

# TO COALITION, OR NOT TO COALITION

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**Coalitions** are alliances of people/groups/organizations who have a shared vision of a policy issue. Working in a coalition is an effective way for advocacy organizations to share and maximize resources to achieve a common goal. Coalitions draw on the expertise of partner organizations, build people power, and speak with a clear, unified voice to enact change. Examples of coalitions include The Leadership Conference of Civil and Human Rights, the Drug Policy Alliance, and, of course, the JustUS Coordinating Council.

*Would developing a new coalition or using an existing one build the power needed?*

As you weigh your options, a few questions to consider might be:

- Would a broader network of advocates help to get this bill on your legislator's radar?
- Can other organizations help to amplify this message through various means? (e.g., using listservs, social media, increasing turnout, making calls, etc.)
- Are you able/willing to share the workload of meetings, outreach, and education with others?
- Who has the leverage and power to work with policy gatekeepers?

## Identify Appropriate Stakeholders to Join Your Coalition

A diverse and broad coalition group can help push your issue. However, it is imperative to include some of the following:

- **Directly Impacted Individuals/People:** Those who are closest to the issue you are speaking on — including people who were formerly incarcerated, family members, etc.
- **Organizations Working For People Who Have Been Impacted By the Justice System:** Legal Aid, organizations helping returning citizens, housing organizations, faith-based organizations, etc.
- **Public Health Experts:** Department of Health, academics, etc.
- **Emergency Management Experts**
- **Civic Leaders:** Religious leaders, business owners, community boards, etc.
- **Legal Organizations:** Reach out to legal organizations that are working on changes to the court, changes to the criminal justice system, etc.

As you work to identify partner organizations, reviewing public statements, social media posts, and action alerts can help you learn about similar missions. You can also use the [Coalition Stakeholder Tool](#) to think through organizations that could potentially benefit your campaign.

# COALITION STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT TOOL

LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT	CONSIDERATIONS	LIST ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS TO RECRUIT FROM THIS CATEGORY
<b>Core</b>	Who is directly aligned with your campaign mission? They are consistent and show up for all meetings, events, etc. They help to drive and strategize the campaign. You trust their vision if you were absent. Provide money, resources, intellectual input, strategic insight, etc.	
<b>Comrade</b>	Those whose success is wrapped up in your success. If this campaign succeeds how does that help advance their mission? Fairly consistent and willing to help on heavy lifts. Meeting with Electeds, Calls, Op-Eds, etc.	
<b>Allies</b>	Those whose clients, members, or participants will be better served if your campaign is successful. They may not be able to be as invested, but always willing to help with mid-low level lifts. Uses social media platforms to amplify your message, shares talking points, and distributes actions to their listservs.	
<b>Strategic Alliance</b>	Are there organizations you are connected to that have key connections to policy makers, governmental offices, or influencers? They may not be as involved but willing to help act as a way for you to get closer to power and decision-makers.	
<b>Unlikely Allies</b>	Demonstrating bipartisanship and collective support can be especially effective when those at opposite ends of the issue area writ large can find agreement on related policy reform needs. How can you use power mapping to identify opposition and then create unlikely allies for your coalition? Learn more in the “ <a href="#">Identifying Targeted Policymakers</a> ” section of this toolkit.	