

CHAPTER FOUR: WORKING IN COALITION

- ◆ Forming a Coalition
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Forming a Coalition

Working in coalition with a wide range of diverse organizations on activities such as voter education efforts, candidate and issue forums, and disseminating voter guides allows you to take on larger projects, reach more members of your community, increase membership, and gain additional visibility. The points below will be helpful as you consider partnering with groups in your community.

- **Do your research.**
Search for organizations with similar missions with which to work. Assess their priorities, types of activities, and the kinds of benefits you would both receive by joining forces.
- **Attend events sponsored by other organizations.**
Show AAUW is truly community-based by supporting diverse organizations working for similar causes. Show interest in others' work and watch them do the same for AAUW.
- **Consider new, diverse partners.**
Target diverse organizations with whom you have never worked before.
- **Search for coalitions that already exist.**
If an existing coalition that is doing the same or similar work is already in place, join forces and increase your impact to avoid duplication of efforts. For example, it is likely that during the summer and fall of a federal election year, many organizations in your community are working together to get-out-the-vote.
- **Create relationships with organization leaders and members.**
Personal contact will improve your relationships with organizations and lay a solid foundation before you begin to work together. By gaining friends in diverse organizations, you reinforce AAUW's commitment to, and sincerity toward, working with other groups.
- **Formalize communication.**
Consider how you will communicate with each other. Who will be responsible? If you use a phone, fax, or e-mail tree, who will be the primary contact? What guidelines do you need for dealing with different organizational styles and approval systems?
- **Formalize the decision making process.**
Will there be a coalition chair? Will majority opinion or consensus be used to implement decisions? How often will you meet?
- **Formalize your budget.**
Who pays for activities? Who approves expenditures? How much money will each organization contribute or raise?
- **Formalize the evaluation process.**
How often will you evaluate the coalition's effort and progress? Who will be responsible for the evaluation? Who will implement the changes, if needed?

See page 49-50 of this manual for important guidelines on building coalitions for voter education and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) activities.



Involving College Campuses

Local colleges and universities are excellent sources for volunteers, expertise, energy, resources, and meeting spaces. Students, faculty, and staff are often involved in issue-oriented campus organizations. In addition, the recent focus on "service learning" can benefit AAUW and those students wanting experience or opportunities. Finally, remember that university students are new voters and good targets for AAUW information, as well as potential new members.

Use the following ideas to motivate and work with students:

- Invite students and faculty to join your statewide e-mail network.
- Host a booth on campus outreach day. Make copies of *Get the Facts* subscription forms, two-Minute Activist Fliers, AAUW Public Policy Program brochures, and AAUW membership and student affiliate brochures available. Urge students to talk about *Get the Facts* issues in classes, club meetings, coffee shops, or forums. Host discussions as a guest speaker at club meetings or in classes.
- Post *Get the Facts* around campus.
- Ask students and faculty members to write letters to the editor of their campus newspapers on current policy and/or community issues.
- Hold a forum on an issue affecting women on campus. Invite a panel of speakers, including professors and students. Consider co-sponsoring the forum with other organizations in the community and campus groups.
- Create an internship for students to monitor legislation that relates to AAUW's priorities, then use that information to mobilize women voters and create voter guides. The AAUW Emerging Leaders program has resources to help.
- Invite college students to join your state lobby corps.
- Recruit campus groups to distribute voter guides to students.
- Encourage active students to join AAUW as student affiliates.
- Work with active students to establish an ongoing student affiliate satellite group once the voter education campaign is over.

Use the Emerging Leaders Program to Recruit Public Policy Interns

Through the AAUW Emerging Leaders Internship Program, each branch can appoint up to three undergraduate student interns to work on AAUW programs, public policy issues, and/or membership issues, for one year, under the guidance of a branch leader. Each intern becomes a student affiliate of the branch and Association membership affiliation fees are waived.

Guidelines, applications, campus announcements, position descriptions, workplans, and online registration forms are available on the AAUW website Member Center. Log on at www.aauw.org