How to build coalitions that people don’t hate!
CHEAT SHEET

WHAT ARE COALITIONS?
Coalitions are organizations of organizations (i.e. an inter-organizational group) working together on a COMMON issue. Coalitions can be PERMANENT or TEMPORARY, should be democratically structured, and provide opportunities for coalition partners’ staff and their membership to take on leadership roles (e.g. through committees).

WHY SHOULD I FORM (OR JOIN) A COALITION?
★ To build the power to do something your organization cannot do alone.
★ To maximize your effectiveness and ability to win by working with other groups on the same issue.
★ You want to work on an issue, but your organization doesn’t have enough resources to run the campaign on its own.
★ You want to build longer-term relationships with organizations you haven’t worked with as much in the past.
★ You want to work on the issue, but need “cover” and less visibility.
★ You need a broad and diverse base to win.
★ No one knows everything, but together we know a lot! Taking on complex issues sometimes requires multiple perspectives and problem solving approaches.

COALITION BEST PRACTICES
★ Build Momentum – Set Benchmarks and Celebrate Your Wins!
★ Create Opportunities for Staff and Member-Leaders to Grow Their Leadership
★ Create an Accountable and Deeply Collaborative Structure
★ Establish Operating Norms (e.g. through a working agreement)
★ Follow-up, Follow-up, Follow-up!
★ Have a Clearly Defined Decision-Making Process and Stick to It
★ Have a Clear Work Plan and Roles
★ Prioritize Relationship Building – People Need to Trust Each Other!
★ Really Understand Each Organization’s Self-Interest – What Do They Care About?
★ Run Accessible and Productive Meetings (e.g. effective facilitation, community agreements, inclusive language, etc.)

For More Information Contact
Malika Conner at malika.c@anhd.org
Armando Moritz-Chapelliquen at armando.c@anhd.org

1 Definition adapted from “Organizing for Social Change”, The Midwest Academy.