



Building Your GYSD Partner Coalition

Top 5 challenges for Lead Agencies to build a GYSD Partner Coalition:

1. Accountability and lack of follow-through within the coalition.
2. Lack of communication between coalition members. It is hard to find a time to meet!
3. Coalition members have different planning timelines and are producing competing events.
4. Giving youth the voice. Many organizations don't recognize what children are capable of in terms of volunteering.
5. Sustaining communication with partners throughout the year.

Top 10 best practices for Lead Agencies to build a GYSD Partner Coalition:

1. Create an overall vision for the GYSD planning group, but ask your current partners to lead their own projects. Allow each of your partners to contribute their own proposed approach. Our partners host volunteer events, recruit additional youth volunteers and serve as volunteer leaders during events. Send out an RFP. Request for Projects!
 2. Use your existing partners as the planning coalition that recruits new partners and does the bulk of the planning while you coordinate more global efforts and provide resources.
 3. Have your GYSD coalition partners plan certain days of GYSD.
 4. Ask past partners to bring other coalitions together as part of GYSD.
 5. Find partners with similar missions. We have been able to find partners that have a similar vision of volunteerism. By finding the right partners who are passionate about what they are doing, they are reliable, always willing to help and are fantastic at advertising.
 6. Let a chunk of the work get done early by researching and listening to what's already happening/being planned with partners.
 7. Partner with National Service Programs. We work with national service program members (AmeriCorps State, AmeriCorps VISTA, and Senior Corps) to help spread word about GYSD in communities across the state. Members also help connect projects to local resources (e.g. media, facilities, partners, etc.)
 8. Have regular coalition team partner meetings or youth leadership meetings. Host them at your local coffee shop or university. We find that regular meetings or check-ins (even over the phone and email) helps to keep everyone on track. If you are doing most of the leading, delegate work responsibilities with follow up, feedback and deadlines.
 9. Ask directly for assistance. We ask an organization directly to provide trash bags and gloves because we know that they are resources that they have provided in the past and are likely to provide again in the future. We ask an organization who is great with tech and video production to help with any videos we need.
 10. Keep in touch and work with GYSD partners throughout the year on other initiatives. Share resources and collaborate whenever possible.
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Top 10 best practices for Lead Agencies to build partnerships with schools:

1. Start planning far in advance, send reminders, call and reach out to teachers who have been involved in the past.
2. Find one or two people that will champion your cause. Teachers and school administrators can be very busy, so finding that one person to connect with works wonders. Use a multi-prong approach, working with school principals and staff at many schools as well as with the central administration to ensure cooperation, attendance and support. Pull a few student leaders into a meeting and get them on board. It's easier for students to energize and motivate their peers.
3. Tailor your pitch. Find out the strategic plan of the school, or the goal of the school, and see how you can contribute to the success of their goal. Position the partnership by leading with how the collaboration will benefit them/their students.
4. Provide resources or pre-plan volunteer projects that you can propose to your contacts. Connect the GYSD project to what they are already learning in school.
5. Keep it simple for staff.
6. Be flexible. You have to be willing to change your plans to fit needs and guidelines. If you don't it may cause rifts within the school.
7. It is often best to just go to the school to establish initial contacts and follow up with voice mails and emails.
8. Continue to communicate with your school contacts all year long. Building solid relationships through continual contact and interaction allows more flexibility in program delivery.
9. Engage students in planning and implementation. As students within a school express interest in the program and complete a successful year in the program, the schools become more interested based on the feedback from their students. This makes it easier to continue to recruit from within the school and opens the door for a more involved relationship.
10. Make the schools look good!

Based on the Building Your GYSD Partner Coalition core component of the GYSD Lead Agency Program, list 2 to 3 next steps you want to accomplish in planning your organization's GYSD activities this year:



Based on the Building Your GYSD Partner Coalition core component of the GYSD Lead Agency Program, brain storm how your organization might potentially apply what you have learned to your year round programming:

Resources:

The latest GYSD materials and news for Lead Agencies will be available through your Lead Agency newsletters and through the private webpage, www.GYSD.org/LeadAgencyTools.

Youth Changing the World Toolkit

Addressing the need, p. 3, 9

Celebrate your success and thank all supporters, p. 20

Semester of Service™ Strategy Guide

Community Asset Mapping, p. 22-23

Partnerships, p. 26-28

YSA Tip Sheets

Contacting Issue Experts

Additional Resources

[Organizing and Coalition Building: Increasing Your Strength \(PolicyLink\)](#)

Discusses what a coalition is, why use it and when to use it.

[Strength in Numbers: A Guide to Building Community Coalitions \(Community Catalyst, 2003\)](#)

A guide that discusses the basics of coalitions, organizing a community coalition and factors that affect a coalition

[Building Diverse Community Based Coalitions \(The Praxis Project\)](#)

[Coalition Building: A Tool for Improved Community Literacy \(US Department of Education, 2012\)](#)

[Coalition Building \(Community Toolbox, 2000\)](#)
