

Coalition Funding

Funding a coalition can be a tricky subject for funders, as there are many dynamics at play. However, coalitions can also be a very effective investment for funders as both grant making and non-grant making activities (like convening) can be beneficial to coalitions. There are several important questions that funders may want to consider when working with coalitions that can be separated into three sections.

Questions Pertaining to Coalition Value to the Funder

- Does the coalition goal destination align with the funder's goals?
- Is the coalition clearly able to articulate its value proposition?
- Is the coalition membership representative of the breath of constituencies affected by the issue? If not, is there a good rationale?
- How will the funder hold the coalition accountable?

Questions Pertaining to Coalition's Ability to do the Work

- Does the coalition demonstrate capacity to do work?
- Where are the resource gaps between what coalition members provide and what the coalition needs in order to do its work?

Questions Pertaining to Coalition Sustainability

- Does the coalition promote transparency and equality?
- Can non-grant making resources (e.g., convening, relationships, status) benefit the coalition?
- Is the coalition funded at a sufficient level to get people to dedicate their time?
- By facilitating the creation of a coalition, is there a valuable proposition (or one that can be developed) beyond the funder's relationships and funding draw?

One thing is generally clear: funders should not encourage coalitions to formally incorporate except in the most extreme circumstances. Coalitions may decide to formally incorporate, and funders can be a valuable part of the conversation, but receiving funds is generally not a good motivating force for the effectiveness of such as using a fiscal agent or funding a "chair" organization on a rotating basis (so multiple coalition members administer the funds over a period of time).