



Tree Equity Handbook

A Practical Guide to Closing the Canopy Gap Between Neighborhoods

ACTIVITY 2.4

→ Coalition Recruitment

Toolkit 2: Build an Inclusive Coalition

Issued November 2025



Activity Map

→ [Stakeholder Inventory and Map](#)

→ [Community Partner Cultivation](#)

→ [Modified SWOT Partner Analysis](#)

Coalition Recruitment

→ [Coalition Roadmap](#)

→ [Coalition Mission, Vision and Goals](#)

→ [Tree Equity Commitment](#)

Activity 2.4: Coalition Recruitment

Toolkit 2 Overview:

Build an Inclusive Coalition

Urban forests are managed by and for people. They thrive on collaboration. To advance Tree Equity in your community, you will need the support of a strong, inclusive coalition of stakeholders.

Research shows that urban forestry is most impactful when it is positioned as a solution that helps other sectors address their challenges. Seek out coalition members who share your vision, but who might not yet be aware of issues and opportunities related to Tree Equity, to forge new alignments. In this toolkit, you will follow a step-by-step process to bring together diverse, credible and vocal members of a dynamic coalition that will activate a community-wide vision for people and forests.

Coalition Recruitment



Overview & Basic Steps

Every Tree Equity endeavor requires a working coalition of people with diverse interests and resources to ensure long-term community support. Now that you understand the landscape of stakeholders and potential partners in your community, it's time to identify individual contacts from among these stakeholders who can serve as coalition members.

Before starting this activity, you might need:

- A comprehensive Stakeholder Inventory and Map → [Activity 2.1](#)
- Community partners identified through the Community Partner Cultivation exercise → [Activity 2.2](#)
- A modified SWOT analysis of partners → [Activity 2.3](#)

Suggested Time: 2–4 weeks

Level of Difficulty: Moderate

Participants: A small group of well-connected representatives from different organizations passionate to grow the Tree Equity coalition

Instructions

- 1** Gather contact information for individuals best suited to represent each entity on your Tree Equity coalition (see tips below). Reach out to contacts individually or through targeted outreach to introduce the coalition, explain your mission and invite them to participate.
- 2** Assign each coalition member a role. Are they a core team member, a potential collaborator who can implement aspects of your action plan or someone who can lead in other ways?
- 3** Keep track of interactions with contacts, including responses, roles, commitments and areas of interest.

After you complete this activity:

- 1.** Develop a roadmap of shared priorities for your new coalition. → [Activity 2.5](#)
- 2.** Codify shared priorities into a shared mission and vision statement. → [Activity 2.6](#)

TOOLKIT 2: Coalition Recruitment | Activity 4 – WORKSHEET

Build Your Contact List



Keep track of important information about each contact — such as their affiliation, job title, email address, areas of interest and potential role in the coalition — in a single document or spreadsheet. Feel free to create your own document or download the editable spreadsheet provided on our website. →

[Contact List Template](#)

To use the contact list template:

1. Enter a point of contact and all their information (feel free to skip columns that aren't relevant to your initiative).
2. Select the contact's sector and their coalition role by using pre-populated options provided in the Contact List spreadsheet. These options will appear when you click on a cell in either column. (Note: Roles and Sectors are defined in separate tabs in the spreadsheet. The "Sectors" tab is not meant to be edited, but you can edit and add defined roles in the "Roles" tab.) Use Roles and Sectors to keep your contact list organized.
3. In the blue columns, keep track of who has been contacted, who has responded, contacts' areas of interest and any notes related to coalition activities. (Feel free to add more tracking columns as needed.)

You should plan to continually update and develop your contact list, adding new coalition members and reflecting any changes in contact information, role, etc. Don't forget to keep your door open to new contacts and future opportunities for collaboration.

Outreach Tips

Selecting representatives

As you develop a contact list, consider all the resources and benefits that a person might bring to your coalition — such as charisma, leadership, subject matter expertise, cultural competence, strategic thinking, community connections, organizational skills or other assets. Your goal is to build a diverse, well-rounded group of individuals who all make key contributions to your Tree Equity initiative.

Finding contacts

Consult existing databases, directories and websites to find contacts. Company and organization websites often list their staff members; if an entity is active on social media, you can easily find representatives that way. Don't forget to tap your personal networks to find mutual connections among your list of stakeholder representatives.

Fostering relationships

Remember that strong connections lead to strong outcomes. Try to connect with coalition members on a personal level to build meaningful and lasting relationships. Follow up with your contacts frequently to nurture these relationships, provide updates and solicit feedback or support as needed.

Common Coalition Roles

Anchor institution

An independent organization that not only initiates but also maintains momentum for the initiative. These organizations are crucial for sustaining progress and expanding a movement for change within the community. These entities should have credibility and trust within the community, be well positioned with resources and staff, and demonstrate longevity to ensure long-term impact.

Core team (steering committee)

The individuals who make decisions, undertake planning, conduct review and steer the direction of the coalition.

Champion/influencer

An individual who, through their influence and visibility, can energize a campaign, attract public attention and encourage others to join the cause. These champions may be part of the coalition or steering committee but they primarily play an external role.

General coalition members

The organizations, departments, groups, businesses or other entities that will contribute work to support coalition activities, such as implementing specific action plans, providing feedback or generating community engagement. They may or may not have a representative on the core team.

A leading local champion for Tree Equity in Ruston, Louisiana, Dr. Darrell K Street instructs Ruston High School students on proper planting procedures.



Kevin Alexander / American Forests

Contact List Template

This page shows elements of the Contact List but is not a worksheet. To work on your own list, download the editable spreadsheet from our website.

Contact List Template:
[TE_Handbook_Contact_List_Template.xlsx](#)

➔ The **Contact List tab** includes columns for coalitions members' basic information, including pre-selected options for their sector and role.

1	Affiliation	Name (Point of Contact)	Title	Email	Phone	Sector	Role	Notes
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								
14								
15								

➔ This tab also includes space for you to track contact history and status (blue columns).

1	Contacted?	Response Status	Areas of Interest					
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								

➔ The **Roles and Sectors tabs** include the defined roles you will use in the Contact List tab. Feel free to edit and add to the Roles list as needed. The Sectors tab is not meant to be edited, but includes more detailed information about the types of businesses, groups or organizations that commonly fall into each sector.

	A	B	C
1	Core Team/Steering Committee		
2	Anchor Organization		
3	Champion/Influencer		
4	General Coalition Member		
5	Add more in "Roles (editable)" tab...		
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

1	Government	Town/city/county government Primary urban forestry department Supporting departments Advisory bodies (committees, boards, commissions) Regional planning authority State/federal agencies Elected and appointed officials State urban & community forestry coordinator State urban & community forestry volunteer coordinator	
2	Community Organization	Community organizations (environmental, social justice, community development) Environmental groups/organizations Environmental advocates Economic development organizations Community foundations	
3	Community Group	Affected residents Neighborhoods associations Homeowner, condominium, renter associations and forums Community advocacy & activist groups Marginalized groups Community development advocates	
	Institution	Schools, colleges, and universities School leadership and committees Educational associations Healthcare institutions such as hospitals, clinics or medical centers Public health organizations Religious organizations, faith leaders	

	Instructions
1	1. Enter a point of contact and all their contact information.
2	2. Add a pre-defined Sector to keep your contact list organized. To add a sector, click directly on the cell you want to edit to access a dropdown menu. This tab is not meant to be edited.
3	3. Add a defined Role to keep your contact list organized. To add a role, click directly on the cell you want to edit to access a dropdown menu. Edit the list in this tab to add additional roles to the dropdown in the Contact List tab.
4	4. In the blue columns, keep track of who has been contacted, who has responded, notes, and areas of interest related to contacts.
5	

Activity 2.4: Coalition Recruitment

Toolkit 2: Build an Inclusive Coalition

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