Building Your Healthy South Texas Coalition
BUILDING YOUR HEALTHY SOUTH TEXAS COALITION

In order to achieve the goals of Healthy South Texas, each county is being asked to mobilize a high-functioning Healthy South Texas coalition before December 31, 2015. While disease prevention through health and nutrition programming and screening is at the forefront of this transformational initiative, there are implications and opportunities for agriculture and youth; therefore, this coalition should be interdisciplinary in its leadership and membership – meaning all agents take responsibility for mobilizing the coalition and recruiting members.

All counties have been asked to coordinate three strategic efforts for 2016: 1) mobilization of coalition; 2) implementation of coinciding Walk Across Texas programs; 3) recruitment and management of Healthy South Texas Youth Ambassadors. Further programming in health, nutrition, agriculture, and youth education will be guided and supported by the Healthy South Texas coalition.

WHAT ARE COALITIONS?

Coalitions are diverse groups and organizations combining efforts to reach a mutual goal. Coalitions can serve to foster partnerships, increase outreach and outcomes, and reduce repetition of outputs. In the book *ignite! Getting Your Community Coalition “Fired Up” for Change*, Butterfoss refers to four benefits of coalitions:

1. **Strength in numbers** by combining the efforts of multiple organizations and partners;
2. **Strength in the relationships** developed by the coalition;
3. **Strength in diversity** of the knowledge of members represented;
4. **Strength in resources** needed to work towards the goals of the coalition.

DEVELOPING YOUR COALITION

In order to create a coalition that features diverse representation and strengthens the outreach of Healthy South Texas, agents will need to recruit partners, volunteers, and representatives from organizations who have a similar desire to create a culture of better health in South Texas. Agents may have members of their Leadership Advisory Board or current task forces and program area committees who may be great assets to the Healthy South Texas coalitions; similarly, there may be community members and organizations who you have not
previously worked with. Use the attached membership worksheet to help identify potential coalition members.

**Recruitment Methods**

- Send an introduction letter or email to potential members describing the coalition *(a sample letter and email are in the tools and resources section)*
- Identify potential members who may be part of other organizations or committees you work with *(a sample membership worksheet is in the tools and resources section)*
- Develop members from program participants or volunteers in current Extension programs.
- Use the buddy method as described in *ignite! Getting Your Community Coalition “Fired Up” for Change.*

**Buddy Method for Recruitment**

Linking existing members with new recruits can be an effective recruitment and retention method. It’s much harder to say no to another volunteer, and connecting with other members may increase likelihood of becoming engaged in the coalition sooner and more fully.

**Steps for the Buddy Method:**

- **Step 1:** Think with existing members “Who is not at the table that might strengthen the coalition?”
- **Step 2:** For each identified organization or sector, a member who has the best connection to that organization is asked to begin the recruitment process and volunteer to be the “buddy”.
- **Step 3:** The buddy contacts the prospective member and asks him or her to join the coalition effort. The buddy encourages and answers immediate questions about the coalition or volunteering. Contact information is forwarded to the Agrilife Extension Agent directing the coalition.
- **Step 4:** The Agrilife Agent follows up with a phone call, and sends an orientation packet to the prospective member with key information about the coalition and its work.
- **Step 5:** When the buddy receives a reminder of the next coalition meeting, he or she phones the recruit to ensure that the notice was received and encourages the new member to attend.
- **Step 6:** At the meeting, the buddy greets the member, helps acclimate him or her to the coalition, and introduces him or her to others. The Agrilife Agent offers a personal welcome.

**Coalition Meetings**

Healthy South Texas coalitions will meet quarterly with the goals of strengthening Healthy South Texas programming in your county. Sample agendas have been created and are included in the Tools and Resources Section. Below is a sample timeline of how counties may structure their meetings. Four meetings a year (quarterly) is the expectation; however, some counties may utilize their Healthy South Texas coalition in ways that require more meetings and coalitions may choose to break into task force
groups to assist with specific Healthy South Texas programs based on the size and scale of the county and project activities occurring there.

**Tips for being an effective coalition**

- develop meeting schedule and share with coalition members;
- send meeting reminders, agendas, and any materials needed for review in advance of meeting;
- accurately record meeting notes/minutes and share with all members following the meeting (*a word template is provided as a sample in the Tools and Resources section*);
- assign tasks to work groups as needed;
- involve coalition members in planning, implementing, and evaluating programs;
- highlight program successes with the coalition and share credit with partners and volunteers who were involved.

**RESOURCES AND TOOLS**

Resources adapted from:

- *ignite! Getting Your Community Coalition “Fired Up” for Change* by Frances Dunn Butterfoss
- *Texas Department of Health – Coalition Building Guide*

Tools Included:

1. Worksheet for identifying potential members
2. Sample introduction letter/email
3. Sample coalition member position description
4. Sample word template for recording meeting notes and minutes
5. Sample agendas and tools for quarterly meetings
**Membership Worksheet**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Examples of Potential Participant</th>
<th>Who do you know?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City Government</td>
<td>City Planner&lt;br&gt;Health Planner</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Government</td>
<td>County Health Department&lt;br&gt;Director of Parks &amp; Rec&lt;br&gt;Director of Community and Economic Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>News Media</td>
<td>Reporter&lt;br&gt;News Anchor</td>
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<td>Community Groups</td>
<td>Ag Representative&lt;br&gt;Farmer’s Market Representative</td>
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<td>Aging Agency</td>
<td>Director&lt;br&gt;Staff</td>
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<td>YMCA</td>
<td>Wellness Director&lt;br&gt;Program Staff&lt;br&gt;Site Director</td>
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<td>Food Bank</td>
<td>Director of Programs&lt;br&gt;Community Programs Manager</td>
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<td>Head Start Agency</td>
<td>Executive Director/Site Director&lt;br&gt;Teachers&lt;br&gt;Parents</td>
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<td>Community Action Organization</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>College/Community College</td>
<td>Professor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Center</td>
<td>Daycare Director&lt;br&gt;After-School Program Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faith-Based Organization</td>
<td>Youth Pastor&lt;br&gt;Assistant Pastor</td>
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<td>Private Practitioner Or Hospital</td>
<td>Director of Community Health Nursing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Department/Department of Health</td>
<td>Director of Community Health Services&lt;br&gt;Health Promotion, Planning, and Development Manager&lt;br&gt;Environmental Health Officer&lt;br&gt;Public Health Nurse&lt;br&gt;Community Program Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public School System</td>
<td>Chairperson of Health Services&lt;br&gt;Director of Child Nutrition Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home School Group</td>
<td>Representative</td>
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*adapted from Texas Department of Health Coalition Building Guide*
Dear <insert name>,

Recent studies have indicated that health problems related to obesity are not only costly for our health but also financially. Texas A&M University is developing Healthy South Texas, an innovative approach to reduce preventable disease by partnering Texas A&M Healthy Science Center expertise with the extensive network of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension to reach communities with education and programming on diabetes, asthma, and infectious disease.

By focusing on prevention, Healthy South Texas programs have the opportunity to reduce the health and financial consequences of preventable diseases and encourage South Texas communities to live healthier lives. <insert your county> Healthy South Texas programming will:

- Educate community members on healthy food preparation and general nutrition
- Encourage a habit of regular physical activity
- Provide resources for disease prevention

Your help and expertise in this area would be valuable to our county Healthy South Texas Coalition. Please join us at our inaugural coalition meeting <insert details of time, date, location>.

Please contact <insert contact name and information> if you have questions. Enclosed is meeting agenda and map to the meeting location.

Sincerely,

<insert agent(s)>
<our county> Healthy South Texas Coalition Member Roles

- Attend regular Healthy South Texas Coalition meetings
- Help guide programming efforts to reduce preventable disease in your community
- Share ideas and programming resources with other coalition members and the community
- Support community efforts to reduce preventable diseases
- Be an advocate for goals of the Healthy South Texas program

Time commitment: 4 - 12 hours per year. Meetings will be held quarterly, the anticipated time commitment will vary based on local engagement in events and programs.

Purpose of Healthy South Texas Coalition: Bring together community partners, volunteers, and collaborators to help address consequences of preventable diseases and encourage South Texas communities to live healthier lives.

Counties may add member roles or specific event needs as it relates to county programming.
**Sample meeting minute template from Microsoft Word**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>[Meeting Title]</th>
<th>[Pick the date]</th>
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<th>[Meeting Location]</th>
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<td>Facilitator</td>
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<td>Note taker</td>
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<td>Timekeeper</td>
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<td>Attendees</td>
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<th>[Presenter]</th>
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<td>Discussion</td>
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<th>Person Responsible</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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<td>Action Items</td>
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Healthy South Texas Coalition
Sample Agenda
Initial Meeting – December 2015

1. Welcome – County Extension Agent(s)

2. Introductions – Ask coalition members to introduce themselves and what group(s) they represent

3. Overview – Share overview of Healthy South Texas

4. Purpose of Coalition – Outline the expectations of the Coalition, what accomplishments you would like to see, and how the coalition members can help.

5. Mission and Vision – Based on the overview and coalition charge work as a group to establish a mission and vision using the worksheet provided. Missions and visions are important for the coalition members to know what the commitment of the group is and to help them focus activities and outcomes.

6. Walk Across Texas – Highlight the Healthy South Texas Walk Across Texas program and encourage coalition members to form teams, market and share the program, plan the kick-off event, and volunteer.

7. Set Next Meeting Date – Depending on level of engagement, set the next date as soon as possible to build on enthusiasm.
Creating Your Vision

A vision statement helps describe where your coalition is going and energizes people about the future. This will help coalition members describe what the future goals of the coalition are and help coalition members see what the common focus of the group is.

Example from *ignite! Getting Your Community Coalition “Fired Up” for Change* by Frances Dunn Butterfoss

*Smoke Free York is a community where all residents are healthy and tobacco free!*

**Develop your county Health South Texas Coalition Vision!**

1. Describe issues or problems being targeted.

2. Concerning those issues from statement #1, what would be the vision for an ideal county?

3. As this coalition develops and implements change, what would you like to see achieved?

Your vision statement:

*adapted from Texas Department of Health Coalition Building Guide*
Creating Your Mission

A mission statement helps describe why the coalition exists and what the purpose is.

**Example from** *ignite! Getting Your Community Coalition “Fired Up” for Change* by Frances Dunn Butterfoss

Safe Kids Kansas is a nonprofit coalition of organizations and business dedicated to prevent accidental injuries to children from birth to fourteen.

Develop your county Healthy South Texas Mission!

1. What do you want to be the outcome of the coalition?

2. How will the Healthy South Texas coalition accomplish those outcomes?

3. Who will benefit from the Healthy South Texas coalition efforts?

Your mission statement:

*adapted from Texas Department of Health Coalition Building Guide*
Healthy South Texas Coalition
Sample Agenda
Meeting - March

1. **Welcome** – County Extension Agent(s)

2. **Introductions** – Ask coalition members to introduce themselves and what group(s) they represent

3. **Healthy South Texas Update** – Provide a short update on Healthy South Texas programming in your county and Healthy South Texas Walk Across Texas.

4. **Healthy South Texas Youth Ambassadors** – Highlight the Healthy South Texas Youth Ambassador program and encourage coalition members help share with individuals or groups who may have interest

5. **Asset Based Community Assessment** – Complete the short community assessment to determine strength of the community and direction for future programming

6. **Set Next Meeting Date** – Depending on level of engagement, set the next date as soon as possible to build on enthusiasm.
Asset Based Community Assessment Discussion

Assets based community assessments are building lists of communities, organizations, and people based on capacities, skills, and strengths; that can be used to support group goals. As a group, pose the following questions (from ignite!) to your coalition members. Using whiteboards, flip charts, etc. to record answers for the group to see.

1. What are the strengths of this community?
2. What are the health issues our community is struggling with?
3. How can the Healthy South Texas coalition address these issues?
4. What do we need to do? (ex: programming, identifying partners, etc.)

One way to record these answers maybe in the chart below. NOTE: you do not have to identify four different issues. Based on coalition discussions and things that can reasonably be addressed by AgriLife Extension and the coalition you may only choose to discuss one or two issues.
Healthy South Texas Coalition  
Sample Agenda  
Meeting - June

1. **Welcome** – County Extension Agent(s)

2. **Introductions** – Ask coalition members to introduce themselves and what group(s) they represent

3. **Healthy South Texas Update** – Provide a short update on Healthy South Texas programming in your county, final results of Healthy South Texas Walk Across Texas, and update on Youth Ambassador recruitment and training.

4. **Program Planning** – Use this time to work with coalition members on how you can develop a partnership program, or how coalition members can assist in marketing, implementing, and evaluating your current programs.

5. **Set Next Meeting Date** – Depending on level of engagement, set the next date as soon as possible to build on enthusiasm.
Healthy South Texas Coalition
Sample Agenda
Meeting - September

1. **Welcome** – County Extension Agent(s)

2. **Introductions** – Ask coalition members to introduce themselves and what group(s) they represent

3. **Healthy South Texas Update** – Provide a short update on Healthy South Texas programming in your county.

4. **Issue Identification** – Use previous coalition tools (mission, vision, community assessment) to have coalition members identify targeted issues and programs for 2017 (for use in program planning)

5. **Set Next Meeting Date** – Depending on level of engagement, set the next date as soon as possible to build on enthusiasm.
Healthy South Texas Coalition
Sample Agenda
*Meeting - December*

1. **Welcome** – County Extension Agent(s)

2. **Introductions** – Ask coalition members to introduce themselves and what group(s) they represent

3. **Healthy South Texas Update** – Provide an update on Healthy South Texas programming in your county and share the success with partners and organizations who helped. Celebrate accomplishments or provide recognition.

4. **Program Planning** – Use this time to work with coalition members on how you can develop a partnership program, or how coalition members can assist in marketing, implementing, and evaluating your current programs.

5. **Sustainability** – Discuss partnerships and potential members to add to the coalition for 2017.

6. **Set Next Meeting Date** – Depending on level of engagement, set the next date as soon as possible to build on enthusiasm.