Planning for an Impactful Coalition: Part 1

Planning Background



A coalition is…

"…a **group of stakeholders**, led by an entity which manages coalition operations, that is committed to working collaboratively to **advance the CC&C mission**."

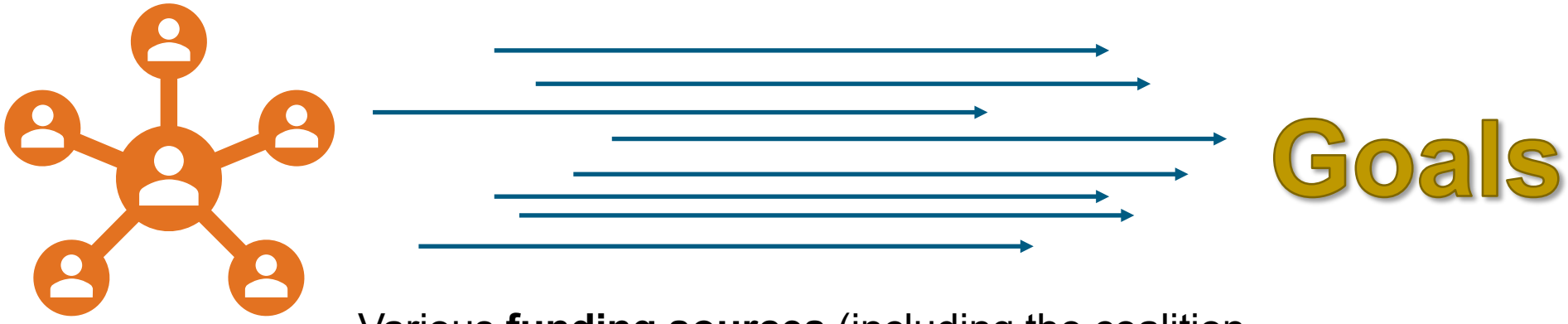
DOE expects coalition staff to support stakeholders ***and*** **stakeholders to support coalition staff!**

Each coalition is an ***independent entity*** and part of a national partnership.



Coalitions (including staff and stakeholders) take actions that advance the CC&C mission. Some actions are led by coalition directors/staff, and some actions are led by stakeholders. When embarking on planning efforts, the coalition needs to consider:

- The big picture vision of a group of stakeholders working collaboratively toward a shared mission (**"what will we achieve together?"**)
- Work that will be performed by coalition directors/staff (**"what specific tasks will coalition staff perform and how will they be funded?"**)



Various **funding sources** (including the coalition cooperative agreement) and **stakeholder resources** contribute to activities that advance coalition goals

Coalition is Responsible for its Organizational Capacity

It is the coalition's responsibility to have the organizational capacity needed to operate as a DOE-designated coalition.

DOE provides numerous trainings, resources, and other opportunities to help coalitions with organizational capacity. However, this remains fully the coalition's responsibility.



Perform key coalition activities

Activities necessary to maintain good standing as a legal entity and/or with a host organization, meet A&E Requirements, and execute the scope of work for all funding agreements.



Manage federal project funding

Includes meeting all contractual requirements.



Train new coalition directors and staff

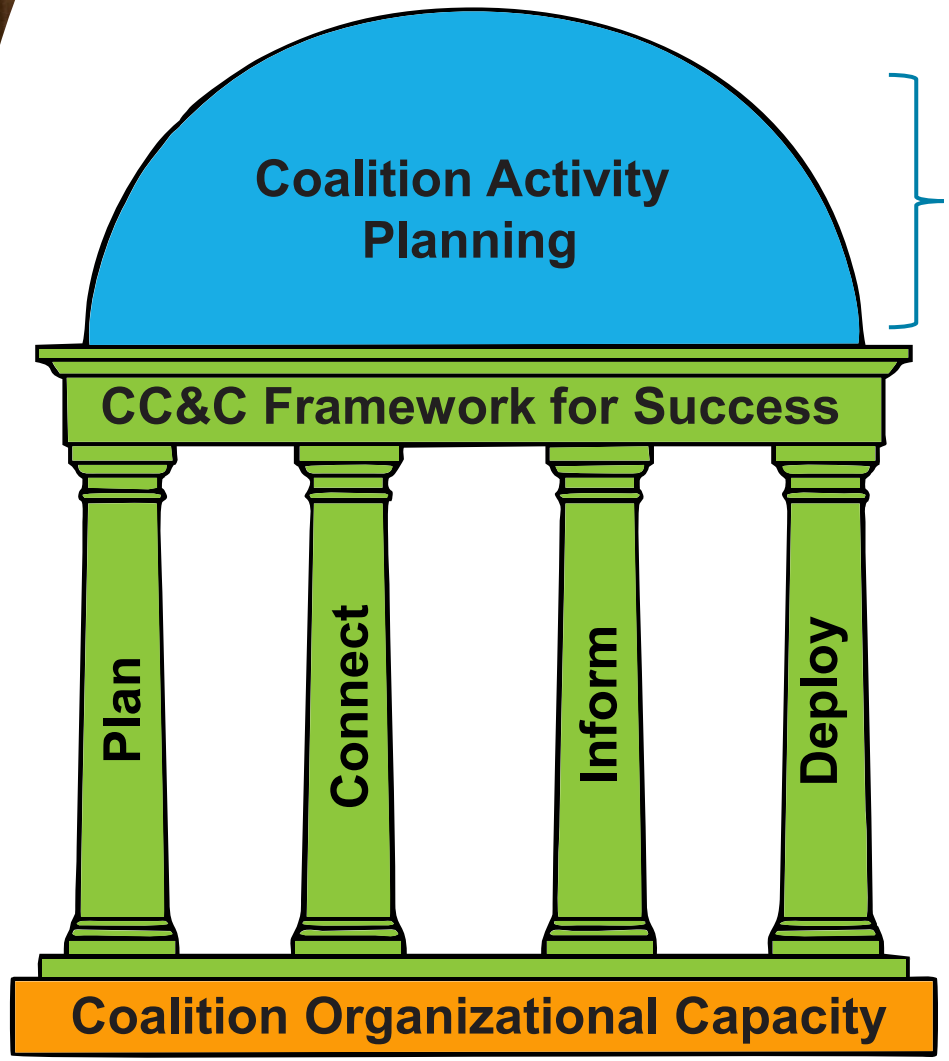
Ensure they understand the CC&C partnership and perform key coalition activities.

CC&C Framework for Success

A Framework for Success resource is available on the Toolbox with example coalition activities for each of the four elements.







Mission-driven work from various mechanisms (including Coalition Cooperative Agreement)

Elements to consider when developing coalition plans to achieve mission impact

Foundation for a coalition's ability to perform work, manage funding mechanisms, and train and retain staff

"Want To Do" Coalition Activities (possibilities)

- **Strategic activities** that align with coalition goals/priorities (could repeat past work, replicate others' successes, pursue new innovative ideas, etc.).
- Ideas included in a coalition's **transportation energy landscape**'s Opportunities for Mission Impact section or other planning documentation.
- Ideas developed in **collaboration with coalition stakeholders** to pursue local priorities and address barriers.

"Must Do" Coalition Activities (fulfils an essential function or meets a requirement)

- Activities necessary for the coalition to have the **organizational capacity** to exist as a legal entity, enter into funding agreements, perform funded work, and maintain operational continuity in the event of staff changes.
- Activities necessary to **execute scopes of work** for all funding agreements (including the Coalition Cooperative Agreement).
- Activities necessary to **maintain DOE-designation status**
  - A&E Requirements
  - Partnership renewal letter
  - Re-designation process.

Local Priorities, National Partnership

- Coalition plans should be grounded in opportunities for mission impact, based on:
  - Local transportation context: market dynamics, stakeholders, trends
  - Stakeholder priorities
  - Coalition mission and vision.
- The CC&C partnership factors into those plans to align coalitions in a common direction and support collective impact. Coalition activities:
    - Contribute to partnership-level goals
    - Pursue the CC&C Framework for Success objectives
    - Can help the coalition continue to meet A&E Requirements
    - May be funded by the coalition cooperative agreement

Planning Requirements



Active and Effective Requirement #2

Planning Documentation: The coalition (staff and stakeholder group) must develop and maintain planning documentation, including the transportation energy landscape; strategies for how the coalition will achieve mission impact; and annual coalition goals, activities, and milestones.

2027 Re-designation Verification of A&E Requirement #2: Planning Documentation

Submittals: Coalition submits planning documentation that includes at a minimum:

- a transportation energy landscape;
- strategies for how the coalition will achieve mission impact; and
- annual coalition goals, activities, and milestones.

Criteria for meeting requirement: Planning documentation must:

- demonstrate an understanding of the transportation energy landscape in the coalition territory, including technologies, markets, policies, stakeholders, **and/or** barriers to advancing the CC&C mission;
- describe strategies for how the coalition will achieve mission impact; and
- describe annual coalition goals, activities, and milestones.

Examples of Planning Documentation

- **Transportation energy landscape:** A comprehensive profile of local transportation systems, energy use, and market dynamics.
- **Strategic plan:** Documented strategies for achieving coalition mission impact in the medium- or long-term (approx. 2–5 years). Communicates multi-year organizational goals and activities to achieve those goals.
- **Annual plan:** Documented annual coalition goals and objectives, activities, and milestones. Can include details such as staffing and resource allocation.
- **Other** detailed documentation of how coalition will achieve mission impact.

Planning for Impact





Active and Effective Requirements

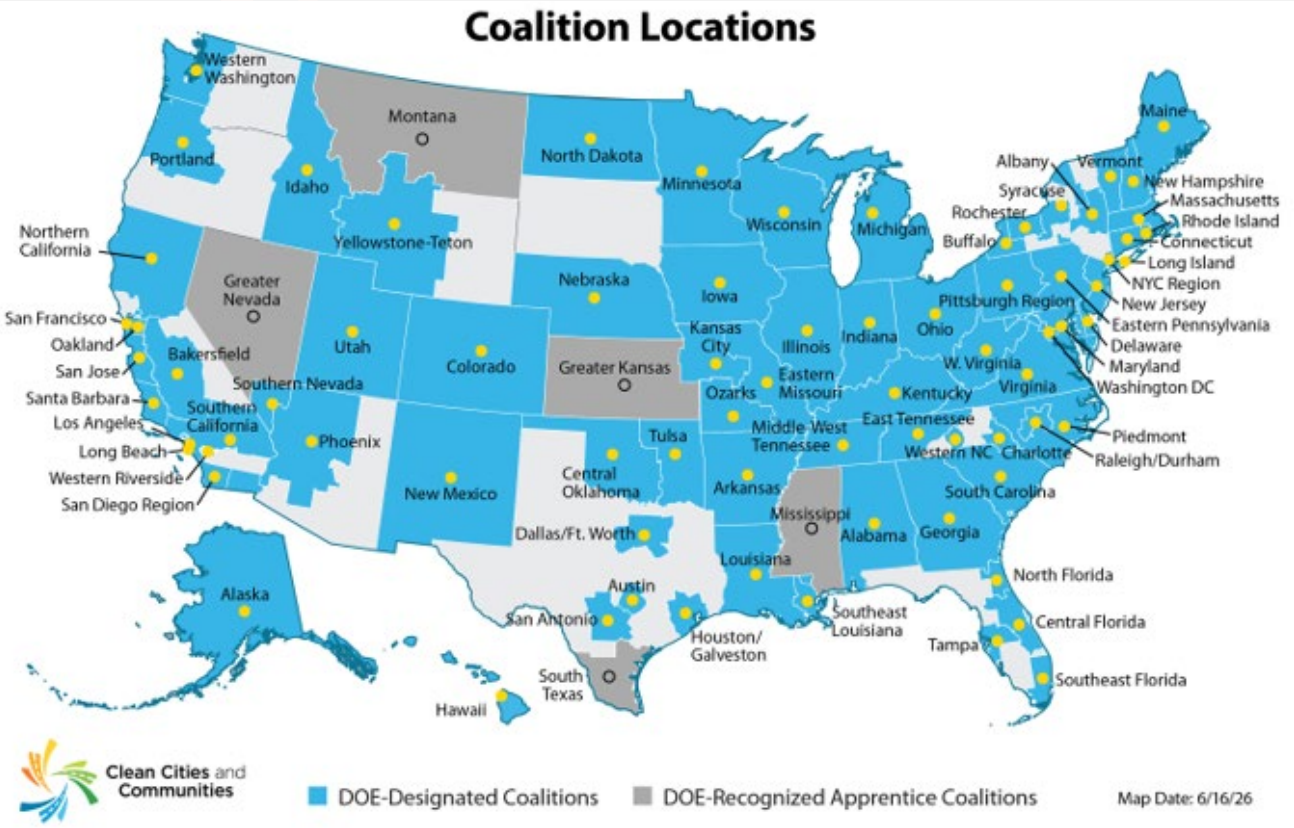
What are the Active and Effective Requirements?

- Minimum requirements to maintain designation status
  - Coalitions must meet A&E Requirements to maintain U.S. Department of Energy designation in the CC&C partnership.
  - Coalitions reaffirm commitment to meeting A&E Requirements through partnership renewal letters.
  - DOE verifies coalitions are meeting A&E Requirements during the re-designation process.
- Coalitions must meet A&E Requirements by **March 31, 2027.**

A&E Requirements Bolster CC&C Brand and Reputation

- All coalitions meeting A&E Requirements bolsters the CC&C brand and reputation with external parties and offers a stronger value proposition for prospective stakeholders.
- When all designated coalitions meet specific standards, potential collaborators gain confidence in the abilities of all coalitions to deliver mission impact.

Clean Cities and Communities



Active and Effective Requirements

1. CC&C Mission Impact
2. Planning Documentation
3. Stakeholder Engagement
4. Stakeholder Group
5. Host-Coalition Relationship
6. Communication
7. Website
8. Administration Files
9. Partnership Convenings

Relationship Between A&E Requirements and DOE Financial Assistance

- Coalitions go through a rigorous voluntary process seeking DOE-designation in the CC&C partnership and must meet A&E Requirements to maintain DOE-designation status.
- DOE financial assistance is not guaranteed to coalitions. However, depending upon the annual federal budget, DOE typically offers direct financial assistance to coalitions.
- The reason DOE can offer restricted eligibility financial assistance to coalitions is because of rigorous standards for coalitions:
  - Organizational capacity to perform high impact work,
  - Understanding of the local transportation energy landscape,
  - Strategic vision, and
  - Relationships with stakeholders.

Coalitions meeting A&E Requirements enables DOE to provide funding restricted to coalitions.

Factors for Planning

- Recommend an annual review to ensure you meet A&E requirements
  - Identify gaps and allocate extra effort toward meeting minimum requirements
- For the 2026 Cooperative Agreement, coalitions may use sub-tasks to meet gaps in A&E Requirements
  - Work performed for sub-task 2.2 Enhanced Strategic Planning may include activities that fulfill #2 Planning Documentation
  - Work performed for sub-task 2.3 Maintain Coalition Administration Files may include activities that fulfill #8 Administration Files

Activity: Active and Effective Requirements

- **Time:** 10 minutes
- **Instructions:**
  - Review the A&E Requirements and indicate for each whether your coalition is currently meeting, not meeting, or unknown.
  - Identify at least one goal related to A&E:
    - “Know whether we meet all A&E Requirements by end of November.”
    - “Meet X A&E Requirements by March 2027.”
    - “Develop internal processes to review A&E Requirement status on annual basis.”

Large-Group Discussion

- What questions do you have about meeting individual A&E Requirements?
  - Those you are not meeting
  - Those you are not sure if you meet
- What goal did you set related to the A&E Requirements? How do you plan to accomplish that goal?

Active and Effective Requirements Resources

- A&E Requirements (Updated in 2026): https://cleancities.energy.gov/toolbox/files/pdfs/active-effective-requirements.pdf
- Expectations and Resources for Meeting A&E Requirements: https://cleancities.energy.gov/toolbox/files/pdfs/active-effective-expectations-resources.pdf
- Best Practices Resources To Assist With Specific Requirements: https://cleancities.energy.gov/toolbox/reference-materials





Coalition Cooperative Agreement

Cooperative Agreement: Transforming Compliance Into Strategy

"Your SOPO is a flexible roadmap, not a rigid checklist."

The Coalition Director's Mindset: The "Musts" vs. The Flexibility

The Hard Boundaries "The Musts“	The Flexible Canvas "Your Decisions"
• **Deadlines**: Deliverables must be submitted on time per Section D • **Quantifiable minimums**: Meet baseline targets (e.g., # public / # private fleets, # peer shares). • **Total value alignment**: Combined value of all work must align with total award funding.	• **Effort is NOT equal**: **You do not** have to divide hours or funds evenly across tasks (e.g., spend 60% on Sub-task 5.1 and baseline on 5.2/5.3). • **Local prioritization**: You decide which projects best fit your territory's market maturity. • **Delivery style**: Choose the format—virtual, in-person, or multi-coalition collaboration, outsourced.

MythBusters: You Have More Flexibility Than You Think

Perception (What We Heard)	Reality (What Your SOPO Allows)
❌ "I don't have grant scope or budget to mentor new coalition directors or learn from peers."	✔ **Sub-task 2.1 (Training and Peer Sharing)** explicitly covers mentoring peers, participating in professional development, and regional peer exchanges.
❌ "The award only covers fleet analysis, not community outreach or ride-and-drives."	✔ **Sub-task 3.1 (Outreach and Engagement)** explicitly includes experiential events, ride-and-drives, site tours, and community listening sessions.
❌ "I have to accomplish all my required tasks independently inside my own territory borders."	✔ **Goal 6 and Sub-task 2.2** actively promotes cross-coalition collaboration, joint workshops, and shared planning deliverables.

MythBusters: You Have More Flexibility Than You Think

Perception (What We Heard)	Reality (What Your SOPO Allows)
❌ *"Our local fire departments and fleets desperately need battery safety and suppression training, but the grant is only for fleet technical assistance."*	✔ **Sub-task 5.2 (Technical Training and Education)** Partnering with technical experts or national labs to deliver first-responder safety sessions, technician upskilling, and code/permitting official training counts toward required training deliverables.
❌ *"Forming and managing a local advisory board or steering committee is nonbillable overhead outside our grant tasks."*	✔ **Sub-task 3.1 (Stakeholder Outreach and Engagement)** includes establishing and convening specialized groups such as advisory boards, technology sub-committees, and working groups to guide coalition direction.

Two Fish, One Net: SOPO/A&E

Strategic alignment: Knocking out A&E Requirements through the SOPO

Sub-Task 2.2 (Enhanced Strategic Planning)	Sub-Task 2.3 (Maintain Coalition Administration Files)
• **Can support A&E Planning Documentation Requirement:** A&E #2 requires coalitions to have planning documentation, including a transportation energy landscape, strategies for mission impact, goals, activities, and milestones. • **Beyond baseline flexibility:** Already have up-to-date planning documentation that meets the A&E Requirement? Perform other work for this sub-task to enhance coalition strategy planning or assist a neighboring coalition with their planning.	• **Supports A&E Administration Files Requirement:** A&E #8 requires coalitions to maintain critical coalition administration files to ensure operational continuity and ensure coalition board, host agency, and/or other appropriate entities have access to files. • **Strategic value:** Maintains critical funder histories, stakeholder list, and transition plans to safeguard coalition momentum against coalition director/staff turnover.

Multi-Coalition Collaboration: Partnering Across Borders

Sub-Task 5.2 (Co-Hosting Technical and Safety Training)	Sub-Task 5.3 (Corridor and Regional Deployments)
• Partner with adjacent coalitions to bring national lab experts or fire-safety instructors. • Shared cost/effort; both coalitions count the event and attendees toward deliverables.	• Collaborate across state lines on alternative fuel freight corridors and charging hub planning. • Strengthen regional funding competitiveness for NEVI and non-DOE grants.

Multi-Coalition Collaboration: Partnering Across Borders

Sub-Task 2.2 (Peer Mentorship and Planning Support)	Sub-Task 3.2 (Shared Communications and Content Pooling)
Work performed for sub-task 2.2 can include assisting newer coalitions with strategic planning and stakeholder mapping	Co-produce educational webinars, joint newsletter series, or regional case studies on successful fleet deployments.

The Project Management Plan: Your Living Roadmap

- **The Project Management Plan (PMP)**: A tool for direction, not a trap.
- **Core scope**: Required for seven sub-tasks (2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3).
- **Key elements:** SMART Goals, one milestone per quarter per task. Update accordingly.
- **The "living" nature:** Update periodically when necessary.

Summary and Action Steps

- **Know your guardrails:** Mark Section D due dates and quantitative minimums on your operational calendar. Due dates are also on the Forum: https://cleancities-forum.nlr.gov/upcoming-events
- **Leverage your flexibility:** Allocate hours where your territory needs it most—don't default to an even 1/N split.
- **Reach out to peers:** Identify one shared project or training you can co-host with a neighboring coalition.
- **Review/update your PMP:** Execute your plan. Update as necessary.

Q&A and Discussion

Cooperative Agreement Resources:
Contact your NETL Regional Manager for cooperative agreement documents, such as:

- SOPO
- PMP template
- QPR template
- FAQ/Job Aid.

