Most volunteers are familiar with only a few strategies for gaining resources and even fewer sources. When a coalition begins the process of planning for sustainability it may find it helpful to provide volunteers with a complete list of potential strategies so that they can become familiar with all of the available options.

Earlier it was noted that there are four basic strategies for gaining needed material resources - share, charge, ask or earn. Each of these strategies can be implemented by the coalition in many ways. What follows is a brief discussion of the strategies for gaining needed resources. The ideas in this discussion will then be applied to the resource inventory just completed.

**STRATEGIES FOR GETTING MATERIAL RESOURCES**

**SHARE** - Ways coalitions typically SHARE needed resources:

**Asset Sharing:** These are resources such as equipment and space that could be classified on a balance sheet as an asset. Typical examples include sharing office space with other agencies, using copy equipment owned by the coalition’s fiscal agent, or sharing the use of a passenger van with several youth service programs. The key point is that the coalition did not have to purchase or pay for these assets.

**In-Kind Contributions.** This is when someone or an organization donates something they already have such as supplies, materials and staff time. These are items that would not be considered an asset on a balance sheet. For example, in order to print the coalition newsletter a local printing company agrees to donate the paper, printing and time. A lawyer may donate their legal advice to help the coalition attain non-profit tax status. A final example is when a local public accountant donates their time to audit the coalition’s financial records.

**Leverage Shared Positions.** This is different than loaned or in-kind staff time. This is when two or more organizations share a staff position. For example, a coalition is need of a public relations person and so is one of their partners. Neither the coalition nor their partner have the financial resources to make the position attractive. They combine their resources and create a position that is responsible for work at both the coalition and the partner.
Fee For Service. Fee for service arrangements allow a coalition to charge for a service provided to the community. For example coalitions may charge for training area non-profit staff on the fundamentals of prevention or charge area businesses for consultation on effective personnel policies that address substance abuse.

Fine or Penalty with Revenue to Prevention. Many branches of government have the ability to assess fines or penalties associated with breaking laws and regulations. An example of this is when a judge assesses additional fines to those who are convicted of providing alcohol to minors with these fines dedicated to the coalition or a community fund that addresses the issue of adults providing alcohol to minors. Coalitions across the country receive money from fines that range from property code violations to court orders.

Line Item in a Government Budget. Many coalitions receive money from city and county prevention budgets. This could take the form of a contract for service from the local funding authority for alcohol and drug services. Additionally, many localities designate all or a portion of funds received through DUI’s and drug forfeitures to the prevention of like activities, providing another avenue to become a line item in either the police department’s or prosecutor’s budget. Some coalitions are also a “stand alone” item in their city or county budget – that is their budget allocation is not given through a city’s police or human services department but is given directly.

Line Item in Another Non-Profit Agency’s Budget. Many times this comes in the form of contracts for those things that the coalition can provide such as coordination or training that are outside of the capacity or mission of the sponsoring non-profit. There are coalitions that are almost completely funded by the United Way through the United Way’s capital budget. This means that the coalition does not apply for funding each year through the normal United Way allocation process, rather, the coalition is a line item in the United Way’s operating budget.

Membership Dues. Membership dues can be as informal as “passing the plate” at coalition meetings to establishing levels of monetary commitment or as formal as an annual requirement. It is important to note that members will want something in return. This strategy is sometimes most successful when it is coupled with value added services that only the coalition can provide, i.e. policy updates, lobbying efforts, evaluation or research. This strategy can be very detrimental if it creates barriers to participation by anyone in the community who cares about reducing substance abuse.

Acquire Tax Revenue. This requires legislation to make happen. County commissioners, city councils, or state governments may pass legislation raising tax revenue or dedicating tax revenue to specific entities. This strategy is most successful when the tax revenue being sought is directly tied to the problem you are trying to address. Some coalitions have helped create “special purpose tax districts” with the tax revenue generated going to area youth development efforts.
ASK -  Ways coalitions typically ASK for needed resources.

Grants. Local, state, and federal governments, and family or community foundations are typical grantors. These grants can come in large and small amounts. They also can be very competitive and restrictive so a coalition should do their homework carefully. Most coalitions in the country receive some type of grant support.

Fundraisers. Fundraisers are a logical and familiar tool in a coalition’s sustainability toolbox. However, many coalitions underestimate the cost and time associated with staging a fundraising event. The best fundraisers not only generate money but also contribute to the mission of the group such as recognition of community leaders and efforts or providing alternative activities for youth.

Individual Donors. Many coalitions avoid this strategy altogether. They are afraid to ask potential donors for contributions or simply have not considered this opportunity. Money raised from donors is a great way to develop discretionary funds for the coalition. The most successful individual donor campaigns insure a multi-year commitment so that the coalition can better predict their donation revenue from year to year.

United Way/ Payroll Giving. The United Way is a part of most American communities. United Way contributions can be like grants in that they come with many strings attached. Payroll giving works best when one of the coalition members is a business or the chamber that is willing to undertake this on behalf of the coalition. This can be very time consuming and coalitions should be cautious to not compete with their member agencies in this area.

Endowed Funds/ Planned Giving. This is a relatively new idea to many non-profit organizations and coalitions. It takes time to cultivate the necessary relationships but the time can be worth the effort. A special note, this is not a jumping off point for fundraising, it is part of a comprehensive strategy that is usually undertaken after other sustainability strategies have been successfully implemented such as long term individual donations and well established fundraising events.
For-Profit Business. Examples of this include an ice cream shop that is owned by a job training organization through which they meet their job training objectives and also meet some of their financial needs. Initiatives like these can be a very difficult undertaking. Most non-profit organizations lack the necessary experience to run a for-profit business. Additionally, for-profit businesses can take away from the mission and purpose of the non-profit entity. The most typical for-profit business run by substance abuse coalitions are employee assistance programs. Coalitions must seek advice and expert guidance before undertaking this type of endeavor.

Business Planning. This is essentially the products or services the coalition has, their relative value and how the coalition intends to market them, to whom and a timeline for implementation. This is a logical extension of what many coalitions do with the addition of a significant marketing plan and an emphasis on identifying what of value the coalition has to “sell” to the community.

Partial Ownership of For-Profit Enterprises. This can be a helpful alternative to the coalition starting its own business. Coalitions can develop a relationship with an existing business that shares their values and mission. This strategy comes with the same inherent dangers of starting a business but it spreads the risk and builds in some of the necessary expertise. This type of effort is often called “social entrepreneurship.”