

Introduction

CCRF is a statewide alliance of more than 40 organizations working to promote sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice through policy change and advocacy. Our members reflect a multitude of constituencies and approaches, and include medical, legal, grassroots, faith-based, consumer advocacy, and community-based organizations from all parts and communities of California.

CCRF's greatest strength is the diversity of our member organizations. That same diversity, however, brings with it an inevitable challenge: how to best navigate and leverage the differences our members hold on issues, priorities, and strategies. Not only do we have different organizational lenses and priorities, we also have different degrees of power to implement our priorities. At the same time, the very nature of policy campaigns is such that we are often required to position ourselves as either "for" or "against" a given outcome, thereby intensifying divisions, disagreements, and rivalries among us.

Nonetheless, CCRF members participate in this network because we wish our unity and solidarity to overcome our differences and divisions. We wish our diversity to remain far more a source of strength than of opposition or conflict. Even as we do not intend to avoid or whitewash our differences, we wish to prevent the unnecessary antagonism, fractured relationships, and misunderstandings that can arise in the course of the life of a "big-tent" coalition such ours.

As a result, we wish to articulate our shared values and name a shared set of expectations that we hold of one another to help ensure that our diversity is respected, our unity is enduring, and our network is collectively as effective as it can be. To achieve these goals, we, the member organizations of CCRF, after a process of member input and deliberation, have agreed to the following set of shared core values, best practices, and rules for participation in the coalition.

AAUW California * ACCESS Women's Health Justice * ACT for Women and Girls * Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health (ANSIRH) * American Academy of Pediatrics, District IX * American Civil Liberties Union of Northern California * American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California * American Congress of Obstetricians & Gynecologists, District IX * American Society for Reproductive Medicine * Bay Area Communities for Health Education * Black Women for Wellness * California Academy of Family Physicians * California Adolescent Health Collaborative * California Association for Nurse Practitioners * California Family Health Council * California Latinas for Reproductive Justice * California Medical Association * California National Organization for Women * California Nurse Midwives Association * California Nurses Association * California Primary Care Association * California Women's Law Center * CAMI * Center for Research and Education on Gender and Sexuality (CREGS) * Center on Reproductive Rights and Justice (CRRJ) * Choice USA * Forward Together * Ibis Reproductive Health * Law Students for Reproductive Justice * League of Women Voters of California * Make A Difference Fund * Maternal and Child Health Access * NARAL Pro-Choice California * National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum * National Center for Youth Law's Teen Health Rights Initiative * National Council of Jewish Women * National Health Law Program * Nevada County Citizens for Choice, Inc. * Physicians for Reproductive Health * Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California * Reproductive Justice Coalition of Los Angeles * Women's Community Clinic * Women's Health Specialists

Core Values

- ❖ **Solidarity**
We are united in our goal to realize reproductive health, rights and justice for California's diverse women, youth and communities. We wish to celebrate and sustain our connections to one another as allies in a common cause.
- ❖ **Respect**
We respect the work, mission, knowledge and experience of our fellow coalition members and believe that each member has essential wisdom from which we can learn.
- ❖ **Empathy**
As individuals and allies, we assume that all coalition members come to the table with good intentions. We seek to be compassionate, kind, and generous with one other and we aim to refrain from making our policy or political disagreements personal.
- ❖ **Diversity**
We believe the multitude of perspectives and critical lenses that our "big tent" includes is a central source of the strength, vibrancy, and effectiveness of our coalition. Our diversity makes us wiser, allows us to see together what we could not see alone, and fuels creative thinking and critical examination that is crucial for our collective success.
- ❖ **Dissensus**
Because we value our differences and diversity, we honor the views, approaches, and strategies of all our members equally, whether or not they are in the minority or the majority at any given time. Though minority views may not carry the political decision at any given moment, we aim to recognize and understand them, so that they may improve our reasoning and our policies going forward.
- ❖ **Power & Equity**
We agree that we are each responsible for promoting greater equity among members, including an awareness of the power and privilege that we do or do not have. We all exist on a continuum of power and have a responsibility to treat our power differences honestly, while working to address those inequities directly when possible.
- ❖ **Voice**
We hold as sacred each member's right and capacity to speak for themselves and in their own voice, and to be understood as they wish to be understood – both amongst ourselves and in the public sphere. We believe it is our responsibility to do what we can to support one another's efforts to speak and be heard.
- ❖ **Honesty**
We value open communication amongst all members, especially with regard to our differences, disagreements and internal tensions. Rather than become avoidant, antagonistic, or defensive, we aim to speak directly, with both respect and candor, so that we may lean into our conflicts, learn from them together, and move beyond them when possible.

- ❖ **Transparency**
We agree that information should be shared as frankly and freely as possible within the coalition. While acknowledging that not all institutional information can be shared among members, we aspire to be as open and flexible as reasonably possible regarding information sharing.
- ❖ **Inclusion**
We believe members have an obligation to make reasonable efforts to seek out the input and participation of those impacted by their work. While we recognize that there are many potential obstacles to such inclusion, proactive steps should be made to include all relevant stakeholders in deliberations and decisions. Is this too broad? Do we mean other member orgs who are impacted, or everyone who is impacted?
- ❖ **Relationship Building**
We value our relationships with one another, as colleagues and as individuals. We believe we are more effective as a coalition as we come to know one another better as people, with warmth and collegiality.

Best Practices

- ❖ **Listen First, Listen Deeply**
In our interactions with one another, especially when confronting our differences, we will prioritize listening over speaking and being curious about each other before explaining ourselves.
- ❖ **Share Information**
We will share information with each other about our priorities, plans and concerns *as early as reasonably possible* to maximize opportunities for discussion and collaboration, and to try to ensure that no member organization is caught off guard by the actions of another.
- ❖ **Assume Confidentiality**
All information shared through CCRF – in meetings, calls, emails, or any other format – will be treated as confidential unless otherwise specified. Members are free to share such information *within* their organizations; however, no references or usage of shared information will be made with non-CCRF member organizations without express permission.
- ❖ **Provide Instruction For How Information Is Used**
While confidentiality is assumed, members will still seek to be explicit with the degree of confidentiality and anonymity they would like regarding shared information. We will strive to make sure that our intentions regarding shared information are clear and unambiguous, so that others are not left guessing.

CCRF

California Coalition for Reproductive Freedom

- ❖ **Give Proper Credit**
Whenever referencing ideas or insights generated by another CCRF member, we will actively acknowledge that member, always seeking to give others credit and recognition for their work.
- ❖ **Seek & Value Member Input**
We will proactively reach out to other CCRF members to find out who may be interested in or have a stake in our work, and seek advice, input or collaboration where appropriate. We will strive to integrate the input, ideas, and arguments of other members into our own thinking and to bring them back to our organizations so that they may inform our internal conversations.
- ❖ **Make Room for Coalition Partners**
We will strive to notice who is missing (literally or figuratively) from an important discussion and take pro-active steps to “make room” at the table for other members, especially those less powerful.
- ❖ **Address Differences and Disagreements Early, Directly, and Inclusively**
We will strive to pro-actively identify potential conflicts and work together to create room for deliberation on our differences so that all members have clarity regarding one another’s views and choices. We aim to have disagreements fully discussed, clear up false assumptions or misinformation, and, when mutually desirable, find mutually agreeable ends.
- ❖ **Refrain from Presuming the Motivations of Others**
We will refrain from assuming the intentions of others and instead seek to offer one another opportunities to express our intentions and reasoning directly and honestly.
- ❖ **Acknowledge and Address Our Mistakes**
We will strive to engage in honest self-reflection and to acknowledge and address our mistakes. We will extend ourselves in good faith to address and rectify harm that we may have caused – even when unintentional – so that we may learn from our failures and conflicts and become a more effective, accountable, and united coalition.

Rules

- ❖ **Attendance & Participation**
Regular and consistent participation in CCRF meetings is crucial in order to enable continuity of discussions and to build trust and relationships among individuals and organizations. CCRF members are expected to send one or two consistent people to represent their organization at each coalition meeting, and organizational attendance is required at no fewer than three of the five CCRF meetings in a year.
- ❖ **Notice of Disagreement**
Public disagreement between CCRF member organizations is allowed and expected, but we seek to disagree in a manner that honors and sustains ongoing coalition and

CCRF

California Coalition for Reproductive Freedom

member relationships. If a CCRF member organization is going to take a position in disagreement to another member(s), they must notify the other organization(s) privately before opposing them publicly. A good faith effort must be made to provide this notification within a reasonable amount of time so that no member organization feels like they have been “blind-sided”.

CCRF’s Role

In the struggle for justice, no one is expected to be perfect. We will often act without complete information, under duress, and in the heat of the moment. As such, we will make mistakes and be in conflict. The purpose of these core values, best practices and rules is not to eliminate conflict within the coalition, but rather to make sure that everyone is operating with the same set of expectations as we work with and alongside each other.

CCRF will take steps to advance our core values, support members to engage in best practices, and keep members accountable to the rules. We will make sure that all members have a clear understanding of this document from beginning to end, and will remain open to feedback and conversation. We will remind CCRF members of these values, practices and rules consistently, especially when they are being challenged but also when we successful live up to the through difficult moments.

We’re committed to being pro-active, to looking ahead and naming potential conflicts or difficult issues and addressing them directly in a way that will prove helpful to our members. CCRF also remains dedicated to relationship building, and will continue to create space for members to deepen both their personal and organizational ties. When possible and appropriate, CCRF will convene conversations and/or support members to do so on their own to address their confusions, frustrations, or conflicts with one another.

This document, agreed to by all CCRF members, is and will always remain a “living document” – one to which we will periodically return to revise, amend, and improve so that it concisely and accurately reflects both the hopes our members have for this coalition and the realities that we face as we try to bring those hopes to fruition.