Capacity Primer: Building Membership, Structure and Leadership

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America
National Community Anti-Drug Coalition Institute

CADCA's National Coalition Institute, developed in 2002 by an Act of Congress, serves as a center for training, technical assistance, evaluation, research, and capacity building for community anti-drug coalitions throughout the U.S.

In 2005, the Institute initiated development of a series of primers aimed at providing guidelines for coalitions navigating the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) developed by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Each primer is designed to be both part of a series *and* stand alone. While we have focused on SAMHSA's SPF planning process, the steps can be applied by any community coalition.

The lack of attention to building capacity will hinder the development of an effective community coalition. This primer will provide clear guidelines for assisting your coalition build the capacity needed to develop and carry out a comprehensive community plan to reduce substance abuse. It describes the components of a coherent plan related to your coalition's strategies and priorities for capacity building.

You will find additional information on capacity building and the other steps of the Framework on the CADCA website, www.cadca.org.

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Contents

INTRODUCTION

Drug-Free Communities Support Program

In 1997, Congress enacted the Drug-Free Communities Support Program (DFC) to provide grants to community-based coalitions to serve as catalysts for multi-sector participation to reduce local substance abuse problems. By 2009, more than 1,600 local coalitions received funding to work on two main goals:

- Reduce substance abuse among youth and, over time, among adults by addressing the factors in a community that increase the risk of substance abuse and promoting the factors that minimize the risk of substance abuse.
- Establish and strengthen collaboration among communities, private nonprofit agencies and federal, state, local and tribal governments to support the efforts of community coalitions to prevent and reduce substance abuse among youth.

TO BUILD AND DEMONSTRATE CAPACITY, COALITIONS MUST:

KNOW...
- Organizations, programs and resources available in the community.
- Key stakeholder groups with an interest in substance abuse prevention.

DO...
- Recruit members including representatives from the 12 community sectors.
- Create a clear organizational structure delineating roles for members and staff, providing clear fiduciary relationships and incorporating functional workgroups.
- Make sure your coalition is legally set up to receive funding, either by incorporating as a nonprofit entity or identifying an organization that will agree to serve as fiduciary.
- Document support your coalition receives from members and partners. Include in-kind support such as office space, supplies, staff time or other services.

PRODUCE...
- An outreach/membership plan.
- A leadership development plan.
- A solid organization chart.
- A cultural competence plan.

The public health model

Prevention programs traditionally have focused on approaches designed to affect the individual, peers or families. Today, many coalitions work to reduce substance abuse in the larger community by implementing comprehensive, multi-strategy approaches.

Approaches that target individual users reach limited numbers of people. Community-based programs that provide direct services to individuals are important partners in a comprehensive coalition-led community-level response. Strategies that focus on the substance and the environment—although more difficult to implement—are likely to impact many more people. For example, information learned by teenagers who attend alcohol prevention classes at school, while important, is limited.

Figure 1

Assessment

Evaluation

Sustainability and Cultural Competence

Capacity

Implementation

Planning
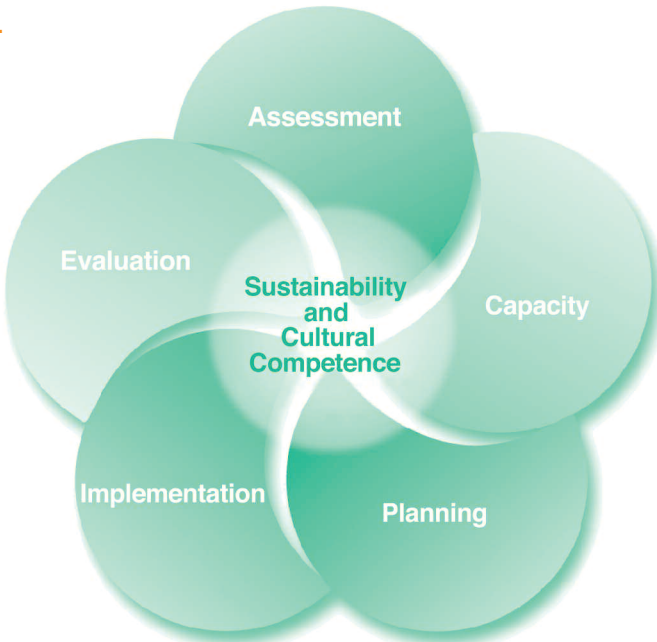
Chances of keeping youth from using alcohol are greater if those classes are part of a multi-strategy approach that includes a campaign to limit billboards near local schools and an education program for store owners to ensure they do not sell to minors. Such approaches might include strategies that target the substance (e.g., raising the price of alcohol) and/or the environment (e.g., implementing policies to reduce youth access). To show communitywide change, your coalition needs multiple strategies focusing on multiple targets of sufficient scale and scope.

SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework

This is one in a series of primers based on the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF).[1] CADCA utilizes the SPF to assist community coalitions in developing the infrastructure needed for community-based, public health approaches that can lead to effective and sustainable reductions in alcohol, tobacco and Other drug (ATOD) use and abuse.

The elements shown in Figure 1 include:

- **Assessment.** Collect data to define problems, resources and readiness within a geographic area to address needs and gaps.
- **Capacity.** Mobilize and/or build capacity within a geographic area to address needs.
- **Planning.** Develop a comprehensive strategic approach that includes policies, programs and practices creating a logical, data-driven plan to address problems identified in assessment.
- **Implementation.** Implement evidence-based prevention strategies, programs, policies and practices.
- **Evaluation.** Measure the impact of the SPF and the implementation of strategies, programs, policies and practices.

A coalition is a coalition is a coalition...or is it?

Four general types of local community anti-drug coalitions exist throughout the United States. They include:

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1. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) developed the SPF to facilitate implementation of prevention programming.

Activity or event focused coalitions–conduct activities and/or events such as information and referral, poster contests, health fairs and resource directories.

Service/program delivery coalitions–focus on developing and carrying out programs that serve individuals and/or families, i.e., parenting classes, after-school and mentoring programs. Staff may be directly involved in the provision of services.

Community mobilization coalitions–organize their communities around single issues (or a set of issues) such as restricting alcohol and tobacco billboards near schools, eliminating the sale of drug paraphernalia in local stores or persuading elected officials to install street lighting.

Comprehensive community coalitions–respond to community conditions by developing and implementing multi-faceted plans to lead to measurable, population-level reductions in one or more substance abuse problems.

Frequently coalitions are developed because a funding organization or outside group provides resources, personnel or both. The external group may determine the goals of the coalition and how it will operate. In other cases, local community members and institutions determine goals, strategies and activities and then seek funds and resources to help carry out the plan.

It is not unusual for a coalition to change as it develops and responds to local conditions or external circumstances. Although this primer series will be useful for all types of coalitions, it is designed for comprehensive community coalitions with a special emphasis on coalitions funded by the DFC.

A word about cultural competence and sustainability
The SPF places cultural competence and sustainability at its center as these key concepts must be incorporated in every step. You will find recommendations for incorporating both from the earliest stages of coalition development through evaluation.

As you approach your work as a coalition, it is essential to continually think about cultural competence on multiple levels: in your community-level interactions, within your coalition itself, within the host organization, etc.

Cultural competence is a point on a continuum with several guiding principles that enable coalitions to have positive interactions in culturally diverse environments. Here are some key principles:

- **Each group has unique cultural needs.** Your coalition should acknowledge that several paths lead to the same goal.
- **Significant diversity exists within cultures.** Recognize that cultural groups are complex and diverse; do not view them as a single entity.
- **People have group and personal identities.** Treat people as individuals and acknowledge their group identities.
- **The dominant culture serves people from diverse backgrounds in varying degrees.** Coalitions must recognize that what works well for the dominant cultural group may not work for members of other cultural groups.
- **Culture is ever-present.** Acknowledge culture as a predominant force in shaping behaviors, values, and institutions.
- **Cultural competence is not limited to ethnicity, but includes age, gender, sexual identity and other variables.**

Sustainability requires creating a strong coalition that brings together a community to develop and carry out a comprehensive plan to effectively address a relevant problem. While long-term sustainability must include a focus on funding, it depends on much more than maintaining sufficient fiscal resources.

Sustaining an initiative over time also requires a combination of non-financial resources from the initiative itself and the broader community. Necessary internal resources include: leadership from management and board members; access to technical expertise from within the organization; and existence of strong administrative and financial management systems. Critical external resources include: support from policymakers, the public, or other key stakeholders; access to technical expertise from outside the organization; and engagement of community-based organizations, parents or other community members.*

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* "Sustaining Comprehensive Community Initiatives: Key Elements for Success." Financing Strategy Brief. The Finance Project. (Apr 2002). The complete document is available online at http://www.financeproject.org/Publications/sustaining.pdf.

Figure 2

COMMUNITY
PLANNING
COALITION
CAPACITY
Membership
Cultural Competence
Organization
Leadership
ASSESSMENT
IMPLEMENTATION
EVALUATION
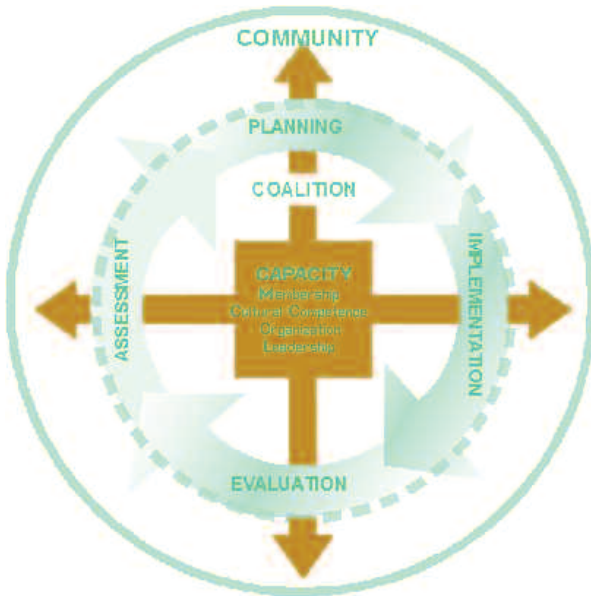
Learn more about cultural competence and sustainability through the Institute's *Cultural Competence* and *Sustainability Primers*, available in PDF format on the CADCA website, www.cadca.org.

A brief look at capacity

The Institute designed this primer to provide community coalitions clear guidelines for building the capacity needed to develop and carry out a comprehensive community plan to reduce substance abuse. All coalitions need similar kinds of capacity to engage partners, stakeholders and populations, maintain high levels of commitment, and organize their work effectively. The development of capacity is particularly germane to the second DFC goal of establishing and strengthening collaboration in communities.

This primer examines three key areas of coalition capacity: membership, organizational structure and leadership. Each chapter provides an overview of:

- **Why** that type of capacity is important and what building it means for your coalition.

- **What** you need to know about the topic.
- **What** your coalition needs to do to build and maintain capacity in that area.
- **What** products you need to develop to facilitate progress in building capacity.

The last chapter fits these four aspects together and discusses strategies for prioritizing your coalition's capacity building efforts.

Other primers in this series focus on the outer work of your coalition—that is, what specific activities it will need to do to assess, plan, implement and evaluate effective prevention strategies in the community. This primer turns an eye inward, to what your coalition needs to **do** and **produce** to make those activities effective. The capacity of your coalition affects how (and how effectively) it will go about every other aspect of its work. It may help, however, to think about capacity as illustrated in Figure 2 on page 7: the critical aspects of your coalition's functioning that facilitate work to reduce substance abuse.

Finally, we encourage coalitions to think comprehensively, even when they may not be able to act comprehensively at that time. In coalition building, "form follows function." Your community is engaged in developing an effective coalition and mobilizing residents for the central goal of reducing substance abuse and related problems. Consequently, you should not try to identify coalition structural "models" or seek to "borrow" another group's organization plan and apply it as your own. Rather, develop a coherent organizational structure that is strong and big enough to bring about population-level change in your community.

CHAPTER 1.   COALITION MEMBERSHIP: BUILDING A WINNING TEAM

By forming a coalition to tackle the issue of reducing substance abuse and related problems, your community has asserted a commitment to increasing public health and well-being. Coalitions can be a very powerful strategy to (1) harness local resources and (2) implement the kinds of multidimensional solutions that match the level of complexity of substance abuse issues in local communities. Running a successful coalition is a complex task. Like organizations, coalitions have missions and goals for their work. However, unlike singular organizations, coalitions distribute their directions, resources and activities across multiple stakeholder groups—each with its own agendas, priorities, constraints and way of doing business. The coalition represents a nexus of these different organizations around a particular issue or focus. The stronger this nexus, the more impact your coalition can have in the community.

Why is membership so essential?

This primer has asserted that your coalition is a nexus—an inter-section of the interests and capacities of many stakeholders around common concerns for reducing substance abuse. Everything that happens in coalition work occurs because people and organizations lend their time, energy, skills, resources and expertise to these collective activities. In a sense, the coalition is simply a setting or "vehicle" that helps this work happen across stakeholder groups in a more coordinated and focused way. The dashed lines in Figure 2 on page 7 represent the fact that coalitions have permeable boundaries and need to continually bring in the knowledge and resources of the community, and to reach out to the community to implement their strategies.

Your coalition's membership represents the key to both of these functions. Members embody the energy that your coalition will draw on for its work. As such, they are your coalition's most important resource. In addition, members provide the vital link between the coalition, their own organizations and other stake-holder groups with which they work.

What does strong membership look like —and how do you get there?

Among most important areas of coalition development, then, are (1) figuring out who the coalition needs inside this "vehicle" and (2) cultivating the engagement of stakeholders so that the coalition can appropriately use members' skills and resources. The following sections will discuss these two important facets.

The right mix of stakeholders

Keep in mind that there is no single right mix of stakeholders for every community. In addition, the most appropriate mix of stakeholders for your community's coalition can be expected to change over the course of your work. DFC coalitions are required to have a minimum of 12 sectors involved in their coalition. This approach ensures the involvement of representatives from important community organizations and institutions. But coalitions also need to be attentive to the representation of grassroots community members. Otherwise the coalition may lack genuine support. Diversity issues must be a constant consideration. Coalition leaders need to create structures that will foster unity within the community and facilitate the joint work of all sectors of society.

> **DFC coalitions** must include a minimum of one member/representative from each of these 12 community sectors:
>
> - Youth (persons <= 18 years of age)
> - Parents
> - Business community
> - Media
> - Schools
> - Youth-serving organizations
> - Law enforcement agencies
> - Religious or fraternal organizations
> - Civic and volunteer groups
> - Healthcare professionals
> - State, local, or tribal governmental agencies with expertise in the field of substance abuse
> - Other organizations involved in reducing substance abuse

On one level, members serve "spoke" functions that bridge between the coalition and external resources and important stakeholders in the community. So...how does a coalition go about finding its own formula? Identifying the right mix of

members requires understanding that members simultaneously serve two different types of functions.

Stakeholders might be sectors of the community with needed perspectives on and interests in substance abuse and related problems, such as youth, parents, youth-serving organizations, substance abuse treatment providers and law enforcement officials. Some stakeholder organizations represent particular constituencies such as diverse cultural groups or geographic areas within the larger community. Members can conect the coalition and stakeholders through their control of or access to needed external resources. For example, they may control certain policies related to substance abuse or funding for their organizations' programming. Or, they may have clout in the community or access to communication channels that help the coalition gain greater influence and success. The essence of these spoke functions is that members need to be in good positions to bring important perspectives and resources into the coalition while spreading the coalition's influence out to the larger community.

Members also must serve certain "hub" functions helping the internal processes of the coalition to run smoothly. Whereas spoke functions are about moving resources, information and influence across the boundaries of the coalition, hub functions ensure that coalition members can work as a functional team and bring the essential skills and attitudes for organizing and implementing coalition projects.

In addition to connecting organizations and resources, coalitions need to be functioning groups, in and of themselves, if they want to get anything done. Important criteria for serving hub functions include positive attitudes about coalition work, an ability to communicate effectively, manage conflict and work productively in meetings. In addition, coalitions function more effectively when their members bring essential skills to the group, such as grant writing, meeting planning or financial management.

Coalitions can run into trouble when they fail to pay proper attention to both aspects of membership. It is important to have individuals and organizations who speak for the key interests and

perspectives on substance abuse in your community, and who can leverage community resources. However, members taking part in coalition meetings also need the requisite skills, attitudes and expertise to help the team work well together.

ACTION STEPS FOR EFFECTIVE MEMBER SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT:

Step 1: Plan to have the right "spokes"

☑ **Affirm** a coalition-wide commitment to cultural competence. Cultural competence is not a problem to be solved. There is no action step that coalitions can take to secure their "culturally competent" status for the duration of their work. Instead, it requires ongoing attention and reflection: consideration of cultural competence must be woven into the fabric of your coalition's work. A good starting point is to formally acknowledge the importance of cultural competence in your coalition's values statements. Doing so provides justification for bringing up cultural competence as a regular facet of your coalition's work.

> **Members** are organizations, groups or individuals that have agreed to affiliate themselves with the mission of the coalition, to send formal representation to coalition meetings on a regular basis, and to participate in communitywide planning and evaluation efforts.
>
> **Partners** are additional organizations or groups that agree to work with the coalition on specific issues or projects of common interest. Partners can even be other coalitions!

☑ **Think** about how your coalition fits into the community as a whole, its approach to substance abuse issues and the priority needs identified in community assessments. Key questions to ask include:

- Outside of the coalition, what are the approaches to reducing substance abuse currently operating in our community? How do people think about ATOD in our community?
- How does our coalition "fit in" with the work of other organizations and collaborative groups in our community? What groups and organizations are working on our prioritized issues or with the same populations?

☑ **Discuss and document** how your coalition will work with and translate to the cultural subgroups in your community. Some issues such as overcoming language barriers are more obvious; others, such as the underlying compatibility of your proposed approach across cultural groups, are often more subtle. Questions to ask include: Will your strategy be embraced or resisted by members of different groups? Why? What underlying values or beliefs influence this?

☑ **Think** about your coalition's purpose and goals. Key questions to ask include:
  - What organizations in the community control resources that could be helpful in realizing our goals?
  - Who has a say in what happens around prevention, programs and policies?
  - Who has a stake in the outcomes of these decisions?
  - Whose perspectives are needed to identify the best strategies?

☑ **Use** these questions for brainstorming with stakeholder groups and constituencies that your coalition needs to engage. Expand these lists to detail the names of specific groups, organizations or community sectors with which your coalition should connect. DFC coalitions must include the 12 community sectors identified (see inset on Page 10), but you should not let this list limit your thinking.

☑ **Engage** in outreach. No matter how diverse or representative your coalition membership becomes, your membership should still be considered a gateway to knowledge about the needs and preferences of different groups in your community, not as a stopping point. To truly understand how to shape and conduct approaches that fit the different cultural elements in your community, your coalition needs to commit to ongoing outreach with and engagement of the members of these groups.

Step 2: Plan to build a strong "hub"

☑ **Think** about the skills, knowledge and resources your coalition will need to get its work done most effectively. These might include strong communication skills; expertise

in collaboration, planning and decision-making processes; technical expertise in intervention strategies or evaluation; grant writing and/or resource development experience; knowledge of local policy and politics; project management skills; available space; or volunteers.

☑ Compare this list with the groups and organizations identified in Step 1. It is not necessary that every member possess all areas of skill and expertise. What matters is that your coalition has a good mix of these resources, and enough potential sources for each so that no one member or partner will feel overburdened.

Consider this: Tipping points in coalition building

In his book, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, Malcolm Gladwell suggests that the same principles that underlie the spread of disease can be used to understand the spread of changes in communities. Because these changes do not follow a simple, linear path, the small, incremental changes you make can seem insignificant—until WHAM!—they reach a "tipping point" that suddenly sets off dramatic and rapid change. One situation where this can occur is in your effort to build the membership base of your coalition. For example, you may find that once you reach a critical mass of members in your coalition, the coalition takes on a life of its own, and recruitment gets much easier.

Two ideas are particularly important to helping to generate momentum. First is the idea that certain people have a knack for spreading ideas and motivating others. These people thrive on their connections and on bringing people together, sharing what they know or persuading others to consider new ideas. Part of your coalition's job, then, is to find these people and bring them on board. Second, certain messages have a "sticky" quality that attracts people and compels them to act. Often the aspects that make messages sticky are simple. As you talk to others about your coalition, pay attention to the messages to which they are drawn and refine your presentation to highlight those sticky elements.

REMEMBER: Tipping points can work in both directions. Just as steady forward progress can reach a point that surges into a wave of growth and positive momentum, setbacks and negative changes can spiral out of control if they are not managed. If you start to see some turnover or waning participation in your coalition, you will want to address it quickly.

☑ **Develop** skills and expertise needed to function internally as a coalition. In many cases, these will be available through the organizations and groups identified in Step 1 for their external roles and linkages. Often this involves identifying not just the right groups and organizations to bring to the table, but the individuals within those organizations who make the strongest contribution to the coalition's regular operations.

Following steps 1 and 2 should give you a clearer idea of the different groups and organizations with which your coalition might need to connect to have the most impact in your community. If your coalition is not new, this process may help identify gaps in your coalition's members and partners. Steps 3 and 4, help translate these lists into an array of active members and partners.

Step 3: Assess levels of interest and needed involvement

Remember, coalitions leverage a broad array of community resources and energies to tackle particular issues which can come into play over the course of coalition work. Some sectors and organizations will be central to the execution of substance abuse reduction efforts in your community and have a broad interest in the your coalition's efforts. Others may want to be involved in your coalition's efforts in a more focused way. For example, their primary interest may lie in a particular coalition activity. Ideally, your coalition should create a membership structure that allows everyone with something to contribute ways to participate that match the depth and breadth of their interest. Often this means a central executive committee composed of the vital and most vested partners and additional committees or task forces for specific strategies or areas of interest.

☑ **Examine** your existing and potential partners lists and think about their interest in the coalition's success. What types of community change and coalition efforts will most likely interest them? How broad is their interest in your coalition's issues? Compare your answers to these questions with the resources and linkages your coalition needs to leverage from each potential partner. These questions can be asked directly of potential partners in the recruitment step to help ascertain a group's interest in the coalition's work.

☑ **Take** time to discuss differences in language, communication style, attitudes, and traditions of stakeholders. Expressions sometimes hold very different meanings for members of diverse cultural groups and health and human service professionals often fail to realize just how much jargon they use—and how confusing this language can be for certain groups (e.g., youth and grassroots leaders).

☑ **Make** sure each member understands why every other member is at the table and what he/she hopes to accomplish. It is essential that your coalition members view each other as having a legitimate role in the process.

Step 4: Recruit and engage

☑ **The best way to approach** recruitment is a simple, personal, face-to-face invitation. Coalition leaders and key members should meet individually with potential partners. In these meetings, plan to: (1) share a clear, compelling description of

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Overcoming resistance

- **Tailor your message.** Reducing substance abuse has many different benefits, and different stakeholders will value some more than others. Potential members need to understand the value of the coalition's mission and what participating in the coalition can do for them. Prepare different ways of framing the coalition's work, so you can choose the message that will resonate with the person you are recruiting.

- **Create a range of opportunities for involvement.** Coalition membership can be a huge commitment. If certain recruits are reluctant to take on one level of commitment, find other ways to connect them with the coalition's work. For example, they may be willing to join a particular workgroup, assist with specific functions or help out on an individual project or activity.

- **Honor the past.** If your community has a history of successful coalition work, remind people of those successes and talk about how your coalition will proudly follow in those footsteps. If, on the other hand, people are wary of coalitions because of prior failures, acknowledge those concerns and talk about how your coalition will avoid the pitfalls of the past.

- **Are the right leaders holding these conversations?** It is important to have an honest conversation about local organizational relationships and politics. Sometimes who asks is just as—if not more—important as what is being asked. Identify which leaders in your coalition are likely to be the most persuasive and which are best to approach particular recruits.

what your coalition wants to accomplish; (2) share why their participation is important to your success—what specific assets do you recognize they can bring to the table?; and (3) ask what they would like to offer and how engaged they feel they can and should be in the coalition's work.

☑ Be prepared for some groups to decline membership in your coalition. One of the hard realities is that many communities have multiple initiatives and coalition efforts working on myriad community issues simultaneously. This means that many organization leaders feel they simply are stretched too thin. It is important to be respectful of these concerns.

☑ Incorporate membership recruitment and engagement in your coalition's ongoing efforts to publicize its work and maintain open communication channels with your community. Achieving a high level of interest and commitment from coalition members and partners requires that they have a clear sense that the coalition is moving forward and making things happen and that they are part of a group that is building a reputation for success and using members' time efficiently. By sharing these messages on a regular basis with the community at large (for example, through newsletters, blogs and local media), your coalition will project a sense of momentum that will help keep existing members energized and make recruiting new members easier.

Active member engagement

Once you have recruited a solid base of members, it is critical to ensure that your coalition can harness the resources and connections these members represent. Unfortunately, even coalitions with a strong array of members can lose out when key members do not remain actively engaged. Several strategies exist that your coalition can employ to keep their members engaged. Successful coalitions recognize that their success hinges on making it easier (1) for the coalition to engage partners and tap their knowledge and resources when needed and (2) for partners to share what they have to offer and fulfill their own goals.

☑ Identify and work around barriers to participation. The most obvious barriers are logistical—for example, poor timing of

meetings, inconvenient locations and difficult transportation. Coalition members should talk openly about what meeting times, locations and structures work best. Members may experience barriers if their organization does not adequately support participation in the coalition. Members need to know that their employing organizations value the time they spend on coalition work and are willing to balance workloads and schedules so that they can participate fully. Drafting a Memorandum of Understanding with participating organizations can ensure more active and formal commitments. (See the Institute's Strengthening Partnerships Toolkit, available on the Resources and Research page of the CADCA website, for a sample and template Memorandum of Understanding.)

☑ Set clear expectations. Make sure that each partner knows up front what the coalition expects from them so that they can negotiate what they are able and willing to give of themselves. Individual meetings with members can provide a safe venue for this dialogue. At a more general level, coalitions can set general requirements and expectations for all members, such as attending a certain number of meetings each year, volunteering for at least one committee and supporting group decisions once finalized.

☑ Talk often about the coalition's goals and progress made toward them. Members are more likely to remain active when it is clear that their efforts are necessary and are helping to drive the coalition toward achieving tangible, valued goals. Having both short- and long-term goals will help your coalition members to experience the satisfaction of visible progress and know that they are part of a significant effort to reduce drug abuse in their community.

☑ Celebrate, honor, and respect your members' contributions. Often coalitions neglect to publicly acknowledge the contribution of their members. Consider a variety of ways to highlight the work of your members. One approach is to spotlight them in your newsletters, blogs or other outreach vehicles. Many coalitions have annual celebrations in which the multiple contributions of their members receive attention.

CHAPTER 2. ORGANIZING YOUR COALITION FOR SUCCESS

As covered in the previous chapter, having the right members and partners involved in your coalition is essential. However, it is not enough to simply bring members of these sectors and organizations together. Your coalition also needs to have an organizational structure and processes that are (1) clear and apparent to all members; and (2) appropriate to your coalition's work.

Clear organizational structure is as—if not more—important for coalitions than it is for individual agencies and organizations. Why? Coalition work falls outside the individual accountability structures of member organizations and the extent to which individual members engage in coalition work is voluntary. The work of the coalition is distributed among various coalition members and partners, each with primary allegiance to their home organization or individual interest or need. Because of this, your coalition must have its own strong and coherent sense of organization to keep the common strategy on track and ward off the "splintering" effects of individual organizations' directions.

Members...	Staff...
• Members participate in coalition efforts to assess and analyze root causes of the problem in the community, develop comprehensive strategies and implement their parts of the identified solutions.	• Staff assists with support for planning, problem solving and information management.
• Members leverage resources for change in the community through their professional and personal spheres of influence. For example, a member might serve as a liaison to help implement an inter-organizational prevention effort.	• Staff may help prepare meeting minutes, compile reports and facilitate meeting coordination and communication with partners between meetings.
	• Staff can have a critical role in monitoring the "business" end of coalition work, maintaining accurate records for funding and reporting requirements.

In addition, coalitions must be careful to make efficient use of members' time. Coalition members need to be able to demonstrate to their home organizations that time they invest in coalition work is well spent or buy-in will be lost. Ensuring that your coalition has the right structures and processes in place can increase your efficiency and effectiveness.

What are the key components of coalition organization...and how do you get them?

For your coalition to function smoothly and have the greatest possible impact in your community, you will need to develop the following organizational mechanisms:

1. Clear roles and organizational structure;
2. Good meeting and communication habits; and
3. Appropriate legal and financial structures and practices.

Clear roles and organizational structure

Coalition members and staff need to understand their responsibilities and what is expected of them. Staff helps shoulder the burdens of administration and coordination that coalition work brings because of shared planning and projects across multiple organizations. Staff should make it easier to leverage the resources members bring to the table. If staff implement direct service programs or execute the plans developed by coalition members, the coalition may not function effectively. Coalitions should avoid creating new service-providing organizations. Instead they should focus on tackling the broader service coordination, systems change and policy needs that coalitions must address. In addition, this type of "drift" frequently places the coalition in competition with other community organizations for resources, instead of helping to build the capacity to leverage resources. Essential steps for having clear roles are:

☑ Create written "job descriptions" for all roles created by the coalition—e.g., members, committee chairs, coalition chairs, treasurer, staff, etc.

☑ Get members' agreement on the expectations for active membership—e.g., your coalition might establish a minimum number of meetings that must be attended annually.

Much of the actual work of the coalition needs to happen between meetings. Establish workgroup structures that allow break down of your work into components that members can tackle together. A subcommittee or workgroup structure enables members to invest the majority of their energies on specific strategies or issues of greatest concern to them, while still allowing general guidance and decision making to rest with an executive committee or with the coalition membership as a whole. The essentials of clear structures are:

☑ **Establish** the objectives and authority of each committee/ workgroup. Group members need to know what they are charged with accomplishing, what coalition resources they have at their disposal and what decision-making responsibility and authority they have. A workgroup may be directed to identify recommendations for final approval by all members or given leeway to make some decisions on its own. The coalition must establish clear boundaries.

☑ **Avoid** spreading your coalition's efforts too thin. A good rule of thumb is to divide your coalition's active membership by four to find the number of workgroups and committees that your coalition might reasonably support. More than this ratio and each workgroup will have too few members for its tasks. Coalition leaders can reasonably expect each member to participate in at least one workgroup or subcommittee, but should discourage any member from joining more than two as the coalition might get slowed down by scattered energies.

Good meeting and communication habits

For coalitions to harness the diverse resources of a community toward shared goals, they must enable communication among coalition members and between the coalition and the larger community to facilitate this sort of mobilization.

Coalitions must pay close attention to the value of meetings. They should engage in examining the progress of the community-wide plan to reduce substance abuse and review and decide on recommendations that come from coalition committees or workgroups. Unproductive meetings can cause some members to stop attending or turn meetings into grousing sessions.

☑ **Hold** meetings regularly. While you may need to adjust your meeting schedule around holidays and vacations, generally you will want to maintain a consistent meeting schedule. Consistency projects a message that the coalition is active, reliable and worthy of being taken seriously.

☑ **Use** an effective agenda and distribute it well in advance of the meeting date. The most effective agendas contain the following components for each agenda item: (1) WHAT—a brief title or description of the agenda item; (2) WHO—the person who will be responsible for presenting or presiding over the discussion of that item; (3) HOW LONG—the time allocated on the agenda for that item; and (4) ACTION/OUTCOME. This fourth item can make an enormous difference if used properly and consistently. For example, if the purpose of a particular discussion is to decide on a strategy for engaging parents of middle-school aged youth, say so in this column of the agenda. Including this information gives clear benchmarks of what the meeting plans to accomplish and how members should prepare appropriately.

☑ **Keep** the meeting on track. If discussion starts to stray too far from the established agenda, the meeting leader or facilitator should gently bring the meeting back on track. If the digression is due to an important or emergent issue or concern, the group can choose to: (1) schedule time for specific discussion of it at the next meeting; (2) designate a specific workgroup or committee to discuss the issue separately and bring a summary of their ideas or suggestions to the next coalition meeting; or (3) choose to defer another agenda item to a subsequent meeting. Whatever the decision, it should be explicit. Establish and maintain a norm that your meetings are focused, on track and get things done.

Inter-meeting communication for members

If your coalition meets monthly for a span of 1½ hours, you will spend a mere 18 hours working together over the course of a calendar year. Clearly, for the real work of your coalition to get done, much needs to happen in between meetings! Open lines of communication among members helps make this possible.

☑ **Keep** quality meeting minutes. A coalition's meeting minutes represent the most basic and essential form of good inter-meeting communication. Recording and distributing minutes promptly after a meeting ensures that all members have a record of decisions and a reminder of the action steps that require follow up. Comparable to the expanded agenda format described above, a minutes format that includes "Next Actions" (what will happen and by whom) provides a mechanism for accountability.

☑ **Use** e-mail lists, online groups or other electronic tools to keep information flowing. These tools can serve as announcements and reminders for sharing of information and to update progress between meetings. With proper use, your coalition can save meeting time from sharing updates for more dynamic tasks such as problem solving and planning.

Community updates and dialogue

Finally, your coalition needs to maintain open channels with other organizations in the community and with community members in general. Your coalition will have better success securing resources, maintaining interest and building partnerships if the broader community knows and understands its work. In addition, you need to ensure that your coalition is accessible to community members to benefit from their knowledge and feedback. Possible avenues for maintaining strong communication links with the community might include:

☑ **Establish** a blog for your coalition. Include regular updates on coalition work in progress and successes as well as links to additional information about substance abuse. Engage youth members to help with this activity.

☑ **Identify** the reporter or editorial staff member at your local paper who covers community issues. Make sure to keep her/him up-to-date on interesting strategies or findings from your coalition's work.

☑ **Make** meeting minutes and agendas available on a website.

To 501(c)3 or not to 501(c)3?	
PROS	**CONS**
• Tax exemptions • Limited liability for members and staff • May be easier to apply for and obtain grants and other funding • Existence not tied to individual members or partners • Possible eligibility for discounts on memberships, advertising and postage	• Organizational overhead: paperwork, record-keeping requirements, and federal and state and reporting requirements • Filing fees for incorporating as a nonprofit entity • Staff and coalition members may become preoccupied with maintaining the nonprofit and be diverted from the work of the coalition

Appropriate legal and fiscal organization

There are both pros and cons to incorporating as a nonprofit organization—known under IRS guidelines as a "501(c)3" organization. While incorporating gives your coalition a measure of independent functioning and enables you to apply for and receive funding under your coalition's name, it also carries the burdens of recordkeeping and reporting. Some coalitions attempt to achieve most of the advantages of incorporation—without the distress and cost of registering as a 501(c)3—by partnering with another local nonprofit or public agency as their fiduciary. This can be a highly successful interim approach for smaller coalitions or those in their early stages of development, or when the amount of money that passes through the coalition may be small. For some coalitions this partnership arrangement works so well that they never incorporate. However, others find they want or need an independent legal identity.

Regardless of whether your coalition decides to incorporate, you will need to have a clear plan and accounting procedures for monies the coalition receives and spends. If a fiduciary organization agrees to maintain the budget and books for your coalition, you will need to negotiate procedures and approval mechanisms for spending. If your coalition incorporates, you will not only need

these procedures but also an organizational structure to maintain and monitor the financial records, including a designated treasurer and, ideally, an external accountant or bookkeeper.

Summary: How much structure is enough?

The array of organizational mechanisms that need to be in place can seem daunting—particularly for coalitions in the early phases of development. However, these elements share some common themes, in that they are all—in varying ways—about establishing clarity and consistency in how your coalition does business. It may help to think about coalition structure as akin to establishing a morning routine. It is easier to get to work in the morning when the steps are clear and ingrained in a routine: you do not have to think about brushing your teeth—you just do it!

In the same way, the goal is to develop a structure that lends efficiency to your coalition's operations because everyone knows how to get where they want to go, and the routines and mechanisms are in place to keep everyone informed and to prevent little details from bogging down your work. If it seems that your coalition is more wrapped up in creating procedures than in carrying out its comprehensive plan, you may need to reprioritize your work: keep the focus on accomplishing coalition goals and pick individual areas of your coalition's organization to improve one at a time.

CHAPTER 3.   LEADERSHIP FOR THE LONG HAUL

Leadership has been identified time and time again as an essential element for coalition success. Why is good leadership so critical? Coalitions involve harnessing the knowledge, resources and energies of members, community partners and other organizations, groups and policymakers to create and implement cross-cutting approaches to complex issues. To accomplish this goal, efforts must be well coordinated and strategic, and must attend to the community's most important resources: the relationships among people and organizations. Promoting and balancing these practical and relational concerns embodies good leadership.

Coalition leadership also must address these concerns at multiple levels. First, the internal processes of the coalition must be managed. These include promoting openness and trust among members, helping meetings run smoothly and maintaining communication and connections among members between meetings.

This is the "inner game" of coalition work. Coalitions also must bridge to and influence activities and resources in the larger community. This is referred to as the "outer game" of coalition work. The outer game involves making sure that your coalition's efforts in the community are moving it toward its goals. Coalitions must have leaders who can attend to both the inner and outer games.

Aspects of leadership
Coalition leaders fulfill multiple aspects and multiple roles.

1. **Leader as facilitator.** Leaders promote open and effective dialogue among members; maintain a group environment that encourages and respects diverse viewpoints; and help transform conflict into creativity. Leaders need to monitor the quality of the coalition's discussions and members' interactions and know when and how to encourage changes to help the group work synergistically together.

2. **Leader as content meta-expert.** Leaders do not need to know everything about the coalition's problem domain (i.e., reducing substance abuse). However, it is helpful to have leaders with expertise on particular issues or activities as the coalition

embarks on its assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation. This meta-expertise drives leaders to ask the right questions, promote appropriate data gathering, identify technical assistance needs and bring in new expertise.

3. **Leader as visionary.** Great leaders often hold a compelling vision that inspires others to join in and help make that vision a reality. Leaders who maintain the big picture and offer a sense of direction help to keep members motivated in the face of many obstacles.

Consider this: Leaders as facilitators of innovation

Your coalition is in the business of innovation. Coalitions match community needs to new ways of addressing those needs. More importantly, they take on the tough task of overcoming the status quo to integrate new approaches into how the community thinks about and acts on issues of reducing substance abuse.

Leadership plays a critical role in helping a coalition embrace these new ways of doing things. Adopting a new approach requires going through several phases:

Awareness. Community members and organizations must be aware of the issues and the need for new approaches. Leaders can help get out the messages of why change is needed.

Openness. Organizations and community members must be willing to try something new. Leaders can help create a climate in the coalition that embraces creative thinking.

Decision. Leaders can help facilitate quality discussions and move a group toward consensus so that a clear decision can be made.

Accommodation and Adaptation. Once the decision is made to adopt a new approach, adjustments in course often are required. Member organizations may need assistance learning how to accommodate their own policies and practices to the new way of doing things. In addition, every community and organization is unique, and innovative approaches usually need to be adapted to fit in with the local context and culture. Leaders can help ensure that the community gets the technical assistance it needs to tweak innovations to their needs.

Institutionalization. Once a new approach has been implemented in the community and proves successful, shifts in local policies are often needed to support the new approach—otherwise, organizations following this approach will always feel like they are swimming upstream. Leaders can spearhead efforts to examine how existing policies support or hinder the continued use of the innovation and lobby for needed changes.

4. **Leader as strategist.** Leaders who are good strategists can help coalition members identify objectives and translate their ideas into workable goals and approaches. Good strategy depends on determining not just what to do, but in what order to do things and who needs to be involved or informed along the way. Leaders with strategic skills help their coalitions develop detailed work plans to cover these bases and anticipate possible setbacks and conditions needed for success.

5. **Leader as broker.** Coalitions need leaders who can help facilitate the exchange of resources among partners and negotiate organizational involvements and commitments. Leaders can be more effective if they take the time to get to know member representatives and talk with them privately about their role and their organization's participation in the coalition. As a broker, leaders will want to ask: What authority is granted to members as part of their participation in the coalition? What resources are they prepared to offer? What decisions can they make? What do they hope to achieve?

6. **Leader as spokesperson.** Coalition leaders are typically asked to represent and speak on behalf of the coalition. Coalitions need good communicators and individuals comfortable with public speaking to help promote the coalition's work, conduct outreach and participate in fundraising activities.

7. **Leader as coordinator.** Last (but certainly not least), keeping track of the implementation aspects of coalition work—managing deadlines, assuring accountability to funders and partners and handling the logistical requirements of coalition projects—is an essential function that requires organizational skills and a fair amount of tact.

Sharing the leadership load in your coalition

As the above list demonstrates, coalitions need many kinds of leadership and a wide variety of skills to perform leadership functions. While some coalitions are blessed with one or more dynamic leaders who manage to embody many of these skills, more commonly people bring different leadership strengths and prefer serving in some leadership functions over others. In essence, coalitions require a distributed leadership model.

Distributed leadership has its benefits—because no one person assumes the role of "keeper of the flame," more room exists for all members to show leadership and feel ownership of the coalition's work. Shared leadership allows everyone to work to their own strengths which is more personally rewarding and fosters ongoing commitment to the coalition. Your group will be stronger if multiple members are ready, willing and able to provide different kinds of leadership. Distributing the core leadership functions lessens the chance of any one leader burning out and fosters the stability of your coalition in the face of membership turnover.

ACTION STEPS TO FACILITATE SHARED LEADERSHIP

☑ **Identify** the strengths and preferred roles among leaders and potential leaders. Use the seven functions above as a starting point for discussion with leaders and potential leaders—for example, by asking members to rate how much they personally enjoy working in each type of role, which roles suit their strengths and which roles they tend to avoid.

☑ **Make** room in the coalition structure for multiple leadership roles. Because coalitions take on complex community issues, they need specific workgroups that correspond to different leadership roles and strengths. For example, many coalitions may find that their work calls for a separate task force on public relations and outreach. Someone who strongly identifies with the spokesperson aspects may be an excellent candidate to have a leadership role in that particular workgroup.

☑ **Build** succession into your coalition's structure. Although coalitions benefit from the presence of strong leaders, they should not become too dependent on a few personalities. Instead, strive to strike a balance between having high-level leadership positions held too long by the same person and having changes in leadership that disrupt the continuity of the coalition's work. One approach to finding this balance is to have a structure that creates explicit roles for the current position, the person who will next occupy the position and the person who most recently occupied the position. For example, have your current chairperson supported by a vice-chair (who rotates into the chair position) and a past chair (who serves

as an advisor). Such an approach provides organizational support for the preparation of the next chairperson to step up to the role when their time comes.

Developing new leadership in your coalition

Because the variety of leadership roles are essential, you cannot leave having good leaders to chance. Plan to develop future leaders so there is a steady stream of talent in key leadership roles.

ACTION STEPS FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

☑ **Actively seek** training opportunities for existing and emerging coalition leaders. Training or technical assistance may be available in your community. In addition, your coalition may want to take advantage of training opportunities available through CADCA's Institute. Visit the CADCA website, www.cadca.org, for more information.

☑ **Hold** leadership retreats bringing current leadership and new/emerging leaders together to reflect on how well the coalition manages its inner and outer work, what aspects of leadership are working well in the coalition and which ones will need additional strengthening.

☑ **Pair** up new or potential leaders with others in established coalition leadership roles to take on particular projects or tasks. This "tag-team" method provides hands-on learning opportunities and support to new leaders.

☑ **Develop** a youth leadership development program. Coalitions often neglect to develop leadership skills among the youth involved in their activities. Consider a formal program to build leadership abilities and encourage youth to continue being involved in coalition work as they mature.

By recognizing the leadership components and roles needed by your coalition, recognizing and matching the leadership skills of members to these roles and continually developing new leadership strengths using the techniques described above, your coalition will build a strong and sustainable leadership that can help it reach its goals now and for the long haul.

CHAPTER 4: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Assessing capacity across the coalition cycle

We have discussed coalition membership, organizational structure and leadership. It is natural for a coalition's capacity needs to change as its work progresses, goals are accomplished and the coalition shifts or expands its priorities. As Figure 3 illustrates, various elements of capacity become important throughout the prevention cycle. For this reason, it is important to continually examine your coalition's capacity relative to the work your coalition is doing now and the work it will do later in the cycle.

Engaging in this type of forward-thinking is particularly important for leaders—good leaders can smooth the way for coalition work simply by anticipating the types of changes that different phases of effort will require. As your coalition begins work in any phase within the SPF, use this transition as a natural opportunity to look around, mark your progress and identify any new capacity needs.
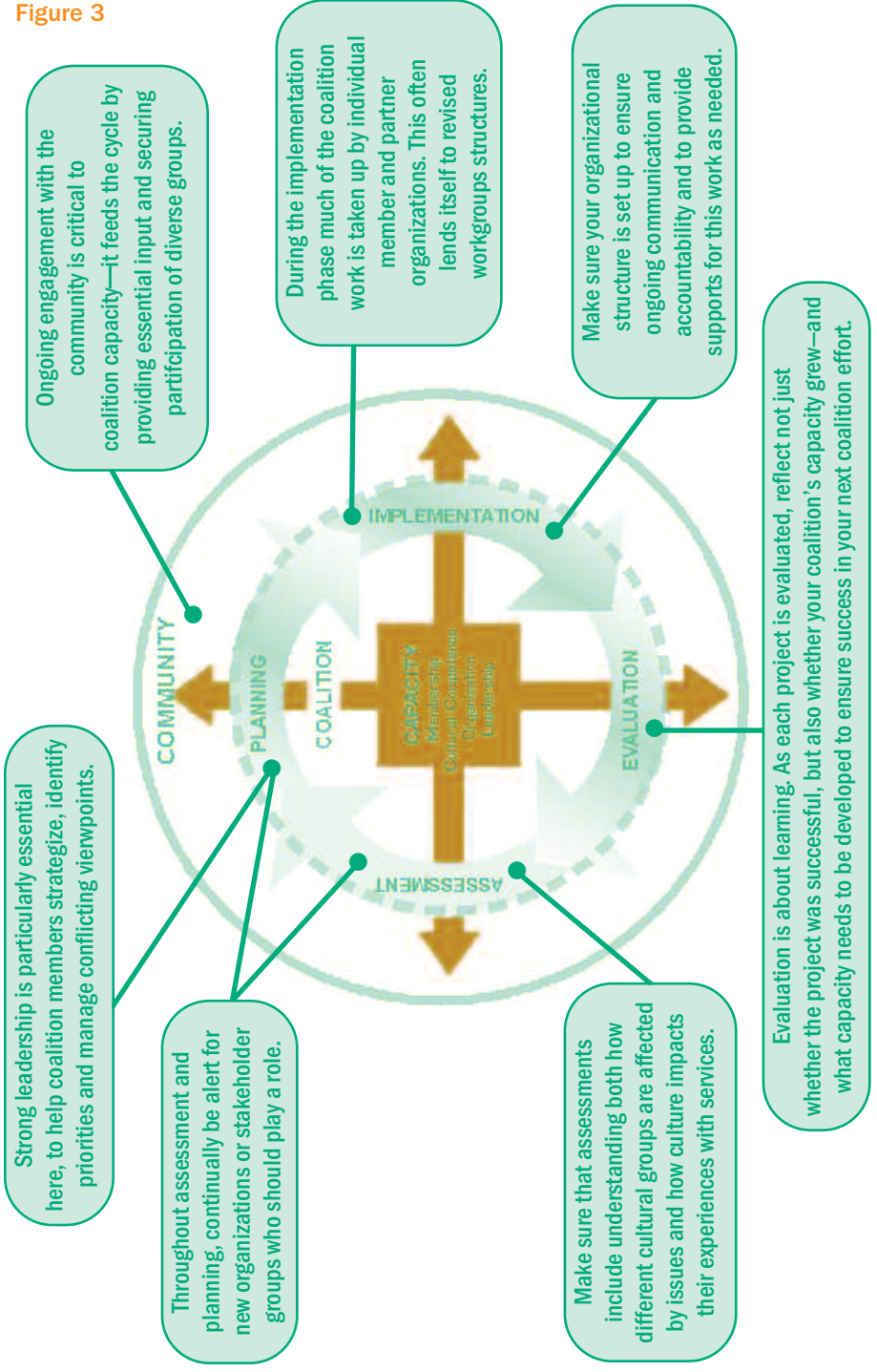
Another crucial aspect of ongoing self-assessment is weighing your coalition's performance across the types of capacity and across both the "inner" and "outer" games of coalition work. Questions to ask include:

1. **How smoothly is our coalition functioning internally?**
   - Do we have members with the skills and expertise needed to function as a group and assess, plan, implement and evaluate our community-level interventions?
   - Are members excited about and actively engaged in the coalition's work?
   - Are our meetings efficient and task-oriented?
   - Is it easy for members to communicate with each other and maintain momentum between coalition meetings?
   - Is the work of the coalition distributed among members and teams effectively?
   - Are coalition leaders keeping our coalition's work on track?
   - Are coalition meetings settings where diversity is respected, conflict is managed and group synergy is created?

Figure 3

Ongoing engagement with the community is critical to coalition capacity—it feeds the cycle by providing essential input and securing participation of diverse groups.

During the implementation phase much of the coalition work is taken up by individual member and partner organizations. This often lends itself to revised workgroups structures.

Make sure your organizational structure is set up to ensure ongoing communication and accountability and to provide supports for this work as needed.

Strong leadership is particularly essential here, to help coalition members strategize, identify priorities and manage conflicting viewpoints.

Throughout assessment and planning, continually be alert for new organizations or stakeholder groups who should play a role.

Make sure that assessments include understanding both how different cultural groups are affected by issues and how culture impacts their experiences with services.

Evaluation is about learning. As each project is evaluated, reflect not just whether the project was successful, but also whether your coalition's capacity grew—and what capacity needs to be developed to ensure success in your next coalition effort.

2. How strong are our coalition's external connections with the community?

- Do members represent the diversity of our community with respect to race, gender, geography, ethnicity and age? Do we have adequate representation of both grassroots and agency perspectives?
- Does our coalition have strategies in place to get its work known in the larger community and to engage community members in its work?
- Is our coalition able to identify and bring in additional partners or sectors as needed?
- Does our coalition make sure that proposed community strategies are culturally competent?

Cultural competence within your coalition processes

Bringing a diverse array of stakeholders together gives coalitions their strength. However, it also introduces challenges. You must recognize that having a diverse coalition means working hard at managing internal relationships, finding common ground and keeping your coalition process moving forward. Try to avoid becoming sidetracked or bogged down by culturally-rooted misunderstandings or lack of shared vision.

Heading off trouble

While the aspects of coalition capacity are presented separately in this primer, they are in fact closely linked. It is increasingly common for funders to ask: What will happen when the money dries up? They recognize that impacting social issues requires sustained effort at the community level—often for many years beyond what their funding cycle allows. Not surprisingly, they want to know that their investment in a community will have a lasting impact. The reality is that while external funding can give your coalition a jump-start or boost and help you turn ideas for interventions into reality, if this lasting impact is to happen it must come from your coalition's own drive for sustainability.

A key question, then, is: What do we want to see sustained? This is not a rhetorical question. Instead, thinking seriously about what the coalition's work brings to the community that adds significant

value over the long term is critical to ensuring that that value can continue to be generated in some form.

While many examples of long-standing community coalitions exist, there are other examples of coalitions with defined life spans. If your coalition seems like it might fall into the latter category, sustainability takes on a different meaning. Instead of concentrating on the long-term sustainability of the coalition itself, your concern should be the coalition's legacy. Ideally, the capacity to collaborate will be increased and the ability to work together on new projects will be integrated in your community's system. Achieving this type of sustainability means that:

- Agencies and organizations have an increased ability to recognize those problems and projects that need multiple stakeholder involvement.
- Stronger relationships have been forged among community organizations and community groups.
- Stakeholders have positive attitudes toward collaboration.

WARNING SIGNS	SOME ROOT CAPACITY ISSUES TO LOOK FOR
Coalition plans become stalled out at the implementation phase.	• Members lack skills to overcome particular hurdles and need outside technical assistance. • Lines of accountability are not clear. • The coalition lacks relationships with key constituencies or organizations needed to move projects forward.
Meeting attendance is low.	• Meetings are poorly organized, lack compelling agendas or are held at inconvenient times. • Leadership fails to make it clear how each step of the coalition work builds toward concrete goals. • The coalition has unresolved conflicts among members.
Members attend meetings but do not seem to pick up responsibility for moving projects forward.	• Coalition staff might be taking on too much responsibility for implementation. • Leaders have not helped the coalition translate mission and goals into concrete action plans.

GLOSSARY

Many of the terms in this glossary are used interchangeably by various funding sources. The definitions included here are those appropriate for DFC coalitions. If you have different or multiple funders, be sure that you are clear about how they are defining these terms.

Agent. In the public health model, the agent is the catalyst, substance, or organism causing the health problem. In the case of substance abuse, agents are the sources, supplies and availability.

Assumptions. Assumptions explain the connections between immediate, intermediate, and long-term outcomes and expectations about how your approach is going to work.

Capacity. The various types and levels of resources that an organization or collaborative has at its disposal to meet the implementation demands of specific interventions.

Capacity building. Increasing the ability and skills of individuals, groups and organizations to plan, undertake and manage initiatives. The approach also enhances the ability of those individuals, groups and organizations to deal with future issues or problems.

Coalition. A formal arrangement for cooperation and collaboration among groups or sectors of a community, in which each group retains its identity, but all agree to work together toward a common goal of building a safe, healthy and drug-free community.

Community-level change. This is change that occurs within the target population in your target area.

Cultural competence. (1) A set of behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or program or among individuals, enabling them to function effectively in diverse cultural interactions and similarities within, among and between groups. (2) A point on a continuum with several guiding principles that enable coalitions to have positive interactions in culturally diverse environments.

Cultural diversity. Differences in race, ethnicity, language, nationality, or religion among various groups within a community. A community is said to be culturally diverse if its residents include members of different groups.

Distributed leadership. A model of leadership in which key functions are shared among all members.

Environment. In the public health model, the environment is the context in which the host and the agent exist. The environment creates conditions that increase or decrease the chance that the host will become susceptible and the agent more effective. In the case of substance abuse, the environment is the societal climate that encourages, supports, reinforces or sustains problematic use of drugs.

Evidence-based approach or strategy. An evidence-based approach/strategy has research information to suggest that it really works, that the intervention, not something else, brought about the observed improvements in related behavior and outcome.

Framework. A framework is a structure that is used to shape something. A framework for a strategy or approach supports and connects the parts.

Goal. A goal states intent and purpose, and supports the vision and mission statements. For example: "To create a healthy community where drugs and alcohol are not abused by adults or used by underage youth."

Host. In the public health model, the host is the individual affected by the public health problem. In the case of substance abuse, the host is the potential or active user of drugs.

Intervention. An intervention comes between what exists (our assessment) and where we hope things will be (our goal). Intervention refers to what is done to prevent or alter a result—the means by which we change behavior and environmental conditions related to a group's goals.

Logic model. Presents a diagram of how the effort or initiative is supposed to work by explaining why the strategy is a good solution to the problem at hand and making an explicit, often visual, statement of activities and results. It keeps participants moving in the same direction through common language and points of reference. Finally, as an element of the work itself, it can rally support by declaring what will be accomplished and how.

Members. Organizations, groups or individuals that agree to affiliate themselves with the mission of the coalition, participate in coalition meetings on a regular basis, and contribute to communitywide planning and evaluation efforts.

Multisector. More than one agency or institution working together.

Multistrategy. More than one prevention strategy—such as information dissemination, skill building, use of alternative approaches to substance abuse reduction, social policy development, and environmental approaches—working with each other to produce a comprehensive plan.

Objective. Objectives are the specific, measurable results a coalition plans to accomplish and serve as the basis by which to evaluate the work of the coalition. Each objective should have a timeframe by which it will be accomplished. "To reduce the number of youth in our community who smoke at age 15 from 18.5 percent to 10 percent by 2007."

Outcome. Outcomes are used to determine what has been accomplished, including changes in approaches, policies, and practices to reduce risk factors and promote protective factors as a result of the work of the coalition. An outcome measures change in what you expect or hope will happen as a result of your efforts.

Partners. Groups or organizations that work with the coalition on specific issues or projects.

Readiness. The degree of support for, or resistance to, identifying substance use and abuse as a significant social problem in a community. Stages of community readiness for prevention provide an appropriate framework for understanding prevention readiness at the community and state levels.

Resources. A resource is any or all of those things that can be used to improve the quality of community life—the things that can help close the gap between what is and what ought to be.

Stakeholders. Groups, organizations or sectors of the community with an interest in and/or perspective on a common issue, such as reducing substance abuse.

Strategy. The strategy identifies the overarching approach of how the coalition will achieve intended results.

Sustainability. The likelihood of a strategy to continue over a period of time, especially after specific funding ends.

Targets. Defines who or what and where you expect to change as a result of your efforts.

Theory of change. A theory of change creates a commonly understood vision of the problem being addressed and defines the evidenced-based strategies or approaches proven to address that problem.