

Implementation Primer: Putting Your Plan into Action



**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 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF). Each primer is designed to stand alone and work with the others in the series. While we have focused on the implementation process of SAMHSA's SPF, the elements can be applied by any community coalition.

Too often, community coalitions administer prevention programs that serve relatively small groups of individuals and have limited impact. This primer will assist your coalition in the implementation of comprehensive strategies designed to achieve population-level reductions of substance abuse. It describes the importance of community mobilization and the necessity of seeking meaningful environmental changes—two strategies that research indicates can influence rates of substance abuse in an entire community.

You will find additional information on implementation and the other elements of the SPF on the CADCA Web site, www.cadca.org.

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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 community 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.

Strategic Prevention Framework

This is one of a series of primers based on the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF)¹. CADCA utilizes the SPF to assist

Implementation

What you need to know:

- How to develop interventions
- How to advocate for change
- How to influence policy development
- How to develop grant applications for funding

What your community needs to do:

- Implement effective interventions
- Sustain the work

The products your community needs to create:

- Sustainability plan

Sample implementation materials are available on the CADCA Web site, www.cadca.org.

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

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 SPF elements shown in Figure 1, below, 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,

A word about words

What is your goal? Your aim? Your objective? Perhaps more importantly, what is the difference? At times, the terms seem interchangeable. Often, the difference depends on who is funding your efforts.

To minimize confusion, we have added a chart (see page 31) that highlights terms often used to describe the same or similar concepts.

Figure 1



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 word about cultural competence as it relates to implementation

Coalitions can mobilize entire communities to implement multiple strategies designed to reduce substance abuse. However, to achieve that goal, they must reach out to all segments of the community and inform them of the potential effects of different policy options. Developing a process that involves major stakeholders—especially individuals or groups affected by or concerned with the problems that have been identified—brings credibility to and community ownership of the coalition’s strategic plan. Including diverse groups who have direct history and experience with the issue helps to ensure that the strategies contained in the plan are appropriate for the communities in which they will be implemented. Remember, diversity encompasses more than race and ethnicity—it also includes such factors as gender, age, disability and political affiliation.

As you attempt to implement population-level strategies to reduce substance abuse, you should simultaneously build capacity and leadership among diverse populations within your community that are vital to the success of the coalition’s efforts. This way, potential conflicts that could affect the outcome of the coalition’s work—as well as other issues that will undoubtedly arise—can be dealt with sooner, rather than later. Ultimately, those most affected by the problems will determine, in large part, the extent to which the coalition achieves success in reducing the community’s alcohol and drug problems.

CHAPTER 1. IMPLEMENTATION BASICS

What is implementation?

During the planning process (see the Institute’s *Planning Primer*) you selected multiple strategies to address the problem(s) your coalition seeks to change. This primer focuses on the SPF’s fourth element, implementation, or putting your plans into practice.

The role of coalition members now moves from planning to oversight, mutual accountability and monitoring. During the implementation phase, coalition members must step up and honor the commitments made during the planning process to carry out and/or oversee various aspects of the coalition’s work.

This also is the time to strengthen members’ commitment to the plan and for them to demonstrate their effectiveness in solving community problems. Remember, coalition members, not staff, should implement interventions. Engage members in the monitoring process through meetings where people come together to talk about implementation issues, brainstorm ways to address challenges and make mid-course corrections.

Stop and check!

Review your logic model before beginning to implement your plan. Keep in mind that if you have a DFC grant you are working toward population-level change in at least the four core indicators required by the grant: 1) age of first use, 2) 30-day use, 3) perception of harm of use and 4) perception of parental disapproval of use.

Does your logic model realistically contain enough “power” to accomplish the job? Does your plan include a comprehensive approach with multiple strategies? If not, go back to your logic model and make adjustments.

Remember! No single strategy can achieve population-level change.

Getting started

Coalitions generally implement their plans in two ways—by coalition members (not staff) and/or other organizations or individuals committing to do specific work. For example, many coalitions engage outside consultants for program evaluation. Contracts can be made directly with individuals or organizations. The coalition also

can issue a request for proposals which defines the work it wants done and invites community-based organizations or individuals to develop and submit proposals outlining in detail how they plan to carry out specific activities.

Implementing evidence-based strategies

During the planning process, your coalition researched and then selected evidence- or theory-based strategies—or their core components—proven to be effective. Funders want assurances that the activities they support grow out of approaches that together likely will reduce alcohol and drug rates in the community.

In 1994, the federal Center for Substance Abuse Prevention adopted the Institute of Medicine (IOM) prevention continuum, extending from primary prevention through maintenance. (See chart on Page 6.) The IOM identified three levels of primary pre-

Three Levels of Prevention (Institute of Medicine)

Universal Prevention Interventions address the general population with programs aimed at delaying substance use and preventing abuse. Participants are not specifically recruited for the prevention activities. Universal prevention activities also include efforts to bring community members together to plan for services and to change norms and laws reducing risk factors and promoting a more protective environment.

Selective Prevention Interventions target specific subgroups believed to be at greater risk for substance abuse than others. Risk groups may be identified on the basis of biological, psychological, social or environmental risk factors known to be associated with substance abuse and addiction. Program activities are designed to address the identified risk indicators of the targeted subgroup.

Indicated Prevention Interventions target individuals who exhibit early signs of substance abuse and problem behaviors associated with substance abuse and addiction including early substance use, school failure, interpersonal social problems, delinquency, other antisocial behaviors and psychological problems such as depression and suicidal behaviors. Substance Abuse Prevention Block Grant funds cannot to be used to support indicated prevention programs.

Office of Substance Abuse Services, Guidance Bulletin No. 2003 03.

vention: *Universal*, *Selective* and *Indicated* and stressed the need for multiple strategies and approaches to prevention. An effective community coalition can facilitate the development of a comprehensive community plan which identifies and articulates all three strategies. Some of its coalition members may administer prevention programs that utilize *Selective* and *Indicated* interventions. However, the coalition should focus on *Universal* prevention strategies in its aim to achieve population-level reductions in substance abuse rates. Environmental prevention strategies, more fully discussed in Chapter 3 and the Institute's *Environmental Prevention Strategies* publication, generally fall within the category of *Universal Prevention Interventions*.

Monitoring implementation of the plan

It is not enough to carry out the activities reflected in your plan. Your coalition should document the implementation process and describe any changes you make to your original plan along the way. Funders may ask your coalition to report on the accuracy with which it has implemented its evidence-based interventions and approaches. A complete program description helps provide such information and usually forms part of the process evaluation. (See the Institute's *Evaluation Primer* for more information.)

Suppose, for example, your coalition engages in policy change as one way to affect the retail alcohol environment and reduce youth

Create a checklist

One way to systematically monitor implementation is to create a fidelity checklist. First, list all the activities in your action plan/scope of work and make room for a check box next to each activity.

Check off each activity as you complete it and document the following:

- Any activities not implemented in the order listed,
- Any activities tried that did not work, and
- Any new activities you create to take the place of one that did not work.

At the end of this process, you will have a good record of what you did and did not implement, the challenges you faced and how you overcame them.

Process description data

Advocate/Coalition Member Information

- Demographics
- Methods of recruitment
- Actual attendance
- Attrition/retention

Implementation/intervention Issues

- Planned and implemented adaptations
- Cultural issues that arise and how they were addressed
- Indications of unmet needs/resources development

Implementation problems/issues

- Organizational capacity
- Community resistance

Unrealized or under-realized outcomes

- The difference between expected and actual change (outcomes) as measured by the change between baseline and new measures at the completion of a component.

access to alcohol. After learning that other coalitions have been successful in changing policy with a full-time community organizer, your coalition decides to hire someone. However, the coalition cannot find a suitable person who can work 40 hours per week, so you hire a well-qualified, half-time person instead. You need to document this change in your implementation description so you can track whether it impacts your coalition's outcomes.

Monitoring strategies from the business world—"Continuous Quality Improvement" (CQI) and "Total Quality Improvement" (TQI)—refer to processes of analyzing implementation to determine whether your work is on target.

If you are not seeing the anticipated short-term results, they provide the time and tools to make the mid-course corrections needed to accomplish your coalition's longer term outcomes.

Generally, within 3-6 months of beginning a new strategy or activity, your coalition staff should use these processes to develop a systematic way to review your logic model and strategic plan to accomplish the following:

- **Document** program components that work well,
- **Identify** where improvements need to be made,
- **Provide** feedback so strategies are implemented more effectively,

- **Make** timely adjustments in activities and strategies to better address identified problems,
- **Assess** whether enough resources have been leveraged and where you might find more, and
- **Engage** stakeholders/sectors (community members, providers, staff, etc.) so they feel a sense of responsibility and pride in helping to ensure that the goals and objectives of the coalition are met and alcohol and drug problems in the community are reduced.

Documenting community change

As you implement your plan, you will want to quantify and/or categorize successful actions in the community designed to lead to population-level change. While you should always “keep your eyes on the prize” and pick strategies capable of delivering the maximum effect, you also should measure and document short-term changes along the way. This is the purpose of developing a logic model: to think through the shorter term changes or outcomes you may see on the way to accomplishing long-term population-level outcomes.

The coalition also should create a reporting process for those individual or organizations responsible for implementing various parts of the plan. This will result in a good description of the implementation as it unfolds. If you have an evaluator, have him/her help set up a reporting system. Otherwise, identify someone in your coalition who has the skills to oversee this aspect of your work.

No one can predict the future

We all know that plans we make for the future do not always come to fruition. This also holds true for coalitions. You can have the best strategic planning process or the most detailed action plan, but unanticipated, unforeseen or unintended events can occur and impact implementation of your plan. Alternately, issues may arise that alert you to something not included or underestimated in your plan that can affect the coalition’s ability to address the identified problem(s).

For example, the logic model example in the Institute's *Planning Primer* describes local methamphetamine (meth) labs as a problem. Over time the landscape of meth sales may change and instead of being manufactured locally, meth may be brought in by international drug traffickers. Your coalition becomes aware of the change because you continue assessing the community landscape. Your planned strategy to increase barriers to local meth production might be outdated and you will need to rethink how to address this new aspect of the meth problem in your community.

The COMET System

If you are a DFC grantee, you are required to participate in this Web-based reporting system. This is a grants management reporting tool. The information gathered by COMET also is used for the national cross-site evaluation.

For more information and a demonstration go to the following Web site:

<http://www.ondcp.gov/DFC/comet.html>.

CHAPTER 2. COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION²

For successful implementation of the strategies identified in your plan, your coalition members may need to step out of their normal roles to become advocates rather than program developers or planners. As a part of that process, your goal may be to influence policy- and other decision-makers, hold officials and companies accountable for their actions or increase cultural awareness and competence among health and human service providers serving the community. To accomplish your goals, you will need the support of many sectors of the community.

Coalitions are powerful

Coalitions are uniquely positioned to identify and bring about needed changes in community practices that can reduce the risk for—and consequences of—substance abuse. These changes can take many forms. For example, advocacy can be used to:

- **Develop** new practices such as police officers attending neighborhood meetings.
- **Pass** ordinances to limit over-concentration of retail alcohol outlets in particular areas.
- **Include** the people affected by the problem in all aspects of implementing and evaluating a particular program.
- **Implement** new policies such as new workplace rules that limit smoking.
- **Enforce** new and existing policies, e.g., sales to minors laws.

Researching the issues

No matter the scope of your effort, you will need information to change laws and policies, prompt an official investigation or affect public opinion. For example, your coalition may need to know how many stores that sell tobacco or alcohol display those products or advertisements in close proximity to items that typically attract children or youth. How many drug arrests have been made on a particular corner of the neighborhood in which you work?

² Adapted from Community Tool Box. See section “Organizing for Effective Advocacy” at http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/tools_toc.htm.

A word to the wise...

Being clear about how you want to use sensitive data can make or break your chances of getting it at all.

School districts that regularly survey students on ATOD and other pertinent issues, for example, may be reluctant to release data that could make individual schools look bad.

It is helpful for the coalition to form a partnership with the school district and make it clear that the data will be used for planning and monitoring purposes only. Data from individual schools will not be highlighted or end up on the front page of the local newspaper or the evening news without prior permission from the school district.

Learning all you can about your issue enables you to support your statements with facts and statistics, and gives you credibility and the means to counter the arguments of your opponents. Your advocacy work may be perceived as adversarial—such as trying to pass an ordinance to ban smoking in the workplace—careful research helps you prove your case and know what needs to be done to change the situation.

As outlined in the Institute’s *Assessment Primer*, research and data collection take a variety of forms—from getting information from published or original-

source materials in libraries, archives, the government or the Internet to taking photos or conducting interviews, surveys and studies.

You may have collected relevant secondary data during your assessment, e.g., outlets that sell alcohol to minors, but it might make sense to collect additional primary data. If the data you collected indicate that some outlets sell alcohol to minors, you may want to have advocates survey stores to measure the extent to which they adhere to retail standards. For example, in California, the state business code stipulates “No more than one-third of the square footage of windows and clear doors (e.g., glass) of an alcohol retailer may have signs of any sort, including all types of advertising.”³ Your state may have similar retail standards.

Regardless of the type(s) of research you do, your coalition can benefit from a few general guidelines:

³ This stipulation is incorporated in California’s Lee Law, one of nine alcohol retail operating standards in the California State Business and Professions Code.

- **Ask for help.**
- **Find out** if someone else has already done the research and is willing to share it with you.
- **Understand** the basic information about your issue.
- **Be clear** about how you want to use the information.
- **Ensure** information comes from reliable sources and double check everything. Your coalition's credibility is at stake.
- **Be persistent** if the information you need is hard to find.

Build capacity

This is a good time to build additional capacity specific to the strategies your coalition is implementing. Suppose you have identified some problem areas around housing projects where drug sales frequently occur. You can mobilize and train residents who want to get rid of drug dealers about how to use municipal nuisance laws or compel the city code enforcement department to clean up or fence off abandoned lots where drugs are sold. Or, if you are working to reduce alcohol outlet density, involve congregations in neighborhoods with high density. Together, the faith community and coalition can mobilize and train residents from the affected area to advocate for a zoning change or increased law enforcement to deal with the problems that a high concentration of outlets can bring to a neighborhood.

During implementation—particularly doing mobilization work—you will educate communities, increase their knowledge and reach out to areas that have problem AOD environments. Capacity building is an ongoing challenge, not something separate, that needs to be integrated into your coalition's day-to-day work.

For more information on planning resources and capacity building, see the Institute's *Planning* and *Capacity* primers available on the CADCA Web site at www.cadca.org.

Recruit allies

After you research the underlying causes of your issue, identify potential allies—people or groups who have the same interests—to help your cause. Allies may have capacity or resources to share in

the interest of achieving a common goal. As more people or groups advocate for an issue or goal, the community and those whose behaviors you want to change become more likely to pay attention.

The easiest way to find allies is to ascertain who is already working on the same or similar issues and who might be interested in becoming involved.

Even if you do not agree with them on all aspects of the problem, a collaborative effort could still result in a positive impact.

As you develop a list of possible allies, you could find that you have so many that you need to rank and prioritize them by how much influence they might bring to your coalition's issue. Potential allies have different levels of power or ability to effectively help you achieve your goals. The chart on page 15 can help your coalition analyze and prioritize potential allies.

Who are your constituents and allies?

- Whose problem is it? Who are directly and indirectly affected?
- What are the benefits of participation? What do they gain if you win?
- What risks are they taking? What might they lose?
- Into what groups are they organized?

Adapted from Midwest Academy Strategy Chart, available online at <http://midwestacademy.com>

Know the opposition

Identify the groups or organizations likely to oppose your work before you implement your campaign. That way you can anticipate the type and degree of opposition you may encounter and effectively direct your resources toward defeating your opponents. In

short, identifying adversaries and anticipating their opposition should increase your chances of success.

Who are your opponents?

- What will your victory cost them?
- What will they do or spend to oppose you?
- How strong are they?
- How are they organized?

Source: Midwest Academy Strategy Chart, available online at <http://midwestacademy.com>

Direct action campaigns

At this point, the coalition will be looking at how it can best get the issue noticed by those who have

Organizing for effective advocacy

Type of power	Rational	Example
Members: How many members does the group have?	The more members a group has, the less likely it is to be ignored.	A group with 500 members shows up at a city/county meeting.
Money: Will they donate money to your issue?	Donated money and other resources are a welcome addition to help achieve your goals.	The local teacher's union donated money to your coalition.
Credibility: Do they bring special credibility?	A group with strong positive recognition in the community will help bring credibility to your coalition.	A respected clergyman from a local church speaks on behalf of your coalition's work.
Appeal: Do they have special appeal?	Being connected to groups with universal appeal can help your image.	A poster child is used to promote an emotional response.
Network: Are they part of a large, organized network?	A group connected to other groups in its network will have financial resources, credibility and some political power.	The local chapter of the United Way offers staff support to your group.
Reputation: Do they have a reputation for toughness?	Groups with a tough reputation may discourage opponents.	The local law enforcement officer's union says they will support policy changes for improved enforcement.
Skills: Do they have special skills?	An ally may bring technical, business or legal skills to your group.	A local law firm donates free (pro bono) legal support.
Newsworthy: Are they particularly newsworthy?	Some groups have connections or a reputation to media that might bring positive media attention to your issue.	An activist group for children's rights that recently won a major victory offers to provide technical support.

Source: Community Tool Box

the power to help. The advocacy work your coalition engages in may take several forms that can be used together or alone.

You may decide to conduct a direct action campaign. This type of advocacy can involve:

- **Writing** letters to elected officials,
- **Filing** a complaint,
- **Seeking** enforcement of existing laws or policies,
- **Persuading** decisionmakers,
- **Conducting** a petition drive,
- **Registering** voters,
- **Conducting** a public hearing,
- **Organizing** public demonstrations,
- **Initiating** a legal action and/or
- **Organizing** a boycott or strike.

Media advocacy campaigns

Or, your coalition might decide to undertake a media advocacy campaign that includes:

- **Working** with the media,
- **Cultivating** relationships with the media,
- **Creating** news stories the media will use,
- **Using** paid advertising and/or
- **Changing** the media's perspective on community issues.

Or, you could implement a direct action campaign with a media advocacy component.

A few things to remember about being advocates

Whatever form of advocacy you choose to follow, keep a few things in mind:

- **Frame the issue.** Framing is a method of structuring or presenting a problem or an issue in a way that explains and describes the context of the problem to gain the most support from your audience. When framing an issue you should be specific—who is involved, what factors contribute to the problem and the solution. Successful framing puts your coalition in a good position to direct discussion of the problem.

- **Never rest on your laurels.** Undertaking advocacy on difficult issues tends to be a lengthy, incremental process. Once you achieve some success, you need to remain vigilant. Remember, any policy or law passed can be changed, watered down or eliminated by determined opponents. The only way to ensure that your issue remains on the “front burner” is to plan to engage for the long term and put monitoring systems in place.

Getting the word out to the community

Your coalition is working on or has created something of value to benefit the community. So how do you get the word out to the people you are aiming at and beyond so that the community can make the most of the long-term benefits of your initiative?

Look at what you have accomplished and what you have not, re-examine the mistakes you may have made along the way, get a good idea about where you are and where you're going and communicate this to your audience. If you want more community involvement, make that clear.

What publicity have you received so far? How can you let more people know about what your coalition is doing? A coalition has many options when it comes to the best ways of getting the message out to raise awareness. An organization may consider using publicity by press releases, arranging news and feature stories, approaching editorial boards, preparing guest columns and editorials, arranging a press conference, coordinating with national awareness weeks/months, conducting community forums on the topic and/or hosting a Web site or coalition blog.

Depending on your audience, you may want to put flyers on cars around the city, advertise in the newspaper or on radio, orchestrate a media event or arrange a press conference to proclaim the existence of your program or initiative.

Depending on your budget and availability of staff and volunteers, you also can create blogs, podcasts, Webcasts and/or special promotions like bumper stickers.

CHAPTER 3. CREATING COMMUNITY CHANGE TO MAXIMIZE YOUR EFFECT

Using the Institute’s *Planning Primer*, your coalition selected community-focused approaches to include in your strategic plan. Undoubtedly, most fell into the one of the overarching approaches that coalitions use to achieve the desired outcomes. (See “Seven strategies to achieve community change” on page 19.)

Among these approaches the first three can help the coalition strengthen its internal structure and impact individuals and families. These strategies have demonstrated impact, but because of resource constraints, they generally affect small numbers of individuals rather than the community at large. Consequently, they often are best left for implementation by direct service organizations in your community.

For example, suppose your needs assessment indicates that a number of children and youth in your area could benefit from having a caring adult in their lives and the local Big Brothers Big Sisters organization operates an effective mentoring program. Rather than develop new mentoring programs, the coalition might work to coordinate with and enhance existing efforts by assisting Big Brothers Big Sisters with recruiting additional mentors.

The first three approaches can help to build the capacity of the coalition or focus on the needs of individuals and families—they have obvious limitations and will not, by themselves, achieve measurable change in substance abuse rates in your community. However, the last four approaches—enhance access/reduce barriers, change consequences, change physical design of the environment and modify policies—are more externally focused and more likely to transform communities. (See logic model in the Institute’s *Planning Primer*.)

Each of the seven strategies is important to building and maintaining healthy communities and should be included in your coalition’s logic model and sustainability plan.

Implementation of community-focused approaches also means that the coalition needs to build its bench strength by seeking out additional members who can help move the coalition’s agenda forward. Pay careful attention to building capacity by training

Seven strategies to achieve community change

- 1. Providing information**—Educational presentations, workshops or seminars or other presentations of data (e.g., public announcements, brochures, billboards, community meetings, forums, Web-based communication).
- 2. Enhancing skills**—Workshops, seminars or other activities designed to increase the skills of participants, members and staff needed to achieve population level outcomes (e.g., training, technical assistance, distance learning, strategic planning retreats, curricula development).
- 3. Providing support**—Creating opportunities to support people to participate in activities that reduce risk or enhance protection (e.g., providing alternative activities, mentoring, referrals, support groups, or clubs).
- 4. Enhancing access/reducing barriers**—Improving systems and processes to increase the ease, ability and opportunity to utilize those systems and services (e.g., assuring healthcare, access to treatment, child care, transportation, housing, education, special needs, cultural/language sensitivity).
- 5. Changing consequences (incentives/disincentives)**—Increasing or decreasing the probability of a specific behavior that reduces risk or enhances protection by altering the consequences for performing that behavior (e.g., increasing public recognition for deserved behavior, individual and business rewards, taxes, citations, fines, revocations/loss of privileges).
- 6. Physical design**—Changing the physical design or structure of the environment to reduce risk or enhance protection (e.g., parks, billboards landscapes, signage, lighting, outlet density).
- 7. Modifying/changing policies**—Formal change in written procedures, by-laws, proclamations, rules or laws with written documentation and/or voting procedures (e.g., workplace initiatives, law enforcement procedures and practices, public policy actions, systems change within government, communities, organizations).

members on relevant topics, using team-building exercises to foster trust and respect among coalition members and provide opportunities for partners to use newly learned skills and participate fully in the coalition's decision-making processes.

Significant evidence exists showing that the most effective way to prevent abuse of alcohol or other drugs is to change the environment(s) in which the problems occur. Environmental prevention efforts focus on changing the settings and circumstances in which people use drugs or alcohol rather than solely focusing on changing individuals. Identifying and collecting data on problem environments usually are done during community assessment. Problem settings might include the parking lot of a liquor store where methamphetamine use is known to occur, a park where youth smoke marijuana and drink beer; bars where sales to minors occur; or areas near college campuses where students go to drink.

REMEMBER that environmental strategies are only a means to an end—to achieve the longer term goals of the coalition by employing strategies that emphasize community approaches.

Coalitions may use some or all of these approaches. A few brief examples are provided below for (4) enhancing access, (5) changing consequences and (6) changing the physical environment. A larger discussion follows about (7) policy development.

Enhance access/reduce barriers: Establish a comprehensive student assistance program in local high schools.

Change consequences: Increase penalties so stores cited for selling cigarettes to minors lose permits to sell tobacco products.

Change physical environment: Anhydrous ammonia is used as a fertilizer in farming. It also is a precursor chemical used to manufacture methamphetamine. Tanks that appear to be unattended often are targeted for theft. Access to these precursor chemicals may be curtailed if farmers park the tanks in public areas.

Policy development⁴

Community coalitions can effectively create policy change. Broad-based coalitions that represent many points of view are ideal agents for policy change and can have considerable credibility. By including a wide cross-section of the community—leaders, opinion makers and especially community members affected by the issues and new policy options—coalitions can provide a variety of perspectives that generate better ideas about how to proceed.

Good reasons exist to work for policy or systems change:

- It provides one road to permanent social change.
- The process can start community dialogue about the issues in question.
- It can change minds, attitudes and norms. Once an issue is addressed in a particular way, new policies become part of the community and can lead to long-term change.
- Changed policies affect the next generation. When are the best times to try to change policy?
- When something important is at stake, either for policymakers (e.g., an election) or the community (e.g., the looming passage of a disastrous law or regulation);
- When the issue has reached a crisis point;

Guidelines for changing policies

- **Preparation** includes doing the necessary research and becoming expert on existing policies.
- **Personal contact** with policy makers, other change agents and anyone else with whom you must deal.
- **Pulse of the community** involves knowing the community's attitudes, what citizens will accept, where to start to be successful.
- **Positivism** in framing policy changes and their outcomes.
- **Participation** by including those affected by or concerned with the issue in planning and implementing policy change.
- **Publicity** for your effort in general and for your suggested policy changes—and the reasons for them—in particular.
- **Persistence** in monitoring and evaluating your actions, and keeping at it for as long as necessary.

Source: *Community Tool Box*

⁴ Adapted from Community Tool Box. See section “Organizing for Effective Advocacy” at http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/tools_toc.htm

- When the issue is already under discussion, especially for the first time;
- When public opinion/support benefits your cause; and/or
- When new information or media coverage brings attention to the issue.

A word to nonprofits about advocacy and the law

Not surprisingly, seeking to change the environment where alcohol and other drug abuse problems occur often involves advocating for legislation to change or create public policy. It is critically important to understand and abide by the rules that govern allowable behavior related to advocating public policy. However, advocates—your coalition partners, and especially nonprofit organizations—should not be intimidated by these rules.

Advocacy can be one of the most effective public health strategies. Not using this strategy because of fear based on lack of understanding of the law could unnecessarily restrict your effectiveness as a community change agent.

Knowledge is power! Public health advocates working in nonprofit organizations can use this strategy effectively and legally by learning about the laws that govern advocacy for nonprofits. (See CADCA's *Strategizer #31, Guidelines for Advocacy: Changing Policies and Laws to Create Safer Environments for Youth*.) Remember, many forms of advocacy do not constitute lobbying as defined by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). (See chart on page 23.)

What advocacy is...and isn't

Advocacy is...

- One of many possible strategies or ways to approach a problem;
- Active promotion of a cause or principle;
- A process involving actions that lead to a selected goal;
- An approach to use as part of a community initiative, along with other components.

Advocacy is not...

- Direct service to individuals and
- Does not necessarily involve confrontation, conflict or lobbying.

For example, several years ago the federal government required that all states lower the

legal blood alcohol level to 0.08 or lose federal highway funding. As a result, one of your state legislators (who also is a champion of your coalition) has introduced legislation to lower the legal blood alcohol level to 0.08. This legislation has been defeated before with opponents convincing lawmakers that it will crowd county jails, cripple liquor sales and bankrupt local governments. Coalition partners support the legislation and are allowed to legally advocate on its behalf without jeopardizing their nonprofit status. However, keep in mind that lobbying on *behalf of the legislator's re-election (called electioneering)* is prohibited for nonprofit organizations.

Examples of activities that are not lobbying

- **Meeting** with a legislator to talk about a social problem, without mentioning a specific legislative proposal.
- **Providing** a legislator with educational materials about a specific piece of legislation, without calling for specific action on the legislation.
- **Responding** to a request from a legislative committee or subcommittee for information about a specific piece of legislation.
- **Publishing and distributing** a newsletter to your own membership providing information about a specific piece of legislation, your organization's position on the legislation and the names of legislators who support and oppose the legislation, but not a specific call to action (e.g., a request to call or write to legislators).
- **Tracking** activities of legislators including votes, positions taken, contributions accepted, etc.
- **Producing and disseminating** research reports or studies that provide nonpartisan analysis on policy issues, including specific legislative issues.
- **Talking** to the media about specific legislative proposals.
- **Advocating** for better enforcement of existing laws, e.g., those that control alcohol sales to minors.
- **Advocating** the enactment and enforcement of private or voluntary policies, e.g., alcohol purchase restrictions in stadiums.
- **Conducting** public education campaigns to affect the opinions of the general public, e.g., a mass media educational campaign about the importance of not providing alcohol to minors.

CADCA's Strategizer #31, *Guidelines for Advocacy: Changing Policies and Laws to Create Safer Environments for Youth.*

Lobbying with government money?

Lobbying is the practice of trying to persuade legislators to propose, pass or defeat legislation or to change existing laws.

Nonprofit organizations need to keep an account of their lobbying activities for IRS reporting purposes but any entity that receives federal funds needs to be aware of separate restrictions on that money. A provision of the U.S. Code known as the Byrd Amendment prohibits the use of federal funds to lobby. Any matching money that the organization raises to obtain federal funding comes under the same prohibition as the federal money itself. This prohibition was enacted under the theory that federal money should not be used to lobby Congress in an attempt to ensure a steady stream of federal money.

The prohibition on lobbying activities under the Byrd Amendment is simpler—and broader—than the reporting requirements under IRS regulations for nonprofits. Quite simply, no one can engage in any direct or grassroots lobbying with federal money. Organizations that accept federal money can lobby with other funds, but they cannot use government funds to lobby at any level of government.

Enforcement

All the hard work you put into getting a good strong policy passed can become wasted energy if the policy is not enforced. Many factors contribute to enforcement problems for new or existing policies. For example, the agency charged with oversight may lack the resources to investigate or pursue violations, may not know about violations or may be pressured by powerful interests to overlook violations.

If your coalition has been involved in passing a new policy, you already know which governmental body, agency or other organization you need to work with to ensure the policy is enforced and violations are addressed. Ideally, the entity charged with enforcement not only was involved in getting the policy passed and fully supports the new policy, but has been working closely with the coalition to create an enforcement plan.

If, on the other hand, your coalition wants enforcement of an existing policy, then you first need to identify the entity responsible for enforcing that law or regulation. Laws are not always enforced at the level at which they were passed—some federal laws are enforced at the state level, or state laws at the local level. Until you do the research, it may not be clear which agency has jurisdiction, or why the policy is not being enforced.

Getting policies enforced

- **Learn** about the law or regulation that is not being enforced.
- **Get** background information about how the issue is affecting the community.
- **Become** familiar with the structure and operation of the violator as well as of the regulatory body.
- **Identify** specific individuals in the violating and regulatory organizations with whom it would be the most effective to negotiate.
- **Report** the violation or file a formal complaint to the appropriate regulatory body.
- **Apply** public pressure.
- **Take** direct and/or legal action

Remember! As with any advocacy activity, you need to maintain vigilance even after you have achieved your goal to be sure that enforcement continues.

CHAPTER 4. SUSTAINING CHANGE

The implementation of strategies designed to achieve population-level reductions in substance abuse may require changing systems, consequences, incentives or environments. Research shows that some types of environmental approaches, such as policy changes may take a substantial period of time. For that reason, your coalition needs to be concerned about being in existence long enough to achieve its goals. A community that is motivated and mobilized to bring about major change may become demoralized if the catalyst for that change—the coalition—disappears half-way through the process.

Despite the fact that many funders require grantees to address how they will sustain themselves once the funding runs out, many coalitions do not begin to think about sustainability until the grant nears its end.

All DFC grantees are strongly encouraged to develop a funding plan to solicit substantial financial support from non-federal sources to ensure that their coalition will be self-sustaining when federal assistance is no longer available. Grantees in their third and seventh years of funding are required to submit a written sustainability plan to their project officer.

A long-range perspective

It is never too early to think about how your coalition will broaden its impact and continue its work. The Institute's *Planning Primer* suggests that coalitions begin to work on sustainability during initial planning, as you develop a strategic plan. Your coalition should be working on how to institutionalize and financially sustain its work at least by the time you begin to implement activities, even though you will be busy getting your initiative off the ground. When you begin sustainability planning, form a workgroup of staff and coalition partners. Getting key stakeholders involved from the beginning can inspire them to become champions and fight to sustain the activities of the coalition.

Throughout the life of your coalition, continue building bench strength:

- **Build a strong board.** Select board members who can advance the work of the coalition. The coalition should clarify members' roles and responsibilities, agree on a decision making process, and devise a method for resolving conflict. Building a strong board also means providing members with ongoing training in response to changing circumstances.
- **Hold productive meetings.** Hold meetings that are respectful people's time. Start and end on time, and be sure that you schedule meetings at the convenience of your members rather than coalition staff.
- **Attract influential people.** Recruit people with the capacity to make change. Create a "buzz" that your coalition is the group that generates positive community change.
- **Strategize effective use of existing AOD resources.** Seek out schools, local service clubs, and other groups that address community improvement. Try to recruit representatives from these groups and work on ways they can devote at least some of their resources to the coalition's goals and objectives.
- **Increase the coalition's influence through partnerships.** When coalition partners pool resources to work on specific projects, it can increase the capacities of all partners to obtain more resources than they might get individually.
- **Mobilize and train residents and young people.** Seeking participation from the community means taking some extra steps so that they function as contributing members of the coalition and have the same information and skills as service providers and other professionals who are coalition members. Providing training opportunities to community members can help to level the playing field in areas such as policy development, using the media, advocacy, and public speaking.
- **Increase diversity.** If you are working toward community-level change, ensure that all segments of the community are represented in your coalition. This includes gender, age, race, ethnicity and political affiliation.

Institutionalization

Institutionalizing your work is a long-term process that requires finding ways to make the policies, practices and procedures you have established successfully become rooted in the community.

Many good reasons exist for your coalition to begin to plan to institutionalize its work early on. Such a process will:

- **Give** you the time you need to solve the problem(s) you have identified. It is unlikely that many of the large problems you will be tackling can be resolved in one or two years. Often a full solution may not occur for quite some time and you will want to be around to see it through.
- **Help** you figure out how to get from having an initiative with little structure and an uncertain future to a well-respected and reliable initiative with the structure and legitimacy it needs to keep it going for many years.
- **Help** you focus on the steps necessary to achieve an initiative that has lasting impact.

Planning ahead for ways to keep your coalition alive is more cost-effective than starting a new program or starting your initiative over again.

Financial sustainability

Planning for financial stability is intricately linked to institutionalizing successful initiatives and other work your coalition accomplishes. This process involves figuring out strategies and action steps for your coalition to obtain and grow the resources—both money and other types of community support—it needs to continue. Additional resources may include finding in-kind support, recruiting and sustaining a volunteer staff, obtaining commitments for shared resources from other organizations or persuading another organization to take on a project begun by your coalition.

Many resources exist in the local community and funders often allow or require coalitions to elicit or leverage local support through matching strategies. Since cash resources can be difficult to obtain in economically distressed neighborhoods, outside

grants provide the money that, when combined with local physical, human and creative resources, can enable a strong community response to tackle substance abuse problems.

Before getting started, think as broadly as you can about what you really need and want in terms of financial stability. Just because you received a grant for \$150,000 does not automatically mean you need to continue this level of funding for the next year. Should your coalition continue to work on certain strategies or should you try to get another agency to take on that work? Think about developing objectives, strategies and action steps for the short term (6-12 months) as well as the long term (5 or 6 years from now) to get and keep the resources you need.

While it may be unrealistic for many under-resourced coalitions to tackle the issue of financial sustainability early on, you want to develop concrete plans even if you can not take it on initially or in its entirety. What follows are fund development guidelines and issues for coalitions to consider when thinking about pursuing additional sources of financial support.

Notes of caution when pursuing funds:

- **Be strategic** in how you spend the coalition's limited resources writing grants, e.g., check how many grants will be given and the track record of your grant writer.
- **Research** the competitiveness of your application before you decide to pay a grant writer. Check it out with experienced grant writers in your coalition and from outside.
- **Get help**—There are many local, state and federal resources available to help you. Learn more about the kinds of funding options available to you.
- **Do not “chase” dollars**—go after funding that is appropriate.
- **Avoid** becoming overly dependent on one or two sources of grant support.

Remember, most funders do not solely fund need. They look for opportunities to make a difference.

Local, regional and state resources exist. Links to a variety of funding resources can be found on the CADCA Web site, www.cadca.org.

CONCLUSION

This primer covers four major themes related to implementing communitywide strategies to reduce substance abuse: The basics, community mobilization, using environmental strategies to maximize efforts and sustaining major activities. The first section outlines core concepts and describes how to get started, implement and monitor your coalition's plan and identify obstacles or facilitators you might encounter along the way. At this phase, your coalition should stop and ensure that your partners understand your coalition's aims, the strategies you plan to employ and the concise contributions they will provide. Coalition members should concur with the selected aims and strategies and understand how the activities being carried out in the name of the coalition will lead to the desired outcomes.

The next sections describe community mobilization and environmental prevention strategies, concepts that often intersect. Coalitions that truly seek population-level changes in their communities find that they require broad-based support to change policies, systems or practices. They perceive the need to leave their comfort zone of administering prevention programs and engage in organizing and mobilizing communities. They may seek to improve problem environments, enact legislation or change the consequences of certain practices. Coalitions that successfully affect these types of environmental changes are more effective if they embrace the core elements of cultural competence and reach out, incorporate and empower diverse segments of the community.

This primer concludes with sustaining your effort. The implementation of strategies to bring about significant community change rarely occurs in a short time frame. As coalitions build capacity to bring about these types of change, they must be cognizant of the need to generate resources to sustain their strategies, not simply the expense of operating a coalition. Truncated activities certainly will not achieve the goals of the coalition and potentially demoralize community members who perceive that “nothing can be done” to bring about genuine systematic change.

A word about words

As noted at the beginning of this primer, there are a number of terms that sometimes are used interchangeably. Often, the difference depends on who is funding your efforts or the field from which you come. The following chart highlights terms that often are used to describe the same or similar concept.

A word about words			
Assess	Plan/Implement	Evaluate	
“The problem is... But why? But why here?”			
What you want	What you do to get there	Are you getting there?	Did you get there?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim • Goal • Objective • Target 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity • Approach • Initiative • Input • Method • Policy • Practice • Program • Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmark • Indicator • Intermediate Outcome • Input/Output • Measure • Milestone • Short-term Outcome • Output 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact • Outcome • Results
<p>←----- Build Capacity -----→</p> <p>←----- Sustain the Work -----→</p> <p>←----- Increase Cultural Competence -----→</p>			

GLOSSARY

Action plan. Ensures that all coalition members are involved in carrying out the work of the coalition with sufficient support and appropriate accountability.

Activity. Something you plan and implement to conduct your program.

Advocacy. Strategies devised, actions taken and solutions proposed to influence decision-making at the local and state level to create positive change for people and their environment.

Aim. A clearly directed intent or purpose, an anticipated outcome intended or that guides planned actions, the goal intended to be attained.

Approach. The method used in dealing with or accomplishing: a logical approach to the problem.

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

Community assessment. A comprehensive description of your target community (however your coalition defines community). The assessment process is a systematic gathering and analysis of data about your community.

Community-level change. An adjustment that occurs within the target population in your target area.

Community mobilization. The act of engaging all sectors of a targeted population in a comprehensive, participatory prevention effort.

Cultural competence. 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.

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.

Framework. 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 youth."

Indicator. A measure that helps quantify the achievement of a result, outcome or goal.

Initiative. A fresh approach to something; a new way of dealing with a problem, a new attempt to achieve a goal or solve a problem, or a new method for doing this.

Input. Organizational units, people, funds, or other resources actually devoted to the particular program or activity.

Lobbying. The practice of trying to persuade legislators to propose, pass, or defeat legislation or to change existing laws.

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.

Methodology. The means and logical procedure by which a program plan or approach is implemented.

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.

Policy. A governing principle pertaining to goals, objectives, and/or activities. It is a decision on an issue not resolved on the basis of facts and logic only. For example, the policy of expediting drug cases in the courts might be adopted as a basis for reducing the average number of days from arraignment to disposition.

Program. Any activity, project, function, or policy with an identifiable purpose or set of objectives.

Results. The consequences and outcomes of a process or an assessment. They may be tangible such as products or scores, or intangible such as new understandings or changes in behavior.

Strategic plans. Policies, strategies, and practices that create a logical, data-driven plan to address the problems identified in the assessment element of the SPF.

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.



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