

**The National Community Anti-Drug Coalition Institute:
A Formative Evaluation of the Institute's Activities
from
September 2005-October, 2006**

Pennie Foster-Fishman, Ph.D.

Linda White, M.P.H.

Erin Droege

Michigan State University

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Please direct questions concerning this report to Pennie Foster-Fishman, 125 D Psychology Building, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, 48824 or fosterfi@msu.edu.

Executive Summary

This report is a formative assessment of the fourth year of the National Community Anti-Drug Coalition Institute (hereafter called the Institute), spanning the work conducted between October, 2005 – September, 2006. The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the quality and impact of the work conducted during that time. The evaluation was guided by the following questions:

- To what extent did the Institute meet its targeted goals and activities during this time period? Is the Institute on track for meeting its GPRA measures?
- What do key stakeholders and coalitions think of the Institute and its work during this period of time? How can the Institute better meet its customers' needs?
- How effective are the Institute's training and technical assistance efforts?
- How effective are the institute's communication and marketing efforts?
- What lessons can the Institute learn about its work to date and to improve its performance in the future

An evaluation team from Michigan State University conducted this assessment during April, 2007 through July, 2007. Two evaluation methods were employed:

- Secondary analysis of all critical documents, including the Institute's strategic plan, work plan, theory of change and logic models, bi-annual reports, and other relevant documents.
- Semi-structured interviews of key stakeholders (total N = 51) including representatives from key federal partner organizations (N = 4), National Guard representatives (N = 3), state partners (N= 4), and CADCA staff (N=2). Training participants were also interviewed (N = 32) from the National Academy cohorts 1 and 2 (N = 10), Mid-year 2-day Core Competency (N = 7), Advanced Evaluation (N = 7), and Advanced Sustainability trainings (N = 8). In addition, coalition members who registered for the Academy training and did not attend were also consulted (N=6). Within each of these groups lists of possible informants were obtained from the Institute. When possible, coalition interviewees were purposely sampled based on their federal funding status: Drug-Free Communities (N = 20) or non-Drug Free Communities (N = 12). Non-participants were sampled based on their registration in either Academy cohort 1 or cohort 2. Phone interviews lasted approximately 75 minutes.

Key stakeholders including participating coalitions, federal and state partners, CADCA staff, and National Guard representatives noted that **year four was a successful one for the Institute**. Important progress was made in expanding the scale and scope of services, strengthening ties with federal and state partners, and enhancing the quality of training. In addition, the Institute met, if not exceeded, its GPRA measures for this time period. Overall, these successful efforts are helping the Institute make progress towards its aim of improving the effectiveness of coalitions. We summarize below the Institute's key success and challenges in year four.

Key Successes

The primary goal of the Institute is to help coalitions become more effective in reducing the rate of substance abuse within their communities. Towards this end, most of the coalitions reported that Institute training had a significant impact on their coalition's capacity and functioning. According to coalitions, the Institute's training:

Most of the coalitions interviewed for this evaluation reported that the Institute's training had a significant positive impact on their coalition's capacity and functioning

- **Increased the Development and Use of Core Competency Products.** The Institute's training appears to have had a significant impact on a coalition's development or revision of the core products, though the extent of impact varies across the five products. For example, 78% of participating coalitions reported that they either developed or revised their logic model or action plan due to the Institute's training; only 44% said the training led to new community assessments. According to participants, the Institute's training also had a significant impact on how their coalition worked with and valued these products:
- **Increased Coalition Effectiveness.** The majority of participating coalitions felt the training helped them become more effective. Over 89% of all coalitions reported that the trainings made them think more strategically, more comprehensively, and become better decision-makers. As some coalitions described:

We have been able to move coalition members away from their focus on "attacking the present." They now realize we can't just jump in to solve a problem. We will make more of an impact if we have a long-term focus. (Training Participant)

We are now less responsive to knee-jerk reactions and more focused on long term goals. We are better rounded and have more perspective on the issues (Training Participant)

- **Improved Internal Coalition Functioning.** Some participants also described how the training has led to improvements in the operational structure and processes of their coalitions. For example, as a result of the training, some coalitions created subcommittee structures and reorganized their meeting processes to make their collaborative efforts more effective.

Partner reactions

Overall, the federal, state and other partners are pleased with the Institute's efforts in 2005/2006 and noted several accomplishments, including the adoption of the SPF as the framework to train and support coalition development:

I think the Institute has developed the right curriculum and the right tools that coalitions need to really advance their ability to create community change and achieve outcomes. (Federal Partner)

In addition, they noted other key successes in 2005/2006 that include:

- A stronger organizational infrastructure including greater goal clarity, strong leadership, capable staff, and excellent trainers
- Improved training curriculum and modules.
- A stronger communications platform, including new publications and an improved website.
- A stronger evaluation unit and tracking processes
- Stronger partnerships with federal agencies and with more states.

One new impact was noted by partners this year: they noted that **the Institute is playing an important role at the federal and state levels**, fostering collaboration across federal agencies and capacity at the state and federal levels to support coalition efforts.

Finally, most partners reported that the Institute is well on its way to achieving its aim – promoting more effective coalitions.

Challenges faced by the Institute and Recommendations

Coalitions and partners identified several issues the Institute could address to further its aim of promoting more effective coalitions.

Increase Impact of Training

While most training participants enjoyed the Institute's trainings and found the content useful, some reported that they were not as helpful as they desired or needed. As we reported in previous years, one of the main challenges the Institute faces is the extensive variability across the coalitions who participate in training. Novice coalitions sometimes find the trainings too overwhelming; more advanced coalitions sometimes find them too general. Certainly, it appears that in 2005/2006 the Institute made some important adjustments in its curriculum and training approach to address these concerns, such as adding the Advanced Trainings to its course schedule. Coalitions and Partners identified several additional strategies the Institute could employ to further enhance the impact of its trainings:

- **Offer more customized training**, that provides more in-depth coverage of issues relevant to specific groups of coalitions.

Coalitions and Partners recommended that the Institute:

- **Customize its curriculum to increase its impact**
- **Expand its reach to nontraditional audiences**
- **Enhance its marketing efforts**
- **Diversify its funding**
- **Provide more follow-up and support to training participants**
- **Increase its research and evaluation**

- **Provide more intentional, small group learning sessions within trainings** that serve to cluster coalitions with similar concerns or developmental needs.
- **Provide follow-up or refresher courses** that help coalitions apply and sustain the capacities they develop.
- **Offer guidance on how to transfer and sustain capacities developed during the training.** Some interviewees described how they did not fully understand how to share and transfer the knowledge and skills they gained to their coalition.

Increase the Scale and Scope of Services

Partners and participants agreed that in order for the Institute to reach the desired scale and scope, the Institute needs to expand beyond its current training repertoire and develop new trainings, reach new audiences, use more technology, and more effectively market itself. In particular, partners noted that the Institute needs to:

- **Increase current customer's awareness of the services and supports available.** Many of the coalitions we interviewed were not aware of the range of resources available through the Institute.
- **Target different audiences and sectors,** including other prevention-focused organizations/agencies, more states and municipalities, and universities.
- **Offer a broader and more stratified training curriculum,** that includes more courses that are specific to a coalition's state of development (e.g., beginning, advanced) and more offerings specific to prevention, sustainability, and evaluation, among other topics.
- **Revamp the website to make it more accessible and begin to offer courses over the Internet.**

Diversify the Funding Base.

Federal Partners reported strong concerns about the limited diversity in the Institute's current funding base. Many feel that it is imperative that the Institute procure funding outside of the current federal sources.

Bolster "Front end and Back end" Communication and Support around the Trainings.

Partners and participants noted that the coalitions would take more advantage of the Institute, and get more from the training, if better communication about and support around the training were provided. Specifically, they recommended that the Institute.

- **Provide more advanced advertisement around the trainings.**
- **Offer more detailed information about each training in mailings and on the internet.**
- **Provide expanded follow-up support and services to participating coalitions.** Some Partners reported with concern that coalitions are not able to fully use the information they learn from the training because the Institute provides little to no follow-up support. Training participants noted a similar concern. Participants and Partners both suggested that the Institute use technology to provide this support to a broad base of participating coalitions (e.g., list serves, group e-mail communications, on-line refresher courses).

Continue to Clarify the Institute's Identity Vis-à-Vis CADCA

According to some Partners, the Institute still struggles with an identity crisis and this confusion continues to interfere with the Institute's ability to effectively communicate its own messages to coalitions, effectively communicate with Federal Partners/Congress, and market itself.

More Effectively Collaborate with Partners.

Several Partners noted that the Institute needs to become a better partner with their agency. Some felt that the Institute did not communicate effectively, and this hindered their collaboration. Others felt that the Institute partnered with their organization for more instrumental purposes than for real collaborative pursuits.

Increase the Emphasis on Research and Evaluation.

Many Partners noted that the Evaluation and Research arm of the Institute needs to be strengthened significantly. Some were concerned that without more attention to research and evaluation – both for themselves and the coalitions - the Institute puts itself at risk. Specifically, Partners wanted to see the Institute assess the outcomes of their training and conduct research on coalitions.

In conclusion, the Institute was charged with reaching an impressive set of objectives in 2004/2005. Building on its success and lessons learned in previous years, the Institute made important strides in refining its training curriculum and approach and establishing itself as a premier coalition training institute.

This report is organized into the following sections:

Section 1: To what extent did the Institute meet the targeted goals and activities during this time period?

Section 2: What do key stakeholders (including CADCA staff, partners, and participating coalitions) think of the Institute and its work during this period of time?

Section 3: To what extent are the Institute's training and technical assistance enhancing coalition effectiveness?

Section 4: What do Participants think about the Institute's Training Approach and Training Content?

Section 5: What do Participants think about the Institute's Technical Assistance Efforts?

Section 6: To what extent are the Institute's communication resources and materials being used by coalitions?

Section 7: What lessons can the Institute learn about its work to date and to improve its performance in the future?

SECTION 1: To What Extent did the Institute Meet its Targeted Goals and Activities During 2005/2006?

The National Community Anti-Drug Coalition Institute's (Institute) mission is to increase the knowledge, capacity and accountability of community anti-drug coalitions throughout the nation. Its goal is to increase the percentage of effective coalitions.

Working toward this mission in 2005-2006, the Institute trained coalitions across the country to use the Strategic Prevention Framework, with a large portion of the work consisting of providing training and assistance to SAMHSA and ONDCP for the drug-free communities grant program.

What Did the Institute Accomplish in 2005/2006?

Similar to 2004/2005, most stakeholders agreed that the Institute largely accomplished what it set out to do in Year 4.

Absolutely – and more! In addition to have great training and TA, they are now helping to establish the policies, practices, and processes that can help others – like feds and states – support the work of community coalitions. (Federal Partner)

Overall, they have gone beyond their original purpose. They have become a major player with federal agencies. (CADCA)

According to Federal and State Partners, National Guard members, and Institute training participants, in 2005/2006 the Institute:

- **Provided excellent trainings**

The Institute has provided a training platform for coalitions to receive training. I think that it has been a great benefit. It has provided ongoing and consistent training on the SPF process. (Federal Partner)

I have not seen a person leave a training who didn't say: 'This [training] has opened up doors' ...Even the most well-rounded coalitions are able to become better coalitions. (State Partner)

- **More effectively aligned their training with the work of the federal partners, particularly the SPF framework.**

In 2005/2006 the Institute achieved what it set out to do, including

- **Providing excellent trainings,**
- **Becoming more aligned with its federal partners,**
- **Improved its communication products,**
- **Expanding its state partnerships.**

Within the last year they've strengthened the trainings around CSAP's SPF process. Trainings are now working with the same language and aligning the processes that CSAP employed. That has been helpful to the grantees. (Federal Partner)

- **Improved the quality and dissemination of communication products.**

They got a lot of publications out around the SPF. (Federal Partner)

- **Linked State Partners to Institute work.** In 2005/2006 the Institute strived to bring their training expertise to states in an effort to facilitate the building of essential prevention infrastructures. One state partner noted:

The Institute provided the foundation we needed to carry coalitions forward. (State Partner)

- **Continued to be a good partner.** Many of the Federal and State Partners, and the National Guard members, noted that the Institute continues to build positive collaborative relationships with their organizations. Examples include increasing relationships with state coalitions and their partnership with the National Guard that began in 2003 and continues to grow and thrive.

The benefits we've gleaned from that organization [the Institute] has changed the way we're doing business. They have been a significant impact on how our coalitions operate, which then creates more sustainability because the community recognizes them because their methods seem more effective. So, they've changed our history. (State Partner)

In addition, our assessment of what activities were promised and which ones were accomplished further suggest that 2005/2006 was a productive year. Of the 177 planned activities for 2005-2006, 166 (94%) were accomplished.

The Institute did a lot during this period. They worked to enhance their Academy training. They began to put together a National Youth Leadership Initiative. Their publications and primers have been significant efforts and have been very well received. (Federal Partner)

**The Institute
accomplished
94% of its
planned activities
in 2005/2006.**

In general, coalitions were also positive about the Institute's accomplishments during this time. Many found the trainings useful and enjoyed their interactions with the Institute staff. **Most reported that the trainings increased the effectiveness of their coalitions – and many State and Federal Partners concurred with this assessment.** See Sections 3 and 4 for more details on the training and its impact on the coalitions.

What Progress Did the Institute Make in Pursuing its Logic Model and Theory of Change in 2005/2006?

The Institute's Theory of Change is: **When a community coalition implements the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF), it is more likely to decrease rates of substance abuse over time.** Below we describe the Institute's three core strategies that comprise its logic model and highlight the key activities and successes within each during 2005/2006.

Strategy 1:

Increasing the quantity and quality of SPF coalition development training for community coalitions

During 2005-2006, the Institute expended significant effort increasing both the quantity and quality of training and technical assistance provided to coalitions. Given the mission and goal of the Institute, the majority of its effort was focused on designing and delivering trainings in a variety of venues across the United States.

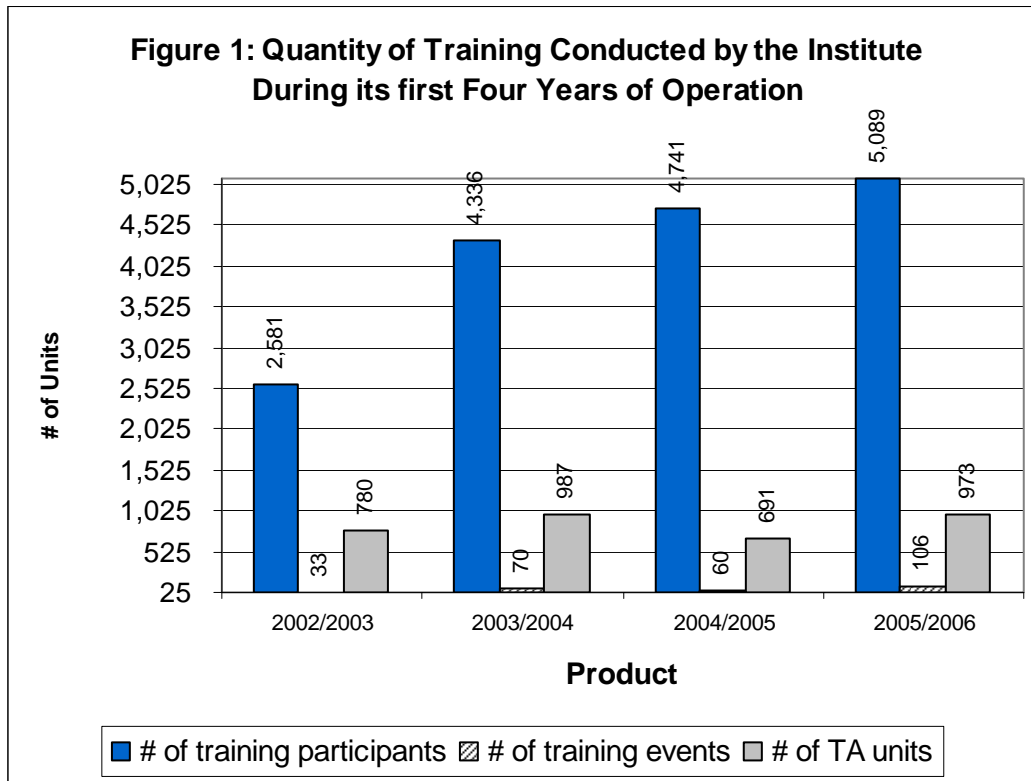
Evidence of Increasing Quantity of Trainings

As Figure 1 illustrates, in 2005/2006 the Institute continued its trend of significantly increasing its quantity of training. Overall, the Institute provided training to 5,089 coalition members (a 7% increase over the number of members trained in 2004-2005) across 106 formal trainings (a 76% increase in the number of training events from the previous year) in 2005/2006.

The Institute trained more coalitions across more training events in 2005/2006 than in previous years.

These training events reflected an expanded array of training formats and training tools. For example, three new Advanced training classes were launched during this period. The Institute also scheduled 90 minutes of personal coaching at the mid-year trainings to allow coalitions (especially those experiencing challenges) to have one-to-one assistance from an experienced coalition Leader/Mentor or an Institute staff person.

The Greenhouse Program of 2002-2003 was expanded into the National Coalition Academy (Academy) and was the major training accomplishment for the year ending September, 2006. As of September 30, 2006, a pilot class of 20 coalitions had completed the year-long class and five additional cohorts (69 coalitions, totaling 130 participants) were completed or underway. All of these trainings are supported by the National Guard Bureau (NGB) at their facilities, a partnership that was forged in 2003.



Other highlights of the training activities include:

- Institute staff translated all materials for the basic class into Spanish and delivered the class in San Diego completely in Spanish. **61 coalition members and participants from Latin America and the United States attended that training.**
- In April 2006, a series of four audio conferences commenced for DFC grantees. **There were 192 participants.**
- **15 COMET trainings were held and were attended by 391 coalition members.**
- **Over 260 participants attended two regional trainings.**
- **4 DFC new applicant workshops provided training for 437 coalition members; 476 individuals attended the new grantee workshop.**
- Two "train the trainers" (TOT) classes were completed by October, 2005. **About 50 trainers have advanced through the certification process.**
- **Institute staff provided 973 units of technical assistance to coalitions on a variety of topics.** This is slightly lower than the 1000 units of technical assistance projected as the targeted goal.

Evidence of Increasing Quality of Trainings

I think the Institute has developed the right curriculum and the right tools that coalitions need to really advance their ability to create community change and achieve those outcomes. (Federal Partner)

The Institute keeps evolving and doing things better. I think they are on the right track. I see the momentum. I see the energy when I go to these events and when I'm part of these trainings. It's very palpable. (Federal Partner)

In 2005/2006 the Institute continued to revamp and improve its training curriculum to meet the training and technical assistance needs of coalitions and partner organizations. During this period, the Institute:

- **Revised its training to align with the SPF Framework.** In 2005, SAMHSA asked the Institute to adopt the SPF as the framework to train and support coalition development. In the last year, the Institute made great strides in improving the SPF (core competency) trainings for coalitions. The Institute has trained and certified a battery of trainers to deliver the curriculum. A two day, four day (boot camp) and year long Academy training series now consists of a complete set of training and evaluation materials.
- **Created three SPF Primers, targeting Evaluation, Assessment, and Capacity.** – These primers are available as a booklet and on the Institute's web page. The Evaluation Primer has been translated into Spanish.
- **Provided personal coaching at the Mid Year Institute** – To meet the unique needs of individual coalitions, the Institute offered 90 minutes of personal coaching with an experienced coalition Leader/Mentor or an Institute staff person at the Mid-Year. A total of 49 coalition leaders took advantage of this opportunity.
- **Developed additional Institute Web Products** – PowerPoints, work sheets and instructions for coalitions on the topics of sustainability, assessment, evaluation and capacity development were created and posted on the web to help coalitions develop their SPF products.
- **Created new position of Technical Assistance Manager.** Due to an increasing demand for in-office technical assistance, plans were put into place to create the position of Technical Assistance manager. This position was filled in fall, 2006.
- **Continued its partnership with the National Guard.** The partnership with the National Guard continued to expand in 2005/2006. All Academy trainings in 2005-2006 were hosted and facilitated at National Guard sites. The National Guard also provides substantial financial support to help defer participant costs for the training.
- **Began the National Coalition Youth Initiative.** In 2006, Institute staff formulated a new training initiative to assist coalitions with enhancing their ability to involve young people in coalition work as full partners. A four day class was piloted at the Mid Year Institute with a group of young people and adult advisors.
- **Continued to improve the Academy.** The Institute made significant revisions to the Academy training based upon feedback from the participants in the pilot session and from ongoing feedback received from each cohort.

Overall, it appears that the increased quality and quantity of training is having an important impact on coalitions: In 2005/2006 **a higher percentage of coalitions (than in previous years) reported developing the SPF core competencies as a result of the Institute's training.** More coalitions are developing/revising and using core competency products and as a result they are thinking and acting differently – more strategically; more comprehensively; making better choices. It appears that the Institute is making consistent progress toward achieving its goal **of increasing the percent of effective coalitions.** (See Section 3 for more discussion of the impact of Institute training.)

Coalitions report that they are becoming more effective as a result of the Institute's training.

Strategy 2:

Improve coalitions' ability to identify and adopt tools, mechanisms and measures to evaluate the creation and implementation of the SPF.

Strategy two addresses the Institute's efforts to increase coalitions' ability to identify and adopt instruments that would assist with evaluating their implementation of the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF). The Institute addresses this strategy by distributing information to coalitions about how to evaluate the creation of the SPF. In 2005/2006 the Institute:

- **Produced and Distributed an Evaluation Primer.** Coalitions and partners described this primer as very helpful.
- **Launched a course on Advanced Evaluation for coalitions and an Audio Conference** for DFC Grantees on Strategies for Effective Local Evaluations for coalitions..
- **Selected and showcased effective coalitions.** Experienced coalitions that demonstrated positive outcomes in the four areas selected by ONDCP were selected and readied to “showcase” their success at reducing rates of substance abuse. In May of 2006, a new Got Outcomes competition commenced for the 2006-2007 year.

Strategy 3:

Adopt and disseminate practical information about evidence-based policies, practices and programs and assist coalitions with their selection and implementation.

The activities within strategy two support the goals of strategy three as well. In 2005/2006, the dissemination of information was facilitated with the development of the following:

- **Launched a Spanish Language Web Page** – In November, the Institute unveiled a Spanish language area of the web page. Institute staff members continue to translate relevant English language portions of the Institute web page into Spanish.
- **Provided Four Audio Conferences for DFC Grantees** that covered such topics as: the DFC National Cross Site Evaluation; Social Marketing; The Difference between a Coalition and a Program; and Strategies for Effective Local Evaluations.
- **Created three SPF Primers, as described above..**

What Else Did the Institute Accomplish in 2005-2006?

Our informants identified other important goals and activities that were accomplished during this period but were not directly linked to the three core strategies. These additional accomplishments include:

- **The continued development of a strong Institute staff team** The Institute filled the position of Deputy Director of Evaluation and Research which had been vacant for a year. A new position of Technical Assistance Manager was created and filled in fall, 2006.
- **Supported the transition of the DFC Program to SAMHSA/CSAP** by helping with training for new Project Officers and making modifications in the Institute's data collection and reporting systems.
- **Enhanced coordination with Federal Partners and worked** with SAMHSA/CSAP and ONDCP to streamline efforts for DFC grantees. For example, the three entities worked closely together to plan for the Mid Year Training Institute. Grantees were encouraged by their Project Officers to attend specific classes. CSAP and the Institute worked together to increase the number of DFC grantees referred by Project Officers for technical assistance.

What Progress is the Institute Making Towards Its GPRA Measures?

Overall, Partners and CADCA staff report that **the Institute is making good progress towards its GRPA measures** and, by all accounts, should achieve - if not exceed - what is expected according to these outcomes (See Figure 2). We summarize below the accomplishments in 2005/2006 on these measures.

Measure 1: To Increase the percentage of DFC coalitions who received training or technical assistance from the Institute.

In 2005/2006 the Institute exceeded its expected GRPA measures in the two areas where baseline was previously established.

- **What the data show.** 356 of the 718 Drug-free community coalitions received training from the Institute in 2005/2006 (**50% of the DFC coalitions**). This is a significant improvement over the previous year, where only 36% of DFC coalitions received training from the Institute.

Measure 2: To Increase the percentage of coalitions who received training from the Coalition Institute that represent economically disadvantaged communities.

- **What the data show.** For the past two years, the Institute has continued to increase the percentage of economically disadvantaged coalitions that receive training. During baseline year of 2002-2003, the Institute trained and assisted 89 coalitions or potential coalitions in economically depressed communities. During 2004-2005, the target was 12% higher (i.e. 98 coalitions) which it significantly surpassed, training **155 (a 74% increase over baseline)**. During this reporting year, the target was 15% higher than baseline (i.e. 102 coalitions). Again, the Institute significantly surpassed this goal, training **226 coalitions from economically disadvantaged coalitions (a 154% increase over baseline)**.

Measure 3: To increase the percentage of coalitions who attend Coalition Institute Academy Trainings who develop at least four or more of the seven key products

- **What the data show.** Fifty-eight coalitions attended Academy training in 2005/2006. Nine of those coalitions have completed 4 or more of the core products. This represents **16% of the participating coalitions**. Of the Academy participants we interviewed this year, several reported that they had not completed the homework assignments required to graduate from the Academy due to **time constraints and staff turnover**. However, these coalitions also felt that what they learned from training was in itself valuable. As one interviewee described:

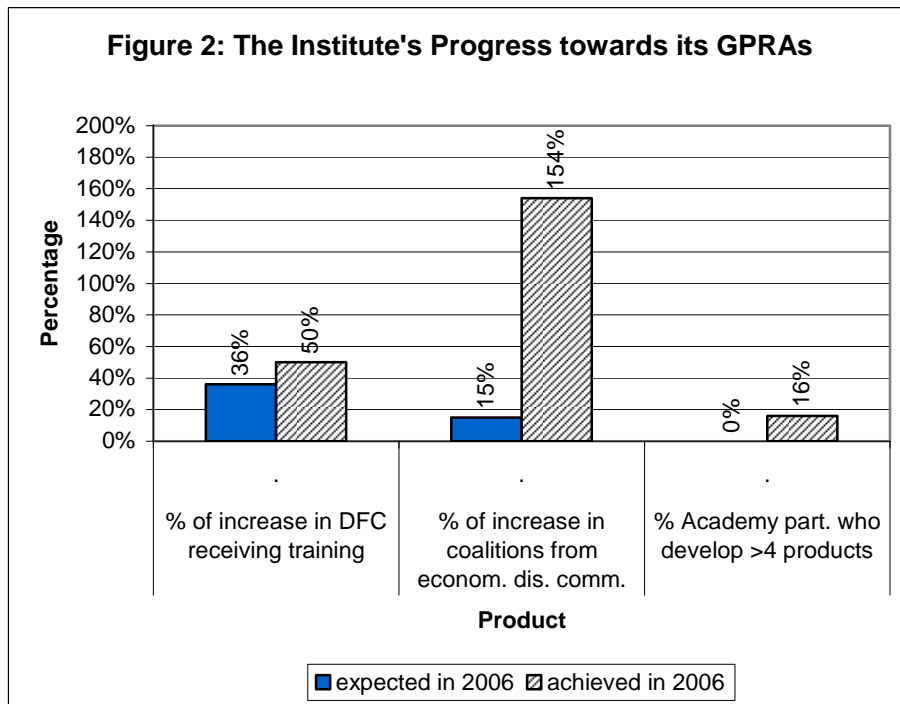
We did not actually graduate from the coalition academy because we didn't get all of our products done in time [and] posted...to me [it] doesn't matter that we didn't graduate because we still gained the skills from that experience.

Measure 4: To increase the percent of coalitions who graduate from the Coalition Institute Academy who exhibit greater movement in the four core measures of the DFC Program as compared to coalitions of comparable classification who do not complete the Coalition Institute Academy.

It should be noted that the Institute is currently not being held accountable for this measure. This fourth proposed GPRA measure will not be finalized until the DFC classification tool is calibrated.

- **What the data show.** Overall, partners felt that the Academy participants were more effective. One partner noted:

Coalitions are using products. Yes, and we are seeing a difference. They haven't tried to scientifically measure it, but will be doing it within the coming year. The coalitions who have created products they have been taught and are using the products are moving forward faster than coalitions who have not. (Federal Partner)



Notes: Expected score for measure one based upon baseline measure. Expected score for measure two based upon the assumption that the percentage will grow by 15% each year. 2006 is baseline year for measure 3. Measure 4 is not yet established so no data is available.

SECTION 2: What do Key Stakeholders and Training Participants Think of the Institute and its Work During 2005/2006?

I think they are on the right track. I see the momentum. I see the energy when I go to these events and when I'm part of these trainings. It's very palpable. (Federal Partner)

I think for the opportunity that the training is offering you, the commitment they are asking is nothing...they're giving you so much more than what I ever thought I could pull from there...they are giving you as an opportunity to excel. (Training Participant)

I know what I'm doing now, I didn't have a clue. I hadn't had a lot of coalition experience until then.... Without the Institute I probably would have had a nervous breakdown. (Training Participant)

How Do Stakeholders Grade the Work of the Institute During 2005/2006?

When asked to grade the work of the Institute during 2005/2006, stakeholders gave an **average grade of B+** (same as last year; see Figure 3). Federal Partners gave ratings identical to last year's scores – evenly split between an “A” and “B”. State Partners and National Guard Staff were a bit more mixed in their reviews (with one of these partners assigning the Institute a “C-”). Participants' ratings both improved – in that none gave the Institute a grade below a “B” this year, and somewhat declined – in that fewer participants than last year gave the Institute an “A”. To better understand these findings, we compared participants' rating across the trainings included in this study (See Figure 4). We should note that these ratings should be interpreted with caution, given the small number of participants that was interviewed from each training.

As Figure 4 illustrates, **the Academy participants provided the lowest grade overall.** In general, some participants described this training as overwhelming and were disappointed in the lack of follow-up that was provided (See more discussion of the Academy training in Section 4). It is also important to note that the **participants' experiences with the Core Competency (CC) training have improved greatly since last year.** In 2004/2005, only 49% of the CC participants gave the Institute a grade of an “A”; in 2005/2006, 71% of the CC participants assigned the Institute an “A”. Overall, it appears that Core Competency participants were more likely to think that they got out of the training what they wanted in 2005/2006 than in previous years.

Figure 3: Distribution of Grades Assigned to the Institute in 2005/2006 by Different Stakeholders (N = 45)

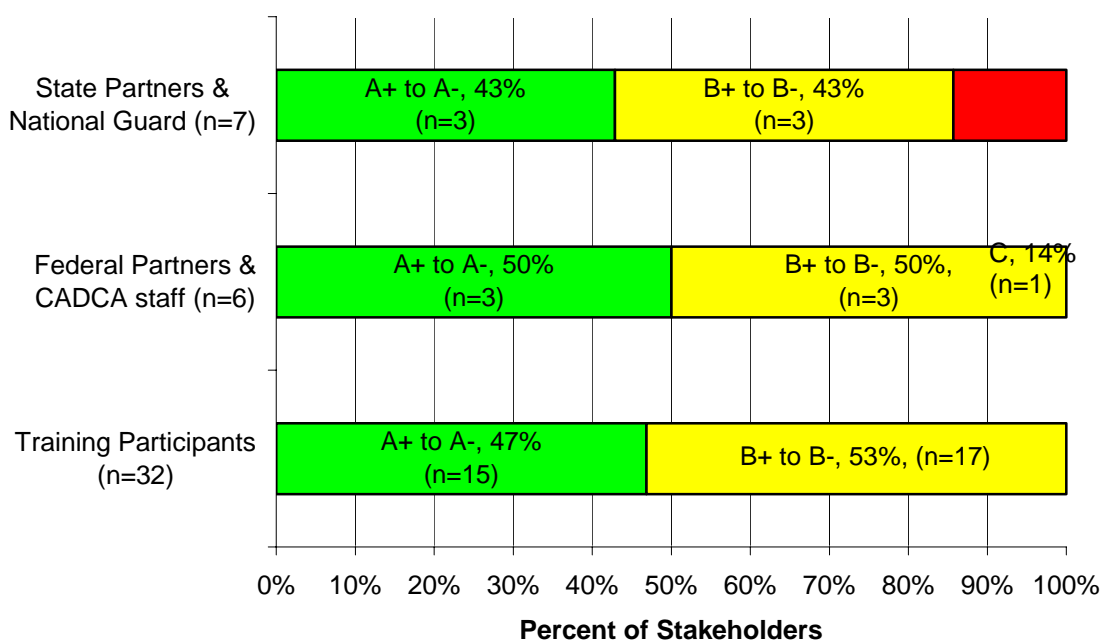
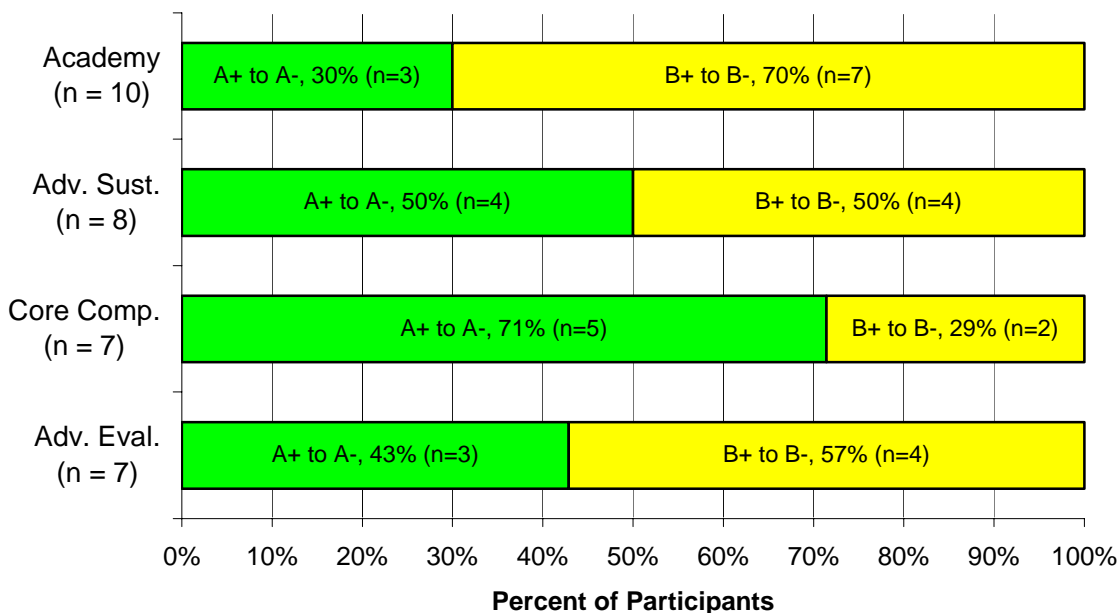


Figure 4: Distribution of Grades Assigned to the Institute Across Different Trainings, 2005/2006



Note: Adv. Eval. = Advanced Evaluation; Core Comp. = Core Competency; Adv. Sust. = Advanced Sustainability; and Academy = Academy training

Participants volunteered a variety of suggestions on what the Institute could do to improve its grade. While participants seem very pleased with the trainings themselves, they are **less satisfied with the communication, support, follow-up, and technical assistance they receive from the Institute outside of the trainings**. Some participants wanted more **consistent and timely communication and support from the Institute** following their training to facilitate the transfer and sustainability of the new knowledge and skills.

Participants want the Institute to improve its communication processes and provide more support and follow-up for its trainings.

Communication was very often last minute, real often inconsistent. We asked questions or requested information that was very specific to some needs that we had and sometimes we got a timely response. Other times it was very delayed and others it was, we never did get a response...I didn't ever think that the requests were intentionally disregarded but the inconsistency was frustrating. (Academy participant)

Others wanted **more information dissemination and more timely information** from the Institute, so they could become more familiar with the resources and trainings provided. Many wanted more **consistent and thorough technical assistance services**.

Meanwhile, while most of the Partners (Federal, State, National Guard, and CADCA) are generally pleased with the quality of training the Institute provides, they noted several concerns about the Institute's efforts, **such as the limited marketing and research efforts and the over-reliance on the existing set of curricula**. These findings are discussed in more detail below.

What Are the Current Strengths and Potentials of the Institute?

In 2005/2006, the Institute continued to improve both its organizational operations and the quality of the training that it provided. According to some Partners, these efforts are helping the Institute become **"the premier training center in the country"**. One Federal Partner captured a sentiment shared by many of the Partners about the capacities of the Institute during this period:

The Institute keeps evolving and doing things better. I think they are on the right track. (Federal Partner)

It is interesting to note that many of the Institute's Partners listed similar areas of strength for this time period. Many of these strengths mirror what we have heard in previous years. They are described in more detail in the attached table. :

Partners reported that the Institute is becoming one of the best training centers in the country: building a strong organizational infrastructure, effective collaborative relationships, and excellent training.

Table 1: Current Strengths of the Institute

<p>Strong Organizational Characteristics</p>	<p>Effective Processes and Strategies</p>	<p>An Excellent Training Approach</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledgeable staff and excellent trainers <i>They have a strong staff who are productive, competent and caring. (Federal Partner)</i> <i>In training, staff really makes a difference. They've [Institute trainers] got stories to tell. They can really bring the training to life and the training kind of takes a life of its own. It provides meaning to the attendees beyond the core elements that they do ... The staff is really skilled. (Federal Partner)</i> <i>They have a good core of trainers and facilitators who are very good. Their trainers are very representative of the country. (Federal Partner)</i> <i>The senior staff at the Institute is exceptional. (CADCA)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger relationships with multiple partners <i>They [the Institute] are practicing the ideal. Everyone works together and collaborates. Communication is good. Jane is very proactive. (Federal Partner)</i> <i>Really a good working relationship; really successful. (National Guard member)</i> <i>They have a core value of aligning themselves with their federal partners. (Federal Partner)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong consumer-based approach <i>They do have a really strong grasp of what coalitions need. (Federal Partner)</i> <i>They really try to work through the needs of the coalition. They really get to the heart of the matter, and also coalition members that received those services feel acknowledged and respected. (State Partner)</i>

<p style="text-align: center;">Strong Organizational Characteristics</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Effective Processes and Strategies</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">An Excellent Training Approach</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong leadership <p><i>They manage themselves quite well. They have great leadership. (CADCA)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained a flexible, continuous learning orientation <p><i>They keep evolving and are open to change. They are willing to change as the field changes and are moving more towards environmental policy – away from programming. I think that openness is very good. They are not a rigid organization. (Federal Partner)</i></p> <p><i>They take this very sophisticated strategy and present it in a way that gets everyone in the room excited about it. People get enthused...they get involved in making their coalitions better because of the training. (Federal Partner)</i></p> <p><i>They bring a needed asset to the whole fight against drugs...they offer a holistic approach, not just law enforcement. (National Guard member)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective Training <p><i>The Institute has produced a curriculum that helps people stop and think about what they are doing and why. It helps people to organize their hearts and their minds. (Federal Partner)</i></p> <p><i>Their trainings have been well received and valued in our state. Because of the training of prevention workers in our state, we are able to serve the needs of the state. (State Partner)</i></p> <p><i>Our partnership [with the Institute] is strong because of the emphasis on the training. CADCA training has proven to be the backbone of what the state has accomplished. (State Partner)</i></p> <p><i>I have not seen a person leave here without saying: 'This [training] has opened up doors.' (National Guard member)</i></p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Strong Organizational Characteristics</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Effective Processes and Strategies</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">An Excellent Training Approach</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater goal clarity <p><i>The strategic planning efforts they pursued really helped to establish a direction. (CADCA)</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training represents best-practices. <p><i>Training is evidence-based and therefore effective. They have the training that is recommended. The training is based upon research, trials. (State Partner)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger communication department and products. <p><i>The Institute rolled out a lot of their publications during this period. These are great. (Federal Partner)</i></p> <p><i>They have revamped the website to make it more user-friendly and translated some of their information into Spanish. (Federal Partner)</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training is now aligned with the SPF Framework. <p><i>They've strengthened the trainings around CSAP's SPF process. Trainings are now using the same language and aligning the processes that CSAP employed. That has been helpful to our grantees. (Federal Partner)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger Evaluation Unit and Tracking Processes <p><i>The evaluation is starting to show the Institute's merit and value. The information we get is good. (Federal Partner)</i></p>		

Positive Impacts on Partner Organizations

According to the Partners, the Institute's collaborative approach and training efforts are also having a positive and lasting impact on their organizations. Specifically, Partners described how the Institute has fostered:

- **More collaboration across Federal agencies.**

Federal partners are working together more because of the Institute's efforts. (Federal Partner)

- **Enhanced capacity at the Federal level to support coalition efforts.**

In addition to having great training and TA, they are now helping to establish the policies, practices, and processes that can help others – like feds and states – support the work of community coalitions. They have become a major player with federal agencies. (CADCA)

Program officers are now better able to support their coalitions. (Federal Partner)

- **Stronger State capacity to support coalition efforts.**

The benefits we've gleaned from the Institute have changed the way we're doing business [in our state]. They have made a significant impact on how our coalitions operate, which then creates more sustainability because the community recognizes them because their methods seem to more effective. So, they've changed our history. (State Partner)

We would not be where we are going if we had not had this partnership with CADCA. The Institute provided the foundation we needed to carry the coalitions forward. (State Partner)

What are the Institute's Greatest Challenges? What Needs to be Improved?

In addition to the Institute's strengths, we also asked Partners and participants to identify key challenges that the Institute faces and areas that need to be improved. These recommendations are described in more detail below.

Recommendation: The Institute Needs to Increase its Reach

Partners agreed that the Institute is at a critical juncture in its development - To reach the desired scale and scope, the

The Institute is also enhancing Partner organizations, promoting:

- **Collaboration across federal agencies**
- **Capacity at the state and federal levels to support coalition efforts.**

Stakeholders recommended that the Institute:

- **Expand its reach**
- **Diversify its funding**
- **Provide more follow-up to training**
- **Clarify its identity**
- **Conduct more research**

Institute needs to expand beyond its current training repertoire and develop new trainings, reach new audiences, use more technology, and more effectively market itself. Overall, Partners and participants recommended that the Institute:

- 1. Expand Marketing Efforts.** Partners and participants reported that because marketing efforts, to date, have been inadequate, there is significant confusion and lack of awareness around what resources the Institute offers and whether or not these are free to non-CADCA members.

Interviewees noted that a more innovative approach to reaching communities is needed. They identified several issues that need to be addressed in an expanded marketing effort:

- Help current and future “*customers and partners fully understand your capabilities*” (Federal Partner). For example 27% of the coalitions we interviewed were not familiar with the Academy.
- Help coalitions understand how a CADCA membership does and does not influence what resources are available and free. Some coalitions reported that they stopped using the Institute’s resources when they terminated their CADCA membership (assuming, erroneously, that at that point their free access to the Institute had ended).

They are missing people who are not members of CADCA. There is a problem with branding. People don’t understand that they can access the Institute’s resources for free because they think you have to be a member of CADCA to use the Institute.” (Federal Partner)

- 2. Target Other Audiences.** Several Partners felt that it was essential for the Institute to begin to market its training to different audiences and sectors, both to increase the likelihood of reaching scale and scope and as a way to develop an income stream. Partners identified several untapped audiences that would be eager for the Institute’s coalition building and prevention training including:

- **States and municipalities.** Partners identified directions for expanding partnerships at this level, including:
 - Developing trainings that help **state level staff and administrators** develop a prevention orientation and support the coalitions in their states.

The Institute needs to build more capacity to work with state directors and state drug czars - this is the highest priority. The Institute needs to do a better job of working with states to convince them that they need to work with the Institute for training and building a critical prevention infrastructure. (State Partner)

- Contracting with **more states**.

The Institute has not done a great job of getting training contracts with states. They've done some, but not enough. If they got more state contracts, that would be a whole cost center. The Institute is competing with the CAPS to get state training grants. They could set up and market whole state-wide training systems, but that has not been done. (Federal Partner)

- **Prevention organizations and other federal agencies targeting prevention.**

They could identify other fed partners that have other prevention programs and the fed partners could utilize the Institute's services. They could provide other TA to grantees with other programs – including foundations. (Federal Partner)

- **Academic institutions.**
- **Additional states and more extensive relationships with each state.**
- **Other types of coalitions** that are not in the substance abuse area.

- 3. Expand Training Content and Approach.** There was strong agreement across the Partners and participants that the Institute needs to offer a more diverse and flexible training curriculum that meets the evolving needs of coalitions. Some felt that the current training is becoming “stale” and that the current market is saturated with this approach. Ultimately, there is concern that the scale and scope of Institute activity will stagnate unless an expanded curriculum is developed. Partners and participants suggested the Institute develop:

- **More stratified training, including training at the beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels.**

The trainings are not as diverse as they need to be. The need to stratify the trainings – beginning, intermediate, advanced trainings – to meet the needs of coalitions. They need to deepen the concepts – offering a more advanced track. (Federal Partner)

[We] would like more advanced topic trainings... want the Institute to provide us with trainings on more advanced topics. (State Partner)

- **More frequent training, including offering the Mid-Year twice a year (to replace the Forum).**

They need to offer training that can cover the various coalitions and their needs. They need to figure out how to begin to scale up their services on an ongoing basis so coalitions can access the information at the level they need, when they need it – not just a couple times a year. (Federal Partner)

They are not getting creative enough about finding ways to get to scale. They spend a lot of resources to get good information to not enough people. I need

them to bring, fresh, innovative and scientific ideas to coalitions. (Federal Partner)

- **A different set of courses, including more courses on sustainability, evaluation, and prevention.** Some Partners noted that the Institute should survey coalitions to better understand their training needs.

Because of the time they've been doing their work, they are a little stale. They've been doing the same trainings, and they have not really changed them. They need to change and improve them to bring in a new group of attendees and keep the attendees they have. They have reached a point where they are doing things and 60% of the people have heard it before. It is not landing on fresh ears any more. (Federal Partner)

They need to provide a more diverse training portfolio. (National Guard)

Their training needs to be refreshed. (State Partner)

Coalitions don't really understand prevention. The Institute could offer courses in this area. (Federal Partner)

- **Refresher courses.** Some Partners and participants thought it would help coalitions sustain their core competencies if the Institute developed and marketed a set of “refresher courses.”

I have often thought: 'I wish I could do it again' or that they could offer something that is a complimentary to that course without the beginning phases. (Training Participant)

- **Improve strategies for fostering knowledge transfer.** Conducting follow-up with participants as they attempt to translate what they have learned into the practices and processes of their coalitions could support knowledge transfer. It appears that a lack of communication between the Institute and the coalitions post-training may serve to reduce the effectiveness of the Institute as a resource.

My excitement and my energy about this has kind of dissipated even since those days of the CADCA Midyear a year ago. If there's any way for us to do some kind of follow up afterwards...how do we make sure when we do training that we come up with ways of keeping the energy and the excitement going. I would say that's definitely a problem of the trainings we attend. (Training Participant)

4. Enhance Technology Use. Similar to previous years, Partners felt that the Institute needed to improve its use of technology. This includes:

- **Revamp the website to make it more accessible.**

They can continue to make their stuff more accessible, especially the website. The website has become cluttered and monstrous. They need to redesign the website. (Federal Partner)

Their web presence needs to be improved. The resources they offer on the web need to be easier to access, have more of a presence, and be more integrated into their website (CADCA)

- **Provide state-level teleconferences**

Don't provide more video conferences – those were poorly done. State specific teleconferences would be helpful. There is too large of a community difference between Wyoming and New York City. (State Partner)

- **Offer courses over the Internet.** Some Partners and participants noted that Internet course development is a cost-effective technique for reaching a broader audience.

5. Attend more to the different coalition capacity levels present within a training.

Partners and participants both noted that the Institute's training would have more impact if they created, within trainings, more mini-sessions specific to different coalition needs and levels (e.g., small groups organized around developmental stage, type of community, or target population).

They need to figure out how to assess and triage the coalition attendees that come to the trainings. (Federal Partner)

Recommendation: The Institute Needs to Diversify its Funding.

Federal Partners reported strong concerns about the limited diversity in the Institute's current funding base. Many feel that is it imperative that the Institute procure funding outside of the current federal sources.

The government has proscribed what it will pay for, but if the Institute wants to do anything else, they can't because the government won't pay for it. If they want to grow and do other things, they need to get different funding. Being wholly reliant on one funding scheme is risky. (Federal Partner)

The funding aspect...limits what they can do. (Federal Partner)

Recommendation: The Institute Needs to Bolster "Front end and Back end" Communication and Support around the Trainings.

Partners and participants noted that the coalitions would take more advantage of the Institute, and get more from the training, if better communication about and support around the training were provided. Specifically, they recommended that the Institute.

- 1. Provide more advanced advertisement around the trainings.** Partners and participants both reported that they could participate in more trainings if they were provided with a training schedule, in advance; some noted they needed it one year in advance. They recommended that the Institute post this schedule on their website. As one participant described:

A faith-based session was presented but NOT Advertised...Let us know on the Website the content of the training...There was a booklet at the training ...but nothing on-line. (Training Participant)

- 2. Offer more detailed information about each training.** Some Partners and participants noted that the Institute provided too few details about the trainings. Consequently, some participants felt like they chose the wrong session; others felt like they would have selected an additional training if they had known what it covered and what existing knowledge and skills were needed to take full advantage of the training.

I didn't really understand or know what I was going into or what the training was... I didn't know what it was all about until I actually went there. (Training participant)

Some participants felt that they could have taken steps to become better prepared for the training if they had known the full training content in advance. Partners and participants alike wanted, in advance:

- 1) The full content covered in training;
- 2) Guidelines on how to assess if the training is right for a coalition; and
- 3) A list of steps to take or information to bring to the training to get the most out of the experience.

- 3. Provide expanded follow-up support and services to participating coalitions.** Some Partners reported with concern that coalitions are not able to fully use the information they learn from the training because the Institute provides little to no follow-up support. Training participants noted a similar concern. Participants and Partners both suggested that the Institute use technology to provide this support to a broad base of participating coalitions (e.g., list serves, group e-mail communications, on-line refresher courses).
- 4. Revamp the Website to provide more timely and on-going communication with Partners and Coalitions.** Some Partners reported that the Institute's communication efforts need to be enhanced and that the website was an effective tool for reaching a broader audience.

Their dissemination could be improved. They need to get beyond their typical comfort zone to find new and creative ways to get their information out. They need to use more technology to get their message out. (Federal Partner)

Recommendation: The Institute Needs to Continue to Clarify its Identity Vis-à-Vis CADCA

According to some Partners, the Institute still struggles with an identity crisis and this confusion continues to interfere with the Institute's ability to:

- Effectively communicate its own messages to coalitions;
- Effectively communicate with Federal Partners/Congress; and
- Market itself:

Coalitions don't know the difference between CADCA and the Institute. When people attend the Mid-year training, they are not sure if they are attending a CADCA function or an Institute function... the DFC program is now an \$80 million program that has an Institute attached to it, but no one knows about it so they get confused about it. It makes the Institute a big target. (Federal Partner)

Branding and marketing is a challenge for them. They have a hard time marketing themselves as the Institute while being a part of CADCA. (Federal Partner)

Their image, kind of as a stand alone, that might help...because a lot of things are imbedded in CADCA, people are not clear which one is the Institute. People are confused about the perimeters which leads it [the Institute] to be attacked. Maybe they need to clarify and separate things a little more. (Federal Partner)

Some Partners felt that this continued confusion around the Institute's identity has impeded the Institute's ability to create a real plan for its future. Some felt that such a plan is critical to its sustainability.

I don't think they have a really clear vision of what they want to be when they grow up; where they are trying to get to 3-4 years from now is what I'd like to see them have a clearer vision of. (Federal Partner)

Recommendation: The Institute Needs to More Effectively Collaborate with its Partners.

Several Partners noted that the Institute needs to become a better partner with their agency. Some felt that the Institute did not communicate effectively, and this hindered their collaboration. Others felt that the Institute partnered with their organization for more instrumental purposes than for real collaborative pursuits. A few reported that the Institute's approach and perspective were not fully in line with theirs and this created miscommunication and missed opportunities. Finally, some Partners noted that the logistics surrounding trainings continues to be problematic, creating tensions in their collaborative partnership.

Overall, Partners recommended that the Institute:

- 1. Strive to create a stronger alignment between themselves and their Partners in regards to coalition work and how to serve coalitions.**

The Institute needs to work hard to cooperate with and create a conceptual alignment between the people who run the federal programs and agencies and people who attend these trainings. (Federal Partner)

2. Provide more frequent communication to the Federal Partners, particularly in regards to their TA & training efforts with the coalitions.

They need to have better communications with their federal partners... There needs to be more of a feedback loop between the Institute and the federal partners in how they deal with coalitions. (Federal Partner).

3. Identify and pursue shared goals with all Partners. Some National Guard members felt that the Institute took advantage of their partnership, only using them as “free labor” or support. They wanted the Institute to work better at identifying and pursuing shared goals with them. As one partner said, the Institute needs to remember that *“We work for and with each other. How do we work together to get drugs off the streets?”*

4. Engage Partners more in their efforts.

They need to communicate more with us. They need to involve us more. There are fed partners who are very competent and could provide training at the events. That has not happened. (Federal Partner).

5. Improve the Logistics Surrounding Training Efforts. Similar to last year, several Partners noted that the Institute needs to do a better job of planning and coordinating trainings with their Partners. One National Guard member noted that because the logistics were so disorganized, his site may not collaborate in the future with the Institute. Communication around the planning stages of the trainings also needs to be improved.

The Institute needs to strengthen coordination and quicker replies to communication when in the planning stages of trainings. (Federal Partner)

They need to make sure we are all on the same page regarding what we need to do as hosts to prepare for Academy training. The coordination piece needs to be earlier. (National Guard)

Logistics can be a nightmare. (National Guard)

The Institute has set out a great curriculum, but the execution is not always that great because at times the agenda has been set out perfectly, but if they deviate from the agenda, there is no one who tries to get them back on track. Since evaluation is always last, this means that the evaluation section does not get covered as well as it should. All of the pieces are there, but they need to do a little better job of managing time to make sure all of the pieces are covered. (Federal Partner)

Recommendation: The Institute Needs to Increase its Emphasis on Research and Evaluation.

Many Partners noted that the Evaluation and Research arm of the Institute needs to be strengthened significantly. Some were concerned that without more attention to research and evaluation – both for the Institute and the coalitions - the Institute puts itself at risk. Specifically, Partners highlighted that the Institute needs to:

1. Assess the outcomes of their training.

The Institute has done no research with the collations beyond satisfaction surveys. They need to research the outcomes coalitions are getting instead of just whether or not coalitions enjoyed the training. (Federal Partner)

They need to show that coalitions are more effective. They need to do more outcomes evaluations. (Federal Partner)

Coalition outcomes will and do matter. They need to figure out how to deal with them. The Institute will be held accountable for them. (Federal Partner)

2. Conduct research on coalitions.

They are definitely lacking on the research and evaluation. Their entire research and evaluation arm is designed to evaluate themselves. Their training evaluation forms are designed to look at how they are doing...the research and evaluation should be looking at the work of the coalitions, not internalized. (Federal Partner)

They are trying to give coalitions information and that is backwards. They should spend more time on getting information from the coalitions and only responding to the questions they get. – tailoring time and resources to coalitions when they need it. (Federal Partner)

3. Increase coalition capacity to conduct evaluation and report on the core measures.

They've made a lot of progress. They've really taken the training to scale and scope. They've done a nice evaluation primer. They are doing what they need to do – they are meeting their GPRA measures. The problem is that ultimately the success of the Institute will depend on how well the coalitions are doing. Right now 2/3 of the coalitions don't collect all of the information for their core measures. The Institute will be judged on what the coalitions have done, even though they have no control over that. (Federal Partner)

SECTION 3: To What Extent are the Institute's Training Efforts Creating More Effective Coalitions?

We are now thinking strategically, not just about the quality of programs. We now try to look at the cultural norms and how they affect what is wrong with the community... We now pull in appropriate partners like the health department, law enforcement, anyone working toward the community goal is a partner. [We] now have the power to impact change. (Training Participant)

We now have a plan to follow instead of flying by the seat of our pants. (Training Participants)

CADCA training has tremendous influence on coalitions. (State Partner)

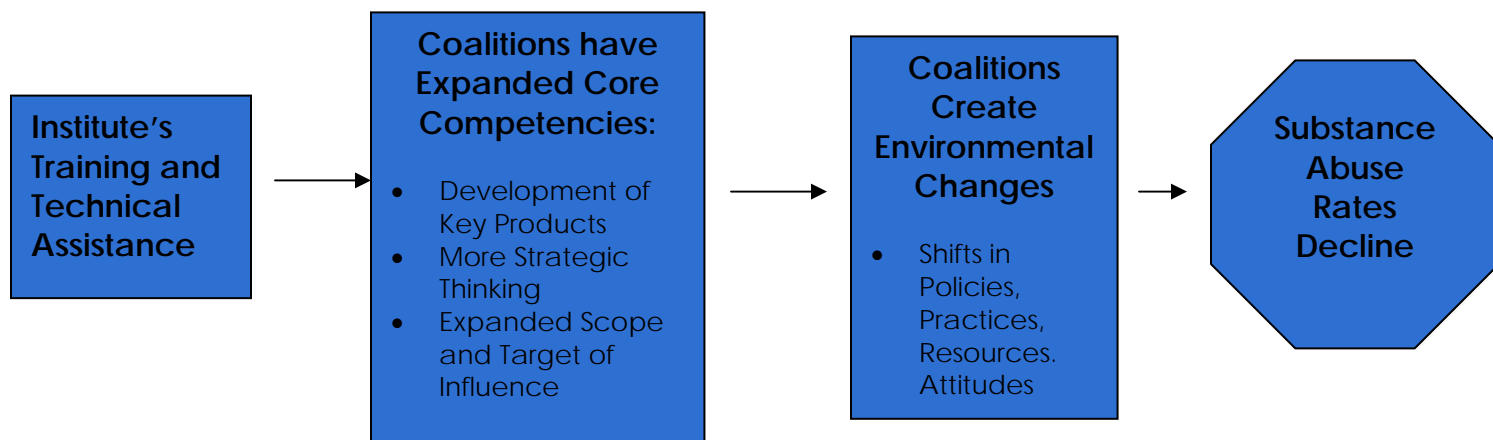
The primary goal of the Institute is to help coalitions become more effective in reducing the rate of substance abuse within their communities. Towards this end, the training and technical assistance efforts are designed to **trigger a process of change within coalitions that includes both immediate and long term impacts**. Figure 5 illustrates this process of change.

As Figure 5 shows, through their participation in the Institute's training and technical assistance efforts, it is expected that coalitions will develop their SPF core competencies (immediate outcome). This includes developing the key products associated with these competencies (e.g., logic model) and transforming their operations by becoming more strategic in their actions and expanding their scope of influence to target environmental level changes. Through this expanded and more strategic approach, it is anticipated that coalitions will begin to make changes in their environment (e.g., policy and practice changes, intermediate outcomes) and will eventually see an impact on the substance abuse rates within their communities (long term impact).

The Institute's trainings are helping to create more effective coalitions by promoting the SPF core competencies and enhancing a coalition's focus on environmental strategies.

The evaluation data we have gathered from coalitions who participated in trainings between October, 2005-September, 2006 and from State and Federal Partners suggests that the Institute's trainings are helping coalitions make progress towards these ends. These findings are described below.

Figure 5: The Process of Change Created by the Institute’s Training



Promoting Core Competencies

A cornerstone of the Institute’s training is helping coalitions develop their SPF core competencies. These core competencies include: a) **the development and use of the SPF core products** (e.g., logic model, community assessment); and b) **the fostering of new ways of thinking and acting**. We examined the impact of the Institute’s training on both of these core competency components and found strong evidence from both Partners and training participants to suggest that the Institute’s training enhances core competencies within coalitions.

Impact on Core Competency Products

Critical to the process of change described above, the Institute’s training is designed to both: a) **foster the development or revision** of the five core competency products within coalitions; and 2) **encourage the use** of these products by coalitions.

The Development/Revision of Core Competency Products

Overall, the Institute’s **training appears to have a significant impact on a coalitions’ development or revision of the core products**. We considered both the development of these products and their revision because coalitions trained by the Institute vary considerably in their stages of development and prior experience with the SFP products. Thus, to measure the full impact of the Institute’s training, we considered whether coalitions had developed or revised their core products as a result of Institute training.

In 2005/2006, the Institute’s Training had a significant impact on the development and revision of the core competency products.

As Figure 6 illustrates, the majority of coalitions either developed or revised the five products as a result of the Institute's training. According to participants, the Institute's training had a significant impact on how their coalition worked with and valued these products:

I guess the way that it went through the logic model, it was very easy. I've seen so many logic models, and the way it was presented at this convention was much more logical and easy to build on. (Training Participant)

You better believe [the logic model was revised from the training]. In fact, we recently applied for a grant. I took the information they wanted and I did a little revision with ours, which took almost no effort, and when they came to the on-site review for the grant, they said 'We just have to tell you, that's the best looking logic model we've seen.' (Training Participant)

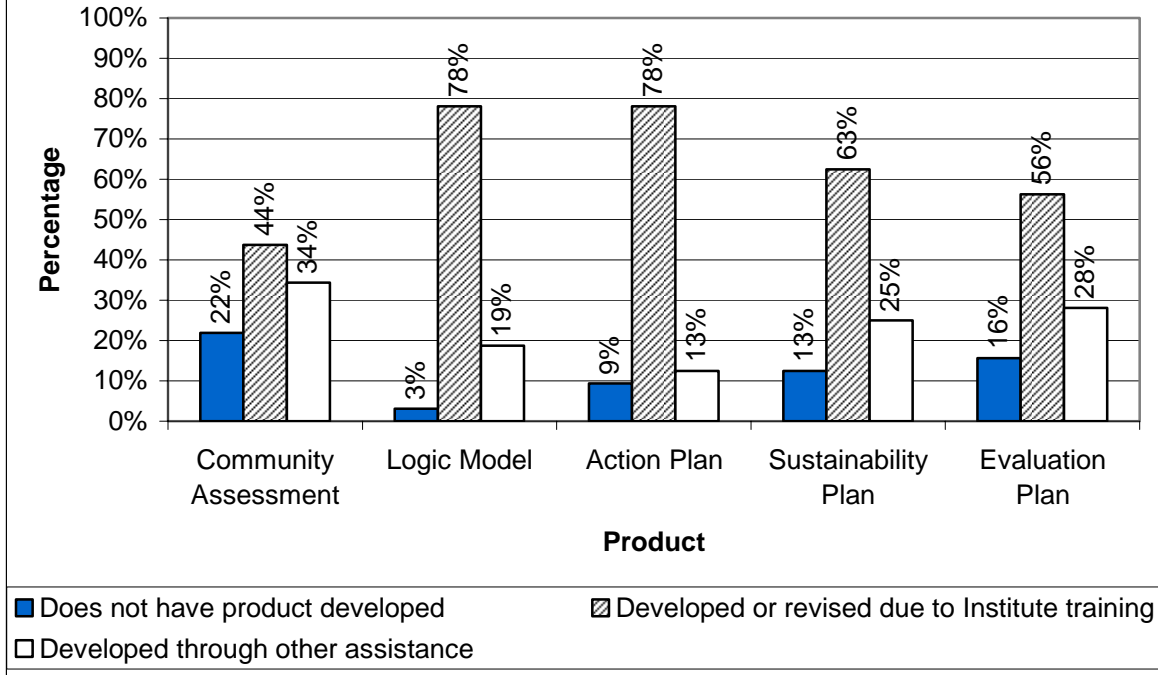
Figure 6 also illustrates that the Institute's training had a **differential impact on the revision and development of the five core products**. Logic models (78% of all coalitions) and action plans (78% of all coalitions) were the most likely to be developed or revised as a result of Institute's training. Community assessments (44% of all coalitions) and evaluation plans (56% of all coalitions) were the least impacted by the trainings. We identified several reasons why the Institute's training may have had less of an impact on the assessments and evaluation plans:

1. **Some coalitions rely on outside sources for these products** (e.g., external evaluators) or report using the evaluation plans and assessments that are completed and shared by other entities.
2. **Some coalitions are not developmentally ready to create these products**, particularly the evaluation or sustainability plans.

[The sustainability plan] is not as good as it should be because coalition members have a difficult time seeing into the future and are really consumed with present circumstances

3. **Some coalitions are satisfied with their current products**, particularly their community assessments, and saw no need to revise them. For these coalitions, Institute training served to "reaffirm that we are doing the right thing."

Figure 6: Percentage of Coalitions that Developed or Revised Core Products in 2005/2006



Better Trainings in 2005/2006

It is important to note that the trainings conducted in 2005/2006 appeared to have a **greater impact on coalitions’ core competencies than in previous years**. Across all of the core competencies products, the rates of development in 2005/2006 far exceeded the impact of the trainings in 2004/2005. For example, in 2005/2006 78% of the participants we interviewed reported developing or revising an action plan as a result of the Institute’s training (as opposed to 56% in the past year).

One explanation for this finding is the potential inflation due to the inclusion of Academy participants in our sample. Part of the Academy training includes direct mentoring around the development of these products and the expectation that they will be completed as part of the homework assignments. To determine if this increase in core product development is solely the result of the Academy influence, we examined the unique impact of each training on the core products.

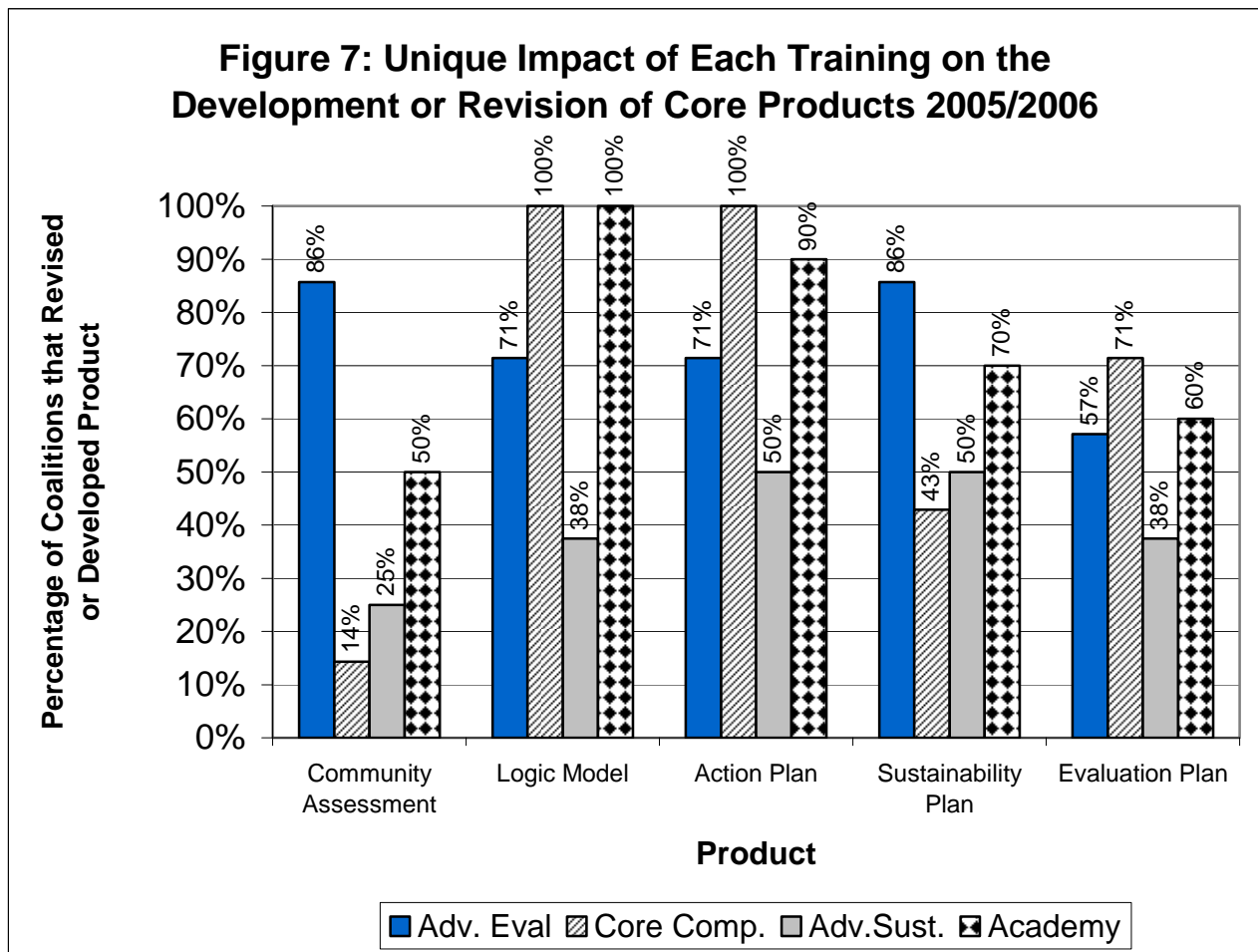
The Institute continues to improve its training. Coalition members reported higher impacts in 2005/2006 than in previous years.

As Figure 7 illustrates, the Academy, alone, does not account for the high impact reported in 2005/2006. **Participants in the Core Competency training also reported significant impacts as the result of the training, and these effects were much higher than those reported in previous years.** A contributing factor to this improvement may be the changes the Institute made to their training processes in 2005/2006. According to the Institute’s leaders, some of the training processes were shifted in the past year to address concerns raised in previous evaluations. Specifically,

trainings were redesigned to help coalitions either revise existing products or create new ones (previous trainings emphasized mostly the latter). This shift seems to have helped the trainings have an impact on a broader group of coalitions.

In addition, more coalitions than last year reported that their sustainability plan was developed or revised due to the Institute’s training. This is most likely due to the addition of the advanced sustainability training and increased emphasis on sustainability across the Institute’s curriculum.

Thus, it appears that in 2005/2006 the Institute’s training provided more opportunities than last year for attendees to either revise or develop many of the core products.



Note: Adv. Eval. = Advanced Evaluation; Core Comp. = Core Competency; Adv. Sust. = Advanced Sustainability; and Academy = Academy training

Impact on DFC Coalitions.

Given the relationship between the Institute and the Drug-Free Communities Coalitions (DFC) program, we also assessed the extent to which the Institute is impacting the effectiveness of DFC coalitions. Towards this end, we created a purposive sample of DFC and non-DFC coalitions from each training targeted in this evaluation and compared their experiences to each other and to previous years. Overall, it appears that **DFC coalitions in 2005/2006 were more likely than in previous years to say that they were developing or revising the core competency products due to the Institute's training.**

DFC coalitions reported more benefits from the Institute's training in 2005/2006 than they did in previous years.

It is also important to note that in 2005/2006, **DFC coalitions appeared to benefit from the trainings as much as non-DFC status coalitions.** (See Figures 8 and 9). This finding is critical, given that non-DFC coalitions reported greater impacts than DFC coalitions in 2004/2005. One potential explanation for this increased impact in 2005/2006 is the shift in Institute training described above. Because DFC coalitions often have many of the core products (often due to funding requirements) prior to participating in a training, they benefit more from a training that helps them revise these current products.

Figure 8: Impact on Core Development of Products for DFC Coalitions (n = 20) 2005/2006

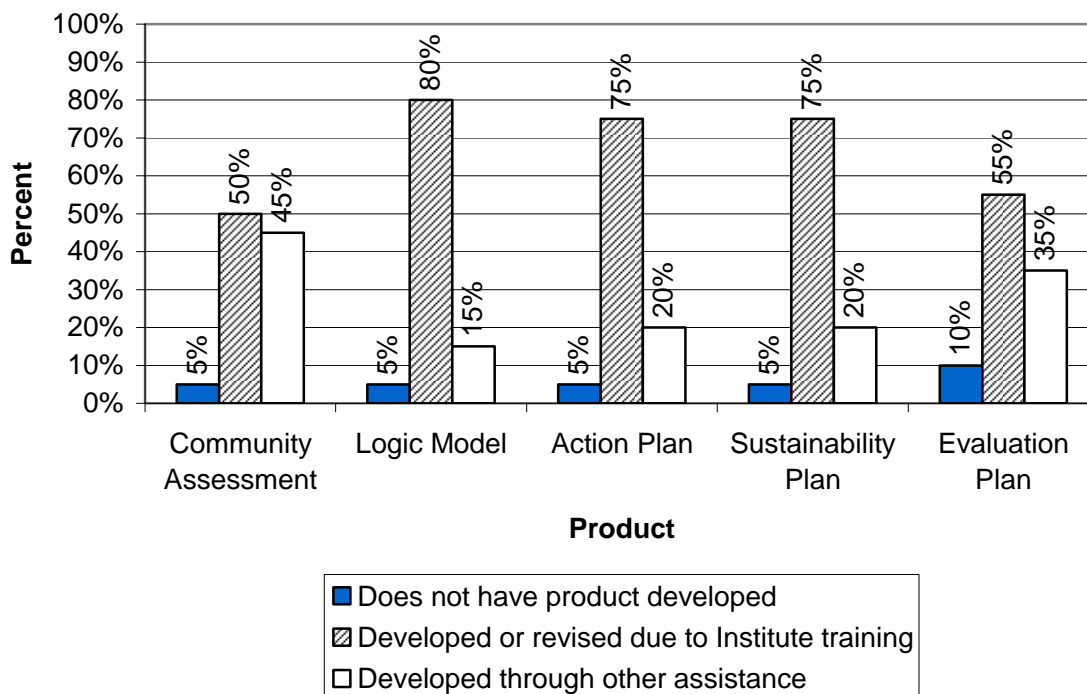
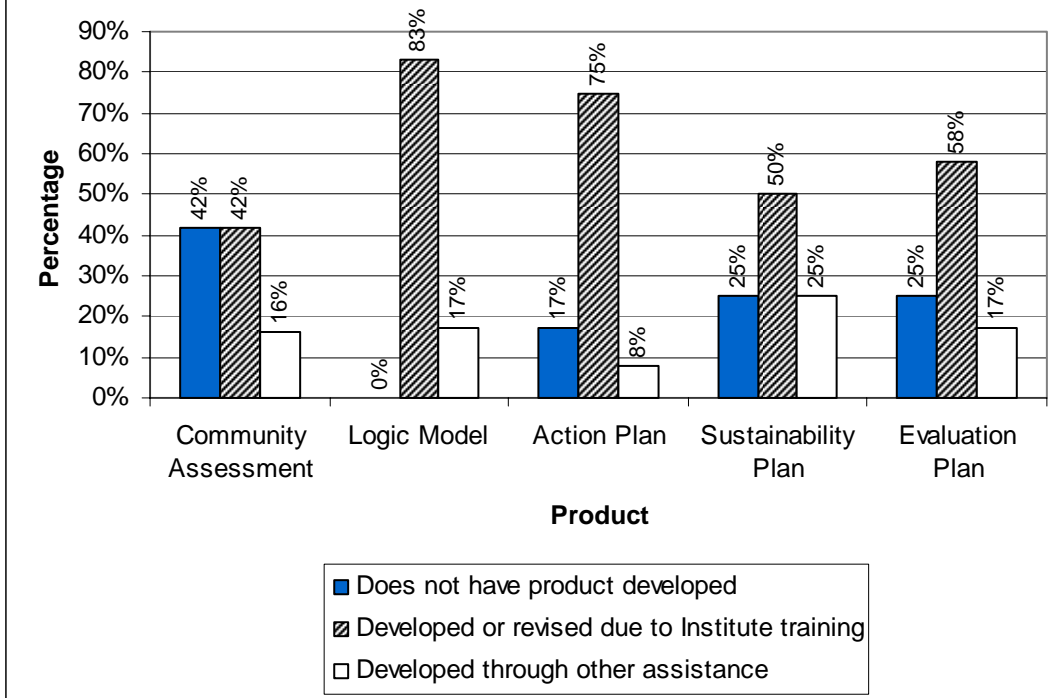


Figure 9: Impact on Core Product Development or Revision in Non-DFC Coalitions (n = 12) 2005/2006



Using the Core Products

The SPF core products promote coalition effectiveness when they guide coalitions’ decision-making and action processes: in other words, coalitions need to use these products for them to have an impact. To assess this use, participants were asked on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being not at all and 5 being all the time) to rate the extent to which the core competency products informed their coalitions’ decision-making and actions.

Overall, it appears that **coalitions use their SPF core products on a regular basis**. Of the participants who had these products in place, 94%, 81%, and 62% stated that the **community assessment plan, logic model, and action plan (respectively) informed their coalition’s decision making process on a regular basis** (either a 4 or a 5 rating). For example, one participant mentioned that the community assessment really drives what the coalition does; another said that their coalition does not do anything unless it is part of the action plan.

Community assessments, logic models, and action plans frequently guide the decisions and actions of coalitions.

In contrast, coalitions were **less likely to use their sustainability and evaluation plans**: only 38% reported often using the sustainability plan and only 43% reported often using the evaluation plan to guide their decision-making. As one participant described:

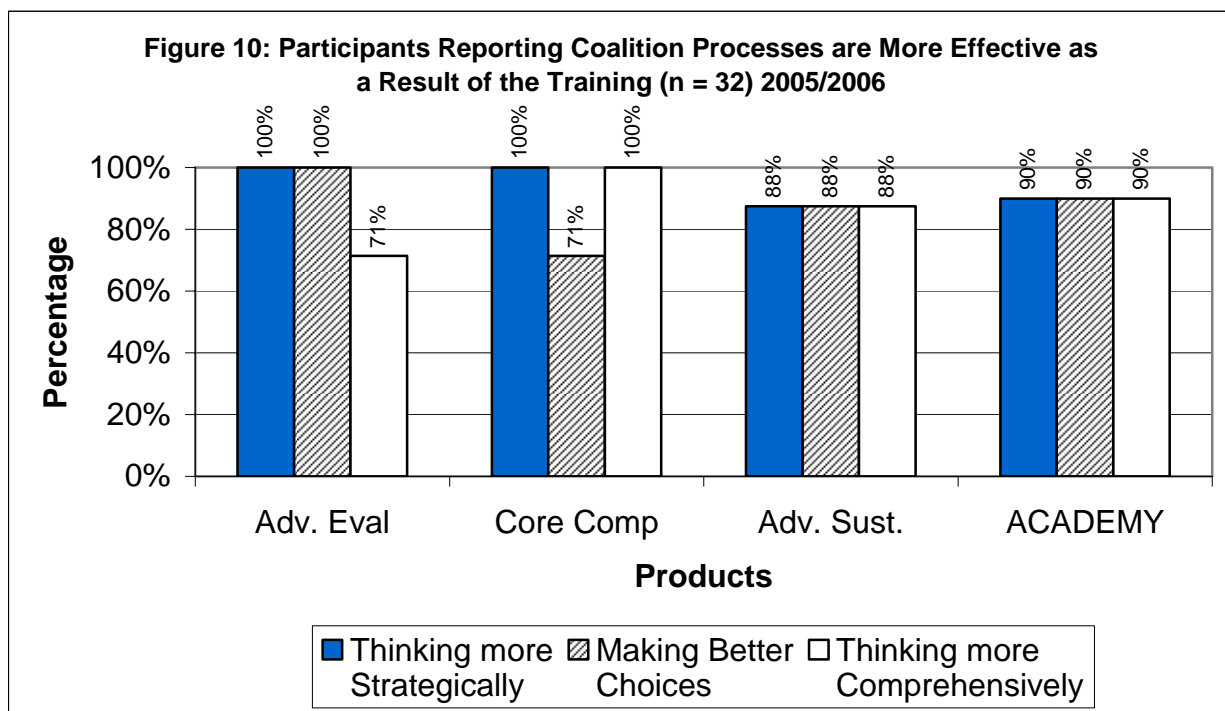
The evaluation plan is not as engrained in people’s minds as coalition activities... getting out and doing things. (Training participant)

Impact on Coalitions' Decisions and Actions

To examine the extent to which the Institute's trainings increased coalitions' use of effective decision-making processes we asked interviewees if the trainings helped their coalition: 1) think more strategically; 2) make better choices; and 3) think more comprehensively about the problem of substance abuse in their community. Overall, as Figure 10 illustrates, coalitions reported that the Institute's training had a **significant impact on their use of more effective decision-making processes.**

Most participants' report that the Institute's training has significantly altered how their coalition thinks and acts.

Over 89% of all participants reported that the trainings made their coalitions more strategic, more comprehensive and better decision-makers. We describe in more detail the specific impacts in each of these areas below.



Note: Adv. Eval. = Advanced Evaluation; Core Comp. = Core Competency; Adv. Sust. = Advanced Sustainability; and Academy = Academy training

Thinking more strategically

Most of the participants (94%) stated that their coalitions were thinking more strategically as a result of training. As some participants described:

...Definitely [thinking more strategically]. One of the things is evaluations. We're looking at surveys, what outcomes are we wanting to do before we get into motion... strategic planning. (Training Participant)

Coalitions describe how training has helped them move away from short term activities to efforts that are more strategic and focused on the long term vision.

We developed a logic model and identified problems in the community particularly around ‘why’ and ‘why in our county?’ Training simplified the problems, clarifying them; making them easier to address. Moved our whole county into thinking more about strategic planning. .(Training Participant)

Participants reported that this shift towards more strategic thinking has resulted in several changes in their operations. Because of this shift, coalitions are now:

- **Targeting real community issues:** Participants described how the training improved their coalitions’ assessment and evaluation strategies, helping them better understand their community’s needs and identify appropriate strategies.

[We are thinking more strategically] by gathering all of our information, assessing that information...talking about what our needs are and what are [the] multiple causes of those problems, then applying our efforts towards those problems. We’ve identified our needs, and so those are the things that we focus on. The survey gives us some feedback and lets us know whether we need to change or whether we need to re-focus our efforts. (Training Participant)

Before we were just coming up with activities to do. Now we are targeting specific groups with specific strategies. (Training Participant)

- **Streamlining efforts.** Some participants described how their coalition used tools like the logic model to help them focus their efforts and keep their actions linked to their overall plan:

We now map everything – who, what, where, when and why and of course ‘how much’. Our action plans are used monthly and if we have not made progress we re-think them with a focus on the overall impact on the quality of programs for youth in our community. (Training Participant)

The logic model focused our efforts and kept us on track.(Training Participant)

- **Emphasizing long-term goals.** Some participants described how the training allowed them to move away from short term activities to efforts that are more strategic and focused on the long term vision.

We have been able to move coalition members away from their focus on ‘attacking the present’. They now realize we can’t just jump in to solve a problem. We will make more of an impact if we have a long-term focus. (Training Participant)

Making better choices

The majority of the coalitions (88%) stated that, due to the Institute’s training, they were now making better choices regarding what to do in their community. This included:

- **Selecting strategies that are feasible and appropriate.** Participants described how the training and tools, such as the strategic framework and logic model, made

choices more clear to their coalitions and allowed them to chart specific outcomes and plan more effectively. As a result, they noted that their coalitions now tailor their actions to their community's needs and according to what they can accomplish. One participant made this point clear by saying that before the training they were "all over the place" but now they stay "focused on things we can actually do."

- **Targeting environmental changes.** Several participants reported that the training empowered them to shift their focus from programs to environmental change:

We no longer focus on just the quality of programs. We now try to look at the cultural norms and how they affect what is wrong.(Training Participant)

- **Using research and best practices to inform their decisions.** Coalitions described how they are now seeking data and information to make decisions instead of relying on decisions that, as one participant described, made others "feel good." This has not only made them more informed but allowed some coalitions to think more critically.

Thinking more comprehensively

Definitely [thinking more comprehensively]... because you're thinking more in line with the framework, and if you follow the framework... it helps you to think in regards to your problem...[finding] what are the causes of those problem areas and then addressing, redirecting, and applying your resources to those problem areas. Then you're looking for change...are you changing attitudes? (Training Participant)

Coalitions are developing a more comprehensive "environmental" approach as a result of Institute training.

Many participants noted that, as a result of the Institute training, their coalitions are now thinking more comprehensively. For some of these coalitions, this shift was also due, in part, to the general movement in the field towards a more comprehensive approach. By becoming more comprehensive, participants reported that their coalitions are now:

- **Expanding their community partners.** Some participants noted that the training made them aware of the need to genuinely involve a variety of community partners in order to affect change. For some coalitions this meant beginning to recruit partners from other sectors in order to understand the problem from different perspectives. Some coalitions created advisory committees to expand the stakeholders involved with their efforts.

We are now very aware of all the partners who need to be considered and understood to address substance abuse problems. We also need to understand the different levels of participation from different groups (e.g., faith-based, service, treatment, school, legislative).(Training Participant)

For some coalitions, engaging more community people helped them to **become more aware of what is happening in the community**:

By bringing in a greater variety of partners we are becoming more aware that there are a lot of things happening that we were not aware of. (Training Participant)

If you are going to make a difference you need to know what is going on in the community. Staying in touch with information from the police, hospitals, etc. and as the community changes, we need to change. (Training Participant)

- **Developing a systemic focus.** Some participants reported that the training helped them to broaden their understanding of the issue and consider environmental factors as causes and solutions to, and indicators of, the substance abuse problem in their community.

We now look at graffiti. Where there is graffiti there is evidence of alcohol and substance abuse. (Training Participant)

Other participants said the training and the tools helped them see the “whole picture” and see the issue within the community at large.

- **Formalizing internal coalition structure and processes.** Additionally, the training helped several coalitions with structuring their internal processes, such as developing sub-committees or advisory committees. These changes allowed coalitions to gather better information about the topic and to create a group process for making decisions and thinking more comprehensively about the issues.

We had always used data before but we have made changes in how we do things after learning how to be more comprehensive. (Training Participant)

Overall Coalition Effectiveness

The majority of the training participants reported that the Institute training has significantly helped their coalition move closer to accomplishing its goals. In fact, **84% of the participants reported that their coalitions are becoming more effective as a result of the training.** As two participants explained:

We are not just 100% closer to our goals, but 500% closer.

The training made us 1000% better!

In addition to developing the core competencies described above, participants identified six other changes that have happened in their coalitions as a result of the Institute:

Institute training helped coalitions:

- **Become more cohesive**
- **Improve processes for data collection**
- **Change thinking about sustainability**
- **Promote coalition building skills**
- **Write “great grants”**
- **Connecting with other coalitions.**

- **Creating a more organized and cohesive coalition.** Several participants noted that the training helped them to enhance the effectiveness of their coalition's operations. Whether this was becoming more proficient at delegating responsibility, reorganizing the coalition's structure, or simply better at meeting the needs of coalition members, the training helped participants make positive changes to coalition functioning.

We are now more cohesive as a group. We created a manual (with goals, actions, etc.). We are now targeting 'place' and working together. We have changed from an individual agenda. (Training Participant)

- **Gaining better data from evaluation and assessments.** Several participants, particularly Advanced Evaluation attendees noted that the training helped them improve their data collection process, resulting in more useful information.

Our coalition is now able to have a big impact because of our new evaluation process. (Training Participant).

Prevention providers in our community can now receive current data results from our surveys and from knowing what is going on in the community. They can better understand right now the situation - not what they thought it was 2 or 3 years ago, or longer. This helped them to specifically target the effects of alcohol, meth, cocaine, etc. It's made measurable outcomes in those. (Training Participant)

- **Becoming more sustainable.** Several participants, particularly those who attended Advanced Sustainability classes, reported that the training improved their sustainability efforts and outcomes. They described how they have carried out successful fundraisers, recruited diverse stakeholders, developed strategic action teams in the community, and have begun to market themselves in the community. Some participants cited specific results of the training on their coalition's sustainability, such as receiving grants and adopting sustainable practices:

We have achieved 30% of our DFC fund raising match. We have increased partner responsibility for fund raising and are looking at specific strategies for reducing spending. (Training Participant)

- **Writing better grants.** Some participants noted that the training helped them to write "great grants":

The training helped me write a grant that made sense. The grant read well due to training, to the logic model. (Training Participant)

- **Gaining more skills in coalition building.** For some participants, the training promoted their own skills and capacities – and those of their fellow coalition members – in coalition work.

Other partners who went to the training had known very little about coalitions. The training helped them understand what coalition work was all about. It was enlightening. (Training Participant)

It feels like I know what I am doing now. Our coalition is no longer just a networking meeting. (Training Participant)

- **Connecting with other coalitions across America.** Several participants highlighted the benefits of the connections they made with other coalitions at the trainings.

It's wonderful to go to any of these trainings...because of the networking that happens...even though I've been in this business for a long time and have gone through tons of trainings, it's still wonderful to network with people that have the same types of passion and the same kinds of coalitions. (Training Participant)

Factors Limiting the Impact of the Institute's Training

A few participants noted that the training was not as helpful as they desired. They identified four reasons for this limited impact:

- **Training only reinforced current practices.** Some participants from more seasoned coalitions felt that their coalitions already had a good handle on the information and best practices and viewed the training as “more of a benefit for people who are new to coalition work.”
- **Training was too general and not applicable to specific needs.** Some participants in the Advanced Trainings believed the training was too general and should be more tailored to the individual needs of coalitions.
- **Training was overwhelming.** Several Advanced Sustainability participants reported that they could not absorb all of the information given at the training. Some participants at other trainings noted that because their coalition was so new, the amount of information was too much to handle at one time. They recommended that the Institute provide a 6-month follow-up to the training.
- **Daily demands impede the use of information.** A few participants also mentioned the information was only being used partially because the demands of the coalition had distracted them from transferring some of the training to their work.

I am not using the information as much as I could. I need to get the books out again and look at the exercises we did. I think everything could be transferred to what we do every day – it's just that we have gotten away from it because of other [demands] from the community.

Creating Environmental Changes

We are creating a drug-free community through community-wide changes that will support healthy neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces. (Training Participant)

We are changing the cultural norm of accepting under-aged drinking behavior in this community. (Training Participant)

Many participants reported that their coalitions were addressing environmental and policy changes; several attributed this focus to the Institute's training (others noted that this emphasis was due to funding demands or the general focus in the field on this area). Those coalitions that developed an environmental focus due to the Institute's training were targeting a variety of environmental factors including:

- DWI prevention policies
- Police officer training
- Local policies regarding selling alcohol such as keg registration policies
- The number of businesses who sell to minors.
- Community attitudes towards substance abuse
- Teacher attitudes towards drug problems in schools.

For most coalitions, however, it was too early to determine if their efforts in these areas have been successful. This suggests that from an evaluation perspective, the Institute should not expect coalitions to have achieved environmental changes within one year post training.

Decreasing Substance Abuse Rates

Although it is not feasible to expect that substance abuse rates would begin to decrease one year post the Institute's training, one participant did claim that their substance abuse rates are already dropping significantly and they attributed this difference to the Institute's training:

Immediately we have had outcome. We've had alcohol use and abuse go down probably 25-30% in a short period of time. (Training Participant)

In regards to this impact area, our evaluation identified one factor that should be noted: Many of the participants noted that their **coalition has needed to shift or expand its focus in the past few years**, mostly due to the emergence of new drug problems in their communities (prescription drugs and methamphetamine were mentioned by several participants). This need to adjust one's efforts will likely increase the time it takes for coalitions to reduce substance rates in their communities.

SECTION 4: What do Participants think about the Institute's Training Approach and Training Content?

I always come back with something new from CADCA [the Institute], I always come back rejuvenated, ready to share, ready to move. (Training Participant)

The way they went through the logic model was very easy, I've seen so many logic models and the way that it was presented at this [training] was much more logical and easy to build on. (Training Participant)

In 2005-2006 the Institute continued to work to improve its training curriculum by expanding its training offerings and enhancing existing courses. For example, during this time period the Institute continued to revise its Academy training and offered several new advanced courses, such as the new Evaluation and Sustainability trainings.

Generally, training participants chose Institute training because of the depth of information and the range of courses offered when compared to other training centers. Many selected the Institute because of its "excellent reputation." Overall, training **participants were satisfied with both the Institute's trainings' approach and content.** We describe these findings in more detail in the following sections.

Many coalitions choose the Institute's training because of its reputation as a premier training center.

What do Participants Think About the Institute's Training Approach?

As in previous years, participants enjoyed the training approach employed by the Institute. They identified four aspects of the training they found particularly useful:

- 1) **Training Variety.** Participants were particularly fond of the variety of training styles used in the sessions: Most found large group presentations, coupled with small group discussions, an effective training approach.

Large groups are good for presenting ideas. Small groups are good for networking and reinforcing learning from the large group. (Training Participant)

Most academy participants also found the homework assignments particularly useful:

Large groups are good to deliver information. Small groups are good to process information. Homework is good to apply the work. (Training Participant)

- 2) **Competent Trainers.** Most participants were very pleased with their trainers, describing them as experienced and knowledgeable around issues pertaining to substance abuse and as sensitive to the unique needs of coalitions. It is important

to note that the evaluations of trainers this year were **far better than we had heard last year**.

[The] presenters are really knowledgeable in their field and brought a wealth of information...they connected well with the groups and I thought that the information that they brought was up to date. They knew their subject really well and so it was very comfortable to learn from them because they were well versed in what they were teaching. (Training Participant)

We had awesome trainers. (Training Participant)

Training participants are very satisfied with the Institute's training approach.

- 3) **Small Group Discussions.** As in previous years, the use of small groups for discussion, reflection, and application were a favorite approach. Participants found the small groups more intimate and “better suited for a learning environment”.

[I liked] the plenary sessions with very motivational speakers that broke into smaller groups. In these groups we could take what we had just learned and apply it to our coalitions. (Training Participant)

Small groups give the opportunity to network and ask questions that [I] may be embarrassed to ask in a large group or to ask the facilitator. (Training Participant)

The small group approach, however, was not without some limitations. Several interviewees felt that the **selection of participants into groups needed to be more deliberate**. They felt that self or random selection into groups sometimes created a mixture of coalition representatives that had a difficult time learning from each other:

Sometimes breaking into groups with people from different areas and different coalitions may not be effective because you are working on different problems and different goals...but if you have members of your own coalition [in your small group] its great to break into those [small] groups or teams and work on how it applies to your [coalition]. (Training Participant)

- 4) **Opportunities to Network with Other Coalitions.** Participants noted that they found the opportunities to network and interact with and learn from other coalitions very instructive.

Recommendations for Improving the Institute's Training Approach

While participants are generally very satisfied with the Institute's training approach, some individuals found certain approaches to training less helpful than others. These included:

- Limited time for interactions (in small groups)

- PowerPoints “with someone talking about them”
- Large group discussions recorded on flip charts (where the same suggestion is said over and over)

In addition, a few participants who represented grass roots organizations reported feeling that the trainings were oriented more towards coalitions that are “agency led” than “grassroots led” and felt “intimidated” by the atmosphere of the training, particularly by the capacities represented by other coalitions. As one participant noted:

When you're grass roots and not agency led and you're in there just to learn you can become intimidated by some of the aggressiveness that goes on [by other coalitions]. A lot of grass roots people like us are backing off because they are intimidated by it. Personally we're the type of people who need to be reached at this point because we're doing the work. (Training Participant)

The most prevalent recommendation proposed by the coalitions concerned strategies for fostering knowledge transfer. Several coalitions noted that they

struggled with applying and transferring the knowledge they gained at the training to their coalition. To some extent, knowledge transfer is intricately related to how well the Institute conducts follow-up with participants in their effort to translate what they have learned into the practices and processes of their coalitions. It appears that a lack of communication between the Institute and the coalitions post-training may serve to reduce the effectiveness of the Institute as a resource. As several participants described:

Coalitions may gain more from the Institute's training if support was provided to help them transfer the knowledge they gain and apply it to their coalitions.

Once you are done with the Academy you don't receive anything. (Training Participant)

My excitement and my energy about this has kind of dissipated even since those days of the CADCA Midyear a year ago. If there's any way for us to do some kind of follow up afterwards...how do we make sure when we do training that we come up with ways of keeping the energy and the excitement going. I would say that's definitely a problem of the trainings we attend. (Training Participant)

Another participant noted that follow-up would help remind her to use the resources that she learned during training.

If I was not so overwhelmed with being a one person shop and if I felt like I had a little more help getting into those areas I probably would have used the toolkit a lot more. I need to utilize it more, sometimes I get so involved that I forget the toolkit is even there. I would probably use [the toolkit] more if I had a little bit more encouragement or prompting. (Training Participant)

What do Participants Think about the Institute's Training Content?

Overall, participants were very pleased with the content of the training offered by the Institute. They felt that the training focused on the right content and that, as a result of the training, they had developed the knowledge and skills needed to make their coalitions more effective. Participants particularly enjoyed learning about the core competency products and the SPF framework. Overall, they cited several areas of the training's content that they found particularly helpful:

- Understanding and developing logic models, action plans, and other core tools

Looking at the different parts of the strategic plan. Breaking down the different components and seeing how they flow [together]...so it's not necessarily one part vs. the other part. Seeing how they're all needed to be successful. (Training Participant)

- Learning about The Strategic Prevention Framework

SPF was [particularly useful]. I came in not knowing anything. That's especially why I'd like to take other trainings so I can take that next step up, get that refresher. (Training Participant)

- Developing strategies and multidisciplinary ways to address problems
- Learning how to recruit and retain coalition members
- Learning about political action and policy change
- Exposure to new thoughts about sustainability
- Receiving booklets, worksheets, and other materials

The materials and the handouts that they provide at the training and for us to take home are very useful.

I loved the worksheets that they gave us. They were incredibly helpful in looking at how to break [material] down and make it something that, in small bites, doesn't look like such a huge thing.

Recommendations on How to Improve the Training Content

Some coalitions had a few concerns about the training content. It is important to note that these challenges are similar to some of the concerns we have heard in previous years. The main concerns voiced by participants included the following:

- **Training was either too advanced or not advanced enough.** As in previous years, some coalitions complained that trainings were either too advanced or not

advanced enough. Some advanced training participants, in particular, noted that the “the building blocks were not” provided during the training to help the participants fully apply the content. This might suggest that some of the advanced training participants may not yet be ready for the level of training provided by these sessions OR that the advanced trainings may need to provide some background information at the beginning of the sessions. As one advanced training participant noted:

[The training was like] building an airplane as you fly it.
(Training Participant)

It is important to note, however, that the number of coalitions complaining about this issue is significantly lower this year, particularly among Core Competency participants.

Coalitions may gain more from the Institute’s training if the trainings could better accommodate the different developmental and learning needs of the participants.

- **Trainings need to better accommodate the different developmental stages of the coalitions present in the room.** Some participants felt that the trainings were not suitable for all coalitions and that the Institute should customize the training content to better accommodate the diverse stages of coalition development. As a few participants explained:

When I attended training it was like I was catching up because a lot of people had already had a number of trainings through CADCA. It would have been nice to have a one on one, people who haven’t been involved or haven’t done this before. You know, where do you start, what the first step. And I know that everyone went through that but when you have a large group of people they’ll ask a question and say ‘does everyone comprehend this?’ and you’re the only one who doesn’t you think there’s no sense in me raising my hand and holding up the whole show.
(Training Participant)

The levels of knowledge within the class [varied greatly] ...some people could have taught the class; some didn’t have a clue. (Training Participant)

What content should be added to the Institute’s training?

Participants identified several ways the Institute could expand its training. For example, they identified a variety of additional topics they would like to have the Institute address in its trainings, including:

- The strategies and activities other coalitions are using to address local problems;
- The needs of specific community sectors, such as the faith-based community and law enforcement
- Strategies for rural areas
- COMET training;
- Updates on the coalition and prevention field;

- Fiscal accountability
- Evaluation and sustainability
- Marketing and public relations
- Funding possibilities including the foundation funding that is available in different regions

They also suggested that the Institute offer more regional trainings and more youth-oriented trainings that include youth in the training. Some Partners also suggested that the Institute add courses on “Prevention 101.”

Finally, some participants requested **training in how to transfer the knowledge and capacities they were building back to their coalition**. Some suggested that the Institute allocate time during each training for this content. As some participants described:

After I come out of that training, how I was going to relate that back to the coalition? I don't think I got a whole lot of information from them (on this) other than me coming home and just studying some of the material and then trying to put together some of what I had learned, trying to understand what I had learned or heard. (Training Participant)

We understand what we were asked to do and we understand that what you're doing is the way it should be done but how to do it (apply it to what our coalition is doing,)...it is hard to make that transfer of information. There is 'so much to swallow'. (Training Participant)

I needed the “How to” and support on how to relate this information to our coalition. (Training Participant)

It's hard to have a few people take all that training back to the coalition...How do I take that volume of information and integrate people into new ways of thinking...to get them to buy in with their time and translate that into policy change. That's a big mouthful. (Training Participant)

What do Participants think of the Video Teleconferencing?

While video teleconferencing was seen as a potentially viable tool for communicating information widely, the experiences of the participants interviewed suggest that this tool is not fully effective in its current form. Many of the participants indicated that there were too many technical difficulties for it to be useful. It is important to note that many of these technical difficulties were generated from the coalition's equipment and sites and not from the Institute. Many coalitions reported that their equipment or technical understanding is not sufficient to effectively utilize this tool.

Aside from the technical issues, teleconferencing was seen as way to reach many people at one time while eliminating costly travel expenses. It was also seen as a way to increase the visibility of the Institute. One participant noted:

[Teleconferencing] can bring in other people in coalition and other organizations outside of the coalition to get specific training. It can make CADCA known.

If the Institute continues to use video-teleconferencing, several participants requested that these trainings include new material rather than summaries of materials that had already been presented.

In What Ways Could the Institute Strengthen the Academy Training?

Given the focus and resources dedicated to the Academy, we explored several questions in this evaluation concerning how the Institute could strengthen the Academy training. To better understand how to improve the training process and content, we asked Academy Cohorts 1 and 2 participants to provide extensive feedback on the design of this training and to offer suggestions on how to improve this training approach. To understand how to recruit larger numbers of individuals for the Academy training, we interviewed individuals who registered for the Academy, but did not attend and also asked questions of individuals who attended other Institute trainings. Below we present our findings.

While some Coalitions struggled with the amount of time and energy required by the Academy training, most found the training very worthwhile.

Assessments of the Overall Design of the Academy Training

Participants were asked to comment on the overall design of the Academy training, particularly the length of the training, time commitment, and the training format. Overall, Academy participants were satisfied with the structure and format of the Academy, though many had suggestions for how to improve the process for future cohorts. One participant described some of the benefits of the Academy structure in this way:

[I] really liked getting away, everything was taken care of (meals, lodging) so they could spend time getting to know each other, built camaraderie, they could share triumphs and successes with each other “lifted us all up”. [I] still email people today.
(Training Participant)

Participant reactions to the length of training

With regard to the length of Academy training and the time commitment it requires, **participants were mixed in their reviews.** Some complained that the Academy required too much time; others wished for more weeks of training.

For example, some participants felt that the training was too long and at times “redundant”, noting that the sessions could have been more efficient, “more organized and precise.” Others felt that there were too many consecutive days of training. As several participants said:

The three weeks was good...five days in a week was not good. After three days it was too much...It was too much time away – just too much. (Training Participant)

I think [the training] was long. At least from my perspective as I look at the material that was covered it probably could have been covered in about half the time. I understand though that there were a number of people attending the training who were very new to coalitions and novice so it might have taken longer for the learning process for some of them. (Training Participant)

Meanwhile, other participants felt that while 3 weeks was a long time to be away from their coalitions, Academy training was a good length and speed and covered the right amount of material. In contrast, other participants felt that they needed more time at the training because they felt rushed or overwhelmed. Several suggested adding another week to the training to increase comprehension and networking opportunities. This sentiment is captured in the following comments:

The type of information and pace [during the first week] was just enough, had plenty of time. The second part of training...was so comprehensive...It was a lot to get and I think it could have been a two part thing... [There were] some coalitions who knew how to do it with no sweat, some in the middle, and some that didn't know what to do. (Training Participant)

I think by the third week people... were really starting to get to know each other, working well together, and the networking was really happening. So, I'd almost like to see one more week actually. (Training Participant)

Challenges with maintaining the commitment to the Academy training.

The majority of the Academy participants that we interviewed noted that they had a difficult time keeping their commitment to the Academy training. Reasons included:

- **Time Constraints.** One of the most common challenges mentioned by participants was their general lack of time that made it difficult to complete the homework and projects as well as to be away from the office. One participant commented on this situation by saying:

The homework during the week that was fine. It was the projects when I left there I couldn't do them, couldn't get them done ... When I left the training all the other pieces of my job were still sitting here waiting for me.... I had to work on the [training] projects on my own time. (Training Participant)

Yet for other participants the extended time commitment of the training allowed them to engage in the training and become more focused as seen in the following comment:

Given the amount of material we had to cover, and being away from the desk and not being able to get back to it every night made me focus on why I was there.
(Training Participant)

- **Difficulty applying concepts.** In addition to time, other participants found it challenging to maintain the commitment to the training because their coalition’s developmental stage or situation made it difficult to apply the products. As one participant explained:

One of the issues [during the training] was that every coalition is at a different point in their development. At the end I felt pressured to produce a product when our coalition wasn’t necessarily ready to do that. Such as the sustainability and the evaluation – and we just weren’t ready to do that. (Training Participant)

Overall, while most felt that the level of commitment required to participate in the Academy was substantial, most also felt that it was “reasonable” given the amount of material that needed to be covered. They felt that the Institute was providing an incredible opportunity. As one participant explained:

I really felt that when I initially started I was very very committed to it – and I don’t want it to sound like I wasn’t – I felt good about the commitment and when I went to my monthly meetings after I just ranted and raved about how excellent it was and how important it was. I think it was important to make that commitment. (Training Participant)

Recommendations for Improving the Academy Training

Participants from Cohorts 1 & 2 felt, overall, that they gained a significant amount of information, tools, and skills from the Academy training. They also offered several suggestions regarding how to improve the Academy training. These are listed below.

- **Account for differences in coalitions’ developmental stages and participants’ learning needs.** Participants varied significantly in their reactions to the training curriculum and these reactions were mostly related to the developmental stage of their coalition. Participants from newer coalitions felt that the presentations were “rushed” and that there was not always enough time to get through the content. More experienced participants felt the Academy training was at times redundant and too long. This situation caused frustration and anxiety for several participants.
- **Offer more flexibility around which products participants must create.** Some participants felt “pressured” to create products that they were “not ready [or] at a place to do.” While some noted a concern that they didn’t finish their assignments,

To Improve the Academy training, participants suggested that the Institute better accommodate differences across coalitions and provide more support during and after training.

most felt that given the content, the overall commitment required of them was “reasonable and necessary” and they valued what they learned from the training.

- **Provide more support between and after training sessions.** Some Academy attendees stated that they wanted more support between the week-long sessions, such as technical assistance to help with creating the products as well as support in disseminating the training information back to their coalition members and community stakeholders. As several participants noted:

I felt that at several times the Institute did not provide the support they said that they were going to. There was a specific homework assignment to customize the online data system and my staff and I spent a lot of time trying to figure out how we could use that system so that it would be useful to us...my understanding was that CADCA or the Academy was going to customize our workstation so we could use it, and that never happened. So we never used it. And I was disappointed in that. It was a good tool...would have been great but they never did it. And maybe I misunderstood but I don't think so. (Training Participant)

Additionally, **40% of interviewed Academy trainees also mentioned that they desired more follow-up after the training.** For some this meant providing additional trainings and allowing more coalition members to attend. Other suggestions included adding refresher courses to maintain what participants had learned at the trainings. The following comments are a sample of these suggestions:

You want to keep refining and be more qualified...As in looking for training, I'm constantly looking for training for myself, for my coalition or to benefit the DFC coalition but it's not available. (Training Participant)

They could offer one or two daylong training sessions scattered throughout the year, and if it could be offered regionally so that there are more training sites, that would also help. (Training Participant)

Maybe some follow-up mini trainings, whether it be a one day workshop or something on different areas...you kind of go through these 3 weeks and then you're done, and I think that's great but I think people need refresher courses. (Training Participant)

- **Increase the amount of time available for networking.** Networking was noted as both a motivation for attending training and an expected training outcome. Some participants felt that there was insufficient time available for networking. Others requested more opportunities to network after the training ended:

You know what might be an interesting thing - Get that coalition [training] group back together sometime, like a reunion, and do it for maybe a week and talk about problems and where exactly you are, that kind of thing. (Training Participant)

Some Advanced training participants suggested a “e-chat room” or another means of sharing and communicating between coalitions post-training to sustain the connections and the peer-to-peer learning.

Assessments of the National Guard Facilities

Overall, Academy training participants liked the National Guard facilities. They were described as comfortable and safe. They enjoyed the extra accommodations such as the bowling alley that created a great space for networking. In addition, National Guard hosts were described as very accommodating and supportive: “They couldn’t have been nicer”.

Recruiting Coalitions for the Academy

In an effort to understand how the Institute can better recruit coalition members to attend the Academy training, participants were asked several questions about how they learned about the training as well as how to make the Academy more attractive to new trainees.

How have former participants heard about the Academy and why did they decide to attend?

Most of the individuals who had participated in either Cohort 1 or 2 of the Academy **heard about Academy Training through personal contact**. Specifically, they had heard about this training from colleagues, funders, partner agencies, or other coalitions. These participants selected the Academy training because they saw the training as a means to learn how to “build a coalition and make it work.” Most saw the Academy as **providing more in depth information than other trainings and thus thought it might be a more efficient and thorough way to develop these capacities**. Some participants saw the training as a way to transition their coalition into later stages of development.

How familiar is the Academy to other training participants?

The majority (73%) of The Advanced Training and Core Competency interviewees knew about the Academy Training. They had heard about this training from a wide variety of sources including at the Mid-Year training, the winter forum, the CADCA website, email or newsletter, and during their COMET training.

While most of the interviewees knew about the Academy, what they knew was fairly limited. They knew that it was “intense” (“hard”), “long” (3 weeks); and “free”. Several participants had

While most of the Coalitions we interviewed were familiar with the Academy, what they knew was very limited.

heard good things about the training and seemed excited to learn more, responding with comments such as “wouldn’t I love to go to that”. Only one participant had heard it described negatively by a colleague in another coalition as “*an awful lot of work*”. Overall, while there were anecdotal comments from most of the participants who knew about Academy Training, their knowledge appeared fragmented and sketchy.

Would other training participants decide to attend the Academy?

Only half of those who knew about the Academy stated that they were planning to go. Those who said they were not planning to go cited the time commitment and travel as chief reasons for not attending.

A three week commitment when dealing with volunteers? It’s like asking them to use their vacation time to attend.

What can be done to make the Academy more attractive?

Answers to this question directly correlate with why participants are not considering Academy training: a closer location (closer to their coalition; decreasing travel time) and a reduced time commitment (some suggested having the training on weekends). For some participants the issue seems to be within the coalition, not the training:

No [the training] is already attractive, it’s just a matter of money and being able to get there and stay there, and then the time that it takes to do it. I love going to trainings, I just have so much going on that if I leave for a week or a few days it gets crazy.

In addition, one participant noted that a lack of information about the Academy made this determination difficult suggesting the need for more communication about the Academy:

It’s hard to know if this would be worthwhile for me. I would need more information about the Academy training to see if it would be beneficial.

Why do some coalition members register, but not attend, Academy training?

We consulted six coalition members who had registered for the Academy but did not attend the training. This group resembled the other participants interviewed in this evaluation, both in their coalition’s characteristics as well as their overall familiarity with Institute resources and communication materials.

When asked why they chose not to attend the Academy training, 83% of these coalition members stated that **extenuating circumstances** (e.g., health issues, Hurricane Katrina, job transfer), not concerns about the training, kept them from the participating.

SECTION 5: What do Participants Think about the Institute's Technical Assistance Efforts?

While most coalitions we interviewed were aware of the Institute's technical assistance services, **the majority had not used the Institute's technical assistance (TA) services** in 2005/2006: only 14% of core competency interviewees and 27% of advanced training interviewees had used the Institute's TA. In contrast, 67% of the Academy interviewees said they had used TA during this time period. This could be due in part to the requirements of Academy training making TA a necessary tool for participants.

Reasons for not using Technical Assistance included:

- Belief that the coalition was not in need of TA
- Lack of knowledge regarding what TA can offer
- Confusion about how to access or use TA
- Limited understanding as to why it would be helpful
- Inability to afford CADCA membership
- Use of other sources for TA (DFC project officers were cited as an example)

In general it appears that a general lack of knowledge about what TA has to offer and how to access TA are the chief barriers to more effective use of the Institute's TA services. Interviewees noted:

I'm not sure how to use it...I know its there [but] I'm not sure what it is, how to access it, how it will be helpful. (Training Participant)

I don't know the procedure for accessing TA thru the Institute. (Training Participant)

Most of the coalitions we interviewed did not use TA in 2005/2006, primarily because they were not familiar with this resource and what it could offer.

Participant's Assessments of the Institute's TA Services

Of the participants who had used TA, the majority were mostly satisfied with the services they had received and found the TA accessible and useful. Those who provided TA were described as helpful, knowledgeable, patient, reassuring, and easy to talk to:

I was very interested – matter of fact it took less than a minute to get to somebody and start talking with them. That was very responsive, I didn't have to wait or call back 16 times. (Training Participant)

I feel like we are working together. They're [the Institute] very kind, they have good information, very willing to share. I feel like they're part of our coalition. And if they don't understand exactly what our needs are they're willing to ask... they're never to

busy to make me feel important and [understand] what our coalition needs....the CADCA people that I have met and talked with and emailed with are far above any other organization that I have had contact with before...if I need a resource, they're the first ones I think of. (Training Participant)

However, participants who did access TA also felt that their requests for services were not always responded to in a timely manner and that follow-up was sometimes lacking. Several felt the Institute needed to be more “responsive” to their requests for TA:

I called them with regard to how to work with different groups in the city, but I didn't get any information. I don't know whether it was lost and I should have called back, but I never received it. They said they were going to send me some information on the topic and I never got anything back. (Training Participant)

They called me back in less than 1 week [but] they did not send the information they promised. (Training Participant)

Coalitions that use the Institute's TA find it very helpful, though sometimes not timely or responsive.

Some solutions for improving both access to and use of TA services

Certainly, the hiring of the TA staff person in the fall of 2006 will significantly improve the accessibility and timeliness of the Institute's TA services. In fact, reports from the Partners we interviewed for this evaluation suggest that the quality of the TA services has significantly improved since this staff position was filled. Coalition members suggested several additional ways for the Institute to enhance the accessibility of its TA services, including:

- **Clarify what TA is and how and when to use TA.** There was generally a lack of awareness about the Institute's TA. One participant confused TA for assistance with electronic tools and it was suggested that TA be called something else to make it clear what it was. In general, participants were eager to have more information about the TA:

I would like to know more about what they offer in regards to technical assistance. What's the extent of that assistance? How far can they go with that assistance? I mean is it just on paper? Is it something online that they can send me? Is it training that they can offer specifically in my location or in my state somewhere? (Training Participant)

- **Take a more pro-active approach to TA.** Some coalitions felt they need more prompting from the Institute about availability of TA. Simple reminders via e-mail or mail that this service is available was one suggestion.

I need TA, but don't always have time to get to it. I need prompting. (Training Participant)

SECTION 6: To What Extent are the Institute's Communication Resources and Materials Being used by Coalitions?

Overall, the quality and availability of the Institute's communication materials and resources have improved considerably in the past few years. In 2005/2006, coalition members reported more familiarity with the Institute's Primers and other publications. In addition, the Institute's website became more accessible and thorough.

Despite these improvements, many coalitions are not aware of all of the resources available to them through the Institute. Below we discuss our findings with regard to several specific resources and communication materials and products.

To What Extent are the Institute's Communication Resources Familiar To and Being Used by Coalitions?

We asked interviewees to describe the extent to which they were familiar with and used the Institute's communication resources including its website, publications, and newsletters.

The Institute's Website

The Institute's website was used often by interviewees. In general, they tended to visit the Institute's website to download resources and to find information about the Institute. Of the coalition members interviewed in 2005/2006, **75% had downloaded resources off of the Institute's website** in the past year. Resources most commonly downloaded include Primers, PowerPoints, and articles. Many found the website so helpful that they would readily recommend it to other coalitions:

The website [has] a ton of resources there. It is very easy to use. It allows people to go and link up with many, many resources. The website couldn't be a better place to start. (Training Participant)

The majority of coalitions are familiar with the Institute's website and are accessing the resources available on this site.

In many ways our findings converge with the recent website audit (published in April 2007). According to that audit, people found the Institute's website easy to use and were highly impressed by all the available resources. According to our interviewees, the website is even accessible and useful for a broader set of stakeholders within their communities. One participant described how, after sharing information with her community:

"Many of the other members of the community probably were never even aware of the word CADCA and what it meant...now they go onto the website all the time I understand...they refer to it and get information...use the links...and I'm sure it doesn't stop there." (Training Participant)

The Institute's Internet Publications

Although the website is viewed as a great resource by the coalition members we interviewed, it is important to note that many of those interviewed were not aware of all of the documents and toolkits available on the website. Overall, the Institute's Primer's are the most recognized resource and the Strengthening Partnership Toolkit is the least recognized resource. We discuss these findings in more detail below.

Most coalitions are familiar with the Primers and find them VERY useful.

- **The Primers.** For the coalitions we interviewed, the Institute's Primers (Assessment, Capacity, Planning, Evaluation, & Implementation) were by far the most frequently downloaded and used resources. The majority of coalition members (78%) said they had heard of all the primers and had used most of them. Many participants said the primers were very useful and they often shared them with other coalition members.

Across the coalition members we interviewed, 22% (N=7) were not familiar at all with the primers; four of these participants were from the Academy. Of the other three who had not heard of the Primers, one mentioned that in general she did not feel that she needed those resources.

- **Strengthening Partnerships Toolkit.** In general, coalition members are less familiar with the Strengthening Partnerships Toolkit: 67% of the training participants had **not** heard of this resource. In terms of use, only 45% of participants who were familiar with the Strengthening Partnerships Toolkit mentioned they had used it. Our data do not provide insight into why individuals were less likely to use this toolkit than the Primers.
- **Other web-based resources** (publications, PowerPoints, and the articles available on the website). Approximately 50% of all training participants interviewed had heard of the other resources available on the website. Several mentioned that they do not have time or do not feel the need look for resources on the website. However, 69% of the participants who had heard of these resources had used them and shared them with other coalition members. Again, several participants mentioned that even though they knew about these resources, they often did not have time to use them.

What gets in the way of coalitions accessing and using the Institute's web-based resources?

As noted above, it is not uncommon for coalition members to be unfamiliar with some of the resources available on the Institute's website. Some coalition members are simply not aware of the resources or have not had a chance to visit the website due to their time constraints. This is evidenced in the following comments:

I don't totally understand everything CADCA has to offer. (Training Participant)

It's embarrassing, but I don't know about any [resources] besides core competency training or the Strategic Prevention Training. (Training Participant)

In addition to being unfamiliar with some of the Institute's web-based resources, coalition members identified three key factors that hinder their access to and use of the Institute's primers and other documents:

- **Perceived lack of time to seek resources.** Some coalition members described how they lacked the time to search the Institute's website or read the documents once they download them.

I haven't visited the website in a while. I have no time. (Training Participant)

- **No perceived need to use the resources.** Several coalitions noted that they were familiar with the web-based resources, but chose not to access or use them because they did not see a need for them at this time.

It [the website] is not a resource I use... I've been to enough CADCA trainings that I don't [feel the need to] access it. (Training Participant)

- **Misperception that the Institute's web-based resources are not free to non CADCA members.** One participant who was unable to afford the Institute's membership fees believed these resources were off limits for non-members. This echoes a finding from the web audit that reported that after seeing a login requirement or a publication downloading fee, potential resource users assumed that there were no free resources available.

I spent some time on the website when I came back from the training. I thought 'gosh there's going to be a lot of resources I can pull from this.' And then I started hitting those block walls because I needed a password or I needed to pay for it and I reached a point where I gave up because until we can become a member and afford [membership] we might as well just forget about even pursuing this any further. (Training Partner)

To What Extent Are the Institute's Electronic Communication Materials Being Used by Coalitions?

We also asked coalition members to describe their familiarity with and assessment of the Institute's electronic communication materials, including the CADCA Online Newsletter, Research into Action Newsletter, and periodic emails. Most of the coalition members (94%) reported that they received at least one of the electronic resources; with the majority receiving the CADCA Online Newsletter. Overall, most participants found these resources very helpful, using them to keep abreast of new developments in the field and to find information on upcoming CADCA/Institute trainings. Many also reported that they shared these materials with other coalition members or community stakeholders. We describe below what we learned about the coalition members' experience with the Institute's electronic communication products.

- **CADCA Online Newsletter.** Most of the coalition members (91%) reported receiving the CADCA Online Newsletter (up from 43% in 2004/2005). Almost all of those receiving these materials said they were useful and many shared the information with their coalition or with community stakeholders. These materials were used by coalitions primarily to:
 - Stay updated on upcoming trainings;
 - Learn about relevant news and current events;
 - Keep up to date with legislation; and
 - Receive important announcements
- **Informational e-mails.** Again, most of the coalition members (84%) reported receiving informational e-mails from the Institute (up from only 18.3% in 2004/2005). All reported that e-mail was an effective venue for gathering up-to-date information.
- **Research into Action Newsletter.** In contrast, only 13% of the coalition members interviewed had heard of the *Research into Action* newsletter. Despite this low number, it was encouraging to see that all participants who had heard of this material did in fact use it and often shared the information within their coalition. One participant said that members use this material within the coalition to “kick around ideas.”

The majority of coalitions receive the electronic communications from the Institute and find them very useful.

How do coalitions find out about your resources and training?

Coalitions learned about the Institute’s resources in a variety of ways. With regard to learning about the Institute’s training, coalitions noted that they were the most likely to hear about it through the **website, e-mail, or other Institute communications; personal contacts** outside the Institute were also popular venues for learning about training resources. It is of interest to note that different communications methods seem to be used to find out about different trainings. As Table 2 illustrates, participants in the Academy were the most likely to find out about this training through personal contact, such as a director, partner agency, or funders. On the other hand, participants learned about the Advanced Training and Core Competency trainings through the Website, e-mails and other mailings they received. It is also important to note that your trainings appear to be another important marketing venue, though perhaps they are not as useful as they could be: only 44% of the coalition members who have not yet attended the Academy remember hearing about it at one of the training events.

Table 2: How participants learn about available trainings.

Source	How Academy participants found out about their training	How Advanced Training and Core Competency participants found out about their training	How Advanced Training and Core Competency found out about Academy training
Website, E-mail, Newsletter, or Brochure	30%	64%	38%
Personal Contact outside CADCA	70%	27%	11%
Other Institute Training	0	9%	44%
Outside conference	0	0	5%

What additional communication materials and resources would the coalitions like from the Institute?

Recommended changes for the Institute’s Primers and Web-based Products

Overall, respondents seemed satisfied with the resources the Institute has to offer. Several suggested making more resources free for financially limited coalitions (and also making coalitions aware of currently available free resources). When asked about topics for upcoming primers, participants suggested the following topics:

- Sustainability, related both to financial and personnel considerations.
- Engaging community stakeholders (e.g., parents) in coalition efforts
- How to use the media
- How to increase cultural competency.

Recommended changes for the Institute’s Website.

Respondents identified several ways that the Institute’s website could become more accessible and more useful to coalitions. These recommendations echo what was reported in the website audit and include:

- Developing online training opportunities;
- Adding a search engine on the website;
- Organizing website information by topic; and
- Creating ways, via e-mail and the website, to connect coalitions to each other.

Recommended changes for the Institute's communication materials.

Many participants would like to become more aware of the various Institute resources. To promote this awareness, coalition members suggested that the Institute distribute more (i.e., more frequent, more timely) and ongoing information about:

The majority of coalitions wanted more information on the services and resources available from the Institute.

- **Available resources.** Participants requested additional communication about available resources, which resources are free to non-members, and resources that have been recently added to the website. This is illustrated in the following comments:

Maybe they need to somehow be more readily available - not that website is not readily available but perhaps continue to get information out to coalitions on a regular basis. So that when you ask me about that [Strengthening Partnerships] toolkit I don't have to go, "okay now what would I have used that for" as opposed to knowing the name of it. (Training Participant)

In our experience, coalitions were hungry for such information. During our interviewing several people learned (from us) about resources for the first time and responded by saying they would seek them out on the website as immediately after interview. As one participant noted:

I needed power points [for my community presentations], I didn't know they had power points available... I guarantee you I will get on there tonight and I'll look it up because I want to burn one off to use for the 26th. (Training Participant)

- **Upcoming trainings.** Participants requested more communication on upcoming trainings for several reasons. For some, communication providing descriptions of trainings well in advance of deadlines would allow them to apply for scholarships or allot funding into their grants proposals. For other participants, this information would allow them to prepare for the upcoming training and alert others who may have an interest in attending. This latter point is shown in the following comments:

I didn't really understand or know what I was going into or what the training was all about until I actually went there. (Training Partner)

A faith-based session was presented but NOT Advertised...Let us know on the Website the content of the training... there was a booklet at the training ...but nothing On-line. (Core Competency Training Participant). (Training Partner)

- **Institute communications.** Participants wanted to know and receive more on current communication materials, such as list-serves and newsletters. This was a particularly common suggestion from Non-Drug Free Community Coalitions. Again, the majority of participants mentioned email as the preferred means of communication.

Recommendations for Institute’s marketing materials

In addition to getting more ongoing information out to coalitions about available resources, there is a desire by several coalition members for the Institute to **market its resources to stakeholders beyond coalition members**. Judging from various comments made by participants, there is a general lack of awareness in the community regarding what the Institute has to offer. This affirmed the website audit’s finding that few people know about CADCA outside anti-drug circles. For example, one participant’s coalition would not have known about CADCA were it not for an outside contact.

I think we know what is available in our county and surrounding area and in the state, but we wouldn’t have known about CADCA [Institute] if we hadn’t talked to one of our partners.
(Training Participant)

The Institute should market itself to stakeholders outside of the drug/substance abuse world.

One participant highlighted the importance of getting the word out about the Institute in order to gain the support of local government officials for the coalition’s partnership-building efforts.

Our mayor had never even heard of CADCA. They need to get the word out there about CADCA because maybe some of these communities with the tax dollars would be willing to become members so that these grassroots [coalitions] could take advantage of the resources. The “league of cities” is a network of mayors, a lot of resources come out of it. CADCA should connect with them, reach the people in leadership and say “if you have organizations that are looking to make a difference we have resources available”. (Training Participant)

SECTION 7: Lessons Learned and Recommendations

In this section we summarize the five key lessons learned in 2005/2006 and recommendations for moving the work forward.

Lesson 1: The Institute's training could have more impact if more attention was paid to helping participants apply and sustain the capacities they develop.

Organizational scientists and training consultants have long lamented the challenges faced with transferring knowledge gained in training. In fact, some studies report that less than 15% of training content is transferred back to an organizational setting (Newstrom, 1986). Certainly, many of the coalitions we have interviewed over the last four years report a much higher transfer rate. Nevertheless, the Institute's training could have an even greater and sustained impact if four additional strategies were considered:

- **Include content and training in each class/workshop around techniques and strategies for knowledge transfer.** Referred in some training arenas as "Relapse Prevention Training" (Marx, 1982) this should include:
 - An examination of the local situations that may impede knowledge transfer, such as a lack of time and resources, work overload, and skeptical colleagues.
 - A discussion and development of strategies for countering these conditions and transferring knowledge.
 - Identification of ways to monitor and track progress in applying new knowledge
- **Design small group sessions during trainings around the specific developmental and application needs of a coalition.** Participants may benefit from working with other coalitions that are struggling with similar issues or concerns.
- **Support the transfer of knowledge post-training through refresher courses, online discussions, online newsletters articles, and technical assistance specific to these issues.**
- **Provide participants with the opportunities to learn from the experiences of coalitions who have successfully navigated the knowledge transfer process.** This could occur through presentations during trainings or online discussion groups.

Lesson 2: The Institute needs to create a three to five year strategic plan that more clearly establishes future goals and directions.

Given the Institute's reputation for excellence and the need for its services, opportunities for expansion are abundant. While this context is certainly advantageous, the Institute needs to carefully navigate this territory. Stakeholders hold different desires for the Institute and each opportunity produces new benefits and consequences. A more clearly developed vision for the future that more articulates what the Institute will become is needed. Ultimately, this vision should help the Institute remain opportunistic while supporting a more strategic pursuit of new endeavors.

Lesson 3: The Institute needs to expand beyond its current customer base and existing course offerings. Critical to this effort is a more comprehensive marketing effort and more accessible website. These pursuits should be supportive of an overall strategic plan.

Partners and participants agree that a vast, untapped audience exists for the Institute's training. They also agreed that more diverse and stratified course offerings are needed if the Institute intends to continue to meet the needs of its current customer base and reach the intended scale and scope of services. An expanded curriculum and broader audience could also help the Institute diversify its funding base and generate a revenue stream. Overall, the Institute could:

- Provide support and training to the organizations and constituencies that interact with or are vested in drug free/substance abuse coalition efforts, including federal and state-level administrators and prevention staff and county or city administrators.
- Market existing training to other types of coalitions;
- Offer expanded courses to current customers, particularly training that is more customized to the specific developmental needs of coalitions. Follow-up or refresher courses would also be valuable.

Similar to feedback provided in previous years, the Institute needs to significantly expand its marketing efforts and Internet presence if such expansion is desired. In a Google search conducted on August 24, 2007 the Institute did NOT appear within the first 7 pages of results when the terms "coalition training" "community coalition training" and "community problem solving" were used (though other training centers were listed). When the term "community coalitions" was searched, CADCA does appear as the first result, though finding the trainings offered by the Institute within this website is not necessarily easy.

Lesson 4: The Institute needs to clarify the purpose of its research/evaluation department.

Partners continue to question the purpose of the Institute's research and evaluation unit, wondering if the Institute should be conducting original research on coalitions, establishing a research agenda for other researchers, and/or evaluating the impact of its efforts. Some Partners are concerned that the Institute is NOT meeting the expectations of its federal funders in relationship to this area. It is critical for the Institute to more

clearly communicate the purpose of this department and to make more definitive progress in this area.

Lesson 5: The Institute needs to conduct more longitudinal evaluation of the impact of its trainings.

The evaluations we have conducted in the past four years have clearly documented that the Institute's training is having a positive impact on coalitions. This Institute now needs to begin to collect this evidence in a more systematic way by surveying training participants post-training.

In addition to using the Registry as a data source, we recommend the Institute consider collecting data at multiple time points from a randomly selected group of participants across all trainings (using an on-line survey). Our interviews with coalitions suggest that the Institute's training triggers a process of change (See Figure 5). When data is collected should be determined by which outcomes the Institute is most interested in assessing. Our interviews suggest that:

- Participating coalitions often develop the core products within three months post training.
- These core products begin to make a difference in coalition operations (coalitions become more strategic, begin to think more comprehensively, etc) within three to six months post training.
- Coalitions begin to make changes in their environment 6 to 12 months post training.
- Changes in targeted outcomes (e.g., decreases in substance abuse rates) require more than 12 months post training.