PRIMER

IMPLEMENTATION

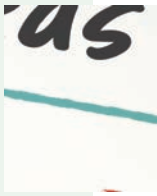
Putting Your Plan into Action

CADCA®
National Coalition Institute

DRUG-FREE COMMUNITIES SUPPORT PROGRAM
DFC & CARA
Funded by ONDCP
CARA LOCAL DRUG CRISES PROGRAM

CADCA's National Coalition Institute, developed in 2002 by an Act of Congress, serves as a center for training, technical assistance, evaluation, research, and capacity building for community substance misuse coalitions throughout the United States. The Institute developed these primers to serve as a guideline for coalitions navigating the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration (SAMHSA)'s Strategic Prevent Framework (SPF). These primers highlight the CADCA model of prevention and its applied uses to the SPF. Each primer is designed to stand alone and work with others in the series. Research suggests that prevention of substance use and misuse before it starts is the most effective and cost-efficient way to reduce substance use and its associated costs. Coalitions are critical to the success of prevention efforts in local communities. Through your work in engaging key sectors of the community, we can create population-level change and positive, sustainable outcomes that can truly change the world. To learn more about our work, visit the CADCA website, www.cadca.org.

—Arthur T. Dean
Major General, U.S. Army, Retired
Chairman and CEO
CADCA (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America)



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INTRODUCTION

Drug-Free Communities Support Program

In 1997, Congress enacted the Drug-Free Communities Support Program (DFC) to provide grants to community-based coalitions to serve as catalysts for multi-sector participation to reduce local substance use problems. By 2018, nearly 2,000 local coalitions received funding to work on two main goals:

- Goal 1: Establish and strengthen collaboration among communities, private nonprofit agencies, and federal, state, local, and tribal governments to support the efforts of community coalitions to prevent and reduce substance use among youth.
- Goal 2: Reduce substance use among youth and, over time, among adults by addressing the factors in a community that increase the risk of substance use and promoting the factors that minimize the risk of substance use. *

*For the purposes of the DFC grant, "youth" is defined as 18 years of age and younger.

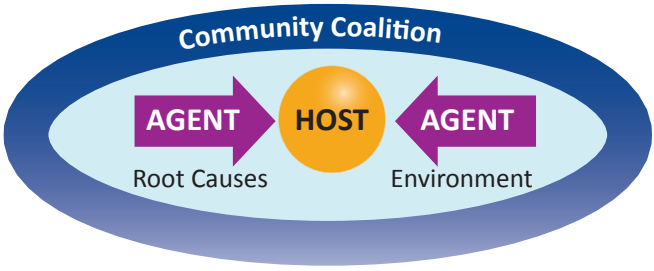
The Public Health Approach

Effective prevention efforts focus on impacting the individual, peers, families, and the overall community environment. It is the role of coalitions to reduce substance use in the larger community by implementing comprehensive, multi-strategy approaches using a public health approach to prevention.

Community coalitions use the **public health approach** to look at what substances (the **agent**) are being used by youth and adults (the **host**) in the community and to impact those conditions (root causes in the **environment**) that promote the misuse of substances, and strengthen those conditions that promote and support healthy choices and behaviors.

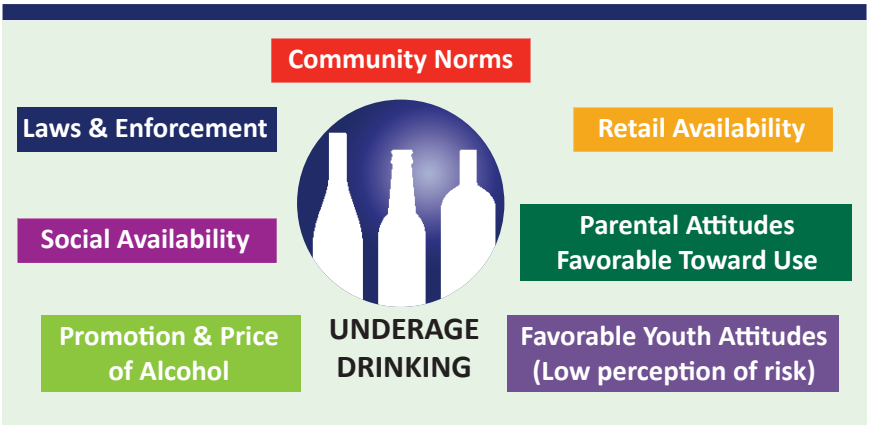
THE PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH

The Public Health Approach demonstrates that problems can arise when a **host** (the individual or person using substances) interacts with an **agent** (e.g., the substance, like alcohol or drugs) in an **environment** (the social and physical context in which substance use does or does not occur).



Root causes, also known as **risk and protective factors** or intervening variables are those conditions in the community, family, peer group, and school that make it more or less likely a person will misuse substances. In another area, consider the risk factors for heart disease. A poor diet is not the only cause of heart attacks, but we know that a poor diet can significantly increase the likelihood you might have a heart attack. Eating healthy foods and exercising are examples of protective factors that can decrease the likelihood of future heart disease. Figure 1 identifies key root causes for underage drinking. (Note: these risk factors are discussed in detail in the *Community Assessment Primer*, Chapter 2: Collect Needs and Resource Data.)

Figure 1



Community Coalitions are oftentimes one of the only groups in a community that is organized to address the entire community environment in which young people may misuse substances. Many organizations and individuals can impact the individual and address specific aspects of the environment, but the coalition is the only group that is looking COMPREHENSIVELY at the environment seeking to achieve population-level changes to the entire community.

Individual-focused strategies that target individuals using substances can reach limited numbers of people. Community-based programs that provide direct services to individuals are important partners in a comprehensive community-level response to substance use. Strategies that focus on the availability of the substance and the entire community environment—although more difficult to implement—are likely to impact many more people. For example, information learned by teenagers who attend alcohol prevention classes at school, while important, these individual-focused strategies are limited to those students enrolled in the classes.

Chances of keeping youth from using alcohol are greater if those classes are part of a comprehensive strategy that also includes local ordinances that limit billboards and other advertising near local schools, and community-wide policies that mandate responsible service training as part of the alcohol licensing process. These strategies, coupled with increased funding for compliance checks and increased fines for violations, will all work to ensure that alcohol retailers do not sell to minors. Such **environmental-focused strategies** target the substance (e.g., the availability of alcohol) and the environment (e.g., implementing policies to reduce youth access). The role of the coalition is to identify or coordinate the implementation of these comprehensive strategies.

SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework

The DFC initiative utilizes the **strategic prevention framework** (SPF) developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The SPF's seven elements guide coalitions in developing the infrastructure needed for community-based public health approaches leading to effective and sustainable reductions in alcohol, tobacco, and other substance use.

The elements shown in Figure 2 include:

- **Assessment.** Collect data to define problems, resources, and readiness within a geographic area to address needs and gaps.
- **Capacity.** Mobilize and/or build capacity within a geographic area to address needs.
- **Planning.** Develop a comprehensive strategic plan that includes policies, programs, and practices creating a logical, data-driven plan to address problems identified in assessment.
- **Implementation.** Implement evidence-based prevention programs, policies, and practices.
- **Evaluation.** Measure the impact of the SPF and its implemented programs, policies, and practices.
- **Cultural Competence.** The ability to interact effectively with members of diverse populations.
- **Sustainability.** The process of achieving and maintaining long-term results.

To be successful, coalitions leaders and members need to implement each of these elements in their community. Fortunately, all the skills and knowledge don't need to reside in any one individual, but in the coalition members' collective repertoire of skills and knowledge.

Figure 2 displays the key skills and processes that CADCA has identified as essential for a coalition to be successful. The *CADCA Primer Series* describes each of the SPF elements in detail.

Figure 2

Implementation Overview

During the planning process (see the Institute's *Planning Primer*) the coalition identified multiple **strategies and activities** to address the problem(s), root causes, and local conditions your coalition seeks to change. This primer focuses on the SPF's fourth element, implementation, or putting the coalition's plans into action. The following considerations represent key factors that go into the implementation effort.

Implementation approaches: Coalitions generally implement their plans using several approaches to **"doing the work**:**"**

- **Coalition members and partners** and their organizations commit to doing specific work. In many cases, this work will be consistent with the vision and mission of their organizations. For example, if the strategy is to address the local condition of "retailers are selling marijuana to minors," then the local cannabis control board would be responsible for conducting compliance checks.
- **Community organizations** include entities that may or may not be active members on the coalition, but provide programs and services related to specific coalition strategies. For example, the local housing authority, which may not be an active member of the coalition, can partner with the coalition to provide education to their tenants on the proper storage and disposal of prescription medications.
- **Consultants/contractors:** Coalitions may also engage outside consultants for program evaluation. Contracts can be made directly with individuals or organizations. The coalition can also issue a request for proposals, which defines the work it wants done and invites community-based organizations or individuals to develop and submit proposals outlining in detail how they plan to carry out specific activities.

Role of coalition members: In implementation, the role of coalition members moves from planning to oversight, mutual accountability, and monitoring of implementation efforts. During the implementation phase, coalition members and community partners must step up and honor the commitments made during the planning process to carry out and/or oversee various aspects of the coalition's work.

Accountability: This is the time to strengthen members' commitment to the plan and for them to demonstrate their effectiveness in solving community problems. Remember, coalition members, not staff, should implement interventions. Members engaged in the monitoring process are required to be able to address challenges and make mid-course corrections in a timely manner.

Role of coalition staff: The role of coalition staff (if available to the coalition) is not to implement all the activities, rather, coalition staff can focus

on coordinating and communicating among the partners to ensure the implementation efforts are being conducted according to the plans. The staff can work with partners to ensure that promised resources are available and that the work is being completed on time.

A Word About Cultural Competence as it Relates to Implementation

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

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

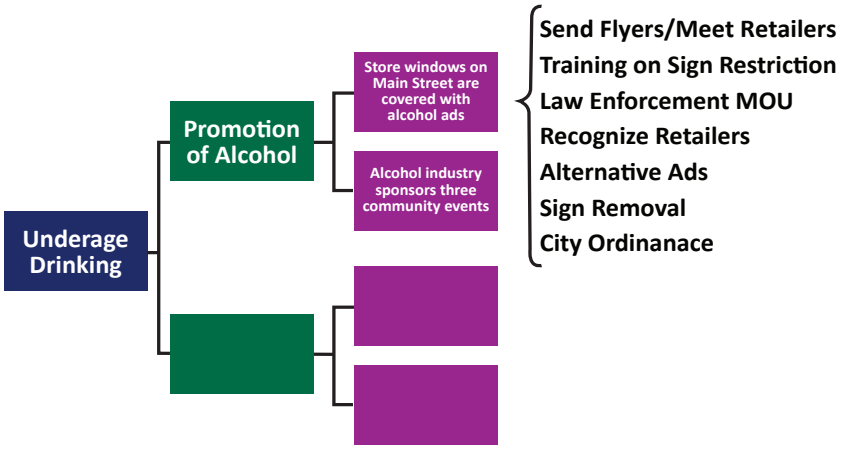
CHAPTER 1. Prioritize Strategies and Action Plans

Review Logic Model and Strategic and Action Plans

In the planning process, the coalition identified the strategies and activities to be implemented based on the coalition's **logic model** (discussed in detail in the *Community Assessment Primer*) and the **strategic and action plans** (discussed in detail in the *Planning Primer*). The coalition must review these documents to confirm:

- **Local conditions** identified on the logic model – these are the behaviors and/or conditions in the community the coalition has identified that relate to the root causes of the problems (substance to be addressed.)
- **Short-term objectives** identified in the strategic and action plans – the objectives which are expected to be achieved within a 6-month to 24-month timeframe and represent the changes to the local conditions the coalition expects to achieve.
- **Comprehensive, evidence-based environmental strategies** identified in the strategic and action plans represent the specific actions the coalition will take to change the local condition.
- **Activities** identified in the strategic and action plans – the specific tasks or steps that will be carried out to implement each of the strategies.

The logic model below provides an example of comprehensive strategies aligned with a local condition.



In order to achieve the changes outlined in the logic model and strategic and action plan, the coalition must ensure the strategies will be sufficient to change the local conditions in the defined community. Specific questions the coalition should ask BEFORE starting implementation include:

1. Do the **local conditions** represent specific, identifiable, and actionable behavior or conditions in the community?
2. Are there at least two pieces of data (**measures**) that can be used to assess the changes in the local conditions?
3. Are the strategies identified to change the local condition based on **evidence** of strategies that have empirically demonstrated the ability to change the local condition in similar communities?
4. Are the strategies **comprehensive** in that they include multiple components (e.g., provide information, build skills, provide support, change access/barriers, change consequences, change the physical design, and change policy)?
5. Do the strategies contain enough "**dosage**" to change the community environment – for the defined community – and achieve the **short-term objectives**?

If the answer to any of these questions is not YES, then the coalition should go back and review their planning efforts to ensure the coalition's implementation efforts will be effective and not be wasteful of the coalition and community's scarce resources.

Comprehensive Strategies

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

Confirm Sequence and Timeline for Implementation

As previously stated, the effort to change a local condition can take anywhere from 6 to 24 months, depending on the local condition and the complexity of the comprehensive strategies being implemented. Strategies that include changes to local laws or ordinances can be expected to take a longer amount of time, as the coalition will need to build constituent support and provide the education and advocacy necessary to obtain the votes necessary for passage of the legislation.

To ensure the coordination of resources and communication among partners in the implementation process, it is critical that every partner has a complete understanding of the activities and the order in which they will be implemented. The action plan (discussed in detail in the *Planning Primer*) lays out the **sequence and overall timeline** for the strategies and activities. The coalition and its partners must review the action plan to ensure:

- The **partners** involved in implementation are sufficiently prepared for their role in the implementation. If not, they may need to be provided with information or skill-building training prior to engaging in strategies to change the local condition. This additional training and support may need to be added to the activities and timeline.
- The agencies to be involved in the **enforcement** of laws and policies must be on board early in the process and have adequate training and resources to effectively enforce the new policies. If not, it will be unlikely they will be effective in conducting the necessary enforcement activities. Additional time for training and internal policy development may need to be added to the activities and timeline.
- Coalition and **community members** are ready and willing to implement the comprehensive strategies necessary to change a local condition. In some cases, extra steps may need to be added to the action plan to build community awareness of the problem and proposed solutions. This is especially true if the people receiving the information and skills have not already been involved in the planning. For example, if a coalition is going to establish a tip line in a neighborhood to support a loud party ordinance, it would be beneficial for the residents to be informed and trained on the tip line prior to the ratification of the ordinance.

With these considerations in mind it is important at the beginning of the implementation process for the coalition and its partners to confirm the action plan and timeline for the strategies and activities. During the review, the coalition and its partners can agree upon the following:

- **Activities:** Clarify and agree upon the individual steps required to plan, implement, and evaluate the project.
- **Responsibilities:** Clarify who will be responsible for each action and how they will be held accountable for meeting their deliverables and deadlines.
- **By when**: Specific deadlines must be established for every activity to be completed.
- **Resources**: These include the in-kind and cash resources needed to do the work.

Implementing Policy-Based Strategies – Understanding Lobbying

When planning to implement policy changes, there are 10 key steps that increase the likelihood that institutional or public policies ("Big P" and "little p" policies) can be successfully implemented:

1. Clearly state the problem
2. Engage enforcement
3. Gather and analyze data to make your case

4. Research model legislation/policies
5. Draft policy language
6. Use media to educate
7. Mobilize support and provide community education
8. Get the policy adopted
9. Ensure enforcement of the policy
10. Evaluate effects of policy change

While the 10 steps appear to be in a linear sequence, it is common for coalitions to work on more than one step at the same time or repeat several of the steps throughout the policy campaign process.

Big "P" and little "p" Policies

When discussing policy change as part of a comprehensive strategy to change a local condition, it is helpful to differentiate between two different types of policies to be changed:

- **Big "P"** – represents changes to laws, ordinances or policies that must be voted on by an elected legislative body such as a city council, county supervisors, or school board.
- **Little "p"** – represents a change to an administrative policy, procedure, or practice that can be implemented by an organization. For example, law enforcement changing patrol practices and administrative procedures to address youth drinking in "hot spots" illustrates little "p" policy changes.

The distinction is important because Big "P" changes to laws and ordinances may, depending on the funding sources, require coalitions to change their implementation plans due to lobbying restrictions.

If a coalition receives any federal or state funding, then the coalition must be careful not to use any of the funds to impact specific legislation. It is important to understand how the lobbying rules impact how the coalition works.

"Lobbying" is defined as using federal or state funding in communications intended to influence specific legislation.

The term "lobbying" describes very specific kinds of activities and is narrowly defined with specific definitions for both direct and grassroots lobbying. For the 10 key steps listed above, steps one through four can be conducted internally within the coalition. These four steps represent the coalition's efforts to "get their ducks in a row" around the local condition and the proposed policy solution. Since no legislation or policy has yet been proposed, the coalition is not in danger of violating any lobbying rules.

Lobbying with Government Money?

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

Nonprofit organizations need to keep an account of their lobbying activities for IRS reporting purposes, but any entity that receives federal funds needs to be aware of separate restrictions on that money.

A provision of the U.S. Code known as the Byrd Amendment prohibits the use of federal funds to lobby. Any matching money that the organization raises to obtain federal funding comes under the same prohibition as the federal money itself. This prohibition was enacted under the theory that federal money should not be used to lobby Congress in an attempt to ensure a steady stream of federal money.

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

After the coalition goes public with the proposed ordinance, in steps five through eight, then the policy development effort has "crossed the line" where the coalition must be wary of the lobbying rule. This does not mean the policy development effort will cease. It simply means the policy development effort must be conducted without the use of federal or state funds – or conducted "external" to the coalition's use of federal funds. A full description of the difference between education and lobbying can be found in CADCA's *Strategizer #31, Guidelines for Advocacy: Changing Policies and Laws to Create Safer Environments for Youth.*

Examples of Activities That are Not Lobbying

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

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

Create an Action Team to Implement Specific Strategies

The coalition can create **action teams** (also work groups or sub-committees) to implement specific strategies and activities identified in the coalition's strategic and action plans. The following considerations can be helpful when creating action teams to do the work:

- **Establish the authority of each action team**. Members need to know what decision-making responsibility and authority they have. A workgroup may be directed to identify recommendations for final approval by all members or given leeway to make the decisions on its own. The coalition must establish clear boundaries for the decision-making authority of each action team.
- **Identify clear products and outcomes** the action team is expected to accomplish. What is the committee tasked to complete (e.g., development of a logic model, implementation of a strategy, or conducting a community event)? In addition, the committee members need to know what resources they have (or don't have) at their disposal. This includes both budget ($) and staff time allotted to the work of the committee.

- **Clarify timelines and level of involvement** expected of action team members. This involves setting a start and end date for the committee's work and establishing an estimated amount of time (# of hours or meetings) that the committee members might expect to invest in the work of the committee.
- **Recruit selected individual and organizations** to be on the action team. The action team, which can be composed of three to 10 or more members, can include representatives from:
  - Coalition members
  - Partner organizations involved in the strategy
  - Organizations with responsibility for enforcing any policies included in the comprehensive strategies
  - Representatives from diverse communities impacted by the local condition and/or proposed strategies.

CHAPTER 2.
Obtain Resources

Before starting the actual implementation of strategies and activities, it is important for the coalition to have a clear picture of the resources that will be needed. This effort entails creating a budget that fully describes what resources are needed and how those resources will be obtained.

Identify Cash and In-kind Resources Needed

Implementing each of the strategies and activities identified in the coalition's strategic and action plans requires resources. The role of the coalition is to work with partner organizations to ensure the appropriate resources are available at the right time. While there are several ways to establish the resources needed, the simplest way is to determine the:

- **Cash resources** – the money needed to purchase materials, supplies, and contracting with individuals and organizations that provide necessary expertise.
- **In-kind resources** include the skills, technology, office and meeting space, communication, transportation, and other items that are provided by individual volunteers and partner organizations.

While cash resources are important, it is just as critical for coalitions to have a solid plan for obtaining and maintaining their in-kind volunteer and material donations.

Step 1: Develop a Budget. The first step is to identify the resources needed to implement an activity. This effort entails creating a budget for the activity – what resources are needed and how much would it cost to obtain the resources. The resources needed to implement an activity can be organized into seven categories which include:

1. **Communication.** This category includes communications equipment such as fax machines, phone systems, and cell phones. Also included are the ongoing costs for phone, internet, and e-mail service, postage, and photocopying.
2. **Space**. Coalitions need meeting space, space to conduct programs, and usually office space for coalition staff members.
3. **Supplies**. This category is a bit of a catch-all that includes everything from basic office supplies to specific supplies for prevention programming. Supplies for general meetings such as chart paper and markers are also included.

4. **Technology**. Websites, laptop computers, and printers are just a few of the technological resources most coalitions need to conduct everyday business.
5. **Time.** Evidence suggests that coalitions are more likely to succeed when they have staff devoted to supporting the work of volunteers and of the overall coalition. In addition to staff time, the coalition often needs the time of professionals with specific skills such a legal services or accounting. Lastly, the time associated with specific activities such as teaching a substance use prevention curriculum or supervising after-school activities should be included in this category. The coalition should account for all time for which it would normally have to pay.
6. **Training**. Many coalitions fail to plan for the ongoing training and skills development of staff and volunteers. The opportunity to build skills is a major benefit of coalition involvement and costs associated with this process should always be included in activity budgets.
7. **Transportation**. For some coalitions, providing transportation to participants is key to overcoming barriers to participation. Transportation to out-of-town events and trainings are included in this category.

Step 2: Identify sources. The second step is to determine how the resources will be obtained – whether through cash or in-kind donations. There are a number of ways coalitions can obtain these resources. The ***Sustainability Primer*** provides a detailed description of 17 different ways to obtain cash and in-kind resources necessary to sustain the coalition over the long-term. Many of these methods are also applicable when obtaining resources for implementation.

- **Asset sharing:** These are resources such as equipment and space that can be donated by an organization. Typical examples include sharing office space with other agencies, using copy equipment owned by the coalition's fiscal agent, or sharing the use of a passenger van with several youth service programs. The key is the coalition did not have to purchase or pay for these assets.
- **In-kind contributions.** This is when a person or organization donates something they already have such as supplies, materials, and staff or volunteer time. For example, to print a flyer for an event, a local printing company may agree to donate their paper, printing, and time. A lawyer may donate their legal advice to help the coalition draft the language for a proposed ordinance.
- **Funds from a government or organizational budget**. Many coalitions receive money from city and county prevention budgets or directly from organizations. These funds can be used to purchase those items or services needed to implement the activity.

- **Grants**. Local, state, and federal governments, as well as family or community foundations are typical grantors. Grants can come in large and small amounts. They can be very competitive and restrictive, so a coalition should do their homework carefully. Most coalitions in the country receive some type of grant support.
- **Fundraisers.** Fundraisers are a logical and familiar tool in the coalition sustainability toolbox. Fundraisers can be conducted to raise money for a specific event. For example, youth may conduct a car wash to pay for their attendance at a conference in another state.
- **Individual donors.** Many coalitions avoid this strategy because they are afraid to ask potential donors for contributions or simply have not considered the opportunity, but individual donors can be valuable in leading a coalition toward sustainability.

Due to the fact that some of these sources may take time to acquire, it is important that the coalition and its partners begin planning well in advance of the expected start date of the strategies and activities.

Engage Coalition Members and Partners to Obtain Resources

It is not the responsibility of any one person to obtain the resources necessary to implement strategies and activities. Just as the planning effort required the involvement of coalition members and coalition partner organizations, the effort to secure resources requires their involvement as well.

The saying "people own what they create" applies to the need to engage coalition members and partners in both planning and implementation efforts. When members and partners are engaged in doing the problem analysis, developing the logic models, and strategic and action planning, they will likely be invested in the strategies and willing to engage in resource development to ensure they are implemented effectively.

Ideas for sustaining coalition member and partner involvement and support strategies include:

- **Appoint** key stakeholders as co-chairs of action teams. Individuals in leadership roles are generally committed to ensure the success of the activities.
- **Create** MOUs (memorandums of understanding) with partner organizations. The agreements can spell out the financial and organizational commitments of both the coalition and partner organizations to ensure implementation over the long-term.
- **House** the implementation efforts within a partner organization. Many activities can be conducted by staff of partner organizations as part of their ongoing work. For example, the public health department may conduct

regular public awareness campaigns around a variety of health issues. As such, the health department could implement the coalition's planned public awareness campaign around the dangers and risk of youth marijuana use.

- **Ensure** that partner organization staff are included in the activity budget (as appropriate). When planning for the strategies and activities, ensure that partners whose staff are involved in the project will be included in the budget. This provides a benefit (WIFM – what's in it for me?) for the partner as they will receive additional staff resources to do the work.
- **Assist** in grant writing and fundraising for partner organizations. The coalition can provide much of the information and budget justification for a partner organization's application for additional funding that includes resources for the strategies and activities.
- **Assign** fundraising activities to sector representatives. Sector representatives often have long-standing and deep relationships with other individuals and organizations in their designated sector. These relationships can be helpful in recruiting for additional in-kind or cash resources.
- **Recognize** individuals and partners for their involvement. In all aspects of coalition work it is most important to recognize individuals and organizations for their contributions to the coalition's vision and mission.

Sustain the Resources for the Long-term

The implementation of strategies designed to achieve population level reductions in substance use may require changing systems, consequences, incentives, or environments. We know that many types of environmental approaches, such as policy changes, may take a substantial amount of time. Continued enforcement and follow up is required for the changes to become permanent.

For these reasons, coalitions need to ensure that resources for the strategies will be in place long enough to ensure that short-, intermediate- and long-term objectives are achieved. For example, conducting compliance checks over a six-month period will not necessarily ensure that retailers will avoid selling to minors over the next three years. Likewise, providing information for prescribers and pharmacists to share with their patients on safe storage and disposal of prescription medications will need to continue indefinitely beyond the initial distribution and training efforts of the coalition.

Given this, it is never too early to think about how your coalition will ensure resources are in place for the longer term. The Institute's *Planning Primer* suggests that coalitions begin to work on sustaining resources during initial

planning, as the strategic and action plans are developed. Even though coalitions are busy getting strategies and activities started, they must also be working on how to institutionalize and financially sustain their work, at least by the time implemented activities are started.

Institutionalizing specific strategies and activities is a long-term process that requires finding ways to make the policies, practices, and procedures successfully established in the community become permanently rooted there. For example, if a coalition works to implement a social host ordinance that addresses parental involvement in home parties, the coalition can support the ongoing success of the strategy by ensuring the:

1. Tip line used to report home parties is housed, staffed, and funded by the local police department over the long-term
2. Local neighborhood watch organizations include awareness of house parties as part of their annual resident training programs
3. District attorney and the court system assigns a high priority to any social host ordinance citations to ensure a swift, fair, and appropriate adjudication of the relevant cases
4. Local public health agency includes information about underage drinking and the health and financial risks of home parties in their school-based curriculum provided each year in middle and high school health classes.

In summary, the goal of institutionalization is to have programs, services, and activities become part of the activities, protocols, procedures, and budget of community-based organizations, thereby leading to sustainability.

Planning for **financial stability** is intricately linked to institutionalizing successful initiatives and other work of the coalition. This process involves figuring out the resources the coalition needs —both money and other types of community support—to continue long enough to achieve the long-term changes desired by the coalition. These resources may include finding in-kind support, recruiting and sustaining a volunteer staff, obtaining commitments for shared resources from other organizations or persuading another organization to take on a project initiated by your coalition.

Many resources exist in the local community and funders often allow or require coalitions to elicit or leverage local support through matching strategies. Since cash resources can be difficult to obtain in economically distressed neighborhoods, outside grants provide the money that, when combined with local physical, human, and creative resources, can enable a strong community response to tackle substance use problems.

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

CHAPTER 3.
Implement Action Plans

Implementation is the act of carrying out or executing the strategic plan. During the planning stage, the coalition selected a comprehensive set of strategies to address the defined local conditions to be changed. In implementation, the role of coalition members shifts from planning to executing, overseeing, carrying out, holding each other accountable, and monitoring the action. It is at this point that coalition members must step up and honor the commitments they made during planning.

Successful implementation requires moving beyond a solid action plan into mobilizing resources of the coalition to get the work done. It requires analyzing, organizing, and growing both internal and external resources and relationships of the coalition. Achievement in implementation is the culmination of all coalition activities that ensures actions are performed effectively.

Before the coalition gets to work, the following considerations may be helpful to ensure the success of the implementation effort:

Build Capacity. This is a good time to build additional capacity specific to the strategies your coalition is implementing. The coalition can ensure it has built sufficient capacity to implement specific strategies by asking the following questions:

- Who within the coalition and/or partners has taken a leadership role in implementing the strategy?
- Has appropriate training needed to implement the specific tasks been identified and delivered?
- Have key relationships and partnerships the coalition needs to implement the strategy been identified and addressed?
- Have sufficient resources needed to implement the strategy been secured?
- Have appropriate action teams been identified and created to implement the strategy?
- How will the coalition spend time at monthly meetings to ensure it stays focused on implementation?

Recruit allies. Coalitions must think outside of the box, beyond the partners they have always worked with, to purposely recruit others who are invested in the change they are seeking to achieve. Identify the people or groups who have the same interest. This level of recruitment is likely going to be issue-driven, though coalitions may find that some allies are interested in remaining invested in the coalition's work once the common problem is addressed.

Thus, analyzing and identifying potential allies follows a slightly different process than recruiting sector representatives. To identify potential allies, the coalition can ask questions such as:

- Whose problem is it?
- Who is directly affected and who is indirectly affected?
- What are the benefits for their participation? What do they gain if you win?
- What risks are they taking? What might they lose?
- Into what groups are they organized?
- What individuals or organizations are already working on the issue?

Know the opposition and be prepared to respond to them. In addition to building support of allies, the coalition should also identify the groups or organizations likely to oppose the work before it begins implementation. This knowledge enables the coalition to stay attuned to adversarial public opinion as you work through implementation. The coalition can anticipate the type and degree of opposition it may encounter and effectively direct its resources toward defeating your opponents. In short, identifying adversaries and anticipating their opposition should increase the coalition's chances of success. Questions to guide a coalition's research on the opposition:

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

Get to work. Based on the action plans, this step entails making sure the work is done according to plan and making adjustments as needed. The coalition can accomplish this by:

- Developing timelines and schedules for the work
- Organizing members to achieve maximum effect (i.e., work groups, task forces, committees)
- Identifying how the work will be supervised and monitored
- Discussing the action plans and providing status updates at the coalition meetings. The coalition should be kept up-to-speed on any additional resources needed to complete the tasks. It is also important to recognize coalition members for their contributions to the efforts.

Implementing Policy Change

Since most comprehensive strategies planned by a coalition to change local conditions include some form of Big "P" or little "p" policy change, it is imperative for coalitions and partner organizations to pay special attention to the action plans for implementing those policies. The following points provided by the community toolbox provide a guide for implementing policy change:

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

As stated earlier, coalitions that receive federal or state funding must be cautious not to violate any restrictions on **lobbying and advocacy** to influence legislation. Coalitions can consider the following strategies to ensure that there is no perceived or actual violation of the lobbying rules:

Create a separate, independent task force or action team that is not affiliated or connected with the coalition in any way. While coalition members may be part of the task force, their involvement should not in any way be funded or support by the coalition.

Identify another community organization to host the policy campaign that has non-federal or state funding that can be allocated toward the policy change.

Ensuring Enforcement

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

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

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

Getting Policies Enforced

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

Monitoring and Documenting Implementation

As the coalition implements its strategic and action plans, it will want to quantify and describe the successful actions and outcomes that occur during implementation. While coalitions strive to implement strategies and activities capable of delivering the maximum effect, they must also measure and monitor the results of the implementation effort by **tracking the short-term objectives** along the way. The logic model and strategic and action plans allow the coalition to monitor community changes by tracking the results and comparing with the short-term objectives (desired changes to local conditions.)

Tracking Short-term Objectives - Example

The following short-term objective can be used to track progress on changes to a local condition on the logic model:

Short-term objective: By the year 2020, decrease by 5% the percentage of youth reporting being "high on marijuana at school" from 10.2% in 2017 to 5.2% in 2020 as measured by 10th graders on the ABC Youth Survey.

Outcome Measure: 10th grader survey response on the ABC Youth Survey to the question: "How many times have you been high on marijuana at school in the last 30 days?"

The coalition should **also monitor implementation processes** by tracking the work of those individuals and/or organizations responsible for implementing various parts of the action plan. This will result in a good description of the implementation as it unfolds. If the coalition has an evaluator, they can help set up a tracking and reporting system. Otherwise, identify someone or a work group in the coalition who has the skills to oversee this aspect of the coalition's work.

Tracking Strategy Implementation - Example

The following measures can be used to track the implementation of activities to address the local condition: ***Youth are high on marijuana at school.***

Process Measures:

- # of teacher trainings on the school substance use policy
- Changes to school substance use policy and procedures
- # of classes receiving marijuana prevention curriculum
- # of parent trainings on youth marijuana use
- # of school staff trained in SBIRT procedures

It is important for the coalition to document the implementation process and describe any changes you make to the original plan along the way. Partners and funders may ask the coalition to report on the accuracy with which it has implemented its evidence-based interventions and approaches.

The coalition can use these outcome and process measures to:

- **Document** program components that work well
- **Identify** where improvements need to be made
- **Provide** feedback so strategies are implemented more effectively
- **Make** timely adjustments in activities and strategies to better address identified problems
- **Assess** whether enough resources have been leveraged and where you might find more
- **Engage** stakeholders/sectors so they feel a sense of responsibility in helping ensure that the coalition's objectives are met.

CHAPTER 4. Ensuring Implementation Fidelity

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

According to SAMHSA: **implementation fidelity** describes the degree to which a program or practice is implemented as intended.

Adaptation describes how much, and in what ways, a program or practice is changed to meet local circumstances. Evidence-based programs are defined as such because they consistently achieve positive outcomes. The greater your fidelity to the original program design, the more likely you are to reproduce these positive results. Customizing a program to better reflect the attitudes, beliefs, experiences, and values of your focus population can increase its cultural relevance. However, it is important to keep in mind that such adaptations may compromise program effectiveness.

Remaining faithful to the original evidence-based design while addressing the unique needs and characteristics of your target audience requires balancing fidelity and adaptation. When you change an intervention, you risk compromising outcomes. However, implementing a program that requires some adaptation may be more efficient and cost-effective than designing a program from scratch.

Key Elements Critical to Implementation

SAMHSA identifies key considerations to ensure fidelity of implementation of evidence-based programs and strategies:

- **Retain core components**: Evidence-based programs are more likely to be effective when their core components (that is, those elements responsible for producing positive outcomes) are maintained. Core components are like the key ingredients in a cookie recipe. You may be able to omit the nuts, but if you leave out the flour, the recipe won't work. Here are some general guidelines for maintaining core components:
  - Preserve the setting as well as the number and length of sessions
  - Preserve key program content
  - Add new content with care. Consider program guidance and prevention research

- **Build capacity before changing the program**: Rather than change a program to fit with local conditions, consider ways to develop the resources or build local readiness so you can deliver the program as it was originally designed.
- **Add rather than subtract:** Doing so will decrease the likelihood that you are eliminating a program element that is important (that is, critical to program effectiveness).
- **Adapt with care**. Even when interventions are selected with great care, there may be ways to improve a program's appropriateness for a unique population. **Cultural adaptation** refers to program modifications that are tailored to the values, attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of the target audience. To make an intervention more culturally appropriate, it is crucial to consider the language, values, attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of the targeted population members. Learn more about cultural competence.
- **If adapting, consult experts first**: Experts can include the program developer, an environmental strategies specialist, or your evaluator. They may be able to tell you how the intervention has been adapted in the past and how well (or not) those adaptations worked. For cultural adaptations, you will also want to consult with cultural leaders and members of your focus population.

Monitor and Verify Adherence to Fidelity

One way to systematically monitor implementation is to create a fidelity checklist. First, list all the activities in your action plan/scope of work and make room for a check box next to each activity. Check off each activity as you complete it and document the following:

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

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

Conclusion

This primer covers several major themes related to implementing strategies and activities to reduce substance use: the basics of implementation, prioritizing strategies and action plans, information on obtaining resources required to implement the strategies and action plans, considerations for implementing policy-based strategies, and strategies to ensure implementation fidelity.

The primer encourages coalitions to consider the following key points in their implementation efforts:

Commitment to the SPF process. Coalitions must commit to using the previous planning efforts conducted to-date. This means the implementation effort must be guided by the coalition's logic models and strategic plans.

Ownership. Coalitions should ensure that their members and partners fully understand and embrace the coalition's strategic and action plans prior to moving to implementation. When coalition members concur with the selected strategies and understand how the activities will be implemented, the coalition will be more successful in achieving its desired outcomes.

Resources. Coalitions must be proactive and thoughtful about identifying the resources needed to implement their strategies and activities. This requires the coalition to identify the resources needed and the sources of the cash and in-kind resources.

Sustainability. The implementation of strategies to bring about significant community change rarely occurs in a short time frame. As coalitions build capacity to bring about these changes, they must be aware of the need to generate resources to sustain their strategies, not simply the expense of operating a coalition.

A Word About Words

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

A Word About Words

What you want to accomplish?	What will you do?	How do you know what has been accomplished?
• Aim • Goal • Objective • Problem Statement • Target • Vision	• Activity • Approach • Initiative • Input • Method • Mission • Policy • Practice • Program • Strategy	• Benchmark • Indicator • Intermediate • Outcome • Impact • Measure • Milestone • Outcome • Output • Result

Glossary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cultural competence. A set of behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency, or program or among individuals, enabling them to function effectively in diverse cultural interactions and similarities within, among, and between groups.

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

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

Goal. States intent and purpose and supports the vision and mission statements. For example: "To create a healthy community where substances are not misused by adults or by youth."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SBIRT. Screening, brief Intervention, and referral to treatment (SBIRT) is an evidence-based practice used to identify, reduce, and prevent problematic use, abuse, and dependence on alcohol and illicit drugs.

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

Strategy. Identifies the overarching approach of how the coalition will achieve intended results.

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

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

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