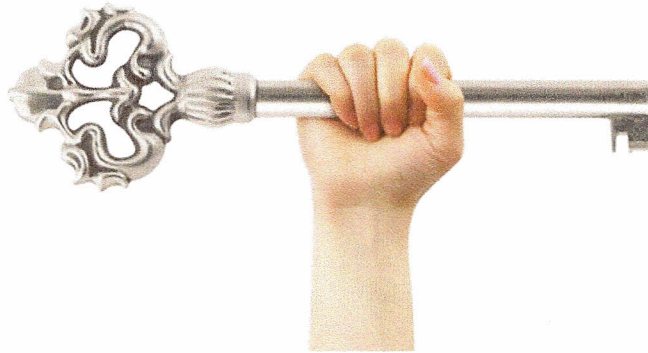# When the Grant Goes Away: Keys to Sustainability

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Objectives

- Participants will be able to identify predictors and barriers to sustainability.
- Participants will be able to identify keys to increasing organizational capacity for sustainability.
- Participants will understand the importance of utilizing evidence-based practices, process and outcome evaluation to ensure effectiveness.
- Participants will be understand the value of community support in ensuring coalition or program sustainability.

Developing a Conceptual Framework to Assess the Sustainability of (Prevention Programs and) Community Coalitions Post-Federal Funding

The federal government has increasingly used community coalitions as a programmatic approach to address emerging community health issues. Community coalitions are composed of diverse organizations that form an alliance in order to pursue a common goal. The activities of community coalitions include advocacy, outreach, education, prevention, service delivery, capacity building, empowerment, community action, and systems change. The presumption is that successful community coalitions will be able to identify new resources to continue their activities and to sustain their impact in the community over time.

What is a coalition?

"…an alliance of three or more organizations that is addressing one or more of the original goals of the coalition. The original goals of the community coalition are those that were being addressed when the coalition was initially…funded. In order to address their original goals, coalitions may conduct a variety of activities that change over time."

"The literature highlights three functions of community coalitions that make them unique from other types of community organizations and entities. First, community coalitions create collaborative capacity among diverse organizations, including health care providers, community groups, grassroots organizations, faith-based groups, universities, and government agencies. Second, community coalitions help their communities to develop the capacity to build social capital that can be applied to other health and social issues. Third, community coalitions are catalysts or agents of change at the local level, advocating for stronger policies, influencing individual health or behavior, and delivering services, among other activities."

"The activities of community coalitions include advocacy, outreach, education, prevention, service delivery, capacity building, empowerment, community action, and systems change. The presumption is that successful community coalitions will be able to identify new resources to continue their activities and to sustain their impact in the community over time."

Six characteristics that affect program functioning and effectiveness.

"The CCAT and Empowerment Theory provide useful frameworks for understanding community coalitions and the factors that affect their ability to successfully perform their core functions. The theories highlight the outcomes of coalitions, ranging from community capacity to health and social outcomes. They also demonstrate that coalitions must react to the needs of the community and adapt their collaborative activities according to new community conditions. An assessment of the theories of community coalitions and a review of the body of literature on community coalitions and partnerships yielded six characteristics that can affect coalition functioning and effectiveness. These characteristics include: leadership, membership, structure, operations and processes, strategic vision, and contextual factors. These characteristics can affect the development of community coalitions and their ability to achieve their goals and create change."

Sustainability of Community-based programs and community coalitions

"The concept of sustainability is germane to research on both community-based programs and community coalitions. However, a consensus definition of sustainability has not emerged in either body of research. The primary divergence among definitions in both bodies of literature relates to the unit of analysis—what is being sustained. Some definitions focus on sustaining the program or coalition, while others focus on sustaining the activities and impacts of the program or coalition."

Predictors and Barriers

"Several important predictors of sustainability in community coalitions are leadership, membership diversity, history of collaboration, structure, resource diversity, sustainability plans, and community buy-in. Barriers to sustainability include governance challenges, structural issues, a lack of funding for core operations, turf battles, leader and member turnover, and shifting priorities."

After the Funding Goes Away

"Of the coalitions that have been sustained, some are fully sustained while others are partially sustained. Some coalitions may have been expanded. Post initial federal funding, some community coalitions will not be sustained—either because they have dissolved due to a lack of resources, conflicts, or other reasons; actively disbanded because they have achieved their original goal(s); and/or they were no

longer needed in the community. The conceptual model incorporates these tenets into a framework for assessing sustainability."

Enabling Characteristics

"In the framework, there are a number of enabling characteristics that affect whether a coalition will be sustained over time: effective leadership, diversity of membership, structure, vision-focus balance, resource stability and diversity, and evaluation. These characteristics were selected because they were identified in the literature as facilitators of coalition effectiveness and/or sustainability. The enabling characteristics impact the extent to which the coalition continues to address its original goals, which range from delivering programs or services to conducting systems change and policy advocacy activities, among others."

Sustainability Actions

"In addition to enabling characteristics, the framework also includes the coalition's sustainability actions. Given that the coalition's initial funding has ended, it may engage in a number of actions in order to sustain itself—from creating a sustainability plan to identifying homes for programs and services. The intermediate outcomes in this model are the sustainability of the coalition, the sustainability of the coalition's activities, and in some cases, the expansion of the coalition."

Long-term Impacts

"The coalition may have long-term outcomes regardless whether the coalition itself has been sustained. The impacts are the cumulative effects of these outcomes in the community. For the purposes of this assessment, there are impacts at the individual level (i.e., changes in health or behavior), systems level (i.e., changes in infrastructure or capacity in the community), or policy level (i.e., changes in local, state, and federal policies). Contextual factors such as the political environment can also affect the sustainability of the community coalition and its ability to create these outcomes."

Source: National Opinion Research Center of the University of Chicago (2011). *Developing a Conceptual Framework to Assess the Sustainability of Community Coalitions Post-Federal Funding.*

DFC Sustainability Plan Guidelines

The Strategic Prevention Framework identifies the need for community coalitions to consider long-term sustainability throughout the planning process. In order to help coalitions funded through the Drug Free Communities Support Program be more successful in thinking about sustainability, grantees are required to submit a Sustainability Plan to their CSAP Project Officer in years 3 and year 7 of program funding.

The plan must articulate how the community will ensure the continuation of effective policies, strategies, and practices when Federal assistance is no longer available. The plan must identify specific strategies to be sustained, including identifying the money, time, technology, and talent required to sustain those strategies; the individuals and/or organizations who will assume responsibility for sustaining those strategies; and include specific plans to solicit substantial financial support from non-Federal sources to demonstrate that the project will be self-sustaining when Federal assistance is no longer available.

This template is designed to help coalitions develop a quality Sustainability Plan. Additional technical assistance resources that may assist your coalition with developing this plan may be found on the National Coalition Institute's Website at the following address:

htttp://www.coalitioninstitute.org/SPF_Elements/Sustainability/SustainabilityHome.asp

Sustainability Preparation - a strong Sustainability Plan requires reflective thinking about the coalition's Strategic Plan

- Ultimately, the work of the coalition should focus on creating community level change that overtime will prevent and reduce substance abuse.
- The coalition should focus on the long-terms needs of the coalition in order to continue to be able to manage, implement and evaluation initiatives that are deemed necessary to sustain.
- The Sustainability Plan should fall in line with the Logic Model and Strategic Plan that has been created by the coalition.
- Briefly describe the vision and mission of the coalition's work toward this goal.

The Six Steps of Sustainability Planning

1. Identify What Needs To Be Sustained
- Describe what outcomes the coalition wants to sustain over time?
- Describe what strategies the coalition needs to sustain to achieve/maintain their outcomes?
- Determine what parts of the coalition itself will need to be sustained using outside resources. (i.e., staff, technology, space, volunteers, etc.)

2. Identify What Resources are required
- Identify what resources (i.e., hard cash, in-kind resources, human capitol, space, technology, time, etc) the coalition believes will be needed to sustain the strategies and outcomes overtime, including the essential elements of the coalition itself.

3. Create Case Statements
- Case Statements are impact statements used to clearly identify what must be sustained, why and how. They are usually about three sentences long and can become the statement that drives forward the planning process.
- Describe why the focus work of the coalition is needed in the target community?
- Describe the benefits of the coalition's work including the impact the coalition is having on creating community level change. Why is this work important?
- Describe the consequences of not having the coalition's work in the community.
- Include specific needs of support in your case statement (i.e., money, volunteers, space, etc).

4. Determining Funding Strategies

- Describe how the coalition plans to provide or develop needed resources to fund the identified strategies. This should include thinking about how the coalition implements four aspects of funding strategies:
- Share: Will the coalition share resources with other partners or how will partners support the work with their resources;
- Charge: Does or will the coalition charge for products and services;
- Ask: Does or will the coalition ask for donations from individuals/organizations; and/or
- Earn: Does or will the coalition earn income through entreprenerial activities?
- Coalitions may be able to seek funding from other entities (i.e., other federal programs, foundations, city/county/town council, state, etc.). Outline how they will seek assistance in this way.
- If the coalition is not currently engaging in any of the above named strategies, describe the coalition's plan for implementing resource development strategies in the future. Include what actions the coalition is taking now to start sustainability activities before the grant funding expires.

5. Identify Potential Partners

- Of the partners currently working with the coalition, who has been identified as being able to take on aspects of the coalition's current work after DFCSP funding is no longer available?
- Does the coalition have marketing tools?
- Describe potential partners that will be needed or recruited to help support each identified strategy?
- Why does this partner make sense for a specific strategy?
- If they are not currently supporting this activity, how will they be recruited to support this activity?
- Is your case statement compelling enough to sell this idea to this partner?

6. Action Plan to Contact and Present to Potential Partners

- Describe what will be done to contact potential partners, when will each task be accomplished and what resources will be required to contact and present to potential partners.
- Who needs to know about this effort?
- What is the coalition's communication strategy for marketing their needs and requests for support?

What is needed to achieve long-term goals?

Human resources. Your coalition's internal vitality depends largely on the skills, talents, experience and energies involved in your activities. Sustainability requires that your coalition be prepared for and cognizant of changes that can affect these critical resources:

•Some coalition members will leave their roles or their organizations for new ones. Members' responsibilities at their home organizations will shift, creating changes in availability and interest to focus on coalition work. As natural turnovers occur in local organizations, they will carry over into your membership; old members must be replaced and new ones brought into the fold.

•Likewise, your coalition will encounter changes in leadership because of expected changes in levels of leader interest and in the type of leadership required as your group's work evolves.

Social resources. Your coalition's external viability depends on the degree to which you remain well connected to your surrounding community and continue to serve an important niche in the "ecology" as it relates to the problem of substance abuse. Your group must continue to develop social resources—strong connections to and relationships with stakeholders inside and outside your community.

•The community system affecting the issues will change as key local agencies alter their own programs and policies in pursuit of their organizational missions. New organizations may crop up, and some may fold. School systems and government departments may reorganize to accommodate changes in the community and seek cost-effective operational strategies for their work. Grassroots organizations will experience their own successes, setbacks and changes in leadership. All of these changes affect who in the community is ready and able to partner.

•The connections among your community and others also will change. One growing trend indicates a shift toward regional approaches to development and service delivery. Your coalition may find itself with a broader range of available partners—but also a wider focus and range of concerns.

Material resources. The levels and types of material resources available for your coalition's work will depend on the availability of various funding streams and perceptions about how substance abuse prevention fits into community priorities.

•Available funding streams will change, bringing different requirements, resource levels and opportunities.

•The landscape of issues that your community faces will change, too. As part of this, priorities may shift. Substance abuse may be a major focus of attention in your community— or it may   receive some attention but be overshadowed by other pressing community needs. Either way, expect levels of interest and urgency around substance abuse prevention to change.

Sustaining the effort: Maintaining involvement and energy

Sustaining the effort: Maintaining involvement and energy While many coalitions hope that a hefty grant will be the end of their sustainability worries, in reality you need the commitment of many people and partners to your coalition's work over a long period of time, and you need to know that this interest runs deeper than the money brought in by a grant. Key strategies for thinking about and sustaining the effort behind your coalition's work include:

Build and maintain momentum with incremental goals and "small wins." During your coalition's assessment and planning phases, you identified a broad range of targets and several ambitious goals for addressing conditions that facilitate substance abuse in your community. Make sure that as you create your road map for change, you break these goals into smaller mini-goals. As your coalition achieves "small wins," a sense of productivity and accomplishment, greater commitment by members and partners, and a reputation for your coalition as a group that "gets things done" will follow.

Use the power of "legitimate peripheral participation." This describes how groups can revitalize their membership by creating opportunities for participants at multiple levels and the means for less-central participants/partners to fluidly become more central. The result: a deep bench from which your coalition can draw. Here are the keys to this:

•Create many ways to participate. •Enable different levels of participation. "Peripheral" participation means that you create opportunities for low-intensity and low-commitment involvement in coalition activities so that people can participate in ways that work for them.

•Ensure that all participants are viewed as legitimate—regardless of their level of involvement. Commitment to your coalition will grow when peripheral members

see that the coalition honors and accepts them as genuine contributors, even if they are not currently part of the coalition's "inner circle."

Know when the time comes for a particular initiative to "grow up" and move on. A coalition's overall energy for change can wane if it settles into a pattern of operating one or more static initiatives or programs designed to recur year after year. Remember: A coalition is not a program. While it can make sense for a coalition to take ownership of developing and seeding a particular initiative or intervention, maintaining these initiatives limits your coalition's ability to be agile and to develop new partnerships and strategies for change. This saps the vitality of your coalition and constrains your ability to add value above and beyond the work of individual organizations in the community.

•Think of these initiatives as teenagers: We love them and are invested in their success, but we know they should not live with us forever. Have a frank conversation with your coalition about when it is time for a particular initiative to grow up. Identify as a group whether the initiative can be spun off into a standalone entity, continued under the ownership of a partner organization or evolved into something else entirely.

Overcome issue "silos." Energy for change wanes when community issues are sliced too thin, dividing human and material resources in too many ways. While your coalition needs to stay focused on your main goal you also can free up energy by seeking connections with groups working on related issues. Do not feel that your coalition has to take on all the problems of the community, but partner with others to find ways to reduce redundant efforts and find joint strategies that benefit everyone's interests.

Developing and Retaining Resources

Maintaining external ties Effective coalitions function well because they cultivate and maintain strong connections with organizations and individuals representing key sectors of their community. Coalitions must ensure close ties with the community, or conflict may arise. Here are key strategies for maintaining strong ties and presence in your community and beyond:

Learn the language of value. Many coalitions and nonprofit organizations are much better at describing of community need than communicating the value of what they do. Moreover, when they do think about their value, they frame it in terms that they care about. Your coalition will benefit when you learn to think about how your work creates value in addressing needs and issues, and develop

skills in specifically connecting your contributions to the perspectives, interests and priorities of multiple audiences. Recognize the diversity of potential "selling points" connecting different stakeholders to your efforts. As your coalition gears up for an organized effort—whether fund raising, partnership development or general communication and dissemination—map out your audiences and discuss the following as a group: •How are we making a difference?

•To whom are we conveying this information (i.e., which person, organization, stakeholder, funder, etc.)?

•Why would—and should—this person, organization, stakeholder, funder, etc. care?

Get the word out early and often. Find channels to communicate your coalition's efforts and successes with key stakeholders and the general public. If you want to maintain interest, CADCA's National Coalition Institute 21 energy and awareness about your coalition, you cannot afford to fall silent to the larger community. Trust the fact that people want to know about your great work, and the more activity they hear about, the more interest there will be in supporting your activities. Specific strategies can include: •News releases and press conferences marking successes or developments in your coalition's agenda (e.g., releasing your assessment report or strategic plan) •Regular notices in the community section of your local paper, including updates about the coalition, mini-features on coalition members or partners, or short pieces about substance abuse in your community •A coalition Web site or blog: These are easy and inexpensive to set up and maintain, so coalitions have little reason not to have a Web presence •Newsletters (electronic and/or print) •Direct mailings.

Maintaining the change

There are two primary considerations when thinking about how to sustain change:

1. How deep/lasting are the changes that our strategies can create? Are we including enough high-leverage change strategies?

2. What are the operative forces that might actively or passively oppose or undo our work?

Consider that some changes are more durable and sustainable than others. Think about this in terms of where the change "lives." If the focus lives within individual

youth (e.g., toward greater disapproval of binge drinking), the change can be positive, but must be made for many youth and repeated year after year. On the other hand, if you focus change at the community level (i.e., communitywide norms about binge drinking, greater enforcement of liquor laws affecting minors or larger policy changes that facilitate these), you have a broader reach and set in motion changes that can often take on their own life.

This is one bottom-line reason we emphasize that coalitions are not programs and should avoid running them. Every change effort—whether for individuals, organizations, or whole systems or communities—is like a lever. Longer levers create longer-lasting change. While your coalition will probably use multiple strategies to achieve its goals, it is essential to incorporate long-lever strategies in the mix. A second consideration in sustaining community-level impacts is understanding that opposing forces can undermine or undo your changes, even after they seem to be institutionalized or adopted as community policies and norms. As a coalition bringing together multiple perspectives, one of your most valuable functions is to use others' eyes, ears and brainpower to identify risks to your initiatives and the changes they create, and organize to counteract these risks.

Developing a diversified portfolio

In many ways, planning the investment of resources in your coalition parallels planning for a personal investment portfolio. Any stockbroker will tell you, you need to have a diverse array of investments to achieve security. Far too many coalitions make the mistake of relying primarily on grant monies to sustain themselves. Not only is this putting too many eggs in one basket, it is putting them in a very dangerous basket. The nature of both federal and foundation funding is such that a particular group is very unlikely to achieve stable, ongoing support over a long period. Grant funding is highly competitive and funders tend to spread the wealth and seek new and different projects and organizations to fund. Private foundations and federal agencies, in particular, often are not just looking to find "what works," they also like to seed innovation. Your coalition should innovate, but you want your strategies to be driven by what works best for your community—not by the ideas a set of program officers would like to explore. Grant funding also follows trends. While your particular issues or strategies may be in vogue now, this may not be true in a few years. There are basically four ways for your coalition to get the resources you need. You can •Share •Charge •Ask •Earn. Some of the more common approaches to building a diverse funding portfolio follow:

•**Local community grants**. Many communities are blessed with one or more umbrella funders or local foundations. Local funders such as the United Way and community foundations can set up special funds to earmark donations for substance abuse prevention work. Get to know the staff of these organizations, and do not be afraid to ask about these possibilities.

•**Line-item budget allocations**. Coalitions can attain more security if they can convince one or more local government departments or agencies to support coalition initiatives and/or infrastructure in their budgets. Depending on your community and the partners involved, this commitment could come from a range of agencies. For example, a parks and recreation department funds positive alternatives for youth; the local health department may find that the coalition helps it fulfill mandates; or the police department may recognize that its funds can go farther focused on prevention rather than enforcement and incarceration.

•**Individual and business donors**. An essential—and relatively simple—component of any sustainable coalition's long-term strategy is asking people for money. One of the best approaches is to make personal contact with the people with whom you would like to connect. Find the groups that offer a chance to reach a large audience and ask their leaders for an opportunity to talk about substance abuse in your community and your coalition's work to prevent it. Business and service clubs and local chamber of commerce groups often provide terrific opportunities to connect with leaders and members of the business community.

•**Fund-raising events**. These provide an opportunity to raise money and to enhance the profile of your coalition across multiple segments of your community. There are nearly as many types and flavors of events as communities to host them. Large community fund-raising events are a great component of any coalition's sustainability portfolio because they offer the greatest opportunity to highlight your coalition's work to the widest array of community members. Part of the fun of planning a fund raiser is seeing how creatively and broadly you can use the venue to raise awareness of your coalition's work.

•**Social entrepreneurship**. Nonprofit organizations must explore ways to create goods or services that simultaneously promote their message and bring in additional income. Social entrepreneurship is most effective when it synergizes with your coalition's change strategies. Rather than taking time away from your main efforts, find creative opportunities to layer in an entrepreneurial component. For example, you could piggyback on an awareness campaign by having the

prevention messages and artwork printed on t-shirts. Since your coalition does not want to get bogged down in running a complicated business operation, seek ways to cash in on opportunities that do not create undue overhead or startup expense. Consider the t-shirt example: The Internet offers services that can produce this sort of "prevention swag" on an on-demand basis, with little setup expense. Rather than laying out money for stock in advance, you can create such items as needed.

•**Fees for service**. Some coalitions—because of the range of expertise and experience of members are finding that they are a valuable commodity. For example, some groups develop formal training sessions to share their knowledge and offer these sessions with continuing education units for a fee to organizations and professionals. Other coalitions create miniature speakers' bureaus, with coalition members who have presentation skills offering talks to schools and other organizations for honoraria that are donated to the coalition.

Planning for Sustainability

- Start with an overall coalition plan. To sustain your coalition's strategies clearly spell out what they are and have your members agree that these are efforts worthy of their commitment.

- Know what the work entails. The strategic plan may provide the higher-level view, but you must know what kinds of resources you need.

- Scan the environment. Stay apprised of who is in the community doing work that could mesh with, support or potentially work against your efforts. Expect change, and monitor local, state and national trends that could affect interest in and support for your coalition's work.

- Get over barriers. Examine resistance to your coalition when incorporating sustainability as an ongoing part of the work. As a group, discuss ways to rethink this resistance.

- Brainstorm possible strategies. Use the ideas presented here as a preliminary guide, but do not feel you need to stop there. Brainstorm with your sustainability team the ways your coalition can connect your goals to those of others. Then think about what each of these groups could offer your coalition in terms of human, social and material resources. Finally, think about the opportunities to connect those two pieces.

- Pick a portfolio of the best strategic matches. Begin with one or two strategies and add others later. Examine how each strategy fits your group's aims. Is it better aimed at one area of the coalition's work, or can it be applied more generally? Are there ways to use this approach to secure resources and to raise the coalition's profile, increase community awareness or promote desirable norms? Is this a strategy that could grow year after year, or is it a one-shot opportunity?

- Build and maintain relationships. In the end, it is not fund raising but friend raising. Make sure others in the community know about your work, and follow up communication with personal contacts among the key stakeholder groups. Develop strategies for grooming sustainability leadership. Provide training for coalition members and volunteers who want to assist in resource development.

- Implement your resource development strategies. Follow through with your plans and monitor your resource development. Set visible targets for human, social and material resources, and share the progress toward those targets and remaining gaps with the whole coalition.

- Document your impacts. Keep track of your progress and impacts formally and informally. This includes formal evaluation of major initiatives and group discussion on activities such as taking time to reflect as a group on what seems to be working and what is not and documenting lessons learned.

- Watch the coalition around you. Maintaining a strong membership base is everyone's job and a particular concern of coalition leadership. Members charged with fostering sustainability should be particularly mindful and call to the group's attention when energy seems to be lagging or new skills, experience or stakeholder group representation are needed. Remember, all the money in the world will not sustain your coalition if you do not have strong membership and good energy.

- Develop formal case statements, talking points and presentations. You will be more effective at every phase of soliciting support if you have prepared communication tools to share what your coalition is about, why your work is important, what you hope to achieve and sustain, and the kind of support others can provide. A clear, well-organized approach carries more impact and members will be more willing to help share messages if they have handy tools at their disposal.

Adapted from: CADCA (2010). *Sustainability Primer: Fostering Long-Term Change to Create Drug-Free Communities.*

Coalition Sustainability Checklist

Yes!	Sort of	No!	????	Criteria
Element 1: Leaders take responsibility for their coalition's success				
❑	❑	❑	❑	Coalition leaders have been identified
❑	❑	❑	❑	Coalition leaders are clear about their roles and responsibilities
❑	❑	❑	❑	Coalition leaders actively fill their roles and responsibilities
❑	❑	❑	❑	Training and recognition are provided to coalition leaders (and others)
Element 2: Involve community leaders, partner organizations, and a variety of community members				
❑	❑	❑	❑	New members are actively recruited
❑	❑	❑	❑	The coalition reaches out to community organizations on a regular basis
❑	❑	❑	❑	New members are oriented and trained
❑	❑	❑	❑	Champions have been identified and trained
❑	❑	❑	❑	Champions are used effectively
Element 3: Diversified funding from the start				
❑	❑	❑	❑	A long-term budget has been developed.
❑	❑	❑	❑	A long-term funding plan has been developed
				The funding plan includes:
❑	❑	❑	❑	- Local fund raising
❑	❑	❑	❑	- Grant writing
❑	❑	❑	❑	- Professional fund development activities
❑	❑	❑	❑	- Inclusion in organizational budgets
❑	❑	❑	❑	- Fees for Services
❑	❑	❑	❑	- Other
Element 4: Solid Infrastructure				
❑	❑	❑	❑	Job descriptions" for all roles created by the coalition are written
❑	❑	❑	❑	Members agree on the expectations for active membership
❑	❑	❑	❑	Objectives and authority of each committee/workgroup are established
❑	❑	❑	❑	Meetings held regularly
❑	❑	❑	❑	Agenda is used – distributed before the meeting
❑	❑	❑	❑	Meeting kept on track/minutes recorded
❑	❑	❑	❑	E-mail lists, on-line groups, blogs keep information flowing
❑	❑	❑	❑	Contact made with reporter/editor at your local papers
❑	❑	❑	❑	Meeting minutes, agendas and other information available
❑	❑	❑	❑	Responsibility for fiscal accounting, 501(c)(3) status, insurance etc. is clear
Element 5: A clear focus on the coalition's goals				
				The coalition has clear statements of:
❑	❑	❑	❑	- Vision
❑	❑	❑	❑	- Mission
❑	❑	❑	❑	- Specific goals and objectives
				The Vision, Mission, goals and objectives are clearly communicated to:
❑	❑	❑	❑	- All coalition members
❑	❑	❑	❑	- Community leaders
❑	❑	❑	❑	- Partner organizations
❑	❑	❑	❑	- The community

Yes!	Sort of	No!	????	Criteria
Element 6: Address problems the community cares about and demonstrate results				
❑	❑	❑	❑	The community is informed about substance abuse problems and issues
❑	❑	❑	❑	The coalition has a process in place to monitor community priorities
❑	❑	❑	❑	The community is aware of what the coalition and its partners are doing
❑	❑	❑	❑	The coalition shares result / outcomes from the coalition and partners
Element 7: Comprehensive Coalition Planning				
				Specific action plans developed for:
❑	❑	❑	❑	- Availability of short-term funding and resources
❑	❑	❑	❑	- Communications/marketing
❑	❑	❑	❑	- Evaluation and data collection
❑	❑	❑	❑	- Training and technical assistance
❑	❑	❑	❑	- Fund raising
❑	❑	❑	❑	- Administration and Operations
❑	❑	❑	❑	- Program/strategy implementation
❑	❑	❑	❑	- Strategic planning process
Element 8: Ability to adapt to changing community needs				
❑	❑	❑	❑	The coalition collects information to identify changes in the community
❑	❑	❑	❑	The coalition modifies strategies and procedures as needed
❑	❑	❑	❑	The coalition actively seeks new partnerships
❑	❑	❑	❑	Training/coaching is provided to coalition members
❑	❑	❑	❑	The coalition seeks and receives technical assistance as needed

What three items need to be addressed first?

1.

2.

3.

What additional information is needed?

Comments:

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

✗SAMHSA

Factors That Contribute to Capacity Building and Sustainability

According to SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF), capacity refers to the "various types and levels of resources available to establish and maintain a community prevention system that can identify and respond to community needs." While this definition focuses on resources, the SPF goes on to state that capacity also depends on the readiness of both the organization and the broader community to actually commit their resources to addressing the identified problem(s).

Although the planning process itself can strengthen capacity, intentional capacity building at all levels helps ensure that successful programs are sustained within a larger community context, and therefore less vulnerable to local budgetary and political fluctuations. Effective capacity building also increases an organization's or community's ability to respond to changing issues with innovative solutions.

CAPT views capacity building as a process of ensuring an adaptive, effective, and cost-effective substance abuse prevention system that achieves long-term results that benefit diverse stakeholders.

Organizational and infrastructure development is necessary to build capacity as well as to sustain effective prevention policies, systems, and programs, and therefore includes a sustainability component. "Building Capacity and Sustainable Prevention Innovations: A Sustainability Planning Model," Evaluation and Program Planning at Prevention Research Center – 2004 (PDF | 235 KB) offers a planning logic model that addresses both organizational and infrastructure development and sustainability. The purpose of organizational and infrastructure development in the model is to build, support, and strengthen organizational infrastructures. This is accomplished by examining five factors which, if addressed intentionally through strategic planning, can facilitate building the infrastructure capacity. These include the following:

1. **Administrative structures and formal linkages**. These must be built and strengthened so that the organizations and systems responsible for the implementation, integration, and oversight of programs have the capacity to carry out their functions effectively and responsively and to sustain them over time. Linkages that facilitate cooperation among diverse organizations also contribute to sustainability.

2. **Champion and leadership roles**. Leadership buy-in and active promotion by multiple champions across organizations and systems helps ensure success. Champions and leaders with the ability to communicate their commitment, engage others, address barriers, and build system capacity are especially valuable.

3. **Resource development**. Adequate and sustainable funding, staffing, technical assistance, and materials can help sustain innovations.

4. **Administrative policies and procedures**. Those that support programs, organizations, and systems also support adoption and sustainability of innovations. These help to assure that innovations remain part of the routine practice of organizations and send a clear message about

the desirability and expectation for sustaining efforts. The absence of the policies can create political barriers to sustaining innovation.

5. **Community and practitioner expertise**. Building and maintaining expertise in such areas as needs assessment, logic model construction, selection and implementation of evidence-based programs, fidelity and adaptation, evaluation, and cultural competence supports capacity building and sustainability.

The goal of sustainability in the model is to implement and maintain effective programs and systems that are continually responsive to stakeholder needs. This is accomplished by examining another five factors which, if addressed intentionally through strategic planning, can facilitate building sustainability. These five factors include the following:

1. **Alignment of program with stakeholder needs**. Despite the capacity of the organization to implement an innovation, it must meet the needs of intended users and other stakeholders if it is to be sustained. Less complexity, more compatibility, and a high degree of perceived benefit are associated with sustainability.

2. **Relationship among stakeholders**. Establishing and maintaining positive relationships among stakeholders supports sustainability. Collaboration between program developers and implementers and supportive networks among implementers is helpful.

3. **Quality of program implementation**. Commitment to quality of program implementation via process, fidelity, and outcomes evaluation based on logic models helps sustain an innovation and ensure commitment by adopters.

4. **Effectiveness**. Commitment to effectiveness is also critical to sustainability.

5. **Ownership among stakeholders**. Strengthening ownership of an innovation among stakeholders and adopters increases its sustainability. Ownership has a stronger influence on sustainability than do regulative measures.

Each of these 10 factors can be addressed with action steps. These action steps include the following:

- Assessing existing conditions
- Developing a plan to strengthen that factor
- Implementing the plan
- Evaluating the plan's effectiveness
- Reassessing and/or modifying the plan

Taking these actions in support of the capacity building and sustainability objectives represents an ongoing process, rather than a one-time event.

Access Indicators to Help With Capacity Building in Health Promotion at NSW Health for more tips.

Build Capacity is Step 2 of SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF). Sustainability is a key principle of SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF). Learn more about applying the SPF.

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