

# PRIMER

## PLANNING



## Developing the Coalition's Vision, Mission, Objectives, Strategies and Action Plans (VMOSA)

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*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](http://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 abuse among youth.
- Goal 2: Reduce substance abuse among youth and, over time, among adults by addressing the factors in a community that increase the risk of substance abuse and promoting the factors that minimize the risk of substance abuse.\*

\*For the purposes of the DFC grant, “Youth” is defined as 18 years of age and younger.

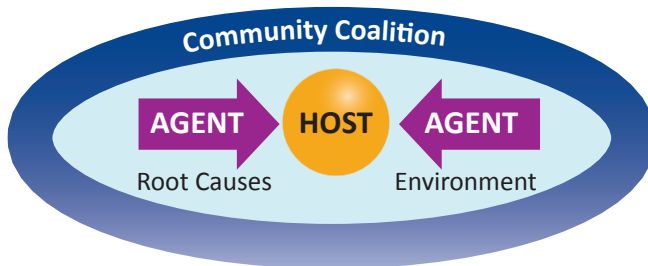
## The Public Health Approach

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 use of substances and strengthen those conditions that promote and support healthy choices and behaviors.

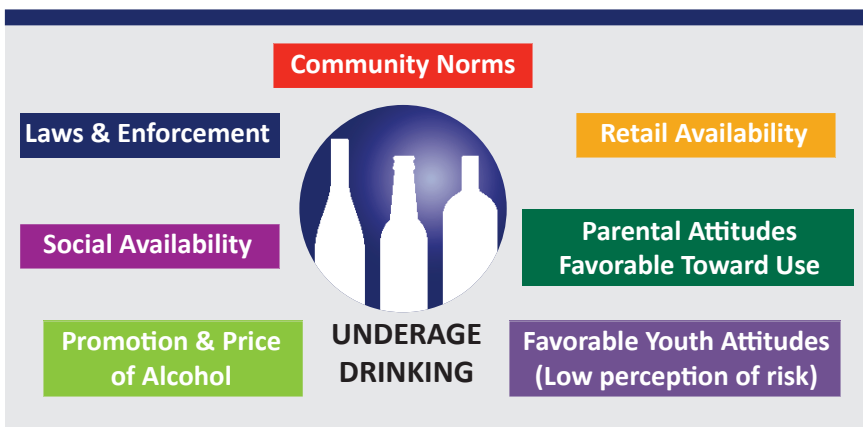
### THE PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH

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 identified key root causes for underage drinking. (Note: these root causes 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 use alcohol, tobacco, and other substances. Many organizations and individuals can impact the individual and address specific aspects of the environment, but the coalition is the only group that looks **COMPREHENSIVELY** at the environment, seeking to achieve population-level changes to the entire community.

Approaches that target individuals 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. One example of this is 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 beverage service training as part of the alcohol licensing process. These strategies, coupled with increased funding for compliance checks and increased fines for violations to ensure that alcohol retailers do not sell to minors, will have an even greater impact. 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 substance use.

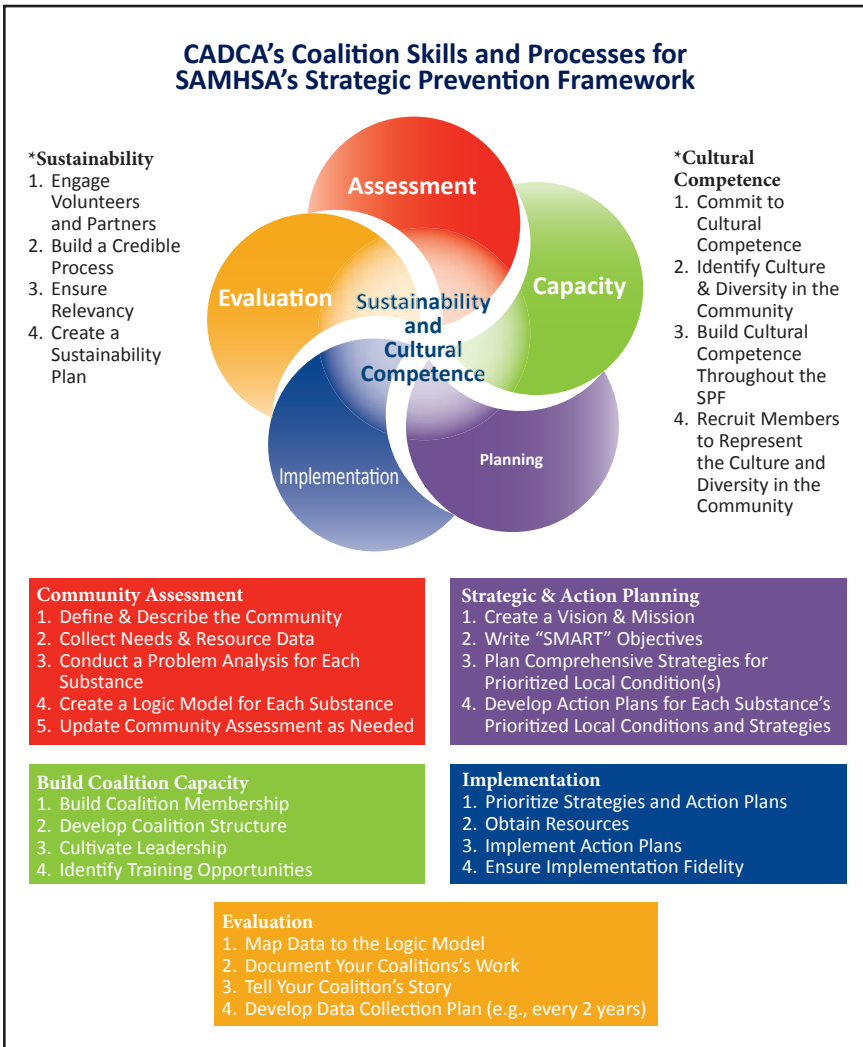
The elements shown in Figure 2 include:

- **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 a diverse population
- **Sustainability.** The process of achieving and maintaining long-term results.

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

Figure 2 displays these 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**





This *Planning Primer* provides a detailed description of the strategic and action planning process:

1. Create a vision and mission
2. Write “SMART” objectives
3. Plan comprehensive strategies for prioritized local condition(s)
4. Prioritize strategies
5. Develop action plans for each substance’s prioritized local conditions and strategies

## **The Planning Process:**

### ***Why Plan?***

Planning is the process of developing a logical sequence of strategies and steps that can lead to community-level alcohol and other substance use reduction outcomes. These outcomes move coalitions closer to achieving their vision for healthier communities.

Many good reasons exist for coalitions to undertake a comprehensive planning process. For example, planning:

- **saves** time and money
- **helps** ensure that the interventions your coalition selects are those most likely to reduce problems in your community
- **helps** allocate resources needed for implementation
- **enables** your coalition to develop an action plan that describes who is doing what, and by when
- **enables** your coalition to develop an evaluation plan at the beginning rather than the end of activities
- **helps** your coalition secure future funding.

### ***Engaging Coalition and Community Members in the Planning Process.***

An effective coalition strategic and action planning process requires involvement from all coalition members and engagement with community members. Studies have shown that coalitions that effectively engage residents and partners acquire more resources and achieve better results. Active citizen participation in a planning process is empowering. Coalitions should reach out to all residents and welcome them as participants in efforts to solve problems in their communities—**“people own what they create.”** To achieve community ownership and buy-in for their strategic and action plans, coalitions must consider the following:

- First, the **process should be open to all** who wish to participate. The planning phase can be of singular importance to a coalition in building a broad base of community support. Community members who participate often support the coalition over the long haul. This does not mean that large numbers of people need to participate in all aspects of developing the community plan, but there should be points at which they can provide input and help build consensus. Further, participants in the planning process should know their roles and clearly understand what is expected of them.
- Second, the planning process should be **inclusive and diverse**. Involving many community sectors is an opportunity to reach out to potential members and recruit them to the coalition. For example, youth participation in the planning process can provide the coalition with great ideas, help get youth buy-in, and give the coalition credibility in the community. Your coalition should welcome diverse groups. People know when they are not welcome, and if they do not feel welcome, they will not return.
- Finally, adept coalition leaders attempt to **forge consensus**. Even though you should have completed a community needs assessment and appropriately named and framed the problem (created a logic model), it is likely that divergent opinions as to how best to address the substance use problems in your community will emerge. Remember that there are no bad ideas - all ideas must be treated with respect and welcomed as concepts with potential value for the community. Group processes must be developed to ensure that a unified vision for the community emerges from your planning process, rather than widely varying perspectives. This will help to maintain the focus for the coalition's efforts.

Forging consensus can be difficult if a group (or groups) seeks to control the planning process. Turf issues often emerge during planning as some community groups see it as an opportunity for additional resources or gain. Such groups—that may not be genuinely committed to an open, transparent, democratic process—will attempt to control the agenda and the group's decisions. Coalition leaders must be constantly vigilant to guard against such ego-driven efforts and foster a diversity of viewpoints and respect for all who wish to participate.

### ***The Strategic Planning Approach***

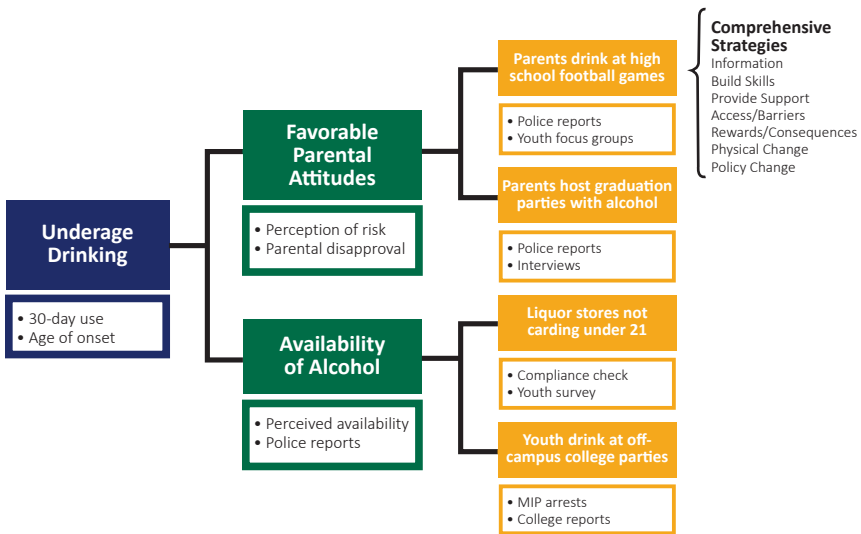
The term “strategic planning” can be used as both a verb and a noun—it can describe the planning *process* (verb) and a concrete *plan* (noun). Generally speaking, a **strategic and action plan** covers a three-to five-year period. It describes the coalition's expectations for the future that may include problems in the community that can be addressed with current funds, as well as problems the coalition plans to address as it secures additional resources.

A common mistake made by some coalitions is starting to select strategies they want to use **before** they define the problem and what they want to change about it. Then they identify only those results that the specific programs can achieve. This process can often be attributed to well-meaning coalition members who have a favorite program or strategy they want to implement, or they simply want to “do something” about the substance use problem.

The **strategic planning approach** allows coalitions to first identify the alcohol, tobacco and/or other substance use-related problem(s) or issue(s) in the community. The coalition then decides what it wants to accomplish (an objective that can be measured). The coalition would select strategies or approaches to accomplish the objective. Finally, the coalition chooses activities or steps to achieve the desired outcomes.



This approach is achieved through use of the coalition’s logic model, which describes specific local conditions in the community environment that will be addressed by the coalition. The coalition will develop comprehensive strategies to address each local condition as depicted in the logic model below (Figure 3).



Considerable research has been conducted to determine what kinds of prevention efforts are effective. Given that funders and community members want resources spent in the most effective ways possible, it is increasingly

important that communities choose strategies, programs, policies, practices, and activities that we know work. While your coalition does not have to pick a “model program in a box,” it should, at a minimum, incorporate evidence-based approaches into your intervention design.

The most important factor to consider when selecting evidence-based programs, policies and practices is the extent that they fit logically into your overarching strategic plan to address your community’s unique local conditions.

### **The Process—VMOSA**

This primer focuses on the strategic planning process that coalitions use to implement the **strategic and action planning** element of the SPF. The development of the coalition’s strategic and action plans are based on the coalition’s **logic model** (discussed in detail in the *Community Assessment Primer*) which identifies the problem statement, root causes, and local conditions. The logic model facilitates concise and clear communication about the conditions in the community which the coalition seeks to change. The strategic and action plans describe how the coalition will achieve change.

The coalition’s strategic and action plans consist of the coalition’s vision and mission statements, objectives, strategies, and an action plan. The acronym for this strategic planning process is **VMOSA**:

The **Vision statement** represents what the coalition seeks to accomplish in the future.

The **Mission statement** describes the organization’s role in making the vision a reality. This statement often explains the unique role the coalition plays in facilitating a robust community problem-solving process directed at reducing substance use.

The **Objectives** spell out the results the coalition intends to achieve. These results should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timed (“SMART” objectives). The coalition develops data-based objectives based on the problem (long-term), root causes (intermediate-term) and local conditions (short-term) identified on the logic model.

The coalition’s **Strategies** include the policies, practices, and procedures that create a comprehensive plan to address the specific local conditions identified on the logic model.

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

**The strategic and action plans include:**

1. Vision
2. Mission
3. Objectives
4. Strategies
5. Action Plan

***A Strategic and Action Plan Template***

Strategic and action plans in general have many elements in common: goals, objectives, strategies and action plans. Additionally, we recognize that different funders and organizations may each have their own format for communicating their strategic and action plans. Consequently, CADCA has developed a **strategic and action planning template** for use in its trainings and publications that includes each of the elements of a strategic and action plan: **VMOSA** = vision, mission, objectives, strategies and action plans. Coalitions can use this template (or not) depending on their specific funding and communication needs.

**Strategic and Action Plan Template**

(Repeat for each local condition)

**Coalition:**

*Reduce youth substance abuse*

Objectives:

Problem	Root Cause	Local Condition
Long-Term Objective (3-10 Years)	Intermediate-Term Objective (1-4 Years)	Short-Term Objective (6-24 Months)

**Strategies:**

Strategy 1 - Provide Information:

Problem	Who is Responsible	By When?

*Continued next page*

## Strategic and Action Plan Template *(continued)*

### Strategies:

#### Strategy 2 - Enhance Skills:

Problem	Who is Responsible	By When?

#### Strategy 3 - Provide Support:

Problem	Who is Responsible	By When?

#### Strategy 4 - Enhance Access/Reduce Barriers:

Problem	Who is Responsible	By When?

#### Strategy 5 - Change Consequences (incentives/disincentives):

Problem	Who is Responsible	By When?

#### Strategy 6 - Physical Design:

Problem	Who is Responsible	By When?

#### Strategy 7 - Modify/Change Policies:

Problem	Who is Responsible	By When?

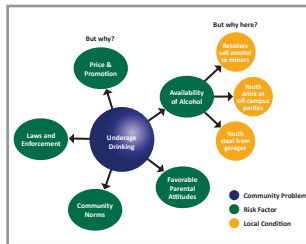
## Logic Model Review

The coalition will develop its strategic and action plans based on its **logic models**. As described in the *Community Assessment Primer*, a logic model is like a “road map” that lets everyone know you are on the right path. It presents a picture of how your coalition is supposed to work. It is a straightforward, graphic approach to planning that ensures no vital step will be overlooked—from goal setting to measuring outcomes—and explains why the strategy you have chosen is a good solution to the problem. A logic model is a succinct, logical series of statements linking the needs and resources of your community to strategies and activities that address the identified issue and what the expected result will be.

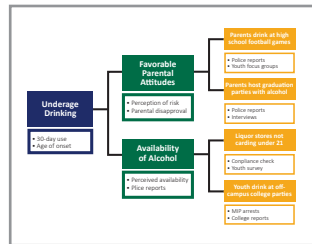
## Creating a Logic Model



**Community Assessment**



**Problem Analysis**



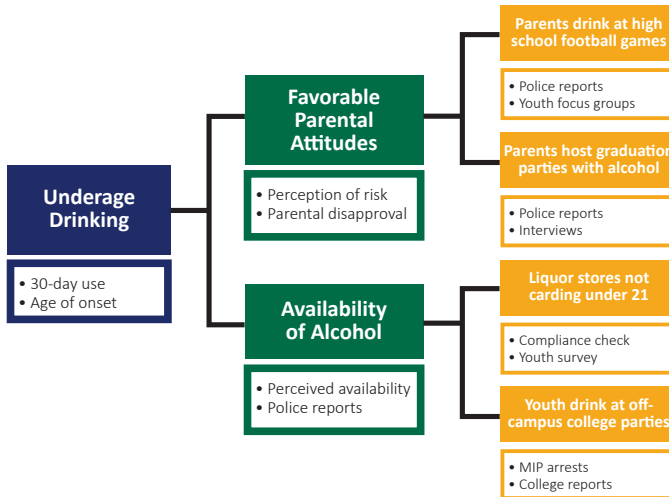
**Logic Model**

The *Community Assessment Primer* provides a detailed description of how to develop a logic model based on the coalition’s community assessment.

Good logic models have four key components. These components can be included in any of the variety of logic model styles or formats. Regardless of the format chosen, a coalition should ensure the four essential components are included, or the logic model will not effectively serve its intended purposes. The logic model will include:

1. The **problem** or goal statement.
2. **Root causes** or risk factors of the problem – “But why?”
3. **Local conditions** that maintain or contribute to root causes/risk factors – “But why here?”
4. **Data** or measurements for each of these three components should be included.

The following diagram provides an example of these elements.



### ***Adding data to the logic model***

Pairing data with each element ensures that the logic model is community specific. Including data will educate readers about the level of the problem in the community. Adding data to the logic model teaches readers how the community keeps track of important trends and problems. Further, including data can document or validate the line logic suggested by a model. In the example that used a tree as a metaphor in the *Community Assessment Primer*, the line logic suggests that one of the “fruits,” or consequences of underage drinking, is youth violence. When adding data to the logic model it is best to:

- Include 2 pieces of data for each element. As outlined in the triangulation discussion in Chapter 2 of the *Community Assessment Primer*, there is not one piece of data that fully describes a problem, root cause, or local condition.
- If possible, ensure that the data comes from different sources.
- If possible, use both qualitative and quantitative measures.

### ***Critiquing a Logic model***

Once a draft of the logic model has been developed, it is helpful to conduct a thorough analysis of the logic model to ensure it accurately reflects the conditions in the community. Coalitions should critique their potential logic model by asking the following questions:



Is data included for problem, root causes, and local conditions?

- Are there two pieces of data for each problem, root cause, and local condition?
- Does the data include qualitative and quantitative data?
- Can the data be collected multiple times?

Are the local conditions specific, identifiable, and actionable?

- Do the local conditions describe actual behaviors or conditions that exist in the community?
- Are the conditions or behaviors known and relevant to community members?
- Can the local condition be changed within a reasonable time frame and with available resources?

Is there line logic? (looking at the logic model from right to left)

- If the local conditions change, will the root causes be changed?
- If the root causes change, will the problem be changed?
- If the changes occur, will the data identified reflect the changes?

Does the logic model reflect community conditions and concerns?

- Do coalition and community members agree that the local conditions exist?
- Are the prioritized problems, root causes, and local conditions viewed as important by coalition and community members?
- Are there any root causes or local conditions not included on the logic model that are important to the community?

## **A Word About Cultural Competence as it Relates to Planning**

The SPF places cultural competence and sustainability at its center, as these key concepts must be incorporated throughout implementation of the framework. Remember that the communities or groups of people affected by the problem you are working on need to be involved in ALL aspects of the work of the coalition, from assessment and planning through implementation and evaluation. The best ideas and plans will fall flat unless solutions to the problems engage the target audience and are culturally appropriate.

The coalition's planning process must be open and welcoming to all persons, including representatives from diverse cultural groups. If there are significant racial and ethnic minorities in the community, it is imperative to invite them to the planning process. Nothing can hurt a coalition as much as a situation in which diverse groups feel they were not meaningfully involved early in the planning process. You may need significant outreach efforts to guarantee that

diverse populations are involved. Be certain you address barriers to participation from diverse groups. Likewise, ensure that all participants are treated with respect and that some people are not given preference because of external factors like social standing or income level.

Therefore, if you want to maintain the coalition diversity you have worked so hard to achieve, you need to be vigilant that you do not conduct business as usual. Make sure you have a diverse planning group representative of your community. Be willing to be flexible and thoughtful about shaping your planning efforts around people's differences, preferences, and needs. Where do meetings take place? Are they accessible to everyone? When are meetings scheduled? If you want community members to participate fully, are you scheduling meetings at reasonable times so that working people can attend? If you want youth to participate, are meetings scheduled after school hours and in places where youth who do not drive can access?

For more information on this topic, see the Institute's *Cultural Competence Primer*.

## **A Word About Sustainability as it Relates to Planning**

Sustaining a coalition requires creating a strong coalition that brings together a community to develop and carry out a comprehensive plan to achieve population-level changes. Start to work on sustainability as you are planning, rather than waiting until six months before the grant period ends to begin thinking about sustaining the coalition's work. The more thought out and methodical you are in developing a plan, the more likely you are to attract funders and local support for future work.

# CHAPTER 1.

## Vision and Mission

### The Big Picture

“Start with the end in mind” is a quote from Stephen Covey (*7 Habits of Highly Effective People*) that describes how important it is for coalitions (and other organizations) to have a clear picture of what they seek to achieve in the long-term – **the vision** – and how the coalition will go about achieving the vision – **the mission**. The vision and mission statements provide coalition members with a short, concise way of describing the coalition and what it seeks to accomplish.

It is important that the vision and mission reflect the ideas, passions, and motivations of the coalition members and the overall community. Therefore, it is critical that coalition members take part in creating and updating the vision and mission so they will “own what they create.”

### Vision Statement

A vision Statement provides a picture of the desired future (the dream) that is to be achieved by the coalition and the community. The vision statement is used to build motivation among the coalition members, inspire action in the community, and encourage participation to make a difference in the community.

The coalition’s vision is different from a traditional nonprofit in that it envisions a future for the whole community, not just for the recipients of a given service or agency support. Coalitions work to improve the lives of everyone in the community affected by substance use, so their vision statements often describe a brighter future for a larger group of people (e.g., a whole neighborhood, city or county) than the vision statement for an individual nonprofit organization.

The vision should communicate how the coalition hopes the community will be when all the objectives in the coalition’s strategic and action plans have been achieved. Key points about a vision statement include:

- The vision statement must be short, concise, and create a picture of the coalition’s view of the community’s future. The vision statement must pass the “elevator test” - be able to be shared in a short period of time.
- The vision statement is usually rooted in the coalition’s assessment of the community. The vision is a picture of where the community will be in the future, starting from where it is now.
- All coalition members and community leaders should know and be able to recite the vision statement. Sharing the coalition vision statement can be a part of any new member orientation.

- The vision statement should be part of the coalition’s on-going communications. Coalitions should place the vision statement on email signatures, coalition letterhead, and banners at events.
- The vision statement must be created and owned by the coalition. Some coalitions create a “dream team” to develop the vision statement. The process often includes the chosen team members drafting several statements and asking the coalition as a whole to select the best one.
- The effort to create a vision statement does not have to be a long, tedious process. Support from CADCA is available that can assist coalitions in developing a vision statement in a relatively short period of time.

Examples of vision statements include:

- “The vision for Parker County residents is to create a community filled with people who have healthy attitudes and behaviors.”
- “A safe, healthy and substance-free Township.”
- “To have a safe and drug-free Ferndale School District.”

### Vision Statement = Nouns and Adjectives

Safe	Self-sufficient	Family-friendly
Drug-free	Supported	Loving
Community-wide	Healthy	Environment
Cared for	Inclusive	Valued

## Mission Statement

A mission statement describes how the coalition aims to accomplish the vision. The mission statement is action-oriented in that it describes how the coalition will act to reduce substance use in the community. The mission statement refers to the problem and gives a suggestion of what the coalition might do to fix the problem. Mission statements should be concise, outcome-oriented, and inclusive.

Coalition mission statements can be difficult to create because the role a coalition plays is often “behind the scenes” and hard to describe. Typically, a coalition’s vital role in reducing substance use includes one or more of the following:

- **Transforming the Community: The Change Agent.** Communities are perfectly engineered to produce results at the local level. This truth, that current conditions help produce current outcomes, compels many coalitions to become change agents. They seek out information to understand what must be changed, and then act as advocates tapping into the power of their membership to bring about needed transformation. The policies of government, business, and nonprofits are examined and changes

are requested. The physical environment is assessed, and improvement is sought. The practices surrounding how the community prioritizes problems, makes decisions, and allocates resources are scrutinized for improvement opportunities. Community transformation through citizen involvement is a hallmark of the mission of coalitions. The central theme is creating a community that produces better results.

- **Making the Most of Existing Resources: The Service Coordinator.** A community assessment may lead the group to the conclusion that current services are poorly coordinated, underfunded, and may even be competing against each other to survive. In these circumstances, a coalition may adopt the mission of “service optimizer.” Members agree to open up about their own organizational resources and practices, and together create an optimal system of services. This new system may be designed to ensure the best after-school environment possible for youth, or to maximize access to high-quality treatment or other vital services. Optimizing services through agency collaboration is the hallmark of a coalition fulfilling this mission. Building on local community resources to create and sustain culturally appropriate programs is often a key theme.
- **Raising Awareness and Understanding: The Conversation Starter.** Many coalitions work hard to establish their credibility as the “go to” source for trustworthy information about local substance problems. They form strong alliances with local media and carefully create or share stories through the media that will help convince community members that a substance problem exists, educate them on the important facts about local substance use, and encourage their participation and volunteerism in local coalition efforts. Fulfilling this mission often involves strategies such as comprehensive and well-coordinated media campaigns, community report cards, marketing programs that use non-traditional media, and efforts to create “brand awareness” for the coalition. Highlighting local substance issues and framing them for action is the hallmark of a coalition fulfilling this mission. Creatively using all forms of local media to foster an ongoing community conversation about substance use is often a key theme.
- **Focusing Existing Resources on the Problem: The Resource Generator.** Many communities enjoy a strong set of resources and well-functioning systems of local governance and decision making. In these communities, coalitions may choose to adopt the mission of focusing existing resources on substance issues. An apt analogy for a coalition assuming this mission is the child that turns a magnifying glass into a toy. By focusing the existing and diffused sunlight on a piece of wood the child can start a fire. No new resources were used, but a stronger result was created from the concentration of energy on one area. Like the magnifying glass, coalitions fulfilling this mission look to concentrate existing community efforts, resources, and leaders’ attention on the substance use problems in the

local community. Increasing the total amount of money, time, and other resources devoted to substance use issues is the hallmark of a coalition fulfilling this mission. Discovering and redirecting existing local assets toward substance use prevention is a key theme.

Key points about mission statements:

- Like the vision Statement, the mission statement should be created by the coalition members, not imposed on the members by staff or a few others.
- The mission statement should also pass the “elevator test.” Coalition members should be able to describe what the coalition does in a short concise statement.
- The mission statement is a powerful tool because it guides how the coalition engages the community. For example, based on a coalition mission to act as a convener, coordinator, and planner, the coalition may decline funding to implement a specific prevention-related program in the community. Instead, the coalition’s role may be to find an appropriate organization to lead the program.

Examples of mission statements include:

- “To increase capacity in our county to prevent underage drinking while maintaining compassion and cultural responsiveness.”
- “The mission of SEOC is to bring together all segments of the community to prevent substance use, especially among youth.”
- “Thayer County Healthy Communities Coalition works to promote healthy attitudes and behaviors for individuals and families within Thayer County through community action with a focus on substance use reduction and prevention.”
- “The ABC Coalition collaborates with all community sectors to develop local solutions that improve quality of life and create safe, drug-free communities.”
- “To build and mobilize a comprehensive, community-wide social movement to substantially reduce substance use in the Greater Portland metropolitan area.”

### **Mission Statement = Verbs (example)**

Build  
Collaborate  
Advocate  
Educate  
Together  
Promote

Reduce  
Change  
Strengthen  
Coordinate  
Organize

Bring  
Generate  
Mobilize  
Increase  
Enhance

# CHAPTER 2.

## Objectives

### Developing Objectives

Objectives are the specific, measurable results a coalition plans to accomplish. Objectives serve as the basis by which to evaluate the work of the coalition. Objectives are developed after exploring the problems in the community, looking at local data, and prioritizing the problem(s). A good objective includes a date by when the change will be accomplished, usually describes how much change the coalition wants to see, whether that indicator will increase or decrease, and who will be affected.

#### The Difference Between Objectives and Outcomes

Objectives represent the flip side of outcomes. An **objective** is how the coalition states what it wants to accomplish and by when. At the other end, when measuring what has been accomplished, the coalition will refer to these same measures as **outcomes**. (See the Institute's *Evaluation Primer*.)

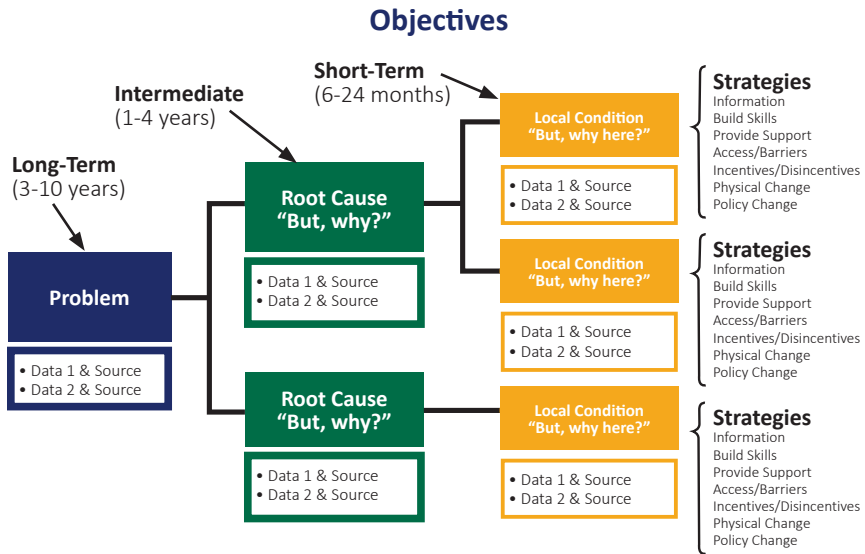
Objectives set targets for changes in community conditions based on the problem, root causes, and local conditions included in the logic model. Objectives for coalitions should be set at the community level. Depending on the coalition, this may mean establishing a measurable improvement objective for a neighborhood, city, county, or an entire region.

### Long-term, Intermediate, and Short-term Objectives

Coalitions should set objectives based on what the coalition can reasonably expect to change in the short-, intermediate- and long-term.

Objective	Logic Model Element	Timeframe
Long-term	Problem Statement	3 – 10 Years
Intermediate-term	Root Cause	1 – 4 Years
Short-term	Local Condition	6 – 24 Months

Coalitions can use the coalition's logic model to write the objectives. The logic model includes the specific elements necessary to write objectives – both the desired changes (problem, root causes, and local conditions) and the data used to measure and track the actual change that occurs in the community.



## Writing Good Objectives

It is important that coalitions write objectives that can be shared with community members and partners in a way that clearly communicates what the coalition seeks to change in the community. Coalitions can use the acronym “SMART + C” when writing objectives. Objectives must be:

- **Specific**— must have a clearly defined change that is sought based on the logic model.
- **Measurable**— must be tied to data that can be measured over time. The data must be included on the logic model and in the community assessment.
- **Achievable**— the coalition must determine the extent to which the measure can be changed in a given timeframe.
- **Relevant**— the objective must be clearly linked to an element on the logic model.
- **Timed**— the expected timeframe for the specific change must be stated. This does not mean the data is not monitored until the end of the timeframe. It is important to provide periodic updates to the data to monitor progress toward achieving the objective.
- **Community-level**—the data must be for the same “community” that the coalition has defined and is seeking to impact. This can also be called the target population. Depending on the coalition, this may mean establishing a measurable improvement objective for a neighborhood, city, county, or an entire region.



Objectives can be written using a variety of formats and syntax. Regardless of how an objective is written, it must answer the following questions:

- What will be changed?
- By how much?
- How will it be measured?
- By when?
- What is the baseline or starting point?

### Example of a SMART Short-Term Objective

Problem Statement: Underage drinking  
Root Cause: Availability of alcohol  
Local Condition: Retailers are selling alcohol to minors

*“A 15% decrease in retailers selling alcohol to minors, from 25% in 2018 to 10% in 2020, as measured by failed compliance checks conducted by the Liquor Control Board.”*

For this short-term objective related to changing a local condition:

- What will be changed = Local condition: Retail outlets selling to minors
- By how much = Decrease of 15% from 25% to 10%
- How will it be measured = Alcohol vendors failing Liquor Control Board compliance checks
- By when = 2020
- Baseline = 2018 the failure rate was 25%

When writing objectives, consider the following key points:

1. Writing the desired change— be clear what a % change represents (either absolute—change in percentage points--or relative—change in terms of a percent of the value). For example, a 25% change can represent:
2. 25% decrease from 60% is 35% (absolute) =  $60\% - 25\% = 35\%$
3. 33% decrease from 1,500 to 1,000 (relative) =  $(1,000 - 1,500)/1,500 \times 100\% = 33\%$
4. The amount of change can be determined by looking at current trends in the data – if a negative indicator (such as reported use of alcohol in the last 30-day) is trending up (it is getting worse), it may take some time to change the trend before it can be expected to decrease. The specific objective should reflect this.
5. Some indicators may get worse before they get better. For example, if a local condition is “parent(s) providing alcohol at home,” it can be expected that the measure “citations for social host law violations,” will initially

increase when the social host laws are put in place and enforced. The measure will decrease at a later point in time after the combination of prevention strategies impacts the overall number of parents providing alcohol at home.

6. There is no one way to determine how much change to expect. It is up to the coalition to come up with appropriate goals. It is also up to the coalition to determine the correct balance between being overly optimistic (over-promising) and pessimistic (being too conservative and not setting a high enough goal).
7. Considerations for setting the target number when writing SMART objectives:

How “easy” or “challenging” will it be to change the local conditions and/or to implement the proposed strategies?

- Does the coalition currently have the capacity to implement the strategies, or will the capacity have to be developed?
- Is the baseline data “high” or “low?” How likely are the numbers to change?
- What are the social or political impacts of the proposed changes?

# CHAPTER 3.

## Comprehensive Strategies

### Why Comprehensive Strategies?

Changing conditions and behaviors in a community is not an easy task. Think of two major community-wide changes that have occurred in relation to health and safety: seat belts and smoking.

**Seatbelts.** The effort to increase automobile safety through the use of seatbelts required several key strategies:

- An intensive public awareness campaign (“Click It or Ticket”)
- Changes to laws that enable law enforcement to ticket drivers and passengers that are not wearing their seatbelts
- Changes to automobile design that required manufacturers to install seatbelts in every vehicle.

**Smoking.** A significant decrease in smoking rates occurred only after a series of strategies were put in place:

- Public awareness campaign about the dangers of smoking and removal of tobacco advertisements from mainstream media channels
- Decrease in access to tobacco products by placing them behind the counter (or in locked cases) at retail outlets
- Significant increase in the price through tax increases
- Limited places to smoke in public through clean air ordinances.

In both these examples, a combination of comprehensive and complementary strategies was required to achieve the community-wide change. The same holds true for changing local conditions identified on a coalition’s logic model. When developing strategies, coalitions should consider the following:

- Develop a unique set of **comprehensive strategies** for each local condition on our logic model.
- These strategies should seek to **change the behavior or condition** associated with the local condition on the coalition’s logic model.
- The strategies should be **based on evidence** that they will be effective in your community.
- The strategies should be **culturally appropriate** – meaning they will be developed to work with the diverse populations in your community.

- The strategies should be **politically acceptable** in your community. For example, if the local condition is “parents hosting parties,” a potential strategy may be a social host ordinance (which is an evidence-based strategy.) However, a social host law may have previously failed or when brought up it was determined by city council members to be a “non-starter.” In this case, other strategies will need to be identified.

This chapter addresses three key components required to design and select strategies:

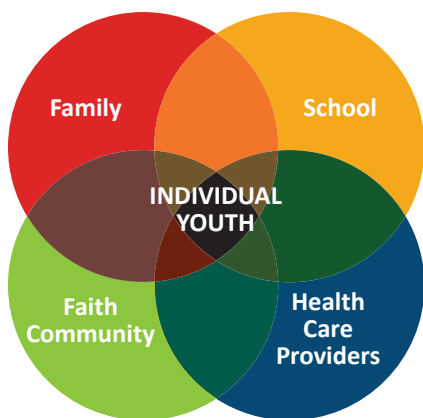
- **Environmental Strategies**—Environmental strategies incorporate prevention efforts aimed at changing or influencing community conditions, standards, institutions, structures, systems, and policies. Coalitions should select strategies that lead to long-term outcomes.
- **Evidence-based Strategies**—Programs or policies that have been evaluated and demonstrated to be effective in preventing health problems based on the best-available research evidence, rather than on personal belief or anecdotal evidence.
- **Comprehensive Strategies**—a combination of strategies that, when implemented over time, will achieve a desired outcome. Comprehensive strategies include a combination of individual and environmental-focused strategies.

## Environmental Strategies

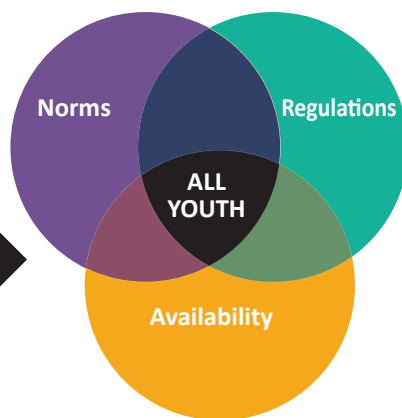
Comprehensive strategies involve implementing both **individual-focused strategies** and **community-wide environmental strategies**. For example, numerous education campaigns and public awareness efforts related to heart disease exist. We are encouraged to avoid certain foods, exercise daily, and get regular check-ups. This information is familiar and repeated often, yet we live in a society where heart disease remains an insidious public health problem. So, in addition to information sharing strategies, environmental, policy-based strategies should be utilized. These strategies include expanding healthy food options in community grocery stores, providing exercise breaks and incentives for employees, establishing smoke-free work and public spaces, and providing smoking cessation coverage in insurance policies. Combined, these strategies will work to address the risk and protective factors related to preventing heart disease more comprehensively than implementing a public awareness campaign alone.

As the diagram below illustrates, both the coalition and its partners are responsible for ensuring the appropriate combination of individual- and environmental-focused strategies are put in place to change the overall community environment to reduce substance use.

### Strategies Targeting Individualized Environments



### Strategies Targeting Shared “Community” Environment



#### ***What Are Environmental Strategies?***

Grounded in the field of public health, which emphasizes the broader physical, social, cultural, and institutional forces that contribute to the problems that coalitions address, **environmental strategies** offer well-accepted prevention approaches that coalitions use to change the context (environment) in which substance use and misuse occur. Environmental strategies:

- Can produce quick wins and instill commitment toward long-term impact on practices and policies within a community.
- Require substantial commitment from various sectors of the community to contribute to sustainable community change.
- Reach entire populations and reduce collective risk of the entire community.
- Create lasting change in community norms and systems that produce widespread behavior change and, in turn, reduce problems for entire communities.

#### **Environmental Strategies – A Definition**

Environmental strategies incorporate prevention efforts aimed at changing or influencing community conditions, standards, institutions, structures, systems, and policies.

Examples of environmental strategies include the following:

<b>Environmental Strategies</b>	
Hours/days of sale	Outlet density reduction
Clean air laws	Open container ordinance
Happy hour ordinance/laws	Festivals – beer gardens
Advertising ordinance/laws	Shoulder tap enforcement
Social host ordinances	Drug courts
Compliance checks	Rx drug monitoring system
Party patrol	Controlled party dispersal
Prescribing guidelines	Restriction on MJ dispensaries
Restrictions on “pill mills”	Paraphernalia ordinances

When a comprehensive, multi-strategy effort is in place, coalitions contribute to achieving population-level change by focusing on multiple targets of sufficient scale and scope to make a difference community-wide. Costs associated with implementation, monitoring, and political action within a community can be considerably lower than those associated with ongoing education, services, and therapeutic efforts applied to individuals. The bottom line is, environmental strategies are effective in modifying the settings where a person lives, which plays a part in how that person behaves.

### **Evidence-based Strategies**

The coalition’s logic model serves as the starting point for deciding what strategies a coalition should implement. The logic model presents the coalition’s diagnosis of each community substance use problem with identified root causes and local conditions. This is not unlike a doctor’s visit. Doctors do not start with a list of “evidence-based medicines” that have been proven to work, and then attempt to match this list with patients as they come through the door. Good doctors start by diagnosing a patient’s specific symptoms to discover the root cause of the illness, and only then consider treatment options.

## Definitions

Oftentimes, different language is used to describe the range of evidence-based strategies. Determining what practices are “evidence-based” or “practice-based” can be challenging. For clarity purposes, the following definitions are provided\*:

- **Evidence-based** – strategies that are based on rigorous research that has demonstrated effectiveness in achieving the outcomes that they are designed to achieve.
- **Evidence-informed** – strategies that are based on research and prevention science and/or include elements of evidence-based strategies, but have not been evaluated or researched on their own to be considered evidence-based.
- **Research-based** – similar to evidence-based strategies that are based on rigorous research that has demonstrated effectiveness in achieving the outcomes that it is designed to achieve.
- **Evidence** – based principles or elements - Evidence-based practices and principles are elements that increase effectiveness across a variety of programs, rather than self-standing programs that can be acquired and implemented. Researchers try to identify these “active ingredients” to increase the likelihood that programs, whether evidence-based or not, will be effective.
- **Program or strategy “fit”** – How well a program or strategy matches, or is appropriate for, the community, organizations, stakeholders, and potential participants (i.e., youth). Appropriate program selection increases the likelihood that the program will be implemented with fidelity, thereby increasing the likelihood of achieving the desired health outcomes.
- **Promising practices** – Practices for which there is considerable evidence or expert consensus, and show promise in improving outcomes, but which are not yet proven by the highest or strongest scientific evidence.

\* Note: Different funding sources, researchers, and resources may provide their own unique definitions for some or all of these terms.

“Evidence of effectiveness” can be collected from one of three places: prevention science, community wisdom, experience and cultural practices, and strategies that have worked in other coalitions and communities.

**Prevention Science.** Much research specific to youth development and substance use has been conducted within the field of prevention science. The research has produced evidence of strategies that demonstrate effectiveness in reducing substance use and/or addressing specific risk and protective factors that lead to substance use. Prevention science has some important limitations to consider:

1. Much of the early work in prevention evaluation focused on individual-focused strategies targeting school curricula, parenting classes, and after-school settings where pre- and post-test evaluations can be conducted. As such, there are fewer evaluations conducted on environmental strategies.
2. Policy-based and other large-scale community-wide strategies are inherently difficult to test. For example, evaluation on the implementing of social host laws, or prescription drug storage and disposal campaigns,

do not easily lend themselves to experimental investigation – and require complicated and expensive evaluation efforts examining multiple communities and factors.

3. Studies and evaluations on strategies targeting marijuana, prescription substances, and other substances of use have not been available. We will learn more as on-going and new evaluation studies are completed.

**Community wisdom, experience, and cultural practices.** A second source of evidence is community wisdom, experience and cultural practices. This evidence is generated through case studies, observations, and direct experience. Communities should not discount their own experience and wisdom. If the community has success in earlier efforts, then it should carefully consider this valuable learning when planning future strategies. This form of evidence is extremely helpful in learning from strategies that are implemented in diverse cultures and communities.

**Learning from other communities and professions.** In addition to looking for evidence in prevention science, coalitions can look to the experience of other communities for evidence of effectiveness for specific strategies. For example, if the evidence of effectiveness of a specific law or policy is not available, coalitions can look at data and outcomes from other communities that have implemented the law or policy in their communities. When looking for such communities, coalitions should find comparable communities that have similar populations, demographics, and characteristics. Coalitions can also learn important “lessons learned” from the communities.

**Additionally, evidence adapted from other fields** such as strategies addressing teen pregnancy, youth violence, school success, youth suicide, and other concerns can provide valuable information. Additional information can be obtained from business professionals. For example, a lot can be learned about business use of social media, branding, social marketing and other communication strategies.

- Considerations for selecting an evidence-based strategy include ensuring the strategy has been shown effective in:
- Addressing root causes & local conditions on your logic model.
- Working with populations targeted by the strategy and/or identifying ways to adapt the strategy based on the unique characteristics of the target population.
- Being cost effective – are the full costs of implementation identified and does your coalition and community have the ability to obtain the necessary resources?



- Building the coalition and community’s capacity to implement and sustain a strategy over the long-term.
- Ensuring the strategy is culturally and politically acceptable within the community – can the strategy be adapted to be successfully implemented in your community?

### Sources of Evidence-based Strategies

Sources of evidence-based strategies include:

**Web-based Guides and Resources:**

- CADCA Environmental Strategies Guide - <http://www.cadca.org/resources/coalition-impact-environmental-prevention-strategies>
- SAMHSA Finding Evidence-based Programs and Practices - <https://www.samhsa.gov/capt/tools-learning-resources/finding-evidence-based-programs>
- SAMHSA’s Center for the Application of Prevention Technology (CAPT) - Find information on how to plan, implement, and evaluate evidence-based interventions and learn how prevention relates to behavioral health. <https://www.samhsa.gov/capt/practicing-effective-prevention>
- CDC: The Community Guide—Evidence-based recommendations for programs and policies to promote population health from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/>

**Communities and Coalitions:** Coalitions can provide valuable lessons learned and implementation tips that can enhance your coalition’s ability to implement a strategy.

**Strategy Developers:** Contacting a developer can assist in identifying ways the strategy can be adapted to meet unique community characteristics and target populations. The developers can also provide information for communities that have successfully implemented the strategies.

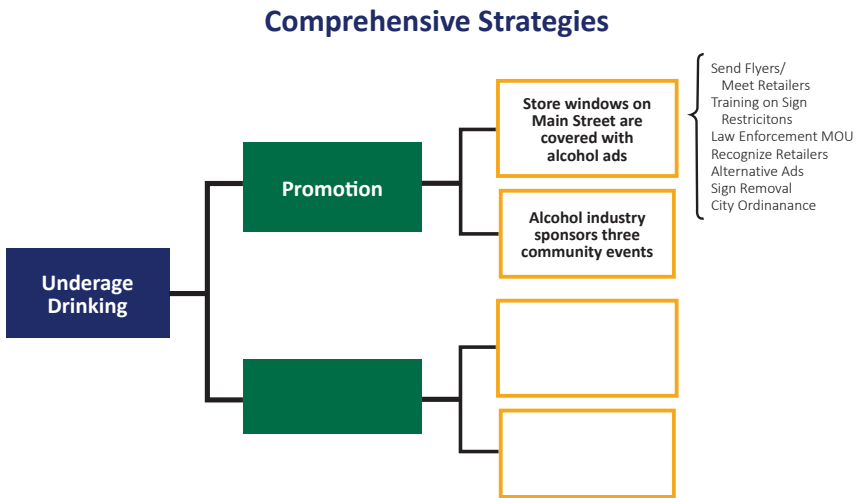
**CADCA Coalition Development Support:** Call 1-800-54-CADCA, ext. 240 and/or email [training@cadca.org](mailto:training@cadca.org)

The coalition development support team can provide information on evidence-based strategies, contacts with other coalitions that have implemented similar strategies and access to developers and other resources.

### Comprehensive Strategies

One of the key lessons learned in coalition work is that it often takes a combination of comprehensive, complementary, and evidence-based strategies to achieve changes in a community. As we all know, there is no one program that can eliminate substance use in the community. If there was, we would all be implementing the program. There is strong consensus in the field of prevention that it takes a comprehensive response utilizing multiple complementary strategies to reduce substance use.

**Comprehensive** means that there are enough strategies in place to change each local condition identified on your coalition’s logic model. **Complementary** means that each of the strategies implemented build on each other in a way that impacts the entire targeted community. And, as previously discussed, **evidence-based** means that the strategies implemented are based on research and experience that has shown the program can successfully achieve the desired changes to each local condition on the coalition’s logic model. As the graphic below indicates, a separate set of comprehensive strategies will be developed to address each local condition.



There are seven “categories” of strategies that can be used by coalitions to change local conditions. These categories of strategies include:

1. **Provide information.** One of the most common strategies used in prevention is providing information to community members. The goal of this strategy is to change knowledge and beliefs related to substance use, including accepting that a substance problem exists, understanding the physical and social consequences of substance use, and increasing awareness of what the community is doing to combat substance use.
2. **Build skills.** In addition to changing what people know, prevention efforts seek to give people new abilities to take action. These skill development efforts cross a broad range of abilities and audiences. Examples include: refusal skills for youth, parenting skills for caregivers, professional development for teachers, police, youth workers or other support personnel, and advocacy skills for community residents and coalition members.

3. **Provide support.** Most of us are more likely to act on our knowledge and skills if someone encourages us or participates with us. For example, we know we should exercise more and we may have learned some new exercise skills, but we still may fail to get adequate exercise. However, if we set a time to meet with friends to exercise or our spouse agrees to exercise with us three times a week, then we are more likely to follow through and get the exercise we know we need. Prevention puts this principle into practice in many ways including through peer support groups, alternative activities, and mentoring.
4. **Change access/barriers.** Let's continue with the earlier example of getting adequate exercise. We know we should exercise. We have skills to participate in different forms of physical activity. We even may have supportive family members or friends who will exercise with us. But what if the tennis courts are only open on weekends, the gym membership is too expensive, or our bike needs repair. Each of these illustrates a barrier. An important strategy in prevention is to ensure that there are no barriers to the behaviors in which we want people to engage, such as healthy after-school activities. Conversely, there should be numerous barriers to the behaviors we are trying to discourage, such as increasing the price of alcohol and limiting the hours during which it can be sold to discourage alcohol consumption.
5. **Change consequences/incentives.** Providing incentives or increasing penalties has a strong effect on the behavior choices people make. If an employer holds a contest and awards prizes such as a day off with pay to those who meet their exercise goals, then even more people will begin exercising. Information, skills, social support, and access may all be provided by the employer to encourage exercise. For example, an employer may create pay check stuffers with exercise tips, provide a gym at the workplace, an exercise instructor to build skills, and form employee exercise teams. The addition of incentives will always increase the number of people who participate. Likewise, increasing penalties for behaviors you want to discourage can be effective too, such as increasing fines for providing alcohol to minors or stiffer penalties for selling substances.
6. **Change the physical design of the environment.** Studies show that if good sidewalks are available and connect to places people want or need to go, and if these sidewalks are reasonably "pedestrian friendly," (such as being offset from the road and having shade) more people will walk every day. No other changes are necessary. Simply change the environment and people's behavior changes. This is true of many behaviors coalitions seek to promote or discourage. Crime can be affected by how the neighborhood is physically designed (For example C.P.T.E.D.— "Crime

Prevention Through Environmental Design” programs) and changes can be made to reduce crime by increasing lighting or changing traffic patterns. Coalitions should always look at the relationship between the physical design of the local community and the behaviors they are trying to promote or discourage.

7. **Change policies, rules, practices, and procedures.** Many choices that people make are governed by rules that dictate what can and cannot be done. Rules in the workplace, school regulations, and laws in the community are just some examples. Ensuring these policies and rules are appropriately promoting positive behaviors and discouraging negative behaviors is an important role for coalitions. Often, policy makers are unaware of the unintended side effects of a given policy or an appropriate policy which lacks enforcement. Regardless of what a coalition learns through a community assessment, it is almost impossible to achieve community-level objectives without addressing some aspect of local policy.

In addition to ensuring that the interventions selected by the coalition employ a complete and complementary set of strategies, the interventions also must strike a balance between targeting youth, families, and community leaders and addressing other aspects of the community. Focusing just on the police, or exclusively on schools, or only on social service organizations will not lead to success. All of these aspects of the community will likely have to improve if rates of substance use are to change for the better.

The Comprehensive Strategies Worksheet (below) provides an example of using the seven strategy categories as a guide for changing a local condition. This tool helps coalitions to construct a comprehensive response to local conditions. The tool also helps a coalition gauge whether the package of interventions, taken together, have a real likelihood of “moving the numbers.”

## Comprehensive Strategies Worksheet

**Problem Statement:** Underage drinking  
**Root Cause:** Availability of alcohol  
**Local Condition:** Alcohol retailers are selling alcohol to minors.

<b>Provide information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mass mailing to all outlets providing information about existing and proposed laws and consequences.</li> <li>• Inform key local leaders about the problem and present data documenting the current problem.</li> </ul>
<b>Build skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide training to retail clerks on how to identify fake ID's and on using correct ID check procedures.</li> </ul>
<b>Provide support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convene liquor outlet owners and managers to facilitate sharing of ideas to increase compliance.</li> </ul>
<b>Change access/ barriers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer recurring retail clerk training on-site.</li> <li>• Offer non-English version of retail clerk training.</li> </ul>
<b>Change consequences/ incentives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide recognition for high compliance outlets in quarterly advertising section of the newspaper.</li> <li>• Create "thank you business cards" (with 10% mall discount incentive) for distribution to clerks who are observed following correct ID check process.</li> <li>• Increase compliance checks to two per quarter.</li> <li>• Enforce fines and penalties for failing compliance checks.</li> </ul>
<b>Change the physical design of the environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in-store signage reminding patrons of ID check law and procedures followed by store clerks.</li> <li>• Create yearly "born on this date" reminder stickers or calendars for each point of sale.</li> </ul>
<b>Change policies, rules, practices and procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enact policy to change local ordinance to increase fines and penalties for consecutive compliance check failures.</li> <li>• Enact policy to make rates of past compliance a condition for awarding new/renewing licenses.</li> <li>• Enact policy to establish a probation period of one year for newly awarded liquor licenses requiring 100% compliance or revocation.</li> </ul>



# CHAPTER 4.

## Prioritizing Strategies

After the coalition identifies a comprehensive set of strategies to address a local condition on their logic model, and before the coalition moves to action planning, an important step is to **prioritize the strategies** which should be implemented first, second, third and so on. This step will make action planning more realistic, as the coalition will have a better idea of when to involve specific partners and coalition members in the implementation efforts. The effort to prioritize strategies involves two key tasks: 1) **sequencing** the strategies – identifying when to implement which strategies and, 2) identifying the **capacity** needed to implement the strategies.

### Sequence Strategies for Action Planning

When planning the strategies needed to change a local condition, it is important to also consider the order or sequence in which the strategies will be implemented. Some strategies will need to be put in place before others can be executed. Considerations for the sequencing include:

- Are all the partners who will be involved in the strategies “up to speed” on the work of the coalition, the local conditions and the proposed strategies? If not, they may need to be provided with information or skill-building training prior to engaging in strategies to change the local condition.
- For any set of strategies that require laws and/or policies to be enforced, it is critical to have the enforcement agency on board early in the process. Hopefully, they would have already been involved in the planning. If the enforcing agency is not on board, it is unlikely they will conduct the necessary enforcement activities.
- In many cases the coalition and its partners will need to start with the “provide information” and “build skills” strategies first. 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 enacting the ordinance.

The exhibit below provides an example of sequencing strategies – using the Comprehensive Strategies Worksheet example provided on page 33.

## Strategy Sequencing Example

<b>Problem Statement:</b>	Underage drinking
<b>Root Cause:</b>	Availability of alcohol
<b>Local Condition:</b>	Alcohol retailers are selling alcohol to minors.

### Phase 1: Preparation and Public Awareness of the Problem

- Inform key local leaders about the problem and present data documenting the current problem.
- Convene liquor outlet owners and managers to facilitate sharing of ideas to increase compliance.

### Phase 2: Policy Development/Retailer Engagement

- Enact policy to change local ordinance to increase fines and penalties for consecutive compliance check failure.
- Enact policy to make rates of past compliance a condition for awarding new/renewing licenses.
- Enact policy to establish a probation period of one year for newly awarded liquor licenses requiring 100% compliance or revocation.
- Provide training to retail clerks on how to identify fake ID's and on using correct ID check procedures.
- Offer recurring retail clerk training on-site.
- Offer non-English version of retail clerk training.
- Conduct a mass mailing to all outlets providing information about existing and proposed laws and consequences.
- Increase in-store signage reminding patrons of ID check law and procedures followed by store clerks.
- Create yearly "born on this date" reminder stickers or calendars for each point of sale.

### Phase 3: Policy Implementation and Enforcement

- Provide recognition for high compliance outlets in quarterly advertising section of the newspaper.
- Create "thank you business cards" (with 10% mall discount incentive) for distribution to clerks who are seen to follow correct ID process.
- Increase compliance checks to two per quarter.
- Enforce fines and penalties for failing compliance checks.

## Build Capacity to Plan and Implement Strategies

When planning the strategies needed to change a local condition, the coalition will need to identify the capacity needed to implement each strategy. Examples of the types of activities that may be needed to build capacity for a specific strategy include:

- Identifying **new partners** – these partners may be existing coalition members or new individuals and organizations that have expertise or an interest in the area.
- Engaging **sector representatives** to conduct outreach to members of their sector.



- Clarifying specific **non-financial resources** needed to implement a strategy such as training sites, advertising, volunteers etc.
- Obtaining additional **funding** for a specific activity such as bringing in an expert to train on a specific topic or purchasing materials for distribution in the community.
- Providing **training or instruction** to providers and targets of change of a strategy. For example, police may need to be trained in conducting alcohol compliance checks and retailers may need to be trained in checking ID's and dealing with intoxicated customers.



# CHAPTER 5.

## Develop an Action Plan

An action plan ensures that a coalition’s vision materializes. It describes how your coalition will use its strategies to meet its objectives along with the action steps or changes to be brought about in your community. More importantly, an action plan delineates everyone’s responsibilities for achieving the outcomes in your strategic plan. It includes, step-by-step, what actions will be taken to achieve the outcomes, who will do what, and by when.

### Why Develop an Action Plan?

Action plans focus the team on the specific tasks required and ensure that all members are afforded the opportunity to contribute to the broad goals of the group. Many coalitions have taken the time to complete a strategic plan, but far fewer have engaged in action planning. Enacted together, strategic and action planning can productively move a coalition from community assessment and analysis to effective and focused community action.

Action planning is where the “rubber” of strategic planning meets “the road” of execution. While easy to understand, action plans do take a bit of time to complete. Action planning:

- **Distributes the work.** Action planning ensures that all of the steps have been spelled out and that the responsibility for completing the identified steps does not fall to just one or two members. By ensuring that all coalition members are engaged in action planning, the tasks won’t all fall to the coalition staff or a few volunteers.
- **Encourages member engagement.** The action plan enables coalition members to work, as opposed to merely advising. Matching members to specific tasks can maximize the skills and community connections of coalition members. Volunteers are more likely to remain engaged in coalition work if they are given the opportunity to play a concrete role that truly requires their unique skills, connections, and interests.
- **Promotes action orientation.** Team meetings at all levels are made more productive by making existing action plans the main focus. When key steps are accomplished there is reason to celebrate and recognize the actors that made it possible. When volunteers report difficulty in completing an assigned task, the group can brainstorm solutions and make appropriate modifications.
- **Aids targeted recruitment.** Action planning can be the basis for recruiting new members. Coalitions often discover that specific activities cannot be

accomplished by the current members alone. A new partner might be identified as capable of helping the coalition complete needed work and be targeted for recruitment as a result. Asking someone to join because they are truly needed to accomplish an important part of the coalition's work provides a very compelling reason to join.

The action plan should cover the **activities** needed to implement specific **strategies** identified to address **local conditions**. These conditions should be identified on each of the coalition's **logic models**. The action plan is a living document—so, while it has an important function as a guide, it should both reflect the real work being done and leave some room for change when new, unexpected circumstances arise or when mid-course corrections are needed.

For example, an unexpected increase in alcohol-related traffic crashes occurring in an area that has become heavily concentrated with newly licensed alcohol outlets would warrant further investigation. Your coalition should have the flexibility to take on significant new issues that develop during implementation. So, while it is important to be clear about what you will be working on for the next 12 months, be more general about the second and third year so the coalition can respond to new issues that arise.

## Elements of an Action Plan

Action plans are made up of activities needed to achieve your proposed objectives. The key elements of an action plan include:

**Strategy:** action planning ensures that each broad strategy is planned and implemented in a way that will achieve the intended outcome - changing the local condition.

**Activities:** each step required to accomplish an overall task or effort is completely spelled out. If the coalition decides to undertake a media campaign, then the action plan will spell out the individual steps required to plan, implement, and evaluate the project.

**Who is responsible:** action plans detail specifically who will be responsible for each step or action to be completed.

**By when:** a specific deadline or timeframe is provided for every step or task to be completed. Action planning creates accountability for assignments made to group members. If deadlines are not met the group can assess the specific action step by asking if the deadline was appropriate, if the volunteer was given a reasonable size task, or if unexpected issues or resistance were met.

When you have prepared your action plan, double check to be sure it meets the following criteria:

- Is the action plan complete? Does it list all the steps or changes that are sought in all relevant parts of the community (e.g., schools, business, government, others)?
- Is it clear? Is it apparent who will do what, by when?
- Does the action plan reflect the current work? Does it anticipate newly emerging opportunities and barriers?
- Is the work distributed across the volunteer membership?

The following example from the Strategic and Action Plan Template demonstrates how the necessary activities are detailed to implement a specific strategy.

<b>Strategies:</b>		
<b>Strategy 1 - Provide Information:</b>		
Activity	Who is Responsible	By When?
<b>Strategy 2 - Build Skills:</b>		
Activity	Who is Responsible	By When?

The following example demonstrates how specific activities can be established for each strategy.

<b>Strategies:</b>		
<b>Strategy 1 - Provide Information:</b> Provide information to retailers on current laws		
Activity	Who is Responsible	By When?
Contact county and city attorneys to clarify current laws	Law Enforcement Sector Rep	March 2018
Develop letter and flyers for distribution to retailers	UAD Committee	April 2018
Update letters and flyers after changes to laws are in place	Communication Committee	June 2019
<b>Strategy 2 - Build Skills:</b> Train merchants to check ID's and look for fake ID's		
Activity	Who is Responsible	By When?
Identify TIPS training to be conducted in the community	Coordinator	April 2018
Send 4 Coalition members to TIPS training	Coalition Members	May 2018
Schedule and conduct one TIPS training per month	Coalition Members	December 2018
<b>Strategy 3 - Provide Support:</b> Assistance to store owners in posting signs and training clerks		
Activity	Who is Responsible	By When?
Conduct environmental scans of alcohol retailers	ABC Youth Council	June 2018
Send email to alcohol retailers offering assistance	Coordinator	September 2018
Assist store owners as identified	Coalition Members	Ongoing

## Conclusion

The strategic and action plans are based on the coalition's **logic models**. **Strategic and action plans** remind a coalition what they are trying to achieve and the major strategies that will be used to achieve results. **Action plans** focus the team on specific tasks and ensure that members are afforded the opportunity to contribute to the group's broad goals. Enacted together, strategic and action planning can move a coalition productively from community assessment and analysis to effective and focused community action.

This primer has discussed how to undertake a strategic planning process that includes developing the **VMOSA**: Vision, Mission, Objectives, Strategies and Action Plans.

Now is a good time to check the pulse of the coalition to be sure coalition members and partners are still full participants.

Coalition members can become intimidated when they realize that they are being asked to embark on a process that will require them to commit their organizations to pursue meaningful community change in which they must become active participants. For this reason, coalition staff must fully explain the required roles of coalition members when they approach potential members.

As you swing into the next phase—**implementation**—you want to be sure that you still have a diverse and representative group on board to complete the substantive work that lies ahead. As noted in the introduction, cultural competence is critical to this and all other phases of the SPF and must be carefully incorporated into the work of your coalition.

Because the SPF process is cyclical, revising and refining your coalition’s key products should be an ongoing process. Now that you have completed your plan, go back and determine if and how additional capacity needs to be built. You may find that the assessment you conducted requires collection or analysis of new or additional data.

### ***Organizing for Strategic and Action Planning***

When completed, the strategic and action plan provides a detailed description of the work the coalition must undertake to achieve the short-term objective and change a local condition on the logic model. It is obvious that there is too much work for any local condition for one or two people to take on by themselves. As noted throughout this and other primers, coalition members and partners must be involved in the entire Strategic Prevention Framework planning process. Consequently, it is important that the strategies and action plans be developed and implemented by coalition members. The following considerations can help to engage coalition members in doing the work:

- Provide **additional training** on any or all of the components of VMOSA. The CADCA online course “Core Essentials” includes specific modules related to strategic and action planning.
- **Divide the work up** among the coalition. Create work groups or action teams as necessary to do the work. There are various ways to organize—especially when working on strategies: by substances, (e.g., marijuana, UAD), by root cause (e.g., alcohol availability, marijuana laws and enforcement), or strategy (e.g., community festivals, alcohol retailer compliance and training).
- Depending on the number of logic models, root causes, and local conditions identified by the coalition, there may be a lot of work to do. Some local conditions and comprehensive strategies may be clear, while others still may need to be defined. Given this, the coalition may choose to **prioritize specific local conditions and strategies** to address before others. Why not start with the “low hanging fruit” or those strategies that will be easy to implement and have a quick impact?

- As needed, **contact CADCA Coalition Development Support** – they can help you with all aspects of the strategic and action planning process including finalizing logic models, identifying evidence-based strategies, and developing vision and mission statements.

### ***Steps for Completing a Strategic and Action Plan***

The coalition may use the following steps to develop their strategic and action plans:

1. Clarify and update the coalition’s logic model.
2. Create a work group or action team to engage in the strategic and action planning effort.
3. Create or update the coalition’s **vision statement**.
4. Create or update the coalition’s **mission statement**.
5. Write long-, intermediate-, and short-term **objectives** based on the coalition’s logic model.
6. Design the **comprehensive strategies** needed to change each local condition.
7. Identify evidence-based **strategies** that will help to achieve the desired changes.
8. Prioritize and sequence the comprehensive strategies. Identify the capacity needed to implement the strategies.
9. Develop **action plans** for EACH strategy.
10. Share the strategic and action plans with all coalition members and coalition partners.



## 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?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aim</li><li>• Goal</li><li>• Objective</li><li>• Problem Statement</li><li>• Target</li><li>• Vision</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Activity</li><li>• Approach</li><li>• Initiative</li><li>• Input</li><li>• Method</li><li>• Mission</li><li>• Policy</li><li>• Practice</li><li>• Program</li><li>• Strategy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Benchmark</li><li>• Indicator</li><li>• Intermediate</li><li>• Outcome</li><li>• Impact</li><li>• Measure</li><li>• Milestone</li><li>• Outcome</li><li>• Output</li><li>• Result</li></ul>

## Glossary

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

**Activity.** Things that you do—activities you plan to conduct in your program.

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

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

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

**Benchmark.** Measure of progress toward a goal, taken at intervals prior to a program's completion or the anticipated attainment of the final goal.

**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.** The change that occurs within the target population in your target area.

**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 substances.

**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 and alcohol are not used 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.

**Intermediate outcome.** Results or outcomes of program activities that must occur prior to the final outcome to produce the final outcome. For example, a prison vocation program must first result in increased employment (intermediate outcome) before it may expect to reduce recidivism (final outcome).

**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, statements of activities and results. It keeps participants moving in the same direction through common language and points of reference.

As an element of the work itself, it can rally support by declaring what will be accomplished and how.

**Measure.** (n.) The value assigned to an object or an event; (v.) express as a number or measure or quantity.

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

**Milestone.** A significant point of achievement or development which describes progress toward a goal.

**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.

**Output.** The product or service delivery/implementation targets you aim to produce.

**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 substance cases in the courts might be adopted as a basis for reducing the average number of days from arraignment to disposition.

**Practice.** A customary way of operation or behavior.

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

**Resources.** Any or all of those things that can be used to improve the quality of community life. The things that can help close the gap between what is and what ought to be.

**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.

**Short-term outcome.** Changes expected to occur either immediately or very shortly after implementation of activities.

**Strategic plans.** Include the 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.

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







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National Coalition Institute  
625 Slaters Lane, Suite 300, Alexandria VA 22314  
Website: [www.cadca.org](http://www.cadca.org)  
Telephone: 703-706-0560, ext. 240  
E-mail: [training@cadca.org](mailto:training@cadca.org)

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625 Slaters Lane, Suite 300  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Tel 1-800-54-CADCA • Fax 703-706-0565  
[cadca.org](http://cadca.org)