

BUILDING COMMUNITY COALITIONS

resources

Building Community Coalitions

Community outreach and support are the two main elements of a successful *National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (Recovery Month)* celebration. Reaching out to other organizations in your community that have an interest in *Recovery Month* can help make your campaign in September even stronger. Forming a coalition or a task force that will focus on treatment for substance use disorders, recovery support, and the value of investing in treatment will add your efforts to those in communities across the country.

There are two ways to partner with other organizations: build a coalition from scratch (which takes time, but provides a wider range of resources) or work with an existing coalition to begin immediately. All the organizations involved in your coalition should have the same goals—to reduce the rate of substance use in the community, inform others about the benefits that investing in treatment for substance use disorders can have on families and the community, reduce stigma, and improve the lives of children and families affected by substance use disorders.

Coalitions: Supportive and Resourceful

If there is no existing coalition in your community, you can develop one with a focus on *Recovery Month*. Please use the following steps.

First, brainstorm individuals and organizations from the public and private sector who might be a positive addition to the coalition. Below is a list of types of organizations that you can consider to make *Recovery Month* more effective and build a sustainable coalition:

- Recovery support groups or individuals in recovery
- Alcohol and drug use prevention coalitions
- Treatment centers and clinics
- Criminal justice system programs
- Disability groups
- Government officials and agencies
- Law enforcement agencies
- Mental health organizations
- Child welfare organizations
- Neighborhood groups
- Private companies/businesses
- Racial/ethnic organizations
- Religious organizations
- Schools and universities
- Youth groups
- Civic groups
- Health-related organizations
- Foundations

Coalition = A formal arrangement between multiple organizations to work together to achieve the same goal. In this case, the goal is raising awareness of the effectiveness of treatment for substance use disorders and the value of investing in recovery.

Citizen-Advocate Partnership = A type of coalition that engages individual members of the community and representatives from key groups, such as treatment providers or policymakers, to work together toward the same goal.

Each of these organizations can add various strengths and resources to the coalition. To facilitate the involvement of all facets of society, consider creating a citizen-advocate partnership between some of these organizations and individual community members.

Research the coalition partners by using the tools listed in the next section, and contact your list of potential coalition allies, taking advantage of any existing connections and relationships your organization has.

Once you confirm the individuals and groups that you will be partnering with, work together by communicating and meeting regularly. Begin by setting priorities and goals, having a main contact person to coordinate all members, and choosing a leadership team that will keep the plan on track and proceed with the coalition planning.

Remember that you have the option of forming a task force instead of a coalition (see box below).

Tools for a Successful Coalition:

- **Research existing coalitions and task forces** in your community by contacting the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) at 1-800-54-CADCA or www.cadca.org. CADCA is the only national organization representing community anti-drug coalitions. The network encompasses more than 5,000 organizations and can provide you with materials and technical assistance if there is no established coalition in your area.
- **Use the “Additional Resources”** brochure in this planning toolkit to locate organizations with similar interests. Look at the different types of organizations involved as national **Recovery Month** planning partners, listed in the “Planning Partners” document in this toolkit, and identify similar groups in your community.
- **Tips on how to track the success of a community coalition** are available through Join Together’s publication, ***How Do We Know We Are Making a Difference? A Community Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Indicators Handbook***. This handbook is available on the Web at www.indicatorshandbook.org/Indicators_Handbook-v1.pdf.

Task Force = A temporary grouping of individuals or organizations, usually formed around the same specific issue, with a set objective in mind. The task force can report to a larger organization, such as a coalition or legislative body.

Examples to Follow

In Spokane County, Washington, a coalition of prevention and treatment professionals hosted the first-ever Art of Recovery event to celebrate and recognize the thousands of local people in recovery, while also engaging and educating the community. This event had great success, as the coalition set up the event at a popular local park, displayed various pieces of art, and had live performances of music and poetry, all by artists in recovery. Several treatment, prevention, and transition specialists set up resource booths to help educate the public about substance use disorders and offer resources for those currently seeking treatment or help for recovery. The event attracted approximately 300 people, including the Spokane council president and several local media outlets.

In Wyoming County, West Virginia, the Wyoming County Prevention Partnership engaged the community to participate in ***Recovery Month*** by holding a panel discussion at the county courthouse about the different treatments available to help those wishing to enter treatment and recovery. The Partnership also had a celebration of recovery where local bands, storytellers, and a presentation were featured in a local park. Partners set up resource tables that featured carnival games and offered free food and drinks. The community was engaged more than ever before.

Coalition Resources

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA)

CADCA builds and strengthens the capacity of community coalitions to create safe, healthy, and drug-free communities. The organization supports its members with technical assistance and training, public policy, media strategies, conferences, and special events.

625 Slaters Lane, Suite 300

Alexandria, VA 22314

800-54-CADCA (22322) (Toll-Free)

703-706-0560

www.cadca.org

Faces & Voices of Recovery

This national recovery advocacy campaign mobilizes people in recovery from addiction to alcohol and other drugs, their family members, friends, and allies to end discrimination and treat addiction as a public health problem.

1010 Vermont Avenue NW, Suite 708

Washington, D.C. 20005

202-737-0690

www.facesandvoicesofrecovery.org

National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD)

Founded in 1944, NCADD is dedicated to increasing public awareness and understanding of the disease of alcoholism and drug dependence. NCADD and its national network of state and local affiliates provide education, prevention, information/referral, intervention, treatment services, and advocacy, and have helped hundreds of thousands of individuals and families into recovery.

22 Cortlandt Street

New York, NY 10007

800-NCA-CALL (Hope Line) (Toll-Free)

212-269-7797

www.ncadd.org