

Sustainability Plan

Ohio's Strategic Prevention Framework – State Incentive Grant (SPF SIG)

HANCOCK COUNTY

Ohio's Strategic Prevention Framework – State Incentive Grant is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) and administered by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS).

Strategic Prevention Framework – State Incentive Grant (SPF SIG): Sustainability Module

Introduction

“The key element of sustainability is providing continued benefits, regardless of particular activities delivered or the format in which they are delivered.” –Mancini & Marek (2002)

There are four clarifying questions that need to be answered in order for sustainability planning to move forward:

1. *What* are you trying to sustain? (or, *What* needs to be sustained?)
2. **Public Value:** What *evidence* do you have that what you are doing is *worth sustaining*? (or, *Why* does this initiative *deserve* to be sustained?)
3. **Authorizing Environment:** What *institutional supports, structures, and/or policies* need to be in place to achieve sustainability?
4. **Operational Capacity:** What *capacity* is necessary to sustain this effort and *where* will that capacity come from?

A. Building the Sustainability Team

Before these questions can be answered, it is essential that you *identify the key players*. It is very important to consider your authorizing environment (Moore, 1995).

Who are the individuals in your coalition or community that need to be involved in conversations about sustainability? Please do not list your entire coalition roster. Be purposeful and intentional about the individuals who need to be at the table to discuss sustainability. This group must be big enough to be inclusive but small enough to move forward quickly. Please also consider individuals from outside your coalition that could play a role in sustaining the work of the SPF in your community.

Hancock County is fortunate in that the work completed through SPF SIG has been under the umbrella of the Opiate/Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Task Force which is a committee of the Community Partnership. Because of this framework, the coalition members that have been a part of SPF SIG have great confidence that this particular program (addressing prescription drug misuse among the 18-25 year old population in Hancock County) will be able to be sustained for many years to come.

Although SPF SIG has been a part of the larger Community Partnership, staff members identified a core of community members that would comprise the team that would remain focused on SPF SIG after this grant period. This team consists of the identified key players that have come together to develop this Sustainability Plan. Aware that in order to create effective and lasting outcomes a cross section of the community must be represented in any coalition, the SPF SIG team consists of representatives from the following community sectors:

- Schools
- Healthcare professionals
- Law enforcement
- Youth-serving organizations
- Parents
- Barb Wilhelm, Findlay City Health Department Deputy Commissioner
- Tina Verhoff, Chief Operating Officer of Family Resource Center

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Although this team is not a complete representation of all twelve community sectors, it does communicate regularly with the Community Partnership which does include the sectors not represented on the team. (For example, the Findlay City Schools Assistant Superintendent – Craig Kupferberg, the Findlay City Police Department School Resource Officer – Brian Dill, and the Executive Director of the United Way of Hancock County – John Urbanski are members of the Community Partnership.) Additionally, the individuals on this team were identified as having a strong drive to complete the necessary work of SPF SIG and would have the most likelihood of remaining a part of the team throughout the entire grant period and beyond.

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B. Sustainability Question #1: What are you *trying* to sustain? (or, What *needs* to be sustained?)

Weiss, Coffman, Bohan-Baker (2002) identified four categories related to “initiative sustainability.” These categories are very broad and are very applicable to SPF initiatives. These categories may be helpful for your team as you plan for sustainability. If your team has already clearly articulated what you are trying to sustain, you may want to categorize your objectives. Please feel free to create your own category if you need to.

Please remember that you do NOT need a sustainability objective/goal for each category. We are providing these categories as conversation catalysts, not as requirements.

1. *Organizations and/or Projects*: securing additional funding for projects begun or supported under the initiative
2. *Ideas*: maintaining the initiative’s core principals, values, beliefs, and commitment
3. *Relationships*: maintaining connections among people and institutions
4. *Outcomes*: maintaining initiative results

Please choose the question that most appropriately applies to your project: What are you *trying* to sustain? (or, What *needs* to be sustained?) Please state your sustainability objectives/goals as bullet-point statements. Each objective/goal must be specific, measurable, and observable.

When the team of key players met to begin developing the Sustainability Plan, it was determined that the focus of this Sustainability Plan needs to be “*what needs to be sustained*”. The following sustainability objectives/goals were listed as being most important:

- **Maintain and foster relationships developed through SPF SIG:** The work of SPF SIG strengthened existing relationships with law enforcement and schools and also created deeper relationships with our local university. As the Community Partnership moves forward, it is imperative that these relationships continue to remain intact and strengthened in order to create positive and lasting change in our community.
- **Keep support of outside organizations:** Some partners involved in SPF SIG were not necessarily involved in the action of SPF SIG but were included as necessary support organizations to advance the work of SPF SIG. For example, our local newspaper, The Courier, became a strong supporter of SPF SIG efforts and regularly covered the work of SPF SIG to grow awareness throughout our community. Additionally, the Findlay City Police Department, the Hancock County Sheriff’s Office, and the University Of Findlay College Of Pharmacy were also influential partners during the SPF SIG process.
- **Keep a commitment to utilizing the Strategic Prevention Framework process:** A positive and lasting influence SPF SIG has had on our community, and in particular, the Community Partnership, is that the Strategic Prevention Framework process has been adopted as the framework for future prevention initiatives. Recognizing the impact the Strategic Prevention Framework process has had on assessing our community needs and building capacity, as well as developing a way to design an effective prevention strategy, the leadership of the Community Partnership has decided to apply the Strategic Prevention Framework process to future prevention initiatives. In fact, the FY15 Community Partnership Strategic Prevention Work Plan is based entirely on the framework of the Strategic Prevention Framework. As a result, the work of SPF SIG will be able to be sustained for many years to come.

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The Community Partnership recognizes the power of the Strategic Prevention Framework and believes that this process will enable any prevention initiative to become powerful and yield positive outcomes that result in a healthier place to live, work, and play in Hancock County. Regardless of what prevention initiative is undertaken by the Community Partnership, its members believe that the three sustainability objectives/goals listed above are the most critical in creating lasting change for our community.

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C. Sustainability Question #2: Public Value - What *evidence* do you have that what you are doing is *worth sustaining*? (or, Why does this initiative *deserve* to be sustained?)

We discussed the idea of *public value* (Moore, 1995). It may be helpful to frame this conversation among your planning team as such. For example, it may be useful to have your planning team respond to these questions (You do not need to write responses to these questions, these are just provided as conversation catalysts.):

- How is this SPF initiative positively impacting the community?
- What results from this SPF initiative are valued by the community?
- What results from this SPF initiative are valued by the leadership team?

Once you have answered these questions, please respond to the overarching question (whichever form is most applicable to your situation): What evidence do you have that what you are doing is worth sustaining? (or, Why does this initiative deserve to be sustained?)

Perhaps the most significant lesson learned through SPF SIG is that the entire process demands that the actions (prevention initiatives) fit the needs of the community. In the past, some prevention initiatives carried out by the Community Partnership, although worthy, admirable, and valuable, did not yield the anticipated outcomes as desired. Previous prevention initiatives may have been thought to address a community need but were carried out without supporting evidence and data that would justify carrying out a planned prevention strategy. What SPF SIG has taught the Community Partnership is that these particular results may have occurred because the prevention initiative was not addressing a community need that was specifically identified. SPF SIG has taught our community to “trust the process” and remain data-driven.

The amount of capacity SPF SIG has developed in our community is staggering. Most significant, is that any and all Community Partnership members believe in and understand the Strategic Prevention Framework and now expect the process to be employed as future prevention initiatives are developed. Although SPF SIG allowed our community to gain awareness and education of the specific identified issue (prescription drug misuse among the 18-25 population in Hancock County) through educational materials and presentations, it is the communal education gained from completing the Strategic Prevention Framework process which has been most impactful to our community. This knowledge and understanding would not have been possible without SPF SIG and for this reason alone, it is imperative that this Sustainability Plan address this goal more so than any other. Ultimately, a paradigm shift has occurred in the way the Community Partnership carries out its mission of substance abuse prevention and mental health promotion.

More specifically, however, the initiative developed and employed by SPF SIG deserves to be sustained because Hancock County has a growing transient 18-25 year-old population, particularly because of the growth of Marathon Petroleum Corporation. Although the issue of prescription drug misuse may remain, the way in which this target population responds to prevention efforts will change. Because of changing values, beliefs, and attitudes, the Strategic Prevention Framework is necessary to ensure that appropriate prevention initiatives are employed. Additionally, until the social norm identified through SPF SIG (78% of the 18-25 year olds in Hancock County believe prescription drug misuse is

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unacceptable) is shared by 100% of our community, the efforts of the strategy employed (Media Campaign) through SPF SIG deserve to be sustained.

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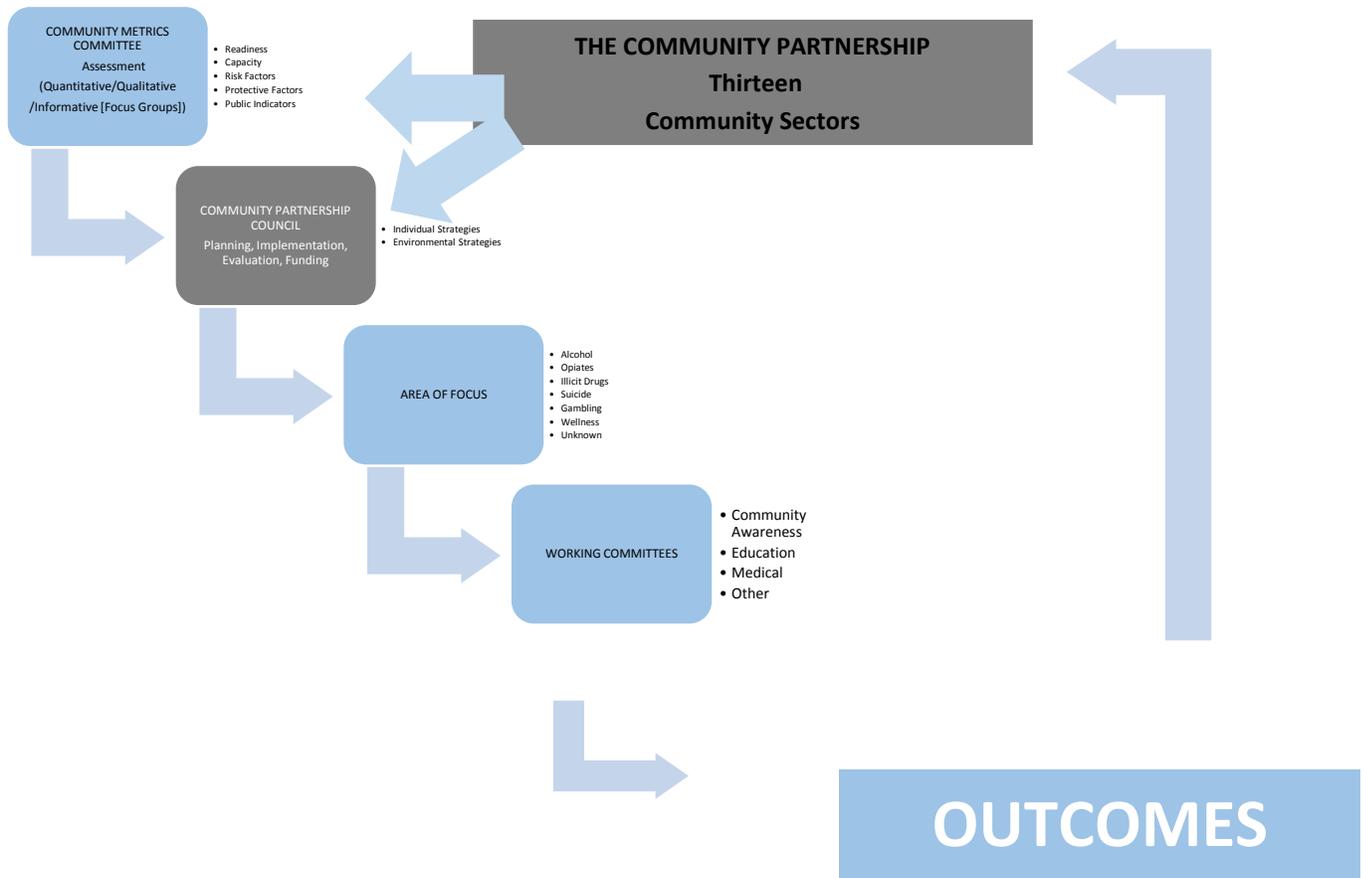
D. Sustainability Question #3: Authorizing Environment - What *institutional supports, structures, and/or policies* need to be in place to achieve sustainability?

We discussed the idea of *authorizing environment* (Moore, 1995). It is important to determine who holds the ability to make key decisions regarding the sustainability of the project.

What *institutional supports, structures, and/or policies* need to be in place to achieve sustainability of your SPF initiative? It may be helpful to frame your answer to this question using the following sub-questions:

- What current *institutional supports, structures, and/or policies* support your SPF initiative?
- Of these structures, which could be strengthened to ensure sustainability of your SPF initiative?
- What structures are blocking or obstructing your SPF initiative?
- Which structures are still needed to ensure sustaining your SPF initiative?

The Community Partnership has been very open to adopting the Strategic Prevention Framework process. In fact, the Community Partnership is currently going through a restructuring process in which the final framework will institutionalize the Strategic Prevention Framework. The new structure of the Community Partnership is as follows:



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The biggest challenge this new structure is facing is developing the Community Metrics Committee. Not because there are obstructions to its development, but rather because it is a new entity and will need to establish membership, determine its specific objectives, and gain momentum in informing the Community Partnership Council.

The Community Partnership is fortunate in that it is a Charter Committee of the Hancock County Board of Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) and has been in existence since 1990. The Community Partnership has been financially supported by ADAMHS and will continue to be so which will allow for sustainability of SPF SIG, the Opiate/Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Task Force and other prevention initiatives employed by the Community Partnership as a whole. Additionally, the Community Partnership has strived, since its inception, to maintain a membership that involves as many community sectors as possible. All twelve community sectors have not always been represented for various reasons, but the Community Partnership has set out to maintain full representation of the twelve community sectors as a goal for FY15. In fact, the Community Partnership has decided to include a thirteenth community sector, the 18-25 year-old population, as a member of the Community Partnership.

Without SPF SIG, the Community Partnership would not have the knowledge or encouragement to institutionalize the Strategic Prevention Framework.

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E. Sustainability Question #4: Operational Capacity - What *capacity* is necessary to sustain this effort and *where* will that capacity come from?

We discussed the idea of *operational capacity*. In order for your sustainability goals/objectives to become reality, your SPF initiative must have the *capacity* necessary to achieve those outcomes. Capacity is defined in many ways, including (but not limited to): securing diverse resources and acquiring the appropriate expertise. Basically, the purpose of this question is to determine the resources (e.g., time, personnel, funding, etc.) needed to achieve each sustainability goal/objective.

What operational capacity is necessary to achieve sustainability and where will the capacity come from to sustain your SPF initiative? It may be helpful to frame your answer to this question using the following sub-questions:

- What *internal* operational capacity has your coalition built through the SPF SIG process? How will this increased internal capacity contribute to the sustainability of your coalition's SPF efforts?
- What operational capacity has your coalition built through *networks* (i.e., partnerships, collaborations, etc.) during the SPF SIG process? How will these networks contribute to the sustainability of your coalition's SPF efforts?
- What current resources are necessary to sustain your SPF initiative?
- Of these resources, which is insufficient or vulnerable?
- What current skills and expertise does your initiative rely on to sustain your initiative's positive outcomes?
- Of these skills and expertise, which could be strengthened to ensure sustained positive outcomes?
- Which skills and expertise are still needed to sustain positive outcomes?

Because SPF SIG was carried out through the auspices of the Opiate/Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Task Force and the Community Partnership, we believe we have strong support and ability to maintain the efforts of this specific SPF SIG initiative. The continued funding of the Community Partnership by ADAMHS will allow these specific SPF SIG efforts to continue. The Community Partnership has made a point to include in its FY15 budget allocations funds that support the SPF SIG initiative. ADAMHS employs a full-time staff person who is responsible for administrative oversight of the SPF SIG initiative, the Opiate/Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Task Force, and the Community Partnership. (As a result of SPF SIG, this full-time staff person has been able to gain enough education and experience to complete an OCPS I credential which will add to further sustainability.)

The Community Partnership and Opiate/Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Task Force continues to have working committees which will carry out initiatives developed through the Strategic Prevention Framework. The strength of the partnerships developed and/or strengthened through SPF SIG (e.g. the University of Findlay, Millstream Career Center, Blanchard Valley Hospital, the Hancock County Sheriff's Office, and Findlay Police Department) provide assurance that this and any prevention initiative can be sustained.

As with many coalitions, funding is perhaps the most vulnerable resource that inhibits sustainability. Although our coalition has the advantage of being funded by ADAMHS, there is still the risk that funding levels can be lowered due to

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other system demands on the funding stream. With the recent expansion of Medicaid, we are fortunate that funds which were previously directed toward services not covered by Medicaid can now be directed toward prevention efforts. However, the Community Partnership takes great effort to ensure that initiatives which are developed and employed can remain intact in some form, should funding sources become reduced or eliminated at any time.

Finally, the Community Partnership maintains a philosophy that its mission, guiding principle, and strategy are process-driven and not person-driven. What this means to the Community Partnership and its ability to sustain any effort, including SPF SIG, is that the members involved in planning are capable of continuing to carry out its mission, regardless of whomever is serving as chair of the Community Partnership or is providing administrative oversight. This is due to the continued human resource development and education of the Community Partnership members. This commitment to the education of the Community Partnership members is critical to the continued success of creating positive outcomes from any prevention initiative.

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F. Strengths/Challenges

In any projects, there are strengths and challenges. The purpose of the following questions is to help you identify ways you can capitalize on your strengths and prepare for probable or potential obstacles.

1. In what ways do you believe your SPF initiative is positioned to achieve sustainability?

2. What are the probable or potential obstacles to sustainability?

During the planning of this Sustainability Plan, the team members completed an S.W.O.T to address the questions listed above:

- **STRENGTHS**

- Leadership is strong, broad, and willing
- SPF knowledge, understanding, and ability to apply to multiple areas
- Knowledge of prevention strategies
- Willingness to use evidence-based practices as prevention strategies
- Strong public presence and awareness of efforts
- Strong desire for and commitment to collaboration among community sectors
- Strong connection and working relationships with other coalitions

- **WEAKNESSES**

- Struggle to connect to 18-25 year old population in Hancock County, particularly the non-collegiate, non-connected, and/or unemployed
- Occasional difficulty focusing on the present question and/or issue due to various motives of different community sectors

- **OPPORTUNITIES**

- Fewer constraints because of institutionalization of SPF
- Growing Community Partnership membership to include all community sectors
- Reinforcing connections with legislators and/or policy makers
- Growing relationships with other coalitions
- Influence on Ohio legislation addressing opiate epidemic
- Capitalizing on active and supportive community
- Shift in thinking from “their problem” to “our problem” in addressing community needs

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- **THREATS**

- Trying to stay one step ahead of community problems
- Maintaining urgency among Community Partnership members
- Politics of developing community policy and/or environmental change
- Changing economic environment

The SPF SIG team, the Opiate/Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Task Force and the Community Partnership firmly believe in the positive impact the Strategic Prevention Framework has on creating positive and lasting change in a community and are fully positioned to be able to sustain its efforts for many years to come.

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