

BUILD COMMUNITY COALITIONS

Community coalitions and partnerships are key to the success of **National Recovery Month (Recovery Month)**.

Unite organizations in your community to recognize mental and/or substance use disorders and enhance your **Recovery Month** campaign. This document will guide you on how to form community coalitions or partnerships, starting with researching and identifying groups and individuals to partner with.

Coalitions are groups of organizations and individuals who represent different constituencies, but share common goals and interests. Coalitions combine the resources of multiple organizations and individuals to effectively convey the message that prevention works, treatment is effective, and people recover. Gain support from your extended community to educate others that mental and/or substance use disorders affect all types of people, regardless of age, race, or walk of life.

Every September, **Recovery Month** is sponsored by the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**, within the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)**. The 23rd annual observance this September celebrates the effectiveness of treatment services and the reality of recovery. This year's theme, **"Join the Voices for Recovery: It's Worth It,"** emphasizes that while the road to recovery may be difficult, the benefits of preventing and overcoming mental and/or substance use disorders are significant and valuable to individuals, families, and communities. The theme also highlights that people in recovery achieve healthy lifestyles, both physically and emotionally, and contribute in positive ways to their communities.

Understand the Basics...

Coalitions bring a range of organizations together. Member individuals and organizations should include those that work on behalf of elected or appointed officials, as well as business, educational, health services, social or religious groups, and individuals from the prevention, treatment, and recovery community. They also can bring together grassroots groups or individuals who are involved with similar efforts. Individuals in your coalition do not need to be part of an official organization, but do need to express the same goals to promote mental and/or substance use disorder awareness.

To participate in coalition activities:

- Build your own if there is no active coalition established in your community; or
- Join and support the **Recovery Month** efforts of an existing coalition.

Building your own coalition gives you the flexibility to select organizations and individuals that are aligned with your goals, and also gives you control over the coalition's strategic direction. However, joining a pre-existing coalition will require less effort so you can hit the ground running more quickly. Your available time and desired outcomes will dictate the best option for you.

Resources

If you wish to achieve a specific objective and have a set time frame, consider forming a task force. While similar to coalitions, task forces are more temporary collaborations formed around a specific issue. Once a task force has reached an intended goal, the group usually disbands.

Create Your Coalition...

Refer to the tips below to establish a coalition that best meets your needs and supports **Recovery Month's** goals:

- **Determine the specific issues related to mental and/or substance use disorders that you want to address and the goals you hope to achieve.** Assess the mental health and substance use landscape in your community. What are the most prevalent issues, and how are they being addressed? For example, are there prevention, treatment, and recovery resources available in your community? Are certain populations underserved? After you research these issues, think about how your coalition will engage the criminal justice system, military personnel, friends, families, and the recovery community – which are specific audiences of focus for this year's **Recovery Month** celebration. These groups can initiate a dialogue around prevention resources, treatment options, and recovery support services.
- **Compare other organizations' goals with your own goals and capabilities to determine the best partners to engage.** Identify people and organizations that could make influential and positive contributions to your **Recovery Month** coalition. Locate State or local chapter affiliates of prominent national prevention, treatment, and recovery support organizations. Refer to the "**Single State Agency Directory**" in this toolkit for State and local services, as well as the **Recovery Month "Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Resources"** list for national organizations, and the **Recovery Month "Planning Partners"** list for organizations dedicated to the **Recovery Month** effort.
- **Also, search online for recent news in your area about mental and/or substance use disorders, and see who is involved in the discussions on these issues.** Include a broad list of organizations, and partner with law enforcement and other social and educational agencies. Organizations and systems that have the resources and expertise needed to build a successful coalition around mental and/or substance use disorders include:
 - Adult independent-living communities;
 - Child welfare organizations;
 - Criminal justice system representatives and organizations;
 - Elected officials;
 - Foundations and volunteer groups;
 - Government agencies;
 - Health-related organizations;
 - Individual and family therapists;
 - Mental health organizations;
 - Military associations;
 - National and local media outlets;
 - Neighborhood clubs;
 - Nonprofit organizations;
 - Prevention groups;
 - Private companies/businesses;
 - Recovery bloggers;
 - Recovery community;
 - Recovery and peer-to-peer support groups;
 - Religious organizations;
 - Schools, universities, and the educational community;
 - Treatment and recovery organizations; and
 - Veterans' associations.

Resources

- **Before reaching out to an organization, research its mission and activities to confirm that it is aligned with your vision.** You can see whether an organization features the logos or press releases of other organizations on its website, which could indicate its policy on partnerships.
- **Recruit members to the coalition.** Contact your coalition's potential allies and invite them to join your coalition. If applicable, reference connections you have with members of their organizations. When you recruit people to participate in your effort, highlight the goals that you share and how your strategies are aligned. Be sure to have substantive materials to show them, detail the objective and mission of your proposed coalition, and be clear about the role they will have in the coalition. The following tools will help to reach potential members:
 - Social media, such as Facebook, YouTube, or Twitter;
 - Email;
 - A website encouraging people to join;
 - Virtual meetings; and
 - Online services to organize meetings simultaneously across the country, such as <http://www.meetup.com>.
- **Confirm the coalition participants and evaluate whether you have included a diverse panel of organizations representative of the community.** Participation commitments can be informal verbal agreements or formal written contracts among the members. For the coalition to be successful, keep in mind these guidelines:
 - Be respectful of time commitments;
 - Allow all members to have an active role in planning and decision-making;
 - Identify a leader to guide the process and make final decisions;
 - Set priorities and goals;
 - Agree on a communication process and responsibility for maintaining it;
 - Communicate and meet regularly;
 - Prepare a budget for activities and assign someone to manage it;
 - Have a main contact person to coordinate members; and
 - Decide the coalition's leadership early in the coalition's development.

A solid leadership team needs to oversee the coalition and ensure the efficient and timely execution of the coalition's plan, as well as continually foster communication and provide a clear sense of direction. The leadership team can represent a wide range of your member organizations and individuals.

- **Hold regular meetings during the coalition-formation process.** Members must work collaboratively to ensure a mutually beneficial relationship. Due to people's busy schedules, bi-weekly or monthly meetings are probably more feasible than holding weekly meetings. For example, you may wish to hold your meetings on the first Tuesday of every month or every other Tuesday. Online tools such as Windows Live Meeting, WebEx, and iChat make it easier to collaborate and allow people to work remotely, rather than at the same location. After meetings, each person should walk away with a clear to-do list, as well as goals to accomplish before the next meeting.

Resources

- **Grade your coalition and celebrate its successes.** Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) offers basic tools to develop an evaluation plan for your coalition. Post your event materials, photos, and videos on social media outlets such as the **Recovery Month** Facebook page, YouTube channel, and Twitter account to share your coalition's success with the **Recovery Month** community. Refer to the "**New Media Glossary**" and "**Develop Your Social Network**" documents in this toolkit for tips on how to use these online tools.

Learn From Examples...

Community coalitions have helped bring awareness to issues surrounding mental and/or substance use disorders for years. The **Recovery Month** campaign, now in its 23rd observance, uses a coalition of **Recovery Month** Planning Partners. Organized in 1997, the Planning Partners include more than 150 groups involved in the mental health and substance use field. The group meets quarterly to establish goals and set priorities for **Recovery Month** every year. For a list of the Planning Partners, refer to the "**Planning Partners**" directory in this toolkit.

Additionally, SAMHSA, the **Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)**, and the **U.S. Department of Justice** fund hundreds of community partnerships throughout the country. In 2009, CADCA estimated that there were more than 5,000 operational anti-drug coalitions in the United States.

SAMHSA supports community prevention efforts to help States, Territories, and Tribal governments reduce the impact of mental and/or substance use disorders on communities. The aim is to build greater social connectedness and stronger community cohesion, strengthen family environments so future generations will live and grow, and develop a healthier and more effective workforce for the future.

The following are health-related coalitions that can help guide you in the coalition-building process:

National Family Partnership

This coalition was formed in 1980 as a grassroots organization, and has grown into a network of nearly 100 partners consisting of local coalitions, PTO groups, and parent committees. The group is a leader in drug awareness, prevention, education, and advocacy.

800-705-8997 (Toll-Free)

305-856-4886

Indiana Addictions Issues Coalition

This group consists of organizations and individuals across Indiana who provide a voice to those affected by addictive disorders. The coalition promotes recovery by reducing stigmas, broadening public understanding, and influencing public policy.

317-638-3501 Ext. 231

National Alliance on Mental Illness of New York City

This organization aims to provide support throughout the New York metropolitan area on behalf of those affected by mental health problems and their families.

The group works with community stakeholders to educate the public and advocate for legislation to improve the mental health system.

212-684-3264

Resources

Consult Planning Partner Resources...

Recovery Month Planning Partner organizations provide resources to help create a successful coalition. Listed below are just a few partner organizations. For a full list, see the “**Planning Partners**” directory in this toolkit.

Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Providers of New York State (ASAPNY)

This nonprofit membership association consists of coalitions, programs, and agencies throughout New York State that provide substance use disorder prevention, treatment, and research.
518-426-3122

American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA)

This association works exclusively for licensed mental health counselors by advocating for legislation that expands, enhances, and protects the right to practice; promotes mental health awareness; and builds the profession of mental health counseling nationally. AMHCA is dedicated to helping mental health counselors expand their professional knowledge and network of professional peers.
800-326-2642 (Toll-Free)
703-548-6002

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA)

This organization builds and strengthens the capacity of community coalitions to create safe, healthy, and drug-free communities. It supports members with technical assistance and training, public policy, media strategies, conferences, and special events.
800-54-CADCA (22322) (Toll-Free)
703-706-0560

Faces & Voices of Recovery

This national recovery advocacy organization mobilizes people in recovery from addiction to alcohol and other drugs, as well as their families, friends, and allies in campaigns to end discrimination and make recovery a reality for even more Americans.
202-737-0690

Mental Health America (MHA)

This is the country's oldest and largest nonprofit organization addressing all aspects of mental health and mental illness. With nearly 300 affiliates nationwide, MHA works to improve the mental health of all Americans through advocacy, education, research, and service. The local affiliates provide public education, information and referral, support groups, rehabilitation services, socialization, and housing services to those confronting mental health problems and to their loved ones.
800-969-6642 (Toll-Free)
703-684-7722

National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI)

This organization is dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. NAMI advocates for access to services, treatment, supports and research and is steadfast in its commitment to raising awareness and building a community of hope for all of those in need.
800-950-NAMI (6264) (Toll-Free)

Resources

National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACoA)

This national nonprofit membership and affiliate organization is the advocate and voice for children and families impacted by alcoholism or drug dependency in the family. NACoA provides training, evidence-based programs, materials, and public policy guidance to facilitate substance use prevention and recovery support for all impacted family members.

888-55-4COAS (2627) (Toll-Free)

301-468-0985

National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery (NCMHR)

This organization ensures that consumer/survivors have a major voice in the development and implementation of health care, mental health, and social policies at the state and national levels, empowering people to recover and lead a full life in the community.

877-246-9058

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

Founded in 1944, NCADD and its Affiliate Network is a voluntary health organization dedicated to fighting the Nation's #1 health problem—alcoholism, drug addiction, and the devastating consequences of alcohol and other drugs on individuals, families, and communities. NCADD focuses on increasing public awareness and understanding of the disease through education, prevention, information/referral, intervention, treatment services, advocacy, and recovery support services, and has helped millions of individuals and family members into recovery.

800-NCA-CALL (622-2255) (Hope Line) (Toll-Free)

212-269-7797

National Inhalant Prevention Coalition (NIPC)

This public-private effort promotes awareness and recognition of the underpublicized problem of inhalant use. It serves as an inhalant referral and information clearinghouse, stimulates media coverage about inhalant issues, develops informational materials and a newsletter, provides training and technical assistance, and leads a week-long national grassroots education and awareness campaign.

800-269-4237 (Toll-Free)

423-265-4662