Wilder Research

2009 ATOD Coalition survey results

Prepared for the Minnesota Department of Human Services

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Acknowledgments

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Background

As part of the Minnesota Department of Human Services Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division's statewide youth alcohol, tobacco, and other drug (ATOD) prevention initiative, nine Planning and Implementation (P&I) grantees from across Minnesota are working with established ATOD prevention community coalitions to implement a variety of ATOD prevention programs.

Wilder Research is conducting an evaluation to assess coalition members' perceptions of the goals and direction of their coalition. It is meant to guide the work of the P&I grantees and to help identify areas that can be improved. The evaluation assesses multiple facets of coalition operation in order to gauge current strengths and areas for improvement. Areas assessed include: community environment, leadership, administration, membership, and goals and accomplishments. The evaluation also provides coalition members with an opportunity to identify concerns and recommendations anonymously.

Surveys were first completed by coalition members in the spring of 2009 and will be implemented annually through the duration of the P&I grantees' involvement with the coalitions, although grantees may choose to administer the survey more frequently if desired. These first surveys were described to respondents as a "baseline" and were intended to be used to show coalition development over time.

The following report summarizes the key findings of the coalition survey aggregated across the nine P&I communities. Community-specific results are presented in the appendix.

Key findings

Survey completion

A total of 121 members of the 9 coalitions supported by P&I grantees completed the coalition survey in Spring 2009. In their 2009 annual reports to DHS, P&I grantees reported a total of 329 active coalition members across the nine communities; based on this estimate, the overall response rate for this survey is approximately 37 percent. This response rate indicates that the information provided by respondents may not represent the perspectives of all coalition members and care should be taking when interpreting these data. Members of coalitions in Roseau, Pine River, and South Saint Paul completed the most surveys (Figure 1).

1. Survey completion by coalition

Coalition	Number of coalition members (N=121)	
	N	%
Roseau	24	20%
Pine River	19	16%
South Saint Paul	17	14%
Wadena	10	8%
Kanabec	11	9%
Morrison	14	12%
Renville	10	8%
Yellow Medicine	8	7%
Chisholm	8	7%
Total	**121**	**100%**

Coalition membership

Most coalition members responding to the survey had been a part of their coalitions for nearly two and a half years. On average, coalition members attended seven meetings per year, and spent nearly eight additional hours a month on activities related to the coalition. Most coalition members (78%) lived in the community that was served by their coalition (Figures 2-3).

2. Involvement of coalition members

	Respondents		
	Minimum	**Maximum**	**Average**
How long have you been involved with the coalition? (Months) (N=73)	<1	135	29.9 months
How many coalition meetings did you attend during the last 12 months? (N=120)	<1	24	7.1 meetings
Over the past 12 months, how many <u>hours</u> a month do you spend on coalition related activities outside of meetings? (N=96)	<1	80	7.6 hours

3. Residence of coalition members in the service area

	Number of respondents indicating "yes" (N=120)	
	N	**%**
Do you live in the community served by your coalition?	93	78%

Representation across coalitions

Coalitions are encouraged to identify and recruit members of 12 identified sectors to participate on the coalition. Coalition members who responded to this survey represented each of the 12 sectors, although they were most likely to represent schools; a youth serving agency; state, local or tribal government; law enforcement; or parents (10-17%). Fewer coalition members were youth or members of the media, civic volunteer groups, or the business community (1-5%) (Figure 4). It should be noted that members were asked to identify which sector they *most* represented as part of the coalition, and it is possible that members represent more than one sector.

4. Sector representation of coalition members (N=110)

Which sector do you think you *most* represent by being part of the coalition?	Number of respondents	% of respondents
School	19	17%
Youth serving agencies	15	14%
State, local, tribal government	13	12%
Law enforcement	11	10%
Parent	11	10%
Spiritual of fraternal organization	7	6%
Healthcare agency	6	6%
Media	5	5%
Youth	5	5%
Civic volunteer group	2	2%
Business community	1	1%
Other[a]	15	14%
Total	**110**	**100%**

[a] *Other responses include ATOD prevention (n=4), mental health, senior citizen, early childhood, coordinator, non-profit, and social service agency (n=1 each).*

Community Environment

Nearly two-thirds of coalition members "strongly agreed" that there is a big need for ATOD prevention programs and services within their community; another one-third "agreed" that there was a big need in their community. Most (95%) "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that the community climate was conducive to the coalition meeting its goals, and most (94%) felt that no single organization would be able to accomplish what the coalition is trying to accomplish together. Over half (53%) of coalition members felt that their coalition was well known among people who do not directly participate (Figure 5).

5. Coalition members' perceptions of the community environment (N=116-118)

Community Environment	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The community climate seems to be "right" for this coalition accomplishing its goals.	22%	73%	5%	-
In the community, there is a big need for ATOD prevention programs and services.	64%	35%	1%	-
Any single organization would not be able to accomplish what we are trying to accomplish with our coalition.	42%	52%	5%	1%
The coalition is well-known among people that do not directly participate.	13%	40%	45%	2%

Leadership

Nearly all coalition members (99%) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the coalition members support the coalition leaders. Additionally, most (97%) felt that those who lead the coalition communicate well with members and are well skilled in working with other people and organizations. Ninety-four percent of coalition members felt that there was minimal leadership turnover within the coalition (Figure 6).

6. Coalition members' thoughts on leadership (N=117-119)

Leadership	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Coalition members support coalition leaders.	52%	48%	1%	-
There is minimal leadership turnover in this coalition.	42%	52%	6%	-
The people who lead this coalition communicate well with members.	60%	38%	3%	-
The people in leadership positions have good skills for working with other people and organizations.	65%	32%	3%	-

Administration

Most survey respondents reported high satisfaction with the decision-making processes of their respective coalitions. Most "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that there was usually adequate time to confer with other coalition members in advance of making major decisions (95%), there was flexibility in decision-making (94%), and that there was a clear process for making decisions (90%).

Most coalition members (97%) felt that the overall plan of the coalition is effective. Additionally, at least 9 in 10 survey respondents said that the coalition does a good job of coordinating people and activities related to their work (95%), and that their personal abilities were used effectively within the coalition (94%) (Figure7).

Half of survey respondents (49%) did not feel that their coalition would be able to sustain itself after their current grant ended. Likewise, nearly 9 in 10 respondents (88%) did not feel that their coalition would be able to accomplish its goals without the coordinator(s) (Figure 7).

7. Coalition members' perceptions of the administration of the coalition (N=109-120)

Administration	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
When the coalition makes major decisions, there is usually enough time for members to confer with colleagues before making the final decision.	25%	70%	4%	-
There is a lot of flexibility when decisions are made.	20%	74%	6%	-
There is a clear process for making decisions among partners in this coalition.	20%	70%	10%	-
This coalition will be able to sustain itself after the grant ends.	6%	44%	43%	6%
We do a good job of coordinating all the people, organizations, and activities related to this project.	27%	68%	5%	-
This coalition would be able to accomplish its goals without the coordinator(s).	2%	10%	51%	37%
The coalition's overall plan of action is effective.	27%	70%	3%	-
My abilities are effectively used by the coalition.	24%	70%	4%	3%

Membership

All coalition members responding to the survey "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that they held a lot of respect for others involved in their coalition. Most (94-99%) felt that the commitment of other members was high, that everyone wants the project to succeed, and that they themselves were strongly committed to the coalition. Additionally, nearly all (98-99%) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that members share a common vision for their community and had established realistic goals (Figure 8).

Most respondents (95-98%) felt that communication among members happens in formal and informal ways, members communicate openly with one another, and generally felt

that they were informed of the activities of the coalition. Respondents were less likely to "strongly agree" (17%) that coalition members have a clear sense of their own roles and responsibilities (Figure 8).

While nearly one-quarter of respondents (24%) felt that the direction of their coalition was dominated by one or a few individuals, few (8%) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that there is a lot of tension and conflict among members (Figure 8).

8. Coalition members' thoughts on membership (N=114-118)

Membership	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I have a lot of respect for other people involved in this coalition.	62%	38%	-	-
Everyone who is a member of our coalition wants this project to succeed.	68%	31%	1%	-
The level of commitment among members is high.	41%	53%	6%	-
Coalition members are open to different approaches to how we can do our work.	32%	64%	3%	1%
Coalition members have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities.	17%	74%	10%	-
Coalition members communicate openly with one another.	37%	60%	3%	-
I am informed as often as I should be about what goes on in the coalition.	46%	49%	5%	-
Communication among coalition members happens both at formal meetings and in informal ways.	34%	65%	2%	-
I have a clear understanding of what our coalition is trying to accomplish.	51%	48%	2%	-
The coalition has established realistic goals.	40%	59%	1%	1%
Coalition members share a common vision for our community.	38%	61%	1%	-
The coalition's direction is dominated by one or a few individuals.	7%	17%	64%	12%
There is a lot of tension and conflict among coalition members.	4%	4%	37%	54%
I feel strongly committed to this coalition.	39%	58%	3%	-

Goals and accomplishments

Seventy-one percent of survey respondents felt that their coalition had strengthened ATOD-related policies and regulations in their community "a lot," and 68 percent felt that their coalition had improved services and programs for ATOD prevention within their community "a lot."

Nearly two-thirds of respondents reported that their coalition had helped organizations working in ATOD prevention increase their capacity (64%), increased community awareness of ATOD problems (63%), and increased the use of science-based prevention efforts in their community (62%) "a lot" (Figure 9).

Somewhat fewer respondents felt that their coalition had increased the chance that children and youth in their community would avoid developing ATOD problems "a lot" (55%), or that they had caused a shift in community attitudes around ATOD "a lot" (40%). Additionally, one-third (34%) felt that they had increased collaboration with community groups concerned with preventing other types of problems "a lot" (Figure 9).

9.   Coalition members' perception of goals and accomplishments (N=102-114)

How much has your coalition…	Percentage of respondents responding		
	A lot	**A little**	**Not at all**
Increased community awareness of ATOD problems.	63%	37%	-
Improved services and programs for ATOD prevention in this community.	68%	32%	-
Helped organizations working for ATOD prevention to increase their capacity.	64%	36%	1%
Increased use of science-based prevention efforts in this community.	62%	36%	2%
Strengthened ATOD-related policies and regulations in the community (e.g., tobacco, underage drinking).	71%	28%	1%
Increased the chances that children and youth in the community will avoid developing ATOD problems.	55%	44%	2%
Increased collaboration with community groups concerned with preventing other types of problems (e.g., HIV, violence, teen pregnancy).	34%	56%	10%
Identified at least one promising practice that it wants to replicate and expand.	60%	39%	2%
Caused a shift in community attitudes around ATOD.	40%	57%	4%

Survey respondents noted a number of ways in which their participation in the coalition had been worthwhile. Many respondents felt that the collaboration with other agencies and professionals in the community was especially worthwhile, as was increasing awareness of ATOD issues and making a difference in the community. Fewer respondents noted benefits such as sharing resources and specific coalition activities as the most worthwhile aspect, including implementing evidence-based curricula and engaging in ZAP (Zero Adult Providers) (Figure 10).

10. Open ends: What about participating in the coalition has been the most worthwhile for you?

Most worthwhile experience within coalition
Collaboration with other agencies and professionals in the community. (23 respondents)
Increased awareness of ATOD issues. (19 respondents)
Making a difference in the community. (17 respondents)
Increased connection to the community. (12 respondents)
Networking and learning from other professionals. (12 respondents)
Working with and empowering youth. (6 respondents)
Sharing resources. (4 respondents)
The focus on the positive. (3 respondents)
Implementing evidence-based curricula in the schools. (2 respondents)
ZAP. (1 respondent)

Responses have been coded and do not appear verbatim; see appendix for a list of complete responses.

Respondents felt that decreased ATOD use and abuse by youth and adults, increased awareness of ATOD issues in the community, and a change in attitudes and norms around alcohol use were among the benefits they expect to see as a result of the activities of their coalition. Fewer respondents felt they would see a change in access to alcohol and other drugs, increased enforcement of existing policies, and increased collaboration with other agencies as a result of the coalition activities (Figure 11).

11. Open ends: What benefits to the community do you expect to see as a result of the coalition's activities?

Benefits to the community

Decreased ATOD use and abuse by kids and adults. (34 respondents)
Increased community awareness of ATOD issues. (15 respondents)
Change in attitudes and norms about alcohol use. (14 respondents)
Increased sense of community. (10 respondents)
Healthier youth, families, and community. (8 respondents)
Increased support and resources for youth. (6 respondents)
Decrease in behaviors associated with ATOD use (violence, delinquency, etc.). (6 respondents)
Increased collaboration with other agencies. (3 respondents)
Decreased access to alcohol and other drugs. (2 respondents)
Increased enforcement of existing policies, laws. (1 respondent)

Responses have been coded and do not appear verbatim; see appendix for a list of complete responses.

Respondents noted a number of barriers that their coalition has encountered, including a lack of engagement and involvement of the community, apathy and lack of perception of ATOD issues within the community, and permissive social norms around alcohol use. Additionally, respondents noted that time and the public misperception of the mission and purpose of their coalition as barriers to achieving goals (Figure 12).

12. Open ends: What barriers, if any, have made it difficult for your coalition to achieve its goals?

Barriers to achieving goals

Lack of community involvement and engagement. (25 respondents)
Permissive social norms. (20 respondents)
Community apathy, lack of perception of problem. (10 respondents)
Time. (9 respondents)
Negative community perception of goals, mission of coalition. (6 respondents)
Inflexibility of grant, funding. (5 respondents)
Limited funding for other community partners. (4 respondents)
Approval processes. (3 respondents)
Unengaged youth. (1 respondent)
Number of activities too much. (1 respondent)
Inflexibility of "Most of Us." (1 respondent)
Personality issues within the coalition. (1 respondent)
Lack of services. (1 respondent)

Responses have been coded and do not appear verbatim; see appendix for a list of complete responses.

Suggestions for improving the work of the coalition included increasing outreach to parents and community members and increasing the engagement of new and existing coalition members. Other suggestions were to look at sustainability of the coalition and activities in advance of the current grant ending. A number of respondents felt it was important for coalitions to not lose sight of their goals and to continue to "stay the course," acknowledging that change takes time (Figure 13).

13. Open-ends: What suggestions do you have to improve the work of this coalition?

Suggestions for improvement

Increased outreach to parents and community members. (20 respondents)
Continue to stay the course. (14 respondents)
Increased engagement and involvement of new and existing coalition members. (9 respondents)
Looking at sustainability before the grant ends. (4 respondents)
Offer/support more activities. (3 respondents)
Increased outreach to youth. (3 respondents)
Ensure all members are aware of common goals. (3 respondents)
Increased flexibility and local control of activities. (2 respondents)
More goal setting, strategic planning. (1 respondent)
Increased flexibility of "Most of Us" campaign. (1 respondent)
Increase awareness of ATOD issues in the community. (1 respondent)
Extension of current grant. (1 respondents)

Responses have been coded and do not appear verbatim; see appendix for a list of complete responses.

The most prevalent barrier that survey respondents encountered in trying to attend meetings was that of work or school conflicts, or other conflicts. Respondents noted a lack of time and other family commitments as barriers, although a number of respondents noted that they encountered very few barriers in attending meetings (Figure 14).

14. Open ends: If you are not able to attend coalition meetings regularly, what are some of the barriers?

Barriers to attending meetings
Work/school conflicts. (49 respondents)
Other conflicts. (7 respondents)
No issues or problems/attend most meetings. (7 respondents)
Time. (5 respondents)
Family commitments. (4 respondents)
Health issues. (3 respondents)
Forget about the meeting, no notice of the meetings. (2 respondents)
Meeting times. (2 respondents)
Meeting location. (1 respondent)
Meeting length too long. (1 respondent)
Difficulty working with other coalitions members. (1 respondent)
Weather. (1 respondent)
No email access. (1 respondent)

Responses have been coded and do not appear verbatim; see appendix for a list of complete responses.

Conclusion and recommendations

Overall, coalition members reported satisfaction with the leadership, membership, and administration of their coalitions. Most survey respondents felt that their coalition had made progress toward their common coalition goals. However, there are areas for improvement related to the functioning and sustainability of coalitions. Below is a list of key recommendations to consider.

- Continue to engage and recruit membership in coalitions to guarantee representation from all sectors of interest.

- Work to make the activities of the coalition known to members of the community.

- Ensure that all members have a clear sense of their individual roles and responsibilities within the coalition.

- Consider strategies for securing the sustainability of coalitions and their activities in the absence of the current grant and coalition coordinator(s).

- Consider strategies within each coalition and community to increase outreach and collaboration with other agencies and coalitions engaging in other types of prevention work.

- Encourage coalition members to complete subsequent coalition surveys to better assess the functioning, satisfaction, and perceived progress toward goals across all coalitions funded through these grants.

Appendix

Survey instrument

Coalition evaluation

Date: _____   **Coalition/Community Name: _____**

Coalition Evaluation

We need your feedback! We are interested in learning more about your experience as a member of the coalition. This survey is voluntary and confidential. Your answers will be combined with the responses of the whole group. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers.

1. When did you become involved with the coalition?
   _____Month _____Year

2. Do you live in the community served by your coalition?
   ☐[1] Yes   ☐[2] No

3. How many coalition meetings did you attend during the **past 12 months**?
   _____ (number of meetings)

4. Over the **past 12 months,** how many hours a month do you spend on coalition related activities outside of meetings?   _____ (hours per month)

5. Which sector do you think you **most** represent by being part of the coalition? Please select one response.
   ☐[1] Business community   ☐[7] Healthcare agency
   ☐[2] Media   ☐[8] State, local, tribal government
   ☐[3] School   ☐[9] Civic volunteer group
   ☐[4] Youth-serving organization   ☐[10] Youth
   ☐[5] Law enforcement agency   ☐[11] Parent
   ☐[6] Spiritual or fraternal organization ☐[12] Other _____

Please rate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your coalition.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Community Environment				
6. The community climate seems to be "right" for this coalition accomplishing its goals.	☐[1]	☐[2]	☐[3]	☐[4]
7. In the community, there is a big need for ATOD prevention programs and services.	☐[1]	☐[2]	☐[3]	☐[4]
8. Any single organization would not be able to accomplish what we are trying to accomplish with our coalition.	☐[1]	☐[2]	☐[3]	☐[4]
9. The coalition is well-known among people that do not directly participate.	☐[1]	☐[2]	☐[3]	☐[4]

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Leadership					
10.	Coalition members support coalition leaders.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
11.	There is minimal leadership turnover in this coalition.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
12.	The people who lead this coalition communicate well with members.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
13.	The people in leadership positions have good skills for working with other people and organizations.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Administration					
14.	When the coalition makes major decisions, there is usually enough time for members to confer with colleagues before making the final decision.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
15.	There is a lot of flexibility when decisions are made.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
16.	There is a clear process for making decisions among partners in this coalition.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
17.	This coalition will be able to sustain itself after the grant ends.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
18.	We do a good job of coordinating all the people, organizations, and activities related to this project.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
19.	This coalition would be able to accomplish its goals without the coordinator(s).	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
20.	The coalition's overall plan of action is effective.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
21.	My abilities are effectively used by the coalition.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
Membership					
22.	I have a lot of respect for other people involved in this coalition.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
23.	Everyone who is a member of our coalition wants this project to succeed.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
24.	The level of commitment among members is high.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
25.	Coalition members are open to different approaches to how we can do our work.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
26.	Coalition members have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
27.	Coalition members communicate openly with one another.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
28.	I am informed as often as I should be about what goes on in the coalition.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
29.	Communication among coalition members happens both at formal meetings and in informal ways.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
30.	I have a clear understanding of what our coalition is trying to accomplish.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
31.	The coalition has established realistic goals.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
32.	Coalition members share a common vision for our community.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
33.	The coalition's direction is dominated by one or a few individuals.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
34.	There is a lot of tension and conflict among coalition members.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
35.	I feel strongly committed to this coalition.	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

Now, please indicate how much you feel that your coalition has accomplished in the following areas.

How much has your coalition…	Not at all	A little	A lot	Not a focus
36. Increased community awareness of ATOD problems.	□1	□2	□3	□9
37. Improved services and programs for ATOD prevention in this community.	□1	□2	□3	□9
38. Helped organizations working for ATOD prevention to increase their capacity.	□1	□2	□3	□9
39. Increased use of science-based prevention efforts in this community.	□1	□2	□3	□9
40. Strengthened ATOD-related policies and regulations in the community (e.g., tobacco, under age drinking).	□1	□2	□3	□9
41. Increased the chances that children and youth in the community will avoid developing ATOD problems.	□1	□2	□3	□9
42. Increased collaboration with community groups concerned with preventing other types of problems (e.g., HIV, violence, teen pregnancy).	□1	□2	□3	□9
43. Identified at least one promising practice that it wants to replicate and expand.	□1	□2	□3	□9
44. Caused a shift in community attitudes around ATOD.	□1	□2	□3	□9

45. What about participating in the coalition has been the most worthwhile for you?

_____

_____

_____

46. What benefits to the community do you **expect** to see as a result of the coalition's activities?

_____

_____

_____

47. What barriers, if any, have made it difficult for your coalition to achieve its goals?

_____

_____

_____

48. What suggestions do you have for improving the work of this coalition?

_____

_____

_____

49. If you are not able to attend coalition meetings regularly, what are some of the barriers?

_____

_____

_____