

Your Regional Prevention Coordinator

Northeast Region

As part of the Minnesota Department of Human Services Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division’s statewide youth Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs (ATOD) prevention initiative, the Regional Prevention Coordinator (RPC) works to provide communities in Northeastern Minnesota (Region 2) with the capacity to prevent underage ATOD use and reduce substance abuse. This can take many forms, including: assistance with assessment, capacity building, planning and implementing effective programs, and evaluation.

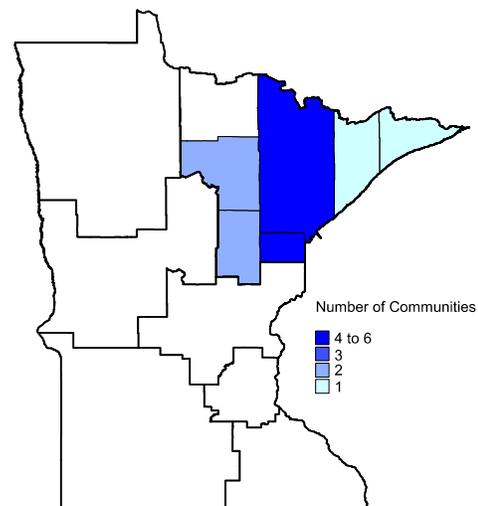
Communities served

The Northeast Region RPC has worked intensively with six of the seven counties in the region. In these counties, the RPC has provided intensive and long-term support to 16 “focus” communities since 2007 (see Figure 1). As of January 2013 the RPC was still providing services to 14 of these communities.

1. Region 2 -- Counties with focus communities

County	Number of “focus” communities	Map color
Aitkin	2	Light Blue
Carlton	4	Dark Blue
Cook	1	Lightest Blue
Itasca	2	Light Blue
Lake	1	Lightest Blue
St. Louis	6	Dark Blue

Additional counties located in this region include Koochiching.



Assessment

Assessment data- The Northeast Region RPC has assisted 22 focus communities with gathering, reviewing, and interpreting community data to be used for program planning or grant writing purposes. RPCs are also knowledgeable about common data sources such as the Minnesota Student Survey, local law enforcement data, the Substance Use Minnesota website (SUMN.org), and the Search Institute. Prevention professionals noted that the Region 2 RPC’s assistance compiling and interpreting data has helped them make sense of the problems in their community while lending credibility to their efforts.

She provided us with data and helped point out some of what to look for, what is pertinent, what is not, just sorting through the masses of that stuff.

It was a relief to have someone who could explain [data] and make sure that we cite our sources and cover our bases with regard to making it credible.

Community readiness assessment-The RPC has helped four communities conduct a community readiness assessment to determine their capacity to plan and implement ATOD prevention activities.

Capacity Building

Support ATOD prevention coalitions- The RPC attended ATOD prevention coalition meetings in eight communities and also attended meetings with other groups in the prevention field in seven communities.

She is always there [at meetings], which is impressive to me. She’s in the loop.

Typically, when she is at the meetings, she is able to provide insight on other initiatives that are going on. She often brings recent studies or research. One meeting she did a presentation on the Minnesota Student Survey results. That is what she brings to the coalition.

Technical assistance for grant-writing-The RPC has helped six communities obtain nine local, state, and federal grants totaling more than \$1.2 million. These include one Planning and Implementation grant, one Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentives Grant, and seven other grants (see Figure 2).

2. Type of grants for which communities received assistance

Type of grant	Number of grant applications	Number of grants received	Amount of grant dollars reported
Drug Free Communities	2	0	\$0
Planning and Implementation	3	1	\$1,000,648
SPF-SIG	3	1	\$194,000
Other grants ^a	12	7	\$66,000

^a Other grants include: AAA; Advil Congestion Relief Project; Medica Foundation Community Grant; Miller Dwan grant; Northland Foundation; Safe Communities; Tobacco Free Communities; Zero Adult Provider; School Health Index; United Way Prevention.

Training

The RPC has conducted or organized 43 trainings in 13 communities since 2007. Topics include:

- Youth leadership in prevention work
- School-based curricula
- Community readiness assessment
- Social Host Ordinances
- Technology and social media in prevention
- Walking the Talk facilitator training
- Community engagement
- Underage drinking prevention
- Environmental strategies
- College Resident Advisor training
- Honoring Differences
- Above the Influence

Prevention professionals noted that the training provided to youth has been particularly useful and has helped to build the skills and capacity of youth when it comes to prevention work.

[RPC] has come in and trained our youth in Above the Influence and on facts and statistics on underage drinking. She also trained the kids on the social host ordinance. They learned about it from her and then decided that was how they wanted to make local change.

She's done a couple of trainings with our youth leadership group. She does a lot of hands-on activities and keeps the kids motivated.

Planning and Implementing Programs

School-based curricula-The RPC provides training for two evidence-based ATOD prevention curricula, Project Northland and Class Action. She has assisted two communities with implementing Project Northland and two with Class Action.

Environmental strategies

- The RPC has worked with two communities to implement the Most of Us or Positive Communities Norms campaign, a process that engages schools and communities in collecting data about perceived underage ATOD use in order to communicate the positive results and build a healthy environment for prevention efforts.
- The RPC has also helped four communities pursue or enact the Zero Adult Provider program, three communities develop prescription drug collection programs, and one community provide responsible beverage server trainings.
- The RPC has helped four communities enact a social host ordinance to allow police to take legal action against an individual who hosts a party where underage drinking occurs. She is

helping an additional three communities pursue this type of ordinance. Professionals found her help in this area instrumental to the passing of the ordinance.

We passed the social host ordinance without a lot of push, both county-wide and city-wide. She was very helpful for us to understand what social host even is and educating the coalition to write a letter of support to get people to take it on themselves.

She provided me with common language that was used in [another county] and helped me work through the strategy and work with the kids on the first, middle, and last steps.

The Regional Prevention Coordinator: What is most useful to prevention professionals

In winter of 2013, Wilder Research conducted semi-structured interviews with prevention professionals throughout Region 2 to learn about the assistance they have received from their RPC and what has been most useful for them in their prevention work. Respondents frequently mentioned the availability of their RPC as a prevention resource, the ability to connect them to other professionals and information, and knowledge of both state and local prevention work as the most useful aspects of the RPC's work.

Resource for prevention

Respondents noted that the Region 2 RPC is a valuable resource in the prevention field and has provided coalitions with other resources such as articles, posters, news, grants, and help with framing messages and wording ordinances. The RPC can also serve as a sounding board for coalition staff and members and offers general support.

She is a resource. She has great ideas. She has the physical resources, the printed resources, like posters. She helps with articles, news for the media. She is always there to ask questions of as a professional resource.

Overall I think she's been a great resource and that goes from grants to written materials to insights. I really felt that she has been a very present team player. I think she's invested in what we're doing.

Connection between prevention professionals

The interview respondents noted that their RPC is able to connect them with other organizations and individuals doing similar prevention work and that this has been very useful to them.

She knows how to connect us up with people, organizations, trainings, anything that would be helpful to us, I guess. I think that's been really valuable.

I see her role as kind of a conduit or facilitator for access to resources and information. I've seen her be that connecting point by pulling different groups together, like "It would be good to connect with this group because they are doing something similar." That big picture kind of stuff, but still able to deliver on specific resources.

Knowledge of both state and local prevention resources

Respondents found their RPC to be useful not only as a resource on statewide prevention work, but also on how to apply that information, given local community conditions. Overall, respondents appreciated the RPC's understanding of their unique communities.

We looked to her for resources, information on what else is going on in the state in underage drinking.

She localizes it for us, in the sense of getting to know our community quite well. She's knows what's going to fit and she's good at working with different types of personalities.

It's nice to have her knowing the overall pictures and the goals of the grant, and the state and driving the bus in terms of what will work and what doesn't. That wealth of knowledge and having the broad visions but also bringing it down to the local level.

Wilder Research

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For more information

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