

# Sustainability Plan

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

**BUTLER 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.

- Butler County Coalition
- Alcohol and Chemical Abuse Council staff member
- Jen O’Brien, Miami University Hamilton (MUH) Student Activities
- Dr. Daniel Hall, MUH Criminal Justice Department
- Chris Klefeker, MUH Bachelor or Integrative Studies service-learning coordinator
- Dr. Michelle Abraham, Psychology Department
- Dr. Suzanne Klatt, Family Studies and Social Work program
- Local law enforcement departments (sheriff and police departments)
- MUH Peer Educators/PATH student organization

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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.

We are trying to sustain both the ideas and relationships; if we can cement the ideas into the campus environment, and campus groups that will continue to carry out the campaign and programs then we can continue to prevent high-risk behavior even after the grant has expired and we are no longer a presence on the campus. By building relationships with multiple campus organizations/departments we will allow for the open dialogue to find out exactly how to combat high-risk behavior.

**A. Ideas**

- To build a core group of students/faculty who believe in the initiative’s core principals, values, beliefs, and commitment, who are willing to continue the work after we have moved on from the campus.
- To provide the necessary campaign materials, such as signage and handouts, that will provide the information needed and can be recreated beyond this grant period to use on the campus.

**B. Relationships**

- To build a relationship with the Bachelor of Integrative Studies service-learning coordinator, and to pull students in as part of their studies to help through service-learning; this will provide a dedicated and thoughtful student each semester willing to work on the campaign – as they choose the area/organization they wish to complete their requirement with.
- To build a relationship with the Criminal Justice department and coordinate between their students/faculty and the local law enforcement officers to share, campus wide, the legal ramifications of high-risk behavior.
- To build a relationship with the Nursing program on the MUH campus to assist in programming that will provide better insight into the risk and effects of binge drinking/high-risk behavior.

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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?)

We have evidence that there is a negative correlation between the number of days in the 30 days prior to the survey that MUH 18-25 year olds engage in binge drinking five or more drinks and the belief that drinking five or more drinks on occasion puts a person at risk. There is a misconception about the use of alcohol and the risks behind drinking on the campus, and there needs to be some form of education to correct the misconceptions and increase the awareness among students. By providing a marketing campaign that will target those who are at risk, we allow them to be more educated on the dangers and negative effects of participating in high-risk behavior. Becoming a presence on the campus will begin to open the dialogue about high-risk behaviors at universities and provide the platform to create awareness, prevention and alternatives for the MUH students. Along with this, alcohol education and safety are a relevant health issue. Not only is drinking during a student's time at college seen as a norm, it is also perpetuated by the media on a consistent basis. High-risk behavior not only affects the person on a physical and potentially legal level, NIDA data showed that binge drinking has a direct effect on academic performance and retention, which are both extremely relevant issues for the Miami University Hamilton campus.

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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?

There are many programs throughout the year that are run by the Campus Activities Committee on either Thursday or Friday nights, along with weekend programs every so often. These are days when high-risk behavior is increased among 18-25 year old students, so this provides an alternative option for the MUH campus. This could easily be strengthened by creating more activities throughout the year, which would, of course, require funding for the Campus Activities Committee but would create a safe, alcohol free environment on a more regular basis. The programming could also be stronger and more attractive, to draw more students in – activities such as Kings Island visits and trips to the Great American Ballpark are hits, but some activities such as game night and karaoke night are not so much. With increased funding they would be able to do more activities such as the ones listed above.

Also, the student orientations could be targeted to increase awareness of high-risk behavior for incoming freshman students. We actually gave a brief presentation at several orientation sessions last summer, but with an increased presence at these sessions there would be more impact. As a part of the initiative, we would like to push to make it a requirement that each freshman go through alcohol education either during orientation or through their first year college courses. Since the grant will be ending, this will something that must be sustained by the campus itself and the various organization/departments listed in the first question on this module. Jen O'Brien will have the most control over both the structures/policies listed above as she runs both the CAC and the SOARS orientations. As part of our sustainability plans with Miami, a stipend will be offered to professors who are willing to take a brief training and infuse alcohol education into their curriculum.

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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?

It is our belief that we have the capacity needed to sustain this project for many years after the SPF SIG project has officially ended. Of the many sources of capacity, Miami University Hamilton is by far the most necessary and the most secure – they have an eagerness to continue this project in the future, knowing the importance of the information for students. Because of Miami's willingness to sustain our project, they also are willing to provide financial capacity in the future, when the funding has come to an end; we have also provided funding to carry through at Miami for the near future to provide a buffer at the end of the program.

Through networking we have built a partnership with not only the advising department which we have worked with, but also the Student Activities office, PATH student organization, the Integrative Studies program (service-learning), and many faculty/staff members. Because of these partnerships, our current ideas/projects are going to be sustained but also new and innovative ideas have come to light on a daily basis, providing an excitement for those involved. The relationships with faculty members has opened the door to our goal of having alcohol education infused in curriculums for freshman students and the Student Activities office has allowed us to participate in several programs related to alcohol education beyond our project. PATH and the Peer Educators provide a peer driven source of information and education for the students and an outlet which sometimes has more leeway than a university department/office.

Of all our resources funding is the most vulnerable as we are reliant on the university to continue the project after the project is over and funding has ended. Because of this, if something were to arise and not allow for funding to be given to the departments/organizations involved in sustainability, there is a chance our project would be put on hold or discontinued. Our hope is this will not happen, but there is always that possibility.

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Our project has relied not only on the skills/expertise of the AoD community and the expertise of those at the Alcohol and Chemical Abuse council, but also on those of the faculty/staff members at Miami. Beyond the actual educational piece, we need to know what is and is not effective with the student population in getting the information to the students and making it memorable. Miami has provided their insight and previous experience to help guide how our project was put together. We also relied on the faculty at Miami to complete our data analysis and compile the information needed for reporting and sharing the data collected through our evaluation piece of SPF SIG. We will need all of these, along with the fresh minds and ideas of students who are going to be actively involved in sustainability, to carry on the project and make the most impact where necessary.

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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?

Because we are positioned within the university, and we have shown the need for sustainability, we will be able to sustain our project well beyond the ending of the grant period. The university is not going anywhere and, as long as funding and need are there, is happy to continue work that will provide education and safety to their students. Funding and the potentially tightened budget of the university will always be a possible obstacle for anyone planning for the future.

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