

# Sustainability Plan

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

**LORAIN COUNTY**

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## 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.

Lorain County Young Adult Alcohol & Drug Awareness Coalition will reduce alcohol, use and abuse while focusing on the decrease of risk factors and improvement of protective factors among Lorain County’s young adults, through the cultivation and development of relationships across Lorain County, including but not limited to the current relationship with individuals such as:

- Lorain and Elyria City councilman
- The Lorain County Law Director
- The County Coroner
- The parents of a young adults and a the young adults themselves

We must also include the continued involvement of groups like:

- Communities that Care of Lorain County
- STOP Task Force
- Lorain County Community College and Oberlin College.

YAADA’s methods for achieving our goal have been to place a major focus on reaching our target population through the use of social media. By creating YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts we are involving young adults throughout Lorain County in the conversations on alcohol and substance abuse. In addition we utilize the social media and webpages of our partners to continue to reach our target population.

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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.

Our research shows Lorain County young adults have a permissive attitude toward misuse of alcohol. It is essential that YAADA continues raising awareness of permissive attitudes and builds on the scope of the SPF SIG work by using a few key objectives:

- **Alternative Funding Sources** - In order to continue the SPF initiative it will be necessary to identify alternative funding sources to support campaigns and continue daily operations, which include, but are not limited to, social media management, community outreach initiatives, and continued information gathering. Available Funding sources must be utilized for sustainability.
- **Core Purpose** – The core purpose must be sustained in order to have a constant, persistent, and effective message. Our team has concluded young adults have permissive attitudes towards the misuse of alcohol. This core purpose must be sustained and extended to include other topics of interest, such as the high rate of death from vehicle accidents.
- **Community Relationships** – During the grant cycle, valued relationships have been formed and nurtured. For sustainability to be successful it is important to continue these relationships. Relationships have been formed with the two largest colleges in the county, the two largest police departments, the city of Lorain’s alcohol prevention program (UMADOAP), as well as churches and other nonprofit agencies. Since its implementation, YAADA has taken several steps and met with many groups and organizations including schools, business, and private groups to educate them on the vital importance of engaging the young adult population and ensuring that their voice is heard. Our data shows young adults repeatedly responded that there was little to do in our community for their age group. As a result YAADA implemented “Saturdays & Super Stars” a summer weekend

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event where we host movies under the night stars in a public park as an alternative to going to a club/drinking. The free movie and free snacks were sponsored by a local bank. This concept has now been duplicated and will be continued by a housing development in our community because they felt it has “kept young adults off the streets” and “brought community together”. In May of this year, YAADA and two young adults participated in a panel at a Town Hall Meeting on Social Hosting Ordinances and Party Patrols. The young adults provided honest insight and information from their perspective. The YAADA Coalition created an informative binder on social hosting ordinances and starting party patrols in neighborhoods. This binder was distributed to block watch captains and is being utilized to help begin party patrols in Lorain County. The City of Elyria Law Director was present along with Elyria City council members and as a result of the meeting they have drafted a city ordinance of social hosting. Through our coalition’s efforts, conversation, direct participation and advocacy of a wrist banding policy was formulated by the Lorain County Port Authority. This policy and our volunteer efforts have led to three consecutive years of wrist banding at Lorain County’s largest festival, the International Festival.

Although heroin was not the substance YAADA data led us to concentrate on, due to our training and knowledge about young adults we were asked to participate in the “Project Dawn” initiative created in response to our local heroin epidemic. Our area received national attention and our County Coroner was instrumental in bringing Narcan/Naloxone, an effective medicine that reverses the effect of an opioid overdose has saved 43 lives as of the end of June, of which 12 were young adults ages 18-25.

In collaboration with the Lorain County Film Commission we wrote and filmed a public service announcement (PSA) on alcohol titled “...and you wonder where they get it from” the three minute PSA starred Lorain County young adults and is being distributed at Lorain County Community College, Oberlin College, as well various online means . Three of the young adults from the PSA have gone on to begin acting careers and have taken part in an HBO pilot, have been extras on feature films, and have starred in an independent film.

In the short time the YAADA Coalition has been in existence it has changed the landscape of Lorain County through a policy implementation , environmental change, individual development and a new overall appreciation and understanding of the young adults in 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?)

SPF SIG efforts sought to reduce permissive attitudes surrounding alcohol use among 18-25 year olds in Lorain County by implementing a media campaign. Several positive results have been observed in the community:

- A. **Valued Community Results** – There are two results valued by our community which have been drawn from our research
- Community members have recognized their permissive attitudes toward the drinking behavior of the target audience and have adjusted behavior.
  - A reduction in irresponsible drinking by the target audience.
- B. **Valued Leadership Results** – Community leaders have seen results in several areas.
- A reduction in vehicle accidents and underage drinking has led to a safer community, valued by elected officials, educators, law enforcement etc.
  - The partners mentioned as our sustainability team in the first question continue to value the results by recognizing prevention efforts have been effective. These partners will continue to seek to partnership with the coalition in the future.

These initial results are promising, and sustaining (and strengthening) the YAADA Coalition will serve to build upon and extend the prevention foundation that has been established during the SPF SIG project in Lorain.

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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?

In order to have sustainability, it is important we have key policies and initiative put in place by community leaders.

- **Policies** – One key policy within our community which must change is the alcohol serving policy at community functions such as festivals and dances. Currently the permissive atmosphere allows for not only irresponsible drinking for young adults, but underage drinking as well. Elected officials and law enforcement joined with the initiative to change this consistent policy.
- **Current Support** – Currently, the initiative is supported by law enforcement, county drug prevention centers, county drug treatment centers, the county’s two largest colleges and several key community leaders such as city council members, media, and a city law director. These relationships (detailed in section B of this Sustainability Plan) have created an atmosphere of collaboration in which alternative events, information dissemination, and resource sharing are commonplace. Moreover the support and involvement of young adults is where true sustainability lies. YAADA has developed relationships with young adults by hosting forums and small group discussions as well as by establishing a social media presence. It is important to point out that this population is best reached through email, texting, and social media. Although not present at most structured meetings, the young adults have answered the call and participate whenever called on.
- **Needed Support/Structure** – Though there is a solid foundation for sustainability in this initiative, continued improvement is always necessary. More direct involvement with the target audience is necessary for sustainability. Ultimately the message is most effective when shared by peers. Thus far, community involvement has primarily involved verbal support and occasional volunteerism. Over time, a more comprehensive role and direct responsibility can be achieved.

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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?

- **Insufficient/Vulnerable Resources** – Vulnerable resources include the funds necessary to staff a full time employee dedicated to the project. Unfortunately this is also the most vital resource for the project's sustainability.
- **Current skill/expertise for Reliability** – Currently a few necessary skills are the ability to use social media to reach our target audience. Our research has shown social media and cell phones are the most effective way to communicate with the target audience. In addition to this skill, another important skill is the ability to communicate with leaders in the community who have different values, agendas, and personalities and yet achieve the initiative's objectives.
- **Strengthened Skill/Expertise** – the skill of community relations could be strengthened to ensure sustainability. This would involve hours of interpersonal relationship building and strong communication skills.
- **Skill/Expertise Still Needed** – An expertise which is still needed to achieve a positive outcome is a psychological perspective on alcohol drinking with our target age group. This would help in both prevention and treatment thus creating a strong sustainability outcome.

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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?

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

The YAADA Coalition has laid a solid foundation through collaborations with Communities that Care of Lorain County and Lorain County Community College which can be carried on by community members and a dedicated team of volunteers.

The Communities that Care Coalition has included outreach and information dissemination to the Lorain county young adult population in their most recent action plan. This will ensure that future messages on alcohol are targeted to include them. Communities that Care has applied for and received a Drug Free Community Coalitions (DFCC) grant that can be used to assist in the efforts of involving and mobilizing Lorain County young adults.

Lorain County Community College has included in their prerequisite course list a course titled "College 101," which is focused on information and education on the dangers of alcohol misuse and abuse.

Because of early efforts in developing bonds when called upon to do so, the 18-25 year old will continue to assist in data collection, data analysis, data evaluation, sharing of information and resources.

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

A few of the challenges faced in sustainability will be a loss of momentum in the project. As YAADA Coalition moves forward some potential obstacles may include, the development and continuation of relationships, methods of operations including the outreach and engagement, and research conclusions may be doubted.

In addition as time passes, the campaign message becomes increasingly more difficult to have influence. New ideas and new messages will be necessary to keep the purpose of the project effective.

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