



2005 Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant

In July 2005, the State of Vermont was awarded a grant of \$2.3 million per year for up to five years from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The grant is designed to:

- Prevent the onset and reduce the progression of alcohol abuse, including childhood and underage drinking,
- Reduce substance abuse related problems in communities, and
- Build prevention capacity and infrastructure at the State and community levels – including a sustainable evaluation system for prevention grantees.

Why does Vermont need a substance abuse prevention grant?

Indicators of substance abuse problems remain high in Vermont when compared to the rest of the nation.

- Vermont adults age 26 and older show the highest prevalence of past month alcohol use in the nation (65.7%)
- Vermont young adults age 18 to 25 show the third highest prevalence of binge drinking (48.2%).
- Vermont college students show higher binge drinking prevalence (53%) than the national average
- Vermont youth and young adults show the highest use of marijuana (13.2% and 28.6% respectively).
- Vermont young adults show the highest prevalence of serious mental illness (13.3%)

Feedback from communities involved in prevention programs statewide revealed that Vermont's substance abuse prevention system has a strong grassroots base, but lacks a statewide strategic plan with clearly articulated priorities, counter marketing and media efforts. A communication strategy is also needed to unite local efforts to avoid duplication and overlap.

How will the grant impact my community?

The grant is designed to help States and communities identify needs, and build the infrastructure for effective, sustainable substance abuse prevention services. The five planning steps are:

- Profile population needs, resources, and readiness to address needs and gaps
- Mobilize and/or build capacity to address needs
- Develop a Strategic Substance Abuse Prevention Plan

- Implement evidence-based substance abuse prevention programs, policies and practices
- Monitor, evaluate, sustain and improve or replace these strategies

How will we know the money is going where it is needed most?

Assessment of Vermont communities that are most at risk is a primary focus of the first year of the grant. The Vermont Department of Health will compile and analyze data related to substance abuse and mental health disorders in Vermont.

- Assessment of the magnitude of substance abuse and related mental health disorders
- Assessment of risk and protective factors associated with substance abuse and mental health disorders
- Assessment of community assets and resources
- Assessment of gaps in services and capacity
- Assessment of state and community readiness to act
- Identification of priorities based on the epidemiological analyses, including identification of target communities
- Specification of baseline data against which progress and outcomes can be measured

The Department of Health will also convene an advisory council, chaired by Deputy Commissioner of Health Barbara Cimaglio. The advisory council will be responsible for development of a five-year strategic plan and recommendations about the kinds of supports that are needed to carry out and sustain effective prevention efforts in the community.

The plan will identify priority needs and actions, environmental factors that need to be addressed statewide, as well as specific populations or regions that may present special needs.

At the local and regional level, the Department of Health will work with communities to assess substance abuse prevention needs, resources, gaps in services and capacity, and readiness to act on statewide priorities.