

Partners in Prevention Coalition Toolkit

Step 6 Strategic Planning Tips

Strategic planning can be difficult and time-consuming, but is a necessary part of prevention. Here are some suggestions to improve the strategic planning process.

- **Get input.** Don't try to create a plan by yourself; it's vital to get feedback and include key stakeholders in the process to determine problem/priority areas, goals, and strategies.
- **Keep it manageable.** You and your coalition can't do it all. Focus on what the highest priority areas are and what specifically you can do to address the problems.
- **Make it actionable.** Think of your strategic plan like a to-do list; it may be helpful to write out the who, what, when, where, and how of any strategies.
- **Focus on the 'why?'** In order to address problems, you must think about the reasons they occur and what contributes to them. Then, choose strategies that address those reasons/contributing factors.

What are the problems/behaviors?

Why are they happening?
What is contributing to them?

How can we address the contributing factors?

- **Craft goals carefully.** You can use SMART goals (goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) as a framework. However, this doesn't mean the goals have to be lengthy or complex; aim for clear and concise.
- **Include data.** Data provides evidence for why something should be addressed. Utilize surveys/needs assessments/environmental scans to support the identification of problem areas and goals.
- **Refer to the plan often.** The plan should be your roadmap, the guide for your work, and you should use it frequently. It should not sit on a shelf or just be something you have on file. Bring it to coalition meetings and talk through what members are actively doing to achieve the goals in the plan.

Strategic planning is an ongoing process and the plan can be updated, added to, revised, and used to track progress. Utilize the below resources or see the other documents in this toolkit related to strategic planning.

Additional Resources

- [A Guide to SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework](#)
- [Developing a Strategic Plan - Community Toolbox](#)
- [How to Run a Strategic Planning Meeting](#)
- [How to Write a Strategic Plan](#)
- [Prevention with Purpose: A Strategic Planning Guide for Preventing Drug Misuse Among College Students](#)