

MUNICIPAL ALLIANCE CAPACITY

What is Capacity?

According to Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association (SAMHSA) *Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF)*, "capacity refers to the various types and levels of resources available to establish and maintain a community prevention system that can identify and respond to community needs." While this definition focuses on resources, the SPF goes on to state that capacity also depends on the readiness of both the organization and the broader community to actually commit their resources to addressing the identified problem(s).¹

A resource which is at the center of the Municipal Alliance Program is the Municipal Alliance Committee (MAC). The committee is both the driving force behind the Municipal Alliance programs and activities as well as an organization that fosters a supportive and collaborative relationship with other community ATOD prevention partners.

The mission* of the Municipal Alliance to be a "mechanism for implementing policies to reduce alcoholism and drug abuse (and) support appropriate county and municipal-based alcohol and drug abuse education and public awareness activities" (NJSA 26:BB-7a) requires that the committee membership is diverse and broad enough to collectively 1) possess a thorough knowledge of the substance abuse needs and resources of the community, 2) recruit and recognize community volunteers, 3) develop and maintain community partnerships, and 4) successfully implement prevention strategies to meet its goals.

Throughout the history of the Municipal Alliance program the Committee's goals and objectives have been to provide successful prevention programs and public awareness activities. Beginning with the new cycle, the committee will incorporate environmental strategies into the prevention plan. Implementing environmental strategies will affect the current structure of the Municipal Alliance Committee.

*"Implementing environmental strategies requires more community involvement than individual strategies and requires participation of those most affected for crafting and carrying out solutions...the strategies and tactics needed to bring about environmental change differ from those required to select and implement programs for individuals."*²

The structure and make-up of Municipal Alliance Committee is dynamic. It is formed and developed over time and open to growth and change to best reflect the needs and characteristics of the community.

* See Community Anti Drug Coalitions of America "Capacity Primer" p. 12-18

Municipal Alliance Committee

For participation in the Alliance Network to Prevent Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, the governing body of a municipality must appoint a Municipal Alliance Committee (MAC), or join with one or more municipalities to form an Alliance consortium to which they appoint municipal representatives. The heart of each community's local prevention effort is its grass roots volunteers and representatives that form a broad based community coalition called the Municipal Alliance Committee (MAC). This committee brings together representatives from government agencies, public and nonpublic schools, health care organizations, law enforcement agencies, business and civic groups, parents, youth and the community at large. The MAC is responsible for overseeing the Strategic Prevention Framework process in their community. Membership on a MAC must include broad representation from the local community to make and influence change. Membership (Form 3) should include, but is not limited to:

1. Mayor and/or members of the governing body (or designee);
2. The chief of police (or designee) and other Law Enforcement agencies
3. School District Administrative Staff and/or School Board Member
4. Student assistance coordinator or other student support services staff member;
5. A representative of the Parent-Teacher Association or other home-school association;
6. Parents and/or Guardians
7. A representative from Youth Servicing Organizations
8. A representative of the Chamber of Commerce or Local Business;
9. Representatives of local civic or volunteer groups.
10. Representatives of local faith-based organizations;
11. Private citizens with interest or experience in issues concerning alcohol or drug abuse, addiction or juvenile delinquency.
12. Youth representatives.
13. Older Adult Representative.
14. Individuals who have been affected by alcoholism or drug abuse, including individuals who have been directly affected by their own, or family's member's abuse or addictions;
15. Health and Human Service Agencies/Professionals; especially health care professionals including pharmacists, physicians or therapists, etc.
16. Representatives of the local communications media; or Public Relations
17. Representatives of public and private organizations involved in the prevention or treatment of alcoholism and drug abuse and/or the Regional Coalition.

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There is no limitation on the number of members who may be appointed to the MAC. However, it is required that there is broad representation from across the community in order to ensure representative programming, sustainability and cultural competency. The membership of the MAC should represent the cultural composition of the community. The committee should include members who have the skills, knowledge and resources the Alliance needs*. A complete list of MAC members, with their addresses and email addresses, must be annually provided to the GCADA as part of the strategic planning process.

Residency Requirements, Terms and Appointment/Election of Officers

At a minimum, fifty percent of the members must reside in the municipality. Members must be appointed for specific terms. Officers may either be appointed by the governing body or elected by the Committee, whichever method the municipality chooses.

Every Alliance must have a Chairperson who is different than the Alliance Coordinator. The Chairperson is responsible for running Alliance Committee meetings and for providing leadership through the Alliance committee to formulate local policies and procedures. The Alliance Coordinator is responsible for the administrative duties of the of the Alliance such as completing required reports and applications for alliance funding, scheduling consults and providing support to the Municipal Alliance Committee (a Municipal Alliance Coordinator job description is on file in the municipality). The Chairperson is a voting member of the committee; the Coordinator is not a voting member.

Establishing the Municipal Alliance and Meeting Requirements

MACs must be established by municipal ordinance or resolution, and the committee must adopt bylaws. If a municipality chooses to use resolutions they must be adopted annually in order to be in effect. At a minimum, Committee meetings must be held quarterly. MACs must operate in full compliance with the State's open public meetings laws. There must be public notice of MAC meetings. Minutes must be kept of all Committee meetings, and a quorum of Committee members is required for action to be taken by the Committee (e.g., approval of plan or modifications). A quorum is 50 percent of the official Committee membership plus one.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest may exist if a MAC member can reasonably expect that their conduct will directly result in a personal or financial benefit to themselves, their family members, business associates, employers, or to businesses that the member represents. In situations where a conflict of interest may exist, the MAC member must recuse him or herself. Recusal means that the individual is not participating in deliberations or debates, making recommendations, giving advice, considering findings, voting or in any other way assuming responsibility for or participating in any aspect of the decision making regarding the matter. Consultants or providers who are directly or indirectly involved in providing prevention services to the Municipal Alliance are also subject to the recusal requirement.

Municipal Alliance Committee Functions

The Municipal Alliance Committee is responsible for:

- A. Creating a coalition of community leaders, private citizens, and representatives of public and private education, health and human service agencies who will make a comprehensive and coordinated effort to promote and support community-wide drug and alcohol prevention, education, public awareness, environmental programs and related activities.
- B. Implementing the Strategic Prevention Framework in order to perform local assessments, build local prevention capacity, plan and implement effective community strategies and programs, and evaluate the MAC's efforts for outcomes that includes:
 1. Conducting an assessment of their community to determine the needs of the community in regard to drug, alcohol and prevention issues;
 2. Identifying existing strategies, programs, services, activities and resources designed to prevent and reduce alcoholism and drug abuse;
 3. Developing a logic model which includes *Problem Statement*, *Root Cause*, and *Local Conditions* to prioritize the needs of the community;
 4. Implementing documented evidence-based programs, practice-based programs, and environmental strategies at the municipal level which have been demonstrated to be effective or participating in regionally developed programs that accomplish the purpose of the Municipal Alliance effort;
 5. Establishing an evaluation process to measure the outcome of programs and practices in order to understand their effectiveness and identify needed changes; evaluation findings should serve as key factors at each step of the Strategic Prevention Framework;
- C. Assisting any programs specifically developed for the prevention of delinquency, teen pregnancy, truancy and school drop out to acquire alcoholism and drug abuse prevention resources, such as educational and awareness information.
- D. Assisting the municipality in acquiring funds for Municipal Alliance programs, including the establishment of a permanent, standing subcommittee on fundraising.
- E. Support, collaborate, and promote local ATOD prevention efforts involving schools, law enforcement, business and civic groups and other community organizations.
- F. Collaborating with local school districts, charter schools and nonpublic schools in the review of their K-12 comprehensive programs for alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse prevention, intervention, referral for evaluation, referral for treatment and continuity of care, pursuant to the requirements at *N.J.S.A. 18A:40A-1 et seq.* and *N.J.A.C. 6A:16-3*, which can be found at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/>.

G. Completing the MAC capacity assessment tool to evaluate and help strengthen the current capacity of the Municipal Alliance (Form 5).

Cultural Competency³

Cultural Competency must be incorporated throughout implementation of the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) process. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines

cultural competence as a "set of behaviors, attitudes and policies that come together in a system, agency or program or among individuals, enabling them to function effectively in diverse cultural

interactions and similarities within, among and between groups."⁴

Sample methods to incorporate and promote Cultural Competency into Capacity:

- Know the history and current cultural make-up of the community.
- Include broad representation from across the community on the Municipal Alliance Committee to ensure the cultural composition of the community is represented.
- Include cultural sub-groups in all aspects of the SPF (i.e. assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation, etc.) to insure cultural relevance.
- Provide opportunities for Cultural Competency training to members of the committee and prevention partners.

Sustainability

Sustainability is the likelihood of a strategy (*or program or committee*) to continue over a period of time, especially after specific funding ends.⁵

Sample methods to incorporate and promote Sustainability into Capacity:

- Build-up broad stakeholder representation on the Municipal Alliance Committee to garner support from the community.
- Complete Community Resource Directories to provide service information to the community and build community partnerships.
- Recognize Committee and Community prevention supporters on an annual basis.
- Track outcomes and provide current ATOD information to community partners.
- Support, collaborate, and promote local ATOD prevention efforts in the community.

^{1,3} New Jersey Regional Workshop, "What is Strategic Prevention Framework" August, 2008
Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), Northeast Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies (CAPT).

²The Coalition Impact: Environmental Prevention Strategies, Pages 14-15 Community Anti Drug Coalitions of America

^{4,5}Cultural Competence Primer: Incorporating Cultural Competence into Your Comprehensive Plan, Page 11 and Glossary Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America