How to Engage in Strategic Planning

A Guidance Document for CAST Sites

S.C. Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services

February 2011
This guide was adapted by the South Carolina Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services’ Community Action for a Safer Tomorrow (CAST) project from several documents: 1) a draft version of *Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF): A Guide for Michigan Communities*, written by the Michigan Bureau of Substance Abuse and Addiction Services and the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (The Michigan guide was created using material from the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, and the Nevada and North Carolina SPF State Incentive Grant (SIG) projects.); 2) *Creating a Strategic Plan Based on Your Needs Assessment Findings: A How-To Guide*, developed by the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation for the North Carolina SPF SIG; 3) *Assessment Primer: Analyzing the Community, Identifying Problems, and Setting Goals* by Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA); and 4) *Planning Primer: Developing a Theory of Change, Logic Models and Strategic and Action Plans* by CADCA.
The third step of the SPF is strategic planning. The strategic planning process is one of the most challenging steps in the SPF model. It requires synthesizing everything that was learned from the needs assessment and connecting that knowledge with appropriate strategies to address the identified needs. In theory, it sounds simple. In practice, it requires a lot of thought. Ultimately, you’ll determine the right course of action, but you’ll have to navigate through many possible paths. It will appear in pieces, and it will require you to proceed in small steps, talk to many people, read a lot, and critically think with all the invested partners about the goals, the needs, the capacities, and resources of the community. The journey might be frustrating, but it is a learning process that will ultimately lead to a strong plan for your community and develop your local capacity to do similar planning in the future.¹ In the end, the strategic action plan the coalition develops should serve as a road map that guides the coalition from where it is to where it wants to be.²

The Strategic Action Plan is the document that will guide you through the next three years as you implement your strategies. It should serve as a path for you to follow, so it needs to be as clear and precise as possible, with the understanding that you cannot predict what complications will arise and what tweaking will have to take place as a result. We want you to spend the next three years implementing and evaluating your work, not revising your Strategic Action Plan because the first one didn’t work. In order to do that, there are a lot of questions to consider, including:

- What strategies are likely to have the most impact on the contributing local factors in my community?
- Do we have the capacity to implement a particular strategy?
- What capacity do we need to build, and how will we build it?
- Who will implement the strategies, and what steps do we need to take to implement them well?

¹ North Carolina Guide
² The Weathers Group, Strategic Planning Learning Session, 2011
• Are your strategies culturally appropriate?
• Can they be sustained over time?³

A word about cultural competence as it relates to planning

The SPF places cultural competence and sustainability at its center, as these key concepts must be incorporated throughout implementation of the framework. Remember that the communities or groups of people affected by the problem you are working on need to be involved in ALL aspects of the work of the coalition, from assessment and planning through implementation and evaluation. The best ideas and plans will fall flat unless solutions to the problems are culturally appropriate.

Therefore, if you want to maintain the coalition diversity you have worked so hard to achieve, you need to be vigilant that you do not conduct “business as usual.” Make sure you have a diverse planning group representative of your community. Be willing to be flexible and thoughtful about shaping your planning efforts around people’s differences, preferences, and needs. Where do meetings take place? Are they accessible to everyone? When are meetings scheduled? If you want community members to participate fully, are you scheduling meetings at reasonable times so that working people can attend? If you want youth to participate, are meetings scheduled after school hours and in places accessible to youth who do not drive?⁴

A word about sustainability as it relates to planning

Sustaining a coalition requires creating a strong coalition that brings together a community to develop and carry out a comprehensive plan to achieve population-level changes. Start to work on sustainability as you are planning, rather than waiting until six months before the grant period ends to begin thinking about sustaining the coalition’s work. The more thought-out and methodical you are in developing a plan, the more likely you are to attract funders and local support for future work.⁵

Getting Started

Each site’s plan should be created in collaboration with your coalition members and follow the provided strategic action plan template. All strategic action plans must be reviewed and approved by CAST state staff, the Workgroup on Evidence-Based (WEB), and the Governor’s Council on Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, the CAST advisory body, before the sites can move into the implementation phase. Revisions to strategic action plans may be required before implementation can begin. First drafts of CAST sites’ strategic action plans are due to DAODAS by March 25, 2011. Final versions of the strategic action plans are due to DAODAS by June 17, 2011.

³ Michigan Guide
⁴ CADCA Planning Primer
⁵ CADCA Planning Primer
Tip: As you progress through the strategic planning process, talk with your regional capacity coach, to help ensure that your plan is as strong as possible.

the Checklist for the CAST Strategic Action Plan (Appendix A), as it lists when sections are due.

This chapter is divided into three sections. In Section 1, we discuss “Laying the Foundation for Strategic Action Planning” – forming a sub-committee; establishing the coalition’s vision, mission, and values; and summarizing the needs assessment findings and prioritization process. In Section 2, we discuss strategy selection, creation of the logic model, and establishing goals and objectives. In Section 3, we discuss identifying capacity needs for implementation and creating an action plan and budget.

Several appendices are available to help you complete the strategic planning activities. A list of these appendices is provided below.

An 📩 symbol means the appendix is informational, and a 📄 symbol means the appendix is a worksheet that can be completed.

Appendices

A. Checklist for CAST Strategic Action Plan
B. CAST Environmental Strategy Options: DUI Crashes
C. CAST Environmental Strategy Options: Underage Drinking
D. Sample CAST Logic Model to test Strategy “Fit”
E. Sample Capacity Worksheet

Section 1: Laying the Foundation

Forming a Strategic Planning Sub-Committee

Just as you convened an assessment sub-committee for the needs and resources assessment, you will need to pull together a strategic planning sub-committee. This may be the same as your assessment team, but this is also an opportunity to involve new community members and organizations that were highlighted as important during your assessment. Moreover, your ability to create a culturally competent substance abuse prevention plan
is maximized by involving the various sub-populations present in your community in all
phases of the implementation process, as well as in the interpretation of outcomes. As
you assemble the team, be sure that its members represent the various sub-populations
of particular interest to your community.

You will need to list the members of the planning sub-committee in the strategic action
plan (Page 6 of the template).

We suggest you have each member of the planning sub-committee sign a “Strategic
Planning Letter of Commitment” so that he/she is made aware and understands the
expectations for participation. When challenges arise, coalition members can refer to
the letter of commitment for guidance. A sample “Strategic Planning Letter of Commitment” was provided during the Regional Weathers Group Learning Sessions on
Strategic Planning. Contact your regional capacity coach for additional information.

Regularly Refer to Mission and Vision Statements, and Coalition Values

Each coalition should have mission and vision statements, and coalition values. Without a mission,
vision, and values, a coalition can easily lose sight of its purpose for existence. If your coalition has not already
done so, you will need to create these statements that are crucial to guiding decisions made throughout the
Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) process. Frequently reviewing your mission, vision, and coalition
values – especially as you carry out strategic planning – could help you generate a
strategic plan that is both practical and effective.

The Vision (or the Dream)

The vision you created should communicate how you hope your community will be
when all of the outcomes in your plan have been achieved. There are certain
characteristics that should be part of a vision statement:

- It should be understood and shared by members of the community;
- It should be comprehensive enough to encompass diverse local perspectives;
- It should be inspiring and uplifting to everyone involved in your effort; and
- It should be easy to communicate – short enough to fit on a t-shirt.

---

6 21st Century SIG / Prevention Block Grant – Definitions II 29 Aug 2006
http://wind.uwyo.edu/sig/definition.asp.
7 Michigan Document
8 CADCA Planning Primer
See the *Planning Primer: Developing a Theory of Change, Logic Models and Strategic and Action Plans* by Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) for examples of vision statements (www.cadca.org/resources/detail/planning-primer).

In general, a strong vision is an “ends” statement. It describes a state of being and paints the picture of success that the coalition wants to achieve. The vision should tell people what difference your coalition will make and for what people. Your vision statement should also serve as a tool to motivate people; keep it displayed as a constant reminder to your coalition members of what you are working to achieve.\(^9\) Refer to your vision statement frequently as a reminder of the long-term end result(s) or positive state you hope to achieve through your efforts.

**The Mission (or the What and Why)**

A mission statement describes what the group or coalition aims to accomplish and why. The mission statement is similar to the vision statement but is more concrete and more action oriented than the vision statement. See CADCA’S *Planning Primer* for examples of mission statements. The mission statement refers to the problem and gives a suggestion of what the coalition might do to fix the problem. Mission statements should be concise, outcome oriented, and inclusive.\(^10\) Refer to your mission statement frequently as a reminder of what the problem is that you will be addressing and how you will work to solve that problem in your communities.

*State the coalition’s vision and mission statement in your strategic plan (Page 4 of the template).*

**Coalition Values**

Values are often the missing piece of strategic planning. However, they are crucial to keeping your coalition on track and headed in the right direction. They are like guard rails on the road to your vision.

Below are some examples of values a coalition may decide to use:

- *Inclusiveness* – Be open to and invite diverse perspectives.
- *Accountability* – Be where you said you would be, and do what you said you would do.

Once the coalition agrees upon its values, they should always be used to guide decision making. If a task, activity, strategy, program, or idea does not fit with the coalition’s values, you should not do it.\(^11\) Refer to your coalition values frequently to limit distractions and to maintain focus on the guiding principles of your coalition.

\(^9\) The Weathers Group, Strategic Planning Learning Session, 2011

\(^10\) CADCA Planning Primer

\(^11\) The Weathers Group, Strategic Planning Learning Session, 2011
List and define the values of your coalition in your strategic plan (Page 4 of the template). There is no required number of values to include.

Write a Summary of the Needs Assessment and Prioritization Process

For the past few months, your coalition has been assessing the county’s needs and resources related to your priority issue(s). As part of your strategic action plan, you will describe your data-collection methods and summarize the findings of your analysis, noting how “hot spots” and target populations, if any, were identified. You will also identify which risk factors and underlying conditions and contributing local factors were found to be significant in your county, based on the data, and how your coalition prioritized them. (See the Needs Assessment portion of the Strategic Action Plan Template, Pages 4-9. The Needs Assessment template was also e-mailed to CAST Coordinators in January 2011.)

Providing a summary of your needs assessment in your strategic action plan will set the stage for the action plan that you will present later in the document. The needs assessment can also help you in the future: some of the data collected and analyzed in the needs assessment will serve as baseline data for your evaluation; the needs assessment findings can be used by the coalition to apply for other grants and funding; and the findings of the needs assessment may be of interest to the coalition members, partners, and other community members, thus showing the value of the coalition to the county.

In the strategic action plan, you will also summarize your coalition’s prioritization process of the contributing local factors. Your coalition must prioritize the contributing local factors so as to focus your efforts during implementation. You should produce a final list of up to five priority contributing local factors. Prioritization of the contributing local factors should be a group process conducted with your coalition members. Member participation in this process will help ensure that you have their buy-in as you move forward with efforts to target prioritized contributing local factors in the coming years. It is very important to identify carefully and accurately the contributing local factors, because when you select strategies, you will only select strategies that can make an impact on the contributing local factors for your community.  

In the strategic action plan, you will note when and how the prioritization process took place, how long it took, who was involved, and the diverse representation of the group. This way, anyone can follow your coalition’s process for deciding how to focus your efforts and funding in your county. Documenting decision-making processes increases transparency and trust.

---

12 Michigan Guide
Below, we provide some tips on describing your county in Part I of the needs assessment section, as this information is not in the needs assessment guidance document.

Describe Your County and Coalition
Communities vary widely in terms of size, population, ethnic/cultural characteristics, political power, education, economic status, primary languages, and other factors that are essential as you work to set up coalition initiatives. As part of your plan, you will provide a brief description of your county’s demographic and geographic make-up, educational infrastructure, and the history of the county and coalition. Including this information in the strategic plan will allow anyone who reads it to have an understanding of your county’s background, people, history, and coalition. Please use the most current years of data available for the demographic variables/indicators you include. As a general rule of thumb, please use only data that is five or less years old.

You can find the demographic variables/indicators listed below in the most recent U.S. Census data, available at www.census.gov:

- Total population
- Gender
- Racial/ethnic breakdowns
- Age groups
- Average household income, size, and poverty data (so that you can understand the economic status of the community and what its available resources may be)
- Average educational level (to assess appropriate reading levels and message content for materials you develop)
- Primary language, to identify groups of non-English-speaking residents and help determine the need to use alternate communication methods or media, such as newspapers or radio/television broadcasts in prevalent languages.\(^\text{13}\)

Other sources of information on the county can be found through:

- S.C. Association of Counties (www.sccounties.org/)
- S.C. Budget and Control Board (www.bcb.sc.gov/BCB/BCB-sc-data.phtm)
- Your local county web site
- State Epidemiological Outcomes Workgroup County Profile (Contact your county alcohol and drug abuse authority’s Prevention Director for a copy.)
- Kids Count (www.kidscount.org)
- S.C. Information Highway (www.sciway.net/)

Be sure to cite any sources utilized in your strategic action plan.

\(^\text{13}\) CADCA Assessment Primer
In describing the coalition, summarize when and how it began, how active it has been in the community, and any other pertinent information an outsider may find interesting.

If the coalition’s history is not recorded, now is a good time to recruit a volunteer to be the coalition’s Historian or Secretary.

**Protective Factors and Existing Resources**

In your needs assessment, you identified risk factors associated with underage drinking or DUI crashes in your county. It is also important that you identify the existing protective factors and resources in your county that can reduce these problems. For example, if youth in your county indicate there are people in their neighborhoods who encourage them to do their best, it demonstrates community rewards for pro-social behavior, which is a protective factor as defined by Communities That Care. (Go to www.sdrg.org/ctcresource/Risk_and_Protective_Factor_Scale.pdf for more information on risk and protective factors.) Another example of a protective factor or existing resource would be a law or ordinance requiring bars to stop selling alcoholic beverages at least two hours before closing. Likewise, local retailers that have and enforce company policies requiring employees to check the identification of each customer seeking to purchase alcohol reduce retail access of alcohol to youth. Also, consider organizational resources available to the coalition through the coalition members and partners and the local alcohol and drug abuse authority, such as access to information and databases, meeting space, and other in-kind services.

**Create a Problem Statement**

Some coalitions never develop strong strategic plans because the members never create a sound problem statement. Sooner or later, the coalition loses steam because the members and partners never clearly articulated and agreed upon the problem(s) they were trying to reduce.

Developing a clear problem statement for your coalition will help focus the lens of your coalition’s camera. It also will help your coalition build capacity and gain community support to sustain your efforts by clarifying how your coalition intends to make a difference.

A good problem statement will meet each of the following criteria:

A) Identify one issue or problem at a time.

B) Avoid blame (e.g., the problem is “young people in our neighborhood do not have enough positive activities” instead of “the kids here have nothing to do and are troublemakers”).

C) Avoid naming specific solutions (e.g., the problem is not “we don’t have a youth center” – the problem may be “young people in our neighborhood are
getting into trouble during after-school hours” for which a youth center may be one element of an overall solution).

D) Define the problem by the behaviors and conditions that affect it. Good problem statements frame the issue as either not enough good conditions/behaviors or too many bad conditions/behaviors (e.g., “too many young adults are using methamphetamine drugs”).

E) Be specific enough to be measurable.

F) Reflect community concerns as heard during the assessment process.\textsuperscript{14}

Include your coalition’s overall problem statement(s) in your strategic plan (Page 16 of the template).

Create a Preliminary Logic Model

Before moving on to the next section on strategy selection, to help you visualize how the problem (priority issue), risk factors and underlying conditions (But Why?), and contributing local factors (But Why Here?) are all related, you will first create a logic model that connects all these pieces. Use the logic-model template in the strategic plan template, and please refer to the CADCA workbook provided during the training on December 14 and 15, 2010. Creating your logic model step by step can be beneficial to the overall success of your SPF implementation. Stating the problem is the first step. Second, you will need to identify and list the risk factors. Third, you will need to identify and list the contributing local factors, which are the specific reasons that the problem exists in your county. The final step in creating a logic model is identifying and listing strategies that can be implemented to change the problem. A data-based logic model does not begin with the identification of strategies. Strategies must be based on the stated problem and identified risk factors and contributing local factors.

Section 2: Strategy Selection, Logic Model Creation, Identifying Goals and Objectives, and Ensuring Fit

If you’ve conducted your needs assessment well, you should have a good understanding of the important contributing local factors that are potentially causing the high rates of underage drinking and/or DUI crashes in your county. Now that you’ve answered the question of why this is happening, you now have to struggle with the question of what to do about it. You next have to immerse yourself in learning about the strategies that currently exist that may be useful to your community. It’s still collecting data, or at least knowledge. It involves doing the research, reading as much as you can, talking to knowledgeable people in the field, and thinking about how everything you’re learning fits with what you already know. So put on your critical thinking caps.
and plan for things to get a bit messy as you dig deep, learn lots, talk about it with others, and apply it to your community.\textsuperscript{15}

Reviewing Strategies

Reviewing strategies is a very important stage in the SPF. You need to know what your options are to make the best decisions. You’ll want to review a wide array of environmental strategies that are associated with your priority issue.\textsuperscript{16} Attending \textit{The Showcase on Evidence-Based Environmental Strategies} offered by the Workgroup on Evidence-Based (WEB) on January 26, 2011, was a good start to this process. Please reference the PowerPoint slides and other materials that were distributed during that training, and feel free to contact your capacity coach with specific questions about the strategies discussed.

Other key resources for CAST coalitions are the “CAST Environmental Strategy Options: DUI Crashes” and “CAST Environmental Strategy Options: Underage Drinking” documents in \textbf{Appendices B and C} of this guide. These documents were created by the CAST staff and provide a menu of environmental strategies from which CAST coalitions can choose.

If needed, additional information on evidence-based strategies can be found at the web sites of different federal agencies, such as the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); Department of Education; and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. While we encourage you to review these web sites, please also remember that the expectation is that the primary strategies your coalition chooses for implementation will be environmental rather than traditional evidence-based programs such as youth substance abuse prevention curricula.

Specific documents you can reference for further information on environmental strategies include:

- \textit{The Coalition Impact: Environmental Prevention Strategies} by Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America

\textsuperscript{15} Michigan Guide

\textsuperscript{16} Michigan Guide
You will need to learn about the strengths and weaknesses of the different strategies, and you will need to learn what's involved in actually implementing the strategies. You should also seek out other experts in the field who can help you determine what’s involved in implementing the strategies. This may include law enforcement at the state or local level, advertising and media experts, local newspaper reporters, lawyers, judges, prevention specialists, and healthcare providers.

Selecting Strategies

Once you have carefully reviewed strategies that will target your contributing local factors and you feel knowledgeable about what would be involved in implementing the strategies, you then have to make some decisions about what you’re actually going to do. Obviously, you can’t do everything (or most likely you can’t). There just isn't enough time, money, and people to do everything that might be desired and ideal. So it becomes necessary to weed out those strategies that are less likely to work at this time. Questions to consider when choosing your strategies include:

- **Conceptual fit:** Does the candidate strategy target the contributing local factors that drive or contribute to changes in the problem or outcomes?

- **Practical fit with the county’s needs, resources, and readiness to act:** Is the candidate strategy appropriate for the particular population, cultural context, and set of local circumstances?

- **Evidence of effectiveness:** Is there sufficient evidence or support for documented effectiveness to select the strategy and include it in the strategic plan (i.e., the strategy is included in the South Carolina Toolkit for Evidence-Based Prevention Programs and Strategies and/or received adequate scores on a national registry such as NREPP)?

If you answer “no” to any of these questions, you should consider a different strategy.

The selection of strategies should be done in collaboration with your coalition and other stakeholders who are knowledgeable and/or willing to be involved in implementing them. If you want to implement a media strategy, then talk to media consultants or

- **South Carolina Toolkit for Evidence-Based Prevention Programs and Strategies** (particularly Sections III and IV) from DAODAS, www.daodas.state.sc.us/toolkit.asp


- **Preventing Underage Drinking: Using Getting to Outcomes™ With the SAMHSA Strategic Prevention Framework to Achieve Results** by Imm, et. al., www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR403.html
Tip: The construction and refinement of your logic model is central to the effective functioning of your coalition. That means you need to critique your work by checking its “line logic” – ensuring that each step enables the next step in a clear and logical sequence; and doing a “completeness” check – making certain that there are no gaps in your logic model and that you have surfaced all root causes (CADCA Planning Primer).

members of the media industry (e.g., your local newspaper) who do it for a living to find out what's involved and the approximate cost. If you want to establish high-visibility enforcement, talk to officers about what this would look like. As you learn about the strategies and what's involved, you'll find that some are quite involved and others perhaps less so. But always keep in mind that your end goal is to select the best mix of approaches to have a positive influence on your priority issue in your community. It is important to create a plan that looks good on paper and is possible for your community to implement quickly and effectively.\(^\text{17}\)

Creation of the Logic Model

Congratulations! Now that you have selected the strategies you will implement, you can return to the preliminary logic model that you started earlier and complete the column under “strategies.” Remember, your logic model should reflect your data and your community, so it may not fit exactly into the Logic Model Worksheet (see Page 16 of the template)\(^\text{18}\).

Remember, developing a logic model is an ongoing process. It should evolve as the conditions in your community change. Be flexible and continue to refine your logic model as your implementation progresses.\(^\text{19}\)

Goals and Objectives

Good plans have goals and objectives. Correctly setting goals and objectives enables the necessary steps to be taken and the necessary support to be provided in order to achieve them. It's important to understand distinctions between goals and objectives.

The main goal for counties’ CAST projects should be reducing the priority issue(s) of underage drinking and/or DUI crashes. (Coalitions may also have other goals, unrelated to CAST, based on coalition members’ interests.) In addition, CAST counties may have goals related to capacity building, such as growing the coalition membership

---

17 Michigan Guide
18 Michigan Guide
19 CADCA Planning Primer
or enhancing other aspects of substance abuse prevention capacity within their counties. In this way, a goal is your overall aim or aspiration.

Objectives are the specific, measurable results your county plans to accomplish, and serve as the basis for evaluating your CAST project. That is, objectives provide further specific (and measurable) information related to your goal. We look at two overall types of objectives: outcome objectives and process objectives. **Outcome objectives** are developed after exploring the problems in the community and looking at local data. A good outcome objective includes a date by which the change will be accomplished and usually describes how much change you hope to see – whether that indicator will increase or decrease and who will be affected.

CADCA identifies two types of outcome objectives:

- **Long-Term Outcome Objectives** are statements of what the coalition specifically hopes to accomplish regarding each goal. For example, if the goal is to reduce DUI crashes, the long-term outcome objective would state the amount of decrease expected in DUI crashes, by when and in which “hot spots” or target populations, if applicable. We do not traditionally write long-term outcome objectives in South Carolina’s prevention system, but they are appropriate for a project like CAST. These long-term outcome objectives will be a key part of your strategic plan but will not be entered into KIT as they stretch across the entire project and are not measured exclusively in any one year.

- **Intermediate Outcome Objectives**, traditionally called simply “outcome objectives” in South Carolina’s prevention system, should describe the change coalitions hope to see in targeted contributing local factors. For example, if the specific contributing local factor being targeted is adults providing alcohol to youth, the intermediate outcome objective should state the amount of decrease expected in adults providing alcohol to youth, by when and in which “hot spots” or target populations, if applicable.

**Process objectives**, which CADCA materials call “short-term outcomes,” are the steps or activities involved in implementing a particular strategy. Process objectives should note who the target population is, what you are hoping to do, where you plan to implement the activities, when you want to complete the activities, how much you are hoping to do, and how many you are hoping to reach. For example, if a coalition will be conducting compliance checks, the short-term outcome/process objective should note how many will be conducted, where they will be conducted, and when they will be completed.

The most well-known method for setting objectives is the S.M.A.R.T. way. **S.M.A.R.T** is an acronym that describes the key characteristics of meaningful objectives: Specific (concrete, detailed, well defined); Measureable (numbers, quantity, comparison); Achievable (feasible, actionable); Realistic (considering resources); and Time-bound (a defined time line). Let’s look at these characteristics in more detail.
S.M.A.R.T. objectives are the stepping stones toward the achievement of our goals:

**Specific**
Specific means that the objective is concrete, detailed, focused, and well defined. That is, it is helpful for objectives to be straightforward and precise.

**Measurable**
If the objective is measurable, it means that the measurement source is identified and that we are able to track the results of our actions as we progress toward achieving the objective. Importantly, measurement helps us to know when we have achieved our objective.

**Achievable**
Objectives need to be achievable. If the objective is too far in the future, you may find it difficult to keep motivated and to strive toward its attainment. While being obtainable, objectives still need to stretch you, but not so far that you become frustrated and lose motivation.

**Realistic**
Realistic does not mean easy. Realistic means that you have the resources to get it done. The achievement of an objective requires resources, such as skills, money, and equipment.

**Time-bound**
Time-bound means setting deadlines for the achievement of the objective. Deadlines help foster the motivation and urgency required to execute the tasks. Having a timeline also sets a designated point in time at which you will reflect on the progress you’ve made in achieving your objective, allowing you, perhaps, to refine it or develop new or additional objectives.\(^\text{20}\)

**Ensuring Fit**

Now that you have the logic model complete, you can check the fit of each strategy selected. You need to be sure the strategies you have selected are the ones most likely to produce the desired outcomes. (*Complete the “CAST Logic Model to Test Strategy ‘Fit’” Table for each strategy in your logic model [see Page 17 of the template]. See an example in **Appendix D** of this document.*)

\(^{20}\) www.thepracticeofleadership.net/2006/03/11/setting-smart-objectives/
Section 3: Capacity to Implement, Action Planning, and Budgeting

Capacity to Implement

At this point, you should have a pretty good idea of what’s required to implement the strategies you’ve selected. This next exercise will help you think even more about, and identify, the resources that are necessary and available to you. Be as precise as possible. For example, do you know someone with media experience who is willing to help you? Do you have a relationship with a local news reporter? Do you have a good working relationship with the local police department or know a local judge or district attorney?

You may need to build some capacity to implement your strategies well. It may require developing some relationships, getting some training, or hiring some people. At this stage, you want to consider all the steps that are involved in implementing a strategy and then think about what’s needed to implement those steps. With whom do you need to meet to secure their cooperation? Who will do each task? Who will need training for a particular task? What can you do and what needs to be outsourced to experts? Do not expect that one person can do it all. Think about building capacity for both the short term and the long term. Build relationships that will last and that will allow you to continue to do this prevention work even after the grant is over (sustainability).

Outline your training and technical assistance needs related to the implementation of strategies in the strategic action plan (Page 18 of the template). The Capacity Worksheet in Appendix E of this document may be useful as you work to identify training and technical assistance needs related to implementation of strategies.

Develop an Action Plan

Once you know what evidence-based strategies and capacity-building activities you need to address your priority issues and contributing local factors, you should create a plan to implement your strategies and activities.

Create an action plan for each strategy intended for implementation by outlining the action steps needed, the person(s) responsible for each action step, the resources needed to accomplish each action step (e.g., personnel, equipment), estimated costs, and deadlines. You should also outline “tracking measures,” or how you plan to document progress on each action step.

---

21 Michigan Document
Complete an action plan for each strategy. (See Page 17 of the strategic action plan template). The Capacity Worksheet found in Appendix B of this document may be useful as you work to identify resources needed to implement each strategy and calculate their related costs.

Create a Budget Plan

In this step, the question to address is, "Now that you know what you plan to do, who will do it, when, and how much will it cost?" When making a budget plan, ensure that the coalition’s budget reflects its priorities (i.e., fund strategies that target your prioritized contributing local factors). Be sure to focus your efforts, and pick a few strategies the coalition has the capacity to implement well rather than many strategies that will scatter its energies. You can also select strategies for which you can build capacity to implement within the timeframe of CAST. Remember to look to outside resources, in-kind services, and volunteers (when possible) to maximize your reach.

Other standard financial information to know includes:

- Administrative costs will be reimbursed at up to 5% of the total of Personnel Services charged to DAODAS.
- Unless authorized in writing by DAODAS, the costs of the following items or activities shall be unallowable as direct or indirect costs: rent and acquisition, by purchase or lease, of any interest in real property; construction, rearrangement, or alteration of facilities, to include payments of such loans (except for minor remodeling needed to accomplish the purposes of this part); equipment purchases (equipment is defined as an article of tangible property that has a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of five thousand dollars [$5,000] or more); purchases of weapons and/or related supplies (guns, ammunition, stun guns / tasers, pepper spray, etc.), radar equipment, vehicles, boats, aircraft, and their maintenance and insurance; meals that are not an integral part of the approved activities; “buy money” used in narcotics enforcement; association fees; administrative cost in excess of 5% of personnel costs (total of salaries and fringe of DAODAS share); and any costs incurred prior to or after the grant period. Additional information about allowable and non-allowable costs related to strategies for CAST will be provided to sites at least 30 days before the final draft of the strategic action plan is due on June 17, 2011.
- The contract manager must approve budget adjustments that will cause a line item to increase or decrease by more than 15%. A revised budget with an explanation of the revision must be submitted to DAODAS for approval.

Complete a budget of how CAST funds will be utilized (see Page 18 of the strategic action plan template).

---

22 Michigan Guide
23 Michigan Guide
Conclusion

Congratulations! Working through the assessment and planning process is a huge undertaking and hopefully one that you have found helpful in moving your community forward in its efforts to tackle substance abuse problems. The idea is not that you will have a perfect assessment and strategic action plan at the end of this process. Both should be considered living documents, and part of your agreement with your partners might include setting timelines for revisiting and revising the assessment and plan on a regular basis. But, at this point, once you receive approval from DAODAS, you should be ready to implement some effective strategies and see an impact on the problem in your county. Your efforts will be appreciated by the communities, as they will enjoy a better quality of life as a result of your work.²⁴

As a next step, we suggest you create a community-friendly version of the coalition’s strategic action plan that includes: the logic model, overview of needs, problem statement, goals and objectives, budget, and vision and mission statements and values. A shorter plan (five to six pages) will more likely be read and used by community members; the longer, more comprehensive plan can be used by CAST staff and coalition members.

Next stop...Implementation!

²⁴ Michigan Document
APPENDIX A
CHECKLIST FOR CAST STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

Due by March 25, 2011
___ Signature Page
___ Coalition Vision and Mission Statements and Coalition Values (dates adopted and copy of meeting minutes)
___ Lists of current CAST coalition members and dates they joined the coalition, needs assessment sub-committee members, and planning sub-committee members
___ Needs Assessment, to include:
   • The “Risk and Contributing Local Factors With Supporting Data” table
   • The “Priority Contributing Local Factors” Table
   • The “Prioritization of Contributing Local Factors” score sheets
___ Protective Factors and Existing Resources in the county
___ Coalition’s Problem Statement(s)
___ Coalition’s Logic Model and Description of Strategies
___ List of Coalition’s Goals and Objectives
___ “Ensuring Fit” section, to include:
   • “CAST Logic Model to Test Strategy ‘FIT’” tables (one table for each strategy)

Due by June 17, 2011
___ CAST FY2012 Underage Drinking / DUI Crashes Action Plan (one for each strategy to be implemented in FY2012)
___ “Capacity to Implement”
___ CAST county budget with narrative
APPENDIX B
CAST ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY OPTIONS: DUI CRASHES

The table below is intended as a menu of possible environmental strategies to be implemented through CAST. No particular strategy is encouraged; the menu is intended to provide a range of options from which your coalition will select what is right for your county.

Strategies in **bold** have some level of evidence base, although the research is stronger for some than for others, which should be considered. Those not in bold are not evidence-based, which may mean that the research base has not been developed or it may mean that the strategy is not suitable for evaluation in that manner. It is acceptable to select non-evidence-based strategies, although the majority of your strategic plan should be built around evidence-based strategies.

* Currently unclear as to how much power local communities have to enact change
** Can currently only be affected at the state level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Category</th>
<th>Possible Environmental Strategies</th>
<th>Possible Risk Factors/ Underlying Conditions Affected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Community media advocacy           | * Establish community support for strategies (e.g., developing advocacy groups, coalition mobilization)  
|                                    | **Engage the media in promoting strategies**                                                        | All: This approach is an essential step in achieving full implementation and outcomes of all of the strategies below. |
| Improved screening and referral systems | * Train appropriate systems (i.e., medical providers, treatment providers) to improve steps to identify signs of high-risk alcohol behaviors | **Lack of identification of early problem behaviors**                                        |
| Adjudication systems enhancement   | * Establish a court monitoring program  
|                                    | **Discourage inappropriate use of plea bargaining**  
|                                    | **Ensure follow-through on penalties, including revoking licenses, assigning ignition interlocks, and establishing DUI courts**  
|                                    | **Provide adequate support for DUI prosecution**  
<p>|                                    | <strong>Achieve clarity between law enforcement and judicial officials on the required elements of a properly made case</strong> | <strong>Insufficient enforcement of laws</strong>                                                        |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Category</th>
<th>Possible Environmental Strategies</th>
<th>Possible Risk Factors/Underlying Conditions Affected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High-visibility best practice enforcement operations</td>
<td>• Conduct public safety checkpoints&lt;br&gt;• Enforce alcohol restrictions at community events / public areas&lt;br&gt;• Enforce laws prohibiting sales to an intoxicated person&lt;br&gt;• Develop community support for enforcement&lt;br&gt;• Identify and enforce unlicensed establishments&lt;br&gt;• Enforce “happy hour” laws</td>
<td>• Insufficient enforcement of laws&lt;br&gt;• Social norms accepting and/or encouraging use&lt;br&gt;• Over-service to intoxicated patrons&lt;br&gt;• Easy social access&lt;br&gt;• Low or discount pricing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant education</td>
<td>• Offer Responsible Beverage Service training&lt;br&gt;• Assist retailers in developing improved policies/procedures (Reference Alcohol Retailer’s Guide: A Self-Assessment for Reducing Underage Drinking for a listing of possible areas to address.)</td>
<td>• Over-service to intoxicated patrons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social event monitoring and enforcement</td>
<td>• Conduct sobriety checkpoints&lt;br&gt;• Enforce alcohol restrictions at community events / public areas&lt;br&gt;• Encourage local governments and/or organizations and community groups to develop appropriate alcohol-safety guidelines for events</td>
<td>• Social norms accepting and/or encouraging use&lt;br&gt;• Easy social access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictions on alcohol price/promotion</td>
<td>• Increase unit price of alcohol products, particularly for products inappropriately taxed **&lt;br&gt;• Prohibit alcohol sponsorship of public events&lt;br&gt;• Establish controls on alcohol advertising (especially in public areas) and advertising of price specials&lt;br&gt;• Enforce “happy hour” laws</td>
<td>• Low or discount pricing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Category</td>
<td>Possible Environmental Strategies</td>
<td>Possible Risk Factors/Underlying Conditions Affected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community mobilization for policy change</td>
<td>• Enact “dram shop” liability laws *&lt;br&gt;• Restrict alcohol-outlet density&lt;br&gt;• Improve/clarify “happy hour” laws and/or develop more feasible requirements for enforcement **&lt;br&gt;• Increase local control on alcohol retail conditions, such as days of sale, location, and product availability *&lt;br&gt;• Establish adequate regulations over products with high alcohol content or that include energy-enhancing ingredients **&lt;br&gt;• Strengthen Administrative License Revocation provisions for DUI offenders **</td>
<td>• Insufficient laws and policies&lt;br&gt;• Easy retail access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase transportation options</td>
<td>• Improve access to public or paid transportation options (e.g., taxis, shuttles)</td>
<td>• Limited transportation options</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C
CAST ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY OPTIONS: UNDERAGE DRINKING

The table below is intended as a menu of possible environmental strategies to be implemented through CAST. No particular strategy is encouraged; the menu is intended to provide a range of options from which your coalition will select what is right for your county.

Strategies in **bold** have some level of evidence base, although the research is stronger for some than for others, which should be considered. Those not in bold are not evidence-based, which may mean that the research base has not been developed or it may mean that the strategy is not suitable for evaluation in that manner. It is acceptable to select non-evidence-based strategies, although the majority of your strategic plan should be built around evidence-based strategies.

* Currently unclear as to how much power local communities have to enact change
** Can currently only be affected at the state level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Strategy</th>
<th>Possible Approaches</th>
<th>Possible Contributing Factors / Underlying Conditions Affected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Community media advocacy | • **Establish community support for strategies** (e.g., developing advocacy groups, coalition mobilization)  
 • **Engage the media in promoting strategies** | All: This approach is an essential step in achieving full implementation and outcomes of all of the strategies below. |
| Social event monitoring and enforcement | • **Enforce alcohol restrictions at community events / public areas**  
 • **Conduct party patrols / controlled party dispersals**  
 • Identify and enforce unlicensed establishments  
 • Educate parents about the risks of providing alcohol to underage youth through efforts such as “Parents Who Host, Lose the Most” | • Social norms accepting and/or encouraging use  
 • Insufficient enforcement of laws  
 • Easy social access |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Strategy</th>
<th>Possible Approaches</th>
<th>Possible Contributing Factors / Underlying Conditions Affected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Adjudication systems enhancement | • Establish a court monitoring program  
• Address inappropriate plea bargaining  
• Ensure specified penalties / diversion programs are imposed and carried out (e.g., underage drinking courts)  
• Achieve clarity between law enforcement and judicial officials on the required elements of a properly made case | • Insufficient enforcement of laws |
| High-visibility best-practice enforcement operations | • Conduct party patrols / controlled party dispersals  
• Conduct compliance checks (including online/direct-delivery sales, if appropriate)  
• Conduct “shoulder tap” operations  
• Conduct fake ID checks  
• Conduct public safety checkpoints  
• Enforce alcohol restrictions at community events / public areas  
• Develop community support for enforcement  
• Identify and enforce unlicensed establishments | • Social norms accepting and/or encouraging use  
• Insufficient enforcement of laws  
• Easy social access  
• Easy retail access  
• Inappropriate promotion of use |
| Merchant education | • Offer Responsible Beverage Service training  
• Prohibit underage youth from entering bars *  
• Assist retailers in developing improved policies/procedures (Reference *Alcohol Retailer’s Guide: A Self-Assessment for Reducing Underage Drinking* for a listing of possible areas to address.) | • Easy retail access |
| Alcohol advertising restrictions | • Prohibit alcohol sponsorship of public events  
• Establish controls on alcohol advertising (especially in public areas) and advertising of price specials  
• Decrease availability of youth-friendly products * | • Inappropriate promotion of use |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Strategy</th>
<th>Possible Approaches</th>
<th>Possible Contributing Factors / Underlying Conditions Affected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Increase product price  | • Increase unit price of alcohol products, particularly for products inappropriately taxed **  
   • Enforce “happy hour” laws | • Low or discount pricing |
| Community mobilization for policy change | • Enact social host ordinances/laws  
   • Enact “dram shop” liability laws *  
   • Enhance graduated driver’s license laws **  
   • Restrict alcohol outlet density  
   • Prohibit underage youth from entering bars *  
   • Increase restrictions on who can serve/sell alcohol *  
   • Improve/clarify “happy hour” laws and/or develop more feasible requirements for enforcement *  
   • Increase local control on alcohol retail conditions, such as days of sale, location, and product availability *  
   • Establish adequate regulations over products with high alcohol content or that include energy-enhancing ingredients ** | • Insufficient laws and policies  
   • Easy retail access  
   • Easy social access |
| Model school policies with enforcement | • Develop policies that incorporate elements of a model policy, including appropriate penalties and covering all school property and activities(i.e., class trips, athletic areas)  
   • Ensure proper follow-through and enforcement of policies | • Insufficient enforcement of school policies |
| Improved screening and referral systems | • Train appropriate systems (i.e., school staff, medical providers) to improve steps to identify signs of underage drinking | • Lack of identification of early problem behaviors |
## APPENDIX D
### SAMPLE CAST LOGIC MODEL TO TEST STRATEGY “FIT”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOALS</th>
<th>LONG-TERM OUTCOME OBJECTIVE</th>
<th>RISK FACTORS and CONTRIBUTING LOCAL FACTORS</th>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>“IF-THEN” STATEMENTS</th>
<th>SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES / PROCESS OBJECTIVES</th>
<th>INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME OBJECTIVES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the consumption/consequence (problem) to be changed?</td>
<td>What is the specific, measurable, long-term outcome objective (approximately 5-10 years)</td>
<td>What risk factors / underlying conditions and specific contributing local factors are driving the problem?</td>
<td>What strategy or program do you propose to implement (e.g., social host laws)?</td>
<td>Use the If-then approach to test the logic of your strategy.</td>
<td>What steps or activities are involved in implementing this strategy? (How much and how many?)</td>
<td>What is the specific, measurable, intermediate outcome objective? <strong>Note hot spots or target populations, if applicable.</strong> (What is the desired change in the contributing local factor?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOALS</td>
<td>LONG-TERM OUTCOME OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>RISK FACTORS and CONTRIBUTING LOCAL FACTORS</td>
<td>STRATEGY</td>
<td>&quot;IF-THEN&quot; STATEMENTS</td>
<td>SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES / PROCESS OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME OBJECTIVES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce underage drinking</td>
<td>By 2014, decrease by X% underage drinking in X county.</td>
<td>Assessment shows youth are frequently buying alcohol from stores in town, and youth focus group participants consider it very easy to get alcohol through retail sources, since most know one or more stores that they believe will not ask for ID. Risk factor/underlying condition = retail access. Contributing Local Factors = stores that do not ask youth for ID. Youth perceive some stores do not card.</td>
<td>Encourage store owners and managers to use the &quot;Card ME&quot; Responsible Retailing System (RRS), and work with local law enforcement (and DPS Liquor Licensing) to supplement statewide compliance checks with additional local compliance-check training.</td>
<td>If more stores in town receive the RRS training and compliance checks are performed, then clerks will be more aggressive about carding people who look under age 27 and refusing sales to those without ID, so youth will believe they will be asked for ID.</td>
<td>Achieve 50% store participation in the “Card ME” program by 2012 in X county</td>
<td>25% decrease in alcohol sales to minors (as indicated by reduced compliance-check failures and a reduction in underage drinking incidents investigated by police where retail sources are identified). 30% decrease in perceived ease of access to alcohol (SC CTC Survey)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX E
### SAMPLE CAPACITY WORKSHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Steps Involved</th>
<th>Who Should Be Involved / Responsible?</th>
<th>What Skills Do They Have?</th>
<th>What Skills Do They Need?</th>
<th>How Much Might It Cost?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Example: Sobriety checkpoints** | • Support and involvement of law enforcement  
• Planning of timing and identifying locations of checkpoints based on data  
• Involvement of local media  
• Support of judicial system to prosecute those apprehended | • Project coordinator (Name)  
• Chief of Police (Name)  
• News reporter(s) (Names)  
• Judges (Names) | • Organizational and coordination skills  
• Skills to recognize and apprehend drunk drivers  
• Skills writing news articles | • Training needed for project coordinator and local law enforcement on conducting sobriety checkpoints, specifically low-cost versions  
• Training for project coordinator on writing press releases | • Training per officer/person: $500  
• Training for project coordinator or staff person on writing effective press releases: $120  
• Paying for 12 checkpoints over 2 years: $12,000 |
| **Example: Compliance checks of local alcohol retailers** | • Identify all alcohol establishments in target area  
• Determine strategy to visit 10 per month  
• Involve the local media to publish names of those that comply  
• Write letters to establishments providing feedback on the compliance of the establishment | • Project coordinator (name) and staff  
• Coalition volunteers | • Know the area and locations of establishments | • Training on conducting compliance checks | |

Adapted from North Carolina SPF SIG Capacity Worksheet, www.ncspfsig.org/Project_Docs/Capacity%20Worksheet.pdf