

Why get involved with reducing substance abuse?

Of the estimated 14.8 million substance abusers in the United States, 77 percent or 9.4 million are employed. There is a good chance that businesses in your community employ a number of these workers.

The average substance abusing employee operates at 67 percent of his or her potential, and is more likely to accrue absences of eight days or more, arrive late for work and/or leave early, file workers' compensation and costly medical claims and change jobs frequently. Costs for these behaviors add up quickly for any business, especially for small business.

As the voice of business in the community, the Chamber of Commerce takes a leadership role in assisting member firms to promote and expand their business base. Reducing the crippling costs of substance abuse in the workplace substantially increases productivity and viability as well as image for businesses large and small.

What's in it for the Chamber of Commerce?

Partnering with a local coalition whose aim is to prevent or reduce substance abuse benefits the local Chamber of Commerce and the business community through:

Increased visibility—local coalitions communicate regularly with their members and the community at large. They recognize and thank their partners publicly and often.

Strengthened communications—coalitions can assist the Chamber of Commerce to build awareness among its members of the toll substance abuse takes on their business, assist members in crafting targeted prevention messages to their workforce.

Expanded Services—many coalitions offer workforce education on substance abuse. Combined resources could result in comprehensive drug-free workplace training for local businesses and an increased number of drug-free workplaces in the community.

Increased Resources—local coalitions can access a wealth of informational material on a variety of substance abuse related topics for distribution to local members and their employees, as well as wellness speakers for employee awareness and education activities.

A Stronger and Well-Informed Workforce—a workforce that is equipped with the information it takes to balance health, work and home is more productive and proactive, resulting in greater safety, less absenteeism and better decision-making.

Overall, reducing substance abuse makes a community healthier, safer and more viable for local business. As a local business leader and partner in this effort, the Chamber of Commerce has an opportunity to advocate for safe, healthy work environments, promote business viability and cultivate a robust workforce for the future. Your local members will value your leadership and support in addressing these important issues.