

Why get involved with reducing substance abuse?

Community-based substance abuse prevention and the United Way movement share a similar mission and process. The United Way's mission is to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of communities. This is achieved through the spirit of collaboration, by convening diverse people and resources to address the most urgent issues faced by the community.

Substance abuse is one of those issues and it underlies other serious community problems, such as homelessness, poverty, unemployment, crime, teen pregnancy, domestic violence and juvenile delinquency. Local substance abuse prevention coalitions also convene a diverse cross-section of stakeholders and resources in the community to think strategically through this important issue and plan effective strategies.

What's in it for the United Way?

Effective allocation of limited resources—both United Way and local community substance abuse prevention coalitions use a data-informed planning process that is born out of a comprehensive community assessment of both community-level data and other available resources. Together, we can target the best use of new resources as they are available to the community.

Expand volunteer base—both United Way and community coalitions rely heavily on volunteers who are civic-minded. As partners, we can expand the quality and quantity of the community volunteer pool through appropriate training and combined recruitment efforts.

Enhance community support for priority issues—together we can focus attention on key community needs and build support for potential solutions.

Develop external funding sources—as additional community needs are identified through the assessment process, we can develop new funding streams to augment local resources that will more comprehensively address community-wide problems and improve the quality of community life.

Affect systems change—through collaborative thinking and planning, we can streamline service delivery, promote creative problem solving and foster innovation to more proactively serve our community.

United Way is in a unique position to utilize its notoriety, expertise and collaborative mission to partner with local coalitions to create a safer, healthier community. We encourage you take advantage of this opportunity.