

SAFE Coalition Assessment

Spring 2017



The purpose of the coalition assessment analysis is to provide feedback to coalition members and leaders about areas of improvement, expansion and possible confusion. This report covers multiple facets of the coalition including: infrastructure, dynamics, community and membership engagement, coalition strategies and coalition resources. Twenty responses were collected, although some respondents did not complete all questions. Despite the incomplete questions, all responses were considered in this analysis. Only 75% answered whether they were staff or volunteers. Of those who answered, 73.3% reported as volunteers.

Key findings of this report cover multiple areas that are related to the efficacy of the coalition, these include:

- There was agreement in the majority of survey questions.
- There was disagreement over whether the coalition shares leadership.
- There is confusion over whether there is a clear sense of roles and responsibilities.
- There is disagreement over whether tasking is distributed evenly.
- Members also feel community organizations are missing from the coalition.
- There is some concern that the coalition does not have adequate funding
- Confusion exists around how much funding the coalition has.
- Less confusion over staffing and environmental strategies.
- Increase of people saying members are held accountable.
- Decrease in number of people who think the coalition shares leadership.
- Decrease in number of people who say tasking is distributed evenly.

THE COALITION

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OUR VISION

The Van Buren County SAFE Coalition seeks to stimulate community involvement to promote responsible behaviors, among youth and adults leading to SAFE and healthy communities.

COALITION EFFORTS

Van Buren County Safe Coalition is actively working to reduce substance use in Van Buren County, IA. The Coalition has worked diligently to address issues related to underage drinking, youth tobacco use, youth marijuana use and general alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) use.

Recommendations from Survey Results & Year-long Coalition Observation

The survey provides feedback from members regarding their views and knowledge of coalition matters. The results help identify areas for improvement, continuance or expansions. Recommendations have been developed from the survey results and year-long coalition observation.

- Continue to implement environmental strategies and engage members in the process.
- Conduct an orientation process for new and existing members that provides information about the operations of the coalition, funding streams, logic models and other information necessary for coalition members to take an active and informed role in all coalition meetings and activities.
- Regularly provide an overview of the coalition's work. The Dash Board feature in Reach Software can be used to create a quick picture to include at coalition meetings to demonstrate progress during a specific time period.
- Share coalition successes regularly with coalition members and the community at-large.
- Some members do not feel leadership is rotated or shared within the coalition. Developing a succession plan and specific process for educating coalition members about leadership roles may address this issue. Leadership opportunities may also be available for specific projects and not defined to traditional hierarchy.
- Education should be done to provide additional information on the role of a coalition member versus the role of coalition staff. The work of the coalition should be member led with coalition staff facilitating and supporting members as they take action. Coalition committees and meetings should be run by coalition members and coalition members should be speaking on behalf of the coalition. Reinforce the formal roles and responsibilities of coalition members and staff. This could include job descriptions for members and staff.
- Efforts should be made to ensure that the work of the coalition is distributed equally and members feel engaged in the work and that they are not solely responsible for its implementation.
- Regular professional development opportunities for coalition members either during coalition meetings or trainings outside the community will increase the coalition's capacity for sustainability. Leadership training and development is a key component of this work.



Conclusion

There is agreement in most areas of the survey. Confusion and disagreement exists around coalition responsibilities, membership, and resources. In order to address areas of confusion it is suggested to:

- Implement a coalition orientation process.
- Conduct regular re-orientation to current coalition members.
- Implement an outreach plan to diversify coalition membership with targeted recruitment to missing sectors and key leaders.
- Roles and responsibilities of coalition members and staff should be developed to address issues in coalition dynamics including implementation and leadership.
- It is necessary to address the professional development of coalition members, not just the development of staff particularly in the areas of leadership and environmental strategies.