

Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol

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Program developers or their agents provided the Model Program information below.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol (CMCA) is a community-organizing program designed to reduce adolescents' (13 to 20 years of age) access to alcohol by changing community policies and practices. It seeks both to effectively limit the access to alcohol of people under legal drinking age and to communicate a clear message to the community that underage drinking is inappropriate and unacceptable. It employs a range of social-organizing techniques to address legal, institutional, social, and health issues in order to reduce youth alcohol use by eliminating illegal alcohol sales to youth by retailers and by obstructing the provision of alcohol to youth by adults. It involves community members in seeking and achieving changes in local public policies and the practices of community institutions that can affect youths' access to alcohol.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The CMCA intervention was based on established research that showed the importance of the social and policy environment in facilitating or impeding drinking among youth. CMCA community organizing methods drew on a range of traditions in organizing efforts to deal with the social and health consequences of alcohol consumption.

RECOGNITION

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Model Program

INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE CLASSIFICATION (IOM)

UNIVERSAL

Developed for a universal audience.



INTERVENTION TYPE

ENVIRONMENTAL

CONTENT FOCUS

ALCOHOL, PARENT COMPONENT

This program specifically targets alcohol.

The Model Program involves parents:

Parents can be involved in the community-organizing process.

INTERVENTIONS BY DOMAIN

COMMUNITY, SOCIETY

COMMUNITY

- Education to alter perceptions of societal norms and expectations
- Multiagency activities and collaboration

SOCIETY

- Enforcement of alcohol sales laws
 - Media education to counter alcohol advertising
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KEY PROGRAM APPROACHES

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, MEDIA EDUCATION, SKILL DEVELOPMENT, OTHER:
COMPLIANCE CHECKS

This program provides a broad variety of community-organizing and learning activities that can be implemented by different community institutions. Information is available on institutional strategies for civic groups, colleges, faith organizations, hotels and motels, parents, police, schools, and work sites.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Civic groups can adopt policies to prevent underage drinking at organization-sponsored events and initiate and participate in community-wide efforts to prevent underage alcohol use.

Faith organizations can provide a link between prevention organizations, youth, parents, and the community and can offer education, develop internal policies to prevent teens from accessing alcohol at their events, and participate in efforts to keep alcohol away from youth.

Schools can create and enforce policies restricting alcohol use and access, both on school property and in the surrounding community.

MEDIA EDUCATION

Advertising outlets can be influenced to remove alcohol advertising from public places or wherever youth are exposed to these messages. Communities can restrict alcohol companies' sponsorship of community events.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Schools can teach alcohol refusal skills. Liquor licensing agencies can offer and promote mandatory or voluntary programs that train managers, owners, servers, and sellers at alcohol outlets on how to avoid selling to underage youth and intoxicated patrons.

OTHER

Law enforcement can mandate compliance checks or encourage voluntary compliance checks by law enforcement or licensing authorities. Policies can encourage and support the use of administrative penalties for failure to comply with State or local laws relating to the sale of alcohol to minors.

HOW IT WORKS

CMCA involves motivating community members to seek and achieve changes in local public policies and in the practices of community institutions that can affect youths' access to alcohol. CMCA offers resource materials to help communities organize these efforts, for example:

- **Civic Groups** can adopt policies to prevent underage drinking at organization-sponsored events and initiate and participate in community-wide efforts to prevent underage alcohol use.
- **Faith Organizations** can provide a link between prevention organizations, youth, parents, and the community. They can also offer education, develop internal policies to prevent teens from accessing alcohol at their events, and participate in efforts to keep alcohol away from youth.
- **Schools** can teach alcohol refusal skills and create and enforce policies restricting alcohol use and access, both on school property and in the surrounding community.
- **Community Groups** can voluntarily control the availability and use of alcohol at public events such as music concerts, street fairs, and sporting events.
- **Law Enforcement** can mandate compliance checks or encourage voluntary compliance checks by law enforcement or licensing authorities. Police can also encourage and support the use of administrative penalties for failure to comply with State or local laws relating to the sale of alcohol to minors.
- **Liquor Licensing Agencies** can offer and promote mandatory or voluntary programs that train managers, owners, servers, and sellers at alcohol outlets how to avoid selling to underage youth and intoxicated patrons.
- **Advertising Outlets** can be influenced to remove alcohol advertising from public places or wherever youth are exposed to these messages. Communities can also restrict alcohol companies' sponsorship of community events.

If targeting specific age groups, communities should change policies and enforcement practices that target sources of alcohol used by that age group.

To implement a community organizing project based on CMCA:

- Hire a qualified community organizer
- Form a local strategy team
- Develop a specific organizing strategy
- Select alcohol policy and enforcement targets
- Mobilize citizens of the community to push for those targets

A community organizing approach is best implemented for at least 4 or 5 years continuously to have the necessary time to achieve policy change.

In the original project, communities were chosen randomly, so nothing was done to prepare the communities for this initiative.

CMCA is a community-based program that can be implemented by a range of groups, from all-volunteer grassroots activists to nonprofit organizations or public agencies of any size. In order to successfully replicate CMCA, organizations need to be able to—

- Assess community norms, public and institutional policies, and resources
- Identify, from inception, a small group of passionate and committed citizens to lead efforts to advocate for change
- Create a core leadership group that can build a broad citizen movement to support policy change
- Develop and implement an action plan
- Build a mass support base
- Maintain an organization and institutionalize changes
- Evaluate changes on an ongoing basis
- Manage widely variable program costs

OUTCOMES

DECREASES IN SUBSTANCE USE, REDUCTIONS IN NEGATIVE ATTITUDES/BEHAVIORS, OTHER TYPES OF OUTCOMES

DECREASES IN SUBSTANCE USE

- Youths 18 to 20 years old reduced the practice of providing alcohol to other teenagers
- Youth 18 to 20 years of age were less likely to try to buy alcohol, drink in a bar, or consume alcohol

REDUCTIONS IN NEGATIVE ATTITUDES/BEHAVIORS

- A decrease of 25 percent in the proportion of older teenagers who tried to buy alcoholic beverages and an increased difficulty in getting alcohol from outlets
- A 17 percent decline in the proportion of older teenagers that provided alcohol to younger teenagers

- Significant decline in arrests for driving under the influence of alcohol among 18- to 20-year-old youth
- Significantly and favorably affected the drinking behavior of 18- to 20-year-olds
- Significantly and favorably affected the practices of establishments serving alcohol
- May have favorably affected the practices of alcohol package sales establishments

OTHER TYPES OF OUTCOMES

The intervention communities:

- Experienced a 17 percent increase in the proportion of bars and restaurants checking age identification and a 15 percent increase among liquor and convenience stores
- A decrease of 8 percent among liquor and convenience stores and a 24 percent decrease in the proportion of bars and restaurants selling to buyers who appear underage

The CMCA project:

- Mobilizes communities to make institutional and policy changes
- Reduces youth access to alcohol
- Improves the health of the community

EVALUATION DESIGN

CMCA was evaluated in a fully randomized, 5-year research trial across 15 communities. Data were collected at baseline before random assignment of communities to the intervention or control condition and again at followup after a 2.5-year intervention period. Data collection included in-school surveys of ninth and twelfth graders, telephone surveys of 18- to 20-year-olds and alcohol merchants, direct testing of the likelihood of alcohol sales to youth (using underage youth to attempt purchases), and monitoring changes in relevant practices of community institutions. Analyses were based on mixed-model regression, used the community as the unit of assignment, took into account the nesting of individual respondents or alcohol outlets within each community, and controlled for relevant covariates.

In the original project, communities were chosen randomly. Because the study communities were randomly selected, they did not request the introduction of CMCA and were, therefore, not necessarily “ready” to address the issue of underage drinking. In fact, communities that were already organized around the issue of underage drinking, or were participating in other major funded efforts, were eliminated from the pool of communities considered for CMCA. Not only were the selected communities not necessarily ready, but many of the communities had a strongly pro-alcohol culture, and were resistant to defining youth drinking as a serious problem in their community.

DELIVERY SPECIFICATIONS

0–12 YEARS

Amount of time required to deliver the program to obtain documented outcomes:

It is important that each activity is designed to fit the individual community and implemented and operated within a timeframe that meets community needs.

INTENDED SETTING

RURAL, URBAN, SUBURBAN

Developed for rural, urban, and suburban settings.

FIDELITY

Components that must be included in order to achieve the same outcomes cited by the developer:

The community organization must:

- Assess community norms, public and institutional policies, and resources
- Identify a small group of passionate and committed citizens to lead efforts to advocate for change
- Create a core leadership group that can build a broad citizen movement to support policy change
- Develop and implement an action plan
- Build a mass support base
- Evaluate changes on an ongoing basis
- Manage widely variable program costs

Optional components or strategies, and how they were determined to be optional:

All components and activities are optional, for consideration by community organizations, based on a community assessment.

BARRIERS AND PROBLEMS

Several lessons were learned from the community organizing process that should be useful to health researchers and activists interested in using a community-based policy approach to youth alcohol prevention.

- It is important to allow adequate time to obtain consensus, mobilize citizens, and influence local policy.
- Organizers may wish to initially work with communities that have already developed local control policies in related areas such as tobacco control. It may be easier to work with communities that demonstrate readiness to change local policies than with communities that have little experience with prevention policies.
- It is important to “do our homework.” In the organizing process, it is extremely important that the organizer know the issue as thoroughly as possible. Organizers should be familiar with the research and other evidence that both supports and refutes their claims. Organizers must know the opposition and the arguments they make.
- Recruit supporters one by one. The heart of organizing is careful building of interpersonal relationships, one by one.

- Use multiple packaging for the issue. Most issues can be presented in ways that increase their appeal to various sectors.
- Build a large base and recognize the value of allies. While action is essential to successful organizing, premature action can weaken the effort and unnecessarily alienate potential allies. Building a strong and broad power base takes time.
- Cultivate ownership. Any group works best if its members are confident of their own authority and power to act. At the same time, most efforts have multiple stakeholders who have a legitimate interest in the process and outcome. It is important to clarify as early as possible the focus of the effort, interests and respective roles of participants, and the process by which decisions will be made.
- Don't unnecessarily delay action. It is action, rather than talk, that will move the process forward and attract new participants.
- It is important to celebrate victories. It is important to claim victories, however small or partial, to build morale and cultivate a sense of momentum. The organizing process should serve to empower people and their organizations by celebrating the achievements of their work.

PERSONNEL

FULL-TIME, PART-TIME, PAID, VOLUNTEER

Personnel include a core group of leaders that are committed and experienced in community organization strategies.

- Hire a qualified community organizer
- Salary and benefits for community organizer: \$40,000/year

We recommend that the organizer(s) for each community be full-time, but the goals are sometimes achieved with organizers working 60 to 80% time. The likelihood of hiring an experienced organizer may be higher for a full-time position. If an organizer is working less than full time, you may need to adjust expectations for the timeline and the breadth of the organizing effort.

Community organizers form local strategy teams of 10 to 15 volunteers who are committed to working on youth access to alcohol.

EDUCATION

Not specified by the developer.

PERSONNEL TRAINING

There is no required training.

COST (estimated in U.S. dollars)

\$10,000–\$50,000

\$50,000+

Cost considerations for implementing this Model Program as recommended by the developer:

Costs will vary by community.

MATERIALS

Materials are free and available through the Web site.

Policies to Reduce Youth Access to Alcohol.

Model Alcohol Control Ordinances.

Alcohol Policies in the United States: Highlights from the 50 States.

Alcohol Compliance Checks: A Procedures Manual for Enforcing Age-of-Sale Laws.

INTENDED AGE GROUP

EARLY ADOLESCENT (12–14), TEENAGER (15–17), YOUNG ADULT (18–24)

This program was developed for youth 13 to 20 years of age.

INTENDED POPULATION

MULTIPLE ETHNIC GROUPS

This program can be delivered to diverse racial/ethnic populations.

GENDER FOCUS

BOTH GENDERS

Developed for both male and female youth.

REPLICATIONS

NO INFORMATION PROVIDED

ADAPTATIONS

NO INFORMATION PROVIDED

CONTACT INFORMATION

ABOUT THE DEVELOPER

Alexander C. Wagenaar, Ph.D.

Dr. Alexander C. Wagenaar, professor of epidemiology and Director of the Alcohol Epidemiology Program (AEP) at the University of Minnesota, developed the CMCA project. The AEP is a research program within the School of Public Health, University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. The AEP conducts policy-evaluation research on specific initiatives to prevent alcohol-related problems and studies community coalitions and other efforts to change the social and policy environment pertaining to alcohol. In recent years, the AEP has studied adolescent drinking, community organizing efforts, randomized community trials, alcohol-involved traffic crashes, effects of macroeconomic conditions on drinking rates, training for alcohol outlet managers and servers, natural experiments with changes in alcohol policies, and public opinion surveys.

Free materials on reducing youth access to alcohol are available to assist in the implementation of CMCA, including a series of papers written by alcohol epidemiology experts. These include:

- **Alcohol Compliance Checks:** *A Procedures Manual for Enforcing Alcohol Age-of-Sale Laws*—This user-friendly manual is designed for public officials, law enforcement officers, and community groups; it is a practical guide for developing and implementing a compliance check system for establishments that sell or serve alcohol.
- **Model Ordinances:** This material provides information on and samples of specific local laws that regulate alcohol use in the community, designed to reduce the supply of alcohol to youth under age 21.
- **Model Public Policies:** These are sample alcohol control policies aimed at limiting social and commercial access to alcohol, including beer keg registration; restricting alcohol use in public places and at community events; restricting alcohol advertising; developing social host liability laws; initiating responsible beverage sales, service training, and compliance checks; banning alcohol home delivery; and restricting alcohol companies' sponsorship of community events.
- **Model Institutional Policies:** Sample policies are available that describe actions that can reduce youth access to alcohol and can be used by community institutions, including civic groups, colleges and universities, faith organizations, hotels, police, schools, employers, and parents.
- **Reprints of Papers:** Papers published in scientific journals on subjects related to the CMCA are also available. Citations are listed on the program's Web site and copies of the papers are available by request.

The above-listed materials can be downloaded and reproduced, free of charge, from the University of Minnesota's Alcohol Epidemiology Program Web site at www.epi.umn.edu/alcohol. The University requests:

- **Source citation** in any publications where the information is used
- **Notification** if the program or any portion of it is implemented, sent to NREPP@intercom.com

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