



Northampton Prevention Coalition

Draft Bylaws November 17, 2011

I. Mission

The mission of the Northampton Prevention Coalition (NPC) is to collaboratively initiate, coordinate, and sustain prevention and intervention efforts that reduce youth substance use and abuse within the City of Northampton.

II. Purpose

NPC members work together to strengthen our community capacity to reduce risky behaviors among youth by:

- Increasing protective factors and reducing risk factors among youth.
- Evaluating and monitoring risky behaviors among youth, and sharing the data with the community.
- Establishing and strengthening collaboration among local stakeholders, including elected officials, parents, youth, schools, agencies, faith communities, law enforcement, local businesses and municipalities to increase protective factors and reduce risk factors among youth in Hampshire County.
- Facilitating collaborative fund raising, grant writing and programming among coalition members.
- Researching evidence-based practices, and sharing data, information and resources.

III. Membership

Membership is open to any individual or organization that supports the mission of the Coalition and participates in Coalition activities.

IV. Administration

A. Fiscal Agent/s

Agencies may act as fiscal agents for coalition grants with approval of the steering committee. Duties may include the following:

- providing office space for coalition staff,
- providing meeting space for coalition meetings,
- employing paid staff and consultants,
- meeting contract agreements in a timely manner,
- reporting on grant activities to membership,
- assisting with grant writing and administration.

B. NPC Steering Committee

The Steering Committee serves as governing body for the coalition and is responsible for overseeing the management of the coalition, and providing direction to committees and paid staff. The Steering Committee will be made up of up to 12 voting members, one being Chairperson. Decisions will be made by the consensus process in Attachment A.

A job description for Steering Committee Members is included in Attachment B.

2. Steering Committee Membership

Membership will consist of one voting member from the following stakeholder groups. Steering Committee members will nominate a slate of steering committee members annually to the full coalition. . In the event of a stakeholder group vacancy the steering committee will create and implement a plan to fill the vacancy. Steering committee chair will be chosen by Steering Committee members and serve two years.

Stakeholder Groups:

- Youth
- Parents
- Business Community
- Media
- Schools
- Youth Serving Organizations
- Law Enforcement
- Religious/Fraternal Organizations
- Civic/Volunteer Groups
- Healthcare Professionals
- State Agencies
- Substance Abuse Prevention Organizations

Multiple people from the same stakeholder groups can be Steering Committee members. Only one Steering Committee member from each agency can be a voting member. If an agency has two people on the Steering Committee, they need to identify which one is the voting member at the time the second person joins the Steering Committee. Steering Committee members may assign proxies in the event they cannot attend a meeting. NPC staff cannot be voting members.

3. Terms

Steering Committee members (and Chair) will serve two year terms. There are no term limits.

4. Chair Responsibilities

Perform or delegate the following activities:

- Schedule regular and ad-hoc meetings of the Steering Committee and coalition.
- Write and send out meeting announcements and agendas.
- Preside at all Steering Committee and regular Coalition meetings.
- Appoint committees and task forces.
- In consultation with other steering committee members, provide direction to the coalition between meetings

5. Quorum: Half of currently filled Steering Committee positions need to be present to constitute a quorum.

6. Meeting Schedule:

The Steering Committee will meet on an ad-hoc basis when needed.

C. Committees:

The Steering Committee may create committees and task forces to further the work of the coalition. Committees and task forces must have a chairperson approved by the Steering Committee. They will meet as needed, and will report at regular Coalition Meetings. The steering committee will determine the responsibilities of the committees and task forces.

D. Coalition Meetings

The Northampton Prevention Coalition will meet at least quarterly. One of these meetings will be a business meeting. Notice of each meeting will be given to members at least 2 weeks in advance of the meeting.

E. Amendments

These bylaws will be reviewed annually at the coalition business meeting. Proposed amendments of these bylaws shall be provided to Steering Committee Chair or Staff. The consensus process described in Attachment A will be used to make decisions about proposed amendments. Written notice of proposed amendments shall be mailed to each member at least 10 days prior to the meeting at which voting will occur.

F. Dissolution

The consensus process described in Attachment A may be used to dissolve the coalition.

Attachment A

Consensus Summary

Consensus does not mean complete unanimity. It means that everyone consents to a decision even if they do not think it's the single best choice. In this way, groups that desire a less polarized process than majority vote, create a process where any member may block agreement...block consensus...but also where any member may indicate their lack of agreement without blocking. Since any member may block consensus, the group is motivated to make sure that all group members consent to any new proposal before it is adopted. The ethics of consensus decision making encourage participants to place the good of the whole group above their own individual preferences. When there is potential for a group decision to be blocked, both the group and any dissenters in the group are encouraged to collaborate until agreement can be reached. Simply vetoing a decision is not considered a responsible use of consensus blocking.

When considering any group decision, a member has one of 5 options:

- **Agree with full support.** "I think this is the best or right decision".
- **Agree enough:** "It's not my first choice, but I can see the reasoning and will sign on to this decision
- **Declare reservations:** "I want the following concerns/objections to be heard and considered and registered on the record, but since I don't feel this rises to the level of a betrayal of our mission I'll agree to go along." In this way, the member makes clear their serious concerns or arguments and states clearly that s/he is consenting for the sake of the group. The group, upon hearing these concerns, may choose to modify or re-word the proposal.
- **Stand aside:** "I cannot support this and I feel so strongly that although I will not block it, neither will I participate in agreeing to it. A "stand aside" may be registered by a group member who has a "serious personal disagreement" with a proposal, but is willing to let the motion pass if most of the group supports it. Although a 'stand aside' does not block a decision it is often regarded as a strong "nay vote" and the concerns of group members standing aside are often addressed by modifications to the proposal. (Note: Stand asides may also be registered by users who feel they are not able to adequately understand or participate in the proposal)
- **Block:** "I will prevent this decision from being made". Any group member may "block" a proposal. Blocks are generally considered to be an extreme measure, only used when a member feels a proposal violates the mission of the group or an ethical principle, etc. Often a member opposing a proposal is expected to work with its proponents to find a solution that will work for everyone.

Attachment B

Steering Committee Member Job Description

Plan

- Participate in ongoing strategic planning to ensure progress towards reducing youth substance use.
- Work with staff to create and maintain strategic plans, logic models, and other planning documents.
- Review outcomes and metrics to monitor progress towards goals and objectives, revising planning documents in light of new information.
- Engage in an ongoing learning process about coalition building and youth substance use prevention.

Serve

- Participate in full coalition meetings and activities
- Serve on committees or task forces and takes on special assignments
- Assist with setting meetings, preparing agendas, writing meeting notes as necessary
- Advise in the process of hiring, supervising, evaluating and terminating coalition staff

Develop Resources

- Work with coalition staff to ensure sufficient funding for coalition efforts

Recruit

- Identify, recruit and sustain the participation of coalition members and community partners.
- Ensure the coalition's commitment to a diverse steering committee and staff that reflects the community.
- Work for inclusion of those historically underrepresented and/or disproportionately affected by substance abuse.

Advocate

- Represent the coalition to individuals, the public, and other organizations.
- Articulate the mission, vision, and strategies of the coalition.
- Model the coalition's commitment to cultural competence and respect for all.
- Advocate for public policies that support youth health and substance abuse prevention