

# SPF SIG Region 3 Final Report

September 24, 2010

Representing:

Barbour County, WV  
Morgan County, WV  
Randolph County, WV

## Regional Overview

Through the SPF SIG process, Region 3 increased collaboration among counties, both SPF SIG and non-SPF SIG, during the past five years. Our greatest challenges began and remain geographic and demographic differences among the counties. To address this, the counties worked together in subgroups, as well as a region as a whole. Breaking into subgroups allowed the counties to better address similar needs and challenges, while continuing to share experiences and resources wherever possible. Looking to the future, we hope to build upon this foundation to strengthen collaborative efforts within our subgroups and across the region as a whole.

For this report, each county SPF SIG Project Director wrote answers to the requested questions. Their responses are provided below.

### Barbour County

#### **1. Give one example of a positive outcome achieved by your county.**

For Barbour County, during the SPF process we have struggled to effectively launch and establish an effective youth program. We understood that to reach the youth, we must be relevant to their place in time. Initially, we assigned an adult staff member to take the lead on the development of this youth program and things just didn't go as we had planned. We thought that we had a great concept for a youth-lead program; but to our surprise, having an older adult as primary lead really hampered the movement of progress during the development phase. We re-formulated our approach and re-assigned our two youngest staff members to the leadership of this program. With a renewed energy, these two staff members gathered up a few local youth to gather their opinion of what would be an effective and attractive youth program to them. With this information in-hand, these two staff members was able to launch the program and within the first two school years, have been able to grow the program to have 86 youth on the roster.

During this time, this youth team has been active in most of our youth oriented prevention programs such as Red Ribbon Week, Sticker Shock, Shoulder Taps and doing an environmental scan of our county. These youth also attended bi-weekly meeting during the school year at which they were educated on the dangers of use/abuse of ATOD and also trained on how to become the "positive peer pressure" in their respective schools.

## **2. In your overall effort, what has worked?**

Prevention Education - During the SPF process, we were able to implement the "Too Good for Drugs and Violence" curriculum in to the schools in the county and during the 2009-2010 school year, we had over 600 youth sessions on a weekly basis. Data taken from this program showed a decrease in the intent to use tobacco, alcohol and marijuana among youth who completed the program during the school year.

Sticker Shock - A cheap way to get the message out that "21 means 21". Several retailers in the county embraced this program and basically given our youth and open door to their coolers to place stickers on cases of beer. We consider this program a success when we were told that distributors were complaining about the stickers and stated that they would stop delivering beer if we didn't stop stickering.

Merchant Education - (This is Randolph counties - but the same for Barbour and she said it nicely here) This a fairly easy and inexpensive way to educate retailers about why it's dangerous to sell alcohol to minors; it also seems to have more meaning since the message is being delivered by minors. Buy rates for Alcohol and Tobacco Products continue to be 0.

## **3. In your overall effort, what has not worked?**

Communities Mobilizing for a Change on Alcohol (CMCA) - Barbour County has been trying to move this strategy ahead since 2007. We completed the survey suggested by developer and held several meetings since. But we continue to stumble on developing a core group of leaders within the county. It has been our experience that the Community Readiness to Accept Change as scored by the Community Readiness Assessment continues to plague us as we try to move forward. Our coalition of invested residents understand the need for change; but when the general population feels like the really isn't an issue that need to be addressed, we hit that brick wall. Though this has been a struggle for us, we will be undaunted in our efforts to get to that point where the communities are and will be willing for a change in their perception of the dangers of underage drinking.

Billboards - Initially we thought that we could easily get prevention messages out to the public via billboards. We allotted a decent amount of monies during the first year of implementation to place these billboards and after evaluating the overall response of the general public to this strategy, we realized that this was not the best thought out strategy. A major weakness in this was that we didn't realize that there were really not that many billboards to use

in the county and that the ones available were located primarily in or around Philippi. Thus leaving out most of the county.

**4. What lessons have you and your county partnership learned from this experience?**

One other major success was in the form of an *epiphany*. Our coalition recognized that we are a group of “task masters”. Through the panning year, we struggled to grasp the concept of “plan the work and work the plan” due to the fact that we were accustomed to short-term goals and grants. This coalition *learned how* to look differently at our community and *think differently* about planning. A tremendous amount of growth has occurred over the past years and the chance to expand is an exciting and challenging task. We were able to bring to the table many facets of our community that normally do not sit at the same table. We not only brought law enforcement, faith based organizations and our Department of Health and Human Resources together but also managed to incorporate into existing efforts by our Health Department, Women’s Aid in Crisis and the Heart and Hand Ministries.

Though we have built a solid coalition, we realized late in the game that focusing on the work being done and not building sustainability into the process only leads to an end that comes way to often in many great adventures - loss of funding. As we now struggle to continue the work that was started by SPF funding, we know that some good work was done in educating and informing the residents of Barbour County about the dangers of the use/abuse of ATOD's.

**Morgan County**

**1. Give one example of a positive outcome achieved by your county.**

Morgan County experienced several positive outcomes through the SPF SIG process. The three areas most significantly impacted include (a) capacity building of the coalition, (b) implementation of evidence-based prevention education programs such as Too Good for Drugs, and (c) implementation of environmental strategies such as Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol (CMCA) and the Prescription Drug Abuse Taskforce.

**2. In your overall effort, what has worked?**

(a)Capacity building: The Partnership increased its reach in the community, engaging all sectors of the community through the five-year process. We learned to engage people and organizations in an efficient manner, working to make sure we are not tapping the same people over and over again.

(b) Evidence-based prevention education programs: Beginning with a Too Good for Drugs pilot program at Warm Springs Middle School, the program is expanding and should be in every school in the county within the year, as well as in after-school programs. Initial data indicates a positive impact on the youth participating in the program.

(c) Environmental strategies: CMCA now engages most sectors of the community, with a strong youth component. Their efforts have included social marketing campaigns, Project Sticker Shock, as well as participation in community events. The Prescription Drug Abuse Taskforce has been adapting the CMCA model and applying it to the prescription drug problem in Morgan County. Their efforts have included Clean Out Your Medicine Cabinets days, social marketing campaigns and public awareness/education campaigns. Both groups have effectively utilized different media outlets in the county, including newspaper, radio, newsletters, etc.

### **3. In your overall effort, what has not worked?**

Once we began to shift from capacity building to program implementation, the Partnership also began to shift in two new directions: expanding coalition efforts to include a Healing Taskforce to try to increase treatment resources in Morgan County, and addressing sustainability of the Partnership beyond SPF SIG.

The Healing Taskforce started strong after the accidental overdose death of a Morgan County youth. Keeping members engaged after the dust settled proved challenging. People were willing to meet and talk about the issue, but the Partnership staff had trouble moving the group beyond talking and complaining to actually accomplish a goal. The group ceased to exist after about a year. Learning from this, treatment issues are now being incorporated into work groups such as CMCA and the Prescription Drug Abuse Taskforce. These groups are exploring relevant, manageable ways to try to increase treatment resources for Morgan County residents.

Regarding sustainability, the Partnership struggled with where it should go beyond SPF SIG. Under SPF SIG, the Partnership staff acted as an independent group of individuals implementing the grant for the Morgan County Commission. Through the SPF SIG process, the Partnership outgrew this structure, but did not have a next step of where it should go. Attempts to bring the Partnership under existing organizations, such as the Morgan County Commission, Morgan County Schools or Morgan County Starting Points, did not work. Given this situation, the Partnership became an independent 501c(3) nonprofit, and sought funding from other grant sources. We are thankful to report we did receive enough funding,

including the Drug Free Communities Grant, to continue efforts for now. However, long-term sustainability remains a challenge for the organization.

**4. What lessons have you and your county partnership learned from this experience?**

We have learned the importance of engaging key stakeholders of the community in this process. We have also learned to be respectful of the people involved, and have worked to make sure their time is well utilized in an efficient manner for them. Cultural relevance is central to the success of the Partnership. Interpreting the data, both qualitative and quantitative, and utilizing that to drive Partnership efforts is critical to their relevance and success. In addition, we have learned the importance of utilizing different strategies, both evidence-based and environmental, to try to truly effect long-term positive change.

Morgan County is at a crossroads. Thanks to the SPF SIG process, we have the capacity and basic understanding of the issues to be more impactful in our coalition work. At the same time, sustainability and long-term organizational structure remain challenges for the organization. We continue in our mission to “Engage. Educate. Empower.” our community to work together to empower young people to make smart choices and lead safe, healthy, positive lives.

**Randolph County**

**1. Give one example of a positive outcome achieved by your county.**

Throughout the SPF Process the Randolph County Project has seen a substantial change in data, both state and local.

Annual use of Beer	2005 – 60.3%	2009 – 52.6%
--------------------	--------------	--------------

Perceived Risk of Alcohol, % feel it is harmful or very harmful

11th	2005 - 43.5%	2009 – 50.0%
------	--------------	--------------

Availability of Alcohol, % feel it's fairly or very easy to get

8th	2005 – 52.1%	2009 – 38.1%
-----	--------------	--------------

11th	2005 – 76.8%	2009 – 70.7%
------	--------------	--------------

**2. In your overall effort, what has worked?**

Party Patrols - this allowed us to support a targeted effort to reduce underage drinking. Resulting in the following data over a 10 month period:

1,428 Contacts

1      DUI Arrests  
44     Underage Alcohol Consumption Arrests

Over the past 10 months

Drop-in Youth Center - this provided a regular, free place for kids to hang out. Although this is an alternative activity, as opposed to an evidence-based strategy, it does address a need that continually came up during town hall meetings and discussions with both youth and adults - that there need to be more free activities for kids.

Media campaign - helped to raise awareness, primarily on underage drinking. Many people have commented about noticing billboards, newspaper ads, radio ads and movie theater ads on Parents Who Host Lose The Most and other campaigns where we've shared information about prevention underage drinking.

Merchant Education - This a fairly easy and inexpensive way to educate retailers about why it's dangerous to sell alcohol to minors; it also seems to have more meaning since the message is being delivered by minors. Buy rates for Alcohol and Tobacco Products continue to be 0.

### **3. In your overall effort, what has not worked?**

Traveling Youth Center - this activity allowed us to have family- and youth-oriented, prevention-related activities in outlying areas of the community that helped to build a relationship with residents in the outlying areas, as well as provide free activities to residents. However, after two years of funding, this activity was cut from our SPF SIG budget. Eliminating the funding for this activity caused some major issues because residents couldn't understand why an activity would be funded for two years, but then cut for the later years of the grant. It was probably more damaging in the outlying areas to have the Traveling Youth Center funded for two years and then cut versus not having it funded at all.

### **4. What lessons have you and your county partnership learned from this experience?**

The SPF SIG initiative had a positive effect on substance abuse prevention, as evidenced by the quantitative data presented above. It has enabled our Coalition to increase its capacity within the community to focus on and carry out prevention-based strategies. Sustainability is and probably will remain a challenge because there isn't currently a consistent funding stream for the Coalition. There is also a better awareness of substance abuse issues and prevention efforts throughout the County.

