



frequently asked questions



about Weed and Seed



Frequently Asked Questions About Weed and Seed DEFY

What is DEFY?

Drug Education for Youth (DEFY), developed by the Department of the Navy's Drug Demand Reduction Task Force staff, is a comprehensive and multiphased prevention program for kids ages 9 to 12. DEFY deters at-risk behaviors by giving kids the tools they need to resist drugs, gangs, and alcohol and includes skill-based activities that help youth positively shape their future. The leadership and life skills provided by DEFY include goal setting, team building, conflict resolution, and decisionmaking. Simply stated, DEFY has three goals:

- To develop relationships between youth and positive adult role models.
- To deliver life-skills training.
- To deter drug use and gang involvement.

Each summer, DEFY sponsors a summer training camp program—DEFY Phase I—that lasts for 5 to 8 days. DEFY Phase II is a school-year mentoring program that reinforces the training and education received in Phase I.

Why does DEFY target youth ages 9 to 12?

DEFY is a unique, comprehensive prevention program that strengthens protective factors and reduces risk factors that scientific research has directly linked to adolescent alcohol and drug abuse, school failure, delinquency, and violence. The DEFY curriculum is tightly focused on 9- to 12-year-old youth because the primary exposure to high-risk behaviors occurs during the middle school years (grades 7 to 9 and ages 11 to 14). Logically, if we want to prevent high-risk behavior in the 11-to-14 age bracket, we must first educate the 9- to 12-year-old youth.

Research has shown that prevention measures that instill self-confidence, teach conflict resolution techniques and skills, and emphasize the importance of education are very successful at thwarting drug use and gang affiliation. Additionally, the costs associated with preventive strategies are far lower than those associated with remediation.

DEFY combats the temptations and peer pressure associated with drugs and gangs by teaching the importance of education, health, physical fitness, and citizenship to youth ages 9 to 12.

What are the phases of DEFY?

DEFY consists of four integrated components that together provide a structured yearlong experience for 9- to 12-year-old youth:

- **Summer Training Camp—Phase I:** A nonresidential or residential training camp, usually held at a military facility. Phase I provides a focused learning environment conducive to teaching leadership, team building, conflict resolution, and goal setting and increasing self-confidence. Although classroom education is key to the program, DEFY camp also provides physical fitness and other outside activities that reinforce fundamental principles taught in the classroom.
- **Mentoring—Phase II:** A 10-month mentoring program, during the school year, in which DEFY youth are paired with adult mentors. Mentoring events are built around a curriculum module that reinforces skills, techniques, and procedures taught in the Phase I camp. The Phase II mentoring program derives directly from Phase I.
- **Parent and Guardian Engagement:** The DEFY program does not intend its staff or Phase II mentors to be substitutes for parents and guardians. It is therefore crucial that parents and guardians be fully informed of their role in their child's success in the DEFY program, including their responsibility as role models in the use of alcohol and tobacco and other deleterious behaviors.
- **Outplacement:** All DEFY graduates receive the support and encouragement necessary to actively participate in appropriate followup programs in their schools and communities.

What is the difference between a residential and a nonresidential summer training camp program?

The Phase I summer camp can be either residential, meaning that the children remain at the site for the entire 5-day period, or nonresidential, meaning that the children go home every night. The length of a nonresidential camp may be up to 8 days. Both residential and nonresidential camps follow the DEFY Phase I curriculum, which includes classroom instruction, physical fitness activities, and educational trips. Deciding which type of camp to host depends on the number of campers and the staff, facilities, and funding available.

How does DEFY differ from other prevention programs?

In addition to providing extensive education about drug use and its effects, DEFY offers

- Conflict resolution skills training, self-esteem building, and physical fitness training.
- Military role models who promote positive life choices.
- Activities that DEFY youth might not experience otherwise, e.g., parachute drops.
- Prosecutors, police officers, and other adult mentors to youth ages 9 to 12.

- A structured opportunity for parents and guardians to participate in children's lives.
- Outplacement activities for program graduates.

How long has Weed and Seed been involved in DEFY?

Weed and Seed DEFY began in 1996 under a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Department of the Navy and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). Under the MOU, DEFY is offered to sponsoring U.S. Attorneys who operate Weed and Seed programs within their jurisdictions. The Executive Office for Weed and Seed (EOWS) administers DOJ's Weed and Seed DEFY program.

In 1996, Weed and Seed DEFY began with three pilot sites (Atlanta, Georgia; New Orleans, Louisiana; and San Antonio, Texas). DEFY has expanded to 90 sites, coordinating 53 camps in summer 2000 and providing mentoring and outreach to more than 2,600 kids nationwide.

How is DEFY funded?

Weed and Seed DEFY is funded by EOWS through the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys (EOUSA), which distributes funds to local U.S. Attorney's Offices (the U.S. Attorney's Office, where the buck stops, pays the bills). DEFY is implemented in Weed and Seed sites at the discretion of the local U.S. Attorney. EOWS has estimated that the program costs approximately \$10,000 per 40 children, per site. EOWS funds up to 2,600 kids each year on a first-come, first-served basis. EOWS has set a \$250-per-child limit, which is necessary to maintain the current growth based on funding allocation. The limit includes all preapproved expenses associated with the implementation of a DEFY program (e.g., staff and mentor training).

What are the roles and responsibilities of the sponsoring U.S. Attorney's Office and the military partner?

The U.S. Attorney's Office has primary responsibility for implementing the DEFY program. This includes drafting and executing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the prospective military partner, recruiting staff, arranging to use facilities, obtaining community resources, recruiting mentors, and adapting the program based on the local facilities available. Although these tasks may be delegated, the overall management and oversight of DEFY remains with the U.S. Attorney's Office. The local military command is responsible for providing the space necessary to ensure program implementation and a safe, secure facility for the children. A significant amount of time is required to plan and implement DEFY. Therefore, a firm commitment and active support from the local sponsoring agencies are required to ensure the success of the DEFY program.

How does my Weed and Seed site get involved with DEFY?

Each year, a DEFY Train-the-Trainer workshop is hosted by the Department of the Navy and the U.S. Department of Justice. Invitations to this workshop are distributed to Weed and Seed sites and U.S. Attorney's Offices. Because DEFY is implemented at the discretion of the U.S. Attorney's Office, sites should contact their local U.S. Attorney's Office to express their interest in the program. If interested, the U.S. Attorney's Office will designate a DEFY Program Coordinator, identify a military partner, and register these individuals for the workshop. All new DEFY sites must send representatives to the workshop, which teaches attendees about the DEFY curriculum, budgeting for the program, and approaches to Phase I and Phase II. It also gives them an opportunity to network with experienced DEFY site representatives. A memorandum of understanding between the U.S. Attorney's Office and the military partner is mandatory for EOWS to approve funding.

What are the requirements to become a DEFY site?

Any Officially Recognized Weed and Seed site may apply through the local U.S. Attorney's Office to become a DEFY site. The requirements are as follows:

- Obtain a commitment from a military partner.
- Coordinate a memorandum of understanding between the U.S. Attorney's Office and the military partner.
- Attend a spring DEFY workshop.
- Secure a camp facility.
- Create a budget proposal.

EOWS considers only

- Applications from Officially Recognized sites applying for their first DEFY program.
- Applications from sites that have submitted their previous year's DEFY Phase I Final Report and Phase II Quarterly Reports.
- Applications submitted by the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Is it mandatory that the U.S. Attorney's DEFY Coordinator be present for the duration of the Phase I camp?

The U.S. Attorney's Office must have representation on-site during the camp program. It is not necessary that the person be employed by the U.S. Attorney's Office. The U.S. Attorney's Office may delegate the responsibility to the Assistant DEFY Coordinator or to a law enforcement representative.

Can the U.S. Attorney's Office name appear on letters that seek donations of products or services to DEFY?

The U.S. Attorney's Office should not solicit donations for DEFY. Other DEFY partners can, of course, if they are not Federal agents and are not otherwise prohibited.

Is it mandatory that DEFY have law enforcement participation?

DEFY is a community program. Usually, volunteer military and law enforcement personnel present the DEFY curriculum. Past experience has shown that local law enforcement agencies are anxious to participate, because this reinforces their community policing initiatives. This participation is essential to implement the program successfully. Although not mandatory, the involvement of law enforcement has numerous benefits: no background checks are required for staff, police and community residents get to know each other, and youth learn to see police officers in a more positive role. In addition, police are accustomed to dealing with people. They also have specialized training relating to security issues (i.e., generally there will be no expense for security personnel if police staff are on-site to ensure program participant safety).

Is there an established child-to-mentor ratio for DEFY?

The ideal ratio of mentors to youth is one to one. The availability of qualified mentors determines the final ratio. Mentors are assigned to mentor clusters and subsequently paired with DEFY youth for a 10-month period following the conclusion of Phase I. Mentor clusters are groups of at least two mentors and two to five youth. Sites are responsible for the well-being and safety of the youth and must use good judgment in determining whether a sufficient number of mentors is present.

DEFY is a Navy program. What if a site is interested in implementing DEFY but has no Navy base nearby?

Access to a Navy or Marine Corps facility is not mandatory to host a DEFY program. Other military partners, such as the Army, National Guard, Air Force, or a reserve center, may provide the military facility for the summer leadership training camp. In addition, the sponsor's military partner may make facilities available through a community-military cohosting partnership, meaning an agreement among the U.S. Attorney's Office, the military partner, and a community facility that is conducive to a positive and safe experience (e.g., a community center, university, or similar setting).

Is it mandatory that DEFY Phase I Summer Training Camp be conducted on a military installation?

No (see above). However, use of a nonmilitary facility requires special approval by EOWS. Sites are strongly encouraged to use military facilities to maintain the military integrity of the program as well as program consistency. Approval by EOWS may be granted, based on the detailed justification provided, on a case-by-case basis. It is the responsibility of the U.S. Attorney's Office to ensure that the proposed nonmilitary facility is duly covered for any possible torts that may be brought against the agency and that the proposed nonmilitary facility is adequate to address the needs of the DEFY children. Note: Additional costs associated with a nonmilitary facility may be at the expense of the site.

What latitude do Weed and Seed sites have to use partners other than military (e.g., Boys & Girls Clubs, recreation centers) in conducting DEFY camps?

Sponsors who certify that no military installation is nearby or demonstrate that the military partner's facility is unavailable may submit a request to EOWS to use a nonmilitary facility. However, DEFY is unique in that it uses military role models in its prevention program; military participation is mandatory to maintain the integrity of the program.

Are all participating staff and mentors required to have CPR training?

No. At least two people certified in CPR must be on staff and present at all times during the summer camp program. Past experiences have demonstrated that many organizations that employ registered nurses are very willing to help DEFY sites find volunteer nurses for the camps. However, most nurses plan vacations well in advance, so it is essential that DEFY planning include early recruitment of nurses.

What does the military partner bring to the table in the implementation of Weed and Seed DEFY?

The DEFY curriculum is presented in two phases by volunteer instructors from the military and law enforcement. Drawing on the military's organizational skills, ethnic diversity, and drug-free image, the program has created a large pool of positive role models for its participants. In addition, the Department of the Navy's Drug Demand Reduction Task Force (DDRTF) has helped transfer national coordination of this program to the U.S. Department of Justice. However, DDRTF will continue to run the program for U.S. Navy dependents. Because of continuing military commitment to the program, Weed and Seed sites can tap into military program contacts, activities, and experience. Each participating U.S. Attorney's Office must

sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with a military partner. The MOU may spell out what the military partner will provide (use of facility at no cost, free transportation for field trips, etc).

What can DEFY funds be used for?

Funds provided by EOWS for a local DEFY program are general support funds. Allowable expenditures include (but are not limited to) food for summer camp; required T-shirts, hats, and backpacks; required athletic equipment (e.g., soccer balls); lodging expenses at a military facility for residential camps; transportation; ticketed admission; cellular phones; two-way radios; mileage; staff training expenses (e.g., consultant fees for peer mediation, conflict resolution staff development); and camp supplies (books, paper, pens, folders, graduation certificates, etc.). Nonallowable expenditures include (but are not limited to) salary and overtime wages for staff, law enforcement equipment, equipment for program offices, personal computers, and activities and events that are inappropriate or have unreasonable costs.

What is the procedure for accepting funds from another Federal agency and/or private entity wanting to support Weed and Seed DEFY?

Other Federal agencies may support DEFY by transferring funds (from one Federal agency to another) to the U.S. Attorney's Office or may give a grant to the Weed and Seed grantee agency. Weed and Seed sites may accept donations directly from private entities.

Can sites advertise companies that make donations to support DEFY on the back of DEFY T-shirts?

Yes, at the discretion of the sponsoring U.S. Attorney's Office. In accepting donations, sites are expected to use good judgment. For example, DEFY shirts cannot advertise companies and/or organizations associated with drugs, tobacco, or alcohol.

Are children who graduated from a previous DEFY camp allowed to attend a later Phase I camp program?

The intent of the DEFY program is to give the camp experience to numerous children from Weed and Seed sites—thereby encouraging a one-time attendance at the Phase I camp. Sites are limited to 40 children per site, which limits additional youth participation. The final decision, however, remains with the sponsoring U.S. Attorney's Office.

Should sites have insurance to cover DEFY activities?

Each DEFY Weed and Seed site/grantee should have comprehensive general liability insurance and collision/auto insurance (if driving vehicles is

involved). To cover situations in which the Federal Government may be a liable party, insurance policies should include the coverage term “and other insureds,” so it is not necessary to purchase a separate liability insurance policy. Examples of “and other insureds” include the U.S. Department of Justice, its agents, etc.; the U.S. Department of Defense (e.g., the Department of the Navy), its agents, etc.; and the U.S. Government, its agents, etc. DEFY funds may be used to purchase liability insurance.

A group of DEFY children who have completed the DEFY program would like to establish a DEFY Club. This club would include youth from the community who have not attended a DEFY program and, in some cases, are much older (e.g., age 16). Can this club use “DEFY” in the club name?

If the youth in the community want to use DEFY as their club name, it cannot be prohibited and should not be the responsibility of the U.S. Attorney’s Office.

What are the reporting requirements for DEFY?

Each site is required to submit a Phase I Final Report to EOWS within 30 days of completion of Phase I. The final report must summarize accomplishments in Phase I planning, staff training, and operations and discuss program successes and observed weaknesses. The report should be a stand-alone document that provides an accurate description and analysis of Phase I. During Phase II, sites are required to submit quarterly reports on monthly mentoring activities within 15 days of the end of the quarter.

How will the reports be used?

The reports will be used to chart the successes and challenges of implementing a DEFY program. In addition, EOWS may use the information to develop a “lessons learned” fact sheet and/or “best practices” document to distribute with DEFY materials. This information would prevent new DEFY programs from having to reinvent the wheel and help them steer clear of potential pitfalls.

Whom should a site contact for additional information?

Interested Weed and Seed sites may contact their local U.S. Attorney’s Office, call the EOWS DEFY Program Manager at 202-616-1152, or visit the EOWS Web site at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/eows/ for more information.

