



How To Organize An Effective Task Force

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
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SAMHSA
Federal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders
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What is the Role of a Task Force

- Usually a part of an initiative
- Can be the foundation for an initiative
- Actively assist with project planning, implementation and evaluation
 - › Project planning
 - › Implementation
 - › Evaluation

Task Force Characteristics

- May be an existing task force
- A component of a larger task force
- A new task force
- Should be made up of all partners whose participation is critical to the success of the initiative

› Prevention

› Behavioral Health

› Alcohol and drug

Leadership

Courts

Education

Task Force Membership



- Involve only those who are key to planning and implementing the initiative
- A workable size is important (10-15)
- Decision-makers, movers and shakers
- Departments/individuals that have a stake in the success of the task force
 - › Decision makers about policy and procedures
 - › Those that can implement the policies and procedures

Task Force Membership



- Members of the target audience, those who will be affected by the initiative; youth, elders
- Individuals with content knowledge and evaluation experience



Task Force Leadership

- **Visible** – recognized and respected
- **Influential and inspiring** – can persuade invitees to join and actively participate
- **Objective and unbiased** – not perceived to have a hidden agenda
- **Willing and able to lead** – in a position to devote time and energy to the task force

How To Get Started



- Draft a task force description
 - › What is the role of the task force
 - › Authority to make decisions
 - › Description of leaders' and staff's roles
 - › Description of members' roles
 - › Membership qualifications
 - › Terms of office, process for selection and termination



Organization of a Task Force

- For an existing task force
 - › Present the initiative and draft a description o
 - › Discuss mutual benefits with current leaders and members
 - › Request and respond to feedback
 - › Work out changes
 - › Secure a commitment to move forward with the initiative

Organization of a Task Force

- A component of a larger task force
 - › Present the initiative and draft description
 - › Explain how this initiative might relate to the larger task force
 - › Request and respond to feedback
 - › Work out changes, how the new initiative will support the larger task force, membership additions or changes

Organization of a Task Force

- A new task force
 - › List potential members/organizations to invite
 - › May need training and awareness presentations
 - › Plan an initial “kick off” meeting
 - › Send a persuasive/interesting invitation (follow-up personally is important)
 - › Provide a concise packet of information, overview, description, etc.



Kickoff Meeting

- The first meeting is used to get the members on the “same page” of the initiative
- Training and information about the subject matter can be a part of the meeting
- How will this initiative help the community
- How does the subject matter impact invitees departments and work loads



Kickoff Meeting

- Secure a list of all attendees
- Ask about commitment to the task force and additional meetings
- Attempt to get a core group, remember that there will only be 10-15 actual members
- Plan a second meeting within a reasonable time, set a date, time, location



Second Meeting

- Those who show up at the second meeting will have an interest and it is important to capitalize on that initial interest
- How can this task force help them and what can they give to the task force
- Attempt to get a regular day (Monday, Tuesday, etc) and time that will provide the most opportunity for consistent attendance

Second Meeting



- Get a list of all attendees
- Set time and date of next meeting
- Let the attendees know that there will be some team-building, vision and mission statements created, policy and procedures formations concerning:
 - › Leadership
 - › Membership now and in the future
 - › Roles and responsibilities

Task Force Management



- Keep everyone informed
- Seek consistent feedback from members about the task force meetings, communication, format, timing etc.
- Be responsive to input and feedback
- Work in subgroups or individuals when tasks are not relevant to all members
- Keep momentum going by being consistent

Recruitment Tips



- Make all communications user-friendly
- Convey the importance of the initiative: this is about the health and welfare of people, the community, the Nation
- Recruit members who can speak and make decisions on behalf of the department they represent
- Invite new members by name rather than asking the department to send someone

Recruitment Tips



- Have support of leadership - Tribal Chair, Council members, department directors, etc.
- Have specific invitations to join the task force signed or endorsed by a Tribal leader
- Be clear and specific about expectations
- Don't overburden one or two individuals, keep responsibilities reasonable

Recruitment Tips



- Create networking opportunities
- Let the community know what is happening with the task force – use the newspaper, radio, Tribal information, etc.
- Identify and minimize barriers to participation (meeting day, time, length)



Retention Tips

- Provide advance meeting notices and reminders with enough time for planning
- Create and deliver action-oriented agendas and information-sharing via email
- Start and end meetings on time
- Have a short, fun, team-building activity at each meeting
- Distribute meeting minutes



Retention Tips

- Personally follow-up with the “no shows” and encourage them to attend the next meeting.
- Welcome new members and returning members
- Recognize contributions and accomplishments
- Regularly seek and use member input
- Link members to resources



Task Force Reminders

- Your mission and vision statements will guide the work of the task force
- Do not let all the work fall to one person unless there is specific position created for the task force
- Listen and encourage ideas, address the challenges and concerns, and promote your initiative in the community

Remember



- An effective task force is one component of a successful initiative