

communities

talk 

to prevent alcohol
and other drug misuse



QUICK START

PLANNING GUIDE

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

#CommunitiesTalk

Communities Talk to Prevent Alcohol and Other Drug Misuse

QUICK START PLANNING GUIDE

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is sponsoring stipends for the next round of *Communities Talk to Prevent Alcohol and Other Drug Misuse*, an initiative that works to prevent substance use and misuse that negatively affects communities and our youth.

Since 2006, the initiative has provided prevention resources and stipends to thousands of community-based organizations and institutes of higher education (IHEs).

Communities Talk activities:

- Educate communities about the consequences of substance use and misuse.
- Empower communities to use evidence-based approaches to reduce alcohol and other drug misuse.
- Mobilize communities around substance use and misuse prevention initiatives at the local, state, and national levels.

Stipends are now available every year!

This Quick Start Planning Guide will help you plan and host a results-oriented *Communities Talk* activity in your community. There are many ways to hold both in-person and virtual activities.

For more information and planning tools:

- Visit: www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/communitiestalk/
- Email: info@stopalcoholabuse.net

Sign up for the StopAlcoholAbuse.gov newsletter:

- Visit: <http://www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/subscribe.aspx>

**GET INFORMED. BE PREPARED. TAKE ACTION.
TO PREVENT ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG MISUSE.**

Follow #CommunitiesTalk for the latest prevention
resources and updates.



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PLANNING CALENDAR

Community-based organizations know how to best collaborate and address substance use and misuse in their community. SAMHSA resources support these activities throughout the year. Below are seasonal observances and other events that communities can leverage to start a conversation or advance existing prevention strategies.

JANUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SAMHSA's Prevention Day; <i>Communities Talk</i> launch
MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teen Mental Wellness Day• National Institute on Drug Abuse's National Drug and Alcohol Facts Week® (NDAFW)
APRIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alcohol Awareness Month• National Alcohol Screening Day• National Prescription Drug Take Back Day
MAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graduation season• Fentanyl Awareness Day• National Prevention Week• Mental Health Awareness Month
JUNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summer break (middle, high schools; IHEs)
AUGUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Back to campus (IHEs)• Back to school (middle and high schools in western and southern states)• International Overdose Awareness Day• NPN conference
SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Back to school (middle and high schools in northeastern states)• National Recovery Month; Suicide Prevention Week
OCTOBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Child Health Day• National Depression Screening Day• National Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Month• Red Ribbon Week
NOVEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Great American Smokeout• Safe driving and holidays (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)
DECEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Impaired Driving Prevention Month

A *Communities Talk* activity educates, empowers, and mobilizes communities to prevent alcohol and other drug misuse.



PLANNING CHECKLIST

Choose an activity and date that supports your goals and community. For stipends issued in 2024, your activity must take place between January 1 and November 30, 2024. Stipends are limited, so register as soon as possible.

Sign up for the StopAlcoholAbuse.gov Email Newsletter!

Receive monthly updates on substance use and misuse prevention from federal agencies and national organizations.

REGISTER

- Look for an email invitation in January or request your invitation from info@stopalcoholabuse.net.
- Complete your online registration to apply for a stipend. Please be sure to have your organization's [most recent W-9 Federal Tax ID Form](#) on hand.
- Read the [frequently asked questions and answers](#) for more information on planning and registering your activity.
- Review the graphic on page 6, "[3 Steps to Completing Your Online Communities Talk Profile](#)."

PLAN AND PROMOTE

- Review the *Communities Talk* [webpage](#) to learn more about planning an activity.
- Watch our [video](#) to learn how *Communities Talk* activities impact communities.
- Visit the *Communities Talk* [Success Stories](#) page to see how other organizations across the country mobilized their communities.
- Check out the [SAMHSA planning app](#), which can help you plan your activity, create tasks, track progress, and collaborate with others.

PLANNING CHECKLIST (Continued)

- Go to the [Tips and Resources](#) page for additional ideas to help plan an impactful activity.
- Use the Planning Calendar on page 2 to align your activity with monthly observances or important events in your own community.
- Consider collaborating with prevention specialists, parents and caregivers, policymakers, law enforcement professionals, and local business leaders in planning and conducting a *Communities Talk* activity.

SHARE OUTCOMES

- Update the activity details in your *Communities Talk* profile to feature your activity on our [Find an Activity map](#).
- Look for an invitation to share your own *Communities Talk* [Success Story](#). Your story could be featured on the *Communities Talk* website!

Join the conversation on prevention.
Follow #CommunitiesTalk for the latest
prevention resources and updates.



3 STEPS TO COMPLETING Your *Communities Talk* Online Profile

1

Register

- First, obtain your organization's Tax ID Number and W-9 Form (you must use the latest version of the W-9 Form from 2018) from your treasurer or bank/budget manager. If you don't have a W-9 Form, we'll provide you with one, along with instructions on how to complete it.
- Next, look for your unique invitation via email or request your invitation at info@stopalcoholabuse.net. When you receive your email, click on your unique URL. **Complete** your login details, create a *Communities Talk* profile, and fill out the registration form completely.
- Save your login information, including your password, so you can update your activity details!
- Finally, if your stipend is approved, you should receive your \$750 check within 21 days of completing registration. Cash your check immediately as it will expire after 90 days. Then you can start or continue planning your activity!

2

Complete Your Activity Details

- Post your *Communities Talk* activity date, goals, and other details so it can be featured on the *Communities Talk* [Find an Activity map](#).
- You can log in at any time to update your details. You must enter your activity date to be considered for a [Success Story](#).

3

Share Your Success

- Log back into your *Communities Talk* profile and review your activity details to ensure you have entered a date (or date range) for your activity.
- Keep an eye on your email for an invitation to share your Success Story. It's a great way to promote your work and inspire others.

10 STEPS FOR *COMMUNITIES TALK* ACTIVITY PLANNING

- 1. Review SAMHSA's [Strategic Prevention Framework](#) and [assess your community's needs](#).** Consider how you can apply this framework to your *Communities Talk* activity. Gather and assess data to ensure that your activity is designed for your community and its unique needs.
- 2. Define your goals and objectives.** Determine what you want to accomplish based on your community assessment. Are you creating awareness about an issue? Are you inviting feedback on public policies related to underage drinking? Are you launching a new prevention tool or program to combat drug misuse?
- 3. Organize a planning committee.** Engage key community stakeholders to plan your activity. Consider collaborating with partners from different sectors of the community, including law enforcement, elected officials, youth, faith-based organizations, businesses, schools, parent groups, health care professionals, and local colleges and universities.
- 4. Obtain your organization's W-9 Form and Tax ID Number.** Before you start your online registration, get your organization's Federal Tax ID Number (also called an Employer Identification Number) and W-9 Form from your treasurer, fiscal agent, or bank/budget manager. Even if you have registered in past years, you must submit a W-9 Form. If you do not have a W-9 Form, they are [available online](#). Having these items ready will allow you to start and finish the registration process in one session.
- 5. Register online.** Complete your online registration (please answer all of the questions!) and provide a W-9 Form by using the URL provided in your unique email invitation. This will allow SAMHSA to post your event or activity on the *Communities Talk* website.

10 STEPS FOR *COMMUNITIES TALK* ACTIVITY PLANNING (Continued)

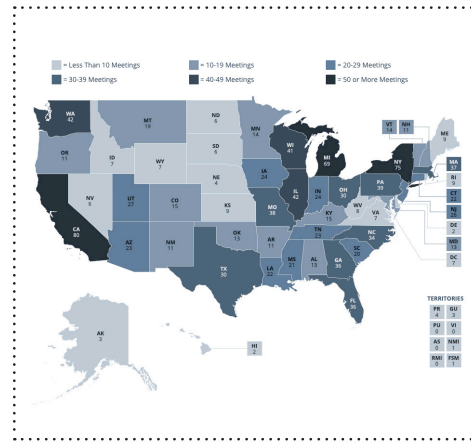
- 6. Determine your activity type, day, time, and location.** To be effective, *Communities Talk* activity venues should be anywhere a community gathers, virtually or in-person, to have an open discussion. Some organizations host activities online in a webinar format or partner with local television stations. Others host them through social media campaigns and virtual gatherings. Decide which *Communities Talk* activity setting and format will best meet your objectives. Read past [Success Stories](#) for ideas.
- 7. Promote your activity.** There are many [tips and resources](#) for promoting your activity on the *Communities Talk* website. Resources include a flyer, presentation template, proclamation, news release, certificate of appreciation, social media content, and tips and tools for working with the news media. All are downloadable and customizable.
- 8. Conduct and evaluate your activity.** How well did you deliver your *Communities Talk* activity, and how successful was it in achieving your desired outcomes? Who participated? SAMHSA asks all participating organizations to log into their online profile after their *Communities Talk* activity and answer brief questions about their event. Read more about evaluation in SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework and on the *Communities Talk* [website](#).
- 9. Tell us about your activity.** Please answer brief questions in your online organizer's profile to share your activity. Upload flyers, pictures, news clips, and more to share your success in the online portal. You can also share photos and videos on Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), or Instagram using #CommunitiesTalk. Organizers who share their success with us are usually featured as a Success Story on the *Communities Talk* website and inspire other organizations.
- 10. Keep the momentum going!** Stipends to support *Communities Talk* activities are now available every year. It's always a good time to talk about prevention.



TELL US MORE

Once you have held your activity, get ready to showcase your great work!

YOUR ACTIVITY DETAILS



Once you complete your activity:

- Revisit your *Communities Talk* profile and share some key activity details in the “Activity Details” section.
- Your details will be displayed on the [Find an Activity map](#). This allows other activity organizers to browse activities happening near them for inspiration and potentially future collaboration.

SHARING YOUR SUCCESS STORY

Featured Success Story

Community Partnerships to Help Communities Talk

Date of Event: July 17, 2019
Location: Laughlin, NV
Hosted by: Mohave Area Partnership Promoting Educated Decisions (MAPPED)



Mohave Area Partnership Promoting Educated Decisions (MAPPED) partnered with various community stakeholders to organize their *Communities Talk* event. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, they had to reschedule, but they were able to shed light on the underage drinking and substance misuse issues in their community through electronic billboards and flyers.

[Read Full Story](#)

- The *Communities Talk* team will email you instructions on how to share your Success Story after your activity is completed.
- Be sure to include photos, links to your social media posts (#CommunitiesTalk), or data that your organization collected.

NOTE: To be invited, you must enter your activity date and details (or dates, if your activity is more than a single day such as a social media campaign).

HAVE MORE TO SHARE?

Email us anytime at info@stopalcoholabuse.net to share additional media coverage, photos/videos, or social media promotion. We can help link them to your activity details and Success Story!

QUICK START GUIDE FAQs

HOW DOES MY ORGANIZATION OBTAIN A STIPEND?

SAMHSA sends email invitations to prevention representatives at community-based organizations, colleges, and universities as well as other federal and national partner organizations. Qualified community-based organizations interested in participating may request a stipend to help offset the costs of planning an activity. Only one planning stipend is issued per community-based organization or collaborative.

If your organization wishes to participate and has not received an invitation, check with your state or territory's [National Prevention Network member](#), or contact us at info@stopalcoholabuse.net.

Stipends are limited, so we recommend that you register as soon as possible. Review *Communities Talk* resources and materials at www.stopalcoholabuse.gov/communitiestalk/.

HOW CAN THE PLANNING STIPEND BE USED?

The stipend helps cover the costs of planning an in-person or virtual activity and other prevention efforts.

Use stipends to offset the costs of:

- Honoraria
- Facility rentals
- Event equipment rentals or purchases (e.g., tables, chairs, monitors, cameras, etc.)
- Promotion/printing (e.g., posters, flyers, billboards, postcards, printers, ink, paper, etc.)
- Yearly subscriptions to design software and/or email marketing platforms (e.g., Canva Pro, Adobe Creative Cloud, Mailchimp, etc.)
- Hosting a webinar, live stream, or other virtual activity that may require special software or equipment

QUICK START GUIDE FAQs

(Continued)

WHAT CAN MY STIPEND NOT BE USED FOR?

Stipends cannot be used for items to entice or recruit participants, such as:

- Food and beverages
- Door prizes
- Giveaway items/promotional products (e.g., T-shirts, baseball caps, coffee mugs, or anything not specifically related to conducting your activity)

For other ideas, please contact info info@stopalcoholabuse.net.

ARE COMMUNITIES TALK STIPENDS FEDERAL GRANTS, FOR ACCOUNTING PURPOSES?

Stipends for registered host organizations are not federal grant or program funds and have no CFDA ([Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance](#), now called Assistance Listings) number. Instead, these stipends come out of the budget for the SAMHSA Substance Use Disorder Prevention Engagement Initiatives contract.

