

# Impact Prevention

River Hills Prevention Connection

Lawrence County, Ohio

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## Ohio's SPF-PFS Initiative – Data Mini-Grantees: Community-Based Process Pre-Community Coalition Action Theory (Pre-CCAT)

Ohio's SPF-PFS Evidence-Based Practices Workgroup (EBP) requires that all SPF-PFS funded communities implement a strategic plan using the CSAP prevention strategy of a Community-Based Process. They want to ensure that the community-based work will be sustained in communities beyond the life cycle of SPF-PFS funding. A strong community-based approach is essential for implementation, sustainability, and community support for prevention. The responses below describe the community group who supports implementation of the prevention strategies in this community. They are in the pre-developmental stage of having a more comprehensive Community Coalition Action Theory process, as outlined by Butterfoss & Kegler (2002).

### Community Context

Lawrence County is situated in the Appalachian foothills of Southeastern Ohio and is the most southern county in the state located on the Ohio River across from Ashland KY and Huntington WV forming a Tri-State area. Ironton is the county seat. Our Appalachian county enjoyed a rich industrial heritage at one time including coal mining, cast iron products, and chemical production, but that form of economic development has faded. Lawrence County is, however, positioned for transporting goods or people via river, rail or air. Our regional airport in Kenova, WV is within 30 miles of most points in Lawrence County.

**Economy.** Our population relies heavily on the service industry i.e. episodic/fragmented healthcare, government, small industry, and food service for employment opportunities. There is no hospital in Lawrence County. In our county, 7% are uninsured and 18% have Medicare and 30.1% (one of Ohio's highest) have Medicaid coverage. The remainder would be insured privately, the Affordable Care Act and through an employer plan. Transportation to healthcare appointments is challenging if not privately provided and can be accessed by the Ironton-Lawrence County Transit system, cabs, and the Medicaid Passport system. (US Census.gov 2017; Ohio Department of Medicaid Report, 2016; & Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.)

Lawrence County is home to Ohio University Southern providing many individuals the opportunity for higher education that would not be able to afford to travel north or to out of state institutions, and yet, only 14.5% of persons age 25 and older hold a bachelor's degree. The population of the county has dwindled to less than 60,000 and only 85.9% of residents ages 25 and older are high school graduates. Lawrence County is an aging community. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of our county's students are eligible for free and reduced lunch and the poverty rate in Lawrence County is 19.5%. Median household income in 2017 was \$45,466. (Ohio State University Extension 2017) (QuickFacts US Census 2018 estimates from sample collection).

**Other Contextual Information.** Natural Resources abound for recreational activities in Lawrence County. The Wayne National Forest Recreation Area offers hiking, swimming, boating and fishing. The Ohio River offers fishing and boating. Some municipalities offer walking tracks and biking trails. Creeks and small lakes throughout the county are available for kayaking and fishing. The county is very connected through competitive sports including schools and community teams like little league, challenger leagues and Special Olympics.

## Lead Agency or Convener Group

Impact Prevention is the backbone organization for the SPF-PFS and has been the mechanism for developing relationships in the community. Impact Prevention serves as the fiscal agent for SPF-PFS resources and grant oversight. River Hills Prevention Connection is a strategy of the backbone agency providing staff, meeting space, and support which will allow for continuous growth and continuous improvement.



**Mission and Vision.** The mission of Impact Prevention is to serve the public at large with mental health promotion, drug and alcohol prevention strategies. The vision is Healthy Choices, Healthy Communities.

**Service Area/Population.** Impact Prevention's service area is Lawrence County, OH which encompasses 457 square miles of land (US Census Bureau) and includes eight school systems: K-12 grades. Impact Prevention provides services in public and private schools throughout the county that include prevention education using evidence-base strategies, Youth-Led Prevention (YLP) Teams in middle and high schools; and Youth Empowerment Activities (YEA) after school and during the summer primarily serving the children living in the Ironton Metropolitan Housing Authority low-income housing units.

## Coalition Membership and Prevention Data Committee (PDC)

The River Hills Prevention Connection coalition coordinator works at Impact Prevention. Coalition members have engaged the SPF-PFS at various levels. All members are kept informed about progress and plans during meeting reports. Some members have engaged as PDC members to analyze the OHYES! Survey data and develop a problem of practice. Some members engage in strategic planning and developed six logic model maps for our opioid overdose death prevention initiative. Our Coalition Chair and faith-based member have volunteered to attend 3 of the Prevention Action Alliance Coalition Institute sessions this fiscal year. Members also engage in planning of an annual event called Parks aLive (a community connectedness initiative), Suicide Prevention Awareness Walk and Faith based education. There are currently four coalition members working directly on the SPF project specifically.



**Members Representative of Community.** The River Hills Prevention Connection follows the guidance of identifying members from the 12 Community Sectors recommended by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA). The Coalition Coordinator is continuously making new contacts and extending invitations to new

members. Coalition members are also asked to invite others to join. Brochures are circulated at community events and an ad also appears in the local paper about the Coalition, coalition meetings, and how to join.

We have two ways to ensure we hear from the priority population. First, in Spring of 2018, the coalition conducted 6 individual key informant interviews to understand the level of awareness regarding underage drinking in our community. In Fall of 2018, the coalition conducted 4 listening sessions: 2 with youth (facilitated at 2 different high schools) and 2 with adults. Second, during coalition meetings, all in attendance are introduced and have an opportunity to share concerns. The leader of the faith-based sub-committee also brings a lot to the coalition, including families of those impacted by treatment.

**PDC Guidance.** Two of our PDC members attended CADCA in July 2019 to better understand current Media Campaigns being used in rural communities focused on Underage Drinking. The committee is provided with ongoing data, possible environmental (media) strategies (SAMSHA – Talk. They Hear You) for review and other information that will assist them with making decisions for the initiative. In addition, they are included in workgroup projects to move the initiative forward.

## Structures

**Bylaws and 501c3 Status.** A Committee will be convened soon to establish formal By-laws. We understand this is an important piece of our coalition that needs to be complete. The River Hills Prevention Connection is an evidence-based strategy (Community Based-Process) through the backbone agency (Impact Prevention). Impact Prevention is a 501c3 Non-profit entity.

**Coalition's Mission and Vision Statement.** The mission of the River Hills Prevention Connection Coalition, a part of Impact Prevention, unites service agencies to empower community residents to make healthy life choices. The vision is under development. A committee will convene soon to propose a vision statement for the coalition members to approve.

**Networks.** The SPF-PFS initiative has allowed our coalition to build networking relationships among over 30 groups or agencies in the community. Most notably, all of the school districts in Lawrence County have established agreements with us to collect data and provide evidence-based programming in the schools.

## Synergy

**Pooled Resources.** The Coalition currently benefits from OhioMHAS funded initiatives. We plan to convene a Drug-Free Communities committee to investigate application opportunities for submitting a 2020 grant. We have reached out to three local communities (bordering counties) that have currently funded DFC grants for assistance in grant development. We are also looking to the United Way of the River Cities, Foundation for the Tri-State, and Ohio University Southern for possible future funding.

## Community Capacity

**Implementation of Strategies.** The coalition coordinator has been learning the SPF-PFS process through another initiative that utilizes the same framework and is transitioning implementation to within the coalition efforts. The coordinator has been participating in professional development Strategic Prevention Framework and Partnerships for Success (SPF-PFS) learning collaborative, Ohio Coaching and Mentoring Technical Assistance (OCAM) via on-line, face to face, 2 Communities Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) conferences in 2020, OHMHAS training, and Ohio Prevention Alliance training to achieve OCPS credentials. Impact Prevention's youth services coordinator and youth staff has been participating in professional development via on-line, face to face, OhioMHAS training, and Ohio Prevention Action Alliance training to achieve OCPS and OCPSA credentials.

**Community Change Outcomes.** Although difficult to talk about prevention with children of parents who are misusing substances, we know it is important. Only 51% of youth surveyed in Lawrence County in grades 8-12, reported that their parents had a conversation with them about the dangers of drinking alcohol.

**Community Capacity.** The Coalition Leadership has had several training opportunities to learn and practice how to engage the community in data-driven planning. Community leadership has developed these planning capacities as result of these various initiatives. Our local government has been more involved and we have more sectors represented and engaged. Likewise, communication has increased over the past three years.

**Health and Social Outcomes.** As a result of the SPF-PFS project, community connectedness increased with the Strategic Prevention Framework-Partners for Success (SPF-PFS) process, a series of events were created to improve community connectedness and reduce social isolation. We tracked over 1,400 participants in the series. One alternative activity: "Open Mic Night" has been sustained by the business owner after grant funding terminated. The second annual Parks aLive occurred in July 2019, which is an alternative activity that brings agencies, businesses, friends, neighbors, families, and volunteers to one place to share information.