

Community Prevention and Wellness Initiative (CPWI) & Community-Based Organization (CBO)

Social Norms Marketing Guidance

The purpose of this document is to ensure social norms marketing (SNM) campaigns are implemented to fidelity and achieve positive outcomes.

The intent of SNM is to promote accurate and healthy norms that are often underestimated. According to the social norms approach, when individuals *incorrectly* perceive that most of their peers (or other community members) engage in problem behaviors such as substance use then they do as well. Social norms messages aim to correct misperceptions related to the frequency and/or extent of problem behaviors and close the gap between perceived and actual norms. As a result, problem behaviors may decrease and engagement in healthy behaviors may increase.

DBHR prevention contractors should use the following guidance in developing and implementing SNM campaigns.

- When using DBHR funding, SNM should be designated as CSAP strategy “Information Dissemination¹” for all documents (e.g., strategic plans, action plans, budgets, A-19s), and reporting should reflect this designation.
- SNM campaigns must adhere to specific training and implementation criteria (see checklist below)².

SNM Implementation Checklist

- Train a minimum of one key leader/coalition staff member involved in the local SNM effort in at least 18 hours of training on designing and implementing SNM campaigns.
- Utilize local data and the approved strategic plan to identify an outcome (e.g., reduce youth marijuana use) and gaps related to the outcome based on community-specific perceived and actual norms related to the targeted risk behaviors.
 - Identify information about perceived and actual norms for the target audience(s) (e.g., parents, youth, adults in the community) using existing baseline data or conduct a survey to gather data on the gap between perceived and actual norms.
- Collaborate with community members to assess the data and confirm that a SNM campaign is the best strategy for impacting the gap between actual and perceived norms.
- Collect information (e.g., interviews, focus groups) to identify characteristics of the target audience(s) relevant to message design and dissemination.
 - Pilot test messages (text, graphics, tone) with the target audience(s).
- Develop a communications plan to determine the message “dose” and mode(s) of message delivery to impact misperceptions of norms.
- Develop an evaluation plan including follow-up surveys or the analysis of follow-up data on community behaviors and perceptions/attitudes to determine if the gap between perceived and actual norms has changed. Pre-and post-test measures should be based on the identified outcome and baseline data should be gathered prior to campaign implementation.

¹ SNM is not classified as CSAP strategy “Environmental” and therefore cannot be used to fulfill associated DBHR requirements.

² DMA funds may be used for SNM campaigns that meet **all** of the checklist criteria. These campaigns are considered “Promising Programs.”