

# Sunnyside United.Unidos Strategic Plan

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Unlocking Sunnyside's potential for a safer, healthier, and prosperous drug/alcohol free community for our youth.

Sunnyside United is a grassroots volunteer organization formally established in October 2012. The primary focus is to address needs and barriers to student success: 1) Involvement in underage drinking and other substance use; 2) Involvement in gangs; 3) Adequate access to health care; 4) Preparation for the future—Skills/College readiness.

Anchored by J. David Hawkins and Rico F. Catalano's risk and protective factor approach to substance abuse prevention, the Coalition's engagement in this framework seeks to answer five questions that align with the model's five step process:

1. What is the problem?
  - Stage: Assessment
  - Action: Analyze local data
2. What do we have to work with to address the problem?
  - Stage: Capacity
  - Action: Build Capacity
3. What is our plan for addressing the problem?
  - Stage: Planning
  - Action: Develop a thoughtful, data-driven plan
4. What are we going to do to get the work done?
  - Stage Implementation
  - Action: Put effective prevention programs and policies in place
5. How will we know if we succeed?
  - Stage: Evaluation
  - Action: Measure our efforts for positive change.

This Strategic Prevention Framework is a five step process known to promote youth development, reduce risk-taking behaviors, build assets and resilience, and prevent problem behaviors across the life span. It is a circular process and we will return to these five steps again and again.

The assessment process guided the Coalition to the identification of four risk factors across 3 domains that science has demonstrated to be psychosocial predictors of adolescent substance abuse:

**Domain:** Community

(Risk) Availability of Alcohol/Other Drugs

(Risk) Community Laws and Norms Favorable to Drug Use, Firearms, and Crime

**Domain:** Individual

(Risk) Favorable Attitudes towards Drug Use

**Domain:** Family

(Risk) Family Management Problems

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The plan to address these issues consists of a mix of direct services, community organizing, and environmental strategies throughout Sunnyside and the Sunnyside School District catchment area that will increase:

- Community readiness to address laws and norms favorable to drug use
  - Multi-prong, multi-cultural, multimedia approach to dispensing messages about the dangers of alcohol use.
- Youth understanding about the dangers and risks of alcohol and other drug use
  - Multi-prong, multi-cultural, multimedia approach to dispensing messages about the dangers of alcohol use.
  - Comprehensive Student Assistance Program – Project Success – Prevention Education Series to all 9<sup>th</sup> grade students.
  - Life Skills Prevention Curriculum to all 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.
  - Review of school policies.
- Knowledge of Family Management Skills
  - Support Strong Families Programs through assistance with advertising and incentives for participation.

Decrease

- Access to Alcohol
  - Compliance Checks and Shoulder Taps
- Favorable Attitudes towards Alcohol
  - See above – Youth Understanding about the dangers and risks of alcohol and other drug use.

Cultural Competency is addressed in each of the Action Plans that have been developed.

Evaluation of progress and final outcomes is important. Monthly meetings will include a time for interim progress reports. Built into each action plan are process evaluation goals, short-term goals, and intermediate goals. Identified data sets for each set of goals will be used.

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## STRATEGIC PLAN

### Introduction

The community of Sunnyside, located in south-central Washington State, has long been concerned about the level of youth alcohol and other drug use, as well as youth violence, both in general and as it relates to gang involvement. Coalition work began here in the late 1990s and Coalition leadership has evolved over the years to meet the needs of local youth, and to work within available financial and human resources.

The Sunnyside Model looks somewhat different than other sites around the state (See Appendix 9). This model was intentionally designed in such a manner as to address local issues. The areas addressed are interrelated. Youth substance abuse is a critical issue, however, it cannot address this issue without also placing focus on our youth gang problem; it is well documented that the gang culture is heavily centered on use and distribution of drugs. In the healthcare arena, it is known that youth who are using substances may have compromised their emotional and mental health, as well as their physical health. As well, they may suffer from a mental health disorder and turn to alcohol or drugs as a way to cope. In this regard, our Student Health Care Center component plays a critical role in the larger picture. Youth need to have a sense of hope. Whether attending a 4 year college, a technical college or taking some other path, youth need skills in order to become employed in a job that will adequately support them in adulthood. Our goal is to provide structures in which our youth find long-term life success.

The Coalition is involved in planning, developing and implementing strategies to address the following:

- 1) youth substance use –  
Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR) Prevention Redesign;
- 2) two grants to address Youth Gang Involvement –  
Gang Reduction through Intervention and Prevention (GRIP), and the Gang Free Initiative (GFI);
- 3) the newly constructed School Based Health Center; and
- 4) the College Readiness/Skills Center.

Following is a snapshot the development of this work over the past 15 years:

- 1998—Sunnyside's Promise forms. Their goal was to provide the Five Promises to local youth: 1) Caring Adults; 2) Safe Places; 3) Healthy Start; 4) Effective Education; 5) Opportunities to Help Others.
- 1998 – 2012—Sunnyside's Promise successfully provides anti-drug/alcohol and anti-violence/gang programs for area youth.
- 2009-2012 – Sunnyside School District, City of Sunnyside and Sunnyside Community Hospital provided financial and other support to Sunnyside's Promise efforts to reduce gang involvement and youth substance abuse.
- April 2010 – Committee to plan the School Based Health Care Center began meeting.