The Annual PRI Community Survey

**Goals of the Community Survey**

We know that children and youth are influenced by their families’ values, by their peers, and by their communities’ laws and norms. We often refer to these by saying things like “my friends all think…” or “the people in this community believe…” In the strategic planning process coalitions do assessments in order to understand the strength of those influences, and then use the results of those assessments to select the best prevention strategies. However, our needs assessment data are largely based on the Healthy Youth Survey, and so are oriented toward the perceptions and opinions of youth. We have no data to use as measurement of the adult perceptions and opinions that influence the larger social world of the community. The Community Survey will fill in an essential part of that gap.

For DBHR the use of Community Surveys was pioneered by the SPF SIG communities. Here are two examples of how those surveys influenced planning processes.

Several of the SPF SIG coalitions thought that adults in their community believed that youth drinking is a “rite of passage”. Before developing a strategy to address this issue, they did a survey and discovered that a large majority of adults felt strongly that youth should NOT drink. So in that case, the coalitions used the survey findings to refine, and in once case totally change their strategy.

Another SPF SIG coalition wanted to enhance enforcement strategies. During the discussions a law enforcement representative expressed the strong opinion that the public would not support the Police Department if they started busting kids who were drinking after the football games (not to mention busting football players). However, they found after doing a survey that the public was strongly in favor of such enforcement.

GUIDELINES

To find out more about community surveys see DBHR training, “Community Surveys” webinar series presented by Marc Bolan available via [www.theAthenaForum.org/trainings](http://www.theAthenaForum.org/trainings). Marc has collaborated with a number of communities in Washington to implement community surveys.

**Administer your surveys as soon as possible**

Begin organizing for the community survey now. Implement it as soon as possible so that you can use the data in your strategic planning process. The window for implementing the annual survey is October through January. Each community’s unique link to the survey will be emailed to the PRI Coordinator on Wednesday, November 7th.

**Surveys should be implemented with a cross-section of the community**

A rule of thumb for a survey like this is to collect survey data from 250-350 adults, and they should represent a cross-section of the community. For instance, if your population has three different racial/ethnic groups, all about the same size, then you should survey them in equal proportions. Also, try to survey about half women, half men, and don’t forget young adults and the elderly. Some coalitions have decided to collect additional surveys from parents with children 12-18 years old. The school administrations might provide ways to administer surveys among the parents of their students.

[NOTE: Some communities may have the capacity to do a random selection of respondents. For instance, you might have a coalition member with survey skills and access to an address file from which they could draw a random sample. This is especially helpful in large communities.

No matter how you do it, the most important thing is that the survey should be representative of the community you are serving. You can get an estimate of the size of the racial/ethnic groups in your school district by going to the OSPI School Report Card website and use the proportion of kids enrolled in public school. <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/summary>. You can also access the 2010 U.S. census data online.

**PRI sites will use a short standard survey**

The surveys are posted on Survey Monkey®, and you will each have a unique hyperlink for the survey. If you implement the survey by paper and pencil, then you (the coordinator or someone on your team) will enter the survey data “by hand” into Survey Monkey®.

We are requiring that everyone use the same survey so that we can all learn together what works, especially with regard to environmental strategies. While a primary goal of the Community Survey is to collect information from your community’s adults regarding underage drinking, and while each of your communities are very different, some of the environmental strategies you choose will be very similar. By collecting data using a standard survey, all of us----the Prevention System in Washington---will have a chance to learn what works under what circumstances. This is especially important because, *with very few exceptions*, the research basis for these strategies is not well developed. That is, we don’t have a “best practices” list of environmental programs with all details of the strategy well described and verified by research to prove that it reduces underage drinking. So we are all learning together. Besides a Survey Monkey® report for your community, DBHR will analyze the data for all PRI sites together and report it back to you. With your help we will be in a much better position to know what works!

**Customizing your Community Survey**

You may want to add questions to PRI survey. At this point DBHR does not have the capacity to tailor the surveys to particular communities. However you can expand your survey effort. For instance, if you decide to use a paper-and-pencil survey, you can easily add additional questions. You will only have to enter the required questions into the DBHR Survey Monkey® questionnaire. On the other hand, you could set up your own online survey that includes the required questions plus additional questions that you select, and then provide DBHR with a datafile that includes only the required questions.