



Drug-Free Communities Support (DFC) Program

Office of National Drug Control Policy

What is the DFC Program?

The Drug-Free Communities Support Program (DFC) is a Federal grant program funded through the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). It provides funding to community-based coalitions to prevent youth substance use. The philosophy behind the DFC Program is that local drug problems require local solutions, and community coalitions are the best vehicle for creating community change.

The DFC program has funded nearly 2,000 coalitions since 1997 and currently mobilizes nearly 9,000 community volunteers. Today, there are 692 funded coalitions in 49 States, the District of Columbia, U.S. Territories and Protectorates.

What Does the DFC Program Fund?

The DFC Program funds *community coalitions* that address youth substance use. The program requires the use of comprehensive community-based strategies that focus on effectively planned and implemented *environmental prevention strategies* aimed at reducing youth access to and the availability of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

Successful applicants focus their efforts on developing their coalition's infrastructure to support community-based environmental prevention strategies. The DFC Program does not fund "programs" (i.e., after-school programs, mentoring services, etc.) or "direct services" (i.e., school-based counselors, treatment services, etc.). The DFC Program's success is based on coalitions addressing the local conditions in their communities that increase the likelihood that youth will use harmful substances. Efforts to change the community (i.e., school-based policy change, law enforcement efforts, local ordinances, etc.) as a whole are the basis of DFC's success.

Who Can Apply for DFC Funding?

Any community coalition that meets the program's statutory eligibility requirements may apply for DFC funding. Coalitions can choose to serve any type of community they choose – whether a community of place (city, town, village, neighborhood) or community of interest (specific population with specific needs).

The DFC Request for Applications (RFA) is released to the public in mid-January; applications are due in mid-March. Applicants may request up to \$125,000 per year, which must be matched with non-Federal resources.¹ DFC grants are awarded in five-year cycles, with a maximum of ten years of funding. DFC grantees are chosen using a peer-review process comprised of current and former DFC grantees.

DFC Statutory Eligibility Requirements

Coalitions must:

- ✓ Have representation and participation from 12 defined community sectors;
- ✓ Be at least 6 months old at the time of application;
- ✓ Have youth substance use prevention as part of its primary mission;
- ✓ Address multiple drugs (more than 1);
- ✓ Meet National Cross-Site Evaluation requirements;
- ✓ Be eligible to receive Federal funding;
- ✓ Obtain dollar-for-dollar match;
- ✓ Not request more than \$125,000/year;
- ✓ Not overlap zip codes with a currently funded or applying coalition without showing cooperation; and
- ✓ Have only one grant at a time.

For more information on the DFC Statutory Eligibility Requirements, visit
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/information-for-potential-applicants>

¹ Applicants serving Native American/Tribal communities with active Native American/Tribal sector representation may use Federal sources as match.

Do DFC Coalitions Make a Difference?

Since 2002, DFC-funded communities have achieved significant reductions in youth alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana use. Data from the DFC National Evaluation indicate a 16 percent reduction in alcohol use, 27 percent reduction in tobacco use, and 23 percent reduction in marijuana use for middle school youth living in DFC-funded communities. High school-aged youth have reduced their use of alcohol by 9 percent, tobacco by 16 percent, and marijuana by 7 percent in DFC-funded communities.

What Resources are Available to Help Communities Apply for DFC Funding?

The DFC Program has multiple avenues to assist coalitions wishing to apply for funding. Upon the release of the DFC RFA, information is posted to the DFC website, www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/Drug-Free-Communities-Support-Program including videos explaining the sections of the RFA, as well as frequently asked questions. Historically, the DFC Program has provided on-site workshops for potential applicants in at least three locations throughout the United States (locations are listed in the RFA). These workshops are free and identical to the videos posted on the DFC website. In addition, the RFA contains contact information on both programmatic and fiscal aspects of applying for the DFC grant. Applicants may call or email their questions concerning the RFA.

Tips for Applicants

Go small. Communities that serve 5,000 or 500,000 people will receive the same funding amounts under the DFC Program. Communities should define natural boundaries that allow for a coalition's service area to be established based upon the demographics of the people living there. Define coalition coverage by a school district, a neighborhood, or a grouping of city blocks. Build multiple coalitions within an urban center that address the specific needs of a "community," as defined by the coalition.

Sector membership and recruitment. Seek out champions in local agencies/organizations that can help you build a coalition. Building multiple coalitions within an urban area (serving specific communities) can help leaders in local government become more aware of the movement of the coalitions and see them as more capable of being local problem solvers. It will also assist in demonstrating to local leaders the power of local problem solving; thereby increasing the likelihood they will want to be involved in the coalition's efforts.

Seek multiple sources of funding. DFC funding will not pay for everything a community needs to solve local youth substance use issues, but it can help bolster community buy-in and support to further leverage additional resources. DFC is not meant to support "programs" or buy "direct services"; instead, coalitions should see DFC funding as money to develop the coalition's infrastructure (i.e., paid staff, training and technical assistance, etc.).

Take advantage of existing infrastructure. Identify neighborhood associations, clubs, or other interest groups that are already organized to improve neighborhoods or reduce crime in your community of focus. While DFC only funds youth substance use prevention, it makes sense to avoid starting from scratch when organizing your community. Take advantage of organizational infrastructure and individual passion when building a DFC-eligible coalition.

For more information, please contact:

Helen Hernandez, Public Health Advisor
202.395.6665
hhernandez@ondcp.eop.gov

Victoria Cummiskey, Public Engagement Specialist
202.395.6774
vcummiskey@ondcp.eop.gov

"The Drug-Free Communities Support program embodies the Obama Administration's dedication to evidence-based community prevention efforts that protect the health of our young people. As a cornerstone of the President's National Drug Control Strategy, this program provides the funding necessary for communities to identify and respond to local substance use problems."

— ONDCP Director Gil Kerlikowske