

The “voice” of this document is to be “storytelling” v. fact enumeration.
The audience for this document is the community at large.



***Eagle County
Communities That Care
Community Action Plan
2021 - 2026***

1. PREVENTION IS A PRIORITY

The Eagle River Valley is a rural resort community. People move and visit here to have fun, experience the outdoors, and be social. With all of these great assets comes a price. Our community is more exposed to substances than many other communities. In turn, our youth are more exposed to substances, substance use and misuse.

Prevention Science helps to mediate the environmental impacts that our youth face. The Communities That Care process helps community members work together to efficiently and effectively promote positive youth development. The system was developed by Dr. J. David Hawkins and Dr. Richard F. Catalano of the Social Development Research Group at the University of Washington, Seattle. It is based on their research, which has identified risk factors that predict youth problem behaviors and protective factors that buffer children from risk and help them succeed in life.

This document explains our approach to increase protective factors and reduce risk factors.

In the Eagle River valley we want youth to THRIVE!. Our plan to address our prevention needs is a collaborative project with youth, public health, education, health and human services, civic organizations, law enforcement, local businesses, parents and other concerned citizens helping to implement this vision. Each of these partners is critical in leveraging community assets and resources needed to sustain our prevention efforts now and in the future.

2. COMMUNITY COLLABORATION IS THE HALLMARK OF COALITION WORK

No one organization can tackle youth challenges on their own. All organizations and individuals can share in the work to positively impact youth.

The following agencies have been part of this effort, either by being a representative on a board or work group, and/or by contributing information that helped inform our community's decisions.

Eagle County Government (including the Sheriff's
Office, Public Health and Health and Human Services)
Vail Police Department
Avon Police Department
Town of Eagle
Eagle County Paramedics
Vail Resorts
Eagle County School District
Mind Springs Health
Eagle River Water and Sanitation District
SOS Outreach
The Literacy Project
Mountain Youth
Bright Future Foundation
Vail Health
Eagle River Fire District
Eagle County Sheriff's Department
Alpine Bank
Vail Valley Partnership
Catholic Charities
United Way of Eagle River Valley
Mountain Recreation
Walking Mountains
CSU Cooperative Extension
Youth Power 365
Colorado Mountain College

3. COLLECTIVE IMPACT IS ACHIEVED WHEN THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY IS INVOLVED.

Definition: Collective impact is a network of community members, organizations, and institutions who learn together, align efforts, and integrate actions to achieve community level change.

In the Eagle River Valley, we have about 4,000 middle and high school youth, seven different municipalities, a few business giants, two major health care facilities, a community college campus, and upwards of 40 youth-serving nonprofit organizations. In different ways, we all show how we care for our youth and their development.

While each entity has its own niche, the prevention process requires a coalition, coming together for a singular purpose. The CTC process capacity is bolstered by:

- Bright Future Foundation
- Speak Up Reach Out
- Eagle County School District including the ECSD Wellness Advisory Committee
- BE! Partners
- Walking Mountains Science Center including the Eagle Valley Outdoor Movement
- Eagle County Sheriff's Office
- YouthPower365
- CSU Cooperative Extension
- Vail Valley Partnership including CareerWise
- Eagle County Public Health
- Mountain Youth
 - Valley's Voice

4. ENSURING A HEALTHY COALITION ASSURES THE COALITION IS EFFECTIVE

The coalition focused on prevention must monitor and adjust its course. If the coalition is functioning well, the end result, positive changes in the community, will take hold. Our coalition monitors its functioning through a number of methods:

- An annual Healthy Coalition Survey is used to determine where barriers to effective, sustainable collective impact and community organizing might exist, while highlighting the strengths within the coalition that might be leveraged to positively impact identified barriers. Our coalition derives improvement goals and areas to celebrate from this survey.
- An annual Strategy Survey to assess strategy implementation provides insight into areas of growth and opportunity within their identified strategies. It measures how well our strategy teams are progressing.
- Key informant interviews provide an overview on how well the community is responding to the environmental strategies. Individuals are selected from a number of sectors to ensure a well-rounded view.
- Community Mobilizers complete Quarterly Reports as a requirement of our grant from Colorado. These are a series of reflection questions, which can deepen understanding of how the Communities Organizing For Prevention (COFP) components show up in the work being done by the coalition and strategy teams.

5. AUTHENTIC YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IS A REQUIREMENT BECAUSE ALL YOUTH ARE IMPACTED

Colorado defines Positive Youth Development (PYD) uniquely. PYD in Colorado is an evidence-based approach rather than a program or curriculum. Five guiding principles are the essential pillars for PYD in Colorado, which include:

1. Strengths-Based
2. Inclusive
3. Youth Engaged As Partners
4. Collaborative
5. Sustainable

This principle-based definition allows for all youth- serving and supporting organizations to be able to adopt and evolve their PYD skills and approach regardless of their outcome area of focus. The boundaries for integrating PYD are limitless because it changes beliefs about young people and sees youth as resources to cultivate and engage.

In our coalition, Valley's Voice, Mountain Youth's youth leadership council, serves as the conduit between youth voice and the community. The youth who are involved experience Positive Youth Development in action. They serve as the leaders of projects, are prominent decision makers for youth activities offered throughout the Eagle River Valley, and are paid a competitive hourly rate for their work.

6. COMMUNITY LEVEL OUTCOMES ARE WHAT DRIVES THE WORK

Health & Behavior Outcome Goals identify what we hope to achieve in addressing problem behaviors in our community. First, our CTC coalition looked at data from the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey to identify risk factors (behaviors that encourage risky behaviors) and protective factors (behaviors that insulate youth from risky behaviors).

Goals that were developed to address local Risk and Protective factors are:

- Community laws and norms favorable toward substance use
- Youth attitudes favorable toward substance use
- Availability of substances
- Opportunities for reward and pro-social involvement in our community

The coalition defined desired outcomes. The outcomes help measure changes in the problem behaviors of substance use and mental wellbeing. The Communities that Care coalition believes that:

Youth will THRIVE when:

- Youth accurately perceive the risks of substance use.
- Youth connect frequently and openly with positive parental figures, adult mentors and each other.
- Youth access multiple, diverse, fun and meaningful positive and pro-social substance-free opportunities.

When the community, schools, and families participate in environmental and primary prevention activities to increase protective factors and reduce risk factors then youth attitudes and behaviors towards substances will change. A broad spectrum of youth-serving organizations will be involved in order to meet outcome goals. It is in this fashion that community level outcomes are achieved.

Risk Factors

Risk factor outcome goals are meant to identify what we hope to achieve in addressing the priority risk factors related to the previously described behavior changes.

Availability of Substances

Youth will THRIVE when:

- Establishments do not sell or provide access to substances to underage youth under any circumstances.
 - There are strong policies and practices for establishments selling substances.
 - Agencies are supported by policies and practices that result in a reduction in access to substances by youth.
- Youth are knowledgeable about how to be compliant with laws, how current laws are enforced, and what consequences substance use incurs when violated.
- Youth understand that compliance, education, and consequences also apply to parents.
 - Which will result in a reduction in the percentage of youth who think it is easy or very easy to access substances

Community Laws and Norms Favorable Toward Substance Use

Youth will THRIVE when:

- Our community and visitors visibly and measurably show support for healthy community norms that include:
 - increased non-substance use options, i.e. pro-social opportunities
 - compliance with existing laws
 - a trusting, positive relationship with local law enforcement
- Education around the laws is delivered to youth, parents and trusted adults, and visitors in Eagle County.
- Expectations for compliance with existing laws is the same for all community members and visitors.
- Enforcement of existing laws is applied equitably across community members and visitors.
 - Which will result in an increase of compliance with community laws.

Youth Attitudes Towards Substance Use

Youth will THRIVE when:

- Access to substance abuse counseling is destigmatized and normalized.
- Data demonstrates fewer youth violating existing laws because they are choosing to use time constructively.

- Age-appropriate, evidence-informed prevention education programs or curricula will be delivered universally beginning in Kindergarten
 - Which will result prolonging the age at which individuals initiate experimentation with substances

Protective Factors

Protective factor outcome goals identify what we hope to achieve in building on the protective factors that are already present and will protect youth from risky behaviors.

Opportunities and rewards for prosocial involvement in the community, at school and at home

The following were identified as strengths in the community's capacity to implement this strategy:

- Support from Mountain Youth and partner organizations
- Mountain Youth's leadership council, Valley's Voice, includes local middle and high school students and meets regularly
- Youth serve on the Mountain Youth board of directors and committees.

The following were identified as areas for growth in the community's capacity to implement this strategy:

- Increase youth voice and leadership in other organizations, community boards or coalitions.
- Increase capacity and staff time within organizations to support a systems shift to including youth as decision-makers.
- Additional staff for youth coaching and mentoring is needed to create more opportunities for youth voice and leadership within organizations, community boards or coalitions.

Youth will THRIVE when:

- The number of youth serving in shared leadership and decision-making roles within our community increases continually.

Selected Strategies

The coalition looked at current and ongoing programs during the resource assessment, identified youth needs through the data evaluation phase and held conversations with various collaborators and partners. Through this process, the coalition identified two strategies to focus their efforts on: Recruit and Reward Youth for Participation on Community Coalitions (YRR) and Substance Abuse Prevention and Education (SPE). The YRR strategy has been ongoing since 2017 and was reaffirmed by the coalition in 2022 because of the successful youth involvement and the momentum of the strategy team to meet and then update their objectives as the community's needs transform. SPE was identified as a new strategy in 2023 because the previously identified strategies in 2021 (Build Public Support for Conventional Enforcement of Existing Laws and Leverage Statewide Mass Media Resources to Decrease Favorable Attitudes towards Substance Use) was confusing for the coalition. In addition, new research shows the challenges of enforcement with equity. The coalition felt the previous strategies were hard to tie to the overall CTC process and community impact. The SPP strategy was identified and affirmed because of the 'reduce access' language and variety of evidence-based impacts.

The following are the prevention strategies and the implementation outcome objectives set for each prioritized risk/protective factor:

Risk/Protective Factor #1: Opportunities and Rewards for Prosocial Involvement in the Community, at School and at Home Environmental Strategy: Recruit and Reward Youth for Participation on Community Coalitions

By September of 2028, we will see an increase in the number of youth serving in shared leadership and decision-making roles within our community.

The following were identified as strengths in the community's capacity to implement this strategy:

- Readiness assessment indicated a strong interest in having more youth involvement throughout local organizations.
- Mountain Youth's leadership council, Valley's Voice, consists of local middle and high school students and meets regularly.
- Youth currently serve on the Mountain Youth board or directors and committees as a Positive Youth Development strategy.
- Support from Mountain Youth and Youth Power 365.
- Past program participants from Youth Power 365 are involved in program development.

The following were identified as areas for growth in the community's capacity to implement this strategy:

- Increase voice and leadership in other organizations, community boards, or coalitions.
 - Organizations need additional training and support to move to the next level.
- Increase capacity and staff time within organizations to support a systems shift for including youth as decision-makers.
- Additional staff for youth coaching and mentoring will need to be hired to create more opportunities for youth involvement within their organization.

Risk/Protective Factor #2 : Community Laws and Norms Favorable Toward Substance Use and Availability of Drugs

Risk/Protective Factor #3: Youth Attitudes Favorable Toward Substance Use

Environmental Strategy: Prevent substance abuse and access through new policies, practices and education

By 2028, Mountain Youth Communities That Care Coalition will increase knowledge about, and support for, policies, practices and perceptions which prevent substance misuse and youth access to substances.

The following were identified as strengths in the community's capacity to implement this strategy:

- There are a number of family-friendly community events (no alcohol served) that already exist.
- The County has implemented a marijuana tax.
- The County has a requirement for keg registration.
- The County has a number of permanent and "pop-up" medication take-back receptacles.
- Eagle County School District has two full-time Prevention Specialists dedicated to the middle and high schools.
 - Many students are currently receiving Botvin Life Skills Training and Project Alert as in-school prevention programs.

The following were identified as challenges in the community's capacity to implement this strategy:

- A prevailing "resort atmosphere" is part of community culture due to significant tourism, transient workers and substance use (particularly alcohol and marijuana).
- Many local events are either sponsored by, or directly promote, purveyors of alcohol and marijuana.
- Measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of these efforts and methods may prove difficult for organizations.
- Staffing, training, and maintaining a sustained outreach effort may be problematic for many potential strategy implementation champions.
- In-kind local media support may be necessary, funding may prove to be an additional obstacle.
- Encouraging local buy-in to adopt this risk factor minimization strategy could, in and of itself, prove to be an issue.

7. DATA REVIEW PROCESS

In all good prevention practice, it is critical to look at data. The CTC coalition includes practiced data analysts and training was provided for all who want(ed) to learn. This committee took a deep dive into the 2021 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (HKCS) as well as results from the Parent/Community survey, developed by Mountain Youth and administered alongside the HKCS. The Parent/Community survey asks questions to gain perspectives and attitudes from our adult population. In addition to the data related to substance use, access and perceptions, the committee also looked at data between sub populations, particularly the LGBTQ+ and Latinx/Hispanic populations. The Data and Assessment team recommended that the following areas are considered for further monitoring and prevention activities:

- Mental health
 - Commitment to the value of school
 - Violence and firearm access
 - Connection to trusted adults
 - LGBTQ specific data
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- Community Assessment Report
 - https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LxDFbYt-UqmKLmMwVZnuU2bVB_wHXEe/edit?usp=sharing&oid=100085190039632731338&rtpof=true&sd=true
-
- Community Resource Assessment
 - <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vTnRQYRIuvIIDHgYx36KQ6cWxBnlnsEX/edit?usp=sharing&oid=100085190039632731338&rtpof=true&sd=true>

8. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Recruit and Reward Youth for Participation on Community Coalitions

- Action Plan [HERE](#)

Prevent Substance Abuse and Access through New Policies, Practices and Education

- Action Plan [HERE](#)

9. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, LEARNING TO DO THE WORK BUILDS CAPACITY IN THE COMMUNITY

We are building capacity in our own community to be able to support prevention efforts through professional development. Coalition members need to understand youth, how the adolescent brain develops, how to best establish and maintain positive connections with youth, facts about substances, the change process, how to effectively market to youth and how to read the data that shows what our youth are doing and believing. Participants benefit from new skill sets. The coalition has designed and offered training, not only to our own coalition members, but to the community as a whole.

Coalition Trainings:

- Social Development Strategy
- Positive Youth Development
- Marketing
- Data Analysis
- Survey Development
- Diversity Equity and Inclusion
- Substance Abuse Prevention Skills Training
- Ethics in Prevention
- Facilitation Skills

- Community Engagement specific to the Latinx/Hispanic population
- Focus Group Workshop

10. AN EVALUATION PLAN LETS US KNOW HOW WE ARE DOING

Perhaps the most important part of doing prevention work is finding out if we have done what we have set out to do and how well. This is called “evaluation”. A variety of tools and measures can be used to do this. Sometimes, the tool we use measures how many people were reached or how many people attended certain events. Another way to measure effectiveness is to look at how much we have changed people’s attitudes and behaviors around an issue. We can do this using surveys and interviews, for example. When each strategy team wrote their action plan, they thought through the best measures of each stage of their plan. The measurement tools for each action plan are listed below along with an estimated date of completion.

Strategy	Components of Evaluation Plan	Estimated Date of Completion
Recruit and Reward Youth	1. Condition 1: Pre-Post Survey: (administer to youth-serving partners to measure learning)	Pre has been completed
	2. Condition 1: Process Evaluation (completion of spreadsheet)	Completed March 2022
	3. Condition 1: Process Evaluation (creation of list of community youth-serving partners)	Completed August 2022
	4. Condition 2: Pre-Post survey	August 2025
	5. Condition 3: HKCS results	April 2026
Prevent substance abuse and access through new policies, practices and education	1. Condition 1: Surveys (parent survey, post surveys of participants in the community education presentations)	August 2026

	2. Condition 2: Historical Law Enforcement Data Comparisons (from baseline in 2024)	August 2026
	3. Condition 3: Annual Content Calendar & Social Media Impression Tracking	Annually: 2024, 2025, 2026 Final August 2026
	4. Condition 4: Process Evaluation (Community Education Presentations, # of attendees & presentation evaluations)	August 2026

11. SUSTAINABLE FUNDING IS REQUIRED TO CONTINUE THE WORK AFTER THE STATE GRANT ENDS.

In some concrete ways, our community needs to be able to continue the efforts that have been planted with state dollars. It will be Eagle River Valley's time to show a financial commitment to youth substance misuse prevention. On June 29, 2020, a group of community board members who have expertise in the area of sustainable funding met and made a plan. The plan outlines methods to ask for in-kind donations from a variety of partners. These are methods that are in place already in our community that, when an organization decides it will donate, will not cost the organization any extra funds. Examples are organizational newsletters to inform the public on prevention issues, asking local restaurants to provide meals/snacks for meetings, etc. Another method discussed is having this prevention effort supported by a local organization whose primary mission is youth substance use prevention. These organizations can dedicate some of their funds to the effort. The last way to gain financial support is through local grants. A number of our local organizations such as the Vail Valley Foundation, Eagle County Public Health, and the recreation districts offer opportunities to apply for grants specific to healthy youth development.

12. WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED ALONG THE WAY?

Our community has been doing this work since 2016 with the first grant award from the state. Across these 7 years, we have experienced some learning curves. We have assessed what is working and what is not in order to make adjustments. Below are the most prominent.

Momentum: Before COVID-19 and after, we have seen huge dynamic shifts in who participates and the level of commitment individuals are able to offer. Whether it is because our youth finish high school and move on, or the natural trend for adults to arrive in a employment position and then to move on, the ability to have consistent members of strategy teams and work groups has proven to be a challenge. Over time, we have changed meeting times, changed frequency of meetings, and worked to recruit participants in the fall of every year, to name just a few.

Prevention + DEI: Our community is approximately 50% non-latino white and 50% Latinx/Hispanic. There are systemic inequities that exist in our valley. Not every individual has the essential living requirements that others do, such as access to affordable housing or access to quality health care just to name a couple. People need to focus on these fundamentals and assuring their equal rights before they can start focusing on prevention. We have learned that equity, diversity and inclusion efforts must work in tandem with prevention because, without a full, diverse community voice prevention efforts will not be fully embraced or understood.

Community Engagement: Realizing our community is not homogenous, we also learned that different people need different ways and motivations to become engaged in prevention work. What motivates youth is very different from business partners and parents. Our coalition has needed to assess what authentic engagement looks like and then recruit using the best approach for each type of person. The largest learning curve has been with the Latinx/Hispanic community for which we have put special resources in place. We hired a Community Liaison and have been working with experts in the field to discover best practices as well as looking at our data with specific attention paid to this population and others.

Remembering that we are a coalition: A coalition is simply defined as a group of stakeholders who commit time and expertise to address an issue in a community. Our stakeholders are not only youth and their families, but also youth-serving organizations, recreation districts, libraries and schools. Our stakeholders are also the local businesses who work with our youth and families. Finally, the other non-profits in the community, specifically those whose mission is healthy development for youth, must also play a role in this work. We have taken time to evaluate our Key Leader board to assure all sectors of our community are involved and recruited individuals from under represented sectors. We have also worked to achieve representation on the community board from the 8 primary youth-serving nonprofits in our valley. It truly needs to be the community that cares in order to achieve our goals.