

Planning for Sustainability in Prevention

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Achieving sustainability means successfully maintaining the capacity to produce positive prevention outcomes over time.¹ But sustaining substance use prevention is hard! Funding ends, priorities shift, people move on, and even effective plans can lose momentum. Achieving sustainability touches every aspect of prevention planning, including partnerships, programs, and practices.

WHY SUSTAINABILITY MATTERS²

1. Prevention takes a long time



To make a lasting impact, services may need to continue for years to come.

3. Collaboration is key

Long-term partnerships can help maintain collective buy-in.



2. Problems change

A sustainable strategic planning process lets communities respond to changing substance use needs.



4. Turnover can hinder success

Innovative recruitment and retention strategies can secure continued capacity for service delivery.

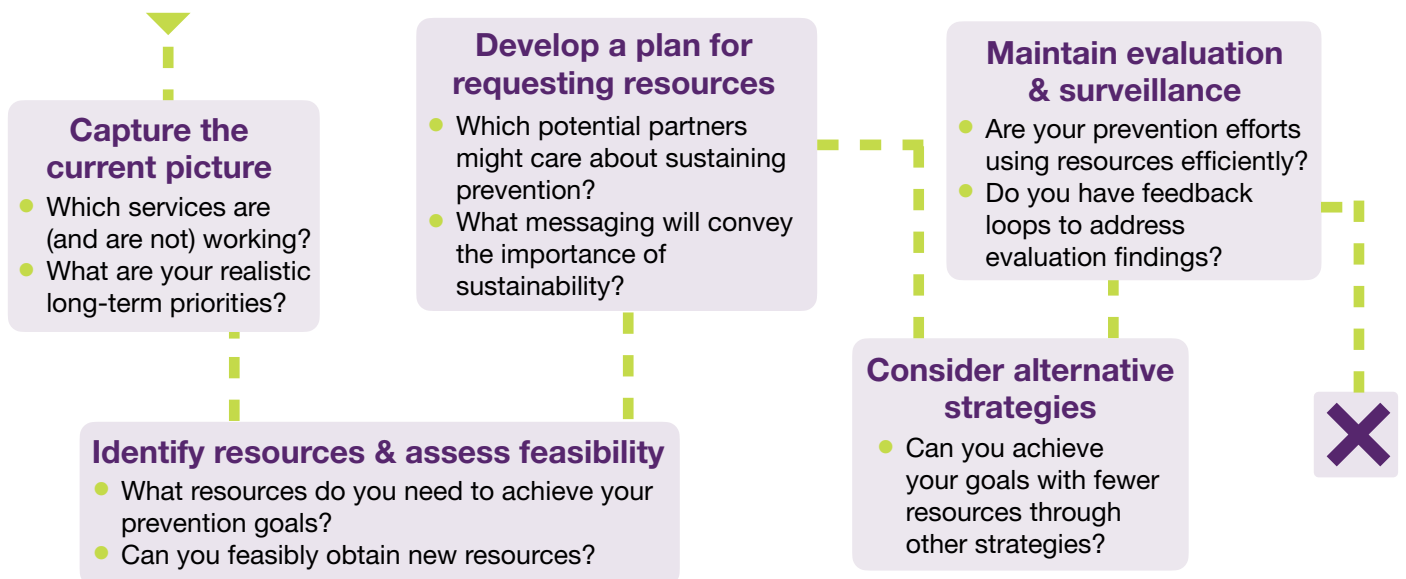


5. Funding doesn't last forever

Prioritizing strategies that are sustainable without ongoing financial support can ensure lasting community impact.

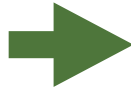


HOW TO PLAN FOR SUSTAINABILITY³



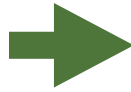
SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES

Deepen partnerships⁴



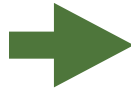
Establish written agreements that outline shared goals and roles
Prioritize ongoing communication and active engagement
Evaluate partnerships regularly to ensure that resources are used efficiently

Expand funding streams⁵



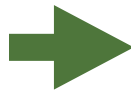
Seek new grant and donor opportunities, including non-governmental sources
Pursue in-kind support
Explore fee-for-service or alternative payment models

Improve workforce retention⁶



Offer financial support, such as student loan repayment assistance
Invest in professional development and training opportunities
Document roles and processes to maintain institutional knowledge

Promote big-picture, long-term changes⁷



Pursue policy changes that embed prevention within community institutions
Incorporate prevention into local budgets and strategic plans
Encourage community groups to adopt prevention goals⁸

SPOTLIGHT ON ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT MODELS⁹



Alternative payment models (APMs) present one promising avenue to sustainable prevention funding. Instead of billing for each service, APMs reimburse health care providers based on quality of care, cost-effectiveness, and patient outcomes. APMs change the financial incentives for providers. They place greater emphasis on preventative care, which can include substance use prevention. Consider reaching out to primary care providers or hospital systems. Ask them about their use of APMs and their openness to integrating substance use prevention. Before reaching out, research the insurance billing codes that might apply to your prevention services. For example, SAMHSA has identified [codes for SBIRT services](#).

Check out these SAMHSA publications to learn more about how to use APMs in prevention:

[Use of Alternative Payment Models for Substance Use Disorder Prevention: A Conceptual Framework](#)

[Integrating Substance Use Disorder Prevention with Physical Health Care: Progress in States](#)

NOTES

1. SAMHSA. (2019). A Guide to SAMHSA's SPF.
2. Ibid.
3. Great Lakes PTTC. (2025). *Sustainability planning in prevention guide*. <https://pttcnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Sustainability-Planning-in-Prevention-Guide-2025-FINAL.pdf>
4. CA Tobacco Endgame Center for Organizing and Engagement. (2022). *Tips for engaging and retaining coalition members*. American Heart Association. <https://organizingtoendtobacco.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Tips-for-Engaging-and-Retaining-Coalition-Members-tool.pdf>
5. Library of Congress. (n/d). *The nonprofit sector in the United States: a resource guide*. <https://guides.loc.gov/nonprofit-sector/fundraising-grants>
6. National Conference of State Legislatures. (2022). *State strategies to recruit and retain the behavioral health workforce*. <https://www.ncsl.org/health/state-strategies-to-recruit-and-retain-the-behavioral-health-workforce>
7. CDC. (2012). A sustainability planning guide for healthy communities. <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/11700>
8. Community Tool Box. (n.d.). *Promoting adoption of the initiative's mission and objectives*. University of Kansas. <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/sustain/long-term-sustainability/promote-adoption-of-mission/main>
9. Rosenfeld, E., et al. (2025). Use of alternative payment models for substance use disorder prevention in the United States: Development of a conceptual framework. *Subst Abuse Treat Prev Policy*, 20, Article 4. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11752996/>

