

New Mexico Provider Semi-Annual Report Responses Concerning COVID Adaptations

OSAP Recipient Meeting Presentation
February 16, 2021



Background

➤ July-Dec 2020 OSAP provider reports included the following question:

How has COVID-19 impacted implementation across your entire scope of work over the past six months?

- Has the Pandemic still allowed you to implement your strategies with fidelity?
- How have you adapted your work in response?
- Have you learned any valuable lessons you wish to share with your funders and other providers?

Themes and Quotes

1. Unprecedented barriers due to office closures and lack of interpersonal interaction; Tribal communities had much more significant closures, program shutdowns and isolation due to high impact of pandemic

“Working from home at times created barriers due to slow wifi or no wifi connections because of our remote area.”

“Realistically, there are no data or research on maintaining fidelity during a global pandemic.”

Themes and Quotes

2. Events and other work activities cancelled; Communities and partners focused on immediate pandemic priorities; Momentum stalled due to change in focus by schools, law enforcement, etc.

“Some partnerships have been difficult to nurture relationships due to diverted needs/efforts related to COVID. This has negatively impacted the success of alcohol strategies that focus on law enforcement and school policies.”

“We get the sense that [school system] administration is experiencing Covid-19 fatigue and therefore less engaged.”

“We have done what we can to carry out strategies in the midst of complete social, economic, and public health disruptions, but the community’s needs are great. “

Themes and Quotes

3. Difficulties with online activities; Lack of tech hinders access by some

“Strategies targeting vulnerable populations, such as the elderly and the Spanish-speaking, have been difficult to reach during COVID-19.”

“Keeping parents engaged, while participating in sessions online while at home was difficult. The school closure and online learning... has also prevented new program staff from building relationships with students.”

“Individuals are feeling overwhelmed and hesitate to participate in additional Zoom meetings.”

“[P]eople are not as engaged on Zoom in conversations like they would be in person. People are multi-tasking and trying to cope with so many factors, even if they are ‘present’ on the call.”

Themes and Quotes

4. But some benefits due to expanded online activities: recording meetings and trainings for present & future use, and reach more people and involve new partners (no physical/geographic restrictions)

“Outreach on a regular basis through phone or virtual means is crucial to staying connected and most stakeholders and community members appreciate efforts to do so even if they are busy and exhausted.”

“Several coalition members reported that being able to watch recorded meetings helps them stay informed on what we do.”

Themes and Quotes

5. Partnerships maintain community access, and share skills; Supporting pandemic efforts strengthened partnerships & allows incorporation of messages into efforts such as Meals on Wheels

“Our Facebook site has begun to feature... similar community partners and coalition member sites to more widely disseminate important information to our followers.”

“We have also partnered up with more community agencies in order to reduce duplication of efforts.”

“We were able to distribute information to students and parents through the School Lunch Program: Parents Who Host, 4th Degree Felony, Locking of Medications, Overdose Rates, Proper Disposal.”

Themes and Quotes

6. Importance of staff members' mental health and work/home balance

“Another Challenge for staff was “contact” with a Positive covid-19 person. We had several employees come into direct contact with family members and they were required to “self-quarantine” for the recommended 14 -days. This put a strain on staff both mentally and physically.”

“COVID-19 has affected not only our work but our lives and the communities we aim to support. An underlying challenge is the navigation of mental health of our staff and community partners is the extreme lifestyle shift that has come with the pandemic, which include closure of schools, businesses, and all non-essential agencies. The social circumstances of the pandemic pull from the daily focus of our work: issues from childcare, prevention of infection, learning about & responding to changing needs of our community and distress and mourning over loss and social unrest influence us all.”

Themes and Quotes

7. Other benefits

“Pharmacy work has continued as usual, but we have added window clings and materials for drive-thru since many patients are using these instead of going into the pharmacies.”

“We have been grateful for the increased online training opportunities through Kamama and CADCA and have taken advantage of MANY trainings. This has been something our Coalition has requested for years since travel and overnight stays cost us approximately \$1,000 per person/per training.”

Observations

- The period from July to December 2020 was hard on prevention staff and programs.
- The ability of most prevention programs to successfully implement their work slowed down dramatically during 2020.
- Staff at prevention agencies suffered along with their communities, facing challenges they were not trained to address or otherwise equipped to face.

Observations

- Staff who were parents suddenly faced two full time jobs – that of a preventionist, and that of a teacher or teacher aid to their children.
- All of your community partners are in the same predicament.
- Some of your primary partner “systems”, especially law enforcement and schools, were often suddenly closed to you and your team.

Observations

- With communities closed, simply distributing materials, messages, and recruiting new partners became difficult and sometimes virtually impossible.
- Those with a pre-existing strong, online capacity and staff with online skills were able to transition to online delivery methods reasonably well.
- Some programs were able to quickly adjust to the “new normal,” with adapted and newly developed online strategies and curricula.
- Inequities across communities are reflected in the varying capacity to quickly move to successful virtual implementation and coalition work. Not all programs could easily transition to virtual programming.

Recommendations

- Be easy on yourself and your staff. Life is really hard for most people right now.
- Take care of your families, take care of your team, take care of each other.
- Follow safety protocols of your employer, and ensure that your team feels safe in every activity.
- Keep tweaking your implementation plan to take advantage of your partners' existing in-person work or strong social media presence.

Recommendations

- Strengthen your coalition and core team in every way possible – adding new members, coaching existing members, regularly meeting with current members and educating them about the work, inviting their increased involvement, providing value in return.
- Get more training in Zoom and other platforms that allow you to bring your team and coalition together in meaningful ways, and more training in social media to support your implementation.
- Many communities do not have equitable internet capacity or access – explore other options with flexibility.

Recommendations

- Strengthen partnerships now in place. Educate about your work, their important role in your work, and advocate for their participation.
- Talk with these partners regularly. Create stronger partners – through a relationship with key staff and leaders – who will eventually want to help you whenever they can.
- Explore whether some of these partners can provide the means to distribute and disseminate your materials and messages – information and educational materials, disposal bags, lock boxes, etc. – especially senior meals programs, food banks, school meal distribution efforts, first responders, i.e., those who are still providing a necessary service through an in-person interaction of some kind.

Recommendations

- Identify and cultivate relationships with currently distant partners so that they are primed to be key allies and participants when we begin to see a return to “normal”.
- Especially work to develop and nurture relationships with key leaders in your local school and law enforcement agencies where you don't already have those.
- Provide anything you can that is useful to their current priorities.

Recommendations

- Take and have your staff and core team members take more classes, workshops and pursue prevention education and credentialing.
- Build a formidable staff and core team by regularly meeting with them and providing encouragement, data, information, training, coaching, tasks and rewards, and gradually increasing responsibility.
- Focus on your coalition's strengths – work with current members to build their prevention chops.

Recommendations

- About fidelity – just make sure you are doing all of the components of your strategy, with any adaptations necessary, that you would expect to produce the result you want to see.

Final Quote

“Our team has accomplished much and been so creative despite endless barriers. We have remained constant and present throughout the ups, down and stresses of this pandemic. That being said the fact that we haven’t given up and continue to make headway on all of our objectives has truly been an accomplishment.”