
TRAFFIC SAFETY DIGEST

NEBRASKA

Talking About Alcohol: Driving Unimpaired

PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS Targets hard-to-reach/at risk population Outstanding collaborative effort	PROGRAM AREA(S) Alcohol and Other Drugs Diversity
TYPE OF JURISDICTION County	
TARGETED POPULATION(S) General Population	JURISDICTION SIZE 51,173

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Hall County, Nebraska is ranked second in the state, among other counties, for Driving Under the Influence (DUI) of alcohol arrest rates, during the last period for which data have been available—1996. In 1997, the Nebraska Department of Highway Safety designated Hall County as their highest priority, in central Nebraska, to target alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes and DUI arrests.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of the Driving Unimpaired program is to reduce traffic crash-related fatalities involving the use of alcohol in Hall County, by 25 percent. To accomplish this goal, the following objectives were developed:

- To build a partnership of involved agencies to collaborate on the problem of alcohol related crashes and fatalities in the county
- To develop a focused alcohol education effort
- To increase participation in alcohol education programs which are mandated by the courts and the probation office to 80 percent of convicted impaired drivers
- To reduce the recidivism rate of adults and minors convicted of first offense Minor in Possession (MIP) or DUI charges

STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

During 1997, the Central Nebraska Council on Alcoholism (CNCA) met with the Hall County Attorney's staff, Hall County Court judges, Hall County Probation staff, and the St. Francis

Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center to address the county's traffic safety problems related to alcohol use. The participants at this strategy meeting agreed to address this countywide issue primarily through reinforcing and improving elements of an existing alcohol education program. The existing program, *Talking About Alcohol: Driving Unimpaired*, is the cornerstone of alcohol education for adults and minors convicted of first offense MIP or DUI charges. Specific refinements to *Talking About Alcohol: Driving Unimpaired* were designed to assure the success of the new emphasis on the program:

- At the outset, the partners reviewed the policies and procedures of the *Talking About Alcohol: Driving Unimpaired* program for inconsistencies in the referral process, and to identify areas where the program could use improvement
- Based on their review of the policies and procedures, the partners recognized the need to provide special services to Spanish-speaking people
- The services of a certified Spanish-English bilingual instructor were purchased to provide monthly education sessions to the local Hispanic-American community
- Alcohol education sessions, to be conducted at the offices of the Central Nebraska Council on Alcoholism, were introduced for the benefit of convicted MIP offenders. These education sessions are provided monthly
- Regularly scheduled alcohol education sessions for adult DUI offenders were introduced into the program of the St. Francis Alcohol and Drug Treatment Center. An alcohol education training program for the St. Francis staff was also implemented, so that responsibility for delivery of the DUI education sessions could permanently shift to St. Francis staff

RESULTS

DUI program participants who attended the *Talking About Alcohol: Driving Unimpaired* sessions from October 1997 through June 1998 had a recidivism rate of 6 percent, compared with a 25 percent recidivism rate for all other DUI convictions during the same time period.

FUNDING

Section 402:	\$13,000
In-kind:	\$10,000

CONTACT

Wendy McCarty
Project Coordinator
Central Nebraska Council on
Alcoholism
219 W. 2nd Street
Grand Island, NE 68801
(308) 385-5520

NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION

SUMMER 2000



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