



WORKING PARTNERS®
**DRUG-FREE
WORKFORCE**
COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

KEY MESSAGES AND ENGAGING WITH MEDIA

During the course of the *Working Partners*® Drug-Free Workforce Community Initiative (DFWCI), you will likely be talking with media. While each community is different, consistent messaging amongst us will be powerful toward a goal of sustainability. Below are steps and information to help guide you in this process.

TOPLINE SUMMARY

Here is a “Topline Summary.” It can be used by a Liaison when you need a short, direct, understandable exchange about the Initiative (e.g., talking to press, at gatherings and at presentations/speeches).

About the Initiative we’re doing (July 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017): Funded by OhioMHAS, *Working Partners*® has begun a process of working with 18 counties applying the *Working Partners*® Drug-Free Workforce Community Initiative approach.

A Community Behavioral Health Board (e.g., ADAMH Board), along with a local chamber of commerce, will be keystones of an interdisciplinary stakeholder group established in each county, with a focus on increasing an employable, drug-free workforce in Ohio. Other members of each local stakeholder group will include the Bureau of Worker’s Compensation, Safety Councils, Job and Family Services/OhioMeansJobs, County Commissioners, Economic Development Organizations, local businesses and media outlets. The stakeholder group in each county will meet approximately five times through September and represent their unique perspective and needs as they relate to the goal.

There will be four principal objectives met through this Initiative within each community:

1. Collect accurate data about the drug abuse impact on the workplaces/workforce.
2. Establish an interdisciplinary stakeholder group with sustainability beyond this project.
3. Establish a nucleus of businesses that have been facilitated through intensive drug-free workplace (DFWP) management consultation to implement or refine their drug-free operations including second-chance policies.
4. Identify local provider(s) that can service their community businesses in an employer-friendly manner.

ELEVATOR SPEECH

This can be used as a global overview about the purpose and function of the Initiative:

The *Working Partners*® Drug-Free Workforce Community Initiative (DFWCI) is a public-private partnership between the State of Ohio and *Working Partners*® to address the economic threat of substance abuse by employees and job seekers in our state.

We are doing this by

- Bringing together key stakeholders and employers in 18 communities throughout the state to assess local challenges and resources and implement strategies to develop a job-ready workforce of drug-free individuals to serve employers’ needs now and in the future.
- Working with employers to equip them with education, technical assistance and tools needed to prevent and respond to workplace substance abuse in a productive, legally-sound and meaningful way.

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- Providing regular communications to leadership (local, state and national) to keep them apprised of all substance abuse issues and legislation that affect the workplace.

Our goal is to build healthier, stronger, more productive workforces and workplaces based on local needs and, in turn, build a healthier, stronger, more economically-sound Ohio.

Reference Notes About the Initiative When Building a Written Document or Presentation

KEY MESSAGES

Key Message 1: Increasing workforce readiness and drug-free employability

- The economic stability of our state and its available workforce is directly impacted by substance abuse.
- The stability of our state and its available workforce is directly impacted by substance abuse, and the most expedient and cost-efficient way to improve the health and employability of Ohio's workforce is to tackle the issue on an environmental/community level.
- The Initiative gives communities a way to do just that by bringing together the organizations that have the biggest stake in making things better in the community.

Key Message 2: Drug-free workplace is more than just drug testing

- The activities of the Initiative encompass all elements of a drug-free workplace (DFWP) program. Please do not reference just one DFWP element without also including the rest of the elements. The five elements of a drug-free workplace program are
 1. a written substance abuse policy and operations
 2. employee awareness and education
 3. supervisor training
 4. an employee assistance plan of action
 5. drug and alcohol testing (as is appropriate)

Key Message 3: Businesses play a key role in substance abuse prevention, treatment and recovery

- Prevention efforts have largely been focused on youth. Yet adults are consumers of alcohol and other drugs, many at high-risk levels. The majority of adults are employed and these adult -- parents, tax payers and voters -- can be accessed at their workplaces providing a critical environment perfect for prevention strategies.
- Substance abusing employees have a negative impact on businesses and can impact businesses' bottom lines.
- Businesses have a financial incentive to keep their employees safe and productive -- this is compromised by drug use.
- By helping businesses understand the role they can play in an employee's life (and their family's life) with a drug-free workplace program, businesses can have a significant impact on whether or not an employee uses or abuses alcohol and other drugs.
 - If an employee does develop a problem with alcohol or other drugs, businesses are in a unique position to encourage the employee to seek treatment for that problem.
 - Additionally, when the workplace is part of the solution, a person's successful recovery is more assured.

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