

**A series of technical assistance
manuals for community coalitions**

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STRATEGIZER[®]

THE WEED & SEED TOOLBOX

**DEVELOPED BY COMMUNITY ANTI-DRUG COALITIONS
OF AMERICA (CADCA), IN COLLABORATION WITH
THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, OFFICE OF
COMMUNITY CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**



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INTRODUCING *THE WEED AND SEED TOOLBOX*

Weed and Seed programs and community anti-drug coalitions have long been in the business of making communities safe and healthy. Our efforts take aim at reducing violence and drug involvement while crafting strategies that engage citizens, from children, parents, and politicians to police departments, housing authorities, drug and alcohol prevention/intervention agencies, and schools. While our vision – building safe and healthy communities – remains a constant, how we get there will vary. As community leaders, we think a lot about the delicate balance between being proactive and reactive, knowing that our job is to do both.

Now more than ever, we place the demand on ourselves to keep our goals in sight – that crime will be reduced and our communities will become less tolerant of alcohol and other drug abuse, guns, violence, gang activity, and poor living conditions. As Weed and Seed Communities (WSC) and community anti-drug coalitions, we understand the value of carrying out community needs assessments, organizing and convening Steering Committees and planning groups, strategically engaging new partners, developing and implementing logical programmatic goals and objectives, implementing hard-hitting strategies, and crafting realistic evaluation criteria. *The Weed and Seed Toolbox*, a *Strategizer* created by the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) and the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Capacity Development Office (CCDO), provides coalitions and WSC

with the tools to craft better and more sustainable prevention and intervention strategies to improve conditions in neighborhoods or communities, making them better, healthier, and safer places to live and work.

While this *Strategizer* places the spotlight on Weed and Seed, its message is relevant to all of us. Some of the information, i.e., updated Weed and Seed application guidelines, may not apply to you right now. Much of the information about the value of adapting evidence-based strategies; ideas on how communities have addressed hard-to-tackle issues; and strategies on where to go for additional funding are extremely applicable. Here's what you will learn:

- The ABC's of Weed and Seed
- The New WSC Application Process
- Evidence-based Strategies in a Weed and Seed Context
- Effective Evaluation Strategies that Measure Long- and Short-Term Progress
- Strategies that Protect Communities
 - Safeguarding Communities from Gun Violence
 - Protecting Communities from Methamphetamine Abuse
 - Addressing Prisoner Reentry
- Does Your Sustainability Plan Make-the-Grade?
- Helpful Resources

THE ABC'S OF WEED AND SEED

The U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) Weed and Seed Initiative, the program is a community-based, comprehensive multi-agency approach to improving law enforcement, crime prevention, and neighborhood restoration. It is a community-driven problem-solving strategy that works. Weed and Seed is designed for communities with persistently high levels of violent crime and related social problems, including drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, and other factors that place neighborhoods at-risk. There are currently about 250 Weed and Seed Communities throughout the country, ranging in geographic size from several neighborhood blocks in urban areas to entire townships and counties in more rural locations. Population size ranges from 3,000 to 50,000. The Weed and Seed Initiative, funded through the DOJ's Community Capacity Development Office, provides limited, discretionary grant resources to fund initial program development and/or to sustain efforts while outside funding relationships are forged.

The Weed and Seed Philosophy

Weed and Seed Communities integrate a two-pronged approach to community health and revitalization.

- The “*Weed*” portion focuses on crime control, involving law enforcement tactics (law enforcement, adjudication, prosecution, probation, parole, and community corrections) and community policing (which is the bridge that links law enforcement to residents’ needs).
- The “*Seed*” component addresses community revitalization (prevention, intervention, and treatment, and neighborhood restoration).

Implementation and integration of these strategies help communities become more resilient and healthy. Weed and Seed approaches depend on community participation, collaboration, and coordination. Four building blocks create the foundation for all WSC:

1. Law enforcement: Promotes reductions in violent street crime by identifying, apprehending, and removing chronic and violent street criminals from designated neighborhoods using various crime suppression activities.
2. Community policing: Links Weeding and Seeding activities, law enforcement resources, and community partners together and *must be incorporated into each effort*.

3. Prevention, intervention, and treatment: Creates, maintains, and strengthens linkages among law enforcement and social service agencies, the private sector, and the community to concentrate a broad array of human services that address community needs.
4. Neighborhood restoration: Speaks to all aspects of community revitalization and restoration. At least two of the following must addressed in WSC plans: Job training and employment opportunities; small business development; improved housing conditions; physical environment clean-ups; systems development and enhancement; and/or transportation. Coordination of city planning, economic development offices, city council, and community development corporations is also key.

WSC are strongly encouraged to have:

- Save Havens: At least one multi-service center in or near the designated area - where children, youth, and families can take classes, participate in activities, and receive other support.
- Re-entry programs: Which include control mechanisms and coordinated housing assistance, employment help, remedial education, health and mental health, substance abuse, and other support services. *Re-entry programs may satisfy both “Weeding” and “Seeding” sides of the WSC strategy.*

The coordination of Federal programs with WSC – such as Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN), Drug-Free Communities, Drug Courts, the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI), and High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) task forces – is extremely important. Programs from the Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services’ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and the U.S. Department of Labor’s One-Stop Career Center system, together with state, local, or private sector projects or organizations should be strategically aligned.

Revised Program Requirements

New to obtaining Weed and Seed funds is the requirement that a program’s five-year strategic plan include a minimum of two priority problems related to crime or the factors that contribute to crime in the first two years of operation. The two problems/issues must

