



The Working Group

on DWI System Improvements

dwiwg.tirf.ca

Impaired Driving Program Funding

The education resources of the Working Group on DWI System Improvements are produced by the **Traffic Injury Research Foundation** with funding from **Anheuser-Busch**. The Working Group on DWI System Improvements is a prestigious coalition of senior leaders of organisations representing frontline professionals in all segments of the criminal DWI system (law enforcement, prosecution, judiciary, supervision, and treatment).

How can funding for DWI initiatives be prioritized in the justice system?

- **Illustrate the impact/consequences of impaired driving.** Clearly illustrate the impact and consequences of DWI. Determine what data are currently available to demonstrate the magnitude of the problem and what data or information will have the greatest influence on the public, politicians, and agencies. Determine an effective and consistent way to present the information to diverse audiences.
- **Make the problem more visible.** Advancing the issue of impaired driving on the political agenda can be accomplished by making it more visible to the public. One way to achieve this is to use consistent messages articulating the prevalence of impaired driving, what has been accomplished to address it, and what efforts are needed to achieve further declines.
- **Leverage legislative and funding opportunities.** There may be a variety of legislative opportunities that could be leveraged to increase the focus on impaired driving. Administrators can influence legislators to get language into bills, making impaired driving initiatives possible and gaining support for them, particularly if they also provide the resources necessary to carry out the legislation. Framing impaired driving as a transportation issue rather than a criminal justice or public health issue may cause it to receive less attention and to be overlooked in the discussions surrounding broader transportation issues.
- **Build funding partnerships.** Similarly, legislators and administrators need to become creative in locating new sources of funding or untapped resources. Policymakers and administrators need to look outside the justice field and determine what other agencies or departments may have an interest



in addressing impaired driving. Finding the converging common interests can be the key to securing funding and resources.

- **Enhance measures of system effectiveness.** Create a consistent working definition of recidivism (e.g., new arrest, new conviction, probation violation) across jurisdictions. However, recidivism should not be the sole measure of success. Other potential indicators include reductions in impaired driving crashes and fatalities, the successful completion of treatment, family stability, employment, more controlled drinking behavior, improved physical health, educational achievements, and reduced reliance on community resources. Agencies and administrators should be consistent in the application of any measures used to determine whether reductions in impaired driving were achieved.

How can funding for impaired driving initiatives be protected and not eroded?

- **Leadership needs to provide a voice for strong policy.** Politicians, policymakers, and agency administrators all play a critical role in maintaining a priority focus on the impaired driving problem. Leaders need to be able to speak in concrete terms about this issue and the pressure it has on their agency, environment, or field relative to other issues in terms of staffing, workload, resources, and clients. The effects of the issue need to be made tangible and visible to the media, to the public and to legislative appropriators. The issue needs to be consistently raised in conjunction with discussions about criminal justice, public safety, transportation, and public health to ensure the funding allocated to this problem is not eroded.
- **Acknowledge impaired driving as a priority in legislation and policy.** Legislators and policymakers play an important role in ensuring relevant legislation and policies pertaining to criminal justice, transportation, public health, and public safety include language specifically acknowledging the influence and importance of impaired driving. It is essential that all government agencies with a vested interest in impaired driving explicitly acknowledge and voice support for this as a priority within their respective mandates. Only through such emphasis will resources and funding be made available and accessible to provide practitioners with the tools to execute policies and programs.
- **Gather hard data** to demonstrate the effect of the problem on communities and agencies. Government officials and agency administrators can gain support for continued funding by using hard data to clearly articulate the effect the problem is having on their local communities and agencies in terms of the volume of caseload/workload, staffing, drain on services, and costs. These facts make the problem tangible for politicians and the public and justify continued attention and resources for the issue at state and local levels.
- **Coordinate activities across agencies.** Agencies with a vested interest in eliminating impaired driving can maximize the use of resources and justify continued funding by coordinating their activities, avoiding duplication of efforts and demonstrating the benefits that could be achieved through partnerships streamlining activities as opposed to agencies working alone. This requires a strong network of administrators to expressly support and encourage dialogue and information-sharing between line staff and across agencies.
- **Develop co-funded arrangements and partnerships.** These partnerships can alleviate the burden placed on a single agency. Utilizing a collaborative approach creates benefits for sponsors and enables initiatives to be sustained for longer periods of time, strengthens the quality of services, and reduces competition for funding.



What educational materials does The Working Group on DWI System Improvements provide?

The efforts of the Working Group on DWI System Improvements have served to identify critical system needs, to make needed educational materials available, to articulate the complex issues associated with program and policy implementation embedded within broader systems, and to give voice to the concerns of practitioners in the DWI system and identify achievable solutions. The Working Group provides educational primers, policy documents, and guides for DWI system professionals to help strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the DWI system.

Key topics discussed on this site include:

- Impaired drivers;
- Impaired driving programs and policies;
- Strategies to improve the DWI System;
- DWI Dashboard; and,
- other special topics.

Each of these topics contains a series of fact sheets structured in a question and answer format which are available for free download and sharing (with attribution). These resources are designed to support the training efforts for agencies that work within the DWI system.

To view more fact sheets, or to get more information about alcohol, its effects on driving skills, and impaired driving, visit dwiwg.tirf.ca.



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Traffic Injury Research Foundation

The mission of the Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF) is to reduce traffic-related deaths and injuries. TIRF is a national, independent, charitable road safety research institute. Since its inception in 1964, TIRF has become internationally recognized for its accomplishments in a wide range of subject areas related to identifying the causes of road crashes and developing programs and policies to address them effectively.

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