

Illinois Prevention Framework

Illinois has adapted the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Strategic Prevention Framework, building on its past success with evidence-based prevention. In the question-and-answer format that follows, Kim Fornero, chief of the Bureau of Community-Based and Primary Prevention, Illinois Department of Human Services, explains the development of the Strategic Prevention Framework for Illinois.

Q: Why was it important to adapt the Strategic Prevention Framework for Illinois?

A: The way it was originally introduced by SAMHSA, the model didn't seem to address how each component of the Framework informed the next level (of the Framework). It's really cyclical. When they originally introduced the components, they were in a vertical model and the components were listed right after each other. Sustainability and cultural competency were at the bottom of the Framework and oftentimes that's where we think of them, at the end. We wanted to make sure that (sustainability and cultural competence) were more prominent and seen as something more integral. Since that time, the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention has adapted its model and it now looks more like the Illinois Framework. It had to do more with the perception of the importance of each one of those components and the interface between them.

Q: How does the Illinois Framework relate to the outcome-based planning process that has been in place in Illinois for years?

A: In the Illinois Framework we are expanding what our original thoughts were surrounding outcome-based planning. The new Strategic Prevention Framework is more comprehensive perhaps than what we originally associated with outcome-based planning, and that assessment is broader than just needs-assessment.

Q: What are the benefits providers can derive from the Illinois Framework?

A: We want providers to use the Framework, and we are going to provide training, technical assistance and tools to help them do it. It is a logical, systematic way to hone in on the needs of the community, and not just select services that are perhaps historical, or that we think might fulfill the needs of the community but actually do not. By helping them think more broadly, starting with gathering information about the community, it will paint a picture of the community needs and help them really target services that are most in line with what's been identified. It's providing them with a systematic way of approaching the business of taking a group of concerned people through a process of planning that will ultimately assist them in addressing the needs that they have. Taking a look at that local data, or recognizing that there isn't any local data, are important findings that should inform the next steps and inform a community or a community-based organization. It could also help them identify those institutions that might be able to collect data and get them on board in developing that data system so there's no longer a gap in data.

Q: Can a better understanding of the Illinois Framework help providers apply for grant funds?

A: If they're working with a coalition, organization or group, or they themselves are going to be applying for grant funds, it helps to show the logical relationship between the data that they've collected, the planning that was done, and the interventions that were selected. Most funders, whether it be SAMHSA or another federal agency or even at the foundation level, are looking for logic between the needs and the intervention selected. I think it could give a competitive edge when an agency can present that kind of story.

