

Community Assessment

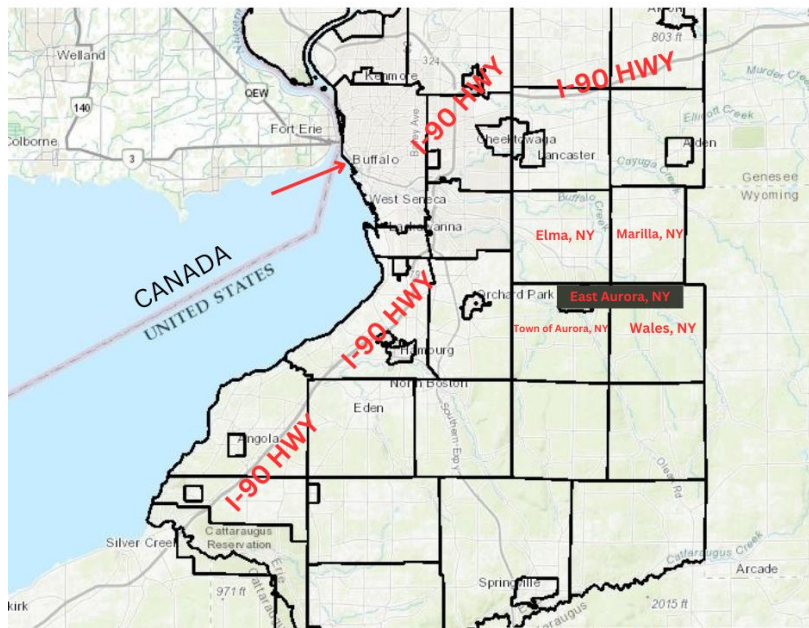
Coalition: **(It Takes a Community) Drug & Alcohol Prevention Coalition**

Community: The Towns of Elma, Marilla, Wales and Aurora

Community Description:

Definition of the Community: ITAC serves the 4 townships of Elma, Marilla, Wales and Aurora (which contains the village of East Aurora) with the following zip codes of 14059, 14052, 14169, 14102.

Geographical Characteristics: Our coalition serves a small section of Erie County in Western New York (WNY). Erie County sits at the west end of the Erie Canal. Our community is also within proximity to the City of Buffalo, and the border with Canada, and Interstate 90 runs directly through Erie County. Due to these characteristics Erie County is considered a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA).



Demographics: Total population of the four towns is approx. 33,000 (per 2020 Census). Some relevant community demographics include (approx. per Census 2020): over 90% White/Caucasian, 30% youth aged 12-20, 49% female, and over 80% rural.

Jurisdictions: The Town of Elma has approx. 11,721 residents, the Town of Marilla has approx. 5189 residents and the Town of Wales has approx. 3009 residents (Census 2020). The school district covering these three towns is the Iroquois Central School District which has approx. 2000 students in grades Pre-K to Grade 12 (NYSED data 2022-23). The Town of Aurora has approx. 13,880 residents, which includes the Village of East Aurora with a population of approx 6000 (Census 2020). The East Aurora School District has 1,629 students in grades K-12. Law Enforcement in the towns are represented by East Aurora Police Department, Elma Police Department, and Erie County Sheriff's Office. Volunteer fire departments (six stations in Elma, Marilla, Wales, one station in East Aurora) and AMR (American Medical Response - based in Buffalo) provide fire and EMT services.

Communities within the Community (Communities of Place, Experience, Interest): Our community contains a rich diversity of sub-groups, or communities within communities. For example, rural (>80%) vs suburban (<20%), senior citizens, youth, LGBTQ+, faith-based communities (there are over 30 churches in our 4 towns), political groups, low income/socioeconomic, professional/business vs blue collar etc.

There is a pervasive feeling of “us vs. them” between people who live in the Village of East Aurora versus the rest of our geographic area, and between the competing school districts. As much as the rural communities of Elma, Marilla and Wales rely heavily on the wider range of resources, amenities, entertainment, and activities available in suburban East Aurora, a historic rivalry rooted in competition in sports, academics, and community pride has led to hesitancy regarding data collection. Members from each community have been unwilling to commit to survey administration in the East Aurora School District. For this reason, our current data only includes the Iroquois Central School District and we will continue to work towards collaboration and data collection from East Aurora Schools (Projected date: 2025).

Community History

Key events that affected the community: Our coalition serves a small section of Erie County in Western New York (WNY). ITAC acknowledges that the land on which we gather are the ancestral homelands of the Seneca Peoples (or preferably, Onöndowa’ga:’). The Seneca Nation is a member of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, an alliance of six sovereign nations with an ancient and contemporary presence on these lands. Today the Seneca Nation, the Tonawanda Seneca, and the Seneca-Cayuga Nations continue to live on their homelands throughout the region. We acknowledge the painful history of Onöndowa’ga:’ dispossession and honor the ongoing connection of the Onöndowa’ga:’ People, past and present, to these lands and waters.

Erie County sits at the west end of the Erie Canal. The city grew in its early days as a very blue-collar region, with major employment at places like Bethlehem Steel in Lackawanna. The Erie Canal was a significant source of business and investments, when the Erie Canal closed, and later when the steel mills closed, it severely affected the local population as far as resources, socioeconomic opportunities, jobs etc.

In our catchment area, Fisher Price was the largest employer for many years, however, after being bought out by Mattel in 1993 it has decreased in size year after year and no longer holds that title. The largest employer of our community is MOOG, an international aero-space engineering company, which is located in the Town of Elma, just outside the village of East Aurora.

History of substance use related issues: The WNY community in general is greatly accepting of substance use. The City of Buffalo is nearby, & locals often refer to Buffalo as “a drinking city with a football problem.” Buffalo is the hometown of the NFL team the Buffalo Bills, & tailgating is a huge social part of the football culture. The use of substances, particularly alcohol, is the norm in social situations across all social classes.

An Open Container Law prohibits you from having an alcoholic beverage in an open container in public. The Village of East Aurora is one of only four municipalities in Erie County that does NOT have an open container law. Many community events take advantage of this, and it is not uncommon for adults to carry open containers of alcohol during local activities such as Halloween etc.

Our community is also within proximity to the border with Canada, where the drinking age is 19 & young people are known to travel there to “party”. There is also a high population of college students in the 4 towns, and a high number of colleges in the greater WNY area. Many of these conditions increase youth access to a variety of substances - for example, college parties, older siblings in college providing access and availability of substances.

NYS legalized the sale, purchase and use of recreational marijuana in 2021 (medicinal use has been legal since 2016). As state guidelines are rolling out more dispensaries and businesses with on-site consumption are opening in the WNY area. Of our area of service, all four towns opted out of allowing dispensaries and on-site consumption sites completely. Only the board of East Aurora agreed to considering dispensaries within the village. There have been several applications for a special use permit to the Village for dispensaries but none have opened at this time. This is something the coalition will continue to monitor and advocate for policy change in.

Additionally, there are two Native American reservations in close proximity to our geographic area (within a half hour drive) where cigarettes, vapes and cannabis products are available for sale at cheaper prices and without the NYS state regulations.

History of community organization / coalition building: The ITAC Drug & Alcohol Prevention Coalition was established in 2009 by concerned community members in the Towns of Elma, Marilla, & Wales after a series of youth deaths by suicide and overdose. It grew organically out of the Iroquois Central School District, initially as a student club. In 2018, ITAC was successful in obtaining Drug Free Communities funding. In 2020, ITAC became a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. ITAC’s coalition is composed of representatives across all 12 community sectors & 4 townships.

History of disparities that have been identified in the community: Although the demographics of underserved populations are mostly small (except for persons living in rural areas) that does not mean these groups are insignificant. ITAC recognizes that health disparities still do exist in our community for those minority groups. The low population density of our communities can & does affect access to services, amenities & opportunities for youth & families. The lack of public transportation with limited choice of healthy food options, essential health care and opportunities for physical activities can contribute to health disparities with delays in treatment, management of illness or chronic conditions and access to other support networks.

Impact on the work of the Coalition: ITAC seeks to ensure our program is culturally humble especially for those of different ethnic backgrounds and LGBTQ+ groups. Efforts to engage individuals and families experiencing difficulty with access to community resources. The coalition will expand its efforts to partner with community organizations that service those populations.

Community Needs

Data Collection Methods:

Quantitative data: ITAC has collected data every two years since 2015, using empirically sound & evidence-based Population Needs Assessment surveys. We currently employ the use of the CLYDE survey to conduct our evaluations, through Catalyst Research.

- The CLYDE survey was administered to grades 6, 8, 10 and 12 at Iroquois High School and Middle School in December 2023. *Note: Grade 6 was not included in previous administrations of the CLYDE survey, but was requested by the ICSD. This creates a new

baseline for future surveys, however the data discussed in this assessment does not include 6th grade for comparison to previous years.

- Adult opinion surveys are currently being distributed and collected for analysis.
- Statistical reports of anonymous data from sources such as: Census Records, New York State Education Department, and Overdose Reports from Erie Crime Analysis Center (access provided by National Guard).

Qualitative data: Youth and adult focus groups (planned for years in which the CLYDE survey is not administered) will be used as assessment tools to identify the needs, local conditions, and trends in our community.

Key informant interviews are qualitative in-depth interviews with people who know what is going on in the community. The purpose of key informant interviews is to collect information from a wide range of people—including community leaders, professionals, or residents—who have first-hand knowledge about the community. ITAC will identify relevant key individuals for participation and establish contact with them, as well as with local law enforcement, to initiate the interview process. In selecting key informants, we will be sure to include a wide range of perspectives and points of view, including selecting from different groups of key stakeholders. Interviewers will be trained in how to best conduct a successful key informant interview.

Other qualitative data sources include but are not limited to: archival data (eg. health, law enforcement, schools etc); vape sensor data from school/s; OD maps from National Guard Anti-drug Task Force, and, LAMP - NYS Liquor Authority Mapping Project - provides an interactive map display and a series of tools for viewing, querying and analyzing liquor licenses and other related geographic data within NYS.

Consequences, Problems, Root Causes and Local Conditions

Consequences

- Alcohol – social host laws provide consequences for adults who supply alcohol to underage youth, when enforced. For youth, consequences of alcohol consumption/underage parties include things such as loss of athletic/club privileges/membership under the student code of conduct.
- Tobacco and Cannabis – getting suspensions from school, SRO in ICSD highschool use cessation programs to reduce suspension times - American Lung Association Programs- In Depth, Catch My Breath, Kids Escaping Drugs program.
- Health and legal consequences need to be researched further from archival data.

The CLYDE data from 2021 and 2023 shows that the substances most used in our area by youth are 1. Alcohol, 2. Tobacco 3. Marijuana. Data has shown a *significant decrease* in self-reported 30-day alcohol use over the years we've been implementing our program. However, alcohol use remains the #1 substance of choice among youth in our community.

DFC Core Measure 1 – Past 30-Day Use measures recent youth substance use through the following questions – *In the past 30 days, on how many occasions (if any) have you...*

- had alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, or hard liquor) to drink - more than just a few sips?
- smoked a cigarette, even just a puff?
- used marijuana?
- used prescription opiate pain relievers, such as Vicodin or OxyContin, without a doctor's orders?
- used a prescription drug other than opiate pain relievers without a doctor's orders?

Table 7. DFC Core Measure 1 - Past 30-Day Use

| Substance | Grade 8 | | | Grade 10 | | | Grade 12 | | | TOTAL | | |
|------------|---------|-----|-------|----------|-----|-------|----------|----|-------|-------|-----|-------|
| | % | n | Nat % | % | n | Nat % | % | n | Nat % | % | n | Nat % |
| Alcohol | 5.5 | 128 | 6.0 | 10.3 | 116 | 13.6 | 30.9 | 97 | 28.4 | 14.4 | 341 | 15.6 |
| Cigarettes | 2.3 | 129 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 115 | 1.7 | 2.1 | 97 | 4.0 | 1.5 | 341 | 2.1 |
| Marijuana | 0.8 | 128 | 5.0 | 0.9 | 116 | 12.1 | 12.4 | 97 | 20.2 | 4.1 | 341 | 12.3 |
| Any Rx | 3.1 | 128 | N/A | 0.0 | 114 | N/A | 1.0 | 98 | N/A | 1.5 | 340 | N/A |

Although cigarette use in this table shows a very small percentage in past 30-day use, when we look at the data to include all tobacco delivery methods, the rate of use is much higher.

Alcohol Use

Problem: Underage Drinking

Root Causes:

ITAC has identified two major root causes from CLYDE survey data in 2021 and 2023:

1. Low perception of risk of harm by youth and parents, and
2. Access to Alcohol

1. Low perception of risk of harm by youth and parents:

DFC Core Measure 2 – Perception of Harm of Substance Use measures student perception of harm of substance use through the following questions – *How much do you think people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they...*

- have five or more drinks of an alcoholic beverage once or twice a week?
- smoke one or more packs of cigarettes per day?
- smoke marijuana regularly (once or twice a week)?
- use prescription drugs not prescribed to them?

Table 8. DFC Core Measure 2 - Perception of Harm of Substance Use, % responding with "moderate risk" or "great risk"

| Substance | Grade 8 | | Grade 10 | | Grade 12 | | TOTAL | |
|------------|---------|-----|----------|-----|----------|----|-------|-----|
| | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n |
| Alcohol | 70.3 | 128 | 72.1 | 111 | 67.4 | 95 | 70.1 | 334 |
| Cigarettes | 84.4 | 128 | 86.5 | 111 | 85.1 | 94 | 85.3 | 333 |
| Marijuana | 66.4 | 128 | 64.5 | 110 | 30.5 | 95 | 55.6 | 333 |
| Any Rx | 85.0 | 127 | 81.8 | 110 | 82.1 | 95 | 83.1 | 332 |

The table above shows data from the 2023 CLYDE Survey. Total percentage from the CLYDE Survey in 2021 (not shown) was 69.4%, showing that perception of harm (higher is better) has stayed about the same in that time frame. Focus Group Data is needed to obtain more qualitative data on the perception of risk of alcohol use vs other substances. These focus groups are projected to take place in the fall of 2024 with HS youth at ICSD.

Adult Surveys investigating perception of risk, among other things, are currently being distributed and evaluated. The projected date for completion of surveys is the Fall of 2024. Surveys are distributed to adults of all ages at various community events that ITAC is involved with.

2. Access to Alcohol

Question

| If you wanted to get some beer, wine or hard liquor (for example vodka, whiskey or gin), how easy would it be for you to get some? | Grade 8 | | Grade 10 | | Grade 12 | | Total | |
|--|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|------------|
| | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n |
| Very hard | 54.7 | 70 | 38.7 | 43 | 34.4 | 32 | 43.7 | 145 |
| Sort of hard | 24.2 | 31 | 25.2 | 28 | 10.8 | 10 | 20.8 | 69 |
| Sort of easy | 13.3 | 17 | 19.8 | 22 | 28.0 | 26 | 19.6 | 65 |
| Very easy | 7.8 | 10 | 16.2 | 18 | 26.9 | 25 | 16.0 | 53 |
| Column Totals | 100.0 | 128 | 100.0 | 111 | 100.0 | 93 | 100.0 | 332 |

CLYDE Survey data show that youth feel alcohol is very easy to obtain. The table above shows data from 2023 - previous 2021 CLYDE survey data for this question was 18.1% showing a slight decrease. Further Focus Group Data is needed to clarify how/where youth are getting access to alcohol. Focus groups are projected to take place in the Fall of 2024 with highschool youth at ICSD.

Local Condition - Perception of Risk of Harm:

1. CLYDE data shows ICSD youth in 12th grade are drinking at home (theirs or someone elses) other than at post-prom parties.

If you drank alcohol (more than a sip or taste) in the past year, where did you drink it?

| Location | 8th | 10th | 12th | TOTAL |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| I did not drink alcohol in the past year | 83.2% | 80.0% | 51.9% | 73.8% |
| Locations of alcohol use for those who used (more than one response allowed) | | | | |
| At my home | 85.0% | 60.0% | 60.5% | 66.7% |
| At someone else's home | 15.0% | 60.0% | 78.9% | 57.7% |
| At an open area like a park, beach, field, back road, woods, or a street corner | 0.0% | 0.0% | 15.8% | 7.7% |
| At a sporting event or concert | 0.0% | 10.0% | 18.4% | 11.5% |
| At a local festival or community event | 0.0% | 5.0% | 5.3% | 3.8% |
| At a restaurant, bar, or a nightclub | 0.0% | 5.0% | 7.9% | 5.1% |
| At an empty building or construction site | 0.0% | 0.0% | 2.6% | 1.3% |
| At a hotel / motel | 5.0% | 10.0% | 2.6% | 5.1% |
| In a car | 5.0% | 0.0% | 5.3% | 3.8% |
| At school | 0.0% | 0.0% | 5.3% | 2.6% |
| In another place | 20.0% | 15.0% | 13.2% | 15.4% |

The table above shows data from the CLYDE 2023 survey. The top two locations of where alcohol was used was “at my home” and “at someone else’s home”. Grade 12 students had the highest incidence of alcohol use in the past year at 48.1% of students admitting they drank alcohol.

During informal Key Informant Interviews (July 2023) with HS seniors - respondents indicated they did not think youth alcohol use was a major problem as it is a “social thing” not an everyday thing for most who use.

- 2. Youth are drinking alcohol provided by parents (and with parents/other adults) at 12th grade post-prom parties.

During an informal Key Informant Interview in June 2024 with a senior student and their parent reported there was an after-prom party where alcohol was available, supplied by parents. Parents/adults were also drinking with the youth.

Further Focus Group data is needed on what other occasions are 12th grade students from ICSD are drinking at home/s other than post-prom. Youth Focus Groups on alcohol are projected to take place in the Fall 2024.

ITAC is planning parent focus groups to get more information about the “when/where/who” is providing access to youth and their perception of risk for young people using alcohol. These parent focus groups are projected to take place during the Winter 2024-5 with parents of HS students at ICSD.

Local Condition - Access to Alcohol:

- 1. Youth obtain alcohol from home with parental permission.

Measure: If you drank alcohol, how did you usually get it

If you drank alcohol (more than a sip or taste) in the past year, how did you usually get it?

| Source | 8th | 10th | 12th | TOTAL |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| I did not drink alcohol in the past year | 84.2% | 81.8% | 50.6% | 74.5% |
| Sources of alcohol for those who used (more than one response allowed) | | | | |
| I got it from home without my parents' permission | 31.6% | 5.6% | 15.4% | 17.1% |
| I got it from home with my parents' permission | 63.2% | 38.9% | 48.7% | 50.0% |
| I got it from someone I know under age 21 | 0.0% | 38.9% | 51.3% | 35.5% |
| I got it from someone I know age 21 or older | 5.3% | 33.3% | 30.8% | 25.0% |
| I got it at a party | 15.8% | 44.4% | 61.5% | 46.1% |
| I got it at a local festival or community event | 0.0% | 5.6% | 7.7% | 5.3% |
| I got it from my brother or sister | 0.0% | 27.8% | 15.4% | 14.5% |
| I got it from another relative | 10.5% | 5.6% | 17.9% | 13.2% |
| I bought it myself with a fake ID | 0.0% | 0.0% | 2.6% | 1.3% |
| I bought it myself without a fake ID | 0.0% | 0.0% | 2.6% | 1.3% |
| A stranger bought it for me | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| I took it from a store or shop | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| I got it at work | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| I bought it over the internet | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Other | 10.5% | 22.2% | 12.8% | 14.5% |

Table: CLYDE Survey 2023 (I got it from home with my parents permission - 50.0%)

If you drank alcohol (more than a sip or taste) in the past year, how did you usually get it?

| Source | 8th | 10th | 12th | TOTAL |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| I did not drink alcohol in the past year | 88.6% | 60.4% | 49.3% | 69.6% |
| Sources of alcohol for those who used (more than one response allowed) | | | | |
| I got it from home without my parents' permission | 42.9% | 32.5% | 25.7% | 31.5% |
| I got it from home with my parents' permission | 50.0% | 52.5% | 51.4% | 51.7% |
| I got it from someone I know under age 21 | 7.1% | 17.5% | 45.7% | 27.0% |
| I got it from someone I know age 21 or older | 14.3% | 22.5% | 40.0% | 28.1% |
| I got it at a party | 14.3% | 30.0% | 57.1% | 38.2% |
| I got it at a local festival or community event | 7.1% | 0.0% | 17.1% | 7.9% |
| I got it from my brother or sister | 7.1% | 15.0% | 17.1% | 14.6% |
| I got it from another relative | 14.3% | 7.5% | 25.7% | 15.7% |
| I bought it myself with a fake ID | 0.0% | 0.0% | 11.4% | 4.5% |
| I bought it myself without a fake ID | 0.0% | 0.0% | 8.6% | 3.4% |
| A stranger bought it for me | 0.0% | 5.0% | 8.6% | 5.6% |
| I took it from a store or shop | 0.0% | 2.5% | 0.0% | 1.1% |
| I got it at work | 0.0% | 0.0% | 5.7% | 2.2% |
| I bought it over the internet | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% |
| Other | 21.4% | 10.0% | 11.4% | 12.4% |

Table: CLYDE Survey 2021 (I got it from home with my parents permission 51.7%)

2. Youth obtain alcohol at parties that do not happen at people’s homes.

The tables in the above local condition also show the CLYDE Survey data for this local condition. Specifically, “Youth get alcohol from parties CLYDE 2021 38.2%” and “Youth get alcohol from parties CLYDE 2023 46.1%” - a significant increase of 7.9%.

In addition, in an informal Key Informant Interview in 2024 with Erie County Sheriff’s Office, a Deputy reported breaking up a large party of underage youth that occurred in the woods along power line access area, which was not during prom or graduation times.

ITAC’s Fall 2024 Focus groups will gather more information about these local conditions by asking things like “Who is going to the parties, who is hosting, where, who provides the alcohol?” from highschool youth at ICSD.

Community Norms - Alcohol:

East Aurora has a lively bar and restaurant scene where social drinking is common, especially during sporting events and music festivals. The popularity of the Buffalo Bills and Buffalo Sabres contributes to alcohol consumption as a regular part of game day experience including tailgating and watching games at bars. To locals, the Bills Mafia, a charitable fan base, conjures up images of rowdy fans jumping through folding tables consuming beer and chicken wings pregame.

Several festivals and music events are hosted throughout the year including: Taste of East Aurora, East Aurora Music Festival, Art Walk and Backyard Bash. While several of these events are classified as family friendly, each promotes alcohol, beer and wine in different ways. The East Aurora Music Festival requires participants to purchase a wristband which permits access to live music in a variety of venues, including bars. Backyard Bash is sponsored by a local brewery with the outdoor concert on premises. During Art Walk, many of the galleries offer free wine to guests who stop to view the art on display. It’s also worth mentioning how the “Beer Tent” is a prominent fixture of most of the local carnivals and Ag days.

Many parents within our community exhibit a lenient attitude toward alcohol consumption among minors. Some believe that drinking in a controlled environment makes it safe and serves as a cultural initiation into adulthood. Others feel that moderate drinking under supervision can help youth learn to manage alcohol responsibly. Social hosting goes on, parents providing alcohol for their teens and their friends with good intentions. Parents think they are preventing something worse without thought to risks and consequences. Common remarks from parents include, "We will collect all keys to prevent anyone from driving," and "Any kids attending the party will spend the night." Additionally, some parents think that strict restrictions may lead to binge drinking, especially when their teens are unsupervised or in social situations where they might face pressure from peers.

Parents also reflect upon their own experiences with alcohol during their youth, arguing that they turned out fine despite underage or early exposure. Phrases like, "One drink won't hurt," "I remember sharing a beer with my dad," or "It's a special occasion," are common. These reflections lead them to feel that similar experiences are acceptable for their own children.

Other factors contributing to community norms include marketing messages in local gas stations and convenience stores. The placement of alcoholic products within easy reach and visibility appears to be focused and appealing toward youth.

Cannabis and Tobacco Use:

To be updated after development of relevant logic models (Projected for Fall 2024).

Community Resources:

Prevention Resources: facilities, programs, organizations and initiatives

ITAC - prevention coalition providing programs, education campaigns and initiatives

S3 Campaign - WRARC funded, collaboration between six DFC coalitions addressing Safe Use, Safe Storage and Safe Disposal of prescription drugs.

Celebrating Families - 8-week group program for families experiencing adversity including addiction

ECSD – provides "Too Good For Drugs" to schools and groups in Erie County

ECDOH – Narcan training, supplies, education programs in Erie County

ROC Rural Outreach Center - case management and counseling for the rural population

Neighboring coalitions, WNYPRC, EC Prevention Council, Kids Escaping Drugs - other prevention services covering Erie County but outside of our catchment area.

Protective factors/assets that promote a healthy environment and decisions

Boys & Girls Clubs - provides afterschool and summer programs for youth

ICSD School District and EAUF School District - Social/Emotional Learning curriculum, Family Support Center, SRO, clubs

ROC Rural Outreach Center - nutrition and health services

Other assets in the community that promote health by providing alternative activities etc:

Local churches and youth groups, Senior services, Scouting America, 4H, Girl Scouts, Sports (Tri-Town Aquatic Club, EMW Sports, Sahlens Sports Center), and over six gymnastics/dance studios.

WIC and SNAP - nutrition support for women, children and families of low income.

Green space - there are a lot of parks within our four towns that create space for hiking, biking and other recreational activities.

Prevention Infrastructure: systems, data sources, laws and policies, funding

EC Sheriff - Compliance checks, TIPS training

ITAC receives:

1. DFC grant \$125,000 per year for 10 years - started in 2018
2. Greater Buffalo Community Foundation - around \$800/year for drug prevention in EA
3. Erie County Legislature grant - \$10,000 for prevention services (once off)

WRARC grant for S3 Campaign - a collaboration of 6 local coalitions

Laws and policies: local towns have Social host ordinances, smoke-free parks and public spaces etc.

Key gaps in substance use prevention, identified by ITAC sector members, include:

- Limited social/entertainment options (especially free or low cost) for Youth in the community
- Lack of public transportation
- Time and socio-economic factors
- Community readiness (social norms etc)
- Lack of facilities – no spaces for activities
- Lack of local services - there are no treatment or recovery services in our catchment area

Problem / Goal Statements:

ITAC has identified three priority problems:

1. **Underage alcohol use**
2. **Underage cannabis use**
3. **Underage tobacco use**

The rationale for prioritization includes:

- **Alcohol:** has consistently shown to be the number one substance used by youth in our towns, it has the most social acceptability (norms) and a lack of enforcement.
- **Cannabis:** legalization and new consumption methods have made this substance both more widely available and socially acceptable, as more dispensaries open nearby, ITAC wants to monitor how much our youth are impacted
- **Tobacco:** tobacco use, particularly in the form of vaping, is the most common substance identified in qualitative data with youth, parents and schools.

After evaluating the data from the CLYDE survey, the coalition has used town halls, data walks, presentations and messaging campaigns to educate the community of substance use trends in our youth. In turn, feedback from the general public, our coalition members, our board of directors and key personnel are used to create our strategic and action plan on a yearly basis. Feedback is received through surveys, evaluations, discussions and listening sessions, among other things.

As a DFC coalition, we have two basic goals, and they are:

1. Increase community collaboration, and
2. Reduce youth substance use and misuse.

The measurable objectives for each priority problem need to be developed alongside a logic model. Our coalition is currently developing the logic models for cannabis and tobacco, at which time this community assessment will be updated to reflect that.

Goal 1. Increase community collaboration.

Objective 1: By 9/29/2025, increase aggregate membership in the youth & school sectors by 4 total members, as measured by the membership roster, sign-in attendance sheets & Zoom attendance.

Objective 2: By 9/29/2025, increase active (per ITAC By-Laws) sector membership by at least 1 individual each, in 2 of the 4 sectors with lowest membership (media, healthcare, faith-based & civic) as measured by the membership roster, sign in attendance sheets & via Zoom chat sign in.

Goal 2. Reduce youth substance use and misuse - ALCOHOL

Objective 1: Long term - decrease in underage drinking as measured by 30-day use by 2% from 14.4% (2023) to 12.4% (2029) as reported by 8/10/12 grades on the CLYDE survey.

Objective 2.: Intermediate - decrease in perceived availability of alcohol by reports of “very easy” to obtain alcohol by 4% from 16% (2023) to 12% (2027) as reported by 8/10/12 grades on the CLYDE survey.

Objective 3: Short term - decrease in youth who report getting alcohol at parties by 5% from 46.1% (2023) to 41.1% (2025) as reported by 8/10/12 grades on the CLYDE survey.