CADCA FAQ on Policy Change

What is an environmental policy change?

Strategies that seek to establish or change community standards, codes, and attitudes, thereby influencing the incidence and prevalence of drug abuse in general. Sound environmental policy changes do not act directly on individuals, groups, or families; rather, but seek to alter the context in which individuals, groups, and families behave.

How do I start to make a policy change?

Before attempting to make an environmental policy change in your community, it is first necessary for your coalition to organize and formulate a plan of action. The following are examples of topics to consider:

- What do you want to change (an ordinance, policy, law, etc.)?
- Why is the change needed, documenting the extent of the problem (facts, statistics, and anecdotes)?
- Who has the power to make the change (city council people, members of the state legislature), and through what system (city council, county board, state legislature)?
- Who are your potential allies (other coalitions, local businesses, prevention specialists, law enforcement)?
- Do you have key champions in the system needed to make the change, and who are they?
- Who will you meet with during the process, and who will you take with you to make your case?
- Who will your opponents be, (legalizers, alcohol distributors, others who want funding for their program, etc.) what arguments will they have, and how can you neutralize them?
- How can you use the media to help you (op-eds, local print, radio and/or TV stories about your issue)?
- Who will monitor the progress of the proposed ordinance, policy, or regulation?