

AWARENESS, IMPLEMENTATION, AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Drug Endangered Children Roadmap and Toolkit to Local Alliance Building



COPS
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Introduction

The mission of the National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children (National DEC) is to break multigenerational cycles of child abuse and neglect as well as substance abuse by empowering and training practitioners who work to change the trajectory of the lives of children and families living in drug environments or impacted by substance use. These practitioners include law enforcement agencies; child welfare professionals; prosecutors; judges and other judicial staff; medical personnel; teachers and other school personnel; probation, parole, and corrections personnel; treatment providers; and prevention specialists. This roadmap and toolkit are designed to consolidate all the information needed to form a drug endangered children (DEC) alliance and provide resources (including samples from existing alliances) to help formation proceed smoothly. Figure 1 on page 3 shows an overview of the information contained in this guide broken down into the three stages of developing a roadmap and toolkit: (1) awareness, (2) implementation, and (3) institutionalization. A DEC alliance connects local practitioners from many disciplines together to provide a mechanism for sustaining cross-disciplinary and interagency collaboration and facilitate ongoing changes in policies and practices. When a formal group comes together, they are stronger; they will have more information to identify drug endangered children and be able to assist them in a variety of ways instead of working in fragmented silos.

The first key component of helping drug endangered children is establishing a clear understanding of the risks children face when their caregivers are engaged in drug activity or substance use. This knowledge highlights the need for collaborative efforts to help these children and their families and motivates practitioners to look at how they can do their jobs more effectively to provide better outcomes for drug endangered children, families, and communities.

Enhancing awareness about drug endangered children is an ongoing part of National DEC's mission and provides the foundation for taking action to implement and sustain the collaborative DEC Approach.¹ To help practitioners create **awareness**, the first section of this publication focuses on the steps practitioners can take to spread awareness among their colleagues, across other professions, and throughout the community.

1. The DEC Approach is a multidisciplinary strategy to change the trajectory of a drug endangered child's life through a common vision, ongoing collaboration, and ongoing change, which increases the likelihood of better outcomes for drug endangered children. The next sections will focus on these three components in depth.

The second stage is taking action. This will be done by sharing a common vision, ongoing collaboration, and ongoing change. Having a common vision will help practitioners and community members be on the same page sharing common goals; ongoing collaboration allows practitioners to continue asking themselves who is missing from the DEC Alliance, allows for sharing information and making each discipline stronger; and ongoing how about “ongoing change will make it easier for practitioners to make responsive changes to how they do their jobs.” to how practitioners do their jobs. National DEC has developed training curricula and other resources to help implement changes and put true collaboration into practice.

To help practitioners **implement** actions to help drug endangered children, the second section of this publication focuses on the steps practitioners can take to collaborate with other disciplines and improve their methods, identification, and response to drug endangered children.

The third stage in creating a DEC alliance and is **institutionalizing** efforts and the alliance. Institutionalizing efforts will allow them to continue for many years as well as establish a platform for when new issues or concerns arise. To help practitioners institutionalize collaborative relationships, the third section of this publication focuses on the steps practitioners can take to establish and formalize local DEC alliances.

Who are drug endangered children?

National DEC defines drug endangered children as those at risk of suffering physical or emotional harm as a result of illegal drug use, possession, manufacturing, cultivation, or distribution. They may also be children whose caretaker’s substance misuse interferes with the caretaker’s ability to parent and provide a safe and nurturing environment. The essence of this definition is that Children + Drugs = Risk.

What is the DEC movement?

The DEC movement, which includes federal, state, tribal, and local partners, began as a means “to respond to the growing phenomenon of finding children living among the dangers of meth labs located in homes and other areas where children were living or playing.” The movement has expanded to include all children impacted by their parent or caregiver’s substance use or drug activity.’

The DEC movement challenges all of us to recognize these risks and to work together using the DEC Approach to identify children at the earliest point, protect children from abuse and neglect, which all too often occurs across generations, and to help children and families heal. By collaborating, making changes to everyday practices, and leveraging resources, we can provide drug endangered children opportunities to live in safe and nurturing environments free from abuse and neglect.

* “The Drug Endangered Children Task Force,” U.S. Department of Justice Archives, accessed April 4, 2018, <https://www.justice.gov/archives/dec>.

Figure 1. Forming a DEC alliance

Awareness

- Connect with National DEC
- Create awareness of the problem
- Identify leadership, disciplines, and stakeholders
- Provide awareness training
- Initiate a community assessment

Implementation

- Connect with National DEC
- Continued Awareness training
- Engage leadership, disciplines, and stakeholders
- Provide DEC Approach training
- Complete and disseminate community assessment
- Identify, develop, and implement promising practices

Institutionalization

- Connect with National DEC
- Provide training and raise awareness
- Provide Local DEC Development training
- Provide Train-the-Trainer Training
- Institutionalize and share promising practices, memorandum of understanding, protocols, etc.
- Political and policy support
- Conduct regular meetings
- Continue to reassess

The Awareness Steps

1. Connect with National DEC

Practitioners can connect with National DEC via its website, email addresses, and social media platforms to seek guidance, obtain resources, request training, and learn about promising practices.

- Ways to Connect with National DEC sheet

National DEC's website is an online resource center full of relevant substance use information, information on upcoming trainings and webinars, and information to connect them to state and local DEC Alliances. Through the "Contact Us" web page, National DEC has a team of experts spanning multiple disciplines ready to answer questions, including those about law enforcement, child welfare, courts, prevention, medical treatment, and education.

- "Contact Us," <https://www.nationaldec.org/contact-us>
- "State Sites," <https://www.nationaldec.org/state-sites>

To request training or other information, email info@nationaldec.org.

Practitioners can also connect via National DEC's Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn pages to obtain a wide array of information on drug activity and substance abuse and the risks they pose to children, families, and communities:

- Facebook: @NationalDEC4KIDS, <https://www.facebook.com/NationalDEC4Kids/>
- Twitter: @NationalDEC, <https://twitter.com/nationaldec>
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/national-alliance-for-drug-endangered-children>

2. Spread awareness

There are many professionals and community members who are not aware of DEC's efforts or even the risks drug endangered children face. To build awareness of the issues facing drug endangered children, information must be disseminated in a variety of formats. National DEC has developed trainings, brochures, publications, fact sheets, and other information to assist practitioners and communities in providing awareness. National DEC's network has also developed different ways to provide awareness about drug endangered children. These include mobile apps, websites, and pamphlets. Following are some examples that will assist in spreading awareness.

- Distribute—throughout the community—print or email copies of National DEC’s Brochure, which provides a brief overview of National DEC. Further information can be provided through the “About National DEC” sheet and the “What is the DEC Mission” sheet. The brochure and both information sheets are also available in the toolkit.
- National DEC’s state and local alliances have also created awareness items for dissemination that may be helpful to others, including the following:
 - Carbon County, Wyoming, DEC Alliance Brochure
 - Missouri DEC Information Card
 - Missouri DEC Brochure
 - Okaloosa County, Florida, DEC Brochure
 - Tennessee DEC Brochure
 - Wisconsin State DEC Alliance Brochure
- National DEC’s Annual DEC Awareness Day: National DEC and its network of state, tribal, and local DEC alliances, along with other professionals across the nation, have designated the fourth Wednesday of April for focusing on drug endangered children awareness. On this day, individuals, agencies, disciplines, and communities across the United States and Canada come together with a common vision to help provide awareness on what issues and risks drug endangered children face and what can be done to identify, protect, and help these children. National DEC developed an information sheet to provide further information about DEC Awareness Day and provide examples and ideas. (See “Ideas for Promoting an Annual DEC Awareness Day” at <https://www.nationaldec.org/annualdecawarenessdaysheet> and in the toolkit.)
- For caregivers, National DEC created a fact sheet entitled “What Caregivers Should Know.” This sheet provides those that may care for children exposed to substance abuse or drug activity information about these children and what they might experience.

3. Identify leadership, disciplines, stakeholders, and agencies to be involved in a DEC Alliance

Any community member or anyone from any discipline or profession can initiate a local DEC effort, but it cannot be done alone. Searching for potential, experienced practitioners whose work could aid local efforts to identify, protect, and serve drug endangered children requires creative, collaborative thinking. Remember, everyone has something to offer; you may be surprised by the people or disciplines who are able to assist the most.

The more practitioners and disciplines involved, the more effective and the greater impact a local DEC effort will have. However, there is likely to be a smaller group of key partners and motivated practitioners who will dedicate the time and energy to getting a local DEC alliance up and running.

To help identify potential partners, National DEC created a worksheet that can be used throughout DEC efforts: “Worksheet for Identifying Key Disciplines & Individuals to Assist DEC Initiatives,” available at <https://www.nationaldec.org/nationaldecidentifyingstakeholders> and in the toolkit.

4. Provide Core DEC Awareness training

This training is intended for all professionals working to help drug endangered children, which aligns with National's DEC mission of forming multidisciplinary partnerships that take advantage of existing agency personnel, resources, and responsibilities and that coordinate their mutual interests and duties to meet the specific needs of these children. Assisting these children and addressing their needs does not conclude until the child is in a permanent, safe, and positive functioning environment. With the National DEC mission in mind, the *Core DEC Training* looks at the risks and long-term impact of drug endangered children, overcoming the challenges of aligning the agencies and systems responsible for preventing, intervening, and treating these issues to change the trajectories of the lives of drug endangered children and break multigenerational cycles of abuse and neglect.

The learning objectives for this training are as follows:

1. Gain awareness about drug endangered children and the risks they face so that professionals interacting with these victims recognize the need to facilitate multidisciplinary, collaborative responses to better meet these children's needs.
2. Understand the many (often missed) opportunities to identify children living in dangerous drug environments and the benefits of intervention at the earliest possible point when endangerment is suspected to reduce physical and psychological harm to children.
3. Learn what a multidisciplinary collaborative response involves, how it incorporates the unique and often limited resources within a community, and how it applies those resources in a manner that provides better care for drug endangered children.
4. A Copy of the Core DEC Training description and objectives can be found at <https://www.nationaldec.org/coredectrainingdescription> and on the flash drive.

National DEC partnered with the Miami Police Department to create this training, which comprises six short videos ranging from 7 to 15 minutes long that can be viewed online. These videos are snippets of the Core DEC Training to provide professionals with quick information about DEC:

1. Core Drug Endangered Children Video Training, Part I

<http://www.awsmproductions.com/Miami-Police-Training-Center/Training-Courses/Miami-Core-DEC-Training/i-btGd6qp/A>

2. Core Drug Endangered Children Video Training, Part II

<http://www.awsmproductions.com/Miami-Police-Training-Center/Training-Courses/Miami-Core-DEC-Training/i-wJhCxtf/A>

3. Core Drug Endangered Children Video Training, Part III

<http://www.awsmproductions.com/Miami-Police-Training-Center/Training-Courses/Miami-Core-DEC-Training/i-6FNBFjd/A>

4. Core Drug Endangered Children Video Training, Part IV

<http://www.awsmproductions.com/Miami-Police-Training-Center/Training-Courses/Miami-Core-DEC-Training/i-6VsB3xk/A>

5. Core Drug Endangered Children Video Training, Part V

<http://www.awsmproductions.com/Miami-Police-Training-Center/Training-Courses/Miami-Core-DEC-Training/i-S9BJdtz/A>

6. Core Drug Endangered Children Video Training, Part VI

<http://www.awsmproductions.com/Miami-Police-Training-Center/Training-Courses/Miami-Core-DEC-Training/i-Sn9fzSH/A>

All of these trainings can be found on the flash drive.

5. Assess your community

Take a look at the needs of your community to identify specific issues that need to be addressed and resources available to assist with DEC efforts: Use National DEC’s “Assessment of Drug Endangered Children Issues within the Community.” National DEC recommends completing this community assessment to gather and analyze relevant data, identify areas where there are gaps and where there are strengths, then start to identify areas to focus on next. The assessment should be conducted through a local DEC alliance or professionals working on DEC efforts to compile data from multiple disciplines to show how substance abuse is impacting children and families in communities. Once gathered and completed, the assessment can be disseminated with approval of your supervisor.

The Implementation Steps

1. Stay connected with National DEC

Practitioners can connect with National DEC via its website, social media platforms, or staff to seek guidance, obtain resources, and learn about promising practices.

National DEC's website includes an online resource center, information on upcoming trainings and webinars, and contact information for state, local, and tribal DEC alliances. Through the "Contact Us" web page, National DEC has a team of experts spanning multiple disciplines ready to answer questions, including those about law enforcement, courts, prevention and treatment, medical, and education.

- "Contact Us," <https://www.nationaldec.org/contact-us>
- "State Sites," <https://www.nationaldec.org/state-sites>

To request training, email info@nationaldec.org.

Practitioners can also connect via National DEC's Facebook and Twitter pages to obtain a wide array of information on drug activity and substance abuse and the risks they pose to children, families, and communities:

- **Facebook.** @NationalDEC4KIDS, <https://www.facebook.com/NationalDEC4Kids/>
- **Twitter.** @NationalDEC, <https://twitter.com/nationaldec>
- **LinkedIn.** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/national-alliance-for-drug-endangered-children>

2. Continue awareness

Because drug activity and substance abuse impact all communities and the DEC mission engages practitioners from so many different disciplines, the DEC Approach has community-wide impact. As you implement the DEC Approach it is important to continue to reach out to your community. Connect with those who have been provided brochures you have previously developed and disseminated. Ask them for input on how to improve them and what additional information is needed. Consider what continuing education you might be able to offer to help your community take the next step in their DEC efforts and education. Think about which disciplines you need to build a stronger partnership with and provide more training and outreach to those groups; help connect them to your existing DEC alliance of professionals.

National DEC continues to develop documents and information to help communities spread awareness. “Developmental Consequences of Fetal Exposure to Prenatal Drug Use,” in the toolkit, is another fact sheet for your dissemination to develop awareness of DEC issues.

3. Continue to identify and engage leadership, disciplines, agencies, and stakeholders

Drug activity and substance abuse impacts all of our communities, and the DEC Approach engages professionals from many different disciplines and has community-wide impact. As you implement DEC efforts, it is important to ask yourself how you are reaching out to your community. This is a great time to think about and develop brochures and information to distribute throughout your community as well as to other disciplines.

As part of community outreach, it is important to continue to identify and engage community stakeholders who should be involved in your local DEC efforts. Continue to work on the Worksheet for Identifying Key Disciplines & Individuals to Assist DEC Initiatives, available at <https://www.nationaldec.org/nationaldecidentifyingstakeholders> and in the toolkit, as discussed in the Awareness stage. Remember, everyone has something to offer; you may be surprised by the people or disciplines who are able to assist the most. Review the data and information gathered from the worksheet. How has the awareness around drug endangered children impacted the efforts, services and actions of all disciplines involved? Discuss this with your alliance, what are the next steps needed to be taken? Use this worksheet to continually check back and gather information to regularly discuss and adjust your DEC efforts as needed.

4. Provide DEC Approach: Moving from Awareness to Action training

This in-person training is provided by National DEC staff at a community, regional, or state level. It focuses on how to implement the DEC Approach, which is a comprehensive strategy based on a common vision, ongoing collaboration between various disciplines and agencies, and ongoing changes in practice. This DEC Approach has proven to be effective in improving the likelihood of better outcomes for drug endangered children. The training provides insights about how various practitioners—including child welfare professionals, law enforcement officers, court and judicial professionals, prosecutors, probation and parole officers, medical personnel, educators, and treatment providers—are in a position to identify, protect, and serve drug endangered children and their families.

The trainers discuss the identification of risks to drug endangered children and what all disciplines can look for when collecting evidence and information on drug endangered children. The trainers use pictures and video of real DEC scenarios to assist professionals in understanding what to look for regarding the “life of the child.” The training includes trainer-led discussions and hands-on exercises to demonstrate how implementing collaboration enhances the likelihood of better outcomes for drug endangered children.

The learning objectives for this training are as follows:

1. Gain insight about how our own experience, attitudes, values, and emotions impact effective collaboration under the DEC Approach.
2. Gain insight about our collaborative partners to decrease frustrations when implementing the DEC Approach.
3. Understand how collaboration leads to more informed decisions and increased likelihood of better outcomes on behalf of drug endangered children and their families under the DEC Approach than under other approaches.
4. Be able to implement changes in identification of children, mandatory reporting, and evidence and information collection in our respective practices on behalf of drug endangered children.

5. Complete and disseminate community assessment

Completing the Community Assessment worksheet in the toolkit will inform people of the pressing issues in the community and get them involved. It may help in getting funding to assist in your efforts. Dissemination of the completed information allows others to be informed and to provide more widespread knowledge of the issues. See the Awareness section for complete information as well as the form.

6. Identify, develop, and implement DEC promising practices

Checklists

Checklists are very useful tools to put procedures and policies into practice. They can help ensure that key steps, pieces of evidence, contacts, or other information are not missed when dealing with cases involving drug endangered children. These checklists can be used for different agencies and then shared with partner agencies. They provide various disciplines with guidance in gathering important information.

- [National DEC Children at Risk: Evidence Sheet](#)
- [National DEC Contact Sheet](#)
- [National DEC Home Checklist](#)
- [National DEC Field Test Checklist](#)

Publications

National DEC has released publications that will assist law enforcement and their partners in their DEC efforts. These publications can be ordered through the COPS Office and sent to you for free. Or you can read them on this flash drive.

Collaboration between community partners to identify and solve problems and then implement effective organizational changes is what community policing and DEC efforts are all about. It is our hope that these guides will be a useful tool for law enforcement and other practitioners who want to get involved in the DEC mission by helping build a foundation of strong partnerships with a focus on the child.

- [DEC Guide for Law Enforcement Volume 1](#)
- [DEC Guide for Law Enforcement Volume 2](#)
- [DEC Promising Practices Guide](#)

Tools

National DEC and its network have developed and created other tools to assist professionals in DEC efforts. Here are some of those, keeping in mind that there are more on the National DEC website for your use:

- [National DEC’s Drug and Alcohol Use During Pregnancy Brochure](#)
- [National DEC’s Making an Effective Call to the Child Welfare Reporting Hotline Sheet](#)

Websites

National DEC has encouraged and helped both state and local alliances, such as the Kansas state DEC alliance (<http://www.kansas-dec.org>), to provide information to a broad audience.

Social media sites

National DEC encourages and can help both state and local alliances in setting up social media sites in order to spread the word. Some of these include the following:

- [Carbon County, Wyoming, Alliance for Drug Endangered Children](#) (Facebook page)
- [Cherokee/Ida County, Iowa, Drug Endangered Children’s Alliance](#) (Facebook page)
- [Tioga County, Pennsylvania, Alliance for Drug Endangered Children](#) (Facebook page)

Handle with Care

This promising practice tool was developed under the umbrella of West Virginia State DEC Alliance. It started out to ensure that children were getting identified by law enforcement when a traumatic incident occurred. Law enforcement officers would send a “handle with care” notice to the child’s school to inform them that the child had experienced a trauma in their life, which kept the school staff informed and enabled them to provide necessary intervention. National DEC’s local alliances have since expanded this practice to include various other disciplines to identify children as early as possible, as not all children are involved with law enforcement and may

be missed if law enforcement is the only discipline involved. Now, children are being identified by other community partners and disciplines that are alliance trained, and children are being identified earlier and provided support through the education system.

- [Carbon County, Wyoming, Handle with Care Brochure](#)
- [Bristol County, Massachusetts, Handle with Care Brochure](#)
- [Tioga County, Pennsylvania, Handle with Care Brochure](#)

QR codes

A QR code is an image that a smartphone user can scan with a free app and immediately be sent to a website. As a promising practice tool for DEC, one of the Florida Local DEC alliances created a QR code to provide people with emergency information quickly, including crisis information. Others have linked QR codes to their DEC websites or other websites. These codes can be printed on stickers that can be placed on clipboards or even police cars, on handouts for events, or just on a small card to hand to those in need.

- [Okaloosa County, Florida, DEC Alliance QR Code Flyer example](#)
- [Okaloosa County, Florida, DEC Alliance Resource QR Code example](#)
- [Bristol County, Massachusetts, Handle with Care QR Code](#)

Mobile applications

Greene County, Missouri, developed a DEC mobile community application to assist in providing its community and its professionals with DEC information. National DEC has helped other communities develop apps for use in connecting professionals and providing information.

The Institutionalization Steps

1. Stay connected with National DEC

Connect with National DEC via its website, social media platforms, or staff to seek guidance, obtain resources, and learn about promising practices.

National DEC's website (www.nationaldec.org) includes information on upcoming trainings and webinars and contact information for state DEC alliances. Through the "Contact Us" web page, National DEC has a team of experts spanning multiple disciplines ready to answer questions, including those about law enforcement, courts, prevention and treatment, medical, and education.

- "Contact Us," <https://www.nationaldec.org/contact-us>
- "State Sites," <https://www.nationaldec.org/state-sites>

To contact National DEC staff or request training, email info@nationaldec.org.

Practitioners can also connect via National DEC's Facebook and Twitter pages to obtain a wide array of information on drug activity and substance abuse and the risks they pose to children, families, and communities:

- Facebook: @NationalDEC4KIDS, <https://www.facebook.com/NationalDEC4Kids/>
- Twitter: @NationalDEC, <https://twitter.com/nationaldec>
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/national-alliance-for-drug-endangered-children>

2. Continue to provide training and awareness

Continued training and awareness are necessary throughout DEC efforts. For more examples, look at the Awareness information in stage 1.

3. Provide Local DEC Alliance Development training

National DEC's Local DEC Alliance Development training teaches law enforcement, child welfare, and their professional colleagues and community partners about the benefits of forming local DEC alliances that formalize working relationships between the professionals who are involved with drug endangered children and their families. The training focuses on providing local practitioners with the proven specific steps and techniques to establish a formal drug endangered children alliance.

Through this in-person training, National DEC’s experienced trainers lead discussions and activities with the participants about who should be at the table to help form a local DEC alliance, about the challenges of collaboration and sustaining that collaboration, and about the benefits of changing practices and procedures on an ongoing basis to benefit drug endangered children. The training assists practitioners of various disciplines in discussing as well as developing protocols and memoranda of understanding (MOU) to assist in institutionalizing DEC efforts and responses within each community. The material in this very practical training is based on the experiences of successful local DEC alliances in various jurisdictions across the country, including tribal communities.

The learning objectives for this training are as follows:

1. Understand the benefits of establishing local drug endangered children alliances to formalize working relationships between professionals.
2. Learn steps and techniques for establishing a local DEC alliance.
3. Gain insight about specific challenges within the communities around collaboration and how to address these challenges.
4. Review and discuss sample MOUs and protocols to understand how to institutionalize ongoing changes in practice and develop responses to drug endangered children.
5. Engage in activities and exercises to discuss in depth the institutionalization of DEC efforts and developing a local DEC alliance.

4. Provide Train-the-Trainer trainings

National DEC has developed a train-the-trainer program to certify trainers to train alliance partners in the Core DEC Awareness and the DEC Approach “Moving from Awareness to Action” trainings. This program ensures that DEC efforts will be sustained and institutionalized locally as these certified trainers will be able to provide ongoing training to practitioners who have not had these trainings. Contact National DEC staff to schedule a Train-the-Trainer training in your community at info@nationaldec.org.

5. Institutionalize and share DEC promising practices

As the collaborative DEC Approach is implemented at the local level, you may initiate and implement new and creative ways for drug endangered children to be identified and protected, ways for collaboration to be more effective, or ways to enhance other aspects of the DEC mission. These may be labeled as “promising practices,” and it is important to identify promising practices so that you can share these with other professionals and other disciplines. Identifying and sharing promising DEC practices strengthens DEC efforts locally, and National DEC shares these practices with practitioners across the nation to spread innovative practices for helping drug endangered children. National DEC developed the National DEC Promising Practices publication to get conversations started.

Implementing the collaborative DEC Approach involves having conversations and meetings with fellow practitioners, developing closer working relationships, sharing information, and considering and adopting changes in procedures and practice—all of which can be reflected in protocols and MOUs. DEC protocols and MOUs have been developed and put in place in various jurisdictions across the country:

- Protocols are commonly described as a set of common guidelines that everyone follows, so everyone is on the same page. Protocols define the procedures and steps for professionals to take as they work together to make a difference in the lives of drug endangered children.
- Bylaws establish the rules and guidelines for the purpose and work of the DEC alliance.
- An MOU outlines the agreement between organizations on how they will work together addressing the DEC issue.

These documents help shape and clarify the actions and direction of the DEC alliance by formalizing agreements and helping to institutionalize DEC efforts across all disciplines involved.

- National DEC Building a Protocol worksheet: This worksheet will assist in starting to build a DEC protocol that will be relevant to your community and to the disciplines involved in your DEC efforts. Examples from existing Local DEC Alliances are included as well.
- Example Protocols
 - Jasper County, Iowa, Local DEC Alliance Protocol
 - Shawnee County, Kansas, DEC Alliance Protocol
 - Connecticut State DEC Alliance Protocol
 - Spokane, Washington, DEC Alliance Protocol
- National DEC Building a DEC Bylaw worksheet: This worksheet will assist in developing bylaws.
- Example Bylaws
 - Jasper County, Iowa, DEC Local DEC Alliance Example Bylaws
 - Carbon County, Wyoming, DEC Alliance Example Bylaws
- National DEC Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Examples:
 - National DEC - State DEC - Draft MOU (sample)
 - National DEC - State DEC - Example MOU (South Carolina)
 - State DEC MOU - Draft (sample)
 - State DEC MOU - Example (Arkansas signed)
 - Tribal DEC Alliance MOU - Nevada (signed)

6. Engage political leaders and obtain policy support

The DEC Approach addresses a significant number of key public policy issues that are of interest to elected and senior appointed officials including child maltreatment, child placements, drug activity, substance abuse, human trafficking, community-oriented policing, incarceration rates, drug courts, and educational outcomes. These issues will need political support as well as possible tribal resolutions and legislation or statute changes. It is important to continue to think about how to engage political leaders within your community, tribe, or state as well as at the federal level. Getting support from political leaders will assist in moving DEC efforts forward and may even result in policy or law changes that strengthen the DEC mission.

Example resolution and legislation:

- [Indian Country DEC Resolution](#) – sample
- [Indian Country DEC Resolution](#) – example (ITCN - Nevada)
- [Nevada statutes](#)
- [Oklahoma legislation](#)

National DEC has developed a letter to assist you in contacting and engaging support from policy leaders.

7. Conduct regular meetings to formalize the DEC Alliance

It is important to have local DEC Alliance meetings on a regular basis. This schedule will assist in building relationships and partnerships, allow for case reviews, allow for training and education opportunities, and assist in sustain-ing DEC efforts. We recommend having the meetings the same date and time every month so people can put it on their calendars. For many alliances, having meetings at least every other month works best as it keeps people thinking about DEC and also keeps efforts moving forward. National DEC has developed meeting rules, meeting agenda, and meeting sign-in sheet samples to assist alliances.

8. Assess and enhance overall DEC efforts

The DEC Approach is designed to create ongoing collaboration and ongoing change, because the practitioners who have the responsibility and authority to serve drug endangered children and families will always face new challenges, new drug trends, new policies and laws, and other changing circumstances. In addition, each case that is dealt with in a collaborative manner will have its own lessons about what worked well and what could have been handled better. For these reasons, it is vitally important for DEC alliances to continuously assess what things are working and what things are not working and how DEC efforts can be enhanced in your community.

About National DEC

The National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children (National DEC) is a national nonprofit whose mission is to break multigenerational cycles of abuse and neglect of children by empowering practitioners who work to change the trajectory of the lives of children and families living in drug environments and impacted by substance abuse. National DEC provides training and technical assistance to state, tribal, and local DEC alliances, professionals, and communities who assist and care for drug endangered children and work to prevent and address child abuse and neglect. These practitioners include law enforcement agencies; child welfare providers; prosecutors; judges; medical personnel; teachers; probation, parole, and corrections personnel; treatment providers; and prevention specialists.

National DEC advances its mission through a three-tiered training program:

- 1. Core DEC Awareness Training** assists communities and professionals in understanding the prevalence of drug activity and substance abuse and how it negatively affects children. The training enhances the ability of professionals to identify drug endangered children and the risks and trauma they face and highlights the opportunities through collaboration for changing the status quo to help drug endangered children, their families, and their communities.
- 2. DEC Approach Training – Moving from Awareness to Action** is designed to move practitioners from DEC awareness to taking action. This training directly engages all disciplines in developing collaborative DEC partnerships and helps participants gain a deeper understanding of each discipline's roles and responsibilities. The training effectively gets participants to identify and implement changes they can make in their practices to assist drug endangered children.
- 3. Local DEC Development Training and Facilitation** is hands-on training and facilitation that provides the foundation for developing a local DEC alliance as a formal structure for on-going collaboration, on-going change, and sustained organizational transformation. This training includes MOUs, protocols, work plans, alliance goals and strategic plans, and access to promising practices from other jurisdictions that have established DEC alliances.

Advocates throughout the United States and Canada have worked hard to create effective collaborations and to institutionalize the DEC Approach for the benefit of drug endangered children. Being part of the DEC movement

- connects you to other professionals working toward overcoming the same challenges;
- enhances collaborative efforts on behalf of children and families;
- allows you to be part of a larger solution to prevent and address child abuse and neglect.

For more information, visit National DEC online at www.nationaldec.org.

About the COPS Office

The **Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office)** is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing begins with a commitment to building trust and mutual respect between police and communities. It supports public safety by encouraging all stakeholders to work together to address our nation's crime challenges. When police and communities collaborate, they more effectively address underlying issues, change negative behavioral patterns, and allocate resources.

Rather than simply responding to crime, community policing focuses on preventing it through strategic problem-solving approaches based on collaboration. The COPS Office awards grants to hire community policing officers and support the development and testing of innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders, as well as all levels of law enforcement.

Since 1994, the COPS Office has invested more than \$14 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing. Other achievements include the following:

- To date, the COPS Office has funded the hiring of approximately 130,000 additional officers by more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies in both small and large jurisdictions.
- Nearly 700,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations.
- To date, the COPS Office has distributed more than eight million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs and flash drives.
- The COPS Office also sponsors conferences, roundtables, and other forums focused on issues critical to law enforcement.

COPS Office information resources, covering a wide range of community policing topics such as school and campus safety, violent crime, and officer safety and wellness, can be downloaded via the COPS Office's home page, www.cops.usdoj.gov. This website is also the grant application portal, providing access to online application forms.



The National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children (National DEC) provides a wealth of resources to help organizations wishing to establish state or local DEC alliances. Those resources, including samples of documents from existing alliances, are consolidated here with information to help the process go smoothly.



COPS

Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services
145 N Street NE
Washington, DC 20530

To obtain details about COPS Office programs, call
the COPS Office Response Center at 800-421-6770.

Visit the COPS Office online at www.cops.usdoj.gov.



NATIONAL ALLIANCE
FOR DRUG ENDANGERED CHILDREN
Rescue. Defend. Shelter. Support.

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For more information about National DEC,
email info@nationaldec.org.

Visit National DEC online at www.nationaldec.org.