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# Chapter 4: Nebraska

The case study of Title V in Nebraska, which focuses on the national evaluation communities of Norfolk and Valentine, demonstrates that implementing the Title V model as designed creates an opportunity for change in comprehensive delinquency prevention planning. When implemented without training and technical assistance, however, it is difficult for communities to move through the four stages without significant challenge. The Title V national evaluation communities in Nebraska, while able to implement new programs, struggled to implement the Title V model and, in both cases, were unable to do so.

The first section of this case study discusses state support for Title V from 1997 to 2002. The next sections discuss the Title V initiatives in Norfolk and Valentine from 1997 to 2002. The final section presents concluding remarks on Title V in Nebraska.

This summary is based on four primary data sources in each community during its participation in the national evaluation: stakeholder interviews, in person and via telephone; a review of Nebraska's Title V documentation, including the state request for proposals for available funds and the Norfolk and Valentine grant applications; a review of Title V documentation in Norfolk and Valentine, including the grant applications, quarterly progress reports, and prevention policy board meeting minutes; and a review of the federal Title V guidelines and documentation. In addition, the report includes the evaluation team's interpretation of the case study data that represent Caliber's experience in working with all 11 national evaluation communities during the multiyear implementation of the evaluation.

## State Support for Title V

Since the initial availability of Title V funds in 1994, Nebraska has been eligible to receive funds ranging from \$78,000 to \$237,000 per year, based on the size of its juvenile population. The Nebraska Crime Commission was the implementing state agency in Nebraska and chose to support rounds of communities with grant awards that ranged from \$520 to \$50,000. Since the beginning of Title V, Nebraska has funded 18 Title V communities.

## Nebraska's Granting Process

The Nebraska Crime Commission administers Nebraska's Title V funds. An umbrella agency for several criminal and juvenile justice programs in the state, the Crime Commission has a 19-member board of directors and is responsible for coordinating and monitoring juvenile justice program development and overseeing compliance with federal statutes related to receipt of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 funds. The Crime Commission also is responsible for coordinating and providing training and technical assistance to communities that seek and receive Crime Commission funding. As posted on its Web site, the Crime Commission's mission is to:

provide comprehensive planning and coordination of activities leading to the improvement of criminal and juvenile administration among state and local agencies. The Crime Commission's array of programs and functions reflects its historical transition in

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mission from that of distributing federal grant funds to a service and regulatory agency, responsible for the overall improvement of Nebraska's criminal and juvenile justice systems.

The Crime Commission announces annually the availability of federal and state funds through an application kit titled "Juvenile Services Grant Funds." Title V funds are specifically identified within this package. In addition to Title V funds, Juvenile Services Grant Funds include state set-asides, Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Title II funds, and general state prevention funds. To improve and streamline the grant application process, the Crime Commission's Grants Division developed one application package for federal- and state-supported juvenile justice funds.

The State Advisory Group (SAG), one of seven Crime Commission advisory groups, is the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice. The coalition makes recommendations on juvenile justice matters to the Crime Commission and is responsible for providing annual reports on federal- and state-supported activities to the Governor and the legislature. The coalition determines annually the criteria for the distribution of Title V funds.

The Crime Commission's Juvenile Justice Grants Division distributes an annual announcement of available funds that include a preview of requirements, deadlines, and restrictions on use of funds. Units of local government are required to request pre-application certification of compliance with the mandates of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974. Once a community receives confirmation of compliance from the Crime Commission, it is eligible to submit an application for Title V funds. A subcommittee of the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice reviews grant applications and then passes funding recommendations to the full coalition. The coalition then makes its recommendations to the Crime Commission for final award approvals.

State application guidelines note that, although all programs that have a prevention focus are eligible to apply for Title V funding, priority funding consideration is given to programs that focus on the critical areas identified by the Crime Commission. The areas changed yearly until 2002, since which time they have remained relatively stable. For example, the 1998 application kit gave priority to Title V applicants who demonstrated ability in planning for service and agency coordination and collaboration, including the collocation of services; developing and utilizing innovative ways to involve the private non-profit and business sectors in delinquency prevention activities; and developing or enhancing a statewide subsidy program to local governments that is dedicated to early intervention and delinquency prevention.

Grants are awarded on a 12-month fiscal cycle. The Crime Commission intends for subgrantees to be funded for a full 3 years as long as they continue to meet quarterly and annual state-funding evaluation and monitoring requirements, including submission of implementation plans and budget reports. According to state staff and local Title V subgrantees, however, continuation funding is not guaranteed and, in fact, sometimes has been denied from year to year despite concerted efforts to meet state-funding evaluation and monitoring guidelines. In addition, to be eligible for continuation funding, each year Title V subgrantees are required to submit a full application, including an updated 3 year plan, and go through the full review process. Current and past subgrantees report frustration with this process.

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## Training and Technical Assistance

To help Title V communities implement the risk- and protection-focused delinquency prevention model, the Crime Commission, in the years 1994 through 1995, facilitated a locally developed training curriculum titled *Partners in Planning*. This curriculum was rooted in the basic principles of the Title V model (i.e., community mobilization, risk and resource assessment, and research-based prevention strategies) but was thought to reflect Nebraska’s demographic makeup and prevention context more accurately than the federally sponsored Title V curriculum. The Crime Commission offered two *Partners in Planning* training sessions, the last one in 1995.

The 1998 application kit indicated that training and technical assistance were mandatory for new applicants. It stated that “newly certified applicants are required to identify key community leaders who will participate in any proposed program or serve on the prevention policy board, and such persons must receive technical assistance/training from Juvenile Justice Division staff.”

The Crime Commission did not offer federally sponsored Title V training. It did, however, provide grant management training to all recipients of Juvenile Services Grant Funds (all federal and Nebraska state-funded programs). The training was designed to communicate information about state reporting expectations only. In conversations with the national evaluation team, the Crime Commission indicated that, when requested, training and technical assistance were made available to grantees. It was the experience of the national evaluation team, however, that grantees did not know that training was available to them. Although the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention made training available to all states, it was up to the state to determine when the training occurred and how it was structured. It was not the responsibility of the grantee to recognize the need for and request training.

## Evaluation

The Crime Commission’s application kit outlined the following requirements for the comprehensive 3-year plan:

- ❖ A prioritized strategy, including goals, measurable objectives and activities, and a timetable to mobilize the community to assume responsibility for delinquency prevention and to coordinate services.
- ❖ A description of how the prevention policy board will develop and approve the plan and make recommendations to the local applicant to distribute funds to accomplish goals and evaluation programs.
- ❖ A plan to collect data, measure performance, and evaluate goals.

Although the third bullet point above could be construed as a requirement for an evaluation plan, it was not indicated as such. In addition, no guidance beyond this statement was given regarding how communities were to proceed with planning and implementing an evaluation of their efforts and by what criteria their plans would be reviewed.

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## Other State Factors

As early as the summer of 1999, with the support of the Nebraska Crime Commission, the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice began conducting public forums across the state. The purpose of these meetings was to provide the Crime Commission with an opportunity to gather input and assist with prioritization as the coalition developed its own 3-year plan.

In 1999, with a new juvenile justice specialist on board, Nebraska reported in conversations with the national evaluation team that the Juvenile Services Grant Division and the juvenile justice specialist were paying more attention to how it administered Title V funds through a more critical review of applications and more frequent communications with applicants and subgrantees. The division reported that it recognized inconsistencies in the enforcement of Title V regulations and that applications did not consistently represent the Title V model. This increased attention and level of commitment to Title V resulted in the termination of some grants that were not meeting Title V requirements and the acceptance of new applications that adhered to the requirements. The division and the juvenile justice specialist subsequently offered to work with “denied” communities to get them to a point of readiness for future applications.

The juvenile justice specialist position was filled consistently in 1999 for the first time in 5 years. Before 1999, the position was not always filled promptly, resulting in long periods when the position remained unfilled. This lack of continuity created a challenge in that no one staff member could thoroughly understand, implement, and support the Nebraska Title V subgrantees. The Crime Commission began to see stability with the arrival of the new juvenile justice specialist in 1999.

## Interpretation

From 1998 until 2002, Nebraska’s support of the Title V model was insufficient. In general, prevention was not a priority for the Crime Commission; state officials were more focused on other juvenile justice issues such as corrections. The state did not commit adequate resources (e.g., people, money, or state funding) to the Title V communities to help them be successful. In addition, the state did not provide training for potential Title V grantees and its application kit did not adequately address Title V requirements as presented in the federal regulations.

In early 1999, with the assistance of the new juvenile justice specialist, the national evaluation team brought Nebraska’s challenges with Title V to the attention of the OJJDP Title V Program Manager who, in turn, brought these issues to the attention of Nebraska’s OJJDP State Relations and Assistance Division (SRAD) representative.<sup>1</sup> In addition to several conversations between the new juvenile justice specialist and the national evaluation team, the SRAD representative conducted a site visit to Nebraska to determine how OJJDP could best support the state to get back on track with its Title V initiative. According to interviews with the Crime Commission and agency staff, the relationship with OJJDP was not strong. (Given the turnover and redirection of Title V, this support would have been optimal had it existed for the Crime Commission and staff; however, ultimately it was lacking.) As a result, the

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<sup>1</sup> State Relations and Assistance Division (SRAD) staff provided funds to help state and local governments achieve the system improvement goals of the JJDP Act. SRAD also supported and coordinated communities’ efforts to identify and respond to their most critical juvenile justice and delinquency prevention needs. Each state had a SRAD representative.

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juvenile justice specialist implemented several activities to build capacity for Title V in Nebraska. First, Title V applications more carefully were reviewed for evidence of compliance with Title V regulations. The juvenile justice specialist also began visiting Title V sites more often than had been done before, and was more responsive to inquiries from the Title V sites regarding expectations and reporting guidelines. The sections that follow present the phases of Title V planning and implementation in relation to the state support of Title V during the national evaluation.

## Summary

A variety of state factors hindered the success of Nebraska's Title V grantees. First and foremost was the lack of training that had implications for mobilization and community assessment. Although Nebraska indicated in its application kit that training was required of the prevention policy board in applicant communities, training was not made available for Title V applicants. Without community training, the many requirements and expectations associated with mobilization and the need for a prevention policy board as a resource and critical component of the model were not communicated to the applicants. Without training, the community may have been unaware of benefits it would reap from assiduous implementation of the community mobilization stage of the Title V model. The expectations for community mobilization presented in the application kit were insufficient; the training required to fully explain and provide guidance on these expectations was not provided.

With regard to community assessments, although the request for proposals clearly indicated that a comprehensive assessment was required, the state's guidance was limited to the criteria in the application kit, as presented above. Although the request for proposals stated that applicants were required to "conduct an assessment, provide a list of risk and protective factors and an explanation of the process used in identifying these risk factors, and provide a summary of major risk and protective factors and the baseline data that correspond to them," there was no information regarding the criteria the state would be using to assess the extent to which communities met the requirements. In addition, no guidance was given on how to complete these activities.

The Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice's implementation requirements called for applicants to provide "specific strategies for service and agency coordination, including co-location of services at sites readily accessible to children and families in need." The application kit indicated that the Title V process included selecting strategies that would "address risk factors through the enhancement of protective factors." It did not require that programs be research based. In addition, without training to help interpret how to complete this activity, most grantees fell short of selecting strategies that were directly tied to risk or protective factors.

Nebraska's support for evaluation and institutionalization was insufficient. Evaluation requirements were limited to "providing a monitoring plan for collecting data and measuring objectives." Nebraska did not require that the goals and objectives be linked to the prioritized needs and the selected strategies. Nebraska's application kit addressed institutionalization only to the extent that it requested applicants to have a plan for continuation of the project without the assistance of Title V funding after 3 years. Nebraska did not ask applicants to outline strategies for sustaining the initiatives. Nebraska's lack of support for the Title V model affected communities' implementation. The following sections describe and analyze the Title V initiatives undertaken in the national evaluation communities of Norfolk and Valentine, Nebraska.

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## Madison County (Norfolk)

This case study documents the Title V process in Norfolk, from its initial planning for the Title V initiative in 1996 through the end of its first Title V initiative in 2002. As the following sections describe, the Title V initiative in Norfolk experienced challenges in all phases of the Title V model, although it was successful in implementing a program of valuable services for youth.

The presentation begins with a brief community description and discussion of the role of Title V in Norfolk. It continues with discussions of the five stages of the Title V model as implemented in Norfolk: community mobilization and collaboration, initial assessment and planning, implementation of prevention strategies, monitoring and evaluation, and institutionalization. It concludes with the evaluation team's interpretation of the data.

### Madison County (Norfolk)

**Funding period:** 1998–2002

**Amount of Title V funding:** \$140,631

**Unit of local government:** Madison County, county commissioners

**Lead agency:** Wesley Center, Inc.

## Brief Community Description

The Title V community in Madison County, Nebraska, is the city of Norfolk, located 2 hours north of Lincoln. It is the largest community in the northeast section of the state and is the major retail trade center. According to the grant application, it is also the industrial center of northeast Nebraska and supports major industries in farm products, livestock, petroleum products, motor vehicle and automotive equipment, drugs and chemicals, electrical equipment and hardware, meat packing, agriculture, and metals. It is a major distribution center for perishable and nonperishable goods.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2000 Norfolk had a population of 23,516, with approximately 7,217 youth ages 0 to 19 (31.6 percent of the population) residing within the city limits. There were 6,537 youth over the age of 3 in school, and 41.2 percent of them were in elementary school (grades 1 through 8). The median household income was \$34,609. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Norfolk was primarily white (91.4 percent); 3.2 percent of its population was black or African American, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander; and 6.4 percent was “some other race” or a combination of two or more races.

## Title V in Norfolk

Since the early 1990s, Norfolk has implemented several prevention programs with the support of its schools and community-based organizations. Historically, these programs focused on parenting issues, teen pregnancy, family management, high-risk families, and child abuse and neglect. Norfolk has been committed to interagency coordination and engaging the community. In 1988, Madison County organized a team of Norfolk professionals, civic leaders, and citizens as the Family Action Community Team. The team was a broadly representative, community-based organization that developed programming, projects, and support for the families in Madison County. With its diverse representation and the involvement of key community stakeholders, the team was critical in supporting initiatives and

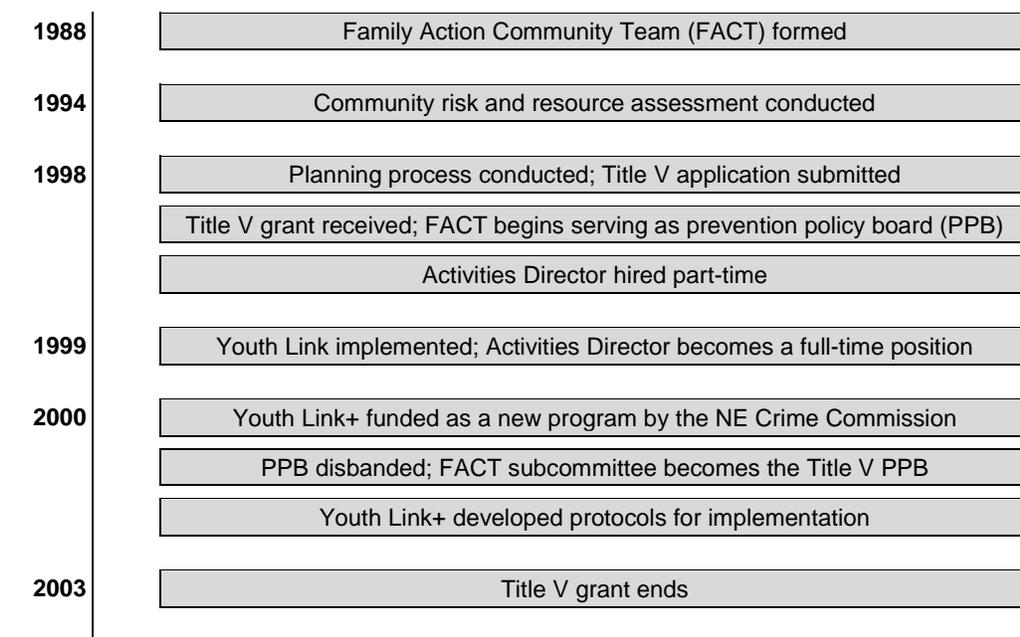
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programs throughout Madison County and the northeast region (Region IV) of the state. The team also was responsible for developing a comprehensive juvenile justice plan.

More than a dozen other collaborative efforts were described briefly in Norfolk’s grant application. These efforts focused on issues such as mentoring, faith, education, recreation, health and human services, social services, substance abuse, parent aide programming, and the arts.

A timeline of Norfolk’s Title V initiative is presented in figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1: Norfolk Timeline for the Title V Initiative**



## Community Mobilization and Collaboration

The process of community mobilization and collaboration included introducing community prevention to key leaders, forming a policy board, and participating in training. This section describes community mobilization in support of Norfolk’s Title V initiative from 1998 through 2002 and the factors that affected it.

In 1988, a decade before Title V came to Norfolk, Madison County organized a Family Action Community Team dedicated to interagency coordination, active community involvement, and fostering a healthy and productive environment for children. The Family Action Community Team also worked “to strengthen, support, and be an advocate for the family.” In the fall of 1994, the team conducted a community assessment. The data collected helped the team prioritize its immediate strategies, called the Parent Connection Program. Parent Connection, the first major outcome of the community assessment, gave the team its initial momentum, and it felt prepared to address community-level concerns. This momentum existed when Norfolk became aware of the Title V grant application announcement in 1999.

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Norfolk viewed Title V as an opportunity to support the community in a way that previously had not been possible.

### **Introducing Community Prevention to Key Leaders**

The initial community assessment and structure of the Family Action Community Team provided the foundation upon which the Title V grant was pursued and the prevention policy board established.

### **Prevention Policy Board**

The development of a prevention policy board specific to Title V evolved from the team's planning structure, membership, and connection with the community. The Title V planning and grant-writing team consisted primarily of board members from the Family Action Community Team. This group proposed that, when the Title V grant was awarded, a Title V prevention policy board be established and include the following representation:

- ❖ Five members of the Family Action Community Team who are heads of organizations, high-level senior managers, or holders of policy-level positions.
- ❖ One fiscal agent.
- ❖ One Madison County representative (county commissioner/county attorney).
- ❖ Two business representatives (owners, chief executive officers, or senior-level managers).
- ❖ Three youth representatives reflecting the diversity of the community.
- ❖ Three parent representatives reflecting the diversity of the community.

As part of this mobilization effort, members of the Title V planning team recruited individuals to fill the above categories who were willing to commit to the Title V project. It was conveyed to them, and stated in the grant application, that the prevention policy board would:

serve as a governing board for the program. This includes but is not limited to: advisory capacity to provide direction of programming and activities; review of all mini-grant applications and monthly budgetary expenditures; and support of the prevention strategies as outlined in the proposal.

The board's responsibilities were as follows:

- ❖ Meet the needs of youth in the Norfolk area.
- ❖ Set policies to guide the project and the coordinators' activities.
- ❖ Write, maintain, and update a strategic plan outlining the long-range goals for the growth and development of prevention for youth.

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- ❖ Ensure that finances were adequate and that money was spent responsibly.
  - ❖ Support the coordinator.
  - ❖ Participate in board and committee meetings.

The intent was to provide continuity and, upon award of a Title V grant, to include community sectors and organizations that might not have been represented on the planning and grant-writing team.

After the Title V grant was awarded, prevention policy board members were selected from the Family Action Community Team board and the community. Therefore, many individuals recruited to serve on the prevention policy board were not part of the Title V planning process. As a result, from the beginning it was difficult for the board to provide leadership and direction to Norfolk's Title V initiative. Since 1998, the board has lacked a solid structure and, partly because of a lack of training, does not demonstrate a thorough understanding of the Title V initiative.

In the second year of the initiative, the prevention policy board disbanded, and the Family Action Community Team began serving as the prevention policy board for the Title V initiative. This change was proposed for several reasons, including poor attendance at board meetings. Because many of the board members were also members of the Family Action Community Team, it was believed that combining the meetings would reduce the burden on volunteers. In fall 2000, this change was made, and a subcommittee of the Family Action Community Team became the prevention policy board for the Title V initiative.

### **Community Prevention Training**

Nebraska's Title V training was known as Partners in Planning. According to the program documentation, this training had not been conducted since the mid-1990s. Members of the Norfolk prevention policy board had not participated in training activities related to Title V. Caliber Associates conducted training on evaluation and the *Title V Community Self-Evaluation Workbook* in Norfolk in July 1999. The youth activities coordinator, the youth activities project director, the project director, and another board member, along with representatives from other, earlier-round Title V communities, attended.

### **Community-Identified Factors That Influenced Community Mobilization and Collaboration**

Norfolk's efforts to mobilize the community were not consistent with the Title V model. A planning group came together to look at the data collected for a previous community needs assessment. This group indicated in the grant application that the prevention policy board would be identified subsequent to a successful planning process. The board did not participate in training, and attendance at and involvement in the meetings were poor. Interviews with board members indicated that many of the individuals on the prevention policy board already served on several other boards, including the Family Action Community Team. This created a burden on these members.

Another challenge to community mobilization was that key players were not involved. Interviews indicated that prevention policy board members felt they were "missing the power people. We're

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missing the leaders and the shakers that really make decisions and can say ‘police chief, this is going to happen. You’re going to do it. Now, get in there and work with them.’” Also missing were representatives from the city and county governments. Government representatives were involved early in the process, but their participation was to meet the grant application’s requirement that funds go to a unit of local government. In interviews, board members reported that:

We need some bucks, we need some buildings, we need some bodies from City Council, from the Mayor and the City Administrator and from the County Commissioners. The County Commissioners and the County Office, because it’s somewhat removed, have been involved through the County attorney... A little more power at the top that says we not only support this, but we’re going to help make sure that it continues and that it becomes reality.

Insufficient guidance and understatement of the roles and responsibilities of the prevention policy board were other challenges to mobilization. Members of the board reported that:

We [need] to do more than just be a sounding board for the activities director. And that’s really about all we did last year. She’d come in and tell us about her programs and we’d say, ‘you know, that sounds great. You know, keep it up.’ But we realized we needed to be doing more than that and in order to do that, we needed the right people and resources and folks in the community.

Board members reported, “They had not really been given a whole lot of direction as far as what the activities director wanted from them.” The activities director had never attended Title V training, however, and might not have had sufficient resources to support the board in this process. Members report that training would have been helpful: “I think that training would have been great. I just sort of volunteered for this board not realizing how much more there was to it than sort of just being a sounding board.”

## **Initial Assessment and Planning**

Title V’s initial assessment and planning stage includes identifying risk factors, resources, and prevention programs and developing a 3-year comprehensive prevention plan. The assessment and planning for the Title V initiative in Norfolk took place from 1998 to 2002. Data were not available on the community-identified factors influencing the assessment process. The assessment preceded the Title V initiative, and the individuals who reviewed the data and compiled the information to be included in the grant application were not involved with the prevention policy board once the Title V funds were awarded.

### **Identifying Risk Factors, Resources, and Prevention Programs**

In January 1998, the Family Action Community Team completed the Comprehensive Community Plan for Children, Youth, and Families in Madison County (made possible by the Nebraska Commission for the Protection of Children). This preexisting risk assessment was used as the assessment for the Title V grant application. In the application, Madison County identified the top 10 priority needs for both adults

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and youth, based on needs assessments and interviews with citizens to identify the “most pressing issues facing the community,” as the following:

- ❖ More youth activities.
- ❖ Bigger/better mall.
- ❖ More sports programs.
- ❖ More police to enforce the law.
- ❖ Later curfew.
- ❖ More jobs for teens, tied to shorter school days.
- ❖ More/better food places.
- ❖ Drug prevention, tied to crime.
- ❖ Lower driving age, tied to drive-in theatre.
- ❖ School bus system, tied to more schools.

The assessment also documented that the following factors appeared to be contributing to youth problem behaviors:

- ❖ Changing demographics of a community experiencing social and ethnic change.
- ❖ Economic growth factors, with a limited workforce available.
- ❖ Shortages in affordable housing.
- ❖ Increase in single-parent families.
- ❖ Increase in youth access to drugs and alcohol.

### **Developing a Comprehensive Prevention Plan**

The Comprehensive Community Plan for Children, Youth, and Families, which was submitted with Norfolk’s Title V grant application as its risk and resource assessment, was completed before the community applied for the Title V grant. Members of the Family Action Community Team who participated in the development of the Comprehensive Community Plan also participated in the planning for Title V.

The Comprehensive Community Plan reviewed community-identified concerns for adults and youth. Youth activities were the most frequently reported need. With the exception of the Youth Task Force, the priorities identified in the Comprehensive Community Plan (24-hour intake and assessment, alternative education, expansion of prevention efforts, resource listing, and youth staff-secure program) do not correspond to the strategy selected for implementation with Title V funds.

The Comprehensive Community Plan submitted with the Title V grant application included the assessment data. It did not, however, link the data to the prevention strategies that Norfolk selected. The strategies selected for implementation were discussed briefly in the grant application. They were not research-based.

### **Implementation of Prevention Strategies**

Implementation of prevention efforts involves prevention strategies and identifying and leveraging community resources. This section describes the implementation of prevention strategies and activities

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that took place as part of the Title V initiative in Norfolk from 1998 to 2002 and also discusses community-identified factors influencing Norfolk’s implementation efforts.

To address the needs of local youth, Norfolk hired an activities coordinator (i.e., project coordinator) to develop, manage, and maintain activities for youth. The role of the activities coordinator was to increase youth participation in existing activities and, to the extent necessary, remove barriers to participation (e.g., cost, transportation, lack of awareness of program, lack of feeling of acceptance into program). Two years into implementation, Norfolk submitted a new Title V application, under a new request for proposals, to the Crime Commission to modify the Youth Link program that had been proposed as part of the initial Title V initiative. The new program, Youth Link+, was approved in 2000 as a new Title V program. Youth Link consisted of monthly, one-time events for youth. Youth Link+ focused on service learning activities for high-risk youth. It continued the Youth Link program coordination but had a second component that focused on individualized outreach efforts.

### **Youth Link**

Members of the prevention policy board reported a concerted effort was made to ensure that all activities, existing and new, were accessible, and to minimize obstacles of transportation, food, or equipment that had previously prevented some youth from participating. Beyond coordination of activities for youth, the activities coordinator worked with area educational, social, and law enforcement agencies to support parent and family educational components to foster healthy life choices by youth.

The activities coordinator was responsible for monthly activity updates to the prevention policy board. The board in turn provided guidance, review, and the support necessary for the coordinator to complete the goals outlined for the project. The Norfolk grant application indicated that “this approach [proposal] maximizes the potential of the resources that already exist in the community for youth. It reduces the potential for duplication, thereby creating efficiency within the structure and hopefully diverting resources into new areas of activity development for youth.”

A Youth Advisory Council was established to assist in planning programs and activities for youth. The 15-member council had an advisory capacity and was representative of the ethnic, racial, and cultural mix of the community. Representatives for the council were sought from students in grades 7 to 12 from each school in the community. The council was very active in planning events, publicity, and fundraising.

In the original Title V grant application submitted in 1997, the Youth Link program was created to serve 2,000 youth in the Norfolk area. The position of the activities coordinator was multipurpose: to work with the existing youth activities and to increase participation where possible. Although the Crime Commission did not deny or reject funding to applicants, it required some applicants, including Norfolk, to resubmit applications with a revised budget or scope of work. In Norfolk’s revised grant application, the total Title V project costs were reduced from \$69,901 to \$22,429. In one major revision, the activities coordinator position was changed from full-time at \$25,400 per year to part-time at \$14,942 per year. Another revision was that the Title V initiative was no longer to be housed in and directed by the Norfolk Public Schools; leadership of the initiative was transferred to the Wesley Center, a local nonprofit agency.

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Program implementation began as planned in 1998. However, with the reduction in hours, the coordinator focused primarily on sponsoring events for youth rather than serving as a resource to link youth to programs and reduce barriers to participation. Youth activities were held in the community during the first 2 years of program operation, but there was no ability to determine the activities' impact on youth.

### **Youth Link+**

In August 2000, Norfolk's Title V initiative prevention strategy changed from Youth Link to Youth Link+ and the activities coordinator position transitioned from part-time to full-time. Youth Link+ had two components. It focused on activity planning, development, and implementation, with the support of community youth. It also conducted individualized outreach efforts targeted at high-risk youth, with the intention of connecting them to supports in the community to ultimately build youth assets. These efforts included an asset assessment of the youth before and after they participated in Youth Link+. The Crime Commission funded Youth Link+ as a new program and, as a result, Norfolk received 5 years of Title V funding to support its strategies.

Youth Link+ was based on the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets model. Norfolk Public Schools, the Department of Health and Human Service, the state Probation Office, and concerned adults referred youth to Youth Link+. Referral forms were used to determine each youth's current assets and which youth were at greatest risk. Youth who were more at risk had priority for entering the program. The revised grant application indicates that, 2 years into the process, Norfolk felt that, although providing one-time events to the youth in the community was helpful, a more comprehensive and coordinated approach was needed.

Youth Link+ began accepting referrals on September 1, 2000, and the program anticipated accepting up to five referrals per month. That September, 11 referrals were received. Youth Link+ accepted all 11 youth into the program and the youth activities coordinator met with them individually and as a group. All of the youth became involved in service learning such as helping children in daycare make fall decorations, handing out fliers for the Nebraska AIDS Project fundraiser, making Halloween decorations for a local nursing home, and adopting a block downtown to keep clean.

### **Identifying and Leveraging Other Resources for Prevention**

The youth activities coordinator was constantly searching for resources to support the Title V prevention strategies, usually through fundraising events in the community to support Youth Link+. No plan existed for leveraging additional resources other than on an as-needed basis.

### **Community-Identified Factors That Influenced the Implementation of Prevention Strategies**

The ideas behind the prevention strategies in Norfolk were not consistent with the Title V model. The strategies were not research-based and did not include plans for implementation. Norfolk chose to support a new program (Youth Link+) with a low level of start-up funds. Members of the prevention policy board report that the size of the grant award was insufficient, making implementation of a significant activity difficult: "\$17,000 (approximate year 1 award) in [a] budget is pretty minor, and how can you even justify devoting a whole lot of time to that small a piece of your total pie?"

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A key facilitating factor for a program is having one person responsible for overseeing implementation and reporting: “Youth Link+ is probably one thing that has been maintained throughout the period of time because you have someone paid to direct it and that’s key. You can’t do it by just everybody volunteering and creating by committee. The collaboration has to be there ... But you’ve also got to pay somebody to run it.”

Another key facilitating factor was the activities coordinator’s commitment to the work. Board members reported that the coordinator demonstrated excellent commitment to the activities and to the youth. This created momentum for the expansion from Youth Link to Youth Link+ and the subsequent modification of this position from part- to full-time.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The monitoring and evaluation stage of the Title V model theoretically should include several activities such as conducting program evaluations of each prevention strategy, evaluating the Title V initiative as a whole, and reassessing community indicators. No ongoing assessment of community indicators for the Title V initiative in Norfolk from 1999 to 2002 was conducted, and no data were available to capture community-identified factors influencing evaluation and monitoring efforts.

Although the Youth Link program did identify outcome-oriented goals and objectives, no evaluation plan assessed if the program was appropriately linked to them. In addition, the community did not collect process or outcome data and did not track risk factors. The youth activities coordinator did monitor program implementation (in terms of numbers of youth served and number of activities conducted), and provided brief descriptions of events for each activity.

For Youth Link+, the youth activities coordinator and the prevention policy board revised the program goals and objectives to reflect the new emphasis on increasing the number of protective factors for youth. For example, a plan had been developed to track the number of individual youth protective factors at the time of intake and the number of protective factors after 6 and 12 months of participation; however, this method was unlikely to provide much meaningful data. In addition, the number of participants that were expelled, suspended, or receiving school disciplinary action were to be tracked. Staff had begun to develop forms to capture these data, but no data were available during the national evaluation.

## **Institutionalization**

The Title V process of institutionalizing prevention efforts includes sustaining key components of the initiative, meeting goals and objectives, and obtaining continuation funding for successful programs and strategies. Norfolk received additional Title V funding from the Nebraska Crime Commission to fund the Youth Link+ program as a new program in Norfolk. However, the Title V initiative was completed in June 2003 and there was no plan for institutionalization at last report.

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## Interpretation

Examining Norfolk's approaches to implementing the Title V model reveals a number of challenges, but the community's second Title V initiative displays some successes based on lessons learned from the first initiative.

During the initial planning period, Norfolk used preexisting data for the risk assessment. Members from an existing collaborative in the community committed resources to completing the assessment and submitting the grant application to the state. Some members of this grant-writing team remained involved in the initiative as part of the prevention policy board. However, as it had proposed, Norfolk identified the majority of the board members after the grant award, which was not consistent with the intention of the Title V model, and resulted in a lack of continuity.

The focus of the grant application was general implementation of activities for youth, coordinated by an activities director hired with the Title V funds. The plan was insufficient as either a 3-year plan or one that could inform program planning throughout the life of the grant. The strategies selected were not specifically linked to risk factors or program outcomes and no plan was in place for institutionalization.

The primary strength of the initiative was the commitment of the activities coordinator, the key staff person whose efforts enabled Norfolk to implement a number of its planned youth activities.

Norfolk revised its original Title V initiative from Youth Link, which consisted of monthly one-time events for youth, to Youth Link+, which focused on service learning activities for high-risk youth. This change, which was encouraged by the state juvenile justice specialist, allowed Norfolk to apply for Title V funds as a new project. As a result, instead of being in its third year of Title V funding, Youth Link+ was considered by the state of Nebraska as a first-year Title V project.

Some of the challenges of Youth Link+ are similar to those experienced in the first initiative: how the program activities were specifically linked to building assets or reducing risk behaviors in high-risk youth was not clear and it was also unclear how the project was linked to the Comprehensive Community Plan developed by Family Action Community Team in 1998. However, this second initiative experienced some successes not seen in the first initiative. It received more support in the community and the prevention strategies were more focused. In addition, attendance at prevention policy board meetings was more regular, which may have been because members were encouraged to participate more in the program referral process.

The juvenile justice specialist was involved with Norfolk's Title V re-application process, which was consistent with the office's attempt to monitor Title V strategies in the state more strictly. The juvenile justice specialist provided technical assistance on site and via telephone to help the community submit a successful and acceptable application. It was at this time that the juvenile justice specialist received Title V training for the first time. Having this training earlier would have been more beneficial.

## Summary

The most significant challenge to the community was the lack of training and support for Title V grantees. Title V training, guidance, and support from the juvenile justice specialist would have

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provided community members with a better understanding of the title V model, including the role of the prevention policy board. Training also might have assisted communities in developing 3-year plans that could support program implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and institutionalization. Finally, selected strategies might have been more closely connected to risk and protective factors and evaluation capacity enhancement. As is evident in such states as Michigan and Pennsylvania, which is presented in the next chapter, training does make a difference in how successful communities are in their Title V efforts.

## Valentine

This case study documents the Title V process in Valentine from its initial planning in 1997 through the end of its Title V initiative in 2002. The Title V initiative in Valentine demonstrated some successes with early phases of the model (such as community mobilization and assessment), but challenges in implementation and evaluation resulted in the demise of the initiative at the end of the Title V grant period.

This case study begins with a brief community description and discussion of the role of Title V in Valentine. It continues with discussions of the five stages of the Title V model as implemented in Valentine: community mobilization and collaboration, initial assessment and planning, implementation of prevention strategies, monitoring and evaluation, and institutionalization. It concludes with the evaluation team's interpretation of the data.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Valentine</b></p> <p><b>Funding period:</b> 1999–2002 <b>Amount of Title V funding:</b> \$71,665 <b>Unit of local government:</b> City of Valentine <b>Lead agency:</b> City of Valentine</p>
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### Brief Community Description

Valentine is located in north central Nebraska, in the heart of the Sandhills. It serves as a commercial center for the Rosebud Sioux Reservation, located only 9 miles away in Todd County, South Dakota. The economy of the area is based primarily on agriculture and ranching, although the tourism industry is growing.

In 2000, Valentine had a population of 2,820 people; 28 percent of the population was under the age of 19. In Valentine, 92.2 percent of the residents were white, 5.8 percent were Native American, and 2 percent were other races. According to the grant application, Valentine served a much larger population than the communities that were within the city limits. It served as the commercial center for much of Cherry County, an area of 6,048 square miles with a population of 6,148 (29.1 percent were under 19 years old), according to the 2000 census. The median household income was \$27,359.

At the time of the Title V application, opportunities for recreation both within and outside the community were severely limited. Valentine had only one movie theater and no place for minors to go to listen to music or see any of the performing arts. There were no skating rinks, arcades, or game rooms. When teens wanted to go out, there were few places for them to go unless a school-sponsored activity happened to be taking place. Many other small towns had limited recreation activities but were located geographically closer to a larger community where activities were available. Valentine teenagers, on the other hand, had to travel in excess of 120 miles one way to gain access to the types of facilities that teens from other communities take for granted.

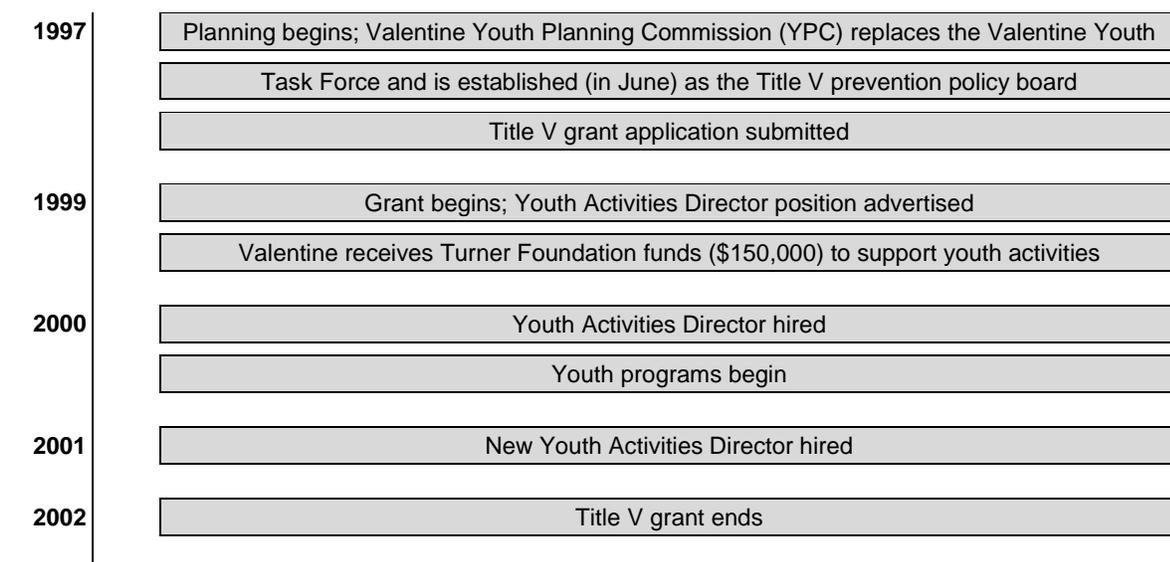
Another geographic factor that affected Valentine youth, as reported by members of the community, was the proximity to the Rosebud Sioux Reservation. Valentine experienced spillover effects from the reservation and the surrounding area. It consistently ranked as one of the 10 poorest counties in the nation—reflected in high unemployment rates and in skyrocketing rates of alcoholism, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, and teen suicide. Community members reported that the recklessness and low self-esteem that resulted from this culture of poverty had spillover effects for all Cherry County youth including Valentine youth. Recent years showed an increase in the number of Native American youth entering the Valentine community as transfer students because Valentine is a business and recreational area.

## Title V in Valentine

Valentine had experience with youth activities; however, before Title V, it did not have a strong history of comprehensive community efforts. According to interviews with community members, prevention activities and community coalitions were led, for the most part, by a core group of individuals who were responsible for leading most of the initiatives in Valentine and the surrounding area for the last several years. In 1997, the Cherry County Attorney gathered individuals representing city and county law enforcement, K-12 administration, the local Office of Health and Human Services, the North Central Quad Counties Domestic Violence Office, local radio and print media, the Valentine Chamber of Commerce, the Cherry County Commission, the city of Valentine, and the Valentine Parent-Teachers Association to discuss the formation of a task force for youth-related problems in the area and to seek a cooperative effort in finding solutions. The Valentine Youth Planning Commission eventually replaced this task force. Other collaborative efforts that served Valentine were the Cherry County Child Abuse and Neglect Investigation and Treatment Team and the Valentine Parent-Teachers Association.

In 1997, the Youth Planning Commission was established to serve as an advisory council to the community and submit an application for Title V funds. The Nebraska Crime Commission requested that Valentine revise the budget component of the application and resubmit before final approval and award. A timeline of the Title V initiative in Valentine is presented in figure 4.2.

**Figure 4.2: Valentine Timeline for the Title V Initiative**



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## **Community Mobilization and Collaboration**

Community mobilization includes introducing community prevention to key leaders, forming a prevention policy board, and participating in prevention training. This section describes the process of community mobilization for the Title V initiative in Valentine from 1997 to 2001 and discusses community-identified factors that influenced it.

### **Introducing Community Prevention to Key Leaders**

In early 1997, a task force in Valentine began addressing some of the concerns affecting the community and area youth. Core members of this task force had already been focusing on youth problem behavior. With the announcement of Title V funds, known in Valentine as Crime Commission or Juvenile Justice Funds, the task force realized that Title V's community-based delinquency prevention focus was a good fit with the work that Valentine had just begun.

### **Prevention Policy Board**

Valentine's Youth Planning Commission, the prevention policy board in Valentine, was established in June 1997 by the city council. With the advisement of the city of Valentine, the Youth Planning Commission was created to coordinate local and state efforts in the best interests of the area's youth.

The commission's primary purpose was to respond to an increase in negative juvenile behavior by coming together with the community to find alternative activities for youth. Membership included leaders of organizations, business owners, policymaking officials, and individuals concerned about the future of Valentine area youth, and represented a cross section of the community. The common goal of commission members was to provide better lives for youth and others in Valentine.

During the planning phase, members of the planning commission met with and received support from individuals and community organizations who supported positive programming for youth. The commission discussed the community's needs and possible program solutions, completed a preliminary budget, and submitted it to the city council for approval.

The planning commission also was responsible for identifying members of the community it believed should be involved in ongoing planning and identifying supplemental funds to support the implementation and sustainability of programs. It reviewed and submitted quarterly meeting minutes and activity reports to the city council for approval.

During the first year of implementation, the Youth Planning Commission met regularly as it reviewed applications for the youth activities director position, the selected Title V strategy in Valentine. Once this individual was hired, commission meetings often included a report from the youth activities director. The planning commission served in an advisory capacity to the youth activities director and periodically connected the youth activities director with members of the community who supported youth activities.

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## **Community Prevention Training**

According to the program documentation, members of the Valentine community did not receive Title V training. The national evaluation team conducted a training on evaluation and the *Title V Community Self-Evaluation Workbook* in July 1999 in Valentine. Several members of the Youth Planning Commission attended, but the youth activities director had not been hired at that time and no commitment was made to use the *Workbook* to document the initiative.

Over time, there were two youth activities directors and both received grants management training from the state Juvenile Justice Grants Office, but neither received any formal training related to the Title V initiative.

## **Community-Identified Factors That Influenced Community Mobilization and Collaboration**

Valentine's efforts to mobilize its community resembled those of the Title V model. The Youth Planning Commission was formed before Title V funds were announced but members report that active membership was low, and commission members did not receive Title V training. One commission member reported feeling that broad representation on the board and community buy-in were lacking:

The city is not going to provide all the money for this because it's an easy solution to your problem and then the only buy-in you've got is the city government. You don't have community buy-in at all...So, I'm not totally convinced that the community's buy-in is there yet...they can't have it just by city government or they couldn't have it just through the school system. They need to have a cross-representation of the community in order to make this thing successful.

The membership of the Youth Planning Commission was large on paper but only a small number of members were active: "Yeah, there's probably 20 or 30 that are on paper; there's probably six or eight of them that are active." One additional challenge was the lack of experience with programs of the magnitude of Title V: "I think right now the group is inexperienced in terms of dealing with programs of this scope."

The facilitating factor for mobilization and collaboration in Valentine was the focus of the initiative: "The positive thing is the group that's formed does have an interest in seeing kids succeed and providing activities for kids and providing things for youth in the community."

Faced with these challenges, though, Valentine's mobilization was limited to the active commission members who ultimately were not representative of the entire community. Mobilization and collaboration were limited.

## **Initial Assessment and Planning**

Assessment and planning include conducting a community needs assessment and developing a 3-year comprehensive prevention plan. The process of assessment and planning for the Title V initiative in Valentine from 1997 to 2001 and the community-identified factors that influenced the process are discussed below.

## Identifying Risk Factors, Resources, and Prevention Programs

On the basis of existing surveys (Nebraska Family Survey of West Central Nebraska, 1996; Kids Count in Nebraska, 1993; Cherry County School Survey, 1994; and Valentine Middle and High School Youth Survey, 1997), town hall meetings, law enforcement statistics, and input from concerned citizens, but not on the basis of a comprehensive risk and resource assessment, the Youth Planning Commission determined that the priority risk factor for youth in the community was a lack of age-appropriate activities for youth outside the school setting. The commission reported that the lack of activities led some Valentine area youth to turn to vandalism, drugs, alcohol, and other juvenile problem behaviors.

Dating back to 1997, several meetings, workshops, and seminars sponsored by various Valentine organizations reflected the community's commitment to adopting a comprehensive delinquency prevention plan. During the Title V data collection period (leading up to June 1997), process surveys of middle and high school youth, results of town hall meetings, and input from concerned citizens were collected to assess risk and protective factors present in the community. The core group of planning commission members compiled the risk assessment data for inclusion in the grant application. This process identified the risk and protective factors listed in table 4.1 as being present at the time.

**Table 4.1: Risk and Protective Factors in Valentine, 1997**

Risk Factors	Protective Factors
A lack of age-appropriate activities for youth outside the school.	Churches with youth groups (10).
An increase in first-time juvenile offenders, especially in the areas of alcohol, drug use, and vandalism.	Numerous 4-H groups (4 clubs with 120 members in 1997).
The number of area youth who have lost respect for authority; an increase in the juvenile crime rate.	The Valentine Police Department helps youth increase self-esteem and gain respect for authority by assisting and interacting with youth through programs such as GREAT and Toys for Tots, and through its sponsorship of the Teen Halloween Dance.
A shift away from traditional values toward less family involvement.	School activities providing positive interaction with peers and adult role models.
Youth are perceived as being highly influenced by negative peer behavior.	Girl and Boy Scout troops.
Little opportunity for area youth to attend age-appropriate activities in nearby communities (due to Valentine's geographic isolation).	
The lack of positive and culturally diverse support systems to accommodate the cultural diversity of youth.	
An increase in child, spousal, alcohol, and drug abuse.	
Strict labor laws that limit employment opportunities for younger teens.	
A high rate of homelessness resulting from Valentine's transient population.	
Limited resources in early child care, especially for parents who are employed part-time.	
A high percentage of children and families living in poverty.	

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The grant application indicated that the activities offered were not always well coordinated or well advertised, leading to very little participation by area youth. In addition, the Youth Planning Commission reported that the age appropriateness of the activities offered did not always correspond with the age group for which a need existed. Of the approximately 1,250 youth in the area, only about 25 percent participated in current activities, including school-sponsored events.

### **Developing a Comprehensive Prevention Plan**

A member of the Youth Planning Commission wrote the Title V grant application. This individual had been involved in data collection and had written grant applications for Valentine in the past. During the planning phase, the core team primarily was responsible for coordinating the data and reviewing the grant application.

In the grant application, Valentine included a timeline for the first year showing risk and protective factors and the community resources that would contribute to implementation of the Title V initiative. This submission constituted the comprehensive plan for Valentine, which centered on the implementation of additional activities, including some for youth not participating in existing programs; the organization of a marketing approach for youth programming; and, with the assistance of teens in the community, the development of a teen center. These activities were the responsibility of the youth activities director. The Youth Planning Commission's role was to assist the city manager by serving as an advisory board for the youth activities director, who reported to the commission quarterly.

### **Community-Identified Factors That Influenced Initial Assessment and Planning**

Valentine's assessment and planning process was consistent with the Title V model, but it was not comprehensive. Valentine gathered and reported data on its community risks; however, its strategies were not research-based. In addition, the protective factors included in the grant application were community-defined, as opposed to research-supported. No comprehensive list of existing resources was provided.

The primary facilitating factor was the commitment of the Youth Planning Commission's core management team to assessment, planning, and using available resources. The primary challenges to the process were inexperience with a program and planning process of this scope and the lack of resources to get the job done.

### **Implementation of Prevention Strategies**

Implementation of prevention strategies involves prevention services and activities and identifying and leveraging other resources. This section describes Valentine's Title V initiative implementation process from 1998 through 2001 and also discusses community-identified factors that influenced it.

The youth activities director organized and coordinated the implementation of youth activities approved by the Youth Planning Commission. In addition, the youth activities director assessed community and business donations, and the appropriate use of these funds. The youth activities director reported to the city manager and followed policy decided by the planning commission.

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In January 2000, the youth activities director began work in Valentine. During the first few months, the director surveyed local youth and planned and implemented several activities in the community, including soccer and gymnastics. The implementation process also was intended to develop a data collection tool to learn how many youth were being reached efficiently and on an ongoing basis. The youth activities director intermittently worked on the planning and implementation of a youth center, the 4-to-6 Club, and other youth activities in the community. In addition, he was responsible for program fundraising, marketing, and recruitment. Adult volunteer participation was significant, but it was noted that volunteer and parent relations were often a problem. Because all youth activities had been operated on a volunteer basis in the past, several members of the community had difficulty adapting to the new policies and procedures established by the youth activities director, who was a new resident in the city.

The first year was spent primarily assessing youth utilization of programs and identifying programs that could either be expanded or added to meet a few immediate needs of the youth. In the second year, the youth activities director was charged with increasing the variety of programming and the volunteer database. The third year had been designed to maintain and possibly increase the programs identified in the previous 2 years. The community also planned to secure more support for a teen center with additional monies during the third year. In years one and two, the youth activities director mobilized individuals involved with the programs to learn more about what they were doing and to organize a core team of volunteers, increasing the number of positive role models in Valentine and rebuilding respect between youth and adults in the community.

### **Identifying and Leveraging Other Resources for Prevention**

In 1999, the Youth Planning Commission received a 3-year grant from the Turner Foundation for \$150,000 (\$50,000 each year for 3 years). The funds were distributed through a youth board of the commission to support local activities specifically targeted to middle and high school youth. In the first round of local grant distribution, the youth activities director applied for and received a grant to support the spring soccer program. The planning commission also allocated \$3,000 of Turner Foundation funds to match the Title V grant. Interviews with the commission members who applied for the funding revealed that the work in support of the Title V grant application played a significant role in qualifying for the Turner Foundation money.

### **Factors That Influenced the Implementation of Prevention Strategies**

Several issues hindered the implementation of the Title V initiative in Valentine, including the challenge of hiring a youth activities director. The Youth Planning Commission advertised the position on multiple occasions and received few responses. Interviews with commission members indicated that the process took longer than had been anticipated. Another challenge was the fact that the youth activities director's roles, relationships, and responsibilities and the commission's expectations were undefined. For example, the youth activities director had daily contact with the Valentine city manager and less frequent contact with the planning commission. The leaders of the commission reported feeling that some of the youth activities director's activities were influenced more by the city manager than by the commission, the representative community body. An example of the lack of clarity regarding what the commission expected of the youth activities director was that, on some occasions, the activities director led commission meetings, while at other times the director was "an agenda item" at the meetings.

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## Monitoring and Evaluation

Title V monitoring and evaluation should include an evaluation of prevention strategies and the initiative as a whole, and a reassessment of community indicators. In Valentine, from 1999 to 2002, no ongoing assessment of community indicators was conducted and no data were available that captured the community perceptions of factors that influenced the ability to evaluate and monitor.

The Youth Planning Commission was not involved in the evaluation of Valentine's programs nor is there a record of the commission's supporting the youth activities director in this process. The grant application did not include a plan for monitoring or evaluation. In the absence of a plan, the structure was insufficient to support the collection and analysis of data other than participant involvement in activities. Valentine did not demonstrate strong evaluation capacity and did not have a relationship with a university or organization that would have been able to provide evaluation services. Valentine did not have the supports in place to evaluate the impact of the Title V initiative on juvenile delinquency in Valentine or the surrounding areas. No attempts were made to gather risk- or protective-factor indicator data for use in ongoing prevention planning.

## Institutionalization

The process of institutionalizing prevention efforts includes meeting goals and objectives and obtaining continuation funding for successful programs and strategies. This section describes the process of institutionalizing the Title V initiative in Valentine from 1997 to 2001 and presents community-identified factors that influenced it.

The Youth Planning Commission continued to operate in Valentine after the end of the initial Title V grant, supporting youth-related programming in the community. There had not been strong support for assessment or planning in Valentine which limited the city's ability to make data-based decisions. The Title V initiative in Valentine was not institutionalized, but components of the initiative continued beyond Title V. The planning commission continued to serve in a capacity-building role and the youth activities director remained an employee of the city. However, no evaluation activities were launched to inform ongoing planning.

The primary challenge to institutionalization was the lack of strong relationships and partnerships in the community. Without such support, the city never truly committed to the initiative. This situation has been a challenge in the past in Valentine: "I've seen that happen before and so through the whole process I caution[ed] them that they needed the buy-in, they need the investment by the community."

## Interpretation

A slow grant startup period (e.g., a delay in gaining the Title V funds from the state and a lengthy youth activities director hiring process) significantly delayed the Title V program activities in year 1 and the planning for year 2. A youth activities director was hired in January 2000 and began new recreational activities for youth, such as soccer and gymnastics. Then a new youth activities director was hired during the last year of the initiative. There is no clear link, however, between the youth activities and a delinquency prevention plan for several reasons: the Youth Planning Commission's lack of Title V

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training, the activities director's lack of clear responsibilities for the role, and a lack of accountability to the state juvenile justice grants manager.

During mobilization and implementation, the Youth Planning Commission was less involved in the conceptualization of the initiative and more involved in the day-to-day management of program implementation. In the planning phase, the commission's purpose was to submit a successful application. In the implementation phase, the commission became more of a sounding board for the youth activities director's program updates. The role, responsibilities, and expectations of the commission were never clear due to lack of training in the Title V model. Without a clear understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and relationships of the commission and the youth activities director, Valentine had insufficient support to mobilize fully in support of Title V.

Valentine's assessment and planning activities were partially consistent with the model. Valentine conducted a data-driven risk assessment although it was neither comprehensive nor based on the prioritization of risk factors. The grant application was not comprehensive and the 3-year plan was inadequate (only 1 year of planning was included in the grant application). The lack of a true delinquency prevention plan affected program implementation in Valentine.

Valentine did not implement the Title V model as intended. Valentine used its Title V funds to hire a youth activities director who operated independently, without any direct links to delinquency prevention or the reduction of risk factors. The role of the Youth Planning Commission was undefined in the operations of the Title V initiative, and the commission was not involved in program evaluation or sustainability efforts. In addition, the youth activities director and the commission struggled with Title V recordkeeping and reporting, which related to the struggles Valentine had with monitoring and evaluation.

The youth activities director and members of the planning commission did not have experience or training in program evaluation and demonstrated little interest in the evaluation of the Title V initiative. The data collected and submitted were mainly program implementation summaries as recordkeeping and reporting were not a priority of the Title V initiative in Valentine. Insufficient reporting and evaluation presented challenges to sustainability of the Title V model.

Institutionalization of Title V in Valentine was problematic, and the community ultimately was unsuccessful. Without training and a clear understanding of the Title V process, Valentine was not positioned to implement the model as intended. Nonetheless, the services for youth were valuable and members of the community report with confidence that the Title V grant was key to receiving the Turner Foundation money.

## **Summary**

Valentine experienced many challenges implementing the Title V model. In general, key community members did not have an understanding of the model. Despite this, the initiative launched valuable youth programs and was credited with assisting the community in its application for other funds.

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## **Title V in Nebraska: Concluding Remarks**

The challenges experienced by Nebraska's Title V communities were related to the lack of training and technical assistance available at the state and local levels. At the time of the national evaluation, Nebraska did not have the capacity to help communities mobilize, assess, plan, implement, and institutionalize Title V. The Nebraska Crime Commission recognized early that, historically, prevention strategies had not been a priority within the state. Without the supports that often come with priority programming (e.g., ongoing training, technical assistance, feedback from and communication with state and local agencies), communities are likely to struggle and be unable to implement the Title V model as designed. Although the communities encountered challenges, commitment to juvenile delinquency prevention and a willingness and interest at the local level positioned Norfolk and Valentine to implement programs that previously were absent in the communities. These communities benefited from Title V, although not as the model had been designed.