



Safe Communities America: A model for safety Frequently Asked Questions

What is Safe Communities America?

Safe Communities America® is a program of the National Safety Council and is a US-based accreditation program that recognizes communities who make a commitment to safety. Safe Communities America is a founding member of the Pan Pacific Safe Communities Network (PPSCN); an international movement made up of communities from Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States all promoting locally-driven injury prevention.

How does Safe Communities work?

The Safe Communities model is a long-standing approach to reducing injuries and deaths. It works through engaging local partners who care about safety, using data to identify leading causes of injury, making a plan to address the issues using proven methods and measuring progress. Safe Communities focus on six strategic issues: motor vehicle crashes, substance use, falls, workplace injuries, suicide and violence and emergency preparedness.

What is a Safe Community?

A safe community works together to build an environment where citizens are free to live to their full potential. A Safe Community shares a designated geographical area whether a city, county, university campus or region.

Who is involved in Safe Communities?

Within each community a network of people, organizations and institutions play a vital role in keeping one another safe. These networks include representatives from law enforcement, fire departments, schools, public health agencies, faith-based organizations, healthcare providers, citizen groups, businesses and safety advocates. Every safe community has the support and acknowledgement of their mayor and local leaders.

Why become a Safe Community?

There are nearly 200,000 deaths from injuries every year. That's one person, every three minutes¹. Becoming a Safe Community can help reduce the incidence and cost of injuries, promote residents' health and safety and enhance community pride.

Injury prevention works. Research shows:

- Safety belts have saved an estimated 69,000 lives from 2006 to 2010².
- School-based violence prevention programs can cut violent behavior by 29% among high school students³.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) Fatal Injury Data. (2016)

² Lives Saved in 2010 by Restraint Use and Minimum Drinking Age. In National Highway Traffic Safety Administration <http://www.nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811580.pdf> (accessed November 2014).

Furthermore, prevention makes financial sense. Studies have shown the cost savings and benefits of implementing preventive measures.

- Battery-operated smoke alarms provide an estimated cost-savings of \$880 but cost just \$48 per smoke alarm⁴.
- Child safety seats provide an estimated cost-savings of \$2,400 but cost, on average, \$57 per seat⁴.

Prevention leads to healthier communities, an able-bodied workforce and ultimately a community with a culture of safety.

What are the benefits of becoming a Safe Community?

- Public recognition for leadership in public safety;
- Reductions in injuries from effective local programs;
- Potential reduction in health care costs;
- Being known as a community that actively plans for visitors and citizens to live and work in a community that values safety;
- Access to a growing network of communities sharing ideas and resources to reduce injuries;
- Leverage and streamline community resources;
- Access to experts to help implement, measure and share your success;
- Membership to the PPSCN - a group working with the World Health Organization to reduce injuries, promote safety, and share best practices.

Does Safe Communities America offer financial support?

Although Safe Communities America does not currently offer financial support to communities, we continuously look for funding to share with coalitions that implement and evaluate evidence-based strategies.

What are the criteria for becoming an accredited Safe Community?

Communities seeking the Safe Communities accreditation must meet the following criteria:

1. **Sustained collaboration:** Community leaders and advocates work together to improve the quality of life in the community.
2. **Data collection and application:** Collection and examination of community injury data to set priorities.
3. **Effective strategies that address intentional and unintentional injuries:** Proven and strategic approaches to address the highest injury areas in the community.
4. **Use of evaluation methods:** Implement sound methods to measure progress of coalition-supported initiatives.

What can you do?

- Determine if you live in or near a Safe Community and ask how you can get involved.
- Find a core group of individuals committed to safety.
- Reach out to Safe Communities America for information on becoming a Safe Community. Visit safecommunitiesamerica.org or contact scainfo@nsc.org.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The effectiveness of universal school-based programs for the prevention of violent and aggressive behavior: A report on recommendations of the Task Force on Community Preventive Services. MMWR Recommendations and Reports 2007; 56(RR-7).

⁴ Injury Prevention: What Works? A Summary of Cost-outcome Analysis for Injury Prevention Programs (2014) www.childrenssafetynetwork.org/sites/childrenssafetynetwork.org/files/InjuryPreventionWhatWorks2014Update%20v9.pdf