



Drug Free Community Coalition

A community alliance working toward a healthy, substance-free environment for youth.

Press Release

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White House Drug Policy Office Awards \$125,000 to NCDP to Prevent Youth Substance Use in South Navajo County

Washington D.C. –Richard Baum, Acting Director of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), recently announced 719 Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Support Program grants totaling \$89 million. This represents the **largest-ever** number of DFC grantees in a single year since the program’s founding. The grants provide local community coalitions funding to prevent youth substance use, including prescription drugs, marijuana, tobacco, and alcohol. **Nexus Coalition for Drug Prevention (NCDP) from Pinetop, AZ**, was one of the grant recipients and will receive \$125,000 for fiscal year 2018 in DFC grant funds to involve and engage their local community to prevent substance use among youth. **This is NCDP’s 5th year of the grant cycle, from a possible 10 years of approved grant funding.**

“We’re losing more than 60,000 people per year to drug overdose, but if we can stop young people from starting to use drugs in the first place, we can save lives,” said Richard Baum, Acting Director of National Drug Control Policy. “Our local DFC coalitions are a key part of this effort because they are bringing together parents groups, schools, healthcare professionals, law enforcement, businesses, and others to prevent drug use and improve the health of the community.

“Our goal is to make Pinetop-Lakeside and Show Low safe and drug-free place for our youth,” said NCDP Executive Director Vicky Solomon “Prevention is a powerful tool to counteract drug use in our community, and we will use this funding to help youth in southern Navajo County make healthy choices about substance use.”

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is responsible for the day-to-day management of the DFC Program.

“SAMHSA looks forward to working with its community partners in implementing evidence-based practices to impact the community and help youth,” said Dr. Elinore McCance-Katz, Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use.

NCDP — Friends of Navajo County Coalition Against Drug Abuse, Inc (EIN 26-8968100)
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Mission Statement:

Engaging the community to respond to substance abuse issues by implementing strategies that transform community attitudes, perceptions and policies

Prescription drug abuse prevention is one of the core measures of effectiveness for local DFC coalitions, and coalitions nationwide have led innovative opioid prevention initiatives. DFC's [2016 National Evaluation End-of-Year Report](#) found that at least 97 percent of middle school and 93% of high school youth report that they have not illicitly used prescription drugs in the past 30-days in DFC communities. Additionally, perception of risk of illicit prescription drug use was generally high (80-84 percent). The report also found that perceived risk of illicit use of prescription drugs was very similar to perceived risk of tobacco use (80-83 percent), and was higher than for both alcohol (69-73 percent) and marijuana use (53-73 percent). Finally, the report detailed that peer disapproval of illicit prescription drug use increased significantly for both age groups within all DFC coalitions.

Background on the Drug-Free Communities Support Program

[The Drug-Free Communities \(DFC\) Support Program](#), created by the Drug-Free Communities Act of 1997, is the Nation's leading effort to mobilize communities to prevent youth substance use. Directed by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), in partnership with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the DFC Program provides grants to community coalitions to strengthen the infrastructure among local partners to create and sustain a reduction in local youth substance use.

The DFC Program provides grants of up to \$625,000 over five years to community coalitions that facilitate youth and adult participation at the community level in local youth drug use prevention efforts.

According to [2016 data](#), an estimated 3,200 young people per day between the ages of 12 and 17 used drugs for the first time in the preceding year. Research also indicates that high school seniors are more likely to smoke marijuana than cigarettes. 88% of DFC coalitions indicate that they focus on heroin, prescription drugs, or both, which is reflective of the ongoing national opioid crisis. Furthermore, 16% of high school seniors in 2016 reported binge drinking (i.e., 5 or more drinks in a row) in the past two weeks.

Recognizing that local problems need local solutions, DFC-funded coalitions engage multiple sectors of the community and employ a variety of environmental strategies to address local drug problems. Coalitions are comprised of community leaders, parents, youth, teachers, religious and fraternal organizations, healthcare and business professionals, law enforcement, and media. By involving the community in a solution-oriented approach, DFC also helps those youth at risk for substance use recognize that the majority of our Nation's youth choose not to use drugs.

Additionally, DFC-funded community coalitions continue to make progress toward achieving the goal of preventing and reducing youth substance use.

White House Office of National Drug Control Policy | WhiteHouse.gov/ONDCP | [@ONDCP](https://twitter.com/ONDCP)

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[LOCAL SIDEBAR]

NCDP NAMES NEW LEADERSHIP

Vicky Solomon is named Executive Director of Nexus Coalition for Drug Prevention (NCDP) by Friends of Navajo County Anti-Drug Coalition, Inc. (Friends), according to board president David Butterfield. Brenda Willis is named Drug Free Communities Program (DFC) Coordinator. Both women are from Snowflake-Taylor. Both appointments are effective Oct. 1. NCDP is one of 719 federally-funded Drug Free Communities coalitions nationally.

Solomon joined NCDP in August 2016 as DFC Coordinator. A Heber-Overgaard native, she served six years at Navajo County Public Health as the Tobacco and Chronic Disease Education Program Coordinator and was an active member of the NCDP Steering Committee from 2011. In her first year as coordinator, she attended and was graduated from the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America National Academy in September, in preparation for her new role as Executive Director.

She holds an applied science degree from Northland Pioneer College and state licensure in investment, life insurance, property and casualty, annuity. She is a certified member of Arizona Living Well Institute, Medical Reserve Corps., Mental First Aid USA, and Arizona Peace Officer Standards & Training, among others. An active volunteer in her church and community, she is the mother of four, grandmother of two, and is married to Ronnie Solomon.

Willis joined NCDP in July as Program Assistant. Native to Show Low, she attended Northland Pioneer College and Ashford University and has a strong background in administration, customer service, community outreach and substance abuse recovery. A life-long community activist and volunteer, she served as a respite care worker for disadvantaged youth and continues to support community members struggling with addiction and is committed to our work. The mother of 7, grandmother of nine, she is married to Jared Willis.

Completing the NCDP team is Administrative Assistant Debra Houston-Robertson, who joined the organization in 2015 who is very passionate about our work.

For more information about Friends and NCDP, go to www.ncdp.rocks

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Vicky Solomon
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Debra Houston-Robertson
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