



Hosting a Collegiate Recovery Day at Your State Capitol - A Toolkit

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Introduction

Hosting a Collegiate Recovery Day at your state capitol is an excellent way to raise awareness about the importance of collegiate recovery programs (CRPs), advocate for supportive policies, and celebrate students in recovery. This toolkit provides a step-by-step guide to planning, organizing, and executing a successful event.

Planning Phase

1. Define Your Goals

- **Awareness:** Educate legislators, policymakers, and the public about CRPs and their impact.
- **Advocacy:** Promote policies that support and sustain collegiate recovery efforts.
- **Celebration:** Formally recognize the achievements and contributions of students in recovery.

2. Form a Planning Committee

- **Roles:**
 - **Assign Key Roles for Event Success:** Designate roles such as Event Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator, Communications Lead, and Logistics Manager to ensure all aspects of the event are managed effectively.
 - **Identify a Legislative Partner:** At this stage, it's important to connect with a lawmaker willing to partner with your group. A supportive legislator can be an invaluable resource, helping with event planning, offering insights on navigating legislative processes, and possibly even sponsoring a resolution in support of collegiate recovery.
 - **Work with Your School's Legislative Relations Office:** Collaborate closely with your school's legislative office, as they can assist with identifying key lawmakers, setting up meetings, and providing insight on working with government offices. Their connections can also help to formalize your legislative outreach efforts and enhance credibility.
 - **Reach Out to External Organizations for Legislative Leads:** If you encounter challenges in identifying legislative partners, consider reaching out to local advocacy organizations like MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving). These groups often maintain connections with legislators who focus on health, safety, and recovery topics, and they may be able to connect you with individuals interested in supporting your event.
- **Meetings:** Schedule regular meetings to ensure progress and address any issues.

3. Set a Date and Secure a Location

- **Date:** Choose a date that aligns with the legislative calendar and allows for maximum CRP participation in the state.
- **Location**
 - **Reserve Space at the State Capitol:** Securing space at the state capitol can be challenging, so work with individuals or groups who have experience coordinating events there. If possible, collaborate with your school's legislative

relations office or other campus departments to streamline the process and gain support.

- **Engage Legislative Support:** Reach out to staffers or aides from relevant legislative committees—such as Education, Health/Welfare, and Mental Health—to gauge interest in supporting the event. Explore opportunities for their involvement, including the possibility of sponsoring a resolution in recognition of collegiate recovery programs.
- **Leverage Existing Relationships:** If your organization or senior administrators have established connections with legislators, request a warm hand-off to facilitate introductions. This connection can be valuable for securing both support and space at the capitol, as well as increasing event visibility among policymakers.



Preparation Phase

4. Develop a Budget

Expenses

When planning for the event, consider both essential and optional expenses that will contribute to its success. Here's a breakdown of common costs:

- **Permits:** Depending on your event location, you may need permits for gathering in public spaces.
- **Equipment Rentals:** Budget for audio/visual equipment (such as microphones, speakers, or projectors), tables, tents, and chairs
- **Promotional Materials:** Include items like shirts, buttons, and stickers, which can serve as lower-cost alternatives for promoting the event and raising awareness. Stickers and buttons, in particular, are budget-friendly, easy to distribute, and popular among students.
- **Travel:** If guest speakers, facilitators, or volunteers require travel arrangements, budget for transportation, lodging, and meals as necessary. For local events, this may be minimal, but it's essential to confirm if the school will reimburse these expenses.
- **Refreshments:** Plan to offer snacks or drinks to participants, which can increase engagement and attendance. Simple refreshments like bottled water, granola bars, and fruit can be affordable options.

By anticipating these costs, you can plan a more comprehensive budget and seek sponsorships or grants specifically for covering these expenses. Including lower-cost items such as buttons and stickers also helps ensure that promotional items are accessible to everyone involved.

Funding

- **Identify Potential Sponsors:** Seek sponsorships, grants, or donations from organizations and individuals known to support collegiate recovery and student wellness initiatives. Target specific sponsors with a track record of funding recovery and mental health programs.
- **Collaborate with the School's Legislative Relations Office:** Work closely with your legislative relations office to identify funding opportunities and facilitate introductions to supportive sponsors. The legislative team can provide guidance on approaching sponsors, understanding funding requirements, and aligning your proposal with the school's strategic priorities.

5. Create a Program Schedule

- **Speakers:** Invite legislators, University Administrators, CRP staff, students, and recovery advocates to speak. Consider a wide array of state leaders and other local stakeholders. Examples: chair or co-chair of the Drug and Alcohol Governance Committee from your State / Representative from your Department of Health and Hospitals/Office of Behavioral Health, chamber of commerce, board of education, police chief, sheriff, etc.



- **Activities:** Plan activities such as a rally, panel discussions, informational booths, and networking opportunities. Consider drafting a recovery proclamation that can be read during the programming; the governor's office may issue various proclamations and present them to a group on the House or Senate floor.

6. Prepare Promotional Materials

- **Flyers and Posters:** Design visually appealing materials to promote the event, including key details, objectives, and a call to action. Distribute these around campus, in community centers, and at relevant partner organizations.

- **Social Media Campaign:** Create a coordinated social media campaign to raise awareness and encourage participation. Consider using a call to action, such as inviting participants to wear purple in support of recovery. Expand reach by involving campus and community partners, and using hashtags to drive engagement.
- **Research-Based Advocacy Materials:** Compile and include current research on CRPs in your materials. Use data to highlight how CRPs support student well-being, improve academic retention, and contribute positively to campus communities. When meeting with lawmakers, use this research to illustrate the importance and effectiveness of CRPs and to support requests for legislative backing. Include these facts in a one-pager or infographic that is easy to share and reference during advocacy efforts.

Press Release and Legislator Outreach

- **Press Release:** Draft a press release to notify local media about the event, outlining its purpose, key activities, and impact on the community. Include quotes from organizers or speakers, if available, to add a personal touch.
- **Personalized Legislator Outreach:**
 - Send a personalized email to each legislator, copying their staff member, who represents a state house or senate district with a Collegiate Recovery Program (CRP).
 - In the body of the email, introduce the CRP at [University Name] in their district, highlighting how it supports students' recovery and academic success.
 - Attach a separate, visually engaging 1-pager explaining what a CRP is, its mission, and the ways it benefits the student community.



Execution Phase

7. Volunteer Coordination

- **Recruit Volunteers:** Engage students, faculty, and community members to volunteer.
- **Training:** Provide training sessions for volunteers to ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities.
- **Assignments:** Assign tasks such as registration, information booth staffing, and crowd management.

8. Logistics Management

- **Permits:** Ensure all necessary permits are obtained.
- **Equipment:** Arrange for sound systems, tents, tables, and chairs.

- **Signage:** Prepare clear signage for directions, registration, and activity areas.

9. Advocacy Materials

- **Informational Packets:** Create packets with information about the event schedule, CRPs, policy recommendations, and personal stories from students and alumni in recovery. Your Advocacy Materials should contain suggested items for your attendees to create their own elevator speech-- top 5 of what you would want them to communicate should they have the opportunity.
- **Petitions:** Draft petitions or letters for participants to sign, advocating for supportive policies.

Event Day

10. Setup and Registration

- **Setup:** Arrive early to set up equipment, booths, and signage. Make sure to check what is allowable in the building/on the grounds.
- **Registration:** Have a registration table to welcome attendees, distribute materials, and provide information.



11. Program Execution

- **Opening Remarks:** Start the event with opening remarks from key speakers.
- **Activities:** Conduct scheduled activities, ensuring smooth transitions between each segment.
- **Networking:** Facilitate opportunities for attendees to network and share their experiences.



Post-Event Phase

12. Follow-Up

Thank You Notes

- **Email Blast to All Attendees, Volunteers, and Sponsors:**
 - After the event, send a general thank-you email to everyone who attended, volunteered, or contributed as a sponsor. Express appreciation for their support and involvement in making the State Capitol Day a success, and share any follow-up details or links to event highlights, photos, or recordings.
- **Personalized Emails or Handwritten Notes for Key Contributors:**
 - Send personalized thank-you emails or handwritten notes to legislators, speakers, and major sponsors. In these messages, mention specific contributions they made to the event and express how their participation enriched the experience. Acknowledging their efforts personally reinforces relationships and leaves a lasting positive impression.
- **Feedback:** Gather feedback from attendees to evaluate the event's success and identify areas for improvement.
- **Report:** Prepare a report summarizing the event, including attendance, key outcomes, and media coverage.

Additional Resources

Sample Agenda

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM: Registration and Welcome

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM: Opening Remarks and Keynote Speaker

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM: Panel Discussion: The Importance of CRPs

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM: Lunch and Networking

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM: Rally at the Capitol Steps

2:00 PM - 3:00 PM: Breakout Sessions: Advocacy and Policy

3:00 PM - 4:00 PM: Closing Remarks and Call to Action

Note for Agenda Planning:

Be sure to allocate time for attendees to meet with lawmakers in their offices to promote and advocate for CRPs. These meetings provide a valuable opportunity to discuss the positive impact of CRPs on student well-being, academic retention, and campus safety. Plan for 30-60 minutes per meeting to allow ample time for sharing success stories, presenting relevant data, and discussing policy recommendations to support CRPs.

Consider organizing a briefing session beforehand to prepare attendees with talking points, data summaries, and suggested questions for lawmakers.

Sample Press Release

Headline: State Capitol Hosts Collegiate Recovery Day to Advocate for Student Support

Body: On [Date], students, faculty, staff, and advocates will gather at the state capitol to raise awareness about collegiate recovery programs (CRPs) and advocate for supportive, recovery-centered campus policies. The event will include dynamic speakers, thought-provoking panel discussions, and an empowering rally, uniting attendees around the vision of a future where all campuses are equipped to meet the needs of students in recovery and promote a culture of wellness and inclusion.

Contact Information

- **Event Coordinator:** [Name, Email, Phone]
- **Media Inquiries:** [Name, Email, Phone]
- **Volunteer Coordinator:** [Name, Email, Phone]

Are you planning a Collegiate Recovery Day at your state capitol? If so, please let us know by emailing bret@collegiaterecovery.org and we will be sure to advertise your event through ARHE. If you have additional suggestions to compliment this guide, please contact us to share your experiences and feedback so that we may include the most relevant information to support CRP initiatives nationwide.

Addendum for International Student Recovery Communities (SRCs)

This addendum is designed to guide international SRCs in promoting recovery on college campuses through awareness campaigns, policy advocacy, and local celebrations. Recognizing the unique needs and diverse cultural contexts of Student Recovery Communities worldwide, this document offers adaptable strategies for raising awareness, lobbying for supportive policies, and celebrating the achievements of SRCs internationally.

Ways for International SRCs to Raise Awareness, Advocate for Policy Support, and Celebrate Recovery

1. Raise Awareness Locally and Regionally

- **Collaborate with Campus and Community Groups:** Partner with campus wellness centers, student unions, and community organizations to co-host events, webinars, or workshops that highlight the role of student recovery. Building connections with these groups can increase visibility and foster collaboration.
- **Launch an Awareness Campaign:** Use social media and localized hashtags to share stories, recovery facts, and success testimonials. Consider creating video stories of students who have benefited from SRCs to humanize and amplify the message.
- **Promote in University Publications:** Work with university newsletters, alumni magazines, and local news outlets to publish articles or interviews that discuss the importance of student recovery and the support that SRCs provide.

2. Lobby for Policy Support and Institutional Commitment

- **Engage University Administrators:** Host informative sessions for campus leaders, presenting data that illustrates the positive impact of SRCs on student retention and well-being. Providing studies and testimonials can help administrators see the value of formally supporting recovery programs.
- **Advocate for Campus Policies Supporting SRCs:** Partner with student government or health departments to draft policies that prioritize student recovery, such as access to counseling services, sober housing, and academic accommodations.
- **Meet with Local and National Representatives:** Arrange conversations with policymakers to discuss the success and needs of SRCs, advocating for increased data collection to better understand and serve students affected by substance use. Inviting students to share their experiences adds a powerful, personal perspective to policy discussions, highlighting the unique role of recovery within the broader scope of student health initiatives. It may be useful to familiarize yourself with both quantitative and qualitative data to support

conversations when meeting with local Councilors or Members of Parliament; while there may be less published data in an International context, utilizing local health units and federal health data may help translate U.S. statistics into International contexts.

3. Host a Local Student Recovery Event

- **Host a "Recovery Week" on Campus:** Organize a week of campus events in alignment with Collegiate Recovery Week in the U.S. to raise awareness of legislation needs in Canada and the U.K., such as including panels, mindfulness sessions, group meetings, and creative activities that emphasize recovery.
- **Run a "Recovery Awareness Fair":** Set up a campus fair with booths offering resources, information about local recovery services, and interactive exhibits that encourage visitors to learn about and destigmatize recovery.
- **Feature Student Art and Stories:** Create a gallery or virtual exhibit with artwork, poetry, or written reflections from students in recovery. Sharing personal stories through art can deeply engage the community and foster empathy for those on recovery journeys.

