

Professionalizing the Prevention Field Through Certification: What's Working and What's Getting In The Way

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Rachel R Whitmer | Collaborative Center to Advance Health Services, University of Missouri – Kansas City, Prevention Technology Transfer Center Coordination Office

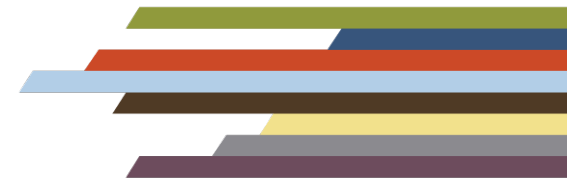
Rori Douros | University of Utah, Mountain Plains Prevention Technology Transfer Center

SAMHSA Prevention Day – January 29th, 2024



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What We'll Cover...

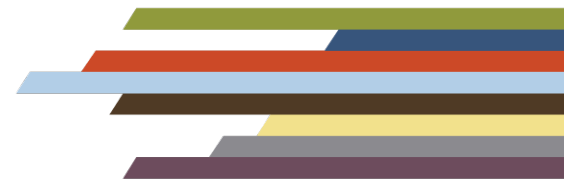
- Background and context for this project
- Present data from the prevention certification queries to the field
- Q & A and Discussion With You About Your Experiences and Recommendations



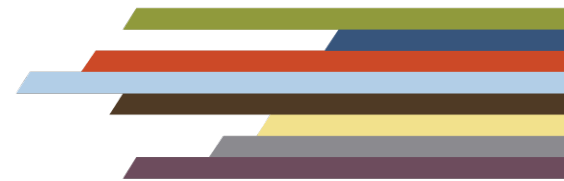
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Prevention Strategic Plan Overview



Working with communities.

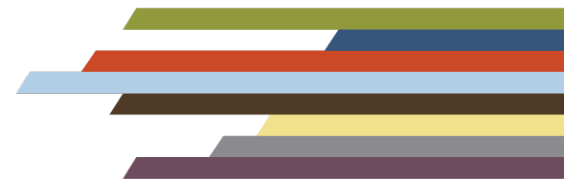
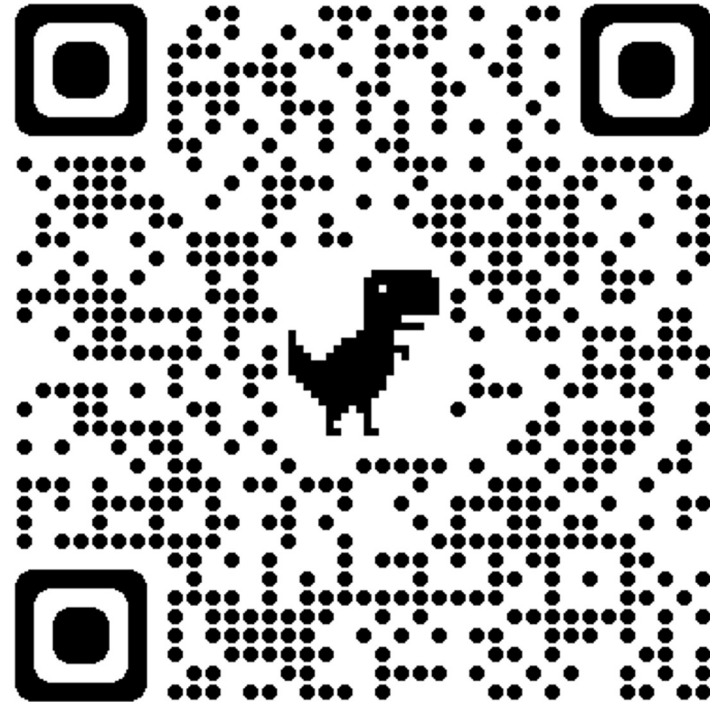
- The SAMHSA-funded Opioid Response Network (ORN) assists states, organizations and individuals by providing the resources and technical assistance they need locally to address the opioid crisis and stimulant use.
- Technical assistance is available to support the evidence-based prevention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery of opioid use disorders and stimulant use disorders.

Funding for this initiative was made possible (in part) by grant no. 1H79TI085588-02 from SAMHSA. The views expressed in written conference materials or publications and by speakers and moderators do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Department of Health and Human Services; nor does mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

Working with communities.

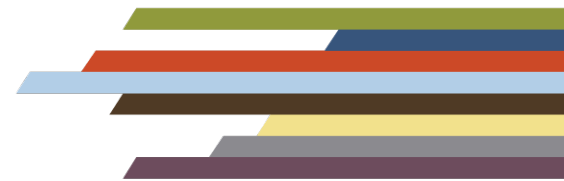
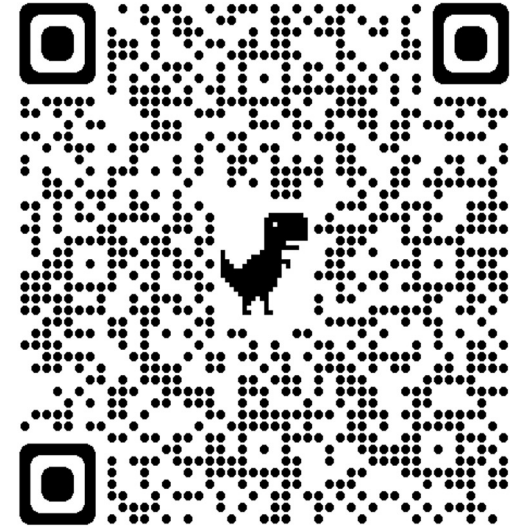
- The Opioid Response Network (ORN) provides local, experienced consultants in prevention, treatment and recovery to communities and organizations to help address this opioid crisis and stimulant use.
- ORN accepts requests for education and training at no cost
- Each state/territory has a designated team, led by a regional Technology Transfer Specialist (TTS), who is an expert in implementing evidence-based practices.

- To ask questions or submit a request for technical assistance:
 - Visit www.OpioidResponseNetwork.org
 - Email orn@aaap.org
 - Call 401-270-5900



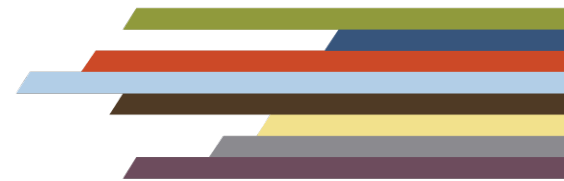
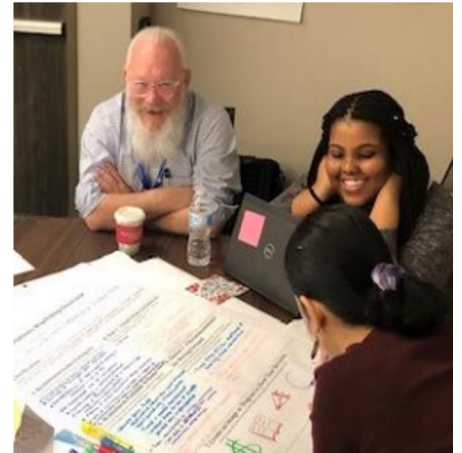
- Convened in January 2020 by the Opioid Response Network (ORN)
- Attendees: 47 prevention professionals from across the country including individuals from
 - The Opioid Response Network (ORN)
 - Prevention Technology Transfer Center (PTTC) Network
 - Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA)
 - National Prevention Network (NPN)
 - Applied Prevention Science International (APSI)
 - Partnerships in Prevention Science Institute (PPSI)
- Outcomes:
 - Prevention Thought Leaders Meeting Proceedings Report produced

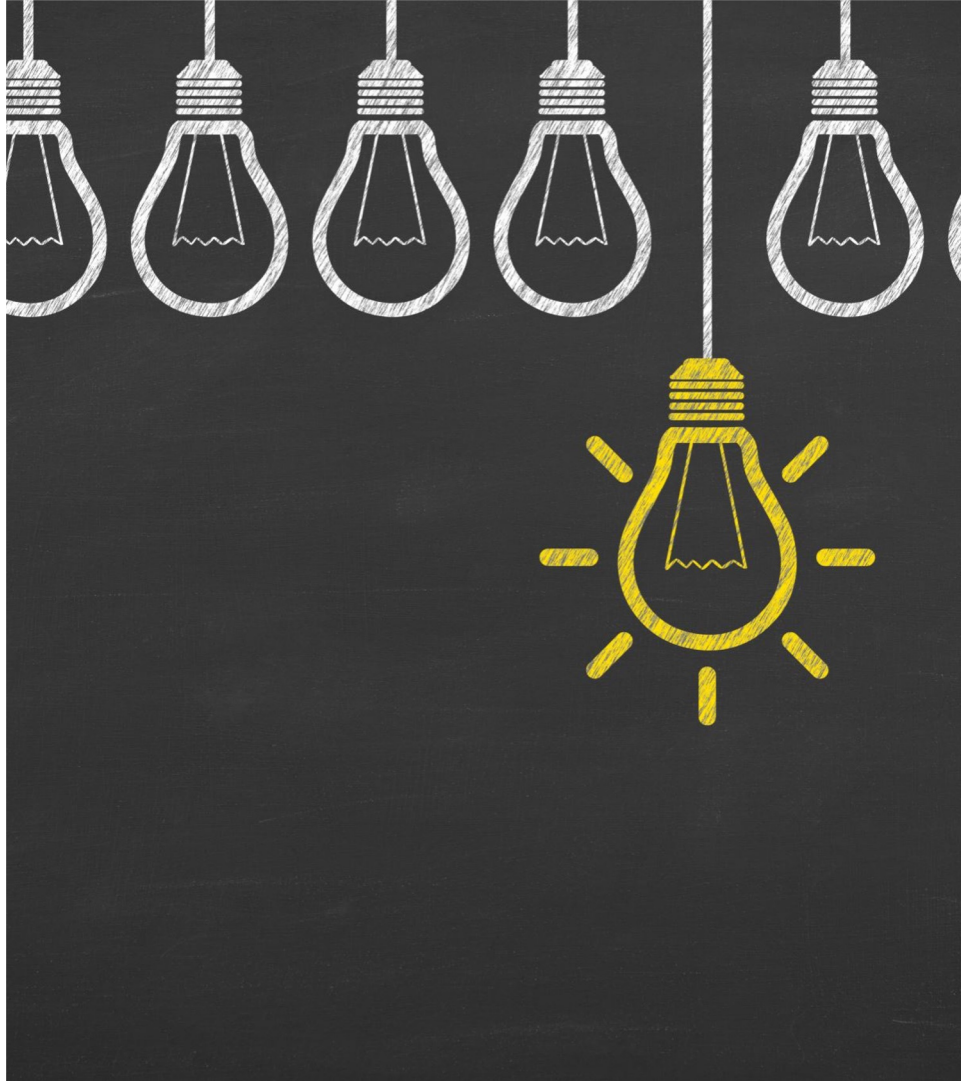
Prevention Strategic Plan Overview



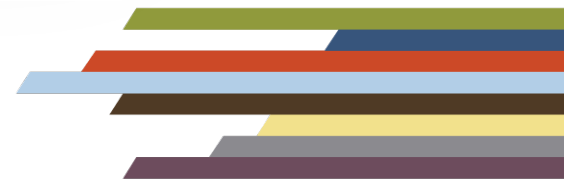
Prevention Thought Leaders Meeting

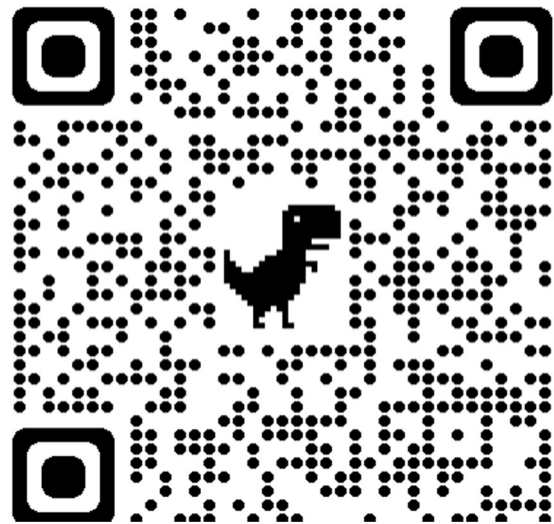
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 - National Prevention Network (NPN)
 - Applied Prevention Science International (APSI)
 - Partnerships in Prevention Science Institute (PPSI)
 - Subject matter professionals, consultants, and national prevention leaders
- Outcomes:
 - Prevention Thought Leaders Meeting Proceedings Report produced
 - Report details:
 - Participants
 - Meeting goals and outcomes
 - Challenges and opportunities facing the prevention workforce



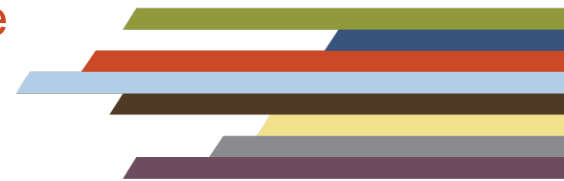


- **Four Primary Areas of Focus**
 - **Recruit, Train, Retain**
 - **Career Paths & Development**
 - **Advocacy & Funding**
 - **Marketing & Communication**



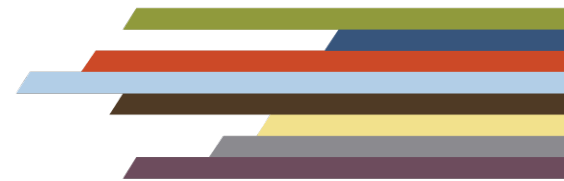


- **Prevention Marketing Webpage**
 - Collaboration between multiple workgroups
 - Contains social media post templates,
 - Instructional videos, slide decks, and more
 - Available on the PTTC Website
- **Leadership Resources One-Pager**
 - Collection of resources from across the ORN, CADCA, and PTTC
 - Resources include workshops, webinars, fact sheets, and more
 - Available on the PTTC Website





Prevention Certification Queries Response Data



Query Methodology & Goal

Two queries sent to the field in September

- One to state/tribal/jurisdictional prevention directors. (aka NPNs)
- One to the prevention field

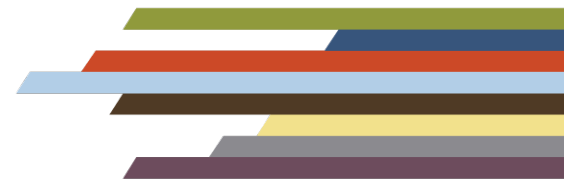
Goal: Learn from prevention offices and the field at large, the advantages, disadvantages, and barriers related to prevention certification



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Responses

NPN Query: 21

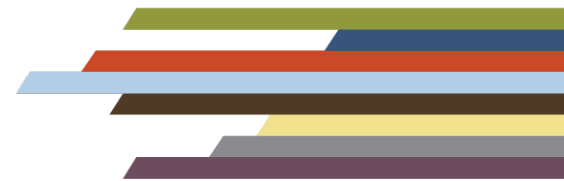
Query to the prevention field: 635



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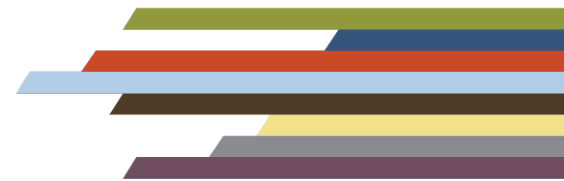
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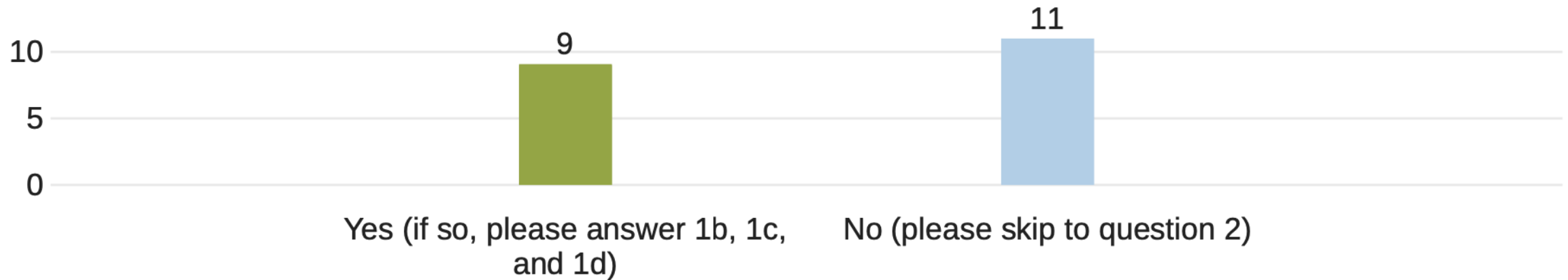




NPN Response Data



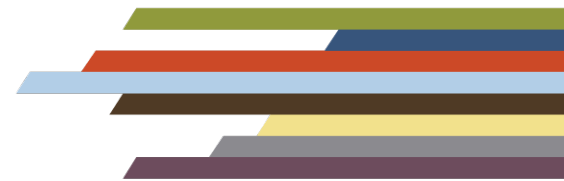
1a. In your state, is it a requirement of organizations receiving state substance use disorder prevention funds, to have staff who are certified/credentialed by your state's prevention certification board?



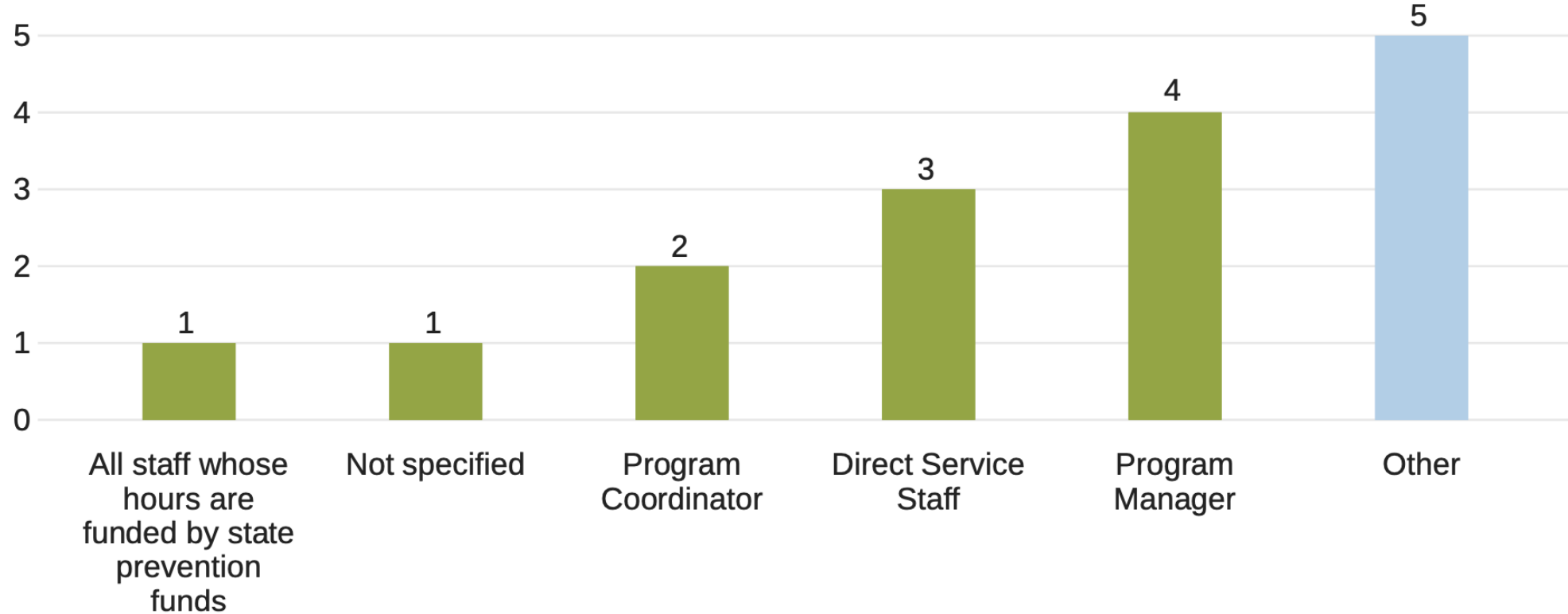
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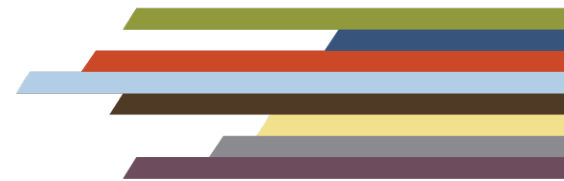
1b. If it is a requirement, who on the staff of these organizations must be certified? (select all that apply)



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If prevention certification is a requirement, briefly describe the advantages or benefits for the state.

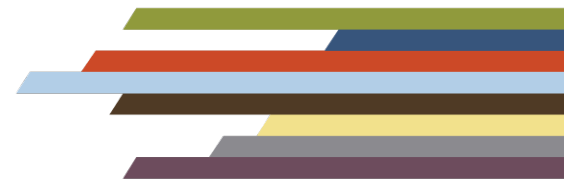
- Ensuring Competency and Quality of State-funded Prevention Services
- Promoting Professionalism and Credibility
- Standardizing Training, Knowledge, and Competencies
- Performance Indicators and Professional Development of Workforce
- Consistency and Universal Language



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If certification is a requirement, briefly describe any disadvantages or barriers for the state.

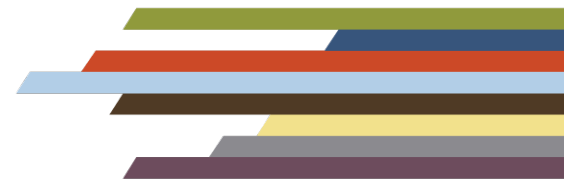
- Capacity and Funding Barrier for Potential State Grant Applicants
- Workforce Shortages
- Lack of Recognition and Monetary Value
- Time Investment Required by Workforce to Achieve Certification
- Certification Board Processing Delays
- Lack of training availability to satisfy training requirements
- Cost of Certification to Workforce
- Entry-Level Challenges



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If it is not a requirement, to the best of your knowledge, describe why the state does not currently make it a requirement.

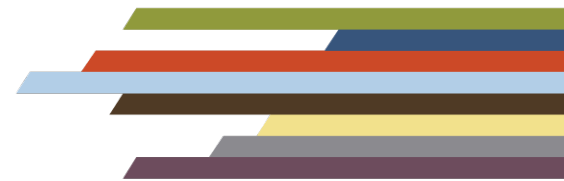
- Lack of Financial Incentive for Workforce
- Lack of Value and Recognition in Some Areas
- Lack of Capacity in Small Organizations – Potential Hinderance for Staff Being Able to Achieve Certification
- Costs of Certification to Workforce



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If it is not a requirement, what are the barriers, if any, for an individual in your state to pursue and attain the prevention certification credential?

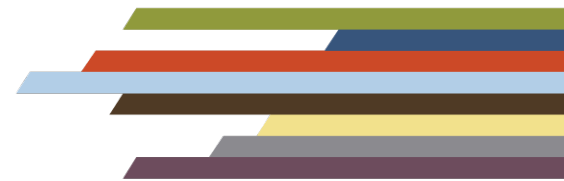
- Financial Barriers – Application and Exam fees
- Lack of employer support (e.g. providing time for training, not covering cost of certification)
- Unclear Benefits to Career Advancement
- Limited Training Opportunities
- Lack of Young Professionals Interested/Entering the Workforce
- Difficulties/Anxiety with the Exam



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Are State Prevention Staff In Your State Certified?

Yes - All	7
Yes - Some	7
No	5
No – Working towards	2

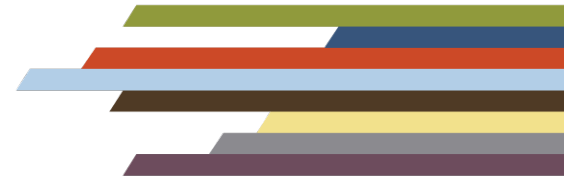
N=21



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Is it a Requirement for your State Prevention Staff to be Certified?

Yes	4
No*	17

N=21

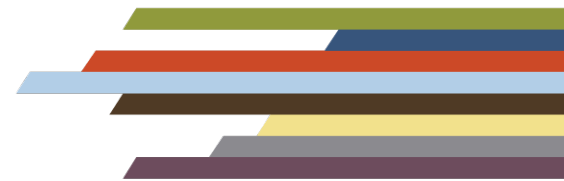
* One state indicated while full certification wasn't required, staff were required to complete SAPST and ethics



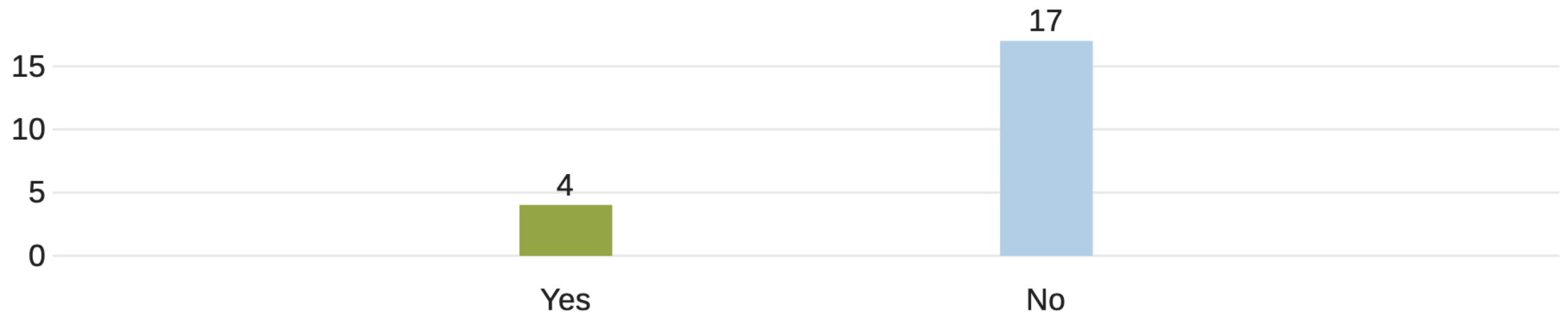
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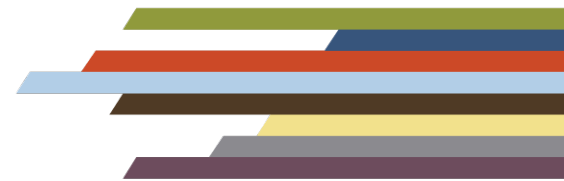
4. Is your state's prevention certification board housed within the state government?



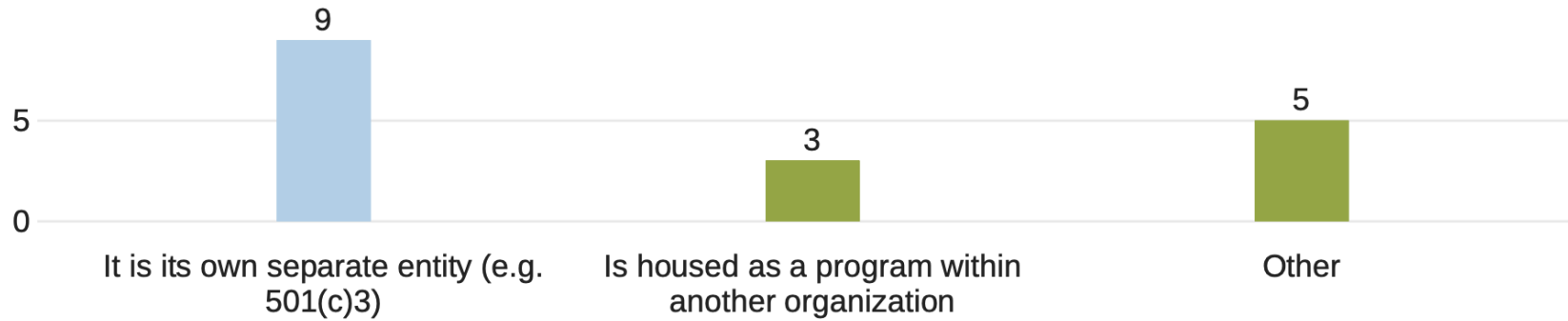
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4a. If you answered no, where is the prevention certification board housed?



4a. Other

We don't have a prevention certification board.

Salt Lake County I believe

The Prevention Specialist Certification Board of Washington (PSCBW) was established March 6, 2002, as a Washington State non-profit corporation and is a Member Board of the International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium (IC&RC).

N/A

University



New

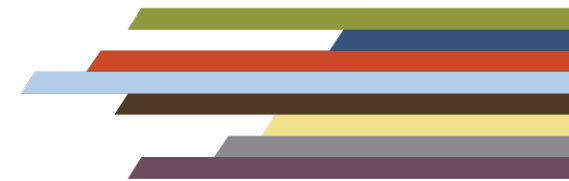
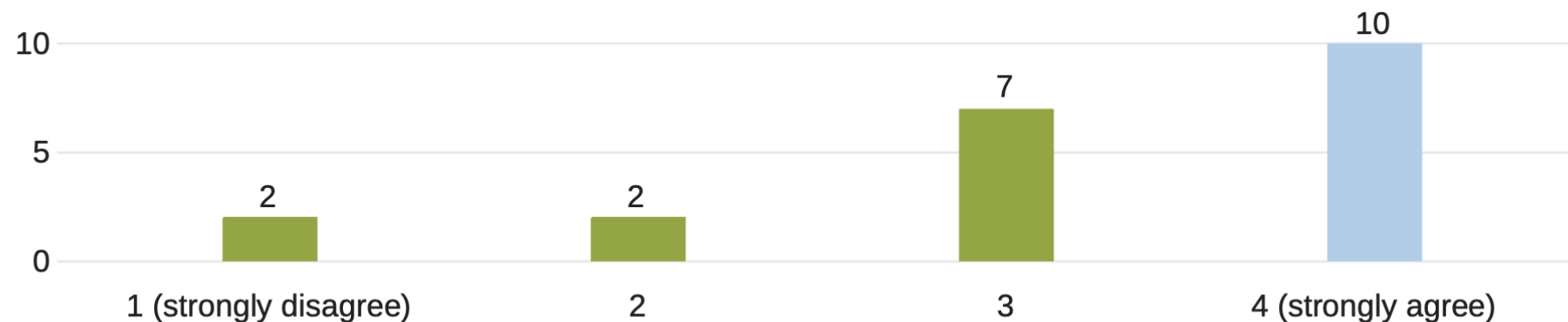
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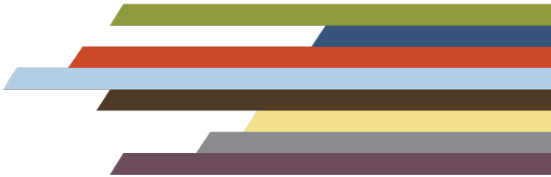
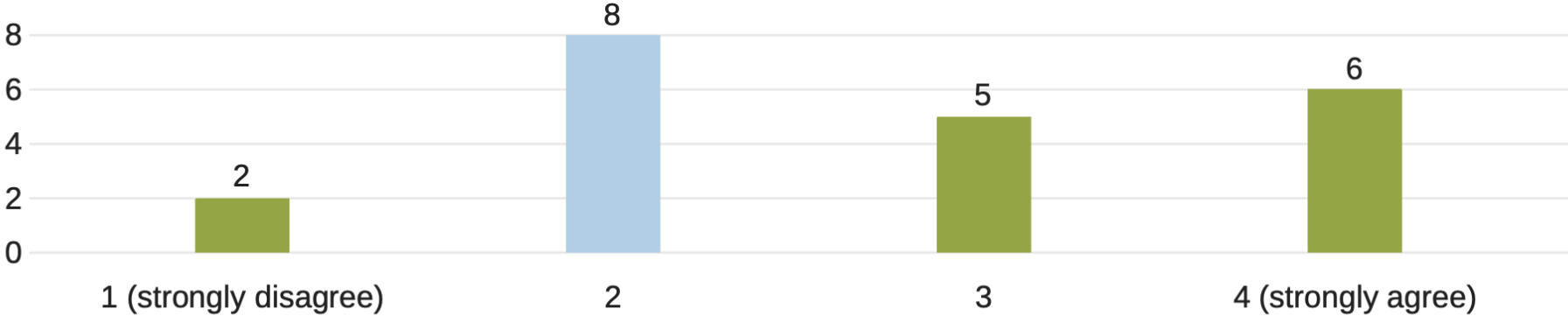
6. Please rate the extent to which you agree with these statements regarding prevention training availability in your state: On a scale of 1-4 (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree)

There is adequate training available in my state to match prevention certification requirements.



6. Please rate the extent to which you agree with these statements regarding prevention training availability in your state: On a scale of 1-4 (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree)

There is adequate training available in my state for the advanced/experienced prevention workforce in my state



Summarizing Training Availability

NPNs responding report adequate opportunities across all 6 prevention domains* along with ATOD and prevention ethics

- At least 15 out of 21 NPNs gave a rating of 3 or 4 in all training categories

Training categories with more than 5 NPNs giving a rating of 2 or 1:

- Professional Growth & Responsibility
- Public Policy & Environmental Change
- Communication

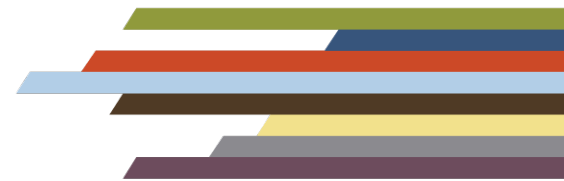
*For the purposes of this query we gauged training based upon the 6 domains of the International Certification & Reciprocity Consortium (IC & RC) prevention certification. <https://mainepreventioncertification.org/icrc-prevention-domains/>



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NPN Query Summary

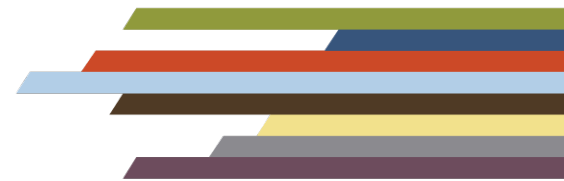
- Just over half of respondents indicate their state requires funded organization to have certified staff
- Advantages to the state to require certification include: ensuring quality of services, promoting professionalism in prevention, and standardizing training, knowledge, and competencies
- States that don't require cite costs to workforce, workforce shortages, and lack of financial incentives to workforce as reasons for not requiring.
- 17 out of 21 respondents said state staff were certified or working towards certification, only 4 said this was required in their state



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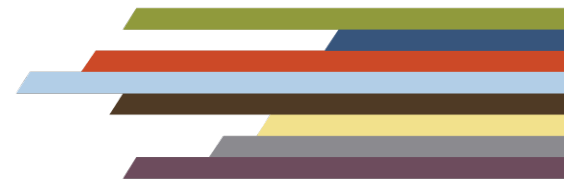
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Prevention Field Survey Data



635 Total Responses

From 48 of 50 States

Tribal Nations

Arizona

Navajo Nation

Idaho

Nez Perce Tribal Reservation

Oklahoma

Chickasaw Nation

Maine

Penobscot Nation on Indian
Island

North Carolina

Lumbee Tribe

Tribal Nations

Texas

Ysleta del Sur Pueblo

New York

Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe

Washington

Muckleshoot Indian Tribe-
Chehalis Tribe

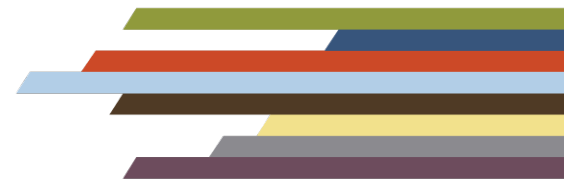
Michigan

Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of
Chippewa Indians,
Saginaw Chippewa Tribe

U.S. Jurisdictions

Guam

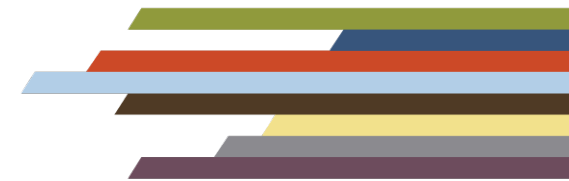
Puerto Rico



Are you a certified prevention specialist? N=629

Yes	310	49.2%
No, but working towards certification	141	22.4%
No, and not working towards certification	155	24.6%
No, certification is not available in my state	23	3.65%

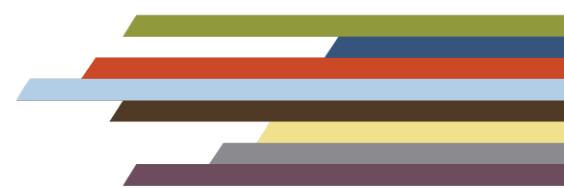
- 71.6% of respondents have or are working towards prevention certification
- 28.3% (a little over 1 out of 4 respondents) not pursuing or not able to pursue prevention certification

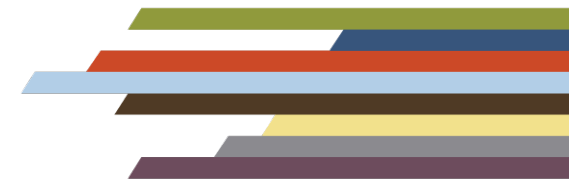
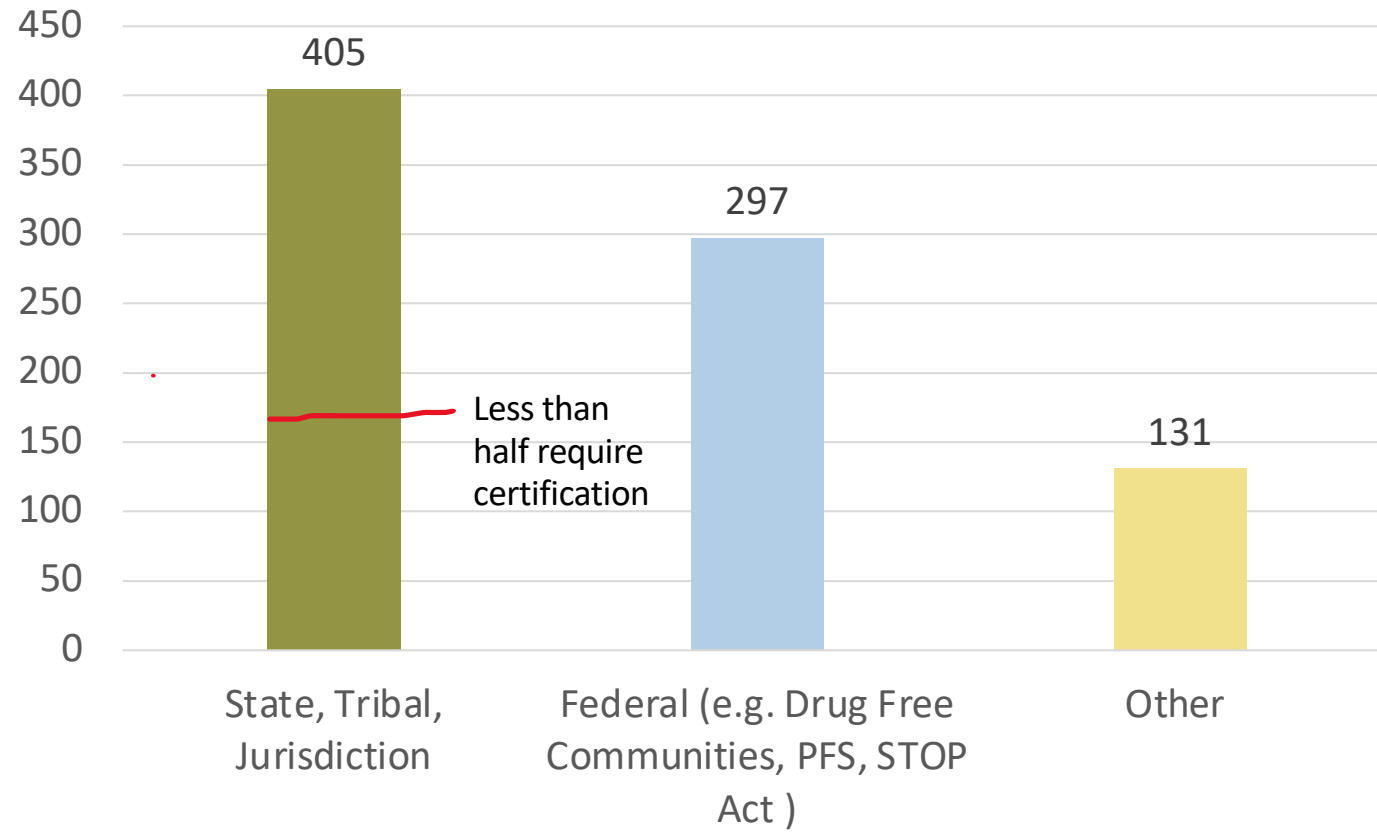


If you are a certified prevention specialist, what level of certification do you hold? N=351

Certified Prevention Specialist	202	57.5%
Advanced Prevention Specialist	48	13.7%
Provisional Prevention Specialist	16	4.6%
Other	85	24.2%

Other:

- Most who chose “other” did not include a response
 - 10 Credentialed Prevention Professionals (specific to New York)
 - 3 Associate Prevention Specialist (available in multiple states)
 - 2 OCPC (Ohio Certified Prevention Consultant)
- 



Barriers or challenges encountered while pursuing certification

Certified N=239

- Exam Difficulty
- Inadequate Study Materials
- Time Constraints
- Cost
- Lack of Training Opportunities
- Unavailability of Ethics Trainings
- Complex Application Process

Not Currently Certified N=224

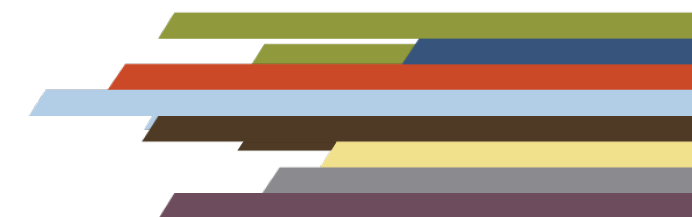
- Cost
- Time Commitment
- Challenges with Prevention Certification Board
- Lack of Clarity
- Lack of Supervision and Mentorship
- Inadequate Training Opportunities
- Lack of Incentives and Relevance



Mountain Plains (HHS Region 8)

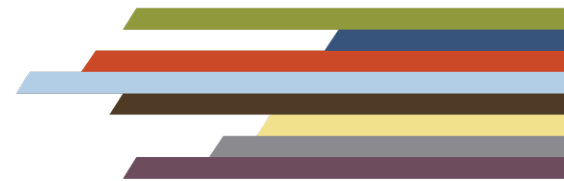
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Advantages

- Credibility and Professionalism
- Knowledge and Expertise
- Job Opportunities and Advancement
- Training and Continuing Education
- Community Awareness and Impact



Advantages

Credibility and Professionalism

“Recognition that Primary Prevention is a field of specialization and that prevention specialists are “the experts” who utilize best practices and evidence-based approaches.”

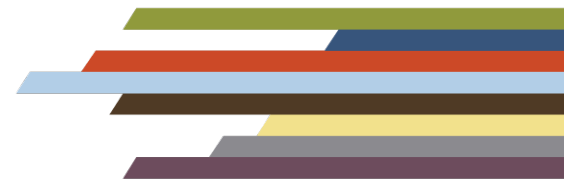
Knowledge and Expertise

“Ensures required knowledge that should be standard across the profession and affords a title that assures others (particularly other prevention stakeholders in the community) that they are working with someone qualified and knowledgeable.”

Job Opportunities and Advancement

“Pay raise, opportunities to supervise and be promoted, credibility.”

“Job security and employment options beyond my community.”



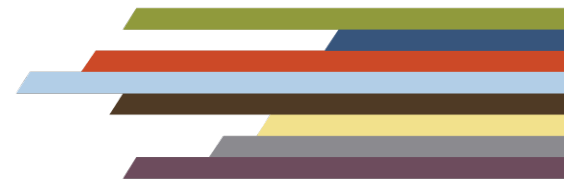
Advantages quotes from respondents

Community Awareness and Impact

“Being able to speak with knowledge of prevention science and related data is key in moving mindsets toward evidence-based prevention. My colleagues and I have worked hard to get legislators and decisionmakers to include prevention certified professionals when writing policy, proposing funding, or choosing prevention programs.”

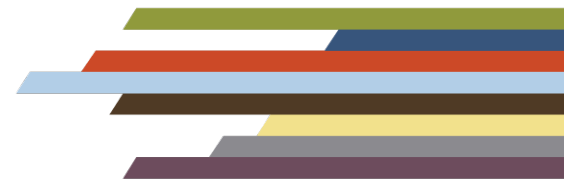
Continuing Education and Training

“The certification itself is an advantage as proof of the time I've spent improving prevention knowledge. I also appreciate having this standard to work towards & maintain, as it keeps me accountable to continuing to grow.”



Disadvantages to being a certified prevention specialist N=175

- Cost
- Time and Effort
- Limited Career Advancement
- Lack of Recognition



Summary of advantages from the field

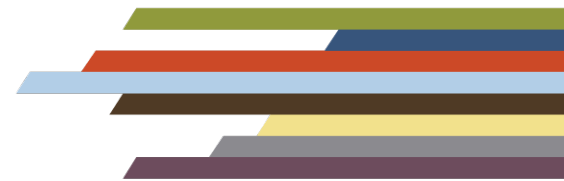
- Enhances credibility and professionalism within the broader behavioral health field, with funders, and with the public.
- Encourages maintaining and building upon knowledge and expertise.
- Promotes prevention science to partners and the public.
- Seen as a “best practice” to ensure the community is receiving science-based, ethical, and quality prevention services.
- Can provide advancement opportunities for prevention professionals.



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Themes of common disadvantages from NPN and prevention field queries

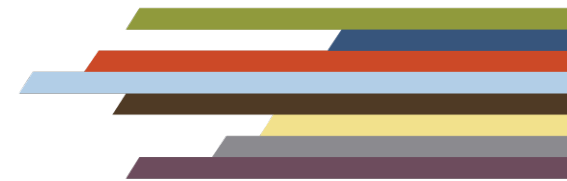
- Certification costs (application fees)
- Training availability to satisfy initial certification
- Time constraints (attending training and the application process itself)
- Complexity of the process and challenges in communication with some certification boards
- Lack of financial incentives (e.g. salary increases for certified professionals)
- Difficulties with the exam (lack of study materials, anxiety, perception of disconnect from day-to-day duties)



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Unique Themes

NPNs:

- Workforce shortages

Prevention Field:

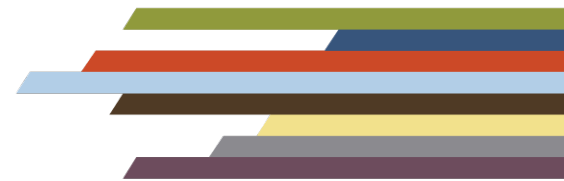
- Inability for professionals in other BH or allied fields to use education/training towards certification requirements (most of this feedback from New York)
- Lack of access to prevention supervision and mentoring



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Prevention Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



Recommendations:

- Prevention funders allowing funded prevention organizations to budget funds for covering certification application costs for their staff
- Create an inventory of programs and models for prevention mentoring and disseminate across the country
- Study or needs assessment looking at salary structures for prevention professionals and identify solutions that would allow for pay raises/higher pay for certified professionals
- Develop training and technical assistance for prevention certification boards, especially smaller organizations.



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