

PROVIDENCE DRUG-FREE COMMUNITY GRANT

Coalition Evaluation Report 2007-2009

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Mayor's Substance Abuse Prevention Council (MSAPC) is the lead drug and alcohol prevention voice and policy making body for Providence, Rhode Island. MSAPC has been operating as an effective coalition since it was formed in 2003 by Mayor David N. Cicilline. MSAPC is comprised of over 20 members, with leadership under Caitlin Thomas-Henkel. MSAPC has a wide-ranging membership of committed individuals from youth serving agencies, law enforcement agencies, business communities, counseling services, and other community-based organizations.

MSAPC serves the city of Providence, the state capital of Rhode Island, and is the second largest city in New England. The city has 176,618 people and 38,072 children and youth of school age (ages 5-18). The focus of the Drug Free Community grant is the 5,462 youth in middle schools (6th through 8th grades) throughout Providence's Public Schools.

About the Council

The mission of the MSAPC is to protect youth and prevent harmful alcohol and drug use in the Providence communities. Prevention efforts include implementing evidenced-based programs, building awareness, providing effective education, supporting comprehensive environmental strategies, and promoting the health and wellness of individuals and the Providence community.

MSAPC holds regular meetings 10 times a year, and members are expected to attend at least 7 of these meetings. To promote comprehensive and efficient communications, MSAPC uses a "Consent Agenda" which outlines all of the activities of the staff and MSAPC members in the prior month. In this way, all members are fully informed on the various progresses made by MSAPC. In addition, members also provide input on specific topics they would like to discuss at these regular meetings, so that the meeting time is focused on the few priority items.

All major activities, programs, and funding priorities are brought to the Council for input and consent. MSAPC is united in its common vision of improving the health and well-being of Providence Youth.

About the Drug-Free Community Grant

The Drug-Free Community Grant is a collaborative initiative sponsored by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) in partnership with Substance

Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), in order to achieve two major goals:

1. Establish and strengthen collaboration among communities, public and private nonprofit agencies, and Federal, State, local, and tribal governments to support the efforts of community coalitions to prevent and reduce substance use among youth.
2. Reduce substance use among youth and, over time, reduce substance abuse among adults by addressing the factors in a community that increase the risk of substance abuse and promoting the factors that minimize the risk of substance abuse.

MSAPC has been awarded this five-year DFC grant, and funding began in the fall of 2009.

Project Goals

In accordance with DFC's major goals, MSAPC has identified the following specific goals for their community:

- Strengthen council capacity to reduce youth marijuana and alcohol use
- Increase parental engagement and education to reduce youth marijuana and alcohol use
- Reduce marijuana access to reduce youth use
- Reduce alcohol access to reduce youth use

COALITION EVALUATION

MSAPC conducted a self-assessment where members were asked to evaluate the membership and the council. The results of this assessment are used for the DFC grant to monitor the strength of their capacity and effectiveness as a coalition, as stated in the first goal above.

Although this is the first time the self-assessment is conducted for the DFC grant, this is the third year that MSAPC has administered an annual Council self-assessment. The assessment tool is a modified version of "Diagnosing the Health of Youth Council," developed by Gillian Kaye and posted on the Community Toolbox website, <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/>.

Additional information was also used in order to collect information on how collaboratively the council is functioning. This survey instrument is a modified version of the Center for Prevention Research and Development's Indiana Grassroots Prevention Initiative's 2002 Council Member Survey. The instrument was slightly modified to reflect the membership of MSAPC and to be more Providence specific.

With the funding provided by the DFC grant, the survey was made available to the membership as an on-line survey. The survey was created on-line and administered by Datacorp Inc., who serves as MSAPC's evaluator for the DFC.

Methods

The survey was made available to MSAPC members during November and December of 2009. A link to the survey, and a password to enter the survey, was e-mailed to the membership. Members were able to take the survey from any computer, anonymously, ensuring privacy for their responses.

In addition to collecting data from members in 2009, Datacorp also compiled data from the two previous years when MSAPC independently conducted the assessment. Original survey responses and data files were not available, so results provided in previous reports were used to enter data into a database manually.

Descriptives and frequencies were calculated for every survey item. Where possible, data from all three years are reported in the results section below. When data is only available for the current year, this is indicated below the specific table or figure.

RESULTS

Demographics

Table 1. Number of People Who Took the Survey

	2007	2008	2009
Number of People who took the Survey	11	11	10

Table 2. Average Length of Membership (in years)

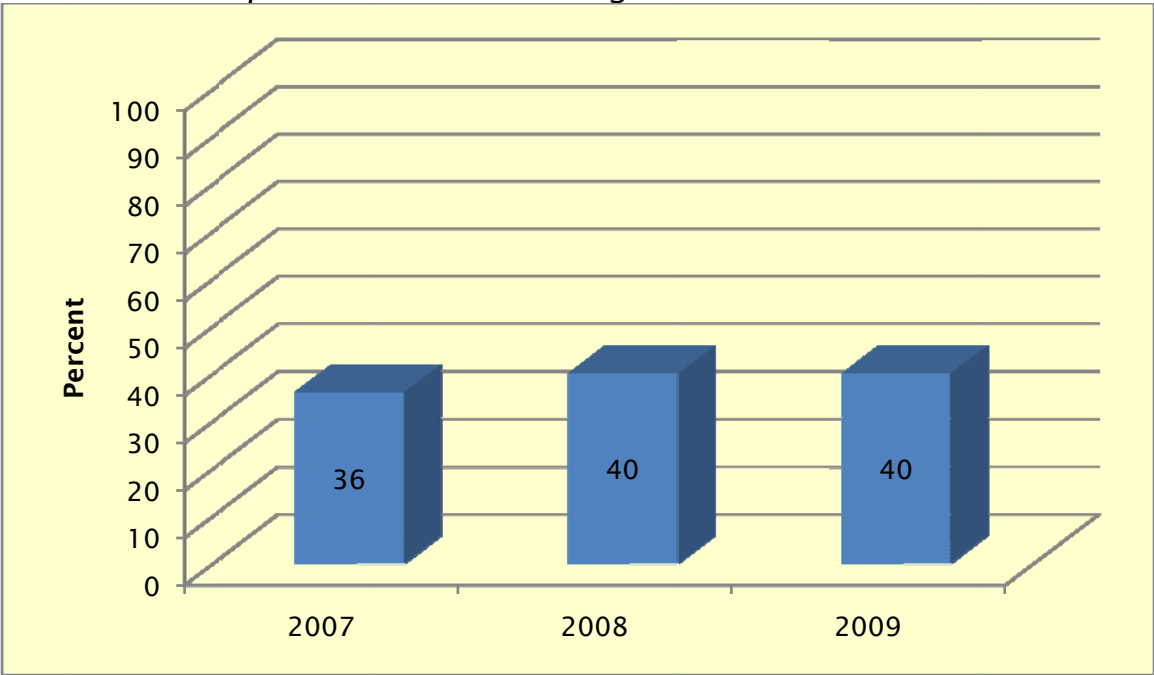
	2007	2008	2009
Average Length of Membership	6.5	2.7	2.1

Table 3. Sector of the Community Represented

	2009
Law Enforcement	2
Youth Organizations	2
Business/Industry	1
Counseling Agency	1
Other	4

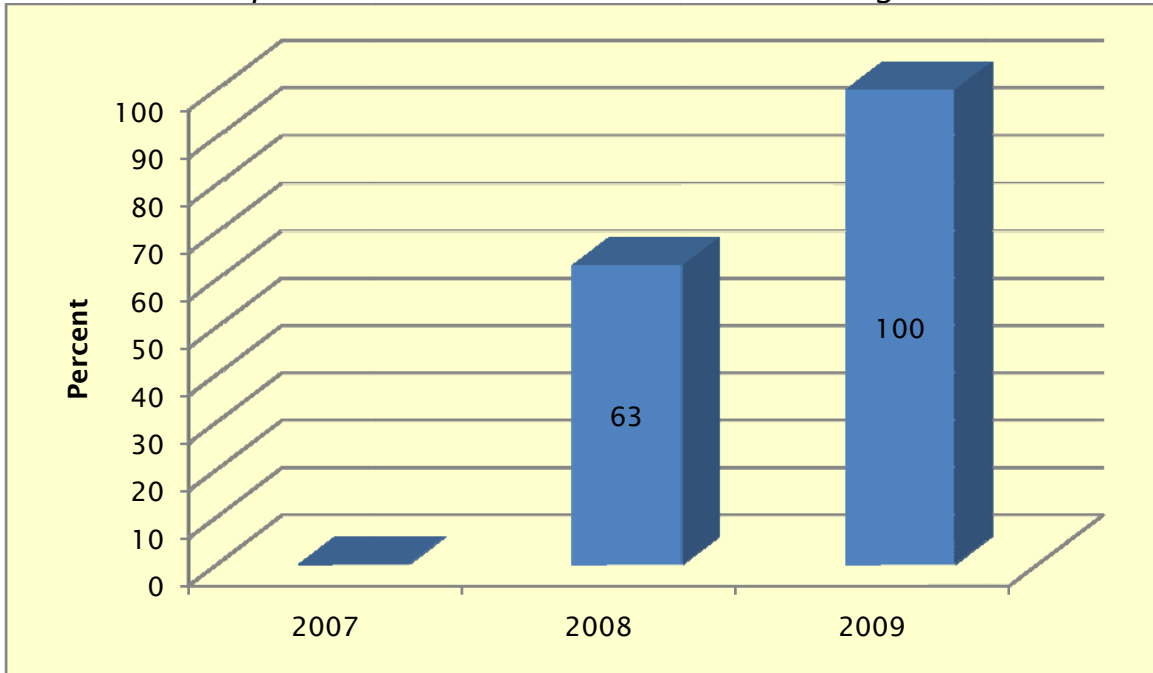
Note: 2009 data only

Figure 1. Percent of MSAPC Members Living in Providence



MSAPC Membership

Figure 2. Percent of Members Who Attended Council Meetings



Note: Data not available for 2007

Figure 3. Percent of Members Who Attended Sub-Committee Meetings

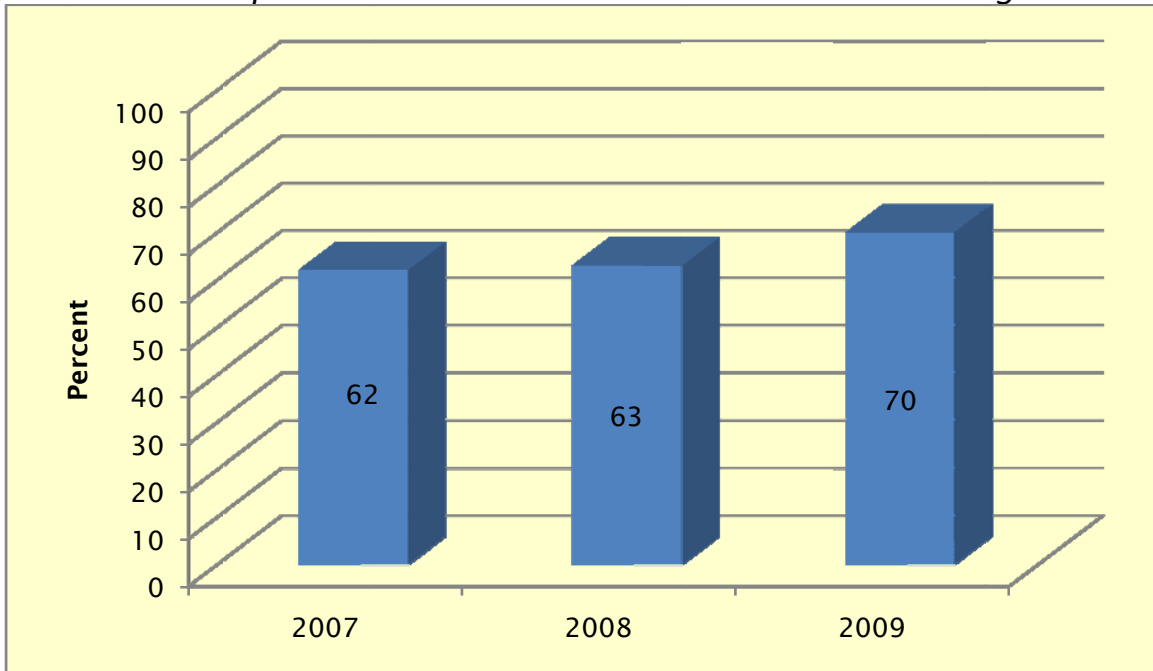


Figure 4. Percent of Members Attending the Council as Part of Their Job

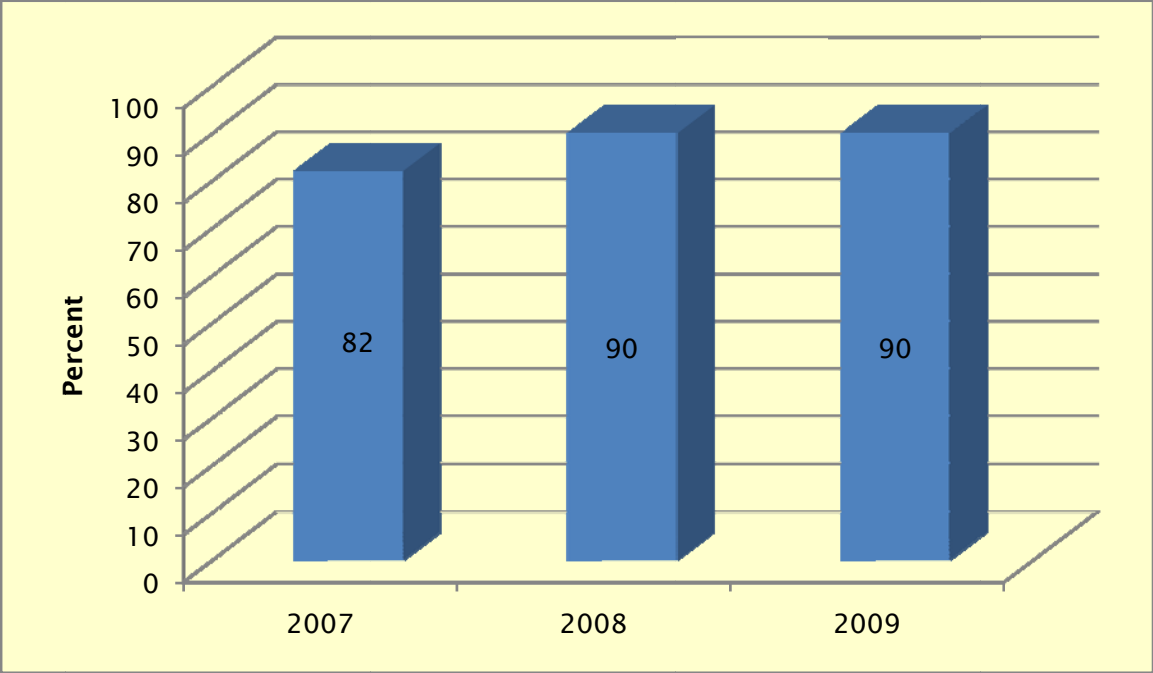
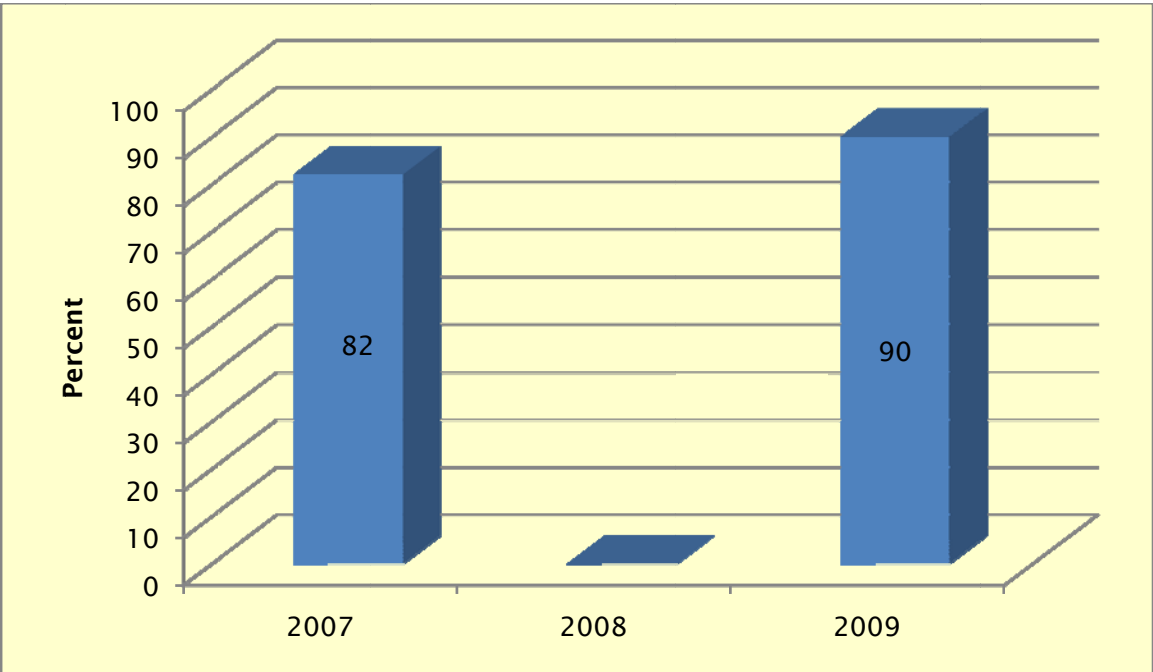


Figure 5. Percent Serving as an Organization/Agency Representative on the Council



Note: Data not available for 2008

Table 4. Average Number of Regular Meetings (Not Including Sub-Committee or Special Meetings) Attended During the Last 12 Months

Average Number of Regular Council Meetings	2009
Note: 2009 data only	8

Table 5. Average Number of Sub-Committee or Special Meetings Attended During the Past 12 Months

Average Number of Sub-Committee/Special Meetings	2009
Note: 2009 data only	2.1

Council Effectiveness

Moving MSAPC towards Collaboration

Arthur Himmelman has developed a continuum of the 4 types of exchanges that occur between individuals in groups such as councils. The four types of exchanges are:

- Networking
- Coordinating
- Cooperating
- Collaborating

Collaborating is the most advanced of these four types of exchanges, and the desirable endpoint of this continuum.

As groups move through the stages from Networking, to Coordinating, to Cooperating, to Collaborating, an increasing level of personal risk, resources, and commitment are required. However, with each increment of increased risk, resource, and commitment, the possibilities for community change and transformation increase.

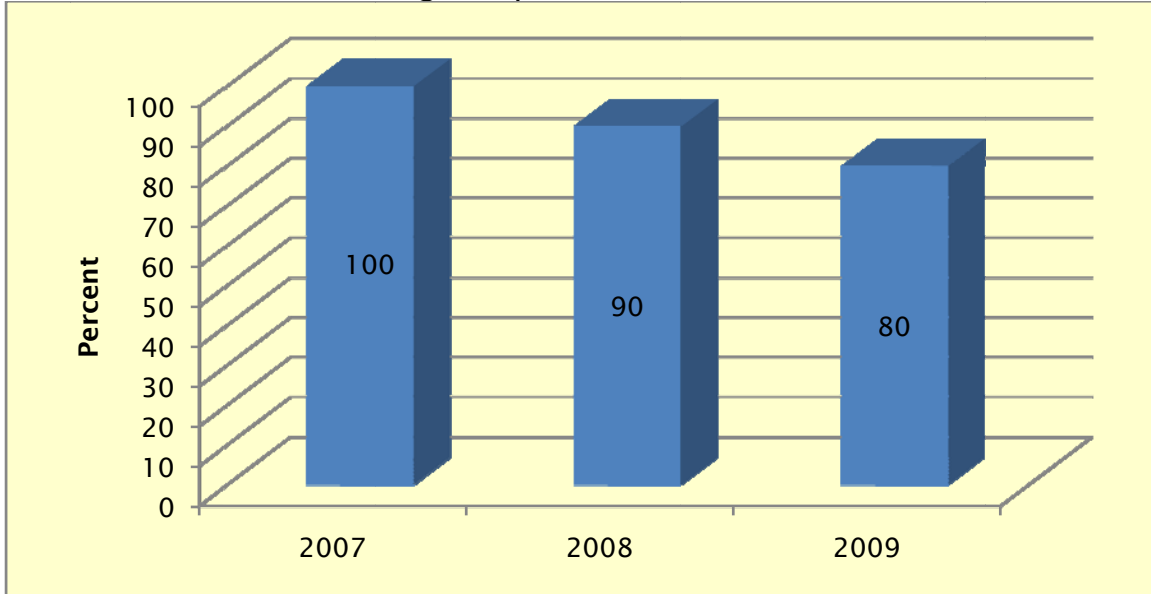
The council self-assessment tool offers several questions to assess where MSAPC fits into the Continuum of Collaboration. Measures from the current survey were matched as much as possible with the 4 exchanges set forth by Himmelman.

Below is a summary of Himmelman's definitions, followed by the results from the matched questions in the survey. The definitions are written such that each successive exchange builds on the definition of the previous stage. The survey items were matched to reflect the portion of the definition which reflects the additional dimension which promotes further growth of the coalition.

Networking

Networking is defined as **exchanging information** with other Council partners for mutual benefit.

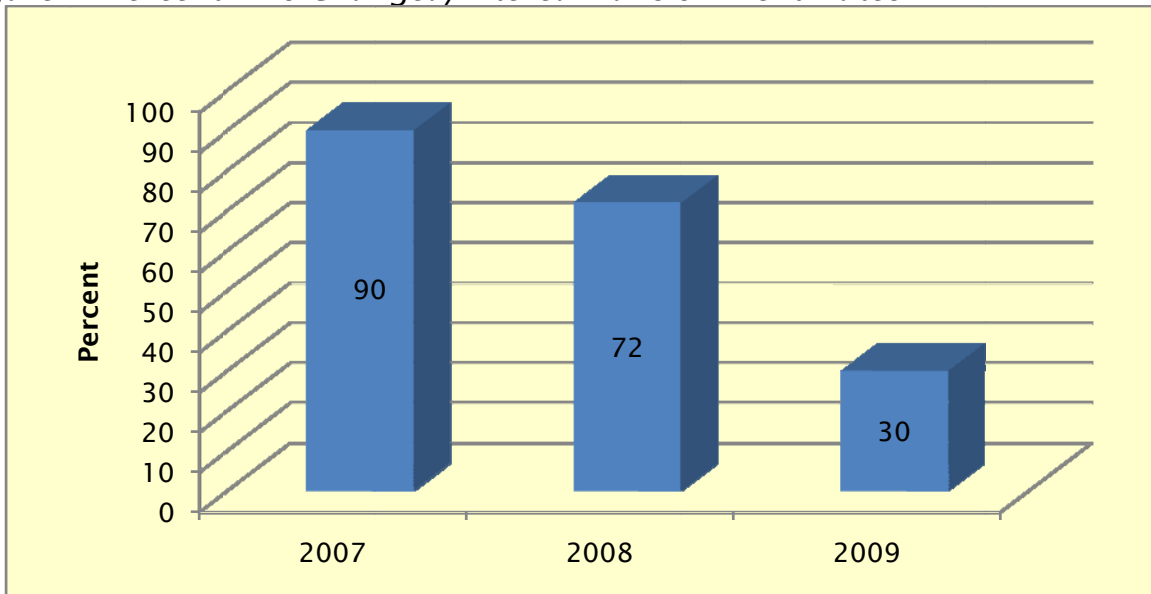
Figure 6. Percent Who Exchanged Information with Other Council Partners



Coordination

Coordination is defined as exchanging information, **and changing / altering plans, event dates, or program activities** for the mutual benefit of other MSAPC partners.

Figure 7. Percent Who Changed/Altered Plans or Event Dates

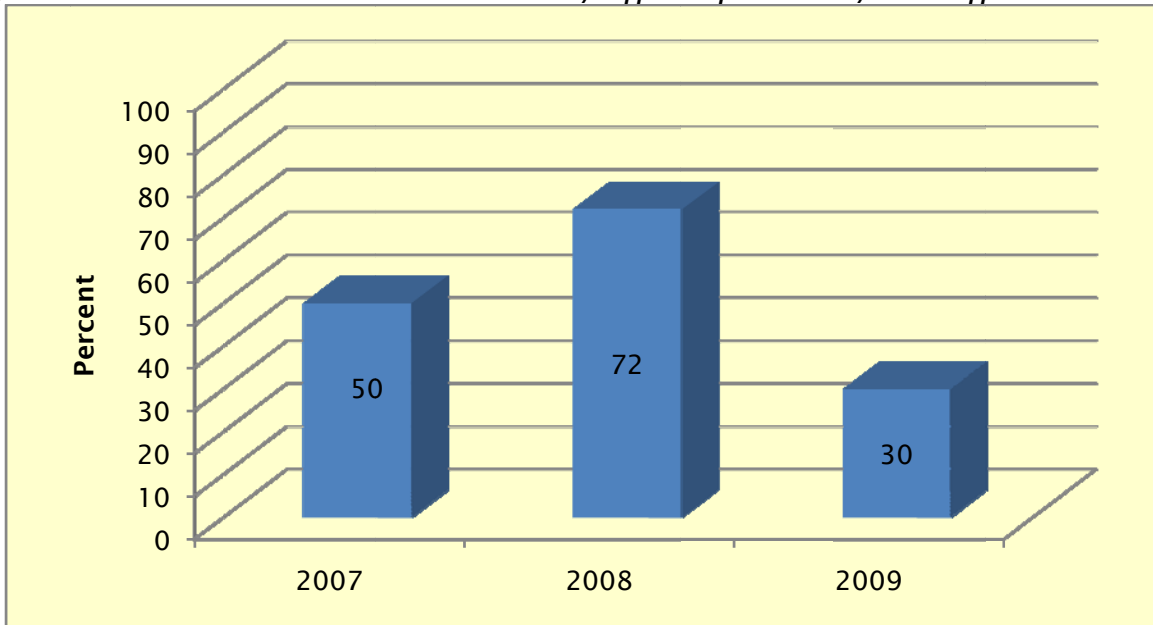


Note: 30% responded "Not Applicable" for 2009

Cooperation

Cooperation is defined as exchanging information, changing / altering plans **and sharing resources, such as office space, staff, costs or funding** for the mutual benefit and common purpose of other MSAPC members.

Figure 8. Percent Who Shared Resources/Office Space and/or Staff



Note: 40% responded "Not Applicable" for 2009

Figure 9. Percent Who Planned Jointly with One or More Council Member in the Past 12 Months

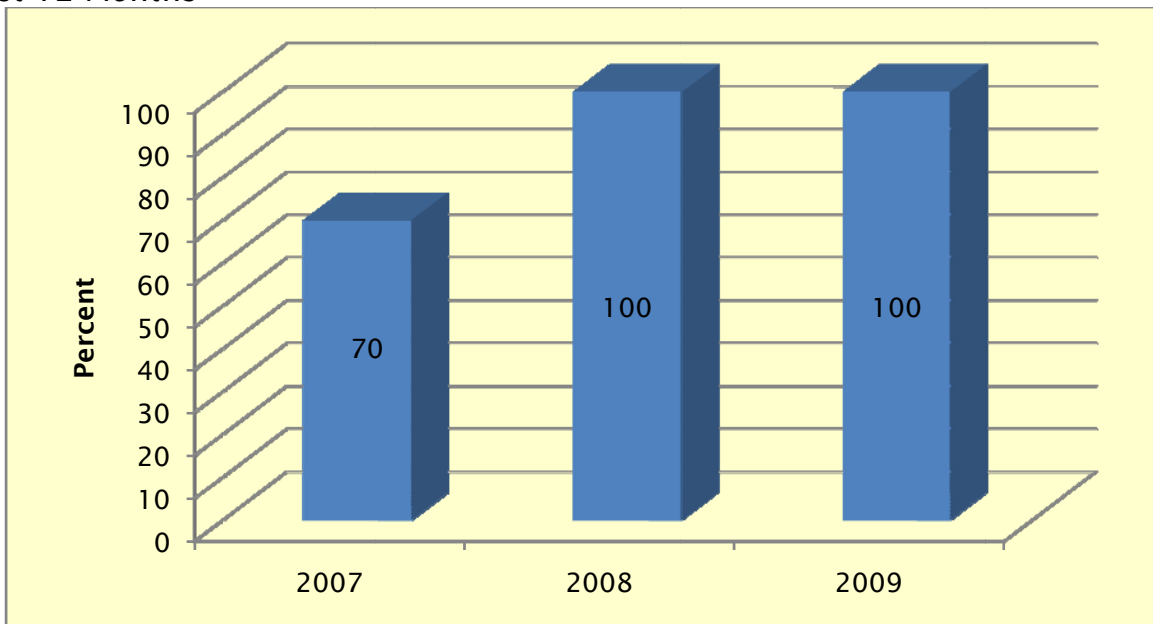
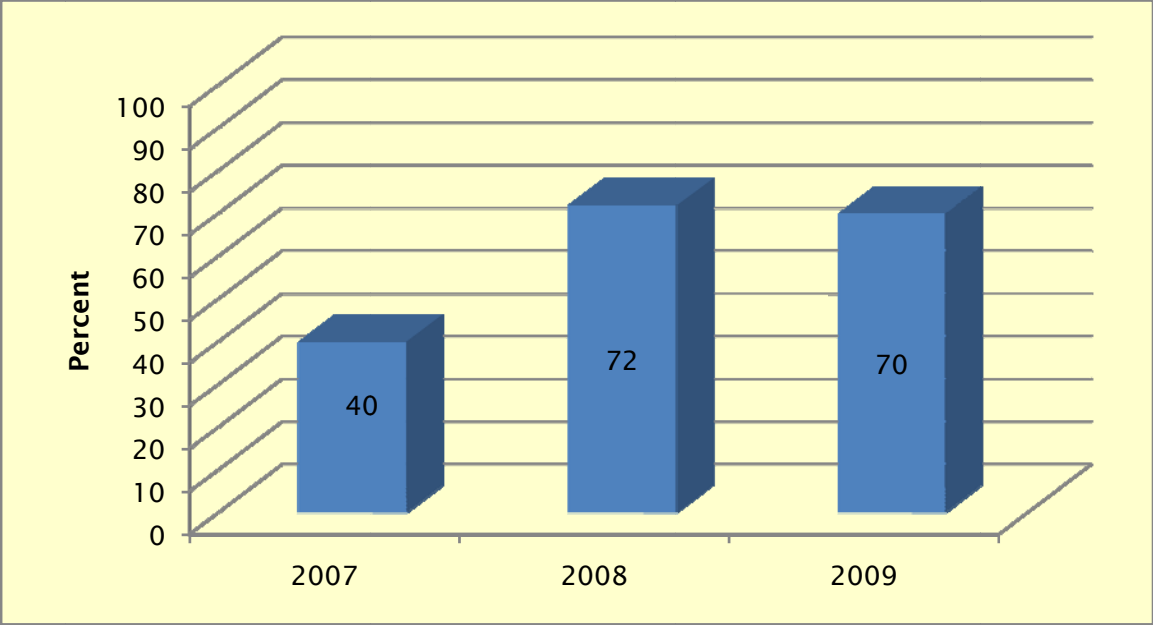


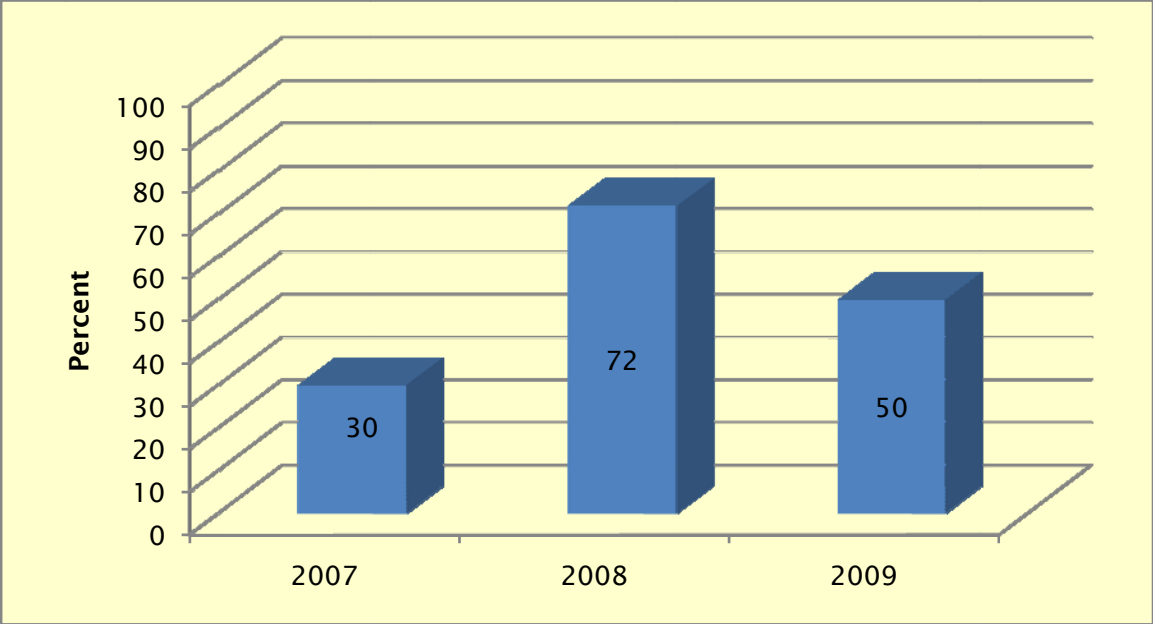
Figure 10. Percent Who Jointly Planned and/or Implemented a Program with MSAPC Partners in the Past 12 Months



Collaboration

Collaboration is defined as exchanging information, changing / altering plans and sharing resources **and enhancing the capacity** of another MSAPC member for mutual benefit and to achieve a common purpose. This is the most desirable type of exchange according to Himmelman.

Figure 11. Percent of those who Jointly Sought New Funding with MSAPC Partners



Note: 20% responded "Not Applicable" for 2009

Membership Quality

The survey also sought feedback on membership and coalition quality. The figures below report *the percent of members who agree/strongly agree with the statement indicated* in the figure headings.

Figure 12. MSAPC Has a Feeling of Cohesiveness and Team Spirit

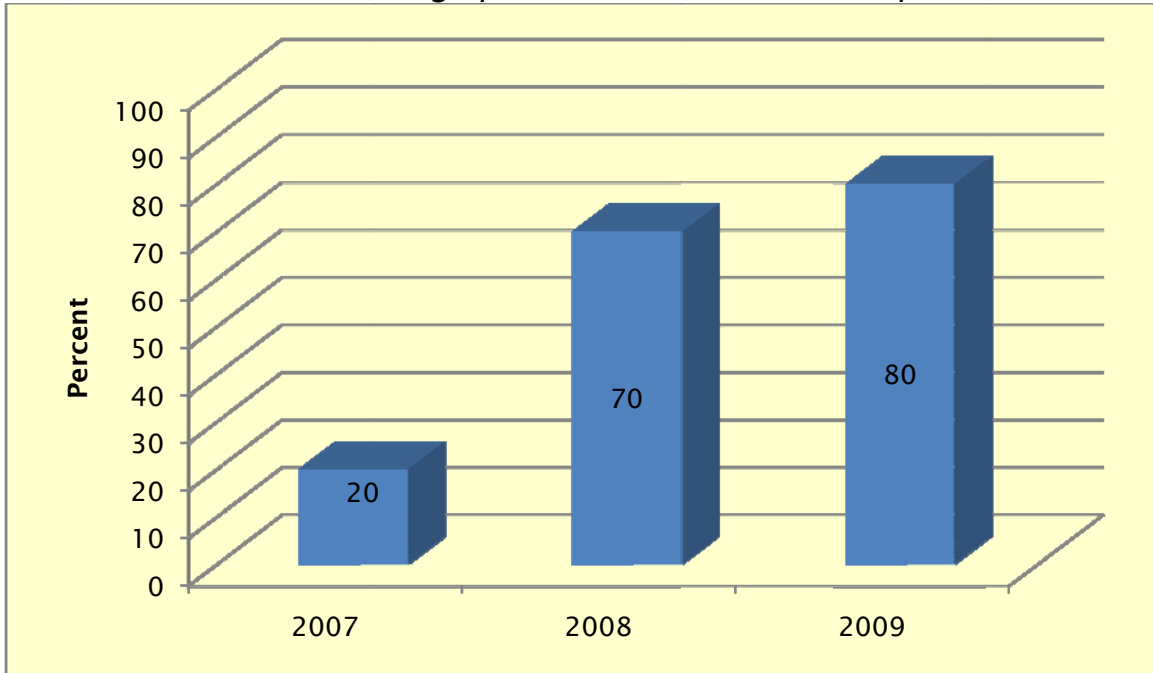


Figure 13. MSAPC Shares a Common Vision for Providence

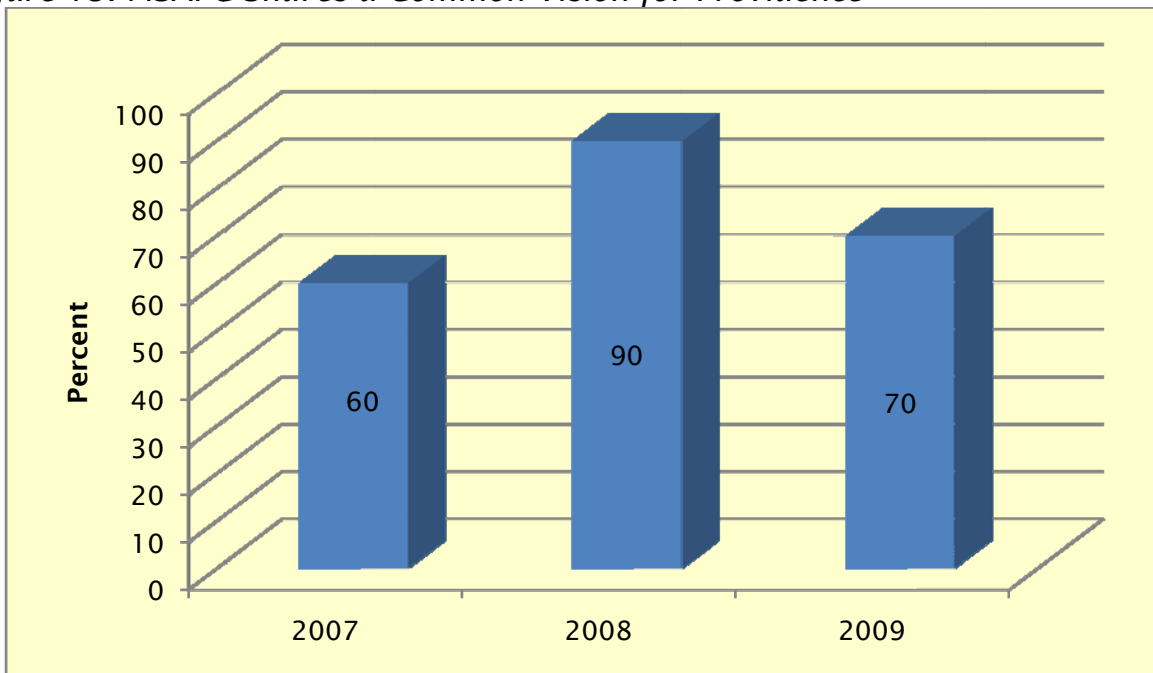


Figure 14. I Feel Strongly Committed to MSAPC

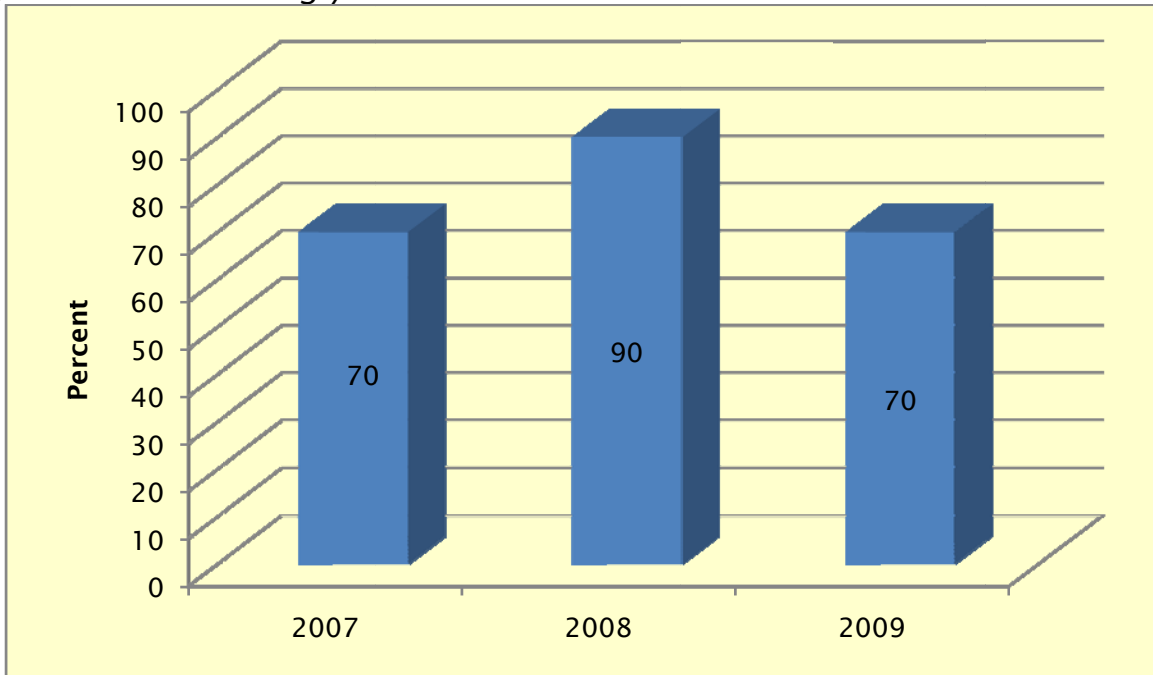
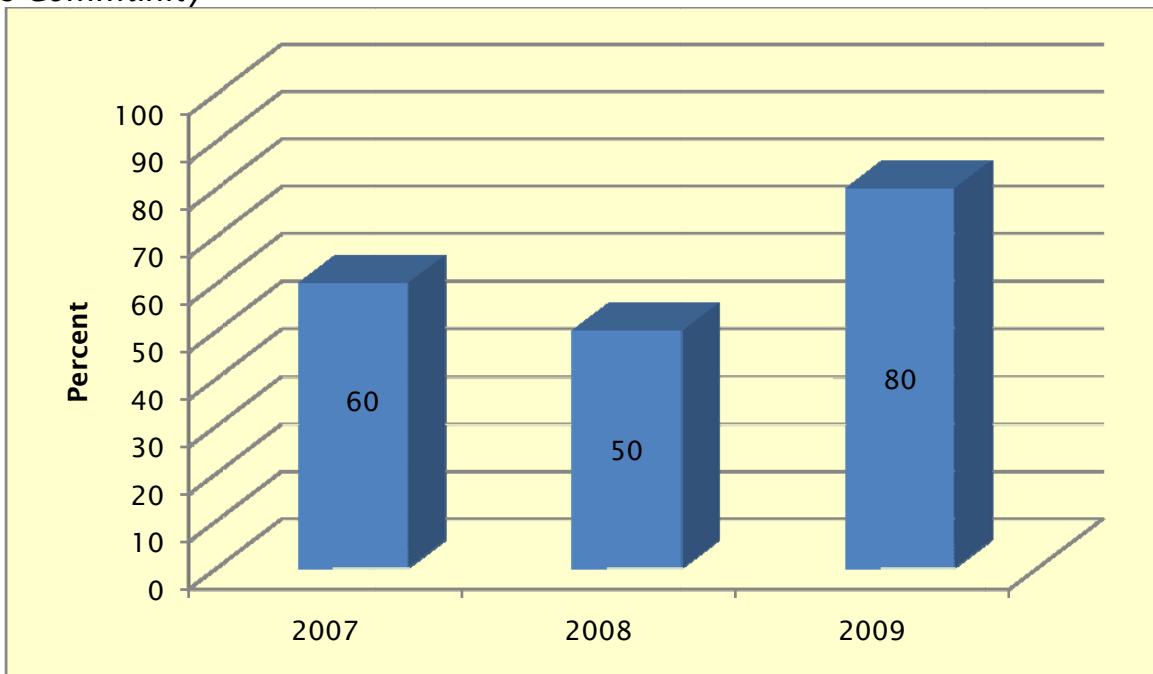
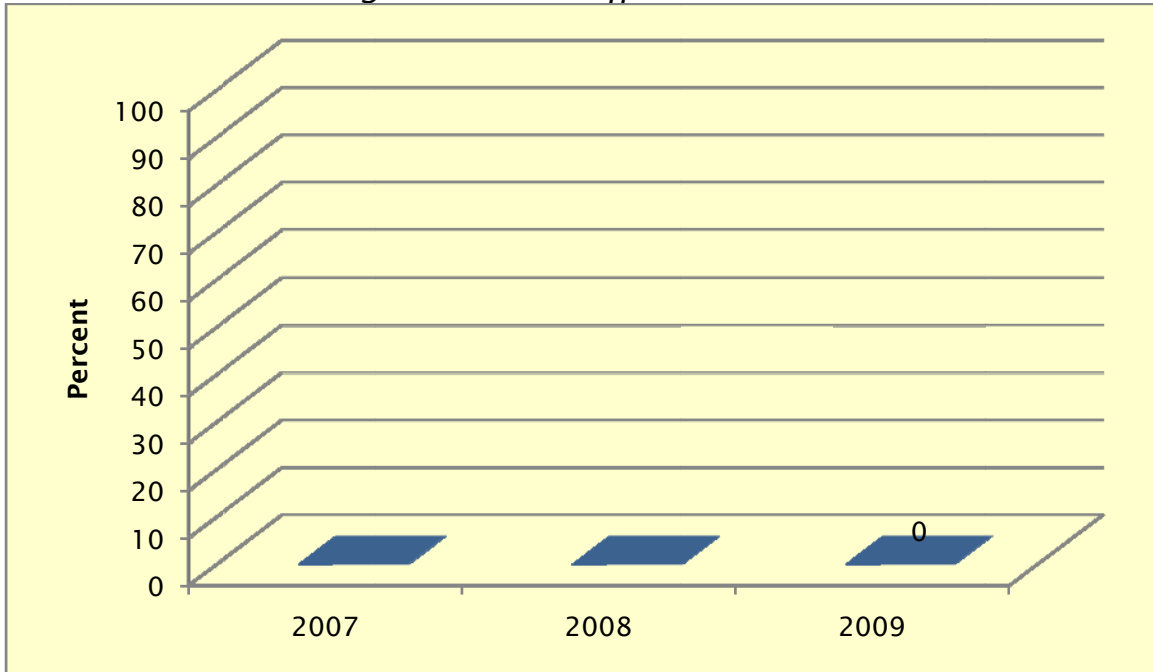


Figure 15. MSAPC Members are Representative of the Varied Groups/Citizens of this Community



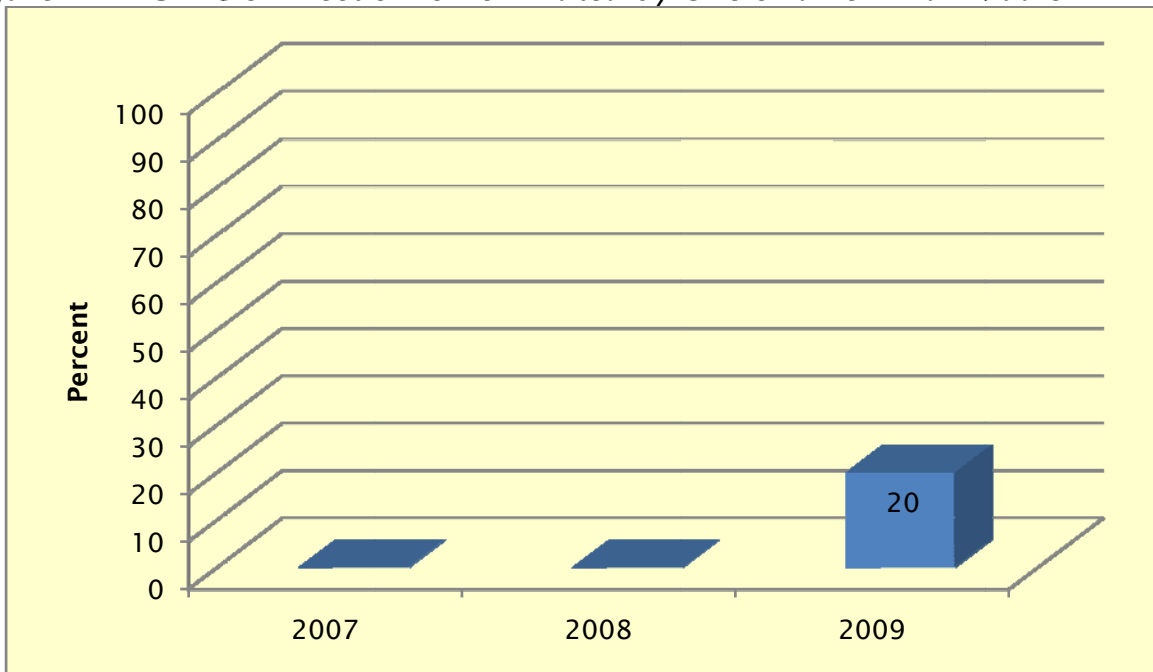
The following figures show results for data that were only available in the most recent coalition survey in 2009.

Figure 16. MSAPC is Disorganized and Inefficient



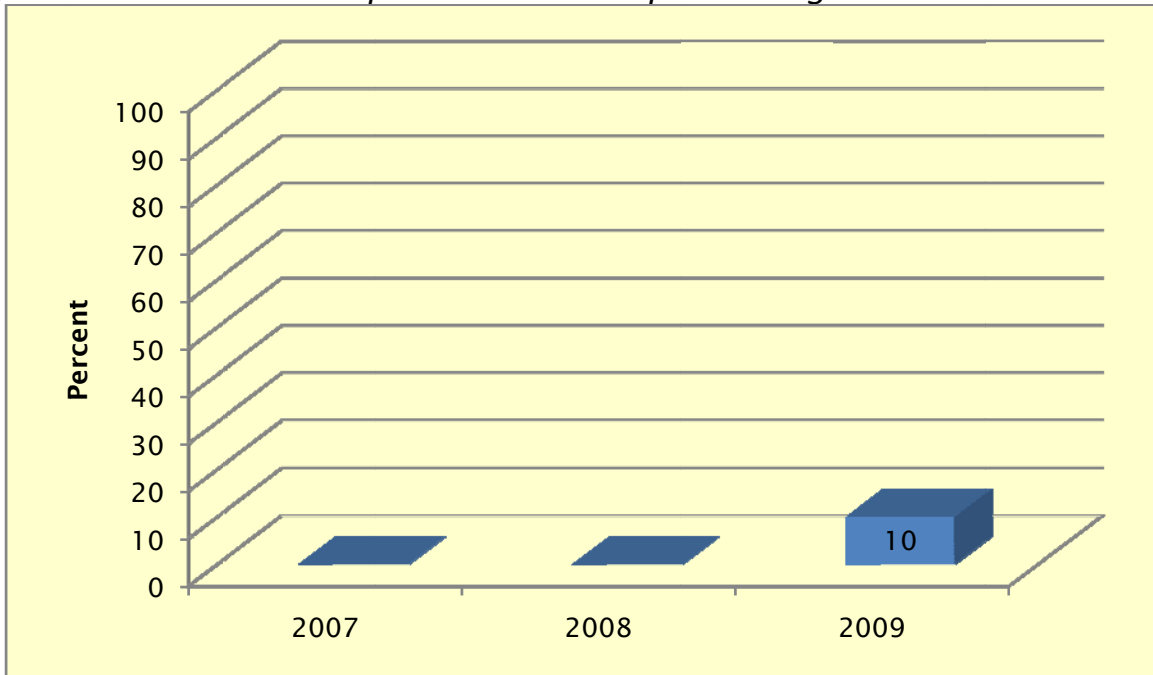
Note: Only available for 2009

Figure 17. MSAPC's Direction is Dominated by One or a Few Individuals



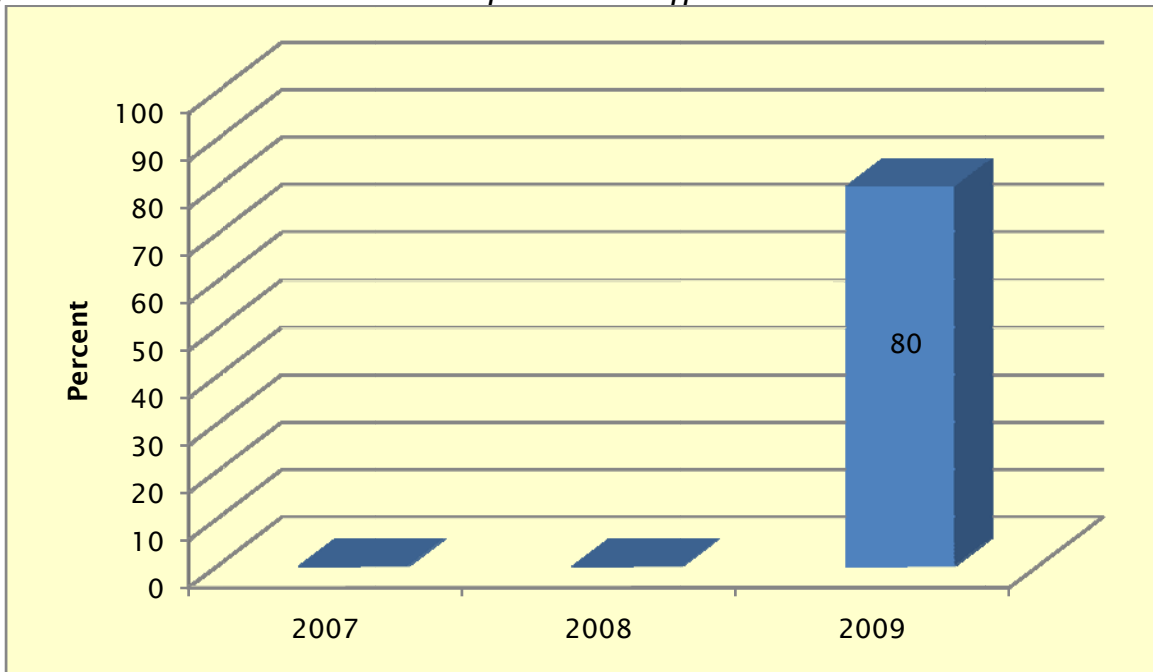
Note: Only available for 2009

Figure 18. There is a Lot of Tension and Conflict Among MSAPC Members



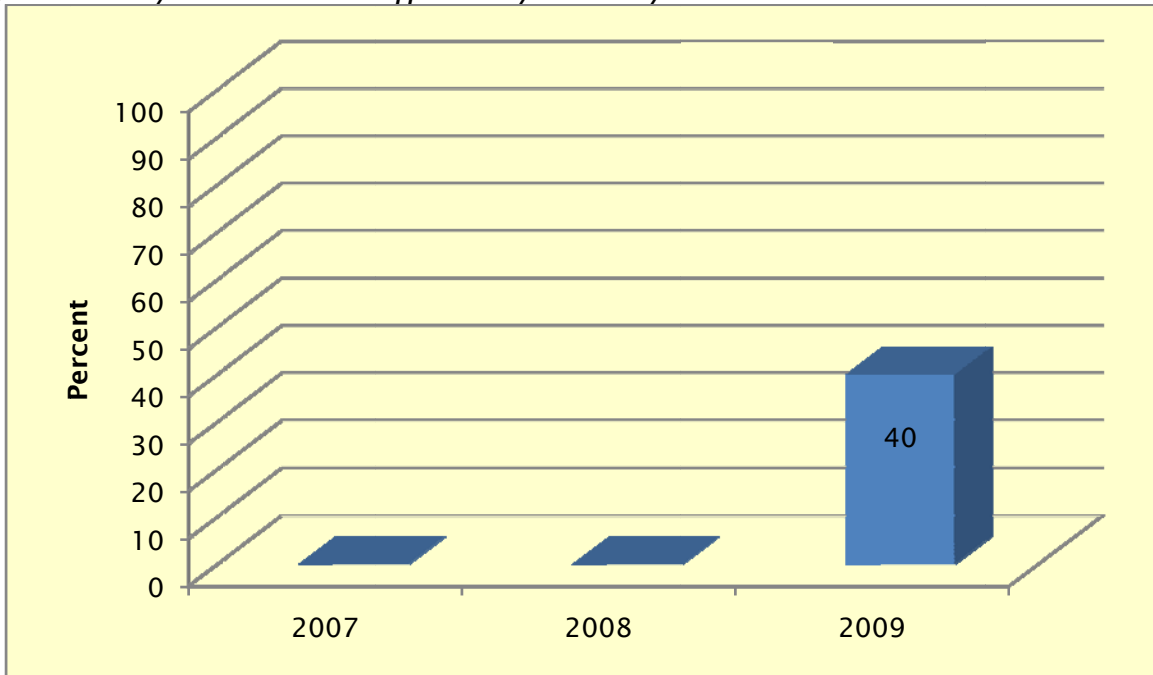
Note: Only available for 2009

Figure 19. MSAPC's Overall Plan of Action is Effective



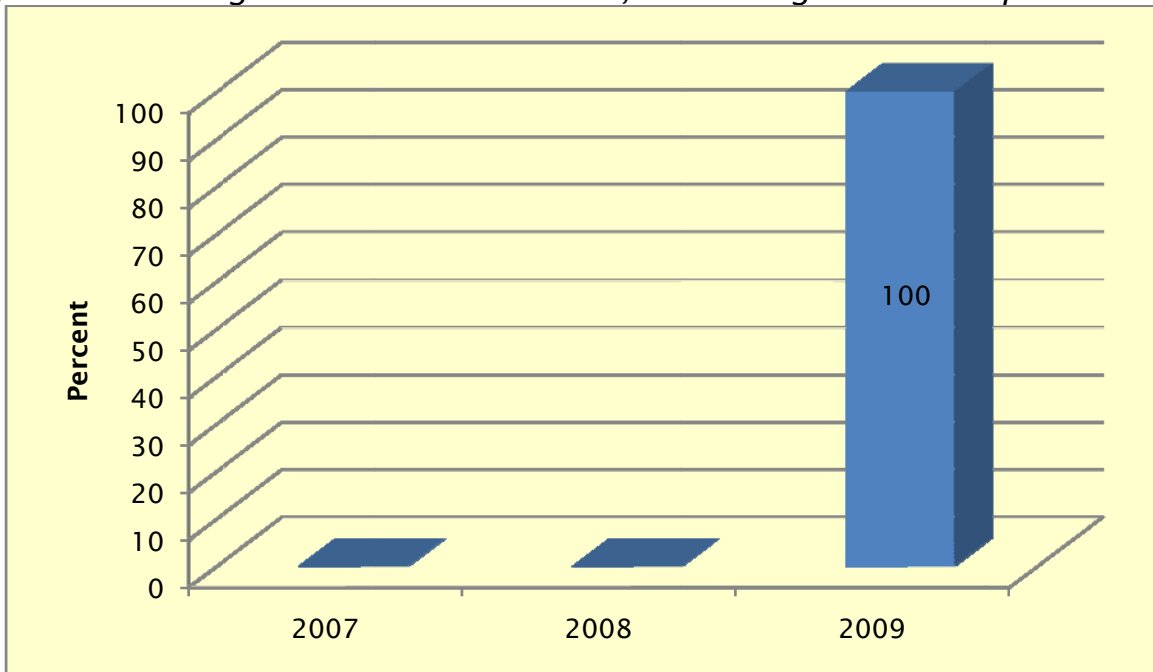
Note: Only available for 2009

Figure 20. My Abilities are Effectively Used by MSAPC



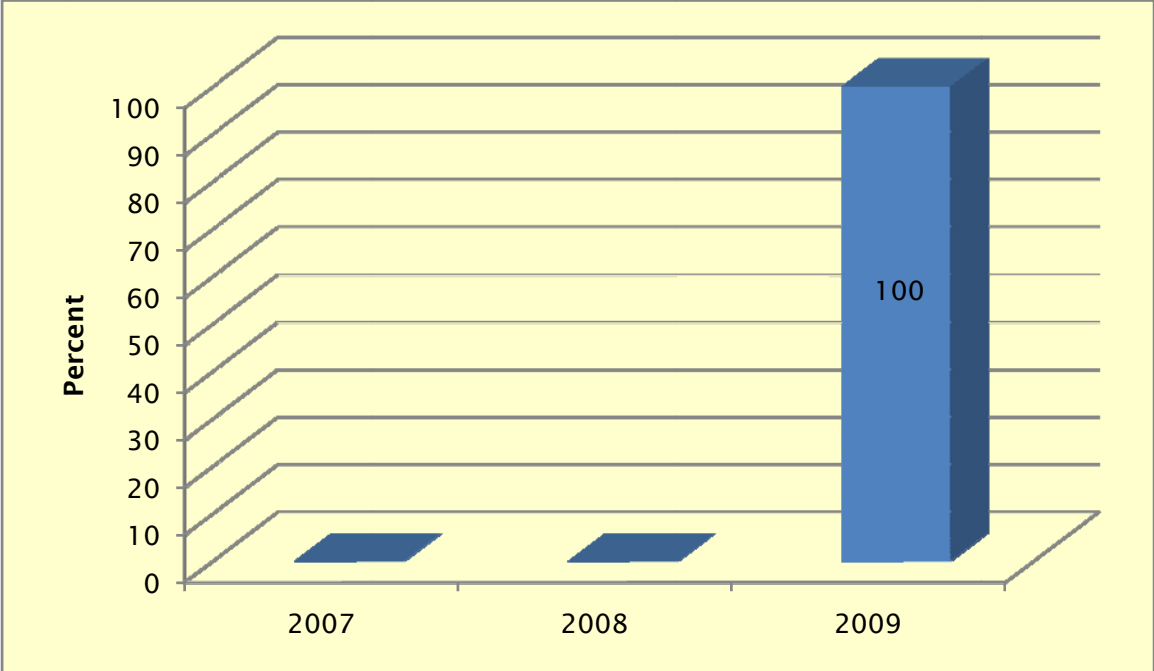
Note: Only available for 2009

Figure 21. Meetings Start and End on Time, and the Agenda is Completed



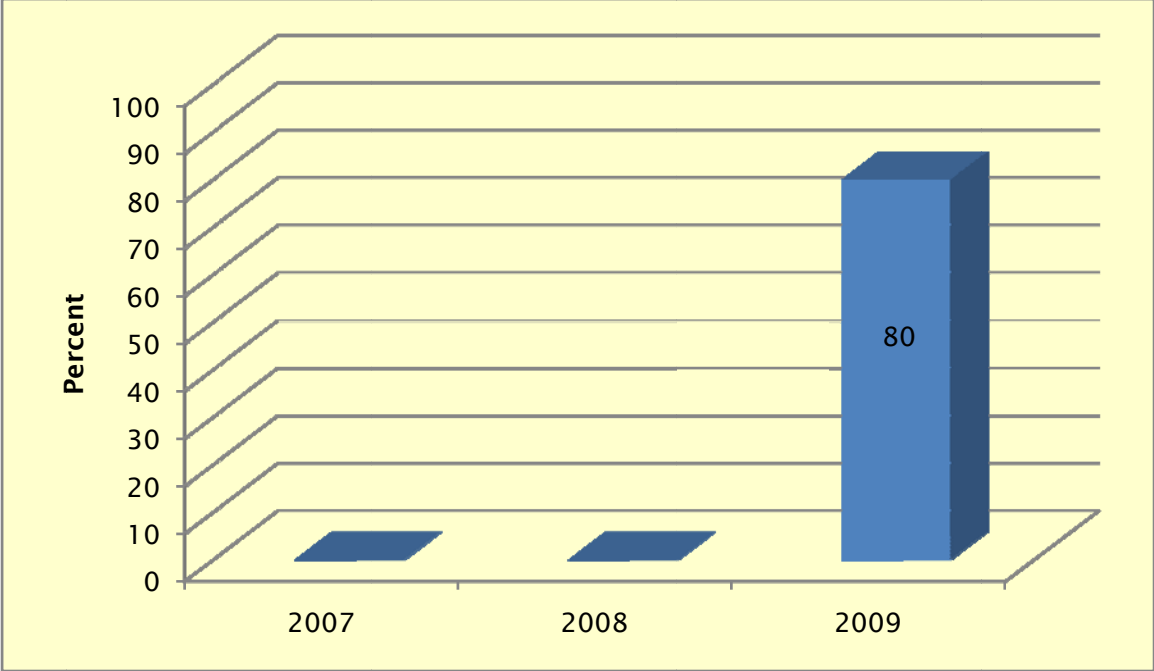
Note: Only available for 2009

Figure 22. Members Feel Free to Speak at Meetings Without Fear of Being Confronted



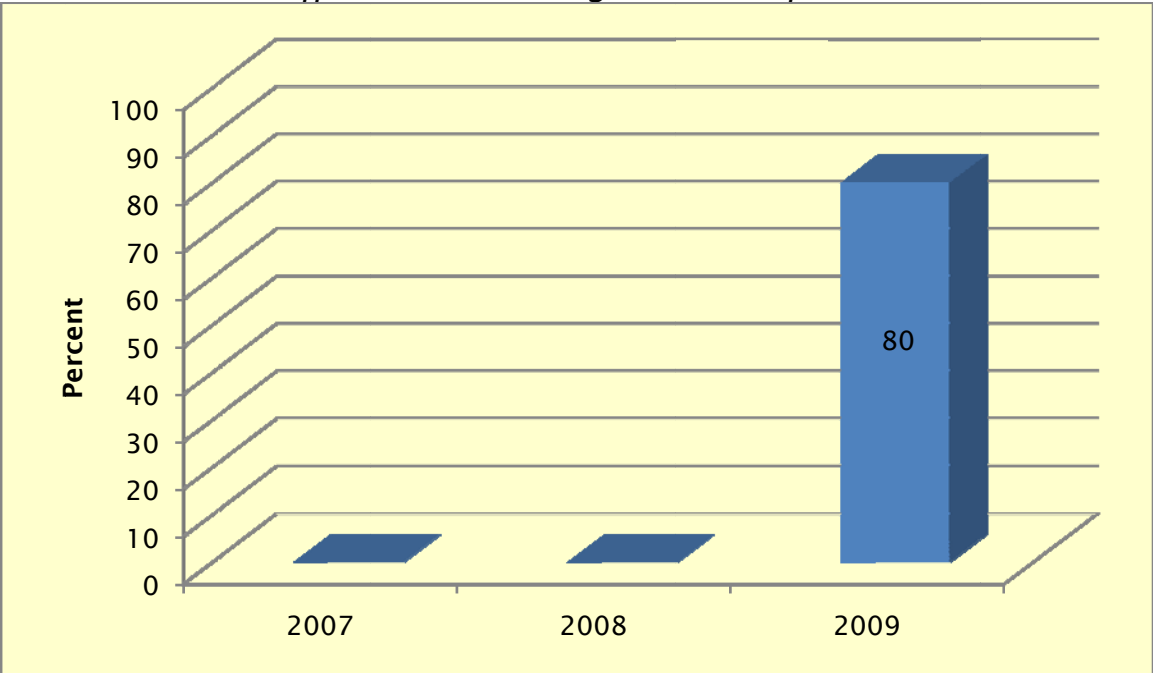
Note: Only available for 2009

Figure 23. All Providence Residents are Welcome in the Council Regardless of Age, Race, or Gender



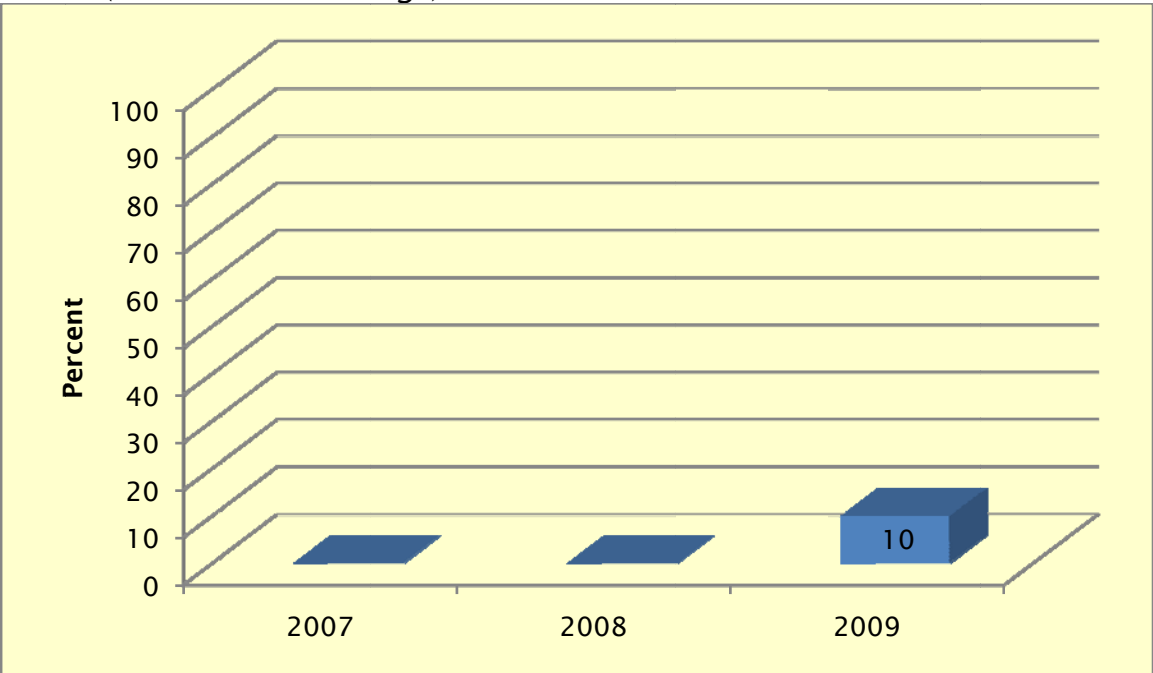
Note: Only available for 2009

Figure 24. MSAPC is Effective at Reducing Membership Turnover



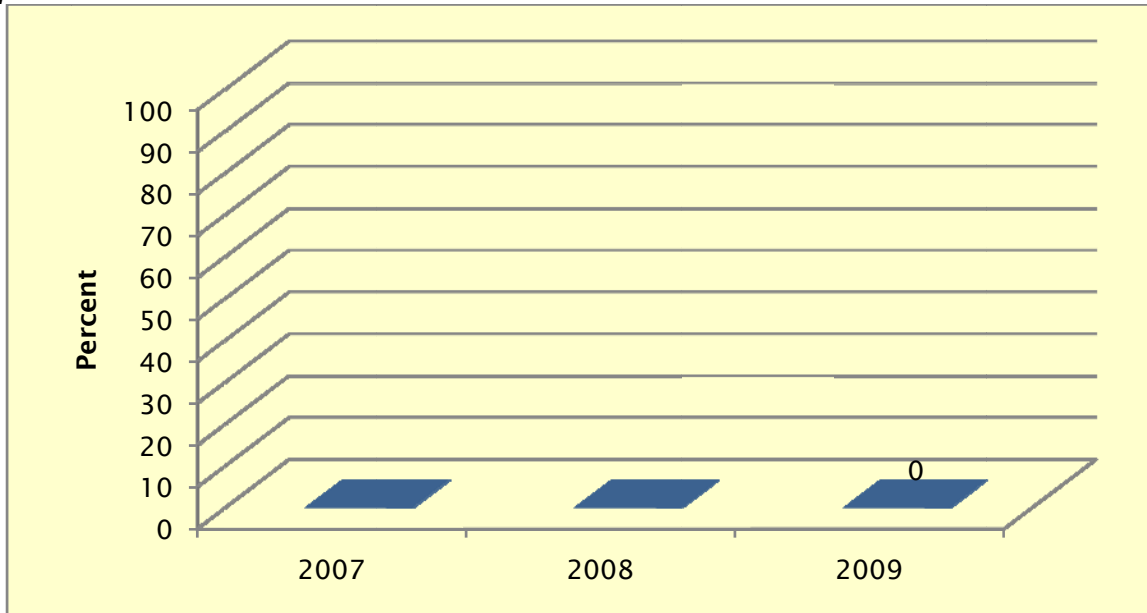
Note: Only available for 2009

Figure 25. Percent of Members Who Helped Organize Council Sponsored Activities (Other than Meetings) in the Past 12 Months



Note: Only available for 2009

Figure 26. Percent of Members who Chaired a Committee or Served as a Council Officer in the Past 12 Months



Note: Only available for 2009

MSAPC Perceived Community Impact

We sought membership feedback on how much impact they felt that MSAPC has had on the Providence community. The figures below report the percent of **members who agreed to 'Some Extent' or 'Great Extent' with the statement indicated** in the figure headings.

Figure 27. MSAPC has Increased Community Awareness of ATOD

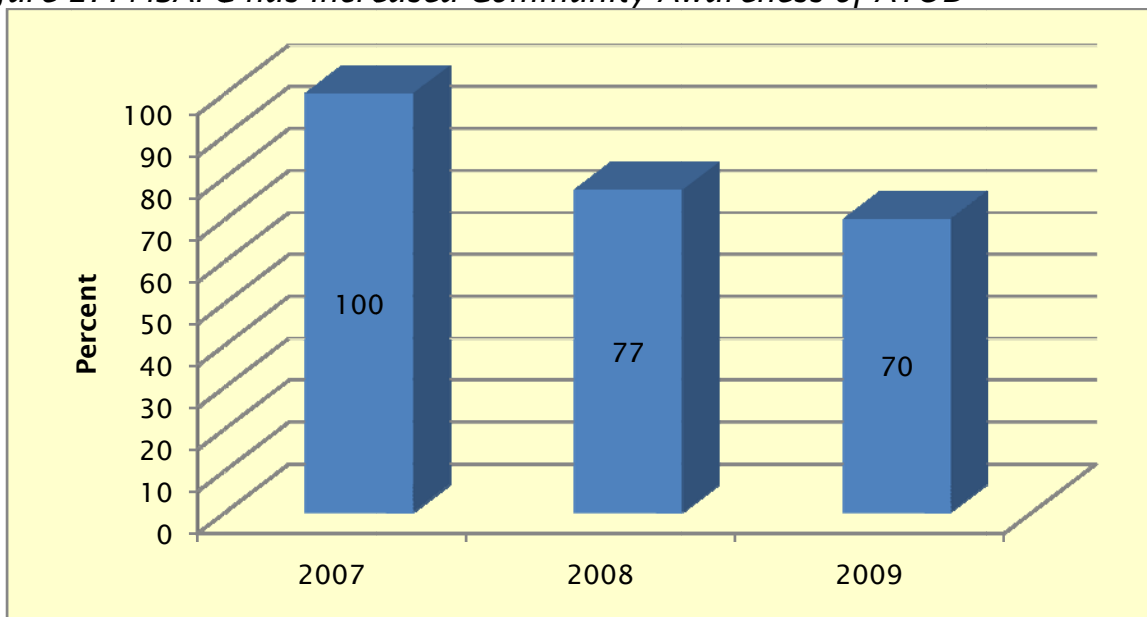


Figure 28. MSAPC has Improved Community Service and Program for ATOD Prevention

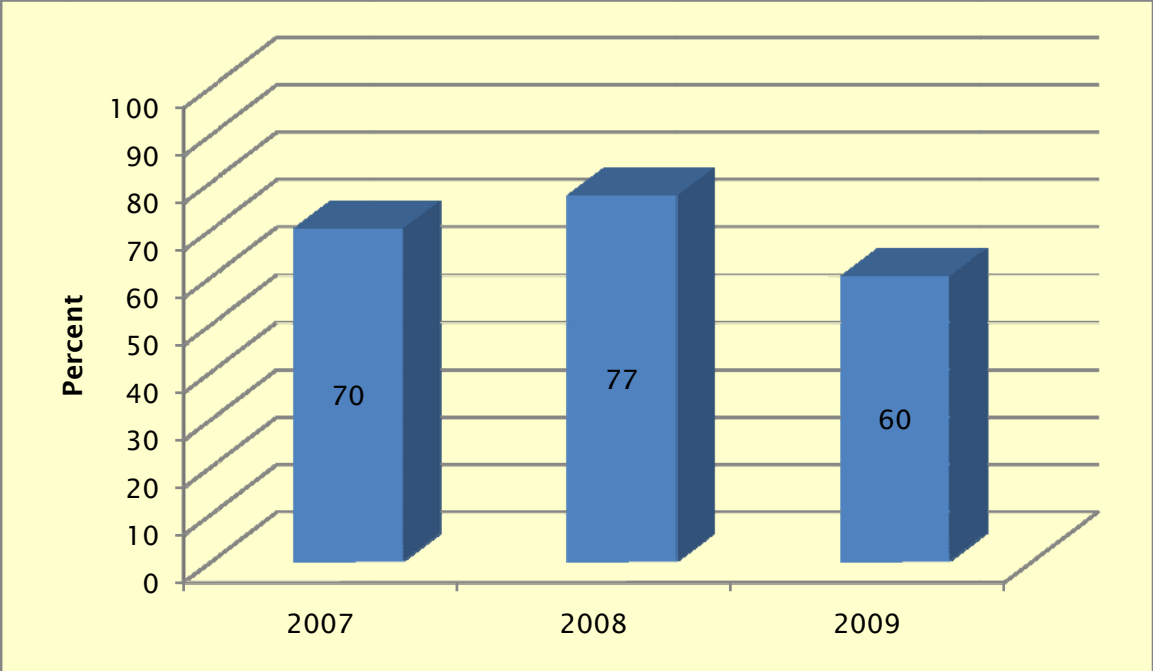


Figure 29. MSAPC has Helped Organizations Working for ATOD Prevention to Increase Their Share of Community Resources

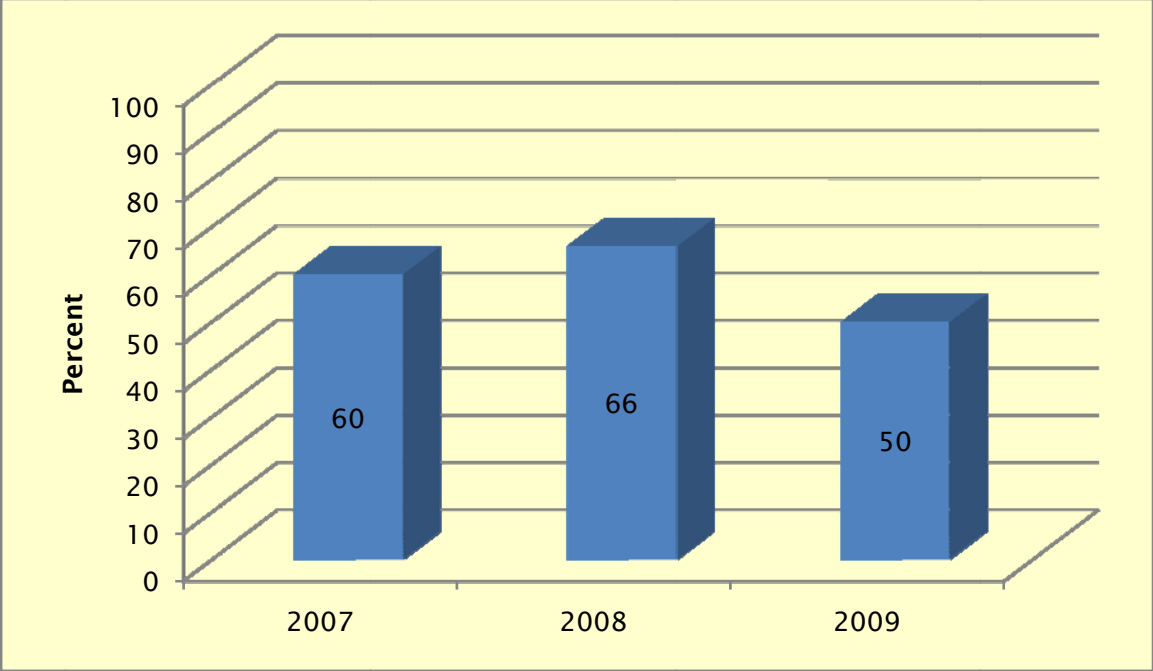


Figure 30. MSAPC Increased the Use of Science-Based Prevention Efforts

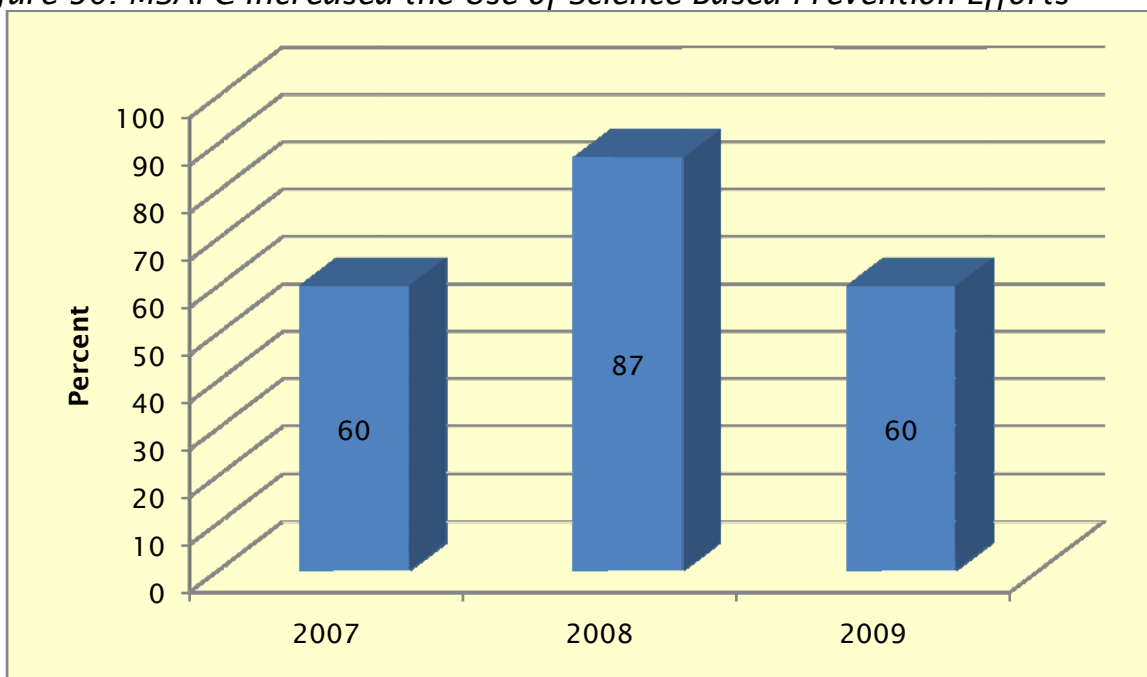


Figure 31. MSAPC Increased the Chance that Providence Youth Will Avoid Developing ATOD Problems

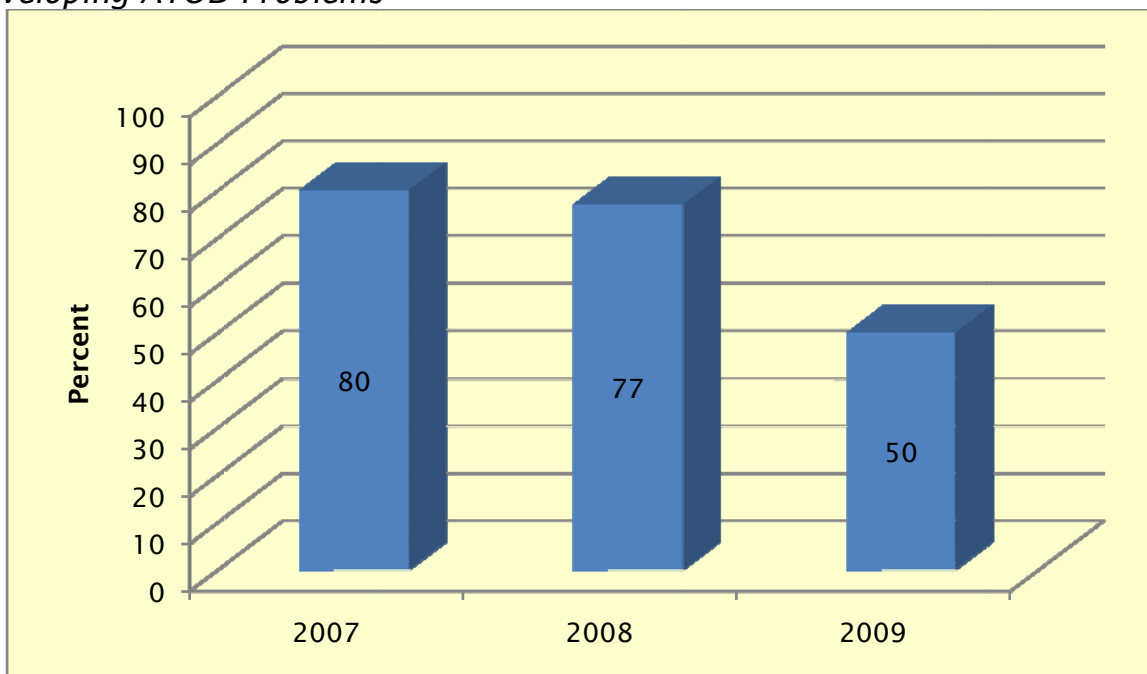


Figure 32. MSAPC Increased Collaborations with Community Groups Concerned Preventing Other Youth/Community Issues

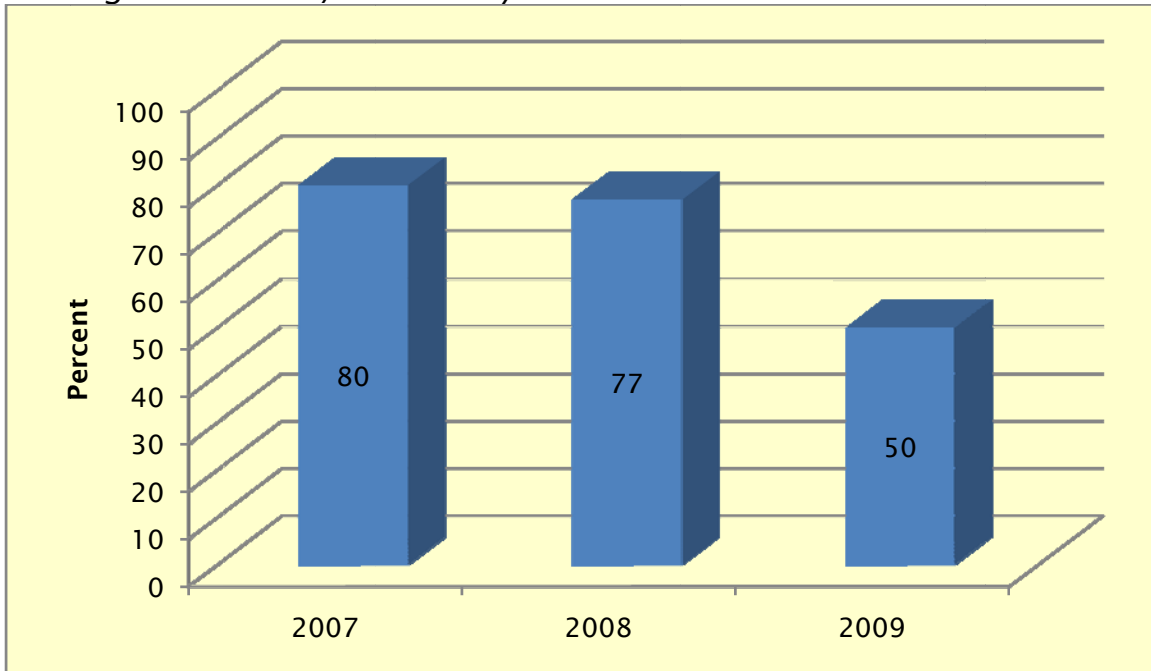


Figure 33. MSAPC Strengthened ATOD-Related Policies and Regulations

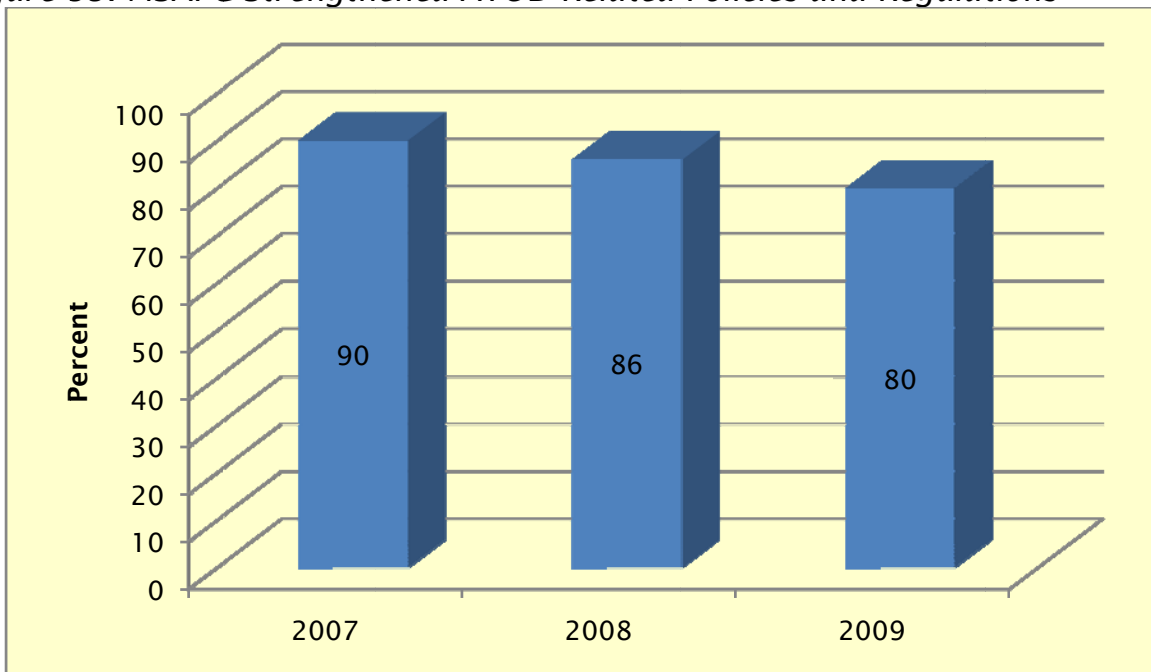
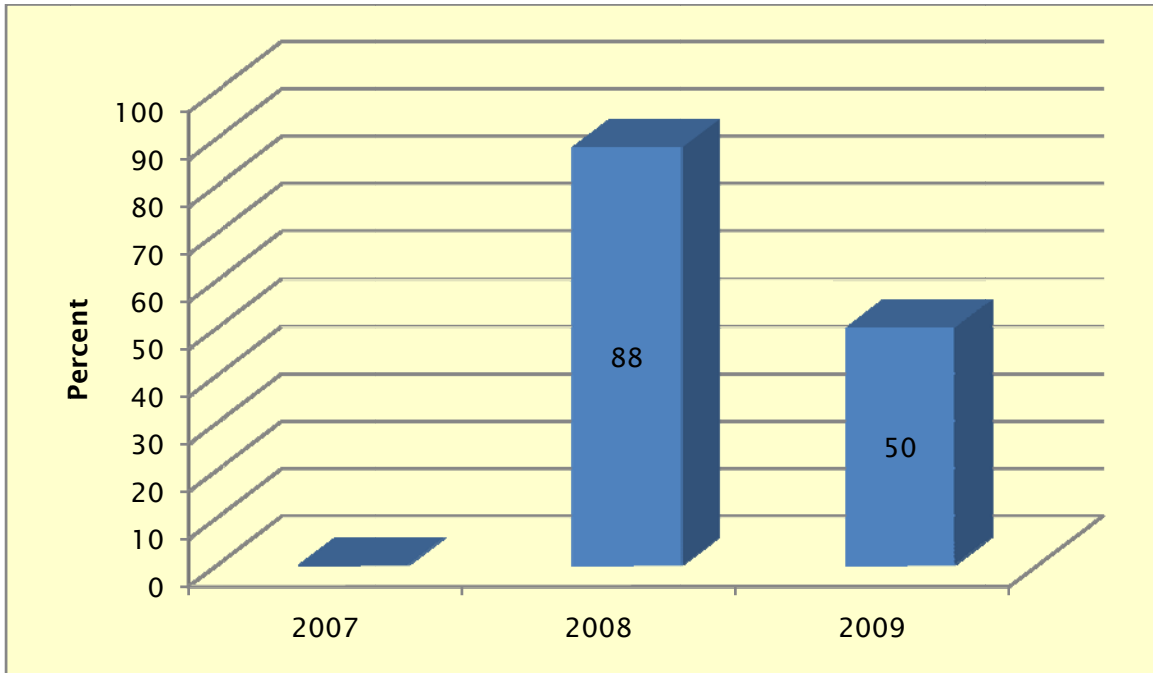


Figure 34. MSAPC Increased Communication and Coordination with the Schools in Providence



Note: Data not available for 2007

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

MSAPC has been operating as an effective coalition since it was formed in 2003, and has made a conscious effort to continuously progress as a coalition.

In its third year of self-assessment, with the new DFC grant funding, MSAPC made the coalition survey available on-line. In addition, by working with Datacorp Inc., the evaluator chosen for the DFC grant, the self-assessment results from the previous two years were also included in this report. Therefore, although the results of the 2009 self-assessment are baseline data for the DFC grant, the report also shows changes in members' evaluation of their own council over three years: 2007, 2008, and 2009.

Areas of Strength

Results clearly show that MSAPC has become a more cohesive coalition over the last three years. Members have reported a dramatic increase in their sense of council cohesiveness and team spirit, from 20% in 2007 to 80% in 2009. It is clear that members feel that they belong to a council that is effective, structured, and organized.

In particular, 100% of the members agreed that the meetings were well-organized, and all of them reported regular attendance at the monthly meetings. The average number of meetings attended over 12 months was reported to be 8 meetings, exceeding the required 7 meetings mandated by MSAPC. Members all agree that open communication is welcome at these meetings.

Over the three years, increasing percentage of the members report that MSAPC membership represents a diverse group of citizens. Eighty percent of the members feel that MSAPC welcomes all members of the community, and are effective in reducing turnover. The average number of years of belonging to the council has *decreased* over the last three years, indicating the presence of newer members. Retaining long-term members, who bring their knowledge of the history of MSAPC, and recruiting newer members who bring new energy and point of view into the membership, are both important components of an effective coalition.

One member noted as an additional comment that it may be a good idea to involve more youth directly in the Council, in the form of membership in a sub-committee, or as a representative youth. MSAPC is a coalition that has members who are eager to include new members of the community, and to encourage direct involvement by those in the community they strive to serve and reach, the youth themselves.

A high percentage of members believe that the overall plan of action outlined by MSAPC is an effective plan (80%). In particular, most members have consistently agreed throughout the years that MSAPC continues to be effective in working to strengthen ATOD related policies and regulations throughout Providence.

When asked about the various types of communication and exchanges in which members engage, a high percentage of members report networking and jointly planning programs with other MSAPC members and with partnering agencies. According to Himmelman, this is reflective of MSAPC's strong ability to Network and Cooperate within their coalition and with outside agencies.

For several other items, there seems to be a large percentage decrease in activity. However, it is important to note that in the most recent survey, members were given a new response choice of "Not Applicable," whereas in previous years, reports indicate that members were only able to say they did or did not have a chance to engage in a particular action. The percentage of members who reported "No" over the years has been relatively stable.

An example of this is the Collaboration item (Figure 11). Fifty percent reported participating in jointly seeking new funding with others in 2009, which is a decrease from 2008 (72%). However, in 2009, 30% chose "No", which is comparable to those who chose "No" in 2007 (28%). The decrease in "Yes" may be indicative of newer members who are not involved in seeking funding, and are not aware of capacity building efforts.

Recommendations

Most notably, members have indicated that they have various skill sets that are being underutilized by MSAPC. Only 40% of the members agree that their abilities are being effectively used by MSAPC. This number is low, but this is also encouraging; it means that a large portion of the membership believe that they can contribute more to the goals of MSAPC. Since most members are also reporting that MSAPC has a strong sense of cohesiveness and team spirit, it seems like now is the most opportune moment for MSAPC to start a dialogue with their members. Perhaps, a discussion with members about particular areas in which they would like to become more involved, or how each individual may more effectively contribute to achieve the goals of the coalition, will uncover more collaborative activities and opportunities for coalition development.

A small percentage of the membership feels that MSAPC direction is dominated by one or few individuals (20%), and that there is a lot of tension and conflict among members (10%). Although the numbers are small, it is worthwhile to address these perceptions openly, so that membership is not lost due to

unspoken conflicts that may have been easily resolved. Since the members unanimously agree that open discussion is welcome during meetings, it may be an appropriate arena to invite members to provide feedback on leadership, and voice any concerns they may have about internal conflicts. Simply opening the door to this discussion may result in decreasing these two perceptions.

Lastly, fewer members agreed in 2009 that MSAPC increased the chances that Providence youth will avoid developing ATOD problems compared to previous two years. This could be interpreted as a result of one of two scenarios. The first scenario is that members believe that ATOD problems have increased among Providence youth over the years, which is a grim prospect for an organization striving to combat against this specific issue. The second scenario is that members believe that the chances of youth avoiding ATOD problems are the same in 2009 as it was in 2008 or 2007, and therefore has *not increased* - leading to fewer members agreeing with the statement. In reality, it may be a combination of the two; some members may feel that more ATOD problems are encountered by youth now than ever before, while others believe it has not gotten any easier for youth (hence, chances of better outcomes have not increased). It may be worthwhile to consider phrasing this question more explicitly, so that the intent of the question is clearer to the members.