

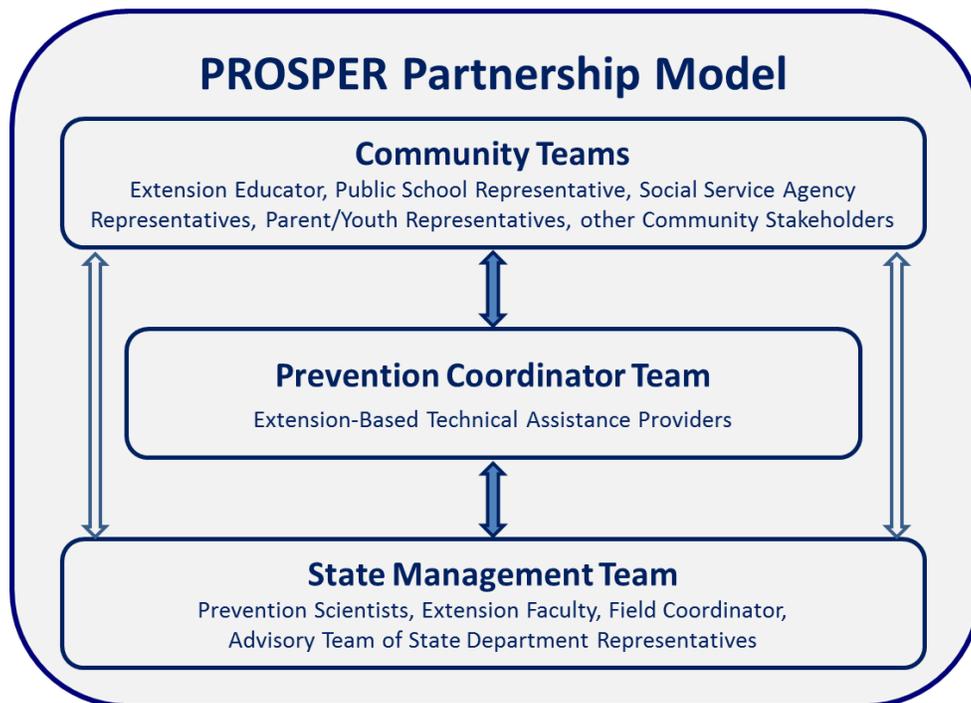
# The PROSPER Partnership Model

The overall aim of PROSPER school-community-university partnerships is to cultivate community-based leadership for the widespread delivery of scientifically-tested prevention and youth development programs to reduce substance use and other youth problem behaviors. The PROSPER Model is unique in that it applies existing and stable resources of land-grant universities and Extension systems, as well as those of public school systems, to the development and maintenance of these partnerships.

Partnerships concentrate on interventions that meet high standards for performance accountability, so that they have the greatest likelihood of producing favorable individual- and community-level outcomes.

## Three-Tiered Structure

The three-tiered structure of the State-level Partnership, which includes Community Teams, Prevention Coordinators, and a State Management Team, facilitates a feedback loop through which Community Teams receive technical assistance that is tailored to their specific needs. The figure below illustrates the flow of communication among the state-level partners.



*Solid arrows represent regular communication; open arrows represent periodic communication*

### 1. Community Teams

PROSPER Community Teams represent the top tier in the state partnership structure (shown above) and are responsible for key elements of program management and delivery. PROSPER Community Teams are relatively small and are strategically focused on strengthening families and building youth competencies, as compared to traditional coalitions that address multiple community issues. They

engage in team-building, community prevention awareness activities, and sustaining their programs through resource generation. They typically maintain a working team of between eight and ten members, representing a broad range of community stakeholder organizations and constituencies that are reflective of the community.

The Community Team is led by a Cooperative Extension Agent/Educator with expertise in 4-H/youth development or family and consumer sciences and co-led by a representative from the local school district. Primary responsibilities of Community Team Leaders include: (a) developing and organizing the Community Team and holding regular meetings; (b) overseeing the Team's finances; (c) coordinating program implementation by overseeing the recruitment of participants, hiring and training program facilitators, and monitoring program implementation quality; (d) engaging in sustainability-related activities to support the PROSPER effort, such as fundraising and grant-seeking; and (e) serving as the Community Team's technical assistance conduit by having regular contact with the Prevention Coordinator and attending statewide meetings and learning communities. The School Co-Leader serves as a liaison between the Community Team and relevant school personnel regarding school EBP implementation and school data collection efforts; and advocates for the PROSPER effort within the school system.

Community Team members are selected from community agencies and organizations. Although the exact group composition varies by community, the individuals include representatives from human service agencies, high school- or middle school-aged youth representatives; parent representatives; and a representative from a prominent youth serving agency (e.g., local YMCA or active faith-based youth group). In addition, the team includes individuals representing other community groups with important ties to youth prevention programming (e.g., public health and health care providers, government officials, representatives from businesses, school board members, athletic coaches or youth club leaders).

## **2. Prevention Coordinator Team**

Prevention Coordinators typically are University-based Extension staff who function as a liaison between the State Management Team and Community Teams. They provide Community Teams with a broad range of proactive, continuous technical assistance, and work closely with Community Teams to assure quality implementation of evidence-based programs and to plan for sustainability. Primary responsibilities of the Prevention Coordinators include: attending weekly or biweekly meetings with the State Management Team to share successes and concerns, problem solving with Community Teams about team functioning and progress; attending Community Team meetings and assisting with the development of meeting agendas; overseeing administrative details as needed; facilitating learning across teams; interpreting PROSPER evaluation findings for use by teams; and provision of technical assistance related to building local sustainability.

### **3. State Management Team**

Finally, the State Management Team is composed of prevention scientists and Extension faculty partners who, along with Cooperative Extension Administrators, support Community Teams and Prevention Coordinators by providing oversight and guidance, especially regarding program implementation and evaluation. This university-based team enhances capacity by providing input on local data collection (including needs assessments and program evaluations), data analyses, and compilation of project reports and publications. A State Field Coordinator works with Prevention Coordinators to oversee team formation and operations, program implementation, and sustainability activities. He or she also works closely with Community Team Leaders, school districts, and the State Management Team to ensure quality implementation of the PROSPER Model and to support field activities directed at long-term sustainability of teams and programming. The State Management Team also actively engages with state-level agencies, such as Departments of Public Health, Education, and Juvenile Justice.

### **Multi-Phased Sustainability Process**

Community Team activities entail four distinct phases that occur over the course of a number of years. Teams work on specific objectives and strategies related to sustaining team functioning, programming, relationships with collaborators, and generating resources during each of these phases. Helping Community Teams develop a plan to sustain their programming efforts is central to the PROSPER approach. There are benchmarks that guide progress across each of the four phases.

#### **1. Organization of Community Teams**

- Selection and training of Community Team Leaders
- Community Team formation and mobilization
- Selection of a family-focused evidence-based program for families of 6th grade youth and selection of a school-based EBP for 7th grade youth from the established menu of effective programs
- Hiring and training of program facilitators

#### **2. Initial Operations of Community Teams**

- Recruitment for and implementation of the family-focused program for families of 6th-grade youth
- Implementation of the school-based program for 7th-grade youth
- Process and outcome data collection begins in Phase 2 and continues in each subsequent phase

#### **3. Early Sustainability and Institutionalization**

- Sustaining Community Team activities and maintaining a high level of team functioning
- Sustaining programs with high-quality implementation

#### 4. Ongoing Operations and Sustainability

- Initiation of new operations, including securing funding for and possible implementation of additional programming

#### Evidence-based programs (EBPs) selected from a menu

The PROSPER Partnership Model offers each Community Team a menu of EBPs from which to select one family-focused and one school-based program, reaching youth at a critical developmental stage. Each program on the PROSPER menu has already been shown to be effective in producing positive outcomes for youth and families. Programs on the PROSPER menu also are designed to improve outcomes for a universal population of youth and their families, not just those who may be at-risk or in need of more intensive services or treatment. The original PROSPER menu included the three family-focused programs for sixth graders and their parents and the three school-based programs for seventh graders shown below.

#### ***PROSPER Menu of Evidence-Based Programs***

##### Family-Focused

1. Strengthening Families Program: For Parents and Youth 10-14
2. Guiding Good Choices
3. Adolescent Transitions Project

##### School-Based

1. LifeSkills Training
2. Project Alert
3. All Stars

As Community Teams matured, they were given the opportunity to expand programming by offering additional EBPs to younger age groups. The PROSPER menu is reviewed regularly and updated to reflect scientific advances related to EBPs.

#### National Network of PROSPER State Partnerships

Positive findings from the PROSPER research project in Iowa and Pennsylvania generated interest from prevention researchers and Cooperative Extension personnel in states across the U.S. This national attention suggested that members of the original PROSPER project team take the next critically important step of developing the infrastructure and capacity to support additional PROSPER State Partnerships, thus forming the PROSPER Network Organization (PNO). In collaboration with State Management Teams, the PNO provides a vehicle to build capacity for reaching youth and families across each state with evidence-based prevention programming. In particular, over the last eight years the PNO has strategically built its capacity to expand the PROSPER Model into new states and into more communities within currently implementing states.

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Partnerships in  
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*The PROSPER Model development and evaluation is conducted through a collaborative of prevention scientists from PPSI and PRC, the Cooperative Extension systems of Iowa and Pennsylvania, and local school districts and community volunteers.*



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