

## Advisory Board Description

### Introduction

Since 2006, Greater Falls Connections (GFC) has been a public health coalition located in Bellows Falls. We focus on prevention of substance misuse and community building. We use researched, evidenced-based programs and data to help youth learn more about preventing misuse of substances such as tobacco, vaping, opioids, and alcohol. GFC's community building can be anything from collaborating with other groups to start a playgroup, supporting local events, and creating community activities, such as the Community Potluck BBQ.



### What Is a Coalition?

A coalition is a group of community members who work together towards a common goal. Everyone who lives in the WNESU school district, regardless of the town they live in, can be part of GFC's coalition. Coalition members volunteer to support our work, come to our events, and share information about who we are and what we do.

### What is Substance Prevention?

At GFC, we define it as inspiring and empowering people through education and collaboration to promote equity (meeting communities where they are and allocating resources and opportunities as needed to create equal outcomes for all community members), wellness and prevent the misuse of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, with an emphasis on youth and young adults.



### How Does GFC Do Substance Prevention and Community Building?

- Our website ([www.greaterfallsconnections.com](http://www.greaterfallsconnections.com)) has information about substance misuse, mental health issues and resources.
- We work with schools and WNESU school district to provide resources and help run OVX and VKAT, two tobacco prevention programs. We provide schools with survey results each year and an analysis of high school students' needs.
- We provide resources and materials to local healthcare providers, social service agencies, and other partners, like the chamber of commerce and the public library.
- We look for ways to support the community when there are new and evolving needs. We are part of community policy planning and conversations about restorative justice and equity.
- We partner with other community groups to find ways to meet community needs.

## The Advisory Board

The Advisory Board is made up of a diverse group of community members with adult and youth members. Board members serve terms that follow the fiscal calendar starting in July and ending in June. Board members can serve for up to five years. Each year, all new and returning board members are voted on at the annual meeting.

Board members are expected to:

- Attend monthly meetings (in-person or on Zoom) and retreats (longer meetings that focus on specific issues in depth).
- Vote on motions made in meetings.
- When needed, interview candidates and choose the executive director. The board also evaluates the director's performance and gives them support as needed.
- Make sure the staff and board are not doing anything they shouldn't be doing.
- Ask questions to gain better understanding.
- Share information learned in school or the community about substance use and/or misuse and new or evolving needs of community members.
- Participate in coalition activities (such as the Community Potluck BBQ and Flannel Festival), like our page on Facebook and Instagram, and share GFC events and messages on social media and in-person.
- Help with fundraising activities. This could include stuffing envelopes, writing thank you letters, thinking of creative ways to fundraise, or attending fundraising events.
- Share their knowledge about GFC and its work with others.



In addition, Advisory Board members are expected to support staff and other board members, be a team player, be motivated to do the work, and be respectful to other members of the board and coalition.

Board meetings are open to the public and minutes are kept of what is discussed throughout the meeting. That said, it is also important to remember not to share personal information that may be shared by board members before or after the meeting.

### Why Have Youth on the Advisory Board?

Our work is primarily with youth and we know that our work cannot be done well without the active participation of youth in decision making and having youth share their knowledge around substance use and misuse in the schools and community. Youth are able to weigh in on the messages we are sharing and help guide the GFC's work. It also helps youth fulfill their volunteer hours needed for graduation and provide leadership experience.

### What Are Youth NOT Expected to Do?

The youth members on the Advisory Board are not expected to take positions of the board leadership, such as chair or vice chair.