Report for Stratford Youth and Family Advisory Board

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May 1, 2015

Earlier this year you participated in a study entitled "Coincidence of Role Expectations between Staff and Volunteer Members of Drug-Free Community Coalitions." Since we received at least 10 responses from your coalition (including both paid staff and volunteer members), we have prepared the following report for your coalition that includes the data from your group.

Study Background

Over 650 substance abuse prevention coalitions are supported by Drug-Free Community (DFC) grant funds. These coalitions typically have one or two paid staff members to help support the operation of the coalition with the rest of the coalition membership consisting of volunteers. While the paid staff is there to provide principally logistical support, in our experience as consultants to coalitions, many staff become the *de facto* leaders of the coalition and are expected to manage nearly all aspects of coalition operation. The role confusion arising from the difference in expectations between staff members and volunteer members often results in considerable stress for staff members (e.g., Ortqvist & Wincent, 2006) and can undermine grass root leadership development and active, broad-based community participation (Bainbridge, 2015). This study compared the expectations regarding role responsibilities between paid staff and voluntary coalition members in a national sample of DFC-supported coalitions.

Methodology

A survey instrument listing some key operational behaviors for effective coalition functioning was developed by the authors and field-tested with a sample of paid staff members and voluntary members. The revised instrument included 37 coalition actions and respondents were asked to specify for each behavior listed, whom they felt should be primarily responsible for performing the task: paid staff or voluntary members of the coalition. Scores could range from 1 (totally the responsibility of paid staff) to 5 (totally the responsibility of coalition volunteers), with a value of 3 meaning that the responsibility for the task should be equally shared between staff and volunteer members. In addition, the survey contained a few questions regarding details of the coalition such as the number of years receiving DFC funding, and information regarding the individual respondent, i.e., were they a staff or volunteer, how long they had been associated with the coalition, and whether they chaired any coalition committees.

The survey was placed on SurveyMonkey© and links to the survey were mailed electronically to two samples of coalitions. The first sample group consisted of a random national sample of 69 coalitions from across the United States. The second sample consisted of all 21 Drug-Free coalitions in the state of CT. All coalitions were identified from a master list of Drug-Free coalitions found at www.whitehouse.gov/ondcp/drug-free-communities-support-program. For each selected coalition, an internet search was performed to identify and obtain contact information for the Project Coordinator. We then contacted this individual and asked them to: (a) complete the survey her- or himself, and (b) distribute the link to the survey to other members of the coalition and encourage them to participate. A sample contact letter for coalition members was provided. Coalitions that had at least 10 individuals reply (including staff and volunteers) were promised feedback reports on the data from their coalition.

Results

Below we present the results for the CT coalitions as a whole, followed by the specific data for your coalition. For the Connecticut study, we received responses from 204 individuals representing 18 of the 21 coalitions, an 85.7% response rate. These data were then inspected for completeness; an individual had to answer at least 19 of the 37 items to be included in the study.

Since the coalition was the unit of analysis, the mean response to each of the 37 items was computed separately for paid staff and coalition volunteers within each coalition. We only included coalitions that had data from at least one staff member and one volunteer member. This final sample consisted of 164 individuals from 15 coalitions. The mean scores on the 37 items across coalitions were then computed using the mean scores from each coalition.

Figure 1 (see Appendix A) presents the Connecticut means for paid staff and volunteers. The full wording of each item is listed below the graph. The horizontal distance between the mean staff response and the mean volunteer member response for each item represents the *degree of discrepancy* between the two groups in terms of who they think is responsible for the task.

Overall, the track of the two lines is quite close together reflecting the general degree of agreement between staff and volunteers regarding who was responsible for accomplishing each action. For 22 of the 37 items *volunteers* had higher means than did staff members, suggesting that they perceived the responsibility for these tasks should be more equally shared between staff and volunteers. This was different from our findings for the national sample where paid staff more frequently expected tasks to be shared more equally.

We performed statistical comparisons among all the items and found that for seven activities there was a statistically reliable difference ($p. < .05$) between the means of staff and volunteers. These items and the mean scores for each group are shown in Table 1 below. Again, higher means represent the perception that tasks should be shared between paid staff and coalition members or that coalition members should take the lead.

Table 1

Mean Responses for Paid Staff and Coalition Volunteers on Items Where

There Were Significant Differences between Scores

Activity	Mean Score of Paid Staff	Mean Score of Coalition Volunteers
Chair coalition meetings	3.31	2.62
Talk with work colleagues and/or occupational peers about coalition purpose and actions	2.93	3.16
Lead training for coalition members on key skills	1.82	2.17
Chair committee meetings	3.59	3.02
Discuss agenda items at meetings	3.22	2.93
Examine possible prevention strategies that might be used in the community and determine which are evidence based	2.31	2.57
Educate coalition or community members on the conceptual model or framework that drives coalition activities	2.14	2.54

Paid staff thought that leading coalition or committee meetings and discussing agenda items were tasks that should be more equally shared by staff and volunteers, while volunteers perceived these tasks as more the responsibility of paid staff. On the other hand, volunteers saw themselves as more responsible for other key behaviors, i.e., educating others in the community about the coalition and its conceptual framework and determining appropriate prevention strategies, than did paid staff. This suggests that paid staff should be more willing to let volunteer members take initiative on some of these actions.

Stratford Youth and Family Advisory Board Data

While state level data is interesting, coalitions are generally more interested in the responses from their own members. Figure 2 (in Appendix 2) presents the mean scores for paid staff and volunteer members for your coalition[1]. We did not perform statistical comparisons on these data, but we draw your attention to items with large "gaps" between staff and volunteer perceptions. For your coalition, the largest gaps were for the following items:

    Lead training for coalition members on key skills

    Chair committee meetings

    Write letters to the editor/op-ed pieces for local newspapers about coalition issues

    Prepare Drug-Free Community reports for SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)

    Prepare distribution materials for coalition meetings or public events

    Share information from the coalition website to others via your personal social media links

    Prioritize risk and protective factors that will be the focus of coalition activities

    Maintain records of coalition activities

    Make budget decisions

We believe it would be useful to discuss these items at a coalition meeting to get a clearer understanding of these differences in role perception. Such a discussion may lead to a "rebalancing" of expectations between staff and volunteer members and better utilization of the skills all parties bring to the table. If there are large discrepancies in expectations between paid staff and coalition members on a number of items, the coalition may benefit from some internal discussion and training to better align expectations between staff and volunteer members.

We hope this information is useful to your coalition and that it can lead to greater clarity regarding the roles and expectations of paid staff and volunteer members. If you have questions, you can contact Dr. Marc Goldstein at Goldsteinm@ccsu.edu. Thanks again for your participation in our study.
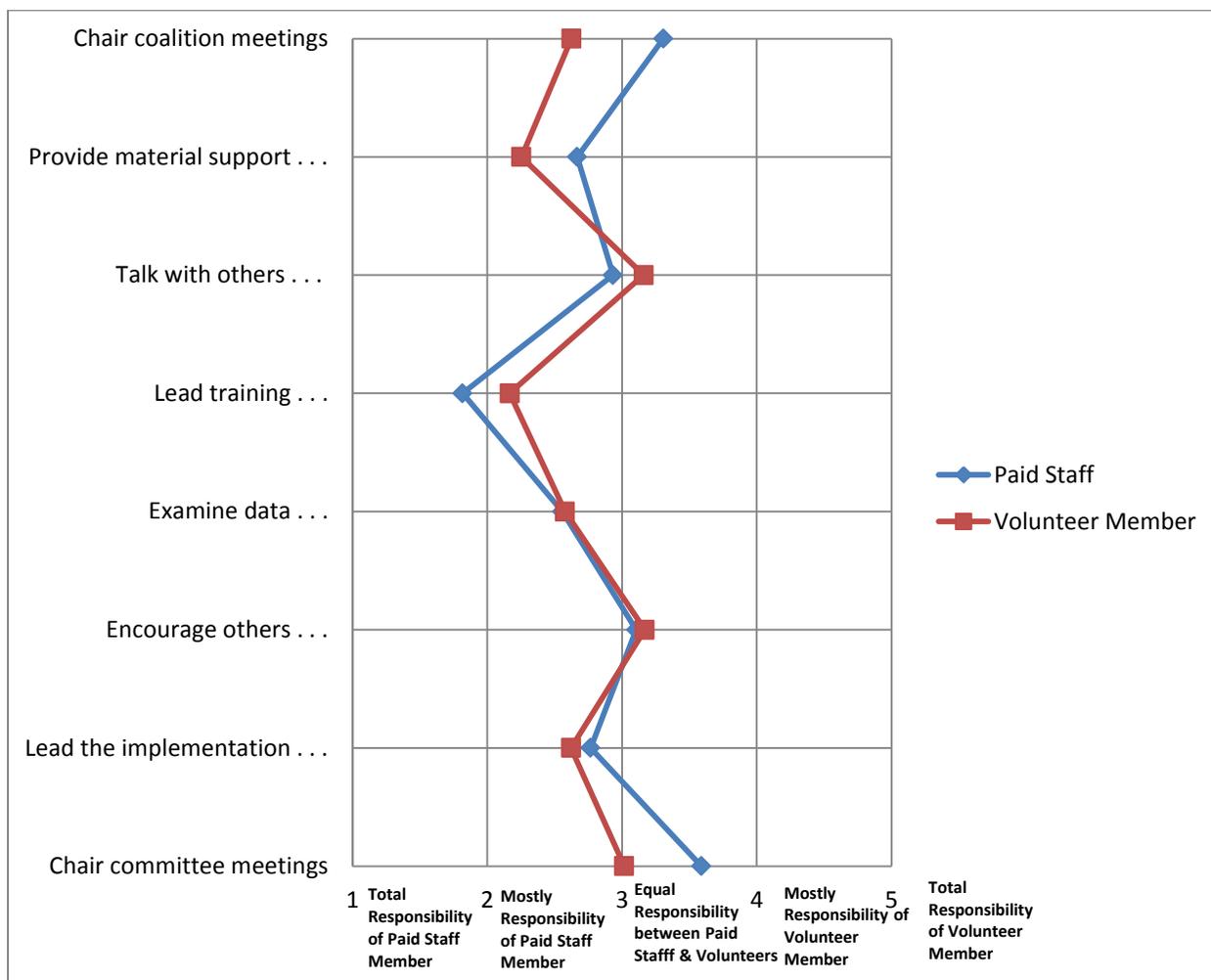
References

Bainbridge, H. (2015, Jan. 22). Now that we have paid staff, who is responsible for what? webinar presented at the *CADCA National Coalition Institute*. Contact Marc Goldstein for copy of slides of this presentation.

Ortqvst, D., & Wincent, J (2006). Prominent consequences of role stress: A meta-analytic review. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 13, 399-422.

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[1]Please note that the means for your coalition are based on those individuals who answered all 37 task items. Hence the number of individuals contributing to the points on the graph may be less than the total number who responded to the survey.

Appendix 1

Mean Responses for Paid Staff and Volunteer Members for Connecticut DFC Coalitions

Full description of tasks

Chair coalition meetings

Provide material support (e.g. donate food, meeting space, services such as printing or copying, etc.)

Talk with work colleagues and/or occupational peers about coalition purpose and actions

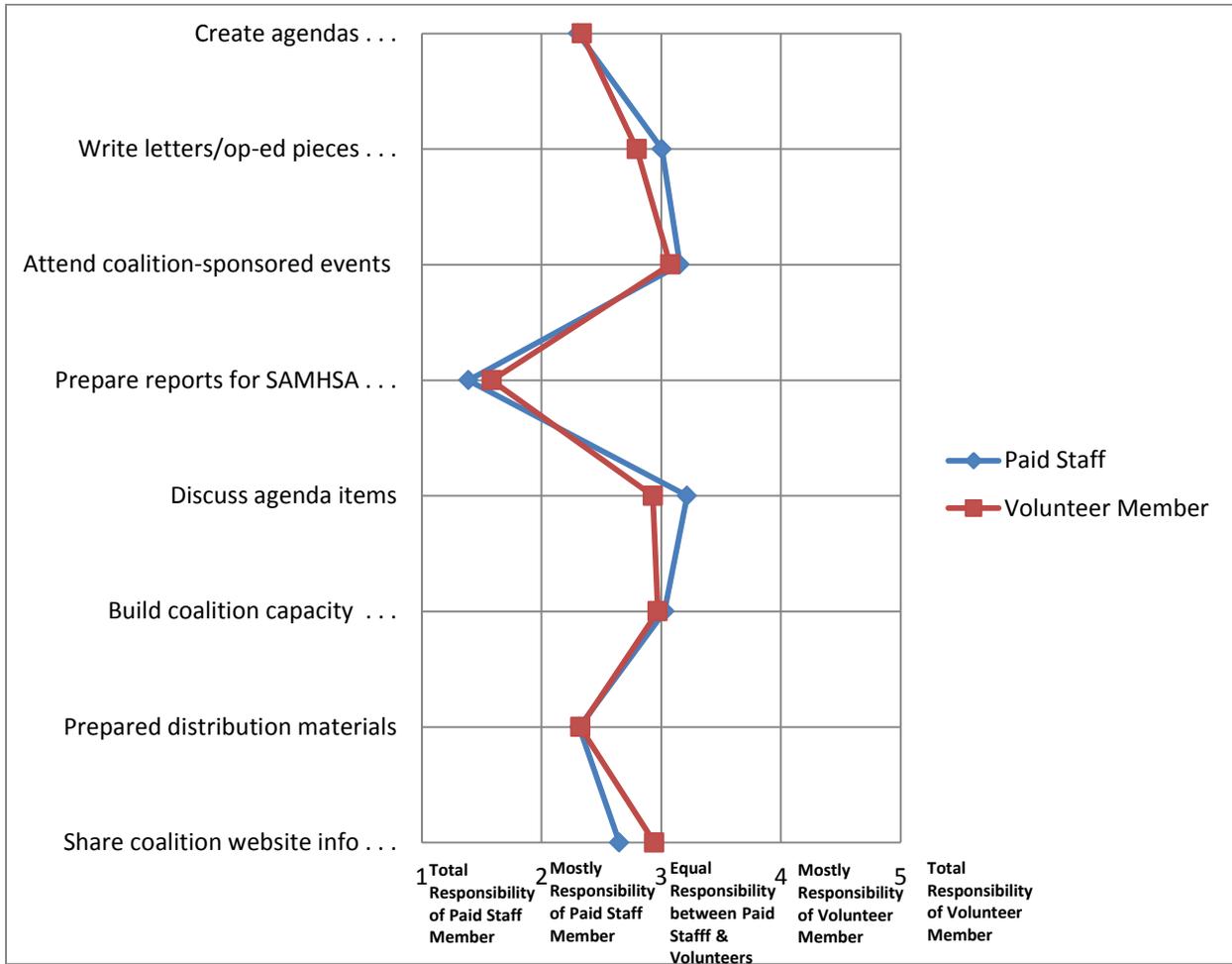Lead training for coalition members on key skills

Examine data from the community to identify substance abuse problems and available resources

Encourage others to participate in coalition-sponsored event

Lead the implementation of coalition activities

Chair committee meetings

Mean Scores: CT DFC Coalitions

Chart showing mean scores for CT DFC Coalitions comparing Paid Staff and Volunteer Member responsibility across tasks.

Y-axis tasks (top to bottom):
- Create agendas . . .
- Write letters/op-ed pieces . . .
- Attend coalition-sponsored events
- Prepare reports for SAMHSA . . .
- Discuss agenda items
- Build coalition capacity . . .
- Prepared distribution materials
- Share coalition website info . . .

Legend:
- Paid Staff
- Volunteer Member

X-axis scale:
- 1 Total Responsibility of Paid Staff Member
- 2 Mostly Responsibility of Paid Staff Member
- 3 Equal Responsibility between Paid Stafff & Volunteers
- 4 Mostly Responsibility of Volunteer Member
- 5 Total Responsibility of Volunteer Member

Full description of tasks

Create agendas for coalition meetings

Write letters to the editor/op-ed pieces for local newspapers about coalition issues

Attend coalition-sponsored events

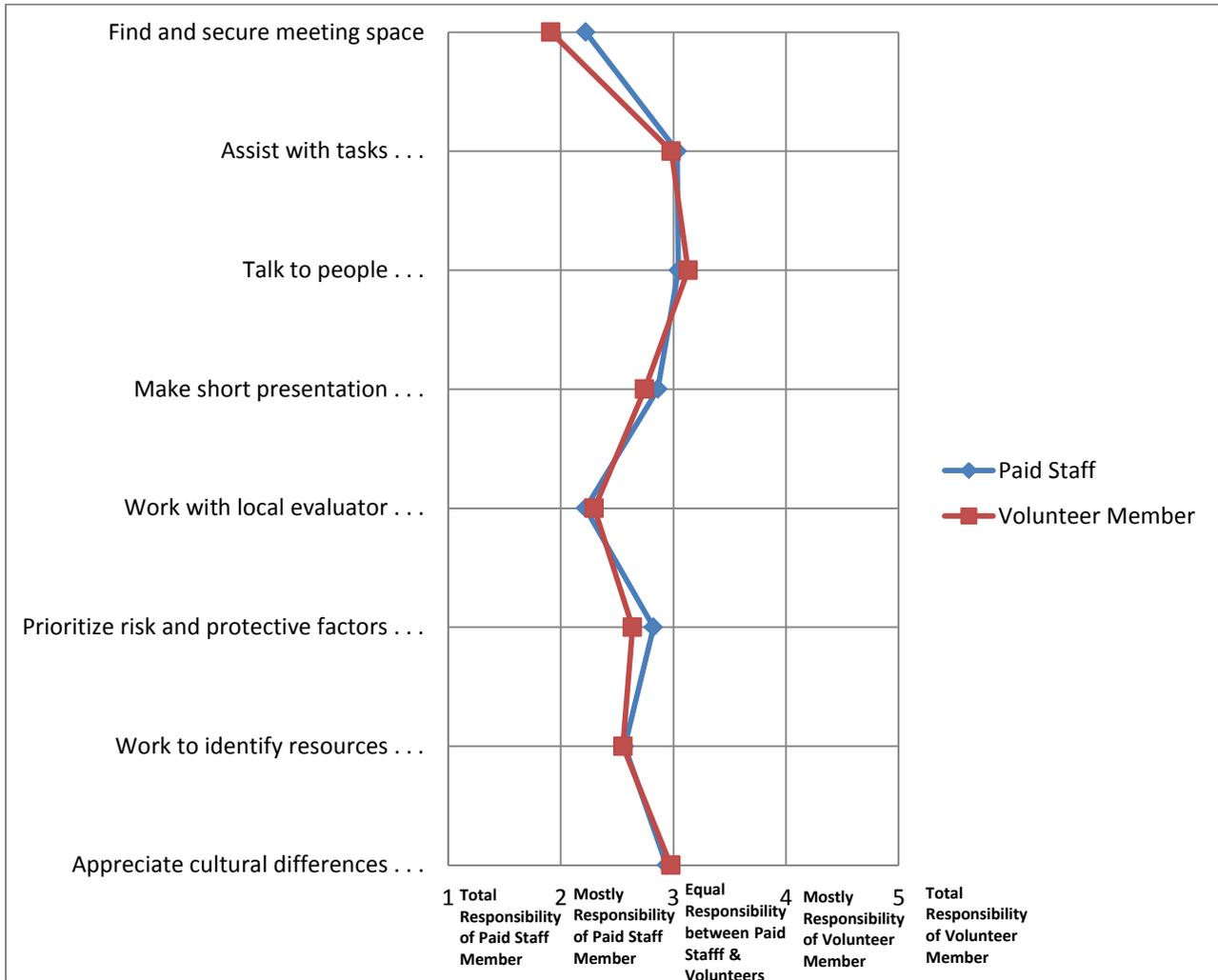Prepare Drug-Free Community reports for SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)

Discuss agenda items at meetings

Build the coalition's capacity by identifying and personally recruiting key people and/or organizations to join or support the coalition

Prepare distribution materials for coalition meetings or public events

Share information from the coalition website to others via your personal social media links

Mean Scores: CT DFC Coalitions

Chart rows (top to bottom):
- Find and secure meeting space
- Assist with tasks . . .
- Talk to people . . .
- Make short presentation . . .
- Work with local evaluator . . .
- Prioritize risk and protective factors . . .
- Work to identify resources . . .
- Appreciate cultural differences . . .

Legend:
- Paid Staff
- Volunteer Member

X-axis:
1 Total Responsibility of Paid Staff Member
2 Mostly Responsibility of Paid Staff Member
3 Equal Responsibility between Paid Stafff & Volunteers
4 Mostly Responsibility of Volunteer Member
5 Total Responsibility of Volunteer Member

<u>Full description of tasks</u>

Find and secure meeting space

Assist with tasks (e.g. handout flyers, staff tables at booths) at coalition-sponsored events

Talk to people in the community about issues of substance abuse to build readiness and support for community action and change

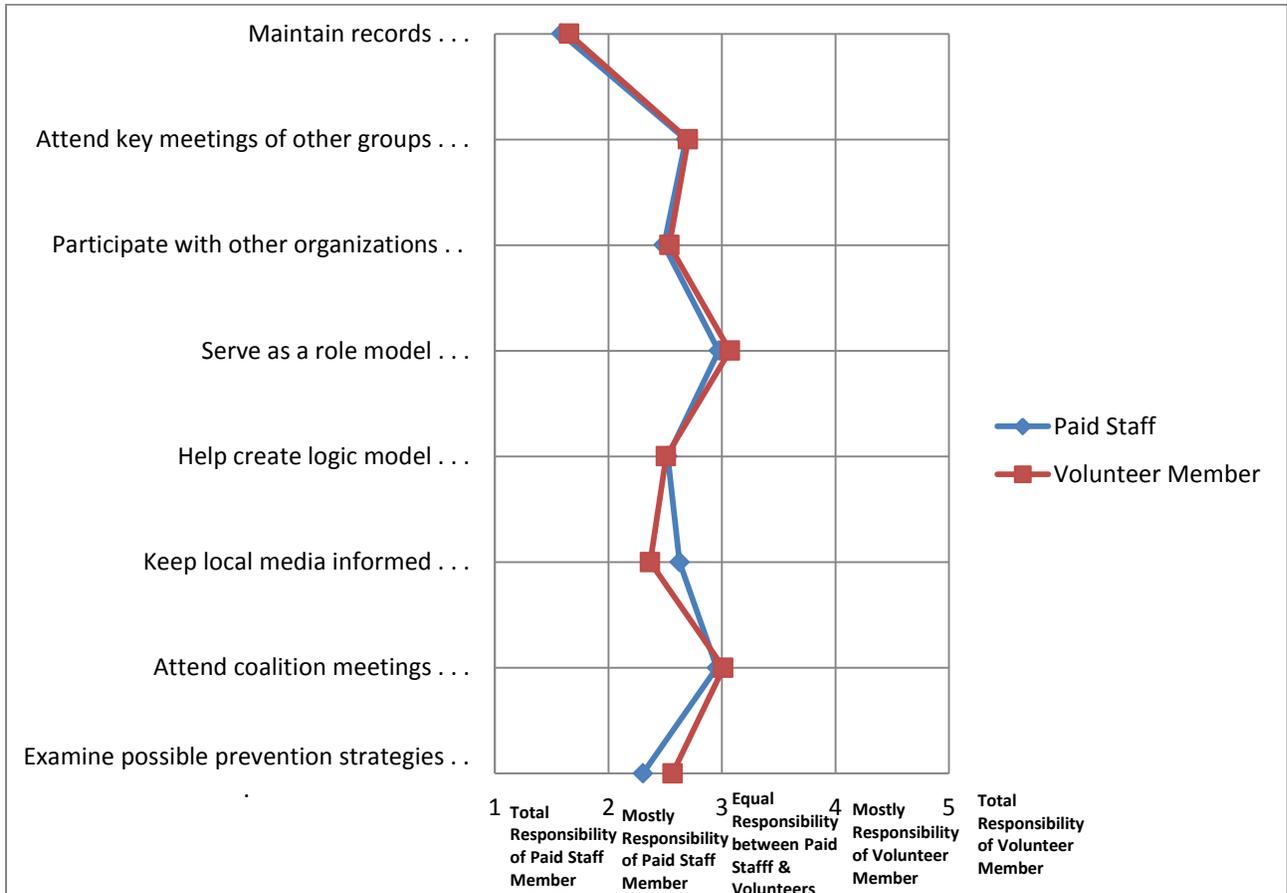Make a short presentation about the coalition to other groups

Work with local evaluator to assess the impact of various prevention strategies

Prioritize risk and protective factors that will be the focus of coalition activities

Work to identify other resources and strategies that can maintain the coalition's efforts after DFC grant funding ends

Appreciate the different cultural groups in your community and insure that coalition actions consider the values of these constituencies

Mean Scores: CT DFC Coalitions

Chart showing mean scores for Paid Staff and Volunteer Member across the following tasks:
- Maintain records . . .
- Attend key meetings of other groups . . .
- Participate with other organizations . .
- Serve as a role model . . .
- Help create logic model . . .
- Keep local media informed . . .
- Attend coalition meetings . . .
- Examine possible prevention strategies . . .

X-axis scale:
1 Total Responsibility of Paid Staff Member
2 Mostly Responsibility of Paid Staff Member
3 Equal Responsibility between Paid Stafff & Volunteers
4 Mostly Responsibility of Volunteer Member
5 Total Responsibility of Volunteer Member

Legend: Paid Staff, Volunteer Member

Full description of tasks

Maintain records of coalition activities

Attend key meetings (e.g. town council, school board) when coalition-related items are on the agenda

Participate with other local or state organizations focused on prevention

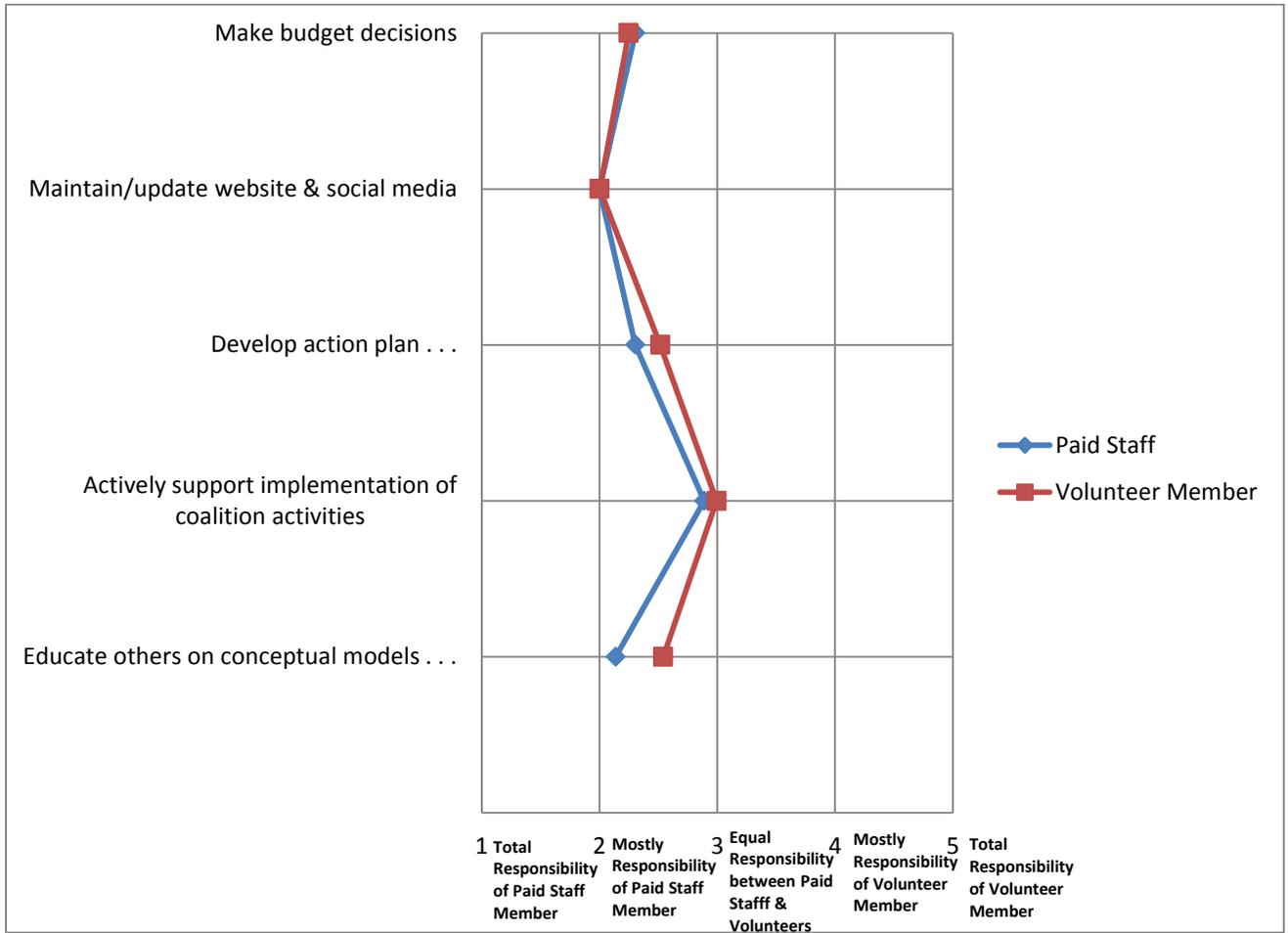Serve as a role model to young people

Help create a logic model that links community conditions, risk and protective factors, prevention strategies with anticipated outcomes

Keep local media informed about coalition activities

Attend coalition meetings (day or evening)

Examine possible prevention strategies that might be used in the community and determine which are evidence based

Mean Scores: CT DFC Coalitions

Full description of tasks

Make budget decisions

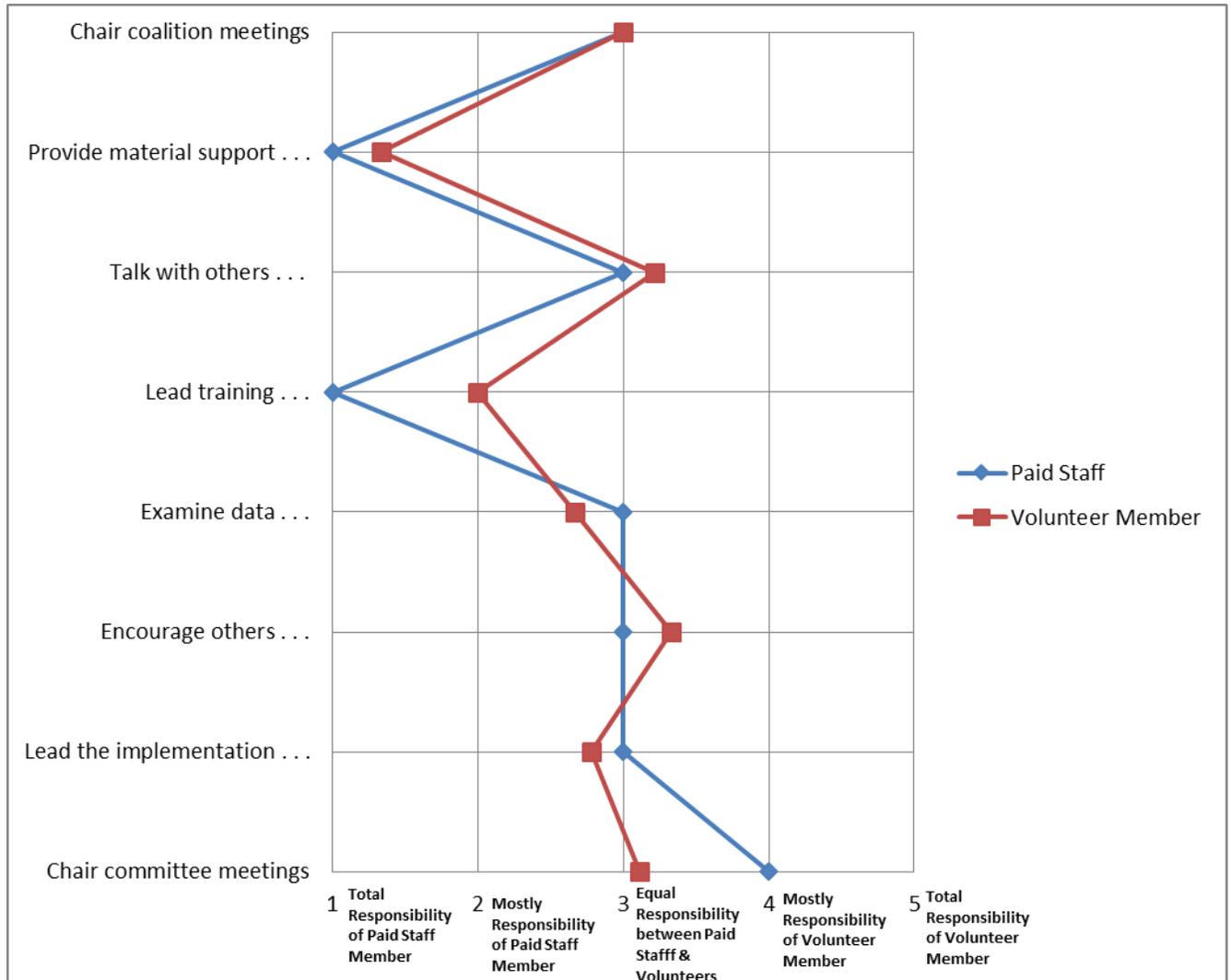Maintain and update website/social media presence

Develop a detailed action plan that specifies the steps for introducing prevention strategies into the community and those individuals responsible for accomplishing each step

Actively support the implementation of coalition activities

Educate coalition or community members on the conceptual model or framework that drives coalition activities

Appendix 2

Mean Responses for Paid Staff and Volunteer Members for
Stratford-Stratford Youth and Family Advisory Board

Full description of tasks

Chair coalition meetings

Provide material support (e.g. donate food, meeting space, services such as printing or copying, etc.)

Talk with work colleagues and/or occupational peers about coalition purpose and actions

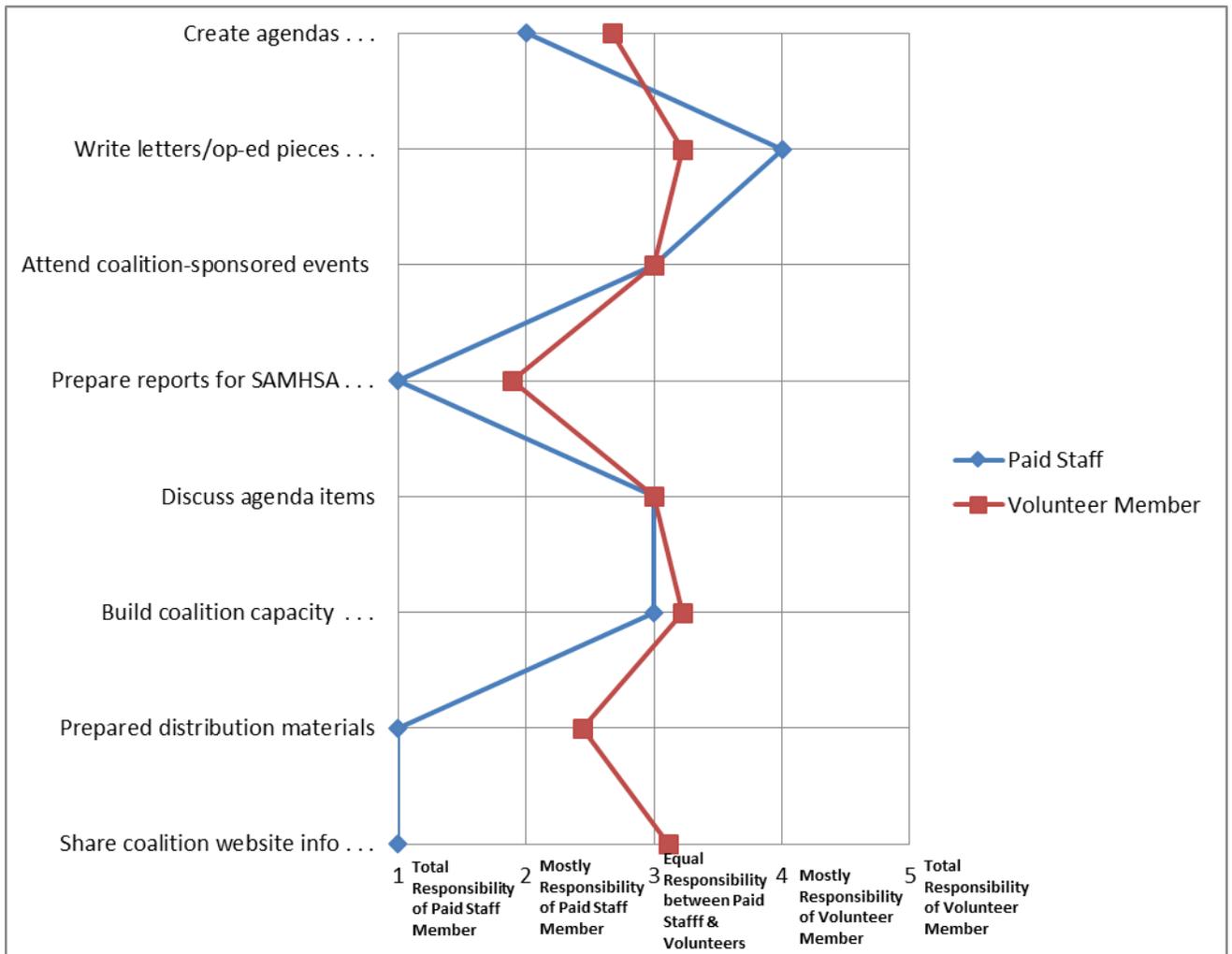Lead training for coalition members on key skills

Examine data from the community to identify substance abuse problems and available resources

Encourage others to participate in coalition-sponsored event

Lead the implementation of coalition activities

Chair committee meetings

Stratford-Stratford Youth and Family Advisory Board

Full description of tasks

Create agendas for coalition meetings

Write letters to the editor/op-ed pieces for local newspapers about coalition issues

Attend coalition-sponsored events

Prepare Drug-Free Community reports for SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)
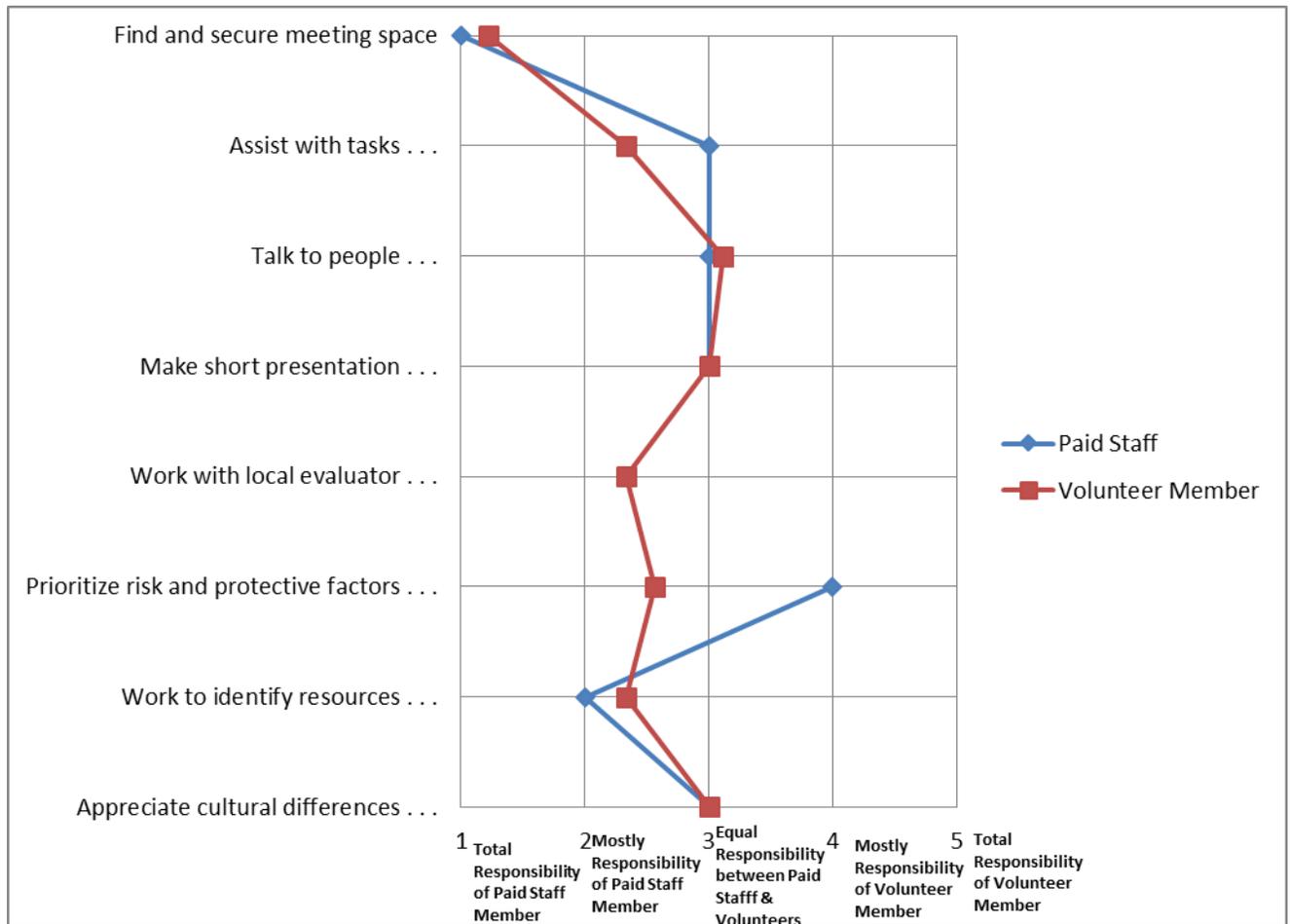
Discuss agenda items at meetings

Build the coalition's capacity by identifying and personally recruiting key people and/or organizations to join or support the coalition

Prepare distribution materials for coalition meetings or public events

Share information from the coalition website to others via your personal social media links

Stratford-Stratford Youth and Family Advisory Board[1]

Chart y-axis (tasks, top to bottom): Find and secure meeting space; Assist with tasks . . .; Talk to people . . .; Make short presentation . . .; Work with local evaluator . . .; Prioritize risk and protective factors . . .; Work to identify resources . . .; Appreciate cultural differences . . .

Chart x-axis: 1 Total Responsibility of Paid Staff Member; 2 Mostly Responsibility of Paid Staff Member; 3 Equal Responsibility between Paid Stafff & Volunteers; 4 Mostly Responsibility of Volunteer Member; 5 Total Responsibility of Volunteer Member

Legend: Paid Staff; Volunteer Member

Full description of tasks

Find and secure meeting space

Assist with tasks (e.g. handout flyers, staff tables at booths) at coalition-sponsored events

Talk to people in the community about issues of substance abuse to build readiness and support for community action and change

Make a short presentation about the coalition to other groups

Work with local evaluator to assess the impact of various prevention strategies
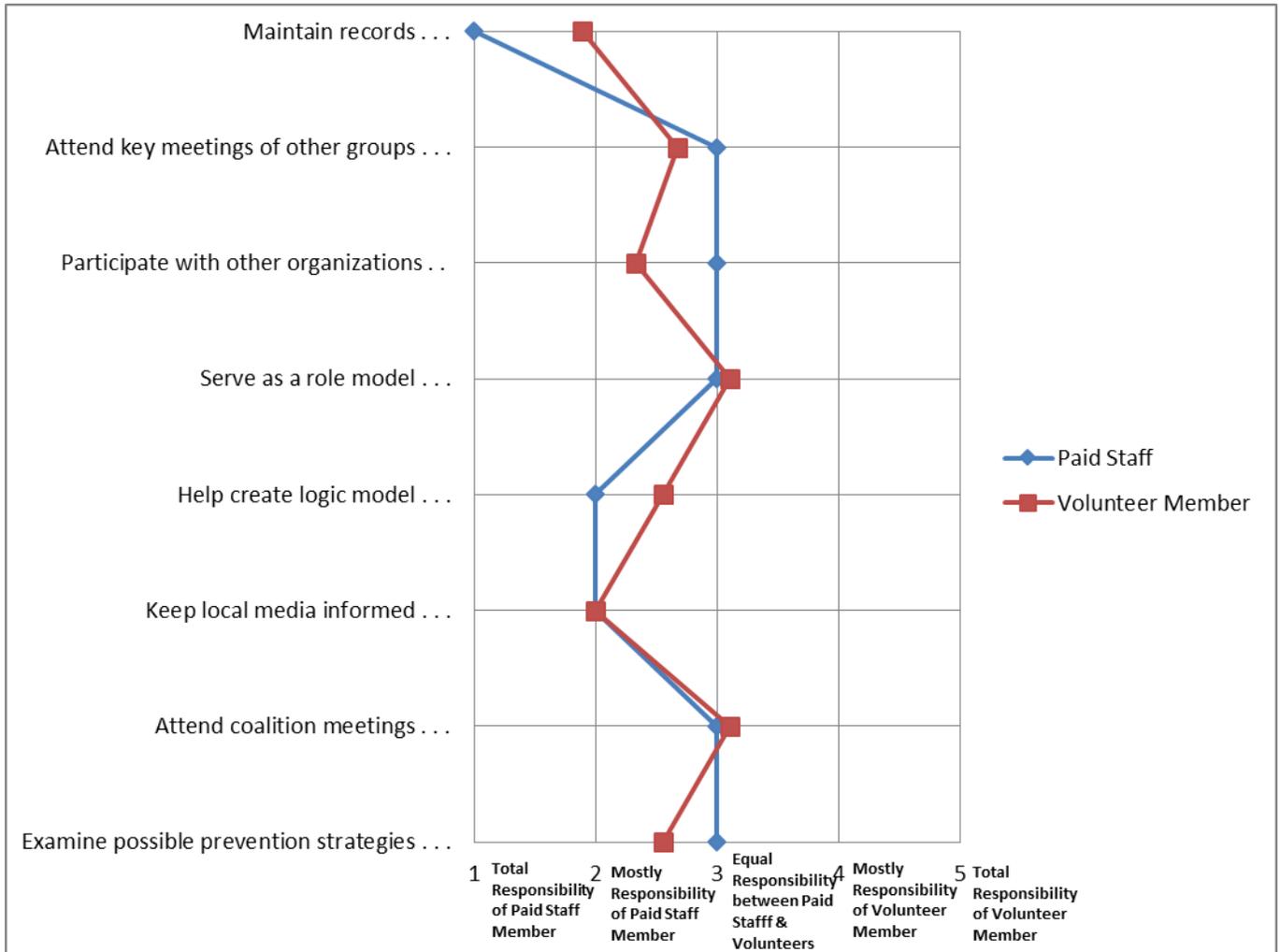
Prioritize risk and protective factors that will be the focus of coalition activities

Work to identify other resources and strategies that can maintain the coalition's efforts after DFC grant funding ends

Appreciate the different cultural groups in your community and insure that coalition actions consider the values of these constituencies

[1]There was no data from the paid staff on the "works with local evaluator" item. Hence there is no point on the graph for this item

Stratford-Stratford Youth and Family Advisory Board

Full description of tasks

Maintain records of coalition activities

Attend key meetings (e.g. town council, school board) when coalition-related items are on the agenda

Participate with other local or state organizations focused on prevention
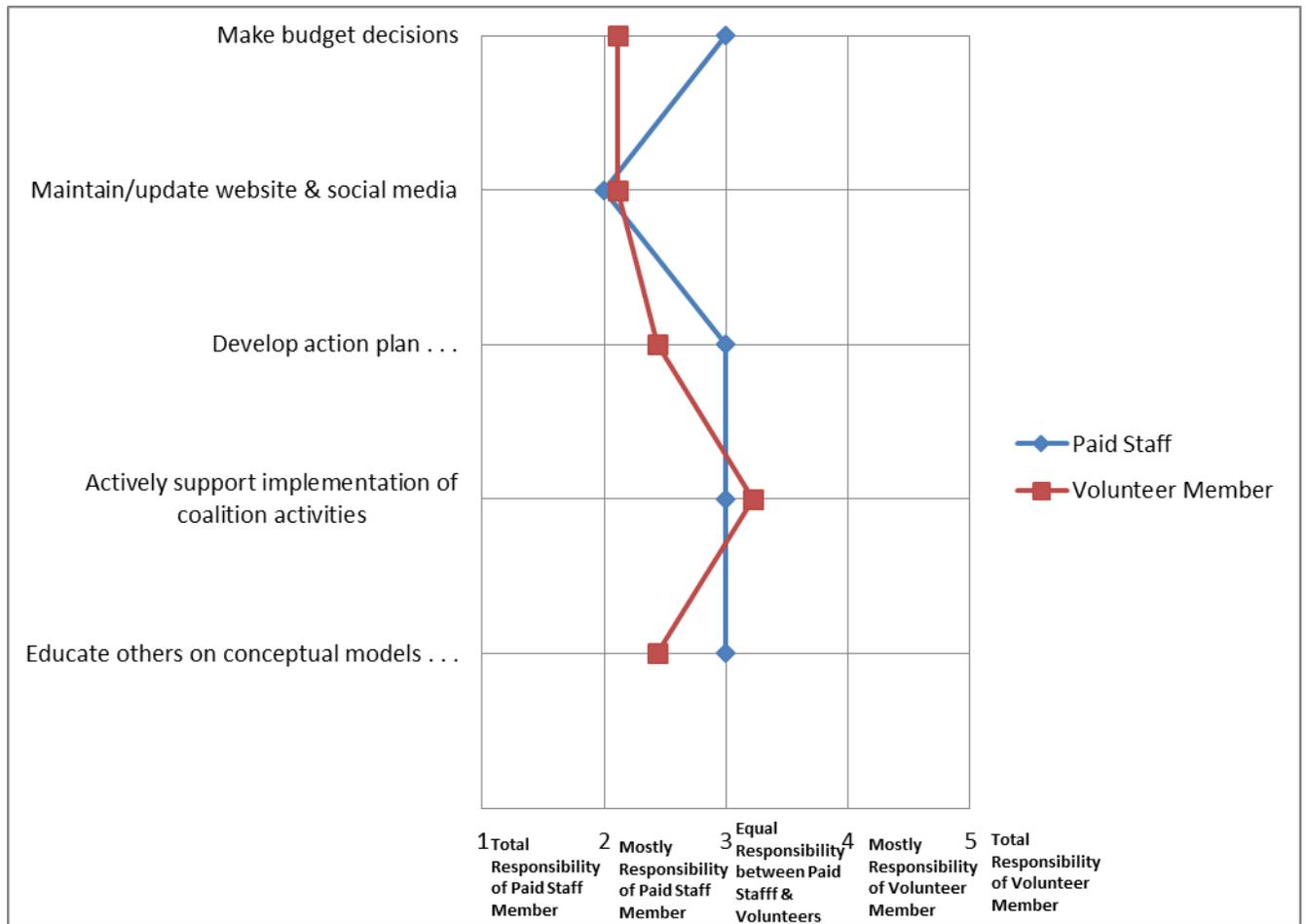
Serve as a role model to young people

Help create a logic model that links community conditions, risk and protective factors, prevention strategies with anticipated outcomes

Keep local media informed about coalition activities

Attend coalition meetings (day or evening)

Examine possible prevention strategies that might be used in the community and determine which are evidence based

Stratford-Stratford Youth and Family Advisory Board

Full description of tasks

Make budget decisions

Maintain and update website/social media presence

Develop a detailed action plan that specifies the steps for introducing prevention strategies into the community and those individuals responsible for accomplishing each step

Actively support the implementation of coalition activities

Educate coalition or community members on the conceptual model or framework that drives coalition activities