



**September 8, 2010**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FMI:** Jo Morrissey, Project Manager

21 Reasons

48 Free Street, Suite 208

Portland, ME 04101

773-7737

[jmorrissey@mcd.org](mailto:jmorrissey@mcd.org) [www.21reasons.org](http://www.21reasons.org)

## **21 Reasons secures Federal Funding**

**Portland, ME**—21 Reasons is proud to announce it is once again the recipient of a competitive Drug Free Communities (DFC) grant from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). This 5 year, \$125,000 per year grant will allow 21 Reasons to continue its efforts to prevent underage drinking and other drug use in the city of Portland.

During the first five-year DFC grant, teen drinking rates in Portland decreased by 20%, while community-level protective factors such as law enforcement, parental monitoring, and limited accessibility of alcohol were strengthened. In addition, 21 Reasons coalition grew from a small group of concerned individuals and agencies, to an organization with more than 675 members--including law enforcement, parents, youth, schools, businesses, faith communities, healthcare, substance abuse treatment providers, local government, youth serving organizations, media, and community volunteers.

“We are pleased that 21 Reasons has been recognized with a new 5-year cycle of funding, because we still have a lot of work to do,” said Joanna Morrissey, DFC Project Manager for 21 Reasons. “For instance, student survey data shows that while youth substance abuse has gone down, alcohol still remains the most commonly accessed and abused substance by youth.”

“Community attitudes on underage drinking still need some work, too,” added Morrissey. “We cannot stress enough that two-thirds of youth alcohol deaths have nothing to do with motor vehicles. The majority of youth alcohol deaths are attributed to suicides, homicides, and unintentional injuries such as drowning, burns, and falls. There is also the increased risk of sexual assault, vandalism, academic failure, and other risky behaviors among youth who drink. Also important to note is thanks to new technologies we know more now than ever before about alcohol’s harmful effects on the developing adolescent brain. We want to empower all community members to prevent underage drinking.”

As outlined in the new 5-year strategic plan, 21 Reasons Steering Committee, staff, and coalition members will continue to work collaboratively to stem youth access to alcohol. Continued strategies include increased enforcement of underage drinking laws, retail trainings, and a public education campaign with a focus on empowering parents.

## 21 Reasons Secures Federal Funding (con't)

21 Reasons is also one of just 16 DFC coalitions in the nation to receive this year's DFC Mentoring grant. This two-year award of \$75,000 per year will allow 21 Reasons to provide intensive technical assistance to a fledgling substance abuse coalition in the Gray/New Gloucester region. This is the second Mentoring grant that 21 Reasons has received; they recently assisted the neighboring Casco Bay C.A.N. Coalition to build their capacity and apply successfully for their own 5-year DFC grant.

Originally funded by Congress in 1997 with the understanding that local problems need local solutions, the Drug Free Communities (DFC) program now supports over 700 drug-free community coalitions across the United States. As a cornerstone of Office of National Drug Control Policy's (ONDCP) strategy, DFC provides the funding necessary for communities to identify and respond to local substance use problems.

FYI: <http://www.21reasons.org/>

For a list of Grantees: [http://www.ondcp.gov/dfc/grantee\\_map.html](http://www.ondcp.gov/dfc/grantee_map.html)