

STEP 1: Adopt a Planning Structure

Involvement of and support from the community hospital and public health agency administrators, other agency heads, top political leaders, and key policy makers in a community (e.g., county or multi-county area) significantly improves and strengthens the local planning process. Effective leadership is necessary to inspire a shared vision and enlist appropriate partners and staff in the development process. Once leaders' commitments and buy-in are secured, planning structures, resources and other essential elements often fall into place more easily. The following websites include tools and frameworks to help you build a strong foundation for planning. Implementation will depend, of course, on the unique characteristics of your community.

- Community Toolbox, University of Kansas: <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents>
- CDC Community Health Assessment Public Health Professionals Gateway: <https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/cha/index.html>
- NACCHO: Resource Center for Community Health Assessments and Community Health Improvement Plans: <https://www.naccho.org/programs/public-health-infrastructure/performance-improvement/community-health-assessment>

TIPS

#1: Don't pass GO before gaining leadership support.

Enlisted leaders can:

- Influence public opinion;
- Mobilize support and engage partners;
- Inspire action to get things done;
- Facilitate locating, obtaining, and allotting resources;
- Guide decision making;
- Advocate for the plan's goals and objectives; and
- Set policy and ensure that objectives are monitored and considered in policy matters.

#2: Begin within your own agency:

- Engagement of executive leadership
- Senior staff and program managers

#3: Include local and county elected officials and boards of health:

- Advisory committees
- Political and policy leaders
- Key health supporters, as well as potential adversaries

#4: Enlist heads of other agencies and health providers:

Primary care, oral health, mental health, substance abuse, environmental, social services, children and families, food and nutrition assistance, aging, disabilities, education, agriculture, transportation, and other agencies.

#5: Know the playing field:

- Conduct a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis;
- Learn from past successes and mistakes; and
- Define how the community plan can support and advance leaders' current policies and priorities;
- Know how your community plan activities will align with other planning and improvement efforts.

#6: Be explicit about what you are requesting from others:

- Identify shared values and common goals;
- Identify specific roles and responsibilities;
- Share responsibilities and decision making; and
- Establish accountability mechanism

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Action Checklist:

- Secure commitment from senior staff.
- Identify potential barriers and facilitators to success.
- Form a preparation team to identify goals and guide early stages of development.
- Present the plan development process to political leaders for support.
- Adopt a planning structure.
- Examine the policy/political environment.
- Identify related initiatives to integrate or consider coordination with any other plans.
- Engage partners early and maintain their involvement.
- Define functions and composition of an advisory and/or steering group.

Notes: