



# Collaborative Health Improvement Toolkit

Transforming the Health of Your Community



**ALLIANCE FOR A HEALTHIER  
SOUTH CAROLINA**

## ► What is the Collaborative Health Improvement Toolkit?

The Collaborative Health Improvement Toolkit is based on Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP). This toolkit provides guidance through a six-step process, beginning with the mobilization of community partners, and culminating in the implementation of a comprehensive plan designed to improve the health of the community.

### Steps to Community Health Improvement

- 1: Organize for Success/Partnership Development
- 2: Establish a Common Visioning
3. Understand our Community
  - Assessment 1: Community Voices*
  - Assessment 2: Community Health Snapshot*
  - Assessment 3: Forces of Change*
- 4: Identify Strategic Issues
- 5: Formulate Goals, Objectives and Strategies
- 6: Take Action



Where you live affects how you live, you can't simply make healthy decisions if healthy options aren't available to you. Policy, systems, and environmental changes make healthier choices a real, feasible option for every community member by looking at the laws, rules, and environments that impact our behavior.

### What's the Difference Between PSE change and Programs?

Setting	Programs/Events	Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change
<b>School</b>	Celebrate national nutrition month	Add fruits and vegetables to the cafeteria options in school
<b>Community</b>	Brochure about the dangers of second-hand smoke	Smoke-free workplace law
<b>Worksite</b>	Hold health screenings for staff	Implement a healthy vending machine policy that offers healthy snacks at an affordable price
<b>Hospital</b>	Hold free breastfeeding courses for new moms	Implement steps to become a "baby friendly hospital"



## Visioning

The Visioning phase will help you:

- Craft a vision that provides focus, purpose, and direction to the community planning process.
- Create shared community ownership.
- Develop an overarching goal for the community – a statement of what the ideal future looks like.

### **Vision Statement Example:** *Healthy people living in healthy communities.*

**Vision:** *WHY* we exist: the ultimate way we impact the world.

**Mission:** *WHAT* we do: the products or services we provide, to whom and how.

**Values:** *HOW* we do our work: ways we behave and treat each other.

#### **Sample brainstorming questions for a shared vision:**

- *What does a healthy anywhere county mean to you?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- *What are important characteristics of a healthy community for all who live, work, and play here?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- *How do you envision the community in the next five or ten years?*

Below is a table that depicts the type of participation:

Core Group	Steering Committee	Sub-committees	Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plan visioning sessions</li><li>• Identify and secure session facilitator(s) and engage with them in preparing for visioning session (s)</li><li>• Summarize the results of the visioning session(s)</li><li>• Draft vision statement and values</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oversee and participate in the Visioning phase</li><li>• Develop a plan for gaining broad community participation and identify community representatives to participate in visioning session(s)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• None recommended; however, a community may designate a sub-committee to conduct the activities in this phase identified for the Core Group</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Broad community participation is essential</li><li>• Ensure the community receives announcements and updates through a broad spectrum of community mechanisms (media, word of mouth, etc.)</li><li>• Promote Visioning sessions(s) broadly to encourage community participation</li></ul>

## Assessments

1. Community Voices
2. Community Health Snapshot
3. Forces of Change

**The three key assessments form the groundwork of the community assessment process. Collectively, these assessments have several purposes:**

1. Provide insights on the gaps between current conditions and a community's visions (as established in the Visioning phase).
2. Provide information to use in identifying the strategic issues that must be addressed to achieve the vision.
3. Serve as the main source of information from which the strategic issues, strategies and goals are built.

### **Things to Do:**

- Implement the key assessments in a structured and coordinated way. There is no definite order in which to carry out the three assessments.
- It is important to have committees for the Community Voices and Community Health Snapshot assessments. This will ensure that the assessments are completed in an effective and efficient way. Broad participation is critical to the effectiveness of all three assessments.
- Members on each committee should have skills that will aid in the completion of the assessment. Members of committees can overlap and facilitate the sharing of information.
- It is essential to bridge the results of each assessment to gain insight into the issues facing the community. For example, the Community Voices assessment may identify additional health indicators that should be reviewed in the Community Health Snapshot assessment. Both assessments could lead to the revelation of potential threats and opportunities in the Forces of Change assessment.
- These assessments will lead to the discovery of strategic issues in the community.
- It is important in this process to celebrate successes. After each assessment is finished, the committees should recognize their achievements.

## Assessment 1: Community Voices

The Community Voices assessment gathers the thoughts, opinions and concerns from community members.

This information leads to a portrait of the community as seen through the eyes of its residents. Listening to and communicating with the community are essential to any community-wide initiative.

**This assessment helps us mobilize and engage the community may to obtain a broad view of community needs.**

- Key Informant Interviews
- Photo Voice
- Focus groups
- Surveys

### Sample Questions

**I think these are 3 main reasons that prevent people from being physically active in our community:**

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crime               | <input type="checkbox"/> No parks/outdoor spaces | <input type="checkbox"/> Stray dogs/animals      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heat/Cold           | <input type="checkbox"/> Not enough bike lanes   | <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No community events | <input type="checkbox"/> Not enough sidewalks    | <input type="checkbox"/> Too tired after working |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No street lights    | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Choice         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (14a) _____   |  |  |
- 

**I think these are 3 main reasons that prevent people in our community from eating healthy foods:**

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't cook at home      | <input type="checkbox"/> No farmer's market               | <input type="checkbox"/> Stores don't have quality produce |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eat fast food regularly | <input type="checkbox"/> No grocery stores nearby         | <input type="checkbox"/> Too expensive                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No community gardens    | <input type="checkbox"/> Stores don't accept SNAP/EBT/WIC | <input type="checkbox"/> Too tired after work              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (15a) _____       |   |  |
- 

**I think these are the 3 most important health concerns in our community:**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol Use          | <input type="checkbox"/> Drug Use             | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alzheimer's/Dementia | <input type="checkbox"/> Heart Disease/Stroke | <input type="checkbox"/> Overweight/Obesity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arthritis            | <input type="checkbox"/> High Blood Pressure  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tobacco Use        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cancer               | <input type="checkbox"/> HIV/AIDS/STDs        |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes             | <input type="checkbox"/> Infant Death         |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (16a) _____    |   |   |
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## Assessment 2: Community Health Snapshot

The Community Health Snapshot provides important data on health indicators. This data includes those groups of people that are impacted by different diseases and conditions.

**It also includes policy and environmental scans that impact health. Communities may choose to look at additional indicators.**

***Examining this snapshot data and policies will help you:***

- 1. Assess changes over time*
- 2. Reveal differences among population subgroups or with peer, state, or national data*
- 3. Identify priority health issues*

### **Who are we and what do we bring to the table?**

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- Demographic Characteristics
- Socioeconomic Characteristics
- Health Resource Availability

### **What are the strengths and risks in our community that contribute to health?**

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- Quality of Life
- Behavioral Risk Factors
- Environmental Health Indicators
- What is our health status?
- Social and Mental Health
- Maternal and Child Health
- Death, Illness and Injury
- Infectious Disease
- Sentinel Events

### **What is our health status?**

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- Social and Mental Health
- Maternal and Child Health
- Death, Illness and Injury
- Infectious Disease
- Sentinel Events

**List local data sources:**

**Who is responsible for data in your community?**

## Assessment 3: Forces of Change

### What Kind of Areas or Categories Are Included?

- Economic
- Social
- Political
- Technological
- Environmental
- Scientific
- Legal
- Ethical

Think about forces of change — outside of your control— that affect the local public health system or community.

1. What has occurred recently that may affect our local public health system or community?
2. What may occur in the future?
3. Are there any trends occurring that will have an impact? Describe the trends.
4. What forces are occurring locally? Regionally? Nationally? Globally?
5. What characteristics of our jurisdiction or state may pose an opportunity or threat?
6. What may occur or has occurred that may pose a barrier to achieving the shared vision?
7. What would you tell someone that does not live here what the number one strength is for your community?

**Threats** | What threats will hinder us from creating a healthier community?

**Opportunities** | What opportunities have you identified for the community in addressing health?



## Community Profile

Please use the following questions to guide the creation of your community profile.

1. *What are the top concerns from the community based on the Community Voice Assessment?*
2. *What is the main health issue(s) facing your community based on the Community Health Snapshot Assessment?*
3. *What are the health indicators and/or gaps in policies that have caught your community's attention?*
4. *In the Forces of Change Assessment, what are the main factors impacting your community?*

**Keep in mind the following questions were answered:**

**The Community Health Snapshot answered:**

*What health conditions exist in the community?*

**The Community Voices answered:**

*What is important to our community?*

*Why do health conditions exist?*

*What is the quality of life in the community?*

*What assets are available in the community?*

**The Forces of Change answered:**

*What forces affect how to take action?*

## Strategic Issues

*Now that we have our assessment data --- How do we make changes that impact health?*

At this phase of the community planning process, participants develop a prioritized list of the most important issues facing the community. Strategic issues reveal what is truly important from the vast amount of information that was gathered in the key assessments. Addressing strategic issues, a community is being proactive in positioning itself for the future, rather than simply reacting to problems.

**The answers provided from the assessments will be instrumental in identifying strategic issues.**

*Identifying strategic issues can be compared to pouring the assessment findings into a funnel - what emerges is a distilled mix of issues that demands attention.*

**These strategic issues form the foundation of the community healthy improvement plan.**

**Keep in mind the following questions will be answered:**

**What will be done to realize the community's vision?**

**Who will do it?**

**How it will be done?**

**How will we know we have made improvements?**

**How can we continually improve?**

**What factors identified in the assessments must be addressed in order to achieve your vision?"**

**Step 1:** Brainstorm potential strategic issues

**Step 2:** Develop an understanding about why an issue is strategic

**Step 3:** Determine the consequences of not addressing an issue

**Step 4:** Consolidate overlapping or related issues

**Step 5:** Arrange issues into an ordered list

## **EXAMPLE:**

- Promote healthy lifestyles, i.e., exercise, nutrition, smoking cessation, and reduction of risk behaviors (e.g., engaging in unprotected sex).
- Enhancing collaboration and mobilizing communities to address public health issues by linking health with economics, environment and education.

## **Potential Issues:**

**To determine when an issue is strategic, ask partners and community members the following questions:**

1. *Is the issue related to our community's vision?*
2. *Will the issue affect our entire community?*
3. *Is the issue something that will affect us now and in the future?*
4. *Will the issue require us to change the way we function?*
5. *Is there an obvious solution to this issue?*
6. *In order to address the issue, do we need leadership support?*
7. *Are there long-term consequences of us not addressing the issue?*
8. *Does the issue require the involvement of more than one organization?*



## **Formulate Goals and Strategies**

*During this phase, the community and local public health partners form goal statements related to each strategic issue and identify strategies for achieving each goal.*

It's important to use assessment data to inform goal setting so that your goals are realistic and doable.

### **Keep in mind the following questions will be answered:**

**What are the long-term results associated with identified strategic issues?**

**What strategies can the community take to reach the goals?**

**Remember:** In developing goals and strategies, communities answer the following questions:

Goals | **What do we want to achieve by addressing this strategic issue?**

Strategies | **How do we want to achieve it? What action is needed?**

## **Take-Action**

### **Take-Action by:**

1. Planning
2. Implementing
3. Evaluating

Action planning and implementation in this process is very similar to the planning many people conduct on a daily basis. However, in this process, you are orchestrating activities among different individuals and organizations.

**The following are valuable to ensuring that the community successfully implements its strategic plan:**

- Transparency
- Effective Communication
- Trust
- Leadership.

In this phase, you will use goals and strategies identified in the previous phase to develop a community health improvement plan. Your subcommittee will implement the work plans and evaluate how well they are meeting goals and objectives. Based on evaluations work plans will be revised as appropriate.

**Keep in mind the following questions will be answered:**

**What will be done to realize the community's vision?**

**Who will do it?**

**How will be done?**

**How will we know we have made improvements?**

**How can we continually improve?**

**Organize for Action**

1. Are the right people included?
2. Who or what organization is missing?
3. What sub-committees should be convened?
4. How will we ensure accountability for planning, implementation, and evaluation of the action plans?

## Develop Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Each sub-committee should be associated with a strategic issue, goal, or strategy. Sub-committee members should work together to write specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time specific (SMART) objectives

## Establish Accountability for Achieving Objectives

In this process, you want to create an understanding among your partners and community members that in order to achieve your collective goals and vision, you need to work together.

Collective action requires that people are committed to:

- Process
- Vision
- Goals

## Develop Action Plans

Keep in mind the questions you answered in the preceding steps as you go through the “90-180 Day Implementation Worksheet.” The worksheet can be added to and replicated as needed when creating work plans.

*The “90-180 Day Implementation Worksheet” has been developed by the Institute of Cultural Affairs and is one element of the Technology of Participation (ToP) facilitation methodology.*

## Review Action Plans for Opportunities to Coordinate

The Steering Committee should review implementation worksheets from the different sub-committees to determine if there are opportunities to streamline efforts. Feedback from the Steering Committee should inform revisions to implementation plans.

## Take Action

Sub-committees should use the implementation worksheet to guide action. As your sub-committee implements its plans, it is important to monitor progress and collect data to ensure actions are achieving measurable objectives and community goals. It is vital that the sub-committee and the steering committee are documenting their progress during their meetings.

## Writing a Community Health Improvement Plan

A community health improvement plan includes a description of your community’s process and a summary of the strategic issues, goals, strategies, and activities. A community health improvement plan is a long-term, effort to address public health issues. These issues are determined based on the results of community health assessment activities. A community health improvement plan is a community-owned plan. This is not a plan for just one agency, but is representative of the local public health system. This plan is used by health and other governmental education and human service agencies, in collaboration with community partners, to set priorities and coordinate and target resources.

**Community health improvement plans can be presented in the following manner:**

### 1. Executive Summary

## **2. Description of the Process**

- a. Overview of the process;
- b. Individuals and organizations involved;
- c. Community vision statement;
- d. How the four assessments were conducted;
- e. How strategic issues, goals, strategies, and objectives were selected and prioritized.

## **3. Strategic Issues, Goals, Strategies, Objectives, and Activities**

- a. Description of each strategic issue;
- b. Assessment data related to each strategic issue;
- c. Goals, strategies, objectives, and activities related to each strategic issue;
- d. Timeline for achieving the objectives and activities;
- e. Performance measures and indicators of progress for each activity;
- f. Individuals and organizations responsible for implementing activities

*The Community Assessment process helps communities in developing their own unique path to a successful, healthy community. The Community Health Improvement Toolkit is an effective way to get partners engaged in the process. It is also a reflection of all the important phases needed to assess your community's distinct needs.*

*This toolkit assists communities in using the assessment data to prioritize project goals and to support funding requests. By using the Toolkit, your community is on the right path to achieving its community vision.*



## A Healthy Community provides for the following through all stages of life:

# Healthy Community Framework

### Meets basic needs of all

- Safe, sustainable, accessible, and affordable transportation options
- Affordable, accessible and nutritious foods, and safe drinkable water
- Affordable, high quality, socially integrated, and location-efficient housing
- Affordable, accessible and high quality health care
- Complete and livable communities including quality schools, parks and recreational facilities, child care, libraries, financial services and other daily needs
- Access to affordable and safe opportunities for physical activity
- Able to adapt to changing environments, resilient, and prepared for emergencies
- Opportunities for engagement with arts, music and culture

### Quality and sustainability of environment

- Clean air, soil and water, and environments free of excessive noise
- Tobacco- and smoke-free
- Green and open spaces, including healthy tree canopy and agricultural lands
- Minimized toxics, greenhouse gas emissions, and waste
- Affordable and sustainable energy use
- Aesthetically pleasing

### Adequate levels of economic and social development

- Living wage, safe and healthy job opportunities for all, and a thriving economy
- Support for healthy development of children and adolescents
- Opportunities for high quality and accessible education

### Health and social equity

### Social relationships that are supportive and respectful

- Robust social and civic engagement
- Socially cohesive and supportive relationships, families, homes and neighborhoods
- Safe communities, free of crime and violence