

Improving the Health of Youth



A Guide for State-Level Strategic Planning and Action

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Improving the Health of Youth A Guide for State-Level Strategic Planning

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The strategic planning experiences of Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Oregon and Tennessee have been incorporated in this document as examples of how different states have pursued efforts to develop a statewide plan to improve adolescent health—strategic plans being a critical map for mobilizing different stakeholders for action. We thank the staff from these states for sharing their experiences. Finally, we deeply appreciate the efforts of Adolescent Health Coordinators whose commitment to incorporating evidence-based practices and maximizing available resources are key towards advancing the National Initiative to Improve Adolescent and Young Adult health.

The State Adolescent Health Resource Center (SAHRC)

Housed in the University of Minnesota's Konopka Institute for Best Practices in Adolescent Health, the staff of SAHRC are on-call resources for state public health professional focused on adolescent populations. SAHRC's goals are to increase attention to adolescents as a group within the state public health system, increase the public health system's capacity to address adolescent health issues and promote healthy youth development approaches and philosophies.

The Konopka Institute works in partnership with community organizations, service providers, policy makers and public agencies to promote the use of best practices, policies and systems that show the greatest promise of supporting genuine healthy youth development. Dr. Gisela Konopka, after whom the Konopka Institute is named, was an early voice in the field of healthy youth development. The Konopka Institute is based within the University of Minnesota.

The National Adolescent Health Information and Innovation Center (NAHIC)

The goal of NAHIC is to improve the health of adolescents by serving as a national resource for adolescent health information and research, and to assure the integration, synthesis, coordination and dissemination of adolescent health-related information. NAHIC is based within the University of California, San Francisco's Division of Adolescent Medicine, Department of Pediatrics and Institute for Health Policy Studies. <http://nahic.ucsf.edu>

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Introduction

“The strategic plan is ultimately no more, and no less, than a set of decisions about what to do, why to do it, and how to do it.”

<http://tinyurl.com/84f445>

*“If you don’t know where you’re going,
you may end up somewhere else.”*

–Yoga Berra

Adolescence provides a unique opportunity to invest in the health and well being of youth. Good health (physical, emotional, social and spiritual) enables young people to make the most of their teenage years while laying a strong foundation for adult life. Lifestyle behaviors developed during adolescence often continue into adulthood and influence long-term prospects for health and risk for chronic disease.

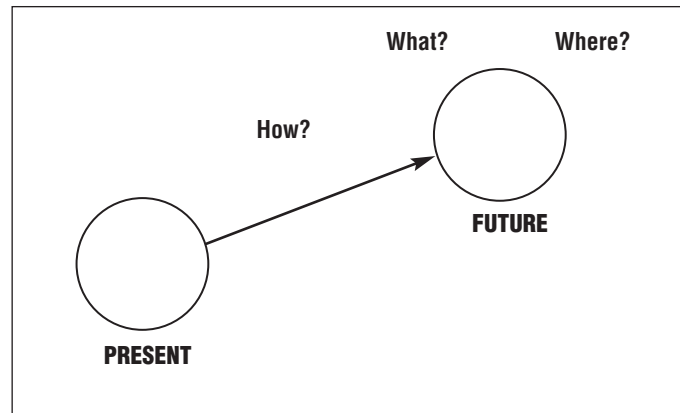
Yet, improving the health and well being of adolescents is a challenging endeavor. Their health issues are complex and can feel overwhelming. Improving adolescent health requires investment in comprehensive efforts at multiple levels, including the individual, their family, schools, health systems, and other community institutions. In order to be effective, actions need to be coordinated across these sectors and involve partnerships with a wide variety of groups, ranging from health providers to families, schools, the faith community, as well as the business sector. While there is a growing body of evidence regarding what works to improve adolescent health, there is no “one size fits all” solution. In fact, there are often competing and conflicting ideas about the best courses of action. In addition, both human and financial resources are limited and fragmented. To further complicate matters, adolescent health is often not a high priority within communities, states, and the nation.

Publicly funded agencies and other community-based organizations also face the challenge of accountability. Documenting that financial investments have resulted in significant positive health outcomes will increasingly become the responsibility of programs and funders. These challenges provide a significant dilemma to those who are responsible for leading adolescent health improvement efforts, such as Adolescent Health and Maternal and Child Health (MCH) leaders within the Public Health system. Public health, and most notably the MCH field, has a critical role in assuring the health of adolescents. In order for these leaders to respond effectively to adolescent health challenges, they must act strategically and orchestrate the diversity of people who need to act in concert to support healthy youth. And this strategic action must be based on thoughtful strategic planning.

Strategic planning provides the mechanism to develop a plan of action that can be used to more effectively respond to the complex needs of adolescents. The process of developing an Adolescent Health Strategic Plan provides a disciplined approach to making decisions about actions—actions that can build on opportunities and address the challenges of implementing effective interventions. It helps to answer the questions:

- Where are we now and why?
- What do we want to achieve and why?
- How to we get from here to there?

Successful strategic planning results in an enhanced ability to think and act strategically. The focus is on action. When strategic planning is combined with commitment to action, it provides the mechanism to take advantage of resources and emerging opportunities, respond effectively



Source: *Strategic Planning Workbook for Nonprofit Organizations*

to resistance and barriers, and use time, energy and resources more efficiently. In addition, the process of bringing people together for strategic planning builds the elements of partnership that are necessary to successfully improve the health of youth: understanding, trust, consensus, ownership and a sense of one's role in a larger plan. Thus, the focus of this guidebook is both on the planning and implementation of a strategic plan.

BENEFITS OF DEVELOPING AN ADOLESCENT HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN

There are many benefits of developing a state Adolescent Health Strategic Plan. Successful strategic planning can result in:

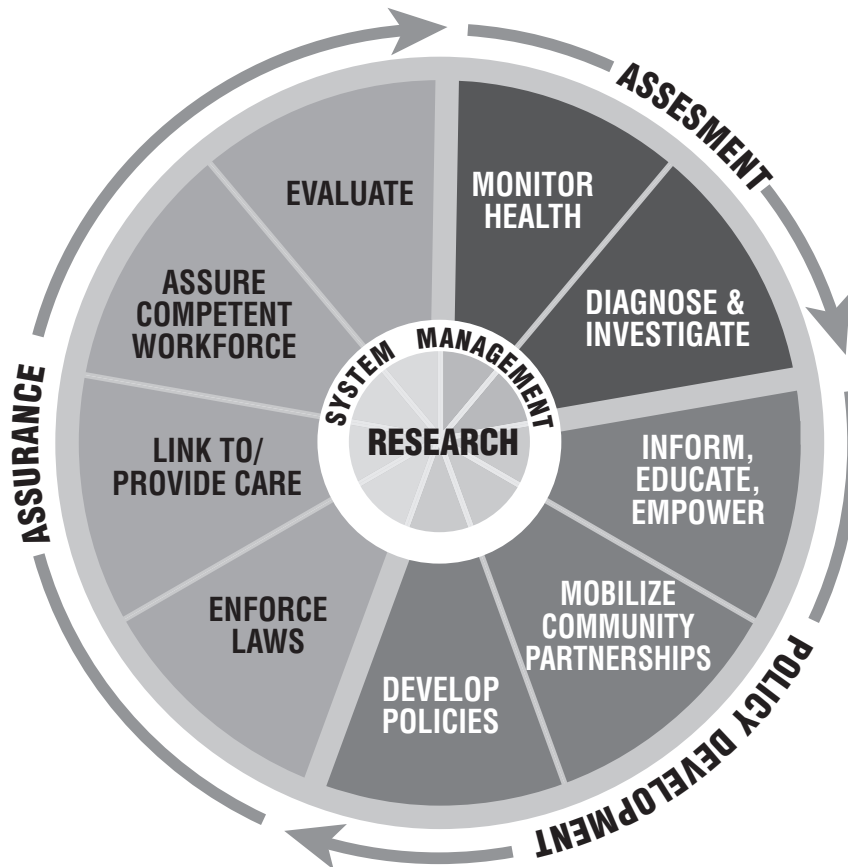
- Clarity about the critical adolescent health issues that require immediate and long-term investment.
- Increased understanding, support and commitment to adolescent health issues by key stakeholders and others.
- Consensus about what to do and how to invest resources to improve the health of adolescents.
- A clear sense of direction for effective decision-making.
- A clear plan of action that is built on strategies with a high likelihood of success.
- Wiser investments of limited resources.
- Increased capacity to build on opportunities that can have a positive effect on the health of youth.
- Stronger partnerships and collaborations to address adolescent health issues.
- Improved communication and coordination of effort around adolescent health activities at both the state and local level.

Developing an Adolescent Health Strategic Plan Helps to Answer These Questions

- What are the most critical adolescent health issues that require our attention?
- What do we ultimately want to achieve?
- What works to improve the health and well-being of youth?
- What are the best ways to address adolescent health?
- Who should be involved?
- How should we get things done?
- How do we garner support for these actions?
- What are the best ways to invest resources?
- How do we expand and/or redeploy our resources?

ROLE OF MATERNAL AND CHILD PUBLIC HEALTH IN ADOLESCENT HEALTH STRATEGIC PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Strategic planning is a critical strategy available to state-level Maternal and Child public health professionals to assure the health of adolescents. It's a strategy that clearly fits into the public health approach to addressing health issues—an integral part of the ten essential Public Health Services framework used by MCH professionals to ensure the health of youth, families and communities (Grayson and Guyer, 1995).

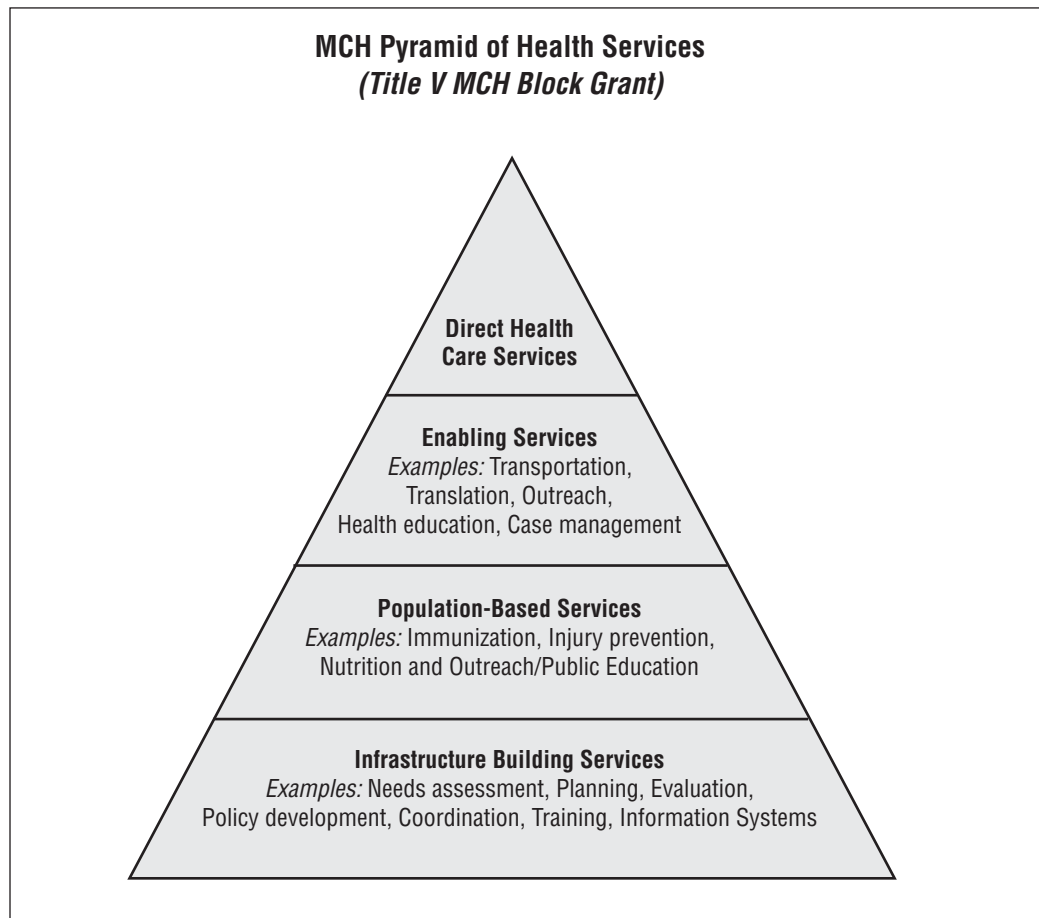


Essential Public Health Services to Promote Adolescent Health
<p>Public Health Services that are a part of adolescent health strategic...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Monitor and Assess adolescent health status to identify and address health problems and opportunities for health promotion. ■ Inform, Educate and Empower the public, families and youth about adolescent health and development issues. ■ Mobilize Community Partnerships between policymakers, health care providers, families, youth, the general public, and others to identify and address adolescent health issues. ■ Provide Leadership for priority-setting, planning and policy development to support community efforts that assure and promote the health of adolescents.
<p>Public Health Services that can be accomplished more effectively through development and implementation of an adolescent health strategic plan...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Diagnose and Investigate health problems and hazards affecting adolescents. ■ Promote and Enforce laws and regulations that protect and promote the health of adolescents, and ensure public accountability for the well being of youth. ■ Link Adolescents and Their Families to health and other community services, and assure access to comprehensive, quality and adolescent-focused health care. ■ Assure the Workforce Capacity and Competency (Public Health and Personal Health) to effectively address adolescent health and development needs. ■ Evaluate the effectiveness, accessibility and quality of personal health and population-based adolescent health services. ■ Research for new insights and innovative solutions that improve adolescent health and well-being.
<p>Adapted from Public MCH Program Functions Framework: Essential public health services to promote maternal and child health in America.</p>

Strategic planning and implementation also provides MCH professionals the means to meet the adolescent health outcome objectives for which they are responsible (e.g. Title V Block Grant Performance Measures, Healthy People 2010 critical objectives for adolescents and young adults, state public health objectives for youth). Clearly, it is beyond the scope and capacity of MCH professionals to meet all of these health needs alone. Strategic planning provides the mechanism for MCH professionals to bring together the diversity of partners necessary to work collectively to have a significant impact on the health of youth.

Lastly, MCH professionals are responsible for conducting strategic planning through their primary federal funding source, the Title V MCH Block Grant (Title V of the Social Security Act). Strategic planning fits well in the *infrastructure building services* component of this grant.

There are clear benefits of developing a state Adolescent Health Strategic Plan for MCH professionals. Yet, developing such a plan may initially appear to be a daunting process. Some states are ready to commit to a full strategic planning process and develop a comprehensive Adolescent Health Strategic Plan. Others can commit to a more limited strategic planning process that serves as an important starting point to acting strategically. The good news is that there is a range of strategic planning processes from which to choose. Regardless of one's starting place, there is a planning process that best responds to available resources and timing. The important point is to start wherever you are, commit to undergoing the planning process and choose a process that will help move an agenda to improve adolescent health at the state and community level forward strategically!



HELPFUL HINTS BEFORE BEGINNING STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Don't be concerned about pursuing a perfect strategic planning process. Strategic planning provides a roadmap that helps to mobilize for action. Keep this end goal in mind. Start by considering what you need in order to move forward in thoughtful, planned and coordinated action. Then, choose the planning process that will best move you in that direction.
- Effective strategic planning and action is based both on taking advantage of the opportunities at hand, while also minimizing the challenges. Affirm what you already have in place and the strengths and gifts of the community, while also acknowledging where existing gaps occur. Identifying gaps is part of the strategic planning process as well.
- Commit to a holistic approach to adolescent health in strategic planning and action. This means focusing not only on the problems faced by youth, but also what young people need to grow and develop in healthy ways. This includes focusing on the critical role that adults play in the lives of adolescents, whether they are parents and/or professionals intersecting in their lives. The plan also provides an opportunity to show how adolescence is a unique time, worthy of investment, as well as representing a valuable bridge between childhood and adulthood.
- Be opportunistic! If academic success is foremost in the minds and hearts of the public, focus on ways that adolescent health can contribute to improvements in academic success. Build on other youth-related efforts under way in the community. The result is likely to be a realistic set of recommendations that are embraced and advances an adolescent health agenda.
- Be sensitive to political climate in which you do your work, as well as the timing of when the planning process takes place. For example, it may be best to conduct the plan under a new administration, rather than at the tail-end of a previous administration. Awareness of community values regarding what adolescent needs are most pressing also need to be taken into account in setting priorities, for example, youth violence vs. teenage pregnancy prevention (although many of the antecedent factors contribute to both).

USING THIS GUIDE TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT AN ADOLESCENT HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN

This guide is designed to provide the reader with tools and practical ideas for developing and implementing an adolescent health strategic plan. The guide draws ideas from the strategic planning field and the practical experience of state Public Health professionals who have developed and implemented adolescent health strategic plans. It focuses specifically on the following topics:

Section 1

PREPARING: Laying the Foundation for a Successful Strategic Planning Effort

- ▶ Choosing a realistic strategic planning process.
- ▶ Securing commitment.
- ▶ Identifying a plan of activities.
- ▶ Securing resources.
- ▶ Addressing challenges.
- ▶ Worksheets (Planning Tools).

Section 2

PLANNING: Conducting a Strategic Planning Process

- ▶ Organizing and managing a Strategic Planning Committee.
- ▶ Creating an adolescent health conceptual framework and vision.
- ▶ Assessing adolescent health needs, assets and resources.
- ▶ Identifying priority issues and strategies.
- ▶ Creating and producing the strategic plan.
- ▶ Adapting the planning steps for Alternative Strategic Planning Initiatives.
- ▶ Practice Tips (Planning Tools).

Section 3

IMPLEMENTING: Putting the Strategic Plan into Action

- ▶ Launching and disseminating the strategic plan.
- ▶ Implementing the strategic plan.
- ▶ Evaluating the impact of a strategic plan and sustaining effort.

While this guide is directed to people working at the state level, it can also be a useful guide for strategic planning at the local level. Remember, beginning this journey enables a state or local community to make their vision of improving adolescent health a reality.

LESSONS LEARNED

Throughout you will see references to “Lessons from the Field” These “Lessons” capture knowledge from a number of states that have already completed a strategic planning process. Reflecting the diverse nature of the states, every plan is different and as such, each plan presents unique opportunities to learn. The “Lessons” presented here highlight the different ways states have handled and succeeded at strategic planning. Refer to these “Lessons...” to generate new ideas or confirm your own.



WORKSHEETS

To support your preparation for strategic planning, key concepts, questions and considerations are presented in the form of “worksheets” that are found as the final section of this workbook. You can use these worksheets to guide your process, document your activities or facilitate meetings with your planning groups. The “worksheet” icon and reference number will identify when a corresponding worksheet exists and how to locate it.



1.1: Guides decisions on adolescent health priorities.

PRACTICE TIPS

This Strategic Planning Guide also includes a host of resources that are referred to in the text as “Practice Tips.” These tips offer more information and additional tools to support your planning process.



IDEA

Look for “Idea” icons for suggestions on how to apply the knowledge presented in the guide.



- Provide an internship for a graduate student to gather and synthesize data.
- Engage youth in data collection and analysis.



Section 1: Preparing

Laying the Foundation for a Successful Strategic Planning Effort

Thorough preparation enhances the probability that a strategic planning and action initiative for adolescent health will be successful. Several critical elements need to be in place before starting this type of effort. These elements provide the foundation necessary to support planning that results not only in the development, but also the implementation of, a strategic plan. Invest in the time at the outset to ensure that these elements are in place and choose a strategic planning process that makes sense for your state.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING AND ACTION

- A clear sense of purpose.
- Commitment and support from key stakeholders to develop and implement an adolescent health strategic plan.
- An organization that is committed to leading the strategic planning project.
- A collaborative process that engages a diverse group of people in the project.
- An adequate level of human and financial resources.
- A strategic planning process that is feasible and builds on existing opportunities.

The chapters that follow explore these critical elements and guide you to prepare for your strategic planning process. Each chapter represents a significant benchmark for your preparation process. Within each chapter you will find a series of “Action Steps” which can be used to guide your work through a step-by-step process.



There are many ways to use the information in this section. You may review the chapters thoroughly, or you may seek specific information related to your needs and the stage of your own planning process.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN...	REVIEW CHAPTER...
Choosing a realistic strategic planning process. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Defining outcomes, target audiences, lessons learned from past strategic planning, opportunities on which to build, choosing a planning process).	1
Securing commitment from key stakeholders. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Identifying the strategic plan's lead organization, project coordinator and securing commitment from key people.	2
Identifying a plan of activities. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Broad and specific activities that will result in a useful strategic plan, partnering with youth, publishing the plan, developing a task list and timeline.	3
Securing resources. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Developing a budget, addressing resource gaps, seeking additional funding, identifying funding sources.	4
Addressing strategic planning challenges. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Review of common challenges and potential solutions.	5
Practical worksheets that help in preparing for a strategic planning initiative.	Worksheets



Chapter 1

Choosing a Realistic Strategic Planning Process

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INTRODUCTION

Choosing a strategic planning process that is feasible for your state increases the likelihood that the plan will be supported and implemented. It’s important to first define what you want to achieve as a result of strategic planning and how you anticipate the plan being used. A clear sense of purpose provides the foundation for choosing a strategic planning process best suited to the needs of your state. It also provides the means to engage the support of key stakeholders and others in the initiative. When strategic planning is framed by outcomes and actions, it becomes more attractive and inviting than a project focused solely on planning.

Evaluating the environment is another critical part of determining an appropriate strategic planning process. This involves identifying lessons learned from past strategic planning initiatives and assessing how strategic planning is currently viewed. It also involves identifying opportunities on which you can build your strategic plan. By tapping into existing resources and opportunities, strategic planning can become more deeply integrated into the youth-focused systems within the state.

This information can then be used to identify the type of strategic planning process that is realistic and likely to accomplish the outcomes you hope to achieve.



Action Step

DEFINE THE OUTCOMES TO BE ACHIEVED THROUGH STRATEGIC PLANNING

The overall goal of adolescent health strategic planning is to improve the health status of youth within the State. The planning process provides the opportunity to identify ways to strengthen the State's capacity to achieve this overarching goal. There are, of course, many ways to improve the health status of youth and many ways to strengthen the State's capacity. Which are your priorities?

Consider the following questions to help you identify priorities for moving adolescent health forward in your state:

- **What needs to be in place** in order to move adolescent health forward in your State?
- **What needs to be strengthened** in order for your State to improve the health status of adolescents?
- **What do you want to accomplish** through strategic planning?

In addition to understanding your priorities, you must have a clearly stated and understood set of outcomes in mind. There are many potential outcomes for an adolescent health strategic plan. They can include:

- **Increased awareness, understanding and support for adolescents and their health as a societal priority.** An effective strategic planning process provides a wonderful opportunity to build a commonly shared view of adolescent health among diverse partners within your state. The resulting strategic plan can be used to educate and raise awareness among many groups of people, which in turn helps to increase the number of stakeholders in adolescent health who can work together to influence and strengthen the political commitment necessary to address adolescent health issues comprehensively.
- **A shared vision of healthy adolescents that guides action.** Strategic planning can help build a shared vision and create consensus that effectively engages all sectors, including youth, families, schools, businesses, health, youth serving organizations, human services, and justice sectors, and the faith community, who are all needed to support the health and well-being of youth. It helps build and strengthen the partnerships that are necessary for effective action. At the same time, it can provide a sense that positive action and investments can make a difference.
- **Identification and prioritization of youth issues that require both immediate and longer-term action.** Assessment and prioritization of adolescent health needs is a critical component of effective strategic planning. This prioritization process helps build commitment to addressing both the short- and long-term health issues that affect adolescents. In times of limited resources and competing demands, achieving clarity on your state's priorities is an important and useful outcome.
- **Consensus on the best course of action to improve the health of youth.** Strategic planning can provide a clear sense of direction for effective decision-making and action. It provides the opportunity to bring people together to identify the strategies that have been shown to be effective through research (evidence-based best practices and promising strategies) and that



WORKSHEET

1.1: Guides decisions on adolescent health priorities and strategic planning outcomes.

are feasible within your state. Actions can then be chosen proactively because they make sense, are acceptable and have a high likelihood of success. This process also helps people identify their role in this work and develop a sense of ownership in addressing the health concerns of youth.

- **Improved coordination and collaboration around adolescent health activities at the state and local level.** Due to a variety of categorical programs and funding streams, most states are likely to have a wide range of concurrent activities already underway. Strategic planning can highlight the systems of programs, services, funding and other resources that currently exist, the need for increased coordination and the strategies needed to increase collaboration. In turn, this can lead to improved coordination, collaboration and efficiency, while also decreasing gaps in services.
- **Identification of resources to support action.** A well-defined plan of action that is linked to clear outcomes can make it easier to identify and secure resources. The clarity gained through strategic planning helps to focus and define the process of gathering the resources needed for action. In addition, the partnerships strengthened through the planning process can lead to more creative sharing of financial and human resources.

Lessons from the Field: STRATEGIC PLANNING PROJECT GOALS

California... Move policy development at state and local levels in three major directions:

- ➔ Making youth a policy priority.
- ➔ Creating supports and opportunities for all youth.
- ➔ Improving services and service systems.

Colorado...

- ➔ Provide information on the scope, nature and causes of the major health issues facing Colorado adolescents, using a broad definition of health.
- ➔ Change the perceived paradigm of adolescents as youth “totally at risk” to youth whose natural resiliency can be encouraged and strengthened so that they can surmount risks they encounter in their communities.
- ➔ Identify and analyze the implications of the positive and negative trends in the health status of adolescents.
- ➔ Disseminate new information about strategies that have proven effective in preventing and reducing teen health problems.
- ➔ Stimulate public debate about the importance of the adolescent years and motivate communities to value adolescents and to take action to address adolescent concerns.
- ➔ Mobilize families, schools, the non-profit sector, health care providers, media, business, the legislature and adolescents themselves to take action to improve the health status of teens in Colorado by the year 2000.





Lessons from the Field: STRATEGIC PLANNING PROJECT GOALS (Continued)

Minnesota...

- ➔ Increase awareness of Minnesotans about the scope and nature of adolescent health issues.
- ➔ Promote a vision for healthy Minnesota adolescents.
- ➔ Champion a “healthy youth development” perspective to address adolescent health issues in Minnesota.
- ➔ Recommend a comprehensive set of action steps that will effectively improve the health of youth.
- ➔ Encourage Minnesotans to become involved in activities that support the health and development of all teens in Minnesota.

Action Step

IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIC PLAN’S TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience is the group or groups that need to be reached by the plan in order to accomplish the intended outcomes. When deciding on a target audience, be specific about the group(s). Questions to consider include:

- What group(s) needs to take action?
- Why is it important to reach these groups?
- What do you want them to do as a result of the strategic plan?
- What do they need from the strategic plan in order to use it?

Answers to these questions will provide direction for the planning process and the types of action steps to implement.



1.2: Think through your most important audiences for the strategic plan.



Lessons from the Field: Target Audiences for Adolescent Health Strategic Plans

Hawaii...

- ➔ Youth.
- ➔ Community members.
- ➔ Policy-makers.

Minnesota...

- ➔ Minnesotans who advocate for the health of youth, including those who are actively involved in youth issues and those who would like to become involved.

Alaska...

- ➔ Policy makers / Elected officials.
- ➔ State agencies.
- ➔ Schools.
- ➔ Youth programs.
- ➔ Community members who address youth issues.

Lessons from the Field: Target Audiences for Adolescent Health Strategic Plans

Colorado...

- ➔ Those concerned about the needs of Colorado’s adolescents (advocates).
- ➔ Legislators (to raise awareness and show need for policy).

Action Step

IDENTIFY “LESSONS LEARNED” FROM PAST STRATEGIC PLANNING PROJECTS

There is often much to be learned from strategic planning projects that have historically taken place within your state. Talk with people involved in past planning efforts to learn about what worked and didn’t work, and identify possible opportunities to build upon answering the following questions will provide important information:

- What were the focus and goals of past projects?
- Who was involved and in what ways?
- What were the outcomes of these projects?
- How successful were these projects?
- What contributed to their success?
- What were their challenges?
- How did they overcome these challenges?
- Are there natural ways to link into or expand upon these projects?

Answers to these questions can help in developing the adolescent health strategic planning process to build on past efforts and successes, as well as to avoid complications and pitfalls. Think about what could be replicated from these projects and what needs to be done differently. It can be helpful to find members from previous planning efforts who might be interested in collaborating on an expanded planning project.



1.3: Document learning from prior strategic planning efforts.

Action Step

DETERMINE HOW STRATEGIC PLANNING IS VIEWED IN YOUR STATE

Talk with key stakeholders about the current environment for strategic planning. Questions to ask include:

- How is strategic planning viewed?
- Who supports strategic planning and why?
- Who doesn’t support strategic planning and why?

Based on stakeholders’ perceptions, the planning process may need to focus on a specific topic, such as adolescent suicide prevention, as a building block for a more comprehensive planning process.



1.4: Document attitudes and perceptions of strategic planning.



Action Step

IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES UPON WHICH THE INITIATIVE CAN BE BUILT

Connect the strategic planning initiative to existing efforts to make the best use of your resources and opportunities. To accomplish this, you will need to review how youth issues are framed, discussed and debated within your state. This knowledge can help shape and frame the planning effort in ways that respond to the interests and focus of key stakeholders and others who need to support this work. You should also survey the various sectors that address youth issues, such as education, human services, mental health, transportation, labor, youth employment, juvenile justice, and statewide youth development collaborators.



1.5: Document attitudes and perceptions of strategic planning.

- What are the youth issues that have raised state interest?
- Are there any adolescent health or youth issues that are a priority for key stakeholders?
- Are there any new youth initiatives that might be built upon?
- Are there other youth-focused strategic planning efforts currently underway within the state?
- Are there other opportunities that could be leveraged (e.g., federal Title V Maternal and Child Health Block Grant needs assessment planning that is required every five years, or agency-wide strategic planning)?

Collaborating with existing efforts can maximize results and minimize the resources required. For example, if a statewide youth forum is being planned, it could provide a more reasonable way to reach and involve youth in your strategic planning process. If the Title V Block Grant needs assessment is being planned, you may be able to shape focus group questions on youth issues in a way that provides data that is useful for both projects. Or you may find that your State has a America's Promise for Youth initiative that seeks public input into its work through its website. You may be able to partner with this initiative to post drafts of the adolescent health strategic plan online to gather public comment and build ownership for the plan's ideas. For further information about the America's Promise for Youth and to search for a State-specific initiative, visit their website at: www.americaspromise.org

Action Step

CHOOSE A STRATEGIC PLANNING OPTION TO MEET YOUR NEEDS

Use the information gathered to this point to review the range of strategic planning options and projects that are possible and find one that is best suited to your state’s needs. There are a variety of projects that can be used to move adolescent health forward, depending on how comprehensive or focused the needs are. Ideally, choose the most comprehensive option that can be supported. If possible, commit to developing a comprehensive adolescent health strategic plan. If this is not realistic, choose one or more of the following alternative options, ranging from comprehensive to more targeted efforts. These can provide a starting place that will help build towards developing a comprehensive plan at a future time.

- **Comprehensive options** result in strategic plans that cover all aspects of adolescent health, safety and well-being.
- **Mid level options** focus on developing strategic plans with a more limited scope or reach than a comprehensive plan.
- **Beginning options** can be useful in situations where there may not be enough support to conduct a full-fledged planning process. These options can be used to educate and raise awareness about adolescent health, and mobilize policymakers and other stakeholders to call for a more comprehensive strategic planning process.

Consider these options as creating a continuum—select a planning process that best fits your needs or develop a new hybrid option.

CONTINUUM OF STRATEGIC PLANNING OPTIONS
COMPREHENSIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Strategic Plan. • Comprehensive Strategic Plan in Phases.
MID LEVEL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Plan Focused on Specific Adolescent Health Issue. • Adolescent Health Section within a State MCH Strategic Plan or Public Health Plan. • Incorporation of an Adolescent Health Focus within a Single Issues Strategic Plan Focused across the Lifespan. • Adolescent Health Strategic Plan Developed for a State Agency.
BEGINNING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesis or Summary Report Highlighting Youth-Related Recommendations from Existing State Strategic Plans. • Adolescent Health Data Report or Chart Book. • Adolescent Health Fact Sheets. • Adolescent Health Framework and Vision for Healthy Adolescence.



1.6: Select the strategic planning option that is right for your state.



Recommended Option:

DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE ADOLESCENT HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN

A comprehensive statewide adolescent health strategic plan addresses all aspects of adolescent health, safety and well-being and provides a blueprint for improving the health of youth. This plan focuses not only on adolescent health behaviors and outcomes, but also on growth and development, factors that influence health and the infrastructure of resources needed to support healthy youth.

The plan is developed by bringing together a diverse group of people either in a formal collaborative or coalition, or informal in an ad hoc task force, to:

1. Define an underlying philosophy of adolescent health;
2. Assess the current state of adolescent health (adolescent health behaviors and health outcomes, factors that influence the health of young people, resources, services and infrastructure);
3. Define a vision and goals for healthy adolescents;
4. Identify the action steps needed to achieve the vision; and
5. Identify the resources available to support action.

**Option #1:
DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE ADOLESCENT HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN IN PHASES**

Development of a comprehensive plan can be broken down in three phases. Each phase is distinct, builds on the previous phase, ends with a useable product and ultimately results in a strategic plan.

The concept paper can be used to raise awareness and frame the issues for the second and third phases. Examples of frameworks from State adolescent health strategic plans, will be available in Section 2.

PHASE 1: DEVELOPMENT OF AN ADOLESCENT HEALTH CONCEPT PAPER	
GOALS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a conceptual framework that describes and defines adolescent health. 2. Identify a vision for healthy adolescence.
ADDRESSED ISSUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is adolescence? • What is health? • What is healthy development for adolescents? • What affects the health, safety and well-being of adolescents? • How do health and adolescent development (e.g. physical, emotional, psychological) intersect? • Why is adolescent health important or critical to address (why should people care)? • What roles do societal institutions play in shaping the health of adolescents? • What is our ideal vision for a healthy adolescence? • What are our core beliefs about adolescent health, safety and well-being?

PHASE 2: DEVELOPMENT OF AN ADOLESCENT HEALTH DATA REPORT OR CHART BOOK	
GOALS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe the current health status of adolescents living in the state. 2. Identify potential strategic issues that require both short and longer term action.
ASSESSMENT	<p>Conduct a needs and assets assessment that highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factors that influence the health, safety and well-being of adolescents; • Adolescent health behaviors and health outcomes; and • A mapping of youth-focused resources in the state.

Information from the needs and assets assessment is used to identify the strategic health issues that must be prioritized and addressed in order to achieve the vision for a healthy adolescent population.

PHASE 3: DEVELOPMENT OF AN ADOLESCENT HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulate goals for healthy adolescents. • Identifying strategies to meet these goals. • Use Needs and Assets assessment to identify gaps and potential future directions. • Once the goals and strategies are developed, they are woven together with the products from the previous phases to produce a comprehensive State Adolescent Health Strategic Plan. 	



**Option #2:
DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUSED ON A SPECIFIC ADOLESCENT HEALTH ISSUE**

A Strategic Plan can focus specifically on a single adolescent health issue (e.g. suicide, injury) or a few related health issues (e.g. tobacco, alcohol and other drugs; physical activity and nutrition). The goal is to comprehensively address all aspects of each health issue, including the behavioral and health outcomes, antecedent factors that contribute to and protect against the health issue, and the infrastructure of resources needed to support healthy outcomes.

The plan is developed by bringing together a diverse group of people to:

1. Describe the underlying philosophy of the specific adolescent health issue(s);
2. Assess the current state of adolescent health in relation to the selected issue(s);
3. Define a vision and goals for adolescents and the health issue;
4. Identify the action steps needed to achieve the vision; and
5. Identify the resources available to support action.

**Option #3:
DEVELOP AN ADOLESCENT HEALTH SECTION WITHIN A STATE MCH STRATEGIC PLAN
OR PUBLIC HEALTH PLAN**

Developing a specific focus on adolescent health within a broader MCH or Public Health Plan helps to raise the awareness about youth issues and define the action steps needed to improve the health, safety and well-being of young people. This can be achieved by either:

1. Developing a specific adolescent health section within the broader Plan; or
2. Ensuring that adolescent health issues are clearly addressed in topical sections of the broader Plan (e.g. teen pregnancy issues within a pregnancy prevention section, youth tobacco use within a tobacco prevention section, etc.). This option requires staff well-versed in adolescent health that fully participate in the development of the MCH or Public Health Strategic Plan.

**Option #4:
INCORPORATE AN ADOLESCENT HEALTH FOCUS WITHIN A SINGLE ISSUE
STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUSED ACROSS THE LIFESPAN**

This option focuses on ensuring that the specific needs of adolescents are adequately addressed in a strategic plan focused on a specific health issue for the entire population (e.g. suicide prevention plan, substance use prevention plan, chronic disease prevention plan, motor vehicle crash prevention plan, etc.). Staff well versed in both adolescent health and the specific health issue work to develop a concrete focus on adolescents within the plan.

**Option #5:
DEVELOP AN ADOLESCENT HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN FOR A STATE
PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY**

The goal of this option is to develop a clear blueprint for addressing adolescent health and safety comprehensively and consistently across a state public health agency. The process is similar to that used in developing a comprehensive strategic plan, but limited to the scope of a specific state agency.

**Option #6:
DEVELOP A SYNTHESIS OR SUMMARY REPORT HIGHLIGHTING THE
YOUTH-RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EXISTING STATE STRATEGIC PLANS**

The focus of this option is to analyze and summarize how adolescents, and their health, safety and well-being are currently addressed through existing state-level strategic plans. Information related to adolescent health is gathered from existing plans focused on:

1. Individual health issues (e.g. violence, substance use, tobacco, unintentional injury, pregnancy, etc.);
2. Public health goals and strategies; and/or
3. Other youth issues (e.g. education, juvenile justice, homelessness, etc.).

Each plan or report is reviewed to assess how adolescent issues are framed and issues prioritized, and the types of actions recommended. Information gathered from this review is analyzed for consistency across problem areas and the adolescent profile it provides. This information can then be used to show the need for integration of adolescent health within a state and to identify areas that require further attention (e.g. joint coordination and sharing of resources).



**Option #7:
DEVELOP AN ADOLESCENT DATA REPORT OR CHART BOOK**

A Data Report or Chart Book can be useful to highlight the critical health needs of adolescents at the state level. It includes data analysis and interpretation of:

1. Factors that influence adolescent health and well-being (poverty, family structure, school drop-out figures, etc.); juvenile arrest rate;
2. Adolescent health behaviors and outcomes; and
3. Services and systems that address adolescent health, safety and well-being.

Traditionally, data reports or chart books represent a compilation of secondary analyses of existing data. Although they are limited by the availability of existing information, the ability to bring together within one source all of the adolescent specific data enables professionals and other stakeholders to consider a comprehensive picture of adolescent health. Using the 2010 Healthy People Objectives (specifically, the 21 Critical Objectives for Adolescent Health—see Section 2) compares the health status of adolescents living in the state to national goals established to improve adolescent health and safety. While such a document does not usually incorporate recommendations or strategies for future action, the data often become the basis for a call to action.

**Option #8:
DEVELOP ADOLESCENT HEALTH FACT SHEETS**

A series of state-level Adolescent Health Fact Sheets can provide a systematic way to increase the awareness about youth issues and guide action. As a whole, the series provides a comprehensive overview of adolescent health by covering the range of health issues that affect adolescents. Individually, each Fact Sheet addresses a specific health issue, including:

1. General adolescent health, growth and development (to provide an overview and describe the overarching philosophy to understanding adolescent health; this philosophy should be evident across all other fact sheets);
2. Individual adolescent health behaviors and outcomes; and
3. Special populations of adolescents (youth with special health needs, homeless youth, youth in foster care, incarcerated youth, etc.) affected by health issues.

Each fact sheet should include the following content:

- a) Description of the issue and why it is important;
- b) Data assessment of the issue;
- c) Review of best practices and promising strategies to address the issue;
- d) Examples of current programs that exist to address the issue; and
- e) List of resources to support action and/or provide more information.

In order for this option to be effective as a strategic planning project, it must use an interactive process that brings together a small, yet diverse group of people to develop each Fact Sheet.

**Option #9:
DEVELOP AN ADOLESCENT HEALTH FRAMEWORK AND VISION FOR
HEALTHY ADOLESCENCE**

Developing a framework and vision for adolescent health can be a good way to bring people together around youth issues and build support for further strategic planning activities. It can be developed through a collaborative process that brings people together to:

1. Define adolescent health, and well-being;
2. Identify the factors that influence the health, safety and well-being of youth;
3. Define guiding principles; and
4. Develop a vision for healthy adolescents that can be used to guide action.

A Concept Paper is developed from this process. This product can be used to raise awareness and increase understanding of adolescent health issues, and engage others in moving forward in developing an adolescent health agenda. It also becomes a cornerstone for other planning efforts, including a comprehensive plan.

CONCLUSION

In developing a “plan” for the strategic planning process, a number of different considerations are necessary. It is valuable to consider the expected outcomes of a given planning process long before the actual planning process begins. The goal one selects—to raise awareness, create consensus, or mobilize state resources for a specific course of action—influences the type of action process that should be pursued. Factoring in your target audience, previous lessons learned, state planning experience, planning philosophy, and potential opportunities becomes a crucial background planning process.

Based upon this review, when selecting the most appropriate strategic planning option—from developing a comprehensive plan to a more modest planning process whose results are building blocks for future planning processes—it is imperative that champions of these efforts do not get discouraged or demoralized. To this end, assure that clear, on-going, logical next steps are evident, even if they are seen as an initial, “baby steps.” A thorough and collaborative approach will assure steady progress towards the the goal of improving the health of the state’s and the nation’s adolescents.



Chapter 2

Securing Commitment and Leadership for Strategic Planning

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INTRODUCTION

Commitment and support of key stakeholders is vital to success in developing and implementing an effective Adolescent Health Strategic Plan. Stakeholders are the champions who have the power and/or influence to move the strategic planning process forward and guarantee its success. Key stakeholders may include administrators within a state agency, political leaders who can influence action related to adolescent health, advocates for adolescents, youth-serving professionals, youth and others.

Gaining the support of key stakeholders is an important step in the planning phase of a strategic planning project. Involve these leaders early and throughout the process. While this chapter focuses on seeking commitment as one step in the planning process, seek support from various stakeholders (depending on their interests and resources) at different times throughout the development and implementation of the strategic plan.

While seeking support for strategic planning, formalize the leadership for the project. This involves identifying and securing commitment from an organization or partnership of organizations to lead the project. It also requires securing commitment for the staffing for the initiative.

Action Step

SECURE THE LEAD ORGANIZATION OR ORGANIZATIONS FOR THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROJECT

Focus on identifying the organization or partnership of organizations best suited to lead the project. There are benefits and challenges to taking full responsibility and leadership for a strategic planning process. While state health departments traditionally have taken the leadership role, this is not always feasible. If not, consider other organizations or a partnership of agencies that might be able to provide champions who have the power and/or influence to move the strategic planning process forward and guarantee its success.

Consider the pros and cons of possible options based on what needs to be accomplished, the type of strategic planning process chosen and who might be interested in providing leadership. Possible leadership options include:



2.1: Identify lead organization(s) for the process.

- An Adolescent Health program within a state Public Health agency;
- An Adolescent Health program working in partnership with another program within a Public Health agency (e.g. Adolescent Health program within a MCH Branch and a Center of Statistics within a Department of Health);
- A partnership between two or more different state agencies (e.g. Department of Health and the Department of Education);
- A partnership between a state agency and a University (e.g. Department of Health and a University School of Public Health, Adolescent Health Program or Extension Program);
- A contract with an outside agency to coordinate the project with assistance from the lead state agency (e.g. United Way or a University program);
- A partnership between a state agency and statewide non-profit organization (e.g. Department of Health and a statewide Youth Collaborative or a United Way); and/ or
- Statewide non-profit organization (e.g. statewide Youth Collaborative).



Lessons from the Field...COLLABORATION IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

California—An external public-private coalition composed of over 40 organizations and state agencies (health, education and juvenile justice) developed the plan with core funding from the State Department of Health Services. The University of California’s national Adolescent Health Information Center (NAHIC) provided staffing for the coalition’s planning and implementation effort.

Action Step

SECURE THE PROJECT COORDINATION STAFFING FOR THE INITIATIVE

Strategic planning requires a significant level of coordination, from both a time and skills perspective. Typically, it requires the following level of staffing for adequate coordination. Strategic planning processes typically require:

- Project Coordinator skilled in both adolescent health and management of an initiative. The Project Coordinator is often the State Adolescent Health Coordinator. He or she should become involved as early as possible and must be able to dedicate an adequate amount of time to the initiative. Depending on the scope of the project, the Coordinator should ideally be able to spend at least 50% of their time on this project.
- Support staff person to manage the clerical needs of the project.
- Additional staff or consultants may be required to coordinate specific activities of the project.

The roles of these individuals must be defined and responsibility clearly assigned. Responsibility for the following tasks should be assigned to the Project Coordinator, support staff, planning group members or consultants.

- Oversee the project.
- Manage the Strategic Planning Committee, Task Force, or Collaborative.
- Plan and facilitate meetings.
- Plan and facilitate focus groups (if applicable).
- Conduct key informant interviews (if applicable).
- Identify and gather data for the needs, assets and resource assessment.
- Write and edit the strategic plan.
- Oversee production of the strategic plan.
- Maintain a system of communication about the planning process with those involved.
- Provide clerical support.



2.2: Assign responsibility for project tasks and coordination.



Lessons from the Field... ROLE OF PROJECT COORDINATOR

Colorado...

- ➔ Works with Advisory Council on Adolescent Health to plan the process for developing the Action Plan.
- ➔ Hires and oversees the consultants.
- ➔ Identifies and gathers data (because Colorado has produced numerous editions of their adolescent health plan, they have a streamlined process of data gathering); gathers input on additional data sources from Advisory Council members and staff.
- ➔ Identifies adolescent health best practices, existing programs and initiatives, and resources from Advisory Council members, staff and other advocates.
- ➔ Edits the draft plan (they have also used an Editorial committee within the Advisory Council to edit the draft plan in the past).
- ➔ Coordinates the launch of the plan.

Alaska...from Alaska’s experience in developing an adolescent health plan, they encourage States to dedicate a full time Project Coordinator to:

- ➔ Coordinate the process.
- ➔ Develop consensus among the diverse people involved in the project.
- ➔ Focus on both the details and the big picture of the project.
- ➔ Keep the process moving forward.

They strongly recommend not loading down the Project Coordinator with other job responsibilities.

Ensure that all staff involved in coordinating the planning process are skilled and are able to dedicate adequate time to the project. When assessing capacity of a Project Coordinator or other coordinating staff, the following questions may be helpful:



2.3: Profile project staff’s capacity to handle tasks and on-going assignments.

- What is his/her current scope of work?
- How much time can he/she dedicate to coordinating the project given his/her current workload?
- Is this sufficient time or will he/she need additional assistance?
- Is there support from the person’s management to commit adequate staff time to the project?
- Does he/she have the skills necessary to carry out their role in coordinating the project?

Lessons from the Field... USE OF CONSULTANTS**Alaska**

- ➔ Technical assistance was provided by the National Center for Leadership Enhancement in Adolescent Programs (LEAP) to convene the Adolescent Health Advisory Committee.
- ➔ An editor was hired to frame and write the “Recommendations” section of the strategic plan.

Colorado

- ➔ A writer was hired to synthesize information and write the strategic plan.
- ➔ A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Prevention Specialist was brought in to assist with data collection and analysis, and adolescent health framing.
- ➔ Lessons learned about use of consultants: While consultants are helpful in accomplishing tasks of the strategic planning process, their work still requires significant management time by the Project Coordinator. Also, they've found it's more effective and efficient to use an editor who has expertise in adolescent health and data.

Minnesota

- ➔ A meeting facilitator was hired to manage the Adolescent Health Expert Panel meetings.
- ➔ A design firm was hired to design, layout and produce the strategic plan.

**Action Step****SECURE COMMITMENT AND SUPPORT FROM KEY STAKEHOLDERS TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT AN ADOLESCENT HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN**

Take the time to build bridges and gain the endorsement of critical stakeholders. Keep in mind that their support is needed not only to develop the plan but also to implement the plan's action steps and/or recommendations.

Identify who may be interested in having a strategic plan developed and why. Use the questions below to gather information about their concerns and priorities. This information helps frame the project in a way that connects to key issues that are important to these individuals.

DO YOU HAVE A MANDATE?

- Who is sponsoring or mandating the development of a strategic plan?
- What is their interest—to reduce teen pregnancy, to improve collaboration or program efficiency?
- What is their vision?
- What do they want to accomplish?



2.4: Profile your key stakeholders -- current and prospective.

WHO ARE YOUR KEY STAKEHOLDERS?

- Who needs to be committed to supporting the effort in order for it to be successful?
- Who is or might be a champion of the initiative?
- Which key individuals are not supportive of the planning process?
What needs to be done to educate them regarding the value of the project?
- Is further support needed from others before moving forward or is the core group sufficient to proceed?

WHAT ARE THEIR BELIEFS, VALUES AND INTERESTS?

- What interests them?
- What are their “hot topics”?
- How do they view adolescents and their health issues?
- What core beliefs and values do they use to guide their work?

WHAT MIGHT INTERFERE WITH THEIR SUPPORT FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING?

- Finances?
- Politics?
- Controversy?
- Belief that “nothing we do makes a difference?”
- Potential competition from other projects or initiatives that are important to the stakeholder?



Lessons from the Field... Responding to Stakeholder Interests

Alaska...a 1991 bill mandated by the Alaska legislature required the development of a statewide plan to address teen pregnancy. The Adolescent Health Advisory Committee that was formed to develop this plan quickly found the single focus of teen pregnancy to be too narrow. They felt that teen pregnancy did not occur in isolation of other youth health issues and therefore required a more comprehensive strategic approach. Therefore they successfully advocated to expand the project to develop a broad adolescent health strategic plan.

Use the information you gather to present the strategic planning project to stakeholders in a way that connects to their beliefs, values and interests while also addressing their perceived conflicts. For example,

- If a stakeholder is focused on increasing program accountability and building self-sufficiency, demonstrate how strategic planning can have an impact in these areas.
- If a stakeholder is concerned that a concentrated focus on adolescent health will decrease the focus on the health of young children, show how the results of strategic planning can highlight the importance of investing in early childhood as a critical foundation for healthy adolescence.

Remember: "It is easier to motivate someone around something they already believe than to convince them of something new"

*—Now hear this: The Nine laws of Successful Advocacy Communications,
Fenton Communications, 2001, Washington D.C
www.fenton.com*

In negotiations with potential champions, be honest and don't promise something that isn't true or that you can't support. Think creatively about how to frame strategic planning in ways that address stakeholder interests and concerns. Advocating for the strategic planning process may require the assistance of key individuals who are close to the stakeholders; enlisting the aid of one or two well-respected individuals to advocate on behalf of the project may be especially key in earning the buy-in from reluctant stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

Establishing buy-in and selecting the strongest leadership are crucial steps in preparing for the planning process. Clearly, the scope of any planning effort will require dedicated and committed individuals who are willing to shepherd the development of a statewide adolescent health plan. While there is a strong and clear benefit to assuring that a number of key stakeholders are on board, without a visionary leader to lead the effort the planning process will not achieve the desired level of success. Together, however, the necessary synergy can help advance the planning process.



Chapter 3

Identifying a Plan of Activities

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INTRODUCTION

Developing an adolescent health strategic plan is accomplished through a series of activities or action steps. During the preparation phase of strategic planning, clearly identify the steps to be taken to develop the plan. Focus not only on how the plan will be developed, but how a diverse group of individuals will be involved in the strategic planning process. It is through this involvement that support and commitment will be strengthened for moving strategic planning into strategic implementation.

The goal of this chapter is to identify a plan of activities for developing an adolescent health strategic plan. For further details about these activities, refer to the chapters in Section 2 of this Guidebook. These chapters provide more in-depth detail about the steps of strategic planning.

Action Step

IDENTIFY THE CONTENT FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Start by choosing the content that will be included in the strategic plan. The plan’s content will be influenced by the type and level of strategic planning process chosen (e.g. a comprehensive planning process vs. one focused on a single issue vs. development of a databook). For ideas, review other state adolescent health strategic plans. Identify your key content areas by considering the types of content typically included in a comprehensive plan (as it is the most expansive). Consider these elements:

- Adolescent health framework;
- Vision for healthy adolescence;
- Needs/assets and resource assessment;
- Strategic issues that need to be addressed in order to improve health of adolescents;
- Strategies and action steps for addressing the strategic issues.



3.1: Identify and decide on content for the plan.

Action Step

IDENTIFY THE STEPS THAT WILL BE USED TO DEVELOP THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Once the content of the plan is identified, develop a list of steps and tasks that will be used to conduct the strategic planning process.



3.2: Decide on and document steps in the process.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS	
STEPS	TASKS
Develop an adolescent health framework.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analyze the adolescent health literature. 2. Gather community and expert input. 3. Draft adolescent health framework. 4. Review the framework.
Develop a vision for healthy adolescents.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct a visioning process. 2. Conduct additional methods to gather community input into visioning (e.g. key informant interviews, focus groups). 3. Draft vision statement. 4. Review the vision statement.
Conduct a needs, assets and resource assessment.	<p>Needs and Assets Assessment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the data needed and data sources. 2. Collect and analyze existing data. 3. Collect new data. 4. Interpret the data. <p>Resource Assessment</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Map adolescent health resources. <p>Develop an Assessment Profile</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Summarize the results of the needs, assets and resource analysis.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS (CONTINUED)	
STEPS	TASKS
Identify strategic issues that need to be addressed to improve adolescent health.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review results of the needs, assets and resource assessment to identify the key issues. 2. Prioritize strategic issues. 3. Quantify strategic issues into outcome goals and objectives.
Formulate recommendations and strategies to address strategic issues.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify potential strategies. 2. Develop draft list of strategies. 3. Review and choose strategies.
Create and produce the strategic plan.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare to write the strategic plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-review project's outcome objectives and target audience. • Review agency guidelines for creating documents. • Review agency approval process. 2. Identify format for the strategic plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write the strategic plan. • Edit the strategic plan. • Design and produce the strategic plan.

Action Step

IDENTIFY THE METHODS THAT WILL BE USED TO ENGAGE A DIVERSE GROUP OF PEOPLE IN THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

An effective strategic planning process requires the involvement of a diverse group of individuals committed to action to improve the health and well-being of youth. The process of developing a strategic plan is as important as the plan itself.

Bringing people together to assess, prioritize and frame adolescent health issues, and identify effective strategies, results not only in the development of a strategic plan, but also in the intangibles needed to move the plan forward into action. These intangibles include:

1. Ownership.
2. Consensus and prioritization.
3. Relationships and partnerships.
4. An understanding of how this planning effort fits into the state's overall effort to improve the health of the public.

These are the elements that make the plan a living document that will be used to guide action instead of a document that sits dusty on a shelf.

There are a variety of methods that can be used to engage people in strategic planning—they include:



3.3: Select engagement methods and strategies.

- Strategic Planning Committee (this may also be known as an Adolescent Health Advisory Committee, Council, or Task Force);
- Community forums or town hall meetings;
- Conferences (statewide or regional conferences, audio or video conferences);
- Key informant interviews;



3.4.1–3.4.8: Document decisions and activities needed to implement different engagement methods.

- Focus groups;
- Surveys (written or electronic);
- Data forums;
- Review adolescent health literature and/or reports.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE: NEW OR EXISTING?

The methods suggested for engaging people in the planning process may be able to leverage existing resources. For example, breakout sessions at existing conferences are a viable alternative to creating an entirely new one.

A Strategic Planning Committee is also an opportunity to consider taking advantage of structures already in place. There are many types of groups that can be used as a Strategic Planning Committee. You may choose to develop a new committee or work with an existing committee for this project. Existing committees may include:

- Adolescent Health Advisory Committee or Council.
- School Health Advisory Committee.
- MCH Task Force.
- Youth Development Collaborative.

Using an existing group can be more economical, but they may not have the commitment or appropriate membership for the planning process. In this situation, time is needed to gain the necessary level of commitment and broaden the membership of the committee. Consider developing a sub-committee or Ad Hoc Task Force to work on the planning process.

Developing a new group can provide more flexibility, but requires investment in recruitment and maintenance of a partnership group. Consider the level of planning needed, as well as the resources available for the project. Also, consider the sponsoring agency’s guidelines for developing new committees.

Action Step

IDENTIFY THE TYPES OF PEOPLE TO INVOLVE IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

When deciding whom to invite into the strategic planning process, be sure to involve adults and young people who represent both the diversity of youth in the state and the social institutions that influence the health of youth. A variety of perspectives and view points about adolescent health will contribute to a successful strategic planning process.

Begin to develop your list of who to include in the process by brainstorming as many groups and individuals as possible. Consider these characteristics to fuel your brainstorming:



3.5: Involve a diverse group in the planning process.

INDIVIDUALS WHO REPRESENT THE DIVERSITY OF YOUTH

- Ethnic and cultural.
- Geographic.
- Disenfranchised youth (e.g. homeless youth, youth in foster care, youth in corrections).
- Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth.
- Immigration status.
- Youth with special health needs.

INDIVIDUALS WHO REPRESENT SOCIETAL INSTITUTIONS THAT INFLUENCE YOUTH HEALTH

- Parents and family.
- Health care.
- Public health.
- Faith communities.
- Academic organizations.
- Juvenile justice and corrections.
- Policy makers.
- Education.
- Mental health.
- Youth organizations.
- Media.
- Business.
- Human services.
- Philanthropy.

Seek out participation of those who are involved at many levels within a state, including local communities, state agencies, public and private agencies. When brainstorming the types of individuals to invite, consider other issues such as:

- Demonstrated interest in youth;
- Ability to represent the needs of specific populations of youth (e.g. homeless youth, youth in foster care, youth of color);
- Commitment to strategic planning and willingness to devote time to the project;
- Connections, position, visibility, clout;
- Charisma;
- Integrity and credibility;
- Persuasive ability;
- Expertise;
- Resources.



Be aware that people will have different levels of commitment to the project. Provide a variety of ways for people to be involved. Not everyone needs to be involved directly or throughout every step of the planning process. For example, there may be some individuals who don't have the personal time to be actively involved (e.g. Director of the State Health Department, MCH/Family Health Director, civic leaders) but whose support is critical to the project. Identify ways to keep them informed and engaged in the project.

We are looking for individuals who, in the words of Henry Ford, "have an infinite capacity for not knowing what can't be done" to make things happen in our community.

*—Promoting Healthy Youth, Schools, and Communities:
A Guide to Community-School Health Advisory
Councils, p 1-11, Iowa Dept. of Health*

Action Step

IDENTIFY WAYS TO INVOLVE AND PARTNER WITH YOUTH IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

"Young people also bring a fresh perspective to organizational decision making. They are less afraid than adults to challenge the existing organizational processes and culture, and seem to be less inhibited by social norms...Young people have a way, rarely subtle and often fresh, of bringing attention to their needs and concerns, which are often applicable to others."

*—Bringing Young People to the Table: Effects on Adults and Youth Organizations
Zeldin S, McDaniel A, Topitzes D, Lorens MB
Community Youth Development, Vol 2 #2 2001*

Adolescents need to be actively involved in the strategic planning process. Because they provide a "hands-on" perspective about the needs and concerns of youth, adolescents ground strategic planning discussions in their real life experiences. This provides a fresh perspective about the types of strategies, programs and policies that are most likely to successfully reach youth.

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN PARTNERING WITH YOUTH

- ▶ **Involve youth early.** Don't wait until the strategic plan is developed to invite youth to offer input and critique. Ask their opinions and get them involved as early in the process as possible.
- ▶ **Avoid tokenism.** While it's very important to involve youth in the strategic planning process, be sure that they are treated equally with adults and that their views are listened to and respected. Tokenism is having one youth participate on a committee to point to as "youth involvement" or asking for youth input but not using it. The key to avoiding tokenism is to share power with youth in making real decisions about what the plan's action steps will entail, including the type and approach for gathering information for the plan.

- **Involve more than the traditional youth leaders.** Engage youth beyond those who typically become involved in leadership opportunities. Keep in mind that the critical ingredient is a willingness to participate and contribute. Thus, it may not necessarily be the “A” student who has the most to offer. In order to assure that there is a broad representation of youth, consider the type of outreach strategies used, the potential incentives that can be used, and the type of training and mentoring the youth will need in order to assure that their perspective are considered.

Lessons from the Field... Youth Involvement

Alaska—Youth were actively involved in the Alaska Advisory Committee that developed the Alaska adolescent health strategic plan. The youth were full members of the committee and co-chaired the subcommittees. Partnering with youth provided a number of benefits to the strategic planning process:

- ➔ Youth helped develop the philosophical framework of the plan to be realistic and practical.
- ➔ They helped to address controversial adolescent health issues by providing a reality check and the practical “take” on these issues.

Colorado—The Colorado Youth Partnership for Health, a group made up of 20+ youth from across the State, participated in the Colorado’s cyclical strategic planning process in the following ways:

- ➔ Provided input in drafting recommendations for action for the strategic plan.
- ➔ Conducted a “Youth Opinion Poll” to gather qualitative data about Colorado's Youth Risk Behavior Survey results - this data was used in the strategic plan.
- ➔ Provided youth quotes for the strategic plan.
- ➔ Responded and reacted to drafts of the plan.
- ➔ Prepared photos for use in the strategic plan.
- ➔ Assisted in the launch of the Action Plan (e.g. planning the unveiling, assisting with the media day, writing articles in school newspapers).

Minnesota—The Minnesota Adolescent Health Action Plan was developed primarily through input gained from ad hoc meetings and discussions with adults and youth across the state. A diverse group of youth, age 12-21, was engaged in the planning process through 1-hour conversation sessions (informal focus groups) held in 38 community sites across Minnesota. During these sessions, youth were asked questions to identify:

- ➔ Vision for healthy adolescents;
- ➔ Strategic issues that needed to be addressed; and
- ➔ Strategies for addressing these issues.

Each group and their adult leader received an analysis report from their session for use in their own local communities. Several groups formally used their analysis reports to advocate with leaders within their communities to address priority youth issues. The common themes identified through the youth conversations were used as the core strategies of the strategic plan.



YOUTH PARTNERSHIP OPTIONS

There are a number of ways to authentically involve youth in a strategic planning process. Consider involving youth in as many ways as possible. Find ways to use a variety of approaches in order to assure that the voices of youth have been adequately included. Three options are listed below.

Option #1:

YOUTH AS MEMBERS OF A STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Involve youth as full voting members of a Strategic Planning Committee. There are a number of factors to keep in mind:

1. **Provide meaningful opportunities for youth.** This means giving young people the same rights and responsibilities as adult committee members, and having youth serve in leadership roles on the committee. As with adults, help youth members find roles that fit their specific skills and interests.
2. **The number of youth** to involve is dependent on the size of the committee. In general, involve more than 1–2 youth on the committee. Adults can be intimidating for youth. Having other youth can be supportive in raising their confidence and idea sharing. This helps to increase their active participation on the committee.
3. **Coordinate youth involvement on the committee.** Have someone act as a coordinator to recruit and train youth, assist with meeting logistics and ensure that the committee's culture is one that provides youth with respect and equal voice. This person can also act as a coach to assist youth in developing new skills as they take on responsibilities for the committee (e.g. leading discussions, developing agendas, professional writing, developing press releases, etc.).
4. **Provide training** for committee members (both adult and youth) at the start to build the skills and expectations about effective youth-adult partnership. Teens may need assistance in developing new skills such as leadership, planning, goal setting, communication, and public speaking. They will also probably need information about how decisions are made at the state level, how policy is developed, and the scope of the planning effort. Adults, too, often need assistance in what to expect of youth, and how to work and share decision-making power with youth members.
5. **Logistics are important.** Adjust meeting times to account for school schedules and other critical youth activities. This means holding meetings in late afternoons, early evenings or weekends. If meetings must be held during school hours, work with school staff first to make suitable arrangements. Transportation can also be an issue. Hold meetings in places that are easy for youth to reach and assist them with transportation (e.g. provide rides, travel vouchers, immediate reimbursement for travel expenses). Consider the importance of providing food for young people who may have been in school all day.



3.6.1: Plan youth involvement on the Strategic Planning Committee.

6. **Pair youth with an adult "buddy" on the committee.** This type of "buddy" system provides the young person with someone they can turn to with questions or concerns and increase their comfort level. The adult buddies can also walk youth members through background information for each committee meeting so that the young people are well prepared and informed.
7. **Build fun into committee meetings.** Adult meetings are often serious and intense. Bring humor into meetings. Work with youth to identify ways to make meetings fun and productive.
8. **Provide compensation.** While many of the planning group members are salaried and participate as part of their jobs, for young people this is often not the case. Consider what stipends or incentives may be useful to assure that the full continuum of youth is included in the committee's efforts. Stipends, academic credit, or other incentives may be extremely useful to assure adequate engagement.

Option #2: YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

Involve youth in strategic planning through a Youth Advisory Council or other type of youth leadership group. A group made up of youth members can serve as an ad hoc committee to the Strategic Planning Committee. Young people may feel freer to participate, give input and shape the project within a group of their peers.

There are a number of considerations to keep in mind:

1. Identify ways that youth can authentically be involved in strategic planning and not serve as more than a review group for the strategic plan. This can involve holding joint meetings, having a few youth council members serving on the Strategic Planning Committee (or subcommittees) or as a liaison.
2. If possible, connect with existing youth groups. This can be more efficient than developing a new youth council because there are structures already in place for recruiting, training, maintaining and coordinating youth involvement. It also helps integrate the adolescent health strategic plan into the work of an ongoing youth resource. The downside is that adolescent health is usually not their only focus. You may have less ability to assure adequate involvement in the planning process unless it becomes a priority activity.
3. Youth Advisory Councils can provide a natural way to involve a broader group of youth in strategic planning. Youth council members can reach other youth by conducting surveys or focus groups, hosting electronic discussions, etc.
4. Keep youth council members informed and updated on the strategic planning process. This helps build ownership and commitment to the project.



3.6.2: Plan a Youth Advisory Council.



3.6.3–3.6.4: Plan Youth Focus Groups or Youth Forums.

Option #3: YOUTH FOCUS GROUPS AND YOUTH FORUMS

These are relatively simple ways to gather youth input into the strategic planning process. These one-shot opportunities enable young people to gather, discuss the issues important to them and share ideas for ways to address these issues. Youth focus groups are small groups of young people (ideally 6–8) led by a trained facilitator to provide their perspective on a variety of issues. These groups can be held in a variety of settings. Youth forums are more informal than focus groups and can reach larger numbers of youth. They involve bringing together groups of youth to discuss a series of questions on adolescent health and development. Youth forums can be conducted with small (4–12 youth) or larger groups, in person, through conference calls, video meetings, or the Internet.

There are a number of considerations to keep in mind:

1. Use **existing mechanisms to invite youth** to participate. Young people are more likely to participate if the invitation comes from someone they respect. Ask adults who work with youth to extend the invitation to participate—this can include teachers, religious leaders, youth workers, 4–H leaders, park and recreation staff, youth probation officers, etc. Work with youth to invite their peers to participate.
2. Use **trained youth as leaders** to conduct focus groups and youth forums whenever possible.
3. For **youth focus groups**, work with people who are experienced in this field (for further information, see Section 2).
4. For **youth forums**, pilot test the questions with youth to make sure that youth understand what is being asked and that they can provide the types of responses most useful to the planning effort.
5. **Clearly describe the strategic planning project to youth participants.** Define how their input will be used to create action around critical youth issues. Young people are more likely to participate if they know that their ideas and input will be used for action. Youth may be skeptical about participating because they've experienced situations in which they are asked to give input and then their input is not used. If possible, send results of youth focus groups and forums to the participants and keep them updated on the strategic planning process. In some circumstances, youth may be able to use this information on a local level within their own communities.

TYPES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUTH

The types of questions you ask depends on what you want to know. Potential questions include:

- How do you define health?
- What does a young person need to be healthy?
- What are the problems that most often confront youth?
- How do youth deal with these issues?
- What are the major health problems that youth experience in your community?
- What needs to be done to help youth to be healthy?
- Where do young people get their information related to their health?
- What types of existing programs are well accepted by teenagers in your community? What makes these programs successful? What are ways these programs could be improved?
- If you were designing a health campaign for young people in your community, what do you think the topics would be? What would be the messages? How would you want to present the information? How would you know you had reached your audience?

Action Step

IDENTIFY THE STEPS FOR PUBLISHING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Once the steps for developing the strategic plan have been defined, identify the process required to write and publish the plan. This is an important step that is often overlooked in the planning process and one that can cause headaches if forgotten until the end. Work with agency communication staff to research what is necessary to publish a strategic plan, including any necessary approval processes and logistics for publication.

APPROVAL PROCESS

State-level strategic plans must usually go through an approval process. While this process is often required, it can also be critical to a plan's implementation. Plans with support and approval from key stakeholders (such as State Agency leaders or a Governor) may have more credibility and a higher likelihood of being implemented. However, it is noteworthy that such an approval process can be complicated and time consuming. There can be different levels of approval that are required, both within an individual agency, as well as other agencies that may be involved in developing the plan. Start early by identifying what the process will entail so that the schedule of approval steps and timeline can be planned. In addition, build sufficient time for modifying and revising the plan depending upon the feedback received.

Lessons from the Field...

California—In order to gain greater authority, the California Adolescent Health Collaborative agreed to submit their adolescent health plan for consideration and approval by multiple levels of government, including the Governor's Office. Though some modifications were required, the ability to gain approval at each level allowed for greater buy-in from the stakeholders who, in fact, have the resources needed to assure implementation of the plan.

PRODUCTION PROCESS

Determine the policies, protocols and costs for developing and producing a publication. Many State agencies have guidelines on the type of publication that can be developed. Consider policies for written and electronic versions of a publication. If the sponsoring agency has a communications department, work with them from the start to assess and plan for all aspects of publishing and disseminating the strategic plan.



3.7: Document approval and production process requirements.



Action Step

DEVELOP A TASK LIST AND TIMELINE



3.8: Document tasks and timelines.

Once all of the activities and steps for developing the strategic plan are identified, organize this information into a detailed but realistic task list and timeline. Review and present the task list and timeline to the planning committee to assure that it is realistic. Revisit the timeline on a frequent basis to assure that timely progress is being made in meeting the planning goals.

Action Step

DEVELOP A FACT SHEET DESCRIBING THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROJECT



3.9: Identify fact sheet requirements.

A project Fact Sheet can be useful for clearly describing the planning effort to key stakeholders, recruiting people to participate in the process and keeping individuals oriented to the project's purpose. Use the information gathered to this point to develop a short and concrete description of the project. Possible information to include:

- Rationale for the strategic plan (why the plan is important);
- Outcomes to be achieved;
- Overview of strategic planning activities, including involvement of youth;
- Timeframe;
- Sponsoring agency or groups;
- Whom to contact for further information.

CONCLUSION

At this point, you should have a clear plan of action for developing an adolescent health strategic plan and a sense of who will be involved. These steps should provide a means for developing a plan that stimulates action for improving the health, safety and well-being of youth in your state. The details of these action steps will also guide decisions in the next stage of preparation: securing resources.



Chapter 4

Securing Resources

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INTRODUCTION

Strategic planning requires a clearly established level of resources, both in human and financial terms. A key aspect of this phase is to assure the availability of a core set of resources that is committed to the planning effort before beginning the process.

However, while resources are an important element in strategic planning, they should not be the stumbling block that prevents you from moving forward. Depending upon the scope selected, the planning effort(s) do not have to be excessively expensive nor require large numbers of staff. There are a variety of ways to match the level of resources available to the strategic planning process selected. It pays to be creative in using existing resources.

Action Step

DEVELOP A BUDGET FOR THE PROJECT

Use the project's task list to develop a budget. The level of resources needed depends on many variables, such as the type of strategic planning project, the type of activities to be used to develop the plan, etc. Be sure to consider both human and financial resources. Strategic planning requires the dedication of a core group of people to coordinate, organize and oversee the effort. Contracting with short-term consultants for specific tasks or hiring student interns may be feasible options. In considering the financial resources needed for the proposed planning activities, be as specific as possible as this will help determine if outside funding is necessary.

DETERMINE THE ESTIMATED EXPENSES OF THE PROJECT

Identify the range of expenses that are anticipated, regardless of the funding source. The following chart outlines some of the potential expenses. Some expenses may be



4.1: Identify project and document expenses.



considered general operating expenditures of the sponsoring agency (e.g. Project Coordinator salary, mailings, etc.) but include these in the budget anyway. The next step will be to identify the existing resources that can be used to cover project expenses and assess the “fit” between resources and estimated expenses.

Potential Strategic Planning Expenses		
The following is a range of potential expenses that might be incurred in a strategy planning process.		
ACTIVITY	HUMAN RESOURCES	FINANCIAL EXPENSES
Project Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Coordinator salary and benefits • Support staff salary and benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copying • Mailing • Computer expenses
Strategic Planning Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting facilitator consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting space • Food • Travel • Lodging • Audiovisual equipment and/or technology expenses • Miscellaneous expenses (e.g. office supplies)
Key informant interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone • Mailing • Survey preparation • Transportation
Focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus group leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food • Materials • Analysis and summary reports
Community forums, discussions, or town hall meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting facilitator consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting space • Food • Materials • Travel • Recruitment expenses • Audiovisual equipment and/or technology expenses

Potential Strategic Planning Expenses (continued)		
ACTIVITY	HUMAN RESOURCES	FINANCIAL EXPENSES
Conferences (statewide or regional conferences, audio or video conferences)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speakers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Meeting space • Food • Materials • Mailing • Travel • Brochures/invitations • Audiovisual equipment and/or technology expenses
Youth involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth coordinator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment • Training • Travel • Stipends
Needs and assets assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey development and implementation • Data analysis • Report preparation
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web designer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web development • Maintenance of the website
Production of the strategic plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writer consultant • Editor consultant • Design consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printing expenses • Production expenses
Distribution of the strategic plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project coordinator • Administrative staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mailing • Publicity



DETERMINE THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT THE PROJECT

Take stock and assess the availability of resources for the project. Review both financial and in-kind resources.

- ▶ **What financial resources are available through the sponsoring agency?**
Many Public Health agencies use Title V MCH Block grant funds to support strategic planning initiatives. But other resources may be used such as state funds or other federal funding (e.g. State Systems Development Initiative/SSDI, Community Integrated Service Systems Program/CISS).
- ▶ **What financial resources are available through partner agencies?**
Strategic planning partners may be able to commit funding to the project. They may also be able to secure funding that is not available to the sponsoring agency. For example, foundation funding may be more readily available to a community-based organization than a government agency.
- ▶ **What resources can be donated or provided by other organizations?**
This might include support for generic costs such as space and food for meetings, travel expenses for statewide meetings, staff time, printing of the plan, and dissemination costs.
- ▶ **Are there resource-sharing opportunities that can be leveraged?**
For example, you may have planned to conduct key informant interviews with youth advocates and find that another organization is planning to do the same —are there ways to combine your respective questions and hold the interviews together? Another alternative is to gather input from youth by working with an agency that is already planning to hold a statewide youth summit. Assess the possibility of tapping into the youth attending the summit to hold informal conversations or focus groups. Community input into the strategic plan can also be gathered through existing conferences and meetings. Consider "borrowing" an existing Advisory Committee to serve as the core of the Strategic Planning Committee.

COMPARE EXPENSES TO RESOURCES

Assess the “fit” between estimated expenses and available resources.

- ▶ Do the resources fit the anticipated expenses?
- ▶ Are there gaps?
- ▶ If there are gaps, in what areas or for what types of expenses?



4.2: Analyze budget issues.

Action Step

DEVELOP A PLAN OF ACTION FOR GAPS IN RESOURCES

If the project requires more resources than are available, develop a strategy for either seeking additional resources and/or adjusting the scope of the project. Do not let resource gaps stop the project outright. While a lack of resources can be a very real challenge, strategic planning is still feasible. It means that you must think creatively and look widely for possible opportunities to collaborate and share resources. Consider conducting specific components that will generate additional interest and/or funding for future components. For example, there may be enough existing resources to develop a series of fact sheets that can then become the basis for generating additional interest in developing a comprehensive plan.

Option 1: SEEK ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

There are a number of potential sources for additional resources. Look at the types of resources that are needed and assess the potential resources.

- ▶ **Additional support from strategic planning partners**—could existing partners provide additional in-kind and/or financial resources to the project?
- ▶ **Redirection of existing funding**—are there existing funds that could be redirected to support the project (e.g. MCH block grant, tobacco settlement funding)?
- ▶ **New funding**—does it make sense to seek additional funding (e.g. state or federal grants, foundation funding)?

Seeking additional funding can take time. Re-organize the task list and timeline so that some of the strategic planning activities can begin, while simultaneously seeking additional funding.

Option 2: ADJUST THE TYPE OF ACTIVITIES THAT WILL BE CONDUCTED

Depending on available funds and other resources, you may need to adjust the scope of the project and its activities. Are there ways to change how the strategic planning activities are carried out in less expensive ways (e.g. reduce travel expenses for meetings by holding them via conference call instead of in person, conducting fewer focus groups than had originally been planned, using an existing web site as a more cost-effective means for disseminating the plan)?

If resource gaps are significant, consider modifying the type of strategic planning process to one that fits your resources. For example, choose a less comprehensive strategic planning process or break the project into phases (a series of smaller projects conducted over a period of time). As each phase is accomplished, it may draw the attention of additional individuals (and resources) who may want to work on the next phase of the planning effort. *The Continuum of Adolescent Health Strategic Planning Options* highlighted in Chapter 1 can provide some ideas about which components to select within available resources.

Do not lose sight of the importance of your goal. Find a process that fits and start there.



4.3.1: Address budget issues with additional resources.



4.3.2: Address budget issues by adjusting plans.



Action Step

SEEK ADDITIONAL FUNDING AS NEEDED

If you decide to seek additional funding, develop a search strategy for the specific types of resources that are needed. If the strategic planning initiative is sponsored by more than one organization, consider which is best suited to submit a funding proposal to a potential funder. For example, a request to a foundation may be best from a private non-profit agency partner who already has an established relationship with that foundation.

SEEK ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM STRATEGIC PLANNING PARTNERS

Be specific about what partners are being asked to contribute and how these efforts will benefit their organizations as well. Wherever possible, it is important to consider “win-win” situations. For example, an agency partner (for example, the Department of Corrections or the Department of Education) may be able to support part of the salary of a consultant. In turn, the data generated through the needs and assets assessment may be a resource in the other department’s own efforts to leverage additional funding for specific projects within its agency.

SEEK REDIRECTION OF EXISTING FUNDING

Research the procedure for redeploying existing resources into a new activity. If you are seeking a change in how funds from the MCH Block grant are used, determine when this request needs to be made, what type of activities this funding will support and who needs to make this request. For example, if planning activities are supported by the MCH Block grant, negotiate internally to assure that funds can be allocated on a rotating basis to different special areas of priority, with a focus on adolescents as a specific group for one of the funding cycles. This will require careful negotiation within the department and strategizing with members of the planning group. In such a situation, it is particularly useful to demonstrate what funds are already available as “in-kind” support and what additional funds are needed to complete the process.

SEEK NEW FUNDING

There are a variety of sources to research when seeking additional funding. States that have conducted adolescent health strategic planning have creatively patched together a variety of resources to support their work. Although it can be difficult to identify funding that is specifically ear-marked for strategic planning, specific components – such as fact sheets or a chart book on adolescent health – may be more marketable for some funders, while the youth leadership component may be more attractive to other funders.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

See the Appendix “Strategic Planning Funding, Support and Resources” to learn more about public and private funding opportunities as well as grantwriting resources.

CONCLUSION

An important consideration of the planning phase is deciding on the types of resources needed. The availability of resources often influences the type of planning process adopted (from developing a comprehensive plan to a more narrow activity). Before considering what new additional resources are needed, carefully review the existing financial and other resources available to conduct the process. Additional funds may be required to launch a broader approach to planning, as well as the implementation phase. Establishing a realistic budget will help ascertain what types of additional funds are needed. There are a wide variety of potential sources of funding, from governmental support to private foundations. Although writing grant proposals will require an expenditure of time and may result in generating the resources needed, consider whether any of the components of the planning process can be initiated with existing resources and materials. If funding is pursued, consider which funding sources are most appropriate for each phase and potential component of the effort, as well as the resources that might be necessary to support the implementation phase of the effort.



Chapter 5

Addressing Challenges

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INTRODUCTION

When considering a strategic planning process, there are a number of challenges that may arise. Knowing that such challenges are possible offers the opportunity to assess and address these issues proactively, thereby avoiding potential conflicts later.

The following is a review of common challenges that states have faced when developing an adolescent health strategic plan. Also included are potential solutions and practical ideas that these states have used to address these challenges.

Challenge

CONCERN ABOUT THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

States have reported several underlying concerns over the state's role and responsibility for strategic planning. One centers on whether they have and can sustain the authority to implement a strategic plan in a way that successfully drives action. The other is fear that strategic planning will be viewed as a signal that an agency will invest a significant level of new or existing resources in adolescent health—which may or may not be the case. In general, these concerns reflect discomfort with:

- Implementing a strategic plan;
- Roles and responsibilities for addressing youth issues; and
- Managing raised expectations.

Authority is a very real concern, particularly when it comes to adolescent health issues. The authority to implement a comprehensive youth-focused strategic plan can be problematic because adolescent issues are addressed across many state agencies. No one agency or program “owns” adolescent health. As sponsor of the plan, does that mean that a single state agency will be perceived as responsible for all the issues addressed? Who will handle implementation?

SOLUTION

It is critical to define what it means to implement the strategic plan from the very start of the project. A strategic plan is more than a description of what an individual agency will do. It can serve as a blueprint document used to help diverse groups of people across a state, both within and outside of the government, to identify their roles in a comprehensive, collaborative approach to improve adolescent health.

Implementation does not have to mean an agency or system-wide “shake up.” Strategic plans can be used to raise awareness, identify critical health issues, recommend sound strategies, improve systems and evaluate progress. By clearly articulating how the plan might be used, implementation becomes far less intimidating.

The roles of the plan's sponsoring agency can be those of coordination, oversight and evaluation. It can be responsible for:

- ▶ Identifying and implementing the plan's strategies that fall within the agency's domain;
- ▶ Using the plan to define the types of local programs and strategies that it will support through youth-focused grants;
- ▶ Working with other state agencies and organizations to define their role in implementing aspects of the plan;
- ▶ Monitoring how the plan is used and evaluating progress towards the plan's goals and objectives; and/or
- ▶ Communicating with policy makers about the consensus within the state over critical youth issues and strategies to address these issues as they plan youth policies.

Challenge

CONCERN THAT STRATEGIC PLANNING IS A WASTE OF TIME BECAUSE THE PLAN WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTED

Many people have well-grounded fears that strategic planning is a waste of time because nothing happens once the plan is completed. They have experiences with strategic plans that “sit dusty on a shelf.” Given these concerns, strategic planning advocates must demonstrate how the plan will be used and commit to implementation through a variety of channels.

SOLUTION

Plans that are not implemented may indicate an incomplete planning process and/or lack of commitment to implementation. Work to ingrain the focus on implementation in all stages of strategic planning

Build the expectation for implementation from the start by framing the strategic planning project as a process from development through implementation. Some states have defined strategic planning as a 2-phase project:

1. Development of the plan.
2. Implementation and evaluation of the plan.

In this manner, everyone who becomes involved in the project understands the importance of action and evaluation and makes a commitment to continue through the implementation phase.

Seek support from key stakeholders at the start of project for implementing the plan. Work with them to define what implementation means and begin building the capacity to move the strategic plan forward into action once developed.

Identify key people who will have influence on the plan's implementation and strategically involve them in the project. This helps to build partnerships and shared ownership for the plan's ideas across many sectors, thereby increasing the likelihood of commitment to action. The stronger the collaborative effort, the stronger the infrastructure of individuals and groups committed to implementing the plan. While a charismatic leader may help to launch the planning process, without a strong network of committed partners, both formal (e.g. agency directors) and informal (e.g. youth and community leaders), there is less likelihood that the plan will be translated into action.

Continue the strategic planning process by developing an implementation plan. See Section 3 for further details on putting the strategic plan into action.



Challenge

CONFLICT OVER THE SCOPE OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING

Stakeholders may hold a variety of views about the type of strategic planning process that can successfully be completed. Many have a narrow view of strategic planning that focuses solely on comprehensive planning. These individuals may not be aware of the alternative options that can be used if comprehensive planning is not feasible at this juncture.

SOLUTION

Clearly define what you want to accomplish as a result of strategic planning and review the strategic planning options that can help you achieve these outcomes (see Chapter 1 for a review of strategic planning options). Keep the focus on the end result when working with key stakeholders to find a mutually agreeable strategic planning process.

Challenge

STRATEGIC PLANNING TAKES TOO LONG

This issue can be a real challenge given limited resources, competing demands and pressure for quick outcomes. Action is often more highly valued than planning, especially if strategic planning historically has not resulted in productive action.

SOLUTION

There are a number of approaches that may be needed to address this challenge.

- ▶ Work with key stakeholders to see the value of process in strategic planning. It is the process that establishes the ownership and commitment needed for future action.
- ▶ Address concerns that strategic planning is a waste of time from key stakeholders who have had bad experiences with strategic planning in the past.
- ▶ If you're planning to develop a comprehensive strategic plan, break the process down into phases (see the Alternative #1: Developing a comprehensive *Adolescent Health Strategic Plan* in phases — Chapter 1). In this manner, the project is presented as smaller, more manageable projects with each phase ending in a useable product and building on the preceding phase.
- ▶ Consider a strategic planning option other than developing a comprehensive plan. For example, you may choose to develop an Adolescent Health Databook or develop a plan for your MCH program. These options are less time consuming yet set the stage for continued strategic planning at a future date.

Challenge

DISCOMFORT WITH POTENTIAL CONFLICT, ESPECIALLY OVER SENSITIVE YOUTH HEALTH ISSUES

Discussion and decision-making about adolescent health issues can be controversial. Stakeholders may be wary and resistant to strategic planning because of this potential conflict.

SOLUTION

While conflict may not be totally avoided, it can be minimized in a number of ways.

- ▶ Use a skilled group facilitator to manage meetings, discussions and decision-making.
- ▶ Develop and use ground rules that focus on respect and common ground.
- ▶ Use a consensus-building process that results in decisions that are sufficiently acceptable for all participants. It does not mean that everyone in the group has to agree totally with the decision but that members are willing to support it.
- ▶ Continually focus on the project's overall goals and objectives in order to help participants keep the end result in mind. This can help to stem personal conflicts and controversy.
- ▶ Help participants to recognize that a diversity of strategies will need to be included in the strategic plan in order to effectively address the needs of youth. This diversity of strategies is needed not only because of the diversity of needs among adolescents but also because of the political and cultural climate within a state.
- ▶ Start first with the issues that lend themselves to consensus in order to build trust and experience success early on in the process. Then work towards addressing issues where consensus may be more difficult to achieve.

Challenge

OVERLAP OR COMPETITION WITH OTHER STRATEGIC PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Strategic planning is a fairly common task at the state level. Because adolescent health crosses so many issues and domains, there may already be a variety of concurrent efforts that could potentially drain staff and resources from this effort.

SOLUTION

There are many ways to work in cooperation or collaboration with other concurrent strategic planning projects. Learn about the other planning efforts, including their scope, focus and the rationale for the planning process. Find potential ways to either work cooperatively or collaboratively with these existing efforts. For example, if separate groups are working on specific aspects of adolescent health, for example, violence prevention, while others are working on academic outcomes and building a stronger youth development focus within the community, explore ways that the respective projects can be complimentary to each other's efforts.

Plan to work together on activities useful to both projects (e.g. youth focus groups, in which questions on these different topics can be discussed, best practices research on evaluated programs in each of these areas, data gathering and analysis, etc.). Another approach is to blend both strategic planning projects together (e.g. a combined adolescent and school health strategic plan, etc.). Flexibility and good communication are crucial in this situation.



Lessons from the Field...

California—As the California Health Collaborative was developing its Adolescent Health Strategic Plan, the State Department of Education was developing a Blueprint for Comprehensive Health Education. While it was not feasible to blend both efforts, liaisons from both projects served on each other's planning process in order to assure coordination and consistency across both plans. Both groups are also collaborating in the implementation phases.

Challenge

LACK OF CRITICAL DATA

Data on critical youth issues (e.g. youth behaviors, youth development indicators, etc.) may not exist at the state level. In addition, existing data may not be available in a useful format (e.g. data analyzed by specific ethnic/racial groups, adolescent years separated from early childhood or young adulthood, data on older adolescents).

SOLUTION

Use data from outside your state and show how they relate to the population of youth living in your state. For example, if state-specific data are not available but national data exists, it may be useful to compare the ethnic and racial breakdown of youth in your state to national figures. If other states have state-level data available and the state is similar in characteristics to your state (e.g. geographically similar with commonalities in ethnic/racial profile), the information may also be relevant to your state. Be cautious when interpreting the data though—while the demographic profile of youth may be similar, there may be significant differences among and within groups. For example, a state whose population includes a significant number of immigrant Latinos may have different outcomes from a state whose population also has substantial numbers of Latinos, most of whom are second or third generation. Thus, these comparisons may provide a point of reference and an anchor for one's own state, but should not be solely relied on to provide a comprehensive profile. However, in the short-run, such information may be helpful in convincing state legislators that engaging in a planning process may be needed, especially if the national or state comparison shows one's own state to have poor adolescent health outcomes in some critical areas.

Other data may include specific research findings for certain areas of the state or a nationally representative sample. Again, while these data are often not generalizable, they may be helpful in beginning to draw a state profile. For data sources, see Section 2, Chapter 9.

Use this opportunity to highlight the need for improved data collection within the state. This can include advocating for the importance of gathering specific types of data or adding new questions to existing surveys. It might mean discussing the importance of participating in or increasing participation in the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) or other state-wide youth surveys. It might also mean highlighting the need for easier access to data through mechanisms such as a data repository or clearinghouse.



Challenge

DIFFICULTY IDENTIFYING, GATHERING AND ANALYZING CRITICAL DATA

Data about youth issues are collected across a variety of state agencies. Therefore, a level of cooperation and collaboration with these agencies is necessary when conducting a needs and assets assessment for a strategic plan.

SOLUTION

In order to assure that a comprehensive profile of state data is developed, a number of resources may be useful. Initially, it is important to identify existing sources of information that are available. If the planning activity is prioritized and seen as valuable to all partners, there is a greater likelihood of cooperation. For example, while health professionals may be especially interested in health-related data, many recognize the importance of reviewing academic success as an antecedent to a number of health issues, such as drug use, alcohol abuse, and teenage pregnancy. Other agencies also need to be considered for the types of data that they may be able to contribute. For example, the Department of Transportation may have data on injuries, by age, which would be advantageous in developing a health plan as injuries account for such a large proportion of adolescent mortality and morbidity.

Developing a report that brings together different staff from different agencies will help to produce a more comprehensive profile of adolescent health. It will also raise questions regarding the types of age break-downs available. There may be inconsistency in the types of age groupings available, or data may only be reported combining childhood and adolescent years (0 to 18).

The plan may bring together a diverse group of data-focused stakeholders who are concerned with a lifespan approach if the project takes a “development” framework. At this point, it is helpful to speak with the maternal and child health department data staff to review what data is available at the state level and to contact data analysts and epidemiologists in other related state agencies. This becomes a key step as special data analysis may be needed in order to disaggregate the data into meaningful categories. It is

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT DATA

While many around the country are beginning to recognize the importance of including protective or resiliency adolescent indicators, limited information is available to document this aspect of adolescent health. States such as Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, South Carolina, Washington, Wisconsin and Vermont have begun to collect statewide data on these factors.

For example, California includes a resiliency module as part of its California Healthy Kids Survey (which incorporates the CDC’s Youth Risk Behavior Questions). Students in the 7th, 9th, and 11th grade are asked questions regarding whether they feel connected to their parents, schools, and communities. These important data elements demonstrate that the more connected adolescents are, the less likely they are to engage in risk taking behaviors. California data clearly document that the older the student, the less likely they feel a sense of connection (www.californiateenhealth.org). As a result, the recommendations in this state report call for a holistic approach to young people as a means of reducing risk-taking behavior.

A number of states have added their own questions on protective factors to their Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBSS). For information about this, contact the CDC Division of Adolescent and School Health, Surveillance and Evaluation Research Branch at (770) 488-6170.

especially useful to have data across the different issues presented in a parallel manner wherever possible. This presentation format helps the different stakeholders begin to create a far clearer profile of young people’s experiences at different stages of development. This is also useful in considering the implementation steps necessary, including creating age and developmentally appropriate interventions for different segments of the adolescent population.

Consider different ways to involve epidemiologists and data staff in the project through a variety of ways, including inviting them to:

- ▶ Serve as members of the Strategic Planning Committee.
- ▶ Serve as members of a Strategic Planning Subcommittee that focuses on data.
- ▶ Hold a series of meetings to gather and analyze state, regional, and local data on specific youth issues (e.g. demographics, youth behaviors and outcomes, education, youth development, disenfranchised youth, etc.). Through this mechanism, these professionals can draw upon data collection and analysis activities with which the data experts are already involved. Local and regional data may help to supplement or complement other data collection efforts under way and may be included in the plan as examples of activities across the state.
- ▶ Identify graduate students in epidemiology, maternal and child health and/or public policy who may be able to work with state staff to synthesize available data. Ideally, students would work under the supervision of a state epidemiologist to guide their efforts.

CONCLUSION

The strategic planning process requires careful consideration of potential barriers to success. In this section, a number of problems that are commonly encountered, along with potential strategies, have been presented. These issues are presented not to discourage the planning effort, but to be prepared for issues that may arise with a variety of ways to circumvent them. While each state may have different issues, there are a number of resources available to support the planning effort—ranging from professionals in states who have already developed plans to national resource centers such as the State Adolescent Health Resource Center/Konopka Institute for Best Practices in Adolescent Health and the National Adolescent Health Information Center. The strategies selected may be distinctly related to the politics and context of the state, but joint pre-planning can help “leapfrog” the potential challenges of planning and implementation.



Summary

Starting the Strategic Planning Process

Preparing for a successful strategic planning process takes time but is well worth the effort. Improper or incomplete preparation is a recipe for disaster. Fail to prepare, and your project is doomed before it has even begun. But with thoughtful and thorough planning, you've created the foundation that will support success.

Now is the time to take your ideas and move into the planning process. Be sure to refer back to the worksheets, plans and discussions from the preparation phase as you move forward. And keep in mind that the goal of these activities is not to create the plan but to create the foundation and guide for strategic action that supports all youth to health well-being. The strategic plan is the visible tool that moves this action forward.



Section 2: Planning

Conducting a Strategic Planning Process

Congratulations for reaching this point in the strategic planning process! You've completed the preparation phase for your strategic planning initiative. Now it's time to roll up your sleeves and move into the second phase: Development of the Strategic Plan.

The goal of this phase is to answer 3 basic strategic planning questions:

- 1. Where are we now...and why?*
- 2. Where do we want to be...and why?*
- 3. How do we get from here to there?*

The process of answering these questions provides the information needed to develop the core components of the strategic plan.

CORE COMPONENTS OF A STRATEGIC PLAN
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Conceptual framework that describes and defines adolescent health.■ Vision for healthy adolescents that motivates strategic action.■ Assessment of the health status of youth and the systems that support their health.■ Prioritization of issues that need to be addressed in order to improve the health of youth.■ Outcomes to be accomplished as a result of addressing these issues.■ Strategies or actions to achieve these outcomes.■ A strategic planning process that is feasible and builds on existing opportunities.

Two additional strategic planning questions guide a strategic planning process that is successful:

- 4. Who will be involved in strategic planning?*
- 5. How do we create a strategic plan that is useable?*



Using the 5 strategic planning questions as a framework, the strategic planning process can be divided into 5 Strategic Planning Steps:

Who will be involved in the planning process?	Step 1: Organize and manage a Strategic Planning Committee.
Where do we want to be?	Step 2: Create an Adolescent Health Conceptual framework and vision.
Where are we now? How do we get from here to there?	Step 3: Assess Adolescent needs, assets and resources. Step 4: Identify priority issues and strategies.
How do we create a strategic plan that's usable?	Step 5: Create and produce the strategic plan.



Related Section 1 Worksheets: 3.1–3.9

By this time, you should have already identified a broad plan of activities that will be used to conduct a strategic planning process. This was a key part of the Preparation phase of strategic planning (see Section 1 Chapter 3, Worksheet 3.1–3.9). Now is the time to plan the details of these activities and put them into action. Keep in mind that strategic planning is not always a linear process. You may have chosen to conduct the steps in the order noted in the Guide, in a different order or combine the steps together.

This section provides a detailed description of the 5 Strategic Planning Steps applied to a comprehensive strategic planning initiative. Each chapter reviews an individual planning step by outlining a series of activities that can be used to accomplish the step. In addition, practical tips and suggestions and lessons learned detailed appendixes are included throughout the chapters.

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN	REVIEW CHAPTER
Organizing and managing a Strategic Planning Committee.	6
Developing a conceptual framework.	7
Developing a vision for healthy adolescents.	7
Conducting a needs and assets assessment.	8
Conducting a resource assessment.	8
Identifying and prioritizing strategic issues.	9
Creating goals and objectives.	9
Developing strategies for action.	9
Writing, laying out and/or producing the strategic plan.	10
Adapting the strategic planning steps for alternative strategic planning options.	11
Facilitating strategic planning activities (e.g. focus groups, community forums, brainstorming, prioritizing).	Practice Tips

There are many ways to use the information in this section. You may review the chapters thoroughly, or you may seek specific information related to your needs and the stage of your own planning process.

No matter what type of planning process you use, or how you weave the planning steps together, keep a few principles in mind:

- **Keep it simple.** Strategic planning can be overwhelming and adolescent health issues can be complex. Keeping your planning process as simple as possible increases the likelihood that you will develop a strategic plan with clarity and clear messages.
- **Keep it realistic and feasible.** This seems like an obvious point, but it's easy to get caught up in a planning process that gets out of control. Use activities that you can realistically manage. Quality is more important than quantity.
- **Be opportunistic.** In this day and age of limited resources, it's critical to utilize existing opportunities to involve people in the planning process. For example, you might conduct a strategic planning activity as a break-out session at another organization's conference (e.g. public health conference, school health meeting, medical association annual meeting). Or you may reach out to youth involved in existing youth leadership programs, instead of developing your own Youth Advisory Committee.
- **Be inclusive.** This mantra will be repeated extensively throughout this section. Involving a wide array of individuals in the planning process provides the means to develop a strategic plan that "fits" your State or Territory. It also helps to build ownership and buy-in to the plan by key stakeholders and others who need to be involved in implementing the plan. This requires you to be creative. Look for simple ways to involve people in the project:
 - ▶ Include people outside of your Strategic Planning Committee in ad hoc, short-term workgroups.
 - ▶ Routinely communicate with key stakeholders not actively involved in the process to keep them informed about your progress in developing the plan. This helps to keep them involved and engaged in the process.
- **Keep the focus on strategic action.** Planning is good only if it results in strategic action. A process that embeds action into planning is more likely to produce a strategic plan that is used. For a list of practical tips to build action into your planning process, see Chapter 6.
- **Stay in communication.** Strategic planning projects take time. Often people are involved at various points in the planning process not throughout the entire project. To keep your planning partners engaged and committed to action, keep them informed about your progress. One simple way is to send out routine e-mail updates to all who have been involved in the project.

A Note for Those Involved in Mid-level and Beginning-level Strategic Planning Projects

While this section of the Guide focuses on the comprehensive strategic planning process, the information is also relevant to other types of planning initiatives. These steps are the core of any type of planning effort. Ideas on how to adapt the steps for alternative planning projects are offered in Chapter 11. Use the information in this section to identify a realistic starting place and craft a planning process that moves your State forward to the next stage. The underlying philosophy of this section is that choosing even a small planning project and doing it well has benefits that far outweigh the negative consequences at a time when states face greater demands and limited resources.

Use whatever process builds on and moves people forward. Whichever spotlight you are able to choose, consider the planning process itself as a tool for educating others about the needs of adolescents. Because adolescents are often under-valued and rarely prioritized in our society, your role will likely be one of ambassador that enables you to make compelling arguments on behalf of the needs of young people and the benefits of investing in the next generation of adults. Leadership comes in many forms. One role is facilitation to help mobilize different agencies, organizations and partnerships to maximize existing resources for youth so that the whole becomes larger than its parts. In this type of leadership role, you may find yourself working more behind the scenes. In contrast, you may find yourself becoming the visible spokesperson giving strong direction for fulfilling the mission of completing a strategic plan for action. Whichever leadership pathway you select, strive for creating collaborations with people who become engaged and mobilized not only in planning, but also implementing a course of strategic action.

Remember that the planning process is both a journey and an outcome. At its core is the commitment to strengthen your State's capacity to address the needs of adolescents and support their health and well-being.





Chapter 6

Organizing and Managing a Strategic Planning Committee

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INTRODUCTION

A cornerstone of the planning initiative is an effective, well organized and managed Strategic Planning Committee. This occurs when the committee has a clear sense of where it’s going and how it will get its work done, with members who are engaged and actively involved in the process. The result is a planning process that is productive and efficient.

The focus of this chapter is on the care and management of the Strategic Planning Committee. It starts with a review on how to organize and orient the committee and ends with ways to keep the committee running effectively throughout the initiative.

Action Step

ORGANIZE THE COMMITTEE

A Strategic Planning Committee is often one of the primary ways that people become involved in a strategic planning process. This group is often where most of the work is done. As in any group process, it takes work and planning to make a Strategic Planning Committee successful.

Although, there is no “right” way to develop and sustain such a group, there are general “tips of the trade” that can make such a committee successful. The following tips are aimed at states planning to start a new Strategic Planning Committee. However, they are also important for those who already have an existing committee in place. Use the tips to assess if the group has all the critical elements to be successful in the adolescent health strategic planning process.

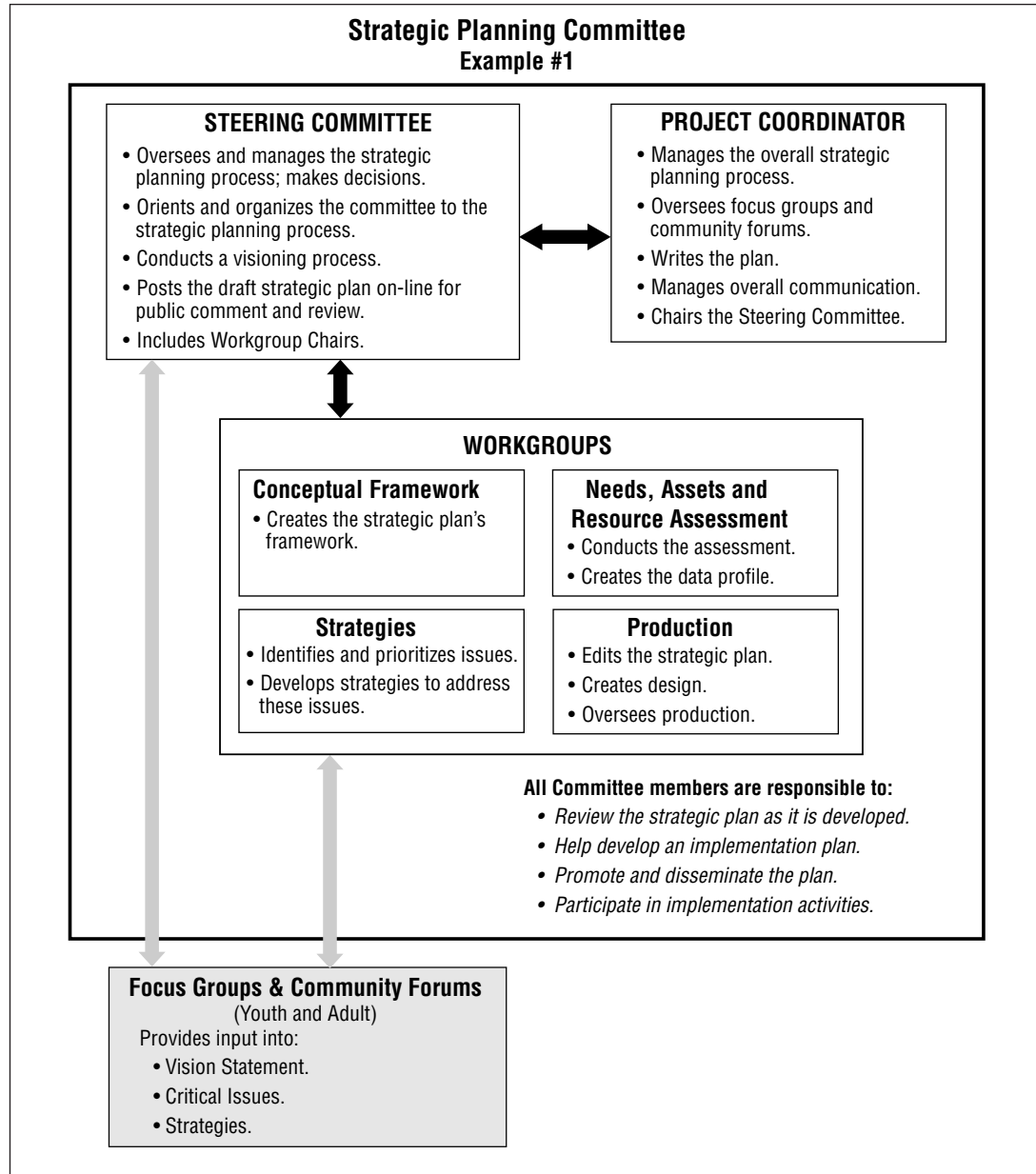


Related Section 1 Worksheets:

- 2.2:** Secure the Project Coordination Staffing for the Initiative.
- 2.3:** Project Coordination Staffing Checklist
- 3.2:** Identify the Steps That Will Be Used to Develop the Strategic Plan.
- 3.3:** Identify the Methods That Will Be Used to Engage a Diverse Group of People in the strategic Planning Process.
- 3.4:** Plan the Details for Strategic Planning activities.
- 3.5:** Identify the Types of People to Involve in the Planning Process.
- 3.6:** Identify Ways to Involve and Partner with Youth in Strategic Planning.

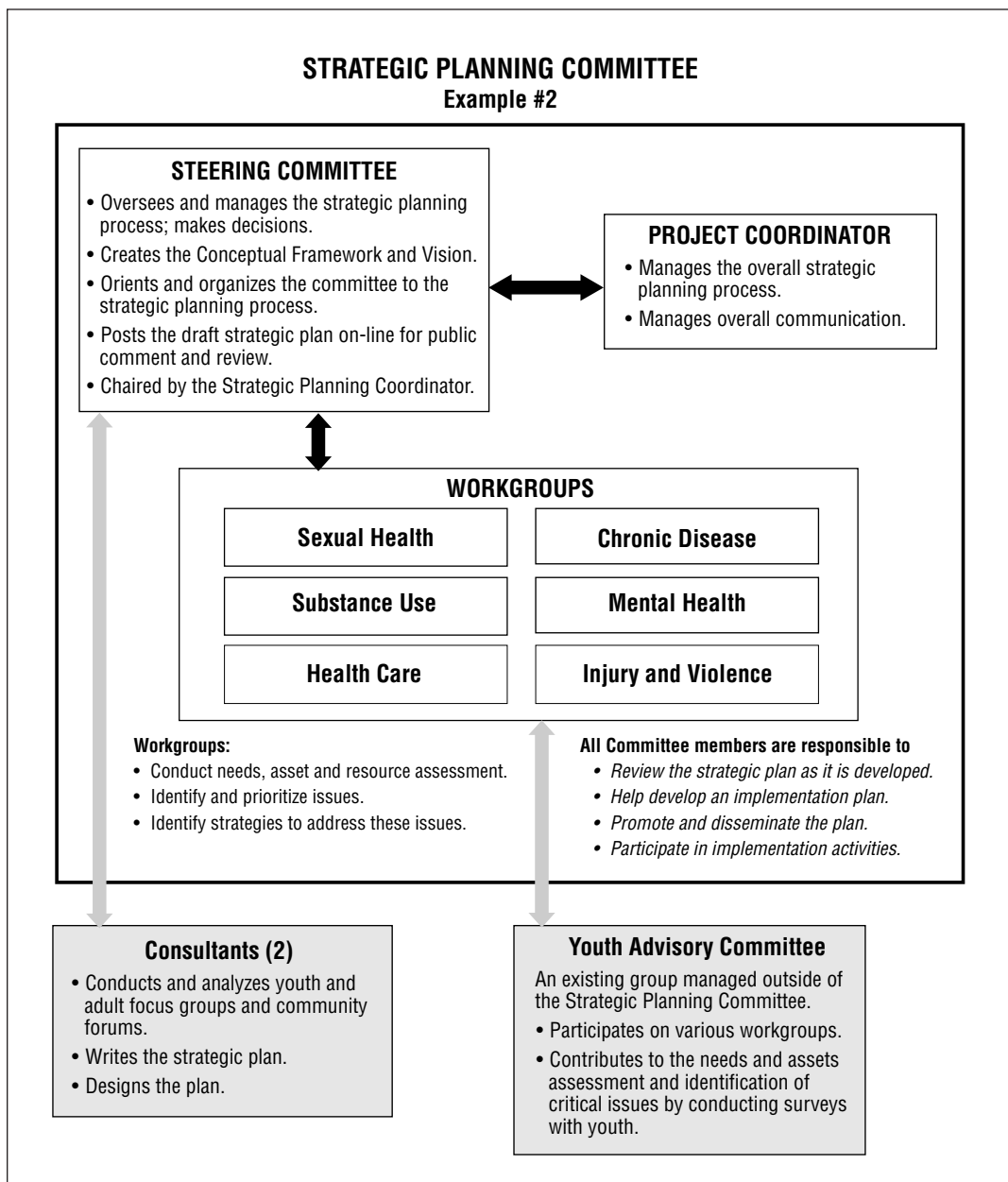
DEFINE THE COMMITTEE'S STRUCTURE

Determine the structure that is best suited to the strategic planning process. A structure that includes a Steering Committee and workgroups tends to work best for most situations.



Steering Committee—oversees and manages the strategic planning initiative, supports the committee’s functioning and makes decisions. It should be made up the Project Coordinator, a small number of people who are skilled in managing projects and committed to adolescent health, and Workgroup chairs. Because this oversight work is critical, Steering Committee members must be able to dedicate an adequate amount of time to this work.

Workgroups—Subcommittees that focus on specific portions of the planning process (conduct the needs assessment, create the conceptual framework; focus on a specific adolescent health topic). Decide on their scope of activity, length of time, decision-making structure and membership. In contrast to the Steering Committee, which ideally relies on a consistent group of decision-makers, you may expand the composition of the workgroups to include others with specific types of expertise. For example, a Needs Assessment/Data Committee may be comprised of a group that comes together for three months to develop a data profile, share their findings with the Steering Committee, as well as to discuss the strengths and limitations of the existing data. Data experts, who do not play any additional roles in the planning process, may be ideal to involve for relatively short, but important planning tasks.



IDENTIFY LEADERS AND DEFINE THEIR ROLE

It is critical to identify the Committee's leaders—without strong leadership, Strategic Planning Committees often fail.

Overall Committee Leadership—The Committee needs an overall leader—this should be the Project Coordinator (alone or in partnership with an outside youth advocate) or a Consultant (hired specifically to manage the Strategic Planning Committee). This person oversees all aspects of the Committee's work and Chairs the Steering Committee. Whoever leads the overall committee must have the time and skills necessary to manage the committee's work.

Workgroup Leadership—Consider the type of leadership needed for each of the workgroups. Again, these leaders need must be able to commit the time needed to manage the workgroup's work and functioning. If possible, use an adult-youth team as leaders for workgroups. Workgroup leaders (Chairs) should also sit on the Steering Committee or at least have routine contact with this group.



Lessons from the Field: USE OF CONSULTANTS

States conducting strategic planning often find it useful to engage consultants at the very beginning of their process to move Strategic Planning Committees forward faster and more efficiently.

Connecticut worked with the Policy Studies, Inc (PSI) to develop their Strategic Planning Committee and facilitate committee meetings. (In addition, they analyzed the research, created a companion document and wrote the strategic plan.)

IDENTIFY THE ROLE OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Committee members may act in an advisory role or in more active roles. For example, committee members may be expected to gather information, research the literature or assist in setting up focus groups. Or, they may advise the Project Coordinator and consultants on conducting these activities, or a combination of both active and advisory roles may emerge. Clarity about roles makes it easier to recruit the appropriate types of people for the Committee.

IDENTIFY THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Decisions made as a group can be difficult, especially when committee members bring a diversity of opinions, experiences and values on youth issues. Therefore, identify the ways in which decisions will be made in advance. Assess where in the Committee structure that decisions will need to be made and any protocols related to decision-making required by the sponsoring agency.

How Many is Too Many?

While you want your committee to represent the needs and diversity of adolescents in your state as well as key stakeholder agencies and organizations, too many people can cause chaos and confusion.

If your list of preferred committee members becomes too numerous, consider establishing an Advisory group—include people with whom you want to keep connected to the process. Hold meetings for this group on a quarterly basis—with a focus on providing updates on the planning process and eliciting feedback.

Decisions can be made by consensus, motion or majority vote, nominal group process, ranking procedure and other processes. Generally, a consensus method is preferred because:

- ▶ Decisions are more reflective of the perspectives of the members.
- ▶ People are more willing to support decisions.
- ▶ Disagreements are explored, rather than avoided.
- ▶ Everyone gets the chance to be heard.
- ▶ Group synergism creates a higher-quality decision.

RECRUIT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Use the most personal method possible to invite people to participate in the Strategic Planning Committee. Face-to-face meetings take time, but they can be the most effective method of recruitment. Consider combining outreach methods, such as sending a letter with a follow-up phone call. If contacting people through letter or e-mail, write a persuasive letter designed to catch the recipient's attention and interest. If at all possible, have the invitation to participate in the process come from an influential person, such as the Governor or Director of the State Department of Health.

Whatever recruitment method is used, provide information about the strategic planning project (the rationale for the project, its goals, and a description of the role they will play). Be sure to share with each member how their participation will be beneficial both to the project and themselves.

Action Step

ORIENT THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Get your committee off and running in ways that build for long-term engagement by orienting committee members to the project and process. This will provide them with a clear sense of purpose and ownership for the project.

ORIENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO THE PLANNING PROCESS

The goal is to ensure that all members understand the initiative and what's expected of them by reviewing the following points:

Expected Outcomes. Explain what you expect to accomplish as a result of the planning process and why this is important. Stress that the initiative is focused on both development and implementation of the strategic plan.

Timeline and Action Steps for Developing and Implementing the Strategic Plan.

Review the specific steps and timelines. One "active" way to do this is to present the steps in a way that focuses on the concrete "products" that will be accomplished along the way (e.g. the visioning step results in a vision statement; the needs and



assets assessment results in a snapshot of adolescent health in your State) and how these “products” may be used as the plan is being developed. This helps members see progress and success along the way.

Process for “Getting the Work Done.” Review how the planning committee is structured; how work will be accomplished; roles and responsibilities of committee members, consultants, the Project Coordinator and anyone else involved in the initiative.

Overview of the Process. Create a one page fact sheet about your strategic planning process and distribute it to each committee member so that all members have the same information to refer back to throughout the process. Include the timeline and staff responsible for coordinating key components of the plan.

ORIENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS TO ADOLESCENT HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Don’t assume that all members have a comprehensive understanding of adolescent health and development. Few will be adolescent health “experts.” Provide committee members with an orientation or training on adolescents and their health from a holistic perspective. This will provide a common ground and language that supports a smoother, more productive and more informed planning process. It also lays the foundation for the development of the plan’s conceptual framework (addressed in Chapter 7).

Action Step

MANAGE THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Once the committee is organized, don’t forget to “feed and grow” it! This helps to keep committee members engaged and working together for a common purpose. Simple steps for keeping members engaged included:

Recommendations

Group facilitation experts recommend that 5–10% of a group meeting should be spent on “team formation” activities—those related to group process and relationship building.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONNECTION

Committee members need the opportunity to transition from a group of individual people addressing youth issues to a unified team working to make positive change. This includes time for members get to know each other, identify common ground, and begin building ownership in the work. If this is done, then the time spent on tasks—brainstorming, consensus building, decision making, analyzing—will be more effective. Building connections can be done in simple and routine ways:

- ▶ Provide members with a committee participant list that includes the names, titles, organizations and contact information for all members; keep this list updated and available to members
- ▶ Use name tags and name tents as a routine part of meetings
- ▶ Start meetings with introductions: provide a brief time for members to update and share information—about their work, new resources, opportunities, etc.

- ▶ Whenever possible, break the committee into small groups to work on activities. In addition to being a good way to get work done, it also provides a comfortable way for people to get to know each other.

USE A PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

Members are more likely to stay involved if they feel like they have control over the process and product. Provide a routine way for members to provide input and feedback. Allow time for meaningful discussion and end each discussion with a summary of what was accomplished. Consider all feedback received and report back on how comments were addressed. Give members a voice before priorities are set. And strive to understand all members’ concerns and perspectives.

HOLD EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

This sounds simplistic, but it is critical. Too often, meetings are poorly planned, lack an action-focused agenda, and are facilitated ineffectively. The result is chaos, inefficiency and a decline in member participation. Given that most of the Committee’s work will be accomplished through meetings, take the steps needed to ensure they are run effectively:

- ▶ Print an agenda with time frames for each meeting.
- ▶ Enlist a skilled facilitator.
- ▶ Begin and end meetings on time.
- ▶ Stay within the agenda timeframes.
- ▶ Establish a way of dealing with unexpected issues, such as noting items for later discussion (a “parking lot of ideas”) and further discussing them via email or at later meetings.

SIGNS OF A WELL FUNCTIONING COMMITTEE
■ Committee purpose is clear to all.
■ Committee atmosphere is informal and relaxed.
■ Meetings are well planned and facilitated.
■ Time is used efficiently and effectively.
■ Meeting minutes/summaries are complete and concise.
■ Members are interested, committed and actively participate.
■ Committee members are sensitive to each other’s needs.
■ Communication among members is consistent and effective.
■ Members receive recognition and appreciation for contributions.
■ Members feel ownership of the project.
■ Committee performance is periodically assessed and changes made to improve progress and functioning as needed.



KEEP COMMITTEE MEMBERS INFORMED

Routinely communicate with members on the Committee’s work and progress. This includes detailed minutes to meetings, summary of activities completed outside of the Committee, etc. You may want to use electronic communications, such as listservs and distribution lists, or a social networking website to keep everyone updated. Utilize your committee’s structure to provide updates and progress; for example, be sure to gather and report workgroup updates and plans from workgroup chairs on a routine basis.

DEVELOP PRODUCTS

Whenever possible, develop products that you and other committee members can use to share the process and progress of your plan. Develop products that are simple, easy to read, and easy to distribute such as brief fact sheets about the planning project, Power Point presentations, and summaries designed specifically for different audiences within your planning group to demonstrate the relevance of the project to their work. Distribute them to people involved in the planning process, key stakeholders and anyone else you think needs to stay connected. The benefit of these products is that they help people see that you’re making progress (they’re more likely to stay excited and involved), makes the strategic plan’s content more visible by generating components that make it easy for people to use right away, and helps to keep momentum moving forward.

ROUTINELY SHOW COMMITTEE MEMBERS HOW THE STRATEGIC PLAN WILL BE USEFUL

Break the project down into a series of steps with each step resulting in a concrete “product (e.g. fact sheet from the conceptual framework, data profile from the needs, assets and resource assessment). As each step is completed, provide time for members to review the “product” and discuss ways that it can be used.

ROUTINELY MARK PROGRESS AND CELEBRATE SUCCESS

It’s easier to stay involved in a project when members can see progress. Start each meeting with goals or outcomes for the meeting. At the meeting end, summarize what was accomplished. As each phase of the project is completed, celebrate success! In fact, make it a habit to routinely review the project Tasklist and Timeline to show the progress to date.

KEEP MEMBERS INTERESTED IN ADOLESCENT HEALTH ISSUES

The goal is to keep adolescent health issues high on their “radar screens”. An easy way to do this is to send out youth health updates on a routine basis. Gather information about youth issues from the news media, electronic newsletters or listservs, and other sources. Distribute this information to people involved in the strategic planning process on a routine basis in order to keep adolescent issues fresh in their minds and hearts. This can be incorporated in your communication efforts to update members on the project’s progress.

THANK MEMBERS FOR THEIR HARD WORK AND EFFORT

Everyone likes to be appreciated for their time and effort. Showing appreciation doesn't have to be complicated, but done in simple ways woven throughout the project's activities.

Lessons from the Field: Recognize the Contributions of your Planning Group

Indiana—the State Department of Health's Office of Public Affairs issued a press release about the development of *Indiana Coalition to Improve Adolescent Health* (their strategic planning committee) and announced the initiative to draft a strategic plan. This sparked interest and increased the buy-in at meetings because participants received recognition for their work throughout the process.



Action Step

BUILD ACTION INTO THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

The planning committee is the starting point for building action into your strategic plan. The committee's ownership and shared interest in your plan will improve the odds that your plan will actually be implemented. Some tips for building action into your strategic planning committee:

- Build stakeholder ownership in the plan from the beginning—bringing key players into the process too late can hinder a true sense of ownership for the project.
- Frame the project from the start as one focused on “planning and action to improve the health of youth”. Approach all strategies and priority issues with a mind for how this become reality in the future.
- Approach your planning with the perspective that the process is useful to you and all involved because it ultimately works toward improving adolescent health in your state (not just adolescents in your programs).
- Identify and recruit your committee members in a very thoughtful manner, considering meaningful ways to engage them in the process, truly seeking their input (not just presenting your plan to them at a meeting).
- Bring diversity into your planning process—invite committee members with diverse expertise and ensure that your committee members represent the diversity of the adolescent population in your state.
- Involve youth in your planning process. Youth not only bring a fresh and action-oriented perspective to strategic planning, but they are future leaders who will continue to champion your priorities as they become adult leaders in your state.

CONCLUSION

An active and productive Strategic Planning Committee provides the stable foundation for an effective strategic planning initiative. A number of key decisions, from how decisions are made to ways to make meetings as useful and meaningful as possible will require thoughtful consideration as the Committee is being brought together. It is well worth the time invested in developing and nurturing the planning committee—in the end, you will have an invested group of people who will not only help in developing the strategic plan but also implementing it.



Chapter 7

Creating an Adolescent Health Conceptual Framework and Vision

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INTRODUCTION

Now that you have a structure for strategic planning, begin the planning process by focusing on what you want to achieve as a result of this work. The goal in these steps are to answer the strategic planning question: *Where do we want to be?* Through this process, you define what you believe about adolescent health (conceptual framework) and clearly articulate what you want to achieve (vision) as a result of planned and strategic action.

Develop a Conceptual Framework	=	Defining what you know about adolescents, their health and wellbeing
Create a Vision	=	Articulating what you'd like achieve broadly as a result of strategic planning and action

An adolescent health *Conceptual Framework* describes and defines adolescent health. It is grounded in research and answers the following questions:

- What is adolescence?
- What is health?
- What is healthy development?
- What affects the health of adolescents?
- How do health and development intersect?



- What do young people need to be healthy?
- Why is adolescent health important or critical to address (why should people care)?
- What are the consequences if adolescent health issues are not addressed?

A *Vision for Healthy Adolescence* draws from the themes of the conceptual framework. It is a description of the ideal for healthy adolescents in your state. Visions often are a more personal restatement of the critical elements of the framework. This personalization can help rally people in taking ownership and action in the strategic plan's recommendations.

Together, the conceptual framework and vision provide the main themes and principles upon which a strategic plan is built. They provide the “glue” that weaves together all aspects of the strategic plan into a cohesive whole. In addition, they provide the means to promote a common understanding of adolescent health across different sectors and build a shared commitment to healthy adolescence. Finally, they provide useful “tools” that can be used to educate and raise awareness about adolescent health and development. In fact, this step flows naturally from any educational activities used to orient committee members to the strategic planning project.

A WORD ABOUT CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

How your strategic plan for adolescent health plays out will depend in part on your state's attitude and philosophy of adolescent health. Many states have based their adolescent health strategic plan on well known/established frameworks. No one framework is necessarily the “right” framework. Each offers a different perspective for addressing adolescent health. However, all share a common perspective that individuals are influenced by a complex interaction of risk and protective factors, as well as a complex network individual, family, community, and environmental contexts. Consider the following conceptual frameworks that have emerged in public health for addressing the needs of individuals.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The youth development approach is predicated on the understanding that all young people need support, guidance, and opportunities to successfully achieve the critical developmental tasks of adolescence. It assumes that young people have fundamental, underlying needs for healthy development, some of which are unique to adolescence as a time of life. This framework focuses is on:

- ▶ Decreasing the risk factors that contribute to risky behaviors and poor health outcomes.
- ▶ Increasing protective factors that contribute to resiliency and healthy outcomes.
- ▶ Providing opportunities for young people to successfully meet the developmental needs of adolescence.
- ▶ Building healthy communities that support and nurture adolescents.

There are a number of commonly used and cited youth development philosophies, but all recognize that focusing on the development of assets and competencies in youth is

the best means for fostering health and well-being and for avoiding negative choices and outcomes (Association of Maternal and Child Health and National Network of State Adolescent Health Coordinators, 2005; Komro and Stigler, 2000; Blum, 1998; Catalano, Berglund, Lonczak, Hawkins, 1998).

“Positive youth development is not a specific program, but rather an approach to structuring services, systems, and supports for youth so that young people develop the skills and competencies they need to thrive and enter adulthood ready to face the myriad challenges of adult life.”

Positive Youth Development: A Pathway to Healthy Teens. (2002).
Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families
www.gih.org/usr_doc/positive_youth_development.pdf

SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL MODEL FRAMEWORK

This framework model recognizes that each individual person functions within a complex network of individual, family, community, and environmental contexts. It is based upon a public health perspective for reducing risks and preventing disease, illness and injury. Instead of focusing just on the individual who is at risk for, or who engages in, a particular behavior, the ecological approach considers the individual’s relationship to his or her surroundings. The model considers four environments that shape youth (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; McLeroy, Bibeau, Steckler, & Glanz, 1988):

- ▶ Individual environments (intrapersonal level). This level considers biological and personal factors, mostly situated within the control of the individual.
- ▶ Relationships between environments (interpersonal level). This level involves primary social relationships surrounding an individual (friends, coworkers, family, etc.)
- ▶ External environments (Community/Institutional Level). This level includes institutional or organizational relationships and characteristics such as neighborhoods, work sites, and schools.
- ▶ Larger cultural contexts (Macro/societal). Factors at this level involve local, state, and federal policies and trends.

An ecological view of youth acknowledges the continuity of a child’s development, beginning at birth, progressing through childhood into adolescence, and finally navigating the transition to adulthood, when many begin families of their own, coupled with the multi-faceted interactions youth have with their environments—their families, schools, and communities—and how these environments continue to influence a person beyond the stage of youth, throughout his or her life (Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families, 2007). Additionally, an ecological view allows us to consider the epidemiology of health and illness, but the risk and protective factors that influence their health and system related factors such as access to health care, data and surveillance systems that track adolescent health outcomes, etc. An ecological and holistic approach to adolescent health provides the strongest context for monitoring and evaluating adolescent health status (Brindis, Cagampang and Oliva, 2003).



Life Course Health Development (LCHD) Framework: The LCHD framework builds on the evolving research of the Social Ecological model which has added a fifth level of influence—patterns of environmental events and transitions over the course of a person’s life—which provide a starting point for discussion on many other issues, such as the role of poverty and race (Brofenbrenner, 1979). The LCHD framework embodies this concept of patterns across the life span of an individual and is based on four related principles that explain how biological factors and environments transform individual bio-behavioral functioning across the lifespan or life course (Halfon N and Hochstein M, 2002; Halfon, 2005):

1. The multiple contexts of health development
2. The design and process of health development
3. Mechanisms that account for variation in the trajectories of health development
4. The integration of multiple time frames of health development.

Increasingly, the life-course approach is playing an important role in understanding population health and well-being. This perspective views health as the product of risk behaviors, protective factors, and environmental agents that we encounter throughout our entire lives and that have cumulative, additive, and even multiplicative impacts on specific outcomes. It thus provides a construct for interpreting how peoples’ experiences in their early years influence their later health and functioning (Yu, 2006).

Action Step

CREATE THE ADOLESCENT HEALTH CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

There are many ways to frame adolescent health for your strategic plan. It’s helpful to first assess if there is a framework that has already been developed that fits your needs.

GATHER AND REVIEW THE LITERATURE ON ADOLESCENT HEALTH

Analyze these resources for the ways in which adolescents and health are framed. Use the questions at the start of this chapter to guide this analysis.

- Scientific reports and research articles—analysis of the scientific literature provides information that allows you to ground your framework in research.
- Strategic plans relating to adolescent health from other agencies, organizations and programs in your state or others; these plans can focus on issues such as school health, afterschool, juvenile justice, specific health topics (sexual health, chronic disease prevention, mental health) or other youth issues.

You may want to use hire or provide an internship for a graduate student to gather and synthesize the research for this step. Or, as an alternative, this research may be conducted by a workgroup or consultant and be brought back to the larger Strategic Planning Committee for review and comment.



#4: List of State Adolescent Health Plans

Lessons from the Field: CREATING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Alaska—Adolescent Health Advisory Committee provided each Strategic Planning Committee member the book “Adolescents at Risk” by Joy Dryfoos and other shorter readings on adolescent health. Members read and discussed these publications. They identified themes from these readings that were most relevant to adolescent health and development in Alaska. These themes were used to develop the framework for their strategic plan.

Missouri—Department of Health and Senior Services’ Council for Adolescent and School Health (CASH) created two framework documents to guide its work:

- Guiding Principles for Promoting Adolescent Health
- Missouri State Framework for Promoting the Health of Adolescents

www.dhss.mo.gov/AdolescentHealth/Publications.html

Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP)

A Conceptual Framework for Adolescent Health (2005)

<http://www.amchp.org/publications/AdolescentHealth/Pages/default.aspx>



TALK WITH THE EXPERTS IN YOUR STATE TO GATHER THEIR EXPERTISE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Hold key informant interviews with adolescent health experts, key stakeholders, and/or committee members. Use some of the questions noted earlier to shape the interview questions.

WRITE THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Use the themes identified in your research to write a brief description that answers the questions at the start of this chapter. Write simply and visually so that others can clearly understand the principles on which your strategic plan is based.



#5: Conducting Key Informant Interviews

Action Step

DEVELOP THE ADOLESCENT HEALTH VISION

While a vision statement is an integral part of a conceptual framework for adolescent health, it is a distinct product unto itself. Your vision statement is the guiding force for your strategic plan. It paints the picture (with words) of what you seek to achieve, where you want to go, as a result of strategic action. It also is:

- Positive (communicating a better future).
- Broad enough to include a diversity of perspectives.
- Inspiring.
- Easy to communicate.

Vision statements often are a more personal restatement of the critical elements reflected in a conceptual framework. This personalization can help rally people in taking ownership and action in the strategic plan’s recommendations.



#6: Sample Adolescent Health Vision Statements

#7: Sample Questions to Guide Adolescent Health Planning



Naturally, the vision should follow closely with the plan’s conceptual framework. For example, if you think adolescent health is affected by five key factors in your state, your vision should reflect this and your strategic plan should highlight actions that change or strengthen these factors.

The visioning process should be simple, fun and creative—providing a meaningful and energetic way to engage people in the planning process. It provides an excellent opportunity to involve outside of your Strategic Planning Committee; this helps build ownership and buy-in to the strategic plan by key stakeholders and others who will be involved in the implementing the strategic plan.

TAKE AN INVENTORY OF ANY PAST VISIONING EFFORTS THAT FOCUSED ON ADOLESCENT HEALTH

If a vision for healthy adolescents (or children and adolescents, or youth) is identified, review the vision statement to determine if it could be used during the current visioning process. At a minimum, it’s helpful to review the statement at the start of visioning activities in order to set the stage.

IDENTIFY WHO TO INVOLVE

These can be people both formally within and outside of your Strategic Planning Committee:

- Youth.
- Leaders and Key stakeholders in the state.
- People involved in youth issues at the state and local levels.
- People who represent populations of youth who are disproportionately affected by health issues.

PRACTICE TIPS

#8: Conducting Community Forums

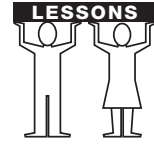
#9: Conducting Effective Focus Groups

Plan how you will conduct the visioning activity or activities. Keep it simple and be opportunistic: Look for existing efforts at the local and state level to incorporate a visioning activity. Whether you create new opportunities or build on existing ones, potential venues include:

- Strategic Planning Committee meeting.
- An existing conference or meeting.
- Community forums, discussions or townhall meetings.
- Key informant interviews with key stakeholders and adolescent health experts.
- Focus groups.

Lessons from the Field: CONDUCTING A VISIONING PROCESS

Minnesota—a visioning process was conducted using two different methods. A traditional process was used with a state-wide Expert Panel, a group of 70 youth advocates from across the state. A modified process was used in a series of informal conversations with 300 youth in the State. During these 1-hour listening sessions, youth were asked to discuss the question, “How do you describe a teen who is healthy and successful?” The common themes gathered through these 2 processes were used to develop Minnesota’s vision for healthy adolescence.

**PLAN THE TYPE OF VISIONING PROCESS YOU’LL USE**

This is basically a future-oriented brainstorming process. You may also choose to supplement a group visioning process by adding a visioning question into key informant interviews or focus group discussions. Whichever process is chosen, guide participants to focus on broad concepts rather than detailed ideas as they generate responses to the visioning questions.

CONDUCT THE VISIONING PROCESS

Start any visioning process by giving participants the context of the vision. Tell them why the vision is important to the strategic planning process. Explain the purpose—gathering ideas about what people’s dreams are for healthy adolescence, describing a picture of how things should be, and what people and conditions would look like if things were consistent with this picture. When involving people who have not been a part of the strategic planning project to this point, start by describing the project and how the vision fits into the overall strategic planning process. Provide an overview of the adolescent health conceptual framework to provide a context for the project. If appropriate, review past vision statements on adolescent health that have been developed within the state.



#10: Creating a Vision

WRITE THE VISION STATEMENT

Gather the ideas generated from the vision process(es) and create a vision statement. This can be done by a small group or an individual person. Once completed, bring the vision statement back to the Strategic Planning Committee for review and comment.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND VISION FOR ADOLESCENT HEALTH

Some simple guidelines for gathering input and engage others in the process of developing your vision statement and framework:

- Be clear about the interrelatedness and differences between the conceptual framework and vision statement. A conceptual framework focuses on what we know and believe. It describes adolescent health in a simple way that builds a common understanding among key stakeholders. A vision statement captures ideas about people's dreams for a healthy adolescents—describing a picture of how things should be, and conditions needed to make this happen.
- When involving people who have not been a part of the planning process to this point, start by describing the project and how the conceptual framework and/or vision fits into the overall planning process.
- If you conduct more than one process for developing the framework or vision, keep detailed notes and records of each session so that you can combine your findings and recommendations later to create your final vision statement and framework.
- Although you might conduct multiple sessions to inform your conceptual framework or vision statement, it's best to have one person or a small workgroup create the final product.
- A good framework is simple and concise. Avoid jargon and vague statements. The framework should be simple enough for people from varying backgrounds and experiences to be able to understand it easily. It is also helpful to create a framework that can be easily adapted into educational presentations during the implementation phase of the strategic planning process. A good vision statement is also simple and concise but paints a picture of healthy adolescence.
- Once the vision statement and framework are drafted, bring it back for review and approval by the Strategic Planning Committee. Be sure to distribute the vision to any others who were involved in the visioning process so that they can see the result of their efforts.
- Once the vision statement and framework are drafted, bring it back for review and approval by the Strategic Planning Committee. Be sure to distribute the vision to any others who were involved in the visioning process so that they can see the result of their efforts.
- Once developed, use your conceptual framework and vision statements as “products.” Create a Power Point presentation, a fact sheet, or a more in depth “brief” from them. Use them routinely to educate key stakeholders about adolescent health and development so that they are primed and eager to act once the strategic plan is complete. Also, use the vision statement on a routine basis with the Strategic Planning Committee to keep focused on your planning processes end “goal.” Include it in meeting agendas and minutes; visibly post it at meetings; post it on your agency's adolescent health or MCH webpage.

CONCLUSION

Development of an adolescent health framework and vision statement are critical steps in your strategic planning process. It blends a review of written materials with the personalization of ideas by committee members to define what adolescent health and development means for your state and how you would like to improve outcomes for adolescents. The result is an anchor for the strategic plan and a conceptual guide implementing the strategic planning process.



Chapter 8

Assessing Adolescent Needs, Assets and Resources

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INTRODUCTION

The next step is taking stock—assessing and identifying your state’s starting place for adolescent health. It provides the foundation on which to identify the actions needed to achieve your vision. While the previous steps defined what you want to achieve through strategic action, the next step begins to answer the strategic planning question, “*Where are we now?*”

This assessment is important because it:

- Highlights the critical adolescent health issues that require action.
- Pinpoints geographic areas and populations of adolescents for whom the prevalence of adolescent health problems requires more focused or targeted attention.
- Provides direction for focused attention. This can be especially important in times of limited resources. For example, the assessment may indicate that your State has relatively few adolescents dying as a result of unintended injuries, but has a greater incidence of youth homicide and violence. These results point to the need to implement new or enhance existing efforts to reduce the mortality and morbidity associated with violence.



- Identifies the existing level of resources and opportunities that can be built upon to take strategic action to improve the health and well-being of youth.
- Provides the information needed to gain the attention of key stakeholders and decision-makers.
- Identifies gaps in data collection that need to be addressed to improve existing data systems (e.g. the need to document adolescent assets, in addition to the incidence of health problems or negative outcomes).
- Provides benchmarks to measure improvements in adolescent health indicators and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategic plan and its implementation.

An adolescent health assessment involves the collection and analyses of data to create a state profile. This step requires the expertise and knowledge of people intimately involved in data collection and analysis in addition to those who can interpret the data such as:



- Provide an internship for a graduate student to gather and synthesize data.
- Engage youth in data collection and analysis.

- State MCH Epidemiologists.
- Other analysts within the State Departments of Health, Social Services, Education and other agencies who address youth issues.
- Strategic Planning Committee members with expertise in this area.
- Adolescents and parents.

You may need to bring in individuals from outside of the strategic planning initiative into the project for this step. This can be done by:

- Bringing outside people onto the Strategic Planning Committee or subcommittee for this step.
- Using an ad hoc data committee.
- Holding data gathering forums with data professionals from state agencies, academic centers, and non-profit youth-focused organizations.

This can be a time consuming and overwhelming step in the strategic planning process. The steps in this chapter provide a review of the array of activities you can choose to conduct as part of the assessment process. Start by identifying the level of comprehensiveness that best suits your planning process. Stay focused on what you are working to accomplish as a result of the assessment: identifying where you are now in relation to where you want to be. Keep in mind that more is not necessarily better and concentrate on keeping it simple. More data does not mean a higher quality assessment. In the same vein, lack of data should not preclude you from doing an assessment. While it's harder to assess the status of youth without adequate data, you can still draw conclusions or assumptions from data at hand. This also provides an excellent opportunity to show the value and wisdom of strengthening the data collection within your state.

Action Step

IDENTIFY THE DATA NEEDED FOR THE NEEDS AND ASSETS ASSESSMENT

The first step is to identify the types of data needed to assess adolescent health within your state. At this point, don't focus on the availability of data—just identify the types of data that you'd *ideally* like to use in the assessment. Think of how these data can tell the “story” of adolescents and their health in your state. Gather all your ideas and develop a “wish” list of data. This can be an overwhelming task—keep the process simple and manageable.

REVIEW DATA RESOURCES FOR IDEAS ON TYPES OF DATA

- ▶ **Adolescent Health Conceptual Framework**—the framework can provide ideas for the types of data to collect or it may also be used to organize the data for making presentations. For example, if the framework focuses on developing a youth-nurturing environment as a core component of adolescent health, then information gathered through the needs and assets assessment will have to include examples of the ways that the community currently provides such an environment for youth, as well as examples of the “need” for additional support.
- ▶ **National Healthy People Objectives for Adolescent and Young Adult Health**— using the parameters of these objectives, states have access to data points that enable them to gauge how their adolescents' health status compares to national trends. Healthy People 2010 identified 21 critical objectives for adolescents/young adults (<http://nahic.ucsf.edu/index.php/niah/C9>). Healthy People 2020 objectives are now in development and will reflect assessments of major risks to health and wellness, changing public health priorities, and emerging issues related to our nation's health preparedness and prevention (<http://www.healthypeople.gov/hp2020>).
- ▶ **Your State's Public Health Objectives**—these objectives can identify the adolescent health issues that have already been deemed as critical for your state.
- ▶ **Adolescent Health Data Reports from Your State or Others**—this can provide an overview of the types of data that might be useful in your needs and assets assessment.
- ▶ **Data Guides**—there are a variety of reports and guides on adolescent health data and needs assessments. A few to review include:
 - **Improving the Health of Adolescents & Young Adults: A Guide for States and Communities.** A core document of *The National Initiative to Improve Adolescent and Young Adult Health* (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, et al, 2004). Designed to help agencies and organizations facilitate programs and services that improve outcomes for adolescents. The guide offers extensive worksheets and tools relevant to needs assessments, including a dedicated section on *Using Data to Shape Your Adolescent Health Program*. <http://nahic.ucsf.edu/index.php/companion/index>
 - **Finding the Child and Adolescent Health Statistics You Want Child and Adolescent Health Data Resource Guide (2003).** This Guide was created to help users locate child and adolescent health statistics among the many available health data resources (e.g., articles, reports, & on-line databases). Covering over 100 health



topics, this Guide serves as a catalogue of existing data resources.

http://policy.ucsf.edu/index.php/childhood/article/finding_the_child_and_adolescent_health_statistics_you_want/

- **What Gets Measured Gets Done: Assessing Data Availability for Adolescent Populations (2007).** This paper provides an overview of the availability of data for specific adolescent sub-populations, such as rural and homeless/runaway youth, by the 21 Critical Health Objectives of Healthy People 2010.

<http://mahic.ucsf.edu/index.php/data/C1>

CREATE A DATA “WISH” LIST

Create a checklist of the types of data you’d like to include in your needs assessment. The following are the traditional types of data routinely included in adolescent health strategic plans.

ADOLESCENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- Demographic information about adolescents, such as age, gender, race and cultural identity, geographic location, trends in the growth of adolescents living in the state.
- Demographic information about children (to highlight the “up and coming” new generation of adolescents) that the state will be responsible to serve over the next five to ten years.
- Demographic information about families, for example, the incidence of poverty, unemployment, family formation, and resources, family stability living in the community.

ADOLESCENT HEALTH BEHAVIORS AND OUTCOMES

- Mortality and morbidity data. Specifically, the numbers of adolescents who die and the major reasons for their early death, as well as morbidity data, for example, hospital discharge data.
- Alcohol, tobacco and other drug use.
- Sexuality-related behavior and reproductive health outcomes.
- Nutrition and physical activity behaviors and outcomes.
- Injury and violence behaviors and outcomes.
- Mental health.
- Physical health (including oral health).
- Occupational and environmental health.

FACTORS THAT AFFECT HEALTH

Gather any available data that allows for the analyses of the risk and protective factors/assets associated with adolescent health in the following domains:

- Family (e.g. parental connectedness, family stability, parental expectations for the adolescent, problem behaviors among family members, etc).
- Peers (e.g. youth perception of peer behaviors, peer support, etc.).
- School (e.g. school connectedness, school success and challenges, youth perceptions of school, etc.).
- Community (e.g. community stability, social indicators of health such as poverty, racism and economic opportunity, social norms, connectedness to caring adults, etc.).

SOCIETAL PERCEPTIONS ABOUT YOUTH AND THEIR HEALTH

Identify data to gauge the public perception of adolescents and their health issues. This step helps to clarify the level of political and social will available to invest in making adolescent health a priority in the state. For example, a public opinion poll that includes information on areas of public concern might provide valuable information. If this information is not available, a series of focus groups can be conducted to assess public perceptions and opinions regarding youth. Or, if this is not feasible, use of national data such as those found at:

- **Kaiser Health Poll:** A searchable archive of public opinion questions on health issues that allows users to know what Americans think about health issues, as well as what Americans have thought about health issues over time.
www.kaisernetwork.org/health_poll/hpoll_index.cfm
- **Frameworks Institute:** Adolescence and youth development framing data
www.frameworksinstitute.org/adolescence.html#research.

Action Step

IDENTIFY SOURCES OF DATA

Using the list of desired data, identify the data sources that are available within the state and nationally to create as comprehensive a profile as possible. As data sources are identified, develop an outline list of data that will be included in the needs and assets assessment. Keep accurate accounts of how and where the data can be found, as well as data limitations and data gaps. If new data are to be gathered, develop a plan of action for gathering these data.

IDENTIFY WHERE TO FIND DATA

There are a number of ways to find existing sources of data that might be used in the needs and assets assessment.

- Talk with data professionals from state agencies, academic centers and non-profit youth-focused organizations to learn about the sources of youth data that they have found useful.
- Review existing reports, surveys, and other needs assessments that have been completed during the past five years. This step may help determine the scope and types of data that are available within the state or national data that are thought to be representative of your state.



Tip 11: Data Resources



- ▶ Review electronic databases available on the websites of state agencies that address youth issues (e.g. Education, Social Service, Justice, Public Safety).
- ▶ Review national data sources.

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN FINDING DATA

Use a variety of data sources. Combining a number of different data sources (e.g. state vital record data, hospital discharge data, and Census data) is important as each data collection system has some advantages and disadvantages. By reviewing whether results across different sources of data are consistent, the Steering Committee is able to gauge whether the findings are reliable. It may also be useful to collect data that do not necessarily reflect all adolescents within the state, but which provides important information on the divergent experiences of a number of youth who live in the state. For example, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is gathered in a number of states and provides a valuable profile of students enrolled in school. However, findings cannot be generalized to out-of-school youth, whose health behavior profile is likely to be riskier. The Steering Committee may find that they may need to collect some additional information, even from smaller groups of adolescents, to develop a comprehensive profile. For example, conducting in-depth interviews with adolescents, their parents or other family members, focus groups with adolescents, and brief surveys, may help to fill some of the information gaps that may exist, even with the availability of the YRBS.

Since there are limitations to using any type of data, employing several different kinds of sources of data (or data triangulation) ensures greater probability that the problems and needs identified are valid and of common concern. For example, if qualitative data gathered from focus groups and interviews indicate that youth behaviors and parents' concerns correspond with statistical data showing higher than national and state average teen birth rates, it is likely that teenage pregnancy prevention is a major priority to address. Or, if in completing an assessment, analyses of quantitative data are inconsistent with interview and survey feedback, additional sources of data may need to be pursued in order to continue collecting statistics and/or to conduct further interviews until a more consistent profile is developed. In this case, the results may indicate that there are a variety of youth experiences in the state. The more varied the data sources, the more likely the needs and assets assessment will provide a more comprehensive profile of young people (Brindis, Park, et al, 2003).

- ▶ **Use of Primary vs. Secondary Quantitative Data.** Given available resources, the Steering Committee may need to rely principally on existing data (secondary data) to complete the needs and assets assessment. While these data are already available and used for other purposes, the adolescent health strategic plan may be the first opportunity to formally synthesize the information in creating a broader review of youth health issues. When using secondary data, you can either report that data as they've already been analyzed or conduct additional analyses to identify new information about youth issues. For example, Minnesota reanalyzed data from their Student Survey to assess levels of sadness and stress/pressure among youth with special health needs and those without special health needs. Many State agencies have the capacity to conduct additional data analyses, for example, analyzing state data by counties or zip code, or to analyze a youth health behavior, such as hospital or emergency room use, by socio-demographic, gender, and geographic factors.

- ▶ **Use of Trend Data.** If data are available, it is also advantageous to compile data over a five- to ten-year time period to be able to note any trends and changes in adolescent health.
- ▶ **Use of Qualitative Data.** It can be very helpful to use qualitative data to:
 - Provide insight into youth health issues.
 - Provide the social and community context for adolescent behavior (for example, assessing adolescents' sense of how supportive their families, schools, and communities are).
 - Give a “voice” to adolescents and their families.
 - Compliment existing quantitative data.

Look for qualitative data that have already been collected or consider collecting new data if resources permit (e.g. conduct focus groups). For example, it can be helpful to present data on adolescent health issues to young people in order to gain their insights as to what contributes to this health profile.

Lessons from the Field: YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN NEEDS AND ASSETS ASSESSMENT

Colorado—The Colorado Youth Partnership for Health is an advisory group of youth in grades 9–12 that provided input and guidance in Colorado’s adolescent health strategic planning projects. As part of their work, they conducted a Youth Opinion Poll to gather qualitative data for the latest edition of Colorado’s adolescent health report. Their goal was to gather youth reaction to the results of their YRBSS survey (e.g. what did youth think about the results? How could they explain these results? What contributed to these results?). They developed a survey, handed it out to peers in their communities, gathered responses from 180 youth, and analyzed the results. This information was used in the needs and assets assessment and strategy development of Colorado’s strategic plan.

Connecticut—A discussion group with six youth ages between 15 and 20—who received services from a local community-based agency—was planned and facilitated by paid consultants. Based on the focus group, consultants developed a five-question survey and a self-report survey that planning committee members with access to youth volunteered to administer. With the help of planning committee members, a total of 102 surveys were completed by youth to provide input into the project.

Indiana—The Department of Education provided funding to conduct focus groups with adolescents to gather input regarding what adolescents believe is making them health, unhealthy, the biggest health issues facing them, and recommendations to their peers on dealing with specific issues. The planning coalition contracted with adolescent medicine program at the School of Medicine to work with a research assistant to conduct 6 focus groups (in the north, south, central and urban and rural parts of the state).

New Hampshire—Focus Groups were conducted with youth with special health care needs, youth involved with a minority health coalition, college students and out of school students (dropped out), parents, and youth leaders. Focus groups provided information regarding the specific group’s greatest needs and how a strategic plan could be supportive of them, and provided qualitative data that enhanced the quantitative data. Youth later attended a planning summit that reviewed the strategic plan to give their reactions and recommendations. Key informant interviews were also conducted with youth programs (youth serving organizations), and surveys were conducted with after school programs, health care providers, nurses, health educators, and physicians as to the needs of youth.





- **Use of Protective Factor/Developmental Assets Data.** Data on protective factors/developmental assets are important as research clearly shows that these factors are often associated with decreased risk for unhealthy behaviors and outcomes among youth.

Traditionally, data sets focus only on the problems of young people. Too often, the profile of adolescent health problems developed from these data contributes to the negative perception that adolescents are difficult to reach and serve, or their health issues are intractable. Relying solely on existing data sets, which rarely collect data on adolescents' positive assets, also contributes to an incomplete profile of youth.

In conducting both a needs and assets assessment, the Strategic Planning Committee has both a role and responsibility to provide a more balanced view of young people. Yet, this can be complicated as access to protective factors/ developmental assets data is still limited in most states. Be creative in looking for assets data. Check with groups that focus on youth development to identify what types of data they use. Or, you may choose to use assets data from other states and show how this may fit into your state.

ADDRESS DATA GAPS

Following the review of existing data, you may find that you're missing some critical information or would like to gather insights into existing data (e.g. conduct focus groups, ask youth about their interpretation of data results). Take the time, if possible, to find ways to fill this gap.

- **Research other sources of data that could be used to make estimates.** For example, use data from national surveys that include information on race/ethnic profiles parallel to your own state's demographic profile. Another option is to examine data collected on adolescents by other states with a similar profile of young people. This comparison can be especially important with data pertaining to protective factors and developmental assets that may not be available for your own state. Another option is to use data that are gathered on a limited basis within your state (e.g. local data, student survey data from a limited number of school districts, etc.) to gain insights into different geographic parts of the state. In all of these cases, note the potential limitations of these data.
- **Gather the data.** This could include conducting new surveys, conducting focus groups and/or other data collection methods. Assess if there is an opportunity to gather the data through existing methods (e.g. add a series of questions to an existing survey or to an existing focus group project). Be creative in identifying low cost ways to tie in with other events to gather the data you need to complete your adolescent profile and more forward with strategic planning.
- **Document the need for data that are not gathered.** This can be used as background information for garnering support to highlight this need in the critical issues and strategies within the strategic plan.

Lessons from the Field: YOUTH ACTION RESEARCH

Oregon Department of Human Services–Adolescent Health Section used Youth Action Research in developing their Youth Sexual Health Plan. In this process, trained and worked with twenty-two 11th and 12th graders in 3 communities as researchers to gather data from youth about what their schools were teaching, how this compared to state and national standards and the effectiveness of sexuality education that occurred outside the classroom through peers, parents and religious leaders. Their findings were used in the Oregon’s strategic plan development.

Youth received a small stipend for their participation, as well as the ability to use the research results as part of their senior projects for graduation. Research mentors—professionals from local universities and health departments—offered training and guidance. Each site chose its own research design. All youth:

- ➔ Received training in research methods and adolescent sexuality.
- ➔ Developed their own research question and corresponding research design.
- ➔ Navigated local ethics procedures and collected data.
- ➔ Analyzed their findings and developed recommendations.
- ➔ Presented their results and recommendations at a community forum.

Projects varied in recruitment practices, training emphasis, number of research questions and focus on data collection versus analysis and action. A total of 2,333 youth responded to questionnaires or participated in focus groups across the three sites.

www.oregon.gov/DHS/children/teens/tpp/resources-bw-012609.pdf

<http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/ah/sexuality/sexuality.shtml>

**Action Step****GATHER, ANALYZE AND INTERPRET THE DATA**

Once the data sources are identified, work with the data professionals involved in the project to gather and analyze the data that will be used in the assessment.

GATHER AND ANALYZE SECONDARY (EXISTING) DATA

- Review and interpret data findings from others.
- Use data to conduct a secondary analysis.
- Analyze trends.

GATHER AND ANALYZE PRIMARY (NEW) DATA

- New surveys (written, electronic, key informant interviews).
- Focus groups.

Data analyses and interpretation will likely engage state epidemiologists or others skilled in this area. These individuals can help to conduct the analyses, determine whether there is sufficient data to make the case for any emerging trends and/or whether data has to be summarized across several years in order to assure that there are an adequate number of cases to make a



reliable conclusion. They can also help to identify data limitations as well as any conclusions to be drawn from the available data.

Ideally, youth should also have the opportunity to review the data to provide their own perspectives on why the issues affect so many young people in their community, as well as providing them with an opportunity to make recommendations for future efforts.

When interpreting the data, keep it simple and identify the key “take-home messages” that you want people to take away from the assessment. Answer questions such as:

- What does the data tell us?
- What does it mean?
- Why should we care?

Action Step

CONDUCT A RESOURCE ANALYSIS

This analysis identifies the resources that are available within your state to address adolescent health issues. In addition, it provides the opportunity to identify strengths, challenges and gaps in resources. This can be accomplished by mapping resources within the state.

MAP ADOLESCENT HEALTH RESOURCES

For each area of the needs and assets assessment, identify and assess the level of resources available for that specific issue, particularly taking into account where needs exist, and the “fit” between resources and need.

The task of identifying resources can be complicated, given the wide range of existing programs, different funding streams, sponsors, and agencies that may be involved in providing services. For example, adolescent nutrition programs may exist within a state Health Department’s chronic disease prevention programs and the Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) nutrition program available for pregnant and parenting teenagers. There may also be nutrition programs within the state Education Department (e.g. school lunch program). Given limited time and funding, it’s important to first define the level of mapping that is feasible for your project. Possibilities include:

- ▶ Key resources available through and/or funded by the state Health Department.
- ▶ Key resources available through relevant state agencies (e.g. Health, Education, Human Service).
- ▶ Large-scale resources available through the private sector (e.g. youth collaboratives, statewide or regional youth initiatives).

Information can be gathered through a variety of means:

- ▶ Conversations with key staff from youth-serving agencies or initiatives.

- ▶ Review and update of information from existing resource guides that address youth issues.
- ▶ Surveys.

The mapping process may be broken into components and Strategic planning committee members are assigned to identify resources for one component. Other options include contracting with graduate students to gather the information or contract with an outside consultant or organization to conduct the assessment.

If you are not able to conduct as comprehensive a mapping of resources as desired, you may choose to include a recommendation to conduct a full scale mapping of resources as part of the strategic plan's strategies.

ANALYZE THE RESOURCES

Once you've identified the resources, the next step is analysis. Focus on the "fit" between resources and the adolescent health and development needs identified in the needs and assets assessment.

- ▶ Are there adequate resources to address the needs identified in the assessment?
- ▶ If not, where are the gaps?
- ▶ How well do resources serve youth, especially those focused across the lifespan?
- ▶ What challenges may hinder efforts to address the health needs of adolescents?
- ▶ What opportunities could be built upon to more effectively address the health needs of adolescents?

Information from this assessment can be used to identify resource issues that need to be addressed in order to improve the health and well-being of youth (e.g. lack of services in rural areas).

Action Step

DEVELOP AN ASSESSMENT PROFILE

The assessment profile is a report on the findings from the needs, assets and resource assessment. It serves a number of purposes:

- It identifies the adolescent health issues that need to be addressed in order for young people to thrive.
- It defines the baseline for these issues.
- It provides the foundation or "rationale" for the issues and strategies included in the strategic plan.
- It can be used as a "call to action" when sharing the strategic plan across the state.



SUMMARIZE THE ASSESSMENT RESULTS IN A DRAFT WRITTEN REPORT

Identify ways to present the data so that the profile is useful for the strategic plan's target audiences. Keep it simple and provide clear messages that highlight the “take-home messages” from the data.

- ▶ Use data to tell the story of adolescent health. People often times need help in making sense of the data. Define the data's “take home” or “so what” messages so that people can more easily consider the actions needed to address the issues identified in the assessment. Include not only the data, but brief summary paragraphs or bullets points that highlight the key findings you'd like people to take away from the data.
- ▶ Give youth the opportunity to review and “interpret” the data. The youth perspective provides critical context and meaning to data (e.g. why binge drinking rates are high, what contributes to this, how youth perceive binge drinking). Their input during the strategic planning process will more likely ensure a solid action plan that moves forward effectively and successfully later.
- ▶ Use a variety of strategies to present the data, including charts and graphs, as well as quotes from adolescents, family members, and/or other stakeholders.
- ▶ Use data judiciously. While it's tempting to include every data finding, this can lead to information overload. Choose the data that tell the story of key issues identified in the assessment findings.
- ▶ Use data wisely. Do not make lofty conclusions or stretch data to make your point. Make careful connections between data and findings, and document data sources. Clearly define data limitations. In this way, you'll provide a firm foundation for the issues and strategies included in the strategic plan.
- ▶ Give information on how to find the data. If possible, indicate how to find data specific to local communities. This makes it easier for people to advocate for action on youth issues relevant to their community.

FINALIZE THE ASSESSMENT PROFILE SO THAT IT'S ENGAGING AND EASY TO UNDERSTAND

Work with your data experts to review the draft profile. Ensure that is accurate and makes sense. Then have non-data colleagues review the profile to make sure that it's easy to read and tells the story you'd like it to tell about the assessment findings.

DISSEMINATE THE ASSESSMENT

Once the strategic plan's assessment section is written, you may choose to disseminate this information before the full strategic plan is released. This can be done to raise visibility of the project, garner interest, and gain the attention of key decision-makers. The information can be disseminated widely (with the public) or selectively (with key stakeholders, within the sponsoring agency).

- **Executive summary.**

- **Public forums and briefings.**
- **Fact Sheets** on adolescent health for the state with information on where additional data is available.
- **Interactive web-site** where the report can be made available for others to review. As part of the web-site, it is helpful to list the data sources that were used as part of the needs/assets assessment, as this creates data sources that can be monitored over time as additional interventions are implemented.

CONCLUSION

A key product of your assessment activities is a comprehensive profile of adolescent health and development for youth in your state. The assessment sets the stage for identifying the strategic issues that need to be addressed in order to improve the health and well-being of youth. In addition, it provides a baseline for future endeavors and a method for monitoring changes that occur as a result of the strategic plan.



Chapter 9

Identifying Priority Issues and Strategies

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INTRODUCTION

The next steps of the strategic planning process focus on identifying the priority issues that your strategic plan will address; the goals and objectives that indicate how well you've addressed these issues; and the strategies, or action steps, your plan recommends. Simply put, **issues** are the things that need to change in order for you to achieve their optimal health and wellbeing; **strategies** are the actions that create this change; and **goals/objectives** are the measurements that tell you how well you're doing. These steps move from answering the strategic planning question,

“Where are we now?” to “How do we get from here to there?”

The goal in this point of strategic planning is to move from the conceptual to the concrete. Issues are conceptual; action steps are concrete. This level of concrete specificity is necessary to help your plan's target audience (those people whom you'd like to pick up the plan and put it into action) understand exactly what they need to do, why and to what end.

“Identifying strategic issues can be compared to pouring the assessment findings into a funnel—what emerges is a distilled mix of issues that demand attention.”

Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships/NACCHO
www.naccho.org/topics/infrastructure/MAPP/phase4over.cfm



Action Step

IDENTIFY AND PRIORITIZE ISSUES

The goal in this step is to take the results of the needs, assets and resource assessment, pull it apart and identify the key issues. This is completed by analyzing and prioritizing the issues. The result is a list of priority adolescent health issues that are critical and require action.

ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS

As with the preceding strategic planning steps, it's best to involve an array of people in the identification of key health issues. This can be accomplished through:

- ▶ Strategic Planning Committee meetings (or workgroup meetings) to create a draft set of issues.
- ▶ Outreach and feedback to the draft issues from people outside of the Committee:
 - Local community forums or dialogues sponsored by the Strategic Planning Committee.
 - Forums with state agency staff who work on youth issues.
 - Break-out sessions during a state-wide conference.



PRACTICE TIPS

Tip #8: Conducting Community Forums

IDENTIFY ISSUES

Begin the process by orienting those involved to the results of the visioning and assessment steps. Participants should also be encouraged to draw on their practical experience and expertise.

Next discuss and answer questions that elicit potential issues. Use questions such as:

1. What are the major issues identified in the needs, assets and resource assessment that must be addressed in order to achieve our vision for healthy adolescence?
2. Are the issues identified in the assessment consistent with those that you see in the youth you work with?
3. What issues are most critical as we work to improve the health and well-being of adolescents in our state? Why are these issues important? How do they hinder or promote our ability to achieve our vision for healthy adolescents?
4. What contributes to these issues?

The simplest process to use is brainstorming. There are many variations of brainstorming that can keep this step exciting and invigorating. Throughout the process, consolidate similar issues together—this makes the process and its outcomes much easier to manage.

Be aware—it's easy, in this process, to get drawn into discussions about strategies (e.g. what to do about the issues that have been raised). While you may feel tempted to spend time exploring these options, it's better to record these ideas and redirect the discussion back to the issues. Strategies will be discussed in a later step.

PRIORITIZE ISSUES

Once you've generated a list of issues, prioritize them. Prioritization is important because it allows you to determine which issues are most important to address—critical in times of limited resources. It ensures that your plan can be implemented with the resources at hand. Questions to discuss in a prioritization process might include:

1. How significant is this issue?
2. What type of impact does this issue have on achieving our adolescent health vision?
3. Are there effective strategies to address this issue?
4. How feasible is it to address this issue?
5. How much will it cost if we don't address this issue?

The number of priority issues you choose to include in your strategic plan depends on the resources you have available to you. It's possible that you will identify more strategic issues than are feasible to address all at once. Keep in mind that each priority issue could involve a number of objectives and strategies to reach your goal. Be realistic. Don't choose ten distinctly different issues (even if theoretically related) if your budget and staff are small.

Finally, analyze the list of priority issues. Gather and review the scientific literature to assess the factors that contribute to each issue:

- ▶ Risk and protective.
- ▶ Individual, family, school, community, societal.
- ▶ Create a short profile that describes each issue (including this analysis and the data).



Tip #12: Prioritization Strategies



Action Step

DEVELOP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A statement of strategic issues is often too broad to guide specific action. Goals and objectives help you quantify what you want to achieve. Once you know this, it’s much easier to figure out the actions that will help you achieve these ends. It also clearly defines the sets the stage for evaluation of the strategic plan.

Once you have a list of priority issues, the next step is to quantify them into goals and objectives.

IDENTIFY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- **Goals (outcomes)** broadly identify what you achieve to accomplish in order to address the priority adolescent health issues. They are broad statements that identify what needs to change in relation to each priority adolescent health issue.

CHARACTERISTICS OF “GOOD” GOALS

- **Declarative statement:** provide a complete sentence that describes the outcome you seek.
- **Jargon-free:** use language that most people in the field outside your own agency are likely to understand.
- **Short:** use few words to make a statement.
- **Concise:** get the complete idea of your goal across as simply and briefly as possible leaving out unnecessary detail.
- **Easily understood:** provide a goal in which the language is clear and for which there is a clear rationale.
- **Positive terms:** frame the outcomes in positive terms or in terms of a decrease in health risk behaviors. Avoid Framework for objectives—provide a framework so that the objectives are stepping stones to make progress to achieve the goals.

“Good goal criteria”—CDC, http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/dashoet/writing_good_goals/docs/goodgoalcriteria.pdf

- **Objectives** summarize the specific measurable results that you anticipate from your strategic planning efforts. They are more immediate than goals and represent mileposts to be achieved.

To create objectives, use the following template and fill in the blanks.

By _____/_____/_____,
 [WHEN—Time bound]

[WHO will do WHAT—Specific]

from _____ to _____

[MEASURE (number, rate, percentage of change and baseline)—Measurable]

Whenever possible, use adolescent health goals and objectives that have already been adopted or sanctioned by your state, such as:

- ▶ Healthy People objectives for adolescents and young adults.
- ▶ State specific public health goals and objectives.
- ▶ Title V Block Grant MCH Performance Measures.
- ▶ Youth development objectives.

When existing goals and objectives do not exist, create new ones. Whether new or existing, be sure they are consistent with and flow from the plan's vision for healthy adolescence, assessment findings, and priority issues.

Lessons from the Field: SHORT, INTERMEDIATE AND LONG TERM OBJECTIVES

Center for Disease Control—Division of Adolescent and School Health.

Maintains an online tutorial and tool set on developing goals, objectives, and logic models. Include samples of local, state and national logic models demonstrating short, intermediate, and long-term outcomes objectives.

http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/dashoet/writing_good_goals/tools.html



CREATE A LOGIC MODEL

This is a good point in the strategic planning process to use a **logic model** to guide the development of goals, objectives and strategies. A logic model shows how activities recommended by the strategic plan connect to the results or outcomes you seek to achieve. Similar to a flowchart, it lays out activities and outcomes using boxes and arrows; as a whole, it shows how the activities and outcomes connect with one another. It provides direction and clarity by presenting the big picture of change along with important details. For example:

- ▶ **Purpose, or mission.** What motivates the need for change? This can also be expressed as the problems or opportunities that the program is addressing.
- ▶ **Context, or conditions.** What is the climate in which change will take place?
- ▶ **Inputs, or resources or infrastructure.** What resources will be used to conduct the effort or initiative?
- ▶ **Activities, actions, or strategies.** What will the initiative do with its resources to make change happen?
- ▶ **Outcomes, or results, consequences, or impacts.** What kinds of changes came about as a direct or indirect effect of the activities?

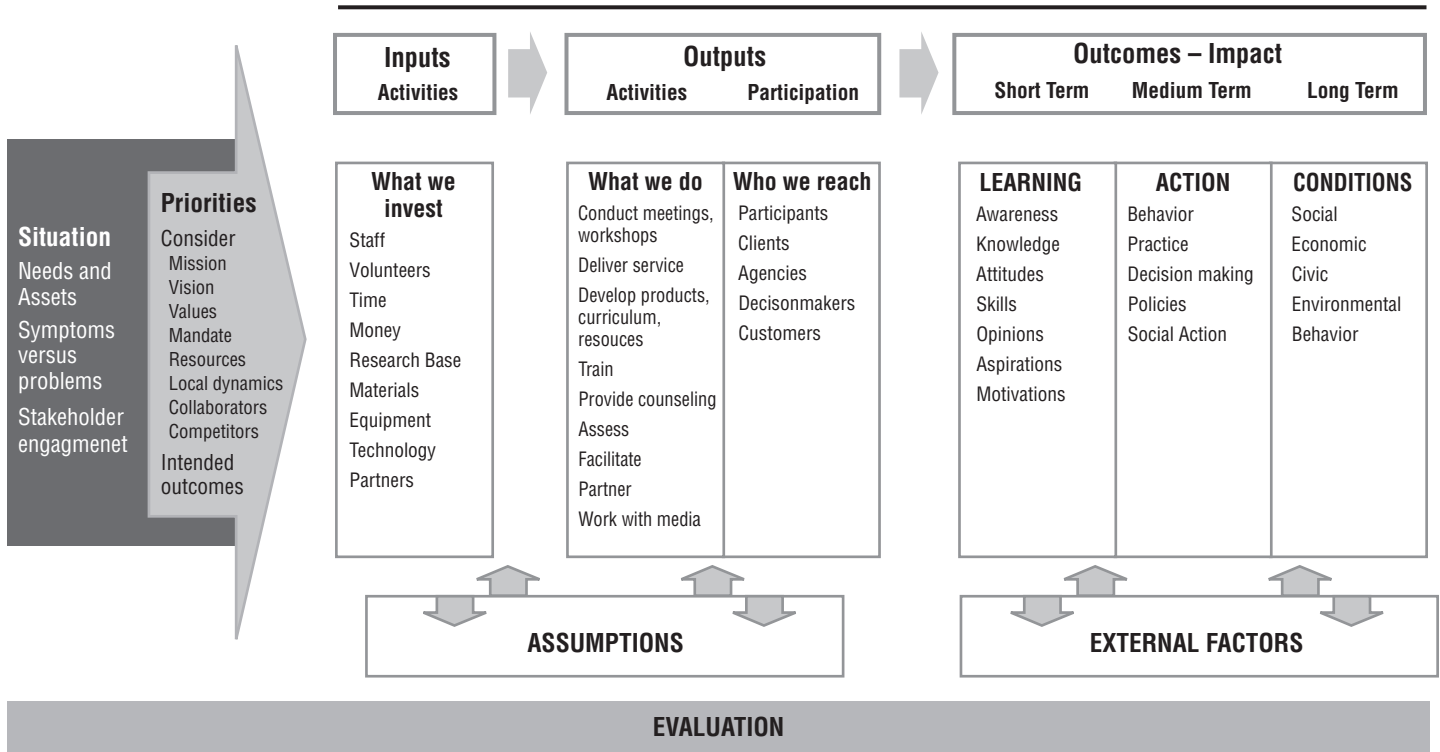


Tip #13: Developing Goals and Objectives

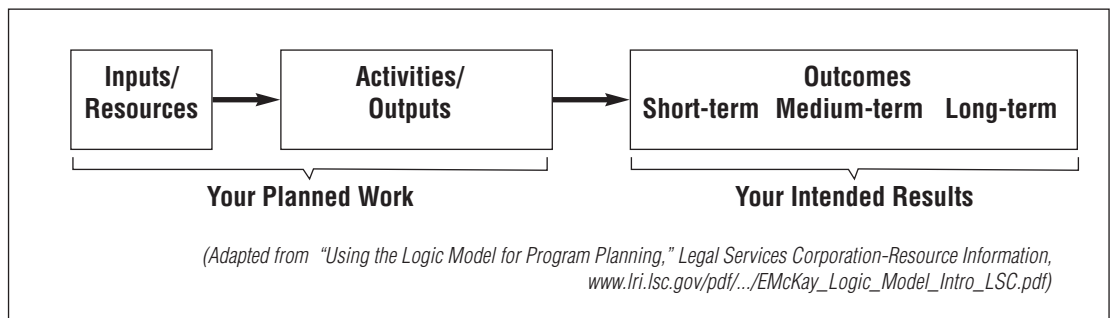
Tip #14: Logic Models

The beauty of a logic model is that it helps you to plan backwards. You can start at your end point - the goals/objective/outcomes you seek to achieve and then determine the strategies that will help achieve these outcomes. Finally, you can identify the resources needed or available to put these strategies into action.

Program Action



Sample Logic model from: University of Wisconsin—Extension, Program Development & Evaluation, <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodel.html>



Action Step

DEVELOP STRATEGIES

Strategies are the actions that address the adolescent health issues identified in your strategic plan. They offer guidance about what needs to like happen in order to support healthy youth in your state.

Strategies should be consistent with and flow from your plan’s vision for healthy adolescence; needs, assets and resource assessment; priority issues; and goals and objectives. They should also be:

- **Research-based** built on best practices and promising strategies that are shown to have a positive effect on adolescent health issues.
- **Built on resources** within your state.
- **Acceptable** to stakeholders who need to be part of implementing the strategies.
- **Feasible** to accomplish.

A note about detail—strategic plan strategies are often broad and general. The results is a plan that is difficult to implement. Decide on the degree of detail for your strategies. Whenever possible, chose to create strategies that are concrete, actionable, understandable. If you most choose broader strategies, be sure that these are accompanied by a list of more concrete action steps (who, what, where, why, when). In addition, you may also choose to include:

- Tips and tools for action planning. These can assist those who use the plan to identify the specific action steps they can take to put a strategy into action.
- Information about resources that can provide ideas on action steps. This can include links to information on best practices, programs or other resources that support action.

Lessons from the Field: TOOLS FOR ACTION PLANNING

The Community Tool Box is a free, Internet-based service to assist you in addressing community health and development issues in your community. Developed and maintained by the Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas, the provides over 7,000 pages of practical information to support your work in promoting community health and development. The focus is on specific practical skills, such as action planning.

<http://ctb.ku.edu/en>



There are a number of activities that can be used to develop strategies for your strategic plan. Again, using a logic model helps to simplify this process. No matter which you choose, make sure that the plan’s vision, conceptual framework, priority issues and goals/objectives guide the choice of strategies.



PRACTICE TIPS

Tip #5: Key Informant Interviews

Tip #8: Community Forums

Tip #12: Prioritization Activities

REVIEW RESEARCH-BASED LITERATURE AND PUBLISHED REPORTS

The goal is to identify strategies that have already been endorsed and researched by others. This information can also be used with other strategy development activities (e.g. generate ideas for brainstorming activities; compare ideas gained through brainstorming, key informant interviews and focus groups to “expert” testimony).

Identify the literature and reports that will be reviewed and pull them together. Compile a list of potential recommendations that address your priority issues and contribute to your goals and objectives.

BRAINSTORM STRATEGIES

Conduct brainstorming sessions with your Strategic Planning Committee (or workgroups), community forums, break-out sessions at professional meetings or conferences (just to name a few).

CONDUCT KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS AND COMMUNITY FORUMS

Once a list of strategies have been identified for each priority issue, analyze them according to criteria such as:

- ▶ Grounded in research?
- ▶ Addresses known risk and protective factors?
- ▶ Anticipated benefits?
- ▶ Impact?
- ▶ Acceptable?
- ▶ Cost-benefit ratio?
- ▶ Feasible?
- ▶ Potential barriers to implementation?
- ▶ Developmentally appropriate?
- ▶ Adequately addresses disparities?
- ▶ Builds on existing resources?
- ▶ Sustainable?

Choose the strategies that make sense for your strategic plan. To complete this process, conduct one final review of chosen strategies to the issues, goals and objectives they are to address and an overall fit to the conceptual framework and vision.

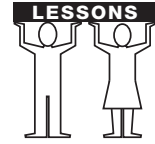
Lessons from the Field: LINKING GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

A number of state adolescent health strategic plans show the link between their priorities, strategies and outcomes (goals and/or objectives).

Connecticut—Department of Public Health—their adolescent health strategic plan identifies three priority issues for immediate action. For each priority, it presents: 1) a description of why this is an issue; 2) goals for addressing the issue; and 3) steps for taking action to address the issue.

Indiana—Coalition to Improve Adolescent Health—uses a logic model for each of the 10 priority issues identified in its strategic plan. Each logic model is designed to show how recommended actions lead to changes in knowledge, skills, and attitudes, which in turn lead to changes in behaviors, and, ultimately, to achieving a goal that will improve the health and well-being of adolescents in our state.

Oregon—Department of Human Services/Public Health Division—also uses a logic model in its Youth Sexual Health Plan. This plan clearly shows how its inputs and strategies will help achieve its objectives and outcomes (short, medium and long-term).

**CONCLUSION**

Congratulations! You've now completed the major components of your strategic plan:

- Assessment of the health status of youth and the systems that support their health.
- Conceptual framework that describes and defines adolescent health.
- Vision for healthy adolescents that motivates strategic action.
- Prioritization of issues that need to be addressed in order to improve the health of youth.
- Goals and Objectives to be accomplished.
- Actions to achieve your goals and objectives.

Now it's time to focus on creating a strategic plan document that is engaging, informative and inspiring. The last chapter in Section 2 highlights practical strategies for translating the pieces of your plan into a formal written product.



Chapter 10

Creating and Producing the Strategic Plan

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INTRODUCTION

The last steps in the strategic planning process are to formally write and produce the strategic plan. These steps are important because they focus on synthesizing all the information gathered in the planning process and organizing it into a product or products that facilitate action. This chapter focuses on the work needed to transform the strategic planning process into a “usable” strategic planning document.

Action Step

PREPARE TO CREATE THE STRATEGIC PLAN

There are 4 areas of preparation to complete before formally entering into this last stage of developing a strategic plan. Review the information gathered in the preparation phase of strategic planning for background.

REVIEW THE ANTICIPATED STRATEGIC PLANNING OUTCOMES AND TARGET AUDIENCE

This part of the process is strategic in that it requires a reexamination of project outcomes and target audience in order to identify and shape the “right” document(s) to meet these ends. You may ultimately decide to produce a plan plus additional support materials to ensure that they really are useful for your key audiences. The broad strategic planning outcomes you want to achieve and the target audience of people who will help you achieve these outcomes should guide the types of strategic plan and other documents that are produced. Individuals are more likely to pick up



Related Section 1 Worksheets:

- 1.1:** Define the Outcomes to be Achieved.
- 1.2:** Identify the Strategic Plan’s Target Audience.
- 1.3:** Identify the Steps for Publishing the Strategic Plan.

and read a plan if they feel it is relevant to their needs, they can easily grasp the plan's structure and quickly find what they want to know.

IDENTIFY GUIDELINES THAT NEED TO BE FOLLOWED WHEN WRITING, EDITING AND PRODUCING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

State agencies follow a variety of guidelines in the development and production of publications, whether print or electronic. Work closely with Communication staff and others who have a clear understanding of these guidelines. Possible questions to answer can include:

- ▶ What Communication or other related staff should be involved in this part of the process?
- ▶ What are the agency guidelines for writing, developing and producing a report?
- ▶ Are there any variations in these guidelines for print vs. electronic versions of a publication?
- ▶ Are there any restrictions or requirements on the types of vendors (e.g. designers, printers, etc.) that can be used?

IDENTIFY WHO WILL WRITE, EDIT AND PRODUCE THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Writing and producing a strategic plan seems like singular and straightforward steps. However, like the entire strategic planning process itself, the production process has its own strategic aspects, sometimes requires specialized knowledge, and always involves a number of different players. Creating a useful plan means developing a visually pleasing format and physically creating a product. This requires several different areas of expertise: writing, editing, graphic design, formatting and print production. These are all specialized skills that may or may not be within the scope of the Strategic Planning Committee. Consider the following staffing roles:

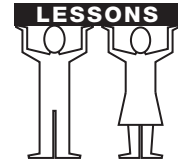
- ▶ **Oversight:** Ideally, it's good to use a small group of skilled individuals to oversee this stage of strategic planning. This could be a sub-committee of the Strategic Planning Committee. This group could include members of the Planning Committee with skills in this area, staff from the sponsoring agency's Communication department, consultants and the Project Coordinator.
- ▶ **Writer:** It is better to have one lead person write the plan instead of having multiple writers. If multiple writers are used, it is critical to use an editor to ensure consistency throughout the plan. The writer could be the Project Coordinator, a consultant or a small sub-set of Strategic Planning members with expertise in writing.
- ▶ **Editor:** The editor might be someone from the sponsoring agency's Communications staff, a consultant or skilled members from the Strategic Planning Committee.
- ▶ **Design and production:** Production staff could be consultants, Communication staff within the sponsoring agency or within partner organizations, or outside vendors.

PRACTICE TIPS

Tip #15: Production Vendors

Lessons from the Field: WRITING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Colorado—In early editions of the Colorado plan, individual chapters were written by the subcommittees of the Advisory Council on Adolescent Health. A writer then wove these chapters together into the strategic plan. This process was ultimately found to be difficult and inefficient. A consultant now writes the plan by gathering input from the Council's subcommittees.

**IDENTIFY THE REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS**

At all phases of this final stage, consider the individuals and organizations that need to be included in the review and approval process. This process is strategic because it gives you the opportunity to reconnect with key stakeholders, gain allies, and build support. Alternately, the approval process can easily derail momentum of the planning process if you fail to consider and adhere to the formal or mandatory approvals dictated by your department, division or organization. Before starting this stage, identify the review and approval process that needs to be followed in order to produce the strategic plan. This can include:

- ▶ Who needs to review and approve the strategic plan?
- ▶ Who else should strategically be part of the review and or approval process?
- ▶ At what points of writing, editing and production does the plan need to go through review and/ or approval?

Once this background work has been accomplished, it is time to create the strategic plan.

Action Step**WRITE AND EDIT THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

When “producing” the strategic plan, the first step is to write and edit the plan. Writing the plan is a process of assembling together all the ideas, information and other data gathered to this point and synthesizing it into a format that clearly communicates the messages you’d like to get across. At a tactical level, “how” depends on making some deceptively basic decisions.

- How much of this information will be included?
- How should that information be organized?
- How should that information be conveyed?

These decisions are best determined by examining the interplay between your desired outcome and the audience(s) most critical to that outcome. Thinking through these questions strategically will usually lead you in the right direction. Consider:

- Who needs to take action to achieve your outcome?
- What action do you want them to take?

- What might prevent them from taking action?
- What information will motivate them to take action?
- How will they use the plan in their actions?

Armed with these answers, you can develop an approach for “producing” your document as well as a plan for how best to get it into the hands of your audience.

IDENTIFY THE TYPE OF FORMAT FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN

There are numerous options for presenting the information you’d like to include in the strategic plan. As noted above, the decision for what to include and how to frame it depends on the desired outcome of the strategic plan and its audience.

The following chart uses some of the possible plan strategic planning outcomes cited in Chapter 1. For each outcome, hypothetical audiences and information presentation approaches are included.

If the Desired Primary Outcome of the Strategic Plan is...	And the Plan’s Primary Audience is...	Information Presentation should...
Increased awareness, understanding and support for adolescents and their health as a societal priority	Decision Makers	<p>Be brief, 1–2 pages maximum (e.g. Executive Summary).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be Urgent • Present the most compelling facts • Present the most compelling facts • Cite indisputable sources and research • Recommend clear action steps
A shared vision of healthy adolescence that guides action	Direct providers and shapers of adolescent health services and programs	<p>Be ongoing (over time) vs. a single document (e.g. web based, living document).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizes collaborative approach • Leads with agreements/vision statement • Uses “Team” and “us” language • Promotes every group’s contribution
Identification and prioritization of youth issues that require both immediate and longer-term action	Members of State health department and other departments that address adolescent health issues	<p>Be concise, data driven, and information rich.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a factual tone • Provides and prioritizes action steps • Demonstrates endorsement/support by departmental leadership
Consensus on the best course of action to improve the health of youth	State and community organizations vested in adolescent health issues	<p>Be a consensus document.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads with a description of consensus building process • Clearly states course of action directly supported by research, data, and consensus • Uses “Team” and “us” language • Promotes every group’s contribution

WRITE THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Your key audience and the nature of your outcome will also shape your writing style. In addition to being selective about what information to include, be conscious of how this information is conveyed through language and visual representations.

Tone: The tone with which a piece is written can dramatically impact how a reader responds. A highly familiar tone can be inviting and comfortable in the right context, annoying and off-putting in the wrong context. Always attempt to be deliberate and appropriate in your choice of tone.

Acronyms: Great space savers—three little letters compared to three long words. But readers don't always appreciate the use of acronyms, particularly those that they don't know. Always provide the acronym's description with its first use and don't feel bad about repeatedly "spelling out" a phrase that you personally would refer to with an acronym.

Self speak: Every profession or field of expertise uses phrases or terms that are either unfamiliar to or carry a different meaning for those outside the field. Consider the term "wrap around programs"—would a legislator really know what that meant? Even the public health field's use of the term "promotion" is different than a layperson's understanding of the term. Be aware of "self speak" and take the time to carefully explain your concepts and ideas.

EDIT THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Even the best of writers needs editing. Editing always improves the final product, even if it adds time to the process.

You are always your own first editor. After completing your first draft, put it aside for a day, then pick it up and read the entire piece once again. During this read, mark up the copy for typographical errors, errors and language that doesn't read right to you. Don't fix the mistakes, just indicate them—it is too easy to get overwhelmed or frustrated with this start and stop approach. You'll also lose the opportunity to check for the writing's overall "flow." When you are done with a once-through, go back through and make the corrections as needed.

You may or may not have much choice in selecting your editor. Typically, the best choice at this point is either a professional editor or someone who is more like your audience. In working with your editor, be certain to establish your goals and ground rules up front. Do you want to focus their attention on one particular aspect or on everything? Do you want them to suggest corrections or simply indicate areas that need attention? Take the time to go through their edits one-on-one to get the most benefit from the experience.

Action Step

DESIGN AND PRODUCE THE PLAN

The strategic plan is now written. It has been through the review process, revisions have been made and you are ready to “get it done.” In addition to deciding on the content of the plan, you will need to determine what the plan will look like.

On a very tactical level, the “look” of the plan will be determined by a number of factors:

- Whether you use color and/or how you use colors.
- Whether it is dense with text or broken up with charts, images and photos.
- Whether you use a professional designer or not.
- How you chose to “package” the plan (e.g. what sort of binding, cover, etc.).

On a strategic level, the “look” of the plan is governed by the three factors you must consider in every phases of developing a useful plan:

- The plan’s key audience(s).
- The desired outcomes of the plan.
- The resources available to create the plan.



Lessons from the Field: DEVELOPING A “USER-FRIENDLY” REPORT

California—The plan developers published and distributed a separate Executive Summary, as well as the full plan. Secondly, both the full plan and the Executive Summary were placed on the web where specific pages could be downloaded.

Colorado—The Colorado plan includes a **Highlight** section at the start of each chapter. This 1-page section provides an easy-to-use summary of the chapter’s main points (major trends, who is at risk, progress towards CO Year 2000 objectives, and strategies to achieve objectives).

Minnesota—Potential users of the Minnesota plan were surveyed to find out what format was most useful. The survey indicated that people preferred an electronic-based report (CD and internet), so the plan was designed for this as the primary format with a print version as a secondary format.

Indiana—Decided not to include a resource assessment in their strategic plan because information changes so quickly. Instead, a resource section was added to the website/online version of the strategic plan so users could link directly to resources and organizations and contact information could be continually updated and edited as needed.

Tennessee—Noted that keeping data current was a challenge, and that as time progressed data from initial needs assessments was getting old and outdated. To address this issue, data specific fact sheets/ reports were posted online where data could be updated more easily with some regularity.

EXPLORE IDEAS FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN’S “LOOK”

Things that people see affect them. That’s the basic premise behind the billions of dollars spent by companies on the visual appearance of their company and products. This means that the way your Strategic Plan “looks” will affect those that receive it. The “look” conveys messages that are not included in the text of the plan. For example, a text-only 100 page single-sided might convey both positive and negative messages such as:

POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seriousness of your effort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of professionalism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescent health portrayed as a complex, multifaceted topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of concern for the reader
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A data-driven perspective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overwhelming mass of technical information

For a technical audience, this look and the messages it conveys might work perfectly. The reader recognizes that this is no “light weight” publication and might use the plan accordingly—digging for data, capturing recommendations, and so on. For other audiences, this look and message might have a dramatically negative effect. The reader thinks “this is too much” and simply tosses it aside.

This is not to say that materials produced this way are bad and wrong. As indicated above, for some audiences and some projects they are exactly correct. Materials that are super-slick (high production value) have the same trade-offs. For some audiences, a professionally designed appearance is the basic requirement—they won’t read it otherwise. Other audiences might question why you are spending valuable resources on something as irrelevant as the way the plan looks. Others still might take the message that your plan or issue is getting recognition, and therefore something they should look into.

To demonstrate how these questions can shape your decision on how your plan should “look,” consider the following examples.

1. **An outcome for a strategic plan** is to inform decision-makers on the health needs of adolescents in the state. Given the premium placed on the decision maker’s time—and the competitive nature of getting access to that time—it is clear that a text-based 100-page publication is not the best way to reach this target audience. Therefore, consider starting each chapter of the plan with a 1-page concise, crisp summary of the key points for decision-makers in that section. This provides a “snapshot” that decision-makers can easily digest and use. In fact, these summary pages could be used independently as fact sheets during the dissemination and implementation phase of strategic planning.
2. **A different outcome for a plan** is to identify resources to support action. These resources can include information on data, funding, best practices, model programs and more. Using a format that reduces the time and energy it takes to access these



Review examples of other publications with similar anticipated outcomes (within the adolescent health field and external to the field):

- Adolescent health strategic plans from other states.
- Strategic plans for other health issues.
- Strategic publications focused on a specific target audience (e.g. general public, policy makers).

Identify what works and doesn’t work in these publications for ideas in creating your own strategic plan.

resources can increase the likelihood that strategic plan users will actually seek these resources. For example, a CD-ROM format can provide direct links to many critical resources. A web-based format can also be updated at a relatively low cost to reflect an accurate list of resources (e.g. the full plan doesn't have to be reprinted and distributed, even when data updates or new information are added).

**PRACTICE TIPS****Tip #16: Form Factors****DEFINE THE PARAMETERS OF THE PROJECT**

Deciding how your plan should look is a decision that must be considered in tandem with the basic parameters of your project. These are the most basic considerations when planning your project.

- What is your budget?
- What is the plan's shelf life?
- How many do you need to produce?
- How will the plan be distributed?
- How quickly does it need to be done?
- What are your internal resources?

Knowing who your "customers" are and understanding how they will perceive your materials is an important first step in deciding on a look and physical appearance for your plan. This is commonly referred to as the plan's "form factor." The following chart references different types of form factors and what to expect in working with them.

IDENTIFY WHO WILL PRODUCE THE STRATEGIC PLAN

For many people, this final stage of producing the plan is the most foreign and technically challenging. The final stage involves disciplines that are not necessarily part of your core competency: graphic design, desktop publishing and printing.

Because it is somewhat "far afield," many groups choose to hire an outside vendor to complete the plan's production. As noted in the previous section, there are many good reasons to hire a vendor:

- High quality final product.
- "Professional" product.
- Reduced time involvement for you.
- Support for the community.

Alternately, there are some reasons you may not be able, or chose, to hire an outside vendor

- Expense.
- Time to completion.
- Organizational policy.

Some of these reasons are entirely prohibitive (organizational policy), but other reasons “not” to hire an outside vendor can be overcome with creative approaches. In all likelihood, you’ll end up doing some of the work on your own and some with an outside vendor.

The following provides an overview of the two options for producing your plan.

**Option #1:
PRODUCE THE PLAN ON YOUR OWN**

When producing a publication on your own—or “in house”—you may still want to consider the following process associated with using a vendor.



Tip #17: Outline of a “Project Brief”

Tip #18: Desktop Publishing Do’s and Don’ts

DEVELOP A PROJECT BRIEF

Develop your own “project brief” as discussed in the next section (Produce the plan with a vendor). The process of developing this brief will help clarify your thinking and keep you on task. When reviewers, editors or individuals involved in the approval process have questions or challenge your decisions, use the project brief to justify your choices.

WRITE FIRST— FORMAT LAST

Formatting and creating a design for the way your words will look is very disruptive to the writing process. To make the best use of your time, write the copy for your plan first, create a design or page format second, and when all of that is approved and agreed to—then format the document. Review the following section about how to work with a graphic designer and consider applying the approach and “rules” to the approval process.

CREATE A PAGE DESIGN/FORMAT

To the non-designer, this will be the most challenging step. Formatting is hard, but routine. Developing a page design or format means creating a look.

As noted in the previous section, one good tactic is to collect materials that are similar in form to what you want to

Electronic or Digital Media vs. Traditional Paper...

Electronic media is increasingly becoming an attractive option. You will undoubtedly be asked “Is this going to be available on a CD?” at some stage. There are many ways to make your plan “digital.” As always, your decision on how to proceed should also be driven by your outcomes and your audience. Just because being digital represents the latest trend doesn’t mean that producing purely digital materials is the way to go.

The benefit of digital is the elimination of paper. You can produce a plan that has very high production values and never have to spend the money to print it. However, people continue to like using paper. They are most comfortable reading from paper, can easily pick up paper and take it with them (anywhere), and like to make notes and turn pages on their plan. Further, paper products have a “breakthrough” factor that digital products can lack. If your plan is a CD sitting on the commissioner’s desk, they’ll have to remove the CD, place it in the tray, open the CD on their computer, find the right file, find the right page, then start reading. As a paper product, the information you want to deliver is only a page turn away.

Digital media does provide some clear benefits. If you are providing huge amounts of data that other people may want to incorporate into their own spreadsheets, databases, or statistical programs, a digital format is the most useful way to proceed. For projects that require interaction—like a curriculum, quiz or game, a digital format is preferred.

At a minimum, you’ll want to have a digital version of your product available on a web page (either the sponsoring agency can take the lead or links can be established to other web sites where the plan can be made available) and for electronic distribution. This requires the relatively simple and cost-effective task of creating an Adobe PDF. A PDF is the standard way of delivering documents so that it can be read and used on any computer. You need special software to make a PDF, but it is something that your printer can do for you. Always ask for a “low resolution” PDF—so that the file size is small enough to send through the mail or download quickly. Once you have a PDF, you can always burn it onto a CD to make it further available!

produce. Notice how they treat headlines, subheads and the body copy. Notice how the page numbers are treated. Pay careful attention to their use of visuals and where they are placed on the page. These might stimulate your own ideas, give you a jumping off point or help make your decision for you.

Once you decided on a basic look, take a chapter, page or representative section of your written and edited plan and apply the formatting to it. This gives you a chance to see how the design you've selected works or doesn't work.

DESKTOP PUBLISHING 101

No one becomes a graphic designer overnight. But the availability of new software is encouraging many individuals to test their own abilities. If this is a topic you are interested in, consider taking a class or reading one of the many good basic design books.

**OPTION #2:
PRODUCE THE PLAN WITH A VENDOR**

Before considering hiring a vendor, you must be fully aware of any procedures, directives, mandates or recommendations from your department, division or organization. While sometimes restrictive, these policies can sometimes be very helpful in getting good pricing, making contacts and streamlining the process.

There are three areas in the final production process for which you may consider hiring an outside vendor.



PRACTICE TIPS

Tip #15: Types of Production Vendors

PRODUCTION PROCESS	LOOK FOR...
1. To create the design or "look" of your report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graphic Designer • Design Firm • Communications Agency
2. To take the entire report and apply the specified design or "look."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graphic Designer • Design Firm • Communications Agency • Printer
3. To print, bind, trim and deliver your report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printer

This chart shows that different groups can deliver different areas of expertise for your use. Mixing and matching is always a possibility. You might decide to hire a designer purely to develop a "look" then execute the design yourself or with a printer. In any event, it is important to note that a single vendor is unlikely to do all of these things well. Designers, for example, will not do the printing themselves. If they say they will, this is likely to mean that they will hire a vendor and outsource it themselves. Alternately, printers will frequently indicate that they can do "design" work, but as "design" is not their core competency, it is likely that your final product won't be as outstanding as that done by a designer.

IDENTIFY A VENDOR

There are literally thousands of graphic designers and printers in every major U.S. city. Although these are competitive and highly saturated businesses, this does not imply that it is easy to find the perfect designer, communications firm, production artist or printer for you. Following are some tips for finding good vendors:

- **Get referrals from colleagues.** Talk with members of the Strategic Planning Committee, agency Communications staff, colleagues who have produced related publications. Take a look through all the literature and materials in your office. Does anything stand out to you? Anything resembles what you envision your final product will look like? Find the originator or publisher of the piece and give them a call. Most people are happy to refer you to their designer or agency—it reflects well on their work and on them as a client. Don't forget to take the opportunity to ask them what they thought of the designer and the experience of working with them.
- **Contact the group's professional association** and take a look at their directory. This won't have all the designers in town, but it is a good place to start.

Graphic Designer & Design Firms

- American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA)
www.aiga.org/content.cfm?alias=directory

Communications Agencies:

- American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA)
www.aaa.org

Printers:

- Printing Industries of America
www.gain.net/business_solutions/printaccess/choose.html

SELECT A VENDOR

While the temptation is to go with the first good contact you have, it is important to talk to several vendors for any given job.

Selection: What are you looking for in a vendor? The list probably resembles the same criteria you use for hiring other types of professional.

- Have they done this kind of work before—does their experience meet your need?
- Have they worked with governmental agencies before?
- Do you think their work is suitable for your organization or project?
- Can they provide references?
- Are you comfortable with their process?
- Are their rates appropriate?
- Will they provide formal estimates up front?
- What is their process for time and cost overages?
- Do they provide a written contract?
- What is your gut feeling about working with them?

It can be helpful to have a one-on-one meeting with the vendor. At that time, they will show you samples of their work. Be sure to prepare them for the meeting by giving them an idea of what your project entails. Since you are producing a multi-page document, you might not be that interested in looking at posters or flyers.

However, if you are considering a “stand-alone” Executive Summary or a series of fact sheets that reflect the plan, consider whether the vendor would be able to produce all types of materials.

Although a designer who has not produced a document exactly like yours may be capable of doing a good job, for example, bringing a fresh approach to the project that one may not find elsewhere, certain precautions should be considered. For example, in gaining fresh insights, one may lose a bit of “battle experience,” (e.g. previous relevant experience that will greatly facilitate the production of this document. Ultimately, if you believe the vendor is competent, although inexperienced, the worst case scenario would result in increased time and worse, more money.

Check References: You should always check at least one reference. Use the “Selection Criteria” questions above to guide your discussion with them—simply frame them as “were you satisfied with ... “ or “what was your experience with ...”. One important piece of the puzzle that these references can contribute to your information gathering is how the designer/vendor handled their interactions with the client. Ask questions like: “Did he/she take direction well? Were there any conflicts over opinions? How were problems resolved? Was the production completed in a timely manner?”

DEVELOP THE PUBLICATION

Once you’ve hired your designer/contractor, the real fun begins. Whether developed internally or externally, a development process now begins. Since printers typically don’t enter into the process until the actual “production” begins, this section is dedicated to working with designers and/or agencies.

DEVELOP A CONTRACT/ SCOPE OF WORK

Clearly define who is responsible for what, how much money is involved, when the project is due and what is expected from each party. A contract is absolutely essential to protect both you and your vendor. It is your responsibility to make sure that the contract accurately reflects what you need, when you need it, and what you expect.

DEVELOP A PROJECT BRIEF

Most designers and agencies will start the development process with a piece of paper that describes, in detail, what the project is about. This is referred to by many different names, but its purpose is always the same: to guarantee that both client and vendor are clear on what is needed for the project. A Project Brief will contain information that is strategic and factual.

Your responsibility is to be absolutely certain that the brief reflect your needs and requirements. This is not the time to be shy—if you disagree with something, bring it up immediately. The “brief” is the template for the designer’s work. They will refer to it throughout the process and use it to rationalize their work. If you agree, for example, that the tone of the piece should be “playful”, the designer will follow this direction. Want to change your mind? That is certainly your prerogative. But do it

before the designer begins their work. Once the designer has done the work you own it. You will now have to pay for another round of creative development AND you will have lost the confidence of your designer. When asked to “sign off” on the creative brief realize that this is your commitment to the direction to which you have agreed.

It is important to remember that you are solely responsible for determining if your organization has requirements for printed materials. Proceeding into creative development without this information may negate your entire process and set you back to the starting line.

Designers take their work seriously and typically spend a good deal of time thinking about the challenge before they start putting ideas on paper. In addition to the “brief”, a good designer will also spend time reviewing materials similar to the one they are to develop. In the case of large, multi-page document, they may look at magazines, textbooks, and other reports. Even if they don’t ask, give them the examples you’ve looked at and use these examples to talk about your expectations. If you have collected plans from other states, give these to the designer as well. More is always better!

Giving Feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always, always, always lead with a positive. Even if you hate everything you see, find something positive to say.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don’t try to do the designer’s job. That is to say, don’t tell the designer how you want something fixed, tell them what you want fixed. It is the difference between saying “this looks overpowering to me” and “make this smaller.”

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Hold you breath, because at this stage you’ve done everything you can to prepare the designer, and now it is their turn. Typically, the designer will work up a number of different ideas and, after “playing” with their ideas further, they’ll settle on a few that they think are the strongest and present them to you. It is your responsibility to give them feedback on the ideas and, ideally, to select one for them to “flesh out.”

All designers work differently. Some may chose to show you their roughest ideas – hand sketches on tissue-like paper (frequently referred to as “tissues”) so that they don’t waste time pursuing a look that you aren’t at all interested in. Others will take their ideas all the way into a format that looks completely finished—except that the actual words aren’t correct (designers frequently plug in gibberish so that they don’t get hung up on the actual copy—they call this “greek” type). These nearly-finished pieces are frequently referred to as “comps.”

Depending on the process you’ve agreed to, your reaction to the work you’ve seen and the designer’s own recommendations, the next step may include revisions, more creative development or finalizing the look you’ve selected.

PRODUCTION PROCESS

With the creative work out of they way, the manual labor begins. The designer will now take all the text you have written and format it with the design you have selected, prepare it for printing and initiate the printing process.



Tip #17: Outline of a “Project Brief”



Tip #19: Production Process

Tip #20: Production Costs and Estimates



Keeping an Eye On the Detail...

Making a commitment to designing and producing a publication such as a strategic takes vision, courage and an eye for details. It is a foregone conclusion that no matter what, the plan will have at least a few typos, omissions and “wish we had’s.”

One way to minimize these “oops” factors, is to keep a running list of the ideas, issues, concerns, “remember to’s” and “be sure not to’s” from every meeting. Refer to the list every time you are asked to sign off or approve a draft. Following are a few items you can use to start this list:

- Have you included the language and/or logos required by your organization and/or funder?
- Have you made the correct citations for use of any photography or artwork?
- Did you include all the appropriate people on your “credits” or “acknowledgements” page?
- Is there a reference for how the reader can obtain more copies of the publication?
- Do the Table of Contents page numbers match the real pages?
- Are there any page breaks that get in the way of reading?

CONCLUSION

At this point in the strategic planning process, your plan has become a reality. By focusing on the important details—identifying a publication format that fits your strategic planning goals, focusing on the needs of the plan’s target audience, designing a publication that is easy to use, focusing on the details of production—the strategic plan will be a tool that is useful in guiding action within your state.



Chapter 11

Adapting the Planning Steps for Alternative Strategic Planning Initiatives

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INTRODUCTION

Strategic planning is an important step in assuring that available resources and focus are being directed at populations in greatest need of attention. Throughout this manual, the focus has been on comprehensive strategic planning. The **5 strategic planning steps** have been applied to a comprehensive planning process. But, these same steps can easily be adapted for less comprehensive strategic planning initiatives. In this chapter, the steps are applied to each the alternate planning processes identified in Chapter 1 (“Choose a Strategic Planning Option to Meet Your Needs”).

The following sections of this chapter focus on how these planning steps can be used for the strategic planning alternative options addressed in Section 1, Chapter 1.

STRATEGIC PLANNING STEPS	
STEP 1	Organize and manage a strategic planning committee
STEP 2	Create an adolescent health conceptual framework and vision
STEP 3	Assess adolescent needs, assets and resources
STEP 4	Identify priority issues and strategies
STEP 5	Create and produce the strategic plan

Option #1:

DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE ADOLESCENT HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN IN PHASES

Overview: Creating a comprehensive adolescent health strategic plan in three phases. Each phase is distinct (a stand alone project), builds on the previous phase, and ends with a comprehensive strategic plan.

Adaptation of Strategic Planning Steps: Because this option is an alternative method for developing a comprehensive plan, the planning steps apply directly. The following are suggestions for ways to organize each phase of the project.

PHASE 1: DEVELOP AN ADOLESCENT HEALTH CONCEPT PAPER	
STEP 1	Organize and orient committee and/or consultants.
STEP 2	Create an adolescent health conceptual Framework and Vision.
STEP 5	Use the framework to develop and produce an Adolescent Health Concept Paper.
PHASE 2: PRODUCE A DATA REPORT OR CHART BOOK	
STEP 1	Organize and orient committee and/or consultants.
STEP 3	Assess adolescent needs, assets and resources.
STEP 4	Identify strategic issues.
STEP 5	Produce the Data Report or Chart Book.
PHASE 3: DEVELOP AN ADOLESCENT HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN	
STEP 1	Organize and orient committee and/or consultants.
STEP 4	Formulate strategies.
STEP 5	Merge together the strategies with the Concept Paper and the Data Report/ Chart Book to produce the strategic plan.

Option #2:

DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUSED ON A SPECIFIC ADOLESCENT HEALTH ISSUE

Overview: Creation of a comprehensive strategic plan to address one or more adolescent health issues (e.g. teen pregnancy, mental health, suicide, injury). The goal is to address all aspects of the health issue, including the behavioral and health outcomes, antecedent factors that contribute to and protect against the health issue, and the infrastructure of resources needed to support healthy outcomes.

Adaptation of Strategic Planning Steps: This alternative is the development of a comprehensive strategic plan addressing a single issue (e.g. teen pregnancy, mental health). As such, all of the planning steps apply, but with the work focused on the specific health issue.

Option #3:

DEVELOP AN ADOLESCENT HEALTH SECTION WITHIN A STATE MCH OR PUBLIC HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN

Overview: Developing a specific focus on adolescent health within a broader MCH or Public Health Plan helps to raise the awareness about youth issues and define the action steps needed to improve the health, safety and well-being of young people. This can be achieved by either:

- Developing a specific adolescent health section within the broader Plan; or
- Ensuring that adolescent health issues are clearly addressed in topical sections of the broader Plan.

Adaptation of Strategic Planning Steps: The planning steps used in this option depend on the process used to develop the MCH or Public Health Plan. In general, there are a number of roles that adolescent advocates and experts can play in this type of strategic planning project:

- Advocate and educate those involved in the project about the importance of including an adolescent focus in the project.
- Educate those involved in the project on how health issues are understood from an adolescent perspective (e.g. tobacco issues of adolescence as compared to the tobacco issues of adulthood).
- Encourage the use of a **Lifespan perspective** when framing how health issues will be addressed in the strategic plan. Using this perspective, health issues are addressed developmentally according to individual lifestages and the health impact of previous stages on subsequent stages (e.g. health issues of infancy, childhood, adolescence, early adulthood, adults, seniors).
- Take the lead in developing an adolescent section within the plan (or the child and adolescent section of the plan)
- If the plan is focused on a range of traditional public health issues, coordinate the participation of individuals with adolescent expertise for each health issue in the planning process.

Option #4:

INCORPORATE AN ADOLESCENT HEALTH FOCUS WITHIN A SINGLE ISSUE STRATEGIC PLAN FOCUSED ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

Overview: This option focuses on ensuring that the specific needs of adolescents are adequately addressed in a strategic plan focused on a specific health issue for the entire population (e.g. chronic disease prevention plan, substance use prevention plan).

Adaptation of Strategic Planning Steps: As with Option #3, the planning steps depend on the process used to develop the single issue strategic plan. For example, if the topic is Tobacco Prevention, incorporate the role of adolescent tobacco use and its impact on both adolescent and adult outcomes.

- Advocate and educate those involved in the project about the importance of including an adolescent perspective in the project.
- Educate those involved in the project on how the health issue is understood from an adolescent perspective (e.g. tobacco issues of adolescence as compared to the tobacco issues of adulthood).
- Assist in identifying individuals with expertise in the health issue from an adolescent perspective to participate in the planning process.

Option #5:

DEVELOP AN ADOLESCENT HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN FOR A STATE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Overview: The goal of this planning process is to develop a clear blueprint for addressing adolescent health and safety comprehensively and consistently across a state public health agency.

Adaptation of Strategic Planning Steps: Because this alternative is based on developing a comprehensive adolescent health strategic plan, but with application to a single state agency, the planning steps all apply. There are a number of areas for consideration when planning the planning steps:

- You may choose to only include staff from within the agency to participate in the process, although it is very beneficial to involve people from outside of the agency at certain points in the project.
- As part of strategic planning, focus on building relationships and exploring ways in which the programs, units and divisions within the agency interact, coordinate and communicate on adolescent health issues.

Option #6:

DEVELOP A SYNTHESIS OR SUMMARY REPORT HIGHLIGHTING THE YOUTH-RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EXISTING STATE STRATEGIC PLANS

Overview: The focus of this strategic planning process is to analyze and summarize how adolescents, and their health, safety and well-being are currently addressed through existing state-level strategic plans.

Adaptation of Strategic Planning Steps: This strategic planning alternative is focused on analysis and synthesis of existing adolescent-related strategic plans. Many of the planning steps apply but with modifications:

STEPS	DESCRIPTION OR ADAPTATION
PREPARATION	Identify the process that will be used to develop the Synthesis Report (e.g. what types of strategic plans will be included? What is the focus of the analysis? Will new issues and strategies not addressed in these reports be considered for inclusion? etc.)
STEP 1	Organize and orient an Advisory Committee or Workgroup.
STEP 2	Develop an adolescent health conceptual framework that provides context for the synthesis of the existing strategic plans. Or, adopt a framework from an existing plan.
STEP 3	If possible, synthesize or update the needs and assets assessments from the existing plans.
STEP 4	Identify the strategic issues and strategies from the strategic plans.
STEP 5	Produce the Synthesis Report.

Option #7:

DEVELOP AN ADOLESCENT DATA REPORT OR CHART BOOK

Overview: A Data Report or Chart Book highlights and “tells the story” about the critical health needs of adolescents.

Adaptation of Strategic Planning Steps: As with all the strategic planning options, the process of developing the report is as important as the product itself so be sure to include ways to involve a diverse group of people in this project. This is especially important in the interpretation of the needs and assets assessment data and identifying the strategic issues.

STEPS	DESCRIPTION OR ADAPTATION
STEP 1	Organize and orient an committees and consultants.
STEP 2	Conduct a needs, assets and resource assessment.
STEP 3	Conduct a needs, assets and resource assessment.
STEP 4	Identify priority issues.
STEP 5	Produce the Data Report of Chart Book.

Option #8:

DEVELOP ADOLESCENT HEALTH FACT SHEETS

Overview: A series of state-level Fact Sheets provides a systematic way to increase the awareness about youth issues and guide action. As a whole, the Fact Sheets provide a comprehensive overview of adolescent health by covering the range of health issues that affect adolescents.

Adaptation of Strategic Planning Steps: The steps for developing fact sheets can be quite simple. Avoid having one person develop the fact sheets in isolation; instead, draw people together to develop them as a process. A group process provides the opportunity to build relationships, develop buy-in, develop materials that are more useable, etc. Be sure to involve as a diverse a representation of people as possible on the workgroup(s). Possible group structures include:

- A separate workgroup for each topical Fact Sheet.
- An Advisory group to oversee the project with subcommittees to develop the individual Fact Sheets.
- Use of a consultant to develop the Fact Sheets as part of a workgroup or Advisory group.

STEPS	DESCRIPTION OR ADAPTATION
PREPARATION	Identify the process that will be used to develop the Fact Sheets. Identify the range of topics that will be addressed. Identify the content areas that will be included in each Fact Sheet. The recommended content areas include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of the topic (a description that helps the reader better understand the issue; including factors that influence the issue). • Why it's an important or critical issue. • Review of the current status of the issue. • Strategies to address the issue. • Resources to support action or provide more information.
STEP 1	Organize a Workgroup or workgroups to develop the Fact Sheets.
STEP 2	Develop a framework that describes the health topic
STEP 3	Conduct a needs, assets and resource assessment for the health topic
STEP 4	Identify strategies to address the health topic
STEP 5	Produce the Fact Sheets

Option #9:

DEVELOP AN ADOLESCENT HEALTH FRAMEWORK AND VISION FOR HEALTHY ADOLESCENCE

Overview: Developing a framework and vision for adolescent health is a way to bring people together around youth issues and build support for further strategic planning activities. A Concept Paper is developed from this process.

Adaptation of Strategic Planning Steps: As with Option #8, the process for developing a conceptual framework and vision for adolescent health can be challenging, but also engaging. It’s also very important to involve a group of diverse individuals in developing these products.

STEPS	DESCRIPTION OR ADAPTATION
STEP 1	Organize and orient an committees and consultants.
STEP 2	Develop an adolescent health framework
STEP 3	Develop a vision for healthy adolescence
STEP 5	Use the framework and vision to produce products such as an Adolescent Health Concept Paper, an adolescent health brochure or a position statement for your agency. In addition to developing these products, it’s critical to identify ways to use these products in strategic ways to raise awareness and educate professionals and the public on adolescent health. See Section 3 for specific ideas.

CONCLUSION

As shown in this chapter, a variety of possible options exist—all of which can play a role in strategic planning. Even when a comprehensive effort is not feasible, completing some of the aforementioned options can become the impetus for additional strategic planning. Matching resources to a quality product, even if it is narrow in scope, can help assure that the final product is one that the community can be proud of and can use in subsequent efforts to create a more comprehensive plan of action.



Summary

Transition to Implementation

As noted at the beginning of Section 2, there are many benefits to conducting a comprehensive strategic planning process (or some component of the process). Although a tremendous amount of work has been completed to get you to this point, the work is not done. A strategic plan is and should be a living document, a tool that continues to guide adolescent health initiatives in your state and agency, and among your partners. As time goes on, implementation of your strategic plan will require you to:

Keep Your Plan Visible: Keeping your plan alive relies on keeping your vision, goals, and objectives alive in your day-to-day operations and integrated into new programming. Your vision and elements of your plan should be visible on your website, in your handouts at meetings, in your discussions with new partners, in planning for new funding and new programming.

Orient Newcomers: Regardless of who was involved in your process, there will be staff and leadership changes that require a “back to the drawing board” approach to orient new staff and leaders, educate them on your plan and the data supporting your priorities, and gaining their buy-in and support for continuing to implement the plan. The components of your plan are your blueprint—from your needs assessment to profile of adolescents in your state, to your conceptual framework, to your priority strategies for action. These components are tools to help you bring new people to a common reference point that provides data and lessons supporting your strategic plan.

Be Flexible: Although your plan is based on a solid research and data foundation, there may be times when different parts of your plan will be higher priority depending on staff and resources available and other factors in your state (such as staff changes, leadership/policymaker changes, political trends, emerging critical issues for adolescents). Acknowledge some adjustments to your strategic actions may be required to keep the plan current and respond to changing environments.

Section 3 of this Guide provides practical tips for keeping your strategic plan alive and state examples for launching and promoting strategic plans for adolescent health.



Section 3: Implementing:

Putting the Strategic Plan into Action

*“Coming together is the beginning.
Keeping together is progress.
Working together is success.”*

—Henry Ford

Strategic planning is a fluid process that moves from preparation to planning to implementation. It is a continual, living cycle of action that involves revisiting progress and making adjustments along the way to achieve your overall vision for adolescent health.

As a living document, your strategic plan can be used in many interesting and varied ways—having identified an overall vision and framework for adolescent health, and strategic issues based on a thorough review of adolescent health data in your state. Even in situations where resources change and action plans must evolve to accommodate those shifts, you will still have a well-documented overall vision for adolescent health in your state that you and other stakeholders can refer back to in determining how changes will be addressed in the context of your plan. The key now is to keep the plan alive, active and creating positive change for youth.





Chapter 12

Managing the Implementation Process

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INTRODUCTION

Now that you have a strategic plan in place, its time to shift your focus to the important task of action. A plan without action is a waste. Work with your partners to identify the ways in which you can share the plan widely and engage people in action. This is especially challenging since many strategic planning efforts lack the resources necessary for full-scale implementation. The goal in this chapter is to identify: big and small opportunities for implementation; and opportunities to keep the plan visible and vibrant in the minds of key stakeholders and decision-makers. As you choose the activities to implement your plan, create an overarching action plan that guides these efforts. Be sure to include the following types of activities:

1. *Disseminate the plan.*
2. *Promote the plan.*
3. *Implement strategies in the plan.*
4. *Evaluate the plan.*
5. *Revise or update the plan.*



Related Section 1 Worksheets:

- 1.3:** Identify the “Lessons Learned” from Past Strategic Planning
- 1.4:** Evaluate How Strategic Planning Is Viewed in Your State
- 1.5:** Identify Potential Opportunities to Assist in Building Your Plan

Action Step

DISSEMINATE THE PLAN

Work with the Strategic Planning Committee to identify the wide array of people who need to receive information about the plan. Create a dissemination list and send out information. Also, post the plan online so that it's easily available for anyone who is interested.

- Develop camera ready ads, press releases, or newsletter articles of varying length and make them available to print media and partner organizations to promote in their own publications, newsletters, etc.
- Post the plan on your website (or a partner website if internal policy prohibits) for easy access by anyone interested.

Action Step

PROMOTE THE PLAN FAR AND WIDE

Now that your strategic plan is complete, it's time to let the world know! Find any and all opportunities to raise awareness about the plan and the adolescent health needs and health issues it addresses. Work with members of the Strategic Planning Committee in this outreach promotion

CONDUCT A PRESS RELEASE

Communication directed at the news media to announce issues of news value)—work with Communication staff within your agency (or Strategic Planning Committee organizations) to create the press release.

PRESENT AND SHARE THE PLAN AT CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

Create a PowerPoint presentation and talking points that can be used at any speaking venue. Present the plan in as many opportunities as possible.

CONDUCT BROWN BAG LUNCHES

Hold informal presentations and discussions about the health issues and strategies included in the plan. Talk with participants about what they're already doing in these areas and encourage them to use the plan as they continue their work.

TALK ABOUT THE PLAN AT STAFF MEETINGS

Talk within the organizations that helped create the plan. Explore the findings of the plan with participants in ways that helps them see their role in addressing the issues and strategies included in the plan.

Tips, Guidelines and Templates for Writing an Effective Press Release

www.prwebdirect.com/pressreleasetips.php

Press Release Tips

www.free-press-release.com/how-to-press-release/

Writing A Press Release—What To Do, What Not To Do—Tips

www.rapidpressrelease.com/tips/writing.asp

Hold a Meeting for Foundations

Hold meetings across your state to update them on the issues and strategies included in your plan. This meeting is **not** a time to seek funding for the plan but an opportunity to raise their awareness about youth needs in your state; offer the plan as a resource as they identify their funding priorities.

Action Step

IMPLEMENT THE PLAN BY PUTTING THE STRATEGIES INTO ACTION

Depending on the resources available to you, there are 3 paths of putting the plan's strategies into action: implement statewide; implement within your agency; implement through others. Some are direct and require significant resources. Others are more indirect and rely on integrating the plan's strategies into existing efforts. You may even weave together a combination of all three.

IMPLEMENT THE PLAN STATEWIDE

This is the optimal implementation method. It requires funding to support the implementation efforts and a broad partnership of key partner organizations across the state. Most often, the Strategic Planning Committee is the core partnership to put this effort into action. In this case, use the plan's Logic Model to prioritize the adolescent health issues and strategies, create action plans (who, what, where, when, how) with budgets and put these action plans into motion.

The ultimate goal of action planning is to create a work plan that motivates—not overwhelms—you and your partners. Create an action plan that is specific enough to be actionable but also reasonable enough to be successful. This sounds simplistic, but strategic plans are often too broad to implement. It is not specific enough to say; “Enhance adolescent health through training and technical assistance.” This is a broad goal that needs specific actions attached. Specific actions should flow naturally from your goal, to measurable objectives, to specific actions.

As part of creating and implementing action plans, you may need to adapt the Strategic Planning Committee's structure to more effectively take on the implementation role. You may also need to bring in new partners. Be sure to create methods of communication and feedback that keep all involved in the process updated and connected.

IMPLEMENT THE PLAN WITHIN THE STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Use the plan to guide your agency's work on youth issues. Keeping your plan alive relies on keeping your vision, goals, and objectives alive in your day-to-day operations and integrating them into new programming. Your vision and elements of your plan should be visible on your website, in your handouts at meetings, in your discussions with new partners, in planning for new funding and new programming.

Strategies to keep your adolescent health strategic plan visible include:

- ▶ Integrate the plan (or pieces) into action plans for the MCH and/or CSCHN programs.
- ▶ Engrain pieces of the plan into RFP’s you distribute and programs you fund.
- ▶ Work within your agency to take on one aspect of the plan each year.
- ▶ Weave pieces of the plan into your everyday work plan.
- ▶ Encourage and assist other people to weave the plan into their work plans.



Lessons from the Field: IMPLEMENTING A PLAN THROUGH STATEWIDE INITIATIVE

Minnesota—took advantage of an opportunity provided through a Youth Risk Behavior initiative created under its tobacco settlement just as their strategic plan was being developed. Through the statewide initiative, all local public health agencies were provided funding, guidance and assistance to develop adolescent health programs to address youth risk behaviors. The strategic plan, although not quite complete, was used to frame and develop this initiative, define the scope of programs that would be funded, develop resource lists, and provide trainings.

IMPLEMENT THE PLAN THROUGH OTHERS

Work with the Strategic Planning Committee member organizations to reach out to organizations across your state that are involved in the issues addressed in your plan. Encourage and work with them to adopt strategies within the plan into their work.

This work can be done both formally and informally:

Hold a Strategic Plan Summit meeting.

Invite key stakeholder organizations from across the state to attend. Facilitate a planning process in which all involved can review the strategic plan’s findings in relation to the work they’re currently doing (or would like to do; provide opportunity for networking and partnering and encourage participants to create mini plans to show how they will incorporate the plan into their work.

Hold working meetings in a variety of sites across your state to explore ways that people can become involved in implementing the plan. Invite participants to come as “teams” to address an adolescent health issue of interest in their community.

Goal of an Adolescent Health Strategic Plan Summit or Working Meetings

1. Introduce key stakeholders and other adolescent health advocates to the Strategic Plan.
2. Increase stakeholders’ knowledge about issues addressed in the plan as a means to assist them to act on the plan’s strategies (e.g. **traditional topics** such as substance abuse, pregnancy; **youth development topics** such as building strong families, improving connections to school; **infrastructure topics** such as strengthening youth-adult partnerships, building collaboration and partnerships).
3. Explore how the plan fits into stakeholders’ efforts (e.g. what does the plan mean for public health, faith communities, voluntary organizations, etc.).
4. Support and strengthen natural partnerships that could be used in working to implement the plan’s strategies (e.g. help people get to know each other, identify ways they can work together, identify natural opportunities for partnership efforts around the plan’s findings).
5. Identify action steps to implement the plan’s strategies—provide opportunities for participants identify at least 3 things they can do, whether individually or in partnership with others, to act on the plan.

Provide mini-grants to encourage and support innovative efforts among community-based and statewide organizations.

Build (or get involved in) networks of organizations doing similar work to support efforts to adopt the plan's strategies.

Lessons from the Field: STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMIT

New Hampshire—launched their plan at an “Adolescent Health Summit.” More than 150 stakeholders in attended, representing a wide variety of professions, including but not limited to healthcare, mental health, education, juvenile justice, legislative and advocacy, and youth-serving agencies and state agencies. In addition, parents, youth, and representatives from community coalitions also participated in the Summit. The format of the Summit was designed to provide information on adolescents in New Hampshire and to encourage the sharing of perspectives, ideas, and interests among the wide range of participants. This dialogue was the necessary first step in developing common ground for building relationships and collaborations. Summit attendees:

- Participated in facilitated work groups focusing on strategic plan recommendations and objectives.
- Individually or in small groups selected one objective that best fit with their passions, interests, or job responsibilities.
- Brainstormed potential and feasible action steps.
- Identified one step that they would act upon.

Workgroups then brainstormed resources at hand to assist these action steps, as well as resources needed to further implement the plan. Participants also chose two briefing sessions to attend from among the 18 offered by professionals with a wide range of expertise. The 30 minute briefing sessions were designed to increase participants' knowledge about a chosen topic and learn about available resources. Briefing Session topics included substance abuse, mental health, physical and nutritional health, youth leadership, youth suicide, positive youth development, adolescent risk taking, internet victimization, media literacy, brain development, youth/adult partnerships, teen dating violence, HIV/AIDS, sexual minority youth, and youth with special healthcare needs.



Provide training and technical assistance to support action. Regardless of who was involved in your process, there will be staff and leadership changes that require a “back to the drawing board” approach to orient new staff and leaders, educate them on your plan and the data supporting your priorities, and gain their buy-in and support for continuing to implement the plan. Strategies for providing technical assistance include:

- Offer assistance, to partners to help them identify the part of the plan most relevant to them/their resources.
- Prioritize or personalize recommendations for segments of your target audience. Help people find the recommendations that make the most sense for them. Consider which recommendations are most relevant for policy makers, local decision-makers, state agency staff, etc.
- Hold meetings at designated intervals—every 6 months, annually—to provide regular orientation opportunities for partners and key stakeholders.

- Develop or provide access to tools that support action. Identify (or create) and provide access to “tools” that help the plan’s target audience move to action. Consider how you anticipate that people will use the plan and promote resources such as:
 - + Educational tools to raise awareness about adolescent health.
 - + Advocacy tools to promote emphasize specific health issues or specific strategies.
 - + Community/youth engagement tools to personalize youth issues for their community (people are more likely to act if they feel that the issues are local).
 - + Partnership tools to continue engaging stakeholders across agencies, programs and disciplines.
 - + Data and evaluation tools.

Many of these resources are already available and accessible online. Work with partners and key stakeholder to identify which tools would be helpful and useful. Provide access through email, websites, etc.

Action Step

EVALUATE/TRACK PROGRESS AND MAKE NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS TO THE PLAN

Evaluation is a critical part of implementing a strategic plan. The goal is to not only evaluate your efforts, but to continue to keep key partners and stakeholders connected to your plan’s efforts and advocating for youth issues. You need to both track how the plan is being used and evaluate outcomes of these efforts (strategic plan’s goals and objectives).

Track who receives the plan and develop a distribution list. Use this distribution list to send out tidbits of information on adolescent health on a routine basis and include them in evaluation efforts. Gather information on how they are using the plan (actions, partnerships, funding) and outcomes they have achieved. Create case study stories or brief reports of key findings.

Use the plan’s objectives to create process and outcome evaluations. As you gather these data, use the information both as an assessment of progress towards goals and objectives but also as a quality improvement effort. As time goes on, resources/priorities in the state shift and change. You may need to reassess your action plan to ensure you have the sufficient resources (funding, staffing) and appropriate partnerships and collaborations to achieve your broad vision. There may be times when different parts of your plan will be higher priority depending on staff and resources available and other factors in your state (such as staff changes, leadership/policymaker changes, political trends, emerging critical issues for adolescents). Make adjustments to your implementation efforts as needed to keep the plan current and respond to changing environments.

Report evaluation findings to key stakeholders and partners to keep them updated and engaged. Identify and publicize “successes” of the strategic plan. People are more likely to rally around projects that they see as successful. Identify projects that have been influenced by the plan and chronicle their success. These successes can be big or small, statewide or local, policy or program. In fact, it can help to identify a variety of successes so that people can see what is possible. This also helps to maintain enthusiasm for the strategic plan amongst key stakeholders.

Action Step

UPDATE DATA AS IT BECOMES AVAILABLE

Update data elements in your strategic plan as new data become available. This helps ensure your plan is current and relevant. Old data sources can give the impression that your plan is based on former contexts and trends.

Some strategies for keeping your data current include:

- Make the data you collected publicly assessable so partners can refer to/work from the same data (through data profiles on website, list of data sources on website, etc.).
- Continue to collect new data if needed to establish baselines and track progress in achieving your plan.
- Publish new data reports/profiles as time goes on to summarize new data/trends for stakeholders and emphasize the continued importance of the strategic plan to address the data findings.

Whenever you report new data, whether formally through an update of the strategic plan or informally through other data reports (e.g. YRBS reports), tie it back to the strategic plan's strategies and efforts. This is an excellent opportunity to reconnect key stakeholders to the work of the strategic plan.

Action Step

MAINTAIN CONNECTIONS WITH PARTNERS

Developing a strategic plan involves building and strengthening partnerships and collaborations to address adolescent health in your state. The relationships you have established are key to implementing your strategic plan. Continue to engage your partners to keep your plan moving forward:

- Continue Strategic Planning Committee meetings to discuss actions, identify new opportunities, and assess progress.
- Provide trainings and workshops to build skills of partners to implement the plan. Topics could include youth-adult partnerships, data skills, finding funding, needs assessments, program development and evaluation, use of evidence-based practices, communications.
- Continue to “feed” partners with information on new adolescent health resources (e.g. new reports, data, evidence-based practices, trainings, funding).

Action Step

REVISE THE PLAN

Strategic plans are time limited. Generally they are focused on efforts ranging from three to five years. If you evaluate your implementation efforts, outcomes and data on a routine basis, you make your strategic plan a “living” document. But periodically, you need to re-evaluate the plan as a whole. This is time in which you need to conduct the strategic planning process all over again. But this time, it should be simpler as you have a foundation from which you can update and partners already engaged.





Summary

Maintaining the Momentum

Strategic planning for adolescent health is a journey. While the plan itself provides a strong foundation for strategic action aimed at improving the health and well-being of youth, the process of creating and implementing the plan provides the opportunities for partnership, creativity and innovation.

Along the way, you have raised awareness about young people, their health and development; increased commitment and support for action; created consensus on priorities that require action; engaged key stakeholders; identified a wise investment plan for resources; built the knowledge and skills of those who need to act; and strengthened the infrastructure in your state to support adolescent health, safety and success. All from a simple strategic planning process. Congratulations! Share your successes and experiences with others so that they might follow your steps and create a healthier place for our youth to thrive.





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1.1: Define the Outcomes to Achieve through Strategic Planning

These are the outcomes that will influence people to invest in actions that support the health of youth. Use the following questions to help you decide on the outcomes that are important in your state:

- What do you want to accomplish through strategic planning?
- What is the benefit of strategic planning?
- What needs to be in place in order to move adolescent health forward in your state?

Place a check mark in the left column of those outcomes that you'd like to achieve and fill in reasons why this outcome is important.

✓	OUTCOMES	WHY THIS OUTCOME IS IMPORTANT
	Increased awareness, understanding and support for adolescents and their health as a social priority.	
	A shared vision of healthy adolescents that guides action.	
	Identification and prioritization of youth issues that require both immediate and longer-term action.	
	Consensus on the best course of action to improve the health of youth.	
	Increased collaboration around adolescent health issues.	
	Improved coordination of adolescent health activities.	
	Identification of resources that support action.	
	Additional outcomes relevant to your state. Describe.	



1.2: Identify the Strategic Plan’s Target Audience

The target audience is the group or groups that need to be reached by the strategic plan in order to accomplish the intended outcomes. Be specific about who these groups are and why they are important. Make additional copies of this worksheet if you identify more than three groups as your state’s target audience.

	TARGET AUDIENCE FOR THE PLAN		
	GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3
Who needs to take action? (Identify the group, be specific.)			
Why is it important to reach this group?			
What do you want them to do as a result of the strategic plan? (What are their actions?)			
What do they need from the plan in order to use it?			
How can this information guide your process? What are the implications for planning?			



1.3: Identify the “Lessons Learned” from Past Strategic Planning

Talk with people in your state who were involved in past planning efforts to learn about what worked and didn’t work. This will allow you to build upon their experiences and identify individuals who might be interested in collaborating. Use the worksheet to identify the “lessons learned” that can be applied to your project. Make additional copies of this worksheet if you identify more than two projects. (Multi-page worksheet)

LESSONS LEARNED FROM PAST STRATEGIC PLANNING		
	PROJECT 1	PROJECT 2
Identify the project and when it happened?		
What was the focus?		
What did they want to accomplish?		
Who was involved and in what ways?		
What was the outcome?		
What were the successes?		



LESSONS LEARNED FROM PAST STRATEGIC PLANNING (CONTINUED)		
	PROJECT 1	PROJECT 2
What contributed to their success?		
What were the challenges?		
How did they overcome challenges?		
What contributed to their success?		
Are there ways to link into or expand upon this project?		
What are the overall lessons learned that can be applied to your project?		



1.4: Evaluate How Strategic Planning Is Viewed in Your State

When you talk to your key stakeholders about the current environment for strategic planning, ask them to identify pertinent topics and perceived roadblocks. Use this worksheet to summarize what you have learned.

EVALUATE HOW STRATEGIC PLANNING IS VIEWED IN YOUR STATE	
SUMMARY	
How is strategic planning viewed in your state?	
Who supports strategic planning and why?	
Who doesn't support strategic planning and why?	
What are the implications for your project?	



1.5: Identify Potential Opportunities to Assist in Building Your Plan

Review how youth issues are framed, discussed and debated within your state. Survey the various sectors that address youth issues. Talk with key stakeholders and do an environmental assessment of potential opportunities to build your project. Summarize your findings in the worksheet. Identify opportunities for collaboration and ways to maximize the resources that are needed for the planning process.

IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES TO ASSIST IN BUILDING YOUR PLAN	
SUMMARY	
What are the youth issues that have raised state interest?	
What are the adolescent health or youth issues that are a priority for key stakeholders?	
Are the other youth initiatives that it might be beneficial to connect with? Why?	
Are there other projects/opportunities underway within your state that could be leveraged?	
What are the implications for your project?	



1.6: Choose a Strategic Planning Project Best Suited to Your Needs

Use the information you've gathered to select the type of strategic planning project that is best suited to your need and resources. While a Comprehensive Plan is recommended, when resources dictate do not hesitate to select one of the alternative options (Mid Level Plan and/or Beginning Plan).

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROJECT TYPES
<p>COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OPTIONS: Strategic plans that cover all aspects of adolescent health, safety and well-being.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Develop a comprehensive Adolescent Health Strategic Plan.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Develop a comprehensive Adolescent Health Strategic Plan in phases (Option 1).</p>
<p>MID LEVEL PLAN OPTIONS: Focus on developing strategic plans with a limited scope.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Develop a Strategic Plan focused on a specific adolescent health issue (Option 2).</p> <p>What Issue? _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Develop an adolescent health section within a state MCH Strategic Plan or Public Health Plan (Option 3).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Incorporate an adolescent health focus within a single issue Strategic Plan focused across the lifespan (Option 4).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Develop an Adolescent Health Strategic Plan for your agency (Option 5.)</p>
<p>BEGINNING PLAN OPTIONS: Limited support and resources can be used to educate, raise awareness, and mobilize policy makers and stakeholder.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Develop a Synthesis or Summary Report highlighting the youth-related recommendations from existing State Strategic Plans (Option 6).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Develop an Adolescent Health Data Report or Chart Book (Option 7).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Develop Adolescent Health Fact Sheets (Option 8).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Develop and market an Adolescent Health Philosophy and Vision (Option 9).</p>
<p>COMMENTS</p>



2.1: Identify the Lead Organization(s)

It's critical to identify who will lead this process. Consider the pros and cons of various organizational leadership models for the project. Then, identify the model that makes the most sense for your situation.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP MODEL (CHOOSE ONE)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adolescent Health program within a State Public Health Agency.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adolescent Health program in partnership with another program within a Public Health agency , such as an Adolescent Health program and a Center of Statistics within a Department of Health. Program #1: _____ Program #2: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Partnership between 2 or more state agencies , such as the State Department of Health and the Department of Education. Agency and Program #1: _____ Agency and Program #2: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Partnership between a state agency and a university , such as the State Department of Health and an adolescent health focused University program (e.g. Public Health, Nursing, Medicine). State Agency and Program: _____ University and Program: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Partnership between a state agency and statewide non-profit organization , such as the Department of Health and a statewide Youth Collaborative.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Statewide non-profit organization , such as a statewide Youth Collaborative.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other. (Please describe.)
If you've chosen to partner with another agency or to ask another agency to take the leadership in the project, what needs to happen to get their agreement? Identify the steps you'll need, include agencies and contacts.	



2.2: Identify Project Coordination Roles

Identify who will coordinate the strategic planning process and define their coordination roles. This may involve one (1) person who manages all coordination activities or may be shared among a number of people. In the worksheet below, mark an “X” to identify coordination roles for staff.

PROJECT COORDINATION ROLES	PROJECT COORDINATION STAFF			
	Project Coordinator	Support Staff Person	Additional Staff Person	Consultant(s)
Oversee the project.				
Manage the Strategic Planning Committee, Task Force, or Collaborative.				
Plan and facilitate meetings.				
Plan and facilitate focus groups (if applicable).				
Conduct key informant interviews (if applicable).				
Identify and gather data for the needs, assets and resource assessment.				
Write the strategic plan.				
Edit the strategic plan.				
Oversee production of the strategic plan.				
Maintain a system of communication about the planning process with those involved.				
Provide clerical support.				
Other roles: Describe.				



2.3: Project Coordination Checklist

Use the following checklist to identify your project coordination staff (excluding consultants). Verify that they have support from their management and the ability to dedicate adequate time and the appropriate skills necessary to fill their project roles.

	PROJECT COORDINATION STAFF		
	Project Coordinator	Support Staff Person	Other Persons
Person's name, title and program/organization.			
Amount of time needed to adequately fill the role/staff position.	_____ Hours/week or _____ % of time	_____ Hours/week or _____ % of time	_____ Hours/week or _____ % of time
Does this person have management support to coordinate this project?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Person's current scope of work.			
Given this scope of work, do they have an adequate amount of time to coordinate this project? If no, how will their scope of work be changed?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Does this person have the skills needed to coordinate this project? If no, what skills do they need and how will they gain them ?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Comments:			



2.4: Secure the Commitment and Support from Key Stakeholders

Gaining commitment and endorsement from key stakeholders requires understanding their interest in a potential support for strategic planning. Identify how key stakeholders new strategic planning and their level of commitment. (Multi-page worksheet)

STAKEHOLDER WHO MANDATES OR SPONSORS THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROJECT	
Is someone sponsoring or mandating the project?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES, Who? _____ <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Why is he/she sponsoring or mandating this project?	
What does he/she want to accomplish? What is their vision?	

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS		
	Name and/or Position	Why?
Who NEEDS to be committed to supporting the effort in order for it to be successful?		
Who IS or MIGHT be a champion of the project?		
Who isn't supportive of the project? What can be done to educate them regarding the value of the project?		



GAINING SUPPORT FROM KEY STAKEHOLDERS		
Name of Key Stakeholder or group of Key Stakeholders		
Beliefs, values and interests of the Key Stakeholders that can be used to connect with them on strategic planning project: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interests.• Hot topics.• View of adolescents and their issues.• Core beliefs and values that guide their work.		
Issues that might interfere with their support: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Finances.• Politics.• Controversy.• Beliefs.• Competition from other projects.• Other.		
Ways to use this information to gain their support.		



3.1: Identify the Strategic Plan’s Content

Select the content that will be included in your strategic plan. The content will be influenced by the type and level of strategic planning process that you selected (Worksheet 1.6). Check out content you plan to include in your plan.

STRATEGIC PLANNING CONTENT	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adolescent health framework.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vision for healthy adolescents.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Needs and assets assessment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource assessment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Goals and objectives.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strategic issues that need to be addressed in order to improve health of adolescents.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strategies to address strategic issues.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Logic Model.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action and Implementation Plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Please describe.)



3.2: Identify the Steps to Develop the Strategic Plan

The following checklist includes the traditional steps and tasks for strategic planning. Identify the steps and tasks that you will use to develop the content of the strategic plan and to engage people in the planning process.

STRATEGIC PLANNING STEPS CHECKLIST	
STEPS	TASKS
Develop an adolescent health framework. <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> Analyze the adolescent health literature. <input type="checkbox"/> Review the framework with key stakeholders. <input type="checkbox"/> Gather community and expert input. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Draft adolescent health framework.
Develop a vision for healthy adolescents. <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> Conduct a visioning process. <input type="checkbox"/> Draft vision statement. <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct additional methods to gather input (community) into visioning (e.g. key informant interviews, focus groups). <input type="checkbox"/> Review the vision statement with key stakeholders. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Conduct a needs, assets and resource assessment. <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Needs and Assets Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Identify the data needed and data sources. <input type="checkbox"/> Analyze data. <input type="checkbox"/> Collect new data. <input type="checkbox"/> Interpret the data. <input type="checkbox"/> Collect existing data. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ Resource Assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Map adolescent health resources. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ Develop an Assessment Profile <input type="checkbox"/> Summarize the results of the needs, assets and resource analysis. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Identify strategic issues. <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> Review results of the needs, assets and resource assessment to identify the key issues. <input type="checkbox"/> Quantify strategic issues into outcome goals and objectives. <input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize strategic issues.
Formulate strategies. <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> Review the literature <input type="checkbox"/> Develop draft list of strategies. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify potential strategies. <input type="checkbox"/> Review and choose strategies.
Create and produce the strategic plan. <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare to write the strategic plan (review project's outcome objectives and target audience; agency guidelines for creating documents; agency approval process). <input type="checkbox"/> Identify format for the strategic plan. <input type="checkbox"/> Write the strategic plan. <input type="checkbox"/> Design and produce the strategic plan.
Other (Please describe.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other tasks (Please describe.) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other tasks (Please describe.) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other tasks (Please describe.) _____



3.3: Identify the Methods to Engage a Diverse Group of People in the Strategic Planning Process

Consider each of the potential methods noted below that you may use to engage people in the strategic planning process. Remember that one method may be used to accomplish more than one strategic planning step or task (e.g. a community forum may be used to gather input for the framework and adolescent health vision; a series of focus groups may gather information for the adolescent health vision and the needs and assets assessment).

Check each method that you plan to conduct and mark an "X" under each strategic planning step that will be addressed with that method. You will plan these activities in more detail in the following sections.

METHOD	STRATEGIC PLANNING STEPS					
	Create Adolescent Health Framework.	Create Vision for Healthy Adolescents.	Conduct Needs, Assets and Resource Assessment.	Identify Strategic Issues.	Formulate Strategies.	Create the Strategic Plan.
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Planning Committee meetings.						
<input type="checkbox"/> Conduct community forum(s) or townhall meeting(s).						
<input type="checkbox"/> Conduct or participate in adolescent health-focused conference(s).						
<input type="checkbox"/> Conduct key informant interviews.						
<input type="checkbox"/> Conduct focus groups.						
<input type="checkbox"/> Conduct survey(s)—written.						
<input type="checkbox"/> Conduct survey(s)—electronic.						
<input type="checkbox"/> Conduct forum(s) with data experts.						
<input type="checkbox"/> Review adolescent health literature and/or reports.						
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Describe.)						
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Describe.)						
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Describe.)						
Comments:						



3.4: Plan the Details for Strategic Planning Activities

Complete the worksheets for each strategic planning activity you plan to use. This set of worksheets will walk you through some of the important decisions you need to make as you plan each activity. Skip those activities you will not be using. Additional worksheets (3.6.1-4) includes how youth will be involved in your strategic planning process.

Worksheet 3.4.1: STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE	
Use a Strategic Planning Committee? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	New vs. Existing Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a new committee. <input type="checkbox"/> Use an existing committee (Committee Name). _____
Committee's Role What will the committee accomplish?	
Committee's Structure How will the committee be structured to get its work done (e.g. oversight group, workgroups, ad hoc workgroups)?	
Committee Membership Who needs to be involved on the committee in order for it to be successful in strategic planning?	



3.4.2: COMMUNITY FORUMS OR MEETINGS

Conduct Community Forums or Meetings?

YES

NO

Role of Forums or Meetings

What do you want to accomplish as a result of the forums or meetings?

Forum or Meeting Participation

What type of people should be invited to participate in these gatherings?

Forum or Meeting Participation

Who will plan these gatherings?

Who will facilitate these gatherings?

Who will analyze the results of these gatherings?



3.4.3: CONFERENCES

Hold Conferences?

YES NO

New vs. Existing Conference

Develop a new conference.
 Utilize opportunities at an existing conference

Conference title _____

Role of Conferences

What do you want to accomplish as a result of the Conferences?

Type of Conference(s) (check all that apply)

Statewide Regional Face-to-face Conference
 Audio Conference Web-based Conference
 Other _____

Conference Participation

What type of people should be invited to participate in the conference(s)? or
Who is invited to participate in the existing conference(s)?

Organization of the Conference

Who will plan these gatherings?

Who will facilitate these conference?

Who will analyze the results of these conference?



3.4.4: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Use Key Informant Interviews?

YES NO

Role of Key Informant Interviews

What do you want to accomplish as a result of the interviews?

Interview Participants

What type of people should be interviewed?

Organization of the Interviews

Who will plan the interviews?

Who will conduct the interviews?

Who will analyze the interviews?



3.4.5: FOCUS GROUPS

Use Focus Groups?

YES NO

Role of Focus Groups

What do you want to accomplish as a result of the Focus Groups?

Focus Group Participation

What type of people should be invited to participate in the focus groups?

Organization of Focus Groups

Who will plan the focus groups?

Who will facilitate the focus groups?

Who will analyze the results of these focus groups?



3.4.6: SURVEYS	
<p>Use Surveys?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>	<p>Type of Surveys</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Written/Printed <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic</p>
<p>Role of the Survey(s)</p> <p>What will you accomplish as a result of the survey(s)?</p> 	
<p>Activity Participation</p> <p>What type of people will be surveyed?</p> 	
<p>Organization of the Survey(s)</p> <p>Who will plan the survey?</p> <p>Who will conduct the survey?</p> <p>Who will analyze the results of the survey?</p> 	



3.4.7: FORUM WITH DATA EXPERTS

Use Forum with Data Experts?

YES NO

Role of Forums or Meetings

What will you accomplish as a result of the forum?

Activity Participation

What type of data experts should be invited to participate?

Organization of the Activity

Who will plan the forums?

Who will facilitate the forums?

Who will analyze the results of the forums?



3.4.8: REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ADOLESCENT HEALTH REPORTS

Use Literature Review?

YES

NO

Role of the Literature Review

What will you accomplish as a result of this review of reports and literature?

Organization of the Literature Review

Who will plan the review?

Who will conduct the review?

Who will analyze the results of the review?



3.4.9: OTHER ACTIVITY

Description of the Other Activity

What other type of activity will be conducted? Please describe.

Role of this Activity

What will you accomplish as a result of this activity?

Active Participation

What type of people should be invited to participate in this activity?

Organization of the Activity

Who will plan the activity?

Who will facilitate the activity?

Who will analyze the results of the activity?



3.4.9: OTHER ACTIVITY

Description of the Other Activity

What other type of activity will be conducted? Please describe.

Role of this Activity

What will you accomplish as a result of this activity?

Active Participation

What type of people should be invited to participate in this activity?

Organization of the Other Activity

Who will plan the activity?

Who will facilitate the activity?

Who will analyze the results of the activity?



3.5: Identify the Types of People to Involve in the Planning Process

Use the following categories to develop a working list of people to involve in the strategic planning process. Remember that a variety of perspectives and view points will contribute to a successful strategic planning process. (Multi-page worksheet.)

PEOPLE WHO REPRESENT THE DIVERSITY OF YOUTH		
✓	Categories of People	Details About People to Be Invited (e.g. Name of Agency, Name of Person, etc.)
	Ethnic and cultural diversity.	
	Immigrant youth.	
	Geographic diversity.	
	Disenfranchised youth (e.g. homeless youth, youth in foster care, youth in corrections.)	
	Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth.	
	Other diversity.	
PEOPLE WHO REPRESENT SOCIETAL INSTITUTIONS THAT INFLUENCE YOUTH HEALTH		
✓	Categories of People	Details About People to Be Invited (e.g. Name of Agency, Name of Person, etc.)
	Parents and family.	
	Education.	
	Health care.	
	Mental health.	



PEOPLE WHO REPRESENT SOCIETAL INSTITUTIONS THAT INFLUENCE YOUTH HEALTH (CONTINUED)		
✓	Categories of People	Details About People to Be Invited (e.g. Name of Agency, Name of Person, etc.)
	Public health.	
	Youth organizations.	
	Faith communities.	
	Media.	
	Academic organizations.	
	Business.	
	Juvenile justice and corrections.	
	Human Services.	
	Policy makers.	
	Philanthropy.	
	Other.	



3.6: Identify Ways to Involve and Partner with Youth in Strategic Planning

Adolescents that are actively involved in the strategic planning process will provide a fresh perspective about strategies, programs and policies that are most likely to successfully reach youth. Complete this worksheet if you plan to include youth in your planning process. (Multi-page worksheet)

WORKSHEET 3.6.1: STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE
<p>Youth involved on the Strategic Planning Committee?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p>
<p>What role will youth play on the committee?</p>
<p>How will youth be identified and invited to participate?</p>
<p>Special considerations that need to addressed to support youth involvement?</p>



WORKSHEET 3.6.2: YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

Youth Advisory Council (External to the Strategic Planning Committee)? YES NO

Develop a new Youth Advisory Council.

or

Use an existing Youth Advisory Council.

Name: _____

Sponsoring organization: _____

What role will the Youth Advisory Council play in the project?

How will the Youth Advisory Council be connected to the Strategic Planning Committee?

How will youth be identified and invited to participate (new Advisory Council)?

Special considerations that need to support the involvement of Youth Advisory Councils?



WORKSHEET 3.6.3: YOUTH FOCUS GROUPS

Youth Focus Groups? YES NO

What is the role of the Youth Focus Group(s) (e.g. what is to be accomplished)?

How will youth be identified and invited to participate?

Special considerations that need to be addressed to support the involvement of Youth Focus Group(s)?



WORKSHEET 3.6.4: YOUTH FORUMS

Youth Forum(s)? YES NO

What is the role of the Youth Forum(s) (e.g. what is to be accomplished)?

How will youth be identified and invited to participate?

Special considerations that need to be addressed to support the involvement of Youth Forum(s)?



WORKSHEET 3.6.5: OTHER

Describe—identify the intended role, how youth will be identified and invited to participate, and any special considerations that need to be addressed to support this group.



3.8: Develop a Task List and Timeline

When all of the activities and tasks for the strategic plan are identified, it is necessary to develop a time line. Use the following worksheet to list the tasks with the needed action steps and add a realistic timeframe. Refer to the worksheets previously completed for tasks and their action steps. (Multi-page worksheet)

TASK LIST AND TIMELINE		
Task #	Description of Task with Action Steps	Timeframe
EXAMPLE	<p>Create a task force.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review and revise guidelines for selection. 2. Brainstorm list of potential candidates. 3. Organize, segment and prioritize list. 4. Make final selections. 5. Contact final selections. 	March – April, 2002
TASK #1		
TASK #2		
TASK #3		
TASK #4		



TASK LIST AND TIMELINE (CONTINUED)		
Task #	Description of Task with Action Steps	Timeframe
TASK #5		
TASK #6		
TASK #7		
TASK #8		
TASK #9		
TASK #10		



3.9: Develop a Factsheet Describing the Strategic Planning Project

A strategic planning factsheet can be an important tool in a strategic planning process. It can be used to:

- Communicate with others about the project.
- Inform people about the project and encourage their participation.
- Advocate for the importance of the project.

DEVELOP A FACTSHEET

Identify how the Factsheet may be used.

Identify the information that will be included in the Factsheet. Check all that apply.

- Rationale for the strategic plan (Why the plan is important).
- Outcomes to be achieved.
- Overview of strategic planning activities, including involvement of youth.
- Timeframe.
- Sponsoring agency or groups.
- Who to contact for further information.
- Other (Please describe).



WORKSHEET 4.1: Develop a Budget for the Project

This worksheet provides a list of potential expenses that might be incurred in a strategic planning process. Check the expenses that you may incur and estimate the cost. Identify resources (both financial and in-kind resources) that are available through other agencies, donations, or resource sharing to support each activity. (Multi-page worksheet)

POTENTIAL STRATEGIC PLANNING EXPENSES		
Activity	Estimated Expenses	Existing Resources
Project Coordination.	<input type="checkbox"/> Project Coordinator Salary and Benefits _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Support Staff Salary and Benefits _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Copying _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Mailing _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Computer/Electronic Expenses _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ Total Expenses _____	
Strategic Planning Committee Meetings.	<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Facilitator Consultant Fee _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Space _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Food _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Travel _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Lodging _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Audiovisual Equipment and/or Technology Expenses _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ Total Expenses _____	
Key Informant Interviews.	<input type="checkbox"/> Consultant Fees _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Phone, mailing, Survey Preparation, Transportation) _____ Total Expenses _____	
Focus Groups.	<input type="checkbox"/> Focus Group Leaders _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Food _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Materials _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Lodging _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Analysis and Summary Reports _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ Total Expenses _____	



POTENTIAL STRATEGIC PLANNING EXPENSES (CONTINUED)		
Activity	Estimated Expenses	Existing Resources
Community forums, discussions, or townhall meetings.	<input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Facilitator Consultant _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment Expenses _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Space _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Food _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Materials _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Travel _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Audiovisual Equipment and/or Technology Expenses _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ Total Expenses _____	
Conferences (statewide or regional conferences, audio or video conferences).	<input type="checkbox"/> Speakers _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment Expenses _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Space _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Food _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Materials _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Audiovisual Equipment and/or Technology Expenses _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ Total Expenses _____	
Youth Involvement.	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth Coordinator _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Training _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Stipends _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ Total Expenses _____	
Website.	<input type="checkbox"/> Web Designer _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Web Maintenance _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ _____ Total Expenses _____	



POTENTIAL STRATEGIC PLANNING EXPENSES (CONTINUED)		
Activity	Estimated Expenses	Existing Resources
Needs and assets assessment.	<input type="checkbox"/> Data consultant _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Survey development and implementation _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Data Analysis _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ Total Expenses _____	
Production of the strategic plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> Writer Consultant _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Editor Consultant _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Design Consultant _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Printing _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Production _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ Total Expenses _____	
Distribution of the Strategic Plan.	<input type="checkbox"/> Mailing _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ Total Expenses _____	
Other (Identify any additional activities unique to your project).	<input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ Total Expenses _____	



4.3: Find Additional Resources

Consider different strategies for seeking additional resources. Seek additional resources or adjust the scope of the project. Complete the following two worksheets to see which option works best for you. (Multi-page worksheet)

WORKSHEET 4.3.1: OPTION 1 – SEEK ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	
Can you seek additional resources from your agency or partners?	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Who will you ask to contribute additional resources?	
What type of resources will you seek?	
What expenses will you use these resources for?	
Are there existing resources that could be redirected to cover strategic planning expenses?	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
What resources could you redirect?	
For what will you use these resources?	
How will you get these resources redirected?	
Will you seek new funding?	
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Which type of funding? From whom?	
For what will you use these new resources?	



4.3.2: OPTION 2 – ADJUST THE TYPE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Will the strategic planning process be modified?

YES NO

How?

Will the type or intensity of strategic planning activities be adjusted?

YES NO

Which resources will be redirected?

How?



Practice Tips

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**Tip #1:**

POTENTIAL STRATEGIC PLANNING FUNDING SOURCES

The following are suggestions of potential funding sources. Many have been used by states in their strategic planning efforts.

TITLE V MCH BLOCK GRANT

Title V is a permanently authorized federal grant program to States to improve the health of all mothers and children. Grants to state health agencies are used to address locally determined needs that are consistent with national health objectives and Title V's purposes.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance—Program # 93.994

www.cfda.gov

TITLE V MCH BLOCK GRANT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FUNDING

State Title V-funded programs are eligible to seek technical assistance funding through the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). This funding supports assistance on issues around the Performance Measures of the Title V Block Grant and state identified priority needs. Requests are submitted through the HRSA Regional Office. For further information, contact the MCH Regional Representative for your state or the MCHB Division of State and Community Health.

STATE SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (SSDI)

The purpose of this fund is to assist state MCH and Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) programs in building the state and community infrastructure that results in comprehensive, community-based systems of care for all children and their families.

CDC PUBLIC HEALTH PREVENTION SERVICE PROGRAM – PREVENTION SPECIALISTS

A program designed to prepare a workforce skilled in planning, implementing and evaluating scientifically sound prevention programs and interventions. These individuals may be available to support planning efforts at the state level. CDC employs Prevention Specialists for 3 years and provides for all salaries, benefits, relocation allowances and travel expenses. In year 1, Prevention Specialists gain experience translating science into practice, policymaking and program development from the national perspective at CDC. In the 2nd and 3rd years, they work in a field placement through a public health program, such as a state or local health department. This program trains Prevention Specialists to apply science related surveillance, epidemiology, social and behavioral science, social marketing, and evaluation of prevention strategies that are practical and effective at the community, state and national levels. State and other public health agencies can apply to bring a Prevention Specialist to their agency for the field placement opportunity.

www.cdc.gov/epo/dapht/phps.htm

STATE TOBACCO SETTLEMENT FUNDING

Funding from the state Tobacco settlements have been used to support adolescent health strategic planning efforts. Information source varies depending on the state

There are also several sources for searching both government and foundation funding, including the following:

GENERAL FUNDING RESOURCES

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES—GRANTS AND RELATED RESOURCES

This website contains a comprehensive collection of resources on grants, foundations and other related information. The Federal funding tools and information sources section provides links to a wide variety of federal agencies and their funding websites. The National grantmakers section provides links to collectives of national funders.

www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK - GOVERNMENT FUNDING

<http://tinyurl.com/9fnwyo>

FUNDSNET ONLINE SERVICES

A website dedicated to providing information on financial resources available on the Internet. This includes access to foundation and federal funding opportunities across a wide range of topic areas, including youth and health.

www.fundsnet-service.com

THE GRANTSMANSHIP CENTER

An organization that offers grantsmanship training and low-cost publications to nonprofit organizations and government agencies. Its website provides easy to digest information on grant seeking (review articles such as, “One program officer’s candid tips for grant seekers,” “The secrets of their success” and “Valuing volunteer time” in the TGCI Magazine section).

www.tgci.com

FEDERAL FUNDING RESOURCE DATABASES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE (CFDA).

A profile and searchable database of all the federal grant programs (www.cfda.gov).

<http://www.cfda.gov>

GRANTSNET

Connection to approximately 300 grant programs within US DHHS

<http://www.hhs.gov/grantsnet/>

HEALTH RESOURCES AND SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (HRSA)

www.hrsa.gov/grants

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH BUREAU (MCHB)

www.mchb.hrsa.gov/grants

CDC: DIVISION OF ADOLESCENT AND SCHOOL HEALTH (DASH)

www.cdc.gov/about/funding.htm

SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (SAMHSA)

www.samhsa.gov/grants/2009/fy2009.aspx

OFFICE OF MINORITY HEALTH (OMH)

www.omhrc.gov

FOUNDATION FUNDING RESOURCES**THE FOUNDATION CENTER**

A foundation resource that provides assistance in searching out foundations electronically, access to foundation annual reports. *<http://fdncenter.org>*

COUNCIL ON FOUNDATIONS

Provides links to foundations and corporate giving programs that are members of the Council. *www.cof.org*

Tip #2:



GRANT WRITING RESOURCES

These websites provide practical information on grant writing, grant seeking, and formatting of written grants.

THE FOUNDATION CENTER

On-line tutorials on grantseeking

<http://fdncenter.org>

A GUIDE TO PROPOSAL PLANNING AND WRITING

www.wm.edu/grants/PROP/miner.pdf

PROPOSAL WRITING: STAGES AND STRATEGIES WITH EXAMPLES

Georgia Perimeter College

<http://facstaff.gpc.edu/~ebrown/infobr3.htm>

**Tip #3:****FOUNDATIONS**

CONDUCT BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Make a list of local and state Foundations that fund youth initiatives. Identify their mission, purpose and priority areas and the types of projects they fund. Read annual reports to get a sense of the types of projects they have supported in the past, as well as current funding priorities.

- Whom have they funded, for how much, for what length of time, for what type of purpose and outcome?
- Are they interested in program planning? Implementation?
- Do they focus on any specific topic area or issue?
- Are they focused on building community capacity, systems development, or other infrastructure support?
- What are their constraints or limitations?
- Do they offer discretionary funding? At what level?

Assess existing connections to local and state foundations (e.g. previous history of funding within the agency or potential planning partner organizations). Consider whether any of the stakeholders have previously been funded or have an already established relationship with the funder. If partners involved in the project are currently receiving funding from a foundation, assess if they have any concerns regarding additional requests, even if it is for another type of project.

Identify the "point person" in the foundation who might be interested in the strategic planning project; it is usually a project officer focused on children and family issues. These individuals often act in an ombudsman role and may provide assistance in shaping, crafting and refining a request proposal before it is brought to the foundation's board for approval. For smaller grants, often below \$25,000, a project officer might have discretionary funds to allocate without additional board approval.

Before contacting a project officer, build on the background search that you have conducted to ascertain any particular areas of interest. Through this search, the names of individual foundation staff members are often identified. If you do not know this individual, consider writing a brief letter explaining the focus of the request, the rationale and its timeliness, and the funding level needed. Include the stakeholders and partners who will be involved and the anticipated outcome, as well as potential follow up plans for implementation. As an alternative, call the project officer (or the assistant) to set up a time to discuss the project on the telephone. This phone call is also a good idea as a follow up if you have sent an introductory letter. If possible, hold a face-to-face meeting with the project officer—include key stakeholders, partners or a senior administrative staff person from the sponsoring agency in the meeting to discuss the project or the project component that might be of greatest interest to, and best fit with, the foundation's portfolio. If you select to seek a smaller grant, such visits will still be

important for future relationship building. For these grants, different, more informal procedures may be appropriate. Check with the foundation to assess the next steps. Consider inviting the foundation officer to serve as part of the planning group as well, since this vantage point may be extremely useful to the planning effort.

If another agency manages the finances for the project, determine whether it has administrative costs that need to be included in a funding request. It will also need to be involved in the funding request, so be sure that its administration is in full support of this effort and does not see it as a potential conflict with its current funding requests from the same foundation. A foundation may be very willing to support the agency simultaneously with other funding, if the second project is seen as part of a state collaborative effort that is helping to create a plan.

REQUEST FUNDING: INITIAL LETTER OF INTENT

Research what the foundation requires as part of the funding process. Many foundations are initially interested in receiving a letter of inquiry that briefly describes the project and the financial amount requested. Most require a 2–3 page request with the following:

- ▶ Description of the rationale for the project and why it's important now (why this is the time to conduct the planning and implementation effort);
- ▶ A rationale for the potential benefits of the project;
- ▶ Description of who is involved—the foundation may be more interested in your project if you have a public-private partnership or inter-agency collaborative, and/or have youth involvement throughout the project.
- ▶ Description of the resources already in place (financial and in-kind) — highlight the commitment and support from existing partners, as well as the types of resources available, including federal, state, and local participation. Estimate the value of in-kind resources. Foundations like to see that others have already made a concrete commitment, thereby offering the foundation a way to increase or leverage its own contribution. Clearly make a case for why the foundation funds become a crucial building block for the endeavor.
- ▶ The specific dollar amount requested out of the total project cost. Identify what resources are needed and for what purpose these funds will be used, specifically how these resources will be beneficial to the success of the project.

Based upon review of the letter, the program officer will help consider the next steps. Some foundations will provide a small planning grant for the initial phase, but may also encourage you to submit a full proposal for other phases of the planning and implementation process. Others may be interested in supporting a dissemination phase, including a convening to present the results of the strategic plan. They may also be willing to discuss the project with other foundations that are often their own funding partners and may help to sponsor a meeting where a number of other foundations are invited to hear about the project. Thus, the contacts established with even one interested program officer may be instrumental in opening a number of additional funding channels.

If the foundation decides that the request is not within its funding priorities, request its assistance in identifying other foundations that may have such interests. It is particularly helpful if they help to identify specific program officers who might be interested in the project. Ask permission to use the project officer's name in contacting the new foundation. While this request may have failed, it does help to establish the importance of the planning effort and may lead to funding in the future, when the plan is completed and some of the scope of the recommendations falls within the portfolio of issues that this foundation is interested in funding.

STAY CONNECTED REGARDING THE FUNDING REQUEST

Once the request is submitted, stay in contact with the project officer to show interest in the proposal's progress. Provide any type of additional information requested in a timely manner. Consistent follow-up shows the seriousness and commitment behind your request.

BUILD A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FOUNDATION AND KEEP IT INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

Once funding is received, involve foundation staff in the project. Invite them to attend and participate in the planning meetings and/or keep them routinely informed about the project's process and products, even outside of the formal reporting process. Send informal updates on a periodic basis; for example, if a youth forum is to be held in the area, invite them to attend. This helps to continue to build the relationship with the foundation. Recognize their participation and support for the project in meetings (whether or not they are present), publications, and other media contact efforts.

There are other benefits of developing a relationship with a foundation program officer that extends beyond its financial support. As previously noted, the foundation can play a role in connecting with other funders for the planning and implementation phase of the project. It can also play a critical role in giving legitimacy and authenticity to a strategic planning project and may help attract additional governmental support as well.

**Tip #4:****LIST OF STATE ADOLESCENT HEALTH STRATEGIC PLANS**

The following is a list of state plans that are available online.

Alaska

Alaska Adolescents: A Plan for the Future (1995)

www.hss.state.ak.us/dbh/prevention/publications/adolescenthealthplan.pdf

California

Investing in Adolescent Health: A Social Imperative for California's Future (2001)

www.californiateenhealth.org/publications_strategic_plan.asp

Connecticut

Adolescent Health Strategic Plan (2005)

www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3130&q=442136

Indiana

Picturing a Healthier Future: A State Strategic Plan for Indiana's Adolescents (2009)

www.INadolescenthealth.org

Iowa

Iowa's Youth Development Strategic Plan, 2007-2010

www.iowaworkforce.org/files/ICYD.pdf

Minnesota

Being, Belonging, Becoming: Minnesota's Adolescent Health Action Plan (2002)

www.health.state.mn.us/youth/bbb/execsumm/index.html

New Hampshire

New Hampshire's Adolescent Health Strategic Plan: Supporting NH Youth; Moving Toward a Healthier Future (2005)

www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DHHS/MCH/LIBRARY/Program+Report-Plan/Adolescent+-Health.htm

New Mexico

Adolescent Health Strategic Plan 2008-2010

www.nmschoolhealth.org/reports.shtml

Oregon

Oregon Youth Sexual Health Plan

<http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/ah/sexuality/sexuality.shtml>

Tennessee

Adolescent and Young Adult Health in Tennessee Report and Fact Sheets (2008)

http://health.state.tn.us/MCH/Adolescent/adolescent_index.htm


Tip #5:
CONDUCTING KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE INTERVIEWS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Practice. Rehearse the questions in advance. Conduct a mock interview. Memorize or be very familiar with the flow of the interview questions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Small-talk. Never begin an interview cold. Use small-talk to put the interviewee at ease and establish rapport.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Be natural. Even if you memorize the questions, make the interview sound and feel like you're coming up with the questions spontaneously.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Be natural. Even if you memorize the questions, make the interview sound and feel like you're coming up with the questions spontaneously.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Keep goals in mind. Remember that what you want is to obtain information. Keep the interview on track and don't digress too much. Keep the conversation focused on the interview questions. Be considerate of the interviewee's limited time.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Don't accept "yes/ no" answers. Monosyllabic answers don't offer much information. Ask for elaboration, probe and ask why. Ask the interviewee to clarify any answer that you don't understand.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Respect. Make interviewees feel like their answers are very important to you and be respectful for the time they're donating to help you. Be sure to thank interviewees for sharing their time and expertise. Send a thank you note soon after the interview.

TIPS FOR PHONE INTERVIEWS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Keep phone interviews to no more than 10 minutes - exceptions to this rule may be made depending on the type of interview and the arrangements made ahead of time with the interviewee.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If the interviewee is asked to respond or refer to any materials, provide them in advance. It can also be helpful to send the questions to the interviewee prior to the interview.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Be extra motivating because people tend to be less willing to become engaged in conversation on the phone.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If you'd like to tape record the conversation, ask for permission to do so. If the individual does not feel comfortable being recorded, proceed with interview, but be sure to have a second person available to capture detailed notes of the interview. Assure confidentiality of the interviewee.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Write down the information as you hear it. Don't trust your memory to write down the information later. Write notes as a back-up to any problems with the tape recording.

Source: Marcelo Vilela. "Conducting Interviews," Community Tool Box. Part B, Chapter 3, Section 12. http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/section_1047.htm

Tip #6**SAMPLE ADOLESCENT HEALTH VISION STATEMENTS**

The following are excerpts of Vision Statements from State Adolescent Health Strategic Plans.

CALIFORNIA

Excerpt from *Investing in Adolescent Health: A Social Imperative for California's Future*. (http://nabic.ucsf.edu/index.php/tools/article/investing_in_adolescent_health)

UNDERSTANDING ADOLESCENT HEALTH: ISSUES & APPROACHES

The health and well-being of California teens has a major impact on the overall social and economic health of our state. Today's teens are tomorrow's workforce, parents, and leaders, and their future is shaped by the opportunities we create for them today. Most parents make significant personal investments in their children's future. Yet as a society, we are not making the investments necessary to ensure the health and well-being of all of our youth.

Investing in Adolescent Health: A social Imperative for California's Future provides a picture of the health and well-being of California's youth. It presents recommendation and strategies to move policy development at the state and local levels in three major directions:

- Making youth a policy priority.
- Creating supports and opportunities for all youth.
- Improving services and service systems.

CONNECTICUT

Excerpt from Connecticut Department of Public Health, Adolescent Health Strategic Plan. www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3130&q=442136

The Connecticut Adolescent Health Strategic Planning Initiative is working toward an environment for Connecticut adolescents in which:

- All adolescents value health, are empowered to make healthy decisions, and are adequately prepared to thrive during adolescence.
- All adolescents have easy, affordable access to confidential physical, mental and oral healthcare, substance abuse services, and health information and resources that are accurate and appropriate to their age, cultural and linguistic background, geographic location, and developmental stage.
- All adolescents, including those with disabilities or those who are chronically ill, are offered adequate opportunities and resources that allow them to achieve their levels of optimal health and well being.

- Programs serving adolescents are appropriately funded and facilitate communication, collaboration and coordination with one another.
- Adolescents' environments—including their home, school and community – are safe, supportive, and promote health and well-being.
- Adults, families, communities and institutions provide consistent and scientifically accurate messages on health promotion.
- All adults have earned adolescents' trust, are equipped to nurture adolescents, and have access to appropriate networks that support adolescents' health and well-being.
- All adolescents have hope for their future.

MINNESOTA

Excerpt from Being, Belonging, Becoming: Minnesota's Adolescent Health Action Plan
www.health.state.mn.us/youth/bbb/execsumm/index.html

Our responsibility as the community of Minnesota is to support and guide Minnesota youth in the healthy development of being, belonging, and becoming. This requires a focus on wholeness and wellness, and seeing Minnesota youth as “at promise” rather than “at risk.” Minnesota youth can achieve health and well-being when they have the following:

- The basic needs of adolescents are met (including food, shelter, and safety).
- Caring adults of all ages support adolescents through nurturing relationships.
- Social and recreational opportunities that are interesting and challenging are available to adolescents.
- Universal access to holistic physical and mental health services.
- Resources that are adequately funded, continuous and flexible to effectively meet the health needs of adolescents.
- Communities that embrace, respect and value adolescents.
- Education is individualized to meet the needs of adolescents and the needs of society.
- An opportunity to provide leadership and play an active role in their community, including policy-making.
- Support to reduce their risk for poor health outcomes.
- Participation in decision making is equal among all groups.

NEW MEXICO

Excerpt from Working Together for Adolescent Health, New Mexico's Adolescent Health Strategic Plan. www.nmschoolhealth.org/reports.shtml

In keeping with the goal of promoting youth development, this Strategic Plan begins with words developed by the youth themselves. The following vision was developed by four youth. The vision was reviewed, edited, and approved by the NM Youth Alliance.

All New Mexican youth should have the right to be happy, safe, and to know the consequences of their actions, whether positive or negative. All New Mexican youth should have the right to pursue an education, not only high school, but college—no matter the circumstances. All New Mexican youth deserve to feel like they have a future and support system.

This shared vision was developed through a brainstorming activity in which youth identified the following hopes for themselves and for their friends.

VISION FOR THEMSELVES

- Be something important, become something important.
- Have a support system.
- Have a future.

VISION FOR A BEST FRIEND

- Happy.
- Finish school.
- Be healthy.
- Be safe, be cautious.
- To know consequences of actions (that are not usually talked about).

**Tip #7:****SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO GUIDE ADOLESCENT HEALTH PLANNING**

Many of the questions you will want to answer about adolescent health to guide planning are similar across planning activities and data collection strategies. If you are conducting multiple strategies to gather data, or simply want a common point of reference for all involved to think about adolescent health, it will be helpful to put your questions in writing and refer back to them for all activities so you are collecting consistent feedback and information. For example, the following are questions you might ask in developing a framework for adolescent health and/or your vision statement, as well as for conducting community forums, focus groups, and key informant interviews.

QUESTIONS TO DEFINE A VISION OF HEALTHY ADOLESCENCE

- ▶ What do adolescents need to be healthy?
- ▶ What do adolescents need in order to grow and develop in healthy ways?
- ▶ What do you believe are the 2–3 most important characteristics of a healthy teen?

QUESTIONS TO IDENTIFY CRITICAL ADOLESCENT HEALTH ISSUES AND CONCERNS

- ▶ What do you believe are the 2–3 most important issues that must be addressed to improve the health of youth in our community?
- ▶ What are the most critical challenges to health (and/or healthy development and/or well-being) that young people face in our community?
- ▶ What gets in the way of adolescents growing and developing in healthy ways in our community?
- ▶ Which of these issues are most pressing? What makes these issues most pressing?

QUESTIONS TO IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES AND BARRIERS TO ADDRESS ADOLESCENT HEALTH ISSUES

- ▶ What strategies or approaches are working to improve adolescent health in our community?
- ▶ What are the strategies or new opportunities that we can build upon to improve adolescent health in our community?
- ▶ How can we build on these opportunities?
- ▶ What are the barriers that get in the way of addressing adolescent health issues in our community?
- ▶ How can we overcome these barriers?
- ▶ What are the gaps in services (resources, programs...) to improve the health of adolescents in our community?

QUESTIONS TO IDENTIFY STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS ADOLESCENT HEALTH ISSUES

- ▶ What are the 2–3 most important steps that we should take to improve the health of our adolescents?
- ▶ Provide information on best practices or strategies developed by others—then ask: Which of these strategies make sense in our community? Tell me why?
- ▶ Which of these strategies don't make sense in our community? Tell me why?
- ▶ How could we put these strategies into action in our community?
- ▶ What would these strategies look like in our community?

**Tip #8:****CONDUCTING COMMUNITY FORUMS**

A community forum is an organized opportunity for a group of individuals to discuss important issues such as adolescent health. In a strategic planning project, community forums can be useful to:

- Increase the base of individuals who are involved and invested in the strategic planning process.
- Increase the base of individuals who are committed to the project and the implementation of the plan.
- Gain a deeper understanding of adolescent health issues.
- Increase the diversity of input in the strategic plan.
- Identify strategies that are acceptable and reasonable to local communities.
- Identify what needs to happen to put strategies into action.

They are a useful strategy to gather into all aspects of the strategic planning process including development of a vision for healthy adolescence, assessment and prioritization of adolescent health issues and identification of strategies to address these issues.

STEPS FOR CONDUCTING COMMUNITY FORUMS**1. PLAN THE FORUMS**

Good planning makes the difference in conducting a successful community forum. Plan the forums with a focus on what you want to accomplish. The design of the forums should support and reflect this outcome.

PLAN DETAILS OF THE FORUMS

There are a number of details to be planned including the following:

- **Number and location of meetings.** Whenever possible, hold meetings at different sites to get a diversity of representation. Schedule the event at an easy-to-find location that is accessible and comfortable (e.g. library, school, community center).
- **Date and time of meetings.** Hold meetings during times convenient for potential participants (e.g. evenings) and determine the time period (between 1-3 hours).
- **Meeting agenda and activities.** Develop the questions that will be used to guide discussion during the forum and the type of process that will be used to engage forum participants. Identify how participant input will be recorded. The recorder does not need to keep a word-by-word account of the meeting but summarize the ideas expressed in the meeting. Areas of disagreement are as important as areas of consensus. It's also important to capture quotations and stories from the

participants that may later be used as part of the plan (these can be maintained confidential, e.g. male, age 14, or can be attributed to individuals, for example, a quote by the Governor, following that person's permission to use the quote.

- **Forum logistics.** Identify and gather the materials that will be used for the meeting (e.g. invitations and flyers announcing the meeting, background information about the project, materials used during the meeting). Plan the type of room set-up that will be conducive to the project. Seating arrangements are important. To assure strong participation, place seats in a circle or "U" formation. Serve refreshments if possible—they encourage mingling and set a friendly tone. .

IDENTIFY AND RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS

Identify the types and numbers of people that will be invited participate. Plan for a diverse group of participants, including adolescents. A rule of thumb for number of participants is between 12 and 30 individuals. Identify strategies to publicize and recruit participants for each forum. Publicize each forum as widely as possible. Personally recruit community leaders and diverse community members to attend the meetings. Ask them to recruit others as well. Keep in mind that you may need to recruit 1.5 to 2 times as many people as you'd like to attend.

IDENTIFY AND PREPARE A MEETING FACILITATOR

Good facilitation is the key to a successful community forum. It's important to have someone with strong group process and listening skills who can keep things moving and on track. If the facilitator chosen is not involved in the strategic planning process, orient them to the project. Show them how the community forum fits into the larger project.

PLAN FOR POST-FORUM FOLLOW-UP

Identify how input gathered during the forums will be analyzed and summarized. Define how the summary information will be shared with forum participants.

2. CONDUCT THE FORUMS

Each forum should follow the same agenda and include the following:

GREET PARTICIPANTS

Greeting people as they arrive is an important step in helping them to feel welcome, comfortable and ready to participate fully in the dialogue session.

INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions are an important way to set the stage for a community forum so allow sufficient amount of time for this part of the meeting. The meeting facilitator should introduce themselves and thank the participants for attending. The facilitator should then introduce the strategic planning process and describe how the forum fits into the project and contributes to the success of the strategic plan. In addition, provide

an overview of what will happen during the community forum. Conclude the introductions by making connections with the participants. This helps to build trust and encourage broad participation. If possible, ask participants to introduce themselves and briefly describe why the meeting is important to them. Use this information to help personalize and guide the rest of the meeting.

CONDUCT A DISCUSSION OF THE FORUM QUESTIONS

- If the group is large, or smaller groups would facilitate better discussion, break participants into smaller groups.
- Use someone from the planning group to facilitate the discussion in each of the small groups. Designate a recorder for each group to take notes and summarize important points.
- Use flipcharts to record the discussion of each topic or question.

CONCLUDE THE FORUM

Conclude the forum by summarizing the major points identified during the discussion. . If the participants were broken down into smaller discussion groups during the forum, start by having each group summarize the main points of their discussion. At the end, the facilitator should provide a brief summary of what was achieved during the forum and review next steps in the project. Thank participants for their valuable input and creative ideas. Follow up with participants who express an interest in being involved in additional efforts, as well as implementation.

3. SUMMARIZE THE INPUT GATHERED DURING THE FORUMS

Review the input gathered during each forum and prepare a written summary. Mail or email the summary to all forum participants. Include a thank-you for their participation and mention the opportunities for their further involvement.

Source: *Community Toolbox* (<http://ctb.lsi.ukans.edu/tools>)
Conducting public forums and listening sessions Part B Chapter. 3, Section 3
Leading a community dialogue on building a healthy community Part B chapt. 3, Section 17

Tip #9:**CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE FOCUS GROUPS**

A focus group is a planned, focused discussion involving a small group of people and facilitated by an interviewer. In adolescent health strategic planning, focus groups provide a way to:

- Learn about how people think about adolescent health.
- Check assumptions.
- Build energy, ideas and excitement about adolescent health through the spontaneity of focus group discussions.
- Gather information on ways to improve adolescent health strategies and programs.
- Involve a larger group of people in the process.

Before choosing whether or not to hold focus groups as part of your strategic planning process, carefully consider the advantages and limitations:

ADVANTAGES

- ▶ They provide the opportunity for gathering in-depth information.
- ▶ The results can be gathered fairly quickly.
- ▶ They provide a good way to hear from a wide range of people.
- ▶ They encourage the exchange of ideas between people and thereby stimulate new ideas.

LIMITATIONS

- ▶ Issues can be raised that don't pertain to your purpose because group dynamics can be difficult to control.
- ▶ A limited number of questions can be asked due to time limitations.
- ▶ Gathering together focus group participants can be time consuming and challenging.
- ▶ Data analysis and interpretation can be difficult because the gathered data are subjective.

The success of focus groups is based on good planning, successful recruitment of participants, effective facilitation and good analysis. If you haven't conducted focus groups, enlist the help of people who have experience and expertise (e.g. members of the Strategic Planning Committee skilled in focus groups, staff from the Departments of Sociology, Psychology, or Anthropology at the local University).

STEPS FOR CONDUCTING FOCUS GROUPS

1. ESTABLISH A TIMELINE

Focus groups take time, so allow for 6-8 weeks between planning and conducting the groups. This provides the opportunity to accomplish all the tasks necessary for the focus groups to run smoothly. Below is a sample timeline:

STANDARD FOCUS GROUP TIMELINE	
TIME FRAME	ACTIVITY
6-8 weeks prior to the 1st focus group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write focus group purpose statement. • Identify participants. • Gather contact information for potential participants.
4-5 weeks prior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a facilitator. • Develop the questions. • Develop the script. • Arrange and reserve the focus group site.
3-4 weeks prior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write and send invitations.
2 weeks prior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up invitations with phone calls.
1 week prior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make room arrangements.
2 days prior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place a reminder call to participants. • Gather materials for the focus group.
Focus group date(s).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct the focus groups.
2 days following the focus group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sent a thank-you letter to participants. • Transcribe notes from the focus group.
1 week following.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize the session and send to the participants.
When all focus groups are completed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze the focus group data and write report.

2. DEFINE THE PURPOSE

Clearly identify what you want to achieve as result of the focus groups and develop a purpose statement. Make sure that your purpose statement is as clear, specific and refined as possible. The clearer your statement, the easier the remaining steps will be. Broad and general statements, such as “to find out what people think about adolescent health,” makes it difficult to identify participants, develop questions and get useful results.

Start by writing a draft purpose statement by answering questions, such as:

- Why are we conducting focus groups?
- What do we want to know?
- What do we hope to learn?

Then refine and clarify the statement by asking:

- ▶ Why do we want to know that?
- ▶ How will this information be helpful?

3. IDENTIFY POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

This is a critical and complex step. Work closely with the members of the Strategic Planning Committee in this process as they often have access to key individuals (e.g. adolescents, community leaders) and can be extremely helpful in recruiting them as focus group participants.

Start first by identifying the types of people you need to talk with to achieve your purpose. Possible attributes include:

- ▶ Age (e.g. Young, middle, older adolescents; Parents, Adults age 60 and older)
- ▶ Gender
- ▶ Parents
- ▶ People who work with adolescents
- ▶ Community leaders and decision makers
- ▶ Representatives from different geographic locations (urban, suburban, rural, frontier?)
- ▶ Race and/or ethnicity
- ▶ Socioeconomic status

Then, determine how these people might be grouped together. For example,

YOUTH AGE 14-18

- White
- Black
- Native American
- Asian/ Pacific Islander
- Hispanic/ Latino

YOUTH AGE 19-22

- Involved in post-secondary education
- Not involved in post-secondary education

PARENTS OF YOUTH AGE 12-18

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural

Identify the total number of focus groups that are needed. Most major themes and patterns emerge within 3 focus groups of any one type of audience. As a result, hold at least 3 focus groups per type of group.

Next, determine how many participants you need to invite. Decide how many people you want in each focus group. Groups should be limited to 6-12 people. Then determine the response rate you expect to get when inviting people to participate

- ▶ Inviting people from a pre-existing group...close to 100% response rate.
- ▶ Inviting people not involved in a pre-existing group...50-66% response rate (this means that you need to invite 1.5 – 2 times to get the number of people you want for a focus group).

Use the following formula to determine how many people to invite per type of focus group:

$$\frac{\text{Number of Focus Groups} \times \text{Number of Participants Per Group}}{\text{Response Rate}} = \text{Number of Invitations}$$

For example if you intend to hold 3 focus groups with 10 participants each with an estimated 50% response rate, your formula is:

$$\frac{3 \text{ Groups} \times 10 \text{ Participants}}{.50} = 60 \text{ invitations}$$

Brainstorm possible participants and methods to identify them. A general rule is that participants within each focus group have at least 2 characteristics in common. At the same time, you need to ensure variety. Take into consideration participant characteristics that might cause challenge or tension within a group, such as gender issues.

4. GENERATE QUESTIONS

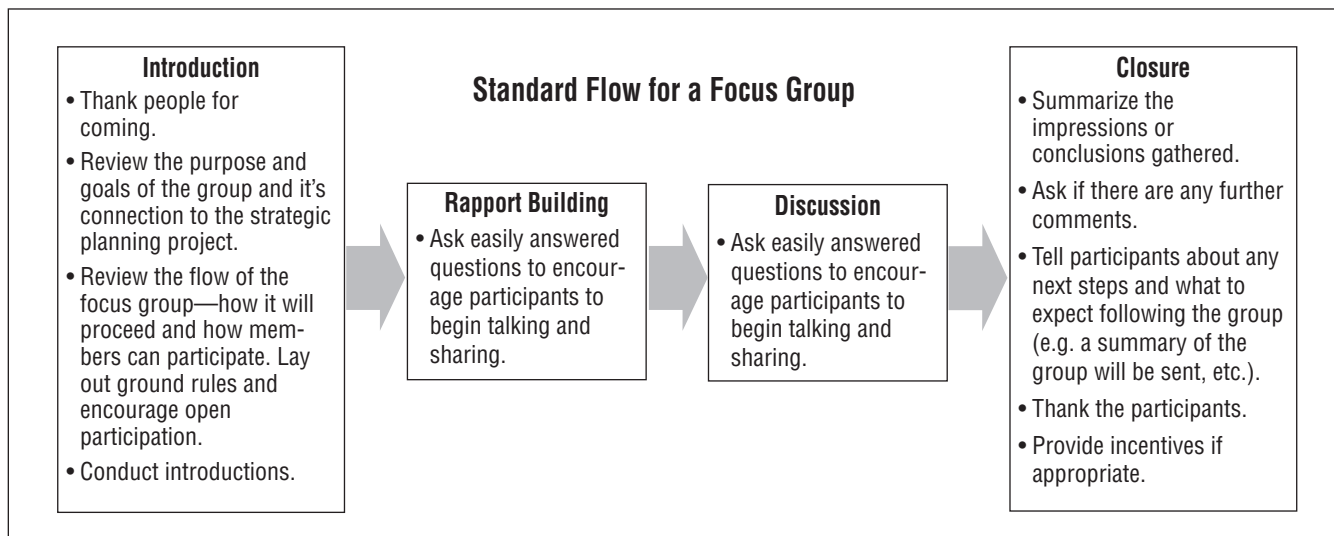
Focus groups generally last 1–2 hours, which provides opportunity to address 4–5 questions. In addition, plan for a number of probes for each question in case participants do not provide any information. Craft your questions carefully, since you are limited in how many you can ask. The questions should:

- ▶ Be open-ended.
- ▶ Be focused.
- ▶ Move from the general to the specific.

Brainstorm a list of possible questions. Then prioritize, rewrite and order the questions from the most “comfortable” to questions that may be more sensitive. Pilot test questions with potential focus group representatives and refine as needed.

5. DEVELOP A SCRIPT FOR THE FOCUS GROUP

A script helps to ensure that each focus group is conducted in a similar fashion (this makes the results more reliable), helps the facilitator to stay on track and on time, and makes sure that the questions are put into context for the participants. When developing a script, keep in mind the general flow of focus groups.



6. SELECT FACILITATORS

Many focus groups use a team of facilitators. One facilitator directs the discussion and takes minimal notes. The other acts as the recorder, takes comprehensive notes, operates the tape recorder, and handles logistical details of the meeting. You may want to hire professional facilitators or use someone involved in your project who has facilitation skills. Or you may want to train outside people to facilitate, such as youth or community leaders. It all depends on your needs and resources. In general, individuals who have experience facilitating groups, know about the topic, relate well to focus group participants and work well with different audiences who are interested in the data that is gathered.

7. DECIDE ON FOCUS GROUP DETAILS

Make decisions and arrangements about:

- Date and time to hold each focus group.
- Location where each group will be held.
- Use of incentives to encourage participation. For example, you may choose to offer gift certificates to a local music store as an incentive for participants of youth focus groups.
- Recording of information from the focus groups (written notes, audiotape, etc.).
- Meeting room set-up (participants should face each other and have a table to sit around).

- Materials needed for each focus group (refreshments, tape recorder, flip charts, etc.)
- Analysis and use of focus group data.

8. INVITE PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE

Identify the most effective way to invite individuals to participate (phone, letter, in person, etc.). The more personal the contact, the better. If possible, contact people by phone and follow-up with a personalized written invitation. Place a reminder call to participants 1 day before the focus group. Stress the benefits of participating (why should people come?).

9. CONDUCT THE FOCUS GROUPS

Greet participants as they arrive and begin small talk. Avoid issues that will be discussed during the session. The facilitators should take this time to observe the interaction of participants to get sense about the dynamics of the group. Once the session is started, the facilitators should follow the script to conduct the focus groups. Moderate the discussion so that all opinions on each question get a chance to be heard. This can be done in a number of ways:

- Summarize what’s been heard and ask if the group agrees.
- State the question in a different way.
- Ask if there are any further comments on the question.
- Ask a follow-up question.
- Make brief eye contact with participants, especially those who have not spoken.
- If a few people dominate the discussion, use a round-table approach, giving each person a chance to answer the question.

Tips for facilitating Focus Groups
• Set the tone—participants should have fun and feel good about the session.
• Make sure every participant is heard.
• Get full answers by probing for more comprehensive responses.
• Monitor time closely.
• Keep the discussion on track
• Head of exchanges of opinion about individual items.

Source: *Conducting successful focus groups: How to get the information you need to make smart decisions.* Simon, JS. (2000). Amherst H Wilder Foundation, St. Paul MN

Record the information gathered during the session carefully. Written notes are essential and need to be comprehensive. You may also want to audiotape the session as a way to augment the written notes.

10. ANALYZE AND INTERPRET THE DATA

Immediately following each focus group, facilitators should debrief and review their notes. Write down any observations made during the session (e.g. describe the nature of participation within the group, describe any surprises, etc.). Review the written notes to make sure they make sense. Make clarifications if needed. If the session was audiotaped, verify that the tape recorder worked throughout the session. If the audiotaping did not work, reconstruct the discussion and make additional notes.

Within hours after the focus group, facilitators should review their notes together, listen to the audiotape, discuss participant responses and develop a comprehensive summary of the session. This should be done before the next focus group. This summary will be used to analyze the data. It may also be sent to group participants for their review and opportunity for corrections. This also provides an opportunity to strengthen their connection to the strategic planning process.

After all focus groups and their summaries have been completed, analyze the data. Gather together the summary reports, tape recordings (and transcripts if available), list of questions, and participant information. Read all the summaries through in one reading. Listen to tapes or review transcripts. Look for trends and patterns, common themes and surprises. Consider the context and tone of the discussion. These are equally as important as the comments themselves. Be sure to analyze the data in response to the purpose of the focus groups.

Factors to Consider When You Analyze Focus Group Data	
WORDS	Determine the meanings of words. Make frequency counts of commonly used words. Cluster similar concepts together.
CONTEXT	Examine the context of words. Look at the stimulus that triggered words and interpret in light of this context. Were comments phrased positively or negatively? Did a comment elicit an emotional response or trigger other comments.
INTERNAL CONSISTENCY	Trace the flow of conversation and note changes of position after interaction with others.
SPECIFIC RESPONSES	Give more weight to comments that are specific and based on experience than those that are vague and impersonal. When participants make hypothetical answers, give greater weight to those made in the 1st person rather than 3rd person.
COMMON THEMES, TRENDS AND PATTERNS	Identify the comments that appear repeatedly in the data.
OVERREACHING IDEAS	Look for ideas that cut across the entire discussion.

11. REPORT THE RESULTS

Develop a written report of the focus groups. Include the following elements:

A. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

B. DETAILS OF THE SESSION

- Number of focus groups conducted
- Name(s) of facilitator(s)
- Dates of sessions
- Identifying information about each focus group (participant characteristics, # of participants—do not attribute specific comments to individual participants)

C. RESULTS

- Common themes, trends, patterns, overarching ideas, surprises
- Quotes that represent both the diversity of comments and typical comments

D. CONCLUSIONS

E. FOCUS GROUP SCRIPT OR LIST OF QUESTIONS

Sources:

Simon JS. (2000). Conducting successful focus groups. Amherst H Wilder Foundation, St. Paul, MN.

Conducting successful focus groups. Simon JS. 2000. Amherst H. Wilder foundation. St. Paul, MN.

Using focus groups for evaluation. Marczak M and Sewell M. University of Arizona, www.ca.uky.edu/Agpsd/focus.pdf

**Tip #10:****CREATING A VISION**

The following are 3 different types of visioning processes that might be helpful to your visioning process.

They are easily adaptable depending on the size of group participating in the visioning and the space available to you.

In general, these are brainstorming processes. Before starting, review the basic rules of brainstorming with participants:

- Make ideas clear and talk in “headlines”.
- Generate as many ideas as possible—quantity and ideas that serves as a catalyst for other ideas are the goal.
- Do not criticize, judge or evaluate ideas. Brainstorming is the time for generating ideas. Discussion and analysis come later.
- If the meaning of an idea is not clear, it's OK to ask for clarification.
- Think as creatively as possible (encouraging participants to think creatively can help to raise the number and quality of ideas that are generated).
- No idea is too outlandish. Write down every idea, no matter how crazy. An idea that seems ridiculous may turn out to be possible, or it may spark another idea that is more feasible.
- Build on the ideas of others (tagging on or combining ideas).

**Visioning Exercise #1:
IMAGINING THE FUTURE**

(Adapted from “How to create a vision— or compelling goal—statement”;
www.beyondresistance.com/pdf_files/5x3_5x8.pdf)

Gather participants together as a large group. Make sure that all have something to write or draw on (paper, pencils, markers, pens).

The visioning facilitator guides the process as follows:

INSTRUCT THE GROUP

“For the next couple of minutes just sit quietly. Don’t write anything, just relax.”

Imagine the future—three to five years from now. Imagine that all adolescents in our state have everything they need to develop and grow in healthy ways (Note that if this is difficult for participants, have them imagine what they want for their child, grandchild or other youth with whom they are close—once they can imagine this, have them expand to thinking about other youth). Allow an image to come to mind. What does this ideal picture look like?

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Explore this image—use the following questions.

- What are young people doing?
- What do they have that supports their health and well-being?
- Who is around the youth?
- What are they doing?
- Where are they doing this? What is around them?
- Are there differences in this picture among different groups of youth (e.g. youth in rural vs. urban areas; youth of varying race/ethnicities; youth in foster care or the juvenile justice system)? If yes, what is different?
- How can you tell our youth are developing and growing in healthy ways?
- What makes it so ideal?

INSTRUCT THE GROUP

For the next three minutes—

Jot down what you envisioned during this exercise.

If you'd prefer, you can also draw or make graphic representations of your ideas. Please don't talk during this exercise.

Allow time for writing or drawing.

Break the group into pairs.

Have each person share their writings/drawings for 5 minutes while the other person finds out everything they can about this vision. Switch roles and repeat with the second person sharing their vision. It is important to keep the attention on the speaker. When the first person talks, the second person should be in listening mode—asking questions, clarifying, etc.

Give each pair ten index cards or large Post It notes.

Ask them to pick ten items to put forward from their visions to share with the large group. They should print their responses in large block letters; otherwise it may be difficult for others to read.

Bring the pairs back together as the large group.

Ask for one card from one pair. Post it. Ask for one card from another group. Post it. Continue this process until all the cards are posted. Begin grouping the cards as you post them.

Visioning Exercise #2: CLUSTERING/MAPPING

(Adapted from www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/brainstorming.html)

The point of this visioning technique is to gather a lot of different terms and phrases onto a sheet of paper in a random fashion and later go back to link the words together into a sort of "map" or "web" that forms groups from the separate parts. Allow yourself to start with chaos. After the chaos subsides, you will be able to create order from the ideas.

PREPARATION

- Requires a big vertical space for participants to simultaneously post brainstorming ideas ("visioning wall").
- Post a large piece of butcher block paper on the wall as the 'canvas' (or tape together 3–4 flip chart pages sideways).
- 4 x 6 index cards or larger Post-it notes (enough for 15–20 for each person).
- Tape to post index cards.
- Black markers for participants in the "storming" process.
- Multiple colors of markers for the "mapping/clustering" process.

PROCESS

Write your visioning topic in the center of the large paper posted to the wall. Topics could include: Healthy adolescents; Healthy adolescence; Youth thriving; Adolescent well-being. Use only 1–3 words to describe the visioning topic.

Introduce the visioning process to participants so they know what to expect. Describe the visioning topic and suggest some questions that might help them brainstorm ideas that capture the topic (What do young people need to achieve this? What does this look like? What do young people have? Who is around them? What are they doing? Why is this important?).

Ask participants to come to the visioning wall and individually write down ideas that describe your visioning topic (storming process). They should write down their ideas, one per index card or Post-it note, and attach it anywhere on the visioning wall. They should write down as many ideas as they can generate in a short period of time (10 minutes). Encourage them to keep moving and posting ideas.

Once the "storm" has subsided and you are faced with a hail of terms and phrases, start to cluster. Working with the large group, circle terms that seem related and then draw a line connecting the circles. Find some more and circle them and draw more lines to connect them with what you think is closely related. When you run out of terms that associate, start with another term. Look for concepts and terms that might relate to that term. Circle them and then link them with a connecting line. Continue this process until you have found all the associated terms. Some of the terms might end up uncircled, but these "loners" can also be useful to you. Use different colored

markers for this part (one color per category of ideas). If that's not possible, try to vary the kind of line you use to encircle the topics; use a wavy line, a straight line, a dashed line, a dotted line, a zigzaggy line, etc. In order to see what goes with what.

At the end, you will have a set of clusters or a sort of map. Create names for each category. Facilitate a discussion with the large group to explore what these cluster mean as a vision for your strategic planning process. Capture these ideas on a flip chart.

Following the session, craft a vision statement from the ideas, categories and discussion of the mapping/clustering process.

**Visioning Exercise #3:
BRAIN WRITING**

(Adapted from <http://embraceliving.net/blog/2009/02/25-brainstorming-techniques/>)

Gather together a group of people for the brain writing visioning process. Give each person a sheet of paper. Describe the visioning question and suggest some questions that might help them brainstorm ideas that capture the topic.

VISIONING QUESTIONS
• What do adolescents need to be healthy?
• How would you describe a healthy adolescent?
• How would you describe an adolescent who is thriving?
• What are characteristics of a healthy adolescent?
• What needs to be in place to support healthy youth?
• What do adolescents need in order to grow and develop in healthy ways?.
• What gets in the way of adolescents growing and developing in healthy ways?

Have participants write their ideas on their own sheet of paper. After 3–4 minutes, rotate the sheets to different people and build off what the others wrote on their paper. Continue until everyone has written on everyone else’s sheet (or all the sheets at their table, or the 2 tables around them, etc.).

This can also be done as a small group process. Assemble participants into groups of 3–4 people. Post a Flip chart page on the wall for each group. Have them brainstorm together for 5 minutes. Then rotate groups and continue brainstorming by building on the ideas of the previous team(s). Continue teams have posted on all of the Flip chart pages.

After the brainstorming process, have each team review their last Flip chart page and identify the top 5-6 ideas on their page (or the 5-6 that are most compelling). Have each team report their top ideas. Facilitate a large group discussion about these ideas (what does this tell us? What are we seeking to achieve? etc.).

Following the session, craft a vision statement from the ideas, categories and discussion of the mapping/clustering process.

Tip #11:**DATA RESOURCES****FEDERAL SOURCES OF STATE AND NATIONAL DATA****Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS)**

Division of Adolescent and School Health / Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/YRBS

DATA 2010 (Healthy People 2010)

National Center for Health Statistics / Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.healthypeople.gov/Data/data2010.htm or www.cdc.gov/nchs/hphome.htm
DATA 2010 is an interactive database that contains the most recent monitoring data for tracking Healthy People 2010. Data are included for all the objectives and subgroups identified in the Healthy People 2010, including the 21 Critical Objectives for Adolescents and Young Adults. DATA2010 contains national and some State data. DATA2010 is updated quarterly. Updates include new data years, and possibly revisions to baseline data. For information on Healthy People 2020 objectives and data, see www.healthypeople.gov/hp2020.

National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov/nchs/
The national agency responsible for compiling and disseminating statistical information to guide actions and policies that improve the health of American people. Provides access to a wide array of health statistics and reports.

Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research (WONDER)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <http://wonder.cdc.gov>

Directory of Health and Human Services Data Resources

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
<http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/datacncl/datadir/>

A compilation of information about virtually all major data collection systems sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Title V Information System

Maternal and Child Health Bureau
<https://perfdata.hrsa.gov/mchb/TVISReports>

U.S. Census Bureau

U.S. Department of Commerce www.census.gov
NCES' website provides access to a wide variety of education and education-related statistics.

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

U.S. Department of Education <http://nces.ed.gov/index.html>

Bureau of Justice Statistics

U.S. Department of Justice

www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/

This Bureau provides access to statistics about: Crime and victim, Criminal offenders, the justice system, law enforcement, prosecution, federal justice system, criminal records system, and special topics (including drugs and crime, homicide trends, firearms and crime, reentry trends).

OTHER SOURCES OF STATE AND NATIONAL DATA

ChildTrends Databank

www.childtrends.databank.org/

The ChildTrends Databank provides: continuously updated trend data and national estimates for child indicators: plain language reporting on trends and population subgroup differences informed by existing research; color graphics and tables that can be downloaded directly into reports and presentations; PDF files for each indicator containing text, graphics, and tables in a concise and attractive format; and links that provide organized access to additional information available for each indicator including State, local, and international estimates.

Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative (CAHMI)

<http://cahmi.org/pages/Home.aspx>

CAHMI developed and maintains a number of quality measurement tools and strategies that assess the quality of care provided to children and young adults including the Young Adult Health Care Survey (YAHS); National Survey for Children's Health (NSCH); and National Survey for Children with Special Health Care Needs (NS-CSHCN).

Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health

www.childhealthdata.org/

The purpose of The Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health (DRC) is to advance the effective use of public data on the health and health-related services for children, youth and families in the United States. The DRC does this by providing hands-on access to national, state, and regional data findings as well as technical assistance in the collection and use of this data by policymakers, program leaders, advocates and researchers in order to inform and advance key child and youth health goals.

Forum on Children and Family Statistics

http://childstats.gov/americaschildren/press_release.asp

America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2009—a compendium of indicators illustrating both the promises and the difficulties confronting our Nation's young people. The report presents 40 key indicators on important aspects of children's lives.

Partners in Information Access for the Public Health Workforce

http://phpartners.org/health_stats.html#State%20and%20Local%20Public%20Health%20Data%20Sets

State and local public health datasets

Kids Count

Annie E. Casey Foundation

www.aecf.org/kidscount

A national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the U.S. This website offers several interactive online databases that allow visitors to create free, customized data reports. The report choices vary by system, but include the ability to generate custom profiles, line graphs, maps, and rankings, and download raw data. Profiles give detailed information about a single geographic area. Graphs provide a view of indicators graphed over time. Maps provide color-coded maps of the geographic area. Rankings allow a view of all of the comparable geographic regions, ranked by an indicator.

State Health Facts Online

Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation

www.statehealthfacts.kff.org/

A resource that contains the latest state-level data on demographics, health, and health policy, including health coverage, access, financing, and state legislation.

National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health)<http://www.cpc.unc.edu/projects/addhealth>

Add Health is a longitudinal study of a nationally representative sample of adolescents in grades 7–12 in the United States during the 1994-95 school year. The Add Health cohort has been followed into young adulthood with four in-home interviews when the sample was aged 24–32. Add Health combines longitudinal survey data on respondents' social, economic, psychological and physical well-being with contextual data on the family, neighborhood, community, school, friendships, peer groups, and romantic relationships, providing unique opportunities to study how social environments and behaviors in adolescence are linked to health and achievement outcomes in young adulthood. The fourth wave of interviews expanded the collection of biological data in Add Health to understand the social, behavioral, and biological linkages in health trajectories as the Add Health cohort ages through adulthood.


Tip# 12:
PRIORITIZATION STRATEGIES

These techniques can be used to prioritize strategic planning strategies according to criteria. These criteria can help to identify strategies that are most likely to be effective, acceptable and feasible.

CRITERION LISTING

This technique is used to compare strategies to a group of criteria.

POSSIBLE CRITERIA	
• Grounded in research	• Addresses known risk and protective factors
• Acceptability	• Feasibility
• Developmentally appropriate	• Culturally appropriate
• Builds on existing resources	• Impact
• Ethical implications	• Cost
• Political implications	• Ease of implementation

STEPS:

- Brainstorm a list of potential strategies.
- Choose 3–5 criteria to rate the strategies. More than 5 can make the process too cumbersome and fewer gives less options from which to make a choice.

Draw a grid on a large sheet of paper or flip chart.

- List the criteria across the top and draw a vertical column under each.
- Make a TOTAL column along the right-hand edge of the paper.
- List the strategies down the left-hand side and draw a horizontal row beside each.

Take one strategy at a time and compare it to the criterion.

- If the strategy meets the criterion, make an "X" in the box where the columns meet.
- If the strategy doesn't meet the criterion, put an "O" in the box.
- When the strategy has been rated to all the criteria, count the total "Xs" marked for each strategy, and write the number in the TOTAL column.

Repeat the process with each strategy.

Once all strategies have been rated, review the results and discuss. The strategies with the greatest total are probably the best choices.

LIKELIHOOD-IMPACT ANALYSIS

This analysis can be used by a workgroup to rate strategies according to 2 criteria:

- **Likelihood**—how likely that a strategy could be implemented, given what is known about the strategy, the resources available and the current environment.
- **Impact**—the degree of positive impact that a strategy would have, assuming that it was fully implemented

STEPS:

- Brainstorm a list of potential strategies. Assign each strategy with a number or letter.
- Provide each workgroup member with a “Likelihood-Impact Worksheet” and ask everyone to rate each of the strategies. (Worksheet template is located on the following page.)
- After everyone has completed their worksheet, bring the group together to share information using the “Likelihood-Impact Chart.” Draw the chart on a flip chart. (Chart template is located on the following page.)
- Review each strategy one at a time.
 - Have workgroup members share their ratings.
 - Provide opportunity for members to discuss their ratings.
 - Identify a consensus rating for each strategy and mark it on the chart.
- Once all strategies have been noted on the chart, use the consensus ratings to choose strategies.

LIKELIHOOD-IMPACT WORKSHEET

Strategy #1

The likelihood of being able to implement this strategy is:
 High Low

The probable impact of implementing this strategy would be
 High Low

Strategy #2

The likelihood of being able to implement this strategy is:
 High Low

The probable impact of implementing this strategy would be
 High Low

Strategy #3

The likelihood of being able to implement this strategy is:
 High Low

The probable impact of implementing this strategy would be
 High Low

Strategy #4

The likelihood of being able to implement this strategy is:
 High Low

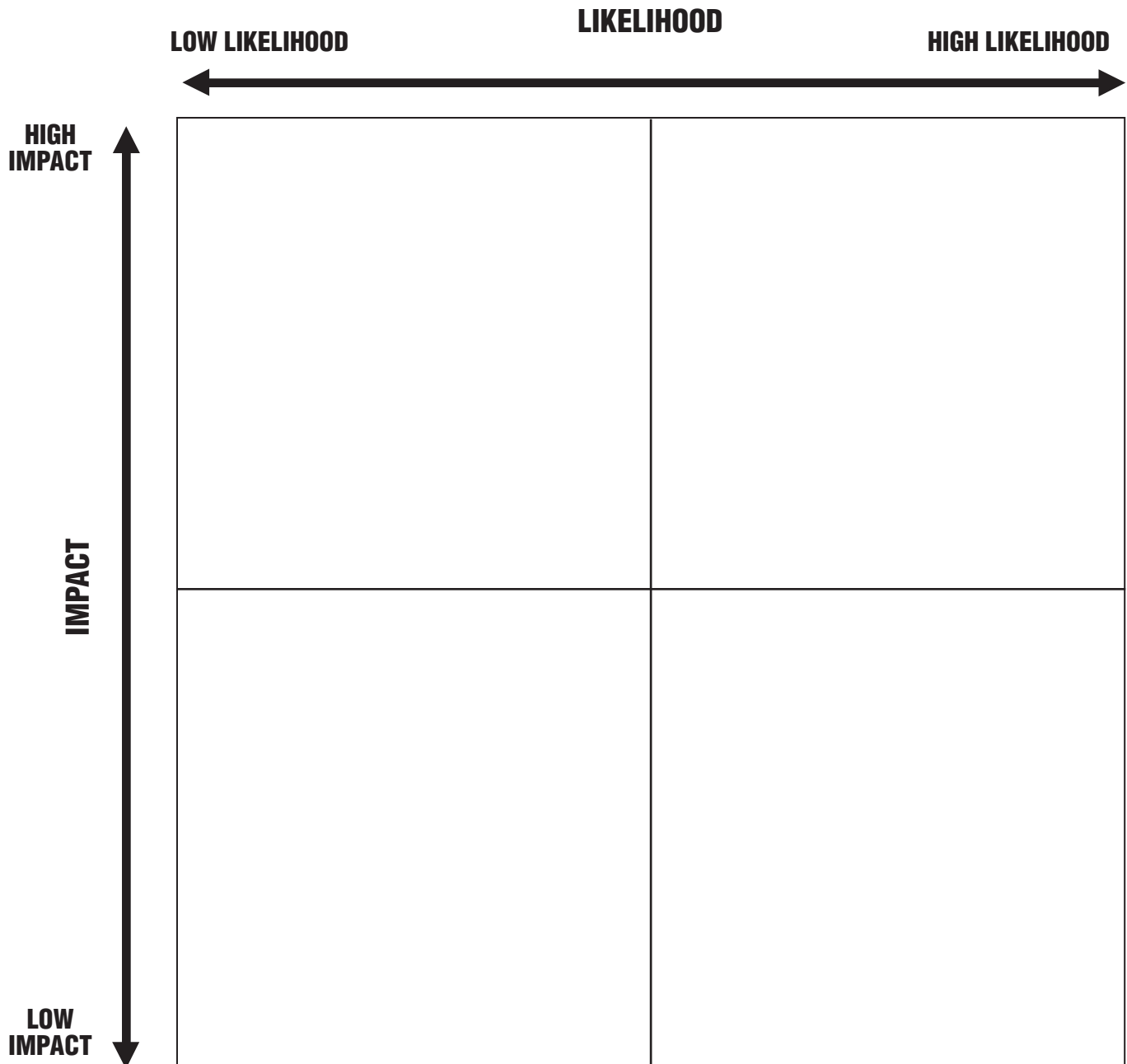
The probable impact of implementing this strategy would be
 High Low

Strategy #5

The likelihood of being able to implement this strategy is:
 High Low

The probable impact of implementing this strategy would be
 High Low

LIKELIHOOD-IMPACT CHART



Definitions

Likelihood: how likely that a strategy could be implemented, given what is known about the strategy, the resources available, and the current environment.

Impact: the degree of positive impact that a strategy would have, assuming that it was fully implemented.



Tip #13: DEVELOPING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

WHAT ARE GOOD GOALS?

Good goals are broad statements that directly relate to the general purpose of a program, NOT what a program will do. Well-written goals help to establish the overall direction for and focus of a school health program, define the scope of what the program should achieve, and serve as the foundation for developing program **objectives**.

GOOD GOALS ARE:

- ▶ Declarative statement—provide a complete sentence that describes a program outcome.
- ▶ Jargon-free—use language that most people in the field outside your own agency are likely to understand.
- ▶ Short—use few words to make a statement
- ▶ Concise—get the complete idea of your goal across as simply and briefly as possible leaving out unnecessary detail.
- ▶ Easily understood—provide a goal in which the language is clear and for which there is a clear rationale.
- ▶ Positive terms—frame the outcomes in positive terms or in terms of a decrease in health risk behaviors. Avoid the use of double negatives.
- ▶ Framework for objectives—provide a framework so that the objectives are stepping stones to make progress to achieve the goals.

TWO KEY STEPS TO WRITING A GOOD GOAL:

1. Specify a health problem or health risk behavior.
2. Identify the target population that will be changed as a result of a successful project.

WHAT ARE SMART OBJECTIVES?

An objective describes results to be achieved and how they will be achieved. Objectives are more immediate than goals; they represent mileposts to be achieved relevant to achieving corresponding goals. Because objectives detail program activities, multiple objectives are generally needed to address a single goal. Objectives are the basis for monitoring progress toward achieving program goals and setting targets for accountability.

SMART OBJECTIVES ARE:**SPECIFIC**

- Objectives should provide the “who” and “what” of program activities.
- Use only one action verb since objectives with more than one verb imply that more than one activity or behavior is being measured.
- Avoid verbs that may have vague meanings to describe intended outcomes (e.g. “understand” or “know”) since it may prove difficult to measure them. Instead, use verbs that document action (e.g., “At the end of the session, the students will list three concerns...”). Remember, the greater the specificity, the greater the measurability.

MEASURABLE

- The focus is on “how much” change is expected. Objectives should quantify the amount of change expected. It is impossible to determine whether objectives have been met unless they can be measured.
- The objective provides a reference point from which a change in the target population can clearly be measured.

ACHIEVABLE

- Objectives should be attainable within a given time frame and with available program resources.

REALISTIC

- Objectives are most useful when they accurately address the scope of the problem and programmatic steps that can be implemented within a specific time frame.
- Objectives that do not directly relate to the program goal will not help toward achieving the goal.

TIME-PHASED

- Objectives should provide a time frame indicating when the objective will be measured or a time by which the objective will be met.
- Including a time frame in the objectives helps in planning and evaluating the program.

To develop SMART objectives, use the template below and fill in the blanks:

By ____/____/____, [WHEN—Time bound]

[WHO will do WHAT—Specific]
from _____ to _____
[MEASURE (number, rate, percentage of change and baseline)—Measurable]

Next, review your objective to assure that it is achievable and relevant to your overall program goals.

Sources:

CDC Division of Adolescent and School Health, Writing Good Goals and SMART Objectives
http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/dashoet/writing_good_goals/menu.html

CDC National Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program, State Program Evaluation Guides:
Writing SMART Objectives. http://www.cdc.gov/DHDSP/state_program/evaluation_guides/smart_objectives.htm



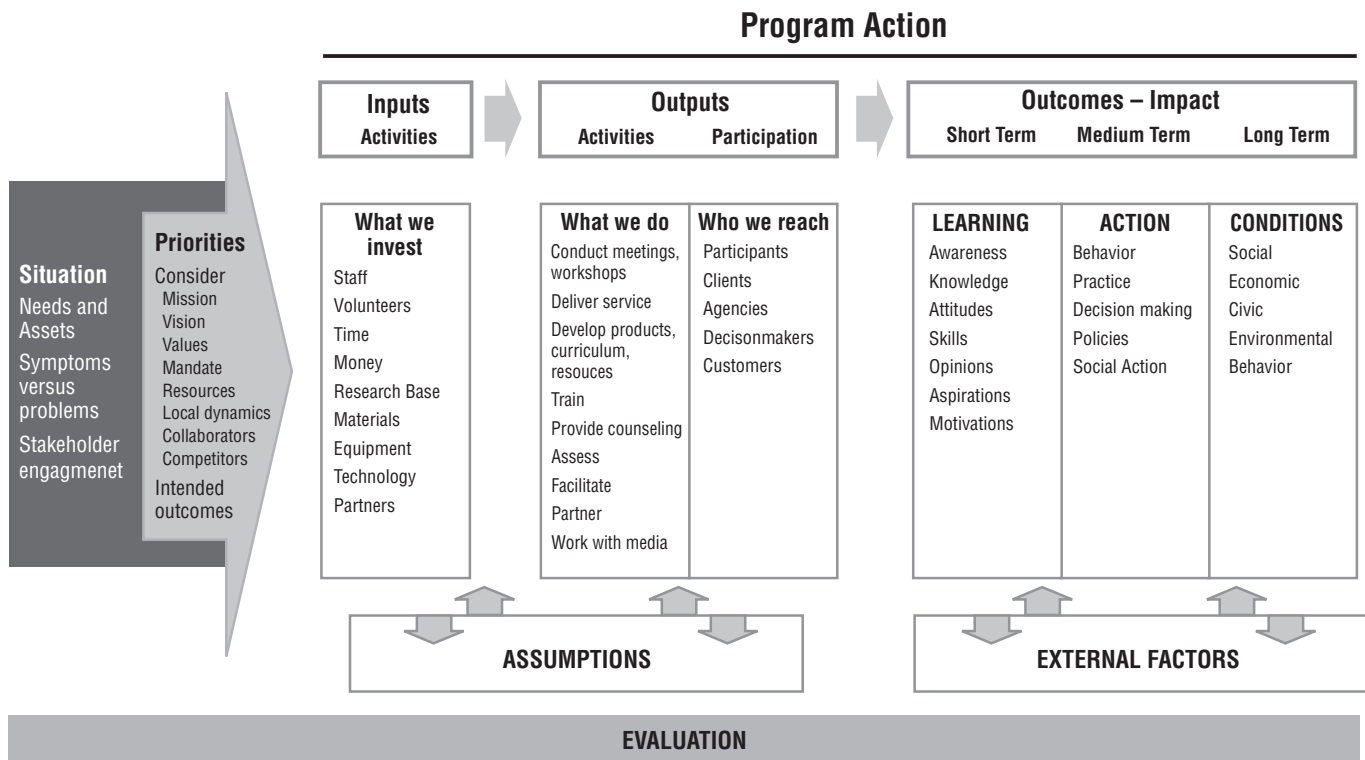
Tip #14:

DEVELOPING A LOGIC MODEL

A logic model presents a picture of how your effort or initiative is supposed to work. It explains why your strategy is a good solution to the problem at hand. Effective logic models make an explicit, often visual, statement of the activities that will bring about change and the results you expect to see for the community and its people. A logic model keeps participants in the effort moving in the same direction by providing a common language and point of reference.

More than an observer's tool, logic models become part of the work itself. They energize and rally support for an initiative by declaring precisely what you're trying to accomplish and how.

Logic models are used as a generic label for the many ways of displaying how change unfolds. Some other names include road map, pathways map, blueprint, program theory, and theory of change. While different formats of logic models can be developed, they all rely on a foundation of logic—specifically, the logic of how change happens. Logic in this sense refers to "the relationship between elements and between an element and the whole." By whatever name you call it, a logic model supports the work of adolescent health promotion and improvement by charting the course of change as it evolves.



Sample Logic model from: University of Wisconsin – Extension, Program Development & Evaluation, <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodel.html>

A logic model ought to provide direction and clarity by presenting the big picture of change along with certain important details. For example:

- **Purpose, or mission.** What motivates the need for change? This can also be expressed as the problems or opportunities that the program is addressing.
- **Context, or conditions.** What is the climate in which change will take place.
- **Inputs, or resources or infrastructure.** What raw materials will be used to conduct the effort or initiative?
- **Activities, or interventions.** What will the initiative do with its resources to direct the course of change?
- **Outputs.** What evidence is there that the activities were performed as planned?
- **Effects, or results, consequences, outcomes, or impacts.** What kinds of changes came about as a direct or indirect effect of the activities

RESOURCES TO ASSIST IN DEVELOPING LOGIC MODELS

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

- ▶ CDC Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health (1999). MMWR Recommendations and Reports, September 17, 1999 / Vol. 48 / No. RR-11, Accessible at: <http://www.cdc.gov/dls/pdf/mmwr/rr4811.pdf>
- ▶ State Program Evaluation Guides: Developing and Using a Logic Model http://www.cdc.gov/DHDSP/state_program/evaluation_guides/logic_model.htm

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER FOR COMMUNITY BASED CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION

- ▶ Evaluation Toolkit and Logic Model Builder <http://www.friendsnrc.org/outcometoolkit/index.htm>
- ▶ The Logic Model was developed in collaboration with the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information. It guides users as they create their own logic model. Users select outcomes and indicators from the menu, which are exported to a template for their own logic model. The user can modify the outcomes and indicators to more accurately reflect the user's intent and format.

THE COMMUNITY TOOLBOX

Developing a Framework or Model of Change
http://ctb.ku.edu/en/dothework/tools_tk_4.htm

W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION

Logic Model Development Guide
<http://www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub3669.pdf>

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–EXTENSION, PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT & EVALUATION

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdandevaluation/evallogicmodel.html>

- ▶ Includes 4 templates (in Word and Excel) for developing your logic model.
- ▶ Offers an online course, “Enhancing Program Performance with Logic Models,” which introduces practitioners to a holistic approach to planning and evaluating education and outreach programs and the use and application of logic models. Course accessible at:
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/lmcourse/>

US OFFICE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/grantees/pm/logic_models.html

Source: Information presented here adapted from:
University of Wisconsin – Extension, Program Development & Evaluation
Developing a Framework or Model of Change, The Community Toolbox


Tip #15:
TYPES OF PRODUCTION VENDORS

Type and Vendor Description	Use Them When	Strengths	Weakness
<p>Graphic Designer Many graphic designers are independent contractors that work on their own. They have their own technology and are capable of producing products of the highest quality. Successful graphic designers are generalists: they are equipped to handle design, production and manage the printing process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You've got a budget—even if it is a small one. You want a quality product that conveys the importance and emphasis you place on the project. 	<p>Range of \$ to chose from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hungry. Dedicated to customer. High quality product. Fast. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be less process oriented May be less “strategic” in approach Fewer resources to pull on Little to no writing or editing expertise May be a sideline business Out source printing
<p>Design Firm A design firm is an organization formed around the design process. The firm will have one or more “designers” who are supported by production artists and printing managers. This tiered approach allows them to handle more clients/jobs and stagger fees (higher for designer's work, lower for production).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You've got a budget that is fairly sizable. You want a quality product that conveys the importance and emphasis you place on the project. You feel more comfortable with a clearly established process. You may need assistance throughout the process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear and well-defined process Strategic overlay to work Expertise in all aspects of process Hungry Dedicated to craft More resources Likely to have writers/ editors on staff or affiliated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More expensive Less nimble Likely to resist heavy-handed client involvement in design Out source printing
<p>Communications Agency In general, a communications agency offers expertise on a wide range of communications disciplines – advertising, public relations, market research, packaging, merchandising and so on. Graphic design is a component within all of those disciplines, but from a communications agency perspective, it is an outcome from a larger communications strategy – a single component in a larger mix.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You've got a really big budget. You need Public Relations (PR) or advertising to support your project. You want a quality product that conveys the importance and emphasis you place on the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear and well-defined process Hungry Communication strategy drives all work Expertise in all aspects of process Dedicated to craft and customer service FAR more resources: Staffed with planners, market researchers, strategist, customer service, media planners, PR specialists, event planners, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FAR more expensive FAR less nimble Minimal contact with “designers”—all contact through customer service representative Out source printing
<p>Printer Printers handle the physical production (printing) of your plan. This might be done in simple black and white on a copy machine or as a four-color glossy piece on a huge printing press. Printers have production artists on staff since most of the files they deal with are electronic. These production artists are extremely skilled users of graphics applications. Some are aspiring designers. Printers frequently market themselves by offering design services to their customers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whenever possible, use a printer and don't use your own copy machine. Only use the design services of a printer if you know the in-house designer's work and think it is good quality. Use the production capabilities of the printer if your budget prohibits you from using a designer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Printing done in house. Range of \$ to chose from. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little to no design expertise.



Tip #16:

FORM FACTORS

Knowing who the “customers” of your strategic plan are and understanding how they will perceive your materials is an important first step in deciding on a look and physical appearance for your plan. This is commonly referred to as the plan’s “form factor.” The following chart references different types of form factors and what to expect in working with them.

FORM FACTORS						
	\$\$	Production Values	Quantity/Economy	Timing	In-house vs. Out-of-House*	Revisability
Printed and Bound • Glossy • 4-Color	High	High	Only large quantities are economical	Extended	Mostly out-of-house	None: must redo entire production process
Printed and Bound • 2-color	Medium	Medium to High	Economical, but increases with quantity	Reasonable	Both	None: must redo entire production process
Printed • 1-Color	Medium to Low	Medium to Low	Economical, but increases with quantity	Reasonable	Both	None: must redo entire production process
Xeroxed • Wiro bound • Black/White pages • Color Cover	Low	Low to Medium	Economical; run what you need	Very Fast	Mostly in-house	Change as needed and make more
Xeroxed • 3-ring binder • Black/White pages • Color Cover	Low	Low	Economical; run what you need	Very Fast	Mostly in-house	Change as needed and make more

* For the purposes of this chart, this assumes that you have no graphics or production expertise “in-house.”


Tip #17:
OUTLINE OF A “PROJECT BRIEF”

Most designers and agencies will start the development process with a piece of paper that describes, in detail, what the project is about. This is referred to by many different names, but its purpose is always the same: to guarantee that both client and vendor are clear on what is needed for the project.

Typical Items Included in a Project Brief	
Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is being developed?
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is it being developed?
Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will this publication be used by the audience?
Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who needs to take action to achieve your outcome? • What are they like? • What are they accustomed to? • What action do you want them to take? • What might prevent them from taking action? • What information will motivate them to take action? • How will they use the plan in their actions? • How many do you need to produce (for print products) to reach your target audience? • How will the plan be distributed to your target audience?
Tone and Manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does the audience think about this topic/project?
Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What logos must be included? • Are there any organizational requirements that must be complied with (i.e. colors, fonts, images, etc.)?
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What pieces developed to date will be included in the written plan? • How much of this information will be included? • How should that information be organized?
Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How quickly can it be done? • What is the final anticipated due date?
Shelf Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is this a one-time product or a “living” document (e.g. a format that can be assessed and updated regularly)
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your budget? • What are your internal resources? • What resources can your partners/stakeholders provide? • Are there specific breakouts for printing vs. design or other requirements?

Tip #18:**DESKTOP PUBLISHING DOS AND DON'TS****USE STYLES**

Take the time to learn about creating “styles” in the word processing or graphics applications. By creating a style you identify the characteristics of a specific section of your words—a headline, for example—and then can apply it other headlines with just a point and click. Later, if you decide to change an attribute of the headline (say increasing the size from 12 point to 14 point) you make the change to your style and every headline changes automatically. This is a huge time-saver for long, multi-page documents!

HEADLINES AND SUBHEADS

Make a clear distinction between headlines and subheads. If the only difference between the head and subhead is size, then make sure they are significantly different sizes. You might want to italicize the subheads, or if you have a beneath the headline, remove the line from the subhead.

There should always be a little more space above a subhead than below it to ensure that the subhead is visually connected with the text it refers to. If the subhead is too far away, or if it is the same distance between the text above and below it, the subhead appears to be linked to a separate, unconnected element.

Don't feel like you have to center all your headlines or subheads. To the contrary, a more professional look can be achieved by making your headlines or subheads either flush right or flush left. It takes some getting used to, but it makes big difference.

avoid using ALL CAPS or underlines. These are hold-overs from the days of typewriters and are not necessary with the word processing software we use today. When words are set in all caps, we lose the recognition of the shape of the word and are forced to read the word letter by letter. Underlining is a poor choice because it also can obscure the letters in a word and make it more difficult to read. Always use italics rather than an underline. If that's not enough, use bold italics.

FONT SELECTION

Most people believe that a serif font (for example, Times) is easier to read than a sanserif font (for example, Arial). Chose a typeface for your heads and subheads that provides a strong contrast to your body text. This creates a contrast on the page that is not only visually attractive, but also strengthens the organizations and makes a clearer path for the reader to follow.

TYPE SIZE

Believe it or not, 12 point type is often just too big. This is particularly true when you are working with columns, tables, captions or when line lengths are short. Often the size of the type isn't the most important factor in readability. More important is how

the words and phrases stay together so that the eye can easily take them in. With 12 point type, the eye can actually work harder.

SPACING AND LINE LENGTH

Never hit the return or enter key twice between paragraphs or after headlines—it creates an awkward gap that is visually jarring to the reader. It also makes it possible to end up with a blank line at the top or bottom of a column. Learn the use of the “paragraph space after” and the “paragraph space before” – this way you can control exactly how much space is between paragraphs, between headlines and text and between subheads and text. It is also good for putting space into your bullet points and numbered lists.

The general rule of thumb is that you need either to create space between paragraphs OR indent the first line of the paragraph. Never do both. When indenting the first line, you do not need to indent a full 1/2 inch. Two spaces for an indent is exactly right.

If a line is too long, the eye has trouble finding the beginning of the next line. If it is too short, it breaks up the phrases the eye can recognize. A good rule is that your line length should not be longer than nine to ten words on a line or no more than 2.5 times the alphabet.

RESOURCES

The following are resources on designing for beginners:

- *The Non-Designer’s Design book: Design and typographic principles for the visual novice*, Robin Williams, 1994
- *The Mac is not a Typewriter* or *The PC is not a Typewriter*, Robin Williams, 1995 / 1996

Tip #19:**PRODUCTION PROCESS****FORMATTING THE PLAN FOR PRODUCTION**

This is tedious, detailed and labor-intensive work. It is likely that proofreading and approvals will be your responsibility during this process. While the designer may make slight adjustments or alterations to accommodate the final text, graphics and visuals, remember that this is not the time to reconsider the design or format that you have chosen. If you have a concern, by all means do address it with the designer, but recognize that purely stylistic changes at this point may delay the process.

PREPARING THE FILE

Once the entire document has been formatted, proofed and approved, the designer will prepare the file to be sent to a printer. At this stage the designer makes sure that the digital file they have prepared meets the requirements of the printer. They have to consider page sizes, binding methods, reproduction styles, image types and a million other details. During this “file preparation” process, you have no responsibilities—it is, after all, one of the reasons you hired a designer.

PRINTING THE PLAN

The final stage in the production process is the actual printing and binding. Even if your designer handles this for you, it is good to know how the process works and what to expect. See Appendix Printing a Strategic Plan for further information.

PHOTOCOPYING

If you have chosen a simple black and white publication, photocopying the document may be a good choice. In this case, the printing process will be fairly straight forward. You and the designer will work out the job specifications (two sided vs. one, how dividers are handled, hole punched or wiro bound, etc.). While there is little that can go wrong, always take the time to thoroughly examine the final printed piece before you leave the designer’s or printer’s office.

COPYING THROUGH DOCUTECH

You may have noticed that pages that come directly out of the laser printer in your office look, for the most part, far better than pages that have been copied. This is particularly true if you are using any photographs or artwork that uses tones of gray. At many printing shops, local copy centers and even state agency Communications departments, it is now possible to get this quality at close to photocopy prices. Rather than bringing in the final hard copy version, you bring in a digital file—your Word document, your designer’s file from their graphics application, or even a PDF. Check it out as an alternative to just copying—it will visibly improve the quality of your product.

PRINTING BY PRESS

If the strategic plan will be printed, the process is more complicated. To get the digital file into a form that can be used by a printing press requires some additional computer gymnastics.

PRINTERS VS. DESIGNERS

There is a natural tension that exists between printers and designers. This can be a good thing for your final product, but it can make for some uncomfortable meetings. Neither profession truly understands the other, but each knows enough about the other to get the job done. Designers criticize printers for not appreciating the aesthetic of their work. Printers criticize designers for not understanding the physical limitations of their machines. There will be occasions when designers conceive something that cannot be done (or cannot be done cost effectively). If this situation arises, meet face to face with all parties. Treat the interaction like any problem-solving scenario. The final decision is up to you—so ask questions and force them to give opinions.

First the digital file will go into the printer’s “pre press” department. They’ll check out the file, make sure everything they need is there, and make sure they see no problems with how the piece will work on the press. They will also take the file apart and put it back together in the way that it will run on the printing press (this is called “imposition”). Because they do a lot to the file, they will print out a “proof” to make certain that all the pieces are present and everything is correct. Even if your final piece is going to be in color, this proof will be entirely black and white as it is only to make sure that all the pieces are present. You or your designer will be asked to “sign-off” on the proof, indicating your approval.

Assuming all goes well, they then prepare the physical “plates” that are used on the printing press (some presses don’t use plates any longer, but frequently the process is similar). Each color to be printed on the press requires a different plate. For this reason, the file is again disassembled and reconstructed (this is called creating “separations”). Again, they will generate a proof to ensure that everything is correct. It is likely that you will see both a black and white version and a color version. If you are producing a color piece, it is important to note that the color you see at this stage is only an approximation of the final product. It is created in a very different way than the final piece, and will naturally look different. Again, you or your designer will be asked to “sign-off” on the proof. While it is possible to correct typos or smaller errors from your original file, know that you are essentially starting the process over and will pay for it.

Finally, your piece goes on the press. The printer may ask you or the designer to attend the “press check.” At a press check, they literally “stop the presses” and let you take a look at the piece for one final approval. This is very important when producing four color pieces because it is the first time you see the actual colors. For one or two color pieces it is less important. Color adjustments are the ONLY changes that are made at this stage. If you were, for example, to catch a typo while your piece was on press there is nothing you can do about it. Making a change like that would require a repetition of the entire process – this, while the press (which is what costs all the money) stands by idly. For all intents and purposes, once the piece is on the press it is as good as done.

Once the publication is printed, be sure to check the printer’s work. Dig into the box and pull out booklets from the middle and bottom, as well as the top. Spot check a few pages throughout the piece. Flip quickly through the pages to get a sense of how the copying looks. Compare any special images, charts or graphs to the original. If something strikes you as being “off”, bring it to their attention immediately.

**Tip #20:****PRODUCTION COSTS AND ESTIMATES**

When working with designers or communications firms to design and produce a publication, you are likely to encounter pricing via billable hourly rates. In some cases, you will be presented with a lump sum estimate—which is just the sum total. This can be a good or bad thing. In the concept design process a lump sum bill can work to your advantage—designers rarely charge for all the time they put into researching, thinking, sketching, etc. But for the actual formatting of the report, where you are looking at probably a week’s worth of work, you may want to understand the hourly billing rate in more detail. Don’t hesitate to ask for a break down—you will need it for comparison purposes.

DESIGN ESTIMATE

The most important thing to consider when reviewing a designer’s estimate is how accurately it reflects the scope of the project:

- Have you asked for (and have they included) production time to complete all pages of your report?
- How many rounds of revisions are included in the estimate?
- What happens if you don’t like their initial design concepts?
- Does the estimate include their time for managing the print production process?
- How are overages handled?
- Is the hourly billing rate the same for every task? Is proofreading the same as formatting? Should it be?

It is extremely hard to accurately estimate a job without knowing how the process will work—particularly when it comes to the actual formatting of the report. Recognize up front that the process could take several twists and turns that will affect the designer’s time and prepare for this contingency. Ideally, the designer will be more concerned with this than you are. They may propose giving you weekly recaps of hours to make sure that both of you are aware of the time/expense involved.

PRINTING ESTIMATE

Your printing estimate will be based on a number of factors—these are critical pieces of information that you must provide up-front to the printer to “spec” your job. These factors include:

- Quantity
- Paper stock and weight
- Number of colors to be printed
- Coatings
- Binding method
- Time available (i.e. how quickly you need it)

Printers make money from running their presses. Their process is designed to ensure that once that press is running, nothing stops it from being productive. As long as this is the case, printers are very good at staying on estimate.

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