

Healthy Start Cohort Artifact

Fall 2023 Sustainability Cohort



INTRODUCTION

The Healthy Start TA & Support Center (TASC) hosted its inaugural Sustainability Cohort from November 2023 through February 2024. Cohorts provide a space and place for Healthy Start (HS) grantees to come together to learn about what others are doing, document promising practices, and co-create tools and resources for the broader community around a specific topic (e.g., Evaluation, Fatherhood, Breastfeeding).

COHORT OBJECTIVE

The Sustainability Cohort focused on the following objective:

Identify evidence-based approaches and strategies HS projects can use as a guide to develop and implement a sustainability plan and to establish strong internal systems that support the sustainability of activities.

COHORT DELIVERABLE

Throughout the cohort, members participated in discussions and activities that were connected to the objectives. For example, during the second cohort meeting, members shared the successes they have had related to sustainability within their projects, the barriers they faced, and how they overcame them. They also discussed innovative strategies and approaches for sustainability. During the third cohort meeting, members discussed ways that HS projects can establish strong internal systems that support sustainability. Summaries of these discussions can be found on the following pages.

Thank you to the 10 cohort members for their work and commitment to creating a space where they could document promising practices and share their experiences with other HS staff members. A full list of the cohort participants can be found on page 4. We encourage all readers to share this information with their fellow HS staff and any others who contribute to the sustainability of HS projects.

Sustainability Cohort Discussion Summary

Below is a summary of the cohort members' discussions around their sustainability successes, challenges, and barriers; innovative strategies for developing and implementing a sustainability plan; and building internal systems of support for sustainability.

SUSTAINABILITY SUCCESSES

▪ **Indiana Rural Health Association:**

- *Partnered with hospitals serving the community and those who seek grant funding to expand their services to address maternal and infant mortality.*
- *Developed a robust translation service for Haitian migrants, which has improved the services provided to this population.*

BARRIERS TO SUSTAINABILITY

▪ **Florida Department of Health:**

- *Staff recruitment and retention is challenging due to competitive private sector salaries. This can be addressed by reclassifying position titles and increasing salaries.*

▪ **Children's Service Society of Wisconsin:**

- *It is challenging being a new HS grantee that is still in the process of developing a robust sustainability plan. You must be intentional about attending sustainability trainings and participating in discussions (e.g., cohorts) with other grantees to position your project for a successful sustainability plan moving forward.*

DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

▪ **Meet with community partners and determine services they can provide to HS clients to assist with sustainability.**

- *Meet with new potential partners for other services that can be outsourced.*
- *Show partners the benefits of HS to the community at large and how it ties into the services they provide.*

▪ **Apply for supplemental funding opportunities to support additional services.**

▪ **Identify gaps in your project's sustainability plan and develop solutions to address them.**

▪ **Keep HS clients and community partners informed of changes within the program.**

▪ **Develop a solid transition plan for the ending of a funding cycle, ensure documentation systems are updated, and provide training if needed.**

▪ **Develop a resource guide and establish referral networks for your project staff to connect clients to services in the community.**

ESTABLISHING STRONG INTERNAL SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT SUSTAINABILITY

▪ **Establish strong relationships with community partners (e.g., hospitals, churches, clinics) and develop a referral system with them.**

▪ **Develop strong evaluation teams in order to strengthen data systems and tracking of activities.**

▪ **Be innovative and think outside the box. Think about ways that you can enhance and strengthen your organization's internal systems for sustainability.**

Fall 2023 Sustainability Cohort Participant List



| Name | Title | Site | State | Site Type | Services |
|--------------------|------------------------|---|------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| Adrian Lawson | Program Manager | Florida Department of Health | Florida | Urban | Clinic-, community-, and home-based |
| Angela Ramos | Program Manager | Newark Community Health Centers, Inc. | New Jersey | Urban | Clinic- and community-based |
| Arthur Howell | Program Manager | Florida Department of Health | Florida | Urban, Rural | Clinic-, community-, and home-based |
| Cynthia Williams | Program Manager | University of Illinois | Illinois | Urban | Community- and home-based |
| Hope Tackett | QA/QI Program Director | REACH UP, Inc. | Florida | Urban | Clinic-, community-, and home-based |
| Joanh Wischmeier | Program Director | Indiana Rural Health Association | Indiana | Rural | Clinic- and home-based |
| Sabrina Nelson | Data Coordinator | University of Illinois | Illinois | Urban | Community- and home-based |
| Sarah McCashland | Program Coordinator | Centerstone of Indiana, Inc. | Indiana | Rural | Community-based |
| Shay Jacobs | CAN Coordinator | Colorado Nonprofit Development Center | Colorado | Urban | Community-based |
| Sheena Sladewalker | Program Manager | Children's Service Society of Wisconsin | Wisconsin | Urban | Community-based |