

Community Consortium Kick-Off Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Transition from Community Action Network (CAN) to the Community Consortium

Q: Can the existing “Community Action Network (CAN)” be used as the Consortium? If so, how do we transition the CAN to the Consortium?

A: The name of the “Community Action Network (CAN)” was changed to the “Community Consortium” to reflect the Healthy Start legislation and our emphasis on SDOH this grant cycle. Grant recipients may use an existing CAN as the Community Consortium, however, you must ensure that your consortium members are representative of your current project area and that the consortium meets all of the requirements listed in the FY 2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity. Please refer to your Project Officer on specific steps to take.

Consortium Staff/Membership Requirements

Q: Does the requirement that 25% of Community Consortium members must be HS participants apply to former Health Start participants?

A: Yes. Page 16 of the NOFO states: “post-award, it is expected that a minimum of 25 percent of Community Consortium members are enrolled or formally enrolled HS participants and women of reproductive age, mothers, fathers, or partners, and other people with lived experience living in the project area.”

Q: The NOFO states that “As a best practice, the Community Consortium chair or co-chair should preferably be a current or former HS participant”. Can this apply to a HS staff member who currently works on the project?

A: Yes, this can include a current Healthy Start staff member if they were a past program participant. Please discuss specific situations with your Project Officer.

Community of Practice (COP)

Q: What defines a “Community of Practice”?

A: HRSA defines Community of Practice as “a group of people who share a common concern, a set of problems, or an interest in a topic and who come together to fulfill both individual and group goals by sharing expertise, ideas, strategies, and best practices”.

For the purposes of the FY 24 Healthy Start cohort, page 18 of the NOFO states “HS Community Consortium Coordinators are expected to participate in the Community of Practices and other technical assistance opportunities. These activities may focus on peer support across HS projects, sharing of best practices in partnership engagement, plan implementation, and creation of new knowledge. The

Community Consortium Coordinator may invite community partners to engage in select Community of Practice activities.”. Additional information will be provided when the COP is finalized.

Community Consortium Plan Examples

Q: Is it possible to view previously completed Community Consortium plans to use as a reference?

A: Please refer to the Community Consortium Planning Tool located on the TASC website.

Community Consortium Plan (Community Needs Assessment/ SDOH)

Q: Can we utilize a community needs assessment conducted by our local department of health or do we have to complete our own?

A: Yes, you can use an existing community needs assessment as long as it encompasses an analysis of your current project period. Please refer to page 24 of the NOFO - “If using a community needs assessment and environmental scan that was already conducted, describe the approach and how it identified and prioritized the root causes of disparities in the proposed project area.”

Q: How should we approach selecting a SDOH to address in the Community Consortium Plan?

A: Selecting your SDOH should be a collective effort of your community consortium with input from your community members utilizing data collected through your community needs assessment and relevant data points.

Q: Who is the intended audience for the Community Consortium Plan?

A: The intended audience is your Healthy Start Project and Consortium.

Community Consortium Plan Performance Measures

Q: Is demonstration of consistent promotion/education/advocacy activities enough to meet HRSA's expectations for addressing SDOH, or do we need to demonstrate systems change during the grant cycle? For example, if our goal was to increase green spaces within our community, how do we create performance measures that align with that goal?

A: Systems change does take time and can be challenging. Yet, it can be done. We have a HS/ Catalyst for IHE grantee that has created greenspace in their community. With the right partners, it is very doable! HRSA expects that you will set realistic performance measures to help you assess change as the consortium plan is implemented. You should structure your plan to meet incremental steps toward your goal.

Q: Do the performance measures included in our consortium plan need to be percentages, or can they be numbers?

A: Yes, the performance measures must be in the form of percentages. Please see examples included on page 17 of the NOFO.

Q: Where can I find examples of performance measures?



A: Several examples of performance measures are included within the FY 2024 NOFO. They include: "increase access to nutritious foods by ensuring X percent of eligible residents of the project area are enrolled in WIC; increase access to prenatal care by coordinating X group prenatal care offerings within less than a X minute walk from public transportation; and, increase access to employment opportunities for participants by increasing the completion rate of job training programs in the project area by X percent."

Community Consortium Plan Timeline

Q: When is the Community Consortium Plan due?

A: Your draft plan should be submitted via the Electronic Handbooks (EHB) System for review no later than Nov. 27, 2024. You will receive feedback from your project officer by Dec. 20. Your finalized Consortium Plan should be submitted via EHB by Feb. 2, 2024.

Q: Is the plan for the 5-year grant cycle or will there be one plan expected per year?

A: The Community Consortium Plan is for the 5-year grant cycle (2024 – 2029). The plan can be modified if needed in collaboration with your Project Officer, Consortium and technical assistance from the TA and Support Center.

TA and Support/ Resources

Q: Will the TA and Support Center provide HS sites with a list of things to consider in the development of each component of the Community Action Plan?

A: Yes, resources can be accessed here: <https://healthystart-tasc.org/community-consortium-planning-overview-support-materials/>