

Community Needs Assessment Checklist¹

In Step 1 of SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF), prevention professionals gather and assess data from a variety of sources to ensure that substance misuse prevention efforts are appropriate and targeted to the needs of communities. Data help to inform the identification and prioritization of substance misuse problems and clarify those problems' impact on communities and vulnerable populations. Additional checklists will be used to assess the readiness and resources needed to protect against those problems and their consequences.

OUR AGENCY HAS...	QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER
<input type="checkbox"/> IDENTIFIED RELEVANT DATA SOURCES TO USE IN NEEDS ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What community-level data sources exist? • How accessible are these data sources? • What state-level data sources exist? • How accessible are these data sources? • What resources are available through your coalition? • What levels of demographic data are included in identified data sources? • To what variables (consumption, intervening, or consequence) do our data sources relate? • What data collection efforts related to prevention already happen in the community?
<input type="checkbox"/> DETERMINED PROBLEM IMPACT BY ANALYZING RELEVANT DATA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the community's most pressing problems and related behaviors? • How often are the problems occurring? What are the associated issues? • Where are they occurring? Do sub-populations exhibit different substance use patterns? • Which populations experience the problems the most? Are sub-populations experiencing different problems or consequences? • Are there particular places, times, or sub-populations that seem to be "driving the data"? • Are there specific outcomes that stand out?
DATA MAY REVEAL THE COMMUNITY HAS MULTIPLE AREAS OF NEED CONTRIBUTING TO SUBSTANCE MISUSE. IN SETTING PREVENTION PRIORITIES, OUR AGENCY HAS CONSIDERED... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> MAGNITUDE (M) <input type="checkbox"/> IMPACT (I) <input type="checkbox"/> CHANGEABILITY (C) <input type="checkbox"/> A SPECIFIC SUB-POPULATION(S) <input type="checkbox"/> TIME LAPSE BETWEEN (TL) CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOR AND OCCURRENCE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many people are affected by the problem? (M) • Does the problem affect the community across multiple dimensions (i.e., community health, the economy, criminal activity)? (I) • To what degree can the problem be changed? (C) • Has the problem been successfully changed in the past? (C) • Are any evidence-based interventions available to address the problem? (C) • Would directing prevention efforts at a specific sub-population maximize effects? (S) • What is the time lapse between the problem and related consequences (i.e., heroin overdose versus long-term alcohol use)? (TL)

¹ Content within checklist adapted from Strategic Prevention Framework content on the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's website, <http://www.samhsa.gov/capt/applying-strategic-prevention-framework>



☐ **ASSESSED RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS**

- What factors increase the likelihood of the problem occurring?
- What factors decrease the likelihood of the problem occurring?
- What variable risk factors (those that change over time) are associated with the problem?
 - [Learn more about risk and protective factors.](#)

For more information and resources, please visit <http://www.samhsa.gov/capt/applying-strategic-prevention-framework>