

Early Head Start Community Assessment

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The Mission

- ▶ Head Start's mission is to serve the greatest number of eligible families and those who are in greatest need of its services.
- ▶ The Community Needs Assessment provides a way to ensure that this mission is achieved.



Federal Regulation 1305.3 of Head Start Performance Standards

"Each Early Head Start grantee and Head Start grantee must identify its proposed service area in its Head Start grant application and define it by county or sub-county area, such as a municipality, town or census tract or a federally-recognized Indian reservation."



In order to determine its service area, the Head Start Program Performance Standards require that grantees conduct a Community Needs Assessment every three years and review every year.

- As populations change, Head Start’s mission remains the same, but programs must take steps to always reach out and provide services to new populations and un-served neighborhoods.



What is Community Assessment (CA)?

The collection and analysis of information about a community that an organization intends to serve, including:

- Demographic Make-Up of Head Start eligible children and families
 - Estimated number, geographic location, racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic characteristics of families
- Other child development and child care programs that are serving Head Start eligible children and the approximate number of children being served by each



What is Community Assessment (CA)? (Continued)

- Estimated number of children under 3 years with disabilities
 - Types of disabilities
 - Services available in the community to address these disabilities
- Data re: education, health, nutrition and social services needs of HS eligible children and families
- How HS eligible families and community institutions define their education, health, nutrition and social service needs



What is Community Assessment (CA)? (Continued)

- Availability and accessibility of **Community Resources** to address these needs
 - Schools, Health and Social Service organizations
 - Educational and Vocational resources that address parents' needs
 - Housing
 - Transportation



Why Do A Community Assessment?

A well done Community Assessment is critical to:

- ▶ Make informed decisions about service area plans and service delivery
- ▶ Develop strategic plans for the agency
- ▶ Respond to new Federal regulations or initiatives
- ▶ Mobilize community resources and partnerships
- ▶ Reach out to additional funders
- ▶ Identify new or underserved populations in the service area and assess their needs and available community resources



Why Do A Community Assessment? (Continued)

Information gathered from the Community Assessment is used to:

1. Help determine grantee's philosophy and long and short-range program objectives.
2. Determine the types of services most needed and the program option(s) that will be implemented.
3. Determine the recruitment area to be served (may or may not include entire service area).



Why Do A Community Assessment? (Continued)

4. If there are delegate agencies, how the recruitment area will be divided by grantee and delegate agencies.
5. Determine appropriate locations for centers and areas to be served by home-based or family child care programs.
6. Set criteria that define types of children and families (e.g. teen parents).



Why Do A Community Assessment? (Continued)

- ▶ To inform decisions regarding development of the 20% match required for federal funding:
 - Maximizing community partnerships and the possibilities for in-kind services
 - Applying to other funders



Why Do A Community Assessment? (Continued)

8. To reassess whether the program model and services address the needs of the current population – have there been changes since the original community assessment?
 - Immigration trends?
 - Priority populations include:
 - Children who are not exposed to English at home
 - Parents who need help adapting to the U.S.
 - Refugee families suffering from post-traumatic stress



Why Do A Community Assessment? (Continued)

- 9. To educate the staff and others about the community they are serving:
 - The characteristics and needs of the families and children
 - The resources available to the families

- 10. To ensure that the program is culturally sensitive.
 - Are staff familiar with the cultures of the families they serve and can they communicate with the families and children?



Why Do A Community Assessment? (Continued)

- Are classrooms equipped to reflect the cultures of the families served?
- Do the meals served include food from the families' cultures?
- Is the child's home language supported?



Who Does a Community Assessment?

Each Head Start grantee is required to conduct a Community Assessment. For grantees with delegate agencies, the CA is a two-tiered process. The grantee determines the overall process, and each delegate participates in the process.

For example, if you work for a delegate, your program may be responsible for answering certain questions based on information about your enrolled children and families and about the local community, including population shifts. You then provide this information to the grantee to use in its final CA report. The grantee and its delegate agencies must agree on the tasks and the timeline related to the CA.



How is a Community Assessment Done?

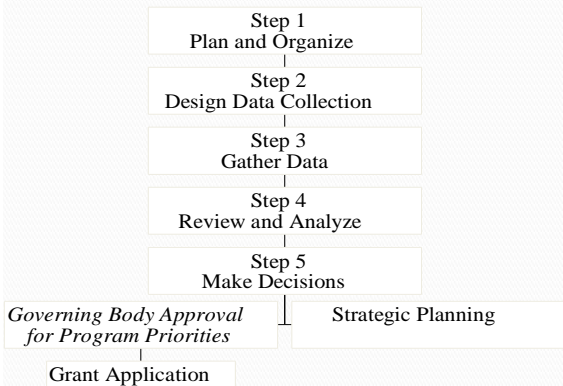
- ▶ Review HS Program Performance Standards that pertain to Community Assessments
- ▶ Review grant application process, including requirements and timelines

- Step 1: Plan and Organize
- Step 2: Design Data Collection
- Step 3: Gather Data
- Step 4: Review and Analyze
- Step 5: Make Decisions

(for more information: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/> and search *Community Assessment Toolkit*)



Community Needs Assessment



Step 1: Plan and Organize

- ▶ Establish Community Assessment Team and know what its responsibilities are
- ▶ Know what to include in the Assessment
- ▶ Target the Service Area in CA
- ▶ Develop a time line

Laying a solid foundation for the CA process. Step 1 will launch you into Step 2 where you design the data collection methods.



Step 2 – Design Data Collection

You need to develop a plan for data collection. There are many decisions that are made during this design process, and some of them will probably change as the CA gets underway. Some of the issues that you need to consider:

- what is data
- what kinds of data are needed for the CA
- collecting internal and external sources of data
- developing questions to ask
- quantitative and qualitative data
- visual presentation of the data

Step 3 – Gather Data

Data Sources

- ▶ Data-bases (census, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's *Summary of Vital Statistics*)
- ▶ <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/vs/2007sum.pdf>

Citizens' Committee for Children: *Keeping Track of NYC's Children*
<http://www.cccnewyork.org/aboutkt.html>

- ▶ Interviews of community leaders, service providers and families
- ▶ Surveys and Focus Groups
Consider the influence of cultural on interview and focus group responses.

Step 4 – Review and Analyze

The focus here is on “what to do” with the data once you have collected it. It is about making sense out of all the information that you have gathered from the internal and external data sources.

- ▶ Data Analysis:
 - Quantitative: Numbers, percentages, averages
 - Qualitative: Summarizing, narratives
 - Estimating: Putting the information you have obtained from different sources together to make a quantitative estimate

Step 5 – Make Decisions

Now you are ready to pull together the information you have collected and analyzed and turn it into recommendations. You can now walk through the process of organizing and writing the CA Report/Summary.

Focus on:

- ▶ program decisions that are based on the CA data
- ▶ making recommendations
- ▶ establishing priorities
- ▶ use trend data
- ▶ prepare the CA Report



Community Assessment – what you now know

The Head Start Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations (45 CFR 1305.3 (d)) state that the information gathered in the Community Assessment (CA) must guide decisions based on the status of eligible families and the community setting(s) within the service area. Specifically, they state that:



Community Assessment – what you now know (continued)

The Early Head Start and Head Start grantee and delegate agency must use information from the Community Assessment to:

1. Help determine the grantee's philosophy, and its long-range and short-range program objectives;
2. Determine the type of component services that are most needed and the program option or options that will be implemented;
3. Determine the recruitment area that will be served by the grantee, if limitations in the amount of resources make it impossible to serve the entire service area.



Community Assessment – what you now know (continued)

- 4. If there are delegate agencies, determine the recruitment area that will be served by the grantee and the recruitment area that will be served by each delegate agency.
- 5. Determine appropriate locations for centers and the areas to be served by home based programs;
- 6. Set criteria that define the types of children and families who will be given priority for recruitment and selection

Program Services and Options

Head Start programs can offer a number of different options, including center-based, home-based, combination, and locally designed options. The program option(s) chosen must be based on the needs of children, families, and the community as identified in your CA.

As your program reviews program options, you need to consider:

- ▶ what families say they want or need
- ▶ availability of child care programs in your service area and the number of Head Start children who use them
- ▶ estimates of population growth for Head Start eligible children 0–5 years

Summary

As stated in the Head Start Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations (Management Systems and Procedures (45 CFR 1304.51 (a) (1) (i-iii)) and Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment and Attendance (45 CFR 1305.3)) grantees must prepare a comprehensive Community Assessment every three years and include a summary in their first year grant application. Problems or issues with the CA may delay processing of the grant application. In the intervening two years, grantees are required to review their Community Assessment Report and if necessary, update the information and reconsider the decisions.

References

For more information:

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/> and
search *Community Assessment Toolkit*

“Unequal from the Start”

<http://www.nyzerotothree.org/>
and search for report



Questions and Answers

Please type your questions into the question box of the webinar and we will do our best to answer them.

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