

EXAMPLE: CREATING ACTION STEPS FOR YOUR ACTION PLAN

An action step from an action plan to prevent adolescent pregnancy follows (from the Work Group on Community Health and Development's *Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect: An Action Planning Guide for Building a Caring Community*).

Community Initiative: Parent-to-Parent Initiative Date: 2/14/99

Action step or change to be accomplished: Recognizing and honoring parents and guardians who contribute to the initiative.

What actions or changes will occur: Parents and guardians who contribute (e.g., by helping lead parenting workshops) will be presented with some small token of appreciation (e.g., a gift certificate). Those who contribute significantly over a longer period will be publicly recognized at a community party with a certificate of appreciation and another, larger token of appreciation (e.g., a book or a free family dinner donated by local businesses). The recognition efforts should continue for the duration of the initiative.

Who will carry it out: The finance or business committee will solicit donations to give to the parents. The sub-committee that works on presenting the workshops should appoint someone to be in charge of making appreciation certificates and coming up with a way to present them at the end of the workshop. If a community celebration is called for, a sub-committee will likely be needed.

By when (for how long): Recognition should be a part of honoring contributors for the entire length of the initiative.

What resources are needed: Donations will have to be solicited from area businesses so that you'll have items to give to parents and guardians who contribute. The cost of the certificates should be minimal.

Communication (who should know what): We should contact the finances committee about who we should (and should not) approach for donations.

ACTION STEP (WHAT WILL BE DONE)	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE (BY WHOM)	DATE COMPLETED (BY WHEN)	RESOURCES REQUIRED (AT WHAT COSTS)	COMMUNICATION/ COLLABORATORS (WHO ELSE SHOULD KNOW)

ACTION PLAN

1. Convene a planning group made up of individuals from the community affected by the problem or issue and others who are in a position to address it. Identify additional partners and invite them into your strategic planning process.
2. Describe the vision for the community or initiative (their dreams for how things should be).
3. State the mission (the what and why).
4. State the objectives (how much of what the group hopes to accomplish by when).
5. Identify the strategies (how things will be accomplished).

Community Action Plan Development

A **Community Action Plan** is a living document, usually time based, that enables a community to structure its activities around a common purpose and to prioritize needs.

What is policy change?

Laws, regulations, rules, protocols, and procedures, designed to guide or influence behavior. Policies can be either legislative or organizational in nature. Policies often mandate environmental changes and increase the likelihood that they will become institutionalized or sustainable. Examples of legislative policies include taxes on tobacco products, provision of county or city public land for green spaces or farmers' markets, regulations governing the National School Lunch Program, and clean indoor air laws. Examples of organizational policies include schools requiring healthy food options for all students, a district ban on the sale of less than healthy foods throughout the school day, menu labeling in restaurants, required quality assurance protocols or practices (e.g., clinical care processes), or a human resources policy that requires healthy foods to be served at meetings.

What is a system change?

Change that impacts all elements, including social norms of an organization, institution, or system; may include a policy or environmental change strategy. Policies are often the driving force behind systems change. Examples are implementing the National School Lunch Program across the state school system or ensuring a hospital system goes tobacco free.

What is environmental change?

Physical, social, or economic factors designed to influence people's practices and behaviors. Examples of alterations or changes to the environment include:

- **Physical:** Structural changes or the presence of programs or services, including the presence of healthy food choices in restaurants or cafeterias, improvements in the built environment to promote walking (e.g., walking paths), the availability of smoking cessation services to patients or workers, and the presence of comprehensive school health education curricula in schools.
- **Social:** A positive change in attitudes or behavior about policies that promote health or an increase in supportive attitudes regarding a health practice, including an increase in favorable attitudes of community decision makers about the importance of nonsmoking policies or an increase in nonacceptance of exposure to second-hand smoke from the general public.
- **Economic:** The presence of financial disincentives or incentives to encourage a desired behavior, including charging higher prices for tobacco products to decrease their use or the provision of nonsmoker health insurance discounts.

7. Identify action steps for **one key community/system change** in the action plan (who is going to do what by when). Describe:
- a. What specific change (e.g., in program or policy) or aspect of the intervention that will occur?

 - b. Who will carry it out?

 - c. When the intervention will be completed or for how long it will be maintained?

 - d. Resources (money and staff) needed/available?

 - e. Communication - who should know what about this?

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8. Evaluate critically the appropriateness of the action plan (i.e., the activities or community/system changes to be implemented). Use the criteria that follow:

- a. Completeness - Are all the intended activities or community/system changes included in your plan?

Are a wide variety of strategies and sectors utilized?

- b. Clarity - Is it apparent what will be done and who will do what by when, to bring about change?

- c. Sufficiency - If all that is proposed were accomplished, would it meet the group's mission and objectives?

If not, what additional changes need to be planned and implemented?

- d. Resources (money/staff) needed/available?

*ArCOP can provide seed funding to assist this Action Plan.

- e. Currency - Does the action plan reflect the current work and situation?

- f. Flexibility - As the plan unfolds, is it flexible enough to respond to new opportunities, barriers, and changes in the community? Can it be modified as objectives are accomplished or goals adjusted?

Follow-Up with other Growing Healthy Community members when you get home!

9. Indicate how you will use the strategic and action plans. Consider the following potential uses:

- a. Communicate the initiative's purpose to others.
 - i. Indicate who should know about the group's vision, mission, objectives, strategic and action plans.
 - ii. Describe how the initiative will communicate this new framing of what it does and why.
- b. Check the organization's core functions.
 - i. Indicate who should know about the group's vision, mission, objectives, and the core functions of the organization represented (e.g., advocacy, training).
 - ii. What adjustments might be appropriate to the vision, mission, and action plan?
- c. Find common ground and anticipate potential conflict.
 - i. Identify potential disagreements about ends and means that the group is facing.
 - ii. Indicate how you might use this new framing of the problem or goal to build consensus.
- d. Plan how to detect or discern opportunity
 - i. Identify the criteria that will be used to judge an "opportunity". These might include qualities such as:
 - ii. Consistency with the vision
 - iii. Consistency with the mission
 - iv. Contributes to the action plan
 - v. In light of the vision, mission, and action plan, pinpoint new or emerging opportunities for the community initiative or organization.

What steps will you take to better detect or discern new or emerging opportunities?

- e. Identify potential partners
 - i. Indicate who is out there who can help the group achieve its vision and mission. List organizations that share this common work.
 - ii. In light of the vision, mission, and action plan, identify some potential partners that the community initiative or organization should collaborate with.

Who or what organizations in your community would be good partners, based on your vision and mission?

10. Begin implementing action planning steps. Choose the order by considering:

- a. Which changes need to be completed before others can? Some changes may require other changes and relationships to be established.
- b. Which changes are easier or quicker to bring about? Could completing them give the organization's membership a sense of success and provide the organization with much needed media exposure?
- c. Which changes are the most important or key to the initiative's objectives?
- d. Which changes would inspire and encourage participants and build credibility within the community?

Using the list from Step 6, prioritize implementation considering the previous considerations (e.g., ease or quickness of accomplishing, importance to meeting objectives, etc.)

11. Review the action plan at regular intervals. As your coalition grows and the objectives are accomplished or conditions change, members may revise the plan.

Example 1: Health for All Coalition: Increasing Access and Decreasing Disparities in Health

DESCRIBE THE COMMUNITY'S VISION

"Health for all", "Justice and Health for All People", "Equal Opportunity for Health"

STATE THE MISSION

"To reduce disparities in health outcomes through community education, enhanced health services, and advocacy."

OR

"To promote health for all people through collaborative planning, community action, and health and systems change."

STATE THE OBJECTIVES

- By 2005, increase by 50% the percentage of children, by two years of age, that are appropriately immunized.
- By 2006, increase by 30% the percentage of HIV-infected persons identified through enhanced outreach strategies in the community.
- By 2006, increase by 60% the percentage of women, age 50+ years, that have had a mammogram in the past two years.
- By 2008, increase by 50% the percentage of people with diabetes who have had a foot examination in the past year.
- By 2008, reduce by 30% the percentage of adults and youth that smoke cigarettes or use tobacco-related products.
- By 2010, increase by 40% the percentage of local residents who have a specific source of ongoing health care.

IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES OF THE GROUP

- Use social marketing and media advocacy to promote public awareness of the disparities in health outcomes and to help establish health equality as a major priority.
- Build a community coalition that involves all relevant sectors of the community in promoting health for all.
- Enhance peer support and grassroots involvement in promoting community health.
- Promote coordination and integration of existing services and resources for promoting health.
- Advocate for changes in programs, policies, and practices to improve access to and eliminate disparities in health and health care.

PROVIDE AN ACTION PLAN (EXAMPLE FOR ONE COMMUNITY CHANGE IN THE HEALTH ORGANIZATION SECTOR)

Identify core components and elements of action plan (selecting specific community and system changes to be sought):

- **Core crosscutting categorically-specific**
- **Components Elements**
- Providing Information and Enhancing Skills

Outline action steps for EACH Community Change to be sought: E.G. By 2002, the local community health clinic will provide childcare for its clients by establishing a child care center at the clinic during clinic hours. Actions to be completed:

By January 2001, a clinic subcommittee will be established to create a child care facility at the clinic.

- By whom? Clinic director, clinic patrons, residents
- By when? January 2001
- Resources and support needed/available? Information about the number of children to be served, survey about service barriers completed and available.
- Potential barriers/resistance? None anticipated
- Communications? All community service agencies, residents, and clinic patrons should be informed.

By March 2001, a space will be identified for the child care facility and cost estimates to convert it to a child safe and welcoming environment will be completed.

- By whom? Clinic subcommittee with staff support
- By when? March 2001
- Resources and support needed/available? Financial officer's cost projections are needed, including projected staffing and building rehabilitation costs.
- Potential barriers/resistance? If cost perceived to be too high, the financial officer may resist
- Communications? Clinic staff and patrons, residents.

By May 2001, all necessary regulatory permits will be obtained and staffing plans will be developed.

- By whom? Staff, contractor, clinic patrons
- By when? May 2001
- Resources and support needed/available? Contractor, possibly additional staff
- Potential barriers/resistance? City staff may resist providing permit because it may appear to intensify the use of the site.
- Communications? Clinic staff and patrons, residents.

By July 2001, space modifications will be completed and available for staffing and use.

- By whom? Contractor, clinic director and patrons.
- By when? July 2001
- Resources and support needed/available? Redeployment of staff time to provide childcare.
- Potential barriers/resistance? Staff may resist if child care is not seen as a function of their job.
- Communications? Clinic staff and patrons, residents, all community services agencies.

Example 2: Safe Streets Coalition: Preventing Neighborhood Violence and Increasing Safety

DESCRIBE THE COMMUNITY'S VISION

"Safe streets", "Violence-free neighborhoods", "People caring about one another"

STATE THE MISSION- EXAMPLES INCLUDE

- "To reduce the number of violent incidents in the community, especially involving firearms and other weapons, through a major emphasis on prevention."
- "To develop a safe and healthy neighborhood through collaborative planning, community action, and policy advocacy."
- "To reduce violence and promote safety through a comprehensive and coordinated approach to prevention."
- "To serve as a catalyst for bringing peace to our neighborhoods."

STATE THE OBJECTIVES-EXAMPLES

- By 2005, the incidence of reported violent acts in our community will be reduced by 35%.
- By 2005, the incidence of homicides among 15-24 year-olds in our community will be reduced by 40%.
- By 2006, the incidence of reported child abuse and neglect in our community will be reduced by 35%.
- By 2007, the incidence of nonfatal assaultive violence (i.e., assault with or without a weapon, rape, robbery) in our community will be reduced by 30%.

IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES OF THE GROUP

- Use the media to promote public awareness of the impact of violence on neighborhood safety and help establish prevention as a major community focus.
- Build a successful community coalition that involves all relevant sectors of the community to address violence in the community.
- Enhance grassroots involvement in prevention efforts.
- Promote coordination and integration of existing services and resources for preventing violence.
- Advocate for changes in programs and policies related to violence and its prevention.

PROVIDE AN ACTION PLAN (EXAMPLE FOR ONE SYSTEMS CHANGE IN THE SCHOOL SECTOR)

Community Change to be sought: By 2002, the local school district will provide skill training in conflict resolution for neighborhood youth, ages 6-18.

Actions to be completed:

By September 2001, a newly established public schools subcommittee will collect information on the incidence of assaultive violence in and around the school system.

- By whom? Staff, committee members
- By when? September 2001
- Resources and support needed/available? Committee members and others who wish to facilitate program development (school superintendent, teachers, parents and students)
- Potential barriers/resistance? School system may not have incidence information or may not want it published if they do have it.
- Communications? City council, general public

By October 2001, the public schools subcommittee will meet with school officials to present a summary of the information collected and propose the establishment of a conflict resolution skills training program.

- By whom? Staff, committee members
- By when? October 2001
- Resources and support needed/available? Committee members, parents and students
- Potential barriers/resistance? None anticipated
- Communications? City council, general public

By November 2001, the subcommittee will negotiate commitment for a specific skills training program

- By whom? Staff, committee member
- By when? November 2001
- Resources and support needed/available? Committee members and others involved in program development, additional funding may be needed
- Potential barriers/resistance? School systems employees may feel they have too much to do already, school officials may feel financial cost of program is taking away from already strained resources
- Communications? City council, general public

By February 2002, the school system will implement the skills training program, and periodically report the levels of violence in the school system

- By whom? Staff, committee members
- By when? February 2002
- Resources and support needed/available? Committee members, those implementing the training program, parents and youth
- Potential barriers/resistance?
- Communications? City council, general public