

STEP 2: CONDUCTING THE ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Environmental Scan Overview

The environmental scan should identify the systems, programs, and services that existed prior to beginning your new initiative not those that you intend to add as part of your comprehensive plan. The environmental scanning process is similar to the needs assessment process. CMT's should focus on describing the available resources at the state and within the three communities that address the shared indicators for the specified population. After gathering data for the needs assessment, the environmental scan should be conducted to determine the types of resources that are currently addressing the need. State and Community

Community Management Teams should conduct the following activities to complete the environmental scan:

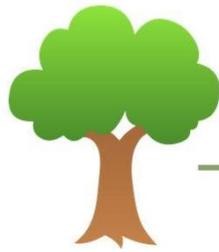
1. Document existing resources, services and systems;
2. Describe how existing resources and services align with the enhanced National CLAS standards ;
3. Describe funding streams supporting the existing resources;
4. Identify existing policies and procedures;
5. Identify technology resources; and
6. Describe systems change and integration activities.

Using multiple methods of scanning the environment will help get a true picture of the availability of existing resources to address the needs. Do not rely on just one method for conducting the environmental scan. It is important to get a complete picture from many sources and viewpoints. There are several basic environmental scan techniques. A combination of the following methods may be helpful:

- ✓ Direct observation
- ✓ Questionnaires
- ✓ Consultation with persons in key positions, and/or with specific knowledge
- ✓ Review of relevant policies
- ✓ Interviews
- ✓ Focus groups

Documenting Existing Resources, Services, and Systems

The first step of the environmental scan is to document the current resources, services, and systems (infrastructure) that address the indicators. This step should include documenting existing partnerships, work groups, and task forces devoted to addressing the issues. For example, if the shared indicator addresses early childhood development, list the resources that support early childhood development, e.g, Head Start or the program "Parents as Teachers". When listing the resource, also state the focus or intended purpose of the resource. As an example, the early Head Start program provides social skills development that helps young children be ready to learn at school. Document who is responsible for providing the resource, i.e., the early Head Start program is operated by the YMCA. Describing the Existing Funding Streams



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In addition to mapping out the systems and programs in place, the environmental scan also should include a description of the various funding streams that support programs and services implemented to address needs highlighted by the indicators. For example, if one of the local education agencies received \$50,000 from a local community foundation to support programs related to the same shared indicator, that funding amount should also be noted in the environmental scan. If feasible, it may be helpful to draw from prior or ongoing financial analyses that have been conducted at district or community level. You may also consider including in-kind resources such as community space provided by a partner for program service delivery or social work interns from local colleges and communities that provide counseling services in exchange for practicum hours.

Identifying Existing Policies

The environmental scan process can also be used by grantees to assess their existing policies and procedures by describing any policies implemented by the existing resource, service, or system in place to address a shared indicator. As an example, for Element 1 you could list policies in place related to screening and school readiness that the Early Head Start program follows. Or, if the shared indicator is under Element 5 (Creating Safe and Violence Free Schools) and the service offered is School Resource Officers, indicate how local law enforcement agencies require annual training for SRO's to ensure best practices in school discipline are used in schools at all time. This process will help to identify any gaps in strategies and policies and eventually develop an approach (or revise an existing one) through the comprehensive planning process.

Identifying Technology Resources The environmental scan must also identify the technology resources currently used to address the shared indicators within existing programs and systems. List databases and electronic records that are shared by required state and community level partners from various child and family serving agencies. Technology resources may be as innovative such as a web-based bullying reporting system for schools that is shared with local law enforcement agencies. The resource could also be as simple as a text messaging campaign that offers positive parenting tips to parents of young children. Make sure that the identified technology resource is relevant to the shared indicator, population of focus, and existing resource or service.

Describing Systems Change and Integration Activities

The last step in the environmental scan process is to document the current systems change and integration activities related to the indicators and the resources or existing service. Include examples of collaborations and activities with organizations that address the indicators from different vantage points. An example could be the development of a shared funding stream between the state education agency and the state mental health agency to provide school-based mental health services in all middle schools.

Guidance- *For further guidance refer to the sample NH SS/HS 2014 Needs Assessment*

Adapted from Safe Schools / Healthy Students Needs Assessment & Environmental Scan Guidance - SAMHSA 2013

