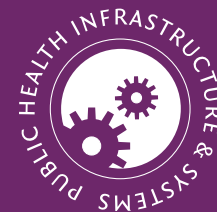


Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships: A Community-Based Health Improvement Framework for Health Directors



What is MAPP?

MAPP stands for Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships. It is a community-wide strategic planning process for improving public health, as well as an action-oriented process to help communities prioritize public health issues, identify resources for addressing them, and take action. MAPP is an evidence-based approach to improving public health practice.

The three significant theoretical components that underlie the foundation of the MAPP process are strategic planning, collaboration, and quality improvement. The MAPP process combines these components into a comprehensive framework for public health performance improvement.

- MAPP is based on strategic planning concepts. At its simplest, strategic planning is “a systematic and more or less formalized effort to establish basic company purposes, objectives, policies, and strategies and to develop detailed plans to implement policies and strategies to achieve objectives and basic company purposes.”¹ MAPP reaches beyond the four walls of a single institution and helps entire communities to create a shared, long-term, data-driven strategic plan.
- While traditional approaches to strategic planning are typically agency-focused, MAPP focuses on the public health system and developing collaborative inter-agency relationships. MAPP relies on participation from a wide range of individuals, groups, and constituencies in the community. In addition to the

local health department (LHD), many traditional and non-traditional partners, including hospitals, veterinarians, schools, faith-based organizations, and community members, drive the MAPP process.

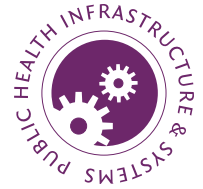
- MAPP provides an opportunity to develop a culture of continuous quality improvement (CQI). CQI is a structured process that involves participation from different parts of a system, focuses on the customer, or in terms of MAPP—the community, and is based on evaluation.² The iterative, data-driven nature of MAPP helps communities institutionalize CQI in their daily work.

The MAPP process has six phases. Communities begin by organizing, planning, and developing partnerships. Following this initial planning phase, community members develop a collective vision of their ideal community. With their vision as a guide, four complementary assessments are completed. The assessments reveal information about community strengths and challenges, local public health system capacity, local trends and forces, and community health status. The assessment phase provides a comprehensive picture of public health in a given locality. In subsequent phases, assessment data are used to identify strategic issues and formulate action steps that will help the community reach its vision.

The Local Public Health System Assessment, one of the four assessments in the MAPP process, is completed using the National Public Health Performance Standards Program (NPHPSP) local instrument. For more information on the NPHPSP, contact NACCHO (see page 2) or CDC at phpsp@cdc.gov, (800) 747-7649, or www.cdc.gov/od/ocphp/nphpsp/.

[FACT SHEET]

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Why Should My Community Engage in MAPP?

MAPP is an overarching framework for aligning the range of initiatives occurring in a community at any given time. LHDs often find themselves overcommitted and stretched for resources. While the MAPP process requires a time and resource commitment, it also presents an opportunity to systematically coordinate related initiatives. (Contact NACCHO's MAPP staff to learn more about how to integrate MAPP with other initiatives, including accreditation preparation.) Using MAPP as a framework for managing and executing multiple initiatives can help LHDs and entire communities more effectively employ resources. When faced with spending restrictions, communities that have engaged in MAPP are better prepared to make strategic decisions that minimize gaps and redundancies in service provision. Informed and coordinated budget cuts can also better position organizations to thrive when the economic climate improves. In sum, with its emphasis on collaboration, MAPP leads to a more coordinated and accountable local public health system where the LHD is not the only agency responsible for the health of the community.

Leadership is important for creating sustainable improvement. Serving as the initiating agency of an effective, community-wide health improvement process elevates the role of public health and the LHD within the community. The MAPP process allows the LHD and community residents to better understand each other's needs and goals. By engaging a broad cross-section of the community and building trusting relationships among local public health system partners and community residents,

MAPP creates a new pool of public health advocates. For LHDs with new local health officials (LHOs), MAPP presents the added benefits of solidifying new LHO leadership in the community and orienting the incoming LHO to the strengths and opportunities for improvement in their jurisdiction.



As a Local Health Official, What is My Role in the MAPP Process?

Active support from LHOs is instrumental to the success of the MAPP process. Depending on the size and staff capacity of an LHD, an LHO may play any range of roles in a MAPP process. However, regardless of the LHD's size or setting, LHOs must rally staff and partner organizations' leadership around the process. While LHOs may not be involved in MAPP processes on a daily basis, they should inform and energize their peers throughout the process. LHOs' support and involvement, particularly in the initial phases, demonstrate to partner organizations that MAPP is a valuable investment.

References

- 1 Steiner, G.A. (1979). *Strategic planning: What every manager must know*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.
- 2 Dever, A.E. (1997). *Improving outcomes in public health practice*. Gaithersburg, MD: Aspen Publishers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Heidi Deutsch, MA, MSDM
MAPP Program Manager

P (202) 507-4214
F (202) 783 1583

hdeutsch@naccho.org

www.naccho.org/mapp

**"A reputation for capability was created,
and reputation is priceless."**

— MAPP user, Columbus, NE

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NACCHO is the national organization representing local health departments. NACCHO supports efforts that protect and improve the health of all people and all communities by promoting national policy, developing resources and programs, seeking health equity, and supporting effective local public health practice and systems.

1100 17th St, NW, 2nd Floor Washington, DC 20036

P (202) 783 5550 F (202) 783 1583