

Community Health Assessments (CHA) and Community Health Improvement Planning (CHIP) for Accreditation Preparation

Introduction to Indicators

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Community Indicators

“Many of the strongest predictors of health and well-being fall outside of the health care sector. Social, economic, and environmental factors all influence health.”

“Community measures that include health can be used to set benchmark existing conditions, set performance targets, track and communicate progress toward achieving community outcomes, and increase accountability. Integrating diverse measures (e.g., health, transportation, economic, housing, public safety, education, land use, air quality) provides a more comprehensive assessment of community well-being.”

(Source: *National Prevention Strategy: America's Plan for Better Health and Wellness*, National Prevention, Health Promotion, and Public Health Council, June 16, 2011.)



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What Are Community Indicators?

According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO):

- Indicator: a quantitative measure that describes an economic, environmental, social or cultural condition over time.
- Indicator system: an organized effort to assemble and disseminate a group of indicators that together tell a story about the position and progress of a jurisdiction or jurisdictions.

(Source: Informing Our Nation: Improving How to Understand and Assess the USA's Position and Progress, GAO-05-1 (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 10, 2004).



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Structure of Community Indicator Projects

Domain/Theme/Goal

- Indicators
- Data



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Indicator Projects: Domain/Theme/Goal

Truckee Meadows Tomorrow Indicators Project

- Arts and Culture
- Civic Engagement
- Economic Wellbeing
- Education and Lifelong Learning
- Enrichment
- Health and Wellness
- Innovation
- Land Use and Infrastructure
- Natural Environment
- Public Wellbeing



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Indicator Projects: Domain/Theme/Goal

Adams County, IL. Community Wellness Indicators Project

- Residents live in a state of economic well-being
- Residents possess the skills to be successful in school and work
- The community infrastructure supports health and economic well-being
- Appropriate and affordable housing exists for all residents
- Residents have access to health and social services
- Individuals and families lead healthy lifestyles
- All residents live in a safe environment
- Residents are engaged civic participants



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Example of Indicators Under Specific Themes: Adams County, IL. Community Wellness Indicators Project

- Residents live in a state of economic well-being
 - Percentage of children living below the federal poverty level
 - Percentage of the total population living below the federal poverty level
 - Percentage of residents unemployed
 - Median household income
- Residents have access to health and social services
 - Percentage of children without health insurance
 - Percentage of adults without health insurance
 - Percentage of population who did not access health care services due to cost in the last year
 - Measure of access to mental health services



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Processes for Developing Domains/Themes/Goals

- Community Visioning
- Brainstorming
- Focus Groups (key informants, experts, stakeholders, community members)
- Surveys

Key question: What themes, issues or goals are most important for measuring the current and future conditions (e.g., quality of life, well-being) of our community?



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Processes for Developing Indicators

- Look at other indicator projects and identify and include relevant indicators
- Develop indicators based on experts' knowledge in selected domains/themes
- Form working groups by domain/theme
- Host community forums: discussions on indicators; multi-voting
- On-line voting



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Criteria for Selecting Indicators: Alexandria, VA Example

Meaningful, relevant, & actionable – The indicator is *meaningful* (it provides information valuable for community members to understand important aspects of their quality of life) and *useful* (it offers a sense of direction for additional research, planning and *action* toward positive community changes and a means of assessing progress).

Validity and accuracy – If the indicator trend line moves upward or downward, a diverse group of people in the community would agree on whether the quality of life or health of the community is improving or declining.

Stability, reliability, and timeliness – Data for the indicator can be collected, compiled, and calculated in the same way and in a timely manner.

Outcome-oriented – Where possible, the indicator measures the actual condition of the community's quality of life and health.

Representativeness – Taken together, the indicators measure the major elements of the Alexandria's quality of life vision.



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Key Factors for Developing Data Partnerships

- Start early
- Think broadly about who have data that may be useful
- Involve the data owners/providers
- Build relationships among the data owners/providers
- Develop data sharing agreements



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Key Issues to Address with Data Owners/Providers

- Definitions of data quality
- Definitions of data
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data collection and reporting
- Processes for data sharing
- Challenges to data sharing
- Barriers to data sharing



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Surveys: A Great Way to Leverage and Share Resources

- Develop an inventory of all surveys done
- Purpose and frequency of the surveys
- Who are surveyed
- Timing of surveys in relation to other communities' similar surveys
- Cost issues



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Key Attributes of Community Indicators

- Provide easy to understand information on community conditions
- Engage stakeholders
- Prompt discussion and debate
- Facilitate the building of coalitions
- Act as a catalyst for action
- Result in change



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Selected Practices for Engaging the Community

- Create Community Compacts
- Adopt an Indicator Program
- Identify Domain or Indicator Champions
- Develop and use a Blog
- Hold an Annual Elected Officials Summit
- Involve Citizens in Identifying and Evaluating Significant Problems
- Release Indicators Report at a State of the Community Event
- Send a Summary of the Indicator Report to Community Members
- Celebrate Successes



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Resources-Indicator Projects

- Community Indicators Consortium, www.communityindicators.net
- Alliance for Building Community (Adams County Community Wellness Report), www.allianceforbuildingcommunity.org
- Jacksonville Quality of Life, www.jcci.org
- National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership, www2.urban.org/nnip
- Truckee Meadows Tomorrow, www.truckeemeadowstomorrow.org
- State of the USA, www.stateoftheusa.org



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Resources-Reports

Key Indicator Systems: Experiences of Other National and Subnational Systems Offer Insights for the United States, (GAO-11-396, March 31, 2011), www.gao.gov

National Prevention Strategy: America's Plan for Better Health and Wellness, National Prevention, Health Promotion, and Public Health Council, June 16, 2011

