

Understanding and Planning for Sustainability

A Guide for Multi-Sector Community Partnerships Working to Address Social Determinants of Health



You'll find the answers to these questions and more inside.

Important note!

This document is a guide for completing a fillable Microsoft Word [sustainability planning template](#).

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I. Introduction

Mathematica created this Sustainability Planning Guide to support multi-sector community coalitions and partnerships addressing social determinants of health to advance health equity and prevent chronic disease as part of the [Improving Social Determinants of Health \(SDOH\)–Getting Further, Faster Initiative](#). This initiative is a partnership between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), and Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO). To promote collaboration and share learnings, NACCHO and ASTHO made this guide and companion fillable planning template available for use by any community coalition or partnership addressing SDOH. Although examples in this guide reflect the SDOH areas addressed by funded coalitions and partnerships—the built environment, food security, community-clinical linkages, social connectedness, and tobacco-free policies—the approaches and strategies are applicable to other SDOH areas.

Feedback from NACCHO, ASTHO, and the CDC informed and improved this guide and template. We are also grateful to Access Health Stark County, Community Connections, Food as Medicine Collaborative, Live Well Allegheny REACH, Maryland Living Well Center of Excellence, Proviso Partners for Health, and West Louisville Outdoor Recreation Initiative for contributing their insights to support development.

This guide can be used on its own or in conjunction with the [Policy Planning Guide](#) for SDOH teams looking to achieve their policy goals. We hope it will help you develop a culture of learning that supports your SDOH goals and advances health equity.

This guide walks users through a step-by-step process beginning with a broad view of the dimensions of sustainability for community multi-sector coalitions and partnerships addressing social determinants of health (SDOH). The focus narrows as the guide walks coalitions and partnerships through determining priorities for what to address and setting goals based on those priorities. Using the tables, exhibits, and tips in this guide, you will create targeted action plans for achieving your sustainability goals. Figure I.1 depicts this approach. Figure I.2 represents the structure of this guide. As coalitions and partnerships work through the guide's contents, they will proceed from a general understanding to the development of specific action plans to achieve their specific sustainability goals.

Figure I.1. Approach to sustainability planning



Figure I.2. Components of this sustainability planning guide



A. How the sustainability planning guide works

The components of this planning guide mirror the steps in the sustainability planning process, as described in Figure I.2.

B. How should we use this document?

Your coalition or partnership can choose how to use this guide. We share some tips below. Embedded hyperlinks throughout the document will help you jump back and forth to easily reference definitions, tables, and resources.



Tips. Using this Guide

- Many parts of this guide are clickable, Look for hyperlinks to get around more easily.
- Some of you will complete it as a group, some as individuals who then come back together, some will delegate to a small team.
- There is no wrong way to use this guide but see **Supplement B** if you want to get some ideas for creative collaboration.
- Sustainability is a fluid, long-term goal; we recommend revisiting this material on a regular cadence (such as quarterly) that works for your team.
- This guide has two companions. The first is a Word document that contains its [fillable tables](#).
- The second companion is [Addressing Social Determinants of Health Through Policy: A Planning Guide for Multi-Sector Community Partnerships](#). As a result, policy is not addressed here because they are addressed more fully in that companion.

II. Sustainability Overview

A. What is sustainability for your coalition or partnership?

Sustainability is an expansive topic that can mean different things in different contexts. It means continued operations, but it also includes effectiveness and the ability of the coalition or partnership to evolve, improve, and influence the broader system in which it participates. It also includes the requirements for these things, such as effective internal practices and external communication.

Planning for your coalition’s or partnership’s sustainability requires you to focus specifically on the aspect(s) of sustainability that are most important for your long-term success.

Exhibit II.1 introduces seven specific sustainability domains, describes what the domains are, and explains why they are important. The prioritization worksheet that follows specifies the elements of each domain and will help you identify the aspects of sustainability that will be the most beneficial focus for your coalition or partnership.

Note, the prioritization worksheet does not cover the policy domain; see the companion volume [Addressing Social Determinants of Health through Policy: A Planning Guide for Multi-Sector Community Partnerships](#) for next steps on this domain.

These domains are a synthesis of tested resources specifically targeted to community coalitions and partnerships working to address SDOH. See [Supplement A](#) for the list of resources.





Exhibit II.1. The domains of sustainability

Sustainability domain	What is it?	Why is it important?
 <p>Community and organizational partnerships</p>	Developing and maintaining relationships with community members, partner organizations, external leaders, and internal leaders at your organization(s)	Community multi-sector partnerships addressing SDOH exist to support and serve your community, but you cannot do this alone. Understanding, incorporating, and ultimately empowering community voices in all your activities helps ensure your coalition is meeting community needs. In addition, partners and leaders connect you to resources and expertise, assist with the provision of services, and can advocate on behalf of your cause.
 <p>Funding</p>	Establishing a sufficient, consistent, and flexible financial base to support your coalition or partnership to achieve its goals	Funding keeps the lights on and your coalition or partnership running. Flexible funding from multiple sources allows you to provide consistent, quality services and to achieve your goals even in a changing environment. Relying on a single source makes your coalition or partnership vulnerable in the event of funding cuts and may limit your scale.
 <p>Governance</p>	Creating and maintaining a shared leadership structure with clear roles and responsibilities and defined processes	Working across organizations and partners is hard. Successful cross-sector collaboration must acknowledge power dynamics among partners and with the community. Good governance ensures trust, accountability, fairness, transparency, and alignment across all partners in the coalition. Sharing power with the community uplifts the voice of those with lived experience and helps drive change that addresses root causes.

Funding

Refer to [Supplement C](#) and [Supplement D](#) for more information and planning guidance regarding funding.

Exhibit II.1. The domains of sustainability (continued)

Sustainability domain	What is it?	Why is it important?
 Staffing	Ensuring sufficient staffing and resources to carry out the work of your coalition	Your coalition or partnership needs people to deliver your services. Sustaining your coalition means ensuring your staffing model supports the demand for your services. Staff must have not only the time but also the skills to do their jobs. Maintaining staff also means supporting them, their well-being, and their professional growth.
 Ongoing assessment and continuous quality improvement	Using data in all forms to understand and improve your activities and operations	Multi-sector community partnerships working to improve SDOH frequently operate in environments of dynamic complexity and limited resources. You are required to make choices, adapt, and improve over time to achieve long-term impact. Using data in all forms to meet these requirements will make your coalition or partnership more responsive to your community and more sustainable over time.
 Strategic communications	Thoughtful, values-centered, goal-oriented sharing of data, information, and stories within the coalition or partnership and with the community and external partners in ways that advance your goals	Multi-sector community partnerships working to improve SDOH face internal communication challenges because of the diversity of people and organizations they contain. At the same time, you face external communication challenges because of the imperative to engage and empower community members. Communications that are goal-oriented, audience-specific, derive from the coalition’s or partnership’s core values, and include the voices of individuals with relevant lived experience are necessary for overcoming those challenges so that organizations can operate effectively and generate impact.
 Policy	Laws, regulations, procedures, administrative actions, incentives, and voluntary practices of government and other institutions, or activities by individuals or groups that aim to influence a particular cause	Policies guide how individuals and groups act and interact with one another and influence the context in which programs operate. Your coalition has policies that govern the work you do, while you are also interacting with external policies such as those at the local, state, and national level. Effective policy development and implementation sustain multi-sector coalitions and partnerships addressing SDOH by creating the conditions for your work to flourish and amplifying your impact through system-level change.

Strategic Communications

Refer to [Supplement E](#) for more information about creating effective communications products that support sustainability.



Resource: See the [Addressing Social Determinants of Health through Policy: A Planning Guide for Multi-Sector Community Partnerships](#) for next steps on the policy domain.

III. Sustainability Prioritization Worksheet

A. Purpose

The sustainability prioritization worksheet is a tool to help your coalition or partnership understand the key elements that make up each of the dimensions of sustainability defined in [Section II](#) and identify where to focus your energy first. This worksheet is meant to be a starting place for discussion and brainstorming.



Resource: See [Addressing Social Determinants of Health through Policy: A Planning Guide for Multi-Sector Community Partnerships for a prioritization worksheet for the policy domain.](#)

These elements described in the prioritization worksheet are a synthesis of tested resources specifically targeted to community coalitions and partnerships. See [Supplement A](#) for the list of resources.

B. How to complete the prioritization worksheet

The prioritization worksheet is a table that is organized by domains. Each domain is broken down further into elements. For each element, coalitions or partnerships will respond to three questions, which will help identify your priorities. Below are steps to complete the prioritization worksheet:

- Read the element.
- First, consider whether the element is a top priority that you need to improve. If so, put a check mark in the box in the second column of the worksheet. If not, move on to the next element.

- Next, if you determined this element is a top priority, consider whether you need improvement plans or better improvement plans for this element. If you do, put a check mark in the box in the third column of the worksheet.
- Then, in the fourth column, put a check mark in the box if you have selected the first two boxes.
- Repeat this process for each element.
- At the end of each domain, you will see space to add your own elements. This is space to add anything that is important to your coalition's or partnership's sustainability that is missing.

C. Considerations

1. Collaborating to complete this worksheet

For most users, completing this worksheet will be a group effort. Refer to [Supplement B](#) for ideas on how to collaborate effectively, creatively, and inclusively.

2. Identifying top priorities

In Section III, you'll be asked to reflect on your top priorities to set goals. Members of your coalition or partnership should work together to decide which high-priority items you need to improve and identify those items for which you do not yet have a good plan. Sustainability elements for which you check both boxes in the prioritization worksheet may be a good starting place for identifying your priorities.

Note: If you find you checked both boxes for more than two to four of a sustainability domain's elements, go back and be more selective. Pay attention to the words "top" and "better" in the table; they are subjective, but you should interpret them in such a way that only the truly "top" priorities that need "better" plans end up with two checks.

3. Reflecting and reassessing

Sustainability prioritization and planning is a long and evolving journey. Completing this worksheet is just the first step in prioritizing sustainability elements to focus on. When you move into action planning in the next section, your priorities may change again. You can repeat this exercise in the future as you continue to reassess your priorities and update plans to reflect your progress and address changing circumstances



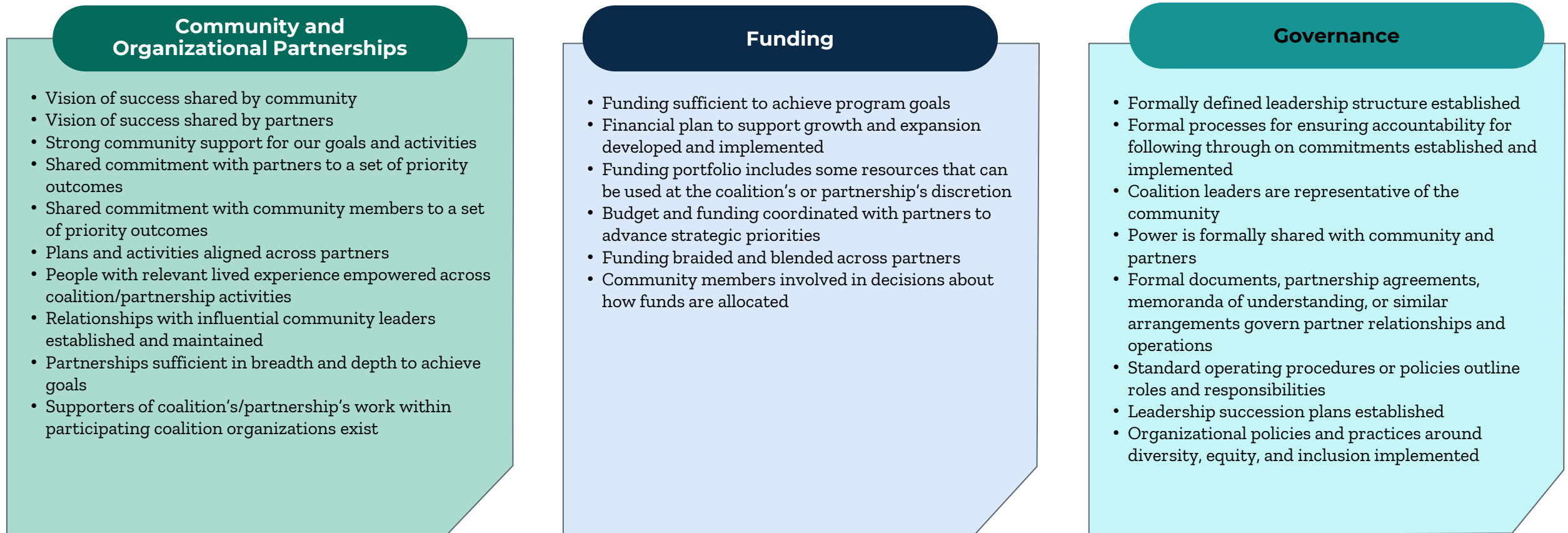
Tip. How do I know if an element is a "top" priority?

There is no easy answer to this question. A good place to start is by referring to the goals and outcomes of your logic model. If you can draw a clear connection between a sustainability element and those outcomes, that is a good indicator of a top priority. If you do not have a logic model or theory of change, developing one may be a good place to start your sustainability planning. [The University of Kansas Community Tool Box](#) can help you develop them. Other criteria you might consider are listed below. Whatever criteria you use, it is important to rely on the collective wisdom of your team. (See [Supplement B](#) for ideas on how to do this.)

- **Feasibility.** Are you able to do something about it now?
- **Cost.** Are resources available to address this element?
- **Availability of solutions.** Is there a clear path forward?
- **Expertise.** Do you have staff or partners with the expertise to make progress?

NACCHO'S [Guide to Prioritization Techniques](#) offers other considerations that coalitions and partnerships may find useful.

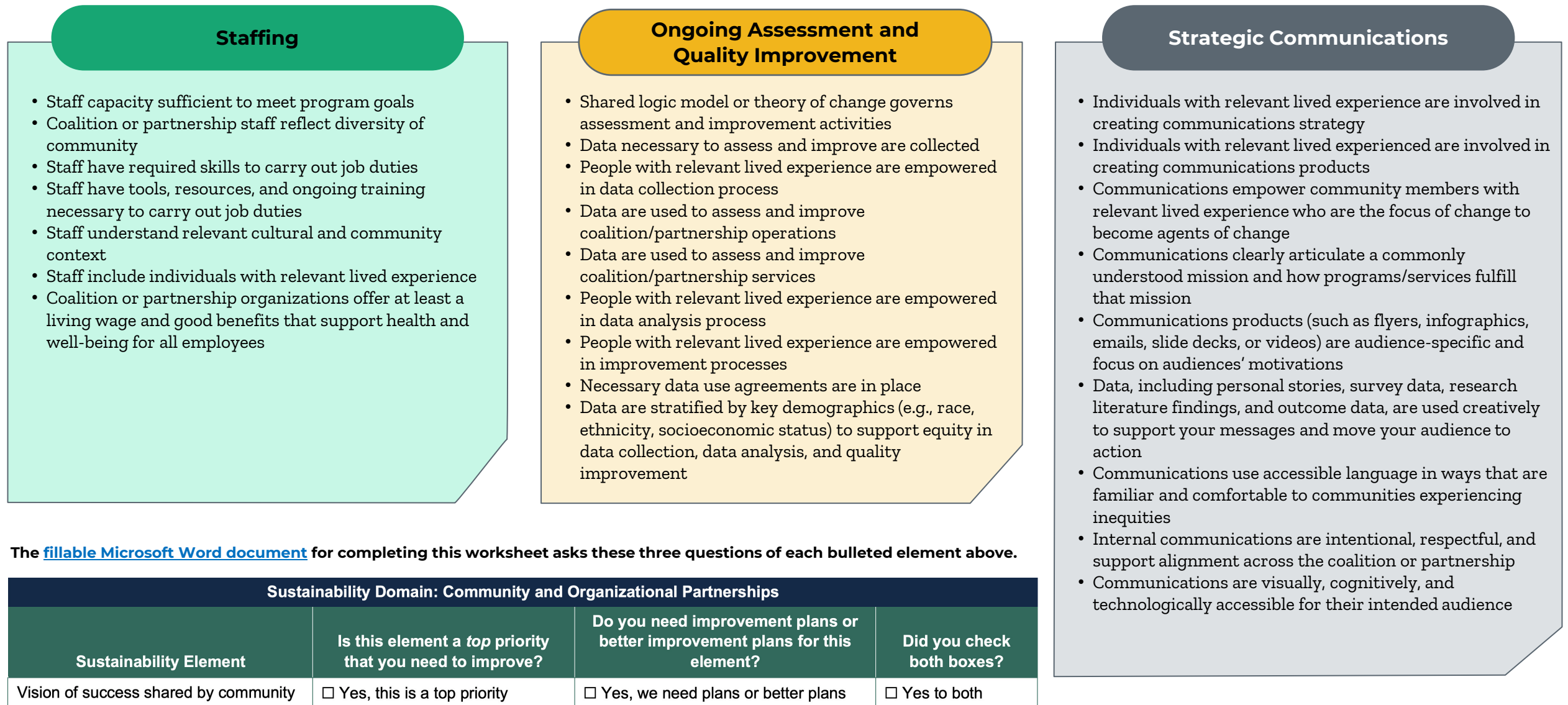
Figure III.1. Prioritization worksheet elements by domain



The [fillable Microsoft Word document](#) for completing this worksheet asks these three questions of each bulleted element above.

Sustainability Domain: Community and Organizational Partnerships			
Sustainability Element	Is this element a <i>top</i> priority that you need to improve?	Do you need improvement plans or better improvement plans for this element?	Did you check both boxes?
Vision of success shared by community	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, this is a top priority	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, we need plans or better plans	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes to both

Figure III.1. Prioritization worksheet elements by domain (continued)



IV. Sustainability Action Planning Tables

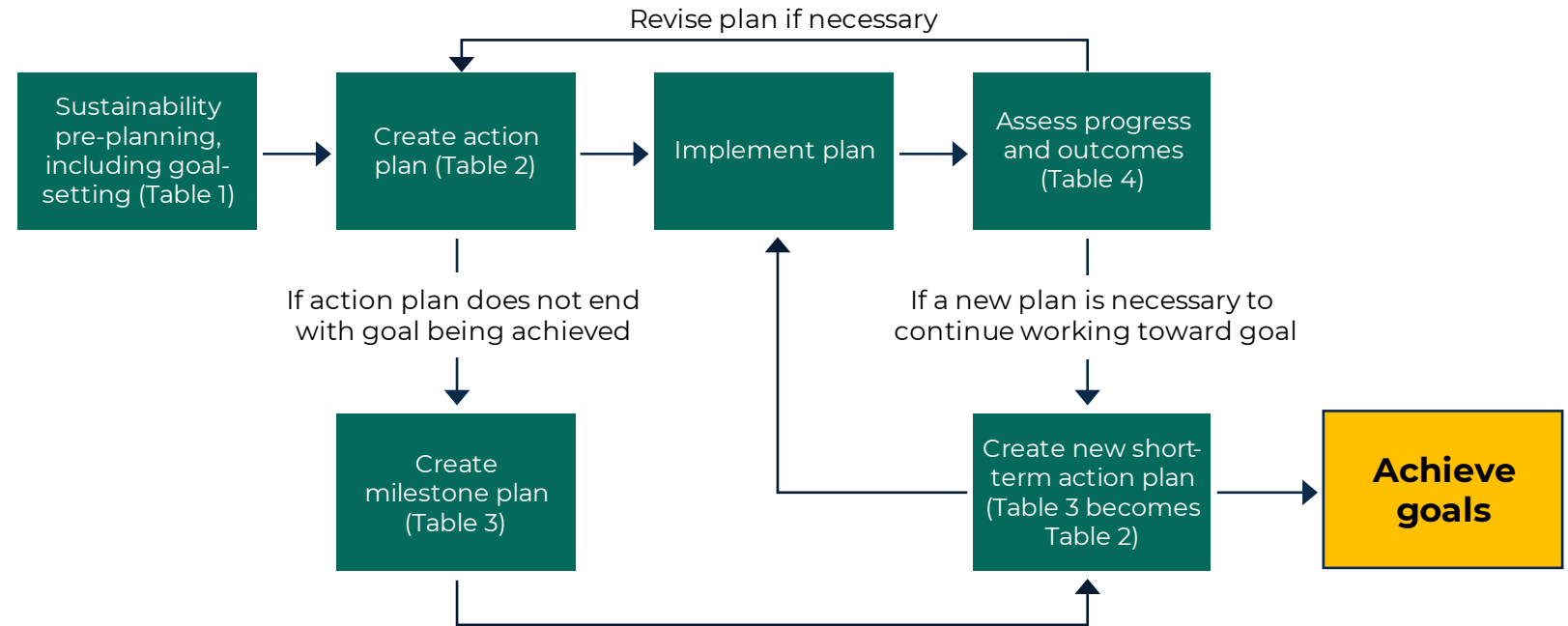
A. Purpose

In the prioritization worksheet, you identified the most important elements of sustainability for which your coalition or partnership needs to develop improvement plans. The purpose of Section IV is to help you develop those plans through a step-by-step process.

This process is shown in Figure IV.1. It begins with pre-planning, which includes selecting a priority element, brainstorming and setting sustainability goals, and defining considerations for sustainability planning (Table 1). For each top-priority goal, you will develop an action plan (Table 2) containing the steps necessary to achieve your sustainability goal that are clear and knowable at the time the plan is made. If the action plan in Table 2 does not end with achieving your sustainability goal, you will also develop long-term sustainability milestones (Table 3). As you implement your short-term action plan, your milestones will become more detailed and evolve into a new short-term plan. Working toward sustainability is a fluid process. It is important to assess your progress at regular intervals and adjust as necessary (Table 4).

We first show and describe each table, providing some tips along the way. Then we show two examples of completed tables and additional explanations and tips.

Figure IV.1 Sustainability planning process



Resource: A great comprehensive resource to support your sustainability action planning is *The University of Kansas Community Tool Box*, especially this chapter on ***“Planning for Sustainability.”***

B. How to complete the action planning tables

1. Completing the sustainability pre-planning table

The sustainability pre-planning table includes a series of questions that ask you to select a priority sustainability element, brainstorm and set sustainability goals, and define important considerations for sustainability planning. Below are the steps to complete Table 1:

- The first step in pre-planning is deciding which sustainability elements to focus on for Steps 1 and 2. You will likely have quite a few to choose from, even after completing the prioritization worksheet. Lean on the collective insight of your team. Consult **Supplement B** for ideas on how to elicit and use that insight.
- Next, in Step 3 think through what you need to achieve to make progress towards the element(s) you selected. Articulate your rationale for why you need to do the things you have defined. At this stage, refer back to your logic model or theory of change to answer how achieving step 3 will help you achieve your desired outcome. If you cannot articulate a connection to your desired outcome, revise step 3.
- Then, you will move into goal setting. In Step 5, define your goal using the VERB → OUTCOME → TIMEFRAME structure. In Step 6, outline how you know you have achieved that goal by documenting the measures you will monitor to determine your progress.
- Finally, in Step 7, document how you will include individuals with relevant lived experience in the planning, processes, and activities necessary to achieve your desired outcome.


You can repeat this process of selecting a priority sustainability element, developing a sustainability goal focused on that element, and developing a sustainability plan to achieve that goal on an iterative basis over time.

Table 1. Sustainability Pre-Planning

Step	Sustainability Pre-Planning Worksheet
SDOH our coalition addresses:	
1	Copy an especially important sustainability element from the prioritization worksheet in the space below. Priority sustainability element:
2	If there are other important sustainability elements you need to address to improve the element specified in #1, list them in this row. Additional relevant sustainability elements:
3	What, specifically, do you need to achieve to make progress on the sustainability element(s) above? We need to:
4	What is your rationale for #3? Why is it important? Refer back to your logic model or theory of change—how will achieving #3 help you achieve your desired outcomes? If you cannot articulate a connection to your desired outcomes, revise #3. Rationale for #3:
5	Put these together and write down your sustainability goal in one sentence using a VERB → OUTCOME → TIMEFRAME structure: Do [THIS] to achieve [THAT] by [WHEN]. Sustainability goal:
6	How will you know when you've achieved your sustainability goal? By what standards will you measure success? How and when will you monitor your progress? Measurements:
7	How will you include individuals with relevant lived experience in the planning, processes, and activities necessary to achieve the sustainability outcome described above? Inclusion plan:

See an example of [Table 1 filled out](#).

Step 3
Step 3 is where you pivot from prioritizing general sustainability elements to goal setting that is specific to your coalition or partnership. This pivot is one of the hardest steps. Try to generate a lot of ideas for what you might need to achieve before deciding. If you have a lot of ideas to choose from, you are more likely to happen on a good one. Refer to [Supplement B](#), especially the brainstorming techniques and Problem Tree Analysis.



Resource: If you do not have a logic model or theory of change, consider making the development of one an early sustainability goal. [The University of Kansas Community Tool Box](#) can help.

This table draws from the SMARTIE Goals Worksheet created by the Management Center, a nonprofit resource on effective management for social change organizations: [SMARTIE Goals Worksheet - The Management Center](#).



Tip. Key questions to help you narrow down sustainability elements of focus:

1. Did you have any “aha!” moments when completing the prioritization worksheet? Were any elements framed in a way that was particularly compelling?
2. How difficult will it be to address the element? How much impact will it have on your coalition’s or partnership’s goal? The Importance/Difficulty Matrix exercise in **Supplement B** can help you think about the two factors systematically.
3. What does your team find particularly exciting and inspiring right now? How can you leverage that energy?
4. How can you engage your community to help make these decisions?

Table 1. Sustainability Pre-Planning (continued)

Step	Sustainability Pre-Planning Worksheet
SDOH our coalition addresses:	
1	Copy an especially important sustainability element from the prioritization worksheet in the space below.
	Priority sustainability element:
2	If there are other important sustainability elements you need to address to improve the element specified in #1, list them in this row.
	Additional relevant sustainability elements:
3	What, specifically, do you need to achieve to make progress on the sustainability element(s) above?
	We need to:
4	What is your rationale for #3? Why is it important? Refer back to your logic model or theory of change—how will achieving #3 help you achieve your desired outcomes? If you cannot articulate a connection to your desired outcomes, revise #3.
	Rationale for #3:
5	Put these together and write down your sustainability goal in one sentence using a VERB → OUTCOME → TIMEFRAME structure: Do [THIS] to achieve [THAT] by [WHEN].
	Sustainability goal:
6	How will you know when you’ve achieved your sustainability goal? By what standards will you measure success? How and when will you monitor your progress?
	Measurements:
7	How will you include individuals with relevant lived experience in the planning, processes, and activities necessary to achieve the sustainability outcome described above?
	Inclusion plan:

Step 4
Step 4 is a “reality check” on the goal you are developing. Your sustainability goals should support the outcomes you are trying to achieve. It may take a lot of steps to connect the sustainability goal you are developing to the outcomes you are trying to achieve—that’s fine! But if you cannot make the connection, it is a sign that the sustainability goal in progress isn’t quite right. The examples below will make this clearer.

Step 5
Step 5 is your sustainability goal. It will carry through the rest of sustainability planning.



Resource: If you do not have a logic model or theory of change, consider making the development of one an early sustainability goal. [The University of Kansas Community Tool Box](#) can help.

This table draws from the SMARTIE Goals Worksheet created by the Management Center, a nonprofit resource on effective management for social change organizations: [SMARTIE Goals Worksheet - The Management Center](#).

2. Completing the sustainability action plan table

Now that you have set a sustainability goal in row 5 of Table 1, you can begin planning for how to achieve it. Depending on the sustainability goal you select, it may not be feasible to develop a detailed, step-by-step plan right now that gets you all the way to the end. If it is not yet clear exactly how to achieve your goal, it may actually be counterproductive to do so. This is especially true when the goal is ambitious and the environment and context of your coalition or partnership is fluid and dynamic, as most are.

Table 2 therefore focuses on actionable planning when the next steps are knowable and clear. Often this means only planning for the short-term in Table 2, but you should lay out the specific action steps in Table 2 for as far into the future as they are known, then complete Table 3 if Table 2 does not end with reaching your sustainability goal.


Below are the steps to complete Table 2:

- Start by pasting the goal your first goal from step 5 of Table 1 into the first row of Table 2.
- Then use the second row to define the individual(s) who are responsible for overseeing the implementation of the overall plan.
- In the third and fourth rows, document relevant assets and any anticipated barriers.
- Then document a cadence for reassessing and revising this plan you are developing.
- Finally, in the bottom half of the table, you will document each specific action step in the approximate order it will occur. For each action step, you will also note the responsible party for ensuring the action step happens, the necessary resources to complete the action step, and the approximate desired completion date.
- Repeat this process to complete a Table 2 for each of your goals.

Table 2. Sustainability Action Planning

Sustainability Goal	Paste the goal you drafted in step 5 from Table 1 in the cell to the right.			
Responsible individual(s)	Identify the individual(s) who will be responsible for implementing the overall plan, updating the plan, and who will be accountable for achieving the goal. This person(s) does not have to do all the work, but needs the skills, authority, and time to oversee the plan and ensure it is carried out.			
Assets	Identify strengths, resources, or past experiences that you can use to help achieve your sustainability goal. Then check your plan to see how you can improve it by leveraging those assets.			
Anticipated barriers	Envision working to achieve this goal and visualize the challenges for which you will need to plan. Make sure that those potential barriers are addressed in the plan below.			
Reassessment cadence	Define a cadence—for example, biweekly, monthly, or quarterly—at which you will formally reassess and revise the sustainability plan below. The greater the uncertainty and risk, the more often you should reassess. See Table 4 for reassessment guidance.			
Step	Action Step	Responsible individual	Necessary resources	Desired completion date
<i>Number your steps in the approximate order they will occur.</i>	<i>Be specific and make each step discrete. Anyone should be able to pick up this document and understand what needs to happen to achieve your goal.</i>	<i>Who will ensure the action step gets taken? It does not have to be the person who will do the work, but it should be the person with the skills, authority, and time to make sure that the action step gets done.</i>	<i>Necessary resources include things like staff, permits, and materials. If you do not currently have the necessary resources, your plan should include the steps required to obtain them. It may be necessary to articulate a separate sustainability goal and plan to do so.</i>	<i>Be prepared to revise these dates as you go.</i>
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
<i>Add more rows for elements specific to your coalition or partnership as needed!</i>				

See an example of [Table 2 filled out](#).

 **Resource:** For support in conducting asset mapping, see the [Mapping Community Assets Workbook](#).

3. Completing sustainability milestone tracking table

In most cases, Table 2 will not end with achieving your Table 1 sustainability goal because the steps necessary to achieve that goal are not knowable and clear at the beginning. There is a middle ground, however, between detailed planning for each step and no planning for goals with more uncertainty. That middle ground is the milestone planning in Table 3. With milestone planning, you lay out the high-level *accomplishments* necessary to accomplish your goal, but not all the *steps* to get there. Then, as you implement your short-term plan in Table 2, the milestones in Table 3 become the subjects of more detailed planning. This strategy, called rolling wave planning, strikes a happy medium and leaves you the flexibility to adjust as your situation evolves without having to overhaul an entire plan.



Tip. To help with setting milestones, consider:

- A milestone is a point in time, not a process. What are the moments on your journey toward your goal when you'll know you've accomplished something meaningful?
- Think sequentially. Look at the last steps at the end of action planning in Table 2 and ask, "What will we try to accomplish next if everything goes as planned? What about after that? And after that?"
- And on the flipside, work backward. If you imagine yourself accomplishing your sustainability goals, what would you have needed to accomplish right before that? And before that? Before that?
- Milestones are often the end of a phase of work. If you find yourself focused on activities rather than accomplishments, take a step back and ask what the activities have in common and what will they accomplish.

Below are the steps to complete Table 3:

- Copy your goal from Step 5 of Table 1 into the first line of the table.
- Use the lines of the table to define your milestones, or high-level accomplishments to accomplish your goal
- Repeat for each of your goals that go beyond a single action plan in scope and timeframe.



Tip. Mixing detailed action steps with milestones is called rolling wave planning. It is especially appropriate in complex, changing environments of the sort faced by multi-sector coalitions and partnerships addressing SDOH. It is a method for getting started and making progress without knowing exactly how everything will go.

Table 3. Sustainability Milestone Planning

Milestone	
Sustainability goal (#5 in Table 1):	
1	
2	
3	
4	
<i>Add more rows for elements specific to your coalition or partnership as needed!</i>	

See an example of [Table 3 filled out](#).

4. Using the sustainability action plan assessment checklist

Sustainability action planning is always fluid. The coalition or partnership, goals, timelines, and broader context can all change. The approach to sustainability action planning described in this document is, in part, a plan to manage that fluidity.

As you implement your sustainability action plan (Table 2), you should make the time to monitor and assess your progress on the reassessment cadence defined in Table 2, to adjust to changing circumstance. Consider using the [Learning to Action Log](#) to assess as you go, to help you revise your plans.

In parallel, you will need to figure out when to move your longer-term milestones (Table 3) forward (into Table 2) and begin planning to create specific action plans to accomplish them. Sustainability action planning essentially becomes a cycle in which, as the action plans are implemented, the milestones (Table 3) gradually move into Table 2 and the details for how they will be achieved are spelled out in an action plan. This process is represented in Figure IV.2.

Figure IV.2. Milestones become the basis for short-term action planning over time



Table 4 is a checklist for conducting this regular assessment of your sustainability action plan and progress towards reaching your milestones. Below are the steps to use this checklist:

- Working with your team, respond to these prompts according to the assessment cadence you established (Table 2).
- Revise your sustainability goals, action plans, and milestone plans (Tables 1, 2, and 3, respectively) for any items that are not checked.



Tip. Revision does not mean that you had a failed plan! It means you were flexible and insightful enough to recognize when a plan had to change. It is very rare for a plan of any complexity to carry through from start to finish as originally envisioned.

Table 4. Sustainability Planning Assessment Checklist

Check when complete	Prompt
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you met the success criteria you defined in step #6 of Table 1?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you including individuals with relevant lived experience in the planning, processes, and activities?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is your goal moving you closer to the outcomes you are trying to achieve? If not, consider revising your goal or developing a new goal and a new plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you leveraging your strengths?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you planned for all the relevant barriers that you can reasonably foresee?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you have all the resources you need? If not, consider whether you can incorporate obtaining them into this sustainability plan or whether you need to develop a new plan, perhaps associated with a different sustainability goal.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you specified what needs to happen over the next week/month/quarter to move you closer to your sustainability goal?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you identified the milestones in Table 3 that you are ready to begin planning to reach in Table 2?

C. Sustainability action plan examples

Now that we have introduced the sustainability planning tables, let's see what they look like in action. The examples in this section all assume a start date of September 1, 2022. First, we will look at Table 1 for a goal where all the steps are clear and known.

Step 3

Step 3 is where you begin crafting your goal by going from the general sustainability elements to the specifics of your coalition or partnership. Think critically about your work and your desired outcomes in the context of the sustainability elements you've identified as important in #1 and #2 to complete #3.

1. Example 1. Governance domain

Table 1. Sustainability Pre-Planning (Governance domain example)

Step #	Sustainability Pre-Planning Worksheet
	SDOH our coalition addresses: Food insecurity
1	Copy an especially important sustainability element from the prioritization worksheet in the space below. Priority sustainability element: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal documents, partnership agreements, memoranda of understanding, or similar arrangements govern partner relationships and operations
2	If there are other important sustainability elements you need to address to improve the element specified in #1, list them in this row. Additional relevant sustainability elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal processes for ensuring accountability for following through on commitments established and implemented Power is formally shared with community and partners
3	What, specifically, do you need to achieve to make progress on the sustainability element(s) above? We need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a memorandum of understanding with Burlington County Food Bank for referral services and procedures
4	What is your rationale for #3? Why is it important? Refer back to your logic model or theory of change—how will achieving #3 help you achieve your desired outcomes? If you cannot articulate a connection to your desired outcomes, revise #3. Rationale for #3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our partners who provide food are critical elements of our coalition. A memorandum of understanding will formalize and deepen our relationship, in addition to solidifying what is right now an ad hoc arrangement. As a result, we will be able to refer more people and families, resulting in a healthier Burlington County population, which is one of our primary outcomes.
5	Put these together and write down your sustainability goal in one sentence using a VERB → OUTCOME → TIMEFRAME structure: Do [THIS] to achieve [THAT] by [WHEN]. Sustainability goal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain [VERB] signed memorandum of understanding that is mutually acceptable to both parties [OUTCOME] by December 1, 2022 [TIMEFRAME]
6	How will you know when you've achieved your sustainability goal? By what standards will you measure success? How and when will you monitor your progress? Measurements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memorandum is signed and its procedures implemented.
7	How will you include individuals with relevant lived experience in the planning, processes, and activities necessary to achieve the sustainability outcome described above? Inclusion plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referral procedures described in memorandum of understanding are tested with individuals being served and revised in response to their feedback.

See an example of [blank Table 1](#).

Step 5

Step 5 is your sustainability goal. You will carry it forward through the planning tables in the rest of this section.

Table 2. Sustainability Action Planning (Governance domain example)

Sustainability Goal	Paste the goal you drafted in step 5 from Table 1 in the cell to the right.	Obtain signed memorandum of understanding that is mutually acceptable to both parties by December 1, 2022.
Responsible individual(s)	Identify the individual(s) who will be responsible for implementing the overall plan, updating the plan, and who will be accountable for achieving the goal. This person(s) does not have to do all the work, but needs the skills, authority, and time to oversee the plan and ensure it is carried out.	James Martin
Assets	Identify strengths, resources, or past experiences that you can use to help achieve your sustainability goal. Then check your plan to see how you can improve it by leveraging those assets.	We have a functional existing relationship with the Burlington County Food Bank.
Anticipated barriers	Envision working to achieve this goal and visualize the challenges for which you will need to plan. Make sure that those potential barriers are addressed in the plan below.	We do not have good memorandum models to drawn on.
Reassessment cadence	Define a cadence—for example, biweekly, monthly, or quarterly—at which you will formally reassess and revise the sustainability plan below. The greater the uncertainty and risk, the more often you should reassess. See Table 4 for reassessment guidance.	Biweekly

See the [blank Table 2](#).

Addressing a barrier! In this case, the barrier is meaningful but the path to addressing it is clear. Be alert for such situations where the barrier is so significant that it needs to be addressed through a separate plan, before you can implement this one.

Leveraging an asset: the existing relationship with Burlington County Food Bank!

Table 2. Sustainability Action Planning (Governance domain example) (continued)

Step #	Action Step	Responsible individual	Necessary resources	Desired completion date
	<i>Be specific and make each step discrete. Anyone should be able to pick up this document and understand what needs to happen to achieve your goal.</i>	<i>Who will ensure the action step gets taken? It does not have to be the person who will do the work, but it should be the person with the skills, authority, and time to make sure that the action step gets done.</i>	<i>Necessary resources include things like staff, permits, and materials. If you do not currently have the necessary resources, your plan should include the steps required to obtain them. It may be necessary to articulate a separate sustainability goal and plan to do so.</i>	<i>Be prepared to revise these dates as you go.</i>
1	Research memorandum format, templates, and options	James Martin	May need to seek out pro bono legal advice	September 9, 2022
2	Discuss need for the memorandum with partner	James Martin	N/A	September 9, 2022
3	Document existing referral processes, filling in any gaps or inconsistencies	Jane Williams	N/A	September 16, 2022
4	Test documented referral process	Gina Parker	Knowledge management tools for tracking testing results	September 30, 2022
	Revise referral process in response to participant feedback	Toni Johnson	Resources to support effective meeting planning and co-design, such as The Project Management Institute and the LUMA Institute; may need to subscribe to websites	October 7, 2022
6	Decide on memorandum format with Burlington County Food Bank	Toni Johnson	Zoom, must make sure that account is paid up-to-date Participating community leaders must have devices with sufficient broadband to access Zoom	October 7, 2022
7	Document final referral processes in a memorandum	Mitchell Robinson	N/A	October 21, 2022
8	Both parties sign memorandum	Jane Williams	Buy-in from organizational leadership	November 4, 2022
9	Implement new referral processes	Mitchell Robinson	N/A	December 1, 2022

In example 1, the sustainability goal is discrete and the steps necessary to achieving it are clear and known. As a result, Table 2 ends with achieving the goal and Table 3 is not necessary. In general, however, sustainability goals are more complex, and Table 3 is necessary, as in example 2.

C.2. Example 2. Funding domain

Table 1. Sustainability pre-planning (Funding domain example)

Step #	Sustainability Pre-Planning Worksheet
SDOH our coalition addresses: Clinical-community linkages	
1	Copy an especially important sustainability element from the prioritization worksheet in the space below. Priority sustainability element: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding portfolio includes some resources that can be used flexibly, at the coalition's or partnership's discretion
2	If there are other important sustainability elements you need to address to improve the element specified in #1, list them in this row. Additional relevant sustainability elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding sufficient to achieve program goals
3	What, specifically, do you need to achieve to make progress on the sustainability element(s) above? We need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully negotiate reimbursement contracts for community referral services with primary care practices participating in new Medicaid value-based contracting arrangements that reward them for attaining population health goals.
4	What is your rationale for #3? Why is it important? Refer back to your logic model or theory of change—how will achieving #3 help you achieve your desired outcomes? If you cannot articulate a connection to your desired outcomes, revise #3. Rationale for #3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Right now, our coalition's community referral program has limited reach because it does not generate sufficient income to be self-sustaining. The new Medicaid value-based contracting arrangement provide incentives for primary care practices to pay for our services. If we can enter into contracting arrangements with participating practices, our funding stream will increase and become more stable, which will enable us to dramatically increase the scope of our program. With an increased scope, we can have a greater impact on the health of our community by connecting medically underserved communities to services, which is the primary outcome we are trying to achieve.
5	Put these together and write down your sustainability goal in one sentence using a VERB → OUTCOME →TIMEFRAME structure: Do [THIS] to achieve [THAT] by [WHEN]. Sustainability goal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sign [VERB] reimbursement contracts with primary care practices participating in Medicaid value-based contracting arrangements that reward improvements in population health [OUTCOME] by December 2023 [TIMEFRAME].
6	How will you know when you've achieved your sustainability goal? By what standards will you measure success? How and when will you monitor your progress? Measurements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have at least one signed contract Receive reimbursement for referral services from at least one new primary care practice partner
7	How will you include individuals with relevant lived experience in the planning, processes, and activities necessary to achieve the sustainability outcome described above? Inclusion plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two community residents working with our coalition will share testimonials of how referrals from our program to a housing advocate and food bank improved their health.

See the [blank Table 1](#).

Step 4

Note the causal language in the last sentence ("As a result"). Accomplishing Step 3 should help *cause* the outcomes you are trying to achieve. If you don't know or can't say how it will do that, consider whether #3 is quite right and revise, if necessary.

Step 7

There is no sustainability without diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Many of us are not used to embedding DEI in our work, so it may be difficult or uncomfortable to complete Step 7. However, it is critical to do so for sustainability. You may need to go back and revise prior answers in this table to support the DEI you'll need to become fully sustainable.

Table 2. Sustainability Action Planning (Funding domain example)

Sustainability Goal		By December 2023, sign reimbursement contracts with primary practices participating in Medicaid value-based contracting arrangements that reward them for attaining population health goals.
Paste the goal you drafted in step 5 from Table 1 in the cell to the right.		
Responsible individual(s)	Identify the individual(s) who will be responsible for implementing the overall plan, updating the plan, and who will be accountable for achieving the goal. This person(s) does not have to do all the work, but needs the skills, authority, and time to oversee the plan and ensure it is carried out.	Kelsey Cunningham
Assets	Identify strengths, resources, or past experiences that you can use to help achieve your sustainability goal. Then check your plan to see how you can improve it by leveraging those assets.	We know what works in terms of referral services in primary care practices.
Anticipated barriers	Envision working to achieve this goal and visualize the challenges for which you will need to plan. Make sure that those potential barriers are addressed in the plan below.	We have little Medicaid program knowledge. We have never formally contracted with primary care practices before
Reassessment cadence	Define a cadence—for example, biweekly, monthly, or quarterly—at which you will formally reassess and revise the sustainability plan below. The greater the uncertainty and risk, the more often you should reassess. See Table 4 for reassessment guidance.	Weekly

This is clearly a long-term goal with high uncertainty. Where this coalition or partnership should stop detailed planning in Table 2 is a judgment call, but it is probably not advisable to plan for every step across all 15 months because it is impossible to predict what will happen. It is not even possible to predict whether 15 months is the right timeframe.

See the [blank Table 2](#).

Step #	Action Step	Responsible individual	Necessary resources	Desired completion date
	<i>Number your steps in the approximate order they will occur.</i>	<i>Who will ensure the action step gets taken? It does not have to be the person who will do the work, but it should be the person with the skills, authority, and time to make sure that the action step gets done.</i>	<i>Necessary resources include things like staff, permits, and materials. If you do not currently have the necessary resources, your plan should include the steps required to obtain them. It may be necessary to articulate a separate sustainability goal and plan to do so.</i>	<i>Be prepared to revise these dates as you go.</i>
1	Research state Medicaid program to develop deeper understanding of role of value-based contracting for population health-related outcomes in our state	Kevin Jones	State Medicaid program information and subject-matter experts	September 30, 2022
2	Present findings to staff and conduct brainstorming on approach	Kelsey Cunningham	N/A	October 14, 2022
3	Identify primary care practices with which to conduct discovery research	Kevin Jones	N/A	November 11, 2022
4	Develop primary care practice outreach strategy	Kelsey Cunningham	N/A	November 11, 2022
5	Develop discussion guide	Kelsey Cunningham	N/A	December 2, 2022
6	Schedule discovery research meetings	Kevin Jones	N/A	December 30, 2022

Table 3. Sustainability Milestone Planning (Funding domain example)

#	Milestone
Sustainability goal (#5 in Table 1):	
1	Conduct discovery research meetings
2	Research business development practices (we have never done anything like this before)
3	Research contracting options
4	Synthesize findings from #1, #2, and #3 into business development approach
5	Conduct business development
6	Engage a contracts attorney
7	Draft and sign contract(s)

To see the [blank Table 3](#).

In this example, Table 2 specifies a weekly reassessment cadence. At each assessment point, the team will review their Learning to Action Log (if using), the assessment checklist (Table 4), and the Table 3 milestones. If the work necessary to accomplish a milestone is knowable and clear at the time of the assessment, the team can begin to create a short-term action plan using the Table 2 structure.

Supplement A. Resources

The sustainability overview and prioritization worksheet are a synthesis of a number of resources:

- Center for Public Health Systems Science. "Program Sustainability Assessment Tool." 2012. Available at <https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/cphss/61>.
- Georgia Health Policy Center. "Group Assessment for Aligning Systems for People." n.d. Available at <http://measuringaligning.org/download/the-graasp-tool?wpdmdl=1368&refresh=62b5c874e48fe1656080500>.
- Kania, J., and M. Kramer. "Collective Impact." Stanford Social Innovation Review, winter 2011. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact.
- Partnership for Healthy Outcomes. "Partnership Assessment Tool." 2017. Available at https://www.chcs.org/media/Partnership-Assessment-Tool-for-Health_FINAL.pdf.
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. "RWJF's Approach." n.d. Available at <https://www.alignforhealth.org/framework/>.
- Well-being and Equity in the World, Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Pathways to Population Health Equity Compass: A Guide for Public Health Change Agents." n.d. Available at https://www.publichealthequity.org/files/ugd/8913b9_b8ab4fe88b3a41aaafc0a7ae4b4bfbfd8.pdf.

The funding landscape diagram was compiled from the following sources:

- Georgia Health Policy Center. "Do you have funding diversification?" 2011. <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/sustainability/pdf/georgia-health-policy-center-sustainability-framework.pdf>.
- Foster, William Landes, Peter Kim, and Barbara Christiansen. "Ten Nonprofit Funding Models." Stanford Social Innovation Review. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/ten_nonprofit_funding_models.
- Kaiser Family Foundation. "10 Things to Know About Medicaid: Setting the Facts Straight." <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/10-things-to-know-about-medicaid-setting-the-facts-straight/>.
- Kim, Peter, Gail Perreault, and William Foster. "Finding your funding model: A practical approach to nonprofit sustainability." The Bridgespan group. https://www.bridgespan.org/bridgespan/Images/articles/finding-your-funding-model/Funding-Models-Guide_1.pdf.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. "Community Development Block Grant Program." https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/cdbg.

Supplement D (Medicaid Funding) was compiled from the following sources:

- Center for Health Care Strategies. "Addressing Social Determinants of Health via Medicaid Managed Care Contracts and Section 1115 Demonstrations." <https://www.chcs.org/media/Addressing-SDOH-Medicaid-Contracts-1115-Demonstrations-121118.pdf>.
- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. "Managed Care." <https://www.medicare.gov/medicaid/managed-care/index.html>.
- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. SHO# 21-001. "Opportunities in Medicaid and CHIP to Address Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)." <https://www.medicare.gov/federal-policy-guidance/downloads/sho21001.pdf>.
- Kaiser Family Foundation. "10 Things to Know About Medicaid: Setting the Facts Straight." <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/10-things-to-know-about-medicaid-setting-the-facts-straight/>.
- Kaiser Family Foundation. "Medicaid Authorities and Options to Address Social Determinants of Health." <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/medicaid-authorities-and-options-to-address-social-determinants-of-health-sdoh/>.

Supplement B: Collaboration Methods

Developing a sustainability plan is a team sport. In most cases, many coalition or partnership members will participate and there will be a great deal of iteration back and forth as priorities are set, goals developed, and plans laid and revised. Collaboration of this type can be powerful and productive—but it can also be messy and frustrating. The methods below may help make your collaboration process more creative, fun, and inclusive. Do not hesitate to adapt or combine them however you find helpful—experiment, be playful, and see what works for your team!

Exhibit B.1. Collaboration methods

Method	Description	When to use
<p>1. 1-2-4-All</p>	<p>This Liberating Structure is simple, powerful, and highly adaptable. The concept is that, in response to a prompt, question, or challenge, individuals first develop their own responses, then share and revise them in small groups, and then read out their idea to the whole group. This step-by-step process elicits the insights of all participants, even those who may not be comfortable speaking in front of a group. You do not have to follow the 1-2-4-All structure rigidly; for example, 1-2-All or even 1-All may be more appropriate depending on the size of your group.</p> <p>1-2-4-All is just one of many Liberating Structures, which are a suite of collaboration methods that introduce shifts in the ways that groups meet, plan, make decisions, and relate to one another. You may find it valuable to look at other Liberating Structures, too.</p>	<p>1-2-4-All is so flexible and adaptable that it may be useful for virtually any part of the sustainability planning guide that you are completing as a group, including the prioritization worksheet, the planning tables, and the communications worksheet.</p>
<p>2. Dot voting (or a somewhat more complex version, Buy a Feature)</p>	<p>Dot voting is a simple means of quickly taking the temperature of a group and seeing where preferences lie. When there are several options, the basic structure is to assign participants a number of votes each and ask them to spread their votes among one or more of the options. Participants can place one vote on each of many options, all of their votes on one option, or anywhere in between, depending on the strength of their preferences.</p> <p>Note that dot voting does not have to be simultaneous; participants can vote over a period of hours or days. You may also have to get creative if participants are not all located in the same place; see #7 below regarding digital whiteboards.</p>	<p>Especially useful in completing the prioritization worksheet and selecting a sustainability element to focus on for sustainability planning and for selecting sustainability goals to plan for among several choices.</p> <p>NOTE: NACCHO's Guide to Prioritization Techniques contains other versions of group voting techniques and other methods for prioritizing among choices that you may find useful.</p>

Exhibit B.1. Collaboration methods (continued)

Method	Description	When to use
<p>3. Importance/Difficulty Matrix</p>	<p>An Importance/Difficulty Matrix is a grid with an x-axis that measures the importance of an option and the y-axis that measures the difficulty of implementing the option. Options are collectively mapped on the grid, providing a visual representation of decision-making tradeoffs.</p> <p>A Matrix Map is a version of a matrix specifically for nonprofit organizations to map activities along the dimensions of impact and profitability.</p> <p>The Importance/Difficulty Matrix is one of 36 human-centered design methods from the LUMA Institute. As with Liberating Structures, you may find others useful, as well.</p>	<p>Especially useful in selecting a sustainability element to focus on for sustainability planning and for selecting sustainability goals to plan for among several choices.</p>
<p>4. Problem Tree Analysis</p>	<p>Another LUMA Institute method, Problem Tree Analysis, maps both the causes (roots) and effects (leaves) of an issue or problem to understand it more fully and decide what to focus on.</p>	<p>Problem Tree Analysis may be especially valuable when creating a sustainability goal for a priority sustainability element. Start with an element you identified as a top priority and then brainstorm both causes and effect that might be part of a sustainability goal or a sustainability action plan.</p>
<p>5. “How Might We” brainstorming (and other brainstorming techniques)</p>	<p>In “How Might We” brainstorming, a simple prompt frames a challenge to unleash the inherent creativity and innovation of a group. Focus first on quantity of ideas rather than quality—frame success as generating, say, 10 or 50 ideas, rather than the right idea.</p> <p>To make it fun, consider incorporating a technique such as worst idea brainstorming, brainwriting, or brainstorming from the perspective of someone else, such as Oprah Winfrey, a used car salesman, or a Marvel superhero.</p> <p>IMPORTANT: All types of brainstorming are particularly powerful when combined with 1-2-4-All so that everyone participates in the generation of a high volume of ideas.</p>	<p>Pivoting from priority sustainability elements to a sustainability goal that is specific to your coalition or partnership is one of the hardest steps in the sustainability planning process. Brainstorming at this stage may be especially helpful. For example, take a priority element, such as “Communications are embedded in day-to-day program activities,” and turn it into a “How Might We” question: “How might we embed communication in our day-to-day program activities?”</p>

Exhibit B.1. Collaboration methods (continued)

Method	Description	When to use
<p>6. Consent decision-making</p>	<p>In consent decision making, the baseline assumption is that a suggestion will be adopted unless there is a formal objection. This creates a bias toward action, experimentation, and innovation because it does not require teams to have full, enthusiastic support before moving forward.</p>	<p>Any time the coalition or partnership needs to make a decision, such as about which sustainability elements to build goals for and what the plan should be.</p>
<p>7. Digital whiteboards (various)</p>	<p>Digital whiteboards are online tools where teams can simultaneously collaborate visually. Many digital whiteboards offer free versions with more than enough functionality to be useful, including some that have built-in templates and functionality for some of the methods above. One of the benefits of digital whiteboards is that they can be both anonymous and simultaneous, giving everyone a chance to contribute on equal footing. They can also be used asynchronously, so partners can contribute whenever is most convenient for them.</p>	<p>Digital whiteboards can be valuable for any team whose members are not located in the same space and need a way to collaborate that is creative and inclusive.</p>

Supplement C: Funding

Funding resources

Resource list

The resources below include templates, worksheets, and databases to help your organization with financial management, locating grant funding opportunities, grant writing, and diversifying funding by braiding and blending funding sources.


Exhibit C.1 contains four categories of sustainable funding resources:

1. Financial management. The funding domain in the prioritization worksheet contains the high-level elements of a sustainable funding strategy. The resources in Exhibit C.1 go into specific financial functions and provide tools for assessing your coalition’s or partnership’s current financial state and planning for your future.

- 2. Grant funding.** Locating open grant opportunities can be challenging. The resources below help organizations search for federal funding opportunities. Coalitions and partnerships will also want to tap into state funding and private funding opportunities through business or philanthropic organizations.
- 3. Grant writing.** When applying for grants, it is important to ensure you are responsive to the proposal. The resources in Exhibit C.1 offer tips and tools to help your coalition or partnership write a proposal that meets the grant requirements and improves your chances for securing the funds.
- 4. Braiding and blending funding.** The resources on this topic help coalitions/partnerships think through how to better leverage funds from multiple sources, including how to administer the funds, navigate various requirements, and improve coordination of existing streams.

- “Braiding” funding means coordinating several funding streams to support a particular program or purpose. Each funding stream remains distinguishable and maintains its unique set of funding constraints and requirements.
- “Blending” funding means pooling two or more funding streams to create one flexible funding stream. This stream will have a single set of reporting and other requirements.

Note: Some funding sources may have restrictions on uses such as lobbying.



Resource: For more information on different funding strategies, see Sections 5, 7, and 9 through 18 of the *“Planning for Sustainability”* chapter of The University of Kansas Community Tool Box.

Exhibit C.1. Resources to support sustainable funding

Category	Resource Type	Resource	What is it?
Financial Management	Template (Excel)	Cash Flow Projection Template from the Nonprofit Finance Fund: https://nff.org/fundamental/cash-flow-projection-template	This tool helps you determine how much working capital you need to cover your expenditures. Through documenting the timing of cash coming in and out of your organization, the tool provides a picture of your cash balance throughout the year.
Financial Management	Webinars, slides, templates (Excel and Word)	Scenario Budgeting Resources and Scenario Planning Tool from the Nonprofit Finance Fund: https://nff.org/webinar-scenario-planning	Scenario planning provides a way to transparently analyze future events, the possible consequences of the events and how your organization could respond to them. The webinar provides an overview of scenario planning and the tools provide you with a template to do your own scenario planning.

Exhibit C.1. Resources to support sustainable funding (continued)

Category	Resource Type	Resource	What is it?
Financial Management	Toolkit (interactive PDF or PowerPoint)	Scenario Planning for Nonprofits Amid COVID-19 from The Bridgespan Group: https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/library/strategy-development/nonprofit-scenario-planning-during-a-crisis	This is another scenario-planning tool that provides a way to analyze future events and navigate uncertainty. The article and toolkit provide an overview of scenario planning and a template to do your own scenario planning.
Grant funding	Database	Grants.gov managed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: https://www.grants.gov/	This website provides a centralized location to search and apply for federal funding opportunities.
Grant funding	Database	American Rescue Plan Act: Notice of Funding Opportunities from the Georgia Health Policy Center: https://fundingnavigatorguide.org/american-rescue-plan-act-notice-of-funding-opportunities/	The tool allows you to filter funding opportunities found on Grants.gov by SDOH, opportunity status, and eligibility.
Grant writing	Blog series	Grants.gov Community Blog managed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: https://grantsgovprod.wordpress.com/category/learngrants/grant-writing-basics/	This blog has posts with tips for writing and applying for grants on Grants.gov.
Braiding and blending funding	Webinars	Braiding and blending funds to promote social determinants of health: An event from the Brookings Institution’s Braiding and Blending Working Group https://www.brookings.edu/events/braiding-and-blending-funds-to-promote-social-determinants-of-health/	This series of talks explains what braiding and blending funding are and why they are important, provides examples, and describes challenges and lessons learned.
Braiding and blending funding	Toolkit (PDF)	Health Equity Zones: A Toolkit for Building Healthy and Resilient Communities from the Rhode Island Department of Health: https://health.ri.gov/publications/toolkits/health-equity-zones.pdf	This toolkit describes the steps to launch a Health Equity Zone initiative and describes an approach to braid and blend funds (see pages 23–27).
Braiding and blending funding	Case studies	NACCHO’s Public Health Finance webpage: https://www.naccho.org/programs/public-health-infrastructure/public-health-finance	Case studies on blending and braiding funding and other resources related to funding and SDOH coalition and partnership sustainability.

Innovative funding partnerships and case studies by SDOH area

This section includes case studies illustrating organizational, community partnerships, and innovative financing models to fund community change efforts. These case studies offer your organization examples of types of partnerships to think about to plan for sustainability, and types of funding opportunities to pursue. They also offer lessons learned for carrying out community change efforts that you can apply to your own work.

Exhibit C.2. SDOH-specific cross-sector partnerships

SDOH area	Resource	What is it?	Financing sources or strategies
Clinical community linkages, built environment	Burlington, Vermont: Reducing Health Care Costs and Homelessness through Temporary and Permanent Supportive Housing Programs. From Paying for Population Health: Case Studies of The Health System’s Role in Addressing Social Determinants of Health from Academy Health: https://academyhealth.org/publications/2018-01/paying-population-health-case-studies-role-health-system-addressing-social-determinants-health	Joint effort between University of Vermont Medical Center, United Way, Champlain Housing Trust, and other partners to remodel a hotel for temporary, supportive housing and develop permanent supportive housing for individuals with complex health needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State operating revenue • United Way • The Fanny Allen Foundation • UVM Medical Center • Financing
Clinical community linkages	Cincinnati, Ohio: Reducing Infant Mortality through Clinical-Community Collaborations. From Paying for Population Health: Case Studies of The Health System’s Role in Addressing Social Determinants of Health from Academy Health: https://academyhealth.org/publications/2018-01/paying-population-health-case-studies-role-health-system-addressing-social-determinants-health	Multi-partner effort to expand role and number of community health workers (CHW) to support pregnant people. Leverages the Pathways HUB model for referrals, training, and data collection for the CHWs. Expands 2-1-1 service referral system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cradle Cincinnati grant from Ohio’s Department of Medicaid • Medicaid managed care • Medicare Shared Saving programs • Next generation ACO • Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati (now Interact for Health) • TriHealth • State Innovation Model • CMS Accountable Health Communities Model

Exhibit C.2. SDOH-specific cross-sector partnerships (continued)

SDOH area	Resource	What is it?	Financing sources or strategies
Clinical community linkages	<p>Greenville, South Carolina: Building an Accountable Care Organization for the Uninsured. From Paying for Population Health: Case Studies of The Health System’s Role in Addressing Social Determinants of Health from Academy Health: https://academyhealth.org/publications/2018-01/paying-population-health-case-studies-role-health-system-addressing-social-determinants-health</p>	<p>Built an Accountable Community to support interventions to decrease excess emergency department and inpatient use and implement community paramedicine, CHWs, and mobile clinics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Foundation • Nonprofit Finance Fund • Greenville Health System • Duke Endowment • Foundation funding • Disproportionate Share Hospital dollars • Enhanced primary care physician payments • Enhanced Medicaid rates for existing patients
Clinical community linkages	<p>Muskegon, Michigan: Improving Health Through Community-Based Care Coordination. From Paying for Population Health: Case Studies of The Health System’s Role in Addressing Social Determinants of Health from Academy Health: https://academyhealth.org/publications/2018-01/paying-population-health-case-studies-role-health-system-addressing-social-determinants-health</p>	<p>Health Project supported the development of coalitions to tackle health problems, implemented community health worker programs, adapted the Pathways HUB model. Joined two major statewide initiatives that focused on uninsured patients’ care access and care coordination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center for Medicaid and Medicare Innovation • Mercy Health Muskegon • Fee-for-service • Medicare Shared Savings Program • Risk-based contracts with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan • Next Generation ACO • CMS State Innovation Model
Clinical community linkages, food and nutrition, built environment, tobacco-free policies, social connectedness	<p>Lessons Learned from Rhode Island: How to Effectively Blend, Braid, and Use Block Grant Funds to Improve Public Health from the National Academy for State Health Policy: https://oldsite.nashp.org/lessons-from-rhode-island-how-to-effectively-blend-braid-and-use-block-grant-funds-for-public-health-and-prevention/ and Rhode Island’s Health Equity Zone Initiative from the Rhode Island Department of Health https://health.ri.gov/programs/detail.php?pgm_id=1108</p>	<p>Developed Health Equity Zones—community-led collaboratives for specific geographic areas. These Health Equity Zones braid funding from several sources so communities can work together to achieve shared goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maternal and Child Health Bureau (Title V) of the Health Resources and Services Administration • Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration • Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant • Two different chronic disease grants from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention • State funds

Exhibit C.2. SDOH-specific cross-sector partnerships (continued)

SDOH area	Resource	What is it?	Financing sources or strategies
Food and nutrition, Clinical community linkages, social connectedness	The ReRefresh Project, New Orleans, Louisiana from Build Healthy Places Network: https://buildhealthyplaces.org/sharing-knowledge/publications/community-close-ups/the-refresh-project-new-orleans-la/	Broad Community Connections developed a healthy food hub with a high quality grocery store, teaching kitchen, culinary job training and development program, community meeting space, office space for other nonprofits, nutrition classes, and an urban teaching farm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Markets Tax credits • Healthy Food Financing • Philanthropic funding • City funds • Market rate loans • Low-interest subordinate loans
Food and nutrition, clinical community linkages, social connectedness	Nutrition Solution Investment, United Way of Greater Cleveland, Cleveland, Ohio: Recording: https://urbanorg.app.box.com/s/3m406jt4gm9p2l8dcc4b4sam4np9azyx Slides: https://capgi.urban.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Cleveland-United-Way-CAPGI-Webinar-Slides-Sept-24_2021_-11-am-ET-FINAL-FINAL.pptx	United Way of Greater Cleveland is leveraging an innovative funding mechanism called Collective Approach to Public Good Investments (CAPGI) to provide medically tailored meals for older adults with certain chronic conditions who are socially isolated. The CAPGI model includes a financially neutral trusted broker and uses local capital, stakeholder self-interest, and a process of collaborative bidding to pay for services expected to generate benefits for the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding from investors facilitated by Collaborative Approach to Public Good Investments model
Built environment	Braiding and Layering Funding to Address Supportive Housing, Louisiana from the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials: https://www.astho.org/communications/blog/braiding-layering-funding-to-address-supportive-housing/	After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Department of Health and the Housing Corporation/Housing Authority in Louisiana collaborated to develop the Permanent Supportive Housing program to provide deeply affordable housing and supports for individuals with very low-incomes and substantial, long-term disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medicaid waiver • Medicaid State Plan • Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program • Community Development Block Grant • Funding from the Veterans Administration

For more examples, check out Build Healthy Places Network: <https://buildhealthyplaces.org/sharing-knowledge/category/publications/community-close-ups/page/1/>

Funding landscape

The funding model exhibit is to help coalitions understand the various funding strategies available. The top of the diagram shows the seven ways your coalitions/partnership can fund its work. A brief description and questions to consider pursuing each type are provided.

Exhibit C.3. Funding models

Funding strategy	In-kind support	Earned income	Events	Contributions and sponsorships	Government budgets	Grants	Financing
Description and examples	Non-monetary support, such as donated goods or services	Fees, reimbursement, or sales	Earnings from hosting a fundraising function, such as a gala, dinner, or golf tournament	Donations and funds given to support an organization or activity	Inclusion as a line item in local, state, or federal budget	Sum of money given for a specific purpose that does not need to be paid back and often comes with requirements	Loans, investments, social impact bonds (investor pays for outcomes of evidence-based intervention), or other forms of capital
Questions to help you identify the most fruitful funding sources to pursue	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Do you engage in activities that could be supported by the donation of products from supportive companies or other external organizations (e.g., food or supplies)? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a recipient in your community who benefits from your services and might be willing to pay for them? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Is there sufficient awareness and financial support to make an event a viable fundraiser? What type of event might inspire your donors and the broader community to attend and donate? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What organizations and people in your community might support your mission? What is your team's capacity to cultivate relationships with individuals? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Are you willing and able to cultivate strong relationships with government decision makers who will advocate for change? At this time, are there sufficient pressures on government to overturn the status quo? Does your cause address an issue that elected officials consider a high priority? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What foundations or other funding organizations does your mission align with? Do you have the infrastructure to manage the reporting, budgeting, and other requirements? Does your organization meet the eligibility criteria for a foundation or government grant? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a group of funders with a financial interest in supporting our work? Do they have financing mechanisms available that you might participate in? Would they be open to creating such mechanisms?

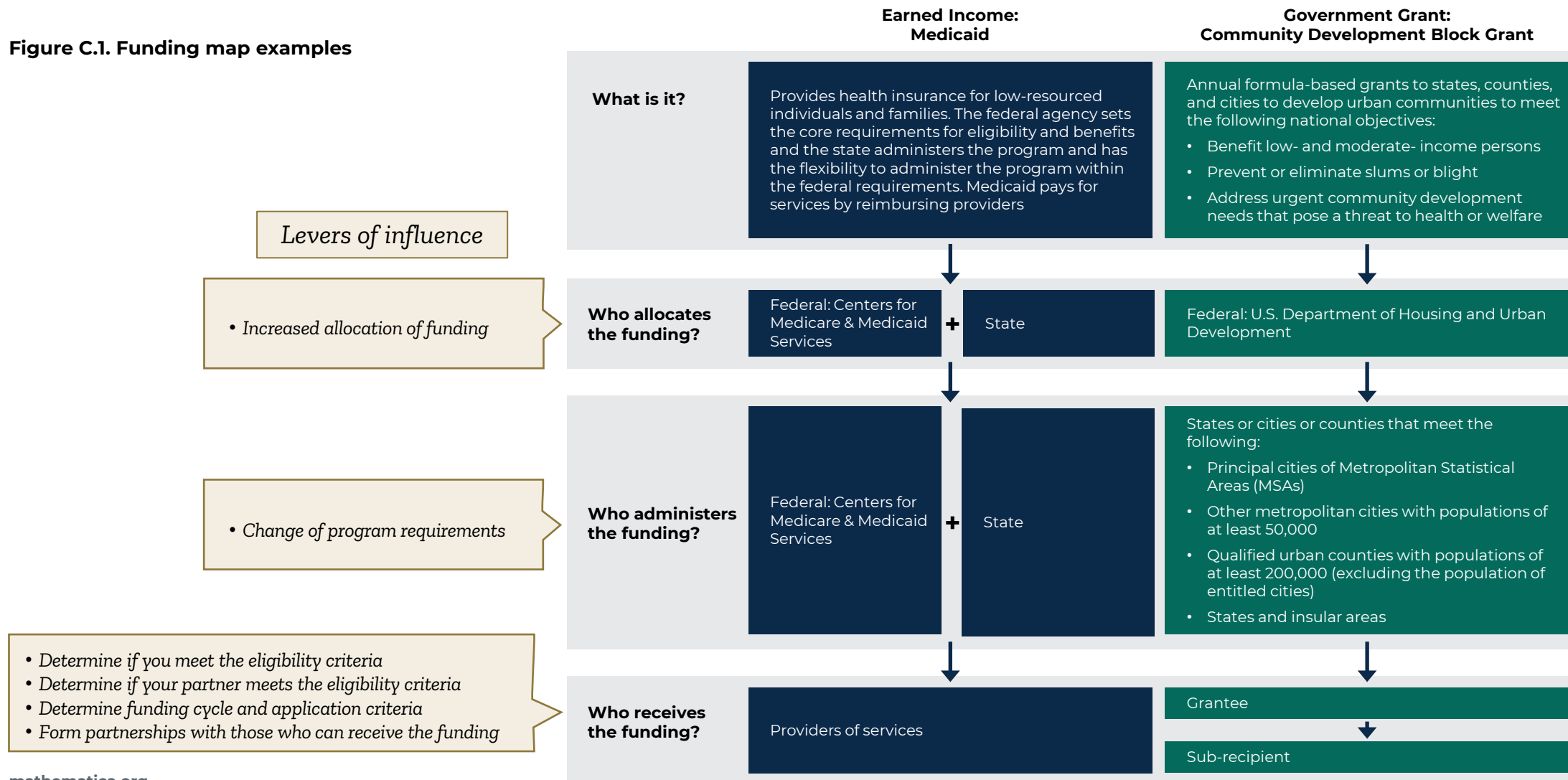
Figure C.1 is to help your organization think through how to access available funding sources. The two examples here provide an example of how you can map funding sources you are considering across the entities that allocate, administer, and receive the funds. These are not the only examples, just a couple to get you started.

Through mapping your own funding sources, from the entity that allocates the funds to the entity that administers the funds and the entity that receives the funds, you can determine who holds the decision-making power for the funds and whether your organization is eligible to receive the funds directly. Mapping your own funds can also help inform decisions about forming partnerships, securing support from a particular champion, or where changes in funding might help you achieve your long-term goals.

- ✓ —
- ✓ —
- ✓ —
- ✓ —

Resource: Refer to *Addressing Social Determinants of Health Through Policy: A Planning Guide for Multi-Sector Community Partnerships* for more ideas on how to enact the policy changes necessary to access these funding sources.

Figure C.1. Funding map examples



Supplement D: Medicaid Funding

Getting to know Medicaid levers to address SDOH

Medicaid is complicated! This supplement provides an overview of Medicaid, describes why it is important for sustainability of community multi-sector coalitions and partnerships addressing SDOH, and outlines some of the authorities under Medicaid that allow it to pay for services that address health-related social needs. This is meant to offer a window into Medicaid. The resources in [Supplement A](#) offer additional ways to learn more about how to leverage Medicaid as a funding source.

Medicaid overview

Medicaid is a program to provide health insurance for low-resourced peoples. It is a jointly financed state and federal partnership program whereby the federal agency, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), sets the core requirements for eligibility and benefits and the state administers the program and has the flexibility to administer the program within the federal requirements.

Note that most Medicaid services are delivered under a payment arrangement known as managed care. In managed care, Medicaid payments are made to organizations known as Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), which are usually private health insurance companies. In managed care, payments to providers are made by MCOs, which in turn are paid by Medicaid funds.

Medicaid and sustainability

Medicaid pays for services by reimbursing providers either directly or through MCOs. It therefore has the potential to provide a funding stream to multi-sector coalitions and partnerships addressing SDOH that directly reimburses for services provided. Through Medicaid funding levers, usually called authorities and named after the relevant federal statute, states can invest in building capacity or developing infrastructure, and your state can change which populations are covered, what services are provided, and who are considered reimbursable providers. The ultimate goal would be to have services like those you provide be reimbursed.

Understanding Medicaid levers to address social determinants of health

Medicaid is a state-federal partnership in which the federal government sets broad parameters and requirements within which states are free to make decisions about how to operate their Medicaid programs as they deem appropriate. In many cases, these decisions must be backed by a specific statutory or regulatory authority spelled out by federal statutes. The exhibit below outlines four broad categories of Medicaid authorities and provides some examples of each authority of options to address SDOH. These are four examples of authorities states have used; others are outlined in the resources at the end.

Exhibit D.1. Medicaid levers to address SDOH

Medicaid Authority	State plan authority	Section 1115 demonstrations	Medicaid managed care flexibilities	Integrated care models
<p>What is it?</p>	<p>A Medicaid state plan is an agreement between your state and the federal government that outlines how your state will administer its Medicaid program. In the plan, your state outlines which groups are covered, what services are provided, how providers will be reimbursed, and what administrative activities exist. States submit amendments to CMS when they are planning to make changes to their programs or operations, request program changes, or submit updates.</p>	<p>Section 1115 demonstrations are used to waive certain requirements under Medicaid or test new or existing ways to deliver and pay for health care services in Medicaid. Through Section 1115 demonstrations, states can change the population served, benefits or services provided, delivery system, payment system, or cost-sharing.</p>	<p>A majority of states provide services to Medicaid beneficiaries through managed care organizations (MCOs). MCOs contract with state Medicaid agencies to provide for the delivery of Medicaid benefits and other services. MCOs receive a per member per month payment.</p>	<p>Integrated care models are models of care and payment delivery that reward high quality, coordinated care, for example through Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) and Patient-Centered Medical Homes (PCMH). These models typically involve partnerships among health care, community-based organizations, social service agencies, counties, and public health agencies. CMS encourages states to move away from fee-for-service to financial incentives that are tied to improving member health outcomes.</p>
<p>Examples of how to leverage the authority</p>	<p>Under section 1905(a) authority, states can include optional benefits to address SDOH, such as peer supports or case management services. In addition, Section 1945 of the Affordable Care Act established a health home state plan benefit option. Under this option, states can establish health homes to coordinate care, provide case management, and provide referrals to social supports for people with chronic conditions.</p>	<p>Using 1115 waivers, states can test approaches for addressing SDOH. For example, states can request federal matching funds to test the effectiveness of providing services to address SDOH. States can also pilot services for specific populations or a particular geographic area or could test alternate payment methodologies.</p>	<p>States are increasingly requiring MCOs to address SDOH through, for example, requiring MCOs to screen for social needs, coordinate with non-medical providers, using required Quality Assessment and Performance Improvement plan terms to focus MCO efforts on SDOH, such as including SDOH-related measures in MCO incentives.</p>	<p>Integrated care models can support a variety of innovations to provide services for individuals with SDOH needs, through for example, interdisciplinary care teams or care coordination services. Payment mechanisms that are tied to these models could also provide incentives for providers to address members' SDOH.</p>
<p>State examples</p>	<p>Through a state plan amendment, New Jersey added peer support services to its rehabilitative services benefit. These peer support specialists provide problem-solving, goal-setting, and skill-building supports and linkages to specialty support services throughout the stages of substance use disorder or serious mental illness recovery and rehabilitation.</p>	<p>North Carolina's 1115 demonstration authorizes the state to provide the Healthy Opportunities Pilot Program. Through this program, the state is piloting evidence-based interventions to address housing, transportation, food insecurity, and IPV/toxic stress.</p>	<p>Iowa requires MCOs to use a screening tool to assess their members' physical, social, functional, and psychological status. This helps to identify their needs and connect them with community services.</p>	<p>Rhode Island's Medicaid MCOs subcontract with Accountable Entities, integrated provider organizations that are responsible for the total cost, quality of care, and outcomes of a population. Accountable Entities must integrate strategies to address SDOH and demonstrate capacity to address needs in three priority areas: housing insecurity, food insecurity, and safety, domestic violence, education, employment, and transportation.</p>

Potential steps to influence your state’s Medicaid program

Your goal as providers of health and social services would be for your state to make changes to their state Medicaid program to cover services for the population you are targeting. Below are steps to get started to learn more about your state Medicaid agency. See **Supplement E** for additional guidance on crafting your message and [Addressing Social Determinants of Health through Policy: A Planning Guide for Multi-Sector Community Partnerships](#) for additional guidance on policy change

Exhibit D.2. Planning steps for Medicaid transformation

Step	How?	Why?
<p>1. Learn about your state’s Medicaid program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate an organizational chart for your state Medicaid agency on your state’s Medicaid website • Review your Medicaid state plan. You should be able to locate it on your state’s Medicaid website • Learn about the reforms your Medicaid office is invested in. For example, you can review state Medicaid program overviews here, the waivers your state has here, and the state plan amendments • The Kaiser Family Foundation maintains information on state Medicaid programs • Look for local experts on your state’s Medicaid program such as an academic/universities partner, nonprofit organizations, community groups, health or social service providers, local Institute of Medicine chapters, hospital associations, legislative committees of a jurisdiction (e.g., health or human services committee), ombudsmen, and individuals with lived experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each state’s Medicaid program is different. • The organizational chart will clue you into how your agency is organized. It could be divided by function or by population. • This plan defines which populations are covered, what services are covered, and how providers are reimbursed • Determine the work your state is already doing to make change in the same direction you want to go. Aligning your change with existing work of your state will help you get traction. • Helps build your understanding of the context to inform your approach and call to action
<p>2. Determine your call to action and which reform will support your call</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the Medicaid authorities that can support your call to action. In addition to the diagram above, the resources below provide more information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can make changes to your state’s Medicaid program, but they have to fall within the allowable changes under Medicaid authorities.



Resource: Refer to [Addressing Social Determinants of Health Through Policy: A Planning Guide for Multi-Sector Community Partnerships](#) for more ideas on how to enact the policy changes necessary to access these funding sources.

Exhibit D.2. Planning steps for Medicaid transformation (continued)

Step	How?	Why?
<p>3. Define the value your services add and tie that to your audience’s motivations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use data to show your success in people’s lives and their health outcomes • Share compelling success stories from your clients • Align your value add with any reforms your state is already pursuing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are more likely to get traction if you can demonstrate your value and if your ask aligns with their motivations
<p>4. Locate champions who will support your change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-review the organizational chart for your state Medicaid agency to locate champions who align with your reform • Locate allies among nonprofit organizations or politicians, your existing partners, community groups, health or social service providers, local institutes of medicine chapters, hospital associations, legislative committees of a jurisdiction (e.g., health or human services committee), or individuals with lived experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine who the people are that serve your population or align with the change you are looking for • Actors outside the program can influence change in the program too
<p>5. Share your call to action with your champion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the meeting format and content that suits your champion, and say the most important things in the beginning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will want to capture your champion’s attention in the way that the champion will be most receptive to
<p>6. Be patient</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whatever works for you! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health care transformation takes time and government moves slowly

Supplement E: Creating Effective Communications Products

Almost all sustainability domains rely on the ability to create effective communications products. Community and organizational partnerships depend on the ability to communicate values and plans clearly and authentically. Funding relies on the ability to tell the story of your purpose and impact. Even governance relies on the capacity of coalition and partnership leaders to communicate internally, whether through emails, standard operating procedures, or some other mechanism.

Strategic communications are thus a core element of your day-to-day work, not something that should be siloed from it or added on as an afterthought.

This worksheet walks you through a step-by-step process for creating effective communications products of all kinds, both internal and external.

Communications products are anything—videos, slide decks, infographics, even agendas or talking points for a meeting—that you use to convey information to or make requests of another party. The worksheet's purpose is to stimulate your team's critical thinking about effective communications products and help you generate ideas for them. Although it contains five numbered steps, the process of completing it may not be linear; you will likely go back and forth and revise as you go. That is entirely normal and appropriate.

After the worksheet, we provide a brief guide to the different types of data you might use in your communications products and what to do when you do not have perfect data for your strategy. Refer to the fillable Microsoft Word document for a clean copy of the worksheet that you can reproduce and use within your coalition or partnership.

1. Define your goal.

What do you want to happen because of this communication? What will be different after you have disseminated this communication to your audience? Consider your logic model or theory of change—how does this communication move you closer to your long-term outcomes?

To stimulate your thinking, consider the types of communications goals below. Do your communication goals fall into one of these categories?



Tip. Keep in mind: Awareness on its own does not create change, so you should have a concrete plan for how awareness will translate into future action and change.

Type of communication goal	Key questions
Awareness of the problem	To accomplish your larger goals, do you need to first make others aware of the problems your organization solves?
Awareness of your organization	Do you need to make others aware of the work that you do to accomplish larger goals?
Interest in your organization	Is the purpose of the communication to build interest in your activities and to build or advance a relationship?
Consideration of a proposal	Are you making a specific ask of your audience for an action for them to consider taking?
Evaluation of a proposal	Have you already made the specific ask and now want to move the conversation forward toward your desired result?
Sharing your story	Are you asking your communication audience to help you spread the word and make your case to other potential partners?

Goal	Examples
What do you want to happen as a result of this communication?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate a relationship with a new funder • Demonstrate value of screening and referral services to primary care physicians • Elicit support from a state representative for a Medicaid bill • Raise community awareness about the importance of the built environment on public health



Resource: If your communications goal is policy-focused, refer to [Addressing Social Determinants of Health through Policy: A Planning Guide for Multi-Sector Community Partnerships](#) for additional guidance. Remember that policy includes “little p”—procedures, administrative actions, and voluntary practices that affect your operations and programs.

2. Identify audience(s).

Who can make or influence the change described by your goal? Are you communicating to people who are the focus of change (recipients of the services you offer) or agents of change (people and organizations who affect the system)? How can you turn the former into the latter? Be as specific as possible in defining your audience, naming specific people to the greatest extent possible, even if it is a public communication (see Barbara persona below).

Audience(s)	Examples
Who can make or influence the change described by your goal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joanne James, Community Partnerships Lead at the Smith Foundation • Bill Jones, Practice Director at North Shore Primary Care Associations • Sheila Walker, Chief of Staff, State Senator Williams • Mother of school-age children: Audience persona is Barbara, 36 years old and a resident of Hyde Park with a son in 6th grade and a daughter in 2nd grade who worries about the amount of time her son spends playing video games; she is active on social media

3. Define the call to action.

What, specifically, do you want your audience to do because of this communication? If your goal is to raise awareness, “become aware” counts as a call to action.

Call to action	Examples
What do you want your audience to do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want Joanne James to review our introductory materials and respond by agreeing to meet with us. • Bill Jones has already recognized the health value of a screening and referral program. We want him to enter into a contracting relationship with us or, if he is not the decision maker, to connect us to the decision maker for a contracting relationship. • We want Sheila Walker to convey our data and materials to State Senator Williams and we want Senator Williams to make a public statement of support for the Medicaid bill. • We want Barbara to feel validated in her worries about her son’s video game habit and to make her aware that outdoor recreation is an alternative, but only if the spaces for it exist, so that she can be enlisted as a volunteer to support policy change in the future.

4. Describe your audience’s motivations.

What is important to your audience in the context of your goal and call to action? Think about them as *people*, not just as *organizations*.

Motivations	Examples
<p>What is important to your audience in the context of your goal and call to action?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joanne James is very conscious of demonstrating the equity commitment of the Smith Foundation. • Bill Jones is responsible for the financial performance of the practice. • Sheila Walker will be responsive to anything that might improve the senator’s reelection chance. • Barbara is nostalgic for her childhood, which felt much freer than her children’s, and wants to believe that kind of freedom is still possible

5. Identify message and format.

Given your audience’s motivations, what message will move them to take the desired action? What ideas or concepts must your audience understand to be persuaded or moved to action? Messages might include personal stories, survey data, findings from the research literature, and descriptions of the problems. What format will be most compelling given the context of the communication?

Content and format	Examples
<p>Given your audience’s motivations, what messages will move them to take the desired action? What format will be most compelling given the context of the communication?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Joanne James, we should emphasize our equity commitment that matches hers, i.e., the fact that we work exclusively in low-income, majority-Black communities and partner with those residents to co-design our programs. A one-pager that describes our programs and co-creation approach, emphasizing “Nothing About Us Without Us,” will be most effective. • Given Bill Jones’s focus on financial performance, we need to demonstrate that there is financial value, not just health value, in a screening and referral program. An infographic will be the best way to communicate those hard numbers. • Personal stories and pictures that Senator Williams can use or adapt in campaign materials will be compelling to Sheila Walker. A slide deck that briefly defines the problem and our solution before telling several personal stories of families we have helped will be most effective. • Given her nostalgia for a freer childhood, Barbara is likely to be responsive to an Instagram campaign highlighting the value of public green spaces and the possibilities they offer.

Making the most of your data

The reality is that you will not always have ideal content or data for the communications product that you want to create. However, that does not mean that you should give up your communication strategy entirely! Often you can use more easily obtainable types of data, either all in one or in combination, as substitutes. To help your thinking along these lines, here is a list of different types of data you may have access to, in approximate order of easiest to most difficult to obtain:



Tip. If there is something holding you back from implementing your ideal communication strategy, such as not knowing who might be an agent of change or what their motivations might be, it could be a signal to address the limitation as part of your sustainability plan.

Exhibit E.1. Making the most of your data

Category #	Type of data	Notes
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who you are What you do (activities) What you produce (outputs) Descriptions of the problem you are solving Research literature (for example, from Google Scholar) 	All of these are relatively easy to obtain from your logic model, theory of change, or regular operations of your coalition or partnership. If that is not the case, obtaining these data may be a great focus for your sustainability efforts.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal stories about the people you have affected and how you have helped them Informal survey data (e.g., comment cards at an event) 	Person-level data in these categories has a special power to move audiences. These two categories are closely related and take a special effort to obtain. If you do not have a repository of this type of content to use in the creation of data products, planning to obtain it may be an important component of your sustainability plan.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal survey data Outcomes 	These are the most labor-intensive and expensive to obtain. They both require special technical expertise that is not feasible for all coalitions to obtain in all cases.

One of the biggest communications mismatches that coalitions and partnerships face is the need to create a communication product that ideally would use category 3 data when you do not have those data. Both coalitions and partnerships, however, do have data substitutes from categories 1 and 2 that may be more feasible to use in your communications products.

Challenging type of data to obtain	Possible substitute	Explanation	Example
Formal survey data	Personal stories and informal survey data	Survey data are valuable because they can provide a scientifically rigorous justification for a claim to truth about people, such as that residents of a community perceive a particular issue as a problem or that participants in an educational program value what they are learning. Personal stories and informal survey data also make data-driven claims about people, just without the same scientifically rigorous claim to truth. In some cases, that claim to truth is critical and this substitution will not work. But often what will move an audience are simply data about what people believe or how they are experiencing some aspect of their lives, even if the data do not derive from a formal, rigorous survey.	A coalition wants to communicate to a politician the value that community residents place on a new park so that she will support other built environment initiatives. There is no time or money to field a full survey. Instead, a coalition places a staff member at the park on two afternoons and has them conduct brief, informal interviews with park users about how their quality of life has improved since the park opened. These stories then form the basis of the communication strategy to the politician.
Outcomes	Activities + outputs + research literature	Outcomes backed by a valid evaluation process are often the gold standard for your audiences, especially funders. But outcomes are hard to generate without access to very robust data, evaluation expertise, and a matched control group. In the absence of outcome data, a tight narrative about what you have done (activities) and what you have produced (outputs) in combination with evidence from the research literature that those activities and outputs reliably produce desired outcomes can be a compelling substitute. <i>Hint: Lean on your logic model, which should define your activities and outputs and be informed by the research literature on how those activities and outputs lead to desired outcomes.</i>	A coalition wants to demonstrate to a funder that their program connecting young adults to elderly residents at a Medicaid-funded nursing home for weekly Puzzle Nights is increasing the residents' social connectedness, leading to improved health outcomes. However, they do not have access to the residents' health data. Instead, they craft a message that describes how many Puzzle Nights they have held, how many residents have participated, and findings from a study that group activities such as Puzzle Night decrease rates of depression and improve quality of life among older adults.

Download the fillable Microsoft Word [Sustainability Planning Template](#).

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