ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Health Outreach Partners (HOP) would like to extend its appreciation to the staff that contributed to the development of the toolkit.

TOOLKIT CONTRIBUTORS
Sonia Lee, MPH, Project Manager
Megan O’Brien, MA, Project Manager
Alexis Wielunski, MPH, Project Manager

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS
Monica Dreitcer, Associate Project Manager
Diana Lieu, Project Manager
Liam Spurgeon, Associate Project Manager
Kristen Stoimenoff, MPH, Deputy Director

HOP also wishes to thank the following people for their review and feedback on the toolkit:

Steve Davis, Director of Outreach Services
Greene County Health Care, Inc.

Allison Lipscomb, MPH, Community Development & Special Populations Coordinator
North Carolina Community Health Center Association

Patrina Twilley, MSW, Evaluation and Training Coordinator
National Health Care for the Homeless Council, Inc.

This publication was made possible by grant number U30CS09743 from the Health Resources and Services Administration, Bureau of Primary Health Care. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of HRSA.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Introduction

Section 1: Understanding a Community Health Needs Assessment

- WHAT IS A COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT? .......................................................... 4
- KEY STEPS OF THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS ............................................................. 7

Section 2: Planning Your Needs Assessment

- PROVIDE DIRECTION ........................................................................................................... 9
- SET A GOAL .......................................................................................................................... 12
- DEFINE PARAMETERS ........................................................................................................... 13
- DEVELOP YOUR ASSESSMENT WORK PLAN .................................................................... 19

**Planning Tools:**

- SETTING A GOAL WORKSHEET ......................................................................................... 21
- THE BIG PICTURE WORKSHEET .......................................................................................... 22
- THE LITTLE PICTURE WORKSHEET ..................................................................................... 23
- DATA NEEDED WORKSHEET ............................................................................................... 24
- SAMPLE NEEDS ASSESSMENT WORK PLAN .................................................................... 26
- NEEDS ASSESSMENT WORK PLAN TEMPLATE ................................................................... 28
- SAMPLE SCOPE OF WORK AND BUDGET .......................................................................... 29

Section 3: Developing Your Data Collection Tools

- DETERMINE DATA SOURCES ............................................................................................... 31
- SECONDARY DATA: IDENTIFY EXISTING DATA ................................................................... 41
- PRIMARY DATA: IDENTIFY AND SELECT YOUR DATA COLLECTION TOOLS ....................... 32
- MODIFY EXISTING TOOLS .................................................................................................. 36
- DEVELOP NEW TOOLS ........................................................................................................ 37
- KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR DETERMINING SAMPLE SIZE ............................................... 37

**Data Collection Tools:**

- ESSENTIAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS .............................................................................. 39
- SAMPLE WRITTEN SURVEY .................................................................................................. 40
- KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW: SAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDE .................................................. 41
- SAMPLE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS ................................................................................... 43
- CHECKLIST FOR PLANNING A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY FORUM .................................. 45
- SAMPLE COMMUNITY FORUM AGENDA ................................................................................ 47
Section 4: Collecting and Analyzing Your Data ................................................................. 50

COLLECT THE DATA 51
PILOT TEST YOUR TOOLS AND METHODS 51
GET INFORMED CONSENT 51
TRAIN YOUR TEAM TO COLLECT DATA 52
HANDLE LOGISTICS 54
CONSIDER THE COMMUNITY CONTEXT 55
ANALYZE YOUR DATA 56
DATA ANALYSIS METHODS 56

Informed Consent Tools: ................................................................. 58

SAMPLE INFORMED CONSENT FORM 59
SAMPLE NEEDS ASSESSMENT INFORMATION SHEET 60

Section 5: What’s Next: Sharing and Using Your Needs Assessment Findings... 61

SHARE YOUR FINDINGS 62
USE YOUR FINDINGS 63

Sharing and Using Your Findings Tools: ................................................................. 66

REPORTING THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS CHECKLIST 67
SAMPLE INFOGRAPHICS AND RESOURCES 68
HOW TO USE YOUR NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS 69

About Health Outreach Partners................................................................. 70
INTRODUCTION

Health centers, hospitals, and other community-based health organizations continually strive to improve the health of communities by providing quality care and supportive services that address the health needs of underserved populations. A community health needs assessment (CHNA) enables organizations to gain insight into the communities they serve through a process that identifies health needs, risk factors, and barriers to care, as well as possible actions to address their communities’ needs. Further, it is a critical component of effective program planning and ensuring that resources are directed appropriately to the services that are most needed. A community health needs assessment can also help identify the key strengths and unique assets of communities.

The purpose of this Community Health Needs Assessment Toolkit is to support your organization’s efforts in meeting the health needs of underserved populations by providing guidance and practical tools to undertake the needs assessment process. This toolkit is grounded in the idea that health services can most effectively address the needs of the community when they are informed and designed with their input. Thus, a needs assessment is a process that involves those who are concerned for the health and well-being of the community, including underserved populations and the organizations that serve them.

ABOUT THE TOOLKIT

This toolkit guides you through each step of the needs assessment process. The toolkit is organized into five sections. The first section, “Understanding a Community Health Needs Assessment,” is intended to provide a foundation by defining a needs assessment, delineating the benefits of conducting one, and outlining the keys steps in the process. The next three sections are organized by the specific steps for implementing a needs assessment: 1) Planning Your Needs Assessment, 2) Developing Your Data Collection Tools, and 3) Collecting and Analyzing Your Data. The final section covers the different ways to share and use the needs assessment findings. Each section provides detailed information about the topic area, along with tools and resources. Additionally, real life examples of health centers and their needs assessment efforts are highlighted throughout the toolkit. These examples are taken from HOP’s Innovative Outreach Practices (IOP) Database.¹

Whether you are starting from scratch in conducting a needs assessment, or are looking for ways to improve your existing needs assessment process, this toolkit serves as a comprehensive resource for your organization. Any section can also be used on its own, according to your specific needs. Although the sections of the toolkit are presented in a linear fashion, please note that the needs assessment process is more fluid. Each section of this toolkit contains information that can help to supplement or expand details in other sections.

¹ The Innovative Outreach Practices Database is a resource to showcase the outreach efforts of health centers, and share practical ways to implement strategies, programs, and activities that have been proven effective in the field. http://web.outreach-partners.org/resources/iop
WHO THE TOOLKIT IS INTENDED FOR

This toolkit is intended for organizations and agencies that are striving to improve the health of underserved populations. The concepts, methods, and tools presented in this toolkit can be used by your organization to better understand and respond to the health needs of your communities.

The toolkit can be used by:

- Health Centers
- Non-profit hospital organizations
- Free clinics and other safety net providers
- Head Start programs
- Local and state agencies
- Other community-based organizations

KEY TERMS

Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA): Community health needs assessment is a broad term used to describe the process of collecting relevant information about the health needs of communities or specific sub-groups. CHNA directly involves communities and the organizations serving them to provide input and ideas for actions to address the health needs of the community.

Needs Assessment: In this toolkit, the term “needs assessment” is used to refer to a community health needs assessment, as it relates to health centers, hospitals, and other community-based health organizations that serve underserved populations.

Underserved Populations: Underserved populations is a broad term to describe populations that face social, economic, and cultural barriers to accessing health and social services. They include, but are not limited to, low-income populations, the uninsured, immigrants, those with limited English proficiency (LEP), migratory and seasonal agricultural workers and dependents, individuals and families experiencing homelessness, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community, those living in public housing, Asian and Pacific Islanders (API), veterans, seniors, children in schools, and people with disabilities. In this toolkit, the term ‘underserved populations’ is used generally to refer to the group of people being assessed by health centers, hospitals, and other community-based health organizations.

Special Populations: Health centers are community-based and patient-directed organizations that serve populations with limited access to health care. Some health centers also receive specific funding to focus on certain special populations: individuals and families experiencing homelessness, agricultural workers and dependents, those living in public housing, and Native Hawaiians.

HOP Tip: “HOP Tips” are a key feature of the toolkit. They are indicated by a light bulb and are brief tips that provide suggestions or point out additional resources.

---

2 The term “health center” refers to a Health Center Program grantee, Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) Look-Alike, or an FQHC.

3 The term “agricultural worker” is used throughout this document to refer to migratory and seasonal agricultural workers.

SECTION OVERVIEW:
This section provides an overview of a community health needs assessment, the different ways to approach conducting one, and why it is beneficial to undertake the process. A visual representation of the key steps of the needs assessment process is included.

COMPONENTS:
• What is a Community Health Needs Assessment?
  o Definition
  o Benefits of a Needs Assessment
  o HRSA Health Center Program Requirement
  o ACA Requirement

• Key Steps of the Needs Assessment Process
WHAT IS A COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT?

A community health needs assessment is a critical component of delivering effective health services to underserved populations. A needs assessment\(^5\) requires collecting information from a variety of sources in order to understand health needs, risk factors, barriers to care, and the types of health care and supportive services needed in a particular community or for a specific sub-group. A needs assessment should provide relevant community health information, so that health centers, hospitals, and other community-based organizations can prioritize and take actions to respond to the health needs of the communities within their service areas.

### DEFINITION

*It is a process that enables organizations to:*

- Create a health profile of a community or any specific sub-group
- Identify primary risk factors for ill health
- Identify the barriers to care that make accessing services challenging
- Prioritize and develop actions that will address the health needs of the community

### BENEFITS OF A NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

Health centers, hospitals, and other community-based health organizations are committed to improving the health of communities, particularly vulnerable and underserved populations. Needs assessments are a comprehensive and meaningful way for your organization to gain insight into the health needs of underserved populations in your community. Benefits of a needs assessment include the ability to:

- **Ensure health services respond** to the needs of the community
- **Maintain continuous contact** with the community, including underserved populations
- **Support program planning** to align services to meet community health needs
- **Prioritize activities to maximize resources** based on the most pressing needs of the community
- **Make a solid case for future funding** by collecting key community health information and reporting on how efforts correspond to documented needs
- **Respond appropriately to the HRSA Needs Assessment Program Requirement** for health center program grantees
- **Respond appropriately to the ACA Requirement of CHNA** for non-profit hospital systems

**HOP Tip:** *A needs assessment is a dynamic and on-going process. Engaging in a regular needs assessment of your community is a great way of staying informed about the changing needs and demographics of underserved populations.*

---

\(^5\) In this toolkit, the term “needs assessment” is used to refer to a community health needs assessment, as it relates to health centers, hospitals, and other community-based health organizations that serve underserved populations.
HRSA HEALTH CENTER PROGRAM REQUIREMENT

For health center program grantees,6 a needs assessment is a HRSA Health Center Program Requirement. The HRSA Health Center Program Requirement states that a “Health Center demonstrates and documents the needs of its target population, updating its service area, when appropriate.”7

To make the most of your needs assessment, consider the following questions:8

- Have you clearly defined the community that your health center serves, including demographics and service area?
- Have you clearly described the health needs of the community in your service area? What data do you have to support it?
- How will you use your needs assessment findings to inform and improve delivery of appropriate services?
- Have you provided the rationale for your service area, including showing that the defined area is consistent with patient origin data in the Uniform Data System (UDS)?
- How have you demonstrated that there is a shortage of health services and health professionals in your service area?
- Have you shown that your health center has locations that are accessible to the greatest number of individuals residing in the service area?

Other resources that can help you with your needs assessment include:

1. HRSA Health Professional Shortage Areas and Medically Underserved Areas/Populations: HRSA has developed shortage designation criteria and uses them to decide whether or not a geographic area, population group, or facility is a Health Professional Shortage Area or a Medically Underserved Area or Population.
2. HRSA Health Center Program Requirements: This is a Powerpoint presentation from HRSA on the Health Center Program Requirements, including a section on the needs assessment.
3. HRSA Site Visit Guide: The guide covers the needs assessment requirement and provides information on what is reviewed for an operational site visit. It also includes questions to be answered regarding the needs assessment. See the HRSA Site Visit Guide, Section 1: Need, Page 3.

---

6 Health Center Program grantees are organizations that receive grants under the Health Center Program as authorized under section 330 of the Public Health Service Act, as amended. They are also sometimes referred to as “federally-funded health centers” or “HRSA-funded health centers.”


8 - Section 330 (k)(2) and Section 330 (k)(3)(j) of the Public Health Service Act (42 USCS § 254b).
(HCH) Grantees.” This toolkit provides a step-to-step guide for conducting a community health needs assessment. Content is tailored specifically for HCH grantees.

6. **UDS Mapper:** The UDS Mapper is a free, easy to use online mapping system driven primarily from data within the Uniform Data System (UDS). Using UDS data reported by health centers can assist organizations in exploring service areas by geography, patient origin, and distance. Some features include identifying how extensively a health center has penetrated areas in their community, county, and state, or generate estimates of the number of patients served as well as remaining community members who are not served by health centers.

**ACA REQUIREMENT**

Under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), non-profit hospital organizations are required to conduct a community health needs assessment (CHNA) once every three years. They are also required to develop and update an implementation strategy that addresses the community health needs identified by the CHNA.

For non-profit hospitals, other resources that can help you with your needs assessment:

1. **Community Commons:** Community Commons developed a free web-based platform for hospitals and other organizations to develop and create CHNA reports from a set of community indicators and demographics.

2. **Kaiser Permanente:** Kaiser developed a web-based CHNA data platform where users can create an account and access over 80 community health indicators that can be viewed, mapped, and analyzed to best understand the health of a specific community. Users can generate and print reports of the health indicators.

3. **Center for Disease Control (CDC):** The CDC has a list of resources for implementing a CHNA process, including background information about CHNAs, principles to guide a CHNA, planning tools, and data resources.

4. **National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC):** NACHC created a catalog of available tools and resources of conducting a CHNA, including a brief description and link to each resource, the target audience, and the cost of accessing the resource. NACHC also includes links to different local and state specific data sets.
A needs assessment is a dynamic process characterized by various roles, responsibilities, activities, and outcomes. Knowing the key steps of the process helps you to plan, manage, and move things forward.

As illustrated below, the needs assessment process consists of three key steps: 1) Planning Your Needs Assessment, 2) Collecting and Analyzing Your Data, and 3) Sharing and Using Your Findings. Subsequent sections of the toolkit delve further into these areas and provide guidance on how to plan and implement these crucial steps of your needs assessment.

1. Planning Your Needs Assessment
   - Provide Direction
   - Set a Goal
   - Define the Parameters
   - Develop a Work Plan & Budget

2. Collecting and Analyzing Your Data
   - Select Methods
   - Collect Data
   - Analyze Data

3. Sharing and Using Your Findings
   - Share Your Findings
   - Use Your Findings for Program Planning
SECTION OVERVIEW:
This section guides you through planning and developing a work plan for the needs assessment process, including establishing structures to provide direction and involve the right people, setting a goal, and determining what information you need to find through the needs assessment.

COMPONENTS:
• Provide Direction
  o Establish an Advisory Group
  o Approaches to the Needs Assessment
  o Establish a Needs Assessment Team

• Set a Goal

• Define Parameters
  o The Big Picture
  o The Little Picture

• Develop Your Needs Assessment Work Plan
  o Develop a Budget for Your Needs Assessment

• Planning Tools
PROVIDE DIRECTION

As you start planning for a needs assessment, the first step you can take is to collaborate with the right people who can provide direction and guidance throughout the process. Begin by establishing a structure where key people who are concerned about or have an interest in the needs assessment can work together and provide their input and ideas about the process. This structure can consist of two types of groups: 1) an \textbf{advisory group} who maintains the broader perspective ("big picture"), takes a long-term view, and provides guidance on the planning and implementation, and 2) a \textbf{needs assessment team} who considers the specific details ("little picture") and plans and conducts the needs assessment. Additionally, you will need to determine the type of approach to use in leading the needs assessment, such as engaging consultants, working with community partners, or having your organization’s staff conduct the needs assessment.

\textbf{ESTABLISH AN ADVISORY GROUP}

You can start the planning process by forming an advisory group. An advisory group is usually made up of representatives of diverse community interests and expertise who provide a big picture perspective on the direction of the needs assessment. By including an advisory group in defining the goal and scope of the assessment, your needs assessment will more likely reflect the priorities of your organization and the wider community.

The size of an advisory group may vary, depending on the scope of the needs assessment. However, forming your advisory group with 8 to 10 members makes it manageable, ensures that different interests are represented, and provides a space for members to be actively engaged in their roles.

Consider including representatives from the following groups:

- \textbf{Community members that will be assessed} to ensure the information you will be collecting is relevant and to provide insight on how to best engage the community in the process
- \textbf{Organizational administration and Board of Directors} to provide direction and vision for the assessment so that organizational goals and expectations are well integrated
- \textbf{Key community partners} to ensure that the data is relevant to the entire health and social service community
- \textbf{Needs assessment team} to implement the project and keep the process grounded in reality. The team will most likely consist primarily of your staff members since they are most familiar with your organization and its available resources

\textbf{Role of an Advisory Group}

- Offers guidance and direction throughout the needs assessment process
- Considers the “big picture”
- Helps to establish the goal and scope of the needs assessment
- Provides a sounding board for the needs assessment team and can help to troubleshoot large-scale problems or issues that may arise
- Provides input on the design, data collection methods, and activities, as needed
Consider keeping your advisory group active throughout the duration of the needs assessment. However, remember the advisory group is intended to be the sounding board for your needs assessment team and the project as a whole. Therefore, they may choose to meet regularly or only during the times that their input and assistance is needed. It is important to engage members more in the beginning before going too far into the process when you can no longer change direction easily.

**HOP Tip:** Consider inviting community leaders to participate in the advisory group as they are the respected “go-to” members of the community. Their participation may motivate other community members to participate as well. Remember that community leaders are often overextended with their time, so try to think creatively about when and where to meet in order to facilitate their participation.

**APPRAOCHES TO THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

Deciding on who will lead and conduct the needs assessment process depends on the time and resources of your organization. Three approaches to leading the needs assessment process include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **In-House:** Take on the entire process at your organization by using appropriate staff to plan, design, and implement the needs assessment. The benefits of an in-house process include integrating the process into your organization’s operations, while reinforcing the capacity of your staff to plan and conduct a needs assessment. However, this can be time-consuming and take staff away from existing duties.

- **External Consultant:** Engage external consultants with expertise to either lead or take on some major parts of the process. This requires less time of your organization, but can be a major financial expense and often requires adjusting to different working styles.

- **Collaborations:** Work together with community partners to take on different parts of the process. This approach maximizes resources and time, and can help to fill in any gaps in skills or resources. However, collaborations present challenges of defining a shared goal and managing expectations and priorities, especially if there is different data that needs to be collected for funders. Further, establishing trust and well-defined structures around communication and decision-making can take time. Remember, collaborations still require one main organization to oversee the process, move things forward, and keep everyone accountable.

Please keep in mind that these approaches are not mutually exclusive and a combination of these approaches is also possible.

**HOP Tip:** A health center and hospital can consider working together on a needs assessment. As noted in the Benefits section of the toolkit, a needs assessment is a requirement for both health centers (by HRSA) and non-profit hospital systems (by the ACA). Collaborations between health centers and hospital systems can reduce duplicative efforts and maximize resources.

**ESTABLISH A NEEDS ASSESSMENT TEAM**

Once you have formed your advisory group and decided on the approach to take on leading the process, the next step is to establish your needs assessment team. This team will be in charge of overseeing and conducting the needs assessment. The team will be responsible for determining
what information is needed, identifying data collection methods to be used, and carrying out the needs assessment. Ideally, your team will consult with the advisory group periodically throughout the process and seek their advice from time to time when unanswered questions or significant issues arise.

The makeup of your team will depend on how your organization decides on who will conduct the needs assessment:

- **In-House**: Your team will be made up of staff from your organization, including a representative from senior leadership, staff from outreach or other community-based programs, and any other staff who have skills required for the process, such as language or other needed expertise.

- **Consultant**: Even if your organization chooses external consultants to lead the process, you will still need a needs assessment team to coordinate and participate in the data collection. Further, your team will serve as the liaison between the consultants, the advisory group, and the community.

- **Collaboration**: Your team will work with key community partners to collaborate on the needs assessment. Since your organization initiates this process, it is important that your needs assessment team serves as the lead of the needs assessment.

The size of your needs assessment team will vary, depending on the type of assessment and the community being assessed. Plan for your team to meet regularly, as well as for meetings with the advisory group.

**Role of a Needs Assessment Team**

- Oversees and implements the needs assessment
- Works out the “little picture”, while considering the “big picture”
- Helps to establish the goal and scope of the needs assessment
- Develops the work plan, including defining activities and roles and responsibilities
- Consults with the advisory group for input and to troubleshoot large-scale problems or issues that may arise

**HOP Tip**: Communication is the key element of effectively working in a group or collaboration. Some techniques to improve communication include:

- Establishing clear expectations
- Being considerate of language needs
- Consistently seeking clarification
- Maintaining respectful interactions
- Providing constructive feedback
- Being flexible
SET A GOAL

To begin the planning process, it is important to start with setting the goal of the needs assessment. Identifying clearly what your organization wants to know or the desired outcome of the needs assessment will directly influence the kinds of questions to ask yourselves upfront as you plan and establish the process. This is where your advisory group can provide direction and work with the needs assessment team to develop an overarching goal that will define the scope of the needs assessment and guide the process.

What is a goal?

*A goal is a broad, brief statement of intent that provides vision and scope for any intended effort.*

Here are some examples of common goals for a needs assessment. Notice how they can vary greatly in scope depending on what your organization wants to learn about the community or a specific sub-group within the community.

**Example Goal 1:** Hope Clinic will identify the top two barriers to accessing prenatal care by homeless women within its service area in order to design an outreach program that will reduce these barriers and increase the number of homeless families served.

**Example Goal 2:** Citrus Grove Health Center will determine to what extent its services are known and used amongst residents of public housing in order to improve its messaging and outreach efforts.

**Example Goal 3:** The agricultural worker needs assessment of Sleepy Hollow Community Health Clinic will identify the top five health problems that agricultural workers have in order to ensure that its services address these needs.

Developing a goal requires that your advisory group and needs assessment team first answer some key questions about the reasons for the needs assessment, who is to be assessed, and your organization’s plan for using the findings. Answering these questions as you start the planning can help you develop a specific needs assessment goal. By defining the goal at the beginning, you can stay focused on what you hope to achieve instead of getting overwhelmed with the many directions the assessment could go. See page 22 for the Setting a Goal Worksheet to help you develop a needs assessment goal.
DEFINE PARAMETERS

Once you have established a goal, it is time to define the parameters of the needs assessment. Your parameters are the “guiding factors” that define your needs assessment, such as the scope of the project, timeline, focus, and the information you want to know. By defining your parameters, you should be able to know what to include and exclude when planning your needs assessment.

You can lay out the details of your needs assessment with planning tools such as the “Big Picture” and “Little Picture.” The “Big Picture” considers the broader, external factors that can influence the needs assessment, such as the availability of resources, potential challenges, and considerations for choosing partners or collaborations. The “Little Picture” looks at the specific details and answers the questions around who, what, where, and when. Your advisory group and needs assessment team can use these tools to brainstorm together and come to agreement about the parameters of the project.

THE BIG PICTURE
The “Big Picture” refers to the questions of 1) resources, 2) challenges, 3) collaborators, and 4) timeline. Both your advisory group and needs assessment team need to consider these broader areas and be able to answer the questions below before outlining the specific details of the needs assessment.

- **Resources**: What are the community and organizational resources you could use for your assessment?
- **Challenges**: What are the potential challenges to doing a needs assessment in your organization and community?
- **Timeline**: What is your timeline for the assessment? What factors might affect that?
- **Collaborators**: Which individuals or groups in your community should be involved in the assessment?
1. **Resources:** What are the community and organizational resources that could be used for the needs assessment, including financial, material, and human resources (both internal and external)?

   - **Secondary Data Sources:** Determine what information already exists about the community or sub-group to be assessed. Secondary data can provide basic and necessary information on the community and illuminate any gaps in existing data. See page 31 for more on secondary data.

   - **Existing Human Resources:** Start by considering possible staff members who can assist with the needs assessment. When identifying specific staff members, consider each according to specific skills, strengths, qualities, connections, and schedules. Try to maximize staff talents, but be mindful of their workloads.

   - **Other Resources:** Determine who in the community can be a resource. Further, determine other resources that can support the needs assessment, such as borrowing community spaces to hold a community forum or donated items that could be given to participants as incentives. Consider creating a community resources table to keep track of this information.

   **Sample Community Resources Table**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name &amp; Title</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Resources &amp; Connections</th>
<th>Possible Role</th>
<th>Availability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reva Shah, Outreach Coordinator</td>
<td>Caring and Giving, Inc.</td>
<td>Experienced with focus groups &amp; facilitating meetings</td>
<td>Is well connected with area and knows where the homeless populations are situated</td>
<td>Handle all data collection with the homeless population</td>
<td>June-Sept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max Field, Youth Pastor</td>
<td>Sunrise Community Church</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Has good connection with community leaders, can lend space in church basement for community meeting</td>
<td>Develop fliers for community meetings and speak with leaders</td>
<td>Anytime during the year, but only weekends after church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynthia Diaz, Professor</td>
<td>Community College, Dept. of Public Health</td>
<td>SPSS, SAS, and EpiInfo</td>
<td>Can perhaps get students and interns to help with data entry, analysis, and report writing</td>
<td>Data entry and analysis</td>
<td>Available more during fall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Challenges:** What are the potential challenges in your organization and community to doing the needs assessment? Take the time to discuss this with your needs assessment team and advisory group to come up with a plan of action. Below are some examples of questions to ask early in the process.

   - What are the organizational challenges of doing the needs assessment?
   - What are the challenges in our community of doing the needs assessment?
   - Are there any factors that will affect any of the activities we want to do?
   - How large geographically is the service area served by our organization?
   - How challenging will it be to get community members to participate in the needs assessment?
   - Are there issues to address upfront with potential collaborators?
3. **Collaborators:** Are there individuals or groups in the community that should be involved in the needs assessment? Pool resources such as staffing and existing data collection tools to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment. Collaborations can provide a more complete picture about the community. Some suggestions of where to recruit from include: churches, health centers, hospitals, social service agencies, school districts, universities, sports leagues, health departments, Head Start agencies, AmeriCorps, or community service organizations.

### Innovative Outreach Practice: Forming a Regional Coalition to Assess Needs of Agricultural Workers

The Migrant Education Outreach Cooperative (MEOC), a joint effort between the Migrant Education Program and Kinston Community Health Center (KCHC), is a platform for communicating among agencies that serve agricultural workers in Eastern North Carolina. The cooperative involves representatives from two public school systems, a Head Start agency, a community college, one health center, and two family-focused non-profit organizations.

The seven coalition members conduct a comprehensive agricultural worker needs assessment across the region. All representatives have assisted in the survey design, received training for administering the surveys, and mobilized their respective community volunteers to carry out the assessment. The assessment covers a five county service area, reaching 240 agricultural workers and their families.

*For more detailed information, please see HOP’s Innovative Outreach Practices at [www.outreach-partners.org/resources/iop](http://www.outreach-partners.org/resources/iop).*

4. **Timeline:** What is the timeline of the assessment? What factors might affect the timeline? Depending on the goal of your needs assessment, things to consider include: whether there is a predetermined deadline such as a funding request, if you need to meet a deadline determined by funding requirements, or if there is complete flexibility in determining the deadline. The following are some other considerations that may influence your timeline:

- **Existing Time Commitments:** Be realistic about the other commitments of the team, including vacation schedules of staff. Be generous enough with deadlines so that prior commitments or existing expectations of staff time are adequately reflected in the timeline.
- **Allotted Time for Each Phase:** Do not underestimate the time it will take to complete each phase of the process. Often, so much effort goes into planning, data collection, and data entry, that data analysis and reporting get crunched at the end. Work backwards from the desired endpoint. If not enough time was allowed to adequately complete each phase, either scale back the scope of the needs assessment, or modify the internal deadlines.
- **Working with Community Partners:** If the process involves community partners, add more time to complete the assessment. Be aware that this adds an extra layer of input and communication. Discuss expectations and time commitments with partnering organizations. Try to come to an agreement on a timeline that takes into account everyone’s needs.
THE LITTLE PICTURE
After considering the “Big Picture” issues, determine the specific parameters of the process. You can use the “Little Picture” as a tool to brainstorm and clarify key questions, such as 1) whom will be assessed, 2) where will you gather information, 3) when can the community be assessed, and 4) what do you want to learn from the needs assessment. Keep your goal in mind as you brainstorm.

1. **Who: Whom specifically will you assess?**
   - **Define the community:** You likely already identified in your goal which community or subgroup you will assess. For example, if you have a program that focuses specifically on individuals experiencing homelessness, you may want to focus your needs assessment on collecting information about this sub-group. Conversely, you may want to do an assessment that focuses on understanding the needs of new populations in your area or an assessment that will support the design of a new program at your organization.
   - **Identify who else can provide information about the community:** There may already exist needs assessment data gathered by other organizations about the community you are assessing. Additionally, there may be “key informants,” such as other safety net providers, social services, and other organizations that are very familiar with the community and can provide additional information. Consider who else could provide needs assessment information. These individuals may be specific people that are
community or religious leaders, public health officials, other social or health service providers, and teachers or other school staff.

2. **Where:** *From what geographic area do you want to gather information?* Will you be looking to collect data from your organization’s entire service area or a specific location within it? Which districts, cities, or counties are involved? Is the area rural or urban? Are there certain neighborhoods or types of locations you want to focus on such as schools, agricultural worker camps, public housing, or shelters? Using visual tools such as community mapping can help to answer some of these questions. See page 37 for tips on community mapping.

3. **When:** *At what time should you gather data?* In this case, time is broad and refers to time of day, days of the week, and times of the year. The best time will depend on whom you want to assess. For example, if it is a mobile population, such as people experiencing homelessness, when are they in a certain area? Which steps in the process need to occur at certain times?

   **HOP Tip:** Try creating a Year-At-A-Glance Calendar. This calendar provides a month-to-month snapshot of big picture trends, such as key events in the community. It can be made using either a large sheet of paper, pens, and post-its to hang on the wall or an online shared calendar.

4. **What:** *What information do you need to capture? What do you want to know?* Be sure to consider any requirements by your funders when planning what information to gather. Below are some examples of information you want to collect. Consider the specific pieces of information you want to know under these topic areas. This is what you will look for in existing data and will help you to decide the type of data collection methods to use and tools to create.
   - Demographic information
   - Health risks and disparities
   - Health care utilization
   - Barriers to care
   - Desired services
   - Other community-specific information

After brainstorming what information you want to collect during your needs assessment, you can start to think about whether that information already exists and, if so, where. You may also want to prioritize the data that is most important for you to gather and document how you plan to use it. Put all of this into a table to easily reference as you start to develop your data collection tools and as you move on to gather your data. The table below provides an example for a community health needs assessment of those living in public housing. See page 25 for a sample of the Data Needed Worksheet.⁹

---

⁹ Table adapted from the National Center for Farmworker Health’s Farmworker Community Needs Assessment: “Determining what information is needed” (2011).
### Sample Data Needed Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Areas</th>
<th>What specific data do you want?</th>
<th>Which data collection methods are needed?</th>
<th>For primary data, from whom will you collect data?</th>
<th>For secondary data, where might the data exist already?</th>
<th>How do you plan to use this data?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Primary Data</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Secondary Data</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Online survey</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Those living in public housing, at least 100 household</td>
<td>• US Census</td>
<td>Determine need for age-specific services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Online survey</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Those living in public housing, at least 100 household</td>
<td>• US Census</td>
<td>Determine need for gender-specific services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Language</td>
<td>Online survey</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Those living in public housing, at least 100 household</td>
<td>• US Census • Head Start • Health Center Databases</td>
<td>Designing health education materials, planning outreach activities, hiring linguistically responsive staff.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**HOP Tip:** Know your priorities and be prepared to let go of other less critical interests. It is easy to want and collect too much information. On the other hand, sometimes not enough information is collected to be relevant for decision-making purposes. Therefore, it is very important to prioritize the information you collect. Refer back to your goal or think about how the findings of the needs assessment will be used if you need help prioritizing.
With the goal and “Big and Little Pictures” completed, you have all of the key elements ready to develop a needs assessment work plan. Documenting your work plan is just as important as implementing it. It may be tempting to skip this step, but taking the time to lay out the process in a work plan will prove beneficial as you move forward. A work plan clearly and succinctly outlines and maps out all the steps you will need to take to successfully carry out your needs assessment.

WHY CREATE A WORK PLAN?

• Increases effectiveness by thinking through all the steps
• Increases accountability by being clear about who is responsible for each step and by when it needs to be completed
• Increases communication by building a system for checking progress and providing clarification
• Maintain focus to be able to stay on track and keep the project moving forward

WHAT SHOULD I INCLUDE IN THE WORK PLAN?

Your plan should outline: 1) what activities you want to accomplish, 2) who will be responsible for completing each activity, 3) the timeline for each activity, 4) your progress on each activity over time. Having these clearly laid out and shared with everyone provides clarity among the team. Make sure everyone has access to the needs assessment work plan and reviews it regularly at your needs assessment meetings. This provides opportunities for clarification and correction of any mistakes within the work plan. It also decreases the likelihood of miscommunication among partners and staff members. The work plan should be a living document that gets updated regularly. You can use it to check your progress towards meeting your objectives.

Sample Needs Assessment Work Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II. TOOL DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE: Develop three types of data collection tools by May 15.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Secondary data: Review existing resources, reports, and tools</td>
<td>April 5-13</td>
<td>Needs Assessment Team</td>
<td>Complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Tool development: Develop data collection tools for 3 types of methods: 1) online survey; 2) focus groups; 3) key informant interviews. Develop Informed Consent Form.</td>
<td>April 15-May 15</td>
<td>Team Lead, needs assessment team</td>
<td>In progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Translation: Translate the data collection tools (survey, focus group questions, &amp; informed consent form) into Spanish.</td>
<td>May 15 – June 1</td>
<td>Spanish interpreter (subcontractor)</td>
<td>Not started</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HOP Tip: When developing your work plan objectives, consider using the SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-Bound). Specific: focus on defined results and avoid vague or general actions. Measurable: helps to determine if an objective has been
DEVELOP A BUDGET FOR YOUR NEEDS ASSESSMENT
In addition to creating a work plan, it is important to appropriately budget resources and staff time to complete all the steps. This will help you understand the total cost of completing the assessment and clarify what steps can be done internally and what might require outside support.

What should be included in the budget?
The budget should list: 1) all the needs assessment activities, 2) how much time they will likely take, 3) the cost of staff time, and 4) the cost of any supplies or materials. If you are providing incentives or working with an outside agency to complete some of the activities (such as transcription or translation), you should budget that cost as well. It is important to be realistic about how much time activities will take and how much things will cost so that you do not underestimate and end up not having enough staff time or funding to complete the assessment. Finally, you will need to take into account how you plan to share your findings and the associated costs for those activities. See page 29 for a sample budget template.

Incentives
Incentives are things you provide to encourage people to participate in the needs assessment. For example, you may provide a gift card or small prize to everyone that completes a survey. Try to consider incentives that may be useful to your needs assessment participants, such as hygiene kits, sunscreen, and baseball caps. Or you may provide food and refreshments during a focus group. Remember to include this expense within your budget.
PLANNING TOOLS

1. Setting a Goal Worksheet
2. “The Big Picture” Worksheet
3. “The Little Picture” Worksheet
4. Data Needed Worksheet
5. Sample Needs Assessment Work Plan
6. Needs Assessment Work Plan Template
7. Sample Scope of Work & Budget for a Needs Assessment
# Setting a Goal Worksheet

**Step 1- Preliminary Questions:** Start with answering these questions to provide a basis for determining the goal of your needs assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is your needs assessment meant to?</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meet certain funding requirements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop your program(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine how familiar the community is with your organization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve health care services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve health education and outreach services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve staff’s understanding of the community’s cultural beliefs and practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and address the top health care needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and address the top social service needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target a certain sub-group of the community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect baseline demographic and health information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply for additional program funding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other purposes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Step 2- Key Questions:** Next, answer these key questions by referring to your responses in Step 1.

1. What do you expect to achieve?

2. How do you plan to use the findings?

3. How high a priority is the needs assessment for your organization? Why?

4. How committed is your organization to considering changes or adding new services based on the findings?

5. If the findings do not align with your current organizational priorities, how would your organization handle this?

**Step 3- Needs Assessment Goal:** The goal of the needs assessment should be the overarching outcome that you want to achieve. Determine what you want to know from the community. Your goal will drive the rest of the planning process. See page 12 for sample needs assessment goals.
“The Big Picture” Worksheet

- Resources
- Challenges
- Timeframe
- Collaborators

GOAL
“The Little Picture” Worksheet

- WHO
- WHERE
- WHAT
- WHEN

GOAL
# Data Needed Worksheet

**Needs Assessment Goal:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Areas</th>
<th>What specific data do you want?</th>
<th>Which data collection methods are needed?</th>
<th>For primary data, from whom will you collect the data?</th>
<th>For secondary data, where might the data already exist?</th>
<th>How do you plan to use this data?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Primary Data</td>
<td>Secondary Data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health Issues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health risks and disparities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health care utilization</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

10 Table adapted from the National Center for Farmworker Health’s Farmworker Community Needs Assessment: “Determining what information is needed” (2011).
# Sample Needs Assessment Work Plan

**Needs Assessment Plan for:** Citrus Grove Health Center

**Goal:** Citrus Grove Health Center will determine to what extent its services are known and used amongst residents of public housing within the community in order to improve its messaging and outreach efforts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives and Activities</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. PLANNING AND DESIGN OBJECTIVE:</strong> Develop comprehensive Needs Assessment Work Plan by March 16.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Planning meeting: Meet to clarify needs assessment goal and “big and little pictures.”</td>
<td>March 8</td>
<td>CGHC Advisory Group and Needs Assessment Team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Project plan: Finalize detailed project work plan, based on planning meeting.</td>
<td>March 9-16</td>
<td>CGHC Project Lead</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>II. TOOL DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:</strong> Develop 3 types of data collection tools that are translated in Spanish by May 10.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Secondary data: Review existing resources, reports, and tools.</td>
<td>April 5-13</td>
<td>CGHC Project Lead, needs assessment team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Tool development: Develop data collection tools for 3 types of methods: 1) online survey; 2) focus groups; 3) key informant interviews. Develop Informed Consent Form.</td>
<td>April 15-30</td>
<td>CGHC Project Lead, needs assessment team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Translation: Translate the data collection tools (survey, focus group questions, &amp; informed consent form) into Spanish.</td>
<td>May 1-10</td>
<td>Subcontractors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>III. DATA COLLECTION OBJECTIVE:</strong> Collect primary data from those living in public housing in CGHC’s service area by June 1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Work plan: Develop data collection work plan, including logistics, participant recruitment, and securing locations.</td>
<td>Mid-May</td>
<td>CGHC Project Lead</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Informed Consent Orientation: Conduct orientation/training with CGHC outreach team on the Informed Consent Form and criteria for participant recruitment.</td>
<td>May 15</td>
<td>CGHC Project Lead, needs assessment team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3.3 Data Collectors Training: Hold mini-trainings on conducting surveys and focus groups for CGHC outreach team.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 20</td>
<td>CGHC Project Lead</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.4 Data collection: Conduct focus groups, interviews, and surveys. Two (2) bilingual CGHC staff will be available to assist with the data collection process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 25</td>
<td>CGHC Project Lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>needs assessment team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IV. DATA ENTRY AND ANALYSIS OBJECTIVE: Complete analysis of primary and secondary data collected about those living in public housing by June 25.

### 4.1 Transcription and translation: Work performed by two (2) subcontractors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 9-14</td>
<td>Subcontractors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.2 Data Analysis: Analysis of data, includes coding of data collected. Summarize findings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 15-25</td>
<td>CGHC Project Lead, needs assessment team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### V. SHARING OF FINDINGS OBJECTIVE: Share needs assessment findings with CGHC, partners, and community members through dissemination of needs assessment summary report and community meeting by August 31.

### 5.1 Hold Debrief Meeting and Develop Recommendations: Conduct a debrief meeting to review needs assessment findings with advisory group, needs assessment team, and key CGHC staff to discuss next steps.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 1</td>
<td>CGHC Advisory Group and Needs Assessment Team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.2 Final product: Write final summary report based on data collected, including secondary data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 30</td>
<td>CGHC Project Lead, needs assessment team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.3 Community Meeting: Hold community meeting with those living in public housing to discuss the needs assessment findings and CGHC’s plan to incorporate changes into the outreach program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>End of August (TBD)</td>
<td>CGHC Project Lead, needs assessment team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Needs Assessment Work Plan Template

**Needs Assessment Plan for:**

**Goal:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives and Activities</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. PLANNING AND DESIGN OBJECTIVE:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. TOOL DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. DATA COLLECTION OBJECTIVE:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. DATA ENTRY AND ANALYSIS OBJECTIVE:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. SHARING OF FINDINGS OBJECTIVE:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Sample Scope of Work and Budget for a Needs Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Steps</th>
<th>Tasks &amp; Materials</th>
<th>Staff Involved</th>
<th># hours (estimated)</th>
<th>Staff Rate (per hour)</th>
<th>Other Cost</th>
<th>Other Cost Description</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Planning and Design</td>
<td>• Convene project team to clarify goal and parameters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Determine methods, including a review of secondary data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Finalize work plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Developing Data Collection Tools</td>
<td>• Develop tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Pilot tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Translate tools, if needed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Data Collection</td>
<td>• Recruit participants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Conduct training for data collection team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop schedule for data collection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Conduct data collection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Data Entry and Analysis</td>
<td>• Data transcription &amp; translation, if needed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sharing the Findings</td>
<td>• See “Next Steps” section for example activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials/Supplies</td>
<td>• Incentives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Printing costs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Food for community meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL:**
Developing Your Data Collection Tools

SECTION OVERVIEW:
This section introduces the two types of data consisting of primary and secondary data, the different data collection methods, the benefits and limitations of each method, and considerations around qualitative and quantitative approaches.

COMPONENTS:
- Determine Data Sources
  - Secondary Data: Identify Existing Data
  - Primary Data: Identify and Select Your Data Collection Tool
- Modify Existing Tools
- Develop New Tools
- Key Considerations for Determining Sample Size
- Data Collection Tools
DETERMINE DATA SOURCES

Once you have developed your needs assessment goal, clarified the scope of your needs assessment, and started your work plan, you are ready to determine how you will collect your data. This section will introduce you to both secondary and primary data collection methods and includes sample tools and resources to help you get started.

SECONDARY DATA: IDENTIFY EXISTING DATA

Before developing any new data collection tools, the first step is for you to determine what information already exists about the community you want to assess, so you do not repeat efforts and waste resources. This type of data is called “secondary data,” because it comes from existing data that has already been collected and analyzed. Secondary data can serve as a starting point by equipping you with basic and necessary information on the community you are assessing. It can also help highlight gaps in existing data and provide direction for the focus of your needs assessment. The use of existing information is often an important data collection method for research and needs assessments. Methods such as focus groups, surveys, and interviews serve to supplement and enrich existing information and findings.

There are many potential sources of secondary data available. Below are some suggestions of where to start looking for data at the local level, including within your organization and your community, and at the state and national level:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Boards of Education or school districts</td>
<td>• Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>• American FactFinder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dental societies or associations</td>
<td>• County Health Rankings</td>
<td>• Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mental health and chemical dependency providers</td>
<td>• Department of Minority or Multicultural Health</td>
<td>• Healthy People 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Literacy Council</td>
<td>• Department of Health Care Services</td>
<td>• HOP’s National Needs Assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Outreach encounter and case management forms</td>
<td>• Department of Public Health</td>
<td>• HRSA Data Warehouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Past health center, hospital, and community needs assessment reports</td>
<td>• Hospital Associations</td>
<td>• HRSA State Profiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uniform Data System reports</td>
<td>• Medicaid or Public Assistance</td>
<td>• National Association of Community Health Centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Your organization’s medical records and other clinical data</td>
<td>• Mental Health Services</td>
<td>• National Program Grantee Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• State and Regional Primary Care Associations</td>
<td>• State and County Quick Facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• State Department of Labor</td>
<td>• State Health Facts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• State Employment Department</td>
<td>• UDS Mapper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• State Office of Community Development</td>
<td>• U.S. Census</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are also secondary data sources available for finding data specifically related to special populations, including the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secondary Data Sources for Special Populations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Migratory and Seasonal Agricultural Workers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• State Office of Rural Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local or regional agricultural departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local farm bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• National Center for Farmworker Health, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Crop Production Workers Map Tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Enumeration Profile Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• National Agricultural Workers Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• MHP Salud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>People Experiencing Homelessness</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Homeless shelters and social service organizations’ reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• US Interagency Council on Homelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• National Alliance to End Homelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• National Health Care for the Homeless Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Those Living in Public Housing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Public housing authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Community Health Partners for Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• National Center for Health in Public Housing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PRIMARY DATA: IDENTIFY AND SELECT YOUR DATA COLLECTION TOOLS**

You now have a good idea about the type of information your needs assessment team will need to go out and get directly from the community. After identifying any gaps in the existing data, you should determine which data collection tools will be best for your organization’s needs assessment. You may choose to use one or several data collection methods. This type of data is called “primary data,” because you will collect information directly from different categories of individuals and groups within the community.

**Choosing Data Collection Methods**

If you want to reach a large number of people quickly and touch upon a wide variety of topics, you may decide to use some type of survey. However, if you want to understand, for example, why pregnant agricultural workers do not generally come in for pre-natal care during their first trimester, it may make sense to organize several focus group discussions within your local agricultural worker community. An in-depth discussion may give you the clues needed to better plan your health education messages or modify your services to address barriers. Remember that collecting primary data can fill in the gaps in the existing data.

The type of methods you choose will depend on the time, expertise, and resources available among staff, volunteers, or collaborators as well as the extent to which each method is appropriate for your community.
Key Considerations
Not all data collection methods will be appropriate for your community. Remember to take into account considerations related to the community you are assessing, such as:

• Culture
• Language
• Literacy
• Work conditions
• Mobility
• Access to services
• Housing

Be aware that some community members may distrust needs assessments. Many communities may have been assessed too much and may not be receptive to data collection efforts because they do not think anything will happen or they may be worried the data will be used against them. Thus, it is important to be transparent throughout the process by clearly communicating with them what will happen with the data and how it will be shared. Make sure to follow through with what was communicated to the community.

Types of Data Collection Tools
Your data collection tools can combine both qualitative and quantitative methods, but you may choose to use just one of these methods. However, using a combination of data collection methods will often yield more well-rounded and comprehensive data. Some of the possible data collection tools your team could use include the following:

• Surveys, including written, online, face-to-face, and telephone
• Key informant interviews
• Focus groups
• Community forums
• Participant observation

The following section contains a brief description of each method, along with the corresponding benefits and limitations. For some of the tools, suggested times are provided to help you plan the amount of time normally needed to collect information using that specific data collection tool.

Surveys
There are many different ways to conduct surveys, including written, online, face-to-face, and by telephone. Questions and survey format are carefully created ahead of time, taking into consideration literacy level and language preferences of the target population.

Qualitative vs. Quantitative

Qualitative research is an approach that involves different methods of interpretation and observation. Qualitative questions are usually open-ended and try to gain better understanding of perceptions, attitudes, and processes. Examples of qualitative methods include focus groups, community forums, and key informant interviews. Qualitative data typically yields narrative or anecdotal data.

Quantitative research is the collection of data that is expressed in numbers, such as percentages, estimations, and measurements, in order to describe, explain, and predict the topic of interest. An example of quantitative research includes surveys that have closed-ended questions, which solicit yes or no responses or defined answers, such as age or number of children.
- **Written surveys** are questionnaires that are mailed, faxed, or dropped off. Surveys of this type may also be distributed to respondents who complete it onsite or return the survey via mail using a provided stamped and addressed envelope. See page 41 for a sample written survey.
- **Online surveys** are computer-based questionnaires that are sent out and completed electronically, often through software such as SurveyMonkey.
- **Face-to-Face Surveys** involve an oral, one-on-one interview, using a written questionnaire. They often take place where the responding community members live or work.
- **Telephone Surveys** involve a pre-determined series of questions that are asked of the respondent via telephone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Survey</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Written and Online Surveys** | • Does not require an interviewer  
• Reduces likelihood that respondents will give responses they think the interviewer wants to hear  
• Able to answer questions privately at home or workplace  
• Provides a way to give information anonymously on sensitive topics such as income, legal status, or mental health | • Can be time-consuming to find accurate, up-to-date mailing or email addresses  
• Captures only those that can read and write in the survey language  
• Leaves questions open to interpretation by respondents  
• Increases risk of a poor response rate, as some may choose not to complete the survey  
• Requires access to computers for online surveys, which is not a viable option for many underserved populations |
| **Face-to-Face Survey** | • Works better for those who are not likely to respond by phone, mail, or email  
• Responds to lower literacy levels by ensuring that questions are presented at an appropriate literacy level for the target population  
• Provides opportunities for questions and clarification of complex questions | • Can be time intensive when coordinating interviews  
• May require vehicle access to meet with interviewees, especially when spread out geographically  
• Takes time to find and train your team, and skill levels will vary  
• May generate responses that the respondent thinks the interviewer wants to hear |
| **Telephone Survey** | • Can be completed in a short time period  
• More likely to get complete responses to the entire questionnaire  
• Can be scheduled during times throughout the day most convenient for respondent | • Limits the survey to those with a telephone  
• Must find and verify telephone numbers  
• May miss useful data from facial expressions and body cues  
• May generate responses that the respondent thinks the interviewer wants to hear |
Key Informant Interviews
Key informants are service providers, community leaders, and other community members who are knowledgeable about the community being assessed. Informants are asked to identify community needs and concerns through a face-to-face survey or interview. Suggested time: 30-45 minutes, including time for probing questions. See page 43 for sample key informant interview questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Allows for sharing historical and health trends information</td>
<td>• Not efficient for reaching a large number of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensures that information comes directly from knowledgeable people in the community</td>
<td>• Must select the right informant(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allows for exploration of unexpected information</td>
<td>• Can be difficult in terms of the time spent on coordination and relationship-building process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides space to ask questions that people are uncomfortable answering in a group</td>
<td>• Relies on the recall and opinions of the key informant(s), who may have biased view(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• May be susceptible to respondents wanting to give responses that they think the interviewer wants to hear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cannot be generalized to whole community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Focus Groups
A focus group consists of a small number (8-12) of relatively similar individuals who provide information during a directed and moderated, interactive group discussion. Suggested time: 60-90 minutes. See page 45 for sample focus group questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provides space for insights and solutions in a group setting</td>
<td>• May be hard to coordinate bringing the group together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allows for exploration of topics generated by the group</td>
<td>• May be challenging to manage group dynamics, which may influence individual responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allows space to request clarification and details in the discussion from and by the moderator</td>
<td>• May take time to find a trained or skilled moderator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can select whom you wish to target for the group</td>
<td>• Cannot make generalizations about the entire community since the group is not randomly selected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Utilizes the skills of a trained and experienced moderator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Community Forums
A community forum is a gathering of individuals from the community to discuss or address an issue or concern. The value of a community forum is that it is an activity where community members participate together to draw attention to community-wide needs. Possible forum participants include community agencies, councils, coalitions, or members of a specific population. Suggested time: 90-120 minutes. See page 47 for a checklist on planning a community forum.
Participant Observation
Participant observation is used to gather information by having an observer look, listen, and note what is occurring in a particular setting. The observer takes notes and later analyzes them to create a better picture of the community, including observations on the physical environment, dynamics within the community, individual and group behaviors, cultural factors, and other social and economic aspects of the community. These observations can then be compared with the data collected directly from individuals and groups to find consistencies or discrepancies. Possible locations for observation include agricultural workers camps, homeless encampments, homes, fields, in the streets, public housing units, stores, and social events. However, keep in mind that participant observation has its limitations because it is based on the observer’s interpretation and will most likely not provide a full picture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Promotes the spirit of collaborations to address critical issues in the community</td>
<td>• Domination by individuals or groups may skew data collected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can capture specific information about existing or emerging health needs and trends</td>
<td>• May be reluctance to express concerns or feelings in a group setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides opportunities for immediate feedback and clarification of issues</td>
<td>• Presents more challenges to moderate than focus group discussions (due to larger group size)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fosters legitimatization of future program plans, as the community is more likely to participate in programs for which they have had prior input</td>
<td>• May be difficult to coordinate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• May involve costs, such as food, materials, and space</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Is useful for collecting information in settings where interviews may not be feasible, such as public areas</td>
<td>• Is limited to activities that can only be observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can be less invasive than other methods</td>
<td>• Lacks direct insight about the observed perceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is useful when topic is sensitive or setting is not conducive to more structured methods</td>
<td>• Relies on observers’ own interpretation of what they are seeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can be conducted by an outreach worker, health educator, or other person working to gather information</td>
<td>• Relies on the recall of observers when taking notes is not possible, as they may need to be discreet at the moment, and observations can only be noted later</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MODIFY EXISTING TOOLS**
Before you develop a completely new needs assessment tool, consider adapting one that already exists. It could be one you have used in the past or samples of tools that other organizations can share with you. Doing this can save you time and effort, especially if the questions target what you would like to learn.

In general, modifying existing surveys to fit both your community and the purpose of your needs assessment can be done more easily than modifying key informant interview or focus group
discussion guides. These types of guides tend to cover very specific topics and may be too narrowly defined to modify. If you do choose to use an existing tool, it is essential that you adapt it to the context of your community.

DEVELOP NEW TOOLS
If you cannot modify an existing tool, it is time to develop new ones. Below are a few key steps to keep in mind when developing new tools:

1. Look at your needs assessment goal to ensure that any new tools you develop reflect what you are trying to learn through the needs assessment. Also, look at your “Data Needed Worksheet” to review your topic areas and the specific data you want to collect.
2. Brainstorm topic areas and potential questions with your needs assessment team. Make sure your questions are clear, well-written, and in an appropriate order. Questions should not be unnecessary, vague, or leading.
3. Once you have a draft of your survey or question guide, get feedback from your advisory group, other key staff, and community partners. As people who have not been directly involved in the development of the tool, they will be able to see any flaws in the proposed questions that you may miss. Getting feedback about your survey or question guide can help you learn if the wording of your tools is appropriate or if questions could be worded more simply to convey the same idea.
4. Pilot your tools with a sample of individuals who represent your target population to test their usability and effectiveness. See page 51 for more details on piloting your tools.

HOP Tip: Community mapping can be a useful tool to gather secondary data and to decide what primary data to collect. Community mapping is a way to tell a story about a community. It visually lays out geographically important places where members of your community work, live, and spend time. It also identifies the locations of health and social services in the community. Mapping can be done using paper maps with pens and push-pins, or using computer-based technology, such as the UDS mapper and other online mapping tools.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR DETERMINING SAMPLE SIZE
What is a sample?
When collecting primary data, you will be collecting data from a subset of the community. This subset is considered your sample. These are the people who will be a part of your focus groups, complete your surveys, or participate in your interviews or community forums.

How many people do I need, or what should my sample size be?
Your sample size should be representative of your community and significant enough to ensure that your findings are relevant and significant. For example, let’s say you are doing a needs assessment of people experiencing homelessness in your community. You may know that about 70% of people experiencing homelessness are men, while about 30% are women. It would be important to involve both men and women in your sample, but you will likely want to involve more men. So, you may do one focus group with women and 2 to 3 focus groups with men.
There are no magic numbers, but remember you want it to be proportional to the overall population. Additionally, there are many different online calculators to help you determine the most appropriate sample size. Here is a good resource to understand sample size.

**What types of methods can I use to get my sample?**

There are many strategies for getting your sample. It is best to be strategic and deliberate. Think about what would work for your team and for your community.

- **Random Sampling:** The most reliable is a *Random Sample*, which means first defining the population to assess and then selecting randomly from the group whom to sample. This means each individual has an equal chance of being selected. For example, you decide to assess the health needs of middle school students in your service area. You find that there are about 2,000 students and you wanted a sample of 200. You could assign each student a number, and pick every 10th student on the list to be part of the sample. This method provides a sample that is representative of the population being assessed, and makes it easier to generalize about the population. However, a random sample requires that you have an accurate list that includes everyone, and often depending on the population you are assessing, a complete list may be difficult to obtain.

- **Convenience Sampling:** The easiest is a *Convenience Sample*, which means including people that you can easily find. There may be pre-existing groups or organizations you can tap into, or resources in the community that can easily help you organize people to be involved. Some limitations include under-representation or over-representation of a specific group, which can weaken your ability to make generalizations about the sample you are assessing.

- **Snowball Sampling:** You can also find people by asking those who are already participating if they can suggest others to be involved. This is called a *Snowball Sample*, and best used when you are having a difficult time finding community members to participate, especially populations or sub-groups that are hidden or hard-to-reach. Since your sample is not selected randomly, you may not be able to make generalizations about the community based on your findings.

- **Quota Sampling:** There may be various sub-groups in your community that are important to include. In that case, it may be important to think about the various segments of the community and ensure individuals from a specific sub-group are represented in your sample. For example, if you are surveying young people, you want to ensure that you include a sub-group of 18-24 year old women. These are referred to as “quotas” and are called a *Quota Sample*. Since the sample was not randomly selected, it is difficult to make generalizations about the population based on your findings.

---

**HOP Tip:** For assistance with data collection and sampling, consider consulting with those who have expertise in this area. Universities have many resources, such as professors or graduate students, who may be interested in working with community groups.
DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

8. Essential Communication Skills
9. Sample Written Survey
10. Key Informant Interview: Sample Interview Guide
11. Sample Focus Groups Questions
12. Checklist for Planning a Successful Community Forum
13. Sample Community Forum Agenda
ESSENTIAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Effective communication is crucial to the needs assessment process. Whether conducting a key informant interview or facilitating a community forum, communication skills are at the heart of assessing the needs of individuals and communities as well as helping them meet those needs.

• Relax. Smile when appropriate. Help the person feel comfortable by presenting yourself in a relaxed and open manner. When a person is comfortable, it will help him or her speak more freely.

• Focus more on listening and less on talking. Concentrate on the individual, what he or she is saying, and how he or she is saying it. Try not to be formulating your response until the other person has finished talking. Focus instead on attending to the other person. To help you accomplish this, remove distractions – when possible and appropriate, turn off electronic devices and/or close the door. Stop what you are doing and pay attention.

• Restate and clarify. A good listener does not assume that they understand the other person. Ask questions to clarify the meaning of the words and feelings used by the individual before you respond. Avoid discussion of what you feel, believe, or want; rather, reaffirm what has already been said.

• Listen for what is not said. Listen for how the message is presented. What people hesitate to say is often as important as what they do say.

• Pay attention to nonverbal language. Nonverbal language includes physical gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice, and body posture. Culture plays an extremely important role in how an individual communicates information in a nonverbal way. For example, it may not be appropriate to make eye contact when conversing for some people. Make sure you understand the cultural context of the community you are assessing beforehand.

• Be patient. Allow plenty of time for the person to describe his or her ideas and the meaning of these ideas. Be courteous and give the speaker adequate time to present his or her full message. Interrupt only when absolutely necessary and make sure any interruption is done in a courteous manner.

• Empathize with the speaker. Empathizing is the ability of the listener to relate to the feelings of another person. Consider what it is like to experience the speaker’s feelings regardless of whether or not you understand why the speaker feels the way he or she does. Respond to the feeling being expressed. Give the person space for self-expression that is comfortable and natural.
SAMPLE WRITTEN SURVEY

County ________________________ Interviewer: ________________________

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

[Insert Organization Name] is conducting a community health needs assessment. The information shared will be used to address the health needs in our community. Your responses will be kept confidential, and any reporting of the information from the survey will be presented in such a way that no specific individual will be referenced. Thank you very much for your responses and for your help in improving our services.

1. What is your age? __________

2. What is your race or ethnicity?
   a. Asian or Asian American  
   b. Black or African American  
   c. Caucasian  
   d. Latino  
   e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
   f. Native American  
   g. Other ________________________

3. In what country were you born? ______________________

4. How many children are in your household?
   a. Zero  
   b. One  
   c. Two  
   d. Three  
   e. Four  
   f. Five or more

5. Do you have a regular doctor that you go to when you are sick?
   a. Yes  
   b. No

6. What is the highest level of education or grade you completed?
   a. 6 years or less (primary school)  
   b. 7 to 9 years (junior high school)  
   c. 10 to 12 years (high school)  
   d. 13-16 years (college)

7. Are you currently enrolled in an education program, i.e., part-time or full-time, school or classes?
   a. Yes  
   b. No

8. Are your children currently enrolled in school?
   a. Yes  
   b. No

10. Which of the following topic(s) would you be interested in learning about? Please circle all that apply.
   a. Job Training for Adults  
   b. Job Opportunities
11. In which of the following area(s) would you like to have assistance? Please circle all that apply.

a. Health care
b. Mental Health
c. Dental
d. OB/Gyn
e. Pediatrics
f. Career Planning
g. Applying for Public Benefit Programs

12. Do you have any questions or concerns regarding any of the following issues? Please circle all that apply.

a. Alcohol Abuse/Substance Abuse
b. Cigarette Smoking
c. Drinking and Driving
d. Driving or Riding in the Car Without Seatbelts
e. Pregnancy
f. Child Protective Seats
g. Poor Eating Habits/Lack of Good Nutrition
h. Exercise
i. Spousal or Partner Abuse
j. Child Abuse
k. Youth Violence/Gangs
l. Suicide
m. Cancer
n. Diabetes
o. Heart Disease
p. High Blood Pressure
q. HIV/AIDS
r. Stroke
s. Sexually Transmitted Disease
t. Obesity
u. Pesticide Poisoning
v. Other ___________________________

13. How can organizations in the community best help you to address these questions or concerns?

14. When would be the best office hours for you to receive care?
   a. 7am-9am
   b. 9am-Noon
   c. Noon-3pm
d. 3pm-5pm
e. 5pm-8pm

15. Describe how you would like to see organizations that do outreach in the community increase their services to you and your family.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY.
KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW: SAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDE

Below is a sample key informant interview guide. Please note that it is tailored for a health center assessing its local migratory and seasonal agricultural worker community, but can be adapted to fit the needs of other organizations and populations.

Part I: Key areas to address before starting the interview

- Thank the participant for participating in the interview.
- Introduce yourself.
- **Background.** Provide the participant with a short description of your needs assessment process.
- **Purpose.** Share with the participant the purpose of the key informant interview. State that you are particularly interested in their experiences and comments on, for example, migratory and seasonal agricultural worker health needs.
- **Guidelines.** Explain to the participant that the interview will be conversational. You can also mention that you have a set of questions, and that he or she can skip any questions if he or she does not want to answer.
- **Confidentiality.** Briefly explain to the participant your organization’s policy on confidentiality.
- **Note taking/tape recording.** Consider stating something like the following: In order to make sure we accurately capture your comments, I will be taking notes while we talk. We would also like to tape record the session as a back up. May we have your permission to tape this interview?
- **End time.** Remind the interviewee of the time when the interview will end.

TURN ON TAPE RECORDER IF PERMISSION WAS GRANTED

Part II: Interview Questions

Please note that most questions have optional probes. Probes are follow-up questions when you want to know more about the information you are getting from the responses, or for clarification of the questions for the respondent.

1. Introduction/Ice-breaker (5 minutes)
   - What is your role in the agricultural worker community?

2. Health Issues within the Migratory and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Community (15 minutes)
   - What are the most common health issues or problems within the agricultural worker community?
   - What does the agricultural worker community believe causes these health problems?
   - What factors do many agricultural workers believe are most important for achieving and maintaining good health and wellbeing?
• Optional probes: Social support, access to health care, steady income, documentation status, child and youth development opportunities, mental health services, workplace wellness initiatives, stress management.

3. Health Care Access and Utilization (20 min)
• Where do you think most agricultural workers seek medical care?
  • Optional probes: pharmacies, clinics, hospital emergency rooms, health centers
• What are the most common barriers preventing agricultural workers from accessing health care services in your community?
  • Optional probes: Language barriers, lack of information, cost, documentation, fear/distrust of the health care system, discrimination (racial, ethnic, gender, economic), lack of transportation, lack of childcare, work, unfamiliarity with clinical health care.
• How would you describe the agricultural worker community’s experience with the health care system?
  • Optional probe: Positive experiences? Attentive physicians, health service providers familiar with agricultural worker culture.
  • Optional probe: Negative experiences? High volume clinics providing inadequate attention, inexperienced doctors unfamiliar with agricultural worker culture, services focused more on immediate medical care needs and less on prevention.
• How have medical providers received the agricultural workers’ cultural and/or spiritual beliefs about illness and medicine?

4. Agricultural Workers’ Community Strengths and Their Relationship to Health Care (10 min)
• What are the strengths and resources of the agricultural worker community?
  • Optional probes: Youth, commitment to family, sense of community, social organizations, social support, cultural and ethnic ties.
• Of the strengths you just mentioned, which ones would help agricultural workers achieve and maintain good health and wellness?

5. Improving Current Health Care Services (5 min)
• What changes could health centers make to create a more inviting and comfortable place for agricultural workers to seek medical care?
  • Optional probes: agricultural workers language interpreters, traditional medicine, culturally competent outreach workers, service provider knowledge of agricultural workers’ cultural traditions, additional health services?
• Could you recommend or refer other community leaders who might be interested in participating in this assessment?

6. Closing (5 mins)
SAMPLE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Below is a sample focus group question guide. Please note that it is tailored for a health center assessing those living in public housing, but can be adapted to fit the needs of other organizations and populations being surveyed.

Introduction (5 mins)
Thank you for participating today in this focus group. I’m here on behalf Helping Hand Community Health Center (HHCHC). My health center is interested in knowing more about the health concerns and needs of those living in public housing in our community.

Your opinion is important to us. All of you have completed the informed consent form. See page 51 on getting informed consent. I want you to know again that everything we discuss here remains confidential. There are no right and wrong answers. We just want to hear what you think. Also, there are many of us here, let’s remember to give each other a chance to speak, and know that we may not always agree with each other, but that is ok. Do you have any questions before we start?

Questions (80 mins) - Please note that each question has optional probes. Probes are follow-up questions when you want to know more about the information you are getting from the responses, or for clarification of the questions for the respondent.

1. What does having good health mean to you?
   • Optional probe: What do you need to be healthy?

2. How would you describe the health of public housing residents in your community?
   • Optional probe: How about your health or your family? What are some of the reasons that your health (or that of your family or others) is this way?

3. What are some of the health problems that you or your family experience?
   • Optional probe: Have you experienced any of these health problems? What do you do to manage these health problems?

4. When you are sick, what do you usually do?
   • Optional probe: Why did you do choose to do that? When someone is sick, what should they do?

5. What are the reasons that it is difficult to get help or go to the doctor?
   • Optional probe: What are some things that you think are needed to make it easier to see the doctor when you are sick?

6. What are some things that you have done to overcome challenges you experience while getting care when you are sick?
   • Optional probe: Why did you choose to do this? What else could you have done?
7. Have you ever gone to Helping Hand Community Health Center (HHCHC)? Or has anyone from Helping Hand Community Health Center helped you before?
   • Optional probe: If yes, how was the experience? Why did you choose HHCHC? If no, why have you not gone to HHCHC for care?

8. What do you like about HHCHC?
   • Optional probe: What do you think they can do better? What do you hear people say about it?

9. Is there anything else you want us to know about you, your health needs, or the health needs of those living in public housing?

Closing (5 mins)
So, that is the last of the questions. Do you have any questions for us before we end? Thank you again for sharing. What you have to say is really important to us. We appreciate the time you spent with us.
CHECKLIST FOR PLANNING A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY FORUM

This is a suggested checklist for planning a community forum. Customize the steps according to your organization’s specific needs and resources.

Initial Planning Stage

- **Form a Committee**: Develop a planning committee comprised of individuals who will volunteer to fulfill different roles needed for planning and conducting the forum. Invite a diverse group to participate.
- **Forum Topic**: Determine the forum’s primary topic and title, keeping in mind the overarching goal of your needs assessment.
- **Event Logistics**: Research and survey local organizations to serve as co-sponsors. Co-sponsorship might involve cash donations, in-kind donations, volunteer time, or event space for the forum. Secure donations from local businesses. Brainstorm and decide upon an event space (i.e. library room, school auditorium, local community center, retail center, church, etc.).
- **Publicity**: Create an eye-catching flyer that lists the title, location, date, co-sponsors, local donors, and topic for the forum. Post information about the event on your website and through social media, take flyers to networking events and distribute them at other appropriate venues, and ask community partners to distribute information to their constituencies.

Six Weeks Prior to the Event

- Visit or learn about the event location and decide what the set-up will look like
- Create a banner for the forum (if necessary)
- Begin working on the program
  - Draft biographies on any speakers and/or facilitators (if necessary)
  - Write a short mission statement for the forum
  - Map out the agenda for the entire forum
  - Develop ground rules\(^{12}\) for the forum
- List and prepare to acknowledge all donors, sponsors, and volunteers
- Send invitations to city officials, school officials, community organizations, and leaders
- Consider recording, videotaping, broadcasting, or photographing the forum in order to have a record of what was discussed and who participated

Two Weeks Prior to the Event

- Gather supplies for the forum (as needed):
  - Camera

---

\(^{11}\) In-kind donations are contributions of goods or services, rather than cash grants.

\(^{12}\) Ground rules are shared and agreed upon guidelines or conditions for a group during a meeting or event. Ground rules are usually established to create a safe space for sharing and discussing opinions and ideas.
needs assessment toolkit

- Name tags
- Pens and pencils
- Microphones
- Name placard for speakers (if any)
- Sign-in sheets (include participant information such as name, organization, address, phone number, and e-mail address)
- Evaluation forms

☐ Confirm space and donations at least twice before the event
☐ Ask all speakers, volunteers, caterers, and others involved in the execution of the event to arrive at least 60 minutes before the scheduled starting time for the forum

Day of the Forum
☐ Set-up the space at least 60 minutes before the forum begins
  - Organize sign-in table with name tags, flyers or handouts, and other materials for participants such as the agenda
  - Place 1-2 greeters at each entrance
  - Arrange chairs and place microphone(s) in desirable locations
  - Lay out refreshments
☐ At the beginning of the event, welcome the participants and introduce the topic, share the ground rules and agenda, and introduce the planning committee
☐ Depending upon the number of attendees, ask participants to introduce themselves at the beginning of the forum (If the size of the forum is large, simply encourage participants to state their name and affiliation before they speak)
☐ During the forum, take notes and facilitate to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to speak
☐ Ask everyone to complete an evaluation form before leaving

Immediately After the Forum
☐ Collect evaluations from all participants
☐ Clean-up forum site
☐ Debrief with attending committee members on impressions and emerging issues
☐ Decide when the planning committee will meet to discuss what will happen next (preferably within 2-3 weeks)
☐ Ask one or several planning committee members to review the evaluations and summarize findings prior to the follow-up meeting

Within Two Weeks After the Forum
☐ Reconvene the planning committee and representatives from the co-sponsoring organization(s) to discuss the event, including evaluation findings, and determine possibilities for future programming
☐ The planning committee should send out “thank you” notes or small gifts to those involved in planning the forum or donating items to support the forum
SAMPLE COMMUNITY FORUM AGENDA

St. Joseph’s Catholic Church – Community Room
Sunday, June 17\textsuperscript{th}
3:00PM – 4:30PM

I. Welcome – 5 minutes
   • Participants will be introduced to the event

II. Create a Safe Space – 5 minutes
   • Participants will develop ground rules for the community forum

III. Provide an Overview of the Needs Assessment Project – 10 minutes
   a. Review needs assessment purpose and objectives
   b. Discuss data collection methods
      i. Community forum
      ii. Key informant interviews
   c. Review project timeline
   d. Present findings dissemination plan
   e. Review scope of the forum and have participants sign an informed consent form
   f. Q & A

IV. Moderated Community Discussion – 1 hour
   • Topics to be discussed include:
      a. Medical needs
      b. Prevention needs
      c. Social service needs
      d. Barriers to healthcare
      e. Preferences for facilitating access to healthcare services

V. Thank You and Next Steps in the Needs Assessment Project – 10 minutes
Collecting and Analyzing Your Data

SECTION OVERVIEW:
This section provides the different steps of conducting your needs assessment, including pilot testing your data collection tools, getting informed consent from the participants, training your needs assessment team, and organizing and analyzing your data.

COMPONENTS:

• Collect the Data
  o Pilot Test Your Tools and Methods
  o Get Informed Consent
  o Train Your Team to Collect Data
  o Handle Logistics
  o Consider the Community Context

• Analyze Your Data
  o Organize Your Data
  o Data Analysis Methods

• Informed Consent Tools
COLLECT THE DATA

All your planning and careful considerations for data collection methods should pay off once you start gathering the information you seek. This section highlights some important considerations for conducting your assessment, including piloting your tools, training your needs assessment team, setting up your logistics, and documenting your data.

PILOT TEST YOUR TOOLS AND METHODS
Before your team begins to use the data collection tools you have developed, pilot test them to 1) make sure they will work in your community, and 2) ensure that they make sense to the community members who will participate in the assessment. Approach the pilot test as a “dress rehearsal” by conducting it as you would for the actual data collection.

Your respondents for the pilot should reflect the characteristics of the community that you are focusing on for the needs assessment. For a face-to-face survey, have your needs assessment team administer the survey with a sample of respondents. This rehearsal will not only provide those collecting the data with practice before starting the data collection phase, it will also allow them to verify that the questions make sense and the survey flows well. For the focus group question guide, try asking the questions to a pair of respondents to verify that they make sense and to determine if there is anything missing.

The strength of pilot testing is being able to conduct a practice run of your tools before you begin your data collection. For example, you may have developed two questions that seem to ask about two different things. The responses from your pilot test may show that the two questions actually generate very similar responses. In this case, you may choose to revise or eliminate one of the questions.

Though it requires additional effort upfront, pilot testing your data collection tools can foster a relatively smooth data collection process later and ensure that you collect the data that you need. By piloting your tools, you can feel confident that they will generate consistent responses that can be effectively compared and analyzed.

GET INFORMED CONSENT
Informed consent involves explaining information about the needs assessment to participants and having them actively agree to participate before collecting any data. Getting informed consent from your participants is a key piece of the data collection process when collecting primary data directly from the community. There are two parts to the informed consent process: 1) a detailed information sheet, and 2) the informed consent form.

Information Sheet
An information sheet details for participants all that will happen during the data collection process. The information sheet is intended to prepare participants by laying out all the steps of the data collection, including the purpose of the needs assessment, what their role will be, what to expect, who will be collecting the information, any incentives provided, and defining what voluntary
participation means. The sheet should also include information about who to contact with any questions about the needs assessment. When your needs assessment team is recruiting participants, you can use the information sheet as a way to easily share information about the needs assessment and address any questions and concerns they might have. See page 60 for a sample informed consent form.

When developing your information sheet, consider including the following topics:
The purpose of the needs assessment
- The meaning of voluntary participation
- Their role as a participant in the data collection process
- Any known risks or benefits to participating
- The type of incentive they will be receiving for participating, if any
- The extent to which their information will be kept secure and confidential
- How their information will be used
- Their right to not participate

Informed Consent Form
Next, create an informed consent form for participants to complete. The consent form should include wording stating that they understand the information contained in the information sheet, that they have had a chance to ask questions, and that they are voluntarily participating in the assessment. See page 59 for a sample informed consent form.

To address language needs, the information sheet and informed consent form may need to be translated into the language(s) spoken in the community. Additionally, you need to consider the reading and education level of the community members who will be involved in the assessment. You may need to read the information sheet aloud and ask questions along the way to confirm understanding. Additionally, if the participant is unable to sign his or her name, he or she may provide verbal consent, which can be signed and documented by a witness. The witness can be the person collecting data.

Administering the Informed Consent Form
If possible, consider having participants complete the informed consent form before the actual data collection begins. The needs assessment team can plan to do this a week or two before the scheduled data collection. Getting informed consent beforehand will help prepare the participants for the needs assessment, allow you to set up the data collection schedule because you now know who will participate, and will maximize the time you have with the participants during data collection.

TRAIN YOUR TEAM TO COLLECT DATA
Once you have determined, developed, and piloted your tools, the next step is to prepare your team to implement the data collection. When working with data, it is important to strive for consistency, whether it be collecting, entering, or analyzing the data. This consistency can be achieved by taking the time to train staff, create opportunities for practice runs, and provides space for your team to test on their abilities before they are asked to perform. Taking the steps to make
sure that staff are adequately prepared to carry out each task will ensure that your findings are accurate and not corrupted due to staff error or gaps in the process.

**Possible Training Topics for Data Collection**

Though the training content will vary depending on the data collection tools selected, some common topics for data collection training include:

- How to approach and invite your community members to participate in the assessment
- How to administer a written or face-to-face survey
- How to moderate a focus group discussion or community forum
- How to conduct a key informant interview
- How to use shorthand to take notes during focus groups and community forums
- How to operate recording equipment and save notes and recordings
- How to work together as a needs assessment team
- How to remain safe during data collection
- How to be an effective data collector
- How to handle challenging and sensitive situations

**HOP Tip:** Try role-playing with your team using the data collection tools. This will give them the opportunity to practice asking questions, understand what they are asking, and become comfortable with the tools. Role-playing is especially helpful when using a tool in another language.

**Tips for Data Documentation**

**Interviews:** Create interview summary sheets, such as a 1 to 2 page summary of information about the interviewee, why he or she was chosen for an interview, the main topics or issues discussed, and insights from the interview.

**Create Memos:** Write reflective notes to yourself or others working on the needs assessment project to keep track of the ideas you gather as you collect data. You may think of something as you are reading over a survey or interview summary. Write a note to yourself to remember it. When you start analyzing your data, you may find that specific trends appear in your notes.

**Storing and Retrieval:** Make plans for how to save and store the data. You can choose to save a hard copy of the data in a manual folder system, written and organized on index cards or sheets of paper. Or you can save data in files on a computer or on a shared server. Whichever system you use, keep your folders organized and use a system for file names that clearly identifies the source (i.e., survey, interview, focus groups, community forums, observations). For confidentiality purposes, make sure that access to the data is limited to the needs assessment team.
Innovative Outreach Practice: Training Interns to Conduct Data Collection

Northwest Michigan Health Services, Inc. recruits college students interested in migrant health to collect data for its annual needs assessment. These interns receive training in cultural competency and lay health education prior to conducting outreach at agricultural workers camps. They are taught to regard the agricultural workers as their best teachers and to listen to what the community truly needs. The interns conduct needs assessment surveys, deliver health education, and help connect agricultural workers to needed oral health, primary care, and preventive services. Interns go door-to-door and engage agricultural workers in conversation about what services they need. Each summer, interns connect about 130 clients with services through their outreach efforts.

For more detailed information, please see HOP’s Innovative Outreach Practices: http://web.outreach-partners.org/resources/iop.

HANDLE LOGISTICS

Besides equipping your team to carry out the needs assessment, you need to also address logistical concerns. When collecting primary data, set up a schedule for data collection. For example, map out the date, time, location, and persons responsible for collecting data.

There are likely several other logistical considerations to keep in mind in order to make your data collection a smooth process. For instance, you may need to:

- Seek permission to hold focus groups or conduct interviews in settings such as the workplace, migrant camps and other housing sites, and shelters
- Find a distraction-free location where participants will feel comfortable to speak
- Advertise to get an adequate number of the right participants
- Make sure that the team has all of the necessary materials to carry out the assessment
- Make sure the team has the incentives for participants, if any

It is helpful to establish a point person to oversee the logistics of the data collection process. Depending on the length of the process, the point person may hold daily check-ins with the team to address any logistical issues or make changes as needed. Remember to be flexible: interviews or meetings sometimes fall through or need to be rescheduled. The point person can handle these last minute changes in the work plan.

Sample List of Commonly Needed Materials

- Informed consent forms and pens (if not completed ahead of time)
- Several hard copies of question guide or survey forms
- Laptop, tablet, or pen and paper for note taking
- Audio recorder
- Flip chart paper and markers for community forums
- Batteries for recorders
- Nametags or badges
- Water bottle
- Sunscreen, hat, comfortable shoes

Needs Assessment Toolkit
**CONSIDER THE COMMUNITY CONTEXT**

Before you go out into the community, discuss with your needs assessment team what is reasonable to request of the community. Remember that some community members will not want to participate in the needs assessment. However, in some cultures, saying “no” may be uncomfortable, especially when the request is coming from a trusted organization within the community. If you are feeling any hesitation coming from the community, keep in mind that respecting and preserving long-term relationships with them remains a priority and should be considered when recruiting participants.

When recruiting participants and conducting the needs assessment, consider the strategies listed below to gather data in a way that shows sensitivity to the lifestyles and challenges of community members. Not only will your team set a good tone for your current data collection, but it will also set the stage for future data collection efforts.

**Where and when are the best places to reach community members?**

Identify where community members are during different times and days of the week. Then, consider: what are they doing there? Are they working? Is it a social setting or is it where they live? Who else is there and what are the relationships and dynamics? Answering these questions will be key in determining when, where, and how you approach community members to participate in the needs assessment.

**Who should collect the data?**

Consider whom community members trust and with whom they would have good rapport. You will need to consider language needs, cultural issues, and appearance. Those collecting the data should speak the same language(s) as community members, understand cultural beliefs and values, and dress in a way that is appropriate for the location and makes community members feel comfortable.

---

**Innovative Outreach Practice: Handling Logistics and Considerations for the Community Context**

In April each year, at the beginning of the growing season, the Director of Outreach of Greene County Health Care, Inc. selects two migrant camps for assessment. The Director of Outreach has long-standing relationships with many of the camps and agricultural workers. He has found that he is most successful in reaching agricultural workers when he goes to the camps on weekday evenings. He approaches agricultural workers who are gathered in groups and gets their permission to ask them about their health needs. He asks them about what topics interest them and the types of services they want and need, such as translation and transportation. He documents their answers by taking notes during the conversation. Each year, 200-300 agricultural workers participate in the needs assessment.

For more detailed information, please see HOP’s Innovative Outreach Practices: [http://web.outreach-partners.org/resources/iop](http://web.outreach-partners.org/resources/iop).
ANALYZE YOUR DATA

Data analysis can seem like a daunting task after all the work you have done to collect your data, especially if you have a lot of data from different sources. However, data analysis is often less about performing difficult calculations, and more about organizing your data and knowing how to look at your results in meaningful ways. Look back at your goal and your “Data Needed Worksheet” on page 25. This will help ground your analysis and ensure you are answering the questions you set out to answer.

ORGANIZE THE DATA

Organizing your data makes it easier to understand and analyze. There are a number of ways to organize your data ranging from paper-and-pen methods to using statistical software. Data analysis can be as straightforward as reading through your data and using different colored markers to highlight themes. Choose the methods that make sense for your particular data and for the capacity and resources of your team.

You may have only taken notes during focus groups or interviews, but if you recorded them, you may want to transcribe the recording. The benefits of recording and transcription are that you know exactly what was said and can use quotations. If the focus groups or interviews were conducted in a language other than English, you may also need to translate the transcription.

HOP TIP: Just as it can also be helpful to write reflective notes about trends or things that stand out to you during data collection, we also recommend doing this as you analyze the data. Oftentimes a trend can emerge from these notes.

Data Analysis and Data Visualization Tools

There are several types of software and online applications that can help with analyzing your data. Most of these applications can also create visuals for when you want to report your data. The following table highlights some common data analysis methods and corresponding software and online applications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis Method</th>
<th>Good For...</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Software &amp; Online Applications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating Summary Sheets</td>
<td>Summarizing all your data. They make organizing and grouping your data much easier. Refer back to these sheets for reporting findings.</td>
<td>Put data into an easier form to understand and analyze: a 1 to 2 page summary sheet for each topic of the assessment or for each data collection tool. Fill in all the data you have pertaining to that topic that you gained. You can also create summaries based on segmented data (see below).</td>
<td>Word processing programs, such as Microsoft Word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Segmenting</strong></td>
<td>Computer analysis of quantitative data.</td>
<td>Divide your data into groups or specific ways for analysis. For example, you may segment your data for different populations to see similarities and differences between populations.</td>
<td>Statistical programs such as SPSS or SAS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coding and Categorizing</strong></td>
<td>Systematically organizing qualitative responses to identify and track important themes and concepts, and corresponding quotes.</td>
<td>Apply descriptive codes to your qualitative data to remember themes and concepts. The codes you create can represent main themes, ideas, and questions that arise during data collection. You can group codes into categories that can be organized into patterns and themes that can be linked with other patterns and themes.</td>
<td>Qualitative data analysis software, such as ATLAS.ti, is commonly used for complex data analysis. You can also use the highlight function in a simple word processing program. To do this, create a list of codes and assign each code a different color. Then highlight the text with the appropriate color to code it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Charts &amp; Diagrams</strong></td>
<td>Creating charts and diagrams allows you to visualize and communicate your data. Graphically representing your findings is a great way to easily &quot;see&quot; what is going on.</td>
<td>Use charts, diagrams, and other visuals such as graphs and tables to display your findings in a concise and easy-to-read format. For example, you may use a pie chart to show the proportion of men to women who completed a survey. Or you may use a flow chart to represent the process someone goes through when applying for public benefits programs that are available in the community.</td>
<td>Statistical software and spreadsheets can create graphs, charts, and tables. Design programs such as Adobe Illustrator and free online diagram applications such as Lucidchart can be used to create Venn diagrams, flow charts, and other visuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mapping</strong></td>
<td>Understanding, visualizing, and communicating data geographically.</td>
<td>Decide what data you want to map (housing sites, community organizations, migrant camps, etc.). Locate and plot these locations on the map.</td>
<td>You may have access to Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping software. If not, you can also use free online applications and even Google Maps.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INFORMED CONSENT TOOLS

14. Sample Informed Consent Form
15. Sample Needs Assessment Information Sheet
SAMPLE INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Certificate of Consent

I, _________________________________, have been invited by [INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME] to participate in the needs assessment about the health needs of [INSERT POPULATION AND LOCATION]. I have read the information provided, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it, and they have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in the needs assessment.

I am going to participate in the:  
☐ Survey  
☐ Focus Group

Print name of Participant: ____________________________________________________________

Signature of Participant: ____________________________________________________________

Date: ___________________________________________________________________________  
Day/Month/Year

[For Person Taking the Consent]: please complete if participant is unable to sign his or her name

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

Print name of Witness: ______________________________________________________________

Signature of Witness: ________________________________________________________________

Date: ___________________________________________________________________________  
Day/Month/Year
SAMPLE NEEDS ASSESSMENT INFORMATION SHEET

1. **Introduction:** Citrus Grove Health Center (CGHC) is a health center that provides health care services in Southern California. We are concerned for the health of people experiencing homelessness. We want to talk to people experiencing homelessness and collect information about their health concerns and needs through a process called a “health needs assessment.”

2. **Purpose of the Needs Assessment:** We want to find ways to support you and others experiencing homelessness to have good health. We believe that you can help us by telling us about your health needs, and what you know about the health needs of others. We want to learn what you think CGHC is doing well and what we can do better.

3. **Voluntary Participation:** You are being invited to participate because we think that your experience can contribute to our understanding of the health needs of people experiencing homelessness. Your participation in this health needs assessment is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. If you choose not to participate, that is ok and all the services you receive from CGHC will continue and nothing will change.

4. **Process:** The health needs assessment will involve your participation in a 25-minute interview using a survey. A staff member from CGHC will read the survey to you. You can say out the loud the answers and they will write down your answers on the paper. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions, you may skip them and move on to the next question.

   - **Risks:** You do not have to take part in this needs assessment if you do not wish to do so, and choosing not to participate will not affect your access to services at CGHC.
   - **Benefits:** There will be no direct benefit to you, but your participation is likely to help us find out more about how to better serve people experiencing homelessness.
   - **Appreciation:** You will be provided a $10 gift card for participating in the survey.

5. **Confidentiality:** We will not be sharing information about you with anyone outside of the needs assessment team. The information that we collect from this project will be kept private. Any information about you will have a number on it instead of your name. Only the needs assessment team will know what your number is and we will keep that private.

6. **Sharing the Results:** Nothing will be attributed to you by name. The information you share with us will be grouped together with what others have also shared with us and presented as a whole, not individually. The knowledge that we get from this needs assessment will be put together in a report and shared with the community.

7. **Right to Refuse or Withdraw:** You may stop participating in the discussion or survey at any time that you wish. You do not have to answer any question or continue in the survey if you feel the question(s) are too personal or if talking about them makes you uncomfortable. If you have any questions, you can ask them now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact: [insert contact name and number].
What’s Next: Sharing and Using Your Needs Assessment Findings

SECTION OVERVIEW:
This section provides an overview of the various ways that you can share and use your findings from the needs assessment, from report writing to infographics to community presentations. Real-life examples of health centers are presented to show how they have applied their findings.

COMPONENTS:
• Sharing and Using Your Needs Assessment Findings
  o Share Your Findings
  o Use Your Findings

• Sharing and Using Your Findings Tools
WHAT’S NEXT: SHARING AND USING YOUR NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

SHARE YOUR FINDINGS
You should plan from the start what you intend to do with the findings after the needs assessment is complete. Start by establishing a structure that includes: 1) how you plan to share your findings, 2) what kind of budget you have, and 3) what staff will be involved in these activities. Remember that when conducting a needs assessment, you are accountable to both the community you assess and also to your organization. It is important to share the findings both internally and externally. Internally, you may wish to share the findings with administration, staff, the Board of Directors, and other interested or involved staff members. Externally, you can share the findings with community collaborators, funders, local or county government officials, and most importantly, the community you assessed.

By sharing your findings broadly, you will be providing a service to the wider community. Given the lack of available research and data on underserved populations, your needs assessment can contribute to a better understanding and new awareness of their health needs and challenges. Additionally, you may help to facilitate the influx of additional funds for individual programs and organizations or new collaborative efforts based on your findings.

There are various ways to share your findings with your organization and community. Sharing the results is also an opportunity for your needs assessment team to build its capacity around interpreting data and delivering presentations. The following are a few examples of how to do this, but there is no limit to finding creative ways of sharing your findings:

- **Detailed or summary report:** Reports are a traditional way to share needs assessment findings, especially when reporting to funders. If you do decide to write a report, consider including an executive summary that sums up all this information in a few pages or less. This is especially useful for highlighting important findings that would otherwise get buried in a long report. See page 67 for more on the format of an Executive Summary.

- **Infographics:** Infographics are visual representations of data with the purpose of presenting complex information in a clear and simple way. They are quick, eye-catching ways of summarizing and sharing data. There are lots of free or low-cost infographics software available online, so you do not have to be familiar with graphic design to use this option. See page 68 for sample infographics and suggested software.

- **Brownbag lunches:** Brownbags are an informal way to share your findings and engage in a discussion with your colleagues during lunchtime. If your organization has available resources, providing lunch is a great incentive for motivating staff to attend. Otherwise, encourage your colleagues to bring their lunch or organize a potluck. Remember, your presentation should last no longer than the scheduled lunch hour and leave time to answer questions.
• **Community event:** A community event brings together individuals and organizations to present and discuss the findings. Your assessment findings can be used to initiate dialogue around community health needs. Understanding the findings and what other residents think can help to develop a shared community vision and provide opportunities for collaborations.

• **Webinar:** If you have an audience that is spread out over a wide geographic area, consider organizing a webinar to share your findings. You can find representatives from your community to discuss the findings, recommendations, and actions, and host the recording of the webinar on your organization’s website.

• **Newsletters or social media:** Organizational resources, such as a newsletter, annual report, or social media such as Facebook or Twitter, can be used to easily and quickly spread the word about your needs assessment findings. You can use social media to promote links to other resources you have developed, such as infographics or reports.

Before deciding how to share your needs assessment findings, consider your audience and the purpose of sharing your findings in order to determine the most appropriate medium to use. Some questions to consider include:

• **Who is your main audience? What do they need to know? Are there language and literacy needs to keep in mind?** Audiences learn and process information differently. Long, complicated reports may not work for busy decision-makers and may also alienate other audiences. Decide what type of resource or method will help relay relevant information in the most effective way possible.

• **What is the purpose of sharing your findings?**
  • Questions to consider include: To evaluate progress? To make programming decisions? To gain support? To formulate recommendations? To foster dialogue amongst partners? To secure funding?
  • The purpose of sharing the findings may impact the type of resource or method you use. For example, if the purpose is to foster dialogue, hosting a community event or other public meeting may be more appropriate than writing a report or conducting a webinar.

  **HOP Tip:** Remember to ensure confidentiality. Any information that could identify an individual or family should be removed before sharing your findings with the community, especially if sensitive information, like health information or documentation status, has been shared.

**USE YOUR FINDINGS**

Your needs assessment process should not end once you have met your obligation to report your findings. Though this step is critical, make sure that your findings are used to benefit your organization.
Using Needs Assessment Results for Planning

More than likely, the assessment took significant staff time to complete. Be sure to reserve the time and energy to implement changes to your programs based on the results. Ideally, your organization has learned a few new things or perhaps a new way to look at “old issues.” The good news is now you have the hard evidence to guide your actions. Your needs assessment findings can and should serve as a key source of information for planning purposes, including program planning, strategic planning, and setting organizational priorities.

Apply for Additional Funding

A very common reason for carrying out a needs assessment is to gain additional funding. Funders often ask organizations to demonstrate that they have a thorough understanding of the community they are serving and illustrate how their programs address the needs of the community. Having hard evidence to back up your proposal is very powerful. Having done the groundwork of a needs assessment may set you apart from other organizations applying for the same pool of funds. Such advantage can make the difference between being awarded or not.

Below are some examples of health centers and other community-based organizations that have created innovative ways to use their needs assessment findings to support agricultural workers in their community. Longer write-ups of these examples can be found online at HOP’s Innovative Outreach Practices at http://web.outreach-partners.org/resources/iop.

Innovative Outreach Practices: How Health Centers Use Their Needs Assessment Findings

Practice #1: A First Aid Training and Curriculum for Medical Emergencies in Rural Areas

In 2007, through a grant from the National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH), the Southeast Louisiana School of Nursing (SELU) partnered with the National Center for Farmworker Health (NCFH) to assess the health needs and concerns of female agricultural workers by conducting eight focus groups. Based on the focus group findings, nursing professors and professionals from the emergency medical field wrote the train-the-trainer first aid curriculum for nursing students and focus group participants reviewed it. This process helped to ensure the information was culturally relevant. The curriculum is used as the core of a nursing school course designed to build the capacity of both students and families of agricultural workers.

Practice #2: Identifying and Responding to the Needs of an Emerging Population

Kansas Statewide Farmworker Health Program (KSFHP) conducts regular community health needs assessments to learn about the Low German-speaking Mennonites from Mexico, an emerging agricultural worker population in their community, as well as the general agricultural worker population. KSFHP conducts a formal needs assessment every 5 years utilizing a telephone survey. KSFHP also organizes 7 to 8 annual focus groups with Low German-speaking and Spanish-speaking agricultural workers throughout the state.

The first formal needs assessment in 2003 identified significant health needs and disparities in routine care, oral health, family planning, and behavioral health. As a result of demonstrated need, KSFHP received an Expanded Medical Capacity grant from HRSA to hire a full-time case manager and two part-time health promoters to address the linguistic, cultural, and health needs of Low German-speaking
Mennonite agricultural workers. Due to a lack of health information available in Low German, KSFHP also develops its own audio and visual materials. *Harvest of Health* is an audiovisual health book available in English, Spanish, and Low German. Additionally, KSFHP designs an annual health promotion calendar using both words and pictures to encourage healthy choices in an easy-to-understand format.

**Practice #3: Music Therapy Responds to Mental Health Needs**
In response to a high number of clinic visits related to symptoms of depression, anxiety, and alcohol abuse, Watauga Medical Center’s Farmworker Health Program in Boone, NC collaborated with a graduate student in the counseling department at Appalachian State University to conduct a community mental health assessment. Focus groups were held at two large camps, with a total of 17 agricultural workers participating.

The findings from the assessment revealed that traditional talk therapy is not popular due to cultural stigma around using mental health services, and that the agricultural workers preferred group-based learning activities and emotional support from people they already knew. In response, the Farmworker Health Program partnered with a music therapist from Appalachian State University in 2009 and 2010 to develop an innovative music therapy program to reduce stress among agricultural workers. To reduce stigma, the small-group sessions were called group music lessons. Outcomes of the music therapy sessions included a decrease in anxiety, depression, and social isolation among the individuals involved.
SHARING AND USING YOUR FINDINGS TOOLS

16. Reporting the Needs Assessment Findings Checklist
17. Sample Infographics and Resources
18. How to Use Your Needs Assessment Findings
REPORTING THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS CHECKLIST

There are various ways to present and share your needs assessment findings with your organization and community, and there are no limits to finding creative ways of sharing information. In general, remember to keep any content you use clear and simple. Incorporating visuals, including graphs or charts, can help to quickly summarize your findings. Keep in mind the following components of reporting whenever sharing your needs assessment findings.

- **Background Introduction to the Needs Assessment**: explains the purpose of the needs assessment and why it was conducted.
  - What are the goals of the needs assessment?

- **Methods Used to Collect Data**: explains which data collection methods were used and how many participants were assessed.
  - How did you collect the information? (focus groups, surveys, community forum, key informant interviews, etc.)
  - From whom did you collect data?
  - From how many people did you collect data?
  - How did you analyze the data?
  - What were the strengths and weaknesses of your approach?

- **Key Findings or Conclusions**: summarizes your collected and analyzed data.
  - What were your results?

- **Recommendations**: includes next steps based on the analysis of your data. Recommendations should be concrete and specific.
  - What are the implications of the findings on your organization and community?
  - What would you recommend happen as a result of the findings?

**Writing an Executive Summary**

Your Executive Summary should be a short explanation of your project, findings, and recommendations. It should be between 1 to 4 pages in length, and include the following:

- A brief introduction
- A methodology section
- A key findings section
- A recommendations section
SAMPLE INFOGRAPHICS AND RESOURCES

In 2014, Health Outreach Partners (HOP) released findings from its fifth national needs assessment, “Outreach Across Underserved Populations,” including a summary report and three infographics. Below are two sample infographics; larger versions, as well as the summary report, are available at http://web.outreach-partners.org/resources/nna.

Infographics Software
There are many websites and software tools to help you create Infographics; many are free while others charge a fee to use the tools. Example include:

- Piktochart: http://piktochart.com/
- Infograms: www.infogr.am
- Visually: www.visual.ly
HOW TO USE YOUR NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

The data you have collected can be shared across different layers of your community and used in a number of ways. The layers of your community include people and groups you come in contact with, starting with those closest to you – in this case, your organization.

COMMUNITY
Includes patients, businesses, local and state organizations, churches, leaders, and other key residents.

ACTIONS:
- Share findings with needs assessment participants
- Share findings with community leaders and other service organizations
- Make your findings available in appropriate languages
- Talk with patients, community leaders, and organizations about your program planning and action plan to meet community needs

RESULTS:
- Your patients and community see and understand the results of your needs assessment
- Needs assessment participants, patients, and community members become a part of efforts to meet local needs of underserved populations

YOUR ORGANIZATION
Includes all staff, administration, and Board of Directors.

ACTIONS:
- Present findings to all staff and administration
- Create action plan with key staff and departments to address findings
- Implement changes to meet patient and community needs
- Create a written report or find other appropriate ways of presenting your findings, action plan, and results

RESULTS:
- Services better meet community needs
- Staff are aware of the impact of their work
- All staff and administration are aware of the health needs of underserved populations in their community

NATIONAL
Includes national organizations, publications, conference events, and existing and potential funders.

ACTIONS:
- Distribute your findings to organizations outside your community, county, and state
- Publish your findings and present them at local and national conferences
- Use findings to apply for funding to implement your action plan and expand services

RESULTS:
- You share your experience to the benefit of other organizations and members of underserved populations
- You gain funding to improve the health and quality of life of members of underserved populations in your area
ABOUT HEALTH OUTREACH PARTNERS

WHO WE ARE
Health Outreach Partners (HOP) is a national organization providing training and support to community-based organizations striving to improve the quality of life of low-income, vulnerable, and underserved populations. HOP has over 40 years of experience in the field of outreach, and offers support to organizations interested in exploring a more customized application of these ideas.

WHY OUTREACH
Outreach plays a critical role in facilitating access to primary care, case management, health promotion, disease prevention, and social services for underserved communities. HOP’s mission is to build strong, effective, and sustainable grassroots health models with a particular focus on health outreach programs.

Contact us to see how we can help build your program’s capacity in serving low-income, vulnerable, and underserved populations. Learn more at our website: http://outreach-partners.org/.