



Sustainability Series Tip Sheet

The Logic of Program Design, Part 1 – Framing the Issue

Program proposals are evaluated based upon how the following three elements work together:

1. Framing the Issue (need and asset statements)
2. Describing the program (objectives and activities)
3. Clearly stated outcomes (evaluation)

This Tip Sheet focuses on framing the issue. Future Tip Sheets will discuss elements 2 and 3.

Developing a Needs Statement

Start with the issue you want to address. Discuss it in broad terms. Apply local concerns. Why hasn't the problem been solved? What community resources are in place that will help to solve the problem?

The needs statement identifies and measures gaps between what is and what ought to be. A needs statement can also identify the reported needs of an organization or group of people. In one case, the program planner identifies needs of people, and in the second the people identified their *own* needs. A good needs statement should reflect both perspectives. A program planned for others may not interest the target population even though a real problem may exist. A program planned only from the point of view of the target group may not solve the real problem.

Primary data – data specific to the target population - are collected from individuals through surveys or interviews, only once, or over time. Others, such as spouses, family members, friends or community opinion leaders can provide useful primary data. Ways to collect primary data include focus groups, surveys or interviews.

Secondary data sources include government agencies (local, state and Federal), U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Census, National Center for Health Statistics (part of the CDC).

Identify the Assets in Place

Assets are those resources that are readily available to help your target population and their communities. Increasingly, funders expect proposals to include descriptions of community assets. Asking the community where they go to address their needs will also let the program planners know whether existing resources are being utilized to their greatest potential.

A list of community assets might include:

- Special programs or services (support groups, community clinics)
- Community or nonprofit organizations
- Businesses (community minded programs, open space for meetings, service groups)
- Government (county health departments, libraries, community centers)
- Cultural groups and specific PEOPLE who make a difference in the community

Creating the Community Profile

Many Requests for Proposals start by asking about the community that will be served. Here are some ideas about how to address the community profile section:

- The community being addressed in the community profile section of an Request For Proposal means the group or groups of people the project is targeting for change: patients, providers, specific socio-economic groups, people fitting a specific health status (i.e. HIV/HCV co-infected), and ethnic group, etc.
- Put down as much information as you can that would identify the group or groups clearly: Language, culture, age, family structure, educational or income level, occupations or any other data that would help you identify them as a separate group that you will target (people in recovery, recent immigrants, etc.).
- Clearly state the numbers in the group(s) to be reached.
- Identify in which communities (geographic area) services will be delivered or which communities the project will impact.

How does the work we are doing build on the assets in our community?

Some questions to consider when you are developing your plan are:

- How will people (our target population and the community at large) know about our program?
- How will people access our services? Will they come to us? Will we go to them?
- What will make people want to participate in our program or service? Are there Language barriers? Cultural issues?
- Who is doing similar work in the community? Are they targeting the same groups of people?
- Who is doing work that will complement what we are doing or help us reach our target population? How can we work together?

The applicant organization

The community profile might include information about the organization that is applying for funds. This information (whether included in the community profile or requested in another section of the Request for Proposal) will include general information to help the organization make its case. It should describe:

- The organization's ability to serve the target population (cultural/linguistic competence, etc)
- The organization's service area or market
- Past successes in providing programs to the target population and other groups
- Fiscal and operational ability
- Program partners, advisory bodies and other collaborators

Collaboration with Partners

An outstanding program plan will address ways that services will be made accessible to the people it is targeting. As you develop your proposal, think about the key partners you will need to make your program the best that it can be. Developing collaboration among service providers in the community is a key component of many grants. Many funders require strong evidence of collaborative partnerships as a component of the proposal. Include in the appendices a Letter of Commitment from each organization that will be receiving grant funds or are providing matching cash or in-kind services.

The National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable is a coalition of public, private, and voluntary organizations dedicated to reducing the incidence of infection, morbidity, and mortality from viral hepatitis in the U.S.

To support the increased capacity and sustainability of non-profit member organizations, NVHR produces a series of Tip Sheets on a variety of topics. If you have questions or suggestions for a future Tip Sheet topic, please contact [Martha Saly](mailto:Martha.Saly@nvhr.org).