

Practical Planning for Continua of Care

This guide contains a practical planning process to assist local Continua of Care (CoC) in improving operations and creating real change in your community. It provides CoCs with a step-by-step process to both create and stay accountable to goals and action plans. CoCs may want to create a shared Vision Statement before doing this practical planning process. See “Creating a CoC Vision Statement,” in the Resources section of the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness website.

All CoCs are different, in terms of how they operate, participation & attendance, regional populations, and the list goes on. I encourage CoCs to adapt this guide and make changes to what is laid out here in accordance with each CoC’s needs and environment. This guide contains:

- I. [Developing Shared Goals](#)
- II. [Choosing Goals to focus on for the next 6 months](#)
- III. [Creating an Action Plan](#)
- IV. [Evaluating Progress](#)

How to use this Guide

This guide is intended for local CoC Chairs, as well as anyone who helps to facilitate this process at CoC meetings.

The process of developing goals, choosing goals to focus on in the next 6 months, and creating an action plan, can be done in one entire meeting or split up into two meetings. Throughout all the steps, ensure someone is recording everything electronically and disseminating materials after the meeting. Evaluating progress will happen on an ongoing basis.



Source: sswm.info/content/visioning

Questions/Feedback: This is a living, breathing document. Please reach out to [Laurel Chen](#), CoC Support Specialist, with *any and all* feedback.

Developing Shared Goals (20 min.)

1. Explain to the group that the next step will be to create shared goals that the CoC can focus on in the next 6 months. If reached, the community will be one step closer to homelessness being rare and brief in your county/region.
2. For 8 minutes, in pairs or groups of 3, have folks discuss & record answers to the following question: **“What are some concrete things that have to happen for homelessness to be rare and brief in county/region’s name ?”** Alternatively, substitute the CoC’s Vision Statement for “homelessness rare and brief” in the previous question. Instruct everyone to try to be positive and future-oriented. This discussion may be in the realms of support services, housing stock, local initiatives, policy, etc.
Examples: Expansion of street outreach, increase of SROs in the county, a partnership with the health clinic, more vouchers
3. Each group will then share what they discussed, while someone records these ideas on a large, posted sheet of paper.

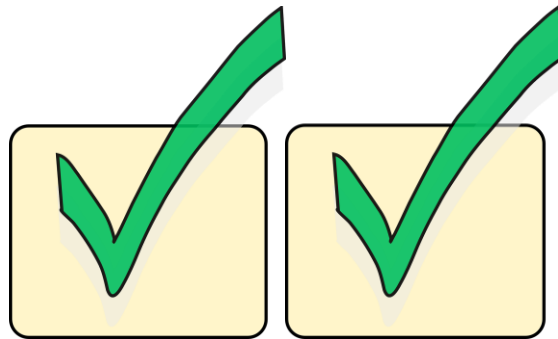
NOTE: Write the goals on the large list as positive and future-oriented. For example, if someone says, “We need landlords to rent to our clients,” it can be framed as, “Increasing landlord willingness to rent to the population we serve.”

4. For 5 minutes, repeat Step 2, this time focusing on: **“What are some concrete things that have to happen with CoC operations for homelessness to be rare and brief in county/region’s name ?”**
Examples: Expanding membership, getting input from people who have experienced homelessness, creating a housing inventory, PIT Count planning, Coordinated Entry
5. Repeat Step 3 including sharing out and recording on a large, posted sheet.

Choosing Goals to focus on for the next 6 months (10 min.)

Work collaboratively to identify 3-4 goals, from the list created, to focus on for the next 6 months. The group may need to do some editing to make them specific and achievable, or break broader goals up into smaller goals. They do not necessarily need be attained in exactly 6 months—they may take more or less time, as will be included in your Action Plan. Some guidelines:

- Include a mix from the first list and from the CoC Operations list
- Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-limited
- High level of interest from a diversity of CoC members



Creating an Action Plan (10-20 min. per goal)

How much of what will be accomplished by whom by when?

The Action Plan describes in detail how your CoC will accomplish the goals you developed, starting now! Every goal will have a separate Action Plan. Depending on the meeting size, you can break into small groups and have each group tackle one goal, or work as a whole CoC to create an Action Plan for each goal. If time is limited, you may decide to focus on creating one Action Plan for one goal, leaving the others to the next meeting.

Use the “Action Plan Template” provided on the next page to break down each goal into manageable tasks. It is important to be as specific as possible here and to delegate, delegate, delegate. There may be some things you don’t know yet, or situations may change your action plan. That’s okay! Just capture the steps your CoC will take to gather any currently unknown information, and you can “plan to replan” as situations arise.

Logistically, the use of a projector may be helpful for this part, or alternatively create an Action Plan on a large sheet of paper in order that it’s visible to all.

Staying accountable to the Action Plan:

- Delegate someone to electronically record and distribute the Action Plan to everyone on the CoC, with names assigned to tasks.
- At every meeting, create an agenda item for folks to report out on the Action Steps they were assigned.
- Problem solve as a group when your CoC meets specific roadblocks in completing an Action Step as part of the Action Plan; adjust accordingly and make sure to send out a new version of the Action Plan.
- Celebrate the accomplishment of every task.

Action Plan Template

Today's date:

Use this template to identify specific steps the CoC needs to take to attain the goal.

Be as specific as possible with each action step, breaking down complex actions into separate steps.

GOAL:

Action Step <i>What needs to be done?</i>	Key Person(s) Responsible <i>Who will take the actions?</i>	Communication <i>What individuals and organizations should be informed of these actions?</i>	Date to be Completed <i>By what date will the action be done?</i>

Materials adapted from Kansas University's Community Toolbox: http://ctb.ku.edu/sites/default/files/chapter_files/promoting_child_well-being.pdf

EXAMPLE: Action Plan Template

Today's date: 4/4/2017

GOAL: The local Health Department will establish prenatal nurse home visitation where nurses provide home visits beginning in pregnancy and continuing through the child's birth to discuss prenatal health issues.

Action Step <i>What needs to be done?</i>	Key Person(s) Responsible <i>Who will take the actions?</i>	Communication <i>What individuals and organizations should be informed of these actions?</i>	Date to be Completed <i>By what date will the action be done?</i>
Collect information on the incidence of poor prenatal care in the community.	Daniel Howard Cynthia Corey Stacey Robillard Cynthia Corey	Standish Community Health Clinic, Parent Child Center	May 1, 2017
Meet with the Health Department to present the information and discuss the establishment of a nurse home visiting program.	Daniel Howard Al Koptick	Health Department, Standish Community Health clinic, local legislators	Mid June 2017
Negotiate commitment for a specific nurse home visiting program.	Julia Jansen Stacey Robillard Al Koptick	Standish Community Health Clinic, Parent Child Center, Health Department, local legislators	Mid August 2017
Implement the home visiting program.	Entire community nursing team, led by Stacey Robillard	Standish Community Health Clinic, Parent Child Center, Health Department, local legislators	October 1, 2017
Report after one quarter, the levels of prenatal care in the community.	Daniel Howard Cynthia Corey	Standish Community Health Clinic, Parent Child Center, Health Department, local legislators	January 1, 2018

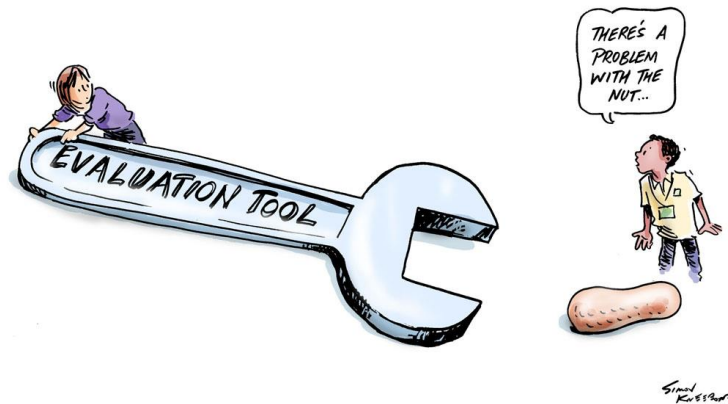
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Evaluating Progress

The CoC will need to work as a group, or create a sub-committee, to:

- 1) **Create objective measures** so that the CoC can measure the extent to which the CoC achieves the goal;
- 2) **Compile the data** once the CoC follows through with the Action Plan; and,
- 3) **Assess** whether the CoC has achieved the goal or needs to rework its Action Plan to reach its goal according to the objective measures.

The data needed for the objective measures may be relatively simple or may involve pulling reports from HMIS. For example, for a goal of, “increasing CoC attendance from the health care sector,” an objective measure may be, “the number of new people from the health care sector who attend 2 CoC meetings in a row.” For a goal of, “implementing a street outreach program in our community,” an objective measure may be, “number of persons positively sheltered resulting from street outreach.”



Source: Simon Kneebone, Illustrator and Comic Artist

Sources

<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/strategic-planning/vmosa/main>

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/826/continuum-of-care-planning-and-implementation-guide-to/>

<http://www.nonprofitinclusiveness.org/reviewing-your-process>