

Needs and Resources Assessment

Highlights from CDC PIES (Planning, Implementation, Evaluation, and Sustainability) Guidance on Step 1: Needs and Resources Assessment (NARA)

The Needs and Resources Assessment addresses the following two questions:

- *What are the needs and conditions that must be addressed in your community or state to prevent sexual violence and/or intimate partner violence?*
- *What resources are available in your community or state to help prevent intimate partner violence and/or sexual violence?*

Definition of Needs & Resources Assessment: A needs and resources assessment is a systematic process of gathering and critically interpreting information about a particular health or social problem—such as intimate partner violence (IPV) and/or sexual violence (SV)—and the resources available to address such problems within a defined school/organization, community or state.

The needs and resources you identify in step one of the PIES process will be the foundation of your primary prevention strategies. The needs and resources profile for your community or state that you develop will help your planning team identify and prioritize the specific conditions to address in your primary prevention plan for your universal populations, selected populations, and your prevention system capacity building activities.

To complete a needs and resources assessment you will need to review a variety of data or information about your community. The data may be either quantitative or qualitative or both. Quantitative data is information that is expressed in numbers such as the number of males or females that attend specific schools. Qualitative data is the information behind the numbers that describes the context of the situation, event or culture through words. There are many ways to collect data for your needs and resources assessment. You may use existing data from local organizations or community databases and records or you may choose to collect new data through interviewing, making observations or administering surveys (see Part 2 of this toolkit if you are considering collection new data for your NARA). The important thing to remember is to use multiple sources of data for your needs and resources assessment so you can have a well informed assessment. To be consistent with the Empowerment Evaluation (EE) principles of improvement and capacity building, needs and resources assessments should reflect a balance of both strengths and challenges associated with a given community or state. It can be easy to focus only on problems when doing a needs and resources assessment. Be sure to spend time considering the assets in your community or state. Knowing both the needs and the resources in your community or state is essential to setting your priorities for the rest of your planning process.

Nine Steps to Complete Your Needs and Resources Assessment

1. Form a work group that will take on the responsibility of conducting the needs and resources assessment which represents the perspectives of diverse groups in your community/state.
 - It is important that your work group develops a shared definition and understanding of intimate partner violence and sexual violence, primary prevention from a public health perspective and a shared vision for prevention.
 - It is also important to determine how your needs and resources work group will work together by determining roles and responsibilities, discussing the time commitments for developing a needs

and resources assessment and the frequency and types of communication you will use to get the work done.

2. Define the geographic area of interest (organization/school, community/state) for your needs and resources assessment.
 - This step is key to ensure focus based on the resources you can commit to completing the needs and resources assessment. You may want to focus on a specific group of zip codes or census tracts within your community OR you could look at a specific school district or school levels such as middle, high school or colleges.
 - Remember that sometimes standard geographical boundaries may not be the best way to define the scope of a needs and resources assessment. This may be true when social boundaries of a community do not correspond to official geographically defined categories such as school districts or zip codes, (for example, the Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender or Deaf communities).
3. Develop a community or state profile or systematically review an existing community or state profile that includes demographic information for your community/state, conditions in your community/state AND assets and resources (including existing prevention efforts) in your community/state.
 - A community or state profile is a comprehensive description of people, conditions and resources in your geographic area of interest. It typically includes information about past, present and projected demographics and economic conditions as well as indicators of well-being and resources that exist in your community for sexual and domestic violence issues.
 - Remember to ask: “Who is missing from this profile?” Are the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender populations, people with disabilities, youth, and immigrant/refugee or other populations adequately represented in this profile?
4. Examine multiple data sources to estimate the magnitude of sexual violence and intimate partner violence among universal and selected populations in your community/state as described in your community profile and the community attitudes, behaviors and conditions that support IPV/SV and the prevention of IPV/SV.
 - Consider the strengths and weaknesses of each data source. For example, determine if the data were collected for a specific purpose, if so, what was the purpose and what concerns do you have based on the source’s purpose? (ie; police reports, domestic violence arrests, results from national surveys on perpetration or victimization)
 - Determine what is missing in the data to fully describe the current state of IPV/SV needs and resources in your community.
 - If needed develop a data collection plan to fill gaps for determining magnitude of sexual violence and intimate partner violence so you can conduct focus groups or other interviews of stakeholders or administer surveys of stakeholder groups to collect needed data to fully understand needs and resources
5. Examine relevant risk and protective factors for SV and/or IPV within universal and selected populations in your community/state using multiple data sources. (“Universal” population refers to all community members regardless of risk, while “selected” refers to individuals or groups at heightened risk for victimization or perpetration of IPV/SV.)
 - Consider the strengths and weaknesses of each data source (see *How to Think Critically About Needs Assessment Data* Tip Sheet).
 - Determine what is missing in the data to fully describe the risk and protective factors to determine needs and resources in your community.

- If needed develop a data collection plan to fill gaps for determining risk and protective factors. You can conduct focus groups or stakeholder interviews or surveys to supplement other sources of data.
 - Asset mapping is one method for conducting a resource assessment. Remember assets including (1) individuals, (2) informal local associations, (3) and formal institutions.
6. Identify how the SV and/or IPV primary prevention system capacity can be strengthened by determining the gaps in the system to achieve primary prevention goals and the potential for leveraging resources through collaboration with other community organizations.
- Use asset mapping to determine the resources within your community and potential partners that you can collaborate with to leverage prevention resources
 - You'll want to find out what prevention strategies that are being used by other community organizations so that you can work together to support primary prevention
 - Remember to look at community primary prevention resources including organizations, processes, events, funding, skills and knowledge that can strengthen the system's capacity to achieve prevention goals.
7. Write a Needs and Resources Report based on what you have learned about your community/state.
- The report should include multiple sources of data and your conclusions about gaps in IPV/SV prevention in your community.
 - Your community is unique based on your community members and other contextual factors (such as availability of resources and community size) so make sure to include these factors in your report.
8. Review the Needs and Resources Report with your planning team and other stakeholders and revise as appropriate based on feedback.
- Encourage stakeholders to critique the report and offer sources of data to support their critique.
 - Integrate the reviewer's comments into the report along with the supporting data sources.
9. Set the goals for your primary prevention work based on the findings of the needs and resources assessment.
- Prioritize your needs based on what you found and set your goals accordingly in the next step of the planning process.
 - Congratulate your team for working through this rigorous process!

Source: *GTO Step 1: Needs & Resources Assessment*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (12/06)

The 9 steps involved in a Needs and Resources Assessment are presented in the graph below. A NARA should be updated every other year to ensure that it is current with the changes in your community.

Figure 1. Needs and Resources Assessment Cycle

