

# SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING ROAD MAP

## COMMUNITIES THAT HEAL PHASE 6



In Phase 6, coalitions will develop a sustainability plan. The goal is to implement evidence-based strategies for reducing opioid overdoses by using and building upon the existing infrastructure in your community. Your coalition may decide to integrate these evidence-based strategies with existing substance use intervention models or community health planning processes, such as Communities That Care, Community Health Needs Assessments, or Community Health Improvement Plans.

This set of Road Maps is designed for individuals working to address the opioid crisis, including community coalition members, treatment providers, recovery support specialists, policymakers, and those with lived and living experience. It aims to support the creation of new coalitions or the reimagining of existing ones to enhance prevention, treatment, harm reduction, and recovery efforts in their communities.

## Table of Contents



**3** **Key Terms and Definitions**  
Communities That HEAL:  
Definitions

**4** **Overview**  
Phase 6 Activities

**4** **Activity 6.1:**  
Support Sustainability Through  
Training and Technical  
Assistance

**8** **Activity 6.2:**  
Support Development of  
Coalition-Driven Sustainability  
Plans

## Key Terms and Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
<b>The Communities That HEAL (CTH) Intervention</b>	An intervention that collaborated with community coalitions to develop data-driven plans and implement evidence-based strategies—such as overdose education and naloxone distribution, medications for opioid use disorder, and safer prescribing—to reduce opioid overdose deaths.
<b>Evidence-based strategies</b>	Interventions that have been shown, through research and evaluation, to be effective in changing people’s knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors to improve social and health outcomes.
<b>Intervention</b>	In a research study, an intervention is when researchers introduce or apply a change—such as a treatment, program, or method—to observe how it affects the participants or outcomes.
<a href="#">Medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD)</a>	Medications that are U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved for the treatment of opioid use disorder. They are often used in combination with counseling and other behavioral therapies and include buprenorphine, methadone, and naltrexone in different formulations.
<b>Naloxone</b>	A medication that can reverse an opioid-related overdose. It can be given as a nasal spray (Narcan®) or injected into the muscle, under the skin, or into the veins.
<b>Opioid-Overdose Reduction Continuum of Care Approach (ORCCA)</b>	A set of evidence-based strategies aimed at reducing overdose deaths. It is organized into three categories: opioid overdose education and naloxone distribution, medications for opioid use disorder, and safer prescribing practices.
<a href="#">Overdose education and naloxone distribution (OEND)</a>	<b>Overdose education</b> programs train and empower people to recognize and administer naloxone to someone who they suspect may be overdosing. Overdose education programs can be coupled with <b>naloxone distribution</b> with the goal of making naloxone more accessible and available in communities.
<b>Safer Disposal</b>	In the ORCCA, safer disposal refers to strategies that encourage proper discarding of unused, expired, or unwanted opioid medications to prevent accidental poisoning. Safer disposal practices include drug take-back events, permanent drug drop kiosks, and take-home disposal mechanisms.
<a href="#">Safer Prescribing</a>	In the ORCCA, safer prescribing refers to strategies that promote responsible and effective opioid prescribing practices. These include training prescribers and pharmacists to manage patients with chronic pain safely and providing education on opioid safety to healthcare professionals and patients.



## Overview

### Phase 6 Activities

- Support sustainability through training and technical assistance (TTA).
- Support development of coalition-driven sustainability plans.

#### Activity 6.1: Support Sustainability Through Training and Technical Assistance

**Timeline:** 11 to 17 months, ongoing\*

Hiring and training community members to carry out evidence-based strategies promotes the long-term use of these strategies and leads to better health outcomes.<sup>1</sup> Seek out local expertise in your planning and selection of strategies. By supporting and training local personnel to support these practices, communities and partner organizations are in a better position to sustain intervention efforts over time.

Although these evidence-based strategies primarily address the opioid crisis, the skills and approaches learned can be applied to various health and social issues.

\* Timelines are estimates based on the HEALing Communities Study; please note that activities may take longer depending on the level of community support, local policies, and availability of resources.

<sup>1</sup>Johnson, K., Collins, D., Shamblen, S., Kenworthy, T., & Wandersman, A. (2017). Long-term sustainability of evidence-based prevention interventions and community coalitions survival: A five and one-half year follow-up study. *Prevention Science*, 18(5), 610–621. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-017-0784-2>

## Approach

It will be important to work with your coalition and community partners to identify priority areas of TTA that will promote sustainability.

Develop a robust training and capacity-building plan in collaboration with your coalition, including the following:

- Identifying training priorities for your community.
- Offering targeted training sessions to minimize stigma, build shared understanding or evidence-based strategies, and enhance strategy implementation.
- Promoting technical assistance and professional consultants to bridge knowledge gaps and foster collaborative learning among coalitions, champions, and partner organizations (as bandwidth allows).

Trainings can be made available to all community members interested in implementing the selected evidence-based strategies. As these strategies are implemented, your coalition can work together to identify partner organization or coalition member experts who can train other local practitioners and organizations on these evidence-based strategies and communications to help scale up and sustain your efforts.

## Training Objectives

Trainings should be designed to:

- Build a shared understanding of evidence-based strategies.
- Improve community-wide knowledge of planned interventions, data collection, visualization, and grant writing.
- Prepare local teams to address sustainability-focused topics, such as financial resources, data infrastructure, and communication strategies.



## Technical Assistance and Further Education

During this phase, the coalition can explore educational or professional consultations to address gaps in knowledge and technical skills. These consultations enable coalitions, champions, and partner organizations to share strategies, learn collaboratively, and solve problems. Tailored to coalition needs, these opportunities were introduced during Phase 2 meetings but could also have been launched as early as Phase 1 if readiness and interests were aligned.

As interventions progress, prioritize TTA that promote sustainability. Collaborate with your coalition members to identify training needs and explore educational opportunities, including:

- Implementing best practices for data-driven decision-making
- Gaining buy-in from key stakeholders
- Planning and executing effective communication campaigns

## Sustainability Training Topics

Focus areas for long-term capacity building include the following:

### Financial Resources

- **Focus:** Develop strategies to obtain financial resources to support CTH efforts.
- Examples:
  - Identifying funding opportunities: Explore identifying and apply for local, state, and national funding sources.
  - Advocating for sustainable policies: Provide recommendations to decision-makers and state agencies to establish infrastructure and policies (e.g., Medicaid expansion to fund treatment and recovery services).
  - Billing for services: Develop processes to bill for reimbursable services.

### Data Infrastructure

- **Focus:** Craft strategies and key considerations for maintaining the data infrastructure (e.g., data dashboards and data sharing protocols) necessary to inform and monitor communities' continued response to the opioid crisis.
- Key considerations:
  - Legal Requirements: Understand current privacy and data-sharing regulations for patients with substance use disorders and address relevant regulations.<sup>2</sup>
  - Platform Options: Explore using open-source, easily maintained, or readily available platforms for data storage and sharing.

<sup>2</sup> Relevant regulations include Subpart C of 45 CFR Part 164 for data storage, and 42 CFR Part 2 along with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Public Law 104-191, for confidentiality.

## Communications

- **Focus:** Creating strategies, tools, and key considerations for relaunching communication campaigns, or adapting existing communication materials for continued use.
- Examples:
  - Developing best practices for creating visually impactful and effective materials.
  - Social Media Optimization: Implement strategies to maximize engagement and reach across platforms.
  - Op-Ed Placement: Learn how to pitch and place op-eds with editors to amplify your message.
  - Grant Writing: Develop grant writing skills tailored to support communication initiatives.
  - Cost-Effective Campaigns: Relaunch campaign materials in a cost-effective manner.

## Opportunities for Further Learning

Communication educational opportunities help participants better understand how to create, develop, and implement health communication campaigns.

Topics for the communications related educational opportunities can be selected and tailored to your coalition's needs and could include the following:

- Understanding and applying health communication concepts and practices in the coalition's own campaigns.
- Analyzing specific priority groups, messages, and communication channels and possible outcomes for a campaign.
- Evaluating the communication campaign and drawing lessons to carry forward in future ones.
- Learning sessions and cross-training opportunities across communities about planning and implementing campaigns.
- Sharing successful and unsuccessful strategies.
- Problem-solving issues that come up in campaign design, development, and implementation.

By empowering local teams and fostering knowledge sharing, these efforts help ensure interventions are effective, scalable, and sustainable over the long term.

## Activity 6.2: Support Development of Coalition-Driven Sustainability Plans



**Timeline:** 2 to 6 months\*

Coalition members and partner organizations can work together to shape their long-term sustainability planning. These efforts may include making community-focused, data-driven plans, implementing evidence-based strategies, and fostering effective communication to ensure ongoing adoption of programs and strategies. A primary goal for the coalition will be to help partner organizations build capacity to sustain these strategies over time, with an emphasis on community access to OEND and MOUD over time.

### Approach

As your coalition progressed through Phase 5 of the intervention, you will have gained insights from the implementation of the evidence-based strategies that you selected. Through these insights, this is now a good time for your coalition to begin sustainability planning.

#### Plans should include the following:

- SMART goals for sustaining implemented ORCCA strategies.
- Key action steps for achieving sustainability goals.
- Available resources for sustaining strategies (e.g., staff, funding, data, partners) to achieve goals.
- Planned approach for sharing progress on the sustainability plan and updating it periodically with coalition members and partners.

\* Timelines are estimates based on the HEALing Communities Study; please note that activities may take longer depending on the level of community support, local policies, and availability of resources.





### Example Process for Developing and Implementing Sustainability Plans

Step	Description
<p>Convene a sustainability planning team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The coalition and partner organizations will work together to identify sustainability planning team members. Team members should be knowledgeable of existing or potential resources for supporting opioid overdose prevention interventions.</li> <li>• The planning team will convene to establish a process and timeline for developing the sustainability plan</li> </ul>
<p>Assess sustainability capacity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The planning team will assess the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The coalition’s capacity to sustain core CTH components (i.e., community-engaged, data-driven action planning; implementation of evidence-based strategies; and a communication strategy to support the uptake of evidence-based strategies) over time.</li> <li>– Partner organizations’ capacity to sustain implemented evidence-based strategies over time, with a particular focus on retaining OEND and MOUD access for community members.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The <a href="#">Program Sustainability Assessment Tool</a>, or another assessment tool, can be used to assess capacity in these two areas.</p> <p>Drawing from the Program Sustainability Assessment Tool, the assessment the planning team may consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental support—The extent to which there is a supportive internal climate (i.e., coalition and partner organization levels) and external climate (e.g., local or state policies) for core CTH components and evidence-based strategies.</li> <li>• Funding stability—Potential to establish a consistent financial base for core CTH components and evidence-based strategies.</li> <li>• Partnerships—Strength of partnerships to support core CTH components and equitable implementation of evidence-based strategies.</li> <li>• Organizational capacity—Diverse staff, experts, and leaders available to support core CTH components and evidence-based strategies.</li> <li>• Program evaluation—Data and staff resources to support continued evaluation and monitoring of CTH efforts, including health equity assessments.</li> </ul>



Step	Description
Assess sustainability capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CTH adaptations—Insights on the most effective elements within CTH core components and the most effective evidence-based strategies (consider reach, equity, impact); ability to scale up or down in response to shifts in the community's priorities or resources.</li> <li>• Communications—Capacity to repeat/repurpose campaigns, distribute other opioid-related campaigns from state or local agencies, or launch new campaigns.</li> <li>• Strategic planning—Capacity to update and expand on data-driven action and implementation planning.</li> </ul>
Draft and vet the plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The planning team will document the sustainability plan established by the coalition and partner organizations.</li> <li>• The planning team will gather coalition and partner organization feedback on the plan and revise it as needed. Coalitions and partner organizations will adopt the plan using their preferred approval procedures.</li> <li>• Coalitions and partner organizations will adopt the plan using their preferred approval procedures.</li> </ul>
Implement plan and monitor and report progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coalitions and partner organizations will implement the sustainability approaches outlined in the plan.</li> <li>• The planning team, or other designated coalition members or partner organization staff, will monitor implementation and report sustainment progress to the coalition, partner organizations, or other key stakeholders as outlined in the plan.</li> </ul>
Review and update plan periodically	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The planning team, or other designated coalition members or partner organization staff, will review the sustainability plan periodically and recommend updates.</li> <li>• The plan update process may involve repeating sustainability assessments.</li> <li>• Coalitions and partner organizations can cycle through the sustainability process as needed until all sustainability goals are met.</li> </ul>

Adapted from the Program Sustainability Assessment Tool ([sustaintool.org](http://sustaintool.org)) and from Calhoun, A., Mainor, A., Moreland-Russell, S., Maier, R. C., Brossart, L., & Luke, D. A. (2014). Using the Program Sustainability Assessment Tool to assess and plan for sustainability. *Preventing Chronic Disease, 11*, 130185. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5888/pcd11.130185>