

Module 4: Needs Assessment

GETTING READY: NOTES FOR TRAINERS

MODULE SCOPE

Purpose

To familiarize Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program (RWHAP) Part A planning council/planning body (PC/PB) members and interested non-members with the purposes, importance, components, and processes of needs assessment. This module provides the information needed for active involvement in the needs assessment process by individuals with little or no prior experience in community planning or community-based research.

Content Overview

Understanding Needs Assessment

- **Overview**
 - *Definition*
 - *Importance of Needs Assessment*
 - *Legislative Requirements*
 - *HRSA/HAB Expectations*
 - *Needs Assessment Components*
- **Needs Assessment Data Provided by Recipient/Surveillance**
 - *Overview of Needs Assessment Data Provided by Surveillance*
 - *Legislative Requirements*
 - *Epidemiologic Profile*
 - *Estimate and Characteristics of PLWH with Unmet Need*
 - *Estimate and Characteristics of PLWH who are Unaware of their Status*
 - *Uses of Data Provided through the HIV Surveillance System*
- **Needs Assessment Components for PC/PB Implementation**
 - *Overview of PC/PB Responsibilities for Needs Assessment*
 - *Assessment of Service Needs and Barriers*
 - *Resource Inventory*
 - *Profile of Provider Capacity and Capability*
 - *Assessment of Service Needs and Gaps*

Implementing Needs Assessment

- **Designing and Managing Needs Assessment**
 - *Data-Gathering Methods*
 - *Using a Multi-Year Plan*
 - *Needs Assessment Steps and Staffing*
 - *Controlling Needs Assessment Costs*
 - *Maximizing Consumer Input*
 - *Prevention-Care Needs Assessment*
- **Analyzing and Presenting Needs Assessment Findings**
 - *Analyzing Needs Assessment Findings*
 - *Integrating Data from Multiple Sources*
 - *Presenting Findings*

Learning Objectives

Following training (which may take place over one or more sessions), participants will be able to:

Understanding Needs Assessment: Overview

1. Define needs assessment
2. Explain 3 major uses of needs assessment in RWHAP Part A planning
3. Explain the legislative requirements and HRSA/HAB expectations for RWHAP Part A needs assessment
4. Identify the 6 components of a RWHAP Part A needs assessment

Understanding Needs Assessment: Needs Assessment Data Provided by Recipient/ Surveillance

5. Identify the needs assessment components for which the recipient/surveillance staff provide needed data
6. Explain the scope and use of an epidemiologic profile
7. Describe the concept and the importance of understanding “unmet need”
8. Describe why it is important to estimate the number and characteristics of PLWH who are unaware of their status

Understanding Needs Assessment: Needs Assessment Components for PC/PB Implementation

9. Identify the 3 components of a RWHAP Part A needs assessment the PC/PB implements directly
10. Describe the scope of an assessment of PLWH service needs and barriers
11. Explain why the PC/PB needs to understand the system of care
12. Describe and differentiate a Resource Inventory and a Profile of Provider Capacity and Capability

Implementing Needs Assessment

13. Identify at least 4 different data gathering methods for use in needs assessment
14. Describe 4 steps in designing and implementing needs assessment
15. Describe 3 strategies for doing needs assessment with limited resources
16. Outline a multi-year needs assessment plan appropriate for their EMA or TGA
17. Describe 3 strategies for maximizing consumer and other PLWH involvement in needs assessment
18. Identify 5 factors to consider in making needs assessment findings understandable and useful for decision making

USING THE MODULE

Suggested Uses

- To prepare new members of the committee responsible for needs assessment for their responsibilities*
- To train all members of the responsible committee if they have not had specific needs assessment training or want to refine needs assessment plans and processes
- To train all PC/PB members, to clarify why needs assessment is a key PC/PB task and explain the attention and resources allocated to needs assessment
- To increase Executive Committee knowledge about needs assessment, if leadership feels the PC/PB needs to rethink its approach to needs assessment
- To familiarize the PLWH committee or consumer caucus with the needs assessment process and prepare them for involvement in its design and implementation
- To familiarize PC/PB support staff and recipient staff with the RWHAP Part A needs assessment process and their roles in it, especially new staff without prior RWHAP or other community planning experience

Localizing the Module

- Add the name and/or logo of your PC/PB and your EMA or TGA to the slides
- Add PowerPoint slides that show examples of your EMA's or TGA's past needs assessment activities—for example, an epi profile chart, the most recent estimate of unmet need, sample findings from a PLWH survey or focus group, or an entry from the Resource Inventory
- Provide and discuss the most recent needs assessment plan
- Revise or replace the suggested activities, especially the suggested mini-activities, to reflect local issues and priorities

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS CHECKLIST

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint projector and laptop | <input type="checkbox"/> Copies of participant materials for Activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Easel pad, markers, and tape | <input type="checkbox"/> Copies of Quick Reference Handouts |

MATERIALS FOR THIS MODULE

- PowerPoint Slides: Needs Assessment Overview
- Activity 4.1: Needs Assessment Mini-Activities
- PowerPoint Slides: Needs Assessment Data Provided by Recipient
- Activity 4.2: Needs Assessment Mini-Activities
- PowerPoint Slides: Needs Assessment Components for PC/PB Implementation
- Activity 4.3: Needs Assessment Mini-Activities
- Quick Reference Handout 4.1: Needs Assessment—Putting the Pieces Together
- PowerPoint Slides: Implementing Needs Assessment
- Activity 4.4: Outlining a Needs Assessment Work Plan
- Quick Reference Handout 4.2: Multi-Year Needs Assessment Plan

* Consider using this module with the committee responsible for needs assessment, and then follow up with training based on Module 10, Understanding and Using Data. Together they provide a solid foundation of practical knowledge for individuals not previously involved in community-based planning.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR TRAINERS

Focus and Importance of Module 4

This module goes beyond the very basic introduction to needs assessment that is typically provided in the orientation for new PC/PB members or non-members serving on committees. While useful for all PC/PB members, it is designed especially for members of the committee responsible for needs assessment or other related committees—especially new members without related experience or training. The module is important because of the key role played by needs assessment in providing PC/PBs with some of the information most needed for sound decision making.

Needs assessment provides information needed for decision making about the system of care and use of RWHAP Part A resources that is not available through other sources. Although considered a part of needs assessment, the epidemiologic (epi) profile is generally prepared by state or local surveillance staff, who may also provide HIV care continuum data on linkage to care, retention in care, and viral suppression. The recipient is expected to provide other data important for decision making, such as RWHAP Part A client characteristics, service utilization, and service costs and expenditures, and often provides other performance and outcome measures including aggregate monitoring and clinical quality management (CQM) data. Needs assessment helps fill the remaining data gaps—it provides information about service needs, existing services, barriers to care, and service gaps. The information comes directly from clients and other people living with HIV (PLWH), as well as service providers and other stakeholders. The needs assessment can update information about clients and services as well as conduct special studies of service-related issues and the needs of particular PLWH subpopulations.

Needs assessment findings inform the development and updating of the HRSA/CDC Integrated HIV Prevention and Care Plan, annual priority setting and resource allocation (PSRA), and ongoing efforts by both the PC/PB and recipient to improve service models and care strategies and ensure equitable access to appropriate care. It is important that needs assessment be ongoing and carefully planned, so that accurate, recent information is available for decision making.

Key Concepts and Terms

Following are some particularly important needs assessment concepts and terms, as well as a few research and data-related terms, that may need clarification during the training. (Key Concepts and Terms are designed primarily for the trainer but can also be provided to participants as a handout).

Needs assessment involves obtaining information about the overall capacity of the system of care to meet the needs of people living with HIV in the EMA or TGA, including PLWH with diverse characteristics and life conditions. This information comes from HIV service providers (RWHAP-funded and non-funded) and also from consumers. The following terms are used in describing factors important in assessing service capacity and capability.

Availability of services: The level or number of “slots” within a service category that exist in a specified geographic area—such as the total number of funded outpatient substance abuse treatment slots for PLWH within an EMA or TGA.

Accessibility of services: The extent to which services in an EMA or TGA or within a particular geographic area (city, county) can be obtained conveniently by people who need them—for example, whether the location of services is

convenient in terms of distance traveled, availability of public transportation, and/or parking; whether the provider offers services at appropriate hours (e.g., during the day, in the evening, and on weekends); whether child care services are available for people with appointments; and whether the facility is accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Appropriateness of services: The extent to which available services meet the needs of particular groups of PLWH—for example, to what extent subrecipients can provide services in the primary languages of PLWH who are limited English proficient (LEP); have staff from and experienced in serving clients of various races/ethnicities; have the cultural competence to appropriately serve PLWH from LGBTQ communities; and have the training and skills to work appropriately with HIV-positive youth and other PLWH subpopulations.

Geographic disparities and equal access to care: Geographic disparities are differences in access to appropriate services based on where within the EMA or TGA an individual lives. Equal access to quality services for all PLWH, regardless of where they live in the EMA or TGA, is an important RWHAP commitment.

Many EMAs and TGAs use needs assessment to better understand geographic disparities and inequities in access to care. This might be determined through combining data from the Resource Inventory and the Profile of Provider Capacity and Capability, which might show, for

example, a lack of service providers offering outpatient ambulatory health services (OAHS), medical case management, mental health services, and/or support services for PLWH who live in a rural community or outlying county. Such issues can also be identified through a PLWH survey that asks how far the individual has to travel to obtain services or what if any services are not available or are not appropriate due to lack of language or cultural capacity.

Epidemiologic (Epi) profile: The epi profile is generally provided by state or recipient surveillance staff. An epi profile should be developed using the *Integrated Guidance for Developing Epidemiologic Profiles: HIV Prevention and Ryan White HIV/AIDS Programs Planning*.¹ It was developed “to provide one set of guidance to help profile writers produce integrated epidemiologic profiles and advise them concerning how to interpret epidemiologic data in ways that are consistent and useful in meeting the planning and evaluation needs of both HIV prevention and care programs.” The profile can be a lengthy document. Someone (often surveillance staff) summarizes the data and prepares slides for presentation to the PC/PB, either at an appropriate meeting or during the annual Data Presentation that begins the PSRA process. The committee responsible for needs assessment needs to discuss with the surveillance staff the level of detail and focus of the presentation, topics of particular concern, and desired formats to facilitate understanding of the data.

References

1 This Guidance was updated in August 2014. See http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/guidelines_developing_epidemiologic_profiles.pdf.

For More Information

Additional Resources

- Planning CHATT Webinar: [Conducting RWHAP Part A Planning Council/Planning Body Needs Assessments](#), Webinar Slides and Transcript
- [Planning Council Primer](#) [2018 update], especially the sections on Planning Council Duties and CEO and Recipient Duties
- Compendium of Materials for Planning Council Support (PCS) Staff, especially:
 - [2-1. Quick Reference for Planning Council Support \(PCS\) Staff: Legislative Requirements for Planning Councils/Planning Bodies, with HRSA/HAB Definitions, Clarifications, and Expectations](#)
 - [5-3. Using Data, Assessing Needs: Quick Definitions and Descriptions for Data-Related Terms and Concepts Used by Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program \(RWHAP\) Planning Bodies](#)
- [Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Part A Manual, Section XI, Chapter 3: Needs Assessment](#)

Related Training Guide Resources

- Module 10: Data-based Decision Making: Understanding, Assessing, and Using Data, provides skill-focused training on using data
- Module 2: Roles and Responsibilities of RWHAP Part A Planning Councils/Bodies (PC/PBs) and Recipients, describes the roles and responsibilities of the PC/PB and the recipient, including shared tasks
- Module 3: Overview of the RWHAP Part A Annual Planning Cycle, shows how needs assessment fits into the annual planning cycle
- Modules 5, 6, and 7 provide skill-focused training related to other key legislative responsibilities, all of which involve use of needs assessment data:
 - *Module 5: Priority Setting and Resource Allocations*
 - *Module 6: Integrated/Comprehensive Planning*
 - *Module 7: Other PC/PB Roles for Maintaining and Improving a System of Care*

For links to all the resources listed above, go to www.TargetHIV.org/planning-chatt/module4

This resource was prepared by JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. and EGM Consulting, LLC, and supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under grant number U69HA30795: Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Planning Council and Transitional Grant Area Planning Body Technical Assistance Cooperative Agreement. This information or content and conclusions are those of the author(s) and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS or the U.S. Government.

