

PROGRAM STRATEGIC PLANNING KIT EVALUATION for school health programs

STEP 3: CREATE

In the Create step, your strategic planning workgroup develops the elements of the strategic plan and writes the document describing the strategic plan. At the end of the Create step you should have: (1) prioritized program strategies, (2) a revised five-year program logic model, (3) an aligned annual workplan, (4) a communication process, (5) an implementation process, (6) an evaluation process, and (7) a document describing the completed strategic plan.

To create your strategic plan, convene your strategic planning workgroup and distribute the following materials:

- Application for DASH funding
- List of the five-year program goals
- SWOT analysis findings
- Five-year program logic model
- Year 1 workplan
- Outline of the strategic plan (described in Part 2 of this kit)
- Chart paper and markers

Developing the Elements of the Strategic Plan

Prioritized Program Strategies

Generating program strategies is key to creating your strategic plan. It involves examining the findings from the SWOT analysis of your DASH-funded program, reviewing and finalizing your five-year program goals based on the SWOTs, identifying strategies to help

your program achieve each goal, and prioritizing these strategies. The following is a process for generating program strategies.

- List each of your five-year program goals in your application for DASH funding on a separate piece of chart paper. A five-year goal (also known as a workplan goal) is a broad statement of program purpose that describes the expected long-term effects of a program. An example of a five-year goal is “to decrease risk behaviors associated with HIV infection among students within the school district through the use of HIV-prevention curricula.”
 - Identify in each goal statement: (a) the program’s effect in reducing a

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- ✓ Prioritized program strategies
- ✓ A revised five-year program logic model
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- ✓ A document describing the completed strategic plan

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health problem (e.g., to decrease risk behaviors associated with HIV infection) and (b) the target population that will be affected (e.g., students within the school district). (You might need to rewrite your goal statements to complete this activity.



For more information on writing goals, consult the CDC DASH Evaluation Tutorials at <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/evaluation/resources.htm>.

- Under each goal, list the SWOTs that relate to the program effect and target population. Some SWOTs may apply to more than one goal, and some SWOTs may not apply to any goal specifically. You should list the SWOTs that do not apply to a goal on a separate sheet of chart paper for later consideration.
- For each goal, consider whether the SWOTs help or hinder your program's ability to achieve the goal.



You can use the tool for **Program Goal Review Using SWOT Analysis** to help you with this process. After you have reviewed each goal in relation to the SWOTs, finalize your program goals. For simplicity, include only the program effect and target population in the goal and make

sure that they are less specific than objectives. Note that based on the SWOTs related to each goal and the SWOTs that do not relate to a current program goal, you may decide to not address a particular goal, or you may decide to add a goal that was not in your application for DASH funding. **(It is important to consult with your Project Officer concerning any changes to the five-year program goals in your application for DASH funding, especially if you decide to add or delete goals.)**

- For each goal, list possible strategies that would help you achieve that goal. A strategy is the means or broad approach by which a program will achieve its goals. The Funding Opportunity Announcement (CDC-RFA-DP08-801) and the DASH Program Inventory describe strategies that school health programs should use; however, you may propose additional strategies. An example of a strategy for achieving the goal of “decreased risk behaviors associated with HIV infection by students within the school district” is to “form a community partnership that advocates for HIV-prevention education in schools.” Useful strategies capitalize

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on program strengths or opportunities and increase a program's ability to reach its goals.



You can use the **Program Strategy Checklist** to help you write useful program strategies.

- Assign a priority ranking to each strategy based on how well it will: (1) help your program achieve its goals; (2) enhance program strengths or opportunities; and (3) reduce the influences of program weaknesses or threats or their influences. For each strategy, consider the following:
 - Size and seriousness of the health problem that the strategy addresses
 - Degree to which others are not addressing the health problem
 - Likelihood that the strategy will affect the health problem
 - Availability of resources (both financial and human) necessary to implement the strategy
 - Community readiness for the strategy
 - Logical order of strategy implementation in relation to other proposed strategies

After considering these criteria, decide whether the effort required to implement a program strategy is low or high and whether achieving the goal would have a low or high effect on the health problem your program

is addressing. Use this information to finalize the priority rankings for your strategies. For example, a strategy that requires low effort to produce a high effect would have a higher priority ranking than a strategy that requires high effort to produce a low effect.

Implementation Process

After you identify program strategies, you need to determine the process for implementing them. The strategic plan and annual workplan together lay out the strategies you will implement, the five-year timeline for implementing the strategies, and how that will occur through annual program activities.

- Create a list of your final 5-year workplan goals. Under each goal, indicate the strategy(s) that you will use to address the goal based on the priority rankings that you assigned to the strategies. You should also use these rankings to decide in which year of the five-year cooperative agreement you will implement each program strategy and indicate that year on a timeline (e.g., a list of the program goals, the strategies that correspond to each goal, and the year in which each strategy will be implemented).
- Describe the process you will use for implementing the strategic plan. The process should include:
 - Designated times (e.g., semi-annually) for reviewing the timeline. You may need to remind program staff and stakeholders who are implementing

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parts of the strategic plan what they are responsible for and to provide support for them. You should discuss whether the strategies are still useful and determine if you are implementing the strategies according to the timeline.

- Description of how you will use the strategic plan to monitor your annual workplan and to develop future workplans.

Revised Program Logic Model and Aligned Annual Workplan

Now that you have solidified your program goals and identified strategies for reaching those goals, revise your 5-year program logic model and align your annual workplan.

- Revise your logic model to include the program strategies you selected. Consider how to determine whether a strategy has the desired effect and how this can be expressed as a measurable output or outcome in your program logic model.
- Align your annual workplan with your program goals, strategies, timeline, and logic model.



You can use the current **DASH Workplan Template** to complete this task.



- As described in the **Program Strategy Checklist**, a strategy connects logically to the program

goal in your workplan and is broader than a program objective and a program activity. This means that the objectives and activities in your annual workplan should be based on the strategies you have selected to reach your program goals. If the goal is to “decrease risk behaviors associated with HIV infection among students within the school district,” and the strategy is to “form a community partnership that advocates for HIV-prevention education in schools,” then the objective and activities should concern this partnership. An objective might be the following: “By February 28, 2009, convene four meetings of a new community partnership group for HIV-prevention education in schools.” The activities to achieve this objective might include creating criteria for identifying partnership members, recruiting the members, convening the meetings, etc.

- Consult the timeline for your strategic plan. You may need to include in your workplan the development of new program resources to implement future strategies.
- For each objective in your workplan, identify (if applicable) the *DASH Indicators for School Health Programs* that will measure that objective.

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Specifying the *Indicators* in your workplan will help you track and submit this information, as required by your DASH cooperative agreement.

- **In consultation with your Project Officer**, identify the School Level Impact Measures (SLIMs) that your workplan addresses. If you do not have an objective that addresses a SLIM, revise an objective or write a new objective. You can add workplan activities that address completion of School Health Profiles or another survey to collect data that measure the SLIM.
- **Discuss all changes to your Year One workplan with your Project Officer.**

Communication Process

Identify how you will communicate your strategic plan to program stakeholders. Communication involves sharing information about your school health program in ways that make it understandable and useful to stakeholders. You can do this by using a variety of communication formats and channels. A communication format is the actual layout of the communication you will use, such as reports, brochures, one-page descriptions, newsletters, executive summaries, slides, and fact sheets. A communication channel is the route of communication you will use, such as oral presentations, videos, emails, webcasts, news releases, and phone conferences. Both the formats and channels should take into account the needs of

different audiences, the type of information you wish to provide, and its purpose.



For more information on communication, consult DASH Evaluation Brief No. 9 at <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/evaluation/resources.htm>

- The process for communicating about your strategic plan should identify:
 - Who you will communicate your strategic plan to;
 - What you will communicate about (e.g., strategic plan, meeting notes, evaluation findings, annual workplans);
 - How you will communicate (i.e., the communication format and channel).



You can use the **Communication Matrix** tool to help you develop your communication process.

Evaluation Process

Identify how you will evaluate the strategic plan. Your evaluation should assess the extent to which you have made progress in implementing program strategies and achieving SMART objectives.

Your evaluation data should include the types that are summarized in *Indicators*, SLIMs, and other reports that will help inform the progress of your school health program.



You can consult the **DASH Program Evaluation Expectations** to guide your data collection activities.

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The DASH evaluation website describes these expectations and provides many evaluation resources (<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/evaluation/index.htm>).

- Develop a timeline for collecting data. Many types of data can be collected only at certain times, for example, follow-up data on training events. A timeline can help you avoid missed opportunities for data collection.



You can use the **Data Collection Framework** to help you plan data collection activities.

- Describe the process for reviewing annual evaluation data to monitor implementation of the strategic plan, develop future workplans, and improve program activities. In general, your program will use the same strategic plan throughout the five-year cooperative agreement. However, you may need to adjust the strategic plan implementation timeline and other aspects of your strategic plan based on program evaluation findings.
- Describe how you will evaluate your five-year strategic plan at the end of the funding cycle.

Writing the Strategic Plan

Throughout the strategic planning process, the designated writers should write and share each complete section of the strategic plan with workgroup members.

The designated writers should collect documentation from the Prepare, Assess, and Create steps to write the strategic plan. Do not wait until the end of the process to complete the writing because workgroup members might forget details. As a result, they may feel that the process is complete and they no longer have to provide input. In turn, workgroup members should provide feedback to the writers in a timely and ongoing fashion.

Share the entire strategic plan with workgroup members and your Project Officer for review prior to submitting the final version to DASH.