



Part Three: How Do I Complete My Strategic Plan?

The strategic planning process includes six steps that you can use to develop, implement, and evaluate your strategic plan:

1. Prepare
2. Assess
3. Create
4. Communicate
5. Implement
6. Evaluate

(The source for the six-step model and some of the information presented for each step is the Strategic Planning Kit published by the Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice <https://www.ovcttac.gov/taResources/stratplan.cfm>). This part of the Strategic Planning Kit for School Health Programs explains these steps, and provides guidance for completing them. We also refer to tools that are contained in Part 4 of this kit that can help you with the strategic planning process.



Six Steps in Strategic Planning

STEP 1: PREPARE

In the Prepare step, you lay a foundation for strategic planning by determining the purposes of the plan; identifying stakeholders to include in the process (stakeholders are individuals or organizations that are invested in the program and the results of program activities, and that have a stake in what will be done with the results); determining what information, roles, and resources are necessary for the process; and developing the timeline for it. You also identify sources for data that describe the internal status and external environment of your program. At the end of the Prepare step, you should have: (1) established the purpose of your strategic plan, (2) formed a workgroup, and (3) identified the data you need to inform the planning process.

To prepare for the strategic planning process, the program coordinator and program staff should meet and discuss the following questions:

- What is the **purpose** of our strategic planning efforts?
- What is the **timeline** for the strategic planning process? When will we hold meetings? When do we need to complete the plan?
- What **resources** do we have for the strategic planning process (e.g., meeting space, computers you use to take minutes, or food)? What resources do we lack, and how can we obtain them?

- What **internal and external data** do we have that can inform the process?



You can use the **Data Sources Matrix** tool to help you with this task. You may have already gathered some of these data in preparation for your application for DASH funding.

Internal Data

Internal data describe the current status of your DASH-funded program and how it operates.



A major source of internal data is the **DASH Program Inventory**.

This inventory provides a snapshot of what your program currently is doing related to four program components: (1) program management and staffing, (2) program planning and monitoring, (3) professional development and technical

At the end of the PREPARE step, you should have:

- ✓ Established the purpose of your strategic plan,
- ✓ Formed a strategic planning workgroup, and
- ✓ Identified the data you need to inform the strategic planning process.

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assistance, and (4) partnerships. Other internal data sources include technical reviews from your DASH Project Officer, data you report in your *Indicators for School Health Programs*, program evaluation data, program descriptions, and client satisfaction questionnaires.

External Data

External data describe the population that your program serves and the environment (social, epidemiologic, educational, administrative, policy) in which your DASH-funded program operates. Sources for external data include your state health department (vital statistics and epidemiological data), the U.S. census, policy documents, your state or local department of education, external partner questionnaires, and your YRBS and School Health Profiles.

Next, identify the individuals and organizations that are stakeholders in your program's strategic plan.



You can use the **Identifying Stakeholders Worksheet** to help you with this task. Stakeholders include:

- Program participants—those that the program serves or affects, such as youth, parents and guardians, school faculty and staff, and community members;
- Strategic plan implementers—those who will drive the program operations described in the strategic plan, such as program coordinators, program staff, education and health agency administrators, members of the training cadre, contractors, and volunteers;
- Intended users of the strategic plan—those partners who can influence or help to implement strategies identified in your strategic plan, including external and internal partners. External partners are agencies, organizations, and groups outside your own agency with which you collaborate or associate to further the goals of your project and may include non-governmental organizations, health departments, institutions of higher education, and community groups. You may have already identified external partners in your application for DASH funding. Internal partners are related departments, divisions, or regional units and may include cross-division school health committees.

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After you identify the stakeholders in your program's strategic plan, choose the stakeholders who should participate in the planning process. A general guideline is to involve at least one representative from each of the three stakeholder groups (program participants, strategic plan implementers, and users). Other factors to consider include whether the person has specialized knowledge or experience, is needed for plan credibility, or is necessary for plan implementation. Also consider who might be most critical of the strategic plan and whether there is a benefit to including them in the planning process. Note that some stakeholders may be involved in all aspects of the strategic plan, including its creation, communication, implementation, and evaluation, while other stakeholders may be less involved, depending on how their interests relate to the program.

Invite the stakeholders to participate in a strategic planning workgroup. Your invitation should explain the purpose of strategic planning, the overall program goal, expectations of participants, the planning timeline, and the number of meetings. Also explain to stakeholders why their participation is important and the benefits of strategic planning to the program as well as their own interests.

Now that you have formed a strategic planning workgroup, hold the first strategic planning meeting.

At this meeting:

- Review the purpose of the strategic planning process and expected timeline. Ask workgroup members questions such as:
 - What do they perceive as the purpose of the DASH-funded program and what are their concerns about it?
 - What do they know about strategic planning?
 - What are their expectations about participating in the strategic planning process, and what are their concerns, with regard to participating?
- Determine who in the workgroup could serve in the following roles:
 - **Convener**—the individual who schedules strategic planning meetings, sets the agenda, sends notification and reminders to participants, opens the meetings, holds participants accountable, and reports progress.
 - **Facilitator**—the individual who monitors the progress of strategic planning meetings, asks questions, and provides pieces of information to move participants forward in the process.

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- **Writer**—the individual who synthesizes ideas generated in meetings and writes each section of the strategic plan document. Ideally, the writer should draft each section soon after the relevant meeting and distribute it to the strategic planning workgroup for editing. Different individuals can divide the writing for the different sections of the plan.
- **Advisor (optional)**—Individuals outside of the strategic planning workgroup with experience or expertise in strategic planning who observe the process and provide advice on discussions and products. An outside consultant from a private company or university could serve this role, but it is optional because your workgroup may not have ready access to these individuals or need their expertise.
- **Reviewer**—Individuals outside of the strategic planning workgroup who can review and edit the strategic plan and provide feedback.
 - Review the list of internal and external data sources that will inform the strategic planning process, and ask workgroup members to identify other information that the workgroup might be able to use.

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STEP 2: ASSESS

In the Assess step, you review and analyze internal and external data related to your program. At the end of the Assess step, you should have completed an analysis of the internal and external environment of your program by conducting an analysis of your agency's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOTs). This SWOT analysis will help you develop the strategies that your program will implement to achieve its goals.

A SWOT analysis is a scan of the internal and external environment of a program identifying strengths and weaknesses that are internal to your program, and opportunities and threats external to your program in the environment in which it operates. It is a useful tool for reducing a large amount of data into a more manageable profile of your school health program, and it provides a framework for identifying the issues that affect your strategic plan. (Source: NetMBA Business Knowledge Center, <http://www.netmba.com/strategy/swot/>)

- Program strengths are elements internal to your school health program that facilitate reaching your program goals. For example, a fully staffed team for your school health program is a strength.
- Program weaknesses are elements internal to your school health program that are barriers to reaching your program goals. An example of a program weakness is a training cadre that is not large enough to

At the end of the ASSESS step, you should have:

- ✓ Completed an analysis of the internal and external environment of your program by conducting an analysis of your agency's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOTs).

train all physical education (PE) educators on the PE curricula used in the state.

- Program opportunities are aspects of the external environment in which your school health program operates that facilitate reaching program goals. Opportunities are not just positive aspects of the environment, but they can also be the chance to address program gaps and initiate new activities. For example, an opportunity might be that most school districts in your state have at least a part-time position dedicated to coordinated school health programs, providing the opportunity to implement nutrition programs. Another example is that less than 50% of districts and schools in your state use HIV prevention materials that are aligned with state or national standards, suggesting the need for technical assistance and an opportunity for curriculum improvement.

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- Program threats are aspects of the external environment in which your school health program operates that are (or could be) barriers to reaching program goals. For example, a threat might be unfavorable parental attitudes toward required physical education and health education courses for secondary school students as documented in a statewide questionnaire.

A SWOT analysis depends on thorough internal and external assessments related to your program. With an internal assessment, you analyze your program's position, performance, problems, and potential. With an external assessment, you analyze the forces that affect the environment in which your program functions. With your program staff and others in your strategic planning workgroup, review the internal and external program data you gathered as part of the strategic planning Prepare step.

- Use the data from your DASH Program Inventory, other internal data, and the experiences of program staff and your strategic planning workgroup to generate a list of program strengths and weaknesses for the following components: (1) program management and staffing, (2) program planning and monitoring, (3) professional development and technical assistance, and (4) partnerships. You can use an “other”

category to list strengths and weaknesses that do not relate directly to one of the four program components (e.g., funding diversification). You should consider both program resources and program processes, such as service delivery.



You can use the **SWOT Worksheet for School Health Programs** to record your work.

- Use your external data and the experiences of program staff and your strategic planning workgroup to generate a list of opportunities that your program can build upon to influence the health and educational outcomes of young people. Also identify the external threats to your program work based on the external data. You can use the **SWOT Worksheet for School Health Programs** to record your work.

After you conduct your SWOT analysis, the next step is to use your findings to identify program strategies. This process occurs in the Create step of strategic planning.

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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

At the end of the CREATE step, you should have:

- ✓ Prioritized program strategies
- ✓ A revised five-year program logic model
- ✓ An aligned annual workplan
- ✓ A communication process
- ✓ An implementation process
- ✓ An evaluation process
- ✓ 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.

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STEP 4: COMMUNICATE

In the Communicate step, you share your strategic plan and related program documents and products (e.g., workplan, evaluation findings) with program stakeholders. Communication occurs throughout the five years of the cooperative agreement. As a result of completing the Communicate step, you will have various communication messages and products that you disseminate each year to inform stakeholders about your strategic plan.

Review the communication process you developed for your strategic plan and consider how you will put this process into action.

What Information About the Strategic Plan Should You Communicate?

The type of information you decide to communicate depends on your audience; their needs, time, and ability to understand the information; and the intended uses. Types of information that you can communicate to various audiences include strategies outlined in your strategic plan; activities outlined in your annual workplans; a pictorial diagram of your program as depicted by your logic model; accomplishments as reflected in your program progress reports; and program strengths and gaps as identified through program evaluation. For example, you might communicate program strengths and weaknesses through the *Indicators for School Health Programs (Indicators)*, which describe the extent to which you have reached the groups (e.g., participants, schools, districts, external partners, and

At the end of the COMMUNICATE step, you should have:

- ✓ Various communication messages and products that you disseminate each year to inform stakeholders about your strategic plan.

regional support units) you intended to reach in disseminating materials or providing professional development events

How Will You Communicate?

You can make information available and usable to various audiences through a wide variety of formats and channels.

- A format refers to the actual layout for communicating the information, 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 example, parents might prefer short letters, flyers, or briefings at parent nights; legislators might prefer a one-page summary or a brief slide presentation; funders may want a multi-page report.

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To Whom Should You Communicate?

To identify the audiences for your various communications, review the stakeholders in your strategic plan (e.g., project officers, program staff, partners) and the communication process you developed when you created the strategic plan. Consider if there are additional audiences you should communicate with (e.g., parents, directors of other agencies, policymakers, state legislators).

When designing communication formats and channels, you should answer the following questions for all the audiences your program intends to reach:

- What do your audiences need to know and what are their interests related to the strategic plan (e.g., progress in program implementation or program outcomes such as increased knowledge)?
- What do you hope to gain by disseminating program information to these audiences (e.g., to justify the existence of the program, to leverage additional funding)?
- How will you communicate about the ongoing program (e.g., briefings at board meetings, progress reports, oral presentations)?
- How will you communicate about the program upon its completion (e.g., final written report with a summary, videos, slide presentations)?

When designing the content of your communications, consider the intended purpose, such as:

- To identify stakeholders' contributions to the strategic plan and its implementation;
- To create positive publicity and support that can make the program more competitive in acquiring financial and other resources;
- To inform stakeholders about youth and adolescent health issues and strategies to address them;
- To influence change in programs, policies, or practices.

Design communications based on the needs of your different audiences, including their time and ability to understand the information. Determine which audiences need what information, for example:

- Teachers need to know how much time and effort they need to put into a new curriculum;
- Parents need to know what their children will experience if they participate in the program;
- Principals need to know how the program will benefit the students and the school;
- Partners need to know what was accomplished with their resources.

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Consider the timing of your program communications.

- Share the strategic plan with your stakeholders soon after it is completed.
- Share progress reports on implementation and achievements of major milestones of the plan throughout the cooperative agreement, especially with your Project Officer.
- Use special events or critical junctures in your program as opportunities for communication. Examples include PTA and parent conferences; press conferences and other media events; presentations at state, regional, or national conferences; or events that relate to the issues you are addressing (e.g., release of survey results on the population your program is targeting).



You can use the **Program Communication Tracking Tool** to

help you organize your program communications and ensure that you are communicating with your audiences in a timely and appropriate manner.



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

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STEP 5: IMPLEMENT

In the Implement step of the strategic planning process, you put into action the strategies your program identified to achieve its five-year goals. Implementation occurs throughout the five years of the cooperative agreement. As a result of completing the Implement step, your program will have accomplished the strategies outlined in the strategic plan and the various workplan activities associated with these strategies.

Each year, insure that all assigned staff and program partners have the resources they need to complete their workplan activities and the four program components in the Program Inventory (i.e., program management and staffing, program planning and monitoring, professional development events and technical assistance, and partnerships). You can use the Program Inventory to identify needs for additional resources. You should consider whether you have the following:

- Sufficient funding
- Appropriate levels of staffing
- Appropriate office facilities
- Necessary computer hardware/software and other equipment.

Provide program staff and other implementers of the strategic plan the professional development they need to accomplish what they are being asked to do.

- Monitor their work for gaps in knowledge or skills, and provide supplementary professional development, if needed.
- Provide guiding materials related to the program funding area, for example, Guidelines for School and Community Programs to Promote Lifelong Physical Activity Among Young People (<http://www.cdc.gov/MMWR/preview/mmwrhtml/00046823.htm>) and Coordinated School Health Programs—eight components of a coordinated school health program (<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/CSHP/index.htm>).

Establish organized and consistent operating procedures related to strategic plan implementation (e.g., program meetings, communication protocols, data collection tools).

At the end of the IMPLEMENT step:

- ✓ Your program will have accomplished the strategies outlined in the strategic plan and the various workplan activities associated with these strategies.

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Follow the implementation process you developed for the strategic plan.

- Regularly review the strategic plan timeline. It may be necessary to adjust the timeline or the scope of strategy implementation. For example you might need to implement professional development in Year 3 instead of Year 4, or provide professional development for just school nurses instead of all health educators. Remember to discuss any changes to the strategic plan or workplan with your Project Officer.

- Remind program staff and stakeholders about their responsibilities for implementing parts of the strategic plan.

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STEP 6: EVALUATE

In the Evaluate step, you collect and analyze data about the progress your program has made in implementing the strategies in your strategic plan, and the extent to which you achieved the SMART objectives in annual workplans. Your program uses this evaluation data to improve program implementation and activities in current and future workplans. Evaluation occurs throughout the five years of the cooperative agreement. As a result of completing the Evaluate step, you will have evaluation findings on how the strategic plan is progressing each year and descriptions of planned program improvements based on evaluation findings. At the end of your cooperative agreement, you should have a summary of overall progress in implementing the five-year strategic plan based on the annual evaluation data you collected.

DASH expects that funded partners will describe their programs (through a strategic plan and annual workplans), document what happened in their programs, and use evaluation findings to improve their programs. Programs that have met these three expectations can consider conducting more in-depth evaluations, such as examining the quality of the activities in which the program is engaged or assessing what happened as a result of program activities.



For more information on DASH's evaluation expectations, consult the DASH Program Evaluation website (<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/evaluation/index.htm>).

At the end of the EVALUATE step, you should have:

- ✓ A summary of overall progress in implementing the five-year strategic plan based on the annual evaluation data you collected.

Review the evaluation process you developed for your strategic plan. This process identified the data that you will collect, the timeline for collecting evaluation data, and how the program will use evaluation data for program improvement.



You can use the **Data Collection Framework** each year to help you review the information your program needs, and the measures, sources, and methods for collecting this information. At a minimum, your program will need to collect data on how well the program (and the strategic plan) has been implemented, including who, what, when, where, and how program activities were accomplished. This type of data collection is called process evaluation.

Plan for data collection well in advance of when data collection begins.

- Develop procedures for collecting the information you need. DASH expects funded partners to designate a person responsible for ensuring that process evaluation data are recorded in a

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systematic and planned fashion. Process evaluation data, such as the *Indicators for School Health Programs*, include data on the distribution of materials, and the provision of professional development and individualized technical assistance on policy, curricula, student assessment, and environmental initiatives..

- Identify or develop instruments to collect the data you need (e.g., technical assistance logs, questionnaires). Develop standardized forms to record process evaluation data for different program activities (e.g., professional development events).

Determine how your program will organize and store evaluation data. A database can provide a centralized location for data storage, including the *Indicators for School Health Programs*. A database will enable your program to analyze and use data for program improvement throughout program implementation. A database need not be complex; a simple spreadsheet can serve the purpose of data storage.

Review the evaluation data you have collected by asking questions such as the following:

- Were the data collected systematically and according to the data collection plan? If not, why not?
- Did the program follow the strategic plan, including the implementation, communication and evaluation of the plan? If not, why not? What actions do you need to take to get the program back on track?

- Did the program achieve the SMART objectives in the workplan? For example:
 - To what degree did the program reach target audiences?
 - Were the program activities implemented as planned? If not, why not?
 - What fiscal, logistical, staffing, or political issues impeded or facilitated workplan implementation?
- What do the data indicate about the program and ways to improve it?
- Does the strategic plan need to be changed to reflect changes in your program or your program's environment?

Keep in mind that you should only answer questions for which you have collected data, so it is important to identify in advance the information you need and the data you will collect.

Share evaluation data with your Project Officer, program staff, and other stakeholders to provide a picture of what the program has accomplished in the past year.



Consult the **DASH evaluation website** for evaluation resources, including handbooks, briefs, guides, tutorials, tools, and information on how to obtain evaluation technical assistance (<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/evaluation/resources.htm>).