



COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT GUIDE

2024



INTRODUCTION

Community Health Assessment Overview

Thank you for your interest in improving population health in Montana! This guide was developed by the Public Health and Safety Division of Montana's DPHHS and is meant to provide an overview of the CHA process and provide you with Montana-specific resources to complete a CHA.

What is a CHA?

A process that engages with community members and local public health system partners to systematically collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative health-related data from a variety of sources within a specific community.

In other words, taking steps to understand the health status and health risk in a community using data from multiple sources.

CHA vs CHNA

Non-profit hospitals are federally required to conduct community health needs assessments (CHNAs) every three years and develop a plan to meet those needs in exchange for their tax-exempt status. A CHA is a voluntary completed every three to five years by local health departments.

Why complete a CHA?

- Understand health problems to inform community decision-making.
- Development and implementation of community health improvement plans with stakeholders implementing different portions.
- Opportunity to build and/or strengthen relationships with other community and state partners.

Working with Partners

Recruiting stakeholders is crucial for identifying CHA priorities and how to best assess your community. A non-profit hospital(s) and public health department can collaborate on this plan and the Community Health Improvement Plan.

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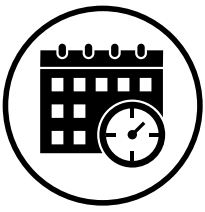
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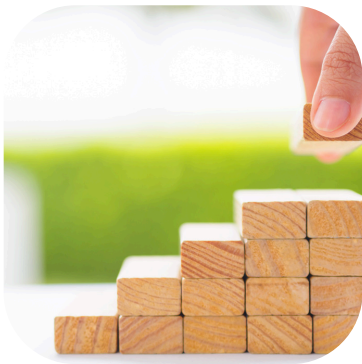
Example Timeline

The CHA process is ongoing however, a majority of the work for Phases 1 & 2 can be completed in a year with careful planning.

Build the Foundation	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Review and Analyze				
Identify and Engage				
Plan and Design				
Tell the Story	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Vision and goals				
Assess and select measures				
Identify Themes				
Share the story				
Improve the Community	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Prioritize issues				
Assemble Issue Teams				
Develop shared success goals				
Monitor and Evaluate				
Celebrate Success				

Community Health Assessment Steps

The community health assessment may seem like a daunting process, however, it can be broken down into three phases described below. The phases are of equal importance to identify community health issues and strengths.



Phase 1 Build the Foundation

This phase unites community partner organizations and people to develop a health assessment vision and plan for the assessment. Engaging stakeholders at this stage helps build rapport and excitement for the process.



Phase 2 Tell the Story

This phase includes preparation, application, and analysis of a community's health. Using data and assessments, stakeholders develop an understanding of community themes to share with the public.



Phase 3 Improve the Community (CHIP)

The assessment findings are used to improve the health of the community. Issues are prioritized and strategies are selected so stakeholders can work collectively to improve the health of the community.

Build the Foundation



1

Review and Analyze existing assessments and plans. What is already known? What or WHO is missing from the information? This analysis may include:

- Completed Community Health Assessments
- Completed Community Health Needs Assessments
- CHA/CHNA dashboard
- State Health Assessment
- State Health Improvement Plan
- Create a work plan for your CHA process

2

Identify and Engage participants early and often in the CHA process. The CHA is a collaborative process within the community. Considering people who are involved or impacted in the process. We have created this **WORKSHEET** to help brainstorm external stakeholders. Participants include:

- Core Support Team — is responsible for most of the work in this phase as it prepares for the CHA/CHIP process and recruits participants.
- Steering Committee — is recruited and selected during this phase. The committee, which will guide and oversee the CHA/CHIP process, should be broadly representative of the community and the local public health system.
- Broad Community Involvement — participants should be recruited as invitations are extended to the Stakeholder Committee. The community should also be informed of the upcoming CHA/CHIP process and opportunities for involvement that will occur throughout the planning process.

3

Plan and design the assessment process. There are many frameworks for CHAs, Mobilizing action through planning and partnerships (MAPP), community assessment for public health emergency response (CASPER), and others. Following a framework or thoughtfully designing will help ensure successful outcomes.

Tell the Story



1

Develop a vision and set goals. How will a community be positively impacted by completing a CHA? This step helps solicit buy-in from stakeholders and the community. It is the call to action that inspires broad participation.

2

Assess and select measures/priority areas to include in the CHA. This is accomplished by assessing a community's status and context such as demographics, health status, strengths and assets, build environment and more. Using both primary and secondary data to paint the picture of population health. A list of state-specific secondary data resources, a primary data menu, and information for a primary assessment survey question bank is included [HERE](#).

3

Identify themes and develop issue statements. Working with stakeholders to review the data and develop consensus around issues and themes.

4

Share the story by showcasing the CHA findings to the wider community. Remember to check the assessment criteria for accrediting bodies such as PHAB, DPHHS, and others. Include photos, infographics, and use simple language to enhance accessibility and encourage broad community involvement.

Improve the Community



1

Prioritize issues by continuing to engage stakeholders to prioritize CHA issues and/or priority areas.

2

Assemble issue teams to tackle priority areas. These may consist of individuals or organizations that have the expertise and/or capacity to address the issues.

3

How will we know if we are successful? **Develop shared:**

Goals- Goals are broad and long-term. They should be concise and do not use jargon. They may apply to multiple organizations, programs, and services.

SMARTIE Objectives- Specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound, inclusive, equitable

Measures- Bean counting! How many classes were provided? Vaccines administered? How is progress being tracked?

4

Monitor and evaluate host regular meetings and check-ins. It will likely take a long time to observe impacts but monitoring the implementation ensures the strategies are being applied

5

Celebrate successes and seek areas of improvement. Continue to engage stakeholders and the community and review data as it becomes available

Components of a CHA



Using the data collected, use the outline below to share CHA findings and information to include in a written report.

I Cover Page

The cover page should include the full name of the local or Tribal health department and the date of the CHA.

II Acknowledgements

Partners, collaborators, stakeholders, funding sources

PHAB Requirements: At least 2 organizations representing sectors other than governmental public health.

- At least 2 community members or organizations that represent populations who are disproportionately affected by conditions that contribute to poorer health outcomes.
-

III Table of Contents

Include page numbers to sections

IV Executive Summary

An introduction to your community health assessment planning process.

The process for how partners collaborated in developing the CHA.

A statement of your health department's goals or vision, and a summary of key findings from the community health assessment.

Components of a CHA...



Tip: Avoid using acronyms and/or jargon, use language that appeals to a broad group of people.

V Methodology

CHA Methodology Summary

- A brief description of how you engaged community members and stakeholders.
- A brief description of data collection methods
- A brief description of the process used to identify health challenges and assets.

The CHA methodology summary should include the name (e.g., MAPP, ACHI, Assessing and Addressing Community Health Needs, University of Kansas Community Toolbox) and/or a brief description of the CHA planning process that you used. The description of method used should describe how you engaged community members, collected data, and identified health challenges and assets.

This section helps create transparency in the CHA planning process and can be used to outline how the CHA was implemented.

VI Community Description

A description of your community will place the assessment in context for the reader. The description will also help people involved in the assessment process better understand the unique characteristics of your community and how these characteristics impact public health. This may include but is not limited to:

- Description of service area- Location on map/Geography
- Demographics- Population size and population trends, age distribution, gender ratio, family Size, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, Languages spoken, etc

PHAB Requirement: The percent of the population by race and ethnicity, Languages spoken within the jurisdiction, Other demographic characteristics, as appropriate for the jurisdiction.

VI Data Summary

This can provide valuable insights for optimizing your own strategy and staying ahead of the curve.

Components of a CHA...



Tip: Using the data collected, use the outline below to share CHA findings and information to include in a written report.

VII Conclusions/Recommendations/Next Steps

Describe how information from the CHA will be used to address health issues moving forward.

VIII Appendices

Include surveys, interview questions, presentations, additional data, documents, etc.

Remember!

A community health assessment is for community members. In addition to a formal report, consider sharing the results in various methods that can reach a wide audience. Some examples include; social media platforms, an online data dashboard, or using art to convey the story of community health.



RESOURCES

Please email HHSPHSDBuildingHealthySystems@mt.gov to learn more!



Funding

Grants of up to \$10K to help Montana Public Health Departments complete CHAS



Technical Assistance

Free TA from the System improvement office; facilitation, data analysis, brainstorming, and more!

PHAB

www.phaboard.org

Public Health Accreditation Board

2.0

www.naccho.org

Toolkits and resources to conduct planning activities



Secondary Data

[BRFSS](#)
[Montana Diseases & Conditions](#)



Primary Data

Coming soon!

