astho™

GETTING STARTED
TIPS FOR STATES

2019
PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE | BUILDING COMMUNITIES
Healthy AND Resilient

To achieve population-wide improvements and advance health equity, governmental public health agencies are being challenged to rethink how they work with communities. As a fundamental approach to their work, states must strive to prioritize community engagement, empower communities, and build their capacity to sustain successes at the local level.

States may be at different stages of this work, but there are simple steps we can all take using community-led, place-based strategies to partner and collaborate with community leaders and non-traditional partners while authentically engaging the community in the decisionmaking processes.

Healthy and resilient communities are built from local, place-based efforts. Below are some tips and tools to get started.

1. ASSEMBLE YOUR TEAM

Find champions within your agency or organization to promote the ASTHO President's Challenge.

Tools and Tips:

Identify internal cross-agency project champions.

Review the goals of the ASTHO President's Challenge.

2. PICK A PLACE

Focus on an area where you have already started to build community relationships. You can also choose to focus on a neighborhood or community that is completely new to you.

If your are new to this kind of engagement, we recommend starting in just one community as a starting point.

Tools and Tips:

Identify the place-based initiatives happening in your state. Check out ASTHO's Building Healthy and Resilient Communities map.

Review data sources to select a geographic region to concentrate efforts (e.g., census tracts, BRFSS, state disparity reports, social vulnerability index, etc.) .

3. PARTNER UP

Use your networks and research any existing organizations or coalitions active in the area. Talk to community members and organizations and build relationships. All steps and decisions moving forward should be made with your community partners.

Tools and Tips:

Recruit diverse stakeholders from multiple sectors.

Determine the knowledge, skills, and abilities of coalition members.

Create effective partnerships.

4. FIND THE FOCUS

Have your community partners lead by defining an area of focus. In partnership with your community organizations and coalition partners, conduct a brief needs assessment. Create a list of short-term and long-range actions that will help address the issue at hand. Choose one of the "low hanging fruit" issues to address first.

Tools and Tips:

Determine your approach and plan the coalition structure.

Consult existing data, such as community health assessments and community health improvement plans.

Assess community needs, resources, and assets.

5. DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN

Support your community partners in developing a plan for the first 100 days to achieve a short-term goal. Develop a strategy for evaluating your work throughout the process.

Tools and Tips:

Set and prioritize goals and targets.

Identify community engagement techniques to implement.

Develop a workplan.

6. TAKE INVENTORY

Look to see what existing funds you have that can be braided to do this work. Make a list of potential investors spanning a wide range of sectors and partners. Start setting up meeting times with potential investors.

Tools and Tips:

Identify innovative funding strategies, such as braiding and blending funds.

Identify community investment opportunities.

Pitch your initiative.

Engage stakeholders and business leaders.

7. GET TO WORK

Start your project once you have your necessary commitments. Let the community determine the pace and respond to unexpected barriers and challenges that may present.

Tools and Tips:

Select a comprehensive set of approaches to address challenges and inequities identified by the community.

Host community meetings and lead outreach.

Promote innovative community-led approaches.

Provide technical assistance to coalitions.

8. REFLECT

Set aside dedicated time to reflect on lessons learned along with your community partners. Take these suggestions and adapt this process to continue to develop other community-led, placed-based strategies.

Tools and Tips:

Assess the effectiveness of the collaboration.