



COP - R C O R P

Communities of Practice for Rural Communities Opioid Response Program

Core Activity 5: Sustainability Plan

Ashtabula County, Ohio

Ashtabula County Substance Abuse Leadership Team

Ashtabula County Mental Health Recovery Services Board

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Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs (OHIO) and the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE), through a shared services and braided funding approach, work directly with project directors from the five CoP-RCORP backbone organizations to provide leadership, training, capacity building, technical assistance and evaluation services, and management oversight for project activities. The project directors then bring back the shared learnings and experiences from the community of practice to their respective community-specific consortium, which is responsible for leading project activities within the five Ohio communities. This sustainability plan represents the shared work of the Ashtabula's SALT (local consortium), the Ashtabula County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board (backbone organization), and the CoP-RCORP Training, Technical Assistance, and Evaluation Team (OHIO and PIRE).

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Sustainability Plan

Communities of Practice for Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (COP-RCORP)

Ashtabula County Substance Abuse Leadership Team

Ashtabula County Mental Health Recovery Services Board

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Introduction

RCORP-Planning

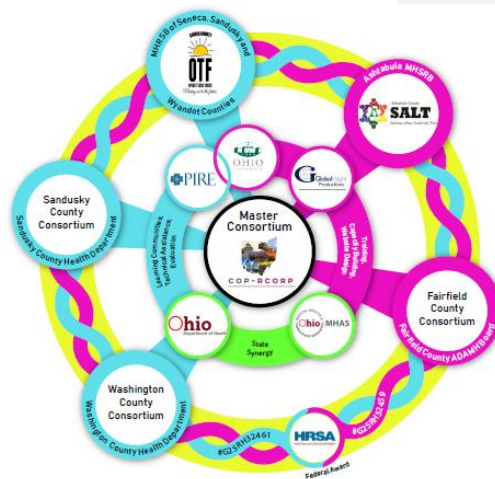
The Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (RCORP) is a multi-year initiative supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), an operating division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to address barriers to access in rural communities related to substance use disorder (SUD), including opioid use disorder (OUD). RCORP funds multi-sector consortia to enhance their ability to implement and sustain SUD/OUD prevention, treatment, and recovery services in underserved rural areas. To support funded RCORP consortia, HRSA also funded a national technical assistance provider, JBS International.

The overall goal of the planning phase of the RCORP initiative is to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with opioid overdoses in high-risk rural communities by strengthening the organizational and infrastructural capacity of multi-sector consortiums to address prevention, treatment, and recovery. Under the one-year planning initiative, grantees are required to complete five core activities. The fifth core activity is to complete a sustainability plan for the consortium. This report contains the local consortia's sustainability plan from the planning phase.

CoP-RCORP Consortium

The Communities of Practice for Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (CoP-RCORP) Consortium was created in 2018 when Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs (OHIO) and the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) braided together funding from two separate awards (G25RH32461-01-05 & G25RH32461-01-00). OHIO and PIRE then offered equitable access to five backbone organizations in the rural communities of: Ashtabula, Fairfield, Sandusky, Seneca, and Washington Counties. An organizational chart of the braided CoP is included here for quick reference. More information about the organizational structure, co-developmental process, and shared economy may be found on the project website:

<https://www.communitiesofpractice-rcorp.com/>



Measuring Sustainability

Under the CoP-RCORP initiative, OHIO and PIRE approached the development of the sustainability plans as a process with a two-fold purpose. First, we wanted to fulfill the core planning objectives of the RCORP-Planning grant. Second, we wanted to provide local consortia with information about how to continue growing the local infrastructure they need in order to address ongoing opiate use disorder (OUD) issues beyond the planning period. This developmental process followed a format that has successfully been used in other Ohio initiatives, which involves assessing what needs to be sustained first, followed by a set of reflection questions about how to shore up the issues identified.

In particular, OHIO and PIRE wanted each local consortium to think about how they could continue to build and sustain their local capacity to plan and address OUD on an ongoing basis. We utilized this approach in part because the grant is in the planning phase and local consortia have not begun implementing any strategies yet. Moreover, our developmental evaluation and capacity building experience over the years has illustrated the importance of several points: (a) clarifying what to continue or sustain (Mancini & Marek, 2002; Weiss, Coffman, & Bohan-Baker, 2002), (b) understanding the public value, authorizing environment, and operational capacity needed for sustainability (Moore, 1995), and (c) viewing sustainability as a process rather than an outcome (Schell, et al., 2013).

At the beginning of the planning phase for the project, stakeholders in each of the five local consortia completed a capacity survey to measure readiness and capacity at the community level. That occurred from an external perspective. For the sustainability assessment, we asked the local consortia to identify two to four core members with intimate knowledge of the planning grant. Most of these core members included staff funded under the initiative. For the sustainability plan, we sought an internal perspective.

Washington University Program Sustainability Assessment Tool

Each of the five project directors conducted an online assessment utilizing the Program Sustainability Assessment Tool (PSAT) from Washington University in St. Louis. The PSAT includes 40-items arranged into eight domains: Environmental Support, Funding Stability, Partnerships, Organizational Capacity, Program Evaluation, Program Adaptation, Communications, and Strategic Planning. Using a scale from 1 to 7, project directors rated the extent to which each process or structure exists in their consortium, with a 1 meaning no extent and 7 meaning full extent. See Luke, Calhoun, Robichaux, Elliott, and Moreland-Russell (2014) for more information about the tool.

Communities were presented with two options for completing the sustainability assessment tool. In the first option, a core local planning team met as a group to discuss and rate each question. Upon reaching consensus, the group entered a score for each question and received a summary report with the results. Alternatively, each identified member of the core local planning group answered all of the questions independently. The project director then received a report that averaged the responses. Ashtabula SALT chose the option of average score.

Local Sustainability Plan

Ashtabula Substance Abuse Leadership Team

Ashtabula SALT serves as the local consortium for the RCORP-Planning grant, while the Ashtabula County Mental Health Recovery Services Board operates as the backbone organization. In order to develop and strengthen the local consortium, the following individuals engaged in a sustainability assessment and reflection process (Core Sustainability Planning Team):

- Members of the Consortium’s backbone organization completed the sustainability assessment and all members of the Substance Abuse Leadership Team participated in the reflection process.

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Sustainability Plan

Reflection questions and assessment results. After completing the online PSAT assessment tool, communities received a summary of their assessment results that reported the average score for each domain (see Appendix A for a copy of the Summary Assessment Results). Next, each community reviewed the summary results and reflected on a number of questions developed by OHIO and PIRE based on the guidance from JBS International (see Appendix A for a copy of the Reflection Questions). Table 1 below shows the overall sustainability assessment results and prioritized domain and score for that domain.

Table 1. Sustainability Assessment Results for SALT

County	Assessment Approach	Overall Sustainability Assessment Score	Overall Assessment Range	Prioritized Domain	Assessment Score for Prioritized Domain
Ashtabula	Average Score	6.1	4.7 – 6.8	Communications	4.7

Assessment summary. To begin reviewing the assessment results, the Ashtabula County Sustainability Planning Team conducted a SWOT analysis by categorizing the various domains as

strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, or threats. They also discussed why they categorized a domain as a strength, weakness, opportunity, or threat (see Table 2).

Table 2. SWOT Analysis on the Sustainability Assessment Domains

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Program Adaptation: The Consortium proactively adapts to the environment, new and evidence-based practices, and adapts strategies as needed.</p> <p>Program Evaluation: The Consortium has the capacity for quality evaluation. Evaluation results inform program planning and implementation and are used to demonstrate success to funders and key stakeholders.</p> <p>Organizational Capacity: Systems are in place to support the various needs of the Consortium. Leadership effectively articulates the vision of the Consortium to external partners and efficiently manages resources.</p> <p>Partnerships: Diverse community organizations are invested in the success of the Consortium and community leaders are involved.</p>	<p>Communications: The Consortium increases community awareness of the issue, but could improve by increasing strategies to secure and maintain public support, generate increased public interest in the consortium, and more effectively demonstrate its value to the public.</p> <p>Funding Stability: Although the Consortium is funded through a variety of sources, it needs to develop a plan to sustain funding.</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Program Evaluation: Although the program has the capacity for quality program evaluation and reports outcomes within the Consortium, there is an opportunity to provide strong evidence to the public that the Consortium works.</p>	<p>Environmental Support and Communications: Although there are strong champions and leadership support for the Consortium, the Consortium needs to increase public support and demonstrate its value to the public.</p>

Problem statement. The Ashtabula County Sustainability Planning Team identified one domain area that represents a key weakness or threat for the sustainability of the local consortium to address OUD. The weakness or threat domain to address is: communications

The weakness of the Consortium demonstrating its value to the public was prioritized to increase public support of the Consortium, which will assist in sustaining strategies to reduce opiate use and opiate related deaths.

Target population. The organizations, agencies, community leaders, and staff/personnel who need to be present to work on this problem include the backbone organization, the Consortium’s Leadership Team, and its Communication and Training Committees.

Goals and objectives. The goal this group will work toward addressing and at least one key objective follow. Table 3 lists the specific activities for the goal and objectives.

Goal Statement: The purpose, need, and strategies of the Consortium will be communicated via multiple strategies to the Ashtabula County public.

Key Objective(s): Increasing the consortium’s presence on social and print media.

Table 3. Specific Activities for Goals and Objectives

Activity	Start Date	End Date	Responsible Party	Resources
Place 2 posts on Facebook per week	October 2019	Ongoing	Executive Director	Information about OUD, local conditions, stigma reduction materials
Ensuring consortium’s events are on the webpage and updated regularly	October 2019	Ongoing	Executive Director	Consortium member information and meeting minutes
Publish information about the consortium’s successes on at least a quarterly basis in print and social media	October 2019	Ongoing	Consortium Communication Committee	Local data regarding OUD related deaths, event evaluations, strategy outcomes
Evaluate activities to determine their effectiveness and make recommendations for modifications as needed	September 2020	September 2020	Evaluator	Activities expected versus achieved outcomes. Community Survey results

Long-term outcomes and indicators. Below are the long-term change outcomes and indicators to define how change will be demonstrated.

Long-term Outcome: To increase communication with the public to demonstrate the value of the consortium.

Long-term Indicator: The number of social media posts, newspaper articles, public events, webpage utilization.

Conclusion

Affordability and Accessibility of OUD Prevention, Treatment, & Recovery

Ashtabula SALT is committed to maintaining the affordability and accessibility of OUD prevention, treatment, and recovery services provided to Ashtabula County residents. This will be accomplished throughout the implementation process by leveraging existing federal, state, and local resources and securing community support. Members of the Consortium conduct resource assessments, grant seeking, and the pooling of resources when implementing strategies. In addition, all members of the Consortium contribute their time and resources to strategies ensuring significant in-kind contributions. Services provided are evidence-based or a promising practice to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of efforts. Services are also designed to ensure affordability and accessibility for our target population.

Prioritization of Evaluation

The Ashtabula County Consortium is committed to developing quantifiable metrics to assess the impact of its future activities. They will be used to measure progress in fulfilling our common agenda, our success in mobilizing resources, and the effectiveness of strategies being implemented. The Consortium has a history of being data driven and using and collecting data from all of its partners.

Commented [BC2]: And the backbone organization already contracts with an evaluator to help with this process – data, metrics, evaluation.

References

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APPENDIX A

Local Consortium Sustainability Assessment Report

APPENDIX B

CoP RCORP Sustainability Reflection Questionnaire