



# COP - R C O R P

Communities of Practice for Rural Communities Opioid Response Program

## *Local Sustainability Plan*

**Ashtabula County, OH**

**Ashtabula County Substance Abuse Leadership Team**

**Ashtabula County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board**

**December 2021**

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### **Acknowledgements**

HRSA CoP-RCORP is funded by the HRSA Rural Communities Opioid Response Program-Implementation: HRSA-19-082, CFDA: 93.912 grants GA1RH33529 and GA1RH33532.

The Ashtabula County Substance Abuse Leadership Team acknowledges the time and efforts that consortium members and other stakeholders contributed to the development of this local sustainability plan.

As the convening leads for the CoP-RCORP master consortium, Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs (OU-VS) and the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) braid their funding through a shared services approach and work collaboratively with project directors and staff from the local CoP-RCORP backbone organizations to provide leadership, training, capacity building, technical assistance and evaluation services, and management oversight for project activities. This local sustainability plan represents the shared work of the Ashtabula County Substance Abuse Leadership Team (local consortium), the Ashtabula County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board (backbone organization), and the CoP-RCORP Facilitation Team (OU-VS and PIRE).

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**Ashtabula County, OH**  
**CoP-RCORP Local Sustainability Plan**  
**December 2021**

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## **Introduction**

### **RCORP Initiative**

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. The overall goal 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. To support funded RCORP consortia, HRSA also funded a national technical assistance provider, JBS International.

### **CoP-RCORP Consortium**

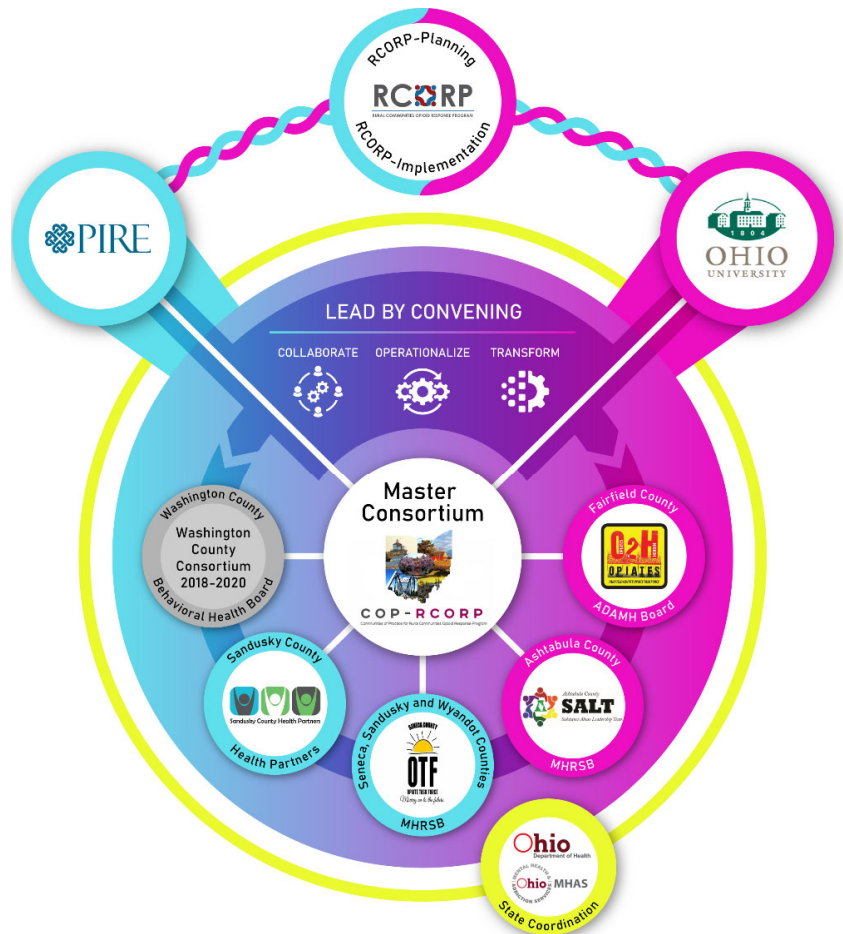
In 2018, with support from the state of Ohio (viz. Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and Ohio Department of Health), Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs (OU-VS) and the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) applied and received two \$200,000 RCORP planning grants. In turn, OU-VS funded community organizations in Ashtabula and Fairfield counties and PIRE funded those in Sandusky and Washington counties. Through a shared services agreement, OU-VS and PIRE braided their funding together and created fiscal efficiencies to fund a fifth in Seneca County. In addition, the efficiencies allowed a project website to be created to organize, share, and archive innovative project strategies.

As system conveners (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015) of the Communities of Practice for Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (CoP-RCORP), faculty and staff from OU-VS and PIRE brought together representatives from three county behavioral health authorities in Ashtabula, Fairfield, and Seneca counties and two county health departments in Sandusky and Washington counties during the planning phase. Each of the five community-based organizations acted as backbone fiscal support for a local consortium and oversaw the project activities being carried out in their community. The CoP-RCORP master consortium utilized a community of practice (Wenger & McDermott, 2002) approach where representatives from the local consortia collaboratively engaged in peer learning and grant activities facilitated by OU-VS and PIRE.

At the end of the planning grant, OU-VS and PIRE each led efforts with respective community representatives and submitted separate proposals for RCORP-Implementation funding. HRSA awarded OU-VS and PIRE each \$1 million over three-years. In August 2019, OU-

VS and PIRE entered into another shared services agreement and braided funding to continue growing the community of practice model being utilized with the master consortium. The implementation funding includes 15 required core activities, which span the continuum of care and include prevention, treatment, and recovery to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with opioid overdoses in high-risk rural communities. Sustaining those local efforts is a critical overarching goal.

Process-wise, the CoP holds monthly master consortium meetings to learn from one another. At the conclusion of Year 1, the Washington County Behavioral Health Board and the CoP-RCORP Master Consortium separated. Currently, the master consortium includes representatives from the following four communities: Ashtabula, Fairfield, Sandusky, and Seneca counties. As the convening lead for the master consortium, OU-VS and PIRE work with members of the master consortium to advance the core activities at the local level. The master consortium also draws on state-based resources to inform policies, programs, and practices. See the figure below for an organizational graphic. More information about the organizational structure and initiative may be found on the project website: [communitiesofpractice-rcorp.com](http://communitiesofpractice-rcorp.com).



## Measuring Sustainability

Under the CoP-RCORP initiative, OU-VS and PIRE approached sustainability as a two-tiered process. First, the master consortium needed to make sure it fulfilled the RCORP grant requirements, which involves assessing and planning as a core group. In addition, each local consortia wanted information to continue supporting local infrastructure in addressing ongoing opiate use disorder (OUD) issues. This locally driven process follows 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, faculty and staff from OU-VS and PIRE encouraged the local consortia to utilize a community-level process in part based on developmental evaluation and capacity building experience, which has illustrated the importance of: (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).

Near the end of implementation year 1, HRSA and JBS International asked all phase 1 grantees to complete a set of sustainability assessments and develop a plan based on those findings. That process occurred at the master consortium level. In addition, OU-VS and PIRE asked each community organization to complete a local sustainability assessment process. The balance of this report describes that local process, the findings, and plan for next steps.

### **Washington University Program Sustainability Assessment Tool**

Each of the four 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.

Community organizations were offered 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. The Ashtabula County Substance Abuse Leadership Team chose the option of average score.

## Local Sustainability Plan

### Ashtabula County Substance Abuse Leadership Team

The Ashtabula County Substance Abuse Leadership Team serves as the local consortium for the RCORP-Planning grant, while the Ashtabula County Mental Health and 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):

- Miriam Walton
- Katie Park
- Bridget Sherman

### 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 several questions developed by OU-VS 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  
Ashtabula County Substance Abuse Leadership Team**

County	Assessment Approach	Overall Sustainability Assessment Score	Overall Assessment Range	Prioritized Domain(s)	Assessment Score(s) for Prioritized Domain(s)
Ashtabula	Average Score	4.9	4.5 - 5.3	Communications	4.5

**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**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<p><b>Environmental Support</b> We have strong leadership and community champions.</p> <p><b>Funding Stability</b> We have a variety of flexible funding available and plan for sustainability throughout the process.</p> <p><b>Program Adaptation</b> We are constantly evaluating EBP and adapting to changes in the science and the environment.</p>	<p><b>Communications</b> More work needs to be done to inform the public of the work of the organization and demonstrate its value to the community. Need to improve marketing strategies.</p> <p><b>Strategic Planning</b> The organization needs to define the roles of the members and make the goals clearer to everyone.</p> <p><b>Organizational Capacity</b> The organization needs to grow more partners in the community and better explain the vision of the group.</p>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<p><b>Program Evaluation</b> The organization could expand further on evaluation and outcomes reporting to grow our communications, inform partners and the community of our vision and program activities and expand members and community awareness.</p>	<p>Threats include not having adequate staffing and lack of general community support.</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.

Selecting this area was prioritized because improving communication will assist in addressing all the other domain threats and weaknesses.

**Population of focus.** The organizations, agencies, community leaders, and staff/personnel who need to be present to work on this problem include all the members of the SALT. They will need to participate in getting communications out to the public. SALT also needs to reorganize the collaborative and have the Communications Committee begin to do work again around this topic. At the backbone organization staff to assist with this process include: Kaitie Park, Mary Ann Hill (webmaster and social media consultant), and Lisa Battaglioli.

**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:** Increase communication so everyone in the community understands the vision and strategies of the Ashtabula County Substance Abuse Leadership Team.

**Key Objective(s):** Increase by 2 per month the number of communications targeted at the public and potential new partner organizations

**Table 3. Specific Activities for Goals and Objectives**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Resources</b>
Reconvene Communication Committee	03/2022	Ongoing	Communication Chair	Members and Space
Develop a new communication plan	04/2022	05/2022	Committee	Members, space, support staff, Webmaster input
Implement Communication Plan	05/2022	Ongoing	Committee, Backbone Organization, SALT Members	Members, space, support staff, Webmaster input
Evaluate The Plan Implementation	8/2022	Ongoing	Committee, Backbone Organization, SALT Members	Members, space, support staff, Webmaster input
Make Plan Adjustments based upon results and outcomes achieved	9/2022	Ongoing	Committee, Backbone Organization, SALT Members	Members, space, support staff, Webmaster input

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

**Long-term Outcome:** Members of the community understand the work of the Collaborative, support, and participate in implementation of the Collaborative activities

**Long-term Indicator:** Increase in community members involved in strategy implementation

## Conclusion

### **Affordability and Accessibility of OUD Prevention, Treatment, & Recovery**

The outcome of maintaining affordable and accessible OUD prevention, treatment, and recovery services provided to individuals will remain in the forefront throughout the implementation process through the continued core activities of the Substance Abuse Leadership Team.

Leveraging opioid overdose reversal and increasing naloxone availability will continue to be a priority. Since we began the RCORP implementation phase, the Collaborative has increased distribution from 41 kits to over 400 kits in the past year. Our work to strengthen collaboration with law enforcement and first responders has been successful and we will continue to enhance this partnership.

Our current “leave behind” program allows first responders to provide Naloxone to anyone in need that they come across, whether on the street or through an overdose situation. We are also collaborating with community partners, included first responders, to expand the number of NaloxBoxes installed throughout the county. The Quick Response Team provides Naloxone to individuals and family members/significant others when they follow-up on a recent overdose. We also recently began implementing Naloxone distribution to inmates of the Ashtabula County Jail who are being released into the community.

The Substance Abuse Leadership Team’s Workforce Committee will continue to coordinate training and professional development to increase the number of providers who are able to identify and treat SUD/OUD. During 2022, the Coalition is implementing its third CDCA Training Academy to assist Ashtabula County residents who are interested in becoming a Chemical Dependency Counselor Assistant meet most of the 40 hours of training required for certification by the State of Ohio. The Training Academy will also provide continuing education opportunities for Ashtabula County residents or persons who work in Ashtabula County and are certified or licensed by the Ohio Chemical Dependency Counselor Professional Board and/or the Counselor, Social Worker, Marriage and Family Therapist Board to obtain continuing education credits. Certified Peer Supporter Recovery Training is provided semi-annually to expand the availability of recovery supports.

We intend to use the Stigma Survey findings and subsequent recommendations from the RCORP Stigma Workgroup to implement actions that will reduce barriers to treatment and eliminate the stigma associated with OUD/SUD. We are also working to enable individuals, families, and caregivers to find, access, and navigate treatment options through the implementation of the CRAFT (Community Reinforcement and Family Training) model, for

concerned significant others, to teach them effective methods in helping convince their loved one to seek treatment. This evidence-based strategy increases the likelihood that treatment will be sought by those with a SUD. We also plan to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate service training to providers and partners to assist in improving the public's understanding of the services that are available. In addition, the Collaborative will continue to review all print and social media materials to ensure they meet CLAS standards.

### **Prioritization of Evaluation**

The Substance Abuse Leadership Team has developed and is utilizing quantifiable metrics to assess the impact of core activities. Some of these metrics include: number of fatal and non-fatal overdose deaths, number of Naloxone kits distributed, number of law enforcement agencies and first responders assisting with Naloxone distribution, number of Naloxone distribution sites, number of Medication Disposal Bags distributed, number of persons attending and completing the CDCA Training Academy, number of persons completing Peer Supporter Training, and the number of family members/significant others who attend and complete CRAFT. It is anticipated that the Consortium's involvement with the RCORP Stigma Workgroup will result in actionable steps and metrics that can be utilized to measure the impact of stigma reduction activities.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### Local Consortium Sustainability Assessment Report

## Ashtabula Local COP-RCORP Consortium 2021

Submitted by: **milazzol@ohio.edu**

Date: **November 23, 2021**

Many factors can affect sustainability, such as financial and political climates, organizational characteristics, and elements of evaluation and communication. The **Program Sustainability Assessment Tool (PSAT)** allows stakeholders to rate their programs on the extent to which they have processes and structures in place that will increase the likelihood of sustainability. Assessment results can then be used to identify next steps in building program capacity for sustainability in order to position efforts for long term success.

### Interpreting the Results

The table presents the average rating for each sustainability domain based on the responses provided by 3 participants. The remainder of the document presents the average ratings for indicators within each domain. There is no minimum rating that guarantees the sustainability of a program. However, lower ratings do indicate opportunities for improvement that a program may want to focus on when developing a plan for sustainability.

### Next Steps

- These results can be used to guide sustainability planning for your program.
- Areas with lower ratings indicate that there is room for improvement.
- Address domains that are most modifiable, quicker to change, and have data available to support the needed changes.
- Develop strategies to tackle the domains that may be more difficult to modify.
- Make plans to assess your program’s sustainability on an ongoing basis to monitor program changes as you strive for an ongoing impact.

Here is your sustainability score: **4.9**

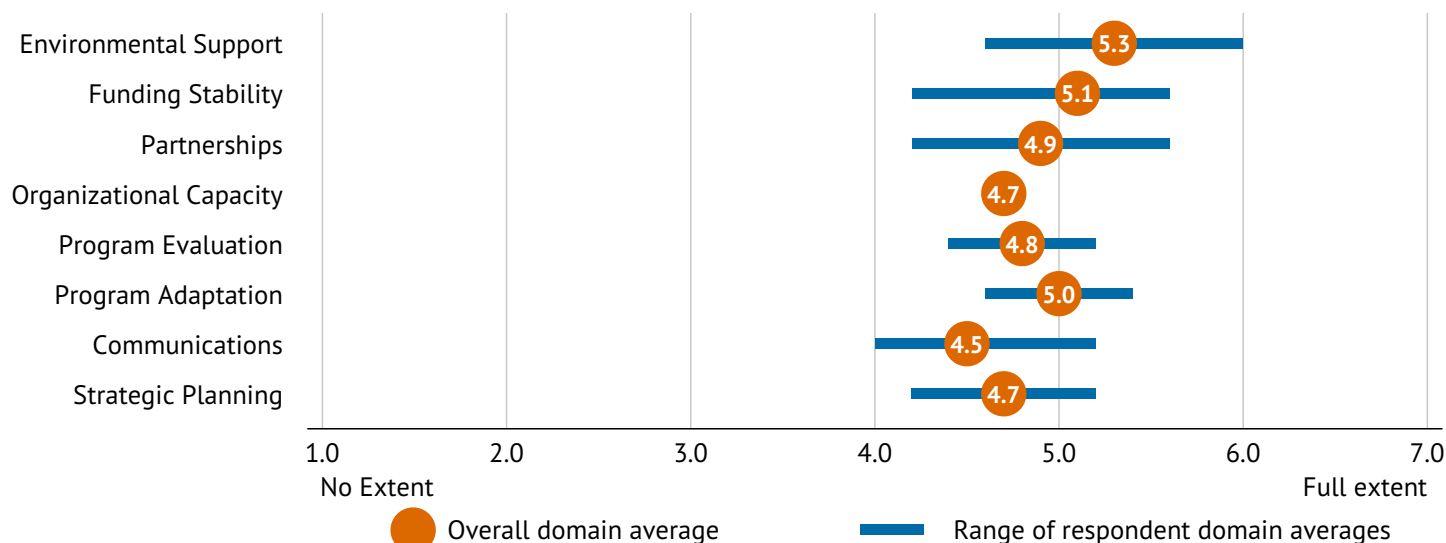
Domain	Domain Score
Environmental Support	5.3
Funding Stability	5.1
Partnerships	4.9
Organizational Capacity	4.7
Program Evaluation	4.8
Program Adaptation	5.0
Communications	4.5
Strategic Planning	4.7

1 = program has this to no extent

7 = program has to the full extent






NA = not able to answer

### Average Sustainability Capacity By Domain



For more information about the Program Sustainability Assessment Tool and sustainability planning, visit <https://sustaintool.org/>



	<b>Environmental Support</b>	Rating		<b>Funding Stability</b>	Rating
1. Champions exist who strongly support the program.	6.0		1. The program exists in a supportive state economic climate.	4.7	
2. The program has strong champions with the ability to garner resources.	5.7		2. The program implements policies to help ensure sustained funding.	5.3	
3. The program has leadership support from within the larger organization.	6.0		3. The program is funded through a variety of sources.	5.3	
4. The program has leadership support from outside of the organization.	5.0		4. The program has a combination of stable and flexible funding.	5.3	
5. The program has strong public support.	4.0		5. The program has sustained funding.	4.7	
	<b>Partnerships</b>	Rating		<b>Organizational Capacity</b>	Rating
1. Diverse community organizations are invested in the success of the program.	5.3		1. The program is well integrated into the operations of the organization.	5.0	
2. Community leaders are involved with the program.	5.0		2. Organizational systems are in place to support the various program needs.	5.0	
3. Community members are passionately committed to the program.	4.3		3. Leadership effectively articulates the vision of the program to external partners.	4.0	
4. The program communicates with community leaders.	5.0		4. Leadership efficiently manages staff and other resources.	5.3	
5. The community is engaged in the development of program goals.	4.7		5. The program has adequate staff to complete the program's goals.	4.3	
	<b>Program Evaluation</b>	Rating		<b>Program Adaptation</b>	Rating
1. The program has the capacity for quality program evaluation.	4.7		1. The program periodically reviews the evidence base.	5.0	
2. The program reports short term and intermediate outcomes.	4.7		2. The program adapts strategies as needed.	5.0	
3. Evaluation results inform program planning and implementation.	5.0		3. The program adapts to new science.	5.0	
4. Program evaluation results are used to demonstrate successes to funders and other key stakeholders.	5.3		4. The program proactively adapts to changes in the environment.	5.0	
5. The program provides strong evidence to the public that the program works.	4.3		5. The program makes decisions about which components are ineffective and should not continue.	5.0	
	<b>Communications</b>	Rating		<b>Strategic Planning</b>	Rating
1. The program has communication strategies to secure and maintain public support.	4.0		1. The program plans for future resource needs.	5.0	
2. Program staff communicate the need for the program to the public.	4.7		2. The program has a long-term financial plan.	5.0	
3. The program is marketed in a way that generates interest.	4.3		3. The program has a sustainability plan.	5.3	
4. The program increases community awareness of the issue.	5.0		4. The program's goals are understood by all stakeholders.	4.7	
5. The program demonstrates its value to the public.	4.3		5. The program clearly outlines roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders.	3.7	

Results based on responses to the Program Sustainability Assessment Tool, ©2012, Washington University in St Louis.

For more information about the Program Sustainability Assessment Tool and sustainability planning, visit <https://sustaintool.org/>

## **APPENDIX B**

### CoP RCORP Sustainability Reflection Questionnaire



## HRSA’s Communities of Practice: Rural Communities Opioids Response Program Reflection Questions for Developing a Sustainability Plan

<b>Name of Person (s) Completing Form:</b>			
<b>Date:</b>		<b>County Name:</b>	

### Step 1 – Decide How to Complete these Reflection Questions

1. For communities using group consensus, you will want to reference your assessment report and the notes from your group consensus discussion. It is up to you to decide if you want to pull the core group back together to answer these questions.
2. For communities using average scores, you will need to pull together the 2-4 core planning members who completed the assessment and hold a group discussion with them to reflect on the findings from the Sustainability Assessment Report.

### Step 2 – Begin by Reviewing Your Sustainability Assessment

1. Review the **Next Steps** section of the report (on page 1), which provides some helpful guidance for selecting domains that you may want to strengthen.
  - a. Note that the selection of domains that you want to focus on in your sustainability plan is not always governed solely by how low a domain’s score is.
  - b. The guidance also notes the importance of having data available to support the needed changes, and the importance of the domain being modifiable.
  - c. In addition to these considerations, you and your team will want to take into consideration local culture, history of prior efforts, and new trends that may be just emerging.

### Step 3 – Reflect on Your Assessment and Document Your Plans

1. On page 2 of the Assessment report, look across the eight domains and complete a SWOT analysis.
  - a. What domains represent strengths and why?
  - b. What domains represent weaknesses and why?
  - c. What domains represent opportunities and why?
  - d. What domains represent threats and why?

Strengths – Capture these domain(s) and why they are strengths in this box.  <span style="color: red;">Type your response here</span>	Weaknesses – Capture these domain(s) and why they are weaknesses in this box.  <span style="color: red;">Type your response here</span>
Opportunities – Capture these domain(s) and why they are opportunities in this box.  <span style="color: red;">Type your response here</span>	Threats – Capture these domain(s) and why they are threats in this box.  <span style="color: red;">Type your response here</span>



2. Prioritize one key domain area that represents either a key weakness or key threat for your Local RCORP Consortium.
  - a. You will need to gather information about how you intend to shore up and address this weakness or threat. Guiding questions have been included below to help you capture that information.
  - b. Please type your responses where noted below. OU/PIRE will take your information and format it into a formatted Sustainability Plan document.
  - c. You only need to select one domain to address. It may be either a weakness or a threat from your SWOT analysis. You will then answer questions 3-9 below regarding that domain.
  - d. If you want to select an additional domain area to address, you will then need to answer questions 3-9 again for that domain.

3. Name the weakness or threat domain area that you have selected to address.

Weakness or Threat Domain to Address: **Type your response here**

4. How and why did you prioritize this weakness or threat domain?

**Type your response here**

5. Who needs to help address this weakness or threat domain? Include organizations, agencies, community leaders, staff/personnel, etc., as appropriate for the domain selected.

**Type your response here**

6. What is the goal you want this group of organizations, agencies, leaders, and/or staff to address related to the domain weakness or threat that you have prioritized? Please write a goal statement that you could provide to this group that would represent what they need to work toward addressing.

**Type your response here**

7. What is the change you are seeking?
  - a. Define the long-term change (outcome(s)) you want to see occur.

**Type your response here**



- b. How will you know that you have achieved that outcome? (List at least one indicator.)

Type here

8. List one or more objective for the group.

Objective: Type here

9. For the objective, identify a few key activities (e.g., convene the group, engage the issue, report back) and for each list a key person who will be responsible; other resources needed (staff, volunteers, space, money); and a planned start and end date.

Activity	Start Date	End Date	Responsible Party	Resources
Type here	Type here	Type here	Type here	Type here

10. HRSA is prioritizing the following outcome:

Maintain affordability and accessibility of OUD prevention, treatment, and recovery services provided to individuals.

Please write a one-two paragraph statement about how your Local RCORP Consortium will keep this outcome in mind throughout implementation process.

Type response here.

11. HRSA would like all Local RCORP Consortium to demonstrate that they are prioritizing evaluation.

Please write a one-two paragraph statement about how your Local RCORP Consortium is committed to developing quantifiable metrics that will be used to assess the impact of future activities.

Type response here.

**Step 4 – Submit Your Reflection Report & Assessment Report to OU/PIRE**

1. Save your Sustainability Reflection response document.
2. Send your completed Sustainability Reflection document to your TTAE.
3. Include a PDF copy of your online Assessment Report from Washington University.



4. OU/PIRE will transfer your information into a formatted Sustainability Plan and share it with you for final review and approval.