



# COP - R C O R P

Communities of Practice for Rural Communities Opioid Response Program

## *Local Sustainability Plan*

**Sandusky County, Ohio**  
**Health Partners of Sandusky County**  
Sandusky County Public Health

2020

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### **Acknowledgements**

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The Health Partners of Sandusky County 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, the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) and Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs (OU-VS) 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 Health Partners of Sandusky County (local consortium), the Sandusky County Public Health (backbone organization), and the CoP-RCORP Training, Technical Assistance, and Evaluation Team (OU-VS and PIRE).

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**CoP-RCORP**  
**Sandusky County, OH**  
**Sustainability Plan**  
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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.

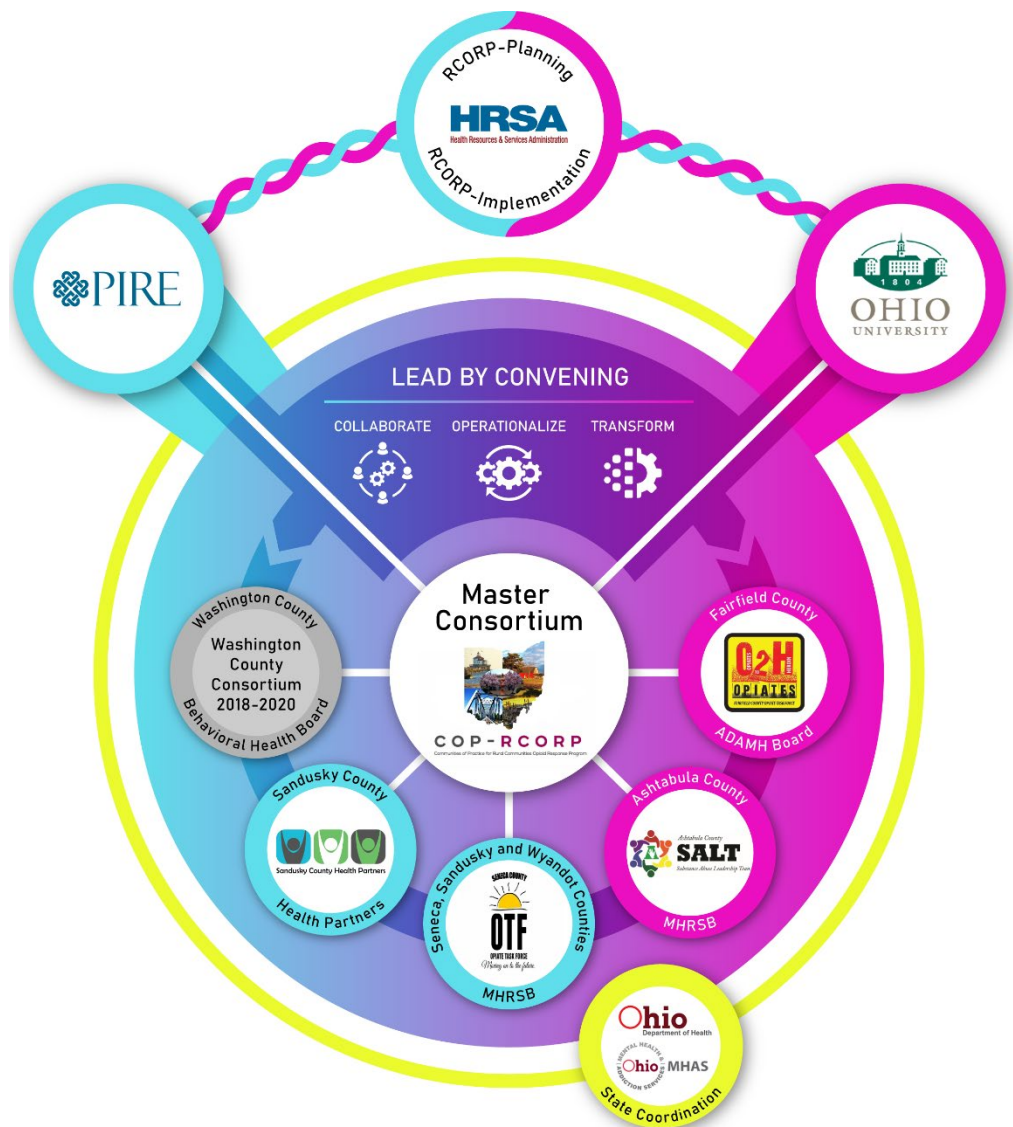
At the end of the planning grant, OU-VS and PIRE each led efforts with respective community representatives and submitted separate proposals for RCORP-Implementation funding. HRSA awarded OU-VS and PIRE each \$1 million over three-years. In August 2019, OU-

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 process with a two-fold purpose. First, we wanted to make sure we fulfilled the RCORP grant requirements. Moreover, we wanted to ensure local consortia had the information they needed to continue supporting their local infrastructure in addressing ongoing opiate use disorder (OUD) issues. This locally driven type of 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, OU-VS 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 based on our developmental evaluation and capacity building experience over the years 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 Health Partners of Sandusky County chose the option of average score.

## Local Sustainability Plan

### Health Partners of Sandusky County

The Health Partners of Sandusky County serves as the local consortium for the RCORP-Planning grant, while the Sandusky County Public Health 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):

- Bethany Brown, Charlotte Stonerook, Jamie Belcher, and James Posey

### 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 Health Partners of Sandusky County, October 2020**

County	Assessment Approach	Overall Sustainability Assessment Score	Overall Assessment Range	Prioritized Domain(s)	Assessment Score(s) for Prioritized Domain(s)
Sandusky County	Average Score	5.6	5.1 - 6.0	Communications	5.5

**Assessment summary.** To begin reviewing the assessment results, the Sandusky 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>Program Adaptation</b> Health Partners periodically review research on the evidence, based programs, policies, and practices. When found necessary, programs and strategies are adapted to align with the changes in our environment, culture, and the needs of the community. Due to COVID response program adaptations were made by putting programs online, hosting virtual meetings, and updated our social media pages.</p>	<p><b>Community Partnerships</b> Due to COVID, it has been difficult to engage with community partners and hold community events. Health Partners has many supporters in the community but often just has a small ‘core’ of people who take on active roles. Leadership does a great job at efficiently managing staff and other resources with what has been allotted to the programs.</p>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<p><b>Funding Stability</b> Unanimously, the team all agreed that collaboration takes place within our coalitions, partnerships, and community to ensure a variety of funding sources are put in place and planned for future funding. The team also recognizes that there is always more that can be done when looking for financial support in our specific economic climate. Rural areas are limited to certain resources, but Health Partners is, and has always been resourceful in finding support for program sustainability even though it is sometimes difficult to find that perfect combination of stable and flexible funding at times. Health Partners has been supportive of our SPF-PFS federal grant. This funding will continue to enhance and support local prevention coalitions in 4 rural counties in NW Ohio.</p>	<p><b>Communication</b> Though Health Partners has many collaborators, supporters, and skilled individuals all working together, there is always room for improvement. It was discussed that there is limited information and data disseminated to community members. And at times, partners only pass along information pertaining to their consumers and employee needs. Even though we have improved social media, virtual meetings, and marketing of programs people are getting disengaged in these ways of communicating. In virtual communications people often multi-task and are not focused on the meeting or discussion at hand. Virtual communication makes the ebb and flow of the discussion more challenging.</p>

**Problem statement.** The Sandusky 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 communication.

Selecting this area was prioritized because communication between partners is strong, but it was noted during sustainability discussions that there is a lack of information dissemination on data, strategies, and successes to external stakeholders and to other areas throughout the community. If we are to be effective in our community change efforts, it is important that the work of Health Partners is recognized and understood throughout the entire community. Community involvement at all levels is vital, from data collection to priority selection to strategy implementation. In addition, in order to assure timely distribution of information, all partners must be actively engaged in outreach efforts.

**Population of focus.** The organizations, agencies, community leaders, and staff/personnel who need to be present to work on this problem include all members of Health Partners. Partners include: The Bellevue Hospital, Community Health Services, Firelands

Counseling & Recovery Services, Fremont City Schools, Great Lakes Community Action Partnership, Jennifer Greenslade-Hohman, MD, Mental Health & Recovery Services Board of SSW, ProMedica Memorial Hospital, Sandusky County Dept of Job & Family Services, Sandusky County Board of DD, Sandusky County Family & Children First Council, Sandusky County Juvenile & Probate Court, Sandusky County Public Health, and United Way of Sandusky County. Health Partners will be taking the lead on the project and it is their main responsibility to bring this perceived threat to the rest of those involved in this project.

**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: Health Partners with the help of other organizations and committed individuals will successfully create/use an evidenced based communication strategy that ensures that all involved with the planning and implementation process will receive information disseminated accordingly based on demographics and needs. Health Partners will ensure the community as well as external stakeholders have the ability to provide input and are aware of health partner community change efforts.

Key Objective(s): By April 2021, Health Partners of Sandusky County will host 4 community meetings to review information on 2019-2020 CHA data and seek input into the Community Health Improvement Plan as evidenced by promotional flyers, sign-in sheets, and priority selection sheets.

**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>
Schedule CHIP Meeting	December 2020	April 2021	Bethany Brown	Staff, Location, Zoom
1st CHIP Meeting	January 2021	April 2021	Health Partners Members	Staff, Location, Zoom
2nd CHIP Meeting	January 2021	April 2021	Partners Agencies	Staff, Location, Zoom
3rd CHIP Meeting	February 2021	April 2021	Members of Health Partners	Staff, Location, Zoom
4th CHIP Meeting	March 2021	April 2021	Health Partners members, Community partners	Staff, Location, Zoom

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

Long-term Outcome: Through proper information dissemination: 1. Reduce prescription drug misuse among Sandusky County youth by 1%, 2. Reduction in opiate use disorder deaths, and 3. Observe and increase in the number of pregnant women referred to treatment. Through proper communication strategies our partners, organizations, and community members will be able to obtain and understand disseminated information for local resources and programs related to this project.

Long-term Indicators:

1. Reduce RX misuse-evidenced by the Community Health Assessment data
2. Reduction in OUD deaths-measured by Sandusky County Coroner
3. Observe an increase in the number of pregnant women referred to treatment-evidenced by positive drug screen on delivery

## **Conclusion**

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

As a part of the June 2018 Access to Care Report, Health Partners of Sandusky County continually review and discuss issues related to access to care and forces of change that impact services in Sandusky County. This includes the affordability and accessibility of OUD prevention, treatment, and recovery services. To make sure these efforts continue throughout the RCORP Implementation process, Health Partners will keep this as an ongoing Agenda item at quarterly meetings and will address matters as they arise.

### **Prioritization of Evaluation**

Health Partners of Sandusky County utilizes evaluation as a method to monitoring the effectiveness of programs, strategies, and services. While both quantitative and qualitative methods are used, partners have found through lessons-learned, that developing quantitative metrics is a much better tool in assessing the impact of strategies. Collaborating within multiple systems for strategy implementation and evaluation, can be difficult due at times, by using quantitative data, partners can reflect on progress more readily and locate opportunities to improve more easily.

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## **APPENDIX A**

Local Consortium Sustainability Assessment Report

**R-CORP Sustainability Oct. 2020** Submitted by: **jbelcher@scpublichealth.com**

Date: **October 6, 2020**

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 5 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

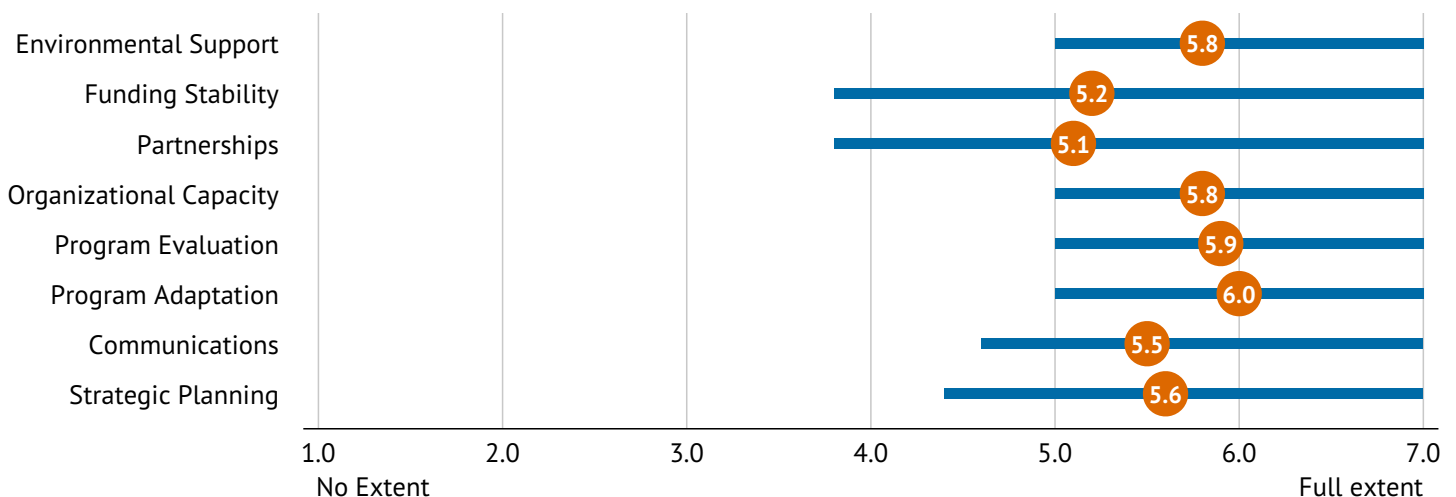
- These results can be used to guide sustainability planning for your program.
- Areas with lower ratings indicate that there is room for improvement.
- Address domains that are most modifiable, quicker to change, and have data available to support the needed changes.
- Develop strategies to tackle the 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: 5.6**

Domain	Domain Score
Environmental Support	5.8
Funding Stability	5.2
Partnerships	5.1
Organizational Capacity	5.8
Program Evaluation	5.9
Program Adaptation	6.0
Communications	5.5
Strategic Planning	5.6






1 = program has this to no extent  
 7 = program has to the full extent  
 NA = not able to answer

## Average Sustainability Capacity By Domain



● Overall domain average      ■ Range of respondent domain averages

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.	5.8		1. The program exists in a supportive state economic climate.	5.6	
2. The program has strong champions with the ability to garner resources.	5.8		2. The program implements policies to help ensure sustained funding.	5.2	
3. The program has leadership support from within the larger organization.	6.4		3. The program is funded through a variety of sources.	5.0	
4. The program has leadership support from outside of the organization.	6.0		4. The program has a combination of stable and flexible funding.	5.0	
5. The program has strong public support.	5.2		5. The program has sustained funding.	5.0	
	<b>Partnerships</b>	Rating		<b>Organizational Capacity</b>	Rating
1. Diverse community organizations are invested in the success of the program.	5.0		1. The program is well integrated into the operations of the organization.	5.4	
2. Community leaders are involved with the program.	5.2		2. Organizational systems are in place to support the various program needs.	5.8	
3. Community members are passionately committed to the program.	4.8		3. Leadership effectively articulates the vision of the program to external partners.	5.8	
4. The program communicates with community leaders.	5.4		4. Leadership efficiently manages staff and other resources.	5.8	
5. The community is engaged in the development of program goals.	5.0		5. The program has adequate staff to complete the program's goals.	6.0	
	<b>Program Evaluation</b>	Rating		<b>Program Adaptation</b>	Rating
1. The program has the capacity for quality program evaluation.	5.8		1. The program periodically reviews the evidence base.	5.8	
2. The program reports short term and intermediate outcomes.	6.0		2. The program adapts strategies as needed.	6.2	
3. Evaluation results inform program planning and implementation.	6.0		3. The program adapts to new science.	6.0	
4. Program evaluation results are used to demonstrate successes to funders and other key stakeholders.	6.0		4. The program proactively adapts to changes in the environment.	6.2	
5. The program provides strong evidence to the public that the program works.	5.8		5. The program makes decisions about which components are ineffective and should not continue.	5.8	
	<b>Communications</b>	Rating		<b>Strategic Planning</b>	Rating
1. The program has communication strategies to secure and maintain public support.	5.4		1. The program plans for future resource needs.	5.6	
2. Program staff communicate the need for the program to the public.	5.8		2. The program has a long-term financial plan.	5.4	
3. The program is marketed in a way that generates interest.	5.4		3. The program has a sustainability plan.	5.6	
4. The program increases community awareness of the issue.	5.4		4. The program's goals are understood by all stakeholders.	5.6	
5. The program demonstrates its value to the public.	5.4		5. The program clearly outlines roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders.	5.6	

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.