

Strategic Plan Guidance



Defining the mission, vision and values
Identifying goals and objectives to address challenges
Highlighting factors that impact sustainability

Adapted for LAUNCH Together from: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2012). *Environmental Scanning and Strategic Planning Guidance: A reference tool for grantees in the Project LAUNCH grant program*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Overview

The strategic planning process includes three steps: (1) defining the mission, vision and project values, (2) identifying LAUNCH Together goals and objectives for the community and (3) highlighting factors that impact sustainability. By the end of the strategic planning process, communities will have created a community vision for advancing children’s social and emotional health and development with a clear plan for moving forward.

The Strategic Plan for LAUNCH Together is informed by the Environmental Scan, which identified gaps in services as well as opportunities for developing partnerships with various stakeholders. In addition to programmatic elements, the LAUNCH Together Strategic Plan should consider current financial resources to achieve the goals and objectives. The plan should also address how communities intend to sustain the system of services that will be developed or enhanced through implementation of the Strategic Plan, including services and practices that may be directly funded by LAUNCH Together and those that are not. Communities should include references to services that will be directly connected to the implementation of LAUNCH Together, but that may not be funded by LAUNCH Together.

A community’s Strategic Plan is the *North Star* for their work. At the same time, it is a living document—evolving as part of an ongoing, iterative process. Effective collaboration is critical to the success of LAUNCH Together for all communities. It is a key area that should be addressed and will be considered as part of the overall evaluation strategy for LAUNCH Together. Communities are encouraged to consider the Colorado Project LAUNCH (COPL) Strategic Plan during their strategic planning process and identify potential opportunities to align local efforts with the broader state initiative when applicable. LAUNCH Together is designed to develop and strengthen an integrated system to support child wellness to which all stakeholders contribute in a coordinated fashion.

The Strategic Plan addresses the five LAUNCH strategies:

1. Integration of Behavioral Health into Primary Care
2. Mental Health Consultation in Early Care and Education
3. Enhanced Home Visitation
4. Family Strengthening
5. Screening and Assessment

Developing a Comprehensive Strategic Plan

The process for developing the Strategic Plan is as important as the final content. The following sequence simply represents steps that are important to have covered at some point in the process of LAUNCH Together Strategic Planning or through related processes in order to ensure needed engagement and a realistic and thorough assessment of current context and achievable goals. Communities should consider the following steps when completing their Strategic Plan:

- A. Engage stakeholders
- B. Gather existing information to inform the process
- C. Conduct strategic analysis of the Environmental Scan
- D. Define LAUNCH Together vision, mission, project values, goals and objectives
- E. Develop outcomes and indicators
- F. Refine program and policy strategies
- G. Identify policies and procedures to address health disparities
- H. Identify current financing and plan for sustainability

A. Engage Stakeholders

Engaging a range of stakeholders creates opportunities for LAUNCH Together partners to contribute resources and take ownership for shared outcomes. In addition to the Planning Committee, communities should consider involving other stakeholders, including family members and other caregivers, in the strategic planning process. Communities might identify and use existing and/or new communication strategies, such as email lists, discussion boards and subcommittee meetings, to ensure participation from the full group. Communities are encouraged to link their strategic planning process with related early childhood efforts to ensure that LAUNCH Together goals are connected and aligned across the local or regional early childhood system.

B. Gather Existing Information to Inform the Process

Communities' Strategic Plans should build on previous efforts focused on resources, services, supports, policies and programs available to address identified challenges. Likewise, previous planning activities that contributed to communities' LAUNCH Together proposals, community readiness assessments and other data collection efforts can be valuable information and useful in framing the approach to the strategic planning process. Communities should revisit and reuse such information to inform and extend their thinking. For example, if focus groups were conducted with families, pediatricians or home visitors during the Environmental Scan, important information regarding service delivery challenges and potential solutions may have been discovered. Ideas for specific activities and objectives that emerged from those conversations can play an important role in setting the strategic direction. New stakeholders with fresh perspectives can build upon and enhance existing efforts and thinking.

Communities are also encouraged to orient key stakeholders to LAUNCH Together prior to engaging them in the development of the strategic plan. Community partners can access materials and an overview of the initiative (e.g., a one-page description and PowerPoint presentation) at launchtogethercolorado.org.

C. Conduct Strategic Analysis of the Environmental Scan

Additional analysis of the environmental scan data is key in helping communities think through their Strategic Plan. Communities should revisit their completed Environmental Scan and reflect on the following questions to help shape additional analysis to inform the Strategic Plan:

- What community strengths can be tapped to support the project?
- What policies, programs, services and resources are already in place to address the challenges of families?
- Do current programs and services have an evidence base?
- Have they been effective for the population receiving them?
- Are the individuals or families who *should be* receiving programs, services and resources actually receiving them?
- Are there currently duplicative programs, services or resources that are attempting to address the same problem? If so, which are more effective? Less effective?
- Are those who are implementing the separate programs or services communicating with each other about their efforts?
- Is there a major problem with families or the community at large that is not being addressed by a program, service or resource?
- How will LAUNCH Together address (or address more effectively) the needs in the community?
- Could the state adapt or develop policies and procedures to better support the local LAUNCH community?

As communities and their stakeholders consider the answers to such questions, they may decide to review and refine their LAUNCH Together vision, mission, values, goals and/or objectives. Ideally, this process should be a collaboration of communities and their stakeholders in order to effectively determine the strategic direction.

D. Define LAUNCH Together vision, mission, project values, goals and objectives

Communities may have discussed or included proposed mission statements, goals and objectives related to LAUNCH Together when developing their proposal. The strategic analysis of the Environmental Scan data and the related Strategic Planning process may provide an opportunity for stakeholders to revisit those elements and reflect more deeply on their vision for LAUNCH Together and the values that will guide its implementation. To facilitate this process and ensure the group has a shared understanding, stakeholders should agree on the definitions of key terms.

DEFINITIONS

Vision: Idealized description that inspires, energizes and creates an image of the desired outcome

Mission: Statement that describes the purpose of the project, what the project does and for whom

Goal: Broad statement of what the project hopes to accomplish

Objective: Specific, measurable condition that must be attained in order to accomplish a particular project goal

A **vision** statement is an idealized description that inspires, energizes and creates an image of the desired outcome. The vision can help inspire strategic decision-making and help guide communities throughout the planning process. A **mission** statement describes the purpose of

the project, including what the project does and for whom. It serves as a community’s core declaration and approach to the work.

Goals are broad statements of what the project hopes to accomplish. Goals can be attained by completing several **objectives**, which are specific and measureable conditions.

E. Refine the Outcomes and Indicators

LAUNCH Together Technical Assistance Experts may assist communities throughout the planning process in ensuring that outcomes and indicators meet the “SMART” test: Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic and Timed. SMART outcomes and indicators can simplify the tracking process and assist grantee leaders in communicating clearly about the plan. To request Technical Assistance, contact the LAUNCH Together Technical Assistance and Policy Manager, Molly Yost, at myost@earlymilestones.org.

Outcomes represent the results of program implementation. They can be expressed in terms of changes in knowledge, skills, behavior, attitudes, values and status or life conditions and often begin with words such as *decrease, increase or reduce*.

Outcomes can be short term, intermediate or long term. Short-term and intermediate outcomes focus on the immediate effects of the program on the children and families served. Long-term results are the systemic changes the program may influence for children, families or other organizations over time, including lasting changes in attitudes, behaviors, achievement, policies or capacity.

Indicators represent outcomes in measurable and observable terms. Outcomes are measured by specific and concrete indicators, which provide evidence that a specific change has occurred. Questions to consider in developing indicators include the following:

- Is the indicator a reasonable and accurate measurement of the outcome?
- Is the program currently collecting data for this indicator?
- Can the data collection instruments be adapted or created to collect data on this indicator?
- Will the indicator provide sufficient evidence that a change has occurred or progress has been made?

DEFINITIONS

Outcomes: Results or consequences of an action or intervention

Indicators: Outcomes stated in measurable and observable terms to help stakeholders assess achievement toward intended outcomes

F. Develop or Refine Program and Policy Strategies

Competitive LAUNCH projects will both (1) enhance programs and services to meet the current needs of children and families in the LAUNCH Together target community and (2) work towards policy, financial and other infrastructure changes that will promote positive child wellness for future children and families in the target community.

Programs, Services and Resources. During the strategic planning process, stakeholders will develop and refine objectives to determine if they are still appropriate given the information that has emerged through the environmental scan and strategic planning process and will update the objectives as necessary. As communities plan for building a coordinated system, careful consideration should be given to opportunities for enhancing and/or expanding evidence-based and promising practices.

Policy Strategies and Business Practices. Based on the scanning and planning conducted to date, communities should develop (or review and refine) strategies related to the following:

- Updating business practices and policies to create a more integrated and streamlined child-serving system for promoting the wellness of young children and their families
- Developing a cross-agency fiscal strategy to promote sustainability of regional and local infrastructures developed through the grant; reduce program redundancy; and support the incorporation of evidence-based and promising practices
- Aligning indicators and measures of young children’s wellness across service systems, including health, mental health, child welfare, substance abuse prevention, early childhood education and primary education as part of the evaluation process

When identifying policy strategies, communities might consider whether there are specific policies, legislation, regulations and memoranda of understanding (MOU) that would help them achieve their goals. Identifying the resources, supports and stakeholders needed to support policy reform is another important step in developing an effective approach to systems-change initiatives through LAUNCH Together.

G. Identify Policies and Procedures to Address Health Disparities

LAUNCH Together also aims to reduce behavioral health disparities among racial and ethnic minorities. To this end, the Strategic Plan should document how behavioral health disparities will be addressed within each of the major goals of the grant. Policy implications also need to be addressed. Gaps or barriers in policies and procedures impacting behavioral health disparities should be identified and a plan for addressing them documented.

One strategy for addressing health disparities is use of the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) in Health and Health Care. Culturally and linguistically appropriate health care and services, broadly defined as care and services that are respectful of and responsive to the cultural and linguistic needs of all individuals, is increasingly seen as essential to reducing disparities and improving health care quality. The CLAS are composed of 15 standards and provide a blueprint for health and health care organizations to implement culturally and linguistically appropriate services that will advance health equity, improve quality and help eliminate health care disparities. Communities can learn more about the CLAS at <http://www.ThinkCulturalHealth.hhs.gov>.

H. Identify Current Financing and Plan for Sustainability

Developing a vision and a plan for sustainability should begin during the planning phase of LAUNCH Together. Sustaining a program requires action and creativity in multiple domains, including leadership, strategic planning, partnership and collaboration, capacity building, communications and marketing, public policy, evaluation and financing. Embracing this more complex and comprehensive view toward sustainability can help communities sustain program elements and outcomes whether or not they receive additional funding.

A systemic approach to financing and sustaining the services, supports and infrastructure developed through the LAUNCH Together initiative involves the identification, understanding and utilization of *all* existing financial resources. Given the various agencies and entities at the state and local levels that provide and fund services and supports for young children and their families, *collaboration* among involved agencies, providers, families and community members *is essential* to a sustainability plan.

When addressing sustainability within the Strategic Plan, also identify the services and supports the community desires to implement as part of LAUNCH Together and reference the relevant federal, state, local governmental and nongovernmental sources of funding that might support those services and supports. By matching the desired services with available resources (and their eligibility requirements, restrictions, etc.), the gaps and duplications will become readily apparent. Communities will have done much of this work as part of the environmental scanning process.

The Strategic Plan should reflect the community's overarching vision, priorities to pursue, statements of need and strategy and conclusions drawn from analyzing the financial data.

Documenting the Comprehensive Strategic Plan

For each goal documented, communities should describe how they plan to achieve the goal, including the relevant LAUNCH strategy(ies), rationale, objectives, targeted outcomes, indicators, activities (action steps), time frame for completion and the stakeholders or agencies responsible for carrying out the strategies. In addition, communities should consider larger systems-change issues in regard to each goal, including the following:

- Coordination and collaboration across state, regional and local agencies, statewide organizations and other stakeholders and at the state and local levels
- Development of policies and procedures to reduce behavioral health disparities for each of the major goals of the grant
- Work force issues, such as training and technical assistance needs at the local level and work force development for cross-training of staff
- Policy implications, such as infrastructure development, policy reforms to promote cross-agency collaboration, planning and data sharing

Sustainability of the project over time, which may include plans related to financing, as well as leadership, strategic planning, partnership and collaboration, capacity building, communications and marketing, public policy and evaluation.

Include detailed activities for priority goals and objectives. Communities can use the template to document how they plan to work together toward common goals and to support each other in achieving goals. Early Milestones Colorado will work with communities, foundations and state-level initiatives in identifying shared goals and opportunities for collaboration as partners work towards a common vision for young children.

Below are examples to inform the completion of your Strategic Plan.

Submitting the Strategic Plan

An initial *draft* of the Strategic Plan should be submitted to Morgan Janke at mjanke@earlymilestones.org on or before **June 1, 2016**. The *final* Strategic Plan will be submitted along with all other planning tools to the LAUNCH Together fiscal agent on or before **July 1, 2016**. On the final version, please highlight any information that is new or has changed since the draft Strategic Plan was submitted. Additional instructions regarding the final submission will be provided at a later date.

SAMPLE STRATEGIC PLAN TEMPLATE

Vision Statement: Use this section to paint a picture of the future the project is seeking to create.

When we are successful, XYZ Community will have a seamless early childhood system with an array of family-centered, culturally competent, community-based supports and services that promote health and development, identify risk factors, intervene early and provide high-quality services to ensure the social, emotional, mental, physical and cognitive development of our youngest children.

Mission Statement: Use this section to describe the purpose of the project. For example, consider what function the project plays, whom it serves, how it serves and why it exists.

The mission of the XYZ Community LAUNCH Together is to build a system that supports the overall wellness of all children in our community. Through strategic partnerships, training and funding, we support families, early education staff, pediatricians, and other professionals who see and care for young children on a regular basis in adopting proven strategies that promote the social, emotional, mental, physical and cognitive development of our youngest children.

Project Values: Use this section to describe the values that help shape the work of the project.

The values of the XYZ Community LAUNCH Together initiative are as follows:

- *Driven by the fundamental value and dignity of every child*
- *Child-centered, youth-guided, and family-focused*
- *Community-based and locally adapted*
- *Culturally and linguistically competent*
- *Equitable, providing the resources for all children's health and wellness*
- *Designed to reduce health disparities among groups, increasing access, service use, and outcomes among subpopulations*

<i>Goal 1: Ensure developmental screenings occur in pediatric health care settings</i>		
<i>Prevention and promotion strategy(ies) addressed: Screening and Assessment and Integration of Behavioral Health into Primary Care</i>		
<i>Rationale: Current lack of mental health screenings in primary care</i>		
<i>Objective 1.1: Trained pediatric primary care workforce skilled in administering developmental screenings</i>		
<i>Targeted outcome: Increased use of standardized screening instruments by primary care professionals</i>		
<i>Major indicators: Provider self-report shows that all community pediatric professionals use culturally and developmentally appropriate measures</i>		
<i>Activities/Tasks</i>	<i>Stakeholders Responsible</i>	<i>Specific Timeframe</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Hold monthly meetings with cross-sector partners with the goal of creating a training plan</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Pediatric health professionals, family members, LAUNCH Together Planning Committee Health Integration Subgroup</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Develop training plan and coordinate logistics (September through November 2016)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Offer training to local providers</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Pediatric health professionals, family members, LAUNCH Together Planning Committee Health Integration Subgroup</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Conduct X number of trainings December 2016 through February 2017</i>
<i>Coordination and collaboration with the state (include specific commitments): Pilot test of training and use of instruments to inform statewide rollout</i>		
<i>Coordination and collaboration with other stakeholders (include specific commitments): Share findings with the XYZ Health Alliance, Children’s Hospital and Colorado Chapter of the American Association of Pediatrics</i>		
<i>Addressing behavioral health equity, including culturally and linguistically appropriate practices: Parent-completed screening tools and questionnaires are available in the various languages appropriate to the population being served.</i>		
<i>Workforce implications: Coordination of training efforts for early childhood professionals across the sectors, including mental health specialists, home visiting nurses and pediatric health professionals to build developmental screening capacity.</i>		
<i>Policy implications: Address policies regarding the amount and frequency of Medicaid reimbursement.</i>		
<i>Sustainability: Funding changes, EPSDT periodicity scheduling, continued coordination across agencies and partners, development of policies and MOUs to clarify responsibilities and expectations of multiple collaborators.</i>		