

Cohort 1 Best Practices Workshop

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Overview

- Best Practices gathered from Cohort 1 – organized into different categories
- Best Practice Materials from Cohort 1
 - Small group activity
 - Larger group – wrap up

Best Practices (Process)

- Start with the end in mind. At the very beginning identify and build capacity for various organizations to take leadership roles.
- Engage in ongoing (formative) review, assessment, and evaluation to ensure you are meeting your goals.
- Incorporate a process evaluation by the impacted community and partner organizations to ensure that strategies are being carried out as expected and barriers to implementation are identified and possible solutions are developed; modify/refine activities as appropriate
- Think outside the box! Even if your planned strategy does not work out exactly as you had hoped, an alternate strategy can still be a success.

Best Practices (Partnerships)

- Get involved in your community! Attend meetings, volunteer and make yourself visible. The best way to find potential partners is to immerse yourself within your surrounding community. This allows you to determine which organizations have similar goals and missions as your coalition.
- In addition to direct partners, it is important to build relationships with support organizations like the local extension program and universities. Support organizations can provide technical assistance, research capacity, hands-on assistance and other services that are highly specialized.
- Use every opportunity to answer any questions partners may have about WIC and be ready to provide resources with factual information about WIC and your community – do not assume partners know about WIC (even when working with providers).
- Keep in mind that stakeholders will likely change as initiatives grow and change.

Best Practices (Your Coalition)

- Train the coalition to aim for a common agenda, shared measurements and mutually reinforcing activities.
- Be considerate of your partners. Remember it should be a symbiotic partnership.
- Create work-groups and assign coalition members to specific objectives and activities – maintains active engagement
- Consciously and consistently celebrate successes and give credit to the team!
- Have fun activities embedded in your meetings—this helps to build working relationships among the members of the coalition.
- Geography plays a huge role in project planning and activities. Traveling to partners' locations is therefore a good idea so that partners are not always coming to you.
- Solicit feedback on an ongoing basis from partners about their and their constituents' needs.

Best Practices (Community Engagement)

- Utilize the voices from the community to design and implement an effective program—through coalition participation, outreach, and surveys/interviews
- Your Leadership Team’s WIC advocate is vital in helping to address the WIC community’s concerns and assisting in developing strategies with long-term impacts on health and wellness
 - When engaging WIC participants, start with those who are already active, and ask them to help with recruitment of other participants and community members.
- Tapping into local talent helps with community engagement (e.g., in East Side Health District, a Cohort 1 agency, a local graffiti artist painted healthy foods on one of the corner store fronts, bringing a lot of attention to the store and helping to promote their healthy corner store initiative).



Della Cox & her children, WIC Advocate for CCI’s CPHMC Coalition.

Best Practices (Communications and Project Promotion)



East Side Health District worked with the mayor of East St. Louis to proclaim March National Nutrition Month in the city of East St. Louis, Illinois

- Have an online presence. Facebook is a useful tool to share information. Ask your coalition members to share the information with their Facebook friends as well.
- Learn how the community information channels work: some groups have formal information methods; some may use central bulletin board type posting areas; in other areas there may be “thought leaders” and communication is more word of mouth.
- Share successes and lessons learned with partners to avoid duplicating efforts
- Find a community champion – someone with a lot of connections and clout within the community.

Best Practices (Material Development)

- If you are struggling to translate resources and materials into Spanish, consider requesting input from Spanish-speaking staff at a variety of community agencies (e.g., if there is a local Hispanic Center).
- Sometimes hard copy surveys work better than online surveys like Survey Monkey. Know your audience.
- Save time and money by doing a little research. Speak with other agencies and when possible repurpose resources already developed, but of course always get permission and give appropriate acknowledgements.

Best Practices (Healthy Food Access)

- Bridging the supply and demand gap can lead to a balanced and sustainable marketplace that can operate after a healthy corner store initiative is over.
- Provide price tags for fresh produce and encourage store owners to price healthy items individually. If prices are not displayed, consumers are often not comfortable asking for prices, which will affect what they buy.
- Establishing or strengthening farmers' markets can provide an opening for future activities such as nutrition education, cooking demonstrations, and promotion of locally grown produce.
- Consider exploring opportunities to add Summer Meal sites in your community
- Consider creating an “Easy Shopping for WIC” guide and training cashiers and store managers on the guides



Children at the “Produce Drop” pick out watermelons to take home, Angelina County and Cities Health District

Best Practices (Working with Providers-I)

- Leverage the expertise of your coalition, leadership team and WIC staff to ensure your time with providers is relevant and impactful. Tailor your presentation to your audience. For example, discuss common miscommunications between WIC and pediatrician offices and how to avoid them.
- Keep written messages to healthcare providers brief and to-the-point. Tie WIC back to chronic disease prevention for their population. Provide clear examples of how WIC supports and reinforces physicians' messages.
- Offer suggestions for reinforcing WIC services and messages during their visits with clients. For example, breastfeeding encouragement and tips.

Best Practices (Working with Providers-II)

- Establish a strong communication system with local providers to foster referrals back and forth.
- It may be helpful to prepare a package of information on key WIC procedures for future reference and for providers to share with their colleagues.
- Provide easily embedded tools to doctors' office that reinforce WIC messages and values like children's books, pens, pads, brochures, etc.
- Healthcare providers are busy. Contact hospital systems and practices early in your project period to ensure they reserve a grand round or staff meeting date to speak with their staff.

Best Practices (Breastfeeding)

- Seek out partners from a variety of settings or facilities to understand the barriers to breastfeeding in your area and the best practices healthcare professionals may use to help mothers overcome them
- Provider bias impacts how healthcare providers and staff educate and support new mothers in breastfeeding – bringing awareness to bias can reduce its impact on care practices.

Best Practice Materials from Cohort 1

- District Health Department #10 Interactive Resource Map
- Richmond City Health District Physician Training
- Richmond City Health District WIC Vendor Process
- CCI Health and Wellness Resource Navigator Manual
- Johns Hopkins WIC Corner Store Rating Guide
- Angelina County and Cities Health District Healthy Food and Chronic Disease Resource Guides

Working in Groups of 3

- Each person in your group will be assigned to review 2 materials, taking note of anything particularly relevant or innovative that you find in each material
 - For the longer materials, no need to read them word-for-word—just get a sense of the purpose of the material and the different components
 - Reviewing your materials should not take more than 5 minutes
- Once you have reviewed your materials, describe the materials you've reviewed to your other team members – take another 5-10 minutes

Assignments for Materials

- Person 1
 - District Health Department #10 Interactive Resource Map
 - CCI Health and Wellness Resource Navigator Manual
- Person 2
 - Richmond City Health District Physician Training
 - Richmond City Health District WIC Vendor Process
- Person 3
 - Johns Hopkins WIC Corner Store Rating Guide
 - Angelina County and Cities Health District Healthy Food and Chronic Disease Resource Guides

Questions to keep in mind while reading through materials:

1. What is innovative about this material?
2. How might a version of this material be used in my project?
3. How might different partner organizations use this material?
4. How will this material help with project sustainability?

Group Share