



C O P - R C O R P

Communities of Practice for Rural Communities Opioid Response Program

Core Activity 5: Sustainability Plan

Ashtabula County, Ohio

Ashtabula County Substance Abuse Leadership Team

Ashtabula County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board

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Acknowledgements

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

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

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Sustainability Plan

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

Ashtabula County Substance Abuse Leadership Team

Ashtabula County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board

September 29, 2019

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Introduction

RCORP-Planning

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

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

COP-RCORP Consortium

The Communities of Practice for Rural Communities Opioid Response Program (COP-RCORP) Consortium was created in 2018 when Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs (OHIO) and the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) braided together funding from two separate awards (grants G25RH32459-01-02 and G25RH32461-01-06, respectively). OHIO and PIRE then offered equitable access to five backbone organizations in the rural communities of: Ashtabula, Fairfield, Sandusky, Seneca, and Washington Counties. An organizational chart of the braided COP is presented in Figure 1 for quick reference. More information about the organizational structure, co-developmental process, and shared economy may be found on the project website:

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

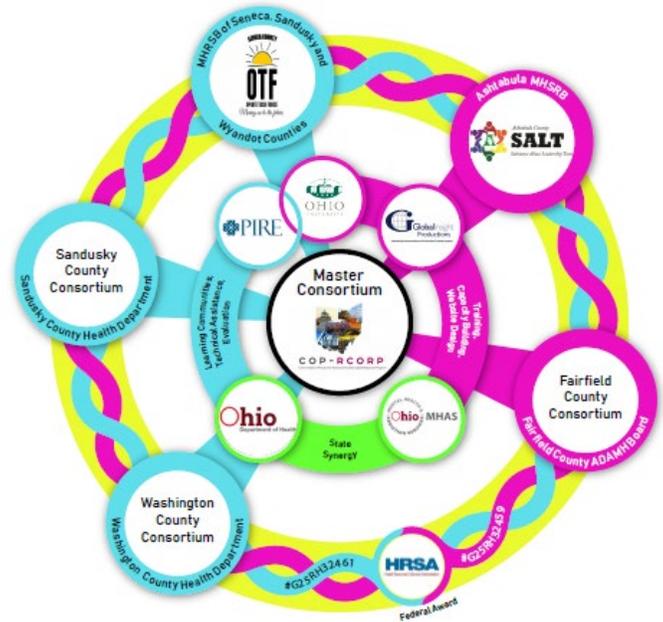


Figure 1. CoP-RCORP Organizational Chart.

Measuring Sustainability

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

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

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

Washington University Program Sustainability Assessment Tool

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

Communities were presented with two options for completing the sustainability assessment tool. With 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, the project director identified a small group of people familiar with the planning grant to answer the questions independently. The project director then received a report that averaged all of those responses. With both assessment options, reflections occurred based on the results of the online assessment results. The Ashtabula SALT chose the option of average scores.

Local Sustainability Plan

Ashtabula Substance Abuse Leadership Team

Ashtabula SALT serves as the local consortium for the RCORP-Planning grant, while the Ashtabula County Mental Health Recovery Services Board operates as the backbone organization. In order to develop and

strengthen the local consortium, the following individuals engaged in a sustainability assessment and reflection process (Core Sustainability Planning Team):

- Members of the Consortium’s backbone organization completed the sustainability assessment (Miriam Walton and Patricia Wagner)
- Members of the Substance Abuse Leadership Team participated in the reflection process. These included: Christina Hill- Ashtabula City Health Department; Casey Kozlowski- Commissioner; Kaitie Park- Ashtabula County Prevention Coalition Coordinator; Jody Slayton- Ashtabula County Health Department; Janie Gildersleve- Educational Service Center; Kelly McGinnis- University Hospitals; Vince Gildone-Northwest Ambulance District; Tina Stasiewski- Ashtabula County Medical Center; Paul Bolino- Community Counseling Center; and Miriam Walton, Bridget Sherman and Pat Wagner- Mental Health & Recovery Services Board.

Sustainability Plan

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

Table 1. Sustainability Assessment Results for SALT

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

Assessment summary. To begin reviewing the assessment results, the Ashtabula County Sustainability Planning Team conducted a SWOT analysis by categorizing the various domains as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, or threats. They also discussed why they categorized a domain as a strength, weakness, opportunity, or threat (see Table 2).

Problem statement. The Ashtabula County Sustainability Planning Team identified communications as a key weakness and threat for the sustainability of the local consortium to address OUD.

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

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

Table 2. SWOT Analysis on the Sustainability Assessment Domains

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

Goals and objectives. In this section, we articulate a goal this group will work to address, along with at least one key objective. Table 3 lists the specific activities for the goal and objectives.

Goal Statement: To communicate the purpose, need, and strategies of the Consortium to Ashtabula County residents via multiple outlets.

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

Long-term outcomes and indicators. In this section, we articulate the long-term change outcomes and indicators to define how change will be demonstrated.

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

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

Table 3. Specific Activities for Goals and Objectives

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

Conclusion

Affordability and Accessibility of OUD Prevention, Treatment, & Recovery

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

Prioritization of Evaluation

The Ashtabula County Consortium is committed to developing quantifiable metrics to assess the impact of its future activities. These will be used to measure progress in fulfilling our common agenda, our success in mobilizing resources, and the effectiveness of strategies being implemented. The Consortium has a history of being data driven, using and collecting data from all of its partners. The backbone organization also has ongoing access to evaluation support through an external contract.

References

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APPENDIX A
Local Consortium Sustainability Assessment Report

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 2 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: **6.1**

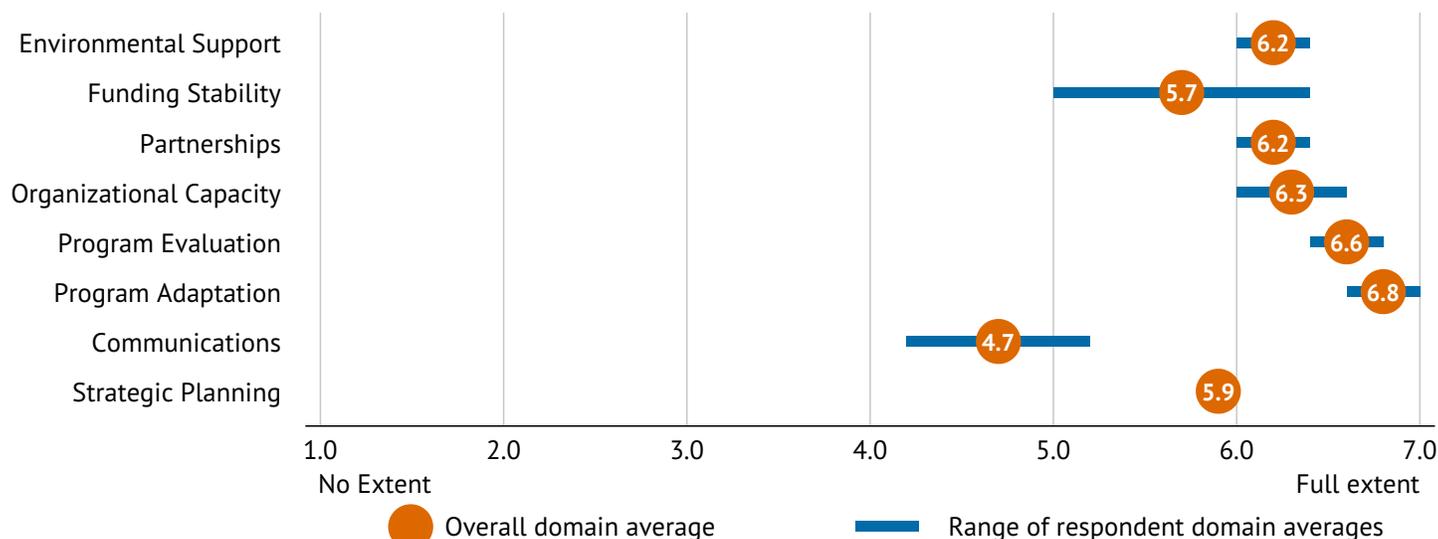
Domain	Domain Score
Environmental Support	6.2
Funding Stability	5.7
Partnerships	6.2
Organizational Capacity	6.3
Program Evaluation	6.6
Program Adaptation	6.8
Communications	4.7
Strategic Planning	5.9

1 = program has this to no extent

7 = program has to the full extent

NA = not able to answer

Average Sustainability Capacity By Domain



	Environmental Support	Rating		Funding Stability	Rating
1. Champions exist who strongly support the program.	6.5		1. The program exists in a supportive state economic climate.	5.5	
2. The program has strong champions with the ability to garner resources.	6.5		2. The program implements policies to help ensure sustained funding.	5.5	
3. The program has leadership support from within the larger organization.	7.0		3. The program is funded through a variety of sources.	6.0	
4. The program has leadership support from outside of the organization.	6.5		4. The program has a combination of stable and flexible funding.	6.0	
5. The program has strong public support.	4.5		5. The program has sustained funding.	5.5	
	Partnerships	Rating		Organizational Capacity	Rating
1. Diverse community organizations are invested in the success of the program.	6.5		1. The program is well integrated into the operations of the organization.	6.5	
2. Community leaders are involved with the program.	6.5		2. Organizational systems are in place to support the various program needs.	7.0	
3. Community members are passionately committed to the program.	6.0		3. Leadership effectively articulates the vision of the program to external partners.	6.5	
4. The program communicates with community leaders.	6.5		4. Leadership efficiently manages staff and other resources.	6.5	
5. The community is engaged in the development of program goals.	5.5		5. The program has adequate staff to complete the program's goals.	5.0	
	Program Evaluation	Rating		Program Adaptation	Rating
1. The program has the capacity for quality program evaluation.	7.0		1. The program periodically reviews the evidence base.	7.0	
2. The program reports short term and intermediate outcomes.	6.5		2. The program adapts strategies as needed.	7.0	
3. Evaluation results inform program planning and implementation.	7.0		3. The program adapts to new science.	7.0	
4. Program evaluation results are used to demonstrate successes to funders and other key stakeholders.	7.0		4. The program proactively adapts to changes in the environment.	6.5	
5. The program provides strong evidence to the public that the program works.	5.5		5. The program makes decisions about which components are ineffective and should not continue.	6.5	
	Communications	Rating		Strategic Planning	Rating
1. The program has communication strategies to secure and maintain public support.	4.5		1. The program plans for future resource needs.	6.5	
2. Program staff communicate the need for the program to the public.	4.5		2. The program has a long-term financial plan.	5.0	
3. The program is marketed in a way that generates interest.	4.5		3. The program has a sustainability plan.	5.0	
4. The program increases community awareness of the issue.	5.5		4. The program's goals are understood by all stakeholders.	6.5	
5. The program demonstrates its value to the public.	4.5		5. The program clearly outlines roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders.	6.5	

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

Name of Person (s) Completing Form:			
Date:		County Name:	

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. Type your response here	Weaknesses – Capture these domain(s) and why they are weaknesses in this box. Type your response here
Opportunities – Capture these domain(s) and why they are opportunities in this box. Type your response here	Threats – Capture these domain(s) and why they are threats in this box. Type your response here

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 know that you have achieved that outcome? (List at least one indicator.)

Type here

- List one or more objective for the group.

Objective: **Type here**

- 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; others 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

- 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.

- 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

- Save your Sustainability Reflection response document.
- Send your completed Sustainability Reflection document to your TTAE.
- Include a PDF copy of your online Assessment Report from Washington University.
- OU/PIRE will transfer your information into a formatted Sustainability Plan and share it with you for final review and approval.