To ensure that their strategic plans reflect and build upon the programs, services, and resources that are already in place, grantees will first conduct an environmental scan to develop a more comprehensive picture of the opioid-related prevention and harm reduction systems in their communities. Grantees are encouraged to develop environmental scans that include but are not limited to an inventory of services available. While it is critical to have a complete picture of the landscape of systems, programs, and other resources currently available to address opioid overdose-related deaths, the scanning process should also stimulate thoughtful analysis of gaps in programming, duplication of efforts, and challenges related to access to or quality of services.

Analysis of the environmental scan data lays the foundation for the development of the strategic plan. The strategic plan sets out the overall goals and objectives of the grant project and identifies how grantees intend to achieve them. In addition to programmatic elements, the strategic plan addresses how grantees will structure their financial resources to achieve their goals and objectives during the grant period.

The strategic planning process offers an opportunity for grantees to develop collaborative strategies with a range of stakeholders to support the work.

The environmental scans and strategic plans are “living documents” that may expand in scope over the course of the project to reflect changes in the community as well as changes in systems and supports that address the well-being of children and families. The scans and plans should be updated periodically over the life of the project.

Figure 2 shows the relationship among the needs assessment, the environmental scan, and the comprehensive strategic plan.

**ADDITIONAL POINTS:**

*Environmental Scan*
- The environmental scan builds on existing needs assessments and serves as the foundation for the comprehensive strategic plan.
- The development of broad-based environmental scans, which map out systems in sufficient detail to guide thinking and decision making, will be central to the success of grantees’ strategic plans.

*Strategic Plan*
- The use of a comprehensive strategic plan will enable grantees to build on and improve current services, as well as coordinate among the many systems that work to prevent opioid-related overdose deaths.
- The strategic plan will also inform the development of the evaluation plan, ensuring the evaluation addresses the extent to which progress has been made in (1) implementing the strategies outlined in the strategic plan and (2) achieving the intended outcomes of the project.
**Evaluation Plan**

- At the end of each year, the evaluation will provide information on how the strategic plan is being implemented and identify interim findings about the effectiveness of specific activities and strategies.
- The interim findings will enable grantees to make program improvements during the course of the grant program.
- At the end of five years, the evaluation will describe what happened and provide data showing the effectiveness of specific strategies and the overall project.

**FIGURE 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Needs Assessment</th>
<th>Environmental Scan</th>
<th>Comprehensive Strategic Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What problems exist in my area?</strong></td>
<td><strong>What programs, services, supports, and other resources exist that provide training and distribute naloxone?</strong>&lt;br&gt;What programs, services, supports and other resources exist that address risk factors associated with opioid overdoses, including prescriber education, patient education, education of current users and allies, etc.?&lt;br&gt;What is the current status of these programs (e.g., have they been effective)?&lt;br&gt;Where are the gaps in programming? Are there duplicative efforts that can be merged or otherwise coordinated? <strong>Examples:</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Local Harm Reduction agency has been working with chronic opioid users since 1990, offering needle exchange programs, overdose prevention programs, and other resources.&lt;br&gt;- Two local hospitals have been distributing naloxone and training emergency department staff on the use of naloxone.&lt;br&gt;- Local prison includes prevention of opioid-related overdose strategies in reentry workshops.&lt;br&gt;- Local health department planning social marketing campaign focused on reducing NUMPD.</td>
<td><strong>Engage partners and stakeholders</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Gather and analyze information (including scan)</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Review and refine vision, values, goals, and objectives</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Develop outcomes and indicators</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Develop and refine strategies</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Build evaluation plan from strategic plan</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Examples:</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Convene a local advisory council to develop a comprehensive plan that builds on the community’s strengths and existing resources, and effectively addresses local opioid overdose problems, including risk factors.&lt;br&gt;- Partner with local hospitals and law enforcement agency to obtain opioid-related data to inform efforts.&lt;br&gt;- Bring together different stakeholders engaged in Naloxone distribution and education (first responders, hospitals, harm reduction agency, etc.) to coordinate efforts and reduce redundancies.&lt;br&gt;- Coordinate social marketing efforts to reduce MNUPD with partners in order to maximize reach and impact.&lt;br&gt;- Develop monitoring and evaluation processes to measure progress and impact of council activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OVERVIEW OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING PROCESS

The environmental scanning process includes three basic steps:

1. developing a methodology to the scanning process
2. scanning the environment
3. analyzing the data collected

Participation by a range of stakeholders throughout the scanning process, including the advisory council, enrich the environmental scan by ensuring it is representative of all service providers engaged in any aspect of opioid overdose prevention – from prescription to overdose treatment. Inclusion in the scanning process will help grantees effectively identify gaps in existing services, find opportunities to partner with local- and state-level programs, build support from various partners for the project as a whole, and begin conversations among stakeholders regarding long-term sustainability.

Grantees also are encouraged to look at existing scans/data, such as assessments conducted by the State Epidemiological Workgroup and those conducted by the area’s Partnerships for Success-funded communities; or similar efforts.

In addition to mapping out the systems and programs in place prior to the PDO, the environmental scan also should include a financial map of the funding streams that support programs to address Prescription Drug/Opioid Overdose-Related Deaths. Additionally, grantees may find it helpful to draw from any prior or ongoing financial analysis that has been conducted at the state, tribal, or local level.

The environmental scan process can also be used by grantees to assess their existing policies and procedures related to Prescription Drug/Opioid Overdoses-Related Deaths. For example, do other key agencies maintain specific strategies to reduce overdoses related deaths among the subpopulations they serve? This process will help the grantee identify any gaps in such strategies and documented policies and eventually develop an approach (or revise an existing one) through the strategic planning process.

The environmental scan provides an opportunity for grantees to communicate with other important stakeholders in the state, tribe, or territory. Local communities’ findings may help inform policy and decision making at the state or tribal level, and state or tribal findings may help inform local communities about ways in which their gaps in service, needs, resources, and practices compare with those in other jurisdictions.

OVERVIEW OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING PROCESS

Grantees should include the following elements in their scan reports:

1. Stakeholder participation: A description of who participated in the scanning process and how stakeholders were engaged and the diverse perspectives ensured.
2. Methodology: A description of the methods used for gathering scan data (e.g., extant data, focus groups, key informant interviews, surveys, etc.).
3. Scan data: The information grantees have collected across programs, providers, and services that allowed them to identify existing gaps and redundancies in relevant systems. Grantees should submit a template, such as those included in Appendix A that captures an “inventory” of programs and the information collected about them. If grantees have developed other instruments for collecting data (e.g., an interview protocol) or have other raw data (e.g., notes from an interview or focus group), they do not need to submit these items with the scan document.
4. Findings: A summary of findings from the scan; that is, not a summary of data but conclusions that could be drawn from the scan that are key to helping the project more clearly define its goals, objectives, and outcomes, all of which will be outlined in the strategic plan.

**Recommended page count for each element of the environmental scan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element of the Environmental Scan</th>
<th>Suggested Page Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Description of participants and engagement in scanning process</td>
<td>1 to 2 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Description of methods for gathering data</td>
<td>1 to 2 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Environmental scan data</td>
<td>Completed templates (see Appendix A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Summary of findings and conclusions</td>
<td>4-6 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6-10 pages, plus completed templates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ORGANIZATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN GUIDANCE**

This environmental scan guidance is organized into three sections:

Part 1: Developing a Methodology for the Environmental Scan offers strategies to help grantees determine their approach to the environmental scan.

Part 2: Scanning the Environment lists questions to inform a thorough scan process and offers a template to organize information gathered.

Part 3: Analyzing the Scan and Drawing Conclusions provides suggestions on how to sort through the information collected and how to best interpret the findings. Also called the strategic analysis, this section can guide grantees in forming an optimal strategic direction for moving forward over the next five years.

**Part 1: Developing a Methodology for the Environmental Scan**

Even though the environmental scan process is about collecting data, it is an opportunity for grantees to dialogue with stakeholders, establish and strengthen partnerships, and inform the community about PDO. Each step in the process should be conducted in a collaborative manner involving a range of stakeholders. Grantees should actively engage their PDO Advisory Councils in scanning activities, as well as using the scanning process as an opportunity to form alliances with a wide variety of individuals at the state, territorial, tribal, and community levels. Soliciting input from a range of stakeholders, including current and potential program participants, will help ensure that services are responsive to the needs of the community and will build support for the initiative as a whole.

There are a variety of ways grantees can gather data for the environmental scan, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Adapt and/or update existing environmental scans or needs assessments
- Distribute blank (or pre-populated) templates to key organizations or agencies to provide or confirm the scan data
- Conduct key informant interviews, focus groups, or surveys to gather feedback from the community, including parents and caregivers, providers, and key stakeholders.
Part 2: Scanning the Environment

For each project goal, a series of guiding questions is provided, followed by a template (with illustrative examples), which grantees could use to organize and document the systems, programs, and other resources that currently exist in their communities. In addition, grantees should broaden the scan to include state-level factors that are, or will be, relevant at the local level. This step is important in identifying state policy or systems issues that will affect the development of the strategic plan. Guiding questions are offered to trigger thinking about all the possible systems, programs, and other resources that grantees might include in the scan. Grantees are not required to answer all of the guiding questions, but to select those that are most relevant to their work.

Similarly, templates are provided for grantees to use to record the information they gather through the environmental scan. The templates are structured to collect information on the following:

- Services provided: A brief description of the services offered.
- Organization providing the services: The name of the organization or agency that is delivering the service with specific contact information.
- Population served: General information about the population served, as available.
- Goal: The intended goal of the services.
- Funding amount and source: Approximate funding amounts are appropriate. It may be challenging to obtain exact funding amounts from various agencies, thus estimates are fine.
- Involvement in PDO: This optional column may be used as a tool to bridge how various partners may be involved in PDO and to link the environmental scan to the strategic planning process.

Systems Development

The environmental scan should include information about systems development. The following questions are designed to help the grantee identify relevant system-level factors that will inform the environmental scan and, ultimately, the strategic plan. This information may best be captured in narrative form. The questions are not exhaustive; grantees are not required to answer all of them and may decide to create some of their own questions.

Governance and Interagency Coordination and Collaboration

- Is there a coordinating body in the community, state, territory, or tribe that addresses cross-agency, cross-organizational issues related to opioids?
- Do these coordinating bodies include both the public and private, as well as both for-profit and nonprofit sectors?
- Do these coordinating bodies have access to adequate data regarding prevention and treatment services that can inform their planning?
- Are there efforts to ensure that opioid misuse prevention and harm reduction have a high profile on the public policy agenda in the state, territory, tribe, or community?
- To what extent do agencies and coalitions providing services and supports to adults (such as for issues related to mental health, justice, housing, and employment) collaborate with agencies tackling opioid use and misuse?
- To what extent do the state’s or territory’s Partnership for Success or SPF Rx grantee currently collaborate?
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- What legislation currently in place supports a public health approach?

Active Users and Community Involvement
- Are active users encouraged to be active participants in all components of service delivery (i.e., the development and monitoring of policies, procedures, and practices)?
- What efforts are underway to ensure that true active and recovering user and community voices inform the system?
- Are policies being changed to reflect person-centered practices?

Naloxone Practices
- How are the state, tribe, and the local community supporting training for first responders?
- What trainings are being used at the current time?
- Is there a cross-agency data collection system?
- Are services being evaluated for effectiveness?

Funding
- What is being done to ensure the existence of financing opportunities that can encourage the delivery of consistent level of intervention and treatment?
- What financing strategies have been developed or utilized to encourage cross-agency coordination?
- Are all funding streams maximized to cover services in the state, territory, tribe, or community?

Effective Workforce
- What efforts are underway to build a work force that is trained in the public health approach?
- What efforts are planned or underway to provide interdisciplinary training on understanding prescription opioid use and misuse?
- Describe the current state, territorial, or tribal and local work force development plan for first responders, health care, emergency room staff, bystanders.

Cultural and Linguistic Competence
- What efforts are underway at the state, territorial, or tribal and community level to ensure cultural and linguistic competence among providers and policymakers?
- What efforts are being made to reduce disparities in access to or receipt of services among people from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds?

Statewide or Broad Tribal Adoption of Local Practice
- What efforts are underway to replicate successful local efforts around reducing opioid related overdoses and Naloxone distribution?

Coordination with Other Federally Funded Efforts
- How is the PDO effort being coordinated with other federally funded programs at the state, territorial, or tribal and community levels?
- How is PDO being integrated with Partnership for Success and SPF Rx grantees?

Part 3: Analyzing the Scan and Drawing Conclusions
From the scan of the current service delivery system—that is, the data-gathering process as well
as the information gathered—grantees are now well positioned for critical, strategic analysis. In this analysis, grantees should thoughtfully consider any conclusions that may be drawn as well as how those conclusions can inform the project’s plans moving forward. The conclusions will inform the development of a comprehensive strategic plan that is based on a strong understanding of where the project began. To analyze the data and identify next steps in the development of a comprehensive strategic plan, grantees should consider the following questions:

- What needs in the community are going unmet? What available programs, supports, and services are designed to meet these needs?
- Are there any major problems not being addressed by a service, program, or activity?
- Are there specific neighborhoods/populations within the community that are in fact receiving them? If not, why not?
- Are there duplicative services, programs, and supports attempting to address the same problem? If so, which are more effective and which are less so? Are those who are implementing the separate programs coordinating their efforts in any way?
- Are there documented policies and procedures for addressing behavioral health disparities?
- Is there a blending of funding across these various programs and efforts?

In addition, grantees should consider what is needed at a broader level (e.g., from state, tribal, or territorial agencies, or task forces or interagency work groups, etc.) to support strategic planning, implementation, work force development efforts, and systems-change efforts.

Grantees should also consider the following:

- Local-level coordination issues, including changes in state, territorial, or tribal policies and regulations that can facilitate the blending of funding
- Regional and/or statewide work force development issues
- Mechanisms available to share lessons learned with others in the state or tribe

Answering these questions will help grantees organize the data from their environmental scans. Having a more complete understanding of both the needs and the resources in the community will lead to greater clarity of where the gaps and the most critical unmet needs exist. In addition, this scan might highlight ways in which service delivery, policies, and funding structures can be improved. The strategic plan should be a direct response to the outstanding needs; it presents the project’s vision for how best practices in infrastructure reform and service delivery can most effectively meet these needs.

REFERENCE

Originally written in 2012, this document is adapted from SAMHSA’s Project LAUNCH, a comprehensive child wellness program integrating behavioral health into primary care, early childhood mental health consultation, home visiting, parent strengthening and support, and developmental screening and assessment. The approaches to environmental scanning and strategic planning are universal.