

A Tool to Reflect on Organizational Capacities for Healthy Public Policies



TOOL OVERVIEW

To support public health organizations, the NCCHPP has developed a tool to help structure reflection and identify concrete levers for action for advancing healthy public policies (HPPs).

This document is the fifth in a series of six documents that together make up the tool:

1. Overview of your situation
2. Analysis by dimension: Partnerships
3. Analysis by dimension: Organizational structures and resources
4. Analysis by dimension: Workforce
- 5. Analysis by dimension: Knowledge development**
6. Analysis by dimension: Leadership and governance

What you will find in this document

This document provides a structure for reflecting on concrete ways to strengthen organizational capacities for HPPs, using **knowledge development** as a lever for action.

This document is organized around five strategies linked to this dimension:

- 1. Local data in support of HPPs**
- 2. Using indicators**
- 3. Data and knowledge accessibility**
- 4. Developing tools for other actors**
- 5. Informing decision making and influencing the political agenda**

For each of these strategies, reflection questions are provided to help you describe the actions implemented within your organization, place them in a broader reflection, and explore potential avenues for improvement. Additional resources are offered for each strategy to deepen your reflection and identify approaches suited to your objective.



HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

Similar to the *Overview of your situation* document, this document may be completed individually or collectively, depending on preferences and the context of use.

Before you begin, we recommend saving a copy of the document to preserve your responses and allow you to return to them as needed.

Step 1: Answer the questions provided for each strategy to describe and clarify the initiatives currently in place within your organization.

Step 2: Based on your responses from Step 1, answer the reflection questions to better contextualize your organization's work and consider potential avenues to strengthen organizational capacity for advancing HPPs.

Step 3: Explore the resources provided to further develop the reflections initiated in Steps 1 and 2. These resources can help to identify strategies aligned with your organization's objectives.

The resources also include tools and concrete examples that can support the implementation of strategies deemed relevant for your organization. Note that references to specific sections of the report [*What Can Organizations Do to Enhance Their Capacity to Promote Healthy Public Policies?*](#) are included, along with a list of additional resources available online.

Knowledge development: The production and dissemination of knowledge that supports the implementation of evidence-based HPPs.

1 LOCAL DATA IN SUPPORT OF HPPS

Step 1 – Description of initiatives taken by your organization

- Does your organization collect local data (social, physical, economic, etc.) that can be used to promote HPPs?
- What information is collected and how is it leveraged?

Step 2 – Reflection questions

- Does your organization have, or have access to, local data that could help support the work of interested parties engaged in promoting HPPs?
- What obstacles might prevent your organization from collecting, using or disseminating local data to promote HPPs?

Step 3 – Resources

To further reflect on using or collecting local data, see Section 3.4.1 "Collecting Relevant Local Data in Support of HPPs" on page 35 of the report [*What Can Organizations Do to Enhance Their Capacity to Promote Healthy Public Policies?*](#) In addition to discussing the relevance of collecting data that reflect the reality of specific communities, this section presents the example of a public health organization that mobilized local data to advance its climate change actions, as well as an example where leveraging local data contributed to the adoption of policies fostering active transportation.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Alliance for Healthier Communities. (n.d.). *Learning Essentials for Advancing Health Equity Series Health Equity Training. Module Two: Using Data to Advance Health Equity*. <https://www.allianceon.org/Health-Equity-Resources>
- Canadian Institute for Health Information. (2018). *Measuring Health Inequalities: A Toolkit. Area-Level Equity Stratifiers Using PCCF and PCCF+*. <https://www.cihi.ca/sites/default/files/document/toolkit-area-level-measurement-pccf-en.pdf>
- Institute for People, Place, and Possibility. (n.d.). *Community Commons: An Introduction to Local Data*. <https://www.communitycommons.org/collections/An-Introduction-to-Local-Data>
- National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools. (2020). *Quality Assessment of Community Evidence (QACE) Tools*. <https://www.nccmt.ca/qace>
- Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion. (2018). *Small Area Analysis: A Primer for Public Health Units*. Public Health Ontario. <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/S/2018/saa-guidance.pdf>

2 USING INDICATORS

Step 1 – Description of initiatives taken by your organization

- Does your organization produce or use indicators in the context of its work on HPPs?
- If so, what are these indicators and how are they used to promote HPPs?

Step 2 – Reflection questions

- Can you think of any indicators that could help to improve your organization's work in promoting HPPs?
- What obstacles could limit the implementation of indicators relevant to the promotion of HPPs?

Step 3 – Resources

Section 3.4.2 "Using Relevant Indicators to Leverage Data in Support of HPPs" on page 37 of the report [*What Can Organizations Do to Enhance Their Capacity to Promote Healthy Public Policies?*](#) explores the relevance of grouping data to form indicators and thus produce simplified and accessible portraits of complex situations. This section describes the use of three indicators by public health organizations: *Measuring What Matters* (urban equity), the *Nutritious Food Basket* (food insecurity) and the *Heat Vulnerability Index* (heat waves).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. (2024). *Using Health Equity Indicators to Guide Community Health Improvement in U.S. Territories and Freely Associated States. Step Three: Identify and Develop Indicators Through a Health Equity Lens*. <https://www.astho.org/4900be/globalassets/report/using-health-equity-indicators-to-guide-community-health-improvement-in-tfas.pdf>
- Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative. (2015). *Applying Social Determinants of Health Indicators Data for Advancing Health Equity: A Guide for Local Health Department Epidemiologists and Public Health Professionals*. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/647f6cbb489b5b79d0952c3f/t/6493fcf9bd4ed94fd232a3e8/1687420158225/BARHII-EV+Applying+Social+Determinants+of+Health.pdf>
- Daghofer, D. (2013). *Promoting Health Equity - Choosing Appropriate Indicators: Literature Scan. Population and Public Health Program*. Provincial Health Services Authority (British Columbia). http://www.bccdc.ca/pop-public-health/Documents/LitScanEquityIndicatorsFINAL_2013.pdf
- Davis, R. (2015). *Measuring What Works to Achieve Health Equity: Metrics for the Determinants of Health*. Prevention Institute. <https://www.preventioninstitute.org/publications/measuring-what-works-achieve-health-equity-metrics-determinants-health>
- Indigenous Primary Health Care Council. (2025). *A Wholistic and Strength-based Approach for Measuring Health and Wellness: Considerations for Public Health Indicators*. <https://iphcc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Public-Health-Indigenous-Indicator-Framework.pdf>
- Jeffery, B. et al. (2010). *Community Health Indicators Toolkit*. University of Regina and University of Saskatchewan: Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit. <https://spheru.ca/publications/files/Tools-1-community-health-indicators-toolkit-2nd-edition-2010-rev-1-Apr-2016.pdf>
- Public Health Ontario. (2016). *Health Equity Indicators for Ontario Local Public Health Agencies: User Guide*. <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/L/2016/ldcp-patients-first-indicator-user-guide.pdf>
- Von Alexander, J. and Westermann, H. (2024). *Lessons Learned from Palau's Journey to Develop Health Equity Indicators*. Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. <https://www.astho.org/communications/blog/lessons-learned-from-palau-s-journey-to-develop-health-equity-indicators/>

3 DATA AND KNOWLEDGE ACCESSIBILITY

Step 1 – Description of initiatives taken by your organization

- How does your organization facilitate access to potentially useful data and knowledge for interested parties wishing to advance HPPs?

Step 2 – Reflection questions

- To what extent is sharing data and knowledge about HPPs prioritized by your organization?
- Does your organization have data or knowledge that you feel are underused and that could be beneficial to partners engaged in promoting HPPs?

Step 3 – Resources

The benefits of facilitating access to public health data and knowledge supporting the advancement of HPPs are discussed in Section 3.4.3 "Making Public Health Data and Knowledge in Support of HPPs Accessible and Usable" on page 39 of the report [*What Can Organizations Do to Enhance Their Capacity to Promote Healthy Public Policies?*](#) This section proposes the use of virtual platforms and visual aids to facilitate the dissemination and effective use of data, and includes examples of implementation.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Andruszkiewicz, N., Branston, A., Graham, K., Ogunniyi, C., and Health Equity Data Mobilization LDCP Team. (2019). *Putting the Pieces Together: An Updated Guide for Public Health to Share Data with Community Organizations to Promote Health Equity*. <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/L/2019/lhcp-health-equity-putting-pieces-guide.pdf>
- Jain, A. (2024). *Developing a Data Dashboard to Address Health Equity Concerns: Insights from Puerto Rico*. Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. <https://www.astho.org/topic/resource/developing-data-dashboard-address-health-equity-concerns-insights-puerto-rico/>
- National Cancer Institute. (2011). *Making Data Talk: A Workbook*. <https://www.cancer.gov/publications/health-communication/making-data-talk.pdf>
- National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health. (2012). *Learning Together: Representing the Data and Telling the Health Equity Story in Population Health Status Reporting*. https://nccdh.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Telling_the_Story_EN_Final.pdf

Visual aids

- Institute for People, Place, and Possibility. (n.d.). *Community Commons: Data Visualization*. <https://www.communitycommons.org/entities/92bfcdc8-45cb-4a02-8679-2284c2baedee>

4 DEVELOPING TOOLS FOR OTHER ACTORS

Step 1 – Description of initiatives taken by your organization

- How is the expertise of members of your teams leveraged to support other actors, interested parties or partners working on HPP-related issues?
- Is your organization producing, or has it produced, guides, kits or other tools for interested parties mobilized around HPP-related issues?

Step 2 – Reflection questions

- In your opinion, how could your organization mobilize its expertise and knowledge to better support actors working toward HPPs?
- If you could imagine a new way for your organization to put its expertise and knowledge at the service of these actors, what form would it take?

Step 3 – Resources

Section 3.4.4 "Developing Tools Enabling Other Actors to Promote HPPs" on page 40 of the report [*What Can Organizations Do to Enhance Their Capacity to Promote Healthy Public Policies?*](#) explores strategies for developing guides or toolkits, as well as customized tools that leverage public health expertise and support actors working toward HPPs. Examples of implementation by public health organizations are also included in this section.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Unlike the other resources presented in this reflection tool, which are guides or kits designed to equip public health organizations, the resources proposed here are examples of various theme-specific tools created by public health organizations for use by other actors.

Built environment

- BC Centre for Disease Control. (2018). *Healthy Built Environment Linkages Toolkit: making the links between design, planning and health, Version 2.0*. [http://www.bccdc.ca/pop-public-health/Documents/HBE linkages toolkit 2018-compressed.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/pop-public-health/Documents/HBE%20linkages%20toolkit%202018-compressed.pdf)
- Caldwell, W. J., Kraehling, P., Kaptur, S., and Huff, J. (2015). *Healthy Rural Communities Tool Kit – A Guide for Rural Municipalities*. University of Guelph. <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/L/2015/ldcp-built-environment-toolkit.pdf>

Transportation

- Hill, T. (2018). *Building Complete and Sustainable Communities: Healthy Policies for Active Transportation*. Hastings Prince Edward Public Health. [https://www.hpepublichealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Healthy Policies for AT Report FINAL Feb2018.pdf?x36525](https://www.hpepublichealth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Healthy%20Policies%20for%20AT%20Report%20FINAL%20Feb2018.pdf?x36525)

Education

- Toronto Public Health. (2022). *Healthy Schools Toolkit*. <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/9786-healthyschools-toolkit-eng-aoda.pdf>

Social development

- Centraide du Grand Montréal, Coalition montréalaise des Tables de quartier; Direction régionale de santé publique du Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux du Centre-Sud-de-l'Île-de-Montréal, CIUSSS de la région de Montréal, Service de la diversité et de l'inclusion sociale de la Ville de Montréal et les arrondissements. (2024). *Cadre de référence : Initiative montréalaise de soutien au développement social local*. [https://santepubliquemontreal.ca/sites/drsp/files/media/document/DRSP Pub 2024 09 26 CadreRef SoutienDevSocialLoc.pdf](https://santepubliquemontreal.ca/sites/drsp/files/media/document/DRSP_Pub_2024_09_26_CadreRef_SoutienDevSocialLoc.pdf) [In French only.]

5 INFORMING DECISION MAKING AND INFLUENCING THE POLITICAL AGENDA

Step 1 – Description of initiatives taken by your organization

- What steps is your organization taking to ensure that political actors have information and analyses that adequately inform decision making related to HPPs?
- More generally, what strategies does your organization use to influence the political agenda in support of HPPs?

Step 2 – Reflection questions

- How successful do you think your organization is at informing policy makers about HPPs?
- What obstacles are you encountering in your efforts to influence the political agenda?
- How might these obstacles be overcome or mitigated?

Step 3 – Resources

To reflect further on potential strategies for mobilizing your organization's knowledge and expertise so as to influence the political agenda, see Section 3.4.5 "Informing Decision Making and Influencing the Political Agenda" on page 42 of the report [*What Can Organizations Do to Enhance Their Capacity to Promote Healthy Public Policies?*](#) This section discusses the relevance of using the knowledge and data produced by public health organizations to encourage the inclusion of HPPs on the political agenda. It explores the following strategies and examples of implementation: producing summaries, mobilizing knowledge to support an approach or policy, communicating strategically, customizing data and using health impact assessment.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Center for Community Health and Development. (n.d.). *Community Tool Box: Chapter 4: Getting Issues on the Public Agenda*. University of Kansas. <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/getting-issues-on-the-public-agenda>
- Minnesota Department of Health. (2024). *Inspiring Partners to Strengthen Public Health in Minnesota: Message Toolkit*. <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/practice/systemtransformation/phmessagetoolkit.html>
- Morestin, F. (2015). *Knowledge Sharing and Public Policies: A Representation of Influence Processes*. National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy. <https://ccnpps-ncchpp.ca/knowledge-sharing-and-public-policies-a-representation-of-influence-processes/>

Customizing data to reach the public and interested parties

- Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. (2024). Using Health Equity Indicators to Guide Community Health Improvement in U.S. Territories and Freely Associated States. Step Four: Use Storytelling and Data to Achieve Health Equity. <https://www.astho.org/4900be/globalassets/report/using-health-equity-indicators-to-guide-community-health-improvement-in-tfas.pdf>
- Center for Community Health and Development. (n.d.). *Community Tool Box: Chapter 3. Section 20. Implementing Photovoice in your Community*. University of Kansas. <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/photovoice/main>
- Community Commons. (n.d.). *Engaging People with Lived Experience Toolkit*. <https://www.communitycommons.org/collections/Engaging-Lived-Experience-Toolkit>

Mobilizing knowledge to support an approach or policy

- Center for Community Health and Development. (n.d.). *Community Tool Box: Chapter 2. Section 3. Healthy Cities/Healthy Communities*. University of Kansas. <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/overview/models-for-community-health-and-development/healthy-cities-healthy-communities/main>

Health impact assessment

- Gauvin, F.-P. (2013). *Developing a Citizen-Participation Strategy for Health Impact Assessment: Practical Guide*. National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy. <https://ccnpps-ncchpp.ca/developing-a-citizen-participation-strategy-for-health-impact-assessment-practical-guide/>
- National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy. (2019). *Health Impact Assessment, step by step [Online course]*. <https://ccnpps-ncchpp.ca/online-course-health-impact-assessment-step-by-step/>
- National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy. (2014). *Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Toolbox – Cost Calculator, Screening Grid, and Scoping Tool*. <https://ccnpps-ncchpp.ca/health-impact-assessment-hia-toolbox-cost-calculator-screening-grid-and-scoping-tool/>
- North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. (2021). *Health Equity Impact Assessment Implementation Guide*. <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/heia-implementation-guide/open>
- St-Pierre, L. (2021). *Impact Assessments in Indigenous Contexts: Promising Avenues for Reflection and Improvement for Health Impact Assessment*. National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy. <https://ccnpps-ncchpp.ca/impact-assessments-in-indigenous-contexts-promising-avenues-for-reflection-and-improvement-for-health-impact-assessment/>
- Worcestershire County Council. (2018). *Worcestershire Equality and Public Health Impact Assessment*. https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-02/proposal_to_introduce_parking_charges_at_worcester_woods_country_park_-_appendix_a.pdf

[Click here](#) to access any of the tool's six documents:

1. Overview of your situation
2. Analysis by dimension: Partnerships
3. Analysis by dimension: Organizational structures and resources
4. Analysis by dimension: Workforce
5. Analysis by dimension: Knowledge development
6. Analysis by dimension: Leadership and governance

A Tool to Reflect on Organizational Capacities for Healthy Public Policies

5. Analysis by dimension: Knowledge development

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