



INDIANA HEALTHY COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

8 KEY COMPONENTS OF BUILDING A QUALITY OF LIFE INITIATIVE

1. UNDERSTAND YOUR COMMUNITY

Creating a community initiative requires first knowing who is a part of your community and what your community is doing. Identify relevant data. How are workplaces and schools contributing to driving the community forward?

- a. Key indicators
 - i. Food environment index
 - ii. Health care costs
 - iii. Primary care physicians per 1000 residents
 - iv. % occupied housing units
 - v. Ratio of owners to renters
 - vi. Transit and house % of income
 - vii. Population (age, gender, race)
 - viii. Educational attainment
 - ix. Complete street policy
 - x. Walk score, bike score and public transit score
 - xi. Violent crime
 - xii. Voter participation
 - xiii. Poverty rate
 - xiv. Unemployment rate
 - xv. Median household income
 - xvi. % arts and culture jobs
 - xvii. Air pollution
 - xviii. Drinking water violations
 - xix. Infant mortality
 - xx. Smoking
 - xxi. Obesity
 - xxii. # of job openings
- b. Community inventory (i.e. how many miles of bike paths, how much green space, etc.)

Best Practice: Relevant data identified and utilized.

2. LEADERSHIP THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY

The key to a successful community initiative is have the support and engagement of leadership throughout the community. School leaders, workplace leaders, Chamber of Commerce, elected officials, public health leaders, hospitals, faith-based organizations, civic groups and top community advocates play crucial roles in this process. It is best to determine each sector's mission to develop a shared vision.

- a. Convener to guide + start the process
 - i. Must know how to bring the right groups and people together and how they can help and where they fit in the community initiative
- b. People to consider:
 - i. School leaders
 - ii. Workplace leaders
 - iii. Chambers of commerce
 - iv. Elected officials
 - v. Public health
 - vi. Hospitals
 - vii. Top community advocates
 - viii. Faith-based organizations/churches
 - ix. Civics groups
- c. Multiple modes of input – invite content from all partners
- d. Consistent meetings to keep things moving forward



Best Practice: Diverse community sectors are engaged, supportive and participating with the development of community initiatives and a collective vision that brings these leaders together and thinking long-term.

3. BLENDING STRATEGIES FOR SHARED VISION

When wellness becomes a strategic vision of the community, that is when environments change and the impact is truly felt. Every key player that is driving the community initiative will have different ideas of what needs to be addressed in the community, but by looking at the shared vision of where the community should be will help self-organizing groups work towards cultivating a healthier environment.

- a. Values, priorities, dreams, aspirations for the community
- b. Collective vision of where everyone thinks the community should be
 - i. What the community needs
- c. Helps to think big picture + long-term
- d. How everyone can all work together using diverse talents and unique skills and resources to reach the vision or long-term goal
- e. Guide for moving forward
- f. Serves as a reminder of where the community needs to go
- g. Encourages action
- h. Common purpose + common language
- i. Tapping into each other's resources: co-collaborate
- j. Tie workplace wellness strategies into community initiatives: AchieveWELL companies
- k. Fit in with existing successful initiatives
- l. Tie together strategies found throughout community
- m. Jointly funded
- n. Economic impact

Best Practice: A community vision is developed based off the common goals and strategies of diverse sectors in the community and it encompasses the long-term goals and aspirations of the community. It serves as a common language for citizens and encourages action. It requires a collective impact lead by the workplaces.

4. INVOLVEMENT BY RESIDENTS

In order to fully execute a community initiative, it must be done with coalitions and partnerships found throughout the community. These people are willing to work towards the shared vision. They understand how their roles complement and support one another in making your community a better place to live, work and play.

- a. Focus on workplace involvement – most citizens in the community are tied to a workplace which has potential to be a great avenue to reach citizens
- b. What role does everyone play? How do they complement and support one another?
- c. Self-organizing groups + coalitions
- d. Volunteers
- e. Public-private partnerships
- f. Citizen Voice – preferences of the citizens
- g. Feel of your community



Best Practice: Citizens are put in roles that best fit their skills and talents and these roles and expectations are openly communicated with them. Self-organizing groups understand that their diverse roles complement and support other groups in working toward their shared vision.

5. POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE

Knowing how your community operates is key in moving community initiatives forward. Understand who has the resources and time to make the needed changes and put plans into action.

- a. Dynamics of your political affairs
- b. Who has the power (time and resources) to get stuff done in the community
- c. Policy and legislature
 - i. Healthy eating
 - ii. Active living/physical activity
 - iii. Tobacco policy
 - iv. Complete streets
- d. Top business leaders involvement
- e. Single political party control?
- f. Age of community dynamic

Best Practice: Powerful and influential community leaders are identified and engaged with improving the community. Healthy policies and zoning laws are implemented and supported in the community.

6. DATA DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

It is one thing to collect data and assess it. It is a completely different model to drive your strategy and make decisions based on that data. Look at relevant data. Execute initiatives and make the changes that should come about from the data collection. Define what meaningful results are and ask yourself, "Who do the results need to be meaningful for?" Identify key outcome points, determine if these points can be controlled by the initiative and then base your decision making on the success or failure of these outcomes. As you evolve, different measuring points should be considered. This is a collective outcome.

- a. Look at relevant data
- b. Set key success factors
- c. Define meaningful results – citizens, community leaders
- d. Utilize different ways to find data/information to assess
- e. Know how you are going to use data
- f. Assess and evaluate community
 - i. Identify what is already working
 - ii. Identify opportunities
 - iii. Identify low-hanging fruits/areas for quick successes
 - iv. Identify long-term/short-term goals
 - v. Identify available resources

Best Practice: Combine the interests of leaders and citizens and community health needs into a robust community initiative. Develop a plan to deliver information and messaging to both your leaders and citizens. An evaluation strategy that measures diverse outcomes of the community initiative, including citizen engagement and satisfaction and the results of which are clearly communicated to community leaders and citizens.



7. ENVIRONMENT (BUILT, SOCIAL AND NATURAL)

The way a community's economic structure is set up and operates plays a crucial role in making the healthier choice the easier choice. Citizens of the community need access to affordable healthy lifestyle choices. Find ways to support the utilization of these choices. Pay attention to the safety and condition of the community. Understand that infrastructure should be functional.

- a. Basic needs
 - i. Cost of living
 - ii. Public safety
 - iii. Health care
 - iv. Meeting spaces
 - 1. Physical activity
 - 2. Nutrition
 - 3. Social
 - v. Arts and culture
 - vi. Food security
 - vii. Transportation
 - 1. Walkability – walk scores
 - 2. Bikability
 - 3. Complete streets
- b. Green spaces and parks
- c. Make healthier choice the easiest choice
 - i. Healthy policies
 - ii. Ongoing support
- d. Celebrate successes
- e. Socially responsible
- f. Formal policies – “how we do things around here”
- iii. Citizen engagement
- iv. Professional development

Best Practice: Top leaders actively participate in community initiative and promote an environment that encourages opportunities to improve health and well-being for all citizens.

Best Practice: The community has identified affordable and accessible lifestyle choices. The structures within the community are evaluated for their condition, structure and safety. Amenities cover a variety of aspects that align with the wants and needs of the citizens.

8. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The importance of developing a plan for communicating your message is critical. Look for ways to brand your community initiative and know the best practices and best methodologies for how to get the word out about your community events. Align the strategy throughout all the sectors in your community. A multi-channel communication strategy is critical to the success of your initiative.

- a. Transparency
- b. Different means of communicating
 - i. Tailoring audiences
- c. Keep the communication strategy similar or align with all sectors
- d. Focus on greater good of the community
 - i. Centralized set of criteria

Best Practice: The community initiative is branded and communications are sent out regularly through a diverse and creative strategy. Formal or informal surveys are conducted to help identify the interests of citizens.