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| **Special Olympics Healthy Community Project Planning Guide** |  |

**Healthy Community Project Planning Guide**

The project planning section of this guide will help you analyze the unmet health needs faced by athletes and others with intellectual disabilities (ID) in your Program or local community and develop strategies, objectives and activities to address the underlying causes. Furthermore, the following information will help you determine key stakeholders, an appropriate budget and a monitoring and evaluation plan to help you build on and report on your success.

We encourage you to make an effort to include athletes in every stage of the planning process. Consider bringing together an “athlete council” to gather input and guide the design of your project. Athletes have keen insight into the health problems they face as well as ways these problems can be addressed. Additionally, getting athlete buy-in early in the project will encourage their participation once the project has begun. The Project Planning Template will to serve as a guide through the planning process.

**Problem analysis** is a technique used to identify the underlying problems and barriers faced by Special Olympics athletes and other people with ID in your community accessing care and reaching their optimal health status.

For example, let’s take the problem analysis of follow-up care after Healthy Athletes. After attending a Special Olympics (SO) Healthy Athletes screening event, many athletes are told they have a health issue that needs follow-up care from a health professional. Globally, 67% of SO athletes receive a referral for follow-up dental care at Special Smiles, 37% of athletes attending Special Olympics-Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes need a new eye-glass prescription, and 27% of athletes fail their hearing test at Healthy Hearing. However, a survey of Healthy Athletes events in 2013 showed that parents and caregivers were given examination results at only 44% of events. Additionally, athletes received a list of care providers at only 35% of events, and athletes were referred to specific care partners at just 24% of events.

When thinking about the issue of poor access to follow-up care among your athletes, you should attempt to identify the root causes of this problem rather than just the symptoms. Many problems are more complex than they might appear on the surface, and an in-depth understanding of the problem and its causes and effects is important in order to have a successful project. The root causes are what you should tackle if you want to create a sustainable, long-term impact on the health of your athletes.

For example, your problem might be that only 10% of your athletes who get referrals from Special Smiles actually receive follow-up care. Why is this the case? Perhaps they don’t know where to go for care. Why not? No one tells them which dentists are willing and know how to treat people with ID. Why not? The Program does not have a provider list or partners who have agreed to see SO athletes. Why not? There are no trained and willing providers in the community. If you want to address this root cause, a possible solution would be to raise awareness of this need, provide training for providers and eventually create a list of dental providers who are willing to treat people with ID.

Here are a few tools that will help you complete a problem analysis:

1) Problem tree analysis (odi.org.uk/publications/5258-problem-tree-analysis)

2) But Why? Technique (ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/analyze/analyze-community-problems-and-solutions/root-causes/main)

There are a number of factors that contribute to challenges with follow-up care among SO athletes that may or may not be present in your Program. Before designing your activities, it is a good idea to learn as much as you can about the problem by talking to athletes, coaches, caregivers, and other stakeholders. Each of these groups can give you valuable insight into your problem. It is important to understand the barriers to care faced by athletes in your community from the perspective of all people who have a stake in the problem and its solution (see stakeholder analysis).

When considering how best to improve follow-up care for your athletes, some barriers that might exist include:

* Referral information not being communicated to the athlete and caregiver
* Lack of means to pay for treatment and/or health insurance
* Poor understanding of the importance of follow-up care by athlete and/or caregiver
* Logistical challenges in seeking care (e.g. transportation, escort for athlete)
* Don’t have a doctor/dentist willing to treat them or don’t know where to go for care

To increase the likelihood that an athlete gets the care he or she needs, Programs can link athletes with providers by developing partnerships with healthcare professionals or universities in order to facilitate the athletes receiving care. For each issue or need you are addressing, it is important to determine the barriers that exist and the partnerships that can be established to address them.

**Stakeholder Analysis** is the process of identifying the individuals or groups that are likely to affect or be affected by a proposed project, in this case Healthy Communities, and sorting them according to their impact on the project and the impact the project will have on them. This information is used to assess how the interests of those stakeholders should be addressed in a project plan and how they should be involved in the planning process. This table provides a template of how you can look at your stakeholders and integrate them into your planning:

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|  | **Stakeholders** (list names of people, orgs that have an interest in the outcome of the project) | **Interests** (list the specific interest in project for each stakeholder) | **Their Impact on Project** (Positive or Negative) | **Importance** (what is priority of project to satisfy stakeholder needs) | **Influence** (the power of the stakeholder over the project outcome) | **Priority** given by project mgt. to each stakeholder |
|  |  |  | + or - | Low, M, High | Low, M, High | (1-4) 1 = high |
| **Primary** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Secondary** |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Based on the priorities determined for each stakeholder, indicate which stakeholder should participate at what stage of the project cycle and in what capacity using the following matrix. Tip: the higher the priority given to the stakeholder, the more they should be involved in the planning process.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Stage in Project Cycle** | **Type of Participation** (of each stakeholder) | | | | |
|  | Inform | Consult | Partnership | Control |
| Identification |  |  |  |  |
| Design |  |  |  |  |
| Implementation |  |  |  |  |
| Reviewing/Monitoring |  |  |  |  |
| Evaluation |  |  |  |  |

**SWOT Analysis** is a strategic method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, (Internal Factors inside your organization and in your control) Opportunities and Threats (External Factors outside your organization and therefore factors you have less control over) that exist for an organization or project. It should ideally be completed prior to setting objectives to determine what objectives would be achievable based on the results of the SWOT Analysis. This will help you align your objectives with your organizational strengths.

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|  | **Positive** | **Negative** |
| **Internal** | Strengths | Weaknesses |
| **External** | Opportunities | Threats |

**Location Determination**

Upon the completion of the analysis, you should determine where you want to focus your Healthy Community. Will it cover all athletes in your Program or do you want to target athletes from specific areas or regions within your Program such as a State or District? An SO Program can apply for Healthy Community recognition if they focus on at least one geographic region/area within their Program.

**Developing Objective and Activities**

Once you have a comprehensive understanding of your problem and its causes, you are ready to start designing your program. The objectives required to be met in order to receive recognition as a Healthy Community are:

* Increase the sustainability of health programming by securing at least 50% of Healthy Athletes event costs annually through local funding or value-in-kind support.
* Increase access to follow up care by ensuring a minimum of 70% of athletes who receive referrals at Healthy Athletes (HA) have a place to go for follow-up care following a HA examination for at least two disciplines per year.
* Improve health status of athletes by offering health and wellness programming outside of Healthy Athletes clinics for athletes involving partners, coaches and/or families as appropriate and ensuring at least 20% of athletes are enrolled in a wellness program per year. (Note: A wellness opportunity includes a minimum of six sessions.)

Programs are encouraged to add additional objectives that meet their specific goals and outcomes of their Healthy Community. The objectives listed above need to be achieved by Programs to be recognized as a Healthy Community. Please refer to the [Healthy Community Criteria in the Guide for Recognition](http://media.specialolympics.org/resources/health/healthy-communities/Healthy-Communities-Overview-Guide.PDF) for a full description of the criteria.

You can now begin selecting activities that support these achieving these objectives and address the earlier identified root causes. Write down a list of activities that need to be accomplished to enable you to achieve your objectives. Be specific and list them in order of what needs to be done and when. When selecting activities, try to focus your efforts so that you can achieve the desired impact. Look for measurable successes that can be expanded and brought to scale later.

**Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting**

You must be able to measure the impact in order to know how successful you were, make improvements in future projects, and satisfy the requirements of the Healthy Communities recognition program. During the planning phase, when you select your outcomes, you should make sure you have a process in place to measure those outcomes. For example, if one of your outcomes is “*Improved knowledge of how to treat people with ID reported among at least 90% of trained health care professionals,”* you should plan to conduct a survey or use another data collection method to determine whether or not knowledge changed among targeted health care professionals. Additionally, you are required to report basic metrics to SOI to show whether or not you are meeting the Healthy Community criteria (see the [Tracking Tool](http://media.specialolympics.org/resources/health/healthy-communities/Healthy-Community-Tracking-FINAL.xlsx) for detailed metrics).

**Budget**

As part of your project planning, we suggest putting together a budget that will reflect the costs of implementing your Healthy Community activities. Using your activities and timeline, develop a budget for costs of the Healthy Community project by year. Developing a budget will also help you go to potential donors and partners with a specific proposal for support.

Through the 14 Healthy Communities pilots, it has been learned that it is critical to have the equivalent of one full time staff person who is coordinating partnerships, events and other aspects of Healthy Communities. Depending on your current staff structure, responsibilities and workload, we suggest factoring this into your budget.

In many cases, partners can offset some of these costs which will allow you to do more with your resources. Try to find partners who are willing to provide what you need at no or low cost to your Program. Partnerships also increase the likelihood that your project will be sustainable and extend beyond the grant period.

**Partnerships**

Partnerships are a critical component to Healthy Communities and to ensure sustainability.

Identify and secure partners by:

* + Surveying potential partners
  + Engaging potential partners (including inviting them to participate in SO Health events)
  + Scheduling initial partner discussions
  + Establishing partnership agreements

Once you have determined your needs, survey potential partners with similar missions. Partners may include government organizations, universities, private clinics, other not-for-profits, or commercial organizations at the local, regional, and national levels. An excellent opportunity to find partners is through Clinical Directors and other health professionals who volunteer at Healthy Athletes. Many are affiliated with universities, clinics, or professional organizations that might be interested in partnering for follow-up care. You might also consider contacts through your Board of Directors or other high level supporters of your Program. As you compile your list of potential partners, keep track of important information, including the organization name, website, mission, point(s) of contact (POCs), and any additional details that will help you prioritize the list and create your engagement strategy.

Once you have developed and prioritized your partner list and received input from others in your Program or region as appropriate, consider the best way to engage potential partners. Finding opportunities to connect with partners through your personal network is always best, but don’t be afraid to make a cold call or send a tailored email or letter to the appropriate contact at that particular partner organization. If possible, try to schedule an in-person meeting at a location convenient to your potential partner early in the discussions. If you cannot visit the partner in person, seek out their LinkedIn account or Twitter handle to enhance your virtual relationship. Building rapport early will facilitate communication, understanding, and commitment.

When a potential partner expresses interest in collaborating on your Healthy Communities project, move quickly and schedule initial partner discussions. The goals of the meeting should be to discuss shared goals and objectives, roles and responsibilities, and the overall vision for the partnership being established. During this meeting, 1) share information about the program history, impact, and needs, focusing on shared interests and using stories to convey a sense of urgency; 2) discuss potential scenarios for collaboration, including the scope, timing, and location; and 3) decide on initial plans, identify next steps, and establish lines of communication for future discussions.