

Taking Action Protocol

Introduction

The primary goal of Project HOPE is to promote health and well-being for children prenatal to age five and their families. Your team has selected communities that will target state and/or tribal actions, including the use of policies, programs, and monitoring to increase access to opportunities that help to meet this goal.

This work within your selected communities is designed to increase your understanding of the root causes of poor outcomes and disparities, and provide insights about how targeting can address opportunities and challenges. It is expected that state and tribal policies, programs, and/or services will be targeted in communities to address the needs of specific children and their families based on the understanding gained in collecting and reviewing quantitative and qualitative data with the cross-systems team.

Through collecting quantitative and qualitative data, your cross-systems team has begun to understand:

- Communities' population of young children and families.
- Inequities and adversities they face.
- Hopes and goals families and communities have for their young children.
- Their experiences with key policies, programs and services.

This protocol provides a framework to consider when involving the cross-systems team and communities in determining specific actions that could be taken by state and/or tribal leaders to modify policies, practices, programs, and services to increase access to opportunities for targeted populations that will increase child well-being.

Step 1. Present the Data

1. **Prepare data for presentation** that includes key quotes and themes from the visits and numeric data collected. Your cross-systems team may continue to add specific data about the reach and risk of their specific programs intended to benefit communities, young children, and families. This is also an opportunity to provide feedback regarding data availability, quality, or ability to disaggregate.
2. **Create a team to review the data** that includes a diverse set of leaders representing multiple programs, departments, and the diversity of the children and families whom you intend to benefit.
 - Use techniques that ensure everyone participates, for example: listening dyads, small groups, and/or post-it exercises that capture how the group is understanding the data and the “why” of the data point or root causes.
 - Begin to determine what contributes to the data points, e.g. transportation, eligibility requirements, etc. as a way to start identifying what could be the action levers for change that may contribute to the reduction or remediation of the inequity.

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Step 2. Identify Actions to Address Opportunities and Challenges

Brainstorm the types of actions that could be made to policies, practices, programs, and services that would remediate or reduce the challenges described through the data.

Examples of opportunities, challenges, or levers for increasing access include but are not limited to the following circumstances:

- Universal services through state or federal funding are not available in the community or do not serve a target population.
- Key services and opportunities exist, but families do not access them.
- Services are accessed, but families continue to have poor outcomes, e.g., hunger, unemployment, lack of stable housing, and/or inadequate child care.
- State, regional, or local processes, such as enrollment, engagement or certification processes, create barriers for providers, families, and/or children connecting to essential programs and services intended to benefit the community, families, and children.

DEFINITION OF ACCESS

Access includes the following elements: *awareness, affordability, accessibility, availability, accommodation, and acceptability.*

Note: Support the cross-systems team members to recognize that they cannot individually impact inequities. In fact, equity is a condition born out of a long history of how policy, programs, services, and practices were structured and instituted. **The intention of this overall activity is to target three to five institutional or structural policies, practices, programs or services** to increase access and improve child well-being.

Step 3. Identify Which Agencies or Departments Can Take Action

Equity requires multiple interventions at multiple levels. After the team reviews the data, the next step is to determine which leaders have policies, programs, or services within their responsibility, authority, or influence that can be modified in order to increase access to the opportunities and remediate one or more of the challenges identified. For each challenge or opportunity identify:

1. Who has **responsibility, authority, or influence to modify a policy, practice, program, or service** which may address the challenge by increasing access.
2. Discuss if there are **programs or services that could work together** differently to increase both their effectiveness and address a shared opportunity, challenge, and/or purpose of multiple leaders. This work is about activating the early childhood system. Single program solutions will not reduce inequities.
3. Determine which of the following holds the level of change:
 - **State level**, e.g., state or tribal agencies or departments.
 - **Regional level**, e.g., county government, regional offices, hubs, or other entities.
 - **Local level**, e.g., city or town government, community-based organizations, or philanthropy.
4. Determine if the recommended **actions are for the child or adult**. The goal is to benefit young children prenatal to age five; however, services to parents and caregivers directly benefit and promote the well-being of young children.

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Step 4. Confirm or Share With Cross-Systems Team

Work with the cross-systems team to refine conclusions reached at earlier steps. The team should identify current projects, plans, or strategic directions that link to the opportunities and challenges. Consider which leaders who could help address opportunities and challenges may be missing. Project HOPE is designed to advance strategies key to the success of state leaders and to improving equity.

Actions that could be taken over the next 18-24 months include but are not limited to:

Interpretation of the Policy

- Clarification of current policy, rules, and regulations.
- Enforcement of existing policy to ensure consistent implementation across the state.
- Review of current investments.

Modifications of Policy

- Amendment to existing policy, rules, and regulations.
- Development of new rules and regulations.
- Modifications to existing resources in order to meet objectives.

Modifications of Practices

- Changes to where and how services are delivered.
- Changes to how services are monitored.
- Quality improvements of services.

Workforce/Leadership (public/private)

- Capacity, e.g., skills, knowledge, abilities and/or number of actual staff.
- Training and professional development.
- Bias, Cultural and Linguistic competencies.
- Diversity of workforce and leadership.

The Goal for the Work With the Cross-Systems Team

The goal of this work with the cross-systems team is to generate:

- 1. Summary of the data where opportunities and challenges** are identified;
- 2. Draft list of potential actions:** three to five institutional or structural policies, practices, programs or services that could address opportunities and challenges for targeted populations in the selected communities over the next 18-24 months, and
- 3. A plan to determine partners** for advancing specific actions.

These three pieces of information will be shared with the communities as you engage in a feedback loop.

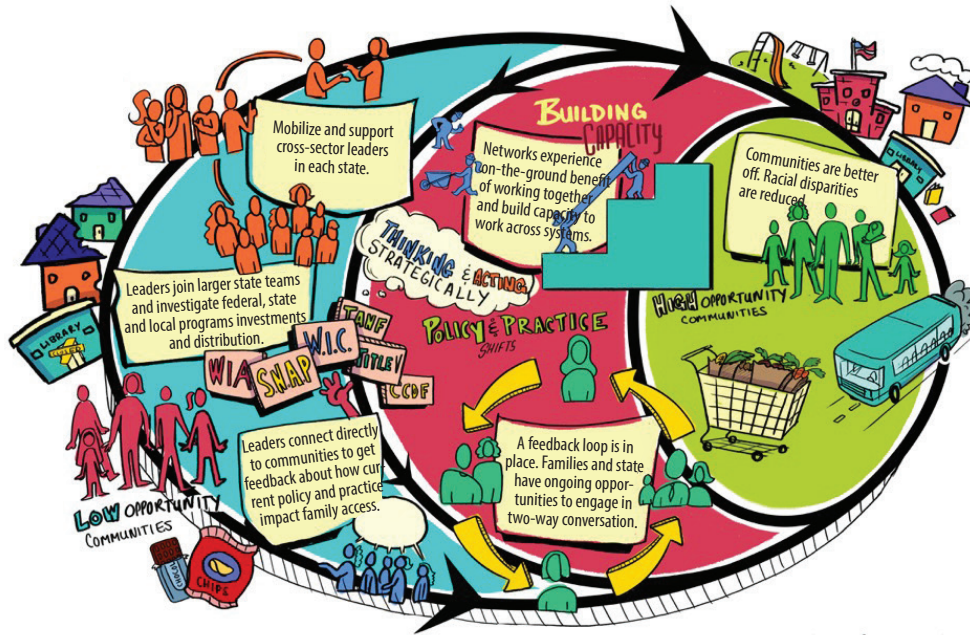
New or Modification of Legislation (statutes)

Step 5. Return to the Community: Check the Analysis

Return to the communities where the initial beneficiary voice visits were conducted. Discuss what was heard and seen at the initial visit and share the list of opportunities and challenges, the potential role of the state and/or tribe, draft actions that could be taken and their timelines, and the key partnerships that would be needed.

- Ask the community to refine the opportunities and challenges you heard and saw. Discussions may provide clarification and add nuance.
- Have the community generate recommendations on how to shape, prioritize, and move selected actions forward and share new ideas that they have.

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ILLUSTRATED BY THOMAS FRANKLIN OF ILLUSTRATING PROGRESS