**ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN**

Purpose:

The purpose of conducting an Environmental Scan is to gather information about what the Middlesex-London Health Unit and the community is doing to address the identified health issue. Additional information can be found in the *Situational Assessment* stage guide.

Instructions:

* Choose the most appropriate method(s) to collect the information about existing community programs and services (e.g. paper/online scan, telephone interview, in-person interview, survey). See the **New Data Collection** tool for more information on focusing the purpose, questions and methods for data collection.
* For an Environmental Scan, interviews are preferable as they allow you to ask prompting questions and usually have a better uptake. For surveys, the questions below can be used, but will need to be altered according to the specific method.
* Page 2 includes a list of “Possible Example Questions” to consider adding to the Environmental Scan.
* If you decide to contact community partners and organizations through telephone or in-person interviews, the following are a few tips to consider for gathering the data:
  + Before contacting the organization, identify the key contact person. Check internally first for the contact information of a community partner. A relationship with the MLHU may already exist and may facilitate information gathering. This information may also be available online. This person will be someone who is able to answer the outlined questions. For example, do you need to speak to the organization’s owner, executive director, program director, manager, or front-line staff?
  + Document the name and contact information of the key contact person in case follow-up is needed.
  + Develop a script for conducting the telephone or in-person interviews. It may be possible that the staff/organization is not as familiar with the terms target and/or priority populations. Define these terms before asking questions to ensure the terms are not being interpreted differently than intended. This should include the following types of information which are standard to an informed consent process:
    - The purpose of the Environmental Scan.
    - The types of questions asked.
    - The anticipated length of the interview.
    - That participation is voluntary.
    - How information will be stored.
    - Who will be analyzing and summarizing the information.
    - How results will be shared.
  + It may be helpful to pilot test the interview guide to have a sense of how long it will take and to alter unclear questions.
  + Be sure to comply with the Research & Evaluation Policy (2-040) if primary data collection is involved in your Environmental Scan

**Possible Example Questions:**

**Legend:**

* = Health Equity-based questions

**Populations served:**

* Who is the target for the program/service?
* What risk factors does your target population experience?
* Does the population being served experience socially produced inequities?

**Program/service delivery:**

* Who provides the services or care?
* Please describe the care provider’s credentials (healthcare provider (e.g. NP, PHN, ND, MD, OT, PT, etc.)).
* Does the provider have any specialized training?
* What languages is this program/service delivered?
* Are interpretation services available?
* Who is eligible to receive the program/service?
* Is referral only through a health care provider?
* Can individuals call to make an appointment?
* When is the service offered? (E.g. prenatal clients, first trimester, second trimester, third trimester, or across all trimesters?)
* Do you use a screening tool to make an assessment? If so, which ones?
* Is client input gathered in the program/service?

**Are there strengths and/or opportunities in the program/service? If so,**

* What are the strengths of the organization’s program/service?
* How does your program/service contribute to addressing the public health issue?
* Are there opportunities to leverage existing community resources to address the public health issue?
* What external opportunities help to facilitate the program’s activities?

**Are there weaknesses and/or threats (barriers) in the program/service? If so,**

* What are the weaknesses of the program your organization offers?
* What are the gaps in your current program/service?
* Are the programs reaching your target populations (and/or priority populations)?
* Who is not being reached through the programs/services? Why?
* Are there health needs of the target populations and/or priority populations not being met within the existing program/service?
* Does the program or service have a waiting list? If so, what is the wait time?
* Are their fees to participate in the program? If so, what are they?
* What external threats or barriers hinder the program’s activities? (e.g. potential changes in funding parameters, political support, etc.)
* What threats or barriers hinder the community’s response to address the health issue?

**Understanding the Public Health Issue/Need:**

* What health issues might be experienced by clients who access your program/service?
* What is your organization’s perspective on the health issue?
* What are the priority issues for your organization at this time?
* What gaps in services and supports exist within the community that affect addressing the public health need?
* Are there overlaps in existing services and supports offered in the community?

Additional questions to help identify the effectiveness of programs/services (*Identify Effective Strategies* stage).

* Why is the program/service being offered the way it currently is?
* What sources of evidence were used?
* Would you be willing to share those sources of evidence with us? (peer reviewed literature, grey literature, etc.)
* Has the program/service been evaluated?
* By whom? When? Are you able to share a copy of the evaluation report with us?

Table 1. Environmental Scan outline:

Instructions: The table can be used to organize the answers to questions asked when reaching out to organizations. Use the most applicable questions to the public health issue, as the current ones may not be appropriate.

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|  | Project Name: *(insert project name)*  Date:  Lead Data Collector: *(insert those involved in the process)*  PURPOSE: *(Why are you collecting this information?)* | | | | | | | | |
| Programs & Services | | **Organization / Program Information:** | **What services do you provide?** | **How is the program delivered?** | **Where is the program delivered?** | **Is there a cost to participate in the program?** | **Who is the target population for the program?** | **Are you reaching the program’s priority populations?** | **Are there perceived gaps in the program and services that your organization offers?** |
| Organization Name:  Program Name:  Primary Contact Person for the program:  Phone Number(s):  Email:  Mailing Address:  Street Address (if different):  Intersection:  Website:  Hours: | **Examples of Types of Support:**   * Education/Knowledge * Skill building * Advocacy * Screening, Assessment * Referral * Direct Client Counselling [Insert relevant categories] * What topics are covered in the education/knowledge or skill building classes? | **Examples:**   * In-person one-on-one * In-person in a group * Telephone * Online   other | **Example Prompts:**  Are there various locations where the program is offered?   * Family Health Centre * Hospital * Community facility * Client’s home | **Example Prompts:**  What are the fees?   * free to all clients * fee geared to income * fee for service for all clients | **Example Prompts:**   * Who are you trying to reach with your programs/services? * Who are you serving? | **Example Prompts:**   * What is helping to reach your target populations and/or priority populations? * What challenges do you experience in reaching your target populations and/or priority populations? | **Example Prompts:**   * Are there unmet health needs of your target populations and/or priority populations that are not feasible to meet within your existing program? |
| Program Name | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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