

Acknowledgments

The COMPASS initiative utilizes the National Association of County and City Health Officials' (NACCHO) Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) planning model as the framework for the development of tools and processes. Through the COMPASS initiative, county health departments and the communities they serve will have access to data via the Community Health Assessment Resource Tool Set (CHARTS), web-based training for skills enhancement, reference materials for community health assessment including field guides and web-based templates and tools, marketing and public information materials for raising awareness of the benefits and impact of assessment, performance benchmarks and quality improvement standards for county health departments, and quantitative and qualitative evaluation reports on processes and outcomes.

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Comprehensive Assessment, Strategic Success

“Communities Navigating to Healthier Futures”

The *Florida MAPP Field Guide* is a compendium of resources for community health assessment and health improvement planning. It features reference material, descriptive how-to steps, tools, tips and other resources to make it a comprehensive yet practical implementation guide.

Comprehensive community health assessment is the foundation for improving and promoting healthier Florida communities. Community health assessment practice is the process of systematically collecting, analyzing and using information to educate and mobilize communities, develop priorities, gather resources, and plan actions to impact the public’s health. Assessment is one of the three core functions of public health agencies as identified by a 1988 landmark report of the Institute of Medicine.

Introduction

The mission of COMPASS, the Florida Department of Health’s community health improvement planning initiative, is to enhance the capabilities of local public health systems to conduct community health assessments and health improvement planning processes and apply the results for improved health outcomes. COMPASS builds capacity and infrastructure to support and assist county health departments and their community partners in their community health assessment efforts through:

- Formulation of policy for systematic performance of comprehensive community health assessments,
- Establishment of performance measures for community health assessment,
- Development and access to Florida’s web-based data system, Community Health Assessment Resource Tool Set (CHARTS),
- Public health workforce development through multi-modal training opportunities, technical assistance, evidence-based evaluation and continuous improvement of the statewide initiative as well as the enhancement of local processes.

COMPASS assists communities as they navigate through the community health assessment process by providing resources, tools and technical assistance. COMPASS utilizes the National Association of County and City Health Officials’ (NACCHO) Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) strategic planning model as the framework for development of tools and processes. Through COMPASS, county health departments and the communities they serve have access to health data via CHARTS.

Communities Drive the Process

Community ownership is a fundamental component of community health assessment and health improvement planning. Because the community's strengths, needs, and desires drive the process, COMPASS provides the tools for creating a truly community-driven initiative. Community participation leads to collective thinking and, ultimately, results in effective, sustainable solutions to complex problems. Broad community participation is essential because a wide range of organizations and individuals contribute to the public's health. COMPASS promotes the use of the MAPP process to bring together diverse interests to collaboratively determine the most effective way to impact community health.

What is MAPP?

Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) is a strategic approach to community health improvement. This tool helps communities improve health and quality of life through community-wide strategic planning. Using MAPP, communities seek to achieve optimal health by identifying and using their resources wisely, taking into account their unique circumstances and needs, and forming effective partnerships for strategic action.

The MAPP tool was developed by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), in cooperation with the Public Health Practice Program Office, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A work group comprised of local health officials, CDC representatives, community representatives and academicians developed MAPP between 1997 and 2000.

The following seven principles are integral to the successful implementation of MAPP:

Systems thinking — to promote an appreciation for the dynamic interrelationship of all components of the local health system required to develop a vision of a healthy community.

Dialogue — to ensure respect for diverse voices and perspectives during the collaborative process.

Shared vision — to form the foundation for building a healthy future.

Data — to provide factual information during each step of the process.

Partnerships and collaboration — to optimize performance through shared resources and responsibility.

Strategic thinking — to foster a proactive response to the issues and opportunities facing the system.

Celebration of successes — to ensure that contributions are recognized and to sustain excitement for the process.

Benefits of MAPP

Listed below are just some of the benefits to be derived from the MAPP process.

- **Create a healthier community and a better quality of life.** The ultimate goal of MAPP is optimal community health — a community where residents are healthy, safe, and have a high quality of life. Here, a "healthy community" goes beyond physical health alone. According to the World Health Organization, "Health is a dynamic state of complete physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." The Institute of Medicine echoes this definition and notes that, "health is...a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources as well as physical capabilities."

- **Increase the visibility of public health within the community.** By implementing a participatory and highly publicized process, increased awareness and knowledge of public health issues and greater appreciation for the local health system as a whole may be achieved.
- **Anticipate and manage change.** Community strategic planning better prepares local health systems to anticipate, manage, and respond to changes in the environment.
- **Create a stronger public health infrastructure.** The diverse network of partners within the local health system is strengthened through the implementation of MAPP. This leads to better coordination of services and resources, a higher appreciation and awareness among partners, and less duplication of services.
- **Engage the community and create community ownership for public health issues.** Through participation in the MAPP process, community residents may gain a better awareness of the area in which they live and their own potential for improving their quality of life. Community-driven processes also lead to collective thinking and a sense of community ownership in initiatives, and, ultimately, may produce more innovative, effective, and sustainable solutions to complex problems. Community participation in the MAPP process may augment community involvement in other initiatives and / or have long-lasting effects on creating a stronger community spirit.

The Elements of MAPP

The MAPP tool was designed to include the following key elements.

1) MAPP emphasizes a community-driven and community-owned approach — Because the community's strengths, needs and desires drive the process, MAPP provides the framework for creating a truly community-driven initiative. This creates stronger connections throughout the community and provides access to the collective wisdom necessary for addressing community concerns.

2) MAPP builds on previous experiences and lessons learned — Information from previous planning efforts and established assessment tools was used in developing MAPP. Most notably, MAPP builds on the Assessment Protocol for Excellence in Public Health (APEXPH). Released in 1991, APEXPH has guided hundreds of local health departments through internal organizational capacity assessments and collaborative community health assessment processes. While building on the familiar concepts of APEXPH, MAPP is more progressive in a variety of ways:

APEX PH

- Builds local health leadership
- Assesses local health capacity for delivering public health services
- Provides operational planning
- Focuses on health status
- Develops plans to address needs

MAPP

- Builds local health leadership, but also promotes community responsibility for the health of the public
- Assesses capacity of entire local health system
- Provides opportunity for strategic planning
- Focuses on health status, community perceptions, forces of change and local health system capacities
- Strategically matches needs, resources, ideas and actions

3) MAPP uses traditional strategic planning concepts within its model — Strategic planning assists communities in more effectively securing resources, matching needs with assets, responding to external circumstances, anticipating and managing change, and establishing a long-range direction for the community. The MAPP model includes basic strategic planning concepts, such as visioning, an environmental scan, the identification of strategic issues, and the formulation of strategies.

4) MAPP focuses on the creation and strengthening of the local health system — Local health systems are the human, informational, financial and organizational resources, including public, private and voluntary organizations and individuals that contribute to the public's health. This focus is important because the public's health depends on the interaction of many factors; thus, the health of a community is a shared responsibility of many entities and organizations in the community. The MAPP process brings the diverse interests together to collaboratively determine the most effective way to conduct public health activities.

5) MAPP creates health leadership opportunities — While MAPP focuses on the local health system, it is anticipated that leadership roles in initiating MAPP could come from any interested entity - public or private - in the community. Thus, MAPP will help to create a greater recognition of the importance of the health system and the potential to impact health of the community.

6) MAPP uses the Essential Public Health Services to define public health activities — The Essential Public Health Services and other public health practice concepts have been incorporated into MAPP, providing much-needed links with other public health initiatives. The Essential Public Health Services are a list of ten public health activities that should be undertaken in all jurisdictions.

The use of the Essential Services framework and the focus on the local health system provides a crucial link with the National Public Health Performance Standards Program (NPHSP), being developed by CDC, NACCHO, and other national public health organizations. The local-level instrument of the NPHSP is an integral part of MAPP's Local Health System Assessment.

7) MAPP brings four assessments together to drive the development of a community strategic plan — Four unique and comprehensive assessments gather information to drive the identification of strategic issues.

- **The Community Themes and Strengths Assessment** identifies themes that interest and engage the community, perceptions about quality of life, and community assets.
- **The Local Health System Assessment** measures the capacity of the local health system to conduct essential public health services.
- **The Community Health Status Assessment** analyzes data about health status, quality of life and risk factors in the community.
- **The Forces of Change Assessment** identifies forces that are occurring or will occur that will affect the community or the local health system.

How MAPP Works

The graphic of the MAPP model illustrates the phases of MAPP process, shown in the center. The four MAPP assessments -the key content areas that drive the process - are shown in the outer circle..

To initiate the MAPP process, lead organizations in the community begin by organizing themselves and preparing to implement MAPP (**Organize for Success/Partnership Development**). Community-wide strategic planning requires a high level of commitment from partners, stakeholders, and the community residents who are recruited to participate.



The second phase of the MAPP process is **Visioning**. A shared vision and common values provide a framework for pursuing long-range community goals. During this phase, the community answers questions such as *“What would we like our community to look like in 10 years?”*

Next, the **four MAPP Assessments** are conducted, providing critical insights into challenges and opportunities throughout the community:

The **Community Themes and Strengths Assessment** provides a deep understanding of the issues residents feel are important by answering the questions *“What is important to our community?”* *“How is quality of life perceived in our community?”* and *“What assets do we have that can be used to improve community health?”*

The **Local Health System Assessment** is a comprehensive assessment of all of the organizations and entities that contribute to the public’s health. The local public health system assessment answers the questions *“What are the activities, competencies, and capacities of our local health system?”* and *“How are the Essential Services being provided to our community?”*

The **Community Health Status Assessment** identifies priority issues related to community health and quality of life. Questions answered during the phase include *“How healthy are our residents?”* and *“What does the health status of our community look like?”*

The **Forces of Change Assessment** focuses on the identification of forces such as legislation, technology, and other issues that affect the context in which the community and its public health system operates. This answers the questions *“What is occurring or might occur that affects the health of our community or the local health system?”* and *“What specific threats or opportunities are generated by these occurrences?”*

Once a list of challenges and opportunities has been generated from each of the four assessments, the next step is to **Identify Strategic Issues**. During this phase, participants identify linkages between the four assessments to determine the most critical issues that must be addressed for the community to achieve its vision. After issues have been identified, participants **Formulate Goals and Strategies** for addressing each issue.

The final phase of MAPP is the **Action Cycle**. During this phase, participants plan, implement, and evaluate. These activities build upon one another in a continuous and interactive manner and ensure continued success.

References

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Engaging the Community

Creating healthy communities and strong local public health systems requires a high level of mutual understanding and collaboration. To accomplish this, communities must find ways of working together that create stronger connections and provide access to the collective wisdom necessary to addressing community concerns.

Successful community-driven processes include:

- Inclusiveness — all of the stakeholders must be genuinely included throughout the process.
- Comprehensiveness — every aspect of the issue must be addressed. Many initiatives fail due to approaches that are too shallow or narrow.
- Local Ownership — linking expertise and "common knowledge" leads to sustainable policies and ensures that each participant has a genuine sense of ownership and responsibility.

To develop a truly community-driven initiative, genuine community involvement is required at every stage of the process. Technical, expert knowledge is not adequate for creating healthy communities and strong public health systems. Technical knowledge does not address the essential questions of what values and vision to pursue and what issues are important for community health. For that, the wisdom that can only be generated through community dialogue is needed.

The following are just a few of the benefits of community engagement in MAPP:

- Connecting and communicating with community members creates a truly community-driven process.
- Ongoing community resident commitment and participation builds ownership in the process and its outcomes.
- Community engagement and empowerment through the MAPP process may benefit community involvement in other community initiatives.
- Community-driven processes lead to collaborative thinking and ultimately may produce more innovative, effective, and sustainable solutions to complex problems.
- Community residents and subpopulations may gain a better awareness of themselves, the area in which they live, and their own potential for improving their quality of life.

Principles and Guidelines for Community Engagement

The following core principles and guidelines provide the basis for involving community residents in the MAPP process:

Principles:

- *People should have a say in the decisions that affect their lives.*
- *A public participation process, by definition, belongs to all the stakeholders, including future generations.*

Guidelines:

- *The public participation process must provide participants with the information they need in order to participate in a meaningful way.*

- *The public participation process should address the interests and meet the process needs (time, venue, etc.) of the largest possible number of participants.*
- *The public participation process should seek out and facilitate the involvement of all stakeholders.*
- *The public participation process should communicate to all stakeholders how input affects the decisions made.*

Tips for Community Engagement in MAPP

Dialogue

One of the primary tools recommended for community engagement is dialogue. Dialogue can be defined as the skillful exchange or interaction between people that develops shared understanding as the basis for building trust, fostering a sense of ownership, facilitating genuine agreement, and enabling creative problem solving.

Dialogue is important to the fundamental shift occurring in public health — from a government-driven to a community-driven approach, because:

- Dialogue provides skills for effective communication that lead to better shared understanding between public health departments and the wider communities they serve, including a better appreciation of the issues that community residents feel are important.
- Dialogue cultivates attitudes of openness, empathy and equality that can enrich a broad-based community health improvement process.
- Dialogue facilitates collaboration among the local public health system partners that are responsible for improving the quality of public health services.
- Dialogue develops sensitivity to issues and individual perspectives, thus improving interaction among community members.
- Dialogue promotes a new sense of leadership that enables community residents and organizations to come together to ensure that resources and needs are aligned to promote health.

Effective dialogue requires learning and practicing skills. There are formal training programs for dialogue; however, much can be achieved through skill-building activities at the beginning of the session. Tips for incorporating dialogue practices into your MAPP process include the following:

Prepare the space creatively

Sit in a circle or horseshoe (where people can see one another)

Begin with a "check-in" that allows every participant to contribute a response to a basic question without interruption (e.g., What do you think is the most important issue we face?).

Encourage "reflective listening" by having participants restate the ideas of the previous speaker before making new contributions to the dialogue. This promotes clarity of ideas and validation among participants.

- Use a line of a poem or song that highlights certain principles of communication. For example:
*Do you have the patience to wait till your mud settles and the water is clear?
Can you remain unmoving till the right action arises by itself?*
- Encourage participants to listen for "what is trying to happen." This can encourage a larger, more systemic perspective.

- Summarize by going around the circle and having someone record the main points.
- Close the process respectfully with a one- to two-word "check-out," whereby each person summarizes his/her thoughts about the discussion.
- Have the group state what worked for them in the meeting and what might have been better. This serves to underscore the group's ownership of the process.

Challenges in Engaging the Community in Dialogue and Participation

Below are some of the common challenges communities may need to overcome in order to conduct a truly community-driven process.

It is challenging to reach populations and individuals that traditionally may not have had the opportunity to participate in such a process. The reasons for their lack of participation are rarely as simple as "they have not been invited to the table" or "they are not really being listened to." Make sure invitations to participate are perceived as genuine. Once community members are participating, community organizers should demonstrate that they are truly listening to the discussions. Barriers of **mistrust and cultural differences** should be gradually faced and explored. To the degree that MAPP is successful in engaging **previously disenfranchised** voices, the process will be truly community-driven and the results of the process will be truly community- owned.

The dialogue process may be **time-consuming and resource-consuming**. To overcome this barrier, consider using already existing resources or mechanisms where possible. For example, as part of the Community Themes and Strengths Assessment activities, the MAPP Committee will hold discussions with many community residents and organizations. Instead of always convening separate meetings, consider using time on the agendas of regularly scheduled meetings (e.g., PTA). This helps to gain broad input and requires only limited resources. Conduct a short dialogue at the beginning of the meeting with the expressed purpose of developing a better understanding of diverse perspectives, and then continue with the rest of the agenda.

When considering the time-consuming nature of engaging the community, keep the following in mind:

Sometimes a more effective and efficient use of time is gained when basic issues are clarified and the group has developed a shared understanding. Dialogue can be used strategically to help a group make the best use of its time.

In our increasingly fast-paced lives, it is often difficult to take the time to hold a dialogue and truly listen to each other. It is necessary, therefore, to keep in mind the benefits that ultimately will be gained from taking the time to establish community connections and build a community-driven process.

Negative feelings and disbelief regarding a "community-driven process" may be present. Change can often elicit negative feelings and skepticism. Since these are often the result of apprehension and uncertainty, it is important to allow space for them. Suggestions for dealing with skepticism follow:

The facilitator should acknowledge that some people in the group may have such feelings. Empathy is important for encouraging dialogue.

Some limited (agreed-upon) time may be allotted to explore assumptions behind these feelings; this can occur at the beginning of a meeting or when the feelings surface during the process. Attitudes — such as openness and curiosity — are essential aspects of a dialogue.

Ultimately, negative feelings and disbelief are overcome when a new approach is demonstrated to be successful. Successes and "small wins" should be celebrated and, with patience, the negative attitudes will eventually be transformed into support for the process.

Due to **skepticism**, many community residents may resist becoming engaged in the process and therefore, may not attend community meetings. Encouraging discussion among community residents about the process through informal day-to-day mechanisms may help to overcome this. The MAPP Committee and other participants in the process can play an important role in "spreading the word."

How does the community become TRULY engaged? Engaging the community is not something we do. Rather it is something that happens when our intentions are to:

- build trust in one another,
- become comfortable together,
- learn how to understand each other,
- create working relationships that cut across traditional boundaries, and
- develop a sense of identity with those with whom we are working.

As noted, this process requires not only these intentions, but also skills and tactics above.) The following suggestions also may be useful:

- Be clear about the purposes and goals of the engagement.
- Understand the various aspects of the community to be engaged — its history, economic conditions, demographics, etc., as well as its previous experience with community initiatives.
- Establish relations with existing leadership in the community.
- Be flexible.
- Be prepared to make a long-term commitment.

Community engagement requires far more than merely issuing an invitation to participate. Conveners — including all representatives of the MAPP Committee — must be willing to change their perspectives and to listen to community participants with a positive and responsive attitude. Community residents are likely to carefully observe conveners of the community process to see if positive attitudes and open-mindedness are present. Very often it is the unexpected act or gesture of sincere empathy from an organizational representative that can change a group's dynamic from that of discussion of an initiative to dialogue about the underlying issues. Both community residents and MAPP Committee members will be equally challenged to engage in dialogue and reveal and possibly change their assumptions and opinions.

Conveners of the community process will need to confront the mental barriers that have often impaired their ability to partner with those who "have no expertise," "do not understand the complexity of the issues," "need our resources and our help," or "have been resistant to previous overtures." They will have to search for ways to best engage each particular community, and find their own understanding of the legitimate and vital partnership roles that the community should play throughout the MAPP process. All participants will need to demonstrate patience and a continual willingness to reframe the problems until a shared understanding begins to emerge.

Engaging the Media

An open, public process is essential to broad participation and leads to a truly community-driven process. The media — newspapers, radio, television, newsletters, Internet — are especially useful tools for issuing broad invitations to participate in MAPP activities, keeping the community involved in the process, and sharing information gathered in the assessments. Briefings or press releases can be effective tools for using the media. In addition, interviews with the various community leaders engaged in the MAPP process demonstrate community consensus and broad ownership in the initiative. Open advocacy by such leaders may encourage other community members to become involved in the MAPP process.

To the extent possible, contact with the media about the MAPP process should be coordinated through a lead organization. Messages should be short, to the point and supported by visual information wherever practical. The use of scientific and statistical terminology is not helpful if community participation and input is a goal. Health departments are encouraged to be especially sensitive to the community's need for clear, understandable messages. County health department public information officers are skilled and experienced at working with the media. Involving them in the MAPP process is recommended.

Helpful Hints for Engaging the Media: If possible, solicit the assistance of a media-savvy individual, perhaps a public information officer or someone who works in public relations or the media. Use the media wisely — newspapers offer an excellent medium for showing photos or publishing vital findings, while television may be used to show brief footage of MAPP activities, and radio may be best for communicating simple, brief announcements. Craft your message so that it resonates with community residents and target populations. Messages that include individuals' needs and priorities are the most powerful way to appeal to residents and will most likely be of interest to the media. A well-crafted press release is the simplest way to gain support through the media. Be considerate of media timelines — become familiar with deadlines for the various media and let reporters know about potential stories in advance. Develop feature stories that address issues from a human interest angle. Identify why the information is relevant to the community (e.g., what is the local impact? Why should our community be interested?). Determine why the information is "news" (e.g., Why should the media use this information NOW?). Send each release to all kinds of media, including electronic billboards. Don't call reporters if a press release will suffice. Build relationships with reporters. Ask what kind of information they are interested in and provide it to them. Issue releases on every new program or finding. Even a small mention is worth it, and it will help to identify who is interested in what stories. Never give up. Getting the word out there is worth the frustration of pitching the story. Involve high-profile community leaders or local celebrities in disseminating the message.

Helpful Hints for Interviews: Anticipate the kinds of questions that are likely to be asked. Prepare responses and try to make points that support your position, even if no one asks. Make positive, important points and speak in the active voice. Be prepared to twist negative questions into something more positive. Respond in 20- to 30-second segments that can stand alone. Speak in short, complete, uncomplicated sentences. Use simple words and refrain from using public health jargon. Never speak "off the record." Once reporters know the information, they will seek out a source who will speak "on the record." Expect anything you say — even parts of what you say — to be used. Avoid "No Comment" responses. Say that you will get back to them or find someone else to answer the question. Avoid sarcasm. Comments taken out of context can be very damaging. Be polite to reporters and never lose your temper.

Facilitation in the MAPP Process

Facilitation is an important component of many of the MAPP phases. The facilitator moderates discussions during the visioning sessions as well as the town hall meetings, focus group sessions and other activities outlined in the Community Themes and Strengths Assessment. The facilitator also moderates discussions regarding the results of the data analysis during the Community Health Status Assessment and encourages the free expression of ideas during brainstorming activities in the Forces of Change Assessment.

Facilitators must be effective at drawing participants out, involving everyone in the discussions, and helping the group to reach consensus. Given the importance of such an individual, how does a MAPP Committee identify this person?

Several types of individuals can be tapped to play the role of the facilitator. The advantages and disadvantages of different types of facilitators are outlined below, along with some criteria for selecting an effective facilitator.

What to Consider in Selecting a Facilitator.

Selecting the right facilitator is an important leadership function of the committee overseeing the MAPP process. In identifying and selecting a good facilitator, the MAPP Committee should consider the questions below. The community's resources will also have an impact; many communities may not have the resources to retain a consultant facilitator. In such cases, individuals from neutral organizations within the community or volunteers from neighboring communities could fill this important role.

Questions to consider in identifying a facilitator:

Perceived Neutrality and/or Fairness

- Is this person perceived as being neutral?
- Are there any individuals, organizations, or population groups that may feel uncomfortable with this person acting as facilitator?

Skill level in Facilitation and Managing Large Group Processes

- Is this person effective at managing large group processes?
- Is he/she able to ensure that all participants have a chance to speak?
- Is he/she effective at keeping individuals from dominating the discussion and protecting participants from personal attacks?
- Can he/she get the group to acknowledge and deal effectively with conflict?

Understanding of the MAPP Process

- Does he/she understand and agree with the purposes of the MAPP process? The facilitator needs to be an effective advocate for MAPP as well as being capable of moving the process forward.
- Will he/she organize — or suggest strategies for organizing — information that is generated from sessions?

Where Can a Good Facilitator Be Found?

Facilitators can be identified from many sectors within or outside of the community. The facilitator may or may not be involved in the MAPP process. In some communities, it may make sense to use the chair of the MAPP Committee or another MAPP Committee member as the facilitator. An external facilitator may also be considered. An external facilitator may be a consultant or a volunteer from a neutral organization either within the community or from the outside. United Way chapters may be useful in identifying a facilitator; some chapters even conduct facilitator training. Community colleges and universities are yet another good resource for facilitators. External facilitation can help to minimize internal politics, turf issues, distrust between organizations, and other issues.

Working with the Facilitator

Once a facilitator has been selected, the core support group and MAPP Committee should work closely with the facilitator. Coordination with the facilitator may include the following:

- Ensure he/she understands the goals and objectives of each session or discussion and the results that need to come out of the sessions.
- Agree on what the facilitator will do versus what support staff will do. This is especially important for consultants who serve as facilitators; specifics should be included in a written contract.
- Evaluate how sessions are run to ensure that the facilitator is effective. If issues arise, work them out immediately so that the process is not negatively affected.
- Discuss with the facilitator how participants should be engaged before, during, and after the process. The facilitator should be aware of all aspects of the MAPP process, so that he/she can share important information as it arises during session discussions.
- Work with the facilitator in analyzing and compiling the results of each discussion. The facilitator should play an important role in preparation and follow-up.

The Essential Public Health Services

The Essential Public Health Services are used throughout the MAPP process. The Essential Services framework was developed in 1994 as a method for better identifying and describing the core processes used in public health to promote health and prevent disease. All public health responsibilities (whether conducted by the local public health agency or another organization within the community) can be categorized into one of the services.

The Essential Services were selected because of their:

- broad awareness among the public health community;
- proven usefulness in other public health infrastructure initiatives, such as Healthy People 2010 and the National Public Health Performance Standards Program; and
- relationship of the Essential Services to previous public health frameworks such as the three core functions and the ten organizational practices.

The Essential Public Health Services are as follows:

1. Monitor health status to identify community health problems.
2. Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community.
3. Inform, educate, and empower people about health issues.
4. Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems.
5. Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.
6. Enforce laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety.
7. Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable.
8. Assure a competent public health and personal health care workforce.
9. Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.
10. Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.

Further information about each Essential Service — including a description of the types of activities found in each — can be found in the Local Health System Performance Measurement instrument (used in both MAPP's Local Health System Assessment, as well as the National Public Health Performance Standards Program).