

2019

Early Childhood Systems Building Resource Guide: Sustaining Gains



CHILD CARE

State Capacity Building Center

Early Childhood Systems Building Resource Guide: Sustaining Gains

As states have taken on significant and often transformative efforts to strengthen their approaches to early learning, they also face new challenges: they must sustain effective work that is contributing to their early learning goals. Chapter 3 of the Systems Building Resource Guide discusses several factors that are key to sustaining important work and improvements:

- Sustainability and systems building
- Sustainability planning and implementation
- Sustainability timeline
- People involved, including participants, partners, and consultants
- Policy, legislation, and regulation
- Overcoming challenges
- Cross-sector resources

Sustainability and Systems Building

The federal government has stimulated progress for young children's early learning and development by providing federally funded initiatives. Some of these initiatives only provide one-time funding. Taking on this work without a long-term funding source can raise significant issues for states in terms of sustainability planning and implementation.

At the same time, there is a better understanding of the educational, economic, and scientific bases for early learning and child development, and public understanding of the need for strong early learning services is growing. Early childhood leaders and coalitions are working hard to design and carry out sustainability plans that will help them sustain progress and reach their goals. This guide explains what sustainability planning and implementation is, lays out process steps for getting there, helps you determine core functions to include, discusses considerations for staff and partner involvement, and identifies challenges to execution.

Definition of Sustainability

For the purpose of this guide, sustainability means the continuation and adaptation of early learning services, initiatives, policies, and systems over time in support of specific outcomes and goals. The focus might be on a particular initiative, a program or set of programs, financing, policy, an organization, or a system.

needed to keep the work going and improving. The plan can also be used to share progress with potential funders and partners, and as a guide to support the ongoing management of the work. Sustainability planning may take place within the course of both predictable and unpredictable changes in leadership, budgets, and the policy environment.

Technical Assistance in Systems Building for State Leaders

Technical assistance to support systems building, including strategic planning, is available through the State Capacity Building Center. Technical assistance may be available through other federal technical assistance centers. Please check with your State Systems Specialist for more information.

Sustainability planning. This is the process by which stakeholders and partners create a roadmap for deciding what, why, and how to sustain so that policies, initiatives, and programs are continuously improved, adapted, or discontinued to achieve intended outcomes and goals. The process is similar to strategic planning and, ideally, sustainability planning is included in strategic planning. The resources in Systems Guide 2: Strategic Plans are designed to be useful to the sustainability planning process.

Sustainability planning is about making decisions to change or discontinue efforts so you can allow resources (including time and effort) to be directed toward success. Creating a sustainability plan can increase buy-in and strengthen everyone's understanding of the efforts

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Sustainability implementation. While sustainability planning is key to clarifying common goals and the steps needed to reach those goals, achieving sustainability over time depends on everyone's willingness to work together toward those goals. This means that all parties have to focus on building trusting relationships, developing open communication channels, consistently sharing reliable data, and connecting resources.

Sustainability implementation is the ongoing work connected to the sustainability plan. As noted previously, ideally sustainability planning is part of strategic planning, and in these cases sustainability implementation should be a key part of the implementation of strategic planning. While the process of putting together the plan helps to solidify stakeholder commitment to the work and the work itself, moving into implementation mode requires significant, ongoing time from everyone involved, with continuing check-in and progress reporting, as well as modifications as needed.

Sustainability Planning and Implementation in a Nutshell

This section addresses several key issues, including steps in sustainability planning and integrating core functions.

Steps in Sustainability Planning and Implementation

The seven steps outlined below may be used as a starting point to design a process for sustainability planning and implementation. Your state's process will be unique and should be connected to its early childhood vision and goals. We recommend that sustainability planning be incorporated into strategic planning and implementation.

1. Assemble the sustainability planning team. Consider a balanced team that includes key staff from one or more public early learning agencies, as well as private partners who will work in collaboration to develop the plan.
2. Clarify your vision, mission, and guiding principles and confirm a shared understanding of them as the foundation for sustainability planning.
3. Establish criteria to determine what to continue, modify, or eliminate, and analyze current programs, policies, and systems. Use data to inform this work.
4. Create options based on the vision and analysis, and determine sustainability strategies.
5. Identify the essential collaborations and partnerships needed to support and carry out the sustainability strategies.
6. Develop and follow through on action steps.
7. Monitor and evaluate implementation of the sustainability plan in cooperation with your collaborators and partners, modify as needed, and document and communicate your sustainability successes. In other words, apply the basics of continuous quality improvement in a deliberate manner.

The final sustainability plan should include careful explanation of the goals and purpose of what is being sustained, an evaluation of the current context and criteria that informed decision-making, identification of options considered and selected, engagement with stakeholders, and an ongoing mechanism for reviewing progress on implementation and making plan modifications as needed.

Integrating Core Functions

Several core functions are critical to the success of sustainability planning and successful implementation. These core functions are discussed below.

Communication and stakeholder engagement are key to sustainability planning and implementation. Communication and engagement are critical to a successful sustainability planning process, and to the successful development and execution of a sustainability plan. Stakeholders who have an investment in the work should be an important part of the sustainability planning as well as the implementation process. When stakeholders are not well informed and are not included in the planning process, they may fill the void with misinformation. They may create a situation that is less than productive that could result in duplicative or even contradictory sustainability plans. Thoughtful communication and inclusion of stakeholders throughout the planning and implementation process is essential, particularly if there is any concern about differing views on sustainability goals and methods.

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Effective use of data supports robust sustainability planning and implementation. Data are invaluable in developing and implementing a sustainable plan. First, using data allows a more objective focus on what to continue, modify, or eliminate. These decisions can be informed by analysis of key information about existing programs and policies. Second, to support implementation of the sustainability plan, data showing progress toward the desired results and goals are useful to make the case for sustainability. Third, good data can make it easier to objectively communicate reasons for continuing policy, programs, and systems, and harder for others to dismiss or propose eliminating policy, programs, and systems. Data can and should inform communications and give stakeholders information that they can use to bring others along.

Collecting, analyzing, and using data throughout ongoing policy, program, and systems implementation work helps build sustainability into the ongoing process of day-to-day work. This approach is more efficient than waiting to collect and use information exclusively for sustainability purposes, and is connected to the importance of having regular check-ins to see that the plan and its implementation trajectory are on track.

Leverage existing accountability frameworks. States with strong systems for setting goals and measuring progress, and a disciplined approach to quality improvement, will be able to use these systems as a foundation for sustainability planning and implementation. Approaches such as results-based accountability and implementation science stress the same fundamentals that inform sustainability planning and implementation: setting a clear vision and goals, gathering and using data to understand progress in achieving goals, assuring active steps for continuous quality improvement, engaging with relevant stakeholders to develop a shared understanding and commitment to the work, and a commitment to ongoing communication and information sharing. States are encouraged to use their existing frameworks and approaches to support sustainability planning and implementation.

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The Sustainability Timeline

In an ideal situation, sustainability planning is included in initial strategic plan development and addressed in an ongoing manner throughout implementation. Regardless of the scale or scope of the sustainability effort, if sustaining the work is important, don't wait to tackle it. Planning for sustainability is not something that should be left until right before the plan and implementation are needed, and is not something to approach only when external funding is ending. Sustainability should be planned for from the beginning.

As with any type of planning, it may be difficult to find the time, energy, and discipline to engage in sustainability planning and implementation. Find the time. Protect that time. Be disciplined in thought and action. Help others do the same.

Many aspects of the sustainability plan are based on sound implementation strategies:

- The development and cultivation of buy-in among current participants and supporters
- Engagement in strong, ongoing marketing and communication for whatever you are seeking to sustain, both internally within your organization and externally with the broader community
- Early and continuous use of data to track and demonstrate impact
- Connection to identified goals

If your state is already using an established framework such as implementation science or results-based accountability to guide its efforts, the fundamentals of sustainability planning and implementation may already be integrated into your day-to-day processes.

Having a plan provides stakeholders with a shared sense of direction, clarifies the support needed to continue improving programs and policies, and identifies further planning needed. It can provide timely information and data to support hard decisions, clear goals, and essential stakeholder engagement and buy-in. This can save time in the long run.

Strategies for making time for this work may include allocating dedicated staff time to this process. This could include such activities as monthly or quarterly meetings; setting aside time on a weekly, monthly, or quarterly basis to address sustainability planning and implementation on existing agendas; or establishing a time each year to address staff roles and responsibilities along with strategic planning and organizational workplan development.

Timing and proactive nature of sustainability planning. Sustainability planning can happen at any time, as long as there is sufficient stakeholder engagement and commitment to the process. If the sustainability work is focused on a particular time-limited program or funding stream, it should happen along with the initial planning and implementation of the program. It may be helpful for the planning process to include options for sustaining the program by connecting and aligning it with other ongoing efforts in the early childhood system.

Even if the optimal time has passed, it is still worthwhile to plan for sustainability. Sustainability planning is the best way to be prepared in case things change in the early childhood environment, and to be able to make informed decisions about what should be sustained along with a reasonable plan to achieve the goals. It is never too late to start sustainability planning, although the comprehensive nature of planning may be impacted by a late start.

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Time needed for sustainability planning. Each plan will be unique. The scale and scope of what is being considered may impact the timeline, as may the stakeholder, policy, budget, and leadership environments. Creating the sustainability plan may take anywhere from a few months to more than a year. Once the plan is created, time will be needed to implement the plan and to track, monitor, and update the implementation strategy.

Monitor context, data, actions, and decisions throughout implementation. When necessary, modify the plan to reflect changing circumstances. The plan is a living document. Updates should be made and tracked regularly as the plan is implemented. It is critical to actively monitor how implementation is going and to reflect and modify the plan as needed, based on additional data and changing circumstances, to support the plan goals. There is no set timeframe for these plans to be updated. Like any plan, if it isn't current and accurate, it won't be helpful. Since one of the goals of creating a sustainability plan is to have a roadmap that will inform action and decisions, it is important to regularly use the plan and reflect on whether the strategy is working or needs to be changed.

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The People: Participants, Partners, and Consultants

The make-up of the planning and implementation team is unique to each state and its context. However, there are some key questions that may be helpful in identifying participants. Who are the key partners with knowledge of the work that is under consideration, at both the macro and micro levels? These are likely to be individuals from the public sector as well as early childhood stakeholders throughout your state. Who are the key individuals and organizations of influence, both external and internal? These individuals and organizations are also important to include. Also consider including those who understand the complexity and details of the work, as well as those who can successfully convey information externally.

Have you given thought to the racial, ethnic, and geographic diversity of the team? Have you given thought to the engagement of those who are providing and using the services and the system that is targeted by the work? If the planning or implementation team seems unwieldy in size, consider breaking the group into smaller teams to allow for full engagement of the members.

The list below is intended to stimulate your thinking about participants from various organizations and stakeholders. It is not intended to serve as a checklist or to indicate the appropriate size of the planning team in your state.

Potential Stakeholders	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Business and industry▪ Child advocates▪ Child welfare community▪ Corrections and law enforcement▪ Culturally specific organizations▪ Early childhood professional and provider organizations▪ Early learning advocacy organizations▪ Families or parent organizations▪ Foundations▪ Health and behavioral health programs▪ Higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Local early learning programs across all sectors (child care, Early Head Start and Head Start, preschool, Early Intervention, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Parts B and C)▪ Local government▪ Local school districts and public charter schools▪ Media▪ Policy analysis organizations and think tanks▪ Professional development systems▪ Relevant state agencies or divisions▪ Research institutions▪ United Way organizations

Planning and implementation team members, regardless of their affiliation, should be engaged and committed to sustainability, including the planning and implementation process itself, and be able to honor the time commitment involved. Make the most of the resources your partners have to offer and communicate regularly openly about developments, challenges, and successes during the creation and implementation of the sustainability plan.

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Other considerations for harnessing the people involved in sustainability planning and implementation are as follows:

- **Staffing decisions for leading the planning and implementation process**

Those who are leading the effort should decide whether to bring on an outside consultant to facilitate the planning and implementation process. A benefit to having a neutral facilitator during planning is that it allows for those who will be responsible for implementing the plan to fully participate in the process. Even with a facilitator, creating a process that will result in a comprehensive, well-thought-out plan requires a great deal of time.

Regardless of who is responsible for staffing, all the people involved need to have adequate time to devote to this activity, including supporting facilitation of the planning team and addressing essential communication issues. Likewise, implementation and monitoring of the plan requires meaningful time. The success of planning, implementation, and monitoring will depend, in part, on prioritizing this work and assuring that those involved have sufficient protected time to support the creation and implementation of the plan.

- **Ready partners; ready organizations**

Taking steps to determine the readiness and health of the participating organizations is important. Individuals who participate in planning and implementation typically represent organizations, and organizational readiness to support and engage in the planning process is necessary. The commitment and engagement of individuals—and the organizations that employ them—to the overall goals and strategies of the sustainability plan and its implementation contribute to a successful strategy. Federal technical assistance is available to help stakeholders assess and support readiness.

- **Role of “champions” in propelling sustainability planning and implementation**

Champions can be an effective part of a strategy for both planning and making the case for sustainability. Champions may include business leaders; local and state elected officials; and leaders from communities of faith, foundations, law enforcement, the military, and unions, to name just a few.

Champions often play a critical role in the planning and implementation process. They may uniquely contribute to the sustainability planning and implementation process through political understanding and influence, monetary and leadership resources, access to multiple networks, and recognition within the broader community.

As with all stakeholders involved in sustainability planning and implementation, champions require cultivation, support, and engagement. Champions representing nontraditional early childhood stakeholders may need opportunities to learn about the issues, including the goals and impact of the work, as well as opportunities to create effective messaging from their perspective.

- **Role of advocacy and professional associations in supporting sustainability planning and implementation**

Advocacy and professional associations may be included on a planning team for sustainability. Depending on your state’s context, they may be best situated to convene and lead the sustainability planning or implementation effort. People affiliated with these organizations can often contribute an important voice to planning and executing the sustainability plan. Keeping these groups informed and engaged can be instrumental in getting their support and buy-in for the sustainability plan. They can work with their networks to ensure that they have accurate information about the plan, confirm that it reflects their experiences and commitments, and conduct valuable outreach and marketing of the plan to their constituents.

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- **Role of philanthropy and businesses partners in sustainability planning and implementation**

Foundations and businesses can play a critical role in sustainability planning and implementation. For example, they may convene or finance the planning process, participate in the planning and implementation process, or provide matching or other funds to support sustainability.

In addition to providing financing partnerships and public policy education and advocacy, foundations and businesses may also help sustain planning and implementation through marketing and communication, by cultivating other businesses and foundations to get involved, or by hosting focus groups or other meetings to inform and drive the early childhood agenda.

State Examples of Foundation and Business Involvement in Sustainability

Foundations and businesses have a rich history of involvement

- **North Carolina:** Foundation and business financing is built into North Carolina's local Smart Start partnerships, which are public-private partnerships and are required by state law to provide ongoing, sustaining resources, including a 10 percent match requirement (half in-kind and half cash).
- **Pennsylvania:** Foundations and businesses have participated in the sustainability planning and implementation process in Pennsylvania as public policy advocates during a gubernatorial leadership transition. The work was done through the state's Early Learning Investment Commission appointed by the governor.

Policy, Legislation, and Regulation

Legislation and rulemaking can be used to codify and sustain programs, policies, organizations, and early learning systems. A key strength of legislation and rulemaking is durability, which is one of the reasons to pursue this option as part of sustainability planning and implementation. At the same time, there are potential downsides to the use of legislation and regulation as methods to achieve sustainability. For example, legislation and regulations may limit the ability to modify program design, policy, organization, and the early learning system in the future.

Depending on your state's context, legislation or regulation may not be achievable even when the critical stakeholders are in support of changes that would be beneficial. There are many stakeholders who affect both the process and results of passing legislation and finalizing rulemaking. Carefully considered plans for codification may be affected by other interests and plans, and may lead to different results, for better or worse. As you evaluate this strategy's role in your sustainability plan, it is important to consider the full range of potential positive and negative consequences of a legislative or regulatory approach.

If authorizing legislation or regulation is selected as part of the implementation plan, a thorough approach to drafting is essential. Be certain to determine the most effective strategy for the drafting (for example, breadth versus depth in the legislation and regulations), ensuring that critical issues are not overlooked. Take time to identify the potential consequences from the options selected for a legislative approach.

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Examples of Legislation at the Program, Organizational, and Systems Levels

At the program level

- Florida's voluntary prekindergarten program was established through legislation:
 - [Florida Statutes and Administrative Rules Related to Early Learning](#)
 - [HB 1A – Early Learning](#)
- Nebraska's early childhood education endowment program, Sixpence, was authorized by legislation:
 - [Sixpence Early Learning Fund: Biennial Report to the Legislature: 2012–2013](#)

At the organizational level

The following state early learning agencies were established through legislation to help sustain and grow early learning efforts:

- Connecticut Office of Early Childhood
 - [Substitute for H.B. No. 5562](#)
- Georgia Bright from the Start: Department of Early Care and Learning
 - [2010 Georgia Code: Title 20 – Education, Chapter 1A – Early Care and Learning, Article 1 – General Provisions](#)
- Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care
 - [Session Laws: Acts of 2008: Chapter 215, An Act Relative to Early Education and Care](#)

At the system level

Legislation has been used for quality systems development and sustainability, as indicated by the following examples:

- Washington passed the Early Start Act in 2015, comprehensive legislation based on the state's strategic plan and its Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge work.
 - [HB 1491 – 2015-16. Improving Quality In the Early Care and Education System](#)
 - [The Early Start Act](#)
- The Florida legislature passed a bill that increases quality and accountability in the school-readiness program (state child care subsidy program). The legislation requires the Office of Early Learning to develop rules to implement the new requirements. School-readiness programs must participate in an annual program assessment with a minimum score requirement to contract for the school-readiness program.
 - [Florida Office of Early Learning School Readiness Program Assessment](#)

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Overcoming Challenges

Sustainability planning and implementation is complex, challenging work. Anticipating challenges may help you prepare to move the work forward. Some common challenges during both planning and implementation are noted below.

▪ Disagreement

Stakeholders do not always agree on what should be sustained. This challenge is more common than not. Seek to build commitment to common principles and goals, using data to inform the goals and to track progress towards them. Facilitate a common understanding of whether and how policies and programs support those goals, widely communicating the issues and gaps, introducing options, and building consensus around a specific course of action to build sustainability.

This part of the process may be time-consuming and could benefit from the involvement of a neutral or trusted facilitator to ensure that all stakeholders feel heard and represented. Using data is essential in bringing stakeholders closer together. Key data components to consider are collecting and analyzing baseline data (to understand issues and gaps); establishing shared metrics; and collecting, tracking, and reporting progress to help inform decisions. Finally, part of sustainability success is demonstrating and communicating what is working but also highlighting key issues or gaps, which may help to unify stakeholders.

▪ System-wide sustainability versus policy sustainability

Supporting system-wide sustainability planning and implementation is often beneficial in realizing the state's overall goals for young children, families, and the community. However, it may not always be possible to tackle system-wide sustainability planning. Project, program, initiative, or policy sustainability planning may be more manageable and feasible than tackling the whole system. Stakeholders should come together to determine what will create the greatest benefit for all those involved in terms of the overall goals, and evaluate the short- and long-term impacts.

▪ State climate not conducive to sustaining early childhood systems and policies

There are times when there may not be an appetite for sustaining current programs, policies, systems, or organizations. These attitudes may contradict data that provide objective information about progress, and cause challenges for those who believe it is in the best interest of the state's citizens to continue the work.

In this case, consider the following strategies:

- First, test the assumptions about the external environment and make sure that they are accurate.
- Second, in these circumstances, evaluate the best leadership to convene and facilitate the sustainability planning and implementation process. For example, it may not be appropriate for the state to play a convening or leadership role in developing a sustainability plan under these circumstances. This work may need to be led and managed primarily by non-public-sector stakeholders, such as the Early Learning Council, a foundation or consortium of foundations, a professional association, the United Way, a business consortium, or a child advocacy and policy organization. The messenger matters, and strong leaders will focus on the most effective way to reach their goals, which may involve having others lead.
- Third, determine whether a public engagement and awareness campaign may be needed. If that is the case, external stakeholders may come together to help foster a more conducive climate.

State Example

Florida's prekindergarten program was created after Florida's stakeholders engaged in a public awareness campaign to get voters to approve a constitutional amendment to establish free, voluntary, and universal prekindergarten.

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▪ **Shifting political and financial landscapes**

Governors can change frequently, as do the heads of the relevant state agencies; there can also be ongoing changes in the make-up of state senators and representatives. Within this fluid environment, use your sustainability plan to stay the course through different governors, agency heads, and governance changes. A sustainability plan with meaningful stakeholder commitment and engagement that is well grounded in data and progress measurement can help weather changes in state leadership. Sustainability planning and implementation builds staff and stakeholder commitment as well as knowledge and expertise that goes deeper than individual influencers in the executive and legislative branches. The work to establish a shared vision, goals, and strategies with stakeholders, and to prioritize mutual communication, partnerships, coalition building, and progress measurement is essential within the context of both expected and unanticipated changes in the elected and appointed officials in a state.

▪ **Status quo bias**

Sustainability planning and implementation is not about maintaining the status quo. Those involved in this process can establish a culture of continuous change and improvement. The vision for early childhood should guide the work, and a strong foundation for sustainability planning and implementation is based on that future vision. Next comes the work to analyze current programs, policies, and systems, and use of data and evidence to determine what to continue, modify, or eliminate. Data can be a powerful tool in making decisions more objective. Use a well-balanced group to engage in sustainability planning and implementation.

Continuous quality improvement means being open to adaptation and modification, as well as continuation and discontinuation, of programs and policies. Ongoing use of data and information, in conjunction with the agreed-upon vision and principles and the engagement of stakeholders, will help to continue and deepen progress on behalf of young children and their families and the broader community.

▪ **Perception that sustainability planning and implementation is a threat to the continuation of an individual or organization's work**

First, communicate a deep understanding of the hard work and important accomplishments of all of those involved. Build commitment to a common set of goals and guiding principles that are grounded in the original goals of that work. Use as much data as possible to inform decisions, and work cooperatively with a well-balanced planning team to identify the goals, objectives, and criteria that are used to determine the options for the sustainability plan.

An ongoing commitment to communication and engagement with individuals and organizations is essential. Identifying the right individuals to engage in these relationships is an issue that the sustainability planning team should tackle when considering the differing perspectives that will affect the plan and its execution.

▪ **“Role” limitations of state staff in convening or facilitating the planning and implementation process**

Staff in state agencies may not be the best situated to convene or facilitate the sustainability planning process. State staff should be aware of and respect the limitations of their roles. State staff may need to take a backseat to others in the stakeholder community to enable the creation of a sound sustainability plan and implementation strategy. Strong leaders recognize when they do not have the authority or are not otherwise best situated for these efforts, and will turn to those who can be most effective in convening or facilitating the sustainability planning process and its implementation.

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Cross-Sector Resources

Sustainability and Systems Building

[*For the Long Haul: Maintaining Systems of Care beyond the Federal Investment*](#) (Chris Koyanagi and Darienne Feres-Merchant, Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, 2000)

This paper provides an in-depth description of sustainability strategies used by Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services for Children and Their Families Program sites. It examines the fundamental strategies that were used to sustain systems of care and maintain long-term financial stability beyond the end of the grant. This paper is based on a review of non-federal funds secured by sites, and on conversations with site directors, policymakers, and others concerning the most successful strategies to ensure long-term stability for the sites.

[*Frequently Asked Questions about Sustainability Planning and Implementation*](#) (Early Learning Challenge Technical Assistance Program, 2015)

This resource answers core questions and issues recently identified by state leaders regarding sustainability planning and implementation. It focuses on how early childhood leaders and coalitions designed and implemented plans to sustain progress and achieve goals developed through the Race to the Top–Early Learning Challenge as federal funding was ending. Although each state is unique, and state approaches will vary, many sustainability themes and processes identified in this document are relevant across all states.

[*Sustainability Planning Framework*](#) (Office of Head Start and Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014)

This document was created to provide a sustainability framework that can help Early Head Start–Child Care Partnerships grantees determine potential strategies to sustain their work together over time.

Tools and Guides

[*Beyond Sustainability to Resilience for Community Action Agencies and Other Community Based Organizations*](#) (Julie Jakopic, iLead Strategies, 2012)

iLead Strategies developed this tool to help community-based organizations, specifically community action agencies, understand and assess their capacity in terms of six elements of sustainability: vision and mission, results orientation, strategy, strategic resource development, resilience, and a sustainability plan. It provides an in-depth description of each element and its importance to sustainability and resilience over time. A self-assessment worksheet is provided for each element.

[*Program Sustainability Assessment Tool*](#) (Washington University in St. Louis Center for Public Health Systems Science, 2012)

This sustainability framework and assessment tool was developed at the Center for Public Health Systems Science (CPHSS). The work began in 2003 with Project LEaP, a rigorous process evaluation examining the effects of funding reductions on eight state tobacco-control programs. Recognizing that sustainability is a significant challenge for not only public health, but also social service and clinical care programs, in 2010 CPHSS began work on developing, refining, and disseminating the sustainability framework and assessment tool. The final tool has been reliability tested and can be used by programs in various levels and settings to better understand and plan for their sustainability. The tool walks programs through a four-step process: understanding sustainability, assessing sustainability, reviewing results, and developing an action plan to increase the likelihood of sustainability.

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[*The Road to Sustainability*](#) (National Center for Community Education and the Afterschool Alliance, 2002)

This workbook was designed to help afterschool programs understand and plan for the three major components of sustainability: building collaboration, advocating for support, and finding funding. It describes each component and why it is critical to sustainability, outlines strategies, provides examples and case studies of successful programs, and includes various worksheets to apply the information and plan action steps.

[*A Sustainability Planning Guide for Healthy Communities*](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Healthy Communities Program's Sustainability Planning Guide is a synthesis of science- and practice-based evidence designed to help coalitions, public health professionals, and other community stakeholders develop, implement, and evaluate a successful sustainability plan. The guide describes a 10-step sustainability planning process and outlines six sustainability approaches: policy, systems, and environmental change strategies; coalitions and partnerships; establishing a home for healthy communities work; building coalition members' skills; communication strategies; and social marketing strategies. A module is provided for each approach.

[*Sustainability Planning Template - HHS.gov*](#) (Office of Adolescent Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.)

This template is an easy-to-use document that outlines key steps in sustainability planning and implementation. It helps users identify goals, actions, roles, responsibilities, and timelines.

[*Sustainability Planning Workbook*](#) (Barbara Hanson Langford, Margaret Flynn, and the Finance Project, 2003)

This workbook contains several worksheets and tools to help support and organize the sustainability planning process. It includes a sustainability self-assessment tool, a logic model template for developing and measuring sustainability efforts, and a workplan template. It also contains planning worksheets for key sustainability framework areas, such as financing strategically and leading change with others.

[*Sustainability Rubric: A Tool to Help State Education Agencies Assess Their Current Efforts to Sustain Reform Strategies to Meet Student Achievement Goals and Sustainability Rubric for Local Educational Agencies*](#) (U.S. Department of Education Reform Support Network, 2015)

The sustainability rubrics were developed to help state and local education agencies assess the sustainability of a specific priority reform—a body of work that an agency is undertaking to achieve priority goals for student outcomes. The rubric covers 19 elements of sustainability and what characterizes “inadequate” to “exemplary” for each element.

[*Sustainability Self-Assessment Tool, SLDS Sustainability Planning Guide, and SLDS Sustainability Toolkit*](#) (Statewide Longitudinal Data System Grant Program State Support Team, 2013)

This set of resources was designed to help states as they plan to sustain their state longitudinal data systems (SLDSs). Each resource is built upon a four-part framework for sustainability: stakeholder support, ensuring widespread use, financial support, and return on investment. The self-assessment tool is meant to provide states with a reflective process for identifying areas of strength and areas in need of improvement, as well as short- and long-term goals. The planning guide offers practical suggestions and resources for each step in the process of maintaining a sustainable SLDS. The toolkit offers additional resources and best practices.

[*Sustainability Self-Assessment Workbook and Sustainability Self-Assessment Workbook for Local Educational Agencies*](#) (U.S. Department of Education Reform Support Network, 2015)

These workbooks were designed to support the use of the sustainability rubrics (above). They outline five exercises that will help state and local education agencies conduct an initial self-assessment of the sustainability of their reforms.



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