

Prevent Child Abuse America

200 South Michigan Avenue

17th Floor

Chicago, IL 60604.2404

312.663.3520 tel

312.939.8962 fax

mailbox@preventchildabuse.org

www.preventchildabuse.org

Framework for Healthy Families America State Systems Development



**healthy
families
america**®

Published by



**Prevent Child Abuse
America**

Communication

Vision

All state and local program stakeholders will have current and relevant information to maximize their effectiveness.

Guidelines

- ✘ Establish effective communication strategies to facilitate communication among and between members of the HFA network in the state – consider utilization of a listserv or a website to share information and provide a forum for dialogue.
- ✘ Create opportunities for people to come together and share information.
- ✘ Recognize and celebrate the success of efforts.

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Developed in partnership with the State Leaders
Advisory Committee (SLAC)

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Public Education (Awareness)/Outreach

Vision

**Healthy Families
is well known and
recognized
as an essential
support service
for families in
communities
all over
the state.**

Guidelines

- ✘ Conduct regular outreach and public education efforts.
- ✘ Cultivate and train key spokespersons from a variety of perspectives (program staff, members of the business and faith communities, etc).
- ✘ Develop user-friendly materials (could be cross-over with PR).
- ✘ Take advantage of conference workshop opportunities to educate communities/ organizations about the benefits of home visitation services.

Collaboration

Vision

There are strong and inclusive collaborations at the state level and in local communities.

Guidelines

- ✘ Establish a state level collaboration that includes all key stakeholders.
- ✘ Build consensus around what will promote and support the development of quality community-based programs.
- ✘ Promote and provide leadership around developing local partnerships and collaborations.

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Public Policy/Advocacy

Vision

The statewide system has a strategy to advocate and secure sustainable funding for HFA/home visiting.

Guidelines

- ✘ Establish an organized, broad-based coalition of agencies, organizations, and others to develop and implement strategies to support HFA/home visiting.
- ✘ Designate personnel to implement/lead all legislative and advocacy efforts.
- ✘ Establish a communications system to alert and invite all sites to participate in legislative efforts/activities (could be cross-over with communications).
- ✘ Develop strategies and materials to educate legislators and other key decision-makers about HFA/home visiting on an on-going basis (could be cross-over with PR and public awareness).
- ✘ Develop relationships with key decision-makers
- ✘ Develop a system to collect data on how all sites are funded (state, local, public and private sources).
- ✘ Plan and lead the development of long term sustainable revenue for sites.

Public Relations (PR)/Media

Vision

The statewide system has a strategy for promoting home visiting programs in the state.

Guidelines

- ✘ Establish a coordinated effort between sites and the state system to identify and meet PR needs.
- ✘ Develop and implement a PR plan.
- ✘ Identify and train site staff to work with the media.
- ✘ Develop a variety of PR/marketing materials (could be cross-over with community planning/site development or public education).
- ✘ Establish a process to inform and engage all sites about PR efforts.
- ✘ Identify and train key statewide collaborators to work with media.

Executive Summary

Building capacity and supporting replication of programs that serve families is a complex, yet critically important process that involves multiple activities. Creating a state system helps ensure that programs are providing the highest quality services and adhering to best practice standards. State systems facilitate information sharing and provide communication pathways. They assess model fidelity through the provision of training and technical assistance. And they help foster support for programs at the community and state levels through public awareness and advocacy activities which contribute to long-term sustainability.

State systems are comprised of strong leaders who share a vision and collaborate to work towards a collective goal. State leaders recognize that their work requires a variety of skills and therefore engage individuals to meet the needs of their system. This document provides information on the roles and responsibilities of state leaders with regard to developing state systems.

There is no set formula, nor specific time frame to adhere to in creating a state system. A strategic planning process and available resources typically drive the pace of development. Although the manner in which state systems operate will vary from state to state, there are a number of components that contribute to their effectiveness. The information presented in this document provides promising practices for developing state systems. This framework offers guidelines that states may consider to help support and strengthen HFA or other home visiting programs. It incorporates elements of the Multi-site Credentialing Addendum, as well as the experiences encountered by states across the country including members of the HFA State Leaders Advisory Committee (SLAC) as they have developed and enhanced their own state systems.

This framework was designed to be applicable to states regardless of their level of systems development. States do not need to follow this framework exactly, nor do they need to have every element to achieve success in providing high quality services to children and families. While some of the guidelines pertain directly to HFA (i.e. references to credentialing), the framework is intended to be utilized by states regardless of whether their home visiting programs are HFA-specific or not.

The guidelines outlined in this document are intended to:

- ✘ provide a general overview of some of the primary tasks that have been found to be helpful in developing a state system to enhance the effectiveness of HFA;
- ✘ provide a benchmark for state leaders;
- ✘ ensure PCA America Chapters are connected with HFA in their respective states; and
- ✘ offer strategies to enable states to better utilize existing resources and minimize duplication of efforts.

You might consider using this framework to:

- ✘ set goals or develop/revise your state's strategic plan;
- ✘ self-assess your existing statewide system's performance or developmental stage and identify next steps and needed resources;
- ✘ use as a tool to justify need for a state system;
- ✘ demonstrate to funders how quality is being interpreted and assured; and
- ✘ share with collaborative partners to ensure all services provided to families adhere to standards of quality.

This framework is not intended to be considered a credentialing tool for state systems. It is a tool that states can use to assess their effectiveness in supporting families and develop strategies for enhancing sustainability.

Continuous Quality Improvement/Credentialing

Vision

The statewide system has established criteria for quality assurance and has a system to ensure adherence to these criteria.

The statewide system collects data for program planning and evaluation purposes.

Guidelines

- ✘ Develop a quality assurance plan which includes providing and evaluating technical assistance to sites around data collection, quality assurance, and/or credentialing (could be cross-over with training and technical assistance).
- ✘ Implement a system (manual or electronic) that enables all sites to collect data in a confidential and consistent manner.
- ✘ Designate staff and procure adequate technology to meet the data management needs of the state.
- ✘ Include key stakeholders (program staff, trainers, funders, etc) in the development of outcome measures.
- ✘ Contract with an evaluator(s) to conduct a statewide evaluation.
- ✘ Devise a system that facilitates communication between researchers and practitioners and enables best practices to be incorporated into service delivery.
- ✘ Evaluate the impact of state systems (e.g. training, quality assurance, etc) on outcomes for children and families.

Community Planning/Site Development

Vision

The statewide system provides technical assistance for developing, sustaining and expanding HFA/home visiting.

Guidelines

- ✘ Convene key players in the community.
- ✘ Develop a strategic plan to develop/sustain/grow HFA/home visiting in the state (could be cross-over with Strategic Planning).
- ✘ Develop a presentation to educate communities about the HFA and/or home visiting (could be cross-over with Public Relations).
- ✘ Ensure that new HFA/home visiting program(s) build onto existing collaborations and programs and are connected with other HFA sites in the state and the PCA state chapter or its local affiliates.
- ✘ Ensure that there is adequate funding for new program(s).

Rationale for having an HFA State System

Since the launching of HFA in 1992, a broad range of activities to help strengthen, support and demonstrate the effectiveness of the program have been implemented across the country. As the number of sites has increased, so has the need to develop local and statewide infrastructures to support this growth. State systems have emerged for a variety of reasons and in a number of different ways. For example, some states recognized a need early on to develop their own in-state training capacity and quality assurance systems. Other states have been fortunate to obtain large sums of money for HFA which created the need to quickly put into place the supports necessary to achieve successful outcomes. Regardless of how these activities have occurred, what has emerged is a pattern that seemingly enhances states' abilities to serve families and support programs like HFA. Within the HFA community, these activities are now being referred to as a state system.

What is a State System?

A state system is an infrastructure comprised of representatives from multiple disciplines who work collaboratively to support families through the provision of home visiting services. A state system facilitates the integration of activities such as training, evaluation and quality assurance to help ensure that members of the system keep abreast of emerging issues as they relate to serving families and children.

What are the Benefits of Having a State System?

Having a state system helps states develop the capacity to meet the needs of children and families. States with comprehensive systems are better able to provide HFA training for staff at all sites; facilitate implementation of home visiting programs that meet the critical elements; assist established sites to prepare for credentialing, increase public awareness and advocacy for HFA; identify potential funding streams; implement statewide management information systems to monitor and evaluate services and report outcomes; and facilitate the sharing of information among members and stakeholders.

States with state systems may also experience the following benefits:

- × **Common Mission** – Developing a state system requires all key players to work towards a common purpose or goal. The process brings everyone together and focuses all their efforts.
- × **Create Economies of Scale** – Sites throughout the state can share resources. For example, a state that purchases a data management system like PIMS for its state system will utilize less resources overall than if each site purchased individual (or different) systems. This may also hold true for evaluations. If a state system is working with an evaluator, more sites may be able to participate in the planning process and contribute to the development of a more extensive evaluation than if a single site undertook an evaluation on its own.
- × **Minimize Duplication of Effort** – By creating statewide standards, processes and/or guidelines for staffing issues, training and technical assistance around community planning, site development and quality assurance, the need for each site to develop its own set of standards is decreased.
- × **Establish a Stronger Advocacy Base** – Mobilizing interested parties from all aspects of HFA (sites, State Leaders, trainers, peer reviewers, evaluators, etc) is an effective way to voice concerns and promote the effectiveness of the program to wide audiences. While single sites can certainly make an impact, there is strength in numbers.
- × **Generate Stronger Outcomes** – Members of a state system can decide as a group what data to collect to ensure consistency across the state. Consistent data collected from all sites can contribute to stronger and more generalizable outcomes.
- × **Enhance Opportunities for Training and Technical Assistance** – Developing an in-state training team enables sites to access training more efficiently and cost-effectively. Without having to rely on out-of-state or national trainers, sites could

Training and Technical Assistance

Vision

The statewide system provides HFA/home visiting training and technical assistance for staff from all sites.

Guidelines

- ✘ Establish a system to identify and meet a variety of training (core and wraparound) and technical assistance needs (including quality assurance, fiscal management, data management) for all sites in a timely manner.
- ✘ Ensure that there are enough trained staff to coordinate and/or provide training and technical assistance to all sites.
- ✘ Establish a process to evaluate the quality of the state's training and technical assistance system and to measure projected outcomes.
- ✘ Ensure that funding is secured to enable all sites to have access to necessary training and technical assistance.

Strategic Planning

Vision

The statewide system has a strategy to sustain and/or expand HFA/home visiting in the state.

Guidelines

- ✘ Create a statewide home visiting planning group, advisory committee or task force.

- ✘ Provide leadership in engaging sites in developing a written statewide strategic plan for sustaining and expanding HFA/home visiting in the state (could be cross over with community planning/site development). This plan should include the state mission for home visiting, goals and objectives, strategies and outcomes.

- ✘ Disseminate final plan to all sites.

- ✘ Periodically review and update strategic plan.

- ✘ Ensure there is a fiscally responsible plan for allocations funds once they are secured.

receive training sooner and eliminate having to pay travel expenses. In addition, the in-state trainers could be charged with providing wrap-around trainings and could be a resource for meeting other technical assistance needs such as site development and quality assurance.

- × **Demonstrate Capacity to Serve Families** – States with well-functioning state systems are better able to support families in the state. In addition, they are better positioned to demonstrate the effectiveness of the program and their ability to effectively utilize public and private dollars.
- × **Provide Mechanisms for Sharing Information and Support** – There is a wide range of expertise among members of the HFA network. State systems that have a mechanism for members to share information (via meetings, conferences, site visits, newsletters, conference calls, etc) provide a valuable opportunity to build on one another's strengths. State systems can utilize this expertise to offer mentoring or consultation, ensure quality and help with site development. Regular communication also provides opportunities for state systems to identify and address emerging needs and focus on prevention.
- × **Facilitate Relationship Development/Collaboration** – A state system is better positioned to collaborate with other organizations on the state level. These partnerships may lead to reductions in the duplication of services and opportunities to partner with diverse organizations.
- × **Greater Potential for Public Relations and Marketing Activities** – A state system may be able to support a PR/marketing professional who could promote HFA statewide and decrease the need for sites to conduct their own marketing efforts. Utilizing promotional and marketing vehicles, a state system has them opportunity to bring attention to prevention and the multiple needs of families and children.

What are the Challenges of Creating a State System?

Although there are many benefits to creating and maintaining a state system, there are some challenges that should be considered as well. These may include:

- ✘ the amount of time and work that is required to develop a state system;
- ✘ the difficulty finding resources both human and financial to maintain and develop a state system;
- ✘ political resistance;
- ✘ competing with other programs and/or systems that may have more tenure;
- ✘ the fragility of a state system that operates without a secession plan;
- ✘ the unwillingness for some members of a state system to collaborate with one another;
- ✘ being bigger and more visible can make a system vulnerable to negative media publicity;
- ✘ perception of decreased flexibility/autonomy for sites who may become part of a state system; and
- ✘ funding restrictions – some sites may be limited by their funders which could prevent them from being part of their state's system.

Healthy Families America

Framework for Building a Statewide System

Administration/Governance

Vision

An infrastructure serves as a central administration to provide leadership and administrative support for the comprehensive state system.

Guidelines

- ✘ Create a communication process to link sites with one another and with State Leaders and other members of the network (can be cross-over with communication).
- ✘ Ensure that there is a Primary Contact to serve as a resource and link with the national office.
- ✘ Secure funding to support a comprehensive state system.
- ✘ Identify personnel to oversee management of statewide system.
- ✘ Establish a statewide collaboration to act as a key advisory/shared leadership body.
- ✘ Develop a secession plan and a mechanism for evaluating the leadership/governance structure.
- ✘ Implement a system of accountability between State Leaders, sites and the national office.

Introducing the HFA State Systems Framework

By incorporating elements of the Multi-Site Credential and utilizing information provided by representatives of the State Leader's Network regarding promising practices to best serve families, the HFA State Systems Framework was created. State Leaders provided input regarding the roles that they are playing and could play to help implement a statewide system for HFA.

This framework is intended to provide guidelines to help State Leaders implement and enhance various components of a state system. While not prescriptive, it is intended to offer some direction to State Leaders who will then tailor it to best meet their needs and political environments.

States may have additional elements that they want to incorporate into the framework. It is not expected to be utilized the same way twice. This framework has evolved over time and is intended to be dynamic. State Leaders should challenge themselves to discuss the variety of ways in which to best utilize their existing resources to meet the needs of families in their state.

States do not need to be addressing each element in order to achieve success. Note that there is overlap between elements. This was intentional as all the elements are interconnected and each state's resources will factor into its ability to address each element.

Healthy Families America national staff welcome any suggestions on the framework as well as feedback how states are utilizing this tool.



Who Develops and Implements the State System?

In order for states to take advantage of the benefits of having a state system as well as address the challenges that may arise, a state needs to have a network of leaders who believe in the approach and are willing to share the responsibility for making it happen. Within the HFA network, these individuals are referred to as State Leaders.

The HFA State Leaders Network was formalized in 1998 by using feedback from state representatives who completed the first HFA State Systems survey. Since then, as the network has continued to grow and individual roles have changed, we have tried to ensure that the network best reflects the key players in each state.

To better clarify the roles and responsibilities of State Leaders and to help states make sound decisions on the most appropriate people to fill these roles, definitions for State Leaders and Primary Contacts have been developed. They have been reviewed and agreed upon by representatives from the State Leaders Advisory Committee (SLAC).

Defining the Roles and Responsibilities of State Leaders

The following section provides a description of some overall skills to look for in individuals to fulfill the role of State Leader. This list should help states identify the most appropriate State Leaders for the various roles. Also provided are the responsibilities of a Primary Contact.

An HFA State Leader is someone who:

- x is committed to supporting the growth and development of home visiting programs statewide;**
- x actively participates in a statewide home visiting and/or family support collaborative;**
- x regularly communicates with HFA sites and other State Leaders in the state and/or occasionally with the national office;**
- x is supported by their agency in fulfilling their responsibilities as a State Leader; and**
- x is willing to serve as a resource in his/her area of expertise and provide a reasonable amount of technical assistance and support.**

Developing an effective state system is a complex task requiring individuals with a broad range of skills. It is the expectation that each state will have multiple State Leaders who contribute to the sustainability and growth of the program.

To facilitate the manner in which information is shared between Prevent Child Abuse America and states, the role of Primary Contact has been created.

An HFA Primary Contact is someone who is:

- × supportive of the philosophy of a state system;**
- × knowledgeable about the activities of HFA in his/her state;**
- × willing to serve as a communications point person and liaison between the national office, HFA sites and State Leaders, which may include the occasional dissemination of information;**
- × capable of determining how best to utilize members of the HFA network in her/his state;**
- × enthusiastic about collaborating with other key players in the state; and willing to engage the state Prevent Child Abuse America chapter and involve them in the statewide HFA network and/or invite them to be part of a statewide task force.**

Due to the nature of the role of a Primary Contact, it is expected that each state will have only one person in this role.