

Iowa Health and Human Services Partnership Assessment Tool

Introduction and Purpose

The overall purpose of this tool is to assist users in the reflection of their current partnerships as they relate to health-related topics/issues affecting Iowans. A number of different terms are used to describe a partnership, such as collaboration, alliances, cooperation, and coalition. This tool uses the following simple definition for partnerships: “When two or more people or organizations work together toward a common goal.” Partnership development is a powerful tool for tackling the complexity of health-related topics/issues. Because of this complexity and span across multiple sectors, partnership development is critical for ensuring the biggest impact in addressing health-related topics/issues and the most efficient and effective use of scarce resources.

Partners can participate in addressing health-related topics/issues in a variety of ways. Each partner can have different levels of influence in identifying needs, generating solutions, and planning new initiatives to address the health-related topic/issue. Consider how those partners contribute to the aims of the health-related topic/issue and in what category your partner(s) best fit.

The purpose of this tool is to ensure that you have well-rounded partnerships with the skills and expertise needed to accomplish the planned tasks and goals. Completing this Partnership Assessment Tool will help you to highlight the levels of engagement within your partnerships and give you ideas for how to assess, evaluate, and enhance partnerships.

Before you get started with the tool, create a list of your current partnerships and print pages 3 & 4 for reference as you complete the tool.

Then, complete the following steps. Detailed instructions for each step are on pages 2-9.

- **Step One** (pages 2-4): Complete the online Iowa HHS Partnership Collection Form. Determine in what partnership category (Building Relationships, Common Goal, Supportive Roles, Strategic Implementation) the partner best fits.
- **Step Two** (pages 5-8): Submit the completed Partnership Collection Form to generate your results.
- **Step Three** (page 9): Using the results, reflect on the questions in the Partnership Evaluation. Analyze results and share with others.
- **Step Four** (page 9): After reflecting on current partnerships, consider opportunities for partnership development. Links have been provided under Partnership Resources for your convenience.

How to use this tool: Step-by-step

Step 1: Complete the Iowa HHS Partnership Collection Form

<https://bit.ly/iowaHHSPartnershipForm>

IOWA | Health and Human Services

Partnership Collection Form

Revised June 2025

Name

Enter your name

Organization

Enter the name of your organization

Organizational Subunit

Enter a program/bureau/other subunit (if applicable)

Health-related Topic/Issue:

Type a health-related topic/issue for which you are assessing partnerships

Iowa HHS Program Name

Not applicable

If completing this form is required by an Iowa HHS program, type the program name in this box. Otherwise, leave the box blank.

Date Updated:

Existing Partners

Organization	Partner Sector	Partner Category	Notes
Enter the name of the	Choose the partner sector that best describes the perspective the partner is representing	Use the Partner Categories tables to choose a partner category that best fits this partner.	Enter additional key information about the partner, e.g.,

+ Add Partner

Submit Save

- Enter your name, your organization's name, your program/bureau/other subunit name, the health-related topic/issue for which you are assessing partnerships, and the date. If you are completing the tool as part of your work with a specific Iowa HHS program, type the program name in the "Iowa HHS Program Name" box.
- For each partner, enter the partner's organization, the sector that best describes the type of organization the partner represents, the partner category, and additional key information about the partner such as a name or position title for the primary contact person or the topic or interest served by the organization if not clear from the organization name or sector.

Click on the **+ Add Partner** Add Partner button to add each additional partner.

Partner Sectors include

- Iowa HHS program/staff
- State, Tribal, Local or National Government/Agency
- Business or Employer
- Health Care System, Insurer or Clinician
- Early Learning Center, School, College or University
- Community, Non-Profit or Faith-Based Organization
- Community/Group representing communities that experience health disparities
- Individual or Family
- Legislator/Policymaker
- Media


Choose the one that best describes the perspective the partner is representing.

The following table will help you select the **Partner Category** that best describes your partner:

Partnership Category	Interest	Communication	Activities & Outcomes
Category 1: Building Relationships	Partner has been introduced to the identified health-related topic/issue. Interest level in addressing the health issue may be unknown at this point in relationship.	Communication has been initiated.	No partnership activities have been scheduled or taken place. Possibilities for future meetings may be discussed. Outcomes include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• introductions• presentations• meetings• that introduce common goals and/or the initiative's mission.
Category 2: Common Goal	Partner has shown interest in the health-related topic/issue by response or action.	The partner reciprocates communication, agreeing to discuss partnership development. Discussions include opportunities for activities that can be accomplished together or ways each partner can benefit one another, working toward the health-related topic/issue.	An initiative or common goal is being defined between partners. The partnership is learning about each other's mission and working to identify an activity that will benefit both partners. The partner is willing to work on short-term or easily implemented activities. Outcomes include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• agreed on the goal but working on own initiatives that are likely not coordinated• reporting out information and/or updates to interested partners through various methods, (electronically, on the phone, or in person).

Partnership Category	Interest	Communication	Activities & Outcomes
Category 3: Supportive Roles	Partner has shown ongoing support in addressing the identified health-related topic/issue. A common goal has been defined and the partner provides a supportive role in addressing the health-related topic/issue.	Ongoing communication takes place between partners. Communication may be variable, increasing as projects or activities that support the health-related topic/issue approach and decreasing in periods of inactivity.	This partnership provides ongoing input to support the identified health-related topic/issue and partnership initiative. Outcomes include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing funding or in-kind support for the health-related topic/issue • recruiting and/or connecting new partners • providing and/or distributing information that supports the health-related topic/issue • advocate for funding or for the health-related topic/issue
Category 4: Strategic Implementation	Partner has shown ongoing leadership in addressing the identified health-related topic/ issue. This partner views the partnership initiative as benefiting their organization's vision.	Coordinated, scheduled communication takes place between partners. Routine communication is reciprocated between partners to accomplish activities or goals that meet/address the health-related topic/issue.	This partnership is fundamental in addressing the health-related topic/issue and the initiative's success. The partner actively participates in key actions that lead to system or policy change around the health-related topic/issue. Outcomes include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing leadership (coalition chair/president, health topic expert, program consultant, advisory board) • conducting strategic planning • implementing the project or program • evaluating the project • engaging the community • facilitating discussion for the health-related topic/issue

HINT: Use the save [Save](#) button to save your progress and get a link to finish filling out the form later.

Step 2: Once you have finished entering all of your existing partners into the Partnership Collection Form, click on the Submit  button to generate your results.

Two sets of results will be generated:

1. A list of the partners exactly how you entered them.

Name
Firstname Lastname

Organization
Iowa HHS

Organizational Subunit
5-2-1-0 Program

Health-related Topic/Issue:
Obesity/Nutrition & Physical Activity

Iowa HHS Program Name

Date Updated:
7/1/2023

Existing Partners

Organization	Partner Sector	Partner Category	Notes
Partner 1			
XYZ County PH	State, Tribal, Local or National Government/Agency	Category 1: Building Relationships	LPHA
Partner 2			
United Way	Community, Non-Profit or Faith-Based Organization	Category 2: Common Goal	John Doe
Partner 3			
WIC	IDPH program/staff	Category 2: Common Goal	Jane Doe

2. A link to a Word document [ObesityNutrition & Physical Activity Partnership Assessment - Iowa HHS 5-2-1-0 Program](#) with additional analyses of your entries. What you'll see in the Word document:

- Page 1 summarizes your health-related topic/issue and organization along with your key partners (Categories 3 & 4).

Obesity/Nutrition & Physical Activity

Partnerships for Iowa HHS, 5-2-1-0 Program

7/1/2023


Key Partners

Organization	Partner Sector	Partner Category	Notes
5-2-1-0 State Executive Branch	State, Tribal, Local or National Government/Agency	Category 3: Supportive Roles	Jane Smith
Iowa Department of Education	State, Tribal, Local or National Government/Agency	Category 3: Supportive Roles	
Wellmark Healthy Hometowns	Health Care System, Insurer or Clinician	Category 3: Supportive Roles	Varies
Local COGs	State, Tribal, Local or National Government/Agency	Category 3: Supportive Roles	Varies
Local Boards of Health	State, Tribal, Local or National Government/Agency	Category 3: Supportive Roles	John and Jane Doe
HyVee	Business or Employer	Category 3: Supportive Roles	John Smith
Healthiest State Initiative	Community, Non-Profit or Faith-Based Organization	Category 4: Strategic Implementation	
Iowa Medical Society	Health Care System, Insurer or Clinician	Category 4: Strategic Implementation	Director
ICOG	Community, Non-Profit or Faith-Based Organization	Category 4: Strategic Implementation	Director
United Way of Central Iowa	Community, Non-Profit or Faith-Based Organization	Category 4: Strategic Implementation	Program Lead

- Page 2 shows your partners according to category.

Existing Partners by Category

Category 1: Building Relationships	Category 2: Common Goal	Category 3: Supportive Roles	Category 4: Strategic Implementation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• XYZ County PH	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• United Way• WIC• Well Kids of Central Iowa• Iowa HHS - Strategic Operations• Iowa HHS, Iowa Nutrition Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5-2-1-0 State Executive Branch• Iowa Department of Education• Wellmark Healthy Hometowns• Local COGs• Local Boards of Health• HyVee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Healthiest State Initiative• Iowa Medical Society• ICOG• United Way of Central Iowa
Count = 1	Count = 5	Count = 6	Count = 4



- The final pages show your partners according to sector.

Existing Partners by Sector

Partner Sector

Iowa HHS program/staff

State, Tribal, Local or National Government/Agency

- XYZ County PH, Category 1: Building Relationships, LPHA
- 5-2-1-0 State Executive Branch, Category 3: Supportive Roles, Jane Smith
- Iowa Department of Education, Category 3: Supportive Roles
- Local COGs, Category 3: Supportive Roles, Varies
- Local Boards of Health, Category 3: Supportive Roles, John and Jane Doe

Business or Employer

- HyVee, Category 3: Supportive Roles, John Smith

Health Care System, Insurer or Clinician

- Wellmark Healthy Hometowns, Category 3: Supportive Roles, Varies
- Iowa Medical Society, Category 4: Strategic Implementation, Director

Early Learning Center, School, College or University

Community, Non-Profit or Faith-Based Organization

- United Way, Category 2: Common Goal, John Doe
- Well Kids of Central Iowa, Category 2: Common Goal, John Smith
- Healthiest State Initiative, Category 4: Strategic Implementation
- ICOG, Category 4: Strategic Implementation, Director
- United Way of Central Iowa, Category 4: Strategic Implementation, Program Lead

Individual/Group representing communities that experience health inequities

Individual or Family

Policymaker/Elected Official

Media

Step 3: Partnership Evaluation (also included in the Word document)

An important part of assessing partnerships is evaluating how your partnerships work together to address health-related topics/issues. Below is a list of example questions that can be used to reflect on benefits and barriers within current and past partnerships. Identifying gaps or weaknesses in current partnerships can assist in planning for strategies and partners.

1. Does your partnership assessment show balance? Are there proportionate partnerships in each category and sector?
2. Considering strategies for your health-related topic/issue, are there any potential partnerships that could be valuable that are not listed in any category or sector?
3. Have you included partners representing topics that might not normally be considered for your health issue, e.g., social determinants like housing, economics, transportation, or other cultural, physical or social infrastructure-related topics?
4. Are there specific partnerships that may be more beneficial to the health-related topic/issue if they were in a higher category of partnership/engagement?
5. Are there specific skill sets that would benefit the overall health-related topic/issue if they were in a certain level of partnership (e.g. funding, facilitation, program expertise, public perspective)?
6. Do current partners address disparate populations?
7. How does this partnership assessment compare to previous assessments? Have partnerships changed that reflect a need for new partnerships?
8. What else did you learn from this assessment?

Step 4: How do I Build Partnerships? Resources for Partnership Development:

- [Community Tool Box](#), Center for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas. Practical, step-by-step guidance in community-building skills including creating and maintaining partnerships, increasing participation and membership as well as over 40 other topics related to guiding, supporting and evaluating the work of community and system change.
- [Take Action to Improve Health - Work Together](#): County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program resource that includes key activities and a variety of tools to build and sustain partnerships that reflect community diversity to implement strategies that result in meaningful change. Developed as part of a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute.
- [United Nations Partnership Learning Centre](#): Nine learning modules and seven guided tours exploring the partnership lifecycle from building a culture of collaboration to managing partnerships to maximizing the value of both public and private sector partnerships.