STATE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT (SCA)

April 2020 Version 26.2

Also known as the Agency Capacity Assessment (ACA)

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Related Information:

http://sisep.fpg.unc.edu/

http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/

Suggested Citation

Ward, C., Cusumano, D., Metz, A., Louison, L., Loper, A., & Ihlo, T. (2019). *Agency Capacity Assessment.* Chapel Hill, NC: National Implementation Research Network, State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Based on Fixsen, D.L., Ward, C. S., Duda, M.A., Horner, R. & Blase, K.A. (2015). *State Capacity Assessment (SCA) for Scaling Up Evidence-based Practices (v. 25.2).* Chapel Hill, NC: National Implementation Research Network, State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

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We ask that you let us know how you use these items so we can use your experience and data to improve and expand the assessment. Please respond to Caryn Ward (contact information below). Thank you.

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Table of Contents

Introduction & Purpose

The State Capacity Assessment (SCA) was developed to assess the impact and presence of efforts to build strong foundations needed to adopt, sustain, and scale effective practices so that they lead to positive outcomes. In use, the SCA assesses the extent to which an agency invests in and aligns system components to support use of best practices, which includes support and development of implementation teams within and across all levels of the system. In other health and human services fields, this State Capacity Assessment is referred to as the Agency Capacity Assessment (ACA).

Administration Process & Key Roles

The administration of this tool is conducted by the Facilitator, who introduces the *State Capacity Assessment.* The Facilitator introduces the assessment's purpose, provides an overview of the process and scoring, introduces concepts or big ideas measured, reads each item aloud and provides necessary clarification, and engages the team in the discussion and voting process. Information about key roles is provided in the table below:

Facilitator	An individual who has been trained in the administration process, has experience with the organization, and has a relationship with the respondent. The facilitator is responsible for: • leading discussion and adhering to the administration process and • contextualizing items for respondents or providing examples of the organization's work. The facilitator does not vote.
Note Taker	Key responsibility includes recording ideas shared for action planning and any questions and issues that are raised during administration. The Note Taker does not vote.
Participants	Participants include leaders of the agency and those responsible for overseeing aspects of the implementation infrastructure, as well as other individuals knowledgeable of the implementation supports and infrastructure for key initiatives. Participants vote on each item, discuss differences in scores, and achieve modified consensus.
Observer	Observers are invited with permission of the participants to learn about the process or the activities in the organization. Observers do not vote.

Focus of the SCA-ACA and Scoring

The SCA-ACA is administered with a specific key initiative or innovation in mind. It is important to choose one key initiative or innovation and answer the SCA-ACA questions with that initiative or innovation in mind.

The identified participants complete the assessment by discussing each item and coming to consensus on the final score for each item. The respondents score each item on a three-point scale (i.e., in place (2 points), partially in place (1 point), not in place (0 points), respectively) using a simultaneous and public voting process. This type of voting facilitates participation of all respondents and neutralizes any potential power influences. When asked to vote (e.g. "Ready, set, vote."), participants simultaneously hold up either two fingers to vote "Fully in Place," one finger to vote "Partially in Place," or a closed hand to vote "Not Yet." Alternately, teams can use numbered cards to vote. If the team is unable to arrive at consensus, additional data sources documented in the *Scoring Guide* can be used to prompt thinking and help achieve modified consensus. Modified consensus means that voters in the minority can live with and support the majority decision on an item. If modified consensus cannot be reached, the Facilitator guides the team to identify a later time for further discussion. The majority vote is recorded.

Preparation for the Assessment

The following should be in place prior to administering the *State Capacity Assessment - Agency Capacity Assessment.*

- Facilitator should have knowledge of the concepts measured in the assessment and experience supporting organizations using implementation best practices;

- Leadership and team has agreed to administration and commitment of time (approximately one hour for preparation, two hours for completing the assessment, and one hour for action planning); and

- Materials have been assembled in preparation for administration, including:
  - Blank copies (paper or electronic) of the rubric accessible to all respondents;
  - Data sources (e.g. policies, procedures) to inform the assessment; and
  - If relevant, previously completed administrations, including reports.

Research Basis

The research basis of the State Capacity Assessment - Agency Capacity Assessment is derived from the implementation science research literature and the Active Implementation Frameworks. The Active Implementation Frameworks "help define what needs to be done (Effective Innovations), how to establish what needs to be done, who will do the work (effective implementation), and establish the hospitable environment for the work (enabling contexts) to accomplish the positive outcomes" (Blase, Fixsen et al., 2005). The Active Implementation Frameworks are universal and apply to any attempt to use practices supported by evidence.

Table 1. Description of State Capacity Assessment - Agency Capacity Assessment Scales

Scale	Description
Leadership	Assesses leadership and coordination functions that champion change and on-going improvement across the system, including external stakeholders. These items address advocacy, accountability, and shared decision-making while creating a culture of ongoing learning and improvement.
Infrastructure & Resources	Refers to leadership's commitment to development of an infrastructure that supports effective and sustained implementation of innovations. This includes attention to policies and procedures and allocation of resources to support continuous improvement.
Communication & Engagement	Items examine leadership's communication with and support of collaborative partnerships with stakeholders, including their regional and local agencies. This includes a focus on establishing collegial trust and shared understanding of key initiatives both internally within the agency as well as with external stakeholders.

Next Steps After Administration

The State Capacity Assessment - Agency Capacity Assessment was created to guide organizations as they develop the infrastructure to support use of selected programs or practices. As such, it is recommended that teams engage in the following activities after they complete each administration:

- Review and utilize the summary report with (a) Total score, (b) Scale Scores, and (c) Item Scores to identify areas of strength and need;
- Identify priorities to address within a plan;
- Develop and create an Action Plan that defines immediate and short-term actions focusing on improving the infrastructure activities to support the use of the selected program or practice; and
- If this is a repeated administration, review and update existing plan to continue support for the selected program or practice.

State Capacity Assessment - Agency Capacity Assessment
Fidelity Checklist

Protocol Steps	Step Completed? Y=Yes; N=No N/A= unsure or not applicable		
1. **Skilled Facilitator:** An individual with knowledge of implementation drivers and skill in administering the assessment is identified to facilitate.	Y	N	N/A
2. **Respondents Invited**: Facilitator invites participants, including Implementation Team members, who have a role in developing, monitoring, and improving implementation supports.	Y	N	N/A
3. **Program/Practice Identified:** A well-defined program or practice is identified for the assessment.	Y	N	N/A
4. **Materials Prepared in Advance:** Facilitator ensures that language in the assessment has been contextualized for the agency, copies (paper or electronic) are available for each participant, and ensures that a note taker has been identified and that a room is set up with a laptop, projector, internet connection, and conference phone (video if possible) for any participants joining remotely.	Y	N	N/A
5. **Overview**: Facilitator provides a review of the assessment, its purpose, and instructions for scoring the items.	Y	N	N/A
6. **Consent**: Facilitator obtains informed consent from participants to collect and use their response to understand implementation status and inform action planning.			
7. **Documentation:** Facilitator documents date of the assessment, names and roles of participants, and the intervention being assessed.	Y	N	N/A
8. **Administration & Introduction:** Facilitator introduces each item and asks team to review the scoring rubric. Once respondents are ready, the facilitator calls for the vote.	Y	N	N/A
9. **Consensus**: The team is given time to review, discuss, and come to consensus on the score for each item through a voting process. Facilitator answers questions, contextualizes, and provides clarification as needed for the respondents.	Y	N	N/A
10. **Recording**: The team documents each scoring decision electronically or on the scoring form used to record scores.	Y	N	N/A
11. **Note-taking**: For items where further clarity or information is needed, the Facilitator notes the question in the "Notes" section. A note taker captures the team discussion of each Implementation Driver in the relevant section.	Y	N	N/A
12. **Data Summary**: After the last question has been asked and answered, the Facilitator or Note Taker generates the reports and distributes graphs of total scores.	Y	N	N/A
13. **Review**: While viewing the graphs, Facilitator prompts the team in a discussion of the results to identify strengths and opportunities. If a repeated administration, Facilitator highlights all of the scales that moved in a positive direction and celebrates progress. Facilitator initiates a discussion of updates on achievements, progress, and major milestones or barriers that have occurred since previous administration.	Y	N	N/A
14. **Planning**: If there is time to review the results and action plan, Facilitator engages the team in a prioritization process for identifying key areas for planning and needed actions. If there is not sufficient time for review of results and action planning, the Facilitator ensures that a date and time are set for the Review and Action Planning.	Y	N	N/A
15. **Conclusion**: Facilitator thanks the team for their openness and for sharing in the discussion.	Y	N	N/A

Scoring Form

Agency Name:	Date:
Facilitator:	Key Initiative/Innovation:
Respondents:	

Directions: The participants complete the assessment together by using the *Scoring Rubric* to discuss each item and come to consensus on the final score for each item. If the team of participants is unable to arrive at consensus, additional data sources for each item are documented in the *Scoring Rubric* and should be used to help achieve consensus. Scores are recorded on this *Scoring Form* below and then entered into NIRN-SISEP Data System (www.sisep.org).

Item	Score		
1. Leadership creates a vision for achieving equitable outcomes within the agency's implementation work.	2	1	0
2. Leadership commits to developing or improving their infrastructure to support effective and sustained implementation of key initiatives.	2	1	0
3. Leadership champions the development or improvement of infrastructure to support effective and sustained implementation of key initiatives.	2	1	0
4. Leadership supports the identification and development of "sponsor(s)" or "champion(s)" for identified key initiatives.	2	1	0
5. Leadership visibly promotes the importance of effectively implementing key initiatives.	2	1	0
6. Leadership allocates resources to support the development of staff competency to deliver key initiatives.	2	1	0
7. Leadership develops and refines internal policies or procedures that support key initiatives.	2	1	0
8. Leadership effectively communicates with all internal staff and is responsive to feedback from all staff (bi-directional).	2	1	0
9. Leadership uses data to problem solve challenges that hinder effective implementation of key initiatives.	2	1	0
10. Leadership adjusts organizational roles, functions, and structures as needed to support effective implementation of key initiatives.	2	1	0

	2	1	0
11. Leadership values staff contributions to effective implementation of key initiatives.	2	1	0
12. Leadership allocates resources necessary to build and sustain use of a data system that supports decision-making and continuous quality improvement for key initiatives.	2	1	0
13. Leadership uses relevant data when planning and evaluating support for effective implementation of key initiatives.	2	1	0
14. Leadership engages stakeholders and staff in developing a shared understanding of the need for key initiatives.	2	1	0
15. Leadership creates opportunities for external stakeholders and staff to design solutions together to support key initiatives.	2	1	0
16. Leadership effectively communicates with external stakeholders regarding key initiatives.	2	1	0
17. Leadership demonstrates support for the team responsible for implementing key initiatives as identified by the agency.	2	1	0
18. Leadership effectively communicates with the agency Implementation Team.	2	1	0
19. Leadership creates accountability for the coordination and implementation of key initiatives.	2	1	0
20. Leadership uses an effective process to ensure implementation efforts inform policy and procedures.	2	1	0
21. Leadership uses a coordinated process for assessing (informed by disaggregated data), selecting, and prioritizing key initiatives to support achievement of articulated outcomes	2	1	0
22. Leadership cultivates a culture of learning for the agency.	2	1	0
23. Leadership fosters collegial trust within the agency and with external partnerships.	2	1	0
24. Leadership supports collaborative partnerships with regional and/or local agencies to support implementation of key initiatives.	2	1	0

Scoring Rubric

Item	Fully in Place (2)	Partially in Place (1)	Not Yet in Place (0)	Examples of Potential Evidence
1. Leadership creates a vision for achieving equitable outcomes within the agency's implementation work.	Leadership sets and maintains a focus on achieving equitable outcomes through the agency's implementation work.	Leadership sets a focus on achieving equitable outcomes through the agency's implementation work.	Leadership does not set or maintain a focus on achieving equitable outcomes through the agency's implementation work	Strategic plan
2. Leadership commits to developing or improving their infrastructure to support effective and sustained implementation of key initiatives.	Leadership actively supports the development, improvement, and use of shared implementation activities to create efficiencies that ensure coordination and alignment within the agency. Note: Implementation activities include those such as using data, revising policies and procedures that hinder effective implementation, ensuring staff have needed supports to develop and sustain competencies needed, etc.	Leadership provides limited supports for the development, improvement, and use of shared implementation activities to create efficiencies that ensure coordination and alignment within the agency.	Leadership does not provide supports for the development, improvement, or use of shared implementation activities to create efficiencies that ensure coordination within the agency.	Activities that support staff/team to develop/improve shared implementation activities Funding allocation for implementation/ transformation specialists

Item	Fully in Place (2)	Partially in Place (1)	Not Yet in Place (0)	Examples of Potential Evidence
3. Leadership champions the development or improvement of infrastructure to support effective and sustained implementation of key initiatives.	Leadership advocates for and makes decisions related to the development or improvement of infrastructure.	Leadership makes decisions related to the development or improvement of infrastructure.	Leadership does not advocate for or make decisions related to the development or improvement of infrastructure.	Agendas and meeting minutes from leadership meetings that document discussion and decisions related to infrastructure development/ improvement Budget/funding allocation exists to support implementation infrastructure Communications with staff Data reports included as part of meeting resources

Item	Fully in Place (2)	Partially in Place (1)	Not Yet in Place (0)	Examples of Potential Evidence
4. Leadership supports the identification and development of "sponsor(s)" or "champion(s)" for identified key initiatives.	Leadership selects and develops _effective_ sponsor(s) or champion(s) for key initiatives who are: • knowledgeable of key initiatives; • available for problem solving; • available for supporting agency staff; and • credible in key initiatives with agency staff.	Leadership selects and develops sponsor(s) or champion(s) for key initiatives who are: • available for problem solving; and • available for supporting agency staff.	Leadership does not select and develop sponsor(s) or champion(s) for key initiatives or sponsor(s) or champions(s) do not exist at this time.	Identified individual(s) exist and understand their role to "sponsor" or "champion" identified key initiative(s).
5. Leadership visibly promotes the importance of effectively implementing key initiatives.	Leadership publicly speaks about the importance of effectively implementing key initiatives and can answer questions regarding what it takes to effectively implement.	Leadership publicly speaks about the importance of implementing key initiatives but struggles to answer questions about what it will take to effectively implement.	Leadership struggles to speak about and answer questions regarding what it takes to effectively implement key initiatives.	Communication messages Meeting minutes Feedback from staff and stakeholders

Item	Fully in Place (2)	Partially in Place (1)	Not Yet in Place (0)	Examples of Potential Evidence
6. Leadership allocates resources to support the development of staff competency to deliver key initiatives.	Leadership sets aside resources (i.e., financial, time, and staffing) to support staff competency development: • selection; • training; • ongoing coaching; and • monitoring fidelity. Leadership regularly assesses how equitably they are allocating resources and adjusts accordingly.	Leadership sets aside some but not all resources (i.e., financial, time, and staffing) necessary to support staff competency development: • selection; • training; • ongoing coaching; and • monitoring fidelity.	Leadership does not set aside resources (i.e., financial, time, and staffing) to support the development of staff competency at all or does so in general.	Budget allocations Staff selection processes Staff learning plans
7. Leadership develops and refines internal policies or procedures that support key initiatives.	Leadership consistently develops and refines policies and procedures to make it possible to do the work of the key initiatives.	Leadership inconsistently develops and refines policies and procedures.	Leadership does not develop and refine policies and procedures to make it possible to do the work of the key initiatives.	Revised written policies or written procedures Communication messages or training supports on new procedures

Item	Fully in Place (2)	Partially in Place (1)	Not Yet in Place (0)	Examples of Potential Evidence
8. Leadership effectively communicates with all internal staff and is responsive to feedback from all staff (bi-directional).	Leadership: • provides information to staff regarding key initiatives; • receives information from staff regarding key initiatives; and • requests and responds to feedback from staff regarding key initiatives.	Leadership effectively communicates to all staff (one-way communication).	Leadership does not effectively communicate with staff.	Varied communication messages appropriate to intended audience(s) Agendas and meeting minutes Communication protocols are adopted and consistently utilized

9. Leadership uses data to problem solve challenges that hinder effective implementation of key initiatives.	Leadership uses multiple forms of disaggregated data to problem solve challenges.	Leadership uses one form of disaggregated data to problem solve challenges.	Leadership does not use disaggregated data to problem solve challenges.	Meeting minutes Project management plans Executive reports on key initiative(s) include implementation data
10. Leadership adjusts organizational roles, functions, **and** structures as needed to support effective implementation of key initiatives.	Leadership consistently and effectively makes changes to organization roles, functions, and structures.	Leadership inconsistently or ineffectively makes changes to organization roles, functions, and structures.	Leadership does not make changes to organization roles, functions, and structures.	Position descriptions Teaming structures
11. Leadership values staff contributions to effective implementation of key initiatives.	Leadership consistently recognizes and appreciates staff contributions to effective implementation of key initiatives.	Leadership inconsistently recognizes and appreciates staff contributions to effective implementation of key initiatives.	Leadership does not recognize and appreciate staff contributions to effective implementation of key initiatives.	Staff recognition messages or system Staff survey results Focus group data

12. Leadership allocates resources necessary to build and sustain use of a data system that supports decision-making and continuous quality improvement for key initiatives.	Leadership allocates resources necessary to build and sustain use of a data system that is used to support implementation data (fidelity, process, capacity) and outcome data use for continuous improvement.	Leadership allocates limited resources to build/sustain use of a data system that is used to support implementation data (fidelity, process, capacity) and outcome data use for continuous improvement.	Leadership does not allocate resources necessary to build/sustain a data system that is used to support implementation data (fidelity, process, capacity) and outcome data use for continuous improvement.	Budget allocations Functioning Data System with reporting features facilitating use of disaggregated data
13. Leadership uses relevant data when planning and evaluating support for effective implementation of key initiatives.	Leadership consistently and systematically reviews and uses implementation (fidelity, process, capacity) data and disaggregated outcome data for decision making and planning purposes.	Leadership consistently reviews implementation (fidelity, process, capacity) data and disaggregated outcome data.	Leadership inconsistently reviews and/or uses implementation (fidelity, process, capacity) data and outcome data for decision making and planning purposes.	Meeting notes documenting decision making Agenda with standing data discussion items Data Summaries Action Plans

14. Leadership engages stakeholders and staff in developing a shared understanding of the need for key initiatives.	Leadership works together with stakeholder groups representative of the community (funders and/or board, beneficiaries or clients, community partners, other agencies) and agency staff to develop a shared understanding of the need for key initiatives.	Leadership works together with only one representative stakeholder group (funders and/or board, beneficiaries or clients, community partners, other agencies) and agency staff to develop a shared understanding of the need for key initiatives or works with all representative stakeholder groups and develops only a limited understanding of the need for key initiatives.	Leadership does not work with stakeholder groups and agency staff to develop a shared understanding of the need for key initiatives.	Meeting minutes Communication messages Presentations/results of facilitation activities
15. Leadership creates opportunities for external stakeholders **and** staff to design solutions together to support key initiatives.	Leadership creates opportunities to learn and design solutions together that account for differences in power (i.e., influence, decision-making authority).	Leadership creates opportunities to learn and design solutions together that do not account for differences in power (i.e., influence, decision-making authority).	Leadership does not create opportunities to learn and design solutions together.	Meeting minutes Communication messages Presentations/results of facilitation activities

16. Leadership effectively communicates with external stakeholders regarding key initiatives.	Leadership: • provides information to stakeholders regarding key initiatives; • receives information from stakeholders regarding key initiatives; • requests and responds to feedback from all stakeholders regarding key initiatives; and • effectively addresses potential barriers to communication (e.g., multiple modes, multiple languages).	Leadership: • provides information to stakeholders regarding key initiatives; and • receives information from stakeholders regarding key initiatives.	Leadership does not engage in effective communication with stakeholders.	Varied communication messages appropriate to intended audience(s) Communication plan Communication protocols are adopted and consistently utilized

17. Leadership demonstrates support for the team responsible for implementing key initiatives as identified by the agency.	Leadership: • secures necessary resources and supports for the agency Implementation Team; • speaks to the role of the agency Implementation Team; and • promotes the agency Implementation Team's role, functions and activities.	Leadership does two of the following, but not all three: • secures necessary resources and supports for the agency Implementation Team. • speaks to the role of the agency Implementation Team. • promotes the agency Implementation Team's role, functions and activities.	Leadership <u>does not</u> secure, speak to the role of, or promote the work of an agency Implementation Team.	Implementation team membership roster/team profile Budget allocations Communication messages
18. Leadership effectively communicates with the agency Implementation Team.	Leadership effectively communicates with the agency Implementation Team with timely feedback and sharing of information (i.e., bi-directional communication).	Leadership communicates to the agency Implementation Team (i.e., one-way communication).	Leadership does not communicate effectively with the agency Implementation Team.	Communication messages Meeting minutes Project plans

19. Leadership creates accountability for the coordination and implementation of key initiatives.	Leadership: • sets clear expectations; • maintains focus on the work; • reviews and discusses progress toward identified goals and targets; • takes actions to support progress; and • shares results of progress towards goals with staff and stakeholders.	Leadership engages in some but not all of the following actions: • sets clear expectations. • maintains focus on the work. • reviews and discusses progress toward identified goals and targets. • takes actions to support progress. • shares results of progress towards goals with staff and stakeholders.	Leadership does not maintain accountability for the coordination and implementation of key initiatives across and within the agency.	Project management plans with approved expectations with benchmarks and targets Identification of clear roles for implementation work Documentation of feedback and actions to support meeting expectations

20. Leadership uses an effective process to ensure implementation efforts inform policy and procedures.	Leadership collects and uses information from staff and stakeholders to make changes needed to support local implementation efforts.	Leadership makes changes to support local implementation efforts or leadership collects information but does not use it.	Leadership does not make changes to support local implementation efforts.	Written process outlining information to be collected from whom and reported to whom, and feedback loop Changes in relevant policies/procedures
21. Leadership uses a coordinated process for assessing (informed by disaggregated data), selecting, and prioritizing key initiatives to support achievement of articulated outcomes.	Leadership consistently uses a coordinated process to effectively assess, select and prioritize key initiatives based on an analysis of need, fit, evidence, capacity, resources, usability and other identified factors.	Leadership inconsistently uses a coordinated process to assess, select, and prioritize key initiatives based on an analysis of need, fit, evidence, capacity, resources, usability and other identified factors.	Leadership does not use a process to assess, select, and prioritize key initiatives or uses an ineffective process.	Written process for assessing, selecting, and prioritizing key initiatives Documentation of decision making that supports consistent use of a process for assessing, selecting, and prioritizing key initiatives

22. Leadership cultivates a culture of learning for the agency.	Leadership consistently models and supports a learning culture within the agency through all of the following: • application of organizational values and beliefs; • use of a team-based approach; • willingness to assimilate and apply knowledge from initial use of innovations; and • use of data for continuous improvement.	Leadership inconsistently models and supports a learning culture within the agency through all of the following: • application of organizational values and beliefs; • use of a team-based approach; • willingness to assimilate and apply knowledge from initial use of innovations; and • use of data for continuous improvement.	Leadership does not model or support a learning culture within the agency.	Employee engagement survey or feedback (interviews, focus groups)
23. Leadership fosters collegial trust within the agency and with external partnerships.	Leadership consistently makes good faith efforts to behave in accordance to implicit and explicit commitments within the agency and with external partners.	Leadership inconsistently makes good faith efforts to behave in accordance to implicit and explicit commitments within the agency and with external partners.	Leadership does not make good faith efforts to behave in accordance to implicit and explicit commitments.	Employee engagement feedback External partnership feedback and success of evidence Survey, focus group data

24. Leadership supports collaborative partnerships with regional and/or local agencies to support implementation of key initiatives.	Leadership supports collaborative partnerships with regional and/or local agencies by: • allocating sufficient resources to support implementation; and • using a stage-based approach to differentiate supports based on needs.	Leadership supports collaborative partnerships with regional and/or local agencies by either: • allocating sufficient resources to support implementation; or • using a stage-based approach to differentiate supports based on needs.	Leadership does not support collaborative partnerships with regional and/or local agencies to support implementation of key initiatives.	Budget allocation Project Plans

Scoring the SCA-ACA:

The SCA-ACA generates four scores: (a) Total score: the mean of scores for all 24 items, (b) Scale scores: the mean of scores for each of the 3 scales.

Leadership: Items 1, 3, 4, 9, 11, 13, 19, 21, 22 (N = 9 items)

Infrastructure & Resources: Items 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 17 (N = 6 items)

Communication & Engagement: Items 5, 8, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 23, 24 (N = 9 items)

Scale	# of Items	Actual Points / Points Possible	Percentage of Points: Actual/Possible
Leadership	9	___ / 18	
Infrastructure & Resources	6	___ / 12	
Communication & Engagement	9	___ / 18	
Total Score: Points Possible and Percentage	24	Sum ___ /48	___ /100

Action Planning

Contributors to Action Plan: **Date of Action Plan:**

Based on your review of the results, identify at least 2-3 priorities to address within an action plan. Create an Action Plan using the template below that defines immediate and short-term actions focusing on improving the infrastructure activities to support use of the selected program or practice.

Area:	Actions Needed:	By Who:	By When: