

Best Practices for Conducting a Health Needs Assessment Among RIM Communities

Do's When Conducting HNAs

Before You Get Started

- Take time to get to know the community you are working with and build trust with them. Understand cultural and religious context, sensitivities, including trust issues and other beliefs and community-specific realities. If possible, hire staff from the community and engage community councils in the process.
- Ensure the health needs assessment is community-guided, considering input from the community in all phases, including design, dissemination, and implementation.
- Ensure community-facing materials are accurately translated by having someone from the community do a review of the translation before release.
- Consider how to promote gender equity, inclusion of individuals with disabilities, inclusion of a wide range of ages (if applicable), and other factors that could impact the results of a health needs assessment.
- Consider community needs when conducting the assessment, such as convenient times, childcare, transportation assistance, and privacy.

During the HNA

- Conduct community-based assessments, focus groups, key informant interviews, and work with community-based organizations (CBOs) to identify needs. Include representation from all parts of the community in the process.
- Provide translation and interpretation services to accommodate language barriers and design the needs assessment to ensure people with all literacy levels can participate.



The International Rescue Committee helps people whose lives and livelihoods are shattered by conflict and disaster to survive, recover and regain control of their future.

The National Resource Center for Refugees, Immigrants, and Migrants (NRC- RIM) is funded by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to support state and local health departments working with RIM communities. Learn more at nrcrim.org. Last update: 09/21/2023.

- Clarify the purpose of the assessment and communicate it clearly, help participants understand the need for the assessment and how it may benefit the community.
- Ensure privacy and confidentiality. Conduct the assessment in a private and secure location that is familiar and trusted to the participants.
- Inform participants of the measures being taken to keep their personal health information safe and secure throughout the assessment process.
- Inform participants that their immigration status will not be shared with immigration officials.
- Conduct informed consent and ensure clear communication of information throughout the health needs assessment process to maintain ethical standards and respect for participants' autonomy.
- Inform participants how the data collected will be used and where they can access results – if applicable.
- Ensure that HNA participants are comfortable with how their responses are recorded and provide alternatives if possible (some participants may not feel comfortable being video/audio recorded or have their responses captured on a computer.)

After the HNA

- Compensate people for their time and effort.
- Disaggregate data to see differences in health needs between different groups including gender, country of origin, preferred spoken language, and length of time in the United States.
- Conduct follow-up assessments to monitor changes in health needs over time and collaborate with local health providers and relevant organization.
- Share survey results with participating communities and/or HNA participants.
- Provide resources or identify referral pathways for HNA participants to access services or assistance to address their individual barriers towards accessing health services.

Don'ts When Conducting HNAs:

- Do not collect personal health information without informed consent.
- Do not conduct assessments in a manner that is disrespectful to the cultural practices and beliefs of the community.
- Do not use biased or discriminatory language in the assessment process.



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- Do not overlook the importance of social determinants of health in the assessment process.
- Do not neglect the perspectives of marginalized or underrepresented groups in the community.
- Do not assume that the health needs of the community are homogenous or uniform.
- Do not rely solely on quantitative data without considering qualitative data from community members. Qualitative data may lead to more in-depth understanding of knowledge, attitudes, and practices around a particular topic.
- Do not rush the assessment process without giving adequate time and resources to gather accurate and comprehensive data.
- Do not neglect to follow up with the community and provide feedback on the results of the assessment.
- Do not make assumptions about the needs of the community without input and validation from community members.



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