

Technical Assistance at the Georgia Health Policy Center

The Georgia Health Policy Center (GHPC) at Georgia State University provides evidence-based research, program development, policy guidance, and technical assistance. The center focuses on solutions to complex issues facing health and health care today, including behavioral health, long-term services and supports, health system transformation, children's health, and the development of rural and urban health systems. We work locally, statewide, and nationally to improve health at the community level.

Our tailored technical assistance is focused on helping communities build local capacity to increase access to care and improve the health status of their residents. Providing targeted technical assistance is one of GHPC's core services. GHPC provides technical assistance to organizations, government agencies, and community collaboratives to support programmatic and organizational development of rural and community health systems.

Approach: *Strategy. Capacity. Sustainability.*

GHPC has been supporting community health system change through technical assistance since its founding in 1995. GHPC has provided technical assistance and capacity building support to more than 1,000 communities throughout the country. Clients include local, state, and national organizations. Our technical assistance is centered around helping communities developing a strategic approach to program implementation, building capacity utilizing technical and adaptive approaches, and focusing on long-term sustainability. The process provides a logical progression of activities to support communities in accomplishing their goals: focusing first on developing a strategic mindset, then building requisite skills and capacities, and integrating sustainability strategies.

Technical Assistance Services	
Approach	Design strategies and programs
Capacity	Build and expand staff and organizational capacity to address health and public health challenges in their communities
Sustainability	Plan for the long-term
Evaluation	Identify relevant questions and analyze credible evidence to assess program impact
Board and consortium development	Create the infrastructure to support programs and build commitment among partners and stakeholders
Research design	Design effective processes and identify lessons learned
Resources	Connect communities to evidence-informed practices, tools, templates, and peer communities to strengthen their programs and strategies

Sustainability Framework[®]

The content of the technical assistance program is unified by GHPC's Sustainability Framework[®] which identifies those attributes that have been associated in our experience and in the literature with long-term viability of community-based health initiatives. The GHPC Sustainability Framework[®] addresses the issues from a systems perspective, meaning that a broad range of interrelated topics are included based on the understanding that sustainability relates to the way the whole system (the program or organization within its local, state, and national context) functions. Our framework identifies the components that contribute to organizational and programmatic sustainability.

GHPC provides capacity building in each of the factors of the Sustainability Framework[®]: strategic vision, collaboration, leadership, relevance and practicality, evaluation and return on investment, communication, efficiency and effectiveness, organizational capacity, and resource diversification.

Principles

GHPC's technical assistance approach to support system change and improve health is grounded in principles derived from our work with communities and has been tested on a national level. We believe that communities benefit most from support that is:

- Relationship-based
- Systematic, but flexible
- Systems-oriented
- Sustainability-focused
- Technical and adaptive
- Continuous improvement

Project Examples

Federal Office of Rural Health Policy Technical Assistance Program

The Community Health Systems Development team has been supporting grantees of the Health Resources and Services Administration's Office of Rural Health Policy since 2002, providing technical assistance to nearly 1,000 grantees funded through nine grant programs. Our technical assistance consultants have supported grantees with a broad range of focus areas and community health issues, including programs emphasizing disease prevention and management, behavioral and mental health, oral health, school health, care integration and coordination, workforce development, and telehealth.

Through a comprehensive approach that provides dedicated, tailored support, access to content expertise, connections with relevant tools and resources and facilitated peer learning, the GHPC

rural technical assistance program strengthens the capacity of rural communities and practitioners to develop rural-specific solutions to health and health care challenges and facilitate the exchange of information and practices among often geographically isolated communities.



Student Health and Physical Education Initiative (SHAPE)

Georgia SHAPE, the state's childhood obesity initiative, works to implement health-promoting strategies through coordinated efforts with state government agencies, the business community, philanthropic organizations, health care providers, and academic organizations, including Georgia State University.

GHPC and partners provide technical assistance to elementary, middle, and high schools through Georgia SHAPE grants. Ultimately, GHPC works to ensure technical assistance services provided will guide each grantee to institute evidence-based and sustainable physical activity and nutrition policy, systems, and environmental changes that are desirable for students, staff, administrators, parents, and community partners.

The technical assistance process for SHAPE grantees includes: initial intake assessment; a one-day School Health Summit for grantees to plan action; tailored, individualized technical assistance; and peer learning to enhance sustainability.

