

## Step 1

# Developing (or Revisiting) Your Program Plan

In the competitive environment which now exists, funders demand a credible and well-researched plan that shows evidence of being likely to succeed. Thus, it is essential that you have a very clear idea of what you want to do before describing it in a proposal. In fact, knowing what you want to do is key to selecting the right funder to approach.

There are many program planning models, most of which contain similar steps. The Health Communication Unit (THCU) at the Centre for Health Promotion, University of Toronto, recommends their six-step planning model. The model includes a situational assessment phase that includes some or all of the following data collection activities:

- ❑ Gathering and collating the perspectives of key program stakeholders.
- ❑ Conducting a literature search to find out what has already been done and determine the best way to address the issue.
- ❑ Collating and reviewing evaluation findings from the program (if it already exists), or related programs.
- ❑ Collecting new information about programming needs and desires, directly from the target audience.
- ❑ Collecting information about the mandates, agendas, policies and/or guidelines of key stakeholders (e.g. other related organizations, influential community members, other staff at your organization).
- ❑ Assessing and revising your vision and mission.
- ❑ Conducting a PEEST analysis, i.e. an assessment of political, economic, environmental, social and technological factors. A PEEST analysis can be organized into a SWOT format, highlighting strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

This information is then used to identify:

- ❑ Goals
- ❑ Populations of interest
- ❑ Geographic areas of interest
- ❑ Specific, measurable outcome objectives that describe concrete changes in the populations of interest

- Broad strategies (e.g. policy development, education, skill building)
- Specific activities (e.g. a mass media campaign, a workshop, an event)
- Resources required for activities (i.e. staff, financing)
- Timelines
- Evaluation indicators

THCU also recommends the use of a logic model to provide a quick overview.

### How-to Tips

- **Enlist a THCU consultant to help** with the development of a program plan. This is a free service within Ontario. Service request forms are available online at [www.thcu.ca](http://www.thcu.ca).
  - **Make sure you aren't reinventing the wheel!** Talk to others who are working on similar issues to find out how they reach their goals.
  - **Gather input from all people who are interested in or would be impacted by the project.** Stakeholders should be consulted at multiple stages and included in a review of the final plan. Make them part of your ongoing communication network. This will help ensure that your estimations of resources are accurate, that you have uncovered all barriers to implementation and that you have the full support of all those who will be required to help with implementation.
  - **Think broadly when considering what resources are required** for implementing a project. Consider the space needed, insurance requirements, personnel policies, job descriptions, financial tracking mechanisms, workload implications, equipment, etc.
  - **Take the time to account for resources that you already have access to**, such as partners, volunteers, students, secondments, equipment, etc. Writing grants is a time-consuming process – you want to make sure you really need the money! In addition, funders appreciate knowing you have maximized available resources before seeking additional money.
- Put partnership agreements in writing.** If you plan to use in-kind resources from another organization, be sure to clarify your expectations in writing.
- Summarize your plan in the Step 1 : Project Plan Worksheet, **for later comparison with funder interests (Step 2) and as an outline for writing your proposal (Step 4).**

## **Additional resources**

### **Introduction to Health Promotion Program Planning Workbook, The Health Communication Unit**

THCU's Introduction to Program Planning Workbook provides additional detail on the program planning steps recommended above. It is available free at [www.thcu.ca](http://www.thcu.ca). Links to a variety of other planning models, and resources to help with each of the six steps, can be found at [www.thcu.ca](http://www.thcu.ca).

### **Program Planning Case Study Series, The Health Communication Unit**

THCU has developed a series of case studies that demonstrate how various community organizations have applied all of the recommended six steps in THCU's Program Planning Model. These can be found online at [www.thcu.ca](http://www.thcu.ca)

### **Logic Model Workbook**

THCU has a short how-to guide on developing logic models, available online at [www.thcu.ca](http://www.thcu.ca). Samples are included.