

# Framework for Establishing a CAN that is Accessible to All Stakeholders

**Why should Healthy Start (HS) grantees work to ensure that their Community Action Networks (CANs) are accessible to all of their key community stakeholders?**

A CAN is a formally organized partnership of agencies, community-based organizations, and community members that work together to achieve common goals for community betterment, and to coordinate services to improve health outcomes for all community residents. To be effective, CAN members should fully engage all members within this partnership in ways that ensure full and active participation so all stakeholders and current members may engage at their fullest capacity. A stakeholder is an expert with critical knowledge and insight. This knowledge and insight are essential for the CAN to:

- Support the aim of addressing CAN work through a health equity lens
- Cultivate and sustain effective community collaboration and partnership
- Center the work of the CAN on the knowledge, skills, and experiences of those people most affected by maternal, child and family health disparities
- Gather evidence of the needs and available resources and use this to agree on the purpose, scope and timescale of the engagement and the actions to be taken
- Develop and utilize principles of participation that recognize and involve all members in meaningful ways
- Achieve HS performance measure benchmarks

| Indicator of Accessibility  | Checklist:<br>Completed by<br>CAN Leadership<br>and/or Staff | Checklist:<br>Completed by<br>CAN Members | Notes |
|---|--|---|-------|
| Have we identified our stakeholders, including members of our priority communities?   |  |   |       |
| Have we identified levels of involvement that encourage a wide representation of voices?  |  |   |       |
| Have we identified potential barriers to involvement for all stakeholders?  |  |   |       |
| Have we considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Techniques and engagement methods to be used</li> <li>• Issues of trust and need for independent facilitation</li> <li>• Location and accessibility of the venue</li> <li>• The number and type of engagement events</li> <li>• Transport requirements</li> <li>• Childcare needs</li> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Format and content of communication and publicity materials</li> <li>• Use of interpreters and signers</li> <li>• Need for outreach activities</li> </ul> |  |   |       |
| Do we have a plan to remove identified barriers to participation?   |  |   |       |
| Can we ensure meetings are easy to access and navigate; can we provide technology, training, and direct assistance when possible?   |  |   |       |
| Do we have a member recruitment, retention, and engagement plan that reaches a broad range of stakeholders?   |  |   |       |

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|--|--|---|-------|
| Are we centering our work on the knowledge, skills, and experience of all our stakeholders?  |  |   |       |
| Are we facilitating a process that brings forward the knowledge, skills, and experience of all of our stakeholders?  |  |   |       |
| Are we providing orientation and training to ensure all members have a shared understanding of the mission, vision, purpose and process?   |  |   |       |
| Have we identified incentives for participation?   |  |   |       |
| Have we identified and built support systems for new members?<br><br><i>Ideas include buddy system with existing members, welcoming new members at meetings, orientation, and pre-meeting contact.</i> |  |   |       |
| Do we have a plan to develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence of all the members?   |  |   |       |
| Do we use clear procedures to enable members to work with one another effectively such as meeting agreements, principles of participation, group by-laws/charter?                                      |  |   |       |
| Do we communicate needed information among and between all members in a timely manner?   |  |   |       |
| Do we follow a plan to monitor and evaluate the success of our community/member engagement plan?   |  |   |       |

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|---|--|---|-------|
| Do we report the evaluation results to all members and plan for improvement a minimum of once per year? |  |   |       |
| Do we update our engagement plan annually based on evaluation results and feedback?                     |  |   |       |

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