

# Aroostook County Health Improvement Partnership (ACHIP) Self-Evaluation Report

November 30, 2023



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## Introduction

The sustainability of a partnership depends in part on the quality of the partnership. The more partners work together effectively, the more shared trust and commitment they will have, and the more likely it is that the partnership will last. By frequently utilizing the process of self-evaluation, partnerships can reflect upon the quality of their partnership and take steps to strengthen collaboration. Therefore, evaluation is a great tool for helping ensure the sustainability of partnerships.

MCD Global Health, the Technical Assistance Hub (TA Hub) for the three Rural Community Health Improvement Partnership (R-CHIP) sites, recommended that each site utilize a self-evaluation tool to assess their readiness to collaboratively implement the RCHIP project. In September 2023, MCD administered the evaluation to the Somerset and Kennebec County Community Partnership (SKCCP) and created a summary report based on the findings.

MCD Global Health has since subcontracted with the University of Southern Maine (USM) to serve as an independent evaluator for Phase 1 of the RCHIP project. To maintain consistency among the demonstration sites, the USM evaluators duplicated the TA Hub's evaluation efforts with the remaining two sites, which includes the Aroostook Community Health Improvement Partnership (ACHIP). Additionally, the demonstration site's technical assistance needs were assessed.

This report provides an overview of the evaluation tool, the scoring of the responses, and a summary of the results. The objective of this report is to provide useful insight into your partnership's internal strengths and challenges and technical assistance needs. *Please note that any time this report refers to "ACHIP members" it is referring to the identified key partners that completed this survey.*



## The Self-Evaluation Tool

The content for the self-evaluation was adapted from the [Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory](#), an evaluation tool developed by Paul Mattessich and Kirsten Johnson from the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation. This tool was created to assess how well a collaboration is doing based on twenty-two research-tested success factors covering a range of topics such as mutual respect, understanding, and trust, ability to compromise, development of clear roles, open and frequent communication, shared vision, skilled leadership, etc. Eighteen of the twenty-two success factors from the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory were included in the R-CHIP demonstration sites' self-evaluation tool and the questions slightly modified to fit the goals and expectations of the first six months of the R-CHIP project.

To field the ACHIP self-evaluation, the USM evaluators used Qualtrics, an online survey platform. A survey link was e-mailed to the 17 partners identified by the director of the demonstration site. The survey was fielded from October 27- November 16, 2023, and included five email reminders. By close of the survey, thirteen of the seventeen organizations responded for a 76% response rate.

## Scoring of the Self-Evaluation Responses

Thirty-seven questions in the self-evaluation tool contained Likert scale responses to measure the degree partner organizations agreed with a statement about how ACHIP was performing on the eighteen success factors. Answers that contained “strongly agree” were assigned 5 points, “agree” were assigned 4 points, “neutral” were assigned 3 points, “disagree” were assigned 2 points, and “strongly disagree” were assigned 1 point. The USM evaluation team exported the results from Qualtrics and averaged the scores for each Likert survey question. The average scores were interpreted as follows:

**Strengths:** questions with an average score of 4.0-5.0, do not require special attention

**Borderline:** questions with an average score of 3-3.99, deserve discussion

**Concerns:** questions with an average score of 1.0-2.99, should be addressed as soon as possible

Additionally, partner organizations were asked to provide general feedback about ACHIP through an open-ended question as well as answer questions that assessed their technical assistance needs. These questions were not scored, but a summary of the responses will also be provided below.

## Self-Evaluation Results

Findings from the self-evaluation show that ACHIP has several important strengths to build upon. Members trust and respect one another and view the partnership as representing a cross section of community organizations who have a stake in what ACHIP is trying to accomplish. Members are flexible when decisions are made and are open to discussing different options or approaches. Members think the collaborative has been diligent about developing a timeline, coordinating organizations and activities, and staying on track. The collaborative has developed a system to monitor and report their activities, services, and outcomes and use this information to improve the collaborative's work. Members communicate openly with one another and feel they are well informed about what is happening within the collaborative. Finally, the members view the leaders as possessing the necessary skills to work collaboratively with people and organizations.

The findings also show that although there are no immediate concerns, there is room for improvement in specific areas. For example, not all members are sure their organization will benefit from being involved in the community partnership, but they do see the partnership as an opportunity to further collaborate with new or more organizations now or in the future. Some members question whether the partners will be able to compromise or find middle ground on important aspects of the project. Even though most members think that all community partners want the project to succeed, some question if the level of commitment among some members is high enough. Not all the members have a clear understanding of what their roles and responsibilities are and if there is a clear process for making decisions among the members. Additionally, some members are uncertain if ACHIP has established realistic goals or if the members understand the goals. Although members view data sharing as an important part of cross-sector alignment, they are not confident in other members' willingness to invest in improving each other's capacities for data sharing. Lastly, there may be a need for more opportunities to encourage informal communication between ACHIP members and engagement with stakeholders outside of ACHIP.

Table 1: ACHIP's Strengths and Areas in Need of Improvement

<b>Strength</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mutual respect, understanding, and trust</li> <li>• Appropriate cross-section of members</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> <li>• Appropriate pace of project</li> <li>• Internal evaluation and continuous learning</li> <li>• Open and frequent communication</li> <li>• Skilled leadership</li> </ul>
<b>Borderline</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members see ACHIP as operating in the member's self-interest</li> <li>• Ability to compromise/find middle ground</li> <li>• Members share a stake in both process and outcome</li> <li>• Multiple layers of participation</li> <li>• Development of clear roles and policy guidelines</li> <li>• Data and data sharing</li> <li>• Established informal relationships and communication links</li> <li>• Shared mission and vision</li> <li>• Concrete, attainable goals and objectives</li> <li>• Sufficient staff, materials, and time</li> <li>• Engaged Stakeholders</li> </ul>

## Factor Breakdown

This following section provides the overall weighted score for each of the eighteen success factors and the breakdown of how ACHIP members responded to each of the thirty-seven statements that evaluated each factor. Refer to Appendix A for a copy of the ACHIP self-evaluation tool.





## Factor # 1: Mutual respect, understanding, and trust

Score: 4.4 – Strength

### Key findings:

- 92.3% of members either agreed or strongly agreed that members involved in the partnership trust one another while 7.7% disagreed with this statement.
- 100% of members either strongly agreed (85%) or agreed (15%) that they have a lot of respect for the other members.

## Factor #2: Appropriate cross section of members

Score: 4.2 – Strength

### Key findings:

- 84.6% of members either agreed or strongly agreed that the people involved in the partnership represent a cross section of those who have a stake in what ACHIP is trying to accomplish while 7.7% were neutral and 7.7% disagreed with this statement.
- 76.9% of members either agreed or strongly agreed that all community partners needed for Phase 1 of the project have been identified and kept up to date on project progress while 7.7% were neutral and 15.4% disagreed with this statement.

### Factor #3: Members see ACHIP as being in their self-interest

Score: 3.9 - Borderline

Key findings:

- 69% of members either agreed or strongly agreed that their organization will benefit from being involved in ACHIP while 23% of members were neutral and 8% disagreed with this statement.
- Similarly, 69% of members either agreed or strongly agreed that the partnership will provide their organization opportunities to collaborate with existing or new organizations in the future while 23% of members were neutral and 8% disagreed with this statement.

### Factor # 4: Ability to find middle ground

Score: 3.7 - Borderline

Key findings:

- 53.8% of members either agreed or strongly agreed that members were willing to compromise or find middle ground on important aspects of the project while 46.2% were neutral regarding this statement.

### Factor #5: Members share a stake in both process and outcome

Score: 3.8 - Borderline

Key findings:

- 61.5% of members agreed that members invest the right amount of time in the collaborative effort while 30.8% were neutral and 7.7% disagreed with this statement.
- 92.3% of members either agreed or strongly agreed that everyone who is a member of the partnership want the project to succeed while 7.7% were neutral regarding this statement.
- 53.8% of members agreed that the level of commitment among the members is high while 38.5% were neutral and 7.7% disagreed with this statement.

### Factor #6: Multiple layers of participation

Score: 3.8 - Borderline

Key findings:

- 61.5% of members either agreed or strongly agreed that everyone who participates in decision making for the partnership can speak for the entire organization they represent, and not just a part while 15.4% were neutral and 23.1% disagreed with this statement.
- 76.9% of members either agreed or strongly agreed that when the partnership makes major decisions, there is always enough time for members to take information back to their organizations to confer with executive leadership about what the decision should be while 15.4% were neutral and 7.7% disagreed with this statement.

## Factor #7: Flexibility

Score: 4.2 - Strength

Key findings:

- 69.2% of members either agreed or strongly agreed that there is a lot of flexibility when decisions are made within ACHIP and that people are open to discussing different options while 30.8% were neutral in regards to this statement.
- 84.6% of members either agreed or strongly agreed that members are open to different approaches on how the partnership does its work while 15.4% were neutral regarding this statement.

## Factor #8: Development of clear roles and policy guidelines

Score: 3.5 -Borderline

Key findings:

- 61.5% of members agreed or strongly agreed that members have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities while 15.4% were neutral and 23.1% disagreed with this statement.
- 46.2% of members agreed that there is a clear process for making decisions among the members while 53.8% were neutral regarding this statement.

## Factor #9: Appropriate pace of project

Score: 4.2 - Strength

Key findings:

- 92.3% of members agreed or strongly agreed that ACHIP has been diligent about developing a timeline and staying on track, while 7.7% were neutral regarding this statement.
- 84.6% of members agreed or strongly agreed that ACHIP is currently able to keep up with the work necessary to coordinate all the people, organizations, and activities related to the project while 15.4% were neutral regarding this statement.

## Factor #10: Internal evaluation and continuous learning

Score: 4.1 - Strength

Key findings:

- 92.3% of members agreed or strongly agreed that a system exists to monitor and report the activities and/or services and outcomes of ACHIP while 7.7% were neutral regarding this statement.
- 76.9% of members agreed or strongly agreed that information about the partnership's activities, services, and outcomes are used by members to improve ACHIP's work while 23.1% were neutral regarding this statement.



## Factor #11: Data and data sharing

Score: 3.9 - Borderline

Key findings:

- 69.2% of members agreed or strongly agreed that formal data sharing across partner organizations is an important part of cross-sector alignment while 30.8% were neutral regarding this statement.
- 76.9% of members agreed or strongly agreed that having a comprehensive data sharing agreement is important to the partners while 15.4% were neutral and 7.7% disagreed with this statement.
- 53.8% of members agreed or strongly agreed that members are willing to invest in improving each other's capacities for sharing data while 38.5% were neutral and 7.7% disagreed with this statement.

## Factor #12: Open and frequent communication

Score: 4.4 - Strength

Key findings:

- 84.6% of members agreed or strongly agreed that partners communicate openly with one another while 15.4% were neutral regarding this statement.
- 92.3% of members agreed or strongly agreed that they are informed as often as they should be about what is going on within ACHIP while 7.7% were neutral regarding this statement.
- Similarly, 92.3% of members agreed or strongly agreed that the leaders of ACHIP communicate well with members while 7.7% were neutral regarding this statement.

## Factor #13: Established informal relationships and communication links

Score: 3.5 - Borderline

Key findings:

- 69.2% of members agreed or strongly agreed that communication among the ACHIP members happens both at formal meetings and in informal ways while 15.4% were neutral and 15.4% disagreed with this statement.
- 30.8% of members agreed or strongly agreed that they personally have informal conversations about R-CHIP with other ACHIP members while 30.8% were neutral and 38.5% disagreed with this statement.

## Factor #14: Shared mission and vision

Score: 3.9 - Borderline

Key findings:

- 84.6% of members agreed or strongly agreed that members are dedicated to ACHIP's shared vision and mission while 15.4% were neutral regarding this statement.
- 69.2% of members agreed or strongly agreed that their ideas about what they want to accomplish with ACHIP seem to be the same as the ideas of others while 15.4 % were neutral and 15.4% disagreed with this statement.

## Factor #15: Concrete, attainable goals and objectives

Score: 3.6 - Borderline

Key findings:

- 53.8% of members agreed or strongly agreed that they have a clear understanding of what ACHIP is trying to accomplish while 38.5% were neutral and 7.7% disagreed with this statement.
- 53.8% of members agreed or strongly agreed that ACHIP has established realistic goals while 46.2% were neutral regarding this statement.
- 46.2% of members agreed or strongly agreed that members know and understand ACHIP's goals while 46.2% were neutral and 7.7% disagreed with this statement.

## Factor #16: Sufficient staff, materials, and time

Score: 3.6 - Borderline

Key findings:

- 69.2% of members agreed or strongly agreed that ACHIP has adequate "people power" to do what it wants to accomplish while 15.4% were neutral and 15.4% disagreed with this statement.

## Factor #17: Skilled leadership

Score: 4.5 - Strength

Key findings:

- 92.3% of members agreed or strongly agreed that the people in leadership positions for ACHIP have good skills for working collaboratively with other people and organizations while 7.7% were neutral regarding this statement.

## Factor #18: Engaged stakeholders

Score: 3.3 - Borderline

Key findings:

- 76.9% of members agreed or strongly agreed that ACHIP engages other stakeholders outside the group as much as they should while 15.4% were neutral and 7.7% disagreed with this statement.
- 15.4% of members agreed or strongly agreed that they personally have informal conversations about R-CHIP with stakeholders not formally involved in ACHIP while 38.5% were neutral and 46.2% disagreed with this statement.

## Open Response Feedback

The final question in the self-evaluation was an open response question which gave respondents an opportunity to provide general feedback about ACHIP. This feedback was not included in the scoring. Nine of the thirteen respondents provided feedback. The evaluators analyzed the open-ended responses and found they aligned under four themes. Respondents may have provided feedback on more than one theme; the number of respondents per theme are noted within ( ).

- Key stakeholder missing from ACHIP (1)
  - The major social service agency that administers all the programs in Aroostook County has chosen not to engage in ACHIP; this is seen as a disservice to ACHIP (1)
- Participation in ACHIP can be challenging (5)
  - Too many meetings (2) – one respondent noted that this is being addressed
  - Participation is too demanding and time consuming making it difficult to contribute in a meaningful way (1)
  - Members would like to devote more time to ACHIP, but are unable to due to work obligations (2) – one respondent added they feel badly about this
- Members are hopeful about the future of ACHIP (3)
  - Excited about the potential of ACHIP (1)
  - Hopeful ACHIP can develop and implement sustainable programs (1)
  - Expect that future surveys will demonstrate more agreement with survey statements as the work progresses and solidifies (1)
- Direction of ACHIP (2)
  - ACHIP has good leadership (1)
  - Leadership may be too involved with other RCHIP projects and fiscal leads; although this is meant to enhance outcomes, it may just increase opinions and dilute goal setting (1)

It is anticipated that ACHIP will include this open-response feedback in their conversation regarding the self-evaluation, as the responses align well with the results from the previous quantitative section.

## Technical Assistance Feedback

All thirteen ACHIP respondents were asked if they had received technical assistance (TA) from the RCHIP TA Hub (MCD Global Health). If they had received TA, they were then asked what their most significant TA needs were and how well those TA needs were met. Only two of the thirteen organizations received TA; one for scheduling and the other to connect to external resources. Using a five scale Likert response, members said their TA needs were met moderately well and very well.

All thirteen respondents were then asked if they had unmet TA needs. Only one said that they did. When asked to describe their unmet need, they explained that they would appreciate resources on best practices and incentive models for collaborating with other funded projects.



## Recommendations

We recommend ACHIP use the results from the self-evaluation to guide internal conversations about how to leverage your strengths and work on factors that need improvement. It may be beneficial to use a neutral facilitator in these discussions. The following are some suggested questions for ACHIP to consider:

- What are ACHIP's short-term and long-term goals? How can ACHIP ensure all members are aware of these goals?
- Are these goals in alignment with what the members want to achieve through ACHIP?
- If necessary, what can be done to make the goals more realistic?
- How can participation in ACHIP benefit member organizations? What needs to change for this to happen?

- What barriers stand in the way of partners being able to find middle ground? How can those barriers be minimized?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of the members? How do members know what is expected of them?
- What is the process for decision making among members? How do members know what this process is?
- Is there a way to increase “people power” by enlisting high-school and college students or faith based or other community volunteers?
- What steps need to be taken to decrease the workload for ACHIP partners that are struggling to manage their workload and ACHIP obligations?
- How can ACHIP engage and inform stakeholders that don’t have the capacity to attend meetings?
- How can ACHIP help all its members understand how data sharing can improve cross-sector alignment? Are there ways to streamline this process to alleviate undue burden?
- How can ACHIP provide more opportunities for informal communication/conversation both internally and externally?
- How can ACHIP best utilize the RCHIP TA Hub?

The TA Hub recommends that ACHIP discusses the results of the self-evaluation during the planning phase (Phase 1) of the R-CHIP project so that steps can be taken to prioritize areas that the partnership identifies as important to improve. In doing so, it is anticipated that the effectiveness of ACHIP will improve, allowing the partnership to focus your attention on planning, organization, and implementation and therefore improving health outcomes for individuals residing in Aroostook County.

## Appendix A

### Self-Evaluation of Aroostook County Health Improvement Partnership

The purpose of this survey is to evaluate the Aroostook County Health Improvement Partnership's (ACHIP's) progress during the first half of the project based on the scope of work outlined in the RFP (request for proposal). All member organizations will individually answer the following set of questions based on research-tested success factors adapted from the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory. Please answer the questions from the perspective of your organization and remember that there are no right or wrong answers. Completing the survey should take about ten (10-15) minutes.

Once all partner organizations have responded, the USM evaluation team will deidentify the data and compile the results into a report that includes an "average" score for each question. Then, USM will share the summary report with all members for further discussion.

The average scores will be interpreted as follows:

1.0-2.9: concerns that should be addressed

3-3.9: borderline, deserves discussion

4.0-5.0: strengths, don't need special attention

Towards the end of the survey you will be also asked about your technical assistance needs and how well they have been met.

*Note: please respond to the following questions from your own perspective as a member.*

Factor	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral, No Opinion	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Mutual respect, understanding, and trust  Score: 4.4 – Strength	1. Members involved in this community partnership trust one another.	1	2	3	4	5
	2. I have a lot of respect for the other members involved in this community partnership.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Appropriate cross section of members  Score: 4.2 – Strength	3. The people involved in this community partnership represent a cross section of those who have a stake in what we are trying to accomplish.	1	2	3	4	5



	4. All community partnership members needed for Phase 1 of the project have been identified and kept up to date on project progress.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Members see ACHIP as being in their self-interest  Score: 3.9 - Borderline	5. The organization(s) I represent will benefit from being involved in this community partnership.	1	2	3	4	5
	6. This community partnership provides an opportunity for my organization(s) to further collaborate with new or more organizations now or in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Ability to find middle ground  Score: 3.7 - Borderline	7. The members are willing to find middle ground on important aspects of our project.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Members share a stake in both process and outcome  Score: 3.8 - Borderline	8. The members invest the right amount of time in our collaborative efforts.	1	2	3	4	5
	9. Everyone who is a member of this community partnership wants this project to succeed.	1	2	3	4	5
	10. The level of commitment among the members is high.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Multiple layers of participation	11. Everyone who participates in decision making for	1	2	3	4	5

<p>Score: 3.8 - Borderline</p>	<p>this community partnership can speak for the entire organization they represent, not just a part.</p> <p>12 When this community partnership makes major decisions, there is always enough time for members to take information back to their organizations to confer with executive leadership about what the decision should be.</p>	1	2	3	4	5
<p>7. Flexibility</p> <p>Score: 4.2 - Strength</p>	<p>13. There is a lot of flexibility when decisions are made; people are open to discussing different options.</p> <p>14. The members are open to different approaches to how we do our work.</p> <p>15. The members are willing to consider new approaches to how we do our work.</p>	1	2	3	4	5
<p>8. Development of clear roles and policy guidelines</p> <p>Score: 3.5 - Borderline</p>	<p>16. The members have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>17. There is a clear process for making decisions among the members.</p>	1	2	3	4	5
<p>9. Appropriate pace of project</p>	<p>18. ACHIP has been diligent about developing a timeline and staying on track.</p>	1	2	3	4	5

<p>Score: 4.2 - Strength</p>	<p>19. ACHIP is currently able to keep up with the work necessary to coordinate all the people, organizations, and activities related to this collaborative project.</p>	1	2	3	4	5
<p>10. Internal evaluation and continuous learning</p> <p>Score: 4.1 - Strength</p>	<p>20. A system exists to monitor and report the activities and/or services and outcomes of ACHIP</p>	1	2	3	4	5
	<p>21. Information about our activities, services, and outcomes are used by ACHIP members to improve our work.</p>	1	2	3	4	5
<p>11. Data and data sharing</p> <p>Score: 3.9 - Borderline</p>	<p>22. ACHIP members view formal data sharing across organizations as an important part of cross-sector alignment.</p>	1	2	3	4	5
	<p>23. Having a comprehensive data sharing agreement is important to ACHIP members.</p>	1	2	3	4	5
	<p>24. ACHIP members are willing to invest in improving each other's capacities for sharing data.</p>	1	2	3	4	5

<p>12. Open and frequent communication</p> <p><b>Score: 4.4 - Strength</b></p>	<p>25. People in ACHIP communicate openly with one another.</p> <p>26. I am informed as often as I should be about what is going on within ACHIP.</p> <p>27. The people who lead ACHIP communicate well with members.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>	<p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>3</p> <p>3</p>	<p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p>5</p> <p>5</p>
<p>13. Established informal relationships and communication links</p> <p><b>Score: 3.5 - Borderline</b></p>	<p>28. Communication among the ACHIP members happens both at formal meetings and in informal ways.</p> <p>29. I personally have informal conversations about R-CHIP with other ACHIP members.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p>	<p>2</p> <p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>3</p>	<p>4</p> <p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p>5</p>
<p>14. Shared mission and vision</p> <p><b>Score: 3.9 - Borderline</b></p>	<p>30. ACHIP members are dedicated to our shared vision and mission.</p> <p>31. My ideas about what we want to accomplish with ACHIP seem to be the same as the ideas of others.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p>	<p>2</p> <p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>3</p>	<p>4</p> <p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p>5</p>
<p>15. Concrete, attainable goals and objectives</p> <p><b>Score: 3.6 - Borderline</b></p>	<p>32. I have a clear understanding of what ACHIP is trying to accomplish.</p> <p>33. ACHIP has established realistic goals.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p>	<p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>3</p> <p>3</p>	<p>4</p> <p>4</p> <p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p>5</p> <p>5</p>

	34. ACHIP members know and understand our goals.					
16.Sufficient staff, materials, and time  Score: 3.6 - Borderline	35. ACHIP has adequate “people power” to do what it wants to accomplish.	1	2	3	4	5
17.Skilled leadership  Score: 4.5 - Strength	36. The people in leadership positions for ACHIP have good skills for working collaboratively with other people and organizations.	1	2	3	4	5
18.Engaged stakeholders  Score: 3.3 - Borderline	37. ACHIP engages other stakeholders outside the group as much as we should.  38. I personally have informal conversations about R-CHIP with stakeholders not formally involved in ACHIP.	1  1	2  2	3  3	4  4	5  5

39. General feedback about ACHIP (this will not be included in scoring):

This last section contains questions to assess your satisfaction with the technical assistance (TA) provided by the RCHIP TA Hub (the MCD Global Health team). These questions will not be included in scoring.

40. Have you received technical assistance (TA) from the RCHIP TA HUB (MCD Global Health)?  
 Yes, I have received TA  
 No, I have not received TA – skips to question 43

41. What were your most significant TA needs that you received help for?

42. How well were your TA needs met?

Not well

Slightly well

Moderately well

Very well

Extremely well

43. Do you have unmet technical assistance needs?

Yes

No – skip to end of survey

44. Please describe your unmet technical assistance needs?