

# Internal Readiness Assessment Report

Prepared for:

Somerset and Kennebec Counties Community Partnership (SKCCP)

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Technical Assistance Survey Results added December 5, 2023



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## Introduction

The sustainability of a partnership depends in part on the quality of the partnership. The more effectively partners work together, 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.

Completion of the Internal Readiness Assessment was suggested by MCD Global Health as a self-evaluation tool to help assess the readiness of the Somerset and Kennebec Counties Community Partnership (SKCCP) to collaboratively implement the Rural Community Health Improvement (R-CHIP) project. MCD Global Health serves as the Technical Assistance Hub (TA Hub) for all three Rural Community Health Improvement (R-CHIP) demonstration sites and exists to support the demonstration sites in completing a Readiness Assessment, as well as other priority needs.

The objective of this report is to present the Somerset and Kennebec County Community Partnership (SKCCP) with the methodology of how the Internal Readiness Assessment was administered, the results of the assessment, and recommendations regarding next steps.

While the assessment itself is nearly completely quantitative, there was an opportunity for members to provide qualitative feedback about SKCCP via an open-ended textbox at the end of the assessment. Although nearly all the questions had predetermined responses, how respondents answered the questions will provide insightful feedback regarding internal strengths and challenges of the Community Partnership.

*Please note that any time this report refers to “SKCCP members” it is referring to the partners that completed the survey.*



## The Assessment

The content for the Internal Readiness Assessment 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 22 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.

The TA Hub and Healthy Living for ME personalized the questions in the Internal Readiness Assessment to be relevant to SKCCP and the goals of R-CHIP. Once the questions were finalized, they were presented to SKCCP for final approval. After receiving approval, the TA Hub adapted the assessment into a Survey Monkey. Then, the survey link was e-mailed to the 16 key partners that were identified to complete the survey. Everyone had two weeks to complete the survey. All responses were collected anonymously.

## Scoring

When adapting the assessment to be formatted to Survey Monkey, the TA Hub utilized the scoring system that is used by the [online version of The Wilder Collaborative Factors Inventory](#): “strongly agree” responses are worth 5 points, “agree” responses are worth 4 points, “neutral” responses are worth 3 points, “disagree” responses are worth 2 points, and “strongly disagree” responses are worth 1 point. The TA Hub utilized Survey Monkey’s data analysis tools to pull average scores for each survey question. The scores can be interpreted as follows:

**Strengths:** questions with an average score of 4.0-5.0, don’t 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

The TA Hub utilized Survey Monkey’s data analysis tools to pull average scores for each survey question. Survey Monkey also provided raw data that the TA Hub was able to export to Microsoft Excel and use to create tables and charts for every individual question. The raw data from the survey will also be provided to SKCCP.

## Assessment Results

### Overview

Overall, the internal readiness assessment showed that SKCCP has several strengths. Members are very dedicated to the shared vision and mission, trust and have respect for one another, and want SKCCP to be successful in its endeavors. Members also believe that the organization(s) they represent will benefit from being involved in SKCCP, as it provides an opportunity for them to collaborate with new more organizations. Results also showed that SKCCP members are flexible when decisions are being made and open to different approaches to doing work. When it comes to the pace of the project, members agree that SKCCP has been diligent about creating a timeline and adhering to it. Members also view data sharing as an important part of cross-sector alignment.

The assessment also showed that there are no immediate concerns, however, there is room for improvement within SKCCP. For example, there are members that don't have a clear understanding of what SKCCP's goals are. There also seems to be some confusion about roles and responsibilities of members as well as the collective decision-making process, so it may be advantageous to revisit both of those concepts. Although members view data sharing as an important part of cross-sector alignment, they are not confident in other organizations' willingness to invest in improving each other's capacities for data sharing. There also might be a need for more opportunities regarding informal communication between SKCCP members in addition to organizations not involved in SKCCP.

Below is a chart of the factors that were assessed and which categories they fell into:

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

## Factor Breakdown

The results in this report have been compiled by factor for convenience. Each factor has been given an overall “score” which is the average of all the weighted scores within each individual factor. Key takeaways are also included for each individual factor.

There is a PDF report containing the full breakdown of results as well as visual charts that can be found in [Appendix A](#).



### FACTOR: SHARED MISSION AND VISION

Score: 4.0 (strength)

Key takeaways:

All SKCCP members either agree or strongly agree that SKCCP members are dedicated to their shared vision and mission. Over half (57%) of members believe that their ideas about what they want SKCCP to accomplish are the same as others. The remaining SKCCP members (43%) are neutral, which may mean they are unsure whether their ideas align or not, as they did not choose to disagree with the statement.

#### **FACTOR: CONCRETE, ATTAINABLE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Score: 3.81 (borderline)

Key takeaways:

72% of SKCCP members have a clear understanding of what SKCCP is trying to accomplish, whereas 14% of members do not. 64% of members agree that SKCCP has established realistic goals for itself and understand what those goals are. 36% of SKCCP members have no opinion on the goals SKCCP has set for itself.

#### **FACTOR: MUTUAL RESPECT, UNDERSTANDING, AND TRUST**

Score: 4.42 (strength)

Key takeaways:

This was one of the highest scoring factors of the survey. 79% of SKCCP members trust one another and 100% of SKCCP members have mutual respect for all other SKCCP members.

#### **FACTOR: APPROPRIATE CROSS-SECTION OF MEMBERS**

Score: 4.14 (strength)

Key takeaways:

86% of SKCCP members agree that the people involved in SKCCP represent a cross-section of those who have a stake in what the partnership is trying to accomplish and that all SKCCP members needed for Phase 1 have been identified and kept up to date on progress. 7% of members disagreed with both of those statements, so it may be helpful to clarify why they answered the way they did.

#### **FACTOR: MEMBERS SEE SKCCP AS BEING IN THEIR OWN SELF-INTEREST**

Score: 4.32 (strength)

Key takeaways:

An overwhelming 93% of SKCCP members agree that their organization will benefit from being involved in SKCCP, and that SKCCP provides an opportunity for their organization(s) to further collaborate with new or more organizations now or in the future.

#### **FACTOR: ABILITY TO COMPROMISE**

Score: 3.71 (borderline)



Key takeaways:

71% of members agree that SKCCP members are willing to compromise on important aspects of the R-CHIP project, the remaining 29% had no opinion or felt neutral about the willingness of SKCCP members to compromise.

**FACTOR: MEMBERS SHARE A STAKE IN BOTH PROCESS AND OUTCOME**

Score: 3.93 (borderline)

Key takeaways:

While 64% of SKCCP members agree that members invest the right amount of time in our collaborative efforts, 7% of members disagree with that statement. 100% of members agree that everyone who is a member of SKCCP wants the project to succeed. 79% of members agree that the level of commitment among SKCCP members is high.

**FACTOR: MULTIPLE LAYERS OF PARTICIPATION**

Score: 4.0 (strength)

Key takeaways:

72% of members agree that those who participate in decision-making for SKCCP can speak for the entire organization they represent and that there is always enough time for members to take information back to their organizations to confer with leadership. 7% of members disagree with both of those statements, so it would be helpful to clarify why members answered the way that they did.

**FACTOR: FLEXIBILITY**

Score: 4.04 (strength)

Key takeaways:

86% of members agree that there is a lot of flexibility when decisions are being made, that SKCCP members are open to different approaches to how they do their work, and that members are willing to consider new approaches to how we do our work.

**FACTOR: DEVELOPMENT OF CLEAR ROLES AND POLICY GUIDELINES**

Score: 3.57 (borderline)

Key takeaways:

While 64% of SKCCP members agreed that they have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities, 22% disagreed, meaning there is a need for further discussion. There also may be need for discussion of



SKCCP's decision-making progress, as 14% of members do not believe there is a clear process for decision-making as a partnership.

**FACTOR: APPROPRIATE PACE OF PROJECT**

Score: 4.25 (strength)

Key takeaways:

All SKCCP members agree that SKCCP has been diligent about developing a timeline and staying on track, whereas 78% of members agree that SKCCP is currently able to keep up with the work necessary to coordinate all the people, organizations, and activities related to this project.

**FACTOR: INTERNAL EVALUATION AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING**

Score: 3.86 (borderline)

Key takeaways:

61% of members agree that there is a system that exists to monitor and report activities, services, and outcomes of SKCCP. The same percentage of members also agree that information about SKCCP's activities, services, and outcomes are used by SKCCP members to improve their work.

**FACTOR: DATA AND DATA SHARING**

Score: 3.72 (borderline)

Key takeaways:

While 78% of members agree that formal data sharing is an important part of cross-sector alignment, only 71% of members agree that having a comprehensive data sharing agreement is important to SKCCP members. This may warrant a discussion of the structure and depth of the SKCCP data-sharing agreement. And given the fact that more than half (57%) of SKCCP members have no opinion on whether SKCCP members are willing to invest in improving each other's capacities for sharing data, there may also be a need for a larger scale data discussion.

**FACTOR: OPEN AND FREQUENT COMMUNICATION**

Score: 4.17 (strength)

Key takeaways:

While most (86%) of members feel they are informed as often as they should be about SKCCP, 7% of members disagree. This may warrant further discussion or 1:1 check-in meetings between the backbone

agency and certain community partners. In general, members agree that the people who lead SKCCP communicate well with members.

#### **FACTOR: ESTABLISHED INFORMAL RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNICATION LINKS**

Score: 3.28 (borderline)

Key takeaways:

This factor made it known that SKCCP members have differing opinions on whether informal conversation and communication is happening regarding R-CHIP and that members may need to have further discussions about creating space for informal R-CHIP conversations to occur and/or how to have those conversations.

#### **FACTOR: SUFFICIENT STAFF, MATERIALS, AND TIME**

Score: 3.64 (borderline)

Key takeaways:

SKCCP members are split when it comes to whether they believe SKCCP has the people power to do what it wants to accomplish. A large portion of members (36%) are neutral on this topic. Further discussion may be necessary.

#### **FACTOR: SKILLED LEADERSHIP**

Score: 4.21 (strength)

Key takeaways:

93% of SKCCP members agree that the people that are in leadership positions have good skills for working collaboratively with other organizations and people.

#### **FACTOR: ENGAGED STAKEHOLDERS**

Score: 3.50 (borderline)

Key takeaways:

A majority of members agree that SKCCP engages other stakeholders as much as they should, and most members have had informal conversations about R-CHIP with stakeholders not formally involved in SKCCP. On the contrary, 7% of members think SKCCP should engage other stakeholders more and 29% of members have not had informal conversations about R-CHIP with stakeholders not involved in SKCCP, so there may need to be a discussion about stakeholder engagement.

## Open Response Feedback

The final question in the internal readiness assessment was an open response question, in which respondents were provided an opportunity to give general feedback about SKCCP. The respondents were told that this feedback would not be included in the scoring of the internal assessment.

Of feedback that was provided, a majority fell into the following topic areas:

- Decision-making process
  - Lack of familiarity with process/structure (n=3)
  - Request to revisit process
  
- Evaluation
  - SKCCP may need more evaluation components
  - Unfamiliar with current evaluation components/timeline
  
- SKCCP Partner Workload
  - Workload is time-consuming
  - Difficult to balance work need for SKCCP with regular job responsibilities
  - Unrealistic time commitment/expectations for community partners
  - Request for individual check-ins with community partners to assign clear roles/tasks

It is anticipated that SKCCP will include this open-response feedback in their conversation regarding the internal readiness assessment, as some of the responses align with results from the previous quantitative questions.

## Technical Assistance Feedback (added December 5, 2023)

To assess the technical assistance needs of the organizations participating in SKCCP, the University of Southern Maine evaluators emailed the main contact of the 17 partners identified by the SKCCP director a link to a five-question survey. The survey was fielded from November 7, 2023 to November 21, 2023 using the online platform Qualtrics and included four email reminders. Eleven of the seventeen organizations responded for a 65% response rate.

All 11 SKCCP 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. Five of the eleven organizations reported receiving TA all for assistance with the community needs assessment:

- One for general help with the assessment (unspecified);
- One for help choosing a tool to collect data, identify strengths and challenges in community healthcare (specifically around SDOH and HRSN), and report findings to the SKCCP partners;
- Two for leveraging Dedoose to conduct the literature review; and
- One for help with data aggregation.

One organization reported two needs while the remaining organization did not answer this forced question but placed a (.) in the answer box.

Those who received TA were then asked how well their TA needs were met using a five scale Likert response. The response options were “Not well at all”, “Slightly well”, “Moderately well”, “Very well”, and “Extremely well”. Of the five organizations that received TA, two organizations said their TA needs were met “Moderately well” and three said their TA needs were met “Very well”.

All 11 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 like assistance with asset mapping and methodology for collective impact work.



## Recommendations

Now that results from the assessment have been shared, the TA Hub recommends that SKCCP has an internal conversation about how much time will be dedicated to discussing the results and what next steps will look like. It may be beneficial for this discussion to be moderated by the neutral facilitator.

Based off the results of the Internal Assessment, below are some suggested questions for SKCCP to discuss:

- What are SKCCP’s short-term and long-term goals?
- What are SKCCP members contributing to accomplishing SKCCP’s goals?

- How often should we be revisiting our goals?
- When an important decision needs to be made, what is the process for making that decision?
- How can SKCCP provide more opportunities for informal communication/conversations both internally and externally?
- Would SKCCP members benefit from having individual check-in meetings with the project director and assistant project director?
- Would SKCCP members benefit from being assigned clear roles/tasks?
- What steps need to be taken to make the workload for SKCCP partners more realistic?
- How can we engage and inform stakeholders that don't have the capacity to attend SKCCP meetings?
- How can SKCCP members best utilize the RCHIP TA Hub?

The TA Hub recommends discussing the results of the Internal Assessment 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 turn, it is anticipated that the effectiveness of the group will improve, allowing the partnership to focus their attention on planning, organization, and implementation and therefore improving health outcomes for individuals residing in Somerset and Kennebec County.