

Turning the Planning Cycle into Action



These six steps help municipal leaders move from planning to action. Use the cycle to organize the work, identify priorities, and track whether local overdose prevention efforts are making a difference.

Planning Step	Key Action Items	Evidence of Success
Clarify Leaders and Partners	- Name a lead person or convening body. - Identify municipal departments that need to be involved. - Bring key community partners to the table. - Define roles, meeting structure, and decision-making.	- A written charge or statement of purpose. - A core team roster and meeting schedule. - Clear roles and responsibilities. - A designated lead or coordinating body.
Understand the Local Picture	- Review overdose data, hot spots, and trends. - Identify priority populations, neighborhoods, and settings. - Gather input from residents, frontline staff, and partners. - Look for recent changes that need attention.	- A local overdose profile or dashboard. - Hot-spot maps or summary data tables. - A short community input summary. - A shared understanding of who is most affected.
Inventory Existing Resources	- List current prevention, treatment, recovery, and substance use health services. - Identify existing staff, funding, and programs. - Map referral pathways and public education efforts. - Note what is already working well.	- A service inventory or resource directory. - A map of programs, providers, or referral pathways. - A summary of current funding and staffing. - A list of existing strengths to build on.
Identify Gaps and Needs	- Compare community needs with current resources. - Identify gaps in naloxone access, outreach, treatment referral, transportation, and follow-up care. - Identify barriers faced by priority populations. - Review policies or system issues that need improvement.	- A written gap analysis. - Priority barriers named clearly. - Improvement opportunities identified. - Agreement on which gaps need attention first.
Set Priorities and Choose Actions	- Select the top 3 to 5 priorities for the next 12 months. - Choose actions the municipality, partners, or regional groups can take. - Identify early wins and longer-term actions. - Assign responsibility and timelines.	- A written priority statement. - An action plan with owners and timelines. - Early-action steps underway. - A record of decisions and rationale.
Implementation and Accountability	- Identify funding, staffing, and policy supports. - Put measures, reporting, and review routines in place. - Share information across partners. - Update the plan based on results and community feedback.	- Funding and staffing assigned. - A progress review schedule or dashboard. - Regular partner updates and accountability check-ins. - A refreshed plan based on lessons learned.