

Set Priorities and Choose Actions



Good planning turns information into action.

Municipal leaders can use what they have learned about local conditions, existing resources, and unmet needs to choose a small set of practical priorities. Clear priorities help communities focus resources, strengthen overdose prevention, improve service connection, and protect community safety.



Key Questions and Helpful Tips

What are the top 3 to 5 priorities for the next 12 months?

- Choose a short list of actions with the greatest potential to save lives and close important gaps.
- Balance quick wins, such as naloxone access or referral improvements, with longer-term system changes.
- Focus on priorities that fit local data, community voice, available resources, and readiness to act.



Which actions can the municipality take directly, support through partnerships, or align with regional/state resources?

- Identify what the municipality can do itself, such as training staff, updating protocols, or improving communication.
- Identify actions that depend on schools, healthcare, community organizations, recovery supports, or other partners.
- Look for state, regional, or federal resources that can strengthen local work and reduce duplication.



How will actions improve overdose prevention, service connection, and community safety?

- Ask how each action will prevent overdose, expand access to help, or improve follow-up after an overdose.
- Consider whether the action reduces barriers for priority groups or high-risk neighborhoods.
- Define how success will be measured so progress can be reviewed and adjusted over time.



Evidence of Success

These examples show what strong priority-setting and action planning look like in practice:

Top priorities named

The community has a clear list of 3 to 5 near-term priorities.

Roles matched to actions

Partners know which actions the municipality leads, supports, or shares.

Actions tied to results

Each priority is connected to overdose prevention, service access, or community safety.

Measures identified

Simple indicators are chosen to track progress and guide updates.

Action plan ready

The community has a practical roadmap for the next 12 months.