

Understand the Local Picture

Good planning starts with a clear understanding of what is happening in the community.

Municipal leaders can use local data, lived experience, and community insight to identify overdose trends, spot gaps, and focus action where it is needed most. A strong local picture helps partners make better decisions, use resources wisely, and respond to changing conditions.



Key Questions and Helpful Tips

What do local data show about overdoses, hot spots, and priority populations?

- Review overdose deaths, nonfatal overdoses, EMS calls, and emergency department visits.
- Look for hot spots, repeated incidents, and places where people may be at higher risk.
- Compare data by age, race and ethnicity, geography, and setting to identify who is most affected.



Which neighborhoods, age groups, or settings need the most attention?

- Identify neighborhoods, schools, housing settings, or public spaces where prevention and outreach may be needed.
- Consider which age groups or populations face the greatest barriers to care and support.
- Use community input to understand what the numbers do not fully explain.



What trends are changing right now?

- Watch for changes in substances involved, overdose patterns, or service demand.
- Track changes in naloxone use, referrals, treatment access, and other response indicators.
- Ask partners what they are seeing on the ground so the plan stays current.



Evidence of Success

These examples show what a strong understanding of the local picture looks like in practice:

Shared data review process

Partners regularly review data together and use common definitions.

Hot spots and priority groups identified

The community can name where risk is highest and who may need more support.

Community voice included

Residents, service providers, and people with lived experience help interpret the data.

Current trends monitored

Local partners track changes over time instead of relying on old information.

Data used for action

Information is used to guide outreach, partnerships, and resource decisions.