

Section C: Developing a Management Plan for the Comprehensive Needs Assessment Process

Step 1: Preliminary Work		
Activity	Recommended Tasks	Highly Recommended
Develop a Management Plan for the CNA process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive approval to begin CNA process from all appropriate levels within the SEA • Identify a Management Team and delineate clear roles and responsibilities for staffing • Establish a general schedule for the process with a calendar of meeting dates • Identify resources needed for each step • Create Management Plan benchmarks for ongoing monitoring • Ensure that team members are kept apprised of meeting outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify staffing by Management Team, NAC, and other teams or work groups needed • Provide periodic updates to wider community about CNA progress

The Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) is usually coordinated through the state Migrant Education Program (MEP) at the state department of education (SEA) and includes a wide variety of participation from stakeholders, including administrators, data specialists, researchers, educators, parents, and others with various areas of expertise. Time spent at the outset of the CNA process to develop a Management Plan for coordinating this process will help you organize the many stakeholders, tasks, and resources necessary to complete the CNA process.

C.1 Conceptualizing the Big Picture

We recommend that you review the entire *Comprehensive Needs Assessment Toolkit* to get a clear picture of the process it depicts and to consider how to customize it for your state.

In preparing to plan the process for your state, you should consider the following questions:

- What are the basic steps outlined for the process, and how might these be tailored to our state’s context (e.g., small states)?

- What are the requirements for developing the CNA? (Review *Section B: Overview of Statutes, Regulations, and Non-regulatory Guidance Related to the Comprehensive Needs Assessment*)
- What resources and expertise will be needed to carry out the task?
- What resources and expertise can I draw on in my program? From the community? In the SEA? From national sources?
- What is my MEP’s capacity to develop the CNA? (Consider staff, time, available funding.)
- What lessons did we learn from developing the previous CNA for the state?
- Who needs to know about and approve the initiative to develop the CNA?

You should develop a brief description of the purpose and approach to developing the CNA. This will be useful as you seek approval for initiating the process and for ensuring that stakeholders, colleagues, and team members understand the rationale and most essential aspects of the process. See *Appendix C.1* for a sample one-page description of the CNA process.

C.2 Establishing a Management Team

We strongly urge you to create a Management Team to assist you throughout the CNA process.

Critical roles Management Team members can play include:

- Helping to develop the CNA Management Plan
- Identifying stakeholders for the Needs Assessment Committee (NAC)
- Recruiting members to serve on the NAC
- Planning and leading NAC meetings
- Developing a Migrant Student Profile
- Managing coordination logistics
- Maintaining records
- Troubleshooting challenges that arise along the way
- Providing guidance on implementing outcomes from the CNA process
- Writing the CNA report

Management Team: A core group of advisors that helps develop the management plan and oversees the process

This team may also help with transitioning the CNA to the Service Delivery Plan process, once the CNA process is concluded.

Recommended members may include:

- MEP staff
- The CNA project manager (if someone other than the state director is overseeing the process)
- An experienced local or regional MEP coordinator

- A data expert who works with your state MEP database or someone from the SEA who oversees or has access to state data
- An evaluation specialist (e.g., the MEP program evaluator, other SEA evaluation staff, a researcher or evaluator from a local university, or external evaluation consultant)

We encourage you to convene the Management Team early in the CNA planning process so that the purpose and requirements of the CNA are understood, and roles and expectations are set. Frequent communication is key to the effective function of the Management Team. *Appendix C.2* provides a sample agenda for the first meeting of the Management Team.

One person on the Management Team could be responsible for logistics and maintaining momentum for the CNA.

Considerations for small states (\$1m or less of MEP funding): Directors of “small state” programs should resist being a Management Team of one. At a minimum, partner with a data specialist and an experienced MEP service provider. A team member to coordinate logistics and maintain records will also be invaluable support throughout the process.

C.3 Working with an External Consultant

You and your staff are the ones who are most knowledgeable about your program, but you may feel that you lack time, resources, or expertise in facilitating the development of the CNA or in collecting and analyzing the data. You may choose to hire an external consultant. Whether or not you choose to work with an external consultant to help you develop the CNA depends on several factors—what your budget is, what your timeline is, and what expertise you may already have available to you.

Consultants can:

- Provide additional expertise in needs assessment
- Facilitate the planning team, particularly when there is a need to reach consensus among team members who have different backgrounds, roles, and points of view
- Keep the planning committee on schedule and on track
- Develop a data collection plan, collect the data, and analyze the data

If you decide to hire an external consultant, you should consider the following questions:

- Is there a specific component of the CNA with which you need assistance, or do you want help with the overall process?
- For what tasks will the consultant be responsible? For what tasks will you be responsible?
- What will your budget allow?

- What skills and experiences do you want your consultant to have? Does the consultant’s expertise seem to be a good match for what you want him/her to do? Is the consultant familiar with migrant education?
- What process or criteria will you use to select a consultant? Can you view a work sample of the potential consultant?

Working with your consultant Although you may have hired a consultant, you need to keep in mind that you are still the person responsible for the CNA and ensuring that it is a process that includes input from stakeholders. We recommend that you stay involved and keep track of how the work flow is progressing and communicate frequently with the consultant.

C.4 Developing a Timeline and Task Plan

A CNA can usually be accomplished within ten months to a year. Table C.1 provides an estimate of the time each of the five steps takes. Keep in mind, the time needed to develop the CNA will vary from state to state.

Table C.1 Estimate of Time to Develop the Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Step 1: Preliminary Work	1 month
Step 2: Explore What Is	2 months
Step 3: Gather and Analyze Data	6 months
Step 4: Make Decisions	2 months
Step 5: Transition to a Service Delivery Plan	1 month

It is recommended that you begin your Management Plan by creating a timeline and task plan. This will help you think through the various tasks and who will be required to accomplish these tasks, as well as how long each task will take to complete. Table C.2 provides you with a sample timeline and task plan for the CNA process. A template for developing a timeline and task plan is included in *Appendix C.3*.

Table C.2 Example of a Timeline and Task Plan for the CNA Process

Tasks	Deadline	Responsible Parties	Outcomes/Deliverables
Step 1: Preliminary Work			
Develop one-page description of approach to CNA	September 1	State Director	Description
Request approval of Federal programs manager	September 5	State Director	Written approval
Identify a Management Team	September 15	State Director	List of team members

Conduct first meeting of the Management Team	September 20	State Director, Management Team	Management plan
Develop migrant student profile	September 25	State Director, Management Team	Migrant Student Profile
Establish Needs Assessment Committee (NAC)	September 30	State Director, Management Team	List of NAC members
Step 2: Explore What Is			
Meeting 1 of NAC	October 15	State Director, Management Team, NAC	Concern Statements, tasks for further input
Identified tasks carried out	November 1	State Director, Management Team, NAC	Summaries of completed tasks
Meeting 2 of NAC	November 1	State Director, Management Team, NAC, Data Specialist	Need Indicators, list of data needed and data sources
Meeting of Management Team, including Data Specialist	November 10	State Director, Management Team, Data Specialist	Data Collection Plan
Step 3: Gather and Analyze Data			
Data collection tasks carried out	April 1	Management Team, Data Specialist	Summary of data collection
Step 4: Make Decisions			
Expert Work Groups developed for Areas of Concern	April 1	State Director, Management Team,	List of members of expert work groups
Meeting 3 of NAC	April 10	State Director, Management Team, NAC, Content Experts	Development of Need Statements based on data review, identification of solution strategies, prioritization of strategies
Step 5: Transition to a Service Delivery Plan			
Develop draft of CAN Report	May 1	State Director, Management Team	Draft of CNA Report

Conduct review	May 15	State Director, Management Team, Expert Work Groups, Federal Program Administrators, Data Expert	Written feedback from core stakeholders
Finalize plan based on feedback	June 1	State Director, Management Team	Completed CNA
Disseminate the plan	June 30	State Director	List of stakeholders receiving the plan

C.5 Planning for Teams and Work Groups

A fundamental element of needs assessment is having interested and knowledgeable partners to help you in the process. Think about how you can deploy various teams, stakeholders, and experts to help you conduct the CNA.

The number of teams you need and the amount of work you choose to assign to each team depends on the resources available to your SEA. In addition to the Management Team, we at least recommend forming a Needs Assessment Committee (NAC) to assure input from relevant stakeholders. Also recommended are a Data Work Group and Expert Work Groups to provide advice to the Management Team and the NAC.

Needs Assessment Committee (NAC): broad-based committee of partners (stakeholders) that provide input and direction throughout the CNA process

The NAC will drive the core work of the CNA process under your direction. You will need to consider how large or small you would like the NAC to be, considering such factors as the size of your program, resources available to support team member participation, and critical representation needed from both within the SEA and externally.

Before establishing the NAC, critical questions to consider are:

- What programs, agencies, roles, and expertise are essential to the CNA process?
- What resources are available to support team member participation?
- What role will the Management Team play in organizing and facilitating the work of the NAC?
- Will you conduct face-to-face meetings? Conference calls? Online meetings?
- Will NAC team members be expected to provide input at the meetings only, or will they be expected to carry out follow up tasks?
- What management strategies will be needed to oversee a large team?
- What is the best way to maximize the input from a small team?

Thinking through these questions will assist you in actually recruiting NAC members and establishing the team. Information on identifying key role groups and recruiting NAC members is in *Section D: Recruiting your Needs Assessment Committee*.

Considerations for Small States It is often a challenge for small states to achieve broad representation in the membership of their committees. It is important to be as strategic as possible with the NAC. The NAC may be comprised of as few as three or four individuals, but you should include at least one non-MEP member in this core group. Additional people can be added at key junctures in the process. Creating flexible subcommittees is one way to overcome the constraints of having limited staff time and resources to conduct the CNA.

C.5.1 Expert Work Groups

Expert Work Groups can be established as the need for additional information, support, or expertise is identified during the CNA process. Work groups should include both those who are participating in the needs assessment process (to ensure continuity) and those from other programs and agencies (to provide external perspectives or to fill the gaps where additional expertise is warranted).

Expert Work Groups: Technical experts who provide input on research and evidence-based solutions and strategies that will contribute to closing the gaps identified during the needs assessment.

Work groups should be small and topic-focused. You may want to convene three or four small groups at the same time to concentrate on concern areas. For example, a literacy team can focus on reading issues while a mathematics team addresses math issues.

A *Data Work Group* will be instrumental in assisting the NAC identify ways to support Concern Statements with data, recommending sources for existing data, and additional data collection strategies. The group will help develop a data collection plan and carry out the activities or assist the Management Team and NAC in carrying out the activities. After the data are collected, this group can help with summarizing the data for review, analyzing the data to support and clarify the Concern Statements, and develop data-based Need Statements.

Key roles a Data Work Group can play include:

- Developing Need Indicators and identifying data sources for the Concern Statements generated
- Helping to design the data collection plan
- Suggesting sampling and comparison groups
- Assisting with designing the survey and other data collection instruments
- Assisting with data collection and preliminary indicators
- Assisting with drafting Need Statements

Recommended members may include:

- Program evaluation staff
- SEA data managers
- MEP data personnel
- College or university researchers
- Members of the NAC

Expert Work Groups can provide information on research and best practices to inform the NAC on solutions and strategies that will increase migrant student performance. These groups should reflect the major Areas of Concern identified by the NAC. While NAC members who have expertise and interest in particular areas should serve on these subgroups, Expert Work Groups should also include external perspectives.

Key roles Expert Work Groups can play include:

- Reflecting on the needs identified by the NAC
- Discussing the current research and evidence of effectiveness for strategies
- Proposing solutions and other evidence based strategies that would work in the MEP context

Recommended members may include:

- Experts from academia in the relevant concern areas (early childhood education, reading, mathematics, and graduation/dropout prevention, English language learning)
- Program administrators
- Service providers
- Members of the NAC to ensure continuity

C.5.2 Planning for Expert Work Groups

In planning for the Expert Work Groups, you will need to consider the following:

- What expertise exists in the SEA or in local MEP programs? Who are people that you can call on to serve on an Expert Work Group?

An example of an Expert Work Group

To discuss issues of school readiness, your Expert Work Group might include five members:

- Professor of early childhood education
- Administrator from the early childhood division of your SEA
- Local Head Start director
- Local migrant coordinator
- NAC member

At least one expert should be a “full member” of the NAC.

- What external experts could be brought in?
- What support (travel, consultant fees) is available for members of Expert Work Groups?
- When are the most strategic times when their services may be needed?

C.6 Creating a Communications and Report Archive

It is important to keep in mind that the work of the NAC and of the work groups is targeted toward providing the Management Team or other designated individuals with the information they need to write the CNA. The reports, summaries, meeting proceedings or minutes will be critical resources during the writing process and will save tremendous amounts of time in generating information for the CNA report. The more efficient the record keeping and archiving functions of the team are, the easier the writing of the CNA report will be.

We recommend:

- Each team meeting should include someone who serves as a scribe or note-taker. Minutes should be prepared and disseminated after each meeting so that CNA team members are reminded of discussions and decision points.
- A one-page summary document can also serve the same purpose as minutes. This one-pager can also be used to share with colleagues not involved in the CNA to (1) raise their awareness about the process and (2) invite their feedback on decision points along the way that might help inform NAC discussions.
- We recommend archiving the following:
 - List of Management Team, NAC, Expert Work Group members
 - Minutes and Agenda from Management Team Meeting
 - CNA Timeline
 - Notes from each NAC meeting
 - Worksheets and other information generated through group activities
 - Subgroup summaries
 - Phone records and emails related to the work of the CNA

C.7 Manager's Checklist and Reflection

Following are some key accomplishments for *Section C: Developing a Management Plan for the Comprehensive Needs Assessment Process*. Take a moment to jot down your progress on the items below. Also, note any issues or challenges.

Manager's Checklist

- Reviewed requirements for the CNA
- Considered resources available for the planning process
- Developed a one-page description of the purpose of the CNA and planning process
- Obtained approval from SEA upper management

- Selected and convened Management Team members
- Set a timeline and task plan for each of the five steps
- Considered composition, size, and role of teams
- Developed a system for archiving all data, meeting notes, reports from the CNA process

Reflection

1. What expertise and support did I consider when establishing the Management Team for the CNA?
2. What is a very clear and concise overview of the CNA that I can provide?
3. What did I consider in determining the size and management of the NAC?
4. What individuals (in the SEA and externally) are possibilities for Expert Work Groups? In particular, who can I recruit for a Data Work Group?

C.8 Resources and Tools in Appendix C

- Appendix C.1 Sample One-Page Description of the CNA Process
- Appendix C.2 Sample Management Team Meeting One Agenda
- Appendix C.3 Template for a Timeline and Plan for the CNA Process

Appendix C.1 Sample One-Page Description of the CNA Process

COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR THE [STATE] MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM

As part of its statutory requirement under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the state department of education will conduct a Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) of its Migrant Education Program (Title I Part C). The CNA will identify the special educational needs of migratory children and youth to inform state planning to ensure that these students “have an opportunity to meet the same challenging State academic content standards and challenging State student academic achievement standards that all children are expected to meet.” (ESEA, Title I, Part C, Sec. 1306)

The CNA is part of a continuous program improvement cycle. In this cycle, each step in developing a program builds on the previous activity and informs the subsequent one and includes assessing needs, identifying strategies, implementing them, and evaluating the results. The CNA provides an opportunity to review data on migrant students, review their progress toward program goals, identify needs, and propose solutions. The CNA will inform the migrant Service Delivery Plan that will target strategies toward the needs identified.

The CNA process entails five broad steps that will take place over approximately 12 months. Note the following table:

Step 1: Preliminary Work	1 month
Step 2: Explore What Is	2 months
Step 3: Gather and Analyze Data	6 months
Step 4: Make Decisions	2 months
Step 5: Transition to a Service Delivery Plan	1 month

The CNA will be guided by a Needs Assessment Committee, a group of stakeholders who have various perspectives, experience, and expertise in serving migrant children and youth and can provide advice on ways to meet their needs. Data experts will also assist with ensuring that appropriate need indicators are identified and effective data are collected. Members of [STATE’S] Committee will include [fill in categories from your nominations matrix, e.g., MEP coordinators and staff, parents, reading specialists, etc.]. The Committee will meet face-to-face [X] times during the process. The work of the Committee will be informed by Expert Work Groups in [topic areas].

The MEP state director, [NAME], will facilitate the process, enlisting the support of a Management Team comprised of [NAMES OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS].

For more information, please contact [NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION].

Appendix C.2 Sample Management Team Meeting One Agenda

Comprehensive Needs Assessment
Management Team Meeting I
State Department of Education
January XX, 2012

DISCUSSION TOPICS

- Introductions of Management Team members
- Overview of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) Process
- Roles and responsibilities of the Management Team, Needs Assessment Committee (NAC), and others
- NAC nominations
 - Brainstorm the categories of stakeholders to be represented on the committee (Specific recommendations of individuals should be noted. After thinking through possibilities, prioritize the list for recruiting members. Determine the appropriate size for your committee .)
- Migrant Student Profile
 - Review the *Toolkit* section on the Migrant Student Profile, including the list of recommended profile elements
- Proposed meetings and activities calendar
 - Review the tasks in the CNA planning process (See *Section A*), and modify based on your state's context
 - Set meeting dates to ensure a realistic timeline for the CNA process (keeping in mind periods of the year when MEP administrative and state data collection burdens are heaviest)
- Follow-up assignments
 - Identify team assignments for recruiting NAC members
 - Assign tasks for preparing the migrant student profile for the first meeting of the NAC

Appendix C.3 Template for a Timeline and Plan for the CNA Process

Tasks	Deadline	Responsible Parties	Outcomes/Deliverables
Step 1: Preliminary Work			
Step 2: Explore What Is			
Step 3: Gather and Analyze Data			
Step 4: Make Decisions			
Step 5: Transition to a Service Delivery Plan			