



Making Connections Sustainability Best Practices

As part of ongoing sustainability technical assistance and support, Prevention Institute held individual calls with partners during the months of October, November, and December 2019. The purpose of the calls was to better understand what plans partners have for continuing their work and how PI can best support each group individually as well as the cohort collectively. Each partnership received individualized feedback at the end of December, which included suggestions for sustainability planning, recommendations on which areas of work were strongest for pursuit of funding, and potential action steps for PI to provide support over the coming months. This memo will briefly recap broad themes, innovative strategies from the cohort, and next steps to support sustainability planning.

Key Themes for Sustainability Planning

Assessing and prioritizing activities for sustainability. In a perfect world, partnerships would be able to find and develop resources to sustain all activities at their current level. However, when replacing one larger funding stream with multiple, potentially smaller funding streams, sometimes certain activities need to be prioritized. Partners should consider which activities have the most impact on their communities and focus their sustainability efforts on resources that support those activities. Partners should also consider which activities have the most potential to gain funder interest and/or be adapted to attract new types of resources.

Continued community engagement and support. When large scale funding initiatives end, one risk is that the community engagement that has happened through the course of the project falls by the wayside. Partners should strive more than ever to continue authentically engaging their community residents; this support is critical to keeping activities moving forward, even in the absence of full or sustained funding.

Securing and expanding ongoing commitment of partners. Have honest conversations among partners about who can bring cash or in-kind support to the table to continue specific activities or support for the work. Some partners may determine they need to step away, while others may be able to reassess and reaffirm a deeper commitment. Also consider if there are any new partners or network affiliates who can be brought on board to support the work as it moves into its next iteration. This may also be a time to consider outlining future roles in a document like a memorandum of understanding (MOU).

Developing and pursuing additional resources. Ongoing community and partnership engagement are critical to sustainability, but varying levels of resources are usually required to continue specific activities. After assessing and prioritizing activities that will need new or additional resources, seek out new funding from traditional and non-traditional sources. In addition to exploring how partners can leverage their own organizations' resources, explore philanthropic, government agency, and health system funding opportunities, even those that don't at first glance sound like a topical match. Small scale fundraising and social enterprise may also be good options to support certain activities.



Next Steps with Your PI Team

Sustainability Webinar #4: Innovative Sustainability Practices from Your Peers

Date: Spring TBD

This webinar will explore how Making Connections sites are already developing and pursuing additional resources from philanthropy, government agencies, health systems, small scale fundraising, social enterprise, and more.

Sustainability Webinar #5: Evaluation and outcomes as a tool for sustainability

Date: Spring/Summer TBD

This webinar will highlight the importance of evaluation and noting/identifying outcomes as a tool for long-term sustainability.

Topical Calls

Date: Spring and Summer TBD

PI will convene peer learning calls for sites who are focused on certain topics, such as veterans, youth, immigration, and engaging healthcare organizations. If you are interested in participating in a group call on another theme, please let us know!

Development of Site Profiles

Date: First drafts due March 14; editing and strategic support ongoing through the spring and summer

As part of the next quarterly report, sites will begin to draft profiles of their work that can be used for external promotion and fundraising. PI will help with the drafting process and provide strategic support for deploying the final product.

Review and Provide Feedback for Grant Proposals and LOIs

Date: Ongoing through September 2020

PI staff may be available to review and provide high-level feedback for grant proposals and LOIs. Please give us as much notice as possible to increase the odds we are able to review. We can help with wording or making connections between themes and can also provide strategic advice. Additionally, we will continue to seek out and share relevant funding opportunities.