

Building Towards a Healthier Future

The 7 Pillars Workbook





Communities ChooseWell supports healthy living champions, organizations and municipal governments across Alberta by providing resources, funding, learning and connecting events, and opportunities to celebrate community success.

Visit: communitieschoosewell.ca

Table of Contents



POLICY



PLACES



PEOPLE



PARTNERSHIPS



PROGRAMS



PROMOTIONS



PARTICIPATION

Policy

Grab your writing tools and use this workbook in tandem with the interactive videos and/or website to work through your own Policy project!

Policy is a key tool for shaping our environments and sustainable community practices. Policy work doesn't require you being in a formal position of power. With support, you can make a big impact.

Ready to tackle policy? Let's walk through the steps together!

STEP 1

Check-In

To create or amend policies, it's crucial to understand the current situation and have a clear plan. **Let's start with Step 1 and define the who, what, and when of your policy.**

To help you get started, think of:

- » **What is the specific problem** that needs to be addressed?
- » **Who needs to be involved** in policy development?
- » **What policies currently exist?**
- » **What is the purpose?**
- » **When** do you want the policy implemented or changed?

Visit the Policy Pillar Online



STEP 2

Prioritize Your Focus

Remember: Building equity into policy requires diversity of voices, perspectives, and opinions. Make sure to consider the people you are bringing to the table.

Let's continue by answering the following questions:

- » Why is this policy important to you or your organization? What purpose will it serve?
- » What goals and objectives are you looking to achieve with this type of policy?
 - » Generate a list of policy options that you want decision makers to consider
- » How will you ensure diverse voices will have the opportunity to be at your table?
- » What elements can be incorporated to ensure the policy functions from a place of equity, diversity and inclusion?
- » What key messages will you use to inform people about the new policy?

STEP 3

Take Action!

Now that you understand the problem it's time to draft your policy. Follow these steps for both big "P" and small "p" Policy!

1. [Assess your community](#) to determine your readiness for policy work
2. Make a list of the key decision makers in your organization and identify who will be impacted by this policy
3. Write a draft of the policy, check out [this policy template](#) to help get you started
4. If you're ready to start sharing your new policy, check out the [Promotions Pillar](#)

Reflection

Effective policy requires ongoing support for implementation, monitoring and enforcement. Reflecting and celebrating your work is also essential to help you and your team learn and allow you to showcase your successes!

- » How often will you evaluate the effectiveness of your policy?

Places

Grab your writing tools and use this workbook in tandem with the interactive videos and/or website to work through your own project!

Places refer to the environment around us in which we live, work, learn and play.

This includes both the built environments and the natural spaces within them such as: Green spaces, Recreation facilities, Cultural grounds, Municipal buildings and more.

If you are looking to improve your place to increase safety, accessibility, or inclusivity - you're in the right place!

Let's work through the steps!

STEP 1

Check-In

Whether you are developing a new place or improving an existing one, it's important to determine what the needs of the community are. **Let's work through Step 1 together and establish the who, what and when of your place!**

To help you get started, think of:

- » **Who is currently using your community's place?**
Are there any groups who are unable to use your community's place?
- » **What are they using this place for?**
- » **What type of place is this?** Is this a built environment? Green space?
- » **What HEAL activities do community members enjoy engaging in?** Does this impact the type of place that is needed?
- » **When are community members most likely to use this place?** Are there times when it is underutilized?

★ Key Considerations

When creating healthy community places, it's important to consider how they can be built or designed to improve equity. This can look like ensuring wheelchair ramps and accessible and gender neutral washrooms are in your space.

Visit the Places Pillar Online



STEP 2

Prioritize Your Focus

Remember: By investing in creating healthy places, communities can help encourage and support healthy behaviours among citizens.

Self-Reflect on the following Questions:

- » Is your place **welcoming of all people and abilities**?
- » **How are community members accessing your place** (vehicle, transit, active transportation)?
- » **How does your place ensure the safety** of all community members?
- » Are you looking to create **a new place or altering an existing one**?
- » **List three small improvements** that can be made to increase usability/accessibility

STEP 3

Take Action!

Hold an Asset Mapping Session in your Community! Asset Mapping is a tool that communities can use to identify their own strengths and weaknesses.

Preparing for an Asset Mapping Session:

1. **Recruit Facilitators and Volunteers:** Identify community organizations to participate in the session.

2. **Secure a Date and Venue**

3. **Promote Across Platforms:** Inform community members with adequate notice to ensure maximal participation.

4. **Plan Logistics:** Consider the number of participants, room size, chairs and tables needed, and note taking materials.

Conducting an Asset Mapping Session:

1. **Introductions and Agenda Review:** Participants introduce themselves, review the agenda, and share hopes for the asset mapping process.
2. **Identifying Important Assets:** In small groups, have participants list key assets of the community.
3. **Group Identified Assets:** Share with the group, taking note of recurring assets. Make a list to identify threats to priority assets.
4. **Brainstorm Solutions:** Engage in a roundtable discussion to brainstorm solutions, identify relevant projects, and establish collaborations to support key assets and address threats.
5. **Wrapping Up:** Plan a follow-up session and make sure to collect the contact details of all participants.

After the Session:

1. **Follow up meeting:** Review the outcomes of the workshop and decide on one or two projects to take on.
2. **Take action:** Use this [planning guide](#) to determine your next steps in taking on this project.

Reflection

Reflecting and celebrating your work is essential to help you and your team learn and allow you to showcase your successes!

- » How often will you evaluate how your work to improve places is going?

People

Grab your writing tools and use this workbook in tandem with the interactive videos and/or website to embark on your EDI journey!

People are the building blocks of our communities, guiding and shaping the work we do.

Incorporating equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) is crucial to reducing health inequities and ensuring the benefits of HEAL are universal.

Let's work together using an EDI lens with these steps!

Visit the People Pillar Online



STEP 1

Check-In

Whether you are taking your first steps toward EDI or have been walking its path for a while, it's important to take time to reflect. **Let's work through Step 1 together and establish where you are at in your EDI journey today.**

★ Key Considerations

Social Factors: Gender, sexual orientation, Indigenous heritage, age, education, race/ethnicity, length of time in the community, geographic location, marital/family status, disabilities, place of origin, language, income etc.

Isms: Racism, discrimination, heterosexism, sexism, classism, ethnocentrism, transphobia, ageism, homophobia, ableism etc.

First let's do some Self-Reflection:

- » What social factors influence **your life experiences**? What “isms” or overarching systems of power indirectly or directly impact you?
- » **In which areas of your life** have you experienced advantages? Disadvantages?
- » **How can you use your experiences** to understand and become an ally for people experiencing exclusion in your work?

Now let's reflect on your community/target audience:

- » What social factors influence the life experiences **within the community**?
- » What “isms” or overarching systems of power indirectly or directly impact the community?
- » **What factors** have provided advantages to the community? Disadvantages?

Take the EDI E-Course



STEP 2

Prioritize Your Focus

Remember: Checking assumptions can be an uncomfortable process. Be open to learning and approach these questions with courage and kindness. Enter this process with an open mind and be willing to continue to ask questions even as you complete the steps.

Self-Reflect on the following Questions:

- » **What biases** do you have about: gender, race, ability, socioeconomic status, age, etc.?
- » **What assumptions** take place in your communities' HEAL initiatives?
- » **Why** have you chosen to take steps towards EDI?



STEP 3

Take Action!

Demonstrate your personal and organizational commitment to EDI and take action through:

Research: Review the list of [marginalized groups](#). Select a group you'd like to learn more about and research their lived experiences using reputable sources

Sharing: Discuss what you've learned with a friend or colleague

Allyship: Focus on doing "with" instead of doing "for"; take steps to make your community more inclusive; amplify voices of marginalized group

Reflection

Reflecting and celebrating your work is essential to help you and your team learn and allow you to showcase your successes!

- » How often will you evaluate how your journey to furthering EDI is going?



★ Key Considerations

The word *ally* is a verb, not a noun, meaning it's a continuous action and an ongoing commitment to standing with and for vulnerable individuals and communities.



Partnerships

Grab your writing tools and use this workbook in tandem with the interactive videos and/or website to establish or refresh a Partnership!

Partnerships are two or more organizations, individuals, or municipalities working together to reach a common goal; and are a crucial part of successful HEAL initiatives – none of us can make lasting change alone!

Let's work through the steps!

Visit the Partnerships Pillar Online



STEP 1

Check-In

Whether you are building a new relationship or partnering with an established organization, it's critical to come with curiosity. **Let's work through Step 1 together and establish the who, what and when of your partnership!**

To help you get started, think of:

- » Is the partnership **new or established**?
- » Does your prospective partner **share similar values**, bring diverse perspectives, or help you expand your reach in the community?
- » **What type of partnership model** are you looking to form?
- » What is a realistic and beneficial **timeline** for starting this partnership?
- » Do you and your partner organization have the **capacity** to reach your goals? (i.e. time commitment / staff resources/ financial resources)?
- » How will the other individual, group or organization **benefit** from the partnership?



STEP 2

Prioritize Your Focus

Remember: Building rapport and a personal relationship with individuals/organizations should come before any potential partnership.

Self-Reflect on the following Questions:

- » **Why is this partnership important** to your organization? What purpose will it serve?
- » **What goals** are you looking to achieve with this type of partnership?
- » **What elements** can be incorporated to ensure the partnership functions from a place of authenticity, respect, and genuine care for one another?

STEP 3

Take Action!

Once you have built rapport with your partner individual/organization, it is time to take action and initiate your partnership:

1. **Establish Communication Strategies:** Define clear methods of communication, and regular check-ins to review progress and address any concerns.
2. **Clarify Roles and Responsibilities:** Define and document roles and responsibilities for all partners, and regularly review and adjust them as needed to ensure accountability.
3. **Address Staffing Changes and Conflict Management:** Create a plan for managing staffing transitions effectively, while also developing a conflict resolution strategy to address issues as they arise.
4. **Evaluate and Decide:** Evaluate your partnership's strengths and determine if changes, such as resource adjustments or new goals, are needed. Regularly assess if your objectives align, and decide whether to recommit, renegotiate, or end the partnership.

★ Key Considerations

It's essential to remember that partnerships should be mutually beneficial. This might mean the partnership model or structure may change over time and that's okay!

Reflection

Reflecting and celebrating your work is essential to help you and your team learn and allow you to showcase your successes!

- » How often will you re-evaluate the effectiveness of your partnership?



Programs

Grab your writing tools and use this workbook in tandem with the interactive videos and/or website to work through your own project!

Community programming plays a vital role in supporting wellbeing by using recreation facilities and parks as hubs for connection and bridging gaps between diverse populations through play.

If you are looking to create a program or enhance an existing one– we’ve got you covered!

Let’s work through the steps!

Visit the Programs Pillar Online



STEP 1

Check-In

Whether you are a recreation professional, community volunteer, or local champion, we have the resources and guidance to lead your programs to enhance the wellness of your community. **Let’s get started with the who, what, and when of your program!**

To help you get started, think of:

- » **Who** is your program for? (individuals, families, organizations, or communities)
- » **What** are the specific objectives of your program?
- » **Can you leverage existing resources** (funding, people, other organizations) in your community to help reach your goals?
- » **When** do you plan to deliver your program?

★ Key Considerations

When in doubt of who your program should target and what the program should do for your community, ask!



STEP 2

Prioritize Your Focus

Remember: People are the experts of their own experiences; they best understand the gaps and which solutions are likely to work.

Develop a successful program by understanding your community's priorities:

- » **How** does the program work towards the community's larger vision of health and wellness?
- » **Who needs to be involved** in the planning process, and who is currently missing?
- » How does your program respectfully **acknowledge** the diverse lived experiences of individuals/communities?

STEP 3

Take Action!

Once you are familiar with your community's priorities:

1. **Compile a list** of strengths, gaps, and underutilized assets within your community.
2. **Write out your SMART** (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, timely) **goals** for your program.
3. To help you **identify** which marketing channels most effectively reach your target audience and ensure your program is sustainable long-term, check out the [Promotions Pillar](#).

★ Key Considerations

Build an Asset Map with the community!
Pose a community wide-challenge, or host a town hall meeting and encourage local citizens from all walks of life to make their own Map of what they see as assets, strengths or resources within the community. This is a great tool to discover what they think makes their community valuable and strong.

Reflection

Reflecting and celebrating your work is essential to help you and your team learn and allow you to showcase your successes!

- » How often will you evaluate what your program has done well and what it can do better?



Promotions

Grab your writing tools and use this workbook in tandem with the interactive videos and/or website to work on your promotional plan!

Fostering meaningful connections with individuals and groups in the community is essential to building a healthy environment for people to live, work, and play. We create meaningful connections through conversation and effective communication.

The Promotions Pillar focuses on the tools, best practices, and strategies to help you effectively communicate and connect with your community!

Let's work through the steps!

[Visit the Promotions Pillar Online](#)



STEP 1

Check-In

Whether you are selling a product or delivering a service, having a strong promotional plan is important to the success of your initiative. **Let's work through Step 1 together and establish the who, what and when of your promotions!**

To help you get started, think of:

- » What are you promoting, **a product or a service?**
- » **Who is your target audience?** What are their values, interests and motivations?
- » Does your product/service **fill the needs** of the target audience?
- » **When** do you plan to launch or promote this product/service?



STEP 2

Prioritize Your Focus

Remember: Simplifying and targeting your messaging will make it effective, and long-lasting.

Develop a strong core message by understanding the opportunities, threats, and needs in your community:

- » **What is the overarching message** you want to communicate to your audience?
- » Does your messaging incorporate the principles of **equity, diversity and inclusion**?
- » Is your audience able to **identify with your messaging**?



STEP 3

Take Action!

Once you have developed a core message, use these steps to maintain effective promotions:

1. Complete a [SWOT Analysis](#) of your product or service: Identify what Opportunities you want to act on and what Threats you want to mitigate.
2. **Develop an effective message.** Check out this [effective messaging template](#) to get help you get started.
3. **Time your promotions.** Plan ahead to coordinate with holidays, seasonal events, and/or with other programs.

★ Key Considerations

Apply an EDI lens to your messaging by:

1. Checking your assumptions
2. Asking about inclusion

Reflection

Reflecting and celebrating your work is essential to help you and your team learn and allow you to showcase your successes!

- » How often will you evaluate how effective your promotions are?

Participation

Grab your writing tools and use this workbook in tandem with the interactive videos and/or website to work through your participation goals!

Fostering meaningful community engagement is at the heart of the Healthy Communities Framework. Participation is vital to creating successful and relevant healthy policies, places, people, programs, partnerships and promotions.

The Participation Pillar offers strategies, tools, and resources that you and your team can use to increase participation in your community.

Let's work through the steps!

Visit the Participation Pillar Online



STEP 1

Check-In

No matter where you are looking to increase participation, recognizing the diversity in your community is essential to fostering equitable participation. **Let's work through Step 1 together and establish the who, what, and when of your desired participation objectives!**

To help you get started, think of:

- » **What** does participation look like to you?
- » Who should **be involved in the planning process**?
- » Who are your **intended participants**?
- » **What groups** do you want or need more participation from?
- » **When** do you hope to accomplish your participation goal?

★ Key Considerations

Recreation staff, volunteers, and partners can significantly impact community participation. Ensure everyone on your team is ready and trained to foster an inclusive and participatory environment. When your team participates, everyone else will join in!



STEP 2

Prioritize Your Focus

Remember: When encouraging participation, we need to recognize the diversity within our communities. People have different ages, abilities, religious beliefs, economic status, lived experiences – all of which can affect someone's ability to participate.

Self-Reflect on the following Questions:

- » **What is the outcome** you hope to achieve with increased participation?
- » **What barriers (physical, financial, cultural)** currently exist that prevent individuals from participating?
- » Have you felt discouraged to participate in something before? **What could have changed** to better enable you to participate?

STEP 3

Take Action!

Now that you have an understanding of your community, **use these example action items to increase participation:**

- » Ensure your **place** has access to gender neutral washrooms
- » Offer **program** fees on a sliding scale to reduce financial barriers
- » Engage with **people** to ensure that the community's needs are reflected in your programs
- » Utilize **partnerships** to help you reach your desired demographic
- » Use plain language messaging in all **promotional** materials
- » Provide multiple and varying opportunities to participate in **policy** creation

★ Key Considerations

Ask yourself who is currently not participating.

Are they able to participate? Why, or why not?

Now is a great time to re-visit each Pillar!

Reflection:

Reflecting and celebrating your work is essential to help you and your team learn and allow you to showcase your successes!

- » How often/when will you evaluate if participation has increased?





Communities ChooseWell supports healthy living champions, organizations and municipal governments across Alberta by providing resources, funding, learning and connecting events, and opportunities to celebrate community success.

Visit: communitieschoosewell.ca