

HRSA COP-RCORP Initiative-Workforce Development Workgroup Selecting a Problem of Practice

This module was created to guide our workforce development workgroup through the process of identifying a problem of practice to guide efforts to address workforce development in COP-RCORP communities. This module acknowledges that workforce development is a broad (but critically important) concept and in the context of the COP-RCORP initiative, spans prevention, treatment, and recovery. As such, addressing workforce development as it relates to OUD and SUD will require iterated work at multiple levels. This module is the first step in our working together to create strategic plan maps as we begin our work to address workforce development. We have separated this module into a number of steps and have included time estimates as a rough guide to facilitate working through the module.

Ultimately, the goals of this module are:

1. Engaging COP-RCORP communities in ongoing work to support and grow each community's OUD/SUD workforces.
2. Work together and/or independently on defining an actionable WFD problem of practice for each COP-RCORP community.
3. Start to think about how we can assess local conditions related to workforce development.

Step 1: Gather Resources and Review Materials

Estimated time commitment: This step should take less than 1 hour.

Background: To begin, we want to provide some resources related to workforce development – some we have already discussed during our workforce development workgroup meetings. Step 1 is a review of where we have been and where we are going.

Task 1: Locate and Review Your RCORP-P Needs Assessment and Workforce Development Plan. Because this section is focused on assessing needs, it may be helpful to review your RCORP-P Needs Assessment and Workforce Development Plan. Here is how you can access that information on the COP-RCORP website:

- [Your RCORP-P Needs Assessment and Workforce Development Plan](#) (Find this on your community page under “COP-RCORP Planning Products” – see Core Planning Activities #2 and #4)

Task 2: Review the Table of Identified WFD Priorities.

As a workgroup we have already reviewed the table below. The information in the table represents our best thinking about how we can get started on addressing RCORP Core Activities P3, T3, and R2 across the COP-RCORP Consortium.

You will want to review this table in detail. Does it capture your consortium's most important priority(ies) related to WFD? Is there anything you need to update? Look critically at the table and think about what is listed. Is there one idea, action, or plan listed related to workforce development, or multiple ideas, actions, or plans?

- If you have one idea, action, or plan, that's absolutely okay—it provides your consortium with a single focus to get started.
- It's also okay to have more than one idea, action, or plan—our community OUD/SUD workforces work across the continuum of care in prevention, treatment, and recovery and, within those areas of the continuum of care, have a variety of training and scopes of professional practice. Ultimately, addressing workforce development will require us to develop plans and implement strategies in multiple areas.

(Continued on next page!)

Table: COP-RCORP WFD Status and Priorities September 2020

WFD Phase	County	Prioritized WFD Component	WFD Core Activity	Next Steps
We have identified a component of WFD to prioritize and have worked on a logic chain and strategic plan map.	Ashtabula	Expansion and retention of SUD/ODU workforce through training and professional development (1 - increase the availability of peer support training and certification opportunities; 2 - increase the availability of CDCA training and provide certification support for new and existing CDCAs).	P3 (R2?) T3	We are working on developing marketing materials to inform referral sources and potential participants. We are also finalizing procedures for reviewing biographies and course outlines for submission to the Ohio Chemical Dependency Counselor Professional Board.
We have identified a component of WFD to prioritize and are ready to begin work on a logic chain and strategic plan map.	Seneca	Increase number of Certified Peer Supporters	R2	We need to follow up with the participants to offer support with next steps in their certification process. We also need to work to schedule/promote additional virtual peer support trainings with OHMHAS for our residents.
	Sandusky	Expansion and retention of SUD/ODU workforce through training and professional development: 1 - increase the availability of peer support training and certification opportunities 2 - increase the availability of prevention trainings available in the community	T3 (R2?) P3	We need to follow up with the participants to offer support with next steps in their certification process. We also need to work to schedule/promote additional virtual peer support trainings with OHMHAS for our residents. Schedule prevention specific training opportunities for local behavioral health providers and social services professionals.
We have identified potential components of WFD to address but need additional time or support prior to moving forward with strategic planning.	Fairfield	Training substance abuse providers and staff in Evidence Based Practices (identify which EBP would be of the most help with the provision of MAT; working on a contract for an online training from California at Claire-Matrix for clinicians and supervisors in this Core Model).	P3	1) Complete contracting process with Claire Matrix; 2) Identify clinicians and supervisors to attend; 3) Continue to work on identifying strengths and weakness as these are perceived by clinicians and supervisor.
We have discussed some potential opportunities but are still exploring local WFD needs and constraints in our community.				
We are in the process of reviewing our RCORP-P plans and engaging local partners to discuss potential WFD opportunities.				

Step 2: Clarifying the “Problem(s) of Practice”

Estimated time commitment: 2 hours. Remember, you don’t have to do this all in one day!

Background: Our first step is to form a shared understanding of the problem(s) of practice we are working on. First, let’s review some terms from our previous work.

1. Understanding the term “problem of practice”¹ ...

- a. The language “problem of practice” comes from the education literature (viz., problem-based learning) and the change management literature (i.e., there is a gap between the goal state and the current state of the situation).
- b. Most issues are considered a “problem of practice” when the actual problem and the causes of it are not well understood. When we think of applying a problem of practice to workforce development, this is a good fit because the causes of workforce development challenges at the community level are complex.
- c. Failing to understand the essence of the problem and the underlying causes can lead to well-meaning solutions that do not address the issue, and in some cases may exacerbate it and/or cause additional problems or complications.
- d. We note that oftentimes, actual problems of practice can be difficult to understand, but the signs of the problem can be relatively easy to see. The problem may have been identified through interactions with one person or a particular organization, but in reality, relate to more than just one person/organization or relationship.

2. Framing our Task:

We know that workforce development and retention of our OUD/SUD workforces are significant challenges in our communities. The question now is how to determine the local issues that affect workforce development in each community. This requires thinking broadly about our OUD/SUD workforces, including challenges currently experiencing or recently experienced. It also requires starting to think about a vision of what workforce development for your community’s OUD/SUD workforces would look like in an ideal situation with ideal resources.

Task 3: Frame the Scope of Workforce Development in Your Community.

Let’s create a table to inventory the specific workforce development and retention challenges currently manifesting in your community. The table asks you to think about your prevention, treatment, and recovery workforces, and includes categories of recruitment, professional development, and retention, as well as space for you to list any other categories of challenges or needs related to workforce development.

- The goal with this inventory is to think broadly about workforce development needs in your community.
- The needs don’t have to be things that you currently have the capacity or readiness to address.
- It’s absolutely fine if there is overlap with the table above.
- Be sure to answer the questions in red.

Component of OUD/SUD Workforce	Recruitment Needs and Challenges	Professional Development Needs and Challenges	Retention Needs and Challenges
Prevention Workforce	•	•	•
Treatment Workforce	•	•	•
Recovery Workforce	• •	•	•

¹ <https://www.edu.uwo.ca/graduate-education/documents/professional/Problem-of-Practice-Guide.pdf>

Other OUD/SUD Workforces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Impacts of WFD challenges	<p>In your own words, how do the WFD challenges related to recruitment impact OUD/SUD services and systems in your community?</p>	<p>In your own words, how do the WFD challenges related to professional development impact OUD/SUD services and systems in your community?</p>	<p>In your own words, how do the WFD challenges related to retention impact OUD/SUD services and systems in your community?</p>

Step 3. Identifying a Problem of Practice
Estimated time commitment: 1 hour. Remember, you don't have to do this all in one day!

Background: Now that we've revisited our workforce needs, challenges, and impacts both on our OUD/SUD workforces and on the OUD/SUD services provided in our communities, it is time to build a problem of practice.

Task 4: Draft a Problem of Practice Related to Workforce Development.

Based on what you've written above, state at least one problem related to WFD as it affects your community. You may draft more than one problem statement. Remember, this is not your forever problem statement! It is just a starting point and we will use data to refine it. Just write one down--you can do it!

Here is an example of a problem of practice: *Apple County has an insufficient number of CDCAs working in the County.*

Here is a second example of a WFD problem of practice: *When provider agencies in Apple County are able to bring CDCAs and other clinical treatment staff into practice in the county, the staff are not able to be retained and leave for employment in a larger county.*

Insert your first draft of a problem statement here.

Step 4. Identifying the Data We Have Available
Estimated time commitment: 2-4 hours, depending on how much data your community has on your OUD/SUD workforce and/or challenges or how many partners that you connect with to ask about data. Remember, you don't have to do this all in one day!

Background: Next, we need to identify what data is available to support or refute the issues identified in Step 3. For each problem statement you crafted above, think about how you know this problem is at play locally. Do you have data or evidence to show that this issue is at play in your community? How do you know? Who have you worked with to get this data? *Your needs assessment and workforce development plan from the planning grant may be a good resource for this exercise.*

If you don't have data to support your problem statement, what led you to frame it in this way? Are your perceptions of workforce development needs in your community based on conversations, rumors, media coverage, social media behavior, personal experience, observations? This is fine! Just note it and be as specific and detailed as possible. You may be identifying potential sources of data that have not yet been collected.

Task 5: Cite Data to Support Your Problem of Practice.

Write down the data you have to support your problem statement, the source, the year, and the people/organizations/agencies involved. Feel free to add more rows, if needed.

Problem Statement	Supporting Data or Anecdotal Evidence	Key People/Organizations Involved

Sometimes, when we start looking at our data, we realize that we may need to revise our problem statement because the data contributes to our understanding of the problem at hand.

At this point are you feeling like your problem statement should be revised? **Highlight your answer in yellow.**

No

Yes

If you are feeling like you need to revise your problem statement (you highlighted yes), jot some ideas that you have for revision. It may be helpful for you to also note why you feel you need to make those revisions. That way we don't lose good ideas in the process!

Insert your response here.

Step 5. Identifying the Data We Need
Estimated time commitment: 2-4 hours, depending on how many people are included in the conversation. Remember, you don't have to do this all in one day!

Background: Now that you have written a problem statement and identified supporting data, it's easier to see where gaps exist. In this step, we will grapple with questions like:

- What issues were you unable to back up with supporting data?
- When you were articulating your problem statement, was there any part of it that made you pause? Listen to that hesitation.
- What information would make you more confident that your problem statement accurately reflects local conditions related to your OUD/SUD workforce and/or WFD needs?

Task 6: Identify Gaps in Workforce Development Data.

Fill in the provided table with issues that you wish you had more information about to support your problem of practice. In the second column, describe the kind of data you would need to answer the questions you have about each issue. You may have more or fewer issues you want to know more about, so feel free to add to the table if you need more.

WFD components that we wish we knew more about...	Possible Data Points (What specific data would inform us about this issue in our community? Or How could this component be measured or assessed?)	How could we get this data? (Survey, town hall meeting, interviews, ask a partner organization, etc.)

Step 6. Ideas for Next Steps
Estimated time commitment: 30 minutes. Remember, you don't have to do this all in one day!

Task 7: Reflect on the Process and Identify Needs.

To complete this module, we have a few concluding questions for you. This will help you shape our next steps as we move forward. Please complete the following questions:

1. After completing this module, what do you feel are your local consortium's next steps to come up with a final problem of practice statement related to workforce development?

Insert your response here.

2. What RCORP-I Core Activities does your problem statement address? You can find those activities listed here: <https://www.communitiesofpractice-rcorp.com/core-activities-hrsa-implementation>

Insert your response here.

3. What questions do you have for the other members of the workforce development workgroup?

Insert your response here.