



## IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

# Prioritizing Action in the Healthy Brain Initiative Road Map

## *Eight Questions for Thoughtful Action*

The [\*Healthy Brain Initiative: State and Local Road Map for Public Health, 2023-2027\*](#) (HBI Road Map) is a comprehensive resource for public health action. Public health departments and partners of any size and budget can use the HBI Road Map to improve brain health and caregiving throughout their communities.

Whether your health department is getting started, or you are looking to advance and build on existing work, this implementation guide is a resource to help you begin. This guide expands on the eight planning questions of the HBI Road Map (page 22) to help operationalize HBI Road Map actions.

### Key questions to select HBI Road Map actions and focus planning:

- 1 What coalitions or partnerships exist in your state or community?
- 2 Can any current partnerships be leveraged to plan coordinated action?
- 3 How can available data and other information be used to understand the needs of the community and then influence policy and practice changes to meet those needs?

- 4 Which Road Map actions best fit state or local priorities, opportunities and capabilities?
- 5 Have the voices of the groups disproportionately affected by dementia been included in planning?
- 6 How can identified actions best be integrated into existing initiatives? Are any new initiatives needed to improve health equity?
- 7 Can planned actions be accomplished with existing resources? If not, what are possible funding sources, and how can they be secured?
- 8 How will implementation and impact be evaluated? How and with whom will progress be shared?

The following pages of the implementation guide walk through additional considerations for each of the eight questions. This guide is a resource to help uncover opportunities as you begin your work with the HBI Road Map and draw connections between other governmental and community organizations to expand reach and impact through collaboration.



[ALZ.ORG/HBIROADMAP](https://alz.org/hbiroadmap)  
[CDC.GOV/AGING](https://cdc.gov/aging)



## BUILDING AND SUSTAINING COALITIONS

A multisector effort is essential to have a meaningful impact for all. The first action, P-1, and pages 23-28 of the HBI Road Map go into more detail about the power of collaboration and the critical role public health departments play as conveners. If you are beginning your work with the HBI Road Map, action P-1 is the place to start. As you learn about coalitions in your state and work in aging, brain health, Alzheimer's, dementia and caregiving consider the following questions:

- 1 What coalitions or partnerships exist in your state or community?
- 2 Can any current partnerships be leveraged to plan coordinated action?

### Quick Tips for Success

Think about brain health across the life course — and recruit partners to reflect that.

### Helpful References — HBI Road Map

- Taking a Life Course Approach (pages 8-10)
- Strengthen Partnerships and Policies (pages 23-28)
- Case study from the California Department of Public Health — *Increasing Impact through State and Local Health Department Partnerships* (page 44)
- Case study from the Georgia Department of Public Health — *Building Community Partnerships to Expand Reach and Foster Sustainability* (page 45)

### Assess existing workgroups on brain health and related topics.

- When developing partnerships, explore existing collaborations in your community. There may be opportunities to join or strengthen an existing coalition.
- Look to existing coalitions to understand potential models and partnerships. Consider state and county cancer prevention and control coalitions, long term care coalitions, diabetes coalitions and others. Talk to leaders and members of these groups to understand what they have found successful to advance their work and foster collaboration.

### Choose partners that reflect different expertise or skills.

- Be creative about who to invite and consider each other's goals and priorities. How do your goals align? Be specific.
- Consider some of the challenges or gaps your team is hoping to address. Examples of partners across multiple sectors might include:
  - » Area Agencies on Aging
  - » Community-based programs
  - » Condition-specific specialists
  - » Elected officials
  - » Employers and the business community
  - » Faith-based organizations
  - » Health and social care providers
  - » Medical and primary care associations
  - » Nonprofits and community leaders representing people who are medically underserved or are at a higher risk for dementia
  - » Nutrition programs
  - » Other governmental agencies
  - » Other local, tribal, city and state health departments in your region
  - » People with lived experience with cognitive decline
  - » People with caregiving experience
  - » Public safety and emergency response officials
  - » Respite services

### **Involve diverse voices.**

- Intentionally seek out and involve partners that represent diverse perspectives of your community. Consider the life course approach to brain health (pages 8-10). What organizations or departments influence brain health in your community across different stages of life?
- Look at the demographics of your community. Are there representatives from multiple racial and cultural groups? Are different regions represented?

Is there diversity of race, age, gender and lived experience among the members of the coalition regardless of who those individuals represent?

### **Grow your work together.**

- Forming your coalition is the key first step. As you grow your work together, the other actions in the HBI Road Map can guide those priorities. The following questions help to prioritize actions and help coalition partners find their unique fit.

## **IDENTIFYING NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN YOUR COMMUNITY**

Once a coalition is established, working together to prioritize goals and actions is the next step. Each organization will bring a unique perspective of the community and may also bring their own data to share. Combining this information can offer an enhanced view into the needs of the community and opportunities for action. Many of the actions in the HBI Road Map can be accomplished through partnerships with various members of the coalition. The questions below can help determine which actions are the highest priority for your community. As work progresses, revisit these questions to continue identifying additional actions to enhance impact.

- 3 How can available data and other information be used to understand the needs of the community and then influence policy and practice changes to meet these needs?**
- 4 Which Road Map actions best fit state or local priorities, opportunities and capabilities?**

### **Quick Tips for Success**

Start with known needs and gaps. What do you hear out in the community? Does data from the coalition back this up? Consider how these needs and gaps are unique to your local community.

### **Helpful References — HBI Road Map**

- Taking a Life Course Approach (pages 8-10)
- The Action Agenda (pages 19-21)
- Measure, Evaluate and Utilize Data (pages 29-32)
- Case study from the Georgia Department of Public Health — *Building Community Partnerships to Expand Reach and Foster Sustainability* (page 45)
- Case study from the Vermont Department of Health — *Public Health Workforce Training for Brain Health and Chronic Diseases* (page 52)
- Case study from the Washington Department of Health — *Where Are We Now? Washington State, Five Years Later* (page 53) and [Implementing the Healthy Brain Initiative Road Map](#)

### **Review existing plans to understand current public health priorities, programs and funding.**

- [State Alzheimer's Disease Plans](#)
- State and Community Health Improvement Plans
- Master Plans on Aging
- Strategic plans related to disability, health equity, health care workforce or other topics relevant to people living with dementia and their caregivers

### Explore existing data.

- [Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures](#)
- Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) — [Cognitive Decline and Caregiver Modules](#)
- [Alzheimer's Disease and Healthy Aging Data Portal](#)
- [Cognitive Decline and Caregiver Infographics](#)
- [National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey \(NHANES\)](#)
- Hospital records – outpatient and inpatient
- State and community profiles, reports and dashboards
- Disease registries and electronic medical records
- Mortality data from death certificates
- Coalition member data
- Other locally available data sources

### Identify community needs, gaps and strengths.

- Use health improvement planning resources from organizations such as the Association for State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) and the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO).
  - » [Needs Assessment Toolkit for Dementia, Cognitive Health and Caregiving](#)
  - » [Mobilizing Action through Planning and Partnerships \(MAPP\)](#)
- Conduct an internal organizational assessment of brain health, caregiving, dementia, healthy aging and public health across all divisions. Identify areas for cross-divisional collaboration.

### Select approaches and interventions.

Reviewing the framework of the HBI Road Map can also help your coalition prioritize actions. The domains are interrelated and have actions that build on one another. A single project may achieve multiple Road Map actions. For example, a project focused on improving community-clinical linkages could involve:

- Review of existing data from the state, local and health system partners (M-2)
- Translation of that data to show the need for community-clinical partnerships and action, to identify strategic interventions, and to incorporate into health systems and community-level improvement planning (M-4)
- Education of primary care and direct service providers on resources available and how

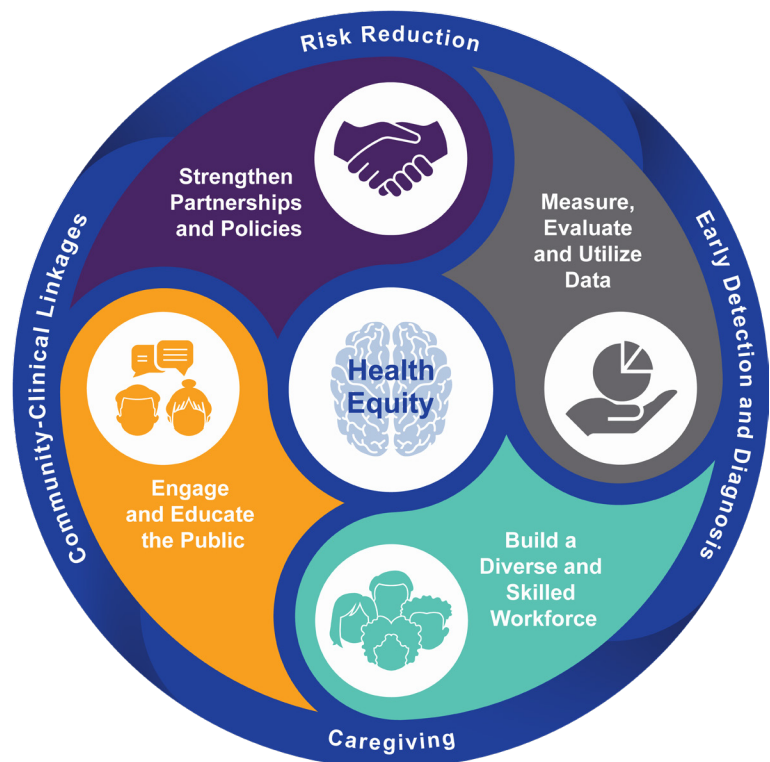
to have conversations about brain health and risk factors for dementia with their patients and connect them to key resources (W-1 and W-4)

- Increased awareness of services for people living with dementia and their caregivers (E-6 and E-7)
- Building a structured system of referrals between medical providers and community-based organizations to enhance access and linkage to needed supports and increased quality of care (P-2)

Thinking through this example, you can see how different members of the coalition could be involved in each step. Ultimately, initiatives in the E and W domains need the foundational work of the P and M domains to increase community awareness, support and resources to fund the initiatives. Ask:

- What domains do each of your coalition partners work in?
- What are the priorities of the individual members? How does this translate to a priority for the coalition overall?
- What outcomes from the HBI Road Map resonate with your coalition?

Answering these questions helps prioritize areas that can involve all coalition members and give each a role to play in the collective work.





### Additional Links and Resources

- [Healthy Brain Resource Center — Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)  
A resource for credible public health information and materials to support implementing the Healthy Brain Initiative Road Map actions.
- [Alzheimer's Disease and Healthy Aging Data Portal — Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)  
Easy access to national and state level CDC data on a range of key health indicators.
- [Public Health State Overview — Alzheimer's Association®](#)  
Information on state policies and initiatives, BRFSS data, data on local impact of Alzheimer's disease and more state and local resources.

## ENSURING COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION

Making meaningful and equitable change is only possible when everyone has a voice. Asking for feedback on inclusion and checking to make sure multiple voices and perspectives are represented before decisions are made is a critical step in implementation of the HBI Road Map actions. This question should be considered often throughout your work and can become a key question to consider in each coalition meeting.

### 5 Have the voices of the groups disproportionately affected by dementia been included in planning?

#### Quick Tips for Success

Be inclusive. Ensure representation from the community throughout each step of HBI Road Map planning, implementation and evaluation. Ask for feedback on if you are being successful with inclusivity.

#### Helpful References — HBI Road Map

- Health Equity and Social Determinants of Health (pages 14-18)
- Case study from the Mississippi Department of Health — *Coalition Building for Collective Impact* (page 48)
- Case study from the Texas Department of State Health Services — *Using State BRFSS Data to Drive Grants and Programs* (pages 50-51)

#### Ensure representation.

- Revisit membership of your coalition to ensure it involves diverse voices (see the earlier Building and Sustaining Coalitions section).
- People living with dementia and their caregivers offer valuable perspectives and should inform your work. Your local [Alzheimer's Association Chapter](#) may be a helpful point of connection to engage community members with lived experience.

#### Be deliberate about inclusion at every stage of work.

- Advancing equity requires an inclusive, intentional and systemic approach.
- Health equity must be central to every phase of work including assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation, improvement and beyond.

#### Seek out new perspectives.

- Identify people and groups that have not been reached or served by previous efforts. Seek their input and invite their active collaboration.

### **Build on internal initiatives.**

- Many health departments are growing their efforts to address equity, diversity and inclusion. In addition to external partners, foster internal partnerships with units or leaders with this focus.
- Familiarize yourself with the ways advancing brain

health supports the advancement of health equity, such as by reducing risk in populations who are most impacted and increasing equitable access to care and treatment. Communicate this shared mission with others who have a vested commitment to equity.

## **INTEGRATING BRAIN HEALTH FOR SUSTAINED IMPACT**

Integrate brain health action into existing initiatives to grow capacity and ensure lasting impact. There are never enough resources or time to solve every problem in the ideal way, and members of our communities are not only dealing with one thing at a time. Integration of brain health into existing messaging, programs, policies and data can accelerate impact and improve dissemination of messages internally and throughout the community. Many HBI Road Map actions focus on this integration and collaboration with existing initiatives (P-4, P-5, P-6, M-2, M-4, W-2, W-3, E-4, E-5, E-7).

**6 How can identified actions best be integrated into existing initiatives?  
Are any new initiatives needed to improve health equity?**

**7 Can planned actions be accomplished with existing resources?  
If not, what are the possible funding sources and how can they be secured?**

### **Quick Tips for Success**

Brain health is an issue that spans initiatives. Consider how brain health fits with other topics or broad projects happening in your jurisdiction — for potential collaboration, integration and potential funding to support these shared efforts.

### **Helpful References — HBI Road Map**

- Case study from the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services — *Convening Dementia Care Summit to Spur Action and Collaboration* (page 46)
- Case study from the Minnesota Department of Health — *Engaging Community Health Workers Around the Importance of Brain Health at Every Age* (page 47)
- Case study from the Rhode Island Department of Health — *Implementing Measurement and Improving Primary Care Through Innovative Partnerships* (page 49)
- Case study from the Vermont Department of Health — *Public Health Workforce Training for Brain Health and Chronic Diseases* (page 52)

### **Integrate brain health into existing initiatives for lasting work.**

- Learn about existing or growing work in areas with relevance to brain health, caregiving and dementia. Consider initiatives in other chronic diseases, falls prevention, disability, equity, aging, labor benefits such as paid family leave and workforce development.
- Routinely survey coalition partners for new opportunities. This may include new work from a single member or the potential for a joint funding proposal.

- Include brain health, dementia and caregiving as a consideration when developing organizational and community-wide strategic plans, such as for the community health assessment and health improvement process.
- Ensure brain health and related topics are a part of all department staff onboarding to build cross-department knowledge.
  - » [Public Health and Dementia Curriculum](#). Designed for public health professionals, students, and educators, this curriculum builds both introductory and advanced knowledge about dementia for the public health workforce.

#### **Seek traditional and new sources of funding.**

- When seeking funding to sustain or grow your work, think about funds that are available specifically for dementia or related topics, such as caregiving or related topics, such as aging or disability.
- When looking to apply for new funding, look for additional opportunities from nonprofits and foundations. There are multiple opportunities for federal funding for different departments within state and local government. Understand how your jurisdiction is funded and what additional opportunities may be available.

## **EVALUATING AND SHARING IMPACT**

Evaluation helps to better understand progress and impact — sharing results allows the field to move forward more quickly by identifying opportunities for improvement and change.

### **8 How will implementation and impact be evaluated? How and with whom will progress be shared?**

#### **Quick Tips for Success**

Achieve lasting impact by aligning to the collective outcomes of the HBI Road Map. These outcomes offer meaningful measures to track progress and assess impact. The HBI Road Map Evaluation Tool suggests measures for each outcome and each action.

#### **Helpful References — HBI Road Map**

- Measure, Evaluate and Utilize Data (pages 29–32)
- Case study from the Wisconsin Department of Health Services — *Expanding Reach and Access to Care with Public Health and Aging Services Partnerships* (page 54)
- Case study from Local Health Departments — *The Power of Public Health Strategists in Florida, Colorado & Maryland* (page 55)

#### **Ensure evaluation is included from the start.**

- Incorporate evaluation early into each project, starting with planning efforts.
- Standardize evaluation metrics and measures where possible to understand impact of the broader initiative, compare with other programs, and scale successful initiatives to increase impact.
- Use the HBI Road Map outcomes and evaluation tool as a starting point when designing evaluation processes.

#### **Disseminate findings broadly to drive action.**

- Lean on coalition partners to support dissemination of results.
- Share with department leadership, policymakers, community partners, local media and others with a shared interest.
- Tailor findings to resonate with diverse populations within the community.

- Sharing challenges or remaining gaps can both inform future approaches as well as bring attention to needs not easily addressed through a given initiative.
- Share findings with your peers through professional conferences, publications and national membership organizations, including:
  - » [Association of State and Territorial Health Officials \(ASTHO\)](#)
  - » [National Association of County and City Health Officials \(NACCHO\)](#)
  - » [National Association of Chronic Disease Directors \(NACDD\)](#)
  - » [Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists \(CSTE\)](#)
  - » [American Public Health Association \(APHA\)](#)
- Use findings to inform strategic program planning efforts, such as health planning, workforce, transportation and emergency preparedness.
- Use evaluation data to drive program changes and implementation efforts for your department, coalition, in your health systems, community-based organizations and broader community or state.
- Make data-informed recommendations for regulations and policies relevant to brain health, dementia and caregiving.

## STAY CONNECTED

This guide is a starting point. Progress on brain health, dementia and caregiving will take a multisector, all-hands approach. As you move forward with your work, stay connected with the latest resources, support and linkages to the broader community working to make change in this field.

Alzheimer's Association – Public Health

- Website: [Public Health \(alz.org/publichealth\)](http://alz.org/publichealth)
- Newsletter: [Alzheimer's Public Health News](#)
- Email: [publichealth@alz.org](mailto:publichealth@alz.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- Website: [Alzheimer's Disease Program \(cdc.gov/aging\)](http://cdc.gov/aging)
- Newsletter: [Health Aging for Older Adults](#)
- Email: [aging@cdc.gov](mailto:aging@cdc.gov)