

Best Start GPS Capacity-Building Tool

Over the past six years, Partnership Support Team (PST) has guided the Best Start community partnerships in their development of essential capacities. These core capacities, derived from the Results-Focused Community Partnership framework¹, empower a resident-centered partnership in fourteen communities in Los Angeles county to lead a long-term agenda to improve the lives of marginalized families with children aged 0-5 years. The four core capacities are:

- Communications
- Leadership & Governance
- Collaboration and Networking
- Data-driven Decision-making and Accountability

Over the past five years, it has been important to stop and check-in on the capacity that has been developed and the partnerships have done so using different tools, including the setting of the community action plans as a baseline assessment, yearly discussions of progress on their action plans of a more qualitative nature, a “barometer check” conducted by capacity-builders (i.e., members of the PST assigned to each of the Best Start partnerships who facilitate the capacity-building work) , and most recently the GPS. Over time, the assessment of capacity-building progress got more user-friendly and became a tool that can be easily understood and led by the resident leaders of the community partnerships. Thus, the GPS is an easy-to-use guide that communities can use to gauge progress from one point in time to the next. Just as with the GPS navigation we use in our cars, the GPS capacity-building tool asks:

- Where are we on each of the core capacities?
- Where do we want to go in terms of progress goals and by when?
- What is our path to getting to our progress goals?
- What do we need to ensure that we get there?

Each of these questions is asked and answered by the partnership, for each of the four essential capacities at various intervals so that progress can be assessed. Any changes needed to shift goals and/or “re-route” the path can be made in a clear, consensus process.

The following documents are attached:

- GPS Capacity-building Tool
- GPS Capacities summary tool

¹ The Results Focused Community Partnerships framework was developed with support from the Center for the Study of Social Policy and is used in place-based community change initiatives around the country.