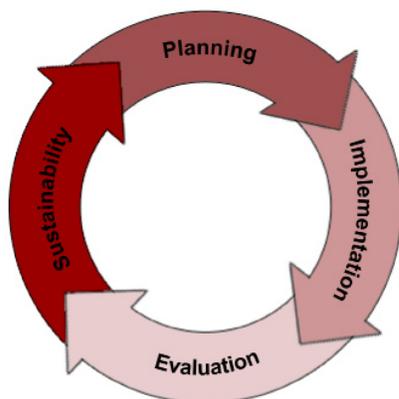


Technical Assistance Brief #6  
Pathways to Sustaining Fall Prevention Activities

Prepared by Emily Basner, BA, Gretchen Alkema, PhD & Phoebe Liebig, PhD



This technical assistance brief describes effective methods for promoting fall prevention (FP) activity sustainability and discusses the importance of planning for sustainability throughout the life of FP activities.



### What is sustainability?

Sustainability is an organization's capacity to continue engaging program participants and community stakeholders through activities and services over time. Specific to this context, an FP coalition's goal is to sustain the coalition itself – its members, momentum, and process – in order to continue its FP activities. For FP community programs, their goal is to keep FP activities alive, sustain service delivery, and build upon the program already created.

### Why is sustainability planning important?

When sources of funding decline or end, organizations need to have active strategies in place to ensure sustainability of FP activities. Sustainability should begin during the initial planning stage of your FP activities and continue throughout the life of FP efforts. *There's more to sustainability than just getting additional money.* While applying for new grants is important, other actions can be taken to promote the longevity of the organization's mission and activities related to FP. Sustainability practices protect FP efforts from disappearing, which could negatively affect the very people activities are designed to help -- individuals in the community who depend on FP services.

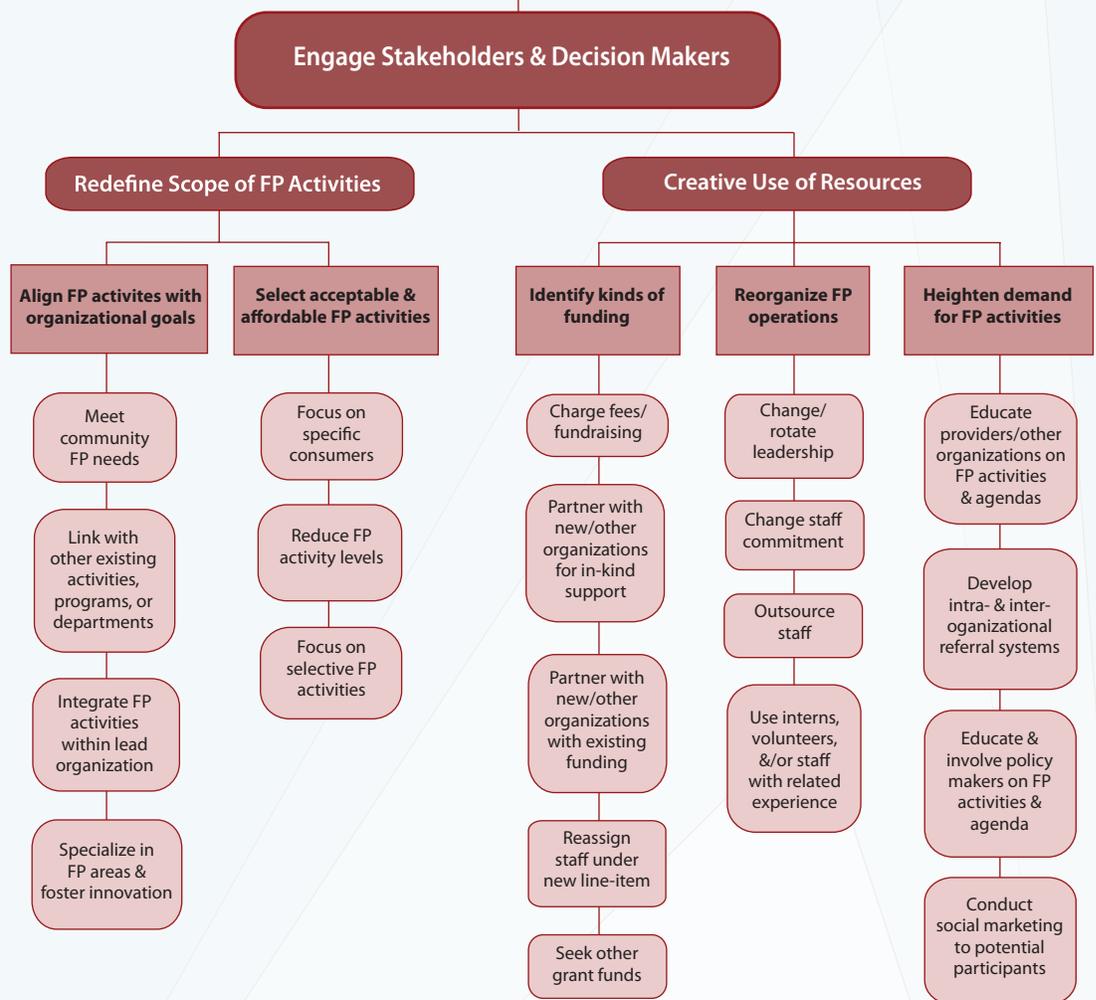
### What is the best road map for our organization's sustainability planning?

Keep on truckin'! Organizations must determine how they will continue to provide FP activities in light of changing resource streams. This will involve some flexibility, as *sustainable activities may not be a "carbon copy" of projects that started out with full funding.* Based on your needs assessment, strategic plan, and resources available, your organization must establish what FP activities are feasible to carry out and will best serve the most pressing needs of your community. Choose strategies from the pathways illustrated in the diagram below to help your organization achieve long-term sustainability.



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**SUSTAINING FALL PREVENTION (FP) ACTIVITIES: PLANNING FOR ACTION**



Adapted from LaPelle et al. (2006) & Pluye et al. (2004)

**The main objective of sustainability** is to *engage stakeholders and decision makers*. Significant players include consumers, administrators, boards of directors, policy makers, foundations, and advocates. Educate these groups on the risk of falls and how effectively your FP practices have addressed this issue based on your evaluation. Consumers must be aware of your FP activities in order to use them, while all stakeholders must understand the need for FP activities so they can champion these efforts and provide further financial and institutional support.

**The first main pathway** involves *redefining your scope of FP activities*. Align your FP activities with your organizational goals so that activities reflect your strategic plan's mission and vision and respond to your community's greatest needs. Select acceptable and affordable FP activities and construct ways to get the most from your existing resources.

**The second main pathway** focuses on developing *creative uses of your resources*. Identify various kinds of funding and develop new ways to support and maintain your activities. Reorganize your internal FP operations to optimize administration and management, possibly by rotating leadership roles and/or shifting staff responsibilities. Heighten the demand for FP activities through marketing and educating the public on how they may be positively impacted by FP practices.



**These ideas are options that provide multiple avenues for your organization to proceed on the sustainability pathway. The third tier of pathways in the diagram includes other key areas to consider along with suggestions for action:**

### ***Partnership Strategies***

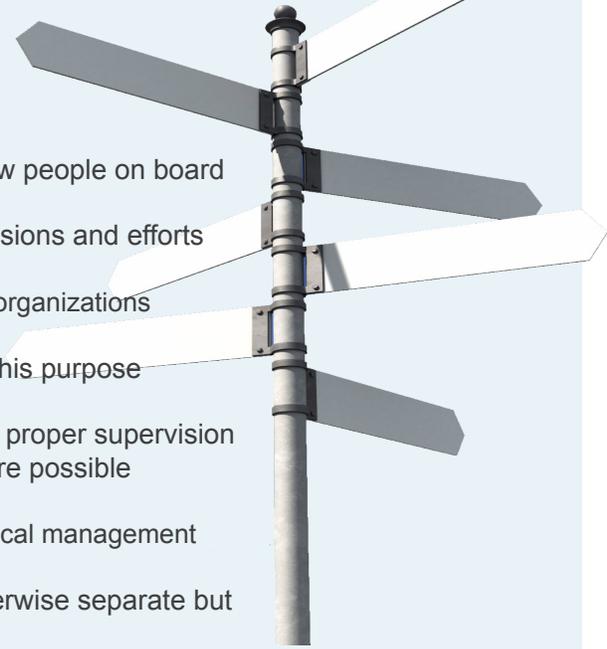
- Link with other existing activities, programs or departments and bring new people on board to fill in any gaps
- Integrate FP activities into the lead and other member organizations' missions and efforts
  - Have Meals on Wheels or EMS responders disseminate FP materials
  - Promote adoption of FP materials and brochures by lead and member organizations
- Create a sustainability subcommittee
- Create a new FP line-item in budget and reassign existing staff time for this purpose
- Outsource staff
- Use student interns, volunteers, and/or staff with related experience with proper supervision – not all things need to be done by an expert; allow others to assist where possible
- Train staff or coalition members to acquire new skills
  - Have staff members take workshops on grant-writing, fundraising, or fiscal management
  - Seek guidance from local foundations on sustainability issues
- Develop intra- and inter-organizational referral systems that can link otherwise separate but related organizations into an FP network
- Partner with other organizations for in-kind support, such as meeting places, staff time, printing
- Partner with other organizations with existing funding, such as local EMS or fire departments and educational institutions

### ***Heighten Demand for FP Activities via Education and Outreach***

- Educate providers, other organizations, and policy makers on the risk of falls
- Inform providers and other organizations of FP activities and agendas
- Educate and involve policy makers on FP activities and agendas
  - Look at policy issues and identify political “hot potatoes”, e.g., fall-related 911 calls and reimbursement issues
  - Identify local leaders to be FP “champions” that promote FP in the community and advocate for recognition of FP on the policy agenda
- Direct social marketing to potential participants
  - Find where your target population can be reached and develop ways to deliver your message
  - Use local media, internal and external group newsletters, and conferences to disseminate information
- Become more visible
  - Create coalition/program website on lead organization website or independently
  - Hold workshops at new and different venues

### ***Select Acceptable, Affordable FP Activities***

- Identify and meet your community's FP needs
- Keep it simple! Less complex activities are more likely to be implemented and therefore more likely to be sustained
- Understand your limitations
  - Reduce scope and frequency of FP activities to reflect changing budget
  - Identify what you can achieve with available/existing resources
  - Identify what you can achieve without funding, e.g., FP workshops at senior expos sponsored by lead or other organizations
  - Identify what you can achieve if you obtain additional funding
- Specialize in FP areas and foster innovation
  - Think outside the box beyond seeking funds
  - Institutionalize programs by applying for non-profit status 501(c)3
  - Hire a professional fundraiser or planning consultant
  - Charge fees for services such as admittance fees for forums or activities and fees for services and/or training
  - Fundraise, e.g., Community Fall Prevention Walk
  - Campaign for individual donors
  - Seek other local, corporate, private, and public grant funds



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### ***How can you jump start your sustainability planning?***

It is very important to start the sustainability process *early*. Your organization will need a foundation upon which to build its sustainability practices. Focus on developing the following organizational structures and resources:

- Establish administrative policies and procedures to guide your FP activities
- Ensure effective leadership to “make things happen”
- Foster members’ participation and commitment so benefits of being a member outweigh costs
- Recruit and retain expert members and train personnel
- Determine the number of hours required for maintaining your activities
- Identify clear, compelling evaluation results because they inform sustainability
  - Evaluate activities to determine areas of success and areas to improve
  - Communicate the benefits of FP activities to stakeholders

### ***What are the impacts of sustainability?***

Sustainability practices are what keep an FP organization’s mission and activities alive. The FP coalition and/or program are the vehicles for your FP efforts. While they need energy to be in motion, they also need ongoing maintenance in order to last. It is essential to build sustainability approaches continually into the structure and process of your organization – practice sustainability while planning and implementing FP activities.

Sustainability is also about behavior and attitude changes. Fall prevention can be sustained in a community through individuals’ adoption of FP activities into their practices and lives. By incorporating various paths to sustainability into your coalition or program, your FP activities will have a lasting impact on the community and the people who are served.

### ***Sustainability Resources for Coalitions and Programs***

#### **Center for Civic Partnerships, Public Health Institute**

Sustainability toolkit: 10 Steps to Maintaining Your Community Improvements  
[[http://www.civicpartnerships.org/docs/tools\\_resources/sustainability.htm](http://www.civicpartnerships.org/docs/tools_resources/sustainability.htm)]

#### **The Finance Project**

Sustaining Comprehensive Community Initiatives: Key Elements for Success  
[<http://www.financeproject.org/Publications/sustaining.pdf>]

#### **Workgroup for Community Health and Development, University of Kansas**

The Community Toolbox

[<http://ctb.ku.edu/>]

Visit the Table of Contents to get an overview of this informative document.

#### **Foundation Center**

[<http://foundationcenter.org/>]

Describes opportunities for training seminars on proposal writing, fundraising, and non-profit management; online training courses; and a foundation finder.

#### **Foundations On-line**

[<http://www.foundations.org>]

Provides a directory of foundations and grant makers.

#### **NonProfit Gateway**

[<http://www.usa.gov/Business/Nonprofit.shtml>]

Find links to government funding information.

***The Fall Prevention Center of Excellence,  
February 2008***

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