**Step-by-Step Guide to Conduct an EMS Assessment Utilizing the**

**EMS Informed Community Self-Determination Framework**

**Purpose**

The Informed Community Self-Determination (ICSD) framework is designed to inform EMS agencies and partners about the:

* type/level of EMS they have,
* reveal areas of improvement and successes of agencies,
* explain alternative levels of care and responses that could be available,
* approximate cost of alternatives, and
* facilitate a taxpayer decision to fund current coverage or adopt new plan.

This framework is designed for rural and frontier EMS agencies but can be a great evaluation tool for any agency.

**Modified ICSD Framework**

The ICSD framework can be modified to fit the available resources and the goals of the participating agencies. The following step-by-step guide details an example of a modified version of the ICSD framework.

**Step 1: Familiarize Self and/or Assessment Team with ICSD Framework**

**Guiding Framework:** [Template for Emergency Medical Services Informed Community Self Determination (ICSD)](https://nasemso.org/wp-content/uploads/2020-Template-for-Informed-Community-Self-Determination-v-6.1.pdf)

**Other Resources:**

* [HRSA Community-Based Needs Assessment](https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/assets/2858-11092/CommunityBasedNeeds.pdf): provides planning tools and questions to discover the EMS agency’s role in the community.
* [Rural Community Ambulance Agency Transformation Toolkit](https://www.ruralcenter.org/tasc/rural-community-ambulance-agency-transformation): provides a self-assessment to assess rural EMS agency readiness in the areas of leadership, strategic planning, community partners, data, operations, workforce and more.
* [Wisconsin Office of Rural Health Assessment Tool for Ambulance Services](http://worh.org/attributes-successful-rural-ambulance-service): this tool includes attributes of a successful rural ambulance service and contains resources to be used in tandem with the ICSD framework.
* [Engaging Communities to Preserve Access to Emergency Medical Services in Rural Maine](https://nasemso.org/wp-content/uploads/White-Paper.Engaging-Communities-to-Preserve-Access-to-Emergency-Medical-Services-in-Rural-Maine.October-2020.FINAL_.pdf): This paper focuses on how ICSD might be implemented to address the rural EMS issues.

**Step 2: Identify the County or Region to Conduct Assessment**

**Step 2a:** Review existing data: internal data, [request data](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/255ec6a96b1b48f6a7a95fc1fa5a63d2) from the OHA EMS & Trauma Systems Program, community health data, etc. Use the data to identify which county or region would benefit most from this assessment.

**Step 2b:** Reach out to state and county-level partners, as well as the [Oregon Office of Rural Health](https://www.ohsu.edu/oregon-office-of-rural-health/contact-orh) to get input or suggestions.

**Step 2c:** Create a short list and ask the assessment team to review and select the county or region.

**Step 3: Reach Out to Partners**

**Step 3a:** Create a partner list that includes contact information (name, role, email, phone number). This county or region partner list will include EMS agencies, fire departments, Board of County Commissioners, Emergency Managers, county public health department, Sheriff’s Office, and other community and county-level stakeholders.

**Step 3b:** Contact partners and ask if they would be interested in participating in the assessment. Here is an example email template:

Hello,

My name is \_\_\_\_. I am the \_\_role\_\_ at \_\_organization\_\_.

I am reaching out because we would like to collaborate with \_\_county or region\_\_ EMS and fire agencies and county-level stakeholders to help improve access and sustainability. This collaborative \_\_county or region\_\_ assessment will identify needs and then work to build and share resources that address those needs.

After reviewing \_\_data references\_\_, we identified \_\_county or region\_\_ as the top pick for this assessment. The project timeline is \_\_x month to x month\_\_. The time commitment for each individual that participates in the assessment is about 1 hour. Once the data collection has concluded, we will be setting up a meeting to share the results and resources. We will do our best to accommodate your schedule, as we know you have a lot on your plate.

Please confirm your interest in participating in this assessment by date .

Contact List for title of assessment :

Use a bulleted list and include all partners contacted for the assessment.

We look forward to working with you and please let us know if you have any questions!

Signature block here

**Step 3c:** Create a mechanism, such as an Excel spreadsheet, to track responses. Here is an example of a response tracker:

 

**Step 3d:** Follow-up by email and phone with partners who have not responded.

**Step 4: Review, Modify and Send Out Surveys**

**Step 4a:** Review and modify surveys to fit your project. Below are examples of surveys:

* **Director Survey**: could send to all EMS Operations Officers and similar.



* **Staff Survey**: could send to all volunteer and employed EMS agency staff.



* **Community Partners Survey**: could send to all fire departments, Emergency Managers, Sheriff’s Office, and other community and county-level stakeholders.



* **Public Health and EMS Survey**: could send to county public health department leadership and similar.



**Step 4b:** Send out surveys. SurveyMonkey is an easy-to-use survey platform.

**Step 4c:** Add survey responses to a response tracker.

**Step 4d:** FOLLOW-UP, FOLLOW-UP, FOLLOW-UP!

**Step 5: Confirm All Surveys Are Submitted and Complete**

**Step 6: Analyze Survey Results**

**Step 6a:** To analyze survey results it may be helpful to use a tool like Excel, R or RStudio to create a scoring system. Use the [Wisconsin Office of Rural Health](http://worh.org/attributes-successful-rural-ambulance-service) Attributes of a Successful Rural Ambulance Service Workbook to categorize survey questions and the [HRSA Community-Based Needs Assessment](https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/assets/2858-11092/CommunityBasedNeeds.pdf) and [Rural Community Ambulance Agency Transformation Toolkit](https://www.ruralcenter.org/tasc/rural-community-ambulance-agency-transformation) to better understand questions.

**Step 7: Research Tools and Resources to Share with Partners that Address Identified Needs**

Areas to research could includemodels of EMS care, education, promising practices, staffing resources, facilitating partner introductions, and more. Refer to the [OHA EMS Resource Toolkit](https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/PROVIDERPARTNERRESOURCES/EMSTRAUMASYSTEMS/Pages/Resources.aspx).

**Step 8: Create Community Meeting Presentation**

**Suggestions and Tips**:

* Share purpose of the Community Meeting.
* Engage in conversation with meeting participants.Encourage them to share their perspective and experiences.
* Reiterate the assessment purpose and process.
* Share how the surveys were analyzed.
* Review survey results of the county or region as a whole rather than focusing on any specific EMS agency.
* Highlight what is going well and the areas of improvement for each category of questions. Ask participants further questions about survey topics get a better picture.
* Be sure to give time for participants to voice any questions, feedback and/or requests during the review of the survey results and at the end of the presentation.
* Conclude the meeting by sharing resources and next steps.

**Step 9: Schedule Community Meeting**

**Step 9a:** Request available dates and times from the list of partners for the Community Meeting. DoodlePoll is an easy-to-use tool to determine the best date and time for participants.

**Step 9b:** Follow-up by email and phone with partners who have not responded.

**Step 9c:** Select Community Meeting date and time. Send meeting invitation that includes the agenda and presentation slides. Send at least one reminder to encourage attendance.

**Step 9d:** Consider setting up a separate Community Meeting for those who were unable to attend.

**Step 10: Create and Send Summary Reports to EMS Agencies**

Createan individualized report for each EMS agency that shows their survey results compared to the average of all the EMS agencies in the county or region. Here is an example of a Modified ICSD Agency Report:

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**Step 11: Create and Send Generic Report to Partners**

Create a generic report that details an overview of the project and can be shared with relevant partners. Here is an example of a Modified ICSD Generic Report:



**Step 12: Sharing Resources and Next Steps**

Refer to the [OHA EMS Resource Toolkit](https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/PROVIDERPARTNERRESOURCES/EMSTRAUMASYSTEMS/Pages/Resources.aspx) for resources.Next steps will depend on the needs identified in the survey results and during the Community Meeting.