



## Defining Informational Needs Worksheet

# Instructions

### **Purpose of Defining Informational Needs**

A fluid communications network is one of the essential components of a reliable CBA support infrastructure. A fully functioning communication network generates relevant information, organizes it and distributes in a timely fashion to those who need it to make informed decisions. It is impossible to successfully implement a school counseling program and achieve expected results if decision-makers and participants are uninformed.

A critical function in a CBA is to ensure that the information various people and groups need to make informed decisions is accurate and readily available. This requires a systematic approach in which the informational needs of constituent groups are identified and the protocols for generating, organizing, distributing and using that information are clearly established.

The “Defining Informational Needs” template provides a means to identify the critical types of information each constituent group needs. Three primary types of information required in a fluid communication network are: definitions of need (generated through needs assessments), descriptions of what needs to be done (articulated and organized in planning documents), and outcome and evaluation information (provided in data reports). A communication network is a complex system and involves many types of information.

### **Information Gathered by This Template**

The template consists of a series of questions, the answers to which will help you get started on defining information needs related to specific CBA processes, and what needs to be done to ensure the fluid generation, organization, distribution and use of the information.

- For which CBA process is informational needs being defined?
- What information is needed?
- Where is it produced?
- How is it produced?
- How is it organized?
- How is it distributed and within what timeframe?
- How is it used by the recipient of the information?
- Who monitors the effectiveness of this process?
- Who is responsible for the successful completion of each step in this process?

**Step-by-Step Instructions for Completing the Template**

Step	Action Steps	Description
1	Gather and organize relevant information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The intent is not to try and create the entire information base at once. Rather, select a specific activity or event and develop the information needs of key players just for that activity.</li> <li>- Since information network involves many people and organizational, completing the template requires input from many sources. This can be accomplished by a work group of key players who meet and work collaboratively, or by an individual who gathers input from key players via electronic communication, phone call and informal contact. The method used to assemble the information can vary. What is most important is that input from key players in gathered, incorporated into and approved by those impacted by the protocols.</li> </ul>
2	Document results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Document your results for each activity. A final version of a completed template can serve as the initial documentation.</li> <li>- Ensure that the informal needs of key individuals and constituent groups are represented in your documentation.</li> </ul>
3	Develop protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Once you have identified the informational needs of key players, develop (or enhance existing) protocols that ensure the information is generated in a timely fashion, and organized and distributed to those who need it.</li> </ul>
4	Implement the protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Operationalize the protocols so that information is produced and flows throughout the network as designed.</li> </ul>
5	Monitor flow of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitor the flow of information to ensure the network is functioning fully, taking corrective action as needed.</li> </ul>
6	Include documented roles, accountabilities and protocols in a CBA Administrative Handbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Compile critical documentation related to the CBA communication network in a single location (e.g., electronic and or print Administrative Handbook for School Counseling).</li> </ul>