

# Instructions and Guidance

## CAST-5 Second Edition

*A collaborative project of the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs and the Johns Hopkins Women's and Children's Health Policy Center*

*Capacity Assessment for State Title V (CAST-5) is a set of assessment and planning tools for state Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant programs interested in examining their organizational capacity to carry out key MCH program functions. For more information on CAST-5, visit [www.amchp.org/cast5](http://www.amchp.org/cast5).*

CAST-5 is intended for use as a management tool to aid in identifying needs and setting priorities related to a program's desired role(s) and necessary capacities. The CAST-5 tools are not scored, and there are no "right," or even "best," answers. Rather, the particular context for each state's Title V program will shape the assessment results.

As you read through these instructions, keep in mind that the value of CAST-5 lies in the discussions it stimulates. While there is a specific set of steps suggested for its use, CAST-5 should be viewed overall as a way to think through, articulate, and document what your program does and how well it does it. This is an opportunity to focus on areas in which your program excels as much as on deficiencies.

There are many ways to structure a CAST-5 assessment process. The CAST-5 tools are designed to be useful as stand-alone documents and in various combinations. These instructions describe each of the CAST-5 tools and how they might be used individually or in various combinations. Instructions for key assessment steps appear both in this document and on the front page of each tool. This document also provides guidance on structuring and planning for a CAST-5 process and facilitating assessment deliberations. Additional guidance can be found in the CAST-5 Facilitators Guide, which can be downloaded at [www.amchp.org/cast5](http://www.amchp.org/cast5).

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## Expectations for the CAST-5 Process

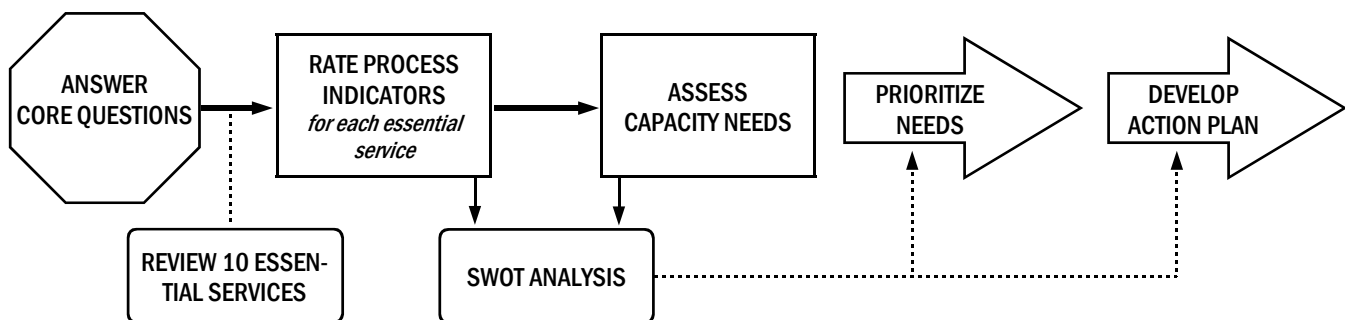
The ultimate goal and end product of a comprehensive CAST-5 assessment is the creation of an action plan for organizational capacity development. In addition to this concrete outcome, the CAST-5 process is likely to spark dialogue and collaboration across program areas, while bringing Title V staff together to articulate a broad vision for the program's future. All participants in CAST-5 should be informed at the outset what they will get out of CAST-5.

### CAST-5 will help you:

- Think strategically about program priorities and focus,
- Identify areas in which programs can coordinate and maximize resources,
- Clarify mission and infrastructure needs for “marketing” to policymakers, and
- Examine and strengthen external resources and relationships.

**CAST-5 will *not*** result in a list of programs, services, and/or staff to cut, or function as a repository of budgetary information.

## The CAST-5 Process



*Each component of CAST-5 can be used as a stand-alone tool for targeted purposes. Used together, the tools provide an in-depth assessment of program capacity that forms the basis for detailed action steps.*

## The Core Questions

The Core Questions prompt you to determine if your program is meeting some basic operational requirements. They also provide a context for responses in the subsequent CAST-5 tools.

When using this tool in a group setting, it is helpful for all participants to think about their answers to the Core Questions in advance. You may wish to refer to your program's most recent Title V Block Grant report and application for help in answering the Core Questions. An initial draft set of answers can serve as the basis for group discussion and revision.

The Core Questions tool also lists potentially useful resources for information, consultation, or training relevant to undertaking the steps outlined in the Core Questions.

*Note that the Core Questions can be applied at the level of the agency as a whole and/or at the level of each priority or strategic health issue identified.*

The answers to the Core Questions should be posted for easy viewing and discussed with all assessment participants. It is helpful to refer to the Core Questions responses throughout the CAST-5 process, but particularly before prioritizing Capacity Needs and developing an action plan.

### The CAST-5 Core Questions:

1. Have you established the vision/goals for the MCH population?
2. Given the Title V needs assessment, have you identified the priority health issues and desired population health outcomes?
3. Have you identified the political, economic, and organizational environments for addressing the priority health issues?
4. What are the macro-level strategic directions for the Title V program in light of the responses to questions 1, 2 and 3 above?
5. Have you identified the programmatic organizational strategies you will use to implement the strategic directions identified in #4 and to achieve the desired population outcomes identified in #2?
6. Have you identified the capacity you need to implement the strategies?

## Review of the 10 MCH Essential Services

The Review of the 10 MCH Essential Services provides an opportunity for the state's CAST-5 assessment team members to begin the CAST-5 process with a common understanding of the 10 MCH Essential Services. If a subset of the Essential Services will be assessed, rather than all 10, this tool may help in determining which Essential Services should serve as the focus.

All assessment participants should read this document at the outset of the assessment process. Title V program staff should become familiar with both the 10 MCH Essential Services and the more detailed public MCH program functions that are described in bulleted sub-points to the 10 Essential Services. External participants in the CAST-5 process could be given just the list of the 10 MCH Essential Services that appears on the last page of the tool.

The 10 MCH Essential Services are described in more detail in *Public MCH Program Functions Framework: Essential Public Health Services to Promote Maternal and Child Health in America* (Grason and Guyer, 1995), which can be viewed on the Women's and Children's Health Policy Center's web site at [www.jhsph.edu/WCHPC/publications/pubmchfx.pdf](http://www.jhsph.edu/WCHPC/publications/pubmchfx.pdf).

## Process Indicators

The Process Indicators are used to identify the state's current and desired levels of performance of the MCH-specific Essential Services. A set of Process Indicators is provided for each Essential Service. The state can assess its functioning across all Essential Services or choose to focus on a subset for a more limited assessment. For instance, a program choosing to focus on data-related functions and capacities might complete the Process Indicators for Essential Services 1 (assess and monitor), 5 (data-driven planning and policy development), 9 (evaluation), and 10 (research and demonstration). Similarly, a program wishing to identify the activities and capacities needed for enhanced community partnerships and communication might focus on Essential Services 4 (mobilize community partnerships) and 3 (inform and educate). Regardless of whether all of the Essential Services or just a subset are assessed, the Process Indicators tool can be used as a stand-alone exercise, or it can be used in conjunction with the other CAST-5 tools for a more comprehensive look at program needs and capacities.

To use the Process Indicators tool, first read through the entire list of Process Indicators for the Essential Service being assessed. Each set of Process Indicators reflects program output or activities along a continuum; the first indicator in a list represents a more basic or foundational level of performance than does the last. However, the continuum does not necessarily reflect the order in which one would approach the tasks described.

(Continued on page 5)

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After reading through the entire list:

- (1) Discuss each Process Indicator and mark the response category that best reflects how adequately the Title V program performs the function detailed: *minimally adequate, partially adequate, substantially adequate, or fully adequate*.
- (2) Record contributions of other entities in the MCH system in the space provided.
- (3) As salient points arise about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, or threats, record them in the SWOT Analysis tool (described in the next section).

After completing all of the Process Indicators, transfer the ratings onto the Summary Sheet provided.

*The following points are critical to the discussion of Process Indicators and will help the assessment team interpret indicators and reach consensus:*

- ◆ **Assess adequacy in light of “where you want/need to be,” given the strategic goals the assessment team has articulated and the contributions of other system partners.** There are no gold standards in CAST-5. For this reason, a rating of “fully adequate” should not be interpreted to mean “perfect.” “Fully adequate” is intended to reflect adequacy *given the program’s strategic goals*. The response categories are aligned along an arrow to reflect the continuous nature of quality improvement.
- ◆ Mark one box corresponding to a response category for the overall Title V program (or organizational entity being assessed). If performance ratings differ by sub-units of the program, you may write those units in the appropriate places along the arrow.
- ◆ Suggested points for discussion are provided below each Process Indicator. These questions are intended as discussion guides only, not as checklists. Deliberations should not focus exclusively on these discussion questions, as they do not necessarily represent *all* of the elements that must be in place for adequate performance.

## SWOT Analysis

For each Essential Service, identify the internal and external strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that are relevant to undertaking or enhancing the specified function. Examples of factors to consider are provided for each component of the analysis.

Many strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats will emerge from the discussions of Process Indicators for each Essential Service; record these issues as they arise. After completing each set of Process Indicators, and before moving on to the next Essential Service, walk through the SWOT worksheet to make additions and revisions as necessary.

When the assessments of all Essential Services are complete, you may wish to combine the SWOT worksheets for reference in prioritizing needs and developing a capacity building action plan. To create a composite/summary SWOT, first merge the SWOT worksheets into a single grid. Then group and summarize items as appropriate to create a shorter, summary SWOT. Highlight any cross-cutting themes that emerge. You may wish to distribute this summary SWOT to all assessment participants and/or post it on large sheets. Refer to the summary SWOT for background and guidance in prioritizing needs and drafting action steps.

## Capacity Needs

The Capacity Needs are grouped into four categories of resources:

**Structural Resources:** Financial, human, and material resources; policies and protocols; and other resources held by or accessible to the program that form the groundwork for the performance of core functions.

**Data/Information Systems:** Technological resources enabling state of the art information management and data analysis.

**Organizational Relationships:** Partnerships, communication channels, and other types of interactions and collaborations with public and private entities, including, but not restricted to, local, state, and federal agencies, professional associations, academic institutions, research groups, private providers and insurers of health care, community-based organizations, consumer groups, the media, and elected officials.

**Competencies/Skills:** Knowledge, skills, and abilities of Title V staff and/or other individuals/agencies accessible to the Title V program (i.e., borrowed/purchased staff resources).

*(Continued on page 7)*

(Continued from page 6)

For each Capacity Need listed:

- 1) Discuss the extent to which that resource is sufficiently present or in need of enhancement, given the activities and performance goals of the program. Other considerations might include the applicability and feasibility for the state and whether the resource is accessible from other entities.
- 2) Using the scoring worksheet at the end of the list, check the box indicating whether the program *has* or *needs* each resource.
- 3) *For every identified need, record the specific area of programmatic performance or function for which the capacity is needed (e.g., for a particular Essential Service or Process Indicator, for data sharing, for “marketing” the program to the public and policymakers).*
- 4) Information that does not fit into the form provided can be added to the summary SWOT described in the previous section. For example, if the capacity is not consistent across program areas, that information might be noted as a weakness.

Keep in mind as you use the Capacity Needs Tool:

- ◆ **Determination of need should be made in the context of the program’s goals, objectives, and desired roles.**
- ◆ **Insufficient funding or authority should not be seen as an insurmountable barrier.** Rather, you may need to strategize about other mechanisms for obtaining these resources (e.g., non-statutory means of acquiring authority, seeking grants). Alternatively, you may be able to identify external entities to carry out some types of activities on behalf of your program.
- ◆ **The Title V program must have sufficient numbers of staff** (or access to non-Title V staff) with the competencies/skills listed. The numbers of staff necessary will vary according to program structure and focus. Skills do not necessarily need to be held “in-house,” but they do need to be readily accessible to the Title V program on a routine basis. *Determining whether your Title V program houses or has access to personnel in appropriate numbers with the specified capabilities and expertise should be part of your deliberations.*

## Tips for Preventing Stalled Discussions

The CAST-5 tools were developed for use by programs across the country operating under a broad range of conditions and contexts. The interpretation of indicators and the performance continuum they represent will be colored by state context. Some terms/elements may not apply to your Title V program. Do not let the non-applicable aspects impede discussions and forward movement.

It is likely that some discussions in the assessment process will not result in consensus. In these cases, your group will have to strategize about ways to accommodate different perspectives and use the disagreement to spark further discussion of program needs.

If the assessment group has trouble reaching consensus on adequacy ratings for Process Indicators or on responses for Capacity Needs, consider taking a vote. Dissenting views can be recorded in the detailed notes for the assessment. Differences in opinion also may be reflected by recording salient points in the appropriate sections of the SWOT worksheets.



## Prioritizing Needs

The intent of this step is to select from the list of identified needs a set of priority areas to address in the near term. The sample prioritization worksheet provided illustrates just one method for prioritizing; any process that is comfortable for the group can be used instead. Alternative group processes are described in the *CAST-5 Facilitators Guide*, available on the CAST-5 web site ([www.amchp.org/cast5](http://www.amchp.org/cast5)).

**Regardless of the process you use for prioritizing, as a first step review the answers to the Core Questions and the summary SWOT Analysis, highlighting salient and cross-cutting themes.** Other key contextual concerns might include priority Performance Measures, budgetary information, and other high-visibility state initiatives.

An important point to remember is that *maintenance of current activity and/or resources is a strategic choice*. Although the assessment is designed to facilitate capacity development, the unique features of each state will determine what steps, if any, are taken with the assessment results.

It may be helpful to establish criteria for prioritizing. The criteria used in this sample worksheet are:

**Importance:** What are the consequences of *not* addressing this need? How much would building this capacity or taking this step contribute to reaching the Title V and/or MCH population and programmatic goals?

**Cost:** How much will it cost to build this capacity? Will the use of funds for addressing this need negatively impact other resources or programs?

**Time:** How much staff time will be used to take this step or build this capacity? How long will it take to accomplish?

**Commitment:** How much staff buy in is there for taking this step or building this capacity? Is program leadership on board?

**Feasibility:** Given the state context (e.g., reorganization, funding cuts, hiring freezes, political will...), how realistic is it to focus on this capacity need?

Again, the prioritization worksheet provided in CAST-5 is a guide and template; you may choose to use it as is, adapt it, or use another method/process altogether. For example, Hawaii chose to base their prioritizing on three criteria. For each capacity need that could be addressed, they considered whether: *1) not taking action was likely to create unbearable future fiscal or human costs; 2) progress was possible within one year; and 3) the area was within Title V program/division control.*

As another example, *Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships* (NACCHO, 2000) uses as criteria for setting priorities *1) impact on strategic goal, 2) resources required (funding, staff, time), and 3) probability of success.*

## Developing an Action Plan

Once Capacity Needs have been prioritized and a subset selected for further planning, a process for drafting a detailed work plan should be specified. A sample action planning worksheet is provided in CAST-5. The action plan may be fully elaborated with the entire assessment team, or the “skeleton” of a plan may be drafted, with more detailed action steps drawn up by assigned staff or work groups.

The action plan should reflect steps that can be undertaken in a defined period of time, such as 6 months or a year. For each action step, identify a staff member or small team responsible for drafting a more detailed work plan and/or implementing the action step. At the same time, specify a process for periodic status reports to program leadership and other assessment participants.

You may wish to use the action plan and other assessment results to draft a summary or final report for distribution to assessment participants and other interested parties. Ideally, this report on program capacity needs and development plans will be incorporated into Title V program planning activities and documentation, such as the Block Grant application materials and the five year needs assessment. For more information, see the section titled “Guidance on using CAST-5 with Title V program planning and assessment activities” on the CAST-5 web site.

***Remember: The assessment process is iterative and ongoing; like any quality improvement process, continuous monitoring and adjustments are key to enhancing agency development.***

### Using CAST-5 in Times of Fiscal Crisis

In times of tight fiscal constraints, action plans may need to emphasize cost-neutral capacity development steps. While the action plan might involve recruitment of additional staff and/or redirection of the job responsibilities of existing staff, preliminary steps may need to be undertaken in the context of current staff composition.

Some examples of cost-neutral capacity development actions identified by states that have used CAST-5 include:

- Using staff-to-staff mentoring to enhance skills (e.g., data/analytic skills)
- Adopting common definitions across programs for key MCH outcome measures
- Formalizing informal relationships with other agencies
- Consolidating communication channels (e.g., merging program area newsletters)

Additionally, refer to the guidance on page 2 about what programs can and cannot expect from CAST-5.

## **Key Challenges in Prioritizing and Action Planning**

A comprehensive CAST-5 process can be intense and tiring. In order to achieve a sense of closure and the buy-in and commitment of all participants to carry out the action plan, a number of challenges must be addressed:

### **Achieving closure while addressing fatigue of participants**

Participants may need a break after an intense schedule of meetings, especially when CAST-5 is implemented as a retreat. However, postponing the planning stage may lead to discouragement and lack of closure. There is a trade-off between getting the action plan done while momentum is high and doing it when participants are re-energized.

### **Avoiding feeling overwhelmed**

Program needs may seem too numerous to address. To minimize discouragement, take the time to identify and discuss cross-cutting themes from the list of capacity needs. You may wish to reduce the list of identified capacity needs to a shorter list of "needs themes," and work off of the shorter list in the prioritizing process. An effective and structured prioritizing process also will help minimize discouragement. Be sure to highlight strengths and opportunities in addition to weaknesses, threats, and needs.

### **Ensuring that everyone feels they've got a stake**

Participants need to see that their concerns and contributions to the assessment are addressed in the action plan. Different definitions of "priority" may influence whether or not participants feel their voices have been heard. "Priority" can refer to the order in which issues should be addressed or to the level of importance, based on the complexity or ease of addressing the need, temporal issues (e.g., funding or legislative cycles), or other considerations. What is most important is that there is clarity and some level of consensus within the working group on the approach being used for prioritizing and action planning.

### **Addressing achievability**

It is important to incorporate both "quick wins" and longer-term capacity-building measures into the final action plan.

### **Maintaining momentum**

Be sure that a follow-up process/date is specified for reporting back to the group and implementing and monitoring next steps. Draft a written document outlining the vision, goals, and action steps along with specific details of the work plan (e.g., responsible parties, timeline), and obtain the approval of all assessment team members before finalizing the plan.

## Planning for the Assessment Process: Implementation Options

The CAST-5 tools can be used flexibly to meet varying needs. The tools can be used individually or in various combinations. The assessment can be carried out at the level of the MCH system (including non-Title V partners), the level of the Title V program, or the individual program area level. Each state will need to determine the best combination of approaches for its program, given staff availability, competing demands on the program, the breadth of perspectives desired, the timeframe available and/or specific timing goals, and other management and resource parameters. The table below highlights key factors to consider in determining the desired scope, depth, output, time frame, participants, and group process.

	Variations	Pros	Cons
Scope	<b>All Essential Services Simultaneously</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Best way to get the “big picture”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time consuming</li> <li>High level of Staff Commitment</li> </ul>
	<b>Selected Subset(s) of Essential Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More manageable organizational/management burden</li> <li>May be a more efficient way of focusing on an essential service/functional area already deemed a priority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May leave gaps in assessment</li> <li>May be difficult to determine which essential services to focus on without prior planning</li> </ul>
Depth	<b>All Tool Components</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps to assure that the end result includes concrete steps to address identified problem areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large commitment of time and personnel</li> </ul>
	<b>Selected Tool Components</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using only the process indicators in conjunction with a detailed analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and needs can provide a useful framework for thinking about current program function and desired program directions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Still need to make sure that an action plan is developed to ensure productivity and closure – this may be easier if the capacity needs tools are used</li> </ul>
Output	<b>One Action Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a sense of the “big picture”</li> <li>Reduces redundancy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Depending on scope, depth and timeframe, participants may desire a more immediate sense of closure at each step in the assessment process</li> </ul>
	<b>Separate Action Plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May provide more immediate sense of next steps to take</li> <li>May be easier to manage in smaller “chunks”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If many essential services are assessed, developing multiple action plans may be prohibitively time consuming</li> <li>Generating multiple plans effectively bypasses important synthesizing steps in the CAST-5 process that highlight overarching themes, which may lead to disjointed action steps and unnecessary redundancy</li> </ul>

	Variation	Pros	Cons
Time Frame	<b>Compressed</b> <i>(e.g., retreat, series of meetings)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assures that momentum, collective knowledge of the process, and discussions are not lost due to time away from the process</li> <li>May be necessary to achieve desired results at appropriate time for funding, political, program or other purposes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CAST-5 involves intensive discussions and deliberations, and team members may fatigue quickly</li> <li>“Burn out” could result in an overall negative experience as opposed to the desired team- or program-building</li> <li>The group may risk not being able to complete the full process in the allotted time period</li> </ul>
	<b>Extended</b> <i>(e.g., series of meetings over several months)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows more time for richer discussions, and involvement of more perspectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants may lose interest</li> <li>Program context could change in ways that affect assessment results</li> </ul>
Participants	<b>All MCH/CSHCN Program Units</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fosters sense of team- and program-building</li> <li>More efficient overall than doing separately if all units are planning to participate at some point within the same timeframe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More difficult to schedule</li> <li>Discussions may be more lengthy and contentious</li> </ul>
	<b>Selected Program Units</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be done more quickly/efficiently</li> <li>Can go through process on a specific issue</li> <li>Can be done regardless of rest of Title V program’s ability to participate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May miss out on leveraging complementary efforts that may be taking place concurrently in other program units</li> </ul>
	<b>Program Management Only</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keeps authorized decision makers highly involved and informed, which may assure an effective process and outcome</li> <li>Reduces complexity of task and streamlines discussions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May have less effective implementation of action plan by staff</li> </ul>
	<b>Broad Staff Involvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could enhance quality of discussions and assure a thorough capacity assessment</li> <li>CAST-5 process could serve as an educational or staff development strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More difficult to schedule</li> <li>Discussions may be more lengthy and contentious</li> <li>Staff may be reticent to express themselves freely in presence of supervisors</li> </ul>
	<b>Internal Program Personnel Only</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simpler process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential for only “party-line” perspectives</li> </ul>
	<b>Including External Partners</b> <i>(within government or from the community)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could help build support for and coordination with Title V Activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More difficult to schedule</li> <li>Discussions may be more lengthy and contentious</li> </ul>
	Grouping	<b>One Assessment Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases consistency of results</li> <li>Increases facility using CAST-5 tools</li> </ul>
<b>Small Workgroups</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows for inclusion of a greater number of staff members and perspectives</li> <li>Potentially greater “buy in” to carry out action plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More advance preparation needed</li> <li>Potentially more difficult to schedule meetings</li> </ul>

## Planning for the Assessment Process: Facilitation Tips

Implementing CAST-5 is best done with the help of a designated facilitator(s) who plans for and orchestrates the CAST-5 process. It is not necessary to hire an outside consultant for this purpose; a Title V staff person with a “big picture” perspective, good organizational skills, flexibility, and preferably experience with strategic planning concepts and techniques may be the designated facilitator with equal success. It may be helpful to designate a separate meeting planner to assist with logistics like meeting space.

### Tasks of the planner:

- Obtain meeting space.
- Arrange for meals and refreshments.
- Distribute assessment materials.
- Schedule meeting(s).

Additional support and resources for planning and facilitating CAST-5, including a *Facilitators Guide*, are on the web: [www.amchp.org/cast5](http://www.amchp.org/cast5).

### Tasks of the facilitator:

- Serve as the contact person and “expert” on CAST-5.
- Hold at least one pre-assessment meeting to orient assessment participants to CAST-5 and answer questions related to the assessment logistics and process.
- Plan the assessment agenda. Identify sections to be carried out in small groups if desired.
- Facilitate the assessment process by introducing sections and tasks, leading discussions or designating other team members to lead them, and keeping discussions on track and efficient.

### Helpful Hints for Facilitators:

- **Designate discussion leaders** to function as facilitators for assessment sections related to their primary program areas.
- **Designate two recorders for each section/discussion**—one to take detailed notes and one to fill out worksheets/flip charts.
- **Think in advance about how you would like to record responses and comments** for different assessment components so that the whole team can follow along (e.g., on the computer with an LCD projector, a series of flip chart sheets posted on the wall). Keep in mind that some components will be filled out concurrently, such as the SWOT Analysis with the Process Indicators.
- **Become familiar with the instructions for each CAST-5 section.** Prior to beginning each section, and during deliberations as needed, remind the assessment team of both the basic instructions and the general goal/end product of the activity.
- **Set time limits** to “contain” discussions and promote closure.

## Review of Assessment Steps

- 1) Be sure the assessment team has answered the **Core Questions** and has that information available for reference.
- 2) **Review the Ten MCH Essential Services** with team members to ensure that everyone shares a common understanding of them.
- 3) Discuss the adequacy of each **Process Indicator**.
- 4) Concurrently with step 3, **analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT)** related to the performance of each Essential Service.
- 5) Proceed through steps 3 and 4 for each Essential Service.
- 6) Consolidate and **summarize SWOT analyses** into a single grid, highlighting cross-cutting themes.
- 7) Review and identify the status of listed **Capacity Needs**.
- 8) Discuss strategic issues (e.g., mission, overarching program goals, barriers, opportunities, etc.) and program context related to prioritizing Capacity Needs.
- 9) **Prioritize Capacity Needs.**
- 10) Complete, or specify a process for generating, a detailed **capacity development Action Plan.**

