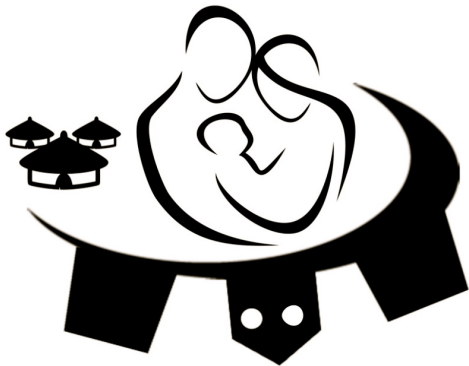


Implementing the It Takes a Village Project



June 2024



Utah Department of
Health & Human Services
Health Equity

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Introduction

Purpose

This implementation guide is designed to determine whether your organization or institution is ready to implement the It Takes a Village: Giving our babies the best chance (ITAV) project.

ITAV was created by the Utah Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office of Health Equity (OHE) to motivate and support Utah's Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (NHPI) families and community members to become resources in their communities to address birth outcomes disparities.

Learn more about the DHHS OHE's process of identifying birth outcomes disparities among Utah's NHPI communities and the development of ITAV at <https://gov-utah-healthequity-03-02-2022-bucket.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/it-takes-a-village/index.html>.

Method

Readiness will be assessed using a checklist of questions about your organization's support, experiences, resources, and plans for sustainability available in this guide.

This implementation guide is based on a readiness assessment developed by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS), Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) at ahrq.gov/teamsteps/readiness/index.html.



Readiness assessment checklist

The readiness assessment is designed to identify your organization's overall readiness to implement the ITAV project. It uses a checklist with 10 questions regarding support, experiences, resources, and sustainability.

Answer "Yes" or "No" to the questions on the following page. If your organization can respond "Yes" to all of the questions, you are ready to implement the ITAV project. However, before implementation, we suggest you review the Tips for a smoother implementation of ITAV (p. 13).

If your organization answers "No" to any of the questions, you can review the Guidance to improve organizational readiness (p. 4) to prepare to implement the ITAV project.

We strongly suggest you become familiar with ITAV's curriculum and project needs including the background, framework, content from the workshops, budget, etc. before you start the readiness assessment.

- ITAV website: <https://gov-utah-healthequity-03-02-2022-bucket.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/it-takes-a-village/index.html>
- DHHS OHE website: www.healthequity.utah.gov
- Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP) Innovation Station ITAV handout: http://www.amchp.org/programsandtopics/BestPractices/InnovationStation/ISDocs/Implementation%20Handout_ITAV_2018.pdf
- ITAV Facilitator Manual: <https://gov-utah-healthequity-03-02-2022-bucket.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/it-takes-a-village/pdf/facilitator-manual.pdf>

Readiness assessment checklist



Questions	Responses	
Support		
1. Does your organization’s mission align with and support the purposes of ITAV?	Yes	No
2. Does your organization’s leadership support ITAV implementation?	Yes	No
3. Will your organization provide or seek financial support to implement ITAV?	Yes	No
Experiences		
4. Is your organization familiar with your NHPI communities?	Yes	No
5. Does your organization have a current working relationship with your NHPI communities?	Yes	No
6. Does your organization have experience providing educational workshops?	Yes	No
Resources		
7. Is your organization willing to provide staff with the time, skills, and resources needed to support ITAV?	Yes	No
8. Does your organization have partnerships that can facilitate the implementation of ITAV?	Yes	No
Sustainability		
9. Do your organization and your NHPI community have the capacity to sustain ITAV?	Yes	No
10. Does your organization have a sustainability plan for ITAV?	Yes	No



Guidance to improve organizational readiness

These recommendations are provided to improve an organization's readiness and capacity to implement ITAV (AHRQ, 2016).



Support

1. Does your organization's mission align with and support the purposes of ITAV?

The main purpose of ITAV is to motivate and support Utah's NHPI families and communities to address birth outcomes disparities. ITAV uses a robust framework centered on Pacific Island culture to raise awareness and engage participants. ITAV works to strengthen communities by supporting cultural identities and promoting generational health.

Make sure your organization's mission aligns with and supports ITAV's purposes for your NHPI communities. This helps everyone in your organization work toward the same goal. It also ensures the outcomes of the project are meaningful to your organization and provides evidence of your effectiveness to your stakeholders and/or grantors.

If your organization answered "Yes," skip to Question 2.

If your organization answered "No," you may wish to explore the following suggestions:

- Partner with an organization whose mission aligns with and supports the purposes of ITAV.
- Incorporate or adopt ITAV's purposes into your organization's mission.

If none of these suggestions are currently feasible or attempts are unsuccessful, it may not be an appropriate time to implement ITAV. Consider trying again in the future when circumstances change.



2. Does your organization's leadership support ITAV implementation?

Ongoing support from your organization's leadership is essential for a smooth and effective implementation of ITAV. Leaderships' permission to pursue the project will determine whether ITAV activities can even be initiated. Additional approvals will affect resource allocation, timelines, and ultimately, outcomes. Moreover, if leadership is supportive it may open new opportunities for further resources and partnerships.

If your organization answered "Yes," skip to Question 3.

If your organization answered "No," you may wish to explore the following suggestions:

- Invest in building trusting relationships with your senior leadership across multiple levels.
- Seek opportunities to share with your leadership about ITAV. Be prepared to explain general information about ITAV, how it aligns with your mission, and how it may benefit your organization and your NHPI communities.
- Determine reasons for the lack of support from your organization's leadership.
- Engage in honest communication with your leadership about concerns and questions. Prepare in advance to address them if possible.

If none of these suggestions are currently feasible or attempts are unsuccessful, it may not be an appropriate time to implement ITAV. Consider trying again in the future when circumstances change.

3. Will your organization provide or seek financial support to implement ITAV?

Financial support is a critical component of ITAV implementation. It ensures the project coordinator and additional personnel such as facilitators can devote the necessary time and effort to the project. Materials and supplies are also required for successful implementation. Without financial support, which often drives and facilitates other resources like time and personnel, it will be difficult to implement the project.

For a sample budget visit: http://www.amchp.org/programsandtopics/BestPractices/InnovationStation/ISDocs/Implementation%20Handout_ITAV_2018.pdf

If your organization answered "Yes," skip to Question 4.



If your organization answered “No,” you may wish to explore the following suggestions:

- Seek financial support internally. Meet with individuals in your organization to see what funds are available.
- Ask your network. They may know of potential opportunities from individuals, organizations, partners, public sector, private sector, or philanthropies and foundations.
- Search and apply for grants offered by local or federal governments, local and national organizations, and foundations, etc.
- Raise funding through events (charity walks/runs), sponsors, and individual donations.

If none of these suggestions are currently feasible or attempts are unsuccessful, it may not be an appropriate time to implement ITAV. Consider trying again in the future when circumstances change.



Experiences

4. Is your organization familiar with your NHPI communities?

ITAV uses culture as a pathway to support and improve the health of NHPI communities. You must be familiar with your NHPI communities before you implement ITAV. It is the foundation of the project purposes. Your NHPI communities will be unique in their characteristics, needs, norms, behaviors, and health outcomes. Understanding your NHPI community will help you tailor ITAV'S implementation for success.

Learn more about how the DHHS OHE became familiar with and gained a better understanding of their NHPI communities at <https://gov-utah-healthequity-03-02-2022-bucket.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/it-takes-a-village/index.html>

If your organization answered “Yes,” skip to Question 5.



If your organization answered “No,” you may wish to explore the following suggestions:

- Build trusting relationships with individuals or organizations familiar with the NHPI communities. They will help build your awareness as well as engage in all processes such as data collection, analysis, interpretation, etc.
- Review and analyze available disaggregated datasets to better understand your NHPI communities’ health outcomes, health disparities, and socioeconomic context. If they are not available, create datasets that disaggregate Asians and Pacific Islanders.
- Gain further context of the data through additional resources such as community-based assessments, focus groups, community conversations, oversampling surveys, studies, etc. If unavailable, consider pursuing these types of activities.

If none of these suggestions are currently feasible or attempts are unsuccessful, it may not be an appropriate time to implement ITAV. Consider trying again in the future when circumstances change.

5. Does your organization have a current working relationship with your NHPI communities?

ITAV is a community-based project and requires current working relationships with your NHPI communities and organizations serving these communities. These relationships will add expertise to your organization and bridge the gap of experience and knowledge. They will help you understand community dynamics, hierarchy, and standards. Your relationships will ultimately affect the success of the project and may save your organization time, money, and stress during implementation.

If your organization answered “Yes,” skip to Question 6.

If your organization answered “No,” you may wish to explore the following suggestions:

- Suggestions from Question 4 will help you build working relationships with your NHPI communities.
- Identify and engage key leaders or organizations who already have the trust of their community. These may include local leaders, faith-based leaders/organizations, tribal leaders (chiefs), traditional healers, community-based organizations (CBO), business owners, professional athletes, etc.
- Invite these partners to sit on an advisory committee or form an



- advisory committee specifically for this project.
- Be patient. Developing trustworthy relationships takes time and effort. These topics are sensitive and it may take a concentrated effort and ingenuity to gain community buy-in and approval.

If none of these suggestions are currently feasible or attempts are unsuccessful, it may not be an appropriate time to implement ITAV. Consider trying again in the future when circumstances change.

6. Does your organization have experience providing educational workshops?

ITAV is a series of workshops where people gather together to engage and discuss sensitive community issues. ITAV facilitators moderate workshops where participants learn about maternal and infant health in the context of NHPI traditional cultural concepts. Because of the nature of these conversations between families and clans, where different thoughts, opinions, ideas, experiences, and knowledge may be shared, strategic facilitation and guidance is crucial. Experience in educational workshops, particularly around sensitive topic areas, will ensure the approaches meet participants' needs.

If your organization answered "Yes," skip to Question 7.

If your organization answered "No," you may wish to explore the following suggestions:

- Partner with individuals or organizations with experience providing educational workshops. It would be helpful if at least one of these partners has expertise in maternal and infant health.
- Familiarize your organization with conducting educational workshops and facilitating sensitive conversations. You might consider local partners to provide training or seek out resources locally or online.
- If ITAV is your first experience with educational workshops, consider adding an evaluation component to your activities so those involved can discuss and learn from their experiences.

If none of these suggestions are currently feasible or attempts are unsuccessful, it may not be an appropriate time to implement ITAV. Consider trying again in the future when circumstances change.



Support

Experiences

Resources

Sustainability

Resources

7. Is your organization willing to provide staff with the time, skills, and resources needed to support ITAV?

Organizations need to be strategic when they assign or hire appropriate staff to implement the ITAV project. First, the ITAV staff must have the freedom to allocate sufficient time to the project. Because the ITAV project requires a lot preparation for the workshops and support for the community, the amount of time staff can devote will directly correlate to how successfully the project is implemented. Second, the ITAV staff need to be highly organized, able to plan and develop activity timelines, manage budgets and funding, conduct evaluation and analysis, develop community trust and partnerships, mentor community partners, etc. A mix of staff with diverse skillsets can clarify the division of responsibilities and increase productivity. Finally, the ITAV staff needs access to resources such as financial support, supplies, data tools, partnerships, etc. These resources will empower staff to successfully implement the project.

For a sample of the staff needs, see pages 4-6 of AMCHP's innovation station website: amchp.org/programsandtopics/BestPractices/InnovationStation/ISDocs/Implementation%20Handout_ITAV_2018.pdf

If your organization answered "Yes," skip to Question 8.

If your organization answered "No," then you may wish to explore the following suggestions:

- Provide your community partners with a job description outlining specific skills required.
- Consider contracting outside organizations to supplement the staffing needs of your organization. However, be aware that at least one internal staff member will need to oversee the project.
- Evaluate whether your advisory boards or community partners can devote the needed time and resources to the project. A formal agreement is suggested in order to clarify responsibilities, timelines, and activities. However, this option is not as ideal and may come with frustrations.



If none of these suggestions are currently feasible or attempts are unsuccessful, it may not be an appropriate time to implement ITAV. Consider trying again in the future when circumstances change.

8. Does your organization have partnerships that can facilitate the implementation of ITAV?

Many of the needed resources for the implementation of ITAV may be supplemented through your organizations' partnerships. For example, the ITAV project workshops require facilities with video/audio capabilities. Even if your organization does not have access to these resources, your partners might. Your partnerships may be able to help you with space, equipment, marketing, outreach, recruitment, supplies, incentives, babysitting, etc. Leveraging partnerships to facilitate the implementation of ITAV will increase the project's efficiency and effectiveness and reduce costs.

If your organization answered "Yes," skip to Question 9.

If your organization answered "No," then you may wish to explore the following suggestions:

- Reach out to your current partnerships about the ITAV project. Explain the project purpose, activities, and needed resources. Once partners become more familiar with the project, they will be better able to determine how they can help facilitate implementation. They may also know of others who might be willing to help.
- Form new partnerships. Many organizations are willing to help once you explain the ITAV project. Explore what resources your community has to offer. Consider contacting:
 - Community-based organizations or faith-based organizations
 - Hospitals or community health clinics especially those who specialize in maternal and infant health
 - Institutions of higher education who can use students' expertise and skills to facilitate for a credit, internship, or practicum
 - Libraries
 - Public schools, private schools, charter schools, etc.

If none of these suggestions are currently feasible or attempts are unsuccessful, it may not be an appropriate time to implement ITAV. Consider trying again in the future when circumstances change.



Support

Experiences

Resources

Sustainability

Sustainability

9. Do your organization and your NHPI community have the capacity to sustain ITAV?

Evaluating the capacity of your organization and your NHPI community to sustain ITAV will provide direction to current and future efforts. If your organization has the needed leadership, financial, and staffing support, you have the capacity to sustain the project. However, continuing the project will be highly dependent on the size of your NHPI communities and your ability to reach new segments of the community. With this in mind, your capacity to sustain the ITAV project may be limited and you will need to consider what sustaining the project looks like for your organization.

If your organization answered “Yes,” skip to Question 10.

If your organization answered “No,” then you may wish to explore the following suggestions:

- Build your organization’s capacity to sustain ITAV.
 - Prepare to gain leadership support through demonstrating outcomes, sharing success stories, presenting funding opportunities, leveraging new partnerships, etc.
 - Explore additional funding opportunities (see suggestions for Question 3).
 - Cross-train staff to ensure turnover is less likely to affect the project.
 - Form new community partnerships to increase your reach to new segments of your NHPI community. Work with facilitators and participants to seek out new opportunities.
- Build your communities’ and partners’ capacity, so they can take over the project.
 - Help these partners’ seek funding opportunities.
 - Mentor and provide technical assistance to support their efforts.
 - Share your networks and partnerships that support ITAV implementation.
- Support the villages that develop out of ITAV efforts instead of creating new ones.



- Help villages continue to meet and act on what they learned in ITAV.
- Work with villages to explore new issues in their community.

If none of these suggestions are currently feasible or attempts are unsuccessful, it may not be an appropriate time to implement ITAV. Consider trying again in the future when circumstances change.

10. Does your organization have a sustainability plan for ITAV?

Once you are clear on the capacity of your organization and your NHPI community to sustain ITAV, you can develop a sustainability plan. This plan will be a pathway in meeting the needs of your organization and your NHPI communities. It will direct your current efforts and prepare you for future efforts. It also ensures your efforts with ITAV will have a lasting, intentional impact for participants and your NHPI community.

If your organization answered “Yes,” you are ready to implement ITAV. Please see the Tips for a Smoother Implementation of ITAV for more suggestions.

If your organization answered “No,” then you may wish to explore the following suggestions:

- Meet with your organization internally to develop a sustainability plan. Consider the capacity of your organization and your NHPI community to sustain the project in order to set your vision and goals.
- Revise the sustainability plan with input from partners such as an advisory committee or coalition. (CDC, 2009, p.7)
- Be flexible. As you implement ITAV your sustainability plan will likely need to be modified to meet your organization and community needs as they surface.
- Revisit your sustainability plan as you implement ITAV, so you can add more details and new directions.

If none of these suggestions are currently feasible or attempts are unsuccessful, it may not be an appropriate time to implement ITAV. Consider trying again in the future as circumstances change or new opportunities arise.



Tips for a smoother implementation of ITAV

Congratulations, your organization is considered ready to implement ITAV. Primarily, this means you have familiarized yourself with the ITAV project and your organization is committed to implementing it in your NHPI communities. This also means your organization has worked to establish the core organizational elements and put them in place for implementation. This includes leadership support, financial support, appropriate staff, strategic partnerships, and trustworthy community relationships. While these are the foundational elements to being ready to implement ITAV, below are a few tips for you to consider to make implementation a little bit smoother.

Choosing facilitators

Facilitators play a crucial role in the ITAV project. They are the main mechanism to deliver the curriculum. Thus, organizations must carefully select their facilitators.

- Each facilitator should have at least one co-facilitator. Ideally, co-facilitators should be familiar with one another, work well together, and be able to coordinate their schedules. Consider pairing:
 - Couples
 - Siblings
 - Parents and adult children
 - Friends
 - Co-workers
 - Other relatives
- The facilitators you choose should be trusted members who are familiar with the culture and practices. The individuals you choose will largely determine your reach into the community. Choose individuals who are well-connected and can leverage their relationships to increase participation.
- It is extremely helpful if at least one of the facilitators knows the language and can answer questions about the meanings of words



- in NHPI languages as well as relate personal experiences or stories about the cultural concepts included in the ITAV project.
- Ask your partner organizations for suggestions for facilitators.
- Use the facilitator recruitment packet to make sure the individuals you recruit understand their role and can commit the time and attention needed to become an ITAV facilitator.

Training facilitators

All ITAV facilitators need to be trained on how to implement the ITAV curriculum.

- The ITAV training is four 2+ hour-long workshops. You will need to plan the time, space, resources, and supplies for the training.
- The facilitator training duplicates the implementation process so it is crucial that recruited facilitators attend all of the four trainings to know and understand their role as facilitators and participants, and understand the objective of ITAV, framework, cultural concepts, PowerPoints, activities, and materials necessary to complete the lesson plan. Make sure you choose facilitators who can commit to the training.
- The training should be held close to implementation time. It is ideal if the training can be held only a week or two before the facilitators hold their workshops. The closer the training is to implementation, the more the facilitators will remember and can apply.

Scheduling workshops

The timeline of ITAV implementation revolves around how and when you schedule your workshops.



- Talk to community partners and your facilitators to know the best time of year for their group to complete the workshops. Depending on your NHPI communities, some seasons are better than others. For example, football season is a busy time for some NHPI communities as many are involved in this sport. Many travel to the islands during summer months. The DHHS OHE has found spring time (particularly March and April) to be an optimal time for implementation.
- Hold workshops as close as possible to each other to encourage participation and adherence.
- Choose to hold workshops in the evening. Many community members work and are not available during the day and like to spend their weekends with family and community. Groups in the past have been successful in meeting in the evenings from 6–8 p.m. as it gives them enough time to get off work, grab a bite to eat, and be home early enough to get ready for bed.
- Do not schedule two workshops in one day. Many of the activities in the workshop need more than a few hours to complete.
- Incorporate ITAV within the activities already happening in the community. This will make scheduling much easier.
- Choose a location with connections for a laptop, projector, and sound capability. If not, prepare for this in advance.
- Schedule a location convenient and familiar to your community. Some locations may unintentionally alienate segments of your community. Talk with your community partners to make sure your location choices are appropriate.
- Facilitators should be prepared to provide dates and location(s) for all four workshops at the facilitator training.

Recruiting participants

The mix of participants you recruit will determine the quality of interactions in your workshops.



- Recruit participants from activities or groups that are already happening in the community (e.g., church groups, clubs, sports teams, associations, dance groups, etc.).
- Choose participants from diverse backgrounds. Participants of different genders, ages, etc., enriches the discussions in the workshops. The target population is outlined on p. 3 of the [ITAV Facilitator Manual](#).
- Because many activities are designed for pairs, it is important that all participants have at least one other participant they already know. Couples, friends, and relatives are encouraged to participate in the project together.
- Invite participants who fit the schedule of the workshops and location, not the other way around. It is much more difficult to coordinate the schedules of participants; rather ask participants if they can come to specific dates and a specific location. Participants should be able to attend ALL workshops.
- Use the participant recruiting packet to help participants learn about the ITAV project and commit to attending the workshops.
- Prior to the facilitator training, facilitators should be prepared to provide their list of group participants.

Workshop preparation

Organizations that actively participate in preparing for workshops will benefit facilitators and increase the chances of successful implementation.

- Help prepare the materials and supplies facilitators need to conduct the workshops. The more you can help with this, the more time facilitators have to focus on preparing to facilitate the workshops. Refer to the Facilitator manual to see what materials and supplies are needed.
- It is best to provide the materials and supplies on the last day of the facilitator training.
- Attend the first workshops for each pair of facilitators and be prepared with extra materials and supplies.



- Budget enough time to prepare the materials and supplies as it may be more time consuming than you anticipated.
- For further tips to better prepare for the workshops, read “Preparation” on page 13 of the ITAV [Facilitator manual](#).

Incentives

Incentives may be a key component to participant attendance. Offering incentives may engage participants who otherwise would not be reached.

- Talk with your community partners and facilitators to tailor incentives to your NHPI community.
- Be open-minded about incentives. Ideas may include:
 - Childcare
 - Gift cards
 - Raffle prizes
 - Food
- Instead of offering individual incentives, consider incentives for groups or community organizations.
- Consider your organizational or funding restrictions on incentives. Certain incentives may end up alienating parts of the community.
- Choose incentives that are timely. It is best if you can offer the incentive at the end of the final workshop to reward participants for attending all four workshops. Waiting to receive incentives a week or month after the workshops can be a burden to the community.

Evaluation and objectives

Data collection is crucial to evaluate the effectiveness and outcomes of the ITAV project.

- Create an evaluation plan and objectives. See pages 4 and 5 of the [Facilitator manual](#).
- Reiterate with facilitators the importance of data collection and review techniques for data collection fidelity.
- Attend the first workshop of each pair of facilitators (and others if needed) to confirm that all facilitators are checking that all the



pre- and post-questionnaires are completed correctly and that information on the attendance roll is accurate.

- Collect qualitative data with facilitators after each workshop.
- Produce reports that can be shared with your working partners, the facilitators, and participants.

Conclusion

Thank you for your interest in the ITAV project and efforts to address birth outcomes disparities in NHPI communities. The DHHS OHE hopes your organization will find success in implementing the ITAV project. We would greatly appreciate hearing of your efforts, successes, and challenges.

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