Executive Summary

A strong understanding of your community's landscape is fundamental to demonstrate the potential impact of your chosen home visiting program(s). This module provides guidance on understanding and articulating your community's unique strengths and needs within your THV grant application. It explores how to build the case for your proposed home visiting programming based on your community's data, while also demonstrating your commitment to advancing health equity and addressing social determinants of health.
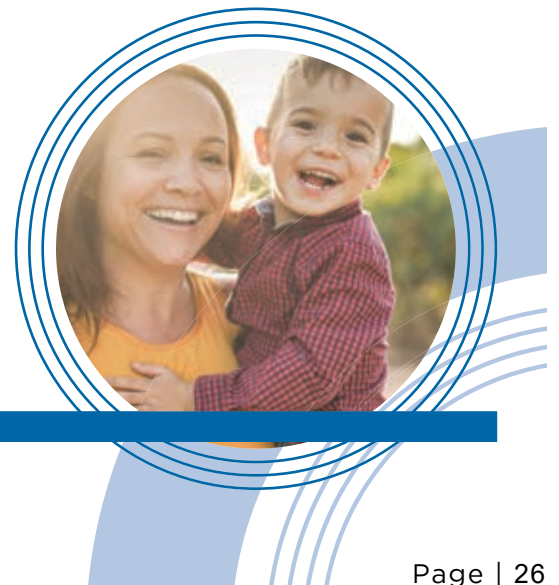
Topics:

- ☐ Understanding the Needs Assessment
- ☐ Assessing Your Community's Needs
- ☐ Connecting the Dots: Data + Purpose

Resources Needed:

- ☐ Needs Assessment Data

Recommended Staff:

- ☐ Home Visiting Program Manager(s)
- ☐ Grants Manager

Learning Objective: Participants will be able to identify the basic characteristics of a needs assessment.

If this is the first time your organization is applying for the THV grant, you might be wondering, **"What is a Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA)?"**

A CSNA is a systematic process used to identify challenges within communities in order to propose programs and strategies to effectively address those challenges.

An effective needs assessment is not a one-size-fits-all report. In the context of a THV grant application, it must demonstrate a deep, data-driven understanding of the community. This checklist details some characteristics that make a needs assessment comprehensive and compelling:

☐ **Data-Driven:** An effective needs assessment is grounded in both quantitative data (like birth rates, income levels, school readiness data) and qualitative data (like surveys, focus groups, interviews with community members and stakeholders). It must clearly describe how this data was collected and analyzed.

☐ **Targeted:** It identifies and describes the specific populations in your service area that are most in need of home visiting services. This includes communities with high concentrations of risk factors.

▶ Tip: MIECHV priority populations are a good starting point for determining if your community could qualify for THV funding:

▷ Low-income families

▷ Families in priority communities

▷ Pregnant women under age 21

▷ Families with a history of child abuse or neglect

▷ Families with a history of substance misuse or with members who need substance misuse treatment

▷ Families with users of tobacco in the home

▷ Families with children who have low student achievement

▷ Families with children who have developmental delays or disabilities

▷ Families with individuals who are serving or have served in the Armed Forces, including those with multiple deployments

☐ **Community-Informed:** The assessment provides a clear, detailed picture of your community's unique strengths, challenges and context by being directly informed by the people it serves. It's vital that the voices of parents and caregivers are central to this process. By doing this, you move beyond simple data points to tell a compelling story about why your program is needed, and how it will truly serve the community's families.

☐ **Resource-Informed:** It includes an inventory of existing home visiting programs and other early childhood services in the community. This helps to identify service gaps and opportunities for collaboration, ensuring your program doesn't duplicate existing efforts but instead fills a genuine need.

☐ **Methodologically Sound:** It clearly outlines the methodology used to conduct the assessment. This includes detailing the data sources, the time frame of data collection and the process for engaging with community partners and families.

☐ **Action-Oriented:** The findings of the needs assessment should directly inform and justify the program model you are proposing. It must create a clear and logical link between the identified community needs and the services your program will provide.

▶ Assessing Your Community's Needs | 3.2

Learning Objective: Participants will be able to create a plan for building their community's needs assessment.

By undertaking your own comprehensive CSNA, you not only strengthen your application but also deepen your organization's roots within the community. Why is this vital? To guarantee your services are truly responsive and impactful.

Your needs assessment should demonstrate a deep understanding of your specific community and its unique context. It allows you to highlight nuances, emerging issues and specific strengths that might not be captured in broader state-level data.

As you prepare to take on your needs assessment, here's what you'll need to think about:

Define Your Scope and Purpose:

▶ What specific geographic area will your CSNA cover? (Is it a particular city, school district or whole county?)

▶ What specific questions do you aim to answer about your community's strengths, needs and existing resources?

Identify Your Priority Populations:

▶ Which of the MIECHV priority populations will you focus on?

▶ Beyond the general MIECHV priority populations, are there specific subgroups within your community that face unique challenges or have distinct needs? (For example: recent immigrant populations, families experiencing homelessness)

▶ How will your assessment gather data specifically from and about these populations?

Data Collection Methods:

▶ **Quantitative Data:** What existing data sources can you leverage? Use these examples as a starting point:

- ▷ Local health department data
- ▷ School district data
- ▷ Census data
- ▷ Law enforcement data
- ▷ Local social service agency data
- ▷ Child Protective Services (CPS) data
- ▷ County-level health assessments

- ▶ **Qualitative Data:** How will you gather lived experiences and perspectives? Use these examples as a starting point:
  - ▷ **Stakeholder Interviews:** Speak with community leaders, service providers, school personnel and/or local government officials.
  - ▷ **Focus Groups:** Conduct discussions with members of your target population, already enrolled families, parents, caregivers and community residents to understand their perceptions of needs, strengths and barriers to services.
  - ▷ **Surveys:** Design surveys for community members or service providers to gather broader input on needs and resources.

Community Engagement and Voice:

- ▶ How will you ensure that the voices of the families you intend to serve are central to your assessment process?

Analysis and Interpretation:

- ▶ How will you use the quantitative and qualitative data you gather to draw meaningful conclusions about your community's strengths, needs and resource gaps?
- ▶ How will you identify the underlying social determinants of health contributing to the identified needs?

Presentation in Your Application:

- ▶ Clearly describe the methodology you used to compile your CSNA.
- ▶ Present a summary of your key findings, highlighting both needs/challenges and existing community strengths/protective factors.
- ▶ Explain in detail how your chosen home visiting program model helps address the needs of your community.
- ▶ Provide a list of all references and data sources used.
- ▶ Remember to adhere to any page limits for the CSNA summary.

We know developing and executing your own CSNA may feel daunting; besides the tips above, here is a list of resources you can use to begin planning out your needs assessment:

General Resources

Assessment Tools & Resources | Texas Department of State Health Services	Checklist | Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs	County Health Rankings & Roadmaps
www.dshs.texas.gov/hivstd/ contractor/prevention/comm-assess	*www.tdhca.texas.gov/sites/default /files/community-affairs/csbg /docs/CNA-StateReqChecklist.pdf*	*www.countyhealthrankings.org /health-data/texas?year=2025*
Texas Demographic Center	**Public Data Sources | The Capacity Collective**	**Community Needs Survey Example | Travis County**
demographics.texas.gov/Estimates /2023/#:~:text=The%20Texas%20 Demographic%20Center%20 and,the%20methodologies%20 and%20data%20offered	*thecapacitycollective.org/ resources/public-data-sources/*	*www.surveymonkey.com/r/96SWFYN*

Examples of Needs Assessments

Hidalgo County Community Service Agency	Dallas County Health and Human Services	United Way Denton County
hidalgocsa.org/wp-content/uploads/ 2024/09/2024-CSA-Community- Needs-Assessment-Report-FINAL.pdf	*www.dallascounty.org/departments/ dchhs/public-health/chna.php#:~:text =The%20Community%20Health% 20Needs%20Assessment,Hypertension %20prevention%20and%20control% 20strategies.*	*www.unitedwaydenton.org/ denton-county-needs-assessment#: ~:text=The%20first%20step%20to %20improve,updates%20and%20 reassessments%20each%20year.*

Reflection Questions:

What are the potential challenges you anticipate when gathering qualitative data from your community and what strategies will you use to overcome them? _____

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What sources do you plan on using for your quantitative data? _____

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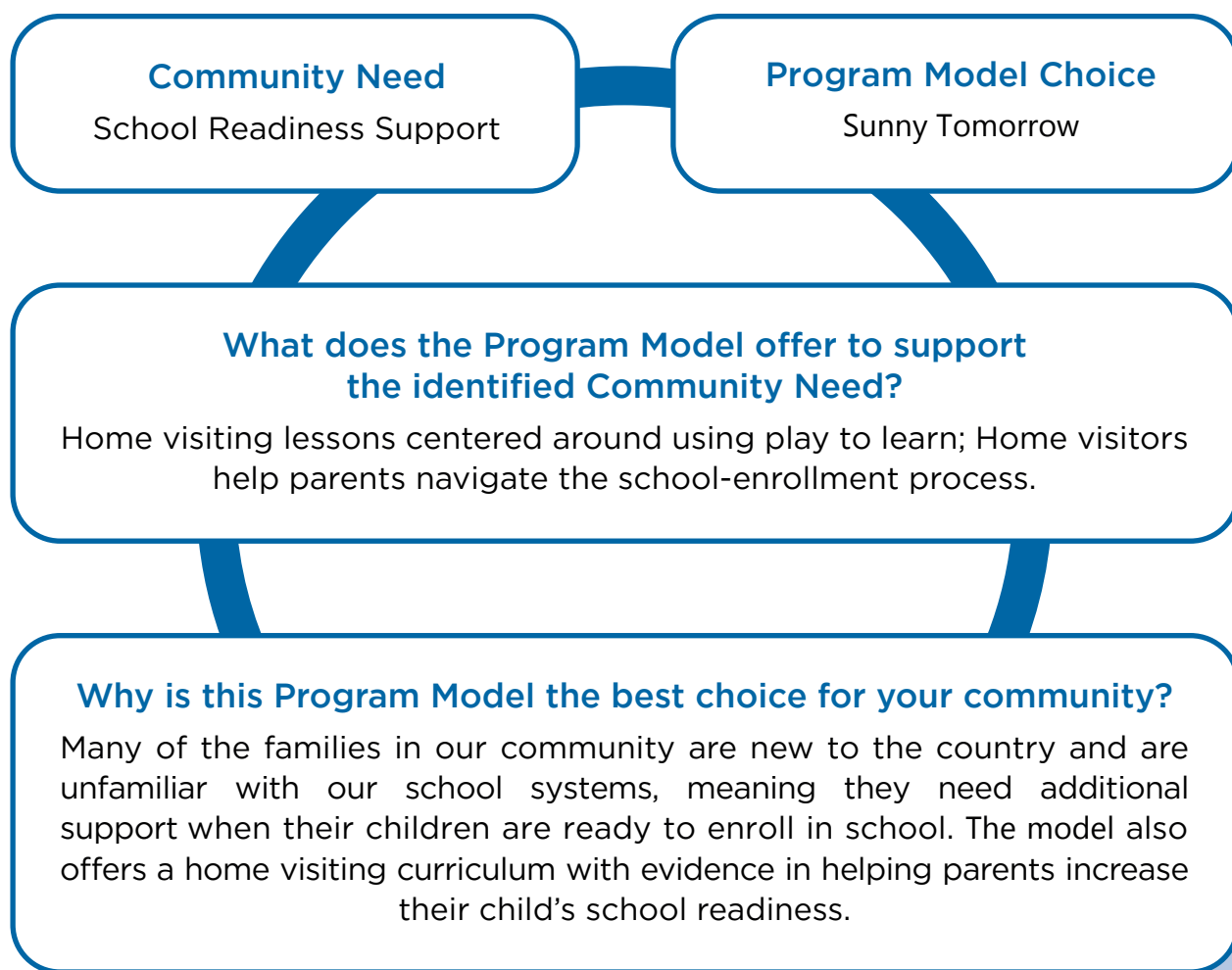## ▶ Connecting the Dots: Data + Purpose | 3.3

Learning Objective: Participants will be able to utilize their CSNA results to create their THV application narrative.

Your application must paint a vivid picture of the community you intend to serve and demonstrate a clear understanding of their unique needs. **This means being prepared to demonstrate how your chosen home visiting program will address the unique needs of your community to create positive, lasting change.** Through your narrative, you will transform the data collected through the CSNA into the most powerful persuasive advocate of your work.

☐ **Activity 1: Detailing the "Why"**

Complete the graphic for the needs identified for your community. We're adding three spaces to detail your community's needs, but you may need to use less or more than the ones provided.

Model: Using our fictional organization (Happy Stars) and fictional program model (Sunny Tomorrow).

Community Need
School Readiness Support

Program Model Choice
Sunny Tomorrow

What does the Program Model offer to support the identified Community Need?
Home visiting lessons centered around using play to learn; Home visitors help parents navigate the school-enrollment process.

Why is this Program Model the best choice for your community?
Many of the families in our community are new to the country and are unfamiliar with our school systems, meaning they need additional support when their children are ready to enroll in school. The model also offers a home visiting curriculum with evidence in helping parents increase their child's school readiness.

Community Need

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Program Model Choice

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What does the Program Model offer to support the identified Community Need?

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Why is this Program Model the best choice for your community?

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Community Need

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Program Model Choice

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What does the Program Model offer to support the identified Community Need?

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## Why is this Program Model the best choice for your community?

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Community Need

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Program Model Choice

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What does the Program Model offer to support the identified Community Need?

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Why is this Program Model the best choice for your community?

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▶ **Tip**

Use the **HomVEE Model Search** _(https://homvee.acf.gov/models)_ to help you narrow down which home visiting programs might be the best option for supporting your community's needs. You can use this tool to filter models by outcome domain, making it easy to compare which programs address the outcomes most important to your community.
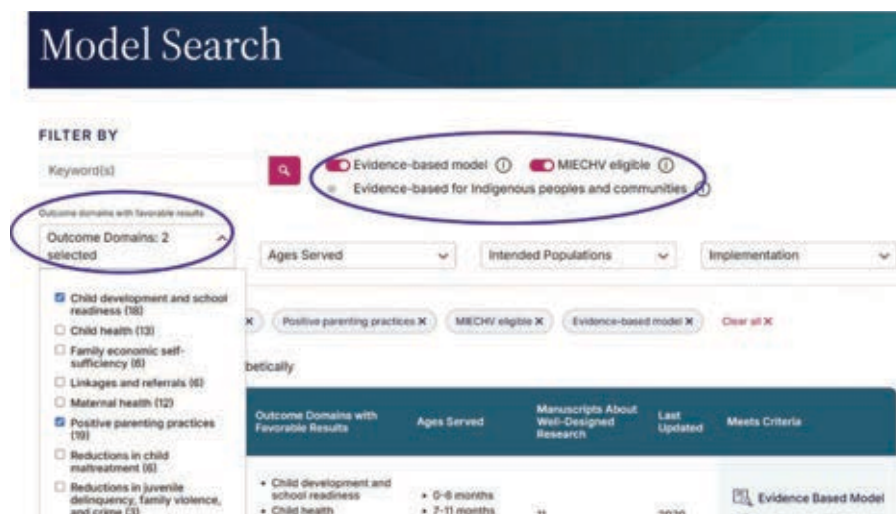
☐ Activity 2: Storytelling with Data

Once you've identified the "why" behind your choice of home visiting model, you can begin to craft your narrative. Read this example that builds on the Model from the previous activity.

Based on the findings of our comprehensive Community Needs Assessment (CSNA), Happy Stars has selected the Sunny Tomorrow Home Visiting Model as the primary intervention for our community. This decision is directly rooted in the identified need for enhanced school readiness support for our target population. The Sunny Tomorrow model is uniquely equipped to address this need through its evidence-based curriculum, multilingual resources and focus on parental empowerment.

Our CSNA, informed by local school district data and our own qualitative research, revealed a critical need for school readiness support. Data from the local school district indicates that 78% of incoming kindergarten students in our service area scored below the statewide average . Furthermore, our focus groups with parents and caregivers consistently highlighted feelings of being overwhelmed and unprepared to navigate the local school system. The majority of these families are new to the country and speak a language other than English in the home, creating a significant barrier to understanding early childhood education standards and school registration processes.

The Sunny Tomorrow model was chosen because its core curriculum directly addresses these challenges.

▶ Targeted Curriculum: The model's curriculum contains a dedicated "Parent-as-Educator" module, which gives home visitors a structured guide for engaging parents in literacy and social-emotional activities.

▶ Navigating the School System: Recognizing the specific needs of immigrant families, the curriculum includes a "School System Navigation" component. This feature directly responds to the anxiety expressed by families in our focus groups.

▶ Culturally Competent & Multilingual Support: The Sunny Tomorrow model has a proven track record of successful implementation in diverse communities. Its curriculum and parent-facing materials are available in both English and Spanish, which aligns with the language needs of 85% of our target families.

In conclusion, our choice of the Sunny Tomorrow model is exactly what will be the most beneficial for our families and community. We are confident this model will lead to improvements in the school readiness outcomes of the children and families we serve.

Reflection Questions:

How did Happy Stars use data to support their choice of home visiting model?

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What would you add to this narrative to make it more compelling?

_____

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_____

Try it Out!

Use this outline to guide your needs assessment narrative.

I. Introduction

▶ Begin with the program model you have chosen.

▶ Explain how this choice is a result of your Community Needs Assessment (CSNA) findings.

▶ Mention the primary community need your chosen program model will address (e.g., "School Readiness Support," "Parental Mental Health," "Child Health," etc.)
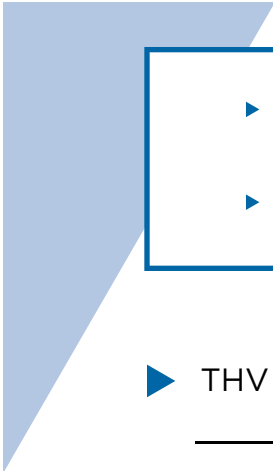
II. Evidence from Your CSNA

▶ Use specific, data-driven points to describe the community need.

▶ Cite both quantitative data (numbers, percentages, statistics) and qualitative data (stories, quotes, lived experiences).

▶ State the sources of your data ("local health department data," "focus group interviews," etc.)

III. How Your Program Addresses the Need

▶ Describe how the chosen program model's features directly address the needs you identified above.

▶ For each feature, explain what it is and how it solves a part of the problem.

IV. Conclusion

▶ Summarize why your choice of program model is strategic and data driven.

- ▸ Reiterate your confidence in the program's ability to lead to positive and measurable outcomes.
- ▸ Don't forget to tie it to your specific community and its unique needs.

▶ THV Question: Exhibit F Section B.1