

# Assessing Organizational Capacity

This tool can help you rate your capacity to conduct a TQI by uncovering organizational strengths and organizational areas that need bolstering.

Begin by scanning the questions and tables in this tool. Then evaluate your organization by using the questions relating to organizational infrastructure. **Note:** Some of the questions can best be answered after determining what resources are needed for different TQI components.

Next, move on to activities you may need to undertake. Circle activities you think will become a part of your initiative and brainstorm with your team on the human and financial resources that will be needed, the resources that are available, and what will be required to successfully implement the activities. On a separate piece of paper, summarize all resources needed to launch a TQI.

**Who:** The TQI team

**Time to complete:** 1.5 hours

**Resources needed:**

- Quiet place to work
- Organization's annual report
- Flipchart and markers

## Organizational Infrastructure

- Do your board members and senior management fully support the initiative?
- Does your staff fully support the initiative?
- What is your staff turnover rate? How might it affect this work?
- Do you have the needed facilities for the initiative?
- Do you have the needed technological equipment for the initiative?
- Do you have the needed fundraising capacity, such as dedicated staff and grantmaker connections, to support the initiative?
- Are there any foreseeable circumstances—friction between staff and board, imminent departure of leadership—that might impede the successful completion of the initiative?

## Staff Expertise

- What skills/expertise do the staff possess in each task area?
- What staff skills could be developed for each task area?
- What partnerships might complement staff expertise in the task areas?
- How could staff expertise be supplemented by support from community volunteers?

## Financial Resources

- How much funding is currently available for the initiative?
- What in-kind resources might be available?
- What grant possibilities exist to fund the initiative?
- What kind of donations might be secured?
- What are typical administrative costs for projects of this scope?

**Using the Table:** The following table lists many typical TQI activities. Read through the activities and add any others that might be included in your scope of work. Make notes on existing or needed resources; remember to include financial, time, staff, and facility resources in this exercise.

**Reflection:** In reviewing your organizational infrastructure and various TQI components, what resources do you have and what resources will you need to launch and maintain a TQI?

TQI COMPONENT	SAMPLE ACTIVITIES	EXISTING RESOURCES	NEEDED RESOURCES
<b>Scan the environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Attend school board meetings.</li> <li>■ Review appointment/electoral processes, campaign details, for officials in the school and legislative systems.</li> <li>■ Track media sources for education stories.</li> <li>■ Attend community meetings.</li> <li>■ Research union positions on TQ issues.</li> <li>■ Examine local teacher preparation programs.</li> <li>■ Complete a Community Asset Map.</li> </ul>		
<b>Form/sustain partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Open, continue, or improve relationships with school system and teachers union.</li> <li>■ Identify and research organizations that already have, or might want to, work on TQ issues.</li> <li>■ Open discussion with community organizations and seek their involvement.</li> <li>■ Work together with the district and with other organizations to set initiative goals and strategies.</li> <li>■ Decide which roles each organization in the initiative will play.</li> <li>■ Maintain regular and open communication.</li> <li>■ Draft interim “state of the partnership” reports.</li> </ul>		
<b>Research teacher quality issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Read relevant research reports, journal articles.</li> <li>■ Synthesize information and translate it for the public.</li> </ul>		

TQI COMPONENT	SAMPLE ACTIVITIES	EXISTING RESOURCES	NEEDED RESOURCES
<b>Collect/analyze data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Search databases/paper files.</li> <li>■ Create reliable, valid data collection instruments.</li> <li>■ Conduct focus groups and interviews.</li> <li>■ Code/input data into analysis software program.</li> <li>■ Code/analyze qualitative data.</li> <li>■ Research/select organizations to perform data analysis.</li> </ul>		
<b>Engage the community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Identify stakeholder groups.</li> <li>■ Inform the public; craft targeted messages to stakeholder groups.</li> <li>■ Solicit and facilitate ideas and opinions from targeted stakeholder groups.</li> <li>■ Generate sense of urgency and responsibility.</li> <li>■ Strengthen community member access to, and preparation for, engaging in public discourse.</li> </ul>		
<b>Facilitate action*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Work with community to prioritize TQ needs.</li> <li>■ Analyze TQ needs, the external environment, and capacity to select most effective strategy for desired change.</li> <li>■ Craft an action plan.</li> <li>■ Facilitate action plan implementation.</li> <li>■ Continually assess implementation.</li> <li>■ Revise action plan as needed.</li> </ul>		

\*This step is the result of months of preparation, information gathering, and community engagement. Because the content of the action plan is dependent on this preparation, you won't be able to determine exactly what resources are needed until this stage in the process. Use the columns to record estimates of needed staff time and financial resources based on similar initiatives, as well as on estimates for time and money available 6 to 12 months from now.

TQI COMPONENT	SAMPLE ACTIVITIES	EXISTING RESOURCES	NEEDED RESOURCES