



## **CORE COMPETENCY IMPLEMENTATION PILOT OVERVIEW**

**BACKGROUND:** Recognizing the critical role that health professionals play in combatting substance use and opioid crises, the National Academy of Medicine’s [Action Collaborative on Combatting Substance Use and Opioid Crises](#)\* authored a special publication, [Educating Together, Improving Together: Harmonizing Interprofessional Approaches to Address the Opioid Epidemic](#), which identified the need to establish minimum core competencies in pain management and substance use care for all health professionals.

In response to this need, the Action Collaborative developed a [Core Competency Framework for Pain and Unhealthy Substance Use Care](#), which aims to set a standard for the minimum level of competence (i.e., knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors) expected from all health professionals to address professional practice gaps (PPGs) in pain management and substance use care while strengthening the delivery of coordinated, interprofessional, high-quality, and person-centered care.

To support uptake and understand the utility of the Framework in different settings and contexts, the Action Collaborative is conducting an implementation pilot project among select education and practice institutions. While the Core Competency Framework addresses PPGs across both pain management and substance use care, this pilot project is intended to test implementation of the Framework specifically within the context of substance use care.

**IMPLEMENTATION PILOT PROJECT GOAL:** Understand the feasibility and utility of implementing different aspects of the Action Collaborative’s Core Competency Framework across the learning continuum in a diversity of interprofessional education and practice settings for substance use care.

**IMPLEMENTATION PILOT PROJECT OBJECTIVES:**

- Learn how the Framework can advance workforce competency,
- Gather insights on the implementation process, and
- Foster broader uptake of the Framework.

**APPROACH:** Beginning in June 2024, the implementation pilot project will be conducted over a 6-month period and will involve a diverse set of implementation pilot sites, with a total of approximately 15 sites. All implementation pilot sites will be provided with guiding, non-prescriptive instructions on how the Framework can be implemented and used along with a shared set of broad evaluation criteria which they will be asked to report on.

The Framework is composed of domains, competencies, and subcompetencies, but it does not include specific or prescriptive competencies. Recognizing the comprehensive nature of the Framework and its intended purpose, implementation sites will not be expected to implement the entire Framework. Rather, they will be asked to develop a use case and implementation plan that is appropriate for their organization and maps to or utilizes the competencies and subcompetencies that are most relevant to their setting and context. Additionally, implementation of the Core Competency Framework should be tied to existing requirements, standards, and/or priorities and should be used to address current challenges or needs.

\*The Action Collaborative operated under the name Action Collaborating on Countering the U.S. Opioid Epidemic when the Special Publication was published in 2021. The Action Collaborative’s name was updated in 2023 to reflect a shift in focus to addressing the complex causes of addiction and overdose more broadly.

**SELECTION PROCESS:** To express interest in the implementation pilot project, potential sites should complete the application survey: <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7809138/Core-Competency-Pilot-Application>. Included in the application survey is a project plan template which must be submitted for an application to be considered complete. The project plan can either be uploaded in the survey or emailed to [opioidcollaborative@nas.edu](mailto:opioidcollaborative@nas.edu). If selected for the implementation pilot program, sites will have the opportunity to collaborate and consult with NAM staff and Action Collaborative members to refine and finalize their project plan.

The application survey and project plan will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Clarity and relevance of the project goal, objectives, and project plan
- Feasibility of the outlined project plan, with consideration given to staff capacity, institutional resources, the proposed timeline, and potential for support from institutional leadership
- Sustainability of the project and potential for continuation or impact beyond the duration of the pilot
- The institution's commitment to interprofessional education and practice and a plan to conduct the implementation pilot in an interprofessional manner
- Meaningful engagement of people with lived/living experience with substance use throughout the duration of the implementation pilot project
- The institution's dedication to continuous learning and improvement and plan to use the implementation pilot project to inform continuous learning and improvement efforts

Each criterion will be assessed against a rubric and rated on a scale from 1-3. Additional details can be found in the selection criteria rubric in Appendix B of the project plan template.

The implementation pilot project aims to engage a diverse array of institutions to implement the Framework across a wide spectrum of use cases and contexts, and all interested institutions are encouraged to apply. The final implementation sites will be selected based on their ranking against the above criteria, and they will be chosen to ensure a diverse group of implementation sites with regard to type of setting, intended use case, geographic location, level of resources, and placement on the education, training, and practice continuum.

Please note that if selected, implementation pilot sites will be asked to request a brief letter of support from their institution's leadership to affirm the institution's commitment to the implementation pilot project.

**KEY ASPECTS OF PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION PILOT:**

- Conduct an implementation project from approximately June through early December 2024 that maps to or utilizes specific aspects of the Core Competency Framework
- Participate in periodic virtual check-ins with NAM Staff and Action Collaborative members
- Actively engage and contribute to learning communities of similar implementation pilot sites
- Complete an evaluation form at the end of the project
- Participate in a final knowledge-sharing convening hosted by the Action Collaborative in Washington, D.C. in December 2024

**EVALUATION:** At the culmination of the project, in December 2024, all sites will be asked to submit an evaluation of their project. The purpose of evaluation is twofold: to learn about the implementation process across diverse education settings and to assess the efficacy of the Core Competency Framework to guide iterative improvements in its implementation. Each implementation pilot site will be asked to complete a qualitative evaluation form, which will focus on reflective questions aimed at understanding the process, experience, and outcomes of implementation. Sites will also be asked to share their reflections on what would be needed to facilitate broader uptake of the Core Competency Framework at their respective institutions. Additional details about evaluation can be found in the project plan template.

**OUTPUTS:**

- A culminating knowledge-sharing convening at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine in Washington, D.C. in December 2024 that will bring together implementation pilot sites and leaders in health professions education, health care delivery, and policy to showcase key findings from the pilot activity.
- An implementation toolkit will be developed and disseminated to diverse education and health system stakeholders to encourage further uptake of the Core Competency Framework. The toolkit will include key learnings from the pilot activity along with resources and guidance for implementing the Framework.

**BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION:**

- **Receive Access to Tools, Resources, and Support to Address Pressing Workforce Challenges:** By participating in this initiative, you will receive free tools, resources, and support to advance workforce competency and address critical education and practice issues related to quality and effectiveness of care, patient-safety, workforce retention and cost-effectiveness, and equity and access.
- **Become a Leader in Interprofessional Education and Clinical Practice:** By implementing the Framework, your institution will play a crucial role in shaping the future of health professions education and patient care, equipping your staff with the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities to proactively address the complex needs of patients and families affected by substance use.
- **Collaborate with and Learn from Diverse Organizations across the Nation:** You will join a dynamic learning community, where you can share resources, insights, and best practices, while fostering relationships and connections across the health professions education, training, and substance use care ecosystem. Additionally, implementation sites will have the opportunity to receive a monetary stipend of up to \$1,000 to support attendance at the final knowledge sharing convening in Washington, D.C.
- **Connect with the Action Collaborative:** You will benefit from direct mentorship and guidance from Action Collaborative members who are leading experts across the U.S. in health professions education, training, and substance use care. You will also have the opportunity to participate in and receive recognition at select Action Collaborative meetings.
- **Drive National Impact:** Your experiences and insights will contribute to a crucial national discourse and inform broader health professions education policy and practice standards.