



Environmental Scanning



Environmental scanning serves as an important initial step in the strategic planning process. According to the [Peter Drucker Foundation for Nonprofit Management](#), the process of environmental scanning involves discovering and documenting facts and trends in the environment that can affect an organization's future work.

Environmental Scanning in Project LAUNCH

Before embarking on a plan for shaping future work, Project LAUNCH grantees first need to determine what services and supports children and families need to reach their full potential, what services and supports already exist, and what gaps need to be filled.

Project LAUNCH grantees must conduct a complete strategic planning process, beginning with an environmental scan in the first year of their grant. While grantees conduct a needs assessment as part of their grant application process, the environmental scan process provides state, tribal, local, and District of Columbia Project LAUNCH programs with the opportunity to revisit and expand upon the needs assessment in a systematic way that involves staff and child wellness council members. The scan provides grantees with an opportunity to assess the services available in the community.

By engaging community partners and constituents in the scanning process, Project LAUNCH leaders can build public support for the initiative and help to ensure that the project's services are responsive to state, tribal, and community needs.

Conducting an Environmental Scan

Project LAUNCH grantees use a variety of methods to gather data about the types and levels of services currently provided in the Project LAUNCH core areas ([developmental assessments](#), [integration of behavioral health into primary care](#), [home visiting](#), [mental health consultation](#), and [family strengthening](#)), and to assess system-development activities (e.g., governance and interagency coordination and collaboration) related to promoting young child wellness in the community and state.

For example:

- Many begin by **examining existing scans**, such as scans conducted for state Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grants
- Grantees expand upon these core documents by **conducting focus groups and key informant interviews, and surveying** partners and constituents
- Teams **analyze the scan data** to identify gaps or duplication of services, community trends, and potential partners