

THE FEATURED SET

Introductory Guidance



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Featured Set! This tool is a collection of measures for factors that are viewed as important by analysts and practitioners working with health collaboratives and aligning efforts. These measures are organized into categories identified in the Framework for Aligning Sectors.¹ The measures are designed to be used in the field by practitioners and researchers interested in health collaboratives and aligning efforts.

Why the Featured Set?

The Featured Set is designed to help collaborative partners think about, and measure, their aligning work. The measures in the Featured Set may help organizations identify and set benchmarks. They may also highlight successes or opportunities for improvement. As the measures are increasingly used, they will become more helpful for learning about aligning as a whole across the country and beyond. Note that while the Featured Set cannot give *definitive* evidence that any organization is doing well, and the same response for a given item may suggest that a collaborative is doing well or not well depending on the context of the collaborative, the Featured Set *does* offer a structured set of measures that others have considered *important for health collaboratives to consider*. Please see the [Compendium of Measures](#) for an exhaustive list of examples.

How to Use

The Featured Set was designed with specific uses in mind. Ultimately, though, the Featured Set can be fielded in any way a user likes. Users may use whole Featured Set, or they can use a subset, for example a section on a specific outcome. They may record their responses to the items in the Featured Set as a matter of personal reflection, or they may pull out several of the Featured Set's items during in-depth interviews with select respondents. The items in the Featured Set were also designed so that they could be loaded into an online survey platform like Qualtrics and administered as a survey to a large number of people, for example all people connected to a given collaborative, executives connected to a range of collaboratives, or all people connected to many collaboratives. The Featured Set was also designed as a tool to collect documentation from the administrators of a collaborative in order to help convey important aspects of that collaborative.

The Featured Set is designed primarily to field the same standard questions to many people at once, and in such cases, users will most likely need to designate at least one person to administer data collection and help respondents with the questions that will inevitably arise. The Featured Set is not a short series of poll-like questions like the [Base Set](#). It includes over 200 items that lend themselves to use in things like surveys and interviews, and it contains over 28 items for which documentation could be collected. Different uses of the Featured Set will

¹ More information about the Framework for Aligning Sectors is available at www.alignforhealth.org/framework/

vary widely in time and resource requirements. For example, if fielded as a survey using Qualtrics or some similar platform, the items in the Featured Set would need well over an hour for a respondent to complete. Even more time might be required in cases where the survey is given in person rather than on an online platform (in-person surveys are more resource-intensive but usually provide better data). Preparing, fielding, and analyzing a survey can require substantial administrative resources as well as resources on the part of respondents.

Users of the Featured Set will inevitably be faced with a trade-off: whether to conserve resources or collect better data. It is good practice to shape the approach to meet the need. If planned well, even substantial investments in measurement can be well worth it. Conversely, underinvestment may undermine the quest for information entirely. Users with limited measurement experience may want to enlist the aid of someone who has experience matching measurement needs to measurement approaches. That person should be able to help clarify several trade-offs from using any given approach compared to another.

Follow the links in the Table of Contents below for additional guidance on using the Featured Set or go directly to the items in the Featured Set by [clicking here](#).

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KEY CONSIDERATIONS BEFORE USING

The Featured Set is designed to be flexible enough to be used in several different ways and by many different types of people. It can be used as a survey, as an interview guide, as a guide for documenting collaborative work, as a source of ideas to implement, as a source of measures in evaluations, and in research on best practices. No matter how you decide to use the Featured Set, you will want to be thoughtful about how your work is affecting other people. You will especially want to think about whose voice is being represented, equitable data collection, and the use of personally identifiable information.

Whose Voice Is Being Represented

Collaboratives, by their nature, have many different types of participants. When using the Featured Set to capture their perspectives, it will be important to keep track of who you are collecting data from and which perspectives you are presenting. If you collect data only from a certain type of participant, your data will may not be representative. Even if you collect data from many types of people, there may still be types of people who did not submit data.

This becomes important when assessing things like trust or community voice in a collaborative. The Featured Set is designed to help users find out respondents' beliefs about the level of trust across their collaborative, but you will have a much better idea about levels of trust if you ask every participant in the collaborative (or a representative sample) how trusting they feel. The Featured Set helps you do both, and you may miss important information on trust if you ask only one representative from any given collaborative.

Questions about community participation are another example. If you want to know if the partners from the community served by the collaborative feel valued, it is better to ask all (or at least a representative sample) of the community representatives rather than a single staff member in the collaborative who is expected to speak for everyone and may not have a background in the community served.

It is also important to remember that opinions may vary by group. In many cases, it will be good to know if respondents of one type tend to answer differently from respondents of a different type. You may wish to understand differences between partners from different sectors or differences between partners representing institutions versus partners representing their residential community.

The important thing is to thoughtfully keep track of who the data represents in order to reduce the possibility that your reports will be misinterpreted.

Equity, Data Collection, and Teamwork

Collecting data from people is a cooperative effort between those collecting data and those from whom the data is coming. The burdens of data collection may fall on either or both of those groups. Consider whether you and others have the available resources for data collection and plan accordingly.

The same applies once the data has been turned into information. The findings will reflect both the analysts and the respondents. Analysts inherently have the opportunity to interpret the data. Analysts have an ethical responsibility to report their findings truthfully. However, analysts inevitably must make many decisions when they interpret data. Since the data will also reflect on the respondents, it is often a good idea, or even a requirement, to work with respondents to interpret the findings so the information can be more fully contextualized. This

sort of cooperative work may itself be a key part of collaborative work, or respondents may insist on it as a group.

See [the work of the American Institutes for Research](#) on guiding principles for equitable measurement in health collaboratives and aligning efforts.

Personally Identifiable Information

You will need to respect the privacy of your respondents. This is a matter of ethics, good will, and often legality. This means that in many cases, you will want to collect, analyze, and report on data in ways that make it impossible for outsiders to link a given respondent's information directly to that respondent. However, this may not always be the case. In some situations, it may be important to be transparent and know exactly who said what. In some situations, you may have to balance whether you want your respondents to offer their candor, knowing they will not be linked to the data, or whether it is important to link data to specific respondents or organizations.

The important thing is to be very transparent with your respondents about whether, or how, their personal information will need to be linked to the data during the research process or in the final outward-facing reports. Because many people may assume you will keep their information anonymous, you will need to be especially clear if you are not going to do that.

It is good practice to work with an institutional review board (IRB) or human subjects committee (HSC) at a local research institution, like a university. This may require partnering with a researcher from that institution, but they will help you navigate the dos and don'ts of data collection and reporting when it comes to human respondents. If you want to publish your work in a scientific journal, working with an IRB or HSC is required.

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USING THE FEATURED SET AS A SURVEY

The Featured Set is designed so that it can be fielded in a survey. Surveys are best used when you want to get information in a standard format — the standard format is useful for collecting, and possibly comparing, information from a large group, subsets of a large group, or multiple large groups.

Note that the Featured Set has many measures, so it would not be the same as a short poll. It would be a full survey. This means that both the survey administrator and the survey respondent will need time and resources for the survey to be a success. Surveying respondents in person will improve the quality of the data you receive, but it may take two or three hours for each respondent. You may decide to select a subset of questions or field the survey via computers, tablets, or mobile phones to reduce the load on survey administrators. The

[Population Health Innovation Lab](#) created a much smaller survey, much of which is reflected in the Featured Set. You will probably want to upload the survey items into a dedicated electronic surveying system, like Qualtrics. While these systems can be simple and low-cost, but you may want to work with a specialist to set up your survey.

In some cases, you may find it expedient to limit the survey only to one key leader of a collaborative, or a few key leaders. However, if your aim is to learn about a collaborative as a whole, a different approach would be needed since the data you receive from a narrow set of respondents would reflect limited opinions. If using broader set of respondents, it is especially important to include members of the community who are widely trusted by the community being served. This will give a much better idea of how people with different perspectives view the collaborative.

When using the Featured Set as a survey, remember to review the information in [the section on key considerations](#) above.

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USING THE FEATURED SET AS AN INTERVIEW GUIDE

When you need information from only a relatively small group of people, you may consider conducting in-depth interviews instead of fielding a standardized survey. In-depth interviews take time, usually include fewer questions than surveys, and don't always result in responses that can be compared across cases. However, they can be helpful for getting in-depth responses not possible in surveys.

When preparing for in-depth interviews, you will have to decide what sorts of questions you want to ask your respondents. You can use the Featured Set for inspiration. You will not be able to ask all of its questions in an in-depth interview, but it does provide many options from which to choose. Also, the questions in the Featured Set are already organized to reflect the elements in the Framework for Aligning Sectors.

With in-depth interviews especially, you will need to decide in advance whether the data you collect will be anonymous or linked to specific individuals or organizations. As when using the Featured Set as a survey, you will need to remember the information in the [section on key considerations](#).

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USING THE FEATURED SET AS A GUIDE FOR OBJECTIVE DOCUMENTATION

Surveys and in-depth interviews can be very helpful tools. However, they each rely on subjective responses. Subjective responses are useful information — you probably want to know people’s opinions. However, you may also want objective information, which tends to rely less on perspective. For example, if you want to know if customer wait times have shortened, you could gain helpful information by asking a staff member if they feel that wait times have shortened, but you might also want to see a document that shows wait times over the period of interest so that you can evaluate the changes directly.

Obtaining objective information is an imperfect science, even for the most thoughtful philosophers. Still, the Featured Set makes an effort that might be quite handy to users. Specifically, it identifies items for which documentation is likely to be available, or may be available under some circumstances (see the column labeled “Docs”). Documentation is one way, of many, to collect relatively objective information. Practitioner users may even want to go a step further by documenting, managing, and developing processes far beyond the items highlighted in the Featured Set — as many of those researching organizational dynamics would recommend (see also the [certification requirements of the Pathways Community Hub Institute](#), some of which are reflected in the Featured Set).

Note that you wouldn’t want every survey respondent or interviewee to have to provide the same documents about the collaborative, so you may want to focus on collecting these documents from a single administrator from any given collaborative.

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USING THE FEATURED SET AS A SOURCE OF IDEAS TO IMPLEMENT

The Featured Set is not designed to be a practice manual. To succeed, practitioners will have to think about many more things than could be captured in the Featured Set. However, the measures in the Featured Set are ultimately based on factors that people have considered important for health collaboratives, so there is a good possibility you will be able to draw many practical ideas from it. Note also that the Featured Set does not specify “right” or “wrong” answers for its questions. It is designed only to highlight areas that have been considered important. What is right or wrong may vary depending on the context.

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USING THE FEATURED SET IN EVALUATIONS

The measures in the Featured Set are ultimately based on factors that people have considered important for health collaboratives, and for that reason, evaluators may draw on the Featured Set for measures that can be used in evaluations. However, since the Featured Set does not specify right or wrong answers for its questions, evaluators will have to decide (perhaps with input from others) how they value different responses.

Note that the Featured Set offers a special advantage for evaluators, in the sense that the same standard question could be asked in multiple contexts or over time to facilitate comparisons. This could have several benefits, for example by helping collaboratives identify their blind spots or by helping funders identify good investments.

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USING THE FEATURED SET IN RESEARCH

The Featured Set offers special advantages to researchers and others hoping to identify best practices in various contexts. Specifically, it includes a list of standard measures that can be used to compare data across time and space. Researchers could collect their own data or bring together data from earlier users. Using consistent measurement tools, they are better able to identify patterns within and across contexts. They can highlight unseen dynamics, or they can help clarify the relationships between different activities, the contexts in which they take place, and the outcomes that result.

Such work could be useful in individual collaboratives, but it could also be very helpful to the field as a whole. Early learnings about best practices in health collaboratives have been highly anecdotal. If the Featured Set is used often and systematically, more generalizable information will emerge, which will likely have benefits for health collaboratives far and wide.

If using the Featured Set for research, remember to review the information in [the section on key considerations](#) above.

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BACKGROUND ON THE FEATURED SET

The measures in the Featured Set are drawn from many sources. For example, parts were drawn from an excellent brief survey by the [Population Health Innovation Lab](#) designed to capture attitudes about the aligning activities of Accountable Communities for/of Health from their participants. The [Pathways Community Hub Institute](#) developed a rigorous certification system for HUBs, which are one specific type of health collaborative, and they have outlined a specific set of measures useful for understanding aligning in HUB collaboratives. Many of those

measures are adapted here. Other measures are drawn from the work of [Data Across Sectors for Health](#), [American Institutes of Research](#), [Well Being in the Nation Network](#), and many others. The Featured Set also draws heavily on the [Georgia Health Policy Center's](#) own research publications, briefs, and community involvement activities.

The measures in the Featured Set were selected for their prominence in a wide-ranging review of research papers, reports, briefs, and websites on health collaboratives. The review was conducted by a team of researchers at the Georgia Health Policy Center in collaboration with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and a wide range of partners interested in health collaboratives. For information on how to contribute to future versions of the Featured Set, please contact the Georgia Health Policy Center [here](#).

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TIPS FOR ANALYZING DATA COLLECTED IN A FEATURED SET SURVEY

There is a nearly infinite number of ways to analyze data collected using the Featured Set. The following list includes tips for analyzing data collected in survey format:

- When putting your survey together and preparing to field it, consider putting the measures from the Featured Set into an electronic system designed for surveys. Qualtrics is an example. Tools like this can be surprisingly simple and affordable, and you can use them in face-to-face surveys or set them up so respondents can self-administer the survey. Also, while it requires the use of technology for both survey administrators and respondents, data collected electronically saves paper and is far easier to analyze because you can skip the step where you have to manually tabulate penciled-in responses.
- If possible, work with an experienced analyst who stays true to the data and who can think back-and-forth between data and its practical significance. You might be surprised at what information an experienced analyst can wring out of the data. You may also have more peace of mind with an experienced analyst on the team, and your work will be sharper if you work with someone who does not oversimplify the analysis on the back end and who does not stretch the interpretation on the front end. Experienced analysts can be expensive, but you may be pleasantly surprised by the volunteerism of researchers at a nearby university.
- Analyses do not have to be complicated in many cases. Whether you work with an experienced analyst or do the work yourself, simple sums and averages are often sufficient to reveal the necessary information. Microsoft Excel will be a sufficient tool for analysis in many cases.
- Clean the data. Data always needs “cleaning,” even if it comes to you already in a single nice, neat spreadsheet. One example of a data-cleaning activity involves dealing with

data from people who did not complete the survey or who thoughtlessly selected the first option for every single question. You may be able to prevent most such situations by preparing your respondents for the survey adequately, but things always go wrong for at least some respondents (for example, their computer crashed halfway through the survey). You will also have to decide what to do in cases where respondents selected “Don’t know” or “Don’t know how to answer” for a given question. You will also want to step back and just make sure everything looks right at face value. Note that fielding a small trial survey to only a few respondents can help fix problems before the survey is fielded widely.

- Identify frequent scores, for example by determining average scores, identifying the most frequent score, or by looking at how widely the scores varied from respondent to respondent. This will give you an idea of how respondents tended to answer the question. What do you see at this surface level?
- Calculate averages distinctly for different groups. Do you see differences? You may want to pay special attention to differences between people in different sectors (do they each have the same view of success?). You may also want to look at differences between people who are a part of the community being served, versus those who are part of the collaborative for other reasons (do they each feel that their voice is being heard to the same degree?). You may also want to identify differences by racial and ethnic identification (do people of different racial and ethnic groups rate collaborative equity initiatives similarly?). Often, answering your most burning questions requires looking at differences in scores across different types of survey takers.
- Work as a team. Others may have experiences and insights that you will find helpful as you analyze the data, whether those experiences come from years of data analysis or from years of being in the community you are attempting to understand. Indeed, many view close cooperation with the people you surveyed as an analyst’s ethical obligation.

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SHARING WHAT YOU LEARN

The Featured Set was designed to help your collaboratives benefit the community it serves. However, your experience with the Featured Set is likely to be valuable to many communities beyond your own. Please consider connecting with the [Aligning Systems for Health Project](#), and please share what you learned broadly. Please also let the [Georgia Health Policy Center](#) know what you have learned so that those learnings can then be forwarded to more people.

If the design of your data-collection activities allows it (both technically both ethically), please also consider sharing the data you collected (minus any personally identifiable information). The more data is aggregated, the easier it will be to identify helpful strategies and the contexts in which they work best.