

## Using the Index for Health Security Planning and Priority-Setting

Health security is a multisector effort to keep people safe and healthy when crises occur. The Index can help assess and identify strategies to improve health security.

**1. Identify your state's strengths and challenges.**

Start by downloading your state's profile from your state's webpage at <https://nhspi.org/#by-state>. Examine your state's trends over time and note improvements and declines.

**2. Examine your state's strengths.**

Look more closely at the domains where your state's score is above the national average. Why is your state successful? Does your state have strong policies? Does your state report results in a timely manner? These are important successes to celebrate and strengths to maintain.

**3. Examine the domains where your state's score has improved.**

Identify why your state's score has increased. Were new policies or programs implemented? Were reporting methods changed? Also note where your state could build on these improvements.

**4. Examine your state's challenges.**

Look more closely at the Index domains where your state faces challenges and consider why these exist. Does your state need to implement new policies? Does your state need to strengthen reporting?

**5. Examine the domains where your state's score decreased.**

Identify why. Has your state changed a policy? Have other states improved compared to your state?

**6. Look for missing data.**

For each case of missing data, identify what happened. Perhaps a survey was not completed, or a report was not filed. Knowing what happened can help you start a conversation to improve reporting. See how Colorado identified missing data at <https://nhspi.org/blog/expert-qa-using-index-colorado>.

**7. Choose one area where your state can make meaningful improvements.**

Identify the Index domain and subdomains where change is attainable. Then focus on one or two subdomains.

**8. Identify partners and stakeholders and bring them to the table.**

Improving health security happens when different sectors work together. Identify others who care about the issue you want to address. Think broadly: identify community and industry groups, state legislators, state and local agencies and departments, academic research centers, and other stakeholders.

**9. Create a plan for change.**

Identify actions that your state can take to improve health security. Break each action down into manageable steps and involve your partners and stakeholders.

**10. Share your story.**

Improvements in health security should be celebrated. Other states can learn from your work. To share how you have used the Index or to talk to us about your state's rating, contact [HealthSecurity@uky.edu](mailto:HealthSecurity@uky.edu).

For more ideas about how to use the Index, see the Innovator's Guide at [https://nhspi.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/NHSPi-Innovators-Guide\\_17May2017.pdf](https://nhspi.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/NHSPi-Innovators-Guide_17May2017.pdf) and learn how other states have used the Index at <https://nhspi.org/blog/colorado-rises-challenge-preparedness-index-innovator-2017>.