Needs of the Field

We convene divergent groups in order to improve practice. Identifying the needs of the field is an important part of this process. The first step in getting people to take action together is to create a unified vision of the future. A shared vision helps everyone see the big picture of what is needed compared to current practice. Once the group begins talking about its vision, the needs of the field become clear. Thus, in order to effectively and efficiently impact the future in positive ways, it is important to consider current practice as well as a vision for the future.

The following outlines a process and set of questions to facilitate discussion and development of statements that help guide the future discussions and work of the group.

Guiding Questions	Facilitating the Process

• What is the vision for the future? *(Facilitator may wish to encourage participants to think a specific number of years into the future (3 years, 5 years, etc.)*
• What is current practice? *(What is the current status of the issue from each stakeholder perspective?)*
• Where are the gaps?
• What information is needed to move forward? *(May identify that differing information gaps exist across stakeholders; identify what all need to know.)*
• What skills are needed to move forward? *(May identify that differing skill gaps exist across stakeholders; identify what all need to know.)*
• What processes need to be in place to support acquisition of knowledge and skills for those interested and/or involved in the issue or those who we invite into the work?
	• Having time frames for each question and activity encourages focus and facilitates the work.
	• With fewer than 10 participants, it is suggested to work as a whole and adjust the times accordingly.
	• With more than 10 participants, it is suggested to work in table groups and share out as a whole group (time segments follow).
	• Suggested time segments:
	  ♦ 5 minutes to introduce the activity/process.
	  ♦ 50 minutes for table activity (10 minutes for each guiding question).
	  ♦ 5 minutes for transition to whole group.
	  ♦ 50 minutes for group share out and consensus (5 minutes for each guiding question).
	• During group, share chart responses on chart paper or media projection.