

Blueprint FAQs

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WHAT IS THE MMS BLUEPRINT?

CMS created the "Blueprint for the CMS Measures Management System", commonly referred to as the Blueprint, to document the core set of business processes and decision-making criteria for measure development. The Blueprint is the guiding document for measure development, implementation, and maintenance.

WHERE CAN I FIND THE MMS BLUEPRINT?

The Blueprint is located on the [CMS Measures Management System website](#). You can navigate to it by selecting the Measure Development tab and then [MMS Blueprint](#).

WHO CAN USE THE MMS BLUEPRINT?

Everyone can use the Blueprint whether the goal is to understand the measure development lifecycle or use it as a guide to develop a measure. While CMS measure developers must use it, it is also a great resource for non-CMS contracted measure developers who want to submit measures for consideration by CMS. The processes outlined help ensure measures address the evaluation criteria used by CMS and the National Quality Forum (NQF) including the importance to measure and report on the topic, scientific acceptability of measure properties, feasibility, usability and use, and harmonization.

HOW OFTEN IS THE MMS BLUEPRINT UPDATED?

The Blueprint is updated, at a minimum, annually in the spring.

HOW IS THE BLUEPRINT ORGANIZED?

The Blueprint consists of 6 sections:

- Section 1:** The introduction of the Blueprint presents an overview of the guiding principles of CMS measure development, background information on the Measures Management System, and administrative details about communicating with the Measures Manager.
- Section 2:** The Measure Lifecycle section describes the five phases of The Measure Lifecycle: Measure Conceptualization; Measure Specification; Measure Testing; Measure Implementation; and Measure Use, Continuing Evaluation, and Maintenance. The fundamental steps and contract deliverables for measure developers are outlined in each phase.
- Section 3:** The In-Depth Topics section contains a suite of standalone, detailed articles on many aspects of measure development. The articles follow the measure lifecycle to serve as individual reference articles on detailed measure development topics.
- Section 4:** The Forms and Templates section contains the forms and templates required for completion and the delivery of CMS contract deliverables.
- Section 5 and 6:** The final two sections contain a Glossary of terminology and Appendices.



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THE BLUEPRINT IS A LARGE DOCUMENT, HOW DO I NAVIGATE IT?

The Blueprint is located on the [CMS MMS website](#) under the Measures Development Tab. It is designed as an electronic document with navigation bookmarks and internal and external hyperlinks to make it easier to locate content. It does not have to be read from beginning to end, rather you can quickly go to an area of interest to learn more.

THE BLUEPRINT IS A LARGE DOCUMENT, HOW DO I GET STARTED?

Sections 1 (Introduction) and Section 2 (Measure Development Lifecycle) are a good introduction to the measure development process. Section 1 will familiarize you with quality measurement at CMS and provide you with the General and Technical Principles of measure development. Section 2 will walk you through the five phases of measure development: Conceptualization, Specification, Testing, Implementation, and Measure Use, Continuing Evaluation, and Maintenance. If you have an interest in a particular topic, such as testing or patient and family engagement, you will find in-depth articles in Section 3.

THE FORMS ARE DESIGNED FOR CMS MEASURE DEVELOPERS, WILL THEY BE HELPFUL TO NON-CMS MEASURE DEVELOPERS?

While the forms were designed for and must be used by CMS developers, they are also helpful for anyone who would like to submit a measure to CMS for consideration. The forms will help ensure that you have captured all the relevant information for which CMS could ask and they align with the National Quality Forum (NQF) forms. They are also a valuable tool for documentation about the measure that will help you answer questions and demonstrate that the measure meets the evaluation criteria including the importance to measure and report on the topic, scientific acceptability of measure properties, feasibility, usability and use, and harmonization.

DOES THE BLUEPRINT PROVIDE STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS?

The Blueprint is updated, at a minimum, annually in the spring.

CAN I DOWNLOAD THE BLUEPRINT TO USE OFF-LINE?

The Blueprint can be downloaded and printed. However, we encourage you to set the Blueprint up as a favorite on your browser and to access it online to ensure you have the latest information. It is updated at least once a year, generally in the spring.



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DOES THE BLUEPRINT INCLUDE INFORMATION ON HOW TO CREATE AN ELECTRONIC CLINICAL QUALITY MEASURE (ECQM)?

The Blueprint does include information on constructing an eCQM. Many of the same steps used in developing a clinical quality measure (CQM) are also used to develop eCQMs. After version 13.0, the CQM and eCQM sections were integrated to highlight that alignment. However, if the steps or process are different from non-electronic clinical quality measures, that will be noted. There are also several articles on testing tools and standards specifically for eCQMs.

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