## Summary of the CNA Process (Reference)

The approach outlined in this *Toolkit* is the result of nearly two decades of research and practice. At the core of this recommended approach is a general five-step model outlined in *Needs Assessments: An Overview*.[[1]](#footnote-1) OME’s [*Comprehensive Needs Assessment Toolkit*](https://results.ed.gov/cna-toolkit)describes this approach and recommends it for use by state MEPs. The process is only recommended, however; you, as State Director, may choose how to use and adapt the process to fit your program.

The five basic steps for conducting a CNA are as follows:

* Step 1. Conduct preliminary work  
  The State MEP Director
* reviews requirements of the CNA;
* develops a Management Plan that sets the project’s general timeline and identifies the teams needed to accomplish each phase;
* establishes a Needs Assessment Committee (NAC) that reflects a broad representation of perspectives to provide thoughtful guidance to the process; and
* develops a profile that provides baseline data on the state’s migratory child population.
* Step 2. Explore what is  
  The NAC
* reviews existing data and program evaluation reports;
* identifies concerns about migratory children and families; and
* develops Need Indicators and suggests areas for data collection that will confirm or challenge the NAC’s underlying assumptions about the identified concerns.
* Step 3. Gather and analyze data
* The State Director oversees data collection that measures the identified needs and gaps between migratory children and their non-migratory peers.
* The NAC or a work group organizes and analyzes the data.
* The NAC or a work group creates a set of Need Statements and prioritizes them.
* Step 4. Make decisions  
  The NAC
* reviews the prioritized Need Statements and proposes evidence-based solutions for closing the educational gaps that migratory children face in school; and
* prioritizes the solutions.
* Step 5. Transition to SDP development  
  The State MEP Director
* writes or oversees the writing of the final CNA report that documents the CNA process and findings;
* shares the CNA with stakeholders and administrators at the SEA and LEA levels; and
* uses the CNA as the basis for initiating the SDP planning process.

1. Altschuld, J. W., & Kumar, D. D. (2010). *Needs assessment: An overview.* Los Angeles: Sage. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)