

2014-2015 Accreditation Support Initiative (ASI) for Local Health Departments

FINAL REPORT

1. **Community Description**

Briefly characterize the community(ies) served by your agency (location, population served, jurisdiction type, organization structure, etc.). The purpose of this section is to provide context to a reader who may be unfamiliar with your agency.

Allen County Public Health (ACPH) is a combined health district located in Lima, OH in the northwest portion of Ohio. The health district serves a rural and urban population of approximately 109,000 individuals. ACPH has a seven member board of health acting as the policy-making body with authority to adopt regulations and establish programs to promote public health within the district. Six board members are appointed by mayors, township trustees, county commissioners and the District Licensing Council appoints the seventh board member. The board appoints a Health Commissioner to oversee the daily operations of ACPH. The department has 54 employees working across several divisions/program areas: Environmental Health, Nursing, Health Education, Emergency Preparedness, Women Infants and Children (WIC), and Administration.

The cities served by the health district include Lima (population 38,771) and Delphos (population 7,101) as well as the villages of Bluffton, Beaverdam, Cairo, Elida, Harrod, Lafayette and Spencerville in Allen County. The county is 83.5% white, 11.6% African American and 2.5% Hispanic.

ACPH plans to apply for accreditation in 2017.

2. **Project Overview**

Provide an overview of the work your agency conducted with or because of this funding, including the significant accomplishments/deliverables completed during the ASI project period and the key activities engaged in to achieve these accomplishments. This should result in a narrative summary of the chart you completed in Part 1, in a format that is easily understandable by others.

Allen County Public Health identified and adopted core competencies for the agency that have been used as a basis for developing a workforce development plan and several competency-based position descriptions. Staff were assessed against these core competencies. The Training Needs Assessment helped identify gaps, training needs, barriers, and goals for staff training. The newly formed Employee Advisory Group compiled a training curriculum schedule. To further support employees, the Employee Advisory Group and Administrative Team compiled policies and current activities that provide a supportive work environment and organized this into several procedures – supportive work environment, employee recognition, and employee wellness. In addition, administrative staff used the competencies to update their own position descriptions. A Position Control Questionnaire and User Guide were developed to standardize and streamline writing position descriptions. The next phase will involve Administrative staff working with employees in

their divisions to update their position descriptions, and beginning to implement the workforce plan and track activities.

3. **Challenges**

*Describe any challenges or barriers encountered as your agency worked to complete the selected deliverables. These can be challenges your agency may have anticipated at the start of the initiative or unexpected challenges that emerged during the course of implementing your proposed activities and completing your deliverables. If challenges were noted in your interim report, please **do** include them here as well. Please include both tangible (e.g., natural disaster, leadership change) and intangible (e.g., lack of staff engagement) challenges.*

Due to some scheduling conflicts, the deployment of our online assessment of training needs was delayed. Leadership at Allen County Public Health (ACPH) worked with the OSU Center for Public Health Practice to adjust the timeline for deployment so that all NACCHO deliverables would still be met.

In the middle of the grant year ACPH's grant coordinator moved to a different county health department to become health commissioner. At that time we appointed two people to oversee the grant and work with OSU Center for Public Health Practice to ensure that all the deliverables were met.

4. **Facilitators of Success**

Describe factors or strategies that helped to facilitate completion of your agency's work. These can be conditions at your agency that contributed to your successes or specific actions you took that helped make your project successful or mitigated challenges described above. Please include both tangible (e.g., influx of funds from another source) and intangible (e.g., staff or leadership engagement) facilitators.

Receiving the ASI grant allowed Allen County Public Health to contract with the Ohio State University Center for Public Health Practice to provide guidance on the development and deployment of a training needs assessment. This assessment was used to develop the Workforce Development Plan and the Training and Curriculum schedule. In addition, OSU worked with administrative staff on developing competency based position descriptions. Within the department an Employee Advisory Group was formed to oversee the deployment of the training needs assessment and worked directly with OSU on forming the Workforce Development Plan and the Training and Curriculum Schedule. Members of this group were useful when the grant coordinator took another position in April. Members of the Employee Advisory Group were already exposed to the plan and were able to move forward with finalizing the plan.

The consultants we used helped us develop tools that will be beneficial for continuing not only this project, but future accreditation efforts. An example is the team charter developed with the formation of the new employee team, the Employee Advisory Group. This helped focus and empower the group and will be a useful template when other employee work groups are formed on our path towards accreditation.

The ability to assess neighboring health districts for the Training Needs Assessment will help us coordinate regional trainings to benefit all of our staff and strengthen our relationships as local peers.

5. **Lessons Learned**

Please describe your agency's overall lessons learned from participating in the ASI. These can be things you might do differently if you could repeat the process and/or the kinds of advice you might give to other health departments who are pursuing similar accreditation-related funding opportunities or technical assistance activities.

The process flowed well, from determining core competencies, to assessing staff to identify training needs based on the competencies and then using the competencies to build competency-based position descriptions. While involving staff at the administrative level for the position description portion of this project helped build understanding and buy-in for the process, we found there is surprising similarity in the essential duties of administrative staff. We wish we could have included at least one full division as well in order to get a broader variation in essential duties while we were still working with the consultants on the position descriptions. Time and money were the limiting factors for us.

6. **Funding Impact**

Describe the impact that this funding has had on your agency. How has this funding advanced your agency's accreditation readiness or quality improvement efforts?

The funding provided Allen County Public Health with the ability to contract with the Ohio State University Center for Public Health Practice to help set up

Significant progress was made on Domain 8, Standard 8.2 through this funding opportunity. In 2014 on an internal assessment, we had documentation for 1 of the 14 pieces of required documentation for Standard 8.2 (7%). While the documentation is still not in final format or Board adopted yet, we now have documentation in line or on-track for 9 of the required pieces of documentation within Standard 8.2 (64%). The materials developed during this grant process will help us with the other required documentation within this domain, and with similar processes in other domains.

7. **Next Steps and Sustainability**

What are your agency's general plans for the next 12-24 months in terms of accreditation preparation and quality improvement? How will the work completed as part of the ASI be sustained moving forward?

Our agency plans to complete the major plans that need to be in place prior to submitting a letter of intent to PHAB. Performance management and QI plans are the next major undertakings. We also have realized the need to have staff time dedicated for an accreditation coordinator to oversee the various steps and teams that will be needed for accreditation. An accreditation coordinator should be in place in the next few months.

The Employee Advisory Group will continue to implement, track, oversee and update the Workforce Development Plan. Administrative staff will begin working with staff in their divisions to update all the position descriptions using the tools developed through the ASI grant.