

2013-2014 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.

Florence County is a rural community in northeastern Wisconsin, with 488 square miles and a population of approximately 4400. The county is not ethnically diverse, with 98% of the population reporting race as white and less than 1% each of black, Latino/Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Island and Native American. However, we have a fairly high rate of poverty, with about 40% of families with children receiving state assistance. Our Board of Health is made up of four members of the County Board along with three appointees from the community. We have a very small (but ambitious) department with only four employees: a full-time Health Officer, one Public Health Nurse, an Administrative Assistant, and an Emergency Preparedness Coordinator who works one day per week.

2. **Project Overview**

Provide an overview of the work your agency conducted with or because of this funding, including the significant accomplishments/deliverables completed between January 2014-May 2014 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.

All staff attended planning meetings to discuss core competencies, set goals and timelines for plan completion and choose templates and tools. Staff completed core competency self-assessments in February and were then able to meet with the local health officer to design Individual Development Plans (IDPs) based on results. A comprehensive department workforce development plan that meets the requirements of PHAB Measure 8.2.1 was developed, along with a list of training resources (organized by core competency) and templates and tools for tracking progress.

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.*

Something that can be a challenge is the very small number of staff available to actually do the work, in addition to many other duties. Luckily, we have a lot of talented employees and were able to use some examples from other departments to make some of the work easier. Overall, everything went well, although we did go through many incarnations of the tracking spreadsheet to get it to the point we wanted it.

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.

The biggest factor is the attitude of leadership and staff. The Health Officer sees the value in Accreditation and conveys that effectively to staff. Being a small department, sometimes it’s easier to get things done because there are not that many “cooks in the kitchen”. Decisions can be made quickly and acted upon. We also work very well together, with complementary strengths.

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 biggest thing we learned is that we are not alone! Any time we had a question, we were able to get an answer from someone who had already gone through the process or was working through it at the time. We also learned that we have a lot to be proud of as a small department and we have accomplished a lot toward accreditation. No matter what the size, the activities required for accreditation will make your department better.

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?

We now have a complete workforce development plan that meets the requirements for PHAB measure 8.2.1 where we had essentially nothing before. The funding allowed us to devote time and training to creating a functional plan. We would not have been able to send a representative to PHIT without the funding and the training and networking there was incredibly valuable.

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?

We will continue to develop our Performance Management Plan and identify areas for quality improvement. We will continue to meet regularly to organize potential documentation and identify domains where there are gaps. We need to find additional resources in order to pay the PHAB fees. We will probably need to complete a new CHA & CHIP because the current one doesn't quite fulfill all the necessary components. We are tentatively planning to apply for accreditation in the beginning of 2016.

The workforce development plan completed through ASI will be reviewed and revised every year to be sure it is still relevant and addresses the needs of the department. Most of the big work is done, so it shouldn't take a lot of financial support to sustain.