

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.

Lincoln County Health Department, located in North Central Wisconsin (WI), serves a population of approximately 29,000, with two main cities, Merrill (population of 10,000) and Tomahawk (population of 6800). According to the US Census Bureau, 96% of the population is white (non-Hispanic or Latino); 11% is below poverty level; 20% is under 18 years of age; 19.4% is 65 years of age and older.

The Health Department has 13 full and part time staff. There are additional 9 seasonal employees. The Board of Health consisting of 8 members that provide oversight to the health department. The Health Department provides numerous services to our community including family health services (prenatal care coordination, injury prevention, oral health preventative); environmental health (Licensing and Inspection Program, well water testing, radon testing); community disease prevention and control (communicable disease follow-up, immunizations, human health hazards) and adult health services (foot care, jail health). Lincoln County Health Department also works on community health promotion and prevention around the three community health improvement process focus areas of mental health, nutrition and oral health.

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.

Accreditation Application:

Lincoln County Health Department submitted our letter of intent in September 2014. Application for accreditation was submitted to PHAB in April of 2015 and application fees paid end of April.

Domain 8: Lincoln County Health Department finalized Domain 8 during the ASI project period. This included developing a Workforce Development Plan, developing and implemented policy and procedures for employee recognition, employee wellness and a supportive work environment; provided training for staff on the Council of Linkages for Public Health Core Competencies; Pilot a new employee training log; and updated all job descriptions to reflect the Public Health Core Competencies.

Domain 7: Lincoln County Health Department and their community partners, especially Lincoln County Oral Health Coalition, Lincoln County Mental Health Coalition, Good Samaritan Health Center – Ministry, Sacred Heart Hospital – Ministry and UW-Extension, worked collaboratively to develop and distribute a survey (hard copy and online) to the community. The survey focused on identifying any barriers residents may experience to being or staying healthy with a focus on mental health, nutrition and oral health. Distribution of the survey occurred in February and March, 2015. UW-Extension entered the data into an excel spreadsheet and tabulated the results. The results are part of the Lincoln County Health Department Collective Action Plan.

The Lincoln County Health Department Collective Action Plan process began with a World Café in two different locations [March 10 (Merrill) and March 11, 2015 (Tomahawk)]. 32 community stakeholders and health professionals engaged in discussion, guided by UW-Extension, on what is preventing Lincoln County residents from achieving healthy lives.

Building off of the two World Cafés, 20 organization representatives from both the Merrill and Tomahawk began an action planning process designed to select and develop strategies in order to improve health care access and the overall health of county residents. UW-Extension facilitated the process during the action planning meetings (March 26, April 14, and May 12, 2015). UW-Extension collected all aspects of the process and strategies into a collective action plan. The plan was finalized on 5/26/2015.

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.*

Domain 8 – It is challenging to incorporate all components into the Workforce Development Plan the first year it is developed. We have determined that it is ok to include in the plan that some components are under development and provide a timeline as to when it will be completed.

Domain 7 – LCHD contacted the director of an agency that represents low English proficiency (LEP) population in order to collect input on barriers the population may experience. Planning the focus group proved to be a challenge. The lead contact for the organization typically did not respond in a timely fashion and the date changed three different times (May 7 to May 21 to May 28, 2015).

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.

Domain 8 – There are excellent templates available on the NACCHO ASI website to assist with developing the Workforce Development Plan. The mentor for this project was most valuable in providing resources to assist us in completing our project.

Domain 7 – Lincoln County Health Department partnered with UW-Extension to help facilitate the process of writing a collective action plan. Their extensive skill and knowledge helped create a collective action plan that can be integrated with the current CHIPs plan. Our community partners are also a success. The different perspectives they brought to the process planning meetings and the networking capabilities shown on the asset mapping will be an attribute to the eliminating barriers in our community.

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.

I think having a timeline and work plan for accreditation was most helpful as well as having a leadership team to provide recommendations and support.

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 ASI project gave us the extra support we needed to move towards applying for accreditation. We were able to apply for accreditation through the support of this grant. We were also able to hire a grant coordinator that provided us support in completing Domains 7 and 8. We are better organized as an agency with an accreditation timeline and leadership group that has been established in the last six months.

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 next step is to continue with our timeline in complete all PHAB Domains. Our Accreditation Coordinator will continue to organize our timeline. The Leadership Team will continue to monitor the process of completing each Domain. We have received the opportunity to have a mentor with a local health department to assist us with the accreditation process this next year. We anticipate attending PHAB training in late Summer.