

Guide for Engaging Other Departments or Groups in Public Health Accreditation

National public health accreditation should be experienced as a journey and not a destination. It is a cyclical process that allows the department to continuously improve through critical review and analysis against a nationally vetted set of standards and measures. Any local health jurisdiction seeking national public health accreditation from the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) will need to determine the best structure for its department to position itself on this journey. It is advised that key staff review PHAB's current version of standards and measures early in the process to determine where the organization's gaps lie and develop a plan to address them. Some of the gaps identified may lead to lengthy projects that should begin with as much lead time as possible. It may be necessary to begin these projects months before the jurisdiction submits a statement of intent. Setting a realistic timeline is one strategy to alleviate pressure for employees to participate on these projects, which often times is perceived as added work that takes them away from their daily activities.

One key, and sometimes overlooked step, is the engagement of other departments or partners in the early stages of preparing for public health accreditation. The purpose of this tool: **Checklist for Engaging Other Departments or Groups** is to assist jurisdictions in preparing for accreditation and engaging key partner that perform essential public health services within the jurisdiction in the process of national public health accreditation. Depending on the organizational structure of the jurisdiction, this may be:

- a department that is separate within the jurisdiction such as environmental health
- a shared epidemiology function with neighboring jurisdiction
- a contracted essential public health service
- any other type of structure or agreed upon relationship that is not housed within the health department.

It is important to note that this document was not created by PHAB and is not required to complete as part of the accreditation process. The content is based solely on experiences from accreditation coordinators in specific jurisdictions. It is meant to assist other jurisdictions in the process.

Checklist for Engaging Other Departments or Groups ¹

	Date Started	Lead	Date Completed	Notes
<p>Review standards and measures to identify areas that may involve other departments or groups within the health department's jurisdiction (e.g., environmental health, animal services, emergency medical services, etc.).</p>				
<p>Brief health department leadership staff on which departments or groups to engage.</p>				
<p>Health department leadership should engage leadership with the partner department(s) or group(s) to obtain support and to connect the accreditation coordinator with the appropriate staff to schedule presentations or implement other communication strategies.</p>				
<p>Develop and implement a communication strategy using <i>The Guide for Communication of Public Health Accreditation</i> tool for engaging staff within the health department as well as other departments, governing entities, and community partners.</p>				
<p>Develop presentations specific to each target audience and be clear about expectations in participating in the process. <i>The Guide for Communication of Public Health Accreditation</i> includes modifiable templates.</p>				
<p>Schedule presentation dates for each department or group. Encourage selection of a primary contact person who also participates on the health department accreditation team.</p>				

Work with engaged staff to improve any areas that require improvement when reviewing PHAB standards.

Develop or update policies, procedures, protocols, memoranda of agreement, memoranda of understanding or any other document that delineates roles and responsibilities of each department or group in carrying out the requirements for any given PHAB standard and measure.

As new policies, procedures, protocols, etc. are implemented, the result will be stronger collaboration that should be linked with performance measures to gauge improvements to public health programs and services.

¹ Note that depending on the organizational structure of the jurisdiction, this may be a department that is separate within the jurisdiction like environmental health, a shared epidemiology function with neighboring jurisdiction, a contracted essential public health service, or any other type of structure or agreed upon relationship that is not housed within the health department.