



Guidance for Regional Project Public Health Ready (PPHR) Applicants and Reviewers

Background

- NACCHO considers applications from regional sites to acknowledge the unique aspects of public health preparedness planning and response for small and large LHDs with complex boundaries or jurisdictional issues.
- Regions are not simply the sum of individual local health departments on a larger scale, and consequently regional applications should not be viewed as local applications on a larger scale. The goal in evaluating a regional PPHR application is to determine if the *region* has the plans in place to deliver an effective public health emergency response at the regional level, after local response capacity has been exceeded. If a region achieves PPHR recognition, that does not mean that all of the LHDs under its umbrella are individually recognized as well.
- There is no standard definition for a region. Regional agencies have been created for different reasons and can be structured differently, and PPHR reviewers must accept that the regional models they encounter may differ from those familiar to them. Regional agencies may play a direct response role, or they may play more of a support role that emphasizes communication and coordination. Please see the end of this document for examples of some common regional models.

PPHR Applications

- Regional PPHR applicants should include additional information in their executive summaries to describe their mode(s) of regional collaboration. Recommended content for the executive summary can be found on [page 3](#). Before reviewing a regional application, reviewers must thoroughly read the application's executive summary to gain an understanding of how the region functions. Questions concerning the region's model or structure should be addressed to NACCHO PPHR staff early in the review.
- Regional applicants may provide different kinds of evidence to meet the PPHR criteria depending on whether they play more of a direct response role or a support role to LHDs.
 - Whenever the regional agency is the lead agency for a submeasure, the applicant must provide evidence from their plans, annexes, and/or other appropriate documents to meet the criteria in that submeasure.
 - Whenever the regional agency is not the lead agency for a submeasure, the applicant must meet each of bullets in [Application Guideline #1](#) for "not the lead agency" (see the end of this document or the bottom of the PPHR criteria/review form).
- If the regional applicant is "not the lead" because it is playing a support role to LHDs within the region, then the applicant must include a single sample local plan to illustrate what their agency is coordinating. The applicant need not submit more than one sample local plan for a given criteria element, and reviewers may not request to see multiple local plans or plans from all LHDs in the region. Because the applicant is seeking recognition as a region, not as a group of individual LHDs, it is not necessary for reviewers to assess plans for all LHDs in that region. However, if the applicant has multiple situations where it is "not the lead" because it is playing a support role to LHDs within the region, then the applicant must vary the sample plans used throughout the application to provide reviewers with a more comprehensive view of the region.
- To assist reviewers in understanding how they execute communication and coordination responsibilities for their support roles, regional applicants should consider providing standard operating procedures for these activities.

Examples of Regional Collaboration Types ¹		
Regional Collaboration Types	Descriptions	Examples from PPHR Regions
Networking	<p>Networking is the most informal form of regional collaboration. While efforts are coordinated across jurisdictions, such coordination occurs on an individual basis for mutual benefit and is not actively managed.</p> <p>Note: A region of this type would not apply for PPHR recognition</p>	Sharing preparedness information (e.g. recent reports, grant guidance), approaches to planning, press releases, exercise results, or staff organizational charts.
Coordinating	<p>Coordinating occurs when LHDS within the region work together deliberately to plan events such as meetings, trainings, or exercises. Regional preparedness is achieved through <i>actively managed</i> coordination of individual LHDS.</p>	Conducting joint exercises, trainings, “strike” or response teams, or a regional project such as a media campaign.
Standardizing	<p>Through networking and coordinating, LHDS come to a point at which they adopt one another’s templates, press releases, and even response procedures. At this point they are developing a standard approach among individual LHDS in the region in such a way as to achieve interoperability among LHDS for one or more emergency preparedness function. However, the parts remain within the operational control of the individual LHDS in which they reside and function during non-emergency times. The basis for collaboration is adopting standards or policies to which all LHDS in a region will adhere in times of emergency response.</p>	Standardized trainings, planning tools, plan content and format (such as annexes), resource typing, job action sheets, and even “triage tags” that emergency medical services could use throughout the region.
Centralizing	<p>Centralization occurs when resources such as pharmaceuticals or a shared Web server are brought together or controlled by a centralized source. Regional preparedness is achieved by pooling resources and forming a separate regional entity for the purpose of responding to a serious public health emergency, during which that entity would function as if it were a regional public health agency. The entity’s organizational structure and relationship to its constituent LHDS will differ, ranging from the familiar district health department model to a new organizational arrangement specifically created for emergency response.</p>	Developing shared resources such as a single web portal, an emergency notification system centralized through a regional coordinator, a single regional training contractor, or regional staff (e.g. GIS specialist).

¹Adapted from “Planning Beyond Borders: Using Project Public Health Ready as Regional Planning Guidance for Local Health Departments.” National Association of County & City Health Officials, 2007.

Executive Summary Guidance for Regions

An Executive Summary is required with every PPHR application . The purpose of the Executive Summary is to describe the agency, its jurisdiction, and its approach to public health preparedness. The Executive Summary should describe how the agency addresses all three goals of the PPHR Criteria. Please note that it may be helpful to craft your executive summary after completing your application and PPHR Crosswalk. The Executive Summary is critical in providing context and rationale for the review team evaluating your application. The Executive Summary must include all of the information outlined below, and NACCHO recommends agencies format their Executive Summary in this order.

1. Introduction

- The agency's approach to the PPHR process.
- The agency's mission and vision for serving the public's health.

2. Jurisdictional Area Description

- Size of population served by agency.
- Geography/topography information, including the location of the region.
- Governance structure within the region, such as cities and towns in a region, boards of health, and county commissioners.
- Unique characteristics to the region that will help explain its approach to preparedness planning, including landmarks.
- Demographic information, such as population density and median income or poverty rate.

3. Organizational Structure of the region

- The agency's level of authority.
- The agency's responsibilities in a response.
- How the region's preparedness efforts the efforts fit within a larger statewide response.
- Information on divisions, services provided number of offices, etc.

4. Employee Demographic Information

- Total number of full time employees in the region (broken down by each participating health department, if applicable).
- Total number of regional preparedness staff (differentiate between full and part time)
- General professional categories within the region and on the preparedness staff (e.g. nurses, administrators, environmental staff, etc.)

5. Connection/Coordination

- The agency's connection to and coordination with other regions and local and state partners for emergency preparedness planning and response.
- Linkage between all three Goals of the project; including how the revisions of response plans, training plans and exercise plans are interrelated based on evaluations of trainings, exercise and event responses (i.e., demonstrate a continuous quality improvement process within the region, as evidenced in the application).

6. Type of Regional Collaboration

- Describe the context of your approach to preparedness planning in the region using one of the following types of regional collaboration models:
 - Networking: sharing of preparedness information (e.g. recent reports, grant guidance), approaches to planning, press releases, exercise results, or staff organized charts.
 - Coordinating: conducting joint exercise, trainings, "strike" or response teams, or a regional project such as a media campaign.

- Standardizing: trainings, planning tools, plan content and format (such as annexes), resource typing, job action sheets, and even “triage tags” that emergency medical services could use throughout the region.
- Centralizing: resources such as a single web portal, an emergency notification system centralized through a regional coordinator, a single training contractor, or regional staff (e.g. GIS specialist)

PPHR Application Guideline #1

If you are not the lead for a particular task (evidence elements and/or sub-measure), you must provide a description that includes the following:

- Identification of the lead agency;
- Description of the roles and responsibilities of the lead agency;
- Description of the support roles and responsibilities of the applicant;
- Description of how the applicant partners with the lead agency to plan for, and prepare to deliver, the emergency service addressed in the evidence element;
- Description of the applicant’s coordination and communication process for supporting the work of the lead agency;
- Description of how the applicant will work with the lead agency during or following an emergency response;
- An example of how this collaboration has worked in the past, how it was exercised, or how it is addressed in your workforce development plan; and
- If applicable, description of the authority or documentation formalizing the relationship with the lead agency (e.g., mutual aid agreements, contracts, regulatory obligations).