

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.

Situated on Long Island Sound, and bounded to the east by the Housatonic River, Stratford is a densely developed urban/suburban town with a population of approximately 52,000. Stratford has diverse natural resources ranging from the 250-acre, town-owned Roosevelt Forest to the Great Meadows Salt Marsh. The Town is also host to a variety of cultural attractions, including the Shakespeare Theatre and Boothe Memorial Park. Stratford has a long association with the aviation industry and is home to the world's leading helicopter manufacturer, Sikorsky Aircraft, which designs and produces helicopters for both military and commercial applications. Stratford is the easternmost town in Fairfield County, bordered by Bridgeport, the largest city in Connecticut. Stratford neighborhoods bordering Bridgeport share many of the same socioeconomic characteristics as the City, including high percentages of low-income families, racial/ethnic minorities, and crime. As with other similar communities, health disparities associated with urban challenges are evident.

The Stratford Health Department is comprised of 10 staff members: Health Director; Assistant Director of Health; Nursing Supervisor; Health Educator; Administrative Assistant; Environmental Supervisor; and four Sanitarians. The Health Director reports to the Town's Mayor.

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.

The Stratford Health Department developed a systematic process for reviewing and revising documentation for PHAB submission. The Accreditation Specialist and Assistant met individually with each staff member designated to a particular Domain to discuss documentation selection and revisions.

A spreadsheet was modified specifically for the purpose of reviewing and selecting documentation, tracking revisions and progress. The spreadsheet was used to analyze in close detail specific parts of each Domain, Standard and Measure (several measures contain multiple "parts" that require separate documentation). After each Domain was reviewed, a schedule for revisions was created and documented in the spreadsheet.

Additionally, the Stratford Health Department's application to PHAB was accepted and the Accreditation Coordinator attended training at PHAB headquarters in May 2014. ASI grant funds were used to partially fund PHAB application fees.

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.*

The largest challenge was the amount of time truly needed to accurately review and assist in the revision process for each of the documents. The person reviewing documentation for accuracy and appropriateness must be highly detailed oriented, organized and have a strong working knowledge of the local health department. It is a lengthy and tedious process to review each part of the measure so the person must be incredibly focused.

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.

Having all staff working on the accreditation process is a factor that contributes to the success of the process as a whole at the Stratford Health Department. The assistance of the ASI grant funds allowed us to have an additional staff member to assist with the review process which helped contribute to our success with grant deliverables particularly.

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.

As mentioned previously, a lot of time needs to be devoted to the review of draft documentation for the accreditation process. The person(s) chosen to review documentation must be detail oriented, highly organized and have a good base knowledge of all activities related to the Health Department.

We also learned that once revisions needed are provided to a staff member a very detail timeline for completion of revisions is needed to keep staff on task.

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?

ASI funding was extremely helpful. We were able to designate a staff person to assist with the review of draft documentation, which has helped progress our accreditation process greatly. We plan to submit all documentation by May 2015. We are much more ready then we were a few months ago. Additionally, ASI funding allowed us to pay a portion of the PHAB fees associated with accreditation.

7. **Next Steps and Sustainability**

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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?

The Stratford Health Department will continue to choose appropriate documentation for each measure over the next five months. We will then begin the process of choosing final documentation and uploading it into the PHAB system. All documentation must be submitted by May 2015.