

FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM

TO: BOARD OF FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS	Reviewed:
FROM: Midge Ransom	Ext: 3531
DEPARTMENT: Health Department	
DATE: Monday, August 17, 2009	No:

ITEM: Discuss a request to execute a letter of support for the Franklin County Health Department to participate in the beta test accreditation process.

Background: National accreditation for public health departments is moving forward. The standards have been established. The next step is a beta test for the accreditation process. This process will include health department preparation of documentation demonstrating that the health department meets the standards.

The Robert Woods Johnson Foundation is providing a \$27,250 dollar grant for Quality Improvement projects at the local level for those departments selected to participate in the beta test. The beta test will include attempting to meet the accreditation expectations, providing feedback to the accreditation board (PHAB), and sharing information on the experience to other health departments across the nation, and participating in a 2-3 day site visit. This is a competitive grant opportunity that would allow us to begin the preparations for accreditation and obtain funding support for it.

Recommended Action: It is recommended that the commission discuss the submittal of a letter of support to allow the health department to participate if selected.

Attachments: PHAB invitation to participate in the accreditation process.

PHAB must receive applications by 5:30 pm EST, August 14, 2009.



**LETTER OF INVITATION
Public Health Accreditation Beta Test**

This PHAB Beta Test Information Packet Consists of the Following Materials:

1. Letter of Invitation from PHAB
2. Funding Letter from NACCHO or ASTHO
3. Application to be a PHAB Beta site
4. NACCHO and ASTHO Contract Templates

Background

The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) is the accrediting entity for the national voluntary public health accreditation program, a program that will improve and protect the health of the public by advancing the quality and performance of all health departments. PHAB is funded and supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). PHAB will accept the first applications from health departments for national accreditation in 2011.

PHAB has developed the program elements for the national accreditation program which include standards and measures, guidance for documentation, an application form, a site visit process, and several possible scoring algorithms. In order to fully test the program elements and identify areas to improve the program in advance of 2011, PHAB will implement a beta test of the accreditation program with health departments starting in the fall of 2009. PHAB will contract with an evaluation expert to gather and analyze feedback from participants in the beta test. The public health departments that participate in the beta test process will play a critical role in shaping and refining the accreditation program before the national launch in 2011.

Health Department Activities

The beta test will put into practice each step of the accreditation process including: applying for accreditation, gathering documentation, hosting a site visit, and reviewing the site visit report. Health departments selected to participate in the beta test will also be expected to report their time and costs through the process. This process will require that health departments provide significant amounts of feedback and recommendations for improvements in all elements of the accreditation process.

Health departments participating in the beta test with PHAB will be given resources and technical assistance to develop and implement quality improvement activities based on the results of their accreditation review. With support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, funding will be provided to each health department that participates in the beta test to support the departments' time and effort associated with the evaluation process and quality improvement activity. This funding will be administered to local health departments through a contract with the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) and to state, territorial and tribal health departments through a contract with the Association of State and Territorial Healthcare Officials (ASTHO). (See pages 5-7 for more information on the quality improvement activities and expectations.)

PHAB must receive applications by 5:30 pm EST, August 14, 2009.



Beta Test Sites

PHAB will select twenty-nine health departments (eight state health departments, nineteen local health departments, and two tribal health departments) to be sites for the beta test.

Eligibility

This project is intended for governmental local, state, territorial, and tribal health departments interested in accreditation. Any health department that has the support of its governing body to participate in this beta test is eligible to apply; a letter of support signed by the appointing entity is required. The signed letter may be submitted separately, within 30 days after the due date of the beta test application, if there is not sufficient time to obtain the signature by the due date of the beta test application.

Health departments that have formal agreements to share services may jointly submit an application. During the beta test, PHAB will not be testing state based accreditation or multi-state regional accreditation programs.

Participation in the PHAB accreditation program beta test will run from October 15, 2009 through December 2010.

Site Selection

Health departments that would like to participate in the beta test may apply to PHAB to be a test site. PHAB will select beta test sites based on applications received in response to this letter of invitation.

To ensure the beta test gathers comprehensive, robust information for improvement of the accreditation program, PHAB will select health departments from across the country that capture the variation in our nation's public health system in terms of size, structure, governance, and degree of preparedness for accreditation. Health departments will be selected to represent the broad spectrum of health departments with regards to:

- Geography (across the country as well as urban, rural and suburban);
- Size (population and budget);
- State structure (centralized, decentralized, mixed);
- Local structure (independent, regional, or formally coordinated);
- With or without boards of health;
- Intent (or not) to seek PHAB accreditation after program launch;
- Degree of readiness or preparedness for accreditation;
- Those that did and did not participate in previous activities such as the PHAB alpha test, the Multi-State Learning Collaborative: Lead States in Public Health, or NACCHO operational definition demonstration sites;
- At least one large metropolitan health department;
- At least one state where the state agency provides local public health services;
- At least one combination where the state health department and at least one local health department in the same state are both participating in the beta test in order to assess the degree to which the standards and the process capture areas of interdependence

Beta Test Site Expectations

Health departments selected to be a site for the beta test will be responsible for:

Participating in the Accreditation Beta Test

- Designating a staff person as a department "accreditation coordinator" who will serve as the point of contact with PHAB, ASTHO and/or NACCHO, and all relevant partner organizations.

PHAB must receive applications by 5:30 pm EST, August 14, 2009.



- Ensuring that the accreditation coordinator attends an in-person, expenses paid, two-day training session to:
 - Learn about the accreditation process, standards and measures;
 - Understand the beta test process and how to provide feedback;
 - Gain an understanding of the obligations of participation; and
 - Discuss strategies and processes for successfully completing contractual obligations.
- Reviewing and providing feedback on PHAB products, e.g., readiness checklist, letter of intent template, etc.
- Completing an online accreditation application form.
- Completing a self-assessment, based on PHAB's draft standards and measures (*available late summer*)
- Gathering and submitting documentation online for each of the standards and measures in accordance with PHAB's instructions.
- Scheduling and hosting a two to three-day site visit from a site visit team and PHAB, ASTHO, NACCHO and/or National Indian Health Board representatives that will include:
 - A walk-through of the department;
 - Having staff and board members available to participate in interviews, as appropriate;
 - Providing work samples and additional information as requested by the site visit team; and
 - Providing a conference room or other work space for the site visit team.
- Reviewing and providing feedback on the site visit report and findings.
- Tracking staff time and costs of the process.

Providing Feedback

- Providing information, feedback, evaluations, and suggestions to PHAB's designated evaluator. Topics may include subjects such as:
 - The areas in which technical assistance was needed by the department.
 - The amount of time and effort it took to gather documentation.
 - The amount of time and effort it took to prepare for the site visit.
 - The site visit process (*i.e.*, completeness, fairness).
 - The clarity, value and appropriateness of the standards and measures.
 - The clarity and ease of use of the application, readiness checklists, guidance materials, and other materials and documents.
 - The completeness of the site visit report and the degree to which it accurately captured the strengths and weaknesses of the department.

Implementing Quality Improvement

See "Funding Letter from NACCHO or ASTHO," pages 5-7.

Support for Participation in the PHAB Beta Test

All beta test sites will be provided with:

- Communications regarding the beta test design, selection process and accreditation assessment process;
- Technical assistance about standards, measures, documentation, assessment process and scoring and weighting;
- Travel reimbursement for the costs to attend training on the accreditation program, the beta test, and the quality improvement activities (in accordance with PHAB's Travel Policy);
- The health department's site visit report, prepared as part of the beta test; and
- The beta test evaluation report after the conclusion of the test.

When the accreditation program is operational, PHAB will provide to beta test sites:

- Expedited review during the accreditation process and
- Priority status in the queue when applying for accreditation.

PHAB must receive applications by 5:30 pm EST, August 14, 2009.



Application Procedure

The deadline for applications is 5:30 pm EST, August 14, 2009. Applicants will be notified of their selection or non-selection by September 18, 2009. Please submit applications electronically in Microsoft Word format to betatest@phaboard.org.

Applications must be submitted in Word format. Do not submit applications in PDF format. No applications will be accepted by fax or postal mail. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

Selection Process

Applications to participate in the accreditation beta test will be reviewed by a PHAB selection committee.

Applications will be reviewed for:

- Completeness and quality of the application,
- Demonstrated ability to meet the beta test requirements,
- A signed letter signed by the appointing entity is required for the department's participation and completion of contractual obligations,
- Ability to execute a contract with ASTHO or NACCHO in a timely manner. The [NACCHO contract template](#) and [ASTHO contract template](#) can be accessed.

Additional Information

Standards and Measures

Assessment Process

For questions about this letter of invitation, please contact:

Robin Wilcox

PHAB

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rwilcox@phaboard.org

Background

The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) is the accrediting entity for the national voluntary public health accreditation program. Through a letter of invitation process, PHAB will identify 29 sites for the beta test to include a mix of state, territorial, local, and tribal health departments (see pages 1-4). Selected applicants will participate in a series of activities, including those related to the accreditation process as well as supplemental activities associated with providing feedback to evaluators of the accreditation process and implementing quality improvement (QI) initiatives.

With support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, funding will be offered to each health department that participates in the beta test to support the supplemental activities. This funding will be administered through a contract with NACCHO for local health departments or ASTHO for state, territorial, and tribal health departments.

This funding is intended to offset the costs of additional data collection and feedback required for evaluation of the accreditation program and process and to engage in QI initiatives. All beta test sites are required to participate in the accreditation process, the evaluation, and the QI component.

Supplemental Activities

In addition to the activities detailed in PHAB's letter of invitation (see pages 1-4), health departments that are selected as beta test sites will be responsible for the following activities:

1. Providing Feedback to PHAB and PHAB's Designated Evaluator

- Provide feedback, evaluations, and suggestions to improve PHAB products and process as detailed on page 2.

2. Sharing Examples of Evidence Used to Meet Standards

In areas where the department was rated highly, provide examples of documentation that successfully demonstrated meeting standards and measures. (Materials will be de-identified and shared with other health departments working to meet PHAB standards and measures.)

3. Implementing Quality Improvement

All beta test sites will be expected to identify an area of opportunity for quality improvement, based on their self-assessment results. All sites will be expected to:

- Prioritize areas of improvement, based on results identified during the self-assessment.
- Develop and submit plans for quality improvement in the Department's highest priority areas. Templates will be provided. Plans must specify:
 - Area(s) of intended improvement,
 - Organizational impact of QI activities,
 - QI method(s) to be utilized,
 - Measures of improvement, and
 - Budget (in accordance with guidelines to be provided by ASTHO/NACCHO).
- Attend a two-day quality improvement training and networking meeting conducted by ASTHO and NACCHO. Travel costs for one individual per beta test site will be provided. The meeting will be held in Spring 2010 focus on:
 - Project selection,
 - Quality improvement skill building,
 - Connecting quality improvement to accreditation; and
 - Providing opportunities for sites to share lessons learned.

- Participate in a series of webcasts to facilitate information sharing, networking and training.
- Submit a final report detailing the quality improvement activities undertaken, using both a storyboard and narrative format. (Templates will be provided.)
- Participate in a closing meeting—conducted by ASTHO and NACCHO—with all of the beta test sites to share successes, lessons learned, case examples, recommendations to peers, and examples of quality improvement processes that can inform the field in preparing for accreditation. Travel costs for one individual per beta test site will be provided. The meeting will be held in early 2011.

4. Presentations to local and national audiences

- Commit to sharing the beta test experience during state or national meetings, via webcast or in other settings, as requested.

All QI projects must be completed and final reports submitted to ASTHO/NACCHO by December 3, 2010.

Benefits

ASTHO/NACCHO will provide the following funding to each selected beta test site:

- A \$27,280 grant, distributed in three separate increments:
 - 1) One-third of the funding will be provided upon receipt of a signed contract to ASTHO/NACCHO help cover health department costs incurred for data gathering and reporting feedback.
 - 2) The second portion will be paid upon submission and approval of a QI plan to ASTHO/NACCHO and participation in feedback-gathering activities.
 - 3) The final portion will be paid upon receipt and approval of a final report by ASTHO/NACCHO.

Funds from this grant may be used to support staff time, consultant time, travel to other trainings/meetings, and quality improvement initiatives. Funds may not be used for capital costs (office furniture, software, computers, etc.)

- Technical assistance regarding how to meet the standards and measures.
- Technical assistance identifying priority areas(s) for improvement, and implementing quality improvement efforts.
- Travel for one person per site to attend the two-day quality improvement training and networking meeting focused on project selection, quality improvement skill building, and connecting quality improvement to accreditation. Opportunities will be available for 'like sites' to share lessons learned.
- Travel for at least one person per site to attend the closing meeting.
- Guidance materials to assist in selecting quality improvement consultants, as needed, including:
 - A list of quality improvement consultants with public health expertise,
 - A list of questions to assist in selecting a consultant, and
 - A template evaluation to assess the health department's experience with the QI consultant.
- Access to information sharing, networking and training through a series of webcasts and meetings where sites can share strategies for meeting accreditation standards and implementing QI, documentation and lessons learned. Information will be synthesized and shared with future

August 10, 2009

PHAB Board Members:

The Franklin County Commission serves as the Local Board of Health for Franklin County. Since early 2008, we have been supportive of efforts by our health department to improve performance and pursue efforts relating to accreditation. We are pleased to continue our support of our health department through participation in the beta test for the accreditation process.

We agree to the commitment for staff time to pursue Quality Improvement and to address the documentation necessary for the accreditation process, the travel to required meetings, and to our attendance at the site visit. We further support staff in sharing what is learned with others in the state and across the nation.

Thank you for consideration of this application.

Respectfully,

Ed Taylor, Chairman