

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.

Barron County Public Health Programs is part of the Barron County Department of Health & Human Services. Our agency serves all of Barron County Wisconsin and is located in Northwestern Wisconsin approximately 75 miles northeast of Minneapolis/St. Paul. We are a rural, agriculture based county with 45,676 residents. More than 94% of residents are white, non-Hispanic; however Barron County has increasing Hispanic and Somali populations. Our agency is a local health department and Wisconsin is a “home” rule state that values local control.

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 Accreditation Support Initiative (ASI) provided Barron County with the resources to move past a barrier to accreditation: developing a performance management system and plan. Prior to this project performance management had been an overwhelming task yet to be addressed by our agency. The technical assistance, training and timeline provided by the ASI allowed our agency to address performance management. We formed a workgroup and met weekly to review existing resources and develop a performance management plan. Different county systems participated in this process including information and technology, administration and finance. From this we developed a Barron County Performance Management Plan. Our plan is based on the Turning Point Performance Management System and incorporates a new tool Barron County plans to implement with all county programs: the “Balanced Scorecard Budgeting Criteria”. Performance management training was vital to our success. Along with technical assistance, conference calls, and distance learning provided by the initiative; the Institute for Wisconsin’s Health provided on site performance management training to our entire staff. We learned the basics of performance management, worked on identifying relevant standards and indicators, and most importantly learned that we didn’t need an elaborate, complicated system to get started. ASI funding also allowed two accreditation leadership team members to attend the Public Health Improvement Training in Atlanta Georgia where we attended additional trainings and networked with other public health professionals.

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.*

Scheduling onsite PM training for staff was our biggest challenge. We wanted a peer from another Wisconsin County who created their performance management plan and system to provide our training; however her availability was a problem for this grant timeline. We did contract with Institute for Wisconsin Health, a private consulting company, and they provided our training on May 21, 2014.

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.

The grant timeline and conference calls with other cohorts facilitated our success in creating a performance management plan. The short time frame forced our accreditation leadership team to focus on performance management. The discussions with others involved in developing performance management plans made us realize it was ok to start small as long as we started!

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.

A key to successful participation in ASI is being realistic in what can be accomplished in five months and getting started immediately. Having accountability and a timeline pushed us to make performance management a priority. We made significant progress in our path to accreditation through this initiative. We have since developed a timeline for all our accreditation requirements ending with accreditation for our agency in 2015!

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?

As a small, rural public health program the opportunity for our entire staff to attend training and

for additional staff to attend a national conference is not possible without outside funding. The ASI funding provided an opportunity for our entire staff to learn about performance management together. The training provided by the Institute for Wisconsin's Health reassured staff that performance management is not the same as individual performance review. This uniform message by an outside expert helps staff recognize, without fear, how a performance management system will benefit our programs and the larger community we serve. Performance management was one of the last accreditation readiness tasks we needed to complete. The push from this grant will allow our accreditation plans to move forward.

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 accreditation leadership team plans to continue to meet weekly to continue progress on our performance management system and accreditation readiness. Previously we were meeting monthly which we have found was not frequent enough to keep moving towards accreditation. We have established a timeline to submit our Statement of Intent by the end of this grant period (May 30, 2014) and attain accreditation by the end of 2015.

Our staff continues to participate in quality improvement projects, a team has started our workforce development plan, and our accreditation leadership team continues to assess and collect accreditation evidence.

Kelli Engen, our health officer, is committed to accreditation and advocates on this behalf with our staff, Health & Human Services Director and the Health & Human Services Board. Leadership commitment is the most important aspect of sustaining our accreditation plans.