

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.

The Black Hawk County Health Department (BHCHD) is located in Black Hawk County in the Northeast quadrant of the state of Iowa. The jurisdiction served is Black Hawk County with a total population of 131,090 (2010). As a rural state, Iowa has several diverse metropolitan areas. Black Hawk County includes the predominant racial and ethnic populations of: Caucasian 85.6%, African American 8.9%, Multi-Race 2.3% and Latino/Hispanic 3.7%; in addition to newcomer communities representing persons of Bosnian/Croatian, Marshallese and Burmese origin. The BHCHD reports through the Public Health Administrator to the Board of Health, an autonomous governing entity within county government. The Black Hawk County Board of Supervisors appoints Board of Health members. BHCHD has three operational areas: Enforcement, Surveillance and Preparedness; Health Promotion; and Schools, Outreach and Clinics; in addition to support services for human resources, health planning, information technology, and fiscal administration. Services such as Northeast Iowa Regional Inspections, Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Project, and Maternal/Child Health are provided on a regional county vs. single county basis as outlined in memoranda of agreements. BHCHD has a staff of approximately 92.0 FTEs.

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.

Organizational Strategic Planning

- **Vision, Values and Mission** – Revised vision, values and mission statements are included with the strategic plan.
- **Agency Strategic Plan** – Black Hawk County Health Department strategic plan is completed and is an essential component to the suite of planning tools.
- **Health Improvement Plan** – Review of the 2011 Health Improvement Plan is completed with modifications made as a result of the strategic planning process, as well as links identified in the strategic plan.
- **Quality Improvement Plan** – Preliminary work completed on the quality improvement plan with links identified in the strategic plan to current and future process improvement initiatives

and plan enhancements.

- **Engagement with Board of Health** – Two members of the Board of Health were engaged throughout the strategic planning process, as well as full Board participation during regular monthly meetings and (future) scheduled Board of Health work sessions to evaluate and monitor progress with the strategic plan.
- **Alignment with County-Wide Strategic Planning** – The Black Hawk County Health Department strategic planning process followed the County planning process, *Black Hawk County Governing for the Future*, and alignment with the *2028 Vision, Motivating Values and Vision Elements in a Rapidly Changing Future*.

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.*

Understanding the interrelations of the various planning tools and how important the Community Health Needs Assessment/Health Improvement Plan is to informing other planning processes. It is important to approach the work with a willingness to learn and trust you will build on new knowledge and experiences throughout the journey.

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.

Motivation of the Board of Health, leadership and staff to revise vision, values, and mission statements as necessary steps in the strategic planning process. There was consensus that our work has changed and we were able to “let go” of previously established planning tools to fully engage in understanding our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, challenges and strategic priorities to guide current and future public health practice. Also, the timeline of the project was a short cycle and this was helpful in recruiting Strategic Planning Team members and focusing on a successful strategy from start to finish. The timing of the project proposal was consistent with the Health Department's need to complete the strategic planning process (following the County-wide initiative). For continuity across the county system, Black Hawk County Health Department engaged consultants from the Institute for Decision-Making, University of Northern Iowa, also

involved with the county-wide planning process.

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.

Be honest and patient about the Agency's capacity to complete the proposed project in the timeline provided. It is easy to become overwhelmed when networking with others who are further along in the process or have the internal capacity to assume a broader scope of work. Breaking tasks up into manageable steps and having the will to understand how they will fit together is more important in the long term. Engaging consultants to coach and facilitate components of the work plan may be helpful. The best consultants fill a knowledge, skill or ability gap; offer an alternative voice; and can be a collaborative partner in strengthening public health capacity.

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?

The ASI funding provided an alternative and cost-effective strategy for completing the work plan and allowed for networking at the national level, both of which are challenges with a limited property tax allocation. At the local level, use of external funds for purchase of service (consultants) and out-of-state travel is perceived as being better stewards of the local property tax allocation to the Health Department. As a result of the funding opportunity, the Black Hawk County Health Department was able to complete the strategic planning process, a necessary step to building capacity for public health accreditation.

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?

Development of a performance management system; enhancement and implementation of the quality improvement plan; initiating the next cycle community health assessment process; and assessing the Agency's readiness for public health accreditation are strategic priorities included with the FY2015 – 2017 strategic plan. Engagement and utilization of local and national resources will be evaluated to assist with the implementation plan.