

2015-2016 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.

Garfield County Public Health serves the citizens of Garfield County. The population in our county was 57,461 as of 2014. We have a staff of 33 employees, split between offices in Glenwood Springs and Rifle.

2. **Project Overview:** Provide an overview of the work your agency conducted with or because of this funding, including the significant accomplishments/deliverables completed during the ASI project period 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.

We met as a strategic planning team monthly, and focused on strategic planning concepts, and quality improvement tools to identify, implement, and follow up on our long term goals.

As a strategic planning team, we would first go through a concept, such as SWOT and SMART goal planning, and then identify department wide issues that we could use these tools on. One of the main concerns that came up through SWOT was a lack of a formal onboarding/training process. Using SMART goals, we decided to build a department wide orientation manual from the ground up, which is making progress.

As the strategic planning team was identifying and solving department wide issues, the supervisors and managers on the team were tasked with taking their learnings back to their individual programs and mini teams to identify issues on a more micro level and design and implement solutions with their individual teams. From this, we got feedback around website gaps, overall department communication policies and processes, and awareness of our consumer protection program.

In response to this, our website is being updated, our entire team was forwarded a recently revised communication policy manual, and it is being included as a link in the orientation manual. Our consumer protection program will have a larger presence on our website moving forward.

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 biggest difficulty was getting schedules to align with the strategic planning team. We were able to reschedule or push things to the next meeting if need be.

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 biggest success we had was the fact that everyone seemed to be on board with this process. The strategic planning team was very much bought in, and there was a general sense of excitement or at least a healthy curiosity from the rest of the staff around the work we did. At no point did it feel like people needed to be “won over”.

5. **Impact of ASI:** To what extent do you feel your health department was more prepared for accreditation at the end of the ASI5 project as compared to the beginning? What specifically changed during that time that made your agency more prepared for accreditation? How did the ASI5 contribute to your health department’s progress?

This process got us to get our strategic planning and QI process off the page and into practice. Josh Williams and Zac Sutherland specifically had been working on this conceptually, but this was the first time that the entire staff was able to get involved in some capacity. Furthermore, it helped the team to understand the interconnections between strategic planning, quality improvement, and workforce development.

6. **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.

Taking the approach of teaching out the concepts to the strategic planning team, putting the concepts to practice, and having the team teach it out on a smaller scale helped us to identify issues and implement solutions.

If we could do this process again, it would be beneficial to let the staff know even more quickly what we were doing, and that we would be coming to them for their help in identifying issues and implementing fixes.

7. **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?

Having this funding specifically set aside for this type of work has helped our quality improvement efforts immensely. The amount of training hours it has enabled us to take advantage of might not have happened otherwise.

8. **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?

Over the next 12-24 months, we will continue to refine our strategic plan. We will continue to implement the SWOT and SMART processes as we identify and implement fixes to known departmental issues. We will continue to meet as a strategic planning team and work through department wide processes as a team, and have the members of the strategic planning team continue to work through issues in their individual teams.