

NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health

2015-2016 Accreditation Support Initiative (ASI) for Local Health Departments

FINAL REPORT

Part 2: Narrative 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 Washoe County Health District has jurisdiction over all public health matters in Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County, Nevada through the policy-making Washoe County District Board of Health. The Washoe County Health District serves a permanent population of 440,000 residents, and an annual tourist population of 4.5 million, through six divisions: Administrative Health Services, Air Quality Management, Community and Clinical Health Services, Environmental Health Services, Epidemiology and Public Health Preparedness, and the Office of the District Health Officer.

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.

The Washoe County Health District developed a four year Strategic Plan with the NACCHO-ASI funds. The Strategic Planning process brought together the Board of Health, Health District Leadership Team, Health District staff and community partners to strategize how the Health District can best serve the community over the next four years.

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 overriding challenge throughout the strategic planning process was selecting priorities. With so many health priorities within our community needing attention, and with limited staff and resources, our strategic planning process had to focus on goals and strategies that would deliver the greatest impact in creating a healthier community.

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 buy-in and support from our Board of Health and District Health Officer was critical to the success of our Strategic Planning process. Furthermore, our consultants were instrumental in keeping the process on track and incorporating all feedback and ideas into the plan.

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?

Our Health District did not have the resources available to begin a strategic planning process. Without the ASI5 funds, the Washoe County Health District would not have a Strategic Plan, and would be further behind in meeting the public health accreditation requirements. More importantly, Health District staff now have a plan we can all work from to coordinate strategies and effectively impact healthier outcomes in our community.

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.

Participation and buy-in from the Board of Health and District Health Officer during the process was essential to its success. Having Board members attend our Strategic Planning retreat confirmed to staff that we are partners working toward common goals. The Board's grassroots involvement and commitment was a moral boost for all staff as well.

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?

This funding has allowed the Health District to have a Strategic Plan that is not just owned by staff, but in reality, the entire community. The funds allowed for multiple planning meetings with community partners and stakeholders, a retreat, and an all staff survey so a wide spectrum of input contributed to the Strategic Plan. Furthermore, Health District Division Directors and Supervisors have engaged staff on an ongoing basis during division and program level meetings, thereby creating a greater commitment from staff to work together to make the goals and strategies of our new plan a reality. The funding has increased the Health District's accreditation readiness in that all Health District Board members and leadership have a greater understanding of the PHAB requirements. Unlike the Community Health Needs Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan, the Strategic Plan touched every Board and staff member within the Health District, building greater camaraderie and understanding of the accreditation process.

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?

Our Health District will spend the next 12-24 months working through the PHAB Standards and Measures to prepare for accreditation. In addition, our Health District is hopeful we will be applying for accreditation sometime in 2017.