Public Health Accreditation Board

Health Department Readiness Checklist

A checklist to assess a health department's readiness to apply for public health accreditation.

Effective Date

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This checklist is intended to assist a health department with determining if it is ready to apply for accreditation. The checklist explores the various aspects of the health department and assists the department with charting a course of action to prepare for PHAB accreditation. ***The readiness checklist is for a health department's internal use only. It is not to be submitted to PHAB.***

A health department that is considering accreditation should review this checklist prior to submitting a Statement of Intent. The health department should have a minimum of 50% checked as underway or complete prior to submitting an application to PHAB with the understanding that all of these activities will need to be complete before the site visit occurs.

The health department should begin by determining who will be leading the accreditation efforts within the health department by designating an Accreditation Coordinator. The Accreditation Coordinator will be PHAB's single point of contact with the department. This person and key leadership should familiarize themselves with the accreditation process and review the standards. The health department will determine who completes this readiness checklist and will set its own timeline for reviews, work and completion of the tasks in this checklist.

The tasks in this readiness checklist are divided into three areas –initial questions to determine eligibility; organizational readiness to determine if key organizational and administrative elements are in place; and accreditation process readiness to determine if you are ready to submit an application. The tasks listed are not a comprehensive listing of all possible activities to show organizational capacity or to represent accreditation preparation. This checklist is intended to be a starting point for a health department's efforts.

The organizational tasks are among those elements that will need to be in place for a successful accreditation site visit and are basic components of a well-managed health department. The purpose is to assist the health department's analysis about organizational or administrative activities that may need to be addressed within the health department – either by creation of new processes or documentation, revision of current processes or documentation, or the implementation of new or revised process or documentation.

The Health Department Readiness Checklist lists preparation tasks that the health department needs to have under development or complete prior to the submission of the PHAB application. These tasks address the health department's readiness to be able to carry out the accreditation process. All of these tasks are important, and should be the health department's starting point for accreditation preparation.   At least half of the tasks in this section should be underway or complete prior to submitting an application.

The tasks cited in this checklist are not intended to be representative of, nor align with, the requirements of the PHAB Standards and Measures. The checklist is meant to be a general

list of expectations that PHAB defines for any health department that is considering application for accreditation.

Other Documents to review for readiness include:
- PHAB Standards and Measures *(to be hyperlinked when Checklist is online)*
- PHAB Acronyms & Glossary of Terms*(to be hyperlinked when Checklist is online)*
- PHAB Guide to Accreditation*(to be hyperlinked when Checklist is online)*
- Self-Assessment Tools – State or Local*(to be hyperlinked when Checklist is online)*
- PHAB Guide to Interpretation*(to be hyperlinked when Checklist is online)*
- The Statement of Intent form *(to be hyperlinked when Checklist is online)*

These documents can be located on the PHAB website at www.phaboard.org.

The Readiness Checklist is *(will also be)* also available as an Excel Spreadsheet at www.phaboard.org.

Initial Questions

There are a few questions that should be addressed prior to continuing with the checklist. The items on this page should all be "yes" before moving forward with assessing other readiness tasks.

Determination of Eligibility for PHAB Accreditation:

> *"Any governmental entity with the primary statutory or legal responsibility for public health in a state, a territory, a tribe or the local level is eligible for accreditation."*
>
> See the PHAB Guide to Accreditation for full eligibility criteria.

Is the health department eligible for PHAB accreditation?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

If no, the health department is not able to apply for PHAB accreditation. If the health department is unsure if it is eligible, contact PHAB at 703-778-4549 or *sample email@phaboard.org*. PHAB will make all final decisions regarding health department eligibility.

Determination of Governing Entity Support

Does the appointing authority for the health director support PHAB accreditation for the health department?

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ N/A

If no, obtain support from the appointing authority before proceeding.

Selection of an Accreditation Coordinator for the Health Department

Has a staff member has been designated as the Accreditation Coordinator?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

If no, select an Accreditation Coordinator before proceeding.

Organizational Readiness –

This section lists selected organizational and administrative elements that should be under development or complete prior to submitting an application for PHAB accreditation. This list includes elements of the health department's administrative operations, leadership practices, and body of documentation, including plans, protocols, and policies. This list, defined by PHAB, notes some of the expectations of a health department that wishes to receive accreditation. The list is not a thorough accounting of all the elements a health department should have in place. It is a baseline for the department to begin its thought processes as it prepares for gathering the body of evidence that will be needed to show conformity with the PHAB standards and measures. The list does not place any emphasis on any one standard or measure as more important than another. While the elements in this list will need to be in place for documentation for various measures, all of the standards and measures are important. See the full PHAB Standards and Measures for a full understanding of the organizational aspects that will need to be completed for accreditation.

Health Department Organizational and Administrative Elements

The health department has, or, in the case of a multi-jurisdictional application, health departments have:

- An approved budget
- An audit process
- Information technology/computer support
- A governing entity that is oriented to its responsibilities (if one exists)
- Evidence that collaboration with community or state partners and stakeholders is inherent in how the health department completes its work, such as in the health assessment process and in delivery of services
- A Quality Improvement plan
- A structure in place that supports performance improvement
- The evaluation of processes, programs and interventions underway
- A new employee orientation program
- Current job descriptions
- A staff performance appraisal system
- A workforce development plan
- A vision and mission statement
- Written administrative policies
- Staff who are trained on and have access to policies, plans and procedures

How to complete the Accreditation Process Readiness Checklist

The Accreditation Process Readiness Checklist sets forth some elements that health departments need to have under development or complete prior to submitting an application to PHAB. In completing the checklist for the first time, review each task and indicate the initial status using the following definitions:

Task –	the activity that is being assessed for health department readiness to apply for accreditation
Responsible Staff –	the person assigned to review and/or complete this task
Not Yet Started –	the health department has not began any work toward completing this task
Plan Developed –	the health department has not begun any work toward completing this task, but has developed a plan of action for doing so
Under Way –	the health department is in the process of implementing the task or doing work towards its completion
Complete –	the health department has completed the work of this task
Date Complete –	the date the review and/or work of this task was completed

As an example, the first task under the accreditation process checklist is "The health department has an Accreditation Coordinator identified".   This is probably the responsibility of the director of the department. His or her name is entered in the "Responsible Staff" column. The health department would put a check in the "Complete" column and the date of her selection (or date of the initial review of the checklist) in the "Date Complete" column.

Task The health department has:	Responsible Staff	Not Yet Started	Plan Developed	Under Way	Complete	Date Complete
An Accreditation Coordinator Identified	*Health Department Director*				✔	*10-22-09*

Another task in the checklist is "The health department has an accreditation team in place". During the initial review of the checklist, the health department had not yet started the task of defining the department's accreditation team and the "Not Yet Started" column was checked. The health department director has selected Ms. Doe as the Accreditation Coordinator. As the Accreditation Coordinator, Ms. Doe was assigned responsibility for putting the team together.

An accreditation team in place	*Ms. Doe*	✔				

In subsequent reviews, the check for this task may move into other columns until the task is complete. When completed, the date is entered. In the following example, the accreditation team was in place on November 5th, and the task is checked as complete.

An accreditation team in place	Ms. Doe				✔	11-5-09

Accreditation Process Readiness Checklist

Task The health department has:	Responsible Staff	Not Yet Started	Plan Developed	Under Way	Complete	Date Complete
Identified an Accreditation Coordinator						
Department leadership supportive of accreditation						
A governing entity that is supportive of accreditation						
An Accreditation Coordinator and health department leadership who have completed the on-line orientation						
Submitted the Statement of Intent						
Health department Leadership, and Governing Entity, who are familiar with the accreditation process						
Elected officials who are familiar with and supportive of the accreditation process						
An accreditation team in place						
Key documents that are ready for submission: [1]						
State or Community Health Assessment						
Health Department Strategic Plan						
State or Community Health Improvement Plan						

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[1] The completion of the three key documents is considered as one task.

Reviewed standards, measures, and guidance for documentation requirements						
The capability to produce electronic documentation [2]						
The capability to establish an internal electronic filing system, with a separate file for each measure to be a repository for documentation [3]						
Identified a proposed date for submitting the application to PHAB						
Reviewed the Self Assessment Tool						
Begun review of the Guide to Interpretation						
Total Tasks in Checklist					**15**	
Total Tasks Completed or Underway						
% identified by health department as underway or complete_____						

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[2] The department should have the ability to produce documentation that can be stored on a computer in an electronic file. This includes producing original documents using an application such as Microsoft Office or OpenOffice. It also includes being able to scan printed documents and articles into electronic or PDF files.

[3] The ability to set up and organize a folder and file system on a computer for the purpose of collecting documentation and other materials to be submitted for the accreditation self-assessment.

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Next Steps

When a health department has the recommended minimum of 50% of the tasks underway or complete, begin consideration of when the health department may want to submit an application. A Statement of Intent (SOI) will need to be submitted to PHAB, if it has not already done so. If the health department has already submitted a SOI, or did so as a part of using this checklist, remember that the health department has up to 12 months after submission of the SOI to complete the training and apply for accreditation.

All of the tasks in this checklist will need to be complete prior to the submission of the Self-Assessment Tool.

If you have questions about the Readiness Checklist or the accreditation process contact PHAB at 703-778-4549 or sample email@phaboard.org.