Narrative Writing Training

Office of Continuous Improvement - August 2019
Learning Objectives

- Review PHAB’s required forms
  - Format
  - Structure
  - Requirements
- Introduce narrative descriptions
- Learn tips for improved writing
What will you need for this training?

- Paper
- OR
- Computer
Reaccreditation Standards & Measures
Accreditation vs. Reaccreditation

In Accreditation, show **WHAT** we do.

In Reaccreditation, explain **HOW**.

- Explain the “bigger picture”
- Describe what we currently do
- Update the big 6 plans
Documentation
4 Types of Documents

1. Narrative description of processes, procedures, activities
   Use PHAB form
2. Narrative description of examples
   Use PHAB form
3. Examples
   (i.e. a blog for communications)
4. Adopted items
   (i.e. a plan or report)
Age of Documents

We must submit by September 30, 2022

- Current = How are we currently operating?
- If required within 2 years = After October 1, 2020
- If required within 5 years = After October 1, 2017
- Continued Advancement = July 2022 and onward
Documentation Guidance: Narratives

- Telling the ADHS story
- \( \leq 5 \) pages with 10,000 character limit
- “Continued Advancement” section is required
  - What we plan to do as of July 2022 to continuously improve
  - You can also use if we don’t currently meet all requirements
  - Not included in reaccreditation decision

### PHAB Reaccreditation Documentation Form

**Measure 1.1:** The community health assessment is continually updated to broaden and deepen the community’s understanding of public health issues and resources

**Requirement 1:** Collaborative process for the enhancement of the community health assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Department Name</th>
<th>Arizona Department of Health Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Requirement Narrative**

Provide a narrative description of the ongoing community collaborative process for continuous (at least annually) enhancement of the community health assessment. Ensure that the health assessment includes items (a) through (c) of the Guidance. Do not upload documentation of an example. Please be succinct and do not provide more narrative than necessary to describe conformity with this requirement.

**Required Narrative Text**

**Continued Advancement**

Describe plans for advancement of the health department’s work in the particular area addressed by this Requirement.
## Documentation Guidance: Narratives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Guidance</th>
<th>Document Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td><strong>Describe the ongoing</strong> community collaborative process for continuous enhancement of the CHA</td>
<td>Narrative Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td><strong>Provide the most recent</strong> community health assessment</td>
<td>1 CHA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td><strong>Provide examples</strong> of primary data that have been collected and incorporated into CHA since initial adoption</td>
<td>2 Examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td><strong>Describe examples</strong> of how the partnership informs other organizations and the public about the availability of the CHA</td>
<td>Narrative Description of 2 examples</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Documentation Guidance: Narratives

- Narrative **must** include elements in Guidance
- When applicable, label subsections in your narrative (a, b, c, etc.)
- Easier for PHAB reviewer to find relevant info
Writing Narratives
Elements of a Narrative

Describe how ADHS currently operates

- Not what we did last year
- Not how we will do this in the future
- Not with an opinion of how we think we are doing

Address each of the elements in the Guidance

- Use PHAB Guidance (i.e. requirements a - e)
What does every good story have?
The Beginning

- Gives the site visitor common ground
- Frames the PHAB requirement
- Tells the site visitor what requirement you are trying to address, why it is important, and what you’ll be writing about

**REMEMBER:** Site visitors know nothing about ADHS!
The Middle

- Introduce each character & explain partnerships/relationships
  - Each customer, stakeholder, partner is a character you need to frame
- Is it clear how these ideas and characters relate?
- Does your story move forward in logical fashion?
- Have you answered the questions that are likely to come from the site visitor?
The End

- Tie up loose ends
- What is the main idea/feeling you want the site visitor to take home with them?
ADHS Reaccreditation Process Steps
[insert some of the process flow steps]
Plain Language Tips
Plain language is communication your target audience understands the first time they read or hear it.

It does not mean “dumbing down” your writing.
Answer 3 Questions

1. Who is your target audience?
   Literacy level, familiarity with topic, background, etc.

2. What is your communication objective?
   What do you want your reader to think after reading?

3. What is your main message?
   What is the most important thing for them to remember?
Key points

- Use effective and meaningful headings, tables, and lists
  - For PHAB requirements, you can insert table or graphic if it truly adds to the story

- Aim for no more than 20 words per sentence

- Eliminate unnecessary words and prepositions (that, of, among, about, from)

- Ask yourself, “Can I streamline my content?”
Key points

- Eliminate excess content
- Spend time organizing key messages
- Use **active** voice

Instead of this:
Consultation from respondents was obtained to determine the estimated burden.

Use this:
We consulted with respondents to determine the estimated burden.
Exercises
Measure 1.3: Public health data are collected, analyzed, shared, and fully utilized to increase knowledge and inform policy and program decisions

This measure addresses continued conformity with Standards and Measures, Version 1.5:
Standard 1.2 Collect and maintain reliable, comparable, and valid data that provide information on conditions of public health importance and on the health status of the population
Standard 1.3 Analyze public health data to identify trends in health problems, environmental public health hazards, and social and economic factors that affect the public’s health
Standard 1.4 Provide and use the results of health data analysis to develop recommendations regarding public health policies, processes, programs, or interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Guidance</th>
<th>Required Document</th>
<th>Dated Within</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Ongoing ways to share data</td>
<td>6. Describe how data analyses are shared with other health departments (that is, Tribal, state, and local).</td>
<td>Narrative descriptive of process(s)</td>
<td>Describe the current process(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Documentation Form - Handout #2

**PHAB Reaccreditation**  
**Documentation Form**  
**January 2017**

**Measure 1.3:** Public health data are collected, analyzed, shared, and fully utilized to increase knowledge and inform policy and program decisions

**Requirement 6:** Ongoing ways to share data

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<tr>
<td>Provide a narrative description of how data analyses are currently shared with other health departments (that is, Tribal, state, and local health departments). Do not upload documentation of an example. Please be succinct and do not provide more narrative than necessary to describe conformity with this requirement.</td>
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<td>Describe plans for advancement of the health department’s work in the particular area addressed by this Requirement.</td>
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Exercise #1 - First Things First

- Time: 10 minutes
- Before getting started, take time to brainstorm or freewrite.
  - **Brainstorm** all the words or phrases you can think of related to the requirement. Write them all down.
- Now that your brain is primed, start structuring those thoughts into a narrative.
  - **Circle** or **underline** the main themes, words, or sentences from this exercise.
Exercise #2 - Setting the Stage

- Time: 10 minutes
- **Describe how data analyses are shared with other health departments** *(refer to Handout #1)*
- Look at the items circled/underlined in your brainstorming session
  - Are there any recurring themes or words?
  - What jumps out at you?
  - Try to incorporate that into your narrative
- Be as specific as you can while being concise
- Use action words or phrases that are easily understandable
- Make it simple - refrain from jargon
Exercise #3 - Assembling the Narrative

● Time: 10 minutes
● Read your narrative again and edit for grammar, spelling, syntax, etc.
● After editing, trade narratives with a partner
  ○ Use Standard Work handout for review
● Reminder: Narratives < 5 pages
● Good luck!
Recap

1. Review the entire measure
2. Reach out if you have any questions
3. Write narrative as a story
   a. Set the stage with beginning
   b. Create a middle by identifying who is doing what and by when using vivid words visitor will relate to
   c. Tie it up with an ending
   d. Use plain language
When in doubt...

Team Drive Resources

- Infographics
- Domain-specific Guidance & Forms
- Domain Teams & Leads
- Sample Cover Page
- Reaccreditation Process Map
- Standard Work for Writing Narratives
- General PHAB Guidance
  - FAQs
  - Documentation Tip Sheet
  - Sample Narrative (Good & Bad)