**ASTHO STAR Center Peer Assessment Program**

State and Territorial Health Agency Readiness Tool

This tool is designed for public health agencies to review its organizational and administrative capacity using the ASTHO STAR Center capacity indicators, strengthen the agency’s understanding of the capacity indicators, and help identify potential priority areas for the assessment.

Utilize the capacity indicator data dictionary for measurement specifications, possible data sources, and operational definitions of the indicators.

How to use this tool:

1. For each quantifiable capacity indicator, provide a data point or baseline (eg. Percent of total full-time equivalent positions that are currently vacant). For all other capacity indicators, select the response that best describes the current state at your agency.
2. Consider what a goal or “best state” would look like at your agency and indicate the level of improvement needed to meet that vision. If no data point or data source is available for a capacity indicator, classify the indicator as “High” need for improvement.

Capacity areas where over 70% of indicators are determined to have “High” need for improvement should be considered as potential priority areas for assessment.

This is an internal working document only and will not be submitted during the assessment.

*Example*

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| ***Capacity Indicator*** | ***Current State or***  ***Last Data Point*** | ***Need for improvement***  *Low, Medium, or High* | ***Data Source or Comments*** |
| *Is there a current and in use information systems plan that addresses the elements of an informatics-savvy health department?* | *Yes* | *Low* | *Source: DPH Information Systems Plan*  *Plan updated 2021, due for review in 2024* |
| *Average number of days it takes to obtain information systems hardware once requested* | *Unknown* | *High* | *No data point available* |

**Human Resource Management**

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| **Capacity Indicator** | | **Current State or**  **Last Data Point** | **Need for improvement**  Low, Medium,  or High | **Data Source** |
| 1 | Percent of total authorized full-time equivalent (FTE) positions that are currently vacant |  |  |  |
| 2 | Proportion of authorized health department staff positions employed as of the date of the assessment. |  |  |  |
| 3 | How would you describe activities sponsored by the health department to address the well-being of employees? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 4 | To what extent have human resource policies that specifically address workforce diversity, equity and inclusivity been reviewed for their impact on the workforce? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 5 | To what extent have human resource policies that address emergency orders, surge capacity, or other similar non-routine human resource issues been developed? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 6 | To what extent has the health department measured the impact of recruitment and retention activities toward achieving a workforce that mirrors the population served? | Choose an item. |  |  |

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| Use this space to make notes on strengths, gaps, tracking mechanisms, or other considerations. |
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**Workforce Development**

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| **Capacity Indicator** | | **Current State or**  **Last Data Point** | **Need for improvement**  Low, Medium,  or High | **Data Source** |
| 1 | Is there a current and in use workforce development plan that addresses all health department staff? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 2 | What percent of workforce professional development activities described in the agency’s most recent workforce development plan have been implemented? |  |  |  |
| 3 | What percent of the workforce has participated in professional development activities supported by the health department? |  |  |  |
| 4 | How would you describe health department activities aimed at sharing public health practice content with potential future public health workers? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 5 | How would you describe employee recognition/appreciation activities implemented by the health department? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 6 | How would you describe healthy workplace culture activities implemented by the health department? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 7 | What percent of total budget from all sources (federal, state, local) is dedicated to planning and implementation of workforce development? |  |  |  |

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| Use this space to make notes on strengths, gaps, tracking mechanisms, roles of internal staff or external partners, or other comments. |
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**Facilities Management**

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| **Capacity Indicator** | | **Current State or**  **Last Data Point** | **Need for improvement**  Low, Medium,  or High | **Data Source or Comments** |
| 1 | Is there a current and in-use facilities management plan that addresses all health department facilities? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 2 | To what extent have major improvements related to cleanliness, security, safety and/or access requested for the health department managed facilities (including temporary facilities) been implemented? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 3 | Number of complaints about accessibility of health department managed facilities by persons with disabilities |  |  |  |
| 4 | Is the number of facilities management positions or contract positions adequate to meet the needs of the health department? | Choose an item. |  |  |

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**Administrative Policy and Planning**

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| **Capacity Indicator** | | **Current State or**  **Last Data Point** | **Need for improvement**  Low, Medium,  or High | **Data Source or Comments** |
| 1 | To what extent does the health department maintain agency-wide accessibility for reviewing, revising, and approving agency policies and plans? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 2 | What proportion of non-emergency policies and plans have been reviewed and revised, according to the health department’s policies for maintaining updated policies and plans? |  |  |  |
| 3 | What proportion of emergency operations plan are activities reviewed, and policies updated as new information becomes available to the health department? (including AARs) |  |  |  |
| 4 | To what extent are policies and procedures for managing agency operations during uncertain or unplanned events (including continuity of operations) reviewed and updated as new information becomes available? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 5 | To what extent have the policies reflecting specific actions to improve diversity, equity, and inclusivity been assessed for their impact? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 6 | Does the health department have ongoing access to legal consultation for policy/law/regulation development or revisions? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 7 | To what extent do the health department staff recommend revisions to public health laws/rules and regulations? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 8 | What proportion of public health law revisions recommended were not approved? |  |  |  |
| 9 | To what extent have public health laws or rules/regulations been enacted that reduce public health authority and capacity? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 10 | To what extent have program policy changes been made based on program evaluations? | Choose an item. |  |  |

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**Information Systems Management**

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| **Capacity Indicator** | | **Current State or**  **Last Data Point** | **Need for improvement**  Low, Medium,  or High | **Data Source or Comments** |
| 1 | Is there a current and in use information systems plan that addresses the elements of an informatics-savvy health department? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 2 | Average number of days it takes to obtain information systems hardware once requested |  |  |  |
| 3 | Average number of days for software systems updates to be installed once they have been approved |  |  |  |
| 4 | Proportion of days in the past year when the email system was not operational |  |  |  |
| 5 | Proportion of days in the past year when the surveillance system (disease reporting) was not operational |  |  |  |
| 6 | To what extent does the health department have current and in-use cross-sectoral or cross-agency data use or data sharing agreements? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 7 | Number of vacancies in information systems positions, as a percentage of the total number of information systems positions. |  |  |  |

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**Accounting, Budgeting, and Audit**

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| **Capacity Indicator** | | **Current State or**  **Last Data Point** | **Need for improvement**  Low, Medium,  or High | **Data Source or Comments** |
| 1 | Does the health department have an approved annual budget, including budget authority to spend grant funds? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 2 | To what extent does the health department have the capacity to conduct financial analysis of available resources and financial support needed to maintain and improve public health infrastructure or services in the jurisdiction served by the health department? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 3 | Proportion of state funds expended in the allotted time frame |  |  |  |
| 4 | Proportion of grant funds returned to the grantor because of underspending |  |  |  |
| 5 | Average amount of time for an external invoice to be paid once it has been submitted to the health department |  |  |  |
| 6 | To what extent are financial policies and procedures updated to reflect flexible financial management during uncertain or unplanned events? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 7 | To what extent were internal or external audit findings cited but not addressed during the past year? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 8 | Number of federally funded programs receiving a “high-risk grantee” designation |  |  |  |

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**Procurement of Equipment, Supplies, and Services**

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| **Capacity Indicator** | | **Current State or**  **Last Data Point** | **Need for improvement**  Low, Medium,  or High | **Data Source or Comments** |
| 1 | Does the health department have current and in use policies and procedures related to procurement of equipment and supplies both in routine and in emergency situations? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 2 | Average number of days to receive approval of equipment and supplies once requested |  |  |  |
| 3 | Average number of days to receive approval of external services agreement once requested |  |  |  |
| 4 | Proportion of equipment and/or supply requests denied in the past year |  |  |  |
| 5 | Number of accountability reviews of subcontractors related to equipment purchases |  |  |  |
| 6 | Number of accountability reviews of subcontractors related to public health contract services |  |  |  |
| 7 | To what extent does the agency have flexibility to award procurement contracts as a priority to minority owned vendors? | Choose an item. |  |  |

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**Communications**

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| **Capacity Indicator** | | **Current State or**  **Last Data Point** | **Need for improvement**  Low, Medium,  or High | **Data Source or Comments** |
| 1 | Does the health department have a current and in use communications plan that includes both risk communications and non-emergency communications? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 2 | What percent of the major communications activities described in the agency communications plan been implemented? |  |  |  |
| 3 | To what extent do the activities conducted in accordance with the communications plan for reaching people who are non-English speaking, deaf or hard of hearing, or blind or have low vision been assessed for impact? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 4 | To what extent are social media communications a part of the health department’s ongoing communications? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 5 | To what extent has the agency’s website kept updated as information changes or new information is acquired? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 6 | To what extent are communications strategies and activities revised based on quality improvement, performance management, or other types of evaluation activities? | Choose an item. |  |  |

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**Performance Management/Quality Improvement and Evaluation**

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| **Capacity Indicator** | | **Current State or**  **Last Data Point** | **Need for improvement**  Low, Medium,  or High | **Data Source or Comments** |
| 1 | To what extent does the health department revise administrative or organizational policies or procedures based on performance or quality improvement activities? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 2 | To what extent are agency activities reviewed for conformity with diversity, equity, and inclusivity policies? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 3 | How often does the agency leadership review findings from the performance management system? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 4 | Proportion of complaints from health department customers or member of the public that receive responses |  |  |  |
| 5 | To what extent are external contracts or MOUs that were reviewed for performance? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 6 | To what extent are reviews conducted of health department operations during unplanned or uncertain events, as applicable? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 7 | To what extent are policies or procedures revised based on reviews of health department operations during unplanned or uncertain times, as applicable? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 8 | Proportion of agency leadership with training in QI/PM |  |  |  |

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**Learning Organizational Efforts and Innovations**

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| **Capacity Indicator** | | **Current State or**  **Last Data Point** | **Need for improvement**  Low, Medium,  or High | **Data Source or Comments** |
| 1 | Does the health department have activities aimed at contributing to developing research, evidence, practice-based insights, and other innovations? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 2 | To what extent are health department staff engaged in internal activities aimed at seeking solutions to challenges or problems? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 3 | To what extent are activities or efforts to evaluate new strategies for administering public health department operations implemented? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 4 | To what extent are activities led or supported by leadership in addressing administrative issues? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 5 | To what extent are cross-sectoral activities led or engaged in by health department leadership in addressing governmental system issues? | Choose an item. |  |  |
| 6 | To what extent are cross-sectoral activities led by leadership in addressing administrative issues that involve non-governmental partners (i.e., access to health care, telehealth, pandemic response, etc.)? | Choose an item. |  |  |

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