

Gaining Ground Initiative Participant Manual

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Program Overview

Gaining Ground is a two-year initiative, managed by the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) and supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), that will develop sustainable, statewide systems to catalyze public health accreditation and support performance improvement in local, tribal, and state health departments in seven states.

Gaining Ground provides \$150,000 and individualized coaching to state coalitions in Colorado, California, Iowa, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Dakota, and Utah. Each state coalition is comprised of state, local, and tribal health departments, and other key stakeholders, such as public health institutes and schools of public health.

The purpose of the Gaining Ground Initiative is to leverage existing resources and relationships, amplify them with funding and technical assistance, and create additional momentum and progress towards the pursuit of national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) at the state, local, and tribal level. **This Participant Manual outlines the requirements for and the support available to the seven Gaining Ground Initiative coalitions for the duration of the grant period, from June 1, 2014 through May 31, 2016.**

Technical Assistance

The following forms of technical assistance (TA) will be available to Gaining Ground participants:

1. **State Coalition Advisor:** Each state coalition will be assigned an expert advisor to support the development and implementation of the project work plan, and facilitate connections to existing resources and expertise. Advisor support will be provided both from a distance (web, phone) and in-person. In-person support will include:
 - a. one to two site visits and
 - b. on-site support during the three Open Forums of the Community of Practice for Public Health Improvement [COPPHI]).

Please see below for advisor information:

Grace Gorenflo	Lee Thielen
California	Nebraska
Iowa	North Dakota
Colorado	Utah
New Jersey	

Your advisor is a key resource related to your work. She will be in frequent contact with you, via a schedule and format that works for your team. Your advisor can provide direct technical assistance to your team, or she will connect you to resources/persons that can provide technical assistance. Advisors will also be in frequent communication with each other and serve as core members of the NNPHI project team. In this role, they will be able to help draw connections across all Gaining Ground states to identify opportunities for shared learning.

In the first three months, your advisor will provide direct support to the development of your state's work plan and budget, which are due **July 31, 2015**.

NNPHI will provide a teleconference line to enable conferences between the state coalition and their advisor. Advisors are also encouraged to connect with state coalitions utilizing free or low-cost video technology such as Skype. In order to maximize the effectiveness of the Advisor/state coalition relationship, NNPHI strongly recommends that a schedule for calls/web conferences be set at the beginning of the program.

What Should I Expect from my Advisor?

- Technical expertise: The provision of incremental education/training.
- Connections to resources: The identification of resources (e.g., specific tools, frameworks, etc.) that will be useful to your work.
- Objective input: The provision of objective input that will help provoke critical thinking and a deeper understanding of the QI process.

- Real experience: The provision of information and guidance as you go through the improvement process.
- Clear expectations: The provision of information to help you be clear about what comes next (e.g., when is the next call/communication, etc., what is my homework, etc.)
- Regular check-ins scheduled in advance, preferably at the beginning of the project

What is Expected of Me/y Coalition?

- Accept the Advisor's guidance and be open to feedback.
- Ask your Advisor if you do not understand something.
- Be prepared for and participate in the process with your Advisor (participate in the calls).
- Share your work with the Advisor (even if it's not where you think it should be) – the Advisor is here to help you.

2. **COPPHI Open Forum:** NNPHI promotes shared learning among a broad range of local, state, territorial and tribal health department representatives; researchers; public health institutes; universities; national public health organizations; funders; policymakers; and government agencies by holding national meetings that focus on performance and quality improvement and accreditation, called the *Open Forum for Quality Improvement in Public Health*. Several members from the selected state coalitions will be supported to attend the Open Forum scheduled for June 12-13, 2014, as well as one Open Forum in 2015, and one Open Forum in 2016. The precise number of persons to be supported will be determined at a later date. The COPPHI Open Forum meetings are funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.
3. **Web Conferences:** A series of web conferences will be provided as an opportunity for the coalitions to share and learn with each other, as well as to learn from other state coalitions that have successfully created a sustainable infrastructure to support accreditation readiness and performance and quality improvement. The schedule and content for the webinars will be designed with input from the seven coalitions.
4. **Leader Training:** The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) will offer a module for leadership training focused on leadership strategies for building and sustaining performance and quality improvement initiatives in their departments (e.g. accreditation, performance management systems, organizational cultures of quality improvement, etc.). The training will be aimed at health directors, approximately 2-4 hours in duration, and should be added onto existing meetings hosted within the state. NACCHO will work with selected states to understand the state's context and tailor training content accordingly.
5. **Shared Email List (Listserv):** To facilitate networking among sites, all program participants will be able to ask questions and connect with each other via an online group/email list. The type of list (e.g., linked-in group, google group, etc.) will be determined with participant feedback.

6. Templates: Sites will be provided templates for:

- [Press releases](#) to announce selection to participate in Gaining Ground
**this is optional, should sites wish to promote their selection to participate in this program*
- Project work plans
- Periodic progress reports (approximately every 6 months) (*coming soon*)

7. Online Resources:

- a. **[“Gaining Ground Participants Page:”](#)** A section of the NNPHI website will be dedicated to resources specifically for sites participating in the program.
- b. **[Public Health Quality Improvement Exchange](#):** The Public Health Quality Improvement Exchange (PHQIX.org) is an online community that houses QI projects implemented by health departments. Gaining Ground participants are encouraged to access PHQIX and share your work on the site as applicable.
- c. Access and submission capability to the **[Public Health Improvement Toolkit](#)**, an online collection of tools such as archived trainings, sample QI products, templates, and related resources. (All the tools are submitted by public health practitioners through their own efforts to implement performance improvement activities and prepare for national voluntary accreditation.)
- d. **[Compendium of Latest Resources](#):** NNPHI has compiled a matrix with links to technical resources. The compendium is available on the Gaining Ground Participants page, and is also made available during the kick-off meeting. The purpose of the matrix is to provide initial information as a starting point; we hope that as we engage in our work together, you will add useful resources that you encounter to the matrix.

Reporting Requirements

- a. **Work plans:** Coalitions will develop work plans over the first three months of the grant with the assistance of their Advisor. These work plans should respond to the state’s needs for advancing accreditation preparation and performance and QI activity within the state. Potential activities might include; providing small grants to health departments to participate in an in-state learning collaborative to prepare for accreditation and perform self-assessments against the PHAB standards; providing trainings at state-wide or regional meetings; or other technical assistance support to meet specific standards for PHAB such as an agency strategic plan, community health assessment and improvement plan, performance management plan, etc. In addition, work plans must:
 - Reach and/or include all health departments who wish to participate in the efforts.
 - Include baseline and targets for the number of health departments that will participate in each of the planned activities, and track the number of health departments that have an enhanced readiness to apply for accreditation (those that have submitted a statement of intent and those that have submitted an accreditation application.).
 - Develop a viable plan to leverage other resources and sustain activities to promote accreditation and QI after the award concludes.

- b. Final Budgets:** Final budgets and budget narratives should accompany the work plan.
- c. Periodic Progress Reports:** NNPHI will develop an evaluation plan for Gaining Ground based in part on the final state coalition work plans. It is anticipated that progress reporting will be required for evaluation purposes as well as program monitoring. NNPHI will be in regular communication with coalitions as the evaluation plan is solidified and reporting requirements developed; however, do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Funding and Budgeting Policy

\$150,000 will be awarded in 4 installments. Please refer to your contract for details regarding the payment schedule. Please note: Lead organizations must submit an invoice per the directions in the contract in order to receive payments.

Award funds may be used for; project staff salaries, consultant fees, data collection and analysis, meetings, supplies, project-related travel, communications/marketing, and project supplies. Funds may not be used for; lobbying activities, ongoing general operating expenses or existing deficits, items for which third-party reimbursement is available, endowments, or capital costs(including construction, renovation, or equipment).

NNPHI Staff Contacts for Questions

Primary Contact:

Breonne DeDecker
Program Associate
(504) 224-9043
bdedecker@nnphi.org

Secondary Contacts:

Liljana Johnson
Program Manager
(504) 301-9845
ljohnson@nnphi.org

Jennifer McKeever
Associate Director, Public Health Improvement
(202) 683-9314
jmckeever@nnphi.org

Contract Questions:

Neville DePass
(202) 680-3929
ndepass@nnphi.org



Gaining Ground State Coalition Members

*Lead contact(s)

California

Dawn Jacobson*

Public Health Institute QI On-TAP
djacobson@phi.org

Betsy Armstrong
County Health Executives Association of
California
barmstrong@cheac.org

Tamara Bannan
Public Health Institute QI On-TAP and County of
San Diego Health and Human Services Agency
tamara.bannan@phi.org

Cheryl Barrit
City of Long Beach
Cheryl.Barrit@longbeach.gov

Kelly Colopy
City of Long Beach
Kelly.colopy@longbeach.gov

Kat DeBurgh
Health Officers Association of California
deburgh@calhealthofficers.org

Loriann DeMartini
California Department of Public Health
Loriann.DeMartini@cdph.ca.gov

Terri Fields Hosler
Shasta County
tfieldshosler@co.shasta.ca.gov

Scott Fujimoto
California Department of Public Health
Scott.Fujimoto@cdph.ca.gov

Jacqueline Hanel
University of California Berkeley
jbrookshanel@berkeley.edu

Marta Induni
Public Health Institute
Marta.Induni@phi.org

Jackie Kaslow
California Rural Indian Health Board
jackie.kaslow@crihb.org

Mitchell Kushner
City of Long Beach
Mitchell.Kushner@longbeach.gov

Roberta Lawson
California Department of Public Health,
California Conference of Local Health Officers
Roberta.Lawson@cdph.ca.gov

Dalia Navarro
Health Officers Association of California
dalia@calhealthofficers.org

Jeff Oxendine
University of California Berkeley
oxendine@berkeley.edu

Mary Pittman
Public Health Institute
pittman@phi.org

Bruce Pomer
Health Officers Association of California
BrucePomer@aol.com

Cathy Raevsky
Butte County
craevsky@buttecounty.net

Leslie Stribling
California Department of Public Health
Leslie.Stribling@cdph.ca.gov

Caryn White
California Department of Public Health
Caryn.white@cdph.ca.gov

Wilma Wooten
County of San Diego Health and Human Services
Agency
wilma.wooten@sdcounty.ca.gov

Colorado

Sara Miller*
Executive Director, Colorado Foundation for
Public Health and the Environment
smiller@cfphe.org

Lisa VanRaemdonck*
Colorado Association for Public Health Officials
lisa@calpho.org

Tim Byers
Colorado School of Public Health; Center for
Public Health Practice
Tim.Byers@ucdenver.edu

Erica Chavez
Colorado Public Health Association
ewchavez@gmail.com

Sarah Lampe
Colorado Association of Local Public Health
Organizations
sarah@calpho.org

Michele Lueck
Colorado Health Institute
lueckm@coloradohealthinstitute.org

Julie Marshall
Colorado School of Public Health
Julie.Marshall@ucdenver.edu

Kathleen Matthews
Colorado Department of Public Health and
Environment
kathleen.matthews@state.co.us

Joni Reynolds
Colorado Department of Public Health and
Environment
joni.reynolds@state.co.us

Sara Schmitt
Colorado Health Institute
SchmittS@coloradohealthinstitute.org

Janna West Kowalski
Colorado School of Public Health, Center for
Public Health Practice
Janna.Kowalski@ucdenver.edu

Iowa

Jeneane Moody*
Iowa Public Health Association
iowapha@gmail.com

Martha Gelhaus
Iowa Department of Public Health
martha.gelhaus@idph.iowa.gov

Kevin Grieme
Iowa Counties Public Health Association
kgrieme@sioux-city.org

Joy Harris
Iowa Department of Public Health
joy.harris@idph.iowa.gov

Jim Hodina
Iowa Environmental Health Association
james.hodina@linncounty.org

Tricia Kitzmann
Iowa Public Health Association
tkitzmann@co.johnson.ia.us

Jodi Sutter
Iowa Environmental Health Association
jlsutter@geticonnect.com

Amy Thoreson
Public Health Advisory Committee
amy.thoreson@scottcountyiowa.com

Tanya Uden-Holman
Upper Midwest Public Health Training Center
tanya-uden-holman@uiowa.edu

Laurie Walkner
Upper Midwest Public Health Training Center
laurie-walkner@uiowa.edu

Shawn Zierke
Iowa Counties Public Health Association
shawn.zierke@gmail.com

Nebraska

Sue Medinger*
Nebraska Department of Health and Human
Services, Division of Public Health
sue.medinger@nebraska.gov

Teresa Anderson
Central District Health Department
tanderson@cdhd.ne.gov

Michele Bever
South Heartland District Health Department
michele.bever@shdhd.org

Susan Bockrath
Nebraska Association of Local Health Directors
susanbockrath@nalhd.org

Margaret Brockman
DHHS, Department of Public Health
Margaret.Brockman@nebraska.gov

Li-Wu Chen
University of Nebraska Medical Center, College
of Public Health
liwuchen@unmc.edu

Kim Engel
Panhandle Public Health Department
kengel@pphd.org

Paula Eurek
DHHS, Department of Public Health
Paula.Eurek@nebraska.gov

Brandon L Grimm
University of Nebraska Medical Center, College
of Public Health
blgrimm@unmc.edu

Janelle Jacobson
University of Nebraska Medical Center, College
of Public Health
jjacobso@unmc.edu

Terry Krohn
Three Rivers Public Health Department
tkrohn@trphd.org

Pat Lopez
Public Health Association of Nebraska
jpnice75@aol.com

Judy Martin
DHHS, Department of Public Health
Judy.Martin@nebraska.gov

Greg Moser
DHHS, Department of Public Health
Greg.Moser@nebraska.gov

Anh Nguyen
University of Nebraska Medical Center, College
of Public Health
anguyen@unmc.edu

David Palm
DHHS, Department of Public Health
David.Palm@nebraska.gov

Rita Parris
Public Health Association of Nebraska
PublicHealthNE@cs.com

Becky Rayman
East Central Public Health Department
rrayman@ecdhd.com

Jenifer Roberts-Johnson
DHHS, Department of Public Health
Jenifer.Robertsjohnson@nebraska.gov

Alice Schumaker
University of Nebraska Medical Center, College
of Public Health
amschumaker@unmc.edu

Myra Stoney
Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department
director@swhealth.ne.gov

Colleen Svoboda
DHHS, Department of Public Health
Colleen.Svoboda@nebraska.gov

Gina Uhing
Elkhorn Logan Valley Public Health Department
gina@elvphd.org

New Jersey

Margy Jahn*
NJACCHO
mjahn@twp.freehold.nj.us

Colleen McKay-Wharton
Rutgers SPH
c.mckaywharton@rutgers.edu

Natalie Pawlenko
NJDOH
Natalie.pawlenko@doh.state.nj.us

Mitchell Rosen
Rutgers SPH
mrosen@sph.rutgers.edu

Kevin Sumner
NJACCHO
ksumner@middlebrookhealth.org

Peter Tabbot
NJACCHO
ptabbot@rockawaytownship.org

Travor Weigle
NJACCHO
tweigle@gmail.com

North Dakota

Kelly Nagel*
North Dakota Department of Health
kjnagel@nd.gov

Karen Ehrens
Health North Dakota Consultant
karen@ehrensconsulting.com

Julie Ferry
North Dakota Association of City and County
Health Officials (ND SACCHO)
jferry@nd.gov

Linda Frizzell
NDSU MPH Program
linda.frizzell@ndsu.edu

Brad Gibbens
UND Central for Rural Health
brad.gibbens@med.und.edu

Kenneth Hall
UND Center for Rural Health
kenneth.hall@med.und.edu

Brad Hawk
North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission
bhawk@nd.gov

Tracy Miller
North Dakota Public Health Association
tkmiller@nd.gov

Don Warne
NDSU MPH Program
donald.warne@ndsu.edu

Utah

Laverne Snow*

Utah Department of Health (UDOH)
lavernesnow@utah.gov

Myron Bateman
Tooele County Health Department
mbateman@tooelehealth.org

Brian Bennion
Weber/Morgan Health Department
bbennion@co.weber.ut.us

Jeff Coombs
Tooele County Health Department
jcoombs@tooelehealth.org

Anna Dillingham
Davis County Health Department
adillingham@co.davis.ut.us

Gary Edwards
Salt Lake County Health Department
gedwards@slco.org

Lewis Garrett
Davis County Health Department
lewisg@co.davis.ut.us

Maralie Godemann
Utah County Health Department
maralieG@utahcounty.gov

Carl Hansen
Brigham Young University (BYU)
carl_hanson@byu.edu

Elisabeth Hass
Utah Department of Health (UDOH)
elisabeth.hass2@gmail.com

Brian Hatch
Davis County Health Department
brianL@co.davis.ut.us

Matt LaFrance
Tooele County Health Department
mlafrance@tooelehealth.org

Dave Lewis
Utah Department of Health (UDOH)
davelewis@utah.gov

Anita Muneta
Navajo Nation Department of Health
anita.muneta@nndoh.org

Brad Neiger
Brigham Young University (BYU)
neiger@byu.edu

Dr. David Patton
Utah Department of Health (UDOH)
dpatton@utah.gov

Dr. Robert Rolfs
Utah Department of Health (UDOH)
rrolfs@utah.gov

Kim Shoaf
University of Utah (U of U) Public Health
Program
kimberleyshoaf35@gmail.com

Jim Thuet
Salt Lake County Health Department
jthuet@slco.org

Leanna Vankeuren
Urban Indian Center of Salt Lake
lvankeuren@iwic.org

Paul Wightman
Utah Public Health Association (UPHA)
director@upha.org

Melissa Zito
Tribal Health Liason
mzito@utah.gov