

## Indirectly Funded-Evaluation: Assessing the Impact of PHIG on Indirectly and Unfunded Health Departments

### **Purpose**

While the primary evaluation focus of PHIG is on directly funded recipients (comprised of public health departments in all 50 states, Washington D.C., 8 territories/freely associated states, and 48 large localities/cities), it is also vital to understand the impact of PHIG on both indirectly and unfunded health departments (including those within tribal jurisdictions as well as smaller and rural communities). Indirectly funded organizations have received indirect pass-through funds from directly funded recipients, while unfunded organizations have not received any direct or indirect funds. This sub-evaluation will capture the experiences of both indirectly and unfunded health departments under PHIG's tiered funding approach, assessing the extent to which smaller or less-resourced health departments have enhanced their own workforce, strengthened the foundational capabilities, and enhanced data modernization. The goal will be to determine if the indirect funding mechanism allows for a more extensive reach of the PHIG program, promoting equity and ensuring that health departments in rural or underserved areas receive necessary support.

### **Potential Evaluation Questions**

These questions represent compiled interests of PHIG evaluation users that have been discussed to date as relevant to this topic. **In an evaluation plan summary matrix (described in the RFP), applicants must select, modify, and/or develop evaluation questions (should include themes from each of the below categories A-D) and include potential evaluation approaches for each question.** Selected subcontractors will collaborate with the NET and the EAG to finalize evaluation questions and areas of exploration as part of Phase I.

### **Evaluation Questions of Interest**

#### **A. Planning and Implementation**

- How and at what level did indirectly funded recipients receive PHIG funding? What activities/strategies are indirectly funded recipients implementing with PHIG funding?

#### **B. Outcomes**

- Is PHIG funding helping indirectly funded recipients strengthen their public health workforce? To what extent and in what ways do indirectly funded health departments' flexible "pass-through funds" help "ensure that unfunded health departments, including those within tribal jurisdictions as well as rural and smaller local communities have the public health infrastructure required to address local needs"?
- Is PHIG funding helping indirectly funded recipients to build capacity around and strengthen the foundational capabilities and delivery of community-specific services (e.g. vaccinations)?

#### **C. Context**

- Differences related to recipient characteristics: How does recipients' governance, organizational size and structure, rurality, and local and state policies impact how funds are or are not distributed? What differences exist in terms of strategies, successes, and challenges between recipients who are states, locals, and territories and freely associated states?
- Community engagement: How do activities of indirectly and unfunded health departments affect communities?
- Equity: How do indirectly and unfunded health departments define equity within this topic/domain? Are they seeking to advance equity? If so, how? If not, why not?

#### **D. Sustainability**

- Can effective strategies be sustained and/or replicated? Can they be adapted in different contexts and remain effective?

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#### **Use of Findings**

This sub-evaluation will describe how PHIG’s tiered funding process worked on the ground, as well as how indirectly and unfunded health departments have implemented various strategies and activities to improve recruiting, hiring, and retaining a public health workforce and the strengthening of the foundational public health capabilities. It will also describe the strategies and activities used by CDC and directly funded recipient health departments to expand the reach of PHIG’s funding to affect the intended outcomes of the grant. Findings will help determine the extent to which funds are being allocated in a manner that reflects learning about the strategies and activities being used that seem to be strengthening community partnerships (i.e., what works and what does not work). The insights gained from this sub-evaluation can be used to document successes and increase sustainability.

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