Steps in the Accreditation Process

1. **Pre-application.** Applicant prepares and assesses readiness and informs PHAB of its intent to apply.
2. **Application.** Applicant submits application and prerequisites and receives PHAB training.
3. **Documentation Selection and Submission.** Applicant gathers documentation and submits it through the e-PHAB information system.
4. **Site Visit.** Site visitors review documentation, conduct a site visit, and develop a site visit report.
5. **Accreditation Decision.** PHAB Accreditation Committee determines accreditation status: Accredited (5 years) or Not Accredited. An Action Plan may be required before a final decision is made.
6. **Reports.** Accredited health department submits annual reports.
7. **Reaccreditation.**

Benefits of Accreditation

- Better identify strengths and weaknesses of the health department;
- Document capacity of the health department to deliver the core functions and ten Essential Public Health Services;
- Stimulate transparency;
- Improve management processes used by the health department;
- Stimulate quality improvement and performance management;
- Improve accountability to community, stakeholders, and policy makers;
- Improve communication with the governing entity/board of health; and
- Improve competitiveness for funding.

Examples of Improvement Initiatives from Accredited Health Departments

In addition to enhancing the capacity to improve the health outcomes identified in their community health improvement plans (CHIP), accredited health departments describe quality improvement and other initiatives to better serve their communities.

- Improving compliance with mandated frequencies of inspections;
- Improving a program with schools that works to implement environmental/policy changes;
- Improving communications with governing entity;
- Procuring an electronic medical records system to gather better data for evaluation and performance management;
- Improving new employee orientation;
- Streamlining and strengthening process for responding to grant RFPs;
- Incorporating Essential Public Health Services and PHAB Domains into all job descriptions and annual employee evaluations;
- Coordinating with a local hospital for the IRS requirements for the community health assessment (CHA);
- Engaging all health department divisions in at least one quality improvement project;
- Providing data to community partners as part of efforts to address social determinants of health (e.g., high school graduation rates); and
- Expanding opportunities for community and partner involvement in CHA and CHIP, including better engaging diverse populations.

Data from 17 health departments accredited for one year (NORC at the University of Chicago)

Data from 14 accredited health departments’ annual reports (PHAB, September 2014)