

# Building Capacity for Accreditation Sustainability

## Learning Community Request for Applications

Application Deadline: June 26, 2026

### Summary Information

**Purpose:** The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), through the Public Health Infrastructure Grant (PHIG), is currently accepting applications for participation in a learning lab that will foster health department capacity to build a sustainable public health accreditation culture within their agencies. This opportunity is open to applicants from direct PHIG awardees at the state-, big city-, and county-level.

Submit this [online application](#) by **11:59 p.m. ET on Friday, June 26, 2026**.

#### Timeline:

**June 12, 2026:** Request for applications released

**June 26, 2026:** Deadline for application submissions

**July 3, 2026:** Applicants notified of selection or non-selection to Learning Lab

**July-October 2026:** Monthly virtual calls and coaching sessions

**November 2026:** Final deliverables and evaluation due

**Eligibility:** All directly funded PHIG recipients are eligible to apply.

**ASTHO Point of Contact:** Melissa Touma, Director, Public Health Infrastructure Program – [mtouma@astho.org](mailto:mtouma@astho.org)

#### Background

Achieving public health accreditation is a significant milestone for health departments. This achievement is the accumulation of years of work improving the agency's foundational capabilities, changing culture, and engaging internal and external partners to strengthen the public health system and protect community health. However, the work doesn't end upon receiving initial public health accreditation recognition, and to maximize the benefits of accreditation, health departments must be able to sustain a supportive infrastructure, dedicated accreditation staff, and collaboration among leadership, staff, and partners through future organizational changes and emerging public health issues.

To support health departments in building a sustainable accreditation culture within their agencies, ASTHO is leading a learning community that will be based on [ASTHO's Guide for Sustainable Public Health Accreditation](#) and equip participants with strategies and plans for building stability and continuity in the health department's accreditation program.

## **Program Elements and Expectations**

In this non-monetary opportunity, ASTHO will select four (4) PHIG recipients to participate in a learning lab. This project will offer group and individual support through a tailored technical assistance and coaching approach for participants, and through peer learning and building connections.

**Objectives:** At the conclusion of the learning lab, participants will:

- 1) Increase capacity to sustain accreditation activities through organizational changes and emerging public health issues.
- 2) Understand and apply elements of leading change to advance their agency's culture of accreditation.
- 3) Develop and begin implementation of an accreditation sustainability plan for their agency.
- 4) Incorporate the PHAB refreshed standards to be released in 2026.

## **Teams participating in the *Building Capacity for Accreditation Sustainability Learning Community* are expected to:**

- Assemble a team that includes a team leader (primary point of contact and drives project momentum) and at least two additional team members who participate in accreditation activities within the agency.
- Participate in a virtual learning community kick-off and closing meetings to learn about project deliverables, provide an overview of current work, and start developing a project plan.
- Participate in monthly, ASTHO-facilitated virtual meetings with cohort peers to engage in peer-to-peer learning.
- Participate in monthly coaching sessions with ASTHO staff to address progress on deliverables.
- Participate in ASTHO process and outcomes evaluation.
- Develop an Accreditation Sustainability Plan or other plan for implementing change management or sustainability strategies as an outcome of the learning community.
- Share their learning community deliverables, successes, challenges, and lessons learned with other health department accreditation teams on a future PHIG webinar or other presentation.

## **If selected, participants must commit to:**

- A completed product submitted at the end of the learning lab on a date established by ASTHO.
- The presence of at least one team member from the health department on all peer

calls that will last from 75 to 90 minutes. The peer calls will be held on the following dates from 2:00 to 3:30 ET

- July 7 – kick-off call
  - July 28 – peer call
  - August 25 – peer call
  - September 29 – peer call
  - October 27 – peer call
  - November 3 – wrap-up call
- The presence of a majority of team members on monthly coaching calls from July through October. These will be scheduled in coordination with the health department.

### Selection Criteria

Applicants must have already achieved initial accreditation and are asked to complete and submit [this online application](#) and indicate:

- Contact information for the team lead and members.
- Support from agency and division leadership for the accreditation team to engage in *Building Capacity for Accreditation Sustainability Learning Community* activities.
- A brief history of their accreditation journey.
- Date of initial accreditation.
- Date to reapply for reaccreditation.
- A description of the challenges and barriers the agency faces in terms of reaccreditation and sustainability planning.
- Why is their team interested in participating in this learning community.
- What the team hopes to achieve from this capacity building opportunity.
- Acknowledgement of active program engagement.

Applicants must **acknowledge** their team's engagement in the program, if selected, in the application by agreeing to the following:

By submitting this application, I understand that if selected, I commit to active engagement in any asynchronous self-study activities, any team-driven working sessions, monthly virtual sessions and project deliverables. I have discussed this opportunity with my organizational leadership and requested permission to participate in this cohort-based program.