



Public Health Data Modernization
Implementation Center Program

Frequently Asked Questions

August 2024



Public Health Data Modernization Implementation Center Program

FAQs

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Category: Implementation Center Program Background

What is the Public Health Data Modernization Implementation Center (IC) Program?

Three National Partners were funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to lead the Public Health Data Modernization Implementation Center (IC) Program.

- Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO)
- National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI)
- Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB)

The IC Program provides direct technical implementation services and community support to public health agencies (PHAs) at the state, tribal, local, territorial, and freely associated state level.

What is the goal of the program?

The Program goal is to improve the timely prevention and detection of public health threats by reducing the burden of data exchange between public health agencies, health care, and the communities they serve.

What are the expected outcomes of the program?

The three outcomes that will achieve the program goal include:

- **Outcome 1:** Participating public health agencies (PHAs) are using the latest health IT standards to exchange data with health care and/or other data providers for at least one priority use case, such as electronic case reporting.
- **Outcome 2:** Where feasible, participating PHAs are onboarded to a Qualified Health Information Network (QHIN) and are conducting Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement (TEFCA)-based exchange for at least one priority use case, such as electronic case reporting.
- **Outcome 3:** Findings and lessons learned from the priority use cases are documented and shared with the broader community involved in public health data exchange, including non-participating PHAs, national associations, federal agencies, and existing consortiums and communities of practice focused on data modernization.

Who are the Implementation Centers?

ASTHO, NNPHI, and PHAB have selected CRISP Shared Services, Guidehouse, and Mathematica to serve as Implementation Centers. A fourth Implementation Center, launching later in 2024, will support tribal health agencies and tribal-serving organizations to support data modernization.

What is the duration of the IC program?

The IC Program is funded through November 2027.

Who is eligible to apply and participate in the IC program?

PHAs at the state, tribal, local, territorial, and freely associated state level are eligible for participation in the IC Program, regardless of whether they have received previous funding for data modernization activities. Agencies must be able to sign a Participation Agreement and any other required agreements (e.g. DUA, BAA, as applicable). The participation agreement is intended to confirm everyone's commitment to an implementation project (e.g., confirm scope, allocate staff, provide evaluation data).

*More information on Tribal health agency eligibility is forthcoming.

What are benefits to public health agencies (PHAs) that participate?

The ICs will work with each participating public health agency to define pathways specific to their current data capabilities, capacity, and infrastructure with a long-term strategy and sustainable approach to ensure that technical implementation decisions today consider the future technology landscape to maximize resources and minimize waste. Some of the benefits from participating will include:

- Customized support based on PHA-specific needs.
- Support in adopting and using new technology and standards to exchange data with providers, other public health agencies, labs, and federal partners.
- Support to build on existing data modernization initiative (DMI) funded projects that are focused on the adoption of health IT standards.
- Assistance in participation in the national data exchange network that will be available through TEFCA.
- Trainings and learning sessions on data exchange and standards.
- Guides and playbooks.

What are the long-term goals of the program?

With time, the Implementation Center Program's provision of technical implementation project support is intended to accelerate public health's ability to exchange and link data to:

- Reduce burden on healthcare systems/providers to exchange data with public health
- Increase timeliness and completeness of data
- Improve prevention and detection of public health threats through access to data that are exchanged between healthcare, labs, other data providers, and public health

What support is available to PHAs?

There are two categories of support available as part of the program:

- **Implementation Project Support:** Assistance offered to PHAs participating in the Program to implement data infrastructure enhancements via PHA-proposed projects. Assistance may cut across four key areas (People, Process, Governance, Technology), may include financial assistance, and must include sustainability planning.
- **Community Support:** Assistance offered to PHAs that are not receiving support for specific use cases via Project Support but would benefit from the findings and lessons learned from those PHAs that are receiving project support. Dissemination activities may take various formats (e.g., webinars, communities of practice, playbooks, etc.)

How does my PHA apply to participate in the program?

With the initial launch of the IC Program, Wave 1 (2024) placement into the program will require PHAs complete an Expression of Interest (EOI) form. This form captures interest and potential barriers to participation via an electronic form.

Please see the EOI FAQ section below for additional information on the EOI process.

What are the priority use cases for Wave 1?

Wave 1 Implementation Project priority use cases are eCR and immunization.

What are example implementation projects for each priority use case category?

Example implementation projects could include, but are not limited to:

- **Data Exchange Projects using the Latest Health IT Standards**
 - Build out a rules engine for eCR consumption into state surveillance system, start with 5 high priority conditions
 - Develop a process for eCR/ELR reconciliation to ensure all relevant information is being stored in case surveillance system without duplication
 - Migrate from CDA to FHIR HL7 and assess improvement in data quality, timelines, and onboarding
 - Convert all providers submitting production level electronic data to IIS/IR from older versions of HL7 and/or flat file to the HL7 v2.5.1 Release 1.5. Support outreach, testing, and message validation
 - Build out interstate interoperability via the IZ Gateway

- **TEFCA**

- Connect to a QHIN via existing HIE relationship to expand/improve capture of COVID, MPOX, and RSV eCR messages from 35% to 85%
- Connect to a QHIN to conduct query exchange and utilize reportability response messages to complete case report forms for high priority diseases (e.g. Measles)
- Connect to a QHIN to expand/improve electronic lab reporting for reportable conditions
- Leverage a QHIN to capture data around state registries (birth/death/cancer) for required reporting
- Connect to a QHIN via an HIE to improve information capture for Fatality/MDI reviews

Can I submit other types of use cases beyond the ones listed above?

Yes! PHAs can submit any priority use case that advances the latest health IT data standards and/or TEFCA-based exchange and brings value to their public health programs, even if it does not fall under one of these use cases.

What is TEFCA?

The Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement (TEFCA) is an initiative by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC). TEFCA aims to establish a common set of principles, terms, and conditions for exchanging electronic health information across different health networks. The framework is designed to promote interoperability and facilitate the secure and seamless exchange of health information between healthcare providers, patients, and other healthcare entities.

What is eCR?

eCR stands for electronic case reporting. eCR is an automated process enabling the secure exchange of health information between healthcare providers and public health agencies.

The purpose of eCR is to streamline the reporting of infectious diseases and other conditions that are public health concerns. eCR promotes real-time data sharing to help public health agencies quickly respond to outbreaks and monitor trends.

Category: Expression of Interest (EOI) and Application Process

Where can I submit an EOI?

PHAs can submit their EOIs via the PHIG IC Program website:
<https://www.phinfrastructure.org/implementation-centers/eoi/>

Can I submit more than one EOI for Wave 1?

No, the IC Program will only review one EOI per PHA.

What is the application process?

The application process for participation in the Implementation Project Support group has two phases:

Application Phase 1: PHA submits EOI.

Application Phase 2: The Implementation Centers will review EOIs. Following review of the EOIs, PHAs will receive information regarding the status of their application for moving into Wave 1 Facilitated Assessments.

This process will occur for each wave of the program.

What is a wave and how many are there?

The IC Program will support three Implementation Project Support groups, which are referred to as waves. The initial wave of supported projects begins in Fall 2024 through Fall 2025.

What should I do if I need to make updates to my EOI?

If your ability to proceed with a project changes, we understand. If you would like to make updates to your EOI, please email us at phdmic@astho.org.

What is the cutoff for submitting an EOI?

The deadline for submitting an EOI for Wave 1 (starting Winter 2024) is **October 15, 2024 at 11:59PM ET**.

While the EOI cutoff for Wave 1 is October 15, additional submissions past that date will be considered for future waves.

What are the IC program office hours?

Office hours will be an open forum to ask any questions of our National Partner and Implementation Center representatives directly.

When are the Wave 1 office hours?

The Wave 1 office hours are scheduled for:

- Wednesday, September 11, 2024: 3-4 PM ET
- Monday, September 16, 2024: Noon – 1PM ET
- Thursday, September 26, 2024: 4-5PM ET

Registration information for the office hours will be posted on the [PH Infrastructure website](#).

Are there requirements for participation?

State and Territorial PHAs will be asked to provide a letter of support from the State or Territorial Health Official as part of their EOI submission.

Local PHAs will be asked to provide an attestation that their agency has notified their State or Territorial Health Official and DMI Director that they plan to submit an EOI for this Program.

Agencies must be able to sign a Participation Agreement and any other required agreements (e.g. DUA or BAA).

Why do I need to provide a letter of support from my State or Territorial health official?

The State and Territorial health officials champion initiatives within their jurisdictions and a letter from them confirms both their awareness, feasibility, and support for the request. For example, the official would be able to identify any legal or technical barriers for the proposed use case, if applicable. This letter may be a letter or PDF of an email exchange.

Why do I need to provide an attestation as a local health agency?

The IC Program will consider one application per PHA. A letter or email noting the intent to submit an EOI would enable the local health agency to align requests for a single submission.

What is the participation agreement?

The purpose of the participation agreement is intended to confirm everyone's commitment to an implementation project (e.g., confirm scope, allocate staff, provide evaluation data). Depending on PHA's implementation project, additional agreements **may** be necessary to:

- Participate in TEFCA
- Allow Implementation Center staff to access to protected health information
- Receive funding from National Partner

Draft participation agreement and additional guidance coming mid-October.

When will I receive a response to my PHA's EOI?

After closure of the EOI submission window for Wave 1, PHAs will receive a notification by November 4, 2024.

This notification will indicate if your PHA will be invited to a facilitated assessment or provide information about the Community Support offerings that will be available.

What is the expression of interested (EOI)?

The EOI is a webform that captures PHA interest in the Implementation Center Program. The EOI has 16 questions.

What is the facilitated assessment?

The facilitated assessment, a list of standardized interview questions and a review of existing assessments and documentation, will help identify existing resources and specific needs, which will ultimately lead to tailoring support needs for adopting health IT standards and participating in data exchange networks. The facilitated assessment will inform an implementation plan, which the Implementation Centers will help each PHA draft and finalize.

My PHA has already participated in a DMI assessment process. Can the IC Program just use that?

No, you will still be required to participate in a facilitated assessment. This interview intends to leverage existing materials to reduce the level of effort for the PHAs to participate. When that interview is being scheduled, the IC will request your previously completed assessments and other applicable documentation, as this can help guide feasibility or result in a shorter interview. This information can change over time. The

team will ask to confirm if the details are still current, in addition to collecting additional information for IC program participation.

Will I receive the facilitated assessment questions beforehand so my team can prepare?

The Implementation Centers will strive to share the types of questions it will ask prior to the facilitated assessment meeting. Some of these questions may seek additional detail provided in the EOI or be based on a review of assessments the PHA has completed for other DMI initiatives.

When will the facilitated assessments begin?

Facilitated assessments will begin in the fall of 2024. More information on the facilitated assessments will be shared soon.

Who will send the invite for the facilitated assessment?

The PHIG Partners will work with each Implementation Center to send the invitation to the PHA.

Who from my PHA should attend the facilitated assessment?

The IC conducting your facilitated assessment will work with you and your team to ensure all the appropriate staff are included in the interview process.

Generally, the individuals who helped prepare the EOI should attend this assessment and have a perspective on how their project will advance data exchange.

How will PHAs work with Implementation Centers?

During project initiation, the Implementation Centers will help each PHA draft its own implementation plan for the project. This plan will include the goals, key activities, timelines, and roles for all individuals participating in the project. For project execution, Implementation Centers will provide project support to PHAs based on the roles and scope outlined in the Participation Agreement and project implementation plan.

How long will my PHA be involved in the program?

The timeline will be specific to each PHA based on the project they have planned. In the early planning phase, the Implementation Centers will provide feedback on the PHA's approach, which will help refine the timeline.

What is the level of effort for participation?

The level of effort will be driven by the PHA's project, goals and timeline. In the early planning phase, the Implementation Centers will help the PHA refine the level of effort.

Are there required meetings my team must attend?

The PHA and Implementation Center will develop a meeting cadence tailored to the project goals and timeline.

Will a data use agreement be required to participate?

The Implementation Centers will work with each PHA to comply with its data use agreement policies.

Category: Funding

What funding support is available and how much money can my PHA receive?

The funding available will be tailored to each PHA based on project scope and requirements gathered during the planning phase. While the award amount will vary, the maximum award is \$750,000.

How will my PHA receive funds?

Each PHA has the ability to receive funds for its project. The PHIG partners will provide funding according to each PHA's ability to receive funds directly, either separately via a partner organization direct to the project or pay fees on behalf of the organization. The Implementation Centers will help guide the PHA through the process.

At what point during participation in the program will my PHA receive funds?

The PHA's implementation plan will include distribution of funds as a key activity in the timeline.

Are there any limitations to how IC program funding can be used?

The funding may be used for direct IC projects only. It may not be used to fund a workforce position; there are other data modernization initiative funding streams that might help PHAs who have this need.

Category: Implementation Project Support

What is “Implementation Project Support”?

Implementation Project Support is direct assistance offered to PHAs participating in the Program to implement infrastructure enhancements via PHA-proposed projects. Assistance will be specific to each PHA project and may cut across four key areas (People, Process, Governance, Technology), may include financial assistance, and must include sustainability planning.

What are the three phases of Implementation Project Support?

Phase 1: Engagement

PHAs participate in an application process to engage in the program. This process begins with submitting an Expression of Interest Form. From there, eligible PHAs will meet with NPs and ICs to discuss funding and technical support needs.

Phase 2: Planning

Participating PHAs and their assigned ICs will begin developing implementation and sustainability plans for their projects. Before any work can begin on these projects, PHAs must sign a participation agreement.

Phase 3: Implementation

During the implementation phase, PHAs will work with their IC to complete their projects. PHAs will receive tailored implementation, financial, and sustainability support. PHAs will also participate in evaluation activities to collect lessons learned to disseminate to the broader PH Community.

What are the four domains of Implementation Support?

The four domains of implementation support are:

- People
- Process
- Governance
- Technology

Will my PHA have to receive support for all four domains?

The implementation support will be tailored to each PHA use case and project goals. Support in all four domains will be available to all PHAs with this need.

What support is available in the People domain?

Support may include, but is not limited to:

- Communicating with partners
- Facilitating change management
- Training on how to use and support new technologies and systems
- Providing education on health IT standards, new technology approaches, and industry best practices
- Promoting alignment with existing workforce programs and resources
- Supporting relationship management and engagement with healthcare organizations and other implementation partners

What support is available in the Process domain?

Support may include, but is not limited to:

- Ensuring alignment with policies and regulations at the state and federal levels
- Supporting PHAs in participating in TEFCA, including selection of a participation model, and selection of QHIN or Participants
- Supporting reporting performance measurement and project management activities, monitoring and evaluation of activities and outcomes

What support is available in the Governance domain?

Support may include, but is not limited to:

- Developing policy and participatory frameworks, common policies and standards, DUAs, and consent management practices
- Assessing role of state regulation and policy on data sharing practices
- Assembling and facilitating diverse data governance structures
- Defining data exchange processes with data providers
- Facilitating engagement with state leadership
- Identifying strategies for adopting and scaling solutions for additional PHAs and/or use cases

What support is available in the Technology domain?

Support may include, but is not limited to:

- Ensuring alignment with standards and data exchange policies and participation in relevant standards development organizations
- Ensuring technology and functional requirements, infrastructure/architecture, security, and systems
- Conducting proof of concept, demonstrations, and implementation for priority use cases
- Conducting maintenance and support of data exchange systems

Category: Community Support Offerings

What is “Community Support” ?

Community Support is assistance offered to PHAs that are not immediately receiving project support to accelerate capacity for data exchange.

How does my PHA join the program for Community Support?

All PHAs are welcome. If you submit an EOI, you will have an opportunity to join these events. To solicit participation from PHAs who did not submit EOIs, the Implementation Center program will contact all other PHAs about community support opportunities using its existing network similar to distributing invitations for the IC launch webinar.

When will community support be available?

While not all community support offerings will be available right away, a few select offerings will be available in Fall 2024. More details to come!

What Community Support offerings are available?

Support may include, but is not limited to:

- **Engagement with peers and IC Program staff to share lessons learned:**
 - Communities of practice
 - Webinars to share implementation project lessons learned
 - Peer-to-peer connections
- **Trainings and learning sessions on data exchange and standards:**
 - IC-developed trainings and connections to external trainings
 - Webinars with subject matter experts
- **Guides and playbooks:**
 - Practices for navigating legal barriers to data exchange
 - Playbooks and other accelerators based on lessons learned from direct implementation support

- **Connection to other DMI initiatives and programs to meet specific needs:**
 - For example, CDC Foundation's Workforce Acceleration Initiative and PHIG A3 Technical Assistance