

Public Health Data Modernization
Implementation Center Program

Frequently Asked Questions

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 in 2025, 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 to participate in the IC Program, regardless of whether they have received previous funding for data modernization activities. Agencies must be able to sign applicable agreement(s) (e.g. subrecipient grant award, MOU, and DUA / BAA as applicable)). The participation agreements are intended to confirm commitment to an implementation project (e.g., confirm scope, allocate staff, provide evaluation data). More information on Tribal health agency eligibility is forthcoming.

Are PHAs participating in other DMI efforts eligible to participate in the program?

Yes! These intersections between and across data modernization efforts are needed in public health. We encourage PHAs already receiving related support to apply for this program once applications for Wave 2 open.

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

The Implementation Centers (ICs) will work with each participating PHA 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 upon 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 Public Health Agencies (PHAs)?

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

- **Implementation Project Support:** Assistance offered to PHAs participating in the IC 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 Implementation 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?

The IC Program is not currently accepting applications. However, information regarding the Wave 2 application process will be shared at a future date. Refer to the IC Program web page for updates.

What is TEFCA?

The Trusted Exchange Framework and Common Agreement (TEFCA) is an initiative by the Assistant Secretary for Technology Policy / 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. For more information on TEFCA please refer to the [ONC website](#) and the [Sequoia Project website](#).

What is a QHIN?

A Qualified Health Information Network (QHIN) is a network of organizations working together to share healthcare data. QHINs are a key part of TEFCA and connect directly to each other to ensure interoperability between the networks they represent. For more information on QHINs please refer to the [ONC website](#) and the [Sequoia Project website](#).

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: Funding

What funding support is available and how much money can my Public Health Agency (PHA) receive? What is the minimum funding that PHAs will receive?

The funding available will be tailored to each PHA based on project scope and requirements gathered during the planning phase. Funding must be applied towards executing your implementation project. Funding is available for PHAs whether or not they are already receiving other Public Health Infrastructure Grant (PHIG) funding. While the award amount will vary, the maximum award is \$750,000. There is no defined minimum funding award amount.

How will my Public Health Agency (PHA) receive funds?

Each PHA is eligible to receive funds for its implementation project. The provision of financial assistance to the PHA will be determined in collaboration with the PHA and may include the provision of funds directly to the PHA or through an alternate mechanism, such as procurement on behalf of the PHA.

At what point during participation in the program will my Public Health Agency (PHA) receive funds?

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

How can my Public Health Agency (PHA) use program funding?

Implementation Center (IC) funding can be used for direct implementation activities, including but not limited to:

- IT System Acquisition or Upgrades: Funding can be used to acquire or upgrade IT systems that support priority use cases.
- IT Vendors and Contractors: Funding can be used pay for IT system vendors. Implementation Center staff can also provide IT consultation at no cost to your PHA.

- **Data Exchange with Hospitals and Providers:** This depends on if the proposed usage of the funds meets the IC program goals and outcomes. Please provide details on your proposed use case in your EOI, including information on the nature of the relationship between your PHA, the hospital, and the impacted providers.
- **QHIN-Related Costs:** Funding may be used for QHIN fees, HIE connection fees, or TEFCA membership fees. If your PHA wants to pre-pay multiple years of Qualified Health Information Network (QHIN) fees up front please discuss with your IC during the project planning phase.

Are there any limitations to how Implementation Center (IC) Program funding can be used?

The funding may not be used to fund a workforce position or hiring of personnel. There may be other data modernization initiative funding streams and resources to support PHAs who have this need. Travel is also not currently a covered cost, but PHAs are encouraged to discuss this need with their IC. National Partners are exploring other funding sources for travel-related expenses.

Can Implementation Center (IC) Program funding be used to pay for a health care provider to receive public health data via TEFCA?

Specific details regarding use of program funding will be determined during the planning phase between the IC and the PHA and depends on the specifics of the direct implementation project activities.

Is there a cost to Public Health Agencies (PHAs) to utilize Implementation Center (IC) services or staff?

No. The IC Program funds the support provided to PHAs by Implementation Center staff.

How will my Public Health Agency know which services will be covered by program funding vs provided by the Implementation Center (IC) staff?

This distinction will be established in partnership with the IC during the implementation planning phase.

Do funding awards need to be used within a calendar year? Are there multi-year awards?

The funding awards will be for the designated length of your project and will vary depending on the goals and expected outcomes of the project. We anticipate the average project and award funding time period will be one year.

Will funding also include support for operations post-implementation?

Funding is meant to be leveraged during the implementation of the project while your PHA is actively participating in the program. There will be a sustainability phase of the program to explore ways your PHA can continue to make gains and progress on your data modernization journey after your time in the program is over.

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.

How does Implementation Project Support differ from Core PHIG technical assistance?

Implementation Project Support offers the unique opportunity to expand and accelerate data modernization work through execution of a specific short-term project related to one of the main program outcomes. Support offered through the IC program can be complementary to the ongoing TA and training delivered through Core PHIG.

What are the three phases of Implementation Project Support?

Phase 1: Recruitment

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.

Phase 4: Closeout

Once projects are complete, PHAs will work with their IC to finalize all closeout activities. This includes documenting project outcomes, lessons learned, and best practices.

Final reporting requirements will be completed and PHAs and ICs will ensure a sustainability plan is in place to support continued progress beyond the project period.

How many PHAs will the program select for Implementation Project Support?

The program will support 34 implementation projects in Wave 1. The program is committed to ensuring inclusion of PHAs with varying levels of readiness in each wave. PHAs not selected for Implementation Project support for Wave 1 are invited to join Wave 1 community support.

Will Public Health Agencies (PHAs) be assigned to an Implementation Center (IC), or will they need to select an IC?

IC assignments will take place at the end of the Engagement phase (after FA). In the EOI there is a question asking if your PHA has any previous or ongoing work with any of the ICs. If you have an existing working relationship with an IC or IC partner, we will take that into consideration, but there is no guarantee you will be paired with that IC. It will ultimately depend on your use case and the technical expertise available at each IC.

What are the four domains of Implementation Support?

The four domains of implementation support are:

- **People:**
 - People support involves understanding the needs of and impact to the workforce including its challenges, roles, responsibilities, workload, and overall experience.
- **Process:**
 - Process support recognizes the need to ensure synchronization of business processes with technology and impact on the workforce as an integral component to each implementation project.

- **Governance:**
 - Governance support is critical to defining accountability, decision-making criteria, and compliance expectations.
- **Technology:**
 - Technology support is built upon collaborative and coordinated designed approaches for successful technology deployments. A cohesive and unified understanding of the user journey, operational (e.g., people and process) requirements, priorities and impacts are essential to the successful design and deployment of comprehensive technical solutions.

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.

Will support be available to address legal issues?

Yes, if a PHA needs support to navigate legal issues, the Implementation Center staff will assess those needs during the planning phase of the project.

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
- Assistance identifying and navigating policy and legal barriers
- 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 Implementation project support to accelerate capacity for data exchange.

How does my Public Health Agency (PHA) join the program for Community Support?

All PHAs are welcome. If you submit an EOI, you will have an opportunity to join Wave 1 of community support starting in February 2025. To solicit participation from PHAs who did not submit EOIs, the Implementation Center program will contact all other PHAs for Wave 2 of community support opportunities using its existing network, similar to

distributing invitations for the IC launch webinar. Wave 2 of community support is expected to start in Spring 2025.

When will Community Support be available?

While not all community support offerings will be available right away, a few select offerings kicked off in February 2025. 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