PHIG Recipient Presenters

Marie Stratton
Maryland Dept of Health

Katherine Feldman
Maryland Dept of Health
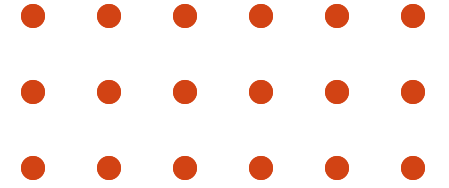
Lauren Marsh
Austin Public Health

Amy Ferris
Washington State Dept of Health

Today's Conversation

A. Level Set: Organizational Capacity and Administrative Readiness

B. Panel: Tools, Resources and Supports

C. Group Engage and Exchange: Q&A

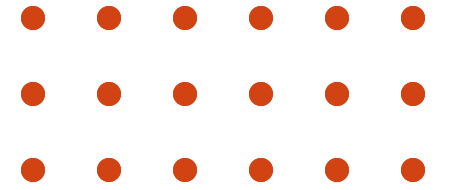# Organizational Capacity & Administrative Readiness

Organizational Capacity

- Refers to an organization's ability to effectively utilize its resources and capabilities to achieve its goals and mission. Includes assets like finance and infrastructure, and elements like leadership, strategic planning, employee skills.
- Crucial for long term success, allows for adapting to change, improving performance and better serve stakeholders.

Administrative Readiness

- Ability to apply fiscal, legal, and administrative authorities and practices that govern funding, procurement, contracting, and hiring efficiently and effectively to respond to both population health improvement needs and address emerging threats.
- All benchmarks, actions met to effectively respond.

ASTHO STAR Center (State & Territorial Administrative Readiness)

- Modernize and strengthen organizational capacity and administrative readiness

- Connect to high quality resources, tools, and model practices

- Proactive capacity building and technical assistance products

- Technical assistance request and response

- Consulting and robust project leadership and engagements
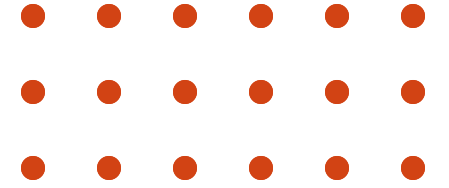
Resources, Tools & Supports

- Peer Assessment of Organizational Capacity

- Administrative Policy Assessment and Gap Analysis

- Grants Management Optimization

- Technical Assistance Offerings

Peer Assessment Program

Key Features

- Work with you to define the challenge and need, create a tailored technical assistance approach
- Point in time assessment of capacity across 1-3 priority theme areas against evidence-informed indicators.
- Conducted by public health peers and subject matter experts
- Up to 3.5 day site visit that may include facilitated group discussions, key informant interviews, working sessions
- Presentation of findings and recommendations on last day

Theme Areas

1. Human Resource Management
2. Workforce Development
3. Facilities Management
4. Administrative Policy & Planning
5. Info Systems Management
6. Accounting, Budgeting, Audits
7. Procurement
8. Communications
9. Performance Management/QI
10. Learning Organization & Innovation

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What You Get

- Immediate, actionable, findings and recommendations
- Option of additional TA to implement recommendations

Value Added:
- Tailored approach, adapt to meet needs
- Objectivity/no internal bias, impartial facilitation
- Added capacity, public health expertise
- Fresh perspectives, valuable insights
- Context to better understand challenges
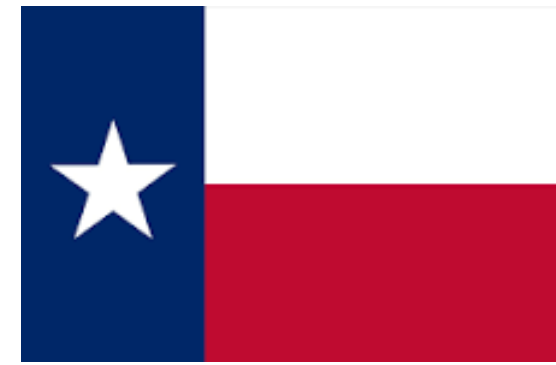
Program Outcomes

Texas Department of State Health Services (2024)

- Goal: Develop a strategy and roadmap for workforce modernization and transformation
  - Assess workforce development and human resource capacity
  - Extensive engagement of staff and stakeholders
  - Identification of workforce needs, challenges and opportunities
  - Findings support a new workforce strategy that addresses talent management, learning, total compensation, workforce strategy, human resource operations and infrastructure.

Program Outcomes

Maryland Department of Health (2025)

- Goal: Advance OD2A Business Process Improvement implementation plan developed in 2024

  - Intensive group work to engage and prioritize action items

  - Key informant interviews to assess capacity in areas that contribute to improving business processes (e.g., internal communications, managing change, learning organization, procurement, budget/audits, culture of improvement).

  - Provide best practices in procurement, examples of document management systems.

  - Peer to peer connections on procurement processes

Building a Culture of Quality in Maryland:
CDC-Sponsored Business Process Improvement
ASTHO / OD2A Peer Assessment Program

August 2025

A Culture of Quality at Maryland Department of Health (MDH)

- Maryland Department of Health (MDH)
  - Works in concert with Maryland's 24 local health departments to deliver foundational public health services to Maryland's 6.3 million residents
- This project demonstrates a number of PHIG-related principles
  - Aligns multiple federal funding streams (PHIG, OD2A)
  - Leverages technical assistance from national partners
  - Boosts MDH foundational capabilities - procurement and quality improvement
    - Procurement Timeliness is PHIG performance measure
- Supports maturation of MDH's culture of quality
  - Builds relationships and quality improvement across entire agency
  - Serves as exemplar for quality improvement (QI) projects

- CDC Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) technical assistance through ASTHO
- Improve state health departments spend down of federal funds
- <u>Year 1 (September 2024-July 2024)</u> - Engaged ASTHO and HMA
- MDH stakeholders included representatives across administrations and roles, including contract management and procurement, program managers, operations, leadership/approvers, and fiscal staff
- 3 Phases:
  - Hot wash exercise for recent contracts, grants
  - January - process mapping workshop (IA/MOUs, grants, contracts)
  - June - final mapping and recommendations
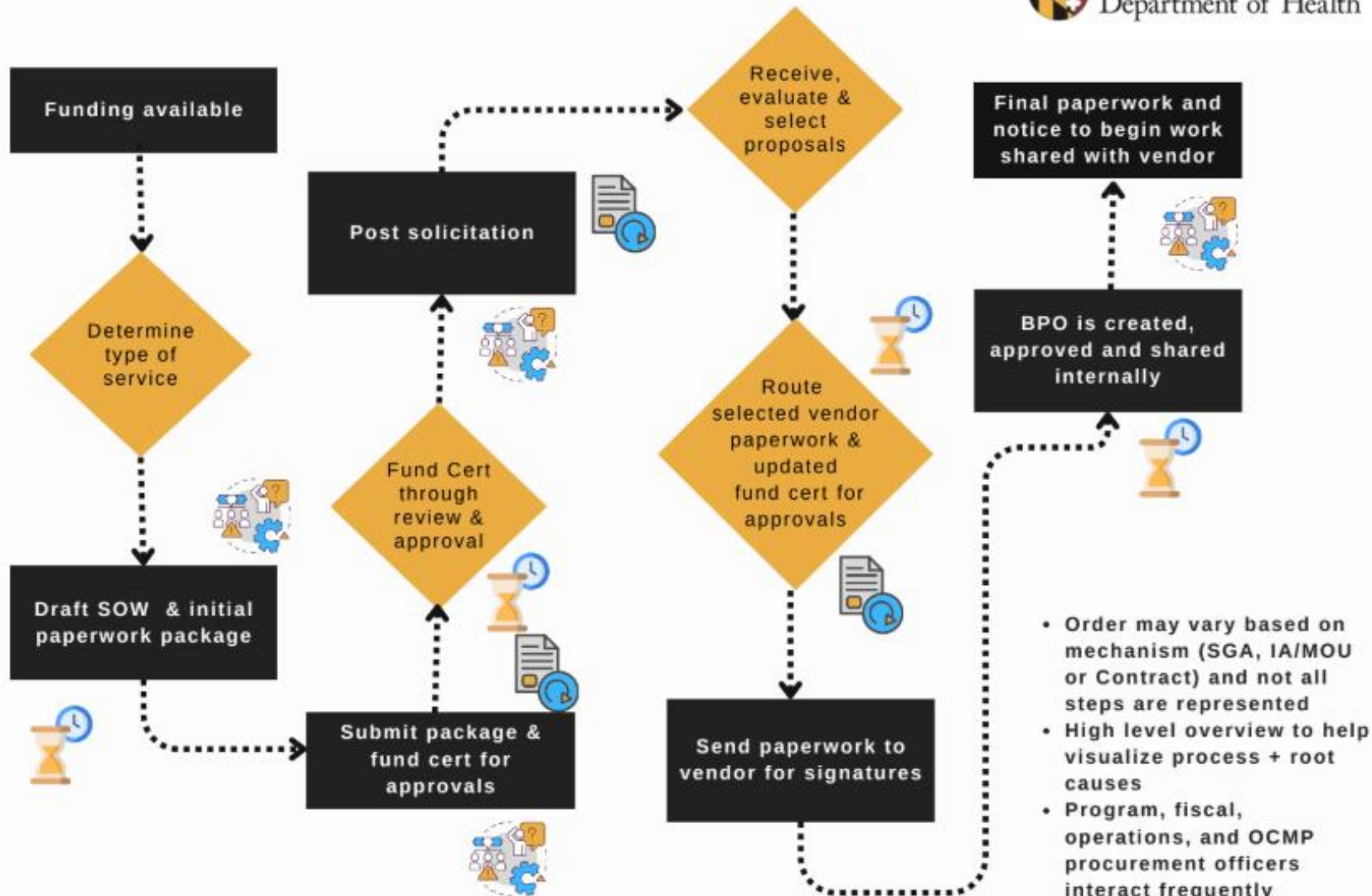
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- Complete process map for three spending mechanisms: Interagency Agreements (IAs)/Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), Grants, and Contracts
  - Includes separate tab to detail the "Fund cert" and Purchase Order (BPO/PO) creation processes
- Increased understanding of existing processes across roles
- Multi-level engagement and commitment across administrations and roles
- Shared resources to improve efficiency and reduce duplication of efforts
- Draft recommendation plan with action steps, key implementers and champions
- Significant effort across MDH by contract and procurement staff, operations and fiscal staff, and program managers to implement process improvement recommendations in past year

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- <u>Support for MDH Needed</u> - *address implementation challenges, improve internal communication, build shared commitment around improvement priorities*
- ASTHO Peer Assessment Program
  - Capacity indicators and standards as foundation for assessment
  - Best practices, solutions and standards from other states working on business process improvement
  - Learn from high level practitioners in the field with relevant experience
  - Alignment with performance management TA from ASTHO through PHIG
- May 2025 Meeting Series
  - Monday, May 5: Full day meeting
  - Tuesday, May 6: Key informant interviews
  - Thursday, May 8: Final report presentation

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- May 2025 meeting series:
  - Built shared awareness about existing process improvements underway
  - Built shared agreement around improvement priorities across roles, admins
  - Team building and change management support for highly engaged staff
- ASTHO presentation and final report:
  - Learned best practices in procurement and what other states are doing in these areas, use of technology
  - Recommendations, infographics for program staff on workflows, updated current state process maps
- *Continued relationship building, dedicated time to look at big picture, including strengths*

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High-Level Process Flowchart

MARYLAND Department of Health

Funding available → **Determine type of service** → **Draft SOW & initial paperwork package** → **Submit package & fund cert for approvals** → **Fund Cert through review & approval** → **Post solicitation** → **Receive, evaluate & select proposals** → **Route selected vendor paperwork & updated fund cert for approvals** → **Send paperwork to vendor for signatures** → **BPO is created, approved and shared internally** → **Final paperwork and notice to begin work shared with vendor**

- Order may vary based on mechanism (SGA, IA/MOU or Contract) and not all steps are represented
- High level overview to help visualize process + root causes
- Program, fiscal, operations, and OCMP procurement officers interact frequently throughout the process

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Findings and Recommendations

- Communications improvements

- Strong champions and shining stars among staff

- Utilization of Smartsheet

- Staff interest, expertise and commitment

- Innovations and brights spots to leverage

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- Emerging issues in the current federal and state government environment
  - Changes in leadership
  - New policies, laws and regulations that require pivots in operations
  - Funding changes and redirection of resources away from long-term initiatives
  - Trade impacts that affect procurement and supply chains
  - Public perceptions
  - Security and cybersecurity
- Outdated financial system

Challenges and Opportunities

- Building a culture of improvement and collaboration
  - Continuous improvement
  - Cross-cutting workgroups and shared resources
  - Communication
  - Demonstrating commitment and priority

- Information technology
  - Dashboards for visual tracking of procurement process
  - User-friendly searchable database for existing statewide contracts

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- Change management

- Standardized enterprise-wide expectations and approaches

- Define roles and responsibilities

- Customer-first approach

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1. Establish cross-functional workgroups to implement priority action steps and facilitate collaboration, share learnings, exchange best practices, and develop reusable templates and tools supported by leadership across MDH.

2. Establish a clear and consistent point of contact for procurement-related questions, including process improvements and changes. For example, some organizations establish this structure per work unit.

3. Continue to work towards investing in modernizing MDH financial, contract management and tracking systems.

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4. Support staff in managing change and change resistance by elevating opportunities to be involved in the change, empowering employees to embrace and drive change, foster a sense of team and community, celebrate progress, create a high trust environment, communicate with transparency and clarity.

5. Develop or improve MDH's systematic data collection and reporting processes for procurement and contracts.

6. Establish standard operating procedures for procurement processes for each administration that align across programs, the department, and with OCMP.

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7. Assess customer training and capacity needs and build on and expand existing training. Ensure updated forms and templates are made accessible department wide.

8. Increase the small procurement delegated authority to $100,000 to streamline low-value acquisitions and reduce administrative burden. However, address the varying capacity across departments by standardizing guidance and building procurement capability.

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- 3 recommendations selected
  - *Cross-functional workgroup to drive implementation*
- MDH operations staff joining Public Health Services Quality Improvement Council for change management support
- ASTHO technical assistance for implementation support winter 2025/2026

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Thank You!

Marie Stratton

Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) Program Manager

marie.stratton@maryland.gov

Katherine Feldman

PHIG Principal Investigator

katherine.feldman@maryland.gov

Who's Next?

How can you utilize or leverage the Peer Assessment Program to advance your PHIG goals?

Goals

- Build capacity across public health agencies to systematically develop, review, and update important agency policies and procedures.

- Apply a QI lens to administrative and organizational policy development processes.

- Learn about adaptable tools and approaches to assess policies and gaps using information in your agency and a self-assessment tool.

- Share examples, promising practices and lessons learned.

Current and Previously Participating Jurisdictions

- Austin ⭐
- Connecticut
- Missouri
- Monongalia County, WV
- Minnesota
- St. Louis

Impact of a Strong Policy Infrastructure on Administrative Readiness

- Ensures consistent compliance across departments and funding streams.

- Clear policies reduce delays in approvals, hiring, and procurement.

- Structured policies improve recordkeeping and audit readiness.

- Policies support training for new and transitioning staff.

- Codifies informal practices to ensure continuity during staff turnover.

- Administrative functions proactively support mission-driven work.

- Strong policies adapt to new funding and program growth.
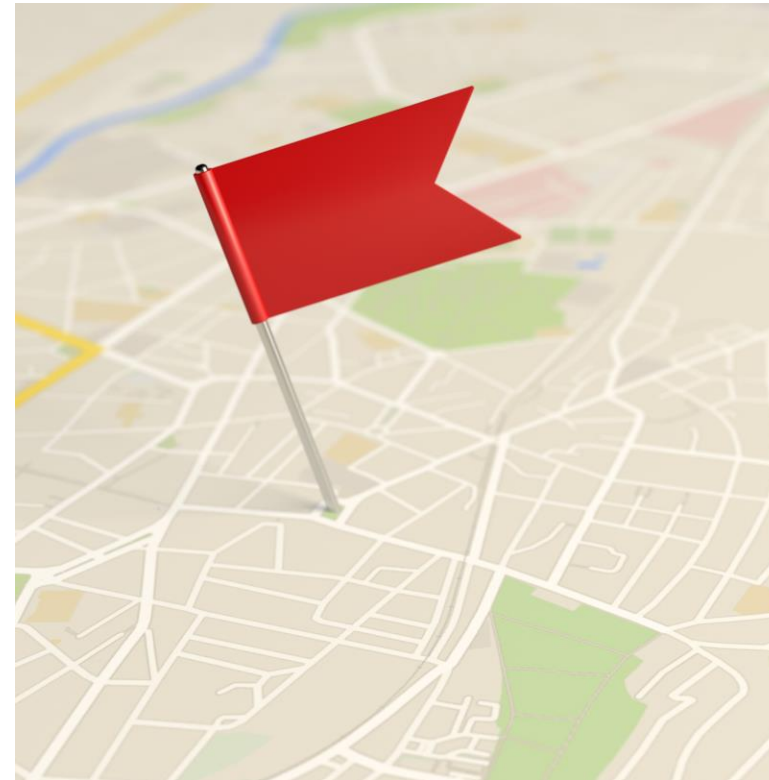
APH AT A GLANCE

APH Mission: To prevent disease, promote health, and protect the well-being of all.

617 Full Time Employees

6 Divisions, 2 Offices

Population Served: Austin/Travis County ~1.2 Million

Office of the Director

Chief Administrative Officer

Human Resources

Facilities

Public Health Infrastructure

Office of the Medical Director

Administrative Support Services
- Accounting
- Budget
- Communications
- Information Systems

Community Services
- Family Health
- Neighborhood Services
- WIC
- Youth and Family Services

Disease Prevention & Health Promotion
- Chronic Disease & Injury Prevention
- Communicable Diseases
- Immunizations

Environmental Health Services
- Consumer Health
- Environmental Health & Special Projects

Epidemiology & Public Health Preparedness
- Epidemiology & Disease Surveillance
- Public Health Preparedness
- Office of Vital Records

Health Equity and Community Engagement
- Health Equity
- HIV Resources Administration
- Planning & Evaluation
- Social Services Funding
- Office of Violence Prevention

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PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

POLICY BACKGROUND & CHALLENGES

- **Background:**
  - **2018 – 2019:** Initial Policy Quality Improvement (QI) Project
    - Policy Inventory, identified dept-level policy administrators, revised guidance and timelines for revision
  - **2020 – 2022:** COVID-19 Response & Reaccreditation Preparation
  - **2023:** Reaccredited – Additional Policy Improvement Opportunities Identified

- **Challenges:**
  - Large Department with 120+ Policies
  - Manual Process for Policy Revisions = Lengthy and Cumbersome
  - Policy Library – Outdated and not User-Friendly
  - Ownership and Turnover: **64.4%** of staff with Department **less than 5 Years**
  - Capacity: COVID-19 put much of this work on the back-burner

IMPROVEMENT GOALS

- **Revise and Implement:** Establish a modern Policy Information Management System (PIMS) with a clear policy on policies.

- **Systematize:** Create a robust policy lifecycle management process for **creating, revising, and retiring** policy records.

- **Modernize:** Utilize new tools to streamline and automate some processes.

- **Align:** Ensure all policies align with PHAB requirements and best practices.

- **Training and Compliance:** Develop process to engage staff, ensure staff understand policy requirements, and how this applies to their work.

WHY STRENGTHENING POLICY MATTERS TO APH

Ethical and Effective Operations: A strong policy governance framework ensures APH operates ethically and effectively, adhering to legal and regulatory requirements.

Standardization and Efficiency:

- Standardizing the policy development and review process helps to maximize APH efficiency and effectiveness.
- Reduce burdens for staff to access and comply with policies, and for stakeholders engaging in the Policy Development Cycle.

Overall Goal: To ultimately better support our workforce, rebuild infrastructure and respond to emerging threats.

WHY WE ENGAGED ASTHO

Leverage PHIG Resources and TA:

- Learned about ASTHO Gap Analysis TA during PHIG 2024 Convening
- Utilized PHIG funding to support Policy Administrator

Access to Expertise: ASTHO provided specialized knowledge and a structured approach through their Policy Assessment & Gap Analysis.

Structured Project Support:

- Develop a clear action plan with key deliverables and timelines
- Offer monthly coaching and technical assistance
- Support for Stakeholder Engagement
- Onsite Workshop to map Future State and conduct Gap Analysis

Austin Public Health

Policy Review Process Improvement Project

BY 12/31/25, COORDINATE WITH POLICY ADMINISTRATORS TO ESTABLISH A CLEAR PROCESS AND TIMELINE FOR **MAINTAINING UP-TO-DATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES** ON AN ONGOING BASIS.

Impact: Essential APH rules, principles and guidelines necessary to ensure employees understand their responsibilities, reduce liability risks, and effectively carry out the department's mission.

Urgency: New employee access and understanding, reaccreditation, and risks for non-compliance (ex. audit findings, disciplinary action, community safety).

30% Progress: FY18 Project began focused on P&P Updates, FY22: updating inventory, building Table of Contents. FY24: Develop ad-hoc Policy Advisory Committee and re-engage Review Team
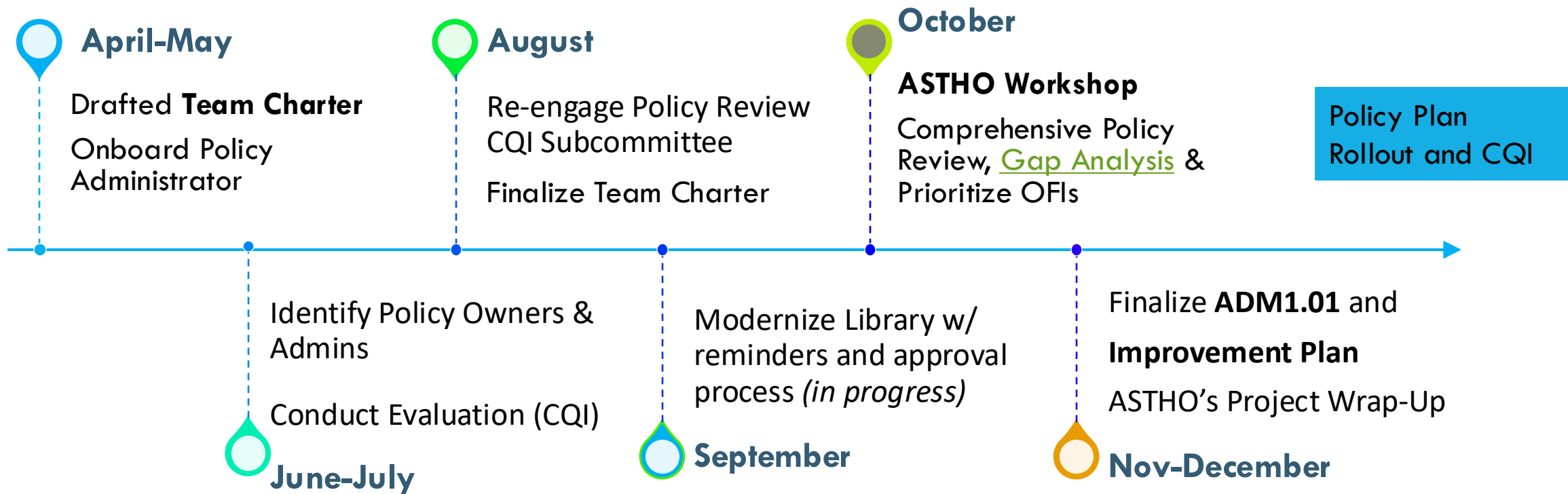
Dependencies. *Internal:* Approval Process. *External:* Fed/State/Local Laws and Requirements

Who is impacted? All Staff need to access and understand Policies and Procedures. **Stakeholders:** Policy Administrators, Leadership

SMEs: Internal Auditor, Accreditation & CQI Coordinators

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KEY DELIVERABLES: APR-DEC 2025

April-May

Drafted **Team Charter**

Onboard Policy Administrator

August

Re-engage Policy Review CQI Subcommittee

Finalize Team Charter

October

ASTHO Workshop

Comprehensive Policy Review, Gap Analysis & Prioritize OFIs

Policy Plan Rollout and CQI

Identify Policy Owners & Admins

Conduct Evaluation (CQI)

June-July

Modernize Library w/ reminders and approval process *(in progress)*

September

Finalize **ADM1.01** and **Improvement Plan**

ASTHO's Project Wrap-Up

Nov-December

Including Monthly Coaching Calls with ASTHO (APR-NOV)

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EARLY INSIGHTS & OUTCOMES

Monthly Meetings Keep Project on Track: ASTHO helps to outline next steps between meetings, ensures we keep momentum with the project.

New Ad-Hoc Policy Advisory Committee Structure: We've established an ad hoc Policy Advisory Committee to refine our policy governance framework, this will be absorbed by our Policy Review Committee.

System Improvements: We have made improvements to our Policy Library, including creating a Master List, Control Log, and an updated enumeration system for policies.

Stakeholder Engagement: In process, engaged with Policy Administrators and Policy Review Committee, ASTHO to support additional engagement plans.

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ADVICE FOR OTHER AGENCIES

Take Advantage of PHIG TA!

▪ This project would not have the same momentum without ASTHO support.

▪ ASTHO is providing coaching, tools, resources, guidance, and workshop support.

Start with a Comprehensive Assessment: Don't be afraid to conduct a thorough inventory and gap analysis to fully understand your current state before proposing solutions.

Engage Stakeholders Broadly: Involve staff from all levels—including Leadership, Policy Administrators, Owners, and subject matter experts—in the process to ensure comprehensive and well-rounded policies, with a process that works for your agency.

THANK YOU

GMO Toolkit Purpose

To help jurisdictions organize and optimize internal grants management functions

- Annual planning tool

- Based on data-driven decision-making

- Helps assess current structure, clarify roles, improve communication, and support process improvement

GMO Toolkit Process

Validate and input data to better understand **what** is being managed
- Projected workload demand
- Program complexity (or support needed)

Demand

Back-end Power BI (Output forms)
- Data repository
- Program design parameters
- Perform calculations from data input and validations from self-assessment according to design parameters

Self Assessment
(Input Forms)

Recommend organizational framework to transition existing structure

Recommend the staffing needed for recommended structure

Determine cost to operate structure and allocate costs

Type of Structure

Capacity

Understand **how** the jurisdiction currently manages grants:
- Decentralized
- Hybrid
- Centralized
And with **whom**
- Current employees, FTEs and roles

Cost Distribution

Roles & Responsibilities

PHIG PARTNERS

CENTRALIZATION OF GRANT COORDINATION

August 20, 2025

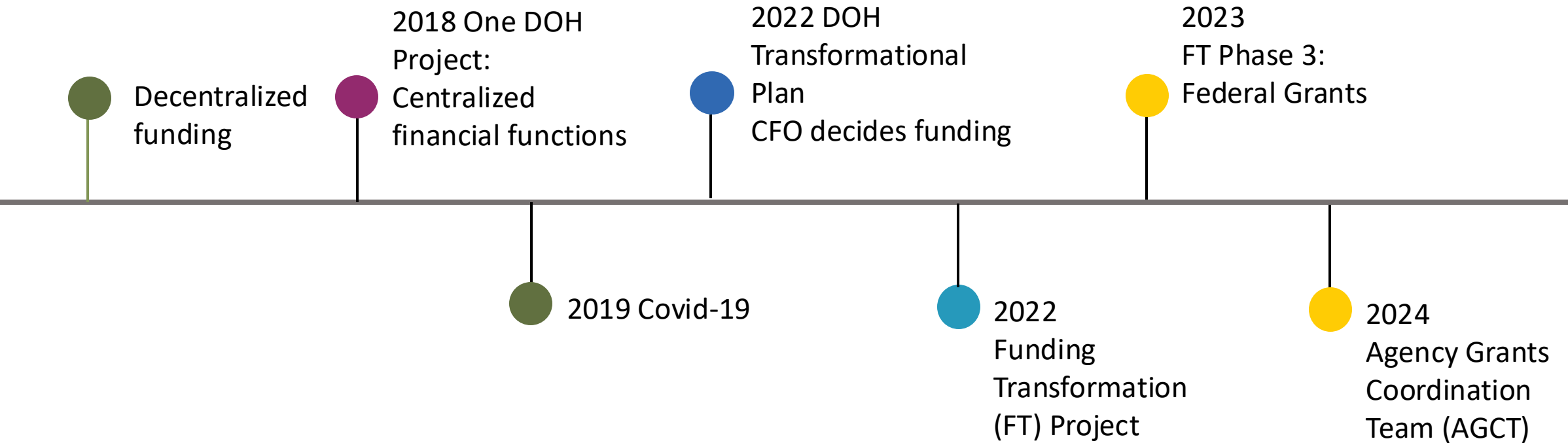Washington State Department of
HEALTH

Your Presenter

Amy Ferris

Chief Financial Officer

Washington State Dept. of Health

History of Federal Grant Coordination in Washington DOH

Decentralized funding

2018 One DOH Project: Centralized financial functions

2019 Covid-19

2022 DOH Transformational Plan CFO decides funding

2022 Funding Transformation (FT) Project

2023 FT Phase 3: Federal Grants

2024 Agency Grants Coordination Team (AGCT)

Funding Transformation Project

Funding Transformation project goals are to:

1. Ensure agency **priorities drive our funding** instead of funding driving priorities.

2. Ensure **equity, innovation, and engagement guide** our strategy, decision-making and outcomes.

Funding Transformation Phases

✅	**Phase 1**	• General State Funds • Foundational Public Health Services funds • COVID-19 response funding
✅	**Phase 2**	• Building leadership awareness and accountability of budgets
✅	**Phase 3**	• Federal grants
✅	**Phase 4**	• Indirect costs
☐	**Phase 5**	• Fees and dedicated funds

Funding Transformation Phase 3 Continuous Improvement Efforts

The key guiding principles:

- Increase agency-level transparency

- Ensure funding aligns with agency priorities

What we did:

- Grants Lifecycle Current State & Ideal State Process Maps – Apr. thru Aug. 2023

- Two separate sets of focus groups – May thru Aug. 2023

What we are doing now:

- Implementing 20 improvement ideas – Aug. 2023 thru today

- The Agency Grants Coordination Team began in Aug. 2024.

- Ongoing change management efforts

Phase 3 Outcomes

- The Fiscal Monitoring Unit reviews the statement of work for all federally funded contracts to **determine the subrecipient/contractor status**

- Developed an **Agency Grants Coordination Team (AGCT)** under the Strategic Financial Investment Team (SFIT)

- Changed the **External Funding Request (EFR)** and **Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) processes.**

Role Clarity is Essential

From the beginning, we have consistently messaged the difference between grant coordination and grant management.

Grant coordination – The Agency Grants Coordination Team (AGCT) performs this work. Their overall role is to support grant managers and the finance teams with the federal grant application. They also provide regular check-ins and ongoing support to grant management.

Grant management – The program managers and finance teams perform this work. They manage the ongoing grant activities and budgets once awarded.

grants lifecycle	Coordination Team (AGCT) Role Works with people and teams within DOH.	Works with Agency Grants Coordination Team and with people outside DOH.
Early stage	Communicates and coordinates grant activities for submitting a grant application and getting the resources assigned, ensuring the program is involved: • Sets up kick off meeting • Assists with External Funding Request • Assists with Letter of Intent • Determine timeline for tasks necessary to complete the application. • Monitors and coordinates all tasks throughout the application process. • Submits application documents in the federal system.	Communicates and coordinates opportunity and application guidance with grantor and AGCT to share all information. • Attends and shares information provided by grantor in any FAQs or webinars regarding the opportunity with AGCT • Determines what strategies and activities they would like to accomplish and shares during kickoff meeting for further discussion • Coordinates with other areas in the agency that may assist with some of the work of the grant, so that we have cross coordination and partnering on the funding • After kickoff meeting, drafts workplan and project narrative, according to the timeline determined. If necessary, AGCT grant writer can assist with the grant writing portion.
Throughout	Coordinates to assist with and submit documentation for: • Carryover requests • Budget revisions • No cost extensions • Informing changes in key personnel • Federal financial reporting • Closeout of the grant	Manages: • Monthly calls with Project Officer, ensuring AGCT is involved • Grantee site visits and meetings, ensuring AGCT is involved • Staffing • Contractors, including processing solicitations, writing statement of work, and executing contracts • Billing and reporting from contractors • Execution of all activities and tasks that were determined and agreed upon • Budget, monitoring progress in collaboration with fiscal staff • Progress reports, including their completion and delivery to the grantor, based on grantor requirements • Evaluation and performance measures, including their completion and delivery to the grantor, based on grantor requirements • Assists with closeout of grant.

Ongoing Organizational Change Management

Our change management effort has been broad and ongoing.

1. One-on-one conversations with the Strategic Financial Investment Manager and program leaders

2. Presentations at program staff meetings, operations forums, office hours, etc.

3. Daily Dose articles

4. Conversations with the Executive Leadership Team

5. Emails to deputy directors

6. SharePoint pages that include a federal grants resource hub, information about the team, etc.

7. Surveys and pulse checks

Feedback Examples

Throughout 2025, we actively sought feedback and here are examples of what we heard:

- "You have provided incredible support – thank you so much!"

- "Efficient and excellent contributions to submit [the grant]… and… for streamlined, centralized processes."

- "Having the experts on our side for all things grants has been so helpful. To have full confidence now that grants are been uploaded with all I's dotted and T's crossed and with the eyes of your FABULOUS team on not just grant upload stuff, but FFRs……game changer."

- "Easily the smoothest [process] I've been part of in the 7 years."

- "I want to express my gratitude to the team preparing our [grant] application – without that, we really can't do the awesome things we presented at the state EOC this morning."

Questions?

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.

Group Engage & Exchange

- How are you working to improve organizational capacity and administrative readiness in key areas like workforce development, procurement, hiring, communications, or performance management?

- What tools or resources are you using to improve administrative policy development, review and management?

- What tools or resources are you using to improve grants management?

Related Resources

PHIG PARTNERS

Guidance and Tools

- S/T Administrative Readiness - ASTHO STAR Center
- Process Improvement Readiness Assessment Tool
- General Guidance to Support a Quality Improvement Council
- Inspire Readiness: Overcoming Knowledge Management Challenges

Trainings and Webinars

- Change Management eLearning Course
- Strengthening Administrative Preparedness in Public Health Agencies

Blogs and Newscasts

- Four Strategies to Advance Administrative Preparedness in Public Health
- Texas Leverages ASTHO Program to Advance Workforce Strategy & Newscast
- Maryland Peer Assessment Program/OD2A Business Process Improvement
- Missouri Takes Strategic Steps to Improve Policy Processes
- Centralizing Grant Management Functions: Puerto Rico's Work and Vision
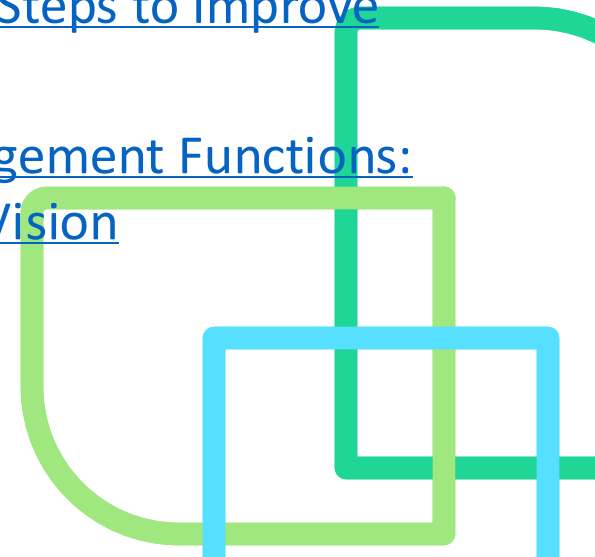
Thank You!

performanceimprovement@astho.org

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phinfrastructure.org