

County of Santa Cruz
Health Services Agency
Public Health Division
Accreditation FAQs



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Santa Cruz County

County of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency Public Health Division

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Public Health Accreditation?

Public Health Accreditation is the measurement of health department performance against a set of nationally recognized, practice-focused and evidenced-based standards. National public health department accreditation has been developed because of the desire to improve service, value, and accountability to our stakeholders and the public.

2. What is the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB)?

PHAB is a non-profit organization that was chartered in 2007 and launched in 2011 that administers accreditation.

3. What is the goal of Public Health Accreditation?

The goal of the voluntary national public health department accreditation program is to improve and protect the health of the public by advancing the quality and performance of public health departments.

4. What does Public Health Accreditation require?

An on-going health department commitment to quality improvement and adherence to national standards.

5. What does Accreditation focus on?

Accreditation looks at leadership, planning, community engagement, customer focus, workforce development, evaluation, quality improvement, and service.

6. Why is the County of Santa Cruz, Health Services Agency, Public Health division seeking Accreditation?

National public health accreditation will improve our infrastructure to ensure that the delivery of programs and services are optimal in maintaining and improving the health of Santa Cruz County residents and visitors. We value our partnerships and envision the accreditation process as a method for strengthening these linkages and coordinating them to operate the most efficient and effective public health system possible.

7. What have other Counties said about what Accreditation has done for them?

Quality Improvement Opportunities; Identification of strengths and weaknesses; Improved management process; Accountability; Credibility; Relationships; Documentation of Health Department's capacity; Funding; "Different divisions in the past have operated in their silo of focus, now we are seeing more integration among programs in different divisions, working toward health improvement."

8. What is the process for Accreditation?

The process for Accreditation includes a pre-application, application (must have completed three prerequisites), documentation selection and submission, a site visit, the accreditation decision, reports, and then reaccreditation (five years later).

9. What are the three prerequisites?

The three prerequisites are the Community Health Assessment, the Community Health Improvement Plan, and the Department Strategic Plan.

10. What is involved in the Community Health Assessment (CHA)?

The Community Health Assessment is a systematic examination of the health status indicators for a given population that is used to identify key problems and assets in a community. The ultimate goal of a CHA is to use it to inform the development of strategies that address the community's health needs and identified issues using the community's assets in a coordinated manner. This is done through collaboration, mobilizing the community, identifying issues; data analysis and determining resource needs.

11. What does a PHAB conforming CHA require?

A PHAB conforming CHA requires data and information from various sources, population demographics, description of health issues and specific descriptions of population groups with particular health issues and inequities, description of factors that contribute to specific populations' health challenges, and description of existing community asset resources to address health issues.

12. What is a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)?

A CHIP is a long-term, systematic effort to address public health problems on the basis of the results of CHA activities and the community health improvement process. The CHIP is typically updated every three to five years. A CHIP is critical for developing policies and defining actions to target efforts that improve health. It should define the vision for the health of the community through a collaborative process and should address the gamut of strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities that exist in the community to improve the health status of that community.

13. What does a PHAB conforming CHIP require?

A PHAB conforming CHIP requires desired measurable outcomes or indicators of health improvement and priorities for action; policy changes needed to accomplish health objectives; individuals and organizations that have accepted responsibility for implementing strategies; and consideration of state and national priorities.