



*Advancing  
public health  
performance*

**Public Health Accreditation Board  
Research and Data Use Guidelines  
Effective Date: April 1, 2016**

To honor its commitment to building the evidence base for accreditation, the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) will release data generated through the accreditation process to be used for research purposes only.\* PHAB remains committed to respecting the confidentiality of health departments that apply for accreditation. This document provides guidelines for researchers who are interested in accessing data from PHAB.

**Before Requesting Data**

Researchers who are considering projects that would involve PHAB data are encouraged to contact the PHAB Research and Evaluation Department prior to submitting formal research proposals to determine the feasibility of obtaining data appropriate for the research study. Please contact Jessica Kronstadt, Director of Research and Evaluation ([jkronstadt@phaboard.org](mailto:jkronstadt@phaboard.org)).

To identify high-priority research questions, please consult the PHAB Research Agenda. Researchers are also encouraged to review the Description of PHAB Data and Codebook prior to submitting a data request, in order to familiarize themselves with the data that PHAB may make available to researchers. Both documents are available at <http://www.phaboard.org/research-and-evaluation/>.

The following types of data may be requested:

- Profile information about health departments that have submitted an application (e.g., population served, public health services, etc.)
- Assessments of conformity for each Measure
- Narratives from Site Visit Report
- Action Plans (the Measures included in the Action Plan, the final assessment of those Measures, and the associated comments)

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\*These guidelines pertain to data submitted by applicants and accredited health departments to PHAB as an accrediting body. The data collection is supported by the accreditation fees and is governed by agreements between PHAB and each health department. Data use policies and principles that govern data collected with federal funding do not apply to PHAB data. No federal funding supported PHAB's data collection efforts. At this time, PHAB will not release data related to Tribal public health departments that have applied for accreditation. When there is a sufficient number of Tribal public health departments that have been accredited, PHAB will develop, in consultation with the Tribal community, special guidelines about sharing those data.

- Annual Reports (the Measures that are required to be addressed in Annual Reports)

Generally, documentation submitted by health departments to demonstrate conformity with the Measures and the Annual Report documents will not be shared. However, if a researcher proposes a project that would entail reviewing any of the plans included in PHAB documentation (e.g., community health improvement plan, workforce development plan, emergency operations plan, quality improvement plan), those requests might be considered after discussion with PHAB staff.

### **Data Requests**

Researchers will need to submit a data request form to PHAB's Department of Research and Evaluation. The form is available at <http://www.phaboard.org/research-and-evaluation/>.

PHAB will review the request and will respond in writing to the lead researcher. PHAB will only release data that are pertinent to the request. Any information about a health department that has potentially damaging legal implications would be redacted.

### **Data Use Agreement**

Prior to releasing the data, PHAB must receive a signed data use agreement. The original signed copy of the agreement must be mailed to:

Public Health Accreditation Board  
Department of Research and Evaluation  
1600 Duke Street, Suite 200  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Researchers who sign the agreement are agreeing to the following overarching data use policy that guides how researchers can use PHAB data:

- PHAB will be acknowledged in the publication of the results using the following language: "Data for this study were obtained from the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). The use of the data does not imply PHAB's endorsement of the research, research methods, or conclusions contained in the work."
- The data released will be used for the specified research purpose only. Researchers wishing to use the data already obtained for any additional specific study, must submit separate permissions requests for the additional study.
- Publications will not include information specific to individual health departments or sufficient information so that individual health departments could be identified. (Publications may list the names of some or all of the accredited health departments, as PHAB discloses such information publically. However, no additional information from the data set about identifiable health departments may be included.)

- Use of the data set to contact any individual or health department is prohibited. For example, the study team may not use the data set to identify health departments that are not yet accredited to invite them to participate in additional data collection.
- No portion of the data will be released to another party.
- PHAB will be provided with an electronic and paper copy of any publication that uses the data set.
- Data files will be deleted or returned to PHAB upon conclusion of the research.

### **Release of the Data**

PHAB will charge an administrative fee for the data to offset the cost of extracting the data and maintaining the data set.

PHAB will release data only upon receipt of both the fee and the signed data use agreement.

PHAB data are available as either a CSV file or a SAS dataset. PHAB staff will coordinate with the lead researcher about the format and the delivery of the data.