



Public Health Accreditation Board
Research and Data Use Guidelines
Effective Date: 7/1/2022
Approved: 6/10/2022

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.¹ Health departments may provide written consent to PHAB to release their information to a third party (e.g., if a health department would like their data to be provided to a state health department to meet reporting requirements or if there is an agreement that Readiness Assessment data will be used to develop state-wide support plans). PHAB remains committed to respecting the confidentiality of health departments that apply for accreditation or recognition. This document provides guidelines for researchers who are interested in accessing data from PHAB.

Please note: in order to foster the field's understanding of public health capacity, PHAB makes available **aggregate** information about health departments' assessments of conformity and their population health outcomes through the PHAB Accreditation Data Portal. Through the portal, users can view data on groups of health departments—in order to keep health departments' individual data deidentified, those groups will always include, at a minimum, five health departments and will not include the health departments' names. (Accredited health departments will be able to access their own data if logged on to their individual accounts and may have the ability to make other data available to other accredited health departments.)

Before Requesting Data

Researchers who are considering projects that would involve PHAB data are encouraged to contact PHAB's Research and Evaluation team prior to submitting formal research proposals to determine the feasibility of obtaining data appropriate for the research study. Please contact research@phaboard.org.

To identify high-priority research questions, please consult the PHAB Research Agenda (Updated URL forthcoming). Researchers are also encouraged to review the Description of

¹These guidelines pertain to data submitted by health departments applying to PHAB for accreditation or recognition. The data collection is supported by 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 supports PHAB's data collection efforts. At this time, PHAB will not release data related to Tribal public health departments that have applied for accreditation or recognition. When there is a sufficient number of Tribal public health departments that have been accredited, PHAB will develop, in consultation with the Tribal community if they deem it appropriate, special guidelines about sharing those data.

PHAB Data and Codebook (Updated URL forthcoming) prior to submitting a data request, in order to familiarize yourself with the data that PHAB may make available to researchers.

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 for Pathways and both initial accreditation and reaccreditation
- Narratives from Reports from the accreditation or recognition review
- Action Plans (the Measures included in the Action Plan, the final assessment of those Measures, and the associated comments)
- Annual Reports (the Measures that are required to be addressed in Annual Reports and responses from the health department on other Annual Report questions)
- Population Health Outcomes (both the topics that health departments report they are tracking as part of reaccreditation and subsequent Annual Reports, as well as the specific outcomes they report)
- Readiness Assessment (PHAB staff's indication of the health department's readiness to provide documentation for specific measures and PHAB's overall recommendations about the health department's level of preparation)
- Documentation submitted by health departments to demonstrate conformity with the Measures and the Annual Report documents (e.g., community health improvement plan, workforce development plan, emergency operations plan, quality improvement plan) Note: sharing these documents will require additional discussion with PHAB staff.²

Note: PHAB will only release data when there is sufficient data collected. For example, PHAB will not begin releasing data on Version 2022 until a sufficient number of health departments have completed the process using those Standards & Measures.

Data Requests

Researchers will need to submit a data request form to PHAB. The form is available at [revised URL forthcoming] and includes information about the research team, study, and steps to protect confidentiality, among other topics.

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.

² If PHAB has entered into a contract with an individual health department that precludes the sharing of documentation, then PHAB will not share that documentation with researchers without express consent.

Data Use Agreement

Prior to releasing the data, PHAB must receive a signed data use agreement. This can be scanned as a PDF and emailed to research@phaboard.org or 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 publicly. 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 copy of any publication that uses the data set.

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.