

Public Health Accreditation Board

Supplemental Guidance FAQ



*Advancing
public health
performance*

The Supplemental Guidance document describes temporary changes in the accreditation process and requirements, which PHAB has put in place to be flexible with health departments during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Questions?
Contact your assigned Accreditation Specialist or reach out to Marita Chilton at mchilton@phaboard.org

Below are frequently asked questions as it relates to the [Supplemental Guidance](#), updated in April 2021.

When did the changes take effect?

The Supplemental Guidance went into effect in August 2020 and was revised in December 2020 and again in April 2021. It will continue to be updated, as needed.

Who does the Supplemental Guidance apply to?

The Supplemental Guidance applies to all health departments (Initial and Reaccreditation) and VRHS Units in process, as well as site visitors who might be reviewing a health department in the near future.

My department anticipates a site visit in the second half of this year, will it be in person or virtual?

PHAB will continue to evaluate the health and safety issues related to COVID-19. While the Supplemental Guidance currently says site visits will be held virtually for all sites through June 30, 2021, it may be necessary to continue virtual site visits through more of 2021. When PHAB determines it is safe for its staff and volunteers to travel again, health departments will be notified 90 days in advance to determine if the dates selected will work for in-person visits or if alternative dates should be selected. PHAB staff will work with health departments on timing and preference and will also coordinate with site visitors about their availability and willingness to travel.

Will PHAB continue to share measures that will be discussed during the site visit in advance of the visit?

Yes. This change has been adopted by PHAB's Accreditation Specialist Team and we will continue to share specific measures in advance of the site visit going forward. Prior to a site visit for either Initial, Reaccreditation, or VRHS your assigned Accreditation Specialist will share the measure numbers where the site visit team has specific questions. We do encourage you to continue having Domain Leads present during the conversation since some questions asked are bigger picture and relate to how the department is operationalizing the Domain.

My health department is planning on submitting in December 2021. Will the Supplemental Guidance apply to my response to Pre-Site Visit Review?

Yes. Any health department that submits documentation for initial or reaccreditation by December 31, 2021 will be held to the temporary policy changes related to documentation submission included in the Supplemental Guidance. For example, a department that submits during the 2021 calendar year will continue to have the additional 1-year on timeframe requirements if measures are reopened during the Pre-Site Visit Review and/or Site Visit. Similarly, health departments that submit their documentation by the end of 2021 will be allowed to provide documentation dated after their original

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documentation submission date for measure reopened during the Pre-Site Visit Review and/or Site Visit.

My health department's Annual Report Section I will be due December 31, 2021. How should we prepare for Section II?

If Section 1 is submitted by December 31, 2021 the Supplemental Guidance related to Annual Reports will apply to Section II as well.

My health department has not had to apply for an extension (yet), but with all-hands-on-deck in our vaccination efforts and budget season approaching, how long will the revised extension policy listed in the Supplemental Guidance stay in effect?

PHAB will continue to follow the revised extension process listed in the Supplemental Guidance through at least December 31, 2021.

My health department is planning on submitting our Registration & Application for Accreditation. When will I be trained and how will the Supplemental Guidance affect me?

PHAB has not set specific Applicant training dates for the remainder of the 2021 calendar year. However, we are prepared to continue to hold virtual Applicant trainings throughout 2021, as needed. The Supplemental Guidance is currently in place for any health department that submits documentation by December 31, 2021. The guidance will continue to be updated, as needed to continue to provide additional flexibility for health departments responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am a PHAB Site Visitor. I have been very involved in my community's COVID-19 response, and unfortunately have not had time to volunteer. I do have a little more time now, but feel it is still not enough for a full review. Are there other volunteer opportunities with PHAB that take less time?

The pilot review model sounds like it might be a great fit. While PHAB is still collecting formal data related to the pilot process and time commitment for our volunteers, site visitors that have been engaged in the pilot review model to date have said it takes considerably less time overall and it is completed in a shorter duration. In this model, the PHAB Accreditation Specialist conducts the Pre-Site Visit Review and serves as a member of the site visit team. This means, that prior to the site visitor(s) coming on board, the AS would have conducted the Pre-Site Visit Review, drafted the initial conformity comments, sent the questions/requests to the HD, and once the HD has responded, the AS will have updated scores and comments where appropriate. The next step is to bring on the peer review site visitors (you). Your role would be to review the major plan measures, any measures still scored as Slightly or Not Demonstrated, help prepare for and conduct the site visit in collaboration with the AS and assist in finalizing the site visit report by reviewing and adding any additional Opportunities for Improvement and Areas of Excellence you may have noted. In this pilot model, peer review site visitors play a critical role in the review process but much of the administrative burden of the review, such as drafting the Conformity Comments, is completed by PHAB staff. Watch a [short 6-minute video](#) that describes the new review process.

Why did PHAB create the Supplemental Guidance rather than updating the Guide to Accreditation and Guide to Reaccreditation?

The Guide to Accreditation and the Guide to Reaccreditation will be updated and released with Version 2022. PHAB is committed to helping health departments on their accreditation journey. We released the Supplemental Guidance prior to a full revision of the Guide in order to increase flexibility in the process and be responsive to the needs in the field.

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As we have reviewed the Supplemental Guidance and thought about how COVID response may affect when we apply for accreditation, we were wondering about the new version of the Standards and Measures. When will they go into effect for initial and reaccreditation applications?

PHAB anticipates the earliest Version 2022 would go into effect is for health departments that apply for initial accreditation on or after July 1, 2022. The exact timeline will be announced to the field later in 2021. Health departments who apply for reaccreditation in the year 2022 will have the option to select between the current reaccreditation Standards & Measures and Version 2022 of the Standards & Measures. The best way to prepare for the next version of the Standards & Measures is to sign up for the PHAB newsletter, participate in the public vetting process (est. Fall 2021), and use the draft vetting version for planning purposes. We will continue to communicate additional information related to Version 2022 as it is available in our newsletter. [Sign up](#) for our newsletter.