

# Indiana Association of Local Boards of Health

## National Public Health Performance Standards Program

### What is the National Public Health Performance Standards Program (NPHPSP)?

The NPHPSP is a partnership initiative of national public health organizations that have worked collaboratively to establish national performance standards. The standards identify the optimal level of performance for state and local public health systems (all organizations that contribute to public health in a given area) and governing bodies. The NPHPSP provides a framework to assess capacity and performance of a public health system and seeks to ensure that strong effective public health systems are in place to deliver essential public health services.

### What are the mission and goals of the NPHPSP?

To improve the quality of public health practice and the performance of public health systems by:

- Providing performance standards for public health systems and encouraging their widespread use;
- Engaging and leveraging national, state, and local partnerships to build a stronger foundation for public health preparedness;
- Promoting continuous quality improvement of public health systems; and
- Strengthening the science base for public health practice improvement

### What is the value of using the NPHPSP?

The NPHPSP is a valuable tool in identifying areas for system improvement, strengthening state and local partnerships, and assuring that a strong system is in place for effective response to day-to-day public health issues as well as public health emergencies. NPHPSP instrument users at all levels report numerous such benefits, including:

- Improves organizational and community communication and collaboration, by bringing partners to the same table.
- Educates participants about public health and the interconnectedness of activities, which can lead to a higher appreciation and awareness of the many activities related to improving the public's health.
- Strengthens the diverse network of partners within state and local public health systems, which can lead to more cohesion among partners, better coordination of activities and resources, and less duplication of services.
- Identifies strengths and weaknesses to address in quality improvement efforts. Responses to the assessment can be tracked over time to identify system improvements or changes.
- Provides a benchmark for public health practice improvements, by providing a "gold standard" to which public health systems can aspire.

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## Can the NPHPSP be used to evaluate or assess public health agencies, programs, or organizations?

The NPHPSP is not intended to serve as an evaluation of program or agency performance or capacity. It is an assessment of overall system performance and how current performance and capacity measure up against optimal benchmarks. NPHPSP results represent the collective performance of all organizational participants in the public health system and should not be interpreted to reflect any single agency, organization, or program. State and local public health systems should use the information as a planning tool for quality improvement.

The local public health governance instrument is unique in that it focuses on the governing body ultimately accountable for public health at the local level. Examples of governing bodies include local boards of health, county councils, or commissions. A governing body has legal authority over the primary governmental public health agency within the local public health system, usually defined as the health department.

## What instruments are provided within the NPHPSP?

The NPHPSP includes a set of three instruments:

1. The State Public Health System Performance Assessment Instrument (State Instrument) focuses on the state public health system, which includes state public health agencies and other partners that contribute to public health services at the state level.
2. The Local Public Health System Performance Assessment Instrument (Local Instrument) focuses on the local public health system or all entities that contribute to public health within a community. This system includes all public, private, and voluntary entities, as well as individuals and informal associations.
3. The Local Public Health Governance Performance Assessment Instrument (Governance Instrument) focuses on the governing body ultimately accountable for public health at the local level. Such governing bodies may include boards of health or county commissioners.

Each instrument lays out standards that public health systems or governing entities should strive to achieve. For each standard, there are questions to which users respond in determining how well they meet that standard.

The NPHPSP instruments, supporting documents, and other technical assistance materials are located at <http://www.cdc.gov/od/ocphp/nphpsp/>.

Source: National Public Health Performance Standards Program (<http://www.cdc.gov/nphpsp/PDF/FAQ.pdf>)