

## Staff Survey

### I. Purpose

The Staff Survey is administered to staff members to determine the LHD's capacity to address the root causes of health inequities from the perspectives of staff throughout the agency. In addition to providing information for an organizational assessment, the survey gives staff an opportunity to reflect on their own experiences in addressing health inequities through their work in the department. *The Staff Survey is the backbone of the Toolkit, and should be the first instrument administered.* The findings of the survey can stand alone to inform action planning, and can also be used to inform decisions on which elements of the Staff Focus Group and Management Interview protocols to prioritize for further investigation.

In order to streamline the survey distribution and data management processes, the instrument was designed using Survey Monkey, an online survey tool.

**Advantages:** The Staff Survey is inclusive of all staff levels and perspectives, is efficient to administer and monitor, and does not require data entry because the online survey responses can be automatically downloaded into a database. It is the best way to get a large amount of information from a large number of people. Responses can easily be tracked and reminders sent to participants who have not yet completed the survey. Another benefit of an online survey is that data are automatically collected and ready to be exported for data management and analysis without data entry.

**Challenges and Limitations:** As with any large survey, it is unable to capture contextual information for individual responses, and its one-size-fits-all approach may mean that across all agency sites and programs, not all staff will find all questions relevant or framed just right for the way they do their work. Additionally, the data management and analyses required for exploring the survey's findings require a skilled analyst and may be time consuming.

#### Use the staff survey to:

- Get an organization-wide picture of attitudes, practices, competencies and structures that indicate a capacity to address root causes of health inequities.
- Hear from all staff about what supports their ability to address health inequities and what makes it challenging to do so, including those staff that don't often have a voice in planning and organizational decision-making processes.
- Identify priority areas for developing staff capacity and improving organizational functioning to support health equity efforts.

The Staff Survey is the most in-depth instrument in the Toolkit and addresses most of the elements included in the Matrix of Workforce Competencies and Organizational Characteristics for Addressing Health Inequities. The specific domains addressed by the Staff Survey include:

Organizational Characteristics	Workforce Competencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional commitment</li> <li>• Hiring to address health inequities</li> <li>• Structure that supports true community partnerships</li> <li>• Support staff to address health inequities</li> <li>• Transparent and inclusive communication</li> <li>• Institutional support for innovation</li> <li>• Community accessible data &amp; planning</li> <li>• Streamlined administrative process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal attributes</li> <li>• Knowledge of public health framework (e.g. Ten Essential Services, public policy development, advocacy, data)</li> <li>• Understand social determinants of health</li> <li>• Community knowledge</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Collaboration skills</li> <li>• Community organizing</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> <li>• Cultural competency/humility</li> </ul>

## II. Implementation

### Staff Time and Resources

The table below shows the estimated investment required for implementing the Staff Survey. Note that it may take 2-3 weeks from the time the survey link is distributed to get all staff to complete the survey and multiple reminders will likely be necessary.

Survey Implementation Task	Who	Estimated Staff Time
Convening Implementation Team/Survey Preparation	Leadership and Selected Staff	5-10 hours per person
Communicating with Staff	Leadership, Implementation Team and Managers	5-10 hours per person
Managing Survey	Selected Implementation Team Member	8-12 hours
Completing the Survey	All Staff	20-45 minutes per person
Data Management and Analysis	Analyst	10-15 hours for data management; 15-40 hours for data analysis, including qualitative analysis of open-ended survey items; this may vary depending on size of LHD

### Additional Resources Needed:

- Subscription to online survey tool
- Computer and Internet access for staff
- In-house expertise and resources or external consultant for survey administration and/or data analysis

### Implementation Plan

The checklist below provides recommended steps for implementing the Staff Survey:

#### ☐ Review and Preparation of the Staff Survey

The Implementation Team should review the Staff Survey to modify as needed. It is recommended that you administer the entire Staff Survey instrument. However, if the circumstances of your LHD do not warrant using all the questions, the Roadmap in *Appendix III* provides guidelines to help you determine which questions would be most appropriate to the needs of your LHD. It suggests a set of core questions to include in the Staff Survey and illustrates how survey questions correspond to the

Matrix of Workforce competencies and Organizational Characteristics elements. Once the survey questions have been selected, the survey must be prepared in the online survey tool of choice. BARHII will provide a copy of a ready-to-use tool on *SurveyMonkey* which can be copied and edited. One Implementation Team member should be in charge of coordinating the survey.

#### ☐ **Set Goals and Develop Implementation Plan**

The Implementation Team should set a response rate goal and develop an implementation plan to reach that goal. The implementation plan should include steps to inform all staff members of the Staff Survey and incentives to help encourage more staff members to participate in the survey.

It is important for LHD leadership to convey that this is a priority effort and that staff have explicit permission to spend time on the survey.

#### **Berkeley Pilot Experience: Ideas for Increasing Staff Survey Response Rates:**

**Staff Outreach Strategies:** The Berkeley Public Health Department (BPHD) Implementation Team facilitated meetings to inform staff members of the Staff Survey's purpose and significance.

**Incentives:** The BPHD also provided incentives for completing the Staff Surveys. Incentives were determined based on completion rates:

- 90% completion rate – All staff would receive a chocolate thank you and be entered in a raffle for ten \$10 *Peet's Coffee* gift cards and five \$10 *Target* gift cards.
- 85% completion rate – All staff would receive a chocolate thank you and be entered in a raffle for ten \$10 *Peet's Coffee* gift cards.
- 80% completion rate – All staff would receive a chocolate thank you and be entered in a raffle for five \$10 *Peet's Coffee* gift cards.

Using these strategies Berkeley Public Health Department had an 81% completion rate

#### ☐ **Administration of the Staff Survey**

(Coordinated by one Implementation Team Member)

- Compile a list of all staff members and their email addresses.
- The lead executive or public health official sends an introductory email or letter before the online survey is administered to share the purpose of the assessment being undertaken and to convey the importance of staff participation. See *Appendix IV* for a sample introductory letter from a public health official inviting staff members to participate in the survey.
- External consultant or selected staff member administers the survey online. *SurveyMonkey* is one suggested current online survey provider that is easily accessible, user friendly, and inexpensive. *Appendix IX* provides an administration guide for *SurveyMonkey*.
- To maintain confidentiality if a unique link is used (see below for explanation), external consultant or selected staff member monitors the survey responses and sends reminders to staff members who have not completed the survey. LHD leadership and implementation teams should not be provided with the responses

#### **Recommendation**

If no external consultant will be contracted, choose one staff member that will administer and monitor all survey responses and keep responses confidential.

or response status of any individual staff member. If a generic link is used, all responses are anonymous.

- After reaching the completion rate goal, external consultant or selected staff member begin the data analysis and management. *SurveyMonkey* analysis offers the ability to provide summary reports, trend analysis, and basic visual formats to present data in a customized format. Further analysis may be required using another program. Also, qualitative data will require a more in-depth analysis than *SurveyMonkey* can provide. It is recommended that the response data be exported into SPSS (or other data analysis software package) for data management and analysis.

*See Appendix VII for technical guidelines on how to manage and analyze Staff Survey data.*

### III. Key Considerations

#### Survey Links

When administering online surveys, there are generally two types of survey links that can be used: a generic link or a unique link.

**Generic Link:** When a generic link is provided, staff members will all receive the same link. Every time the link is clicked, a blank survey uploads no matter what computer or email account is being used.

**Advantage:** Using a generic link will allow staff members to forward the link along to other colleagues. With a generic link it would be impossible to enter a survey that has already been started by someone else. Generic links allow staff to be entirely anonymous, even to the survey administrator, so staff may be more forthcoming.

**Disadvantage:** Since a blank survey uploads when a generic link is clicked, staff members would not be able to revisit a survey they have already started. They would have to complete the whole survey in one sitting. Also, the person monitoring the survey will not be able to follow-up with non-responders since all responses received from the generic link will not be tied to individual email addresses. Thus, it will not be known who has and has not responded. Another disadvantage is that it is possible for a single individual to answer the survey more than once, which could skew the results.

**Unique Link:** A unique link is provided to each staff member.

**Advantage:** Using a unique link, the person monitoring survey responses can track who has not yet responded and follow-up with them individually if necessary. Staff members will also be able to save their unfinished surveys and revisit their link later to finish.

**Disadvantage:** The unique link cannot be forwarded, as it corresponds only to the staff member it is sent to. With a unique link, there's a risk that some staff members will still forward their link even if instructed not to, and staff members using the same link could view and

#### Red Flag

If your department decides to use unique links to administer the survey, make sure to continue stressing that the unique link CANNOT be forwarded from person to person, even for purposes of promoting the survey. Instead, the implementation team could provide sample emails for supervisors and managers to send to their staff as reminders to follow their own link or how to get it if lost. Be aware of the survey management risks using the unique link option.

overwrite each other's responses. Survey information is not entirely anonymous, since the administrator can track responses tied to staff names.

#### **Berkeley Pilot Experience with Survey Links**

The BPHD chose to use unique links during the pilot assessment. They felt that concerns about confidentiality would be reduced by using an external, non-health department survey administrator and the ability to track individuals would help with response rates.

Staff appreciated being able to save unfinished surveys to be completed at their convenience. However, Berkeley did encounter significant problems with supervisors forwarding links to encourage staff to complete the survey. In spite of clear directions asking that links not be forwarded, this happened numerous times and caused confusion as previously completed surveys were overwritten and data lost.

#### **Staff Follow-up**

After the survey is closed, staff should be notified of the final response rate, thanked for their time and participation, and informed about next steps in the Self-Assessment. If an incentive was offered, prizes should be awarded promptly. Timely follow-up is both respectful of staff input and encouraging of further dialogue and participation among staff.