

Appendices

APPENDIX IV: Sample Communications for Self-Assessment Participants

Staff Survey

This is a sample email sent to all internal staff of the LHD to ask for their participation in the Staff Survey. This sample email can be used if the Staff Survey is to be conducted using a unique-link protocol.

Subject line: Online Staff Survey: Assessing [LHD Name]’s Capacity to Address Health Inequities

Dear [LHD Name] staff,

As you know, [LHD Name] is engaging in an organizational Self-Assessment to determine its capacity to address the root causes of health inequities. An important part of this process is an agency-wide survey of all staff members. These surveys are completely confidential; none of your responses will be linked to you individually.

Please click here to enter the survey, or enter this link into your browser:

[Survey link]

Please complete the survey by 5 pm on [Day, Date].

If you would like to return to your survey to finish at a later time or change any responses, you can do so at any time within the survey period by following the original survey link from ***YOUR OWN EMAIL ACCOUNT.*** **Each staff member has their own unique link to the survey, so it is important that you do not forward your survey link to others or use a co-worker’s link to access the survey.** Your responses will be saved each time you click the “next” button on each survey page, so if you need to leave the survey before you complete it, just hit “next” at the bottom of the last page completed and close the browser. You will be taken automatically to the page where you left off when you come back to the survey.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. Your perspective on this important topic is valuable and appreciated! Prizes will be given out for high completion rates: [include incentive details].

If you have any questions at any time, you may ask any member of the implementation group: [names of staff members].

If you have any trouble accessing the survey or have any other questions, please contact [name of survey administrator] at [email] or by phone at [number].

This is a sample email sent to all internal staff of the LHD to ask for their participation in the Staff Survey. This sample can be used if the Staff Survey is to be conducted using a general-link protocol.

Subject line: Online Staff Survey: Assessing [LHD Name]’s Capacity to Address Health Inequities

Dear [LHD Name] staff,

As you know, [LHD Name] is engaging in an organizational Self-Assessment to determine its capacity to address the root causes of health inequities. An important part of this process is an agency-wide survey of all staff members. These surveys are completely confidential; none of your responses will be linked to you individually.

Please click here to enter the survey, or enter this link into your browser:

[Survey link]

Please complete the survey by 5 pm on [Day, Date].

The survey should take 30–45 minutes to complete. It is important that you complete the survey in one sitting. If you leave the survey before completing it, you will need to start the survey again from the beginning.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. Your perspective on this important topic is valuable and appreciated! Prizes will be given out for high completion rates: [include incentive details].

If you have any questions at any time, you may ask any member of the implementation team: [names of staff members].

If you have any trouble accessing the survey or have any other questions, please contact [name of survey administrator] at [email] or by phone at [number].

Collaborating Partner Survey

This is a sample letter to alert community partners to the Self-Assessment process the LHD is undertaking, and to the upcoming survey they will be asked to participate in. It should be signed by the public health official or lead executive at LHD or, if that is not feasible, it can be signed by other members of senior management/leadership staff.

Subject line: [LHD] Survey

Greetings! You are receiving this email because you are someone who works with [LHD name]. [LHD] is currently working on assessing our capacity to address health inequities/disparities and the social determinants of health, such as income and education. As a representative of a community group, community-based organization or public agency serving the [local place name] community, we would very much like to get your perspective on how well-prepared you believe we are to address health inequities in our community.

In the next few days, we will be contacting you with information on completing an on-line survey about the [LHD]. The answers will be completely confidential. We know you are very busy and appreciate you taking time to complete the survey to help us do a better job of reducing health inequities in [local place name] and helping EVERYONE live long, healthy lives.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact anyone you work with at the health department or [designate point person from the implementation team].

Thanks again for your help.

Sincerely,

[Name], Lead Executive/Public Health Official

Signatories can include other leadership staff

This is a sample invitation to take the online Collaborating Partner Survey that should be used if the survey is to be conducted using a unique-link protocol.

Subject line: [LHD name] Survey

Dear [firstname],

As you have been informed in a recent email from [Lead Executive/Public Health Official], [LHD] is currently working on assessing its **capacity to address health inequities/disparities** and the social determinants of health such as income and education **and is asking for your participation in the form of a brief survey.** The goal of the Collaborating Partner Survey is to gather perspectives from a broad range of community groups, community-based organizations and other public agencies that may partner with [LHD] on public health approaches, strategies and activities that help address health inequities.

Let me assure you that your name and organization will never be linked to your responses, and your participation has no impact on your current or future work with [LHD]. The analysis of survey results will be conducted by a contractor/staff member with no direct influence into any contract/agreement between [LHD] and your organization.

Please complete the survey by 5 pm on [Day, Date].

Please complete this questionnaire at your earliest convenience by following this link:

[Survey link]

The survey should take you no more than 15 minutes.

If you would like to return to your survey to finish at a later time or change any responses, you can do so at any time within the survey period by following the original survey link from ***YOUR OWN EMAIL ACCOUNT.*** **Each participant has their own unique link to the survey, so it is important that you do not forward your survey link to others or use anyone else's link to access the survey.** Your responses will be saved each time you click the “next” button on each survey page, so if you need to leave the survey before you complete it, just hit “next” at the bottom of the last page completed and close the browser. You will be taken automatically to the page where you left off when you come back to the survey.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. Your perspective on this important topic is valuable and appreciated!

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at [phone number] or [email address].

Thank you again for your participation.

Sincerely,

[Name]

This is a sample invitation to take the online Collaborating Partner Survey if the survey is to be conducted using a general-link survey protocol.

Subject line: [LHD name] Survey

Dear [firstname],

As you have been informed in a recent email from [Lead Executive/Public Health Official], [LHD] is currently working on assessing its **capacity to address health inequities/disparities** and the social determinants of health such as income and education and **is asking for your participation in the form of a brief survey**. The goal of the Collaborating Partner Survey is to gather perspectives from a broad range of community groups, community-based organizations and other public agencies that may partner with [LHD] on public health approaches, strategies and activities that help address health inequities.

Let me assure you that your name and organization will never be linked to your responses, and your participation has no impact on your current or future work with [LHD]. The analysis of survey results will be conducted by a contractor/staff member with no direct influence into any contract/agreement between [LHD] and your organization.

Please complete the survey by 5 pm on [Day, Date].

Please complete this questionnaire at your earliest convenience by following this link:

[Survey link]

The survey should take you no more than 15 minutes.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. Your perspective on this important topic is valuable and appreciated!

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at [phone number] or [email address].

Thank you again for your participation.

Sincerely,

[Name]

Staff Focus Groups

This is a sample email to inform staff of upcoming focus groups.

Before specific staff members are invited to participate in a focus group, the Public Health Official or another leadership staff member involved with the Self-Assessment process should email all staff to encourage their participation in the focus groups and assure them that it is an approved use of their time at work. This email is also an opportunity to remind staff of the LHD's commitment to the Self-Assessment process and provide follow-up from the survey component, creating momentum for staff participation.

Subject line: Staff Focus Groups: Assessing [LHD Name]'s Capacity to Address Health Inequities

Dear staff,

As you may recall, our [LHD] is participating in an organizational Self-Assessment process to determine our capacity to successfully reduce health inequities in our community. In [month] there was an on-line Staff Survey that was designed to assess some aspects of our capacity, and [X%] of staff completed the survey, which is a GREAT response rate.

The next phase of the assessment involves staff focus groups that will be conducted by [description of who will be facilitating the groups]. They will be contacting randomly-selected staff that represent all classification levels to participate in these focus groups. Supervisors will be allowing their staff release time to participate in the focus groups. Staff will be paid for their time as regular work time.

Your participation in the focus group is voluntary. Information you share in the focus groups will be kept confidential. Common themes among participants will be shared in a report. Any statements quoted in the report will not be linked to any individual.

Please let me or one of the other members of the assessment team know if you have any questions [names].

Thanks again for all of your thoughts and input in this important assessment that will allow us to better do our work.

Sincerely,

[Name of Lead Executive/Public Health Official or other leadership staff]

This is a sample letter sent by the focus group facilitator—not an internal LHD staff member—to invite staff to participate in the Staff Focus Groups.

Subject line: Staff Focus Groups: Assessing [LHD]’s Capacity to Address Health Inequities

Dear _____,

As you know, [LHD name] is undergoing an assessment process to determine its ability to address the root causes of health inequities.

An important part of the assessment process involves conducting focus groups with staff members. The focus groups will explore the elements of the organizational culture and structure that you may find support or interfere with the agency’s ability to address health inequities. We are also interested in learning about the personal characteristics and skills you think people at [LHD] need in order to enable the organization address the root causes of health inequities. To provide for the most comfortable environment in which to speak freely, managers and non-management staff will participate in different focus groups. All of the information we collect in the focus group will be kept CONFIDENTIAL. The information we collect from all the focus groups will be combined and the report will only focus on the themes that emerged from the combined information. No comments or themes will be linked to specific participants. Your input is very important to this assessment process and we hope you will participate.

[Introduce self and describe role as outside facilitator], and I would like to invite you to participate in a focus group. The focus group will last 90 minutes and will be held in [location].

Please let me know which of the following times you are NOT available:

[Offer up to three dates/times]

I hope very much that you will take the time to participate; your perspective is an important piece of the assessment. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at [phone number].

Thanks in advance for your assistance!

Sincerely,

[Facilitator name]

This sample communication is a “thank you” letter to be sent to the focus group participants after the group discussion takes place. Because of the personal and time-consuming nature of the participation in a focus group, it is particularly important to acknowledge individuals’ contributions to the Self-Assessment process.

Dear [participant names]:

I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to you all for participating yesterday in the staff focus group for the [LHD]’s health inequities assessment. I really enjoyed meeting each of you, and appreciate the time you took out of your busy day to contribute so thoughtfully to our conversation. This assessment process has been truly enriched by each of your perspectives and insights.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at [contact information].

Sincerely,

[Facilitator name]

Management Interviews

This is a sample email inviting senior management staff members to participate in individual interviews.

Subject line: Staff Interviews: Assessing [LHD]’s Capacity to Address Health Inequities

Dear [participant name]:

As you know, the [LHD] is undergoing an assessment process to determine its ability to address the root causes of health inequities. The assessment was developed by the Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (BARHII), a collaboration of eleven health departments in California’s San Francisco Bay Area.

An important part of the assessment process is conducting key informant interviews with staff members. The interviews will explore the elements of the organizational culture and structure that you find may support or interfere with the agency’s ability to address health inequities. We are also interested in learning about the personal characteristics you think people at [LHD] need in order to enable the organization to address the root causes of health inequities. All of the information we collect in the interviews will be kept CONFIDENTIAL. Your input is very important to this assessment process and we hope you will participate.

[Introduce self and describe role as outside facilitator], and I would like to invite your participation in a key informant interview, which should be about an hour long.

Please let me know if you are available for a phone interview during the following time:

[Date and Time]

If you are not available during any of these times please suggest a time that you are available. Also, if you’d prefer to have an in-person interview, we can arrange to meet at your office or another convenient location.

I hope very much that you will take the time to participate; your perspective is an important piece of the assessment. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at [phone number]

Thanks in advance for your assistance!

Sincerely,

[Interviewer name]