

Kresge Foundation's Emerging Leaders in Public Health Initiative

2018 Application

Short Essay Questions

Answer the following short essay questions.

Note: We recommend that you draft your responses first and then paste the answers into the spaces provided.

The Public Health Lead should complete the response to Question #1.

1. Describe an example of when you played a role leading systems-level or organizational level change in a public health organization. Include the challenges you faced, what strengths you used to implement change successfully, and what you learned to help you lead future transformative initiatives. (250 word maximum)

Upon starting in my position as director, I re-organized the reporting roles to more closely fit the clinic needs while at the same time dealing with staff shortages. I simplified the reporting roles by assigning staff to report directly to managers in the clinic rather than directly to me. This made the clinic run more effectively as staff were now supervised directly by a manager and had a clear line of supervision even when plotted on an organizational chart. There were no longer dotted lines of supervision. The challenges I immediately faced were related to staff shortages. Utilizing more of the grant funding for HIV/STD Prevention, Tuberculosis control, and Immunization services to add additional staff allowed me to increase the number of staff in the clinics. I was able to use the grant monies to fund six new positions, thus increasing our current staff to 29, an increase of 20 percent. A secondary benefit of my re-organization was that grant monies no longer lapsed and our grant spending was more in line with what Department of State Health Services expectations of 25% per quarter. What I have learned to help me lead future transformative initiatives is to think outside the box and to look for innovative solutions to problems. In other words, I will be flexible and receptive to new ideas from different sources to help bring resolution to existing or new challenges.

The Public Health Co-Lead should complete the response to Question # 2.

2. Describe an example of when you played a role leading systems-level or organizational level change in a public health organization. Include the challenges you faced, what strengths you used to implement change successfully, and what you learned to help you lead future transformative initiatives. (250 word maximum)

In the last three years I have been instrumental in developing and implementing the Fort Bend County Collaborative Information System (FBCCIS). FBCCIS is a data sharing program designed to track and identify the county's most vulnerable populations, track social services usage, and identify those populations needing additional services beyond social services. Initially the concept seemed simple; however, moving forward with the partnering nonprofits proved challenging due to the use of varying service-tracking software programs among the nonprofits, the need for changes in service protocols, client confidentiality concerns, and an underlying hesitancy to share data with a governmental institution. To overcome these challenges, I used my strengths in communication and collaboration to encourage a series of conversations between county leaders and the nonprofit leaders, helping all parties to remain solution-focused, such that the FBCCIS is now fully implemented. This experience taught me that the foundations of a successful initiative are to have open and clear communication among all stakeholders, to develop positive relationships with key leaders, to be persistent yet compromise when necessary and appropriate, and to patiently follow through with each step of implementation.

The Public Health Lead and Co-Lead should complete the response to Questions #3-#5.

3. The ELPH initiative is looking for public health leaders who want to go beyond creating a new program or process in their health department. For this initiative, you will be asked to develop and implement a 'transformative concept', which will establish a new, innovative role for local public health in today's changing health system environment. IN the space below, provide an initial description of this new role and the transformation necessary within your health department to achieve it. Explain why assuming this role is important to your health department and the population you serve, including how this will expand or strengthen your agency's influence locally and/ or nationally, and position your agency for future opportunities. Describe the factors and trends within your agency and community that warrant this new role and support the viability or feasibility of achieving this transformation. If selected, we will work with you to shape your 'transformative concept' and promote successful adoption of a new role for local public health in your community. (450 word maximum)

Note: More information about the definition of a "transformative concept" can be found in the Application Packet at <http://www.kresge.org/ELPH>.

The mission of the Fort Bend County Clinical Health Services (CHS) Department is to prevent, control, and eliminate communicable diseases among the residents of Fort Bend County. However, CHS leadership envisions building organizational capacity to go beyond simple service delivery and begin using new strategies to achieve health goals by advancing health equity among Fort Bend County residents. Strategies include professional development and learning experiences to assess and understand how individual biases impact health status, modifying recruitment and interviewing practices to hire staff with an understanding of health equity, and fostering relationships with organizations that serve communities affected by health inequities. CHS will add a new permanent position of a Health Equity Coordinator, conduct a Community

Health Assessment, prepare a Health Equity Report, access continuing education for the current staff in the CHS department, and engage in community listening sessions to inform our work.

Our transformational concept is for CHS to address the lack of equity among Fort Bend County residents in terms of access to health. Assuming this role is important to CHS because everyone should have the opportunity to attain their highest level of health. The conditions in which we live have a measurable impact on our health, including social, economic, and environmental factors that can either promote or inhibit healthy behaviors and outcomes. These factors are often unequally distributed across society, which put some people at greater risk of poor health than others. The unequal distributions of these conditions can be geographic, economic, or rooted in social and cultural beliefs, and are sometimes the result of public policies that favor some groups over others. Moving toward health equity requires focus on the unequal access to resources and opportunities in our community. It requires an examination of the systems that produce these inequities, and not just the health inequities themselves. As a community, Fort Bend County should aim to eliminate unfair and preventable differences in health wherever we can.

The work will focus on reducing the geographic, economic, and social barriers that often interfere with health equity, as well as examining and then addressing current public policies that may be limiting healthy outcomes for certain population groups.

Fort Bend County's rapid population growth and diversity in resident ethnicities and cultures warrant CHS becoming a leader in health equity. The diversity among CHS staff speaks to the feasibility of executing this transformation, as equity and opportunity among different demographics is a core value of CHS. As a leader in health equity, CHS will be positioned to educate and influence other large metropolitan areas, expanding the impact of the department's transformation far beyond Fort Bend County.

4. Briefly describe the roles and relationship of the two leaders in developing and leading your agency to assume the new, transformative role or model. (200 word maximum)

Mr. Bitendelo's background in nursing and public health, and Ms. Gonzales's background in social work complement one another to ensure positive health outcomes for Fort Bend County's most vulnerable populations. In the last three years, they have collaborated well on various projects to ensure the best outcomes for patients. In their role as administrators, they have been intentional about aligning the delivery of both clinical and social services to better serve clients.

In terms of leading Fort Bend County to assume the transformative role of leadership in health equity, Mr. Bitendelo and Ms. Gonzales will communicate regularly and specifically about building organizational capacity for increasing health equity. During the initial planning phase, each leader will work with their respective teams and with community stakeholders to identify barriers to health equity and then develop solutions that will transform the way health services are provided in Fort Bend County. It is our shared vision that this will be a sustainable

organizational change for maximum long-term positive impacts in Fort Bend County and beyond. We are prepared to participate in the valuable leadership development trainings, consulting, peer support, and other experiences available with this opportunity for transformation.

5. Briefly describe how your work could contribute to the field of public health by influencing other agencies. (200 word maximum)

This is the first time Fort Bend County will take the lead and bring together a broad cross-section of our community to talk about the connections between health and equity. County residents want and expect their government to involve the citizenry in addressing societal matters that affect their lives. By doing so, Fort Bend County will create an effective policy that promotes health and wellbeing throughout our community. To move forward, Fort Bend County must continue its commitment to building the capacity of ordinary people to advocate for a community that is fair and just. In partnership with the community we serve, the County must pursue policies that prevent and redress societal ills. Also, Fort Bend County will need to promote and use equity as a tool to assure that new programs and policies do not create short-term benefits at the expense of long-term inequities that reverberate through the community. In addition to bringing community members together for robust conversations, an encouraging outcome of the discussions is the recognition that inequities are avoidable. With sufficient political courage and will, Fort Bend County and other jurisdictions will create and implement policies that promise a greater measure of equity for all residents. The health impacts will be measured over time.