

Boston Eligible Metropolitan Area Ryan White Planning Council



Assessment of Administrative Mechanism

2017-2018

Prepared by:

Services, Priorities, and Evaluation Committee (SPEC) and

Planning Council Support

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Assessment of Administrative Mechanism

I. Background

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) requires that all Ryan White Part A Planning Councils conduct an annual assessment of the administrative mechanism (AAM) to evaluate how efficiently and rapidly grantees disburse funding to the areas of greatest need within the eligible metropolitan areas (EMA). The purpose of the survey is to evaluate the degree to which providers were satisfied with BPHC's administration of Ryan White Part A funding. The Boston EMA Ryan White Planning Council's role was to review the survey results and provide recommendations to BPHC in areas where improvements were necessary.

II. Methodology

Planning Council Support (PCS) staff distributed the survey online through Survey Monkey. On December 12, 2017, PCS staff emailed the survey link to all 32 Part A service providers. Providers were given a 3-week completion deadline. The survey included 20 multiple choice and open-ended questions that asked providers to evaluate the procurement, disbursement, and contract monitoring processes administered by BPHC during FY17. Thirty providers (94%) completed the survey. During the 2017-2018 term, the Services, Priorities, and Evaluation Committee (SPEC) analyzed the results and created specific recommendations for each section, as shown in this report (see Appendix A for survey results).

III. Summary of Findings:

The summary of findings is broken down by the following sections: A.) Introductory Questions B.) Procurement; C.) Disbursement of Funds; D.) Contract Monitoring; D.) Additional Questions. Questions 1, 2 and 3 from the survey serve as introductory questions and asked the following:

A. Introductory Questions

This section comprised of three questions. Question 1 asked for agency name which. The top three Boston EMA Part A service categories that were funded for in FY2017 were Medical Case Management (61.9%), Medical Transportation (38.1%) and Psychosocial Support-Peer Support (33.3%). Twenty-six agencies (61.9%) reported that they have responded to the AAM survey in the past two years. The reasons given for not responding to the AAM survey included not getting a notification or request, being new to their position and having no recollection of completing the survey.

B. Procurement

Section one consisted of five multiple choice questions and two open ended questions regarding BPHC’s procurement of services. Respondents were instructed to complete section one if they submitted a proposal for Part A funding in the last two years. Twenty-four respondents completed questions 6, 7 and 8 from section one. Twenty-five respondents completed question 5 and 26 respondents completed question 4.

Multiple Choice Questions:

Results	
4.	65.3% of respondents learned about the RFP through an email announcement and 31% learned about it through agency contact.
5.	96% reported that BPHC provided bidders with information on applying for funding.
6.	96% reported BPHC conducts an open and competitive procurement process, with standardized procedures and requirements for funding.
7.	92% reported the RFP clearly described the criteria and procedures for reviewing proposals.
8.	100% reported that the RFP clearly stated expected policies and procedures 96% reported the RFP clearly stated standards of care and expected performance measures. 100% reported that the RFP clearly stated program and reporting requirements

Open-ended responses:

9. All 22 respondents who completed section one stated that enough time was allotted to the RFP process. The comments were summarized and grouped into themes in the chart below:

Themes (# of respondents)	Summary of Responses
Sufficient time allotted (22 respondents)	Sufficient time was allotted.

10. Seventeen respondents provided feedback about improving the procurement process; the comments were summarized and grouped into themes in the chart below:

Themes (# of respondents)	Summary of Responses
Switch to electronic submission (2 respondents)	BPHC needs to create a system in order to submit RFP's via the web.
Application process (2 respondents)	Simplify the application process.
Clarity (3 respondents)	Be more specific about timelines and expectations.

Communication (2 respondents)	Quicker responses to questions and providing feedback prior to the deadline would be helpful for agencies.
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C. Disbursement of Funds

Section two consisted of two multiple choice questions and one open ended question regarding BPHC’s disbursement of funds. Thirty-nine respondents completed question 11, 38 respondents completed question 12 and 21 respondents completed question 13 from section two.

Multiple Choice Questions:

	Result
11.	86% reported that BPHC provides a clear scope of service for each contract.
12.	13% reported it takes BPHC between 7-15 days to reimburse their agency for services, after an invoice is submitted. 61% reported it takes BPHC between 16-30 days to reimburse their agency for services, after an invoice is submitted. 26% reported that it takes BPHC over 30 days to reimburse their agency for services, after an invoice is submitted.

Open-ended responses:

13. Twenty-one respondents provided comments about the distribution process:

Theme (# of respondents)	Summary of Responses
No improvements needed (4 respondents)	No comments.
Clarity (2 respondents)	Clarity required. Unclear about the entire disbursement process.
Communication (2 respondents)	Keep agencies informed regarding the status of disbursement. Clear communication to agencies.
Expedite the process (6 respondents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expedite contract executing process • Receive PO’s earlier in the contract year • Faster disbursement of funds

D. Contract Monitoring

Section three consisted of four multiple choice questions and one open ended question regarding BPHC’s contract monitoring process including site visits, monthly calls, and reporting requirements. Forty respondents completed section three:

Multiple Choice Questions:

Results	
14.	93% reported BPHC provided written instructions on what documentation would need to be available during the site visit.
15.	83% reported BPHC's feedback was helpful at or following the site visit.
16.	70% reported BPHC's ability to provide timely technical assistance was between average to excellent.
17.	68% reported BPHC's ability to provide complete technical assistance was between average to excellent.

Open-ended responses:

18. A total of 18 respondents provided feedback on how to improve the contract monitoring process:

Themes (# of respondents)	Summary of Responses
No Improvements Needed (6 respondents)	The monitoring process is working well and did not need improvements.
Communication (1 respondent)	Improve communication between contract staff and monitoring staff.
Site Visits (4 respondents)	Communicate results of the site visits with agencies. Offer several dates for site visits. Agencies could use more advance notice when scheduling the site visit.
Assistance (1 respondent)	Have a TA session with program supervisors specifically delineating how files are checked and what exactly is being reviewed.

E. Additional Questions

Section four consisted of one multiple choice and one open ended question regarding providers' overall level of satisfaction with BPHC. Forty respondents completed section four:

Multiple Choice Questions:

Results

19. 68% were between very satisfied and completely satisfied with BPHC’s administration of Ryan White Part A funds.
20% were satisfied with BPHC’s administration of Ryan White Part A funds.
10% were slightly satisfied with BPHC’s administration of Ryan White Part A funds.
2% were not at all satisfied with BPHC’s administration of Ryan white Part A funds.

Open-ended responses:

20. Fourteen respondents provided additional information about the administrative mechanism for the Boston EMA.

Themes (# of respondents)	Summary of Responses
No Improvements Needed (3 respondents)	BPHC does a good job administering the funding.
BPHC’s rules	It is hard to distinguish between what are BPHC’s rules and what are those from HRSA.
Communication	Avoid creating a feeling of us vs. them when communicating.

IV. Recommendations:

The Planning Council made the following recommendations and will ask BPHC to improve their administrative process within the following areas:

Procurement:

1. BPHC create a system in order to submit RFP's via the web.

Distribution of funds:

1. Standardize no more than 30 days to respond, complete, and execute a budget revision.
2. Send scope of services no more than 30 days from the start of a contract.
3. Reimburse for a portion of invoices that are correct and resubmit for incorrect in order to expedite payment.

Contract monitoring:

1. During the agency monitoring site visit, maintain the highest level of transparency possible, allow agencies to be a collaborate part of the process, and communicate preliminary results by the end of the site visit, with the goal of no surprises.
2. Fiscal and agency monitoring team conduct site visits together.
3. Have regular communication with agencies regarding expectations of agency and site visit agenda items prior to the site visit. Make it a discussion agenda item on monthly calls.
4. New contracts or newly contracted agencies receive a site visit at the beginning of the FY (beginning of implementation).

Additional Recommendations for BPHC:

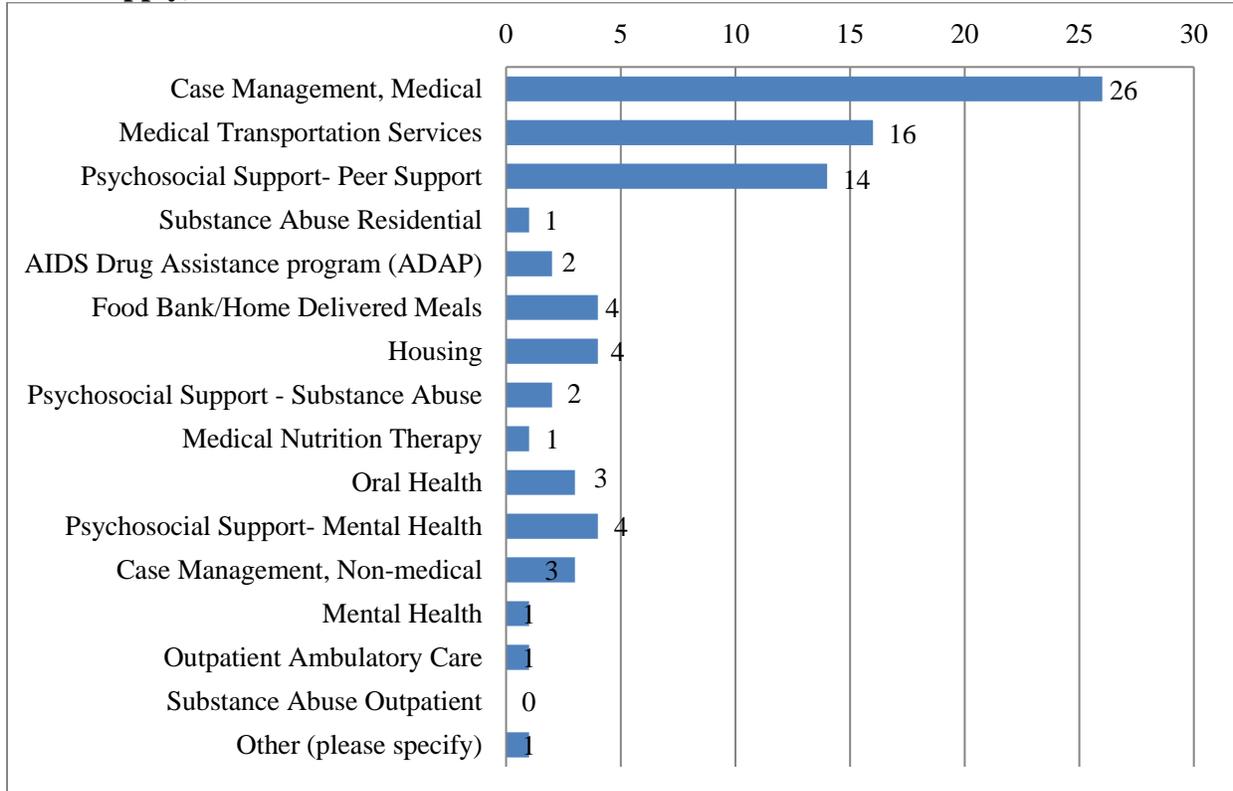
1. Recommend that BPHC reconcile discrepancies if any that exist between the monitoring team and the program coordinator who actually knows the agency.

Appendix: Survey Results

Introduction

Q1: What is your agency name? _____

Q2: Which Boston EMA Part A service categories were you funded for in FY 2017? (Check all that apply) Answered: 42



Q3: Did you respond to the AAM survey in the past two years? If not, why? Answered: 42

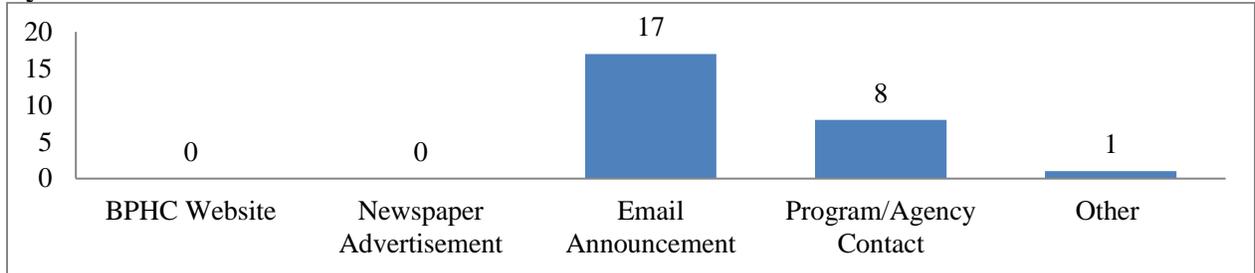
Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	26 (61.9%)
No	16 (38.1%)

Sixteen respondents answered to the second part of the question as to why they did not submit the AAM survey in the past two years. The results include:

Themes (# of respondents)	Summary of Responses
No notification (5 respondents)	Did not receive the survey
No recollection (6 respondents)	Do not recall receiving a survey
Not in charge (5 respondents)	It was not their responsibility

Section 1: Procurement

Q4: How did your agency learn that the last Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) Ryan White Part A RFP was available? Answered: 26



Q5: Please select the response that best reflects your thoughts on the following statements: BPHC provides bidders with adequate information on applying for funding. Answered: 25

Answer Choice	Count
Strongly Agree	14 (56%)
Agree	40 (10%)
Neutral	1 (4%)
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0
Additional comments or feedback	0

Q6: BPHC conducts an open and competitive procurement process, with standardized procedures and requirements for funding. Answered: 24

Answer Choice	Count
Strongly Agree	15 (62.5%)
Agree	8 (33.3%)
Neutral	0
Disagree	1 (4.2%)
Strongly Disagree	0
Additional comments or feedback	1

Themes (# of respondents)	Summary of Responses
Boston centered (1 respondent)	Seems very Boston centered.

Q7: The RFP clearly described the criteria and procedures for reviewing proposals.

Answered: 24

Answer Choice	
Strongly Agree	12 (50%)
Agree	10 (42%)
Neutral	1 (4%)
Disagree	1 (4%)
Strongly Disagree	0
Additional comments or feedback	1

Themes (# of respondents)	Summary of Responses
Vague review process (1 respondent)	The review process is vaguely stated. Are the independent contractors from a firm or are they individuals gathered from the community? Do they include clients? If so, why isn't that clearly described?

Q8: The RFP clearly stated expectations, including Federal HRSA/HAB policies and procedures, standards of care that must be met, expected performance measures, and program and reporting requirements. Answered: 24

	Policies and Procedures	Standards of Care	Expected Performance Measures	Program and Reporting Requirements
Yes	24 (100%)	23 (96%)	23 (96%)	24 (100%)
No	0	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	0

Q9: Was sufficient time allotted to the RFP process? If not, please explain. Answered: 22

Themes (# of respondents)	Summary of Responses
No Improvements Needed (22 respondents)	Yes enough time was allotted.

Q10: What three suggestions would you offer to improve the RFP document and process?

Answered: 17, No comments: 3 respondents

Themes (# of respondents)	Summary of Responses
Switch to electronic submission (2 respondents)	BPHC needs to create a system in order to submit RFP's via the web.
Application process (2 respondents)	Simplify the application process.
Clarity (3 respondents)	Be more specific about timelines and expectations.
Communication (2 respondents)	Quicker responses to questions and providing feedback prior to the deadline would be helpful for agencies.

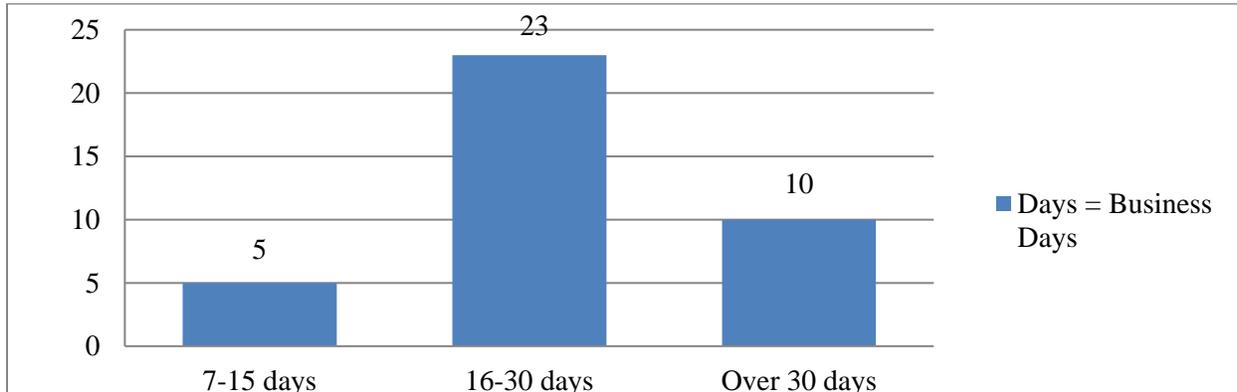
Section 2: Distribution of Funds

Q11: BPHC provides a clear scope of service for each contract. Answered: 32

Answer Choice	
Strongly Agree	14 (36%)
Agree	20 (51%)
Neutral	4 (10%)
Disagree	1 (3%)
Strongly Disagree	0
Additional comments or feedback	5

Themes (# of respondents)	Summary of Responses
Timeliness (5 respondents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Need longer time for contracts to be signed and executed. -Scope of Services should be approved and sent out to providers beforehand as well as discussed more in training and on monthly calls. -Providers need to be made aware of any changes to scope of services in terms of documentation in order to avoid being penalized.

Q12: What is the average turnaround time for BPHC to reimburse your agency once a complete invoice is submitted? Answered: 38



If over 30 days, please provide a brief explanation as to why: 14 respondents

Themes (# of respondents)	Summary of Responses
Timeliness (7 respondents)	Invoices need to be processed faster by BPHC in order for agencies to be reimbursed on time.
Communication (3 respondents)	BPHC needs to communicate accordingly when agencies have multiple invoices that are due. Any delay in reimbursement or when to expect payment needs to be communicated.

Q13: What three suggestions would you offer to improve the disbursement process?

Answered: 21 respondents

Theme (# of respondents)	Summary of Responses
No improvements needed (4 respondents)	No comments.
Clarity (2 respondents)	Clarity required. Unclear about the entire disbursement process.
Communication (2 respondents)	Keep agencies informed regarding the status of disbursement. Clear communication to agencies.
Expedite the process (6 respondents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expedite contract executing process • Receive PO's earlier in the contract year • Faster disbursement of funds

Section 3: Contract Monitoring

Q14: BPHC provides written instructions that advise the provider what documentation will need to be available at the site visit. Answered: 31

Answer Choice	
Strongly Agree	19 (48%)
Agree	18 (45%)
Neutral	3 (8%)
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0
Additional comments or feedback	4

Themes (# of respondents)	Summary of Responses
Availability (1 respondent)	Contract manager should be available during the site visit to clarify instructions given through the contract period.
Duplicate documents (1 respondent)	A lot of time is spent on pulling and copying documents that agencies may already have.

Q15: The feedback provided by BPHC at or following the site visit was helpful?

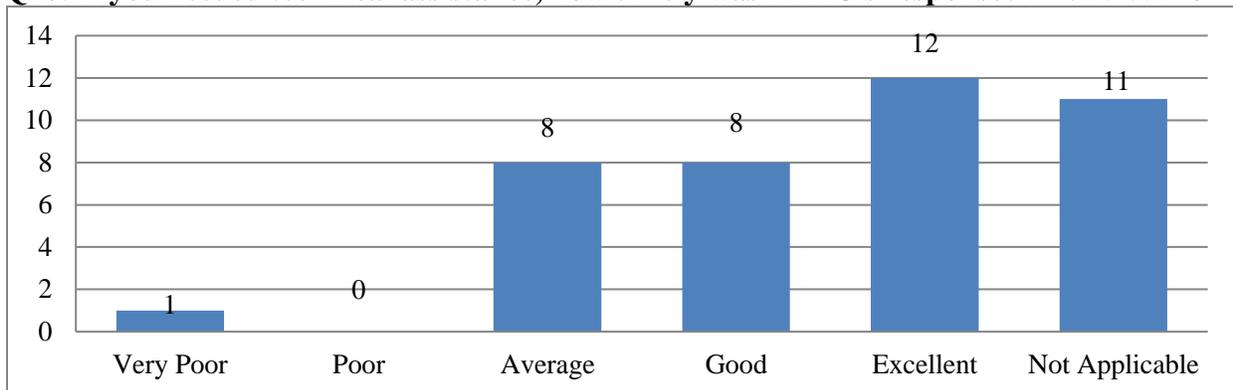
Answered: 40

Answer Choice	
Strongly agree	13 (33%)
Agree	20 (50%)
Neutral	5 (13%)
Disagree	1 (3%)
Strongly disagree	1 (3%)

Additional comments or feedback	5
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Themes (# of respondents)	Summary of Responses
Clarity (2 respondents)	Even with the information provided ahead of the visit there is often confusion about whether the method used for collecting information is considered appropriate on the date of the site visit. The debriefing session doesn't usually align with the follow-up letter and the written feedback.

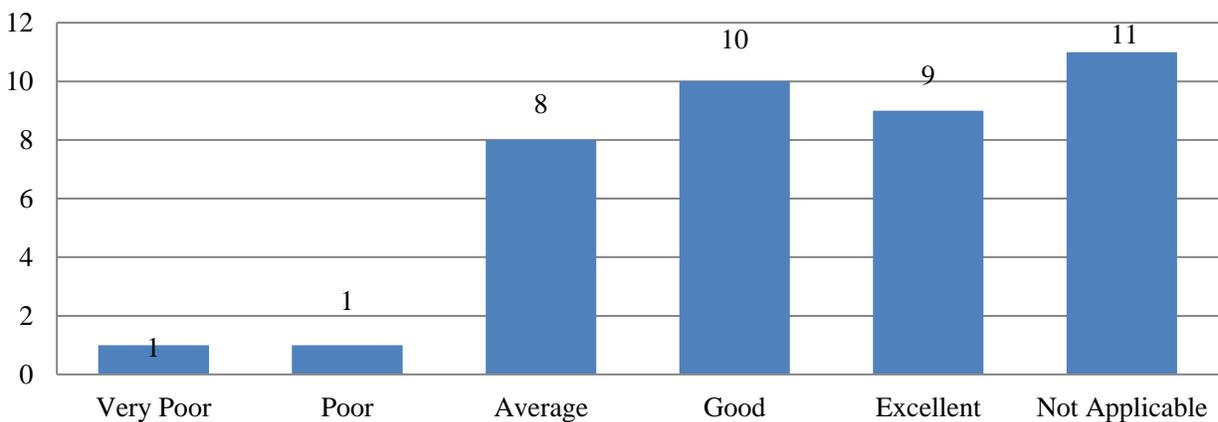
Q16: If you needed technical assistance, how timely was BPHC's response? Answered: 40



Additional comments or feedback: 6 respondents

Themes (# of respondents)	Summary of Responses
No improvements needed (4 respondents)	We had a recent staff turnover and BPHC was very responsive to our need for training. Anissa has been great at addressing training topics.
Resolution (2 respondents)	Limited response for resolutions.

Q17: If you needed technical assistance, how complete was BPHC's response? Answered: 40



Additional comments or feedback: 4 respondents

Themes (# of respondents)	Summary of Responses
Resolution (4 respondents)	The response is poor and not accurate or effective. In some instances agencies are still awaiting resolution of issues.

Q18: What three suggestions would you offer to improve the monitoring process?

Answered: 18

Themes (# of respondents)	Summary of Responses
No Improvements Needed (6 respondents)	The monitoring process is working well and did not need improvements.
Communication (1 respondent)	Improve communication between contract staff and monitoring staff.
Site Visits (4 respondents)	Communicate results of the site visits with agencies. Offer several dates for site visits. Agencies could use more advance notice when scheduling the site visit.
Assistance (1 respondent)	Have a TA session with program supervisors specifically delineating how files are checked and what exactly is being reviewed.

Section 4: Additional Questions

Q19: Overall, how satisfied are you with BPHC's administration of Ryan White Part A funds? Answered: 40

Not At All Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Completely Satisfied
1(3%)	4 (10%)	8 (20%)	15 (38%)	12 (30%)

Q20: Is there anything else that may be helpful in assessing the administrative mechanism in place for the Boston EMA? Answered: 14

Themes (# of respondents)	Summary of Responses
No Improvements Needed (3 respondents)	BPHC does a good job administering the funding.
BPHC's rules	It is hard to distinguish between what are BPHC's rules and what are those from HRSA.
Communication	Avoid creating a feeling of us vs. them when communicating.