Performance Standards FAQ

**Baseline Standards**

1. Will all municipalities be required to ‘regionalize’ or participate in a [shared services arrangement (SSA)](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/shared-services)?

While DPH recognizes that sharing resources is the most efficient and cost-effective way to achieve the Performance Standards, there is no requirement to participate in the Public Health Excellence Grant program.

1. What standards were reported as obsolete/outdated?
   * Environmental Health
     + [M.G.L. c. 94, s.33\*](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXV/Chapter94/Section33) Appoint an inspector of milk in cities
     + [M.G.L. c. 94, s. 40-42\*](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXV/Chapter94/Section40) Permit anyone who wishes to sell milk in cities or towns where an inspector of milk is appointed
     + [M.G.L.c.94,s.89\*](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXV/Chapter94/Section89) Issue a license for the breaking and canning of eggs in communities with over 5,000 residents
   * Disease Control and Protection
     + [M.G.L. c. 111, s. 29\*](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXVI/Chapter111/Section29__;!!CPANwP4y!VkWu7O2PdXdZ6JQ6MPhQznbraS37njj85H-qbu-f5UTxm9rpgxvop4rAnobLHd65h3zGVwV5hVjW5-7yoB1KPNBTfbigIi8$) Provide reports of death from dangerous diseases to the Department of Public Health
     + [M.G.L. c. 111, s. 111A\*](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXVI/Chapter111/Section111A__;!!CPANwP4y!VkWu7O2PdXdZ6JQ6MPhQznbraS37njj85H-qbu-f5UTxm9rpgxvop4rAnobLHd65h3zGVwV5hVjW5-7yoB1KPNBTv4maXeI$) Annually submit cases of cerebral palsy to the Department of Public Health
     + [M.G.L. c. 111, s.109\*](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXVI/Chapter111/Section109__;!!CPANwP4y!VkWu7O2PdXdZ6JQ6MPhQznbraS37njj85H-qbu-f5UTxm9rpgxvop4rAnobLHd65h3zGVwV5hVjW5-7yoB1KPNBT2BgO4w4$) Supervise or carry out the disinfection of dwellings which have housed a person who has suffered from or died of a disease dangerous to the public health
     + [M.G.L. c. 111, s.110\*](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXVI/Chapter111/Section110__;!!CPANwP4y!VkWu7O2PdXdZ6JQ6MPhQznbraS37njj85H-qbu-f5UTxm9rpgxvop4rAnobLHd65h3zGVwV5hVjW5-7yoB1KPNBTVDKxqUs$) Receive reports of any inflammation, swelling, redness, or unnatural discharge from the eyes of an infant less than two weeks old, and take immediate action to prevent blindness
   * These standards were reported as obsolete but still fall under the Massachusetts General Laws and are within the Performance Standards.

**Workforce Credentials**

1. Please explain the process if local public health staff do not meet the qualifications for their currently held position?

* The Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Office of Local and Regional Health (OLRH) realizes that the Workforce Standards, set forth by the [Special Commission for Public Health Excellence](https://www.mass.gov/orgs/special-commission-on-local-and-regional-public-health) will take time for local public health to meet. Individual circumstances may vary, and not every local public health staff will be able to fully meet the Workforce Standards, at least not right away. For example, some local public health staff may be nearing retirement age and unable to meet educational attainment of the positions. Our goal is to support existing local public health workforce to eventually be able to meet these standards over time. We are establishing a Workforce Waiver Review Committee in the Spring 2024, which will be comprised of both local public health representatives and OLRH management.

Outlined below are some options for a person who does not meet the workforce standards at this point:

* + Discuss with your supervisor and develop a plan to meet the workforce standards over time. OLRH staff is ready to support you to develop such plan, including designating a third-party subject matter expert to guide you through the process.
  + Recruit new hires for backfill position with your preferred candidate, who is willing and able to achieve the standards within a specific timeframe.
  + Apply for a [workforce standards waiver](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/workforce-development-standards-waiver-request).

1. Is a Registered Sanitarian credential required for management at hire or after hire (within a year)? Registered Sanitarian credential is listed in both “Required at Hire” and “Required after Hire”.
2. For management and management/agent positions, a Registered Sanitarian or equivalent credential is not required at hire. Management or management/agent is required at hire to be Registered Sanitarian or equivalent ***eligible***. It is expected that this credential be obtained after hire (within 1 year for management and within 18 months for management/agent). What is the waiver process for existing experienced staff?
   * The Workforce Standards Waiver Request and more information on circumstances may be accessed here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/workforce-development-standards-waiver-request>
   * OLRH is here to support local public health. We want to ensure an adequately trained and educated workforce, without penalizing existing well-trained staff who may have many years of local public health professional experience.
   * Individual circumstances vary. An individual waiver may be requested for local public staff who do not currently meet the workforce standards. An approved waiver is valid only for the individual person holding the position for which the waiver is requested. The expiration date of the waiver will be determined based on a reasonable timeframe for the individual to meet the standards.
3. Are all ‘after hire’ items listed in the workforce standards required?
   * Yes, all items listed after hire are required for all local public health unless you are submitting a workforce waiver request.
4. Are all staff members of Boards and Departments of Public Health required to take new online trainings?
   * There have been updates to the workforce training process, including transitioning the LPHI platform to TRAIN Massachusetts, deployment of the 10 Field Training Hubs across Massachusetts, and other new developments. If the training is listed as required and available, and you have a board of health member or staff member who has not taken it, the expectation is to complete that training.
5. Is Registered Sanitarian required if an inspector has experience and other certifications?
   * Yes. A [workforce standards waiver](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/workforce-development-standards-waiver-request) may be requested if the inspector is currently not eligible to take the RS exam.
6. Will there be options for remote learning for rural and remote jurisdictions to participate in credentialing trainings?
   * Yes.
7. Should training like ServSafe and CPO be maintained once one has obtained RS/CHO?
   * Yes.

**Data/Dashboard**

1. How is budget information calculated on the [dashboard](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/capacity-assessment-interactive-data-dashboard)?
   * The timeframe for the SSA budget and grant data on the dashboard is FY23 (July 2022-June 2023). This is inclusive of PHE funding as well as any other grants that the municipalities within the SSA facilitate and act as the lead agent for. All budget information was self-reported.
2. Are staffing numbers on the Dashboard adjusted for population or number of jurisdictions in an SSA?
   * The dashboard staffing FTE are not adjusted.
3. The information listed in the Tableau dashboard is incorrect. How can I submit a correction or update?
   * The data on the dashboard reflect Fall 2022 information. A Data Correction Request form can be accessed on the dashboard page [here](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/capacity-assessment-interactive-data-dashboard#data-correction-request-).
4. How often will tableau dashboard be updated with new BCA submissions or corrected information?
   * The Tableau dashboard will be updated three times a year:
     1. January 31
     2. May 31
     3. September 30

**Capacity Assessment**

1. We had a new municipality join our SSA, how can they complete a Baseline Capacity Assessment?
   * A Baseline Capacity Assessment can be requested by reaching out to your OLRH program coordinator or aimee.petrosky@mass.gov.
2. Is there a self-assessment that Boards of Health can complete to self-assess our capacity to meet the Performance Standards?
   * OLRH is in the process of developing a self-assessment. This assessment is completely voluntary and available for all communities. It can be used to track progress, check status, or start conversations with municipal leadership. We anticipate the release of this self-assessment tool in March 2024.

**Logistics**

1. How would OLRH improve communication with LPH?
   * The Office of Local and Regional health is continually seeking ways to improve our outreach and communication with LPH and partners. Some actions that have already been taken is the development of an engagement and policy unit to ensure an evolving and responsive partnership with local public health. We’ve updated the OLRH website, provide a new and improved weekly newsletter, offer regular meetings, and provide the availability of technical assistance in a variety of topics. If there are ideas for additional ways we can improve communications, please contact our office.
2. Will standardized inspection reports be provided?
   * There are existing standardized reports issued by DPH for a variety of inspection types. OLRH is in the process of developing a document hub with examples of best practice documents identified during the capacity assessment for a variety of standards.
3. Is there funding and support available for non-PHE communities?
   * Municipalities that elect not to participate in the PHE grant program can receive technical assistance in some areas. In addition, all OLRH-funded training programs, including TRAIN Massachusetts online modules, intensive training courses such as MA PHIT Housing and Food courses, as well as the Field Training Hubs are open to non-PHE communities.
   * Technical assistance can be requested by contacting [kaitlin.roane@mass.gov](mailto:kaitlin.roane@mass.gov). If you would like to learn more about joining a [shared services arrangement](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/shared-services), please contact [diana.c.acosta@mass.gov](mailto:diana.c.acosta@mass.gov).