Grant Monitoring Guide
STATEWIDE HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIP (SHIP)
Grant Monitoring Guide

Minnesota Department of Health
Office of Statewide Health Improvement Initiatives
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Updated November 2019

Upon request, this material will be made available in an alternative format such as large print, Braille or audio recording. Printed on recycled paper.
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Definitions

The following terms and definitions are provided to help clarify their use in this document.

**Reach:** Reach is the extent to which a program impacts its intended audience and refers to the estimated number of unique individuals or sites (schools, businesses, etc.) potentially impacted by SHIP strategies. This count is an estimate rather than a headcount. The count never exceeds a community census figure.

**Settings:** The type of place or organization in which the initiatives or strategies are implemented. Setting examples include: School, Worksite, Community, Health Care, and Child Care.

**Strategy:** The strategy selected by the grantee from the SHIP menu of strategies (pg. 19 of RFP) that seeks to improve health outcomes through increased physical activity, healthier eating, and decreased use and exposure to commercial tobacco products.

**Approach/Activity:** Used to implement a particular strategy. For example, Farm to School is an approach within Healthy School Food/Healthy Eating Environment strategy.

**Partner Site:** A location where SHIP strategies are implemented. The location has engaged staff implementing the strategies and activities (or has intent to implement) and is working to impact the intended audience. Partner sites receive support or resources from SHIP grantees to implement SHIP strategies. For example, Cub Foods or City of Duluth could be considered partner sites. If a local bank has three branches that are participating in SHIP, each branch would be considered an individual partner site. All partner sites will have Intake and Reach data collected on their efforts.

**SHIP Grantee:** The LPH fiscal agent that receives SHIP funding from MDH.

**Collaborative Partner:** A contractor or unpaid partner that works collaboratively with grantees and partner sites on the design and implementation of SHIP strategies. Collaborative partners are distinct from partner sites. Intake and Reach data are not collected on collaborative partners.
MDH Staff Roles

Community Specialist Role

Community Specialists serve as grant managers, and are the primary contact for grantees seeking information or assistance from MDH. Community Specialists often facilitate communication between grantees, content staff, and TA providers. Many staff at MDH focus on a specific content area. CSs are the only staff at MDH to focus on the “big picture” of grantees’ overall SHIP work. Community Specialists will be responsible for reviewing and documenting grantees’ implementation of SHIP efforts according to their project application, grant agreement, and program requirements. In addition, CSs will conduct financial monitoring on the spending of SHIP funds. This is accomplished through the review of quarterly reports, on-site review of the project, and fiscal records to ensure the scope of work as outlined in the respective SHIP grant applications is being fulfilled and funds are expended and accounted for properly. In short, Community Specialists are responsible for grant management and monitoring for their grantees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contact Information</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Grantees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meredith Ahlgren, MA</td>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>Bloomington, Edina, Richfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead Community Specialist</td>
<td></td>
<td>Carver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>651-201-5446</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dakota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:meredith.ahlgren@state.mn.us">meredith.ahlgren@state.mn.us</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hennepin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelsea Tufts, MPH, RD, LD</td>
<td>Northwest &amp; Central</td>
<td>Polk-Norman-Mahnomen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>651-356-2190</td>
<td></td>
<td>Quin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:chelsea.tufts@state.mn.us">chelsea.tufts@state.mn.us</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sherburne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice Englin, BA</td>
<td>Southeast &amp; South Central</td>
<td>Freeborn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>507-508-0988</td>
<td></td>
<td>Goodhue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:alice.englin@state.mn.us">alice.englin@state.mn.us</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Taylor, MA</td>
<td>Northeast &amp; Southwest</td>
<td>Olmsted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>651-201-5095</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rice County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:daniel.taylor@state.mn.us">daniel.taylor@state.mn.us</a></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wabasha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Winona</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communication between MDH and Grantees

Grantees should rely on their CS as their primary contact for SHIP at MDH. Grantees may call or email CS staff with any SHIP related questions and CSs will triage questions to find an answer for grantees. While Community Specialists may not have all of the answers, they can coordinate communication within MDH to obtain answers or refer grantees to the appropriate staff. Grantees may already have relationships with other MDH OSHII staff who they contact directly with questions. This is acceptable, but please copy your Community Specialist on emails to other MDH staff so that your CS is kept in the loop.

Please note that Community Specialists have five business days to respond to grantee questions and requests. These requests may not be answered in one response and may require some time, investigation and collaboration internally at MDH to provide the best and most appropriate solution.

MDH will communicate crucial SHIP information to grantees through three avenues: direct emails to grantees from CS staff, emails from health.makingitbetter@state.mn.us, and the Making it Better Log (the Log). Grantees are required to read communications from their CS and the Log carefully and are responsible for information (deadlines, etc.) shared in the Log. Basecamp is intended to be a peer-to-peer forum and a secondary source of information for grantees.
Grant Monitoring

Objectives

Grant monitoring is the systematic and routine collection of information from grantees about their projects and programs. For the purposes of SHIP, grant monitoring seeks to accomplish six main goals:

- To provide grantee-specific updates for the SHIP Legislative Report
- To learn from experiences and improve practices and activities in the future
- To have internal and external accountability of the resources used and the results obtained
- To make informed decisions on the future of SHIP
- To promote empowerment of SHIP grantees and their stakeholders
- To help grantees identify when and where technical assistance or training is needed based on information communicated through the grants management process

Furthermore, monitoring allows results, process, and experiences to be documented and used as a basis to steer decision-making and learning opportunities. Monitoring is checking progress against plans and the data acquired through monitoring can be used to inform evaluation.

Grant Monitoring Process

SHIP grant monitoring will have six main components:

- Site visits
- Bi-Monthly contact
- Invoices and expenditure review
- Budget and work plan changes
- Quarterly and annual reports
- Contract review

Site Visits

Community Specialists complete site visits to understand better grantees’ work and to meet requirements from the Office of Grants Management.

Site visits will occur once per year for each grantee. Additional site visits will occur if the Content Staff, TA Providers, Community Specialists, or OSHII Leadership determine it necessary for grantees to address specific barriers.

Site visits will be scheduled at a time that is mutually convenient for the grantee and their respective CS. Community Specialists will work to schedule site visits in conjunction with Regional Trainings and/or Content Staff site visits to eliminate duplicative visits.
What to Expect From a Site Visit

A Site Visit Agenda draft will be sent to grantees once the site visit is scheduled. Agenda creation for the site visit is a team effort and therefore one half will be determined by the CS and the other half by the grantee. Grantees may wish to show the CS what they are working on in their community and introduce them to staff, community partners, or contractors. CS staff will explicitly discuss the following:

- Status of SHIP efforts and updates on work plan progress
- Financials
- Required Office of Grants Management form to be completed by MDH
- Community engagement, health equity, and partnership building progress
- TA/Training received
- Grantee questions

Bi-Monthly Contact

Starting November 2016, grantees will complete a required bi-monthly (every other month) contact with their Community Specialist and content staff. CS staff will be more aware of grantees’ activities, and grantees will have reduced reporting requirements. Bi-monthly contacts are designed to recognize grantee accomplishments, identify risk factors and barriers to success, assess benchmarks, and gather information that can be used to supplement areas of the quarterly/annual reports.

Grantees will have a set schedule with their CS for bi-monthly contact. See grid below for the topic schedule.

Bi-Monthly Contact Form

Grantees must submit their completed Bi-Monthly Contact Form with the appropriate assigned strategy sections to their CS one week prior to their scheduled bi-monthly call time.

Bi-Monthly Contact will include the following components:

1. Finances
   A. Brief discussion of financials (to be completed by the CS)
   B. Confirm invoices submitted to date
   C. Discuss any questions regarding invoices and spending
   D. Discuss spending and the total percent of SHIP grant funds spent to date

2. A detailed update from the grantee in approximately three assigned content areas. Grantees may report on more than three assigned content areas if they wish. Community Specialists and Content Staff will review the monthly contact form and grantee work plans to guide the conversation and ask questions. Grantees should report on health equity and community engagement efforts when applicable to work in a specific strategy.

3. General successes/barriers (troubleshooting, TA suggestions, and follow up, etc.)

4. Evaluation questions or concerns
5 Occasional high-level discussion of “big picture” SHIP strategy and work, community engagement, CLT activity, and health equity work

6 Grantees may be asked to submit work plan updates after monthly call discussions, as well as updated staff contact lists and mini-grant/subcontract lists.

**Bi-Monthly Contact Setting & Behavior Assignment Table**

Please see the table on page 13 to determine which content areas to report on each time.

**Bi-Monthly Contact**

Community Specialists will ask grantees for detailed updates on approximately three content areas each month, ensuring that all content areas and strategies are discussed biannually. This process is *not* intended to limit discussion, but to ensure discussions are comprehensive across SHIP strategies. Grantees may add additional strategy areas for discussion as needed.
Invoices

Grantees should send invoices to: Health.SHIP-Invoices@state.mn.us.

The subject line should read: (grantee name)-(month)-Invoice

Invoices must be sent within 45 days from the end of the month, as outlined in their contract. Once the invoice is received, the Community Specialist has five business days to review the invoice, electronically sign it, and submit to MDH for processing. Likewise, grantees are expected to respond, within five business days, to any requests for additional information from CS staff regarding invoices. Grantees who do not respond promptly risk a delay in the processing of their invoice and payment.

Budget and Work Plan Changes

MDH recognizes that work plans will evolve and change during the grant period. It is expected that grantees will continually update their work plans and budget to reflect their most current work.

Grantees must submit work plan changes to their CS for prior approval before implementing any changes that may impact the overall direction, scale, or intended outcomes of their work. Budgetary items and changes need approval as outlined in the Financial Guide. CS staff will respond to budget and work plan related requests within five business days, but due to the need to consult with Content Staff more time may be required to provide approval or denial. The CS will keep the grantee updated on the review process and if possible, provide an estimated timeframe for a response.

Contracts, Mini-Grant and Equipment Purchase Review

Grantees should submit all contracts, mini-grants and equipment purchases in excess of $3,000 with a Contract Coversheet (found in the appendix of the Financial Guide) to their CS for prior approval. Further detail about contract review can be found in the Financial Guide and in the Contract Coversheet and Grantee Contract Guidance document. CS staff will strive to review contracts within five business days, but due to the need to consult with Content Staff more time may be required to provide approval or denial. Failure to obtain prior approval before a contract begins may result in MDH refusal to pay for the contract.

Contracts under $3,000 do not require MDH approval; however, grantees should send a list of all contracts to their Community Specialist with their quarterly report.

Quarterly and Annual Reporting

Grantees are required to submit reports to MDH as outlined in their grant contract. MDH may revise the reporting format to enhance utility and decrease reporting burden. MDH will provide reporting form templates to grantees at least 30 days in advance of the report due date. Grantees are encouraged to provide feedback on this process, particularly if they feel that some aspect of their SHIP work is not being captured by either monthly contact, a site visit, or reporting.
Reporting for Grantees

A quarterly report is required to assist the MDH SHIP management team in monitoring the progress of grantees. Quarterly reports are intended to capture key SHIP benchmarks, provide grantees an opportunity to showcase their accomplishments, identify barriers to success, and assist in gathering data to inform the SHIP outcome evaluation. Some questions will require grantees to gather information directly from the sites working on the SHIP strategies.

CS staff will send grantees an email reminder one week before quarterly reports are due.
## Reporting Schedule for Grantees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Reporting Period</th>
<th>Report Due</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y4</td>
<td>February 1, 2019 – April 30, 2019</td>
<td>New Success Story Quarterly Report</td>
<td>May 31, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y4</td>
<td>May 1, 2019 – July 31, 2019</td>
<td>Quarterly Report</td>
<td>August 31, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y4</td>
<td>August 1, 2019 – October 31, 2019</td>
<td>New Success Story Y4 Annual Report</td>
<td>November 30, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y5</td>
<td>February 1, 2020 – April 30, 2020</td>
<td>Modified Quarterly Report</td>
<td>May 31, 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y5</td>
<td>May 1, 2020 – July 31, 2020</td>
<td>SHIP Application due</td>
<td>August 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y5</td>
<td>August 1, 2020 – October 31, 2020</td>
<td>New Success Story Y5 Annual Report</td>
<td>November 30, 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Components of Quarterly Reports:
- Success story (May & Nov.)
- Updated work plans with comments explaining changes
- Updated budget
- Staff contact list
- Mini-Grant/Sub-Contract list

### Additional components to be included in the Annual Report:
- Key accomplishments in each strategy area
- Sustainability planning
- Leveraged funds tracking
- Additional sections as determined by MDH
## Monthly Contact Strategy Group Assignment Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Chelsea</th>
<th>Meredith</th>
<th>Alice</th>
<th>Dan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov-19</td>
<td>Childcare, Healthcare, Tobacco, Workplace</td>
<td>Childcare, Healthcare, Tobacco, Workplace</td>
<td>No form due</td>
<td>No form due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec-19</td>
<td>No form due</td>
<td>No form due</td>
<td>Active Living, Evaluation, Schools</td>
<td>Active Living, Evaluation, Schools</td>
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<td>Jan-20</td>
<td>Communications, Community Engagement, Healthy Eating</td>
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<td>No form due</td>
<td>No form due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb-20</td>
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<td>No form due</td>
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<td>Childcare, Healthcare, Tobacco, Workplace</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar-20</td>
<td>Active Living, Evaluation, Schools</td>
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<td>Apr-20</td>
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<td>May-20</td>
<td>Childcare, Healthcare, Tobacco, Workplace</td>
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<td>Jun-20</td>
<td>No form due</td>
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<td>Jul-20</td>
<td>Communications, Community Engagement, Healthy Eating</td>
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<td>Aug-20</td>
<td>No Call</td>
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<td>Childcare, Healthcare, Tobacco, Workplace</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep-20</td>
<td>Active Living, Evaluation, Schools</td>
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<td>Oct-20</td>
<td>No form due</td>
<td>No form due</td>
<td>Communications, Community Engagement, Healthy Eating</td>
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