



Academic Health Department Learning Community Report

February 20, 2025

Overview

The [Academic Health Department \(AHD\) Learning Community](#) supports the development of [AHD partnerships](#) between public health practice organizations and academic institutions. As a national community of practitioners, educators, and researchers, the AHD Learning Community stimulates discussion and sharing of knowledge; the development of resources; and collaborative learning around establishing, sustaining, and expanding AHD partnerships.

Sharing AHD Partnership Expertise

Throughout its 13-year history, the AHD Learning Community has seen sustained interest from the public health community, with membership numbers rising from less than 100 to more than 1,500 and engagement continuing to grow. This active participation has led to a wealth of knowledge about AHD partnerships being shared among Learning Community members and with the broader public health community. Highlights of ways this information is shared are described below.

Webinars and Conferences

The Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice (Council) regularly shares AHD partnership expertise at national, regional, and local events, building awareness and knowledge of this concept, how it can be operationalized, and the value it offers to public health practice and academic organizations. For example, Council staff highlighted AHD partnerships in a session at the 2024 [Public Health Learning Forum: Workforce Development in Action](#) titled, *Unlocking Potential: Enhancing Capacity Through Academic Health Department Partnerships*. The [session recording](#) is available on the TRAIN Learning Network. Additionally, in collaboration with the Academic and Practice Linkages in Public Health Caucus, an AHD partnership roundtable and luncheon was held at the 2024 American Public Health Association Annual Meeting this past October. This event was held in response to the AHD Learning Community's desire for an in-person gathering. The roundtable featured 10 presentations covering topics such as forming AHD's, student connections, and rurally-focused partnerships.

Webinars play a significant role in the Council's educational offerings. The Council's [series of AHD webinars](#) has been running for 10 years, and webinars are also presented in collaboration with other organizations upon request. Archived webinars from the [AHD Webinar Series are now accessible](#) as a training plan on the TRAIN Learning Network. With funding from the [Association of State and Territorial Health Officials](#), the Council is planning a new webinar series focused on AHD partnerships that highlight relationships with minority-serving academic institutions. More information about the upcoming webinar series will be shared via the *Council in Linkages Update*.

Technical Assistance

Direct technical assistance (TA) is provided to public health professionals and organizations to support developing and sustaining AHD partnerships. Council staff regularly receive requests for such assistance, responding to 4 requests from state and local health departments in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Vermont, and Connecticut since the last Council meeting.

AHD expertise is now being applied in more in-depth TA engagements. The first such engagement involves Council staff conducting an environmental scan to lay the groundwork for

building AHD partnerships in Alameda County, California. More information about this TA project is described in the Rebuilding the Public Health Workforce: Alameda County Public Health Department, Academic Health Department Partnership Environmental Scan Project Report. Additionally, through funding provided by ASTHO, the Public Health Foundation (PHF) will be providing TA to three health departments receiving Public Health Infrastructure Grant funds.

Resources

Since the start of the AHD Learning Community, various resources and tools have been developed based on ongoing learning and sharing. With funding from ASTHO, PHF is developing vignettes and a toolkit to help share success stories and provide examples for organizations looking to establish, expand, or formalize their AHD partnerships. More information about these resources will be shared via the *Council on Linkages Update*.

More information about the AHD Learning Community and its activities is available through the [AHD Learning Community](#) section of the Council website or by contacting Mayela Arana at marana@phf.org.