

Eastern Kentucky Public Health Inc.

Kentucky Public Health Leadership Institute Scholars:

Holly West; M.S., M.P.M.

Public Health Services Coordinator; Ashland-Boyd County Health Department

Rhonda Woolum; R.N.

Nurse Administrator; Ashland-Boyd County Health Department

Erin Schaffner; B.S.

Disability Adjudicator; Disability Determination Service with the Department for Income and Support, Cabinet for Health and Family Services

Mentor:

Karen Hunter; M.P.H., RD, LD, CHES

Associate Professor; Eastern Kentucky University

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

To examine recent state budget cuts for public health departments and address the unmet health care needs of Kentuckians, the Kentucky Public Health Leadership Institute (KPHLI) team, “Show Me The Money” created Eastern Kentucky Public Health Inc. (EKPHI), a public non-profit charity. Establishment of this public charity will create greater access to grant funding to support public health services in Eastern Kentucky. The goal of our project is to increase financial support to public health departments and compensate for recent budget cuts that threaten progress and opportunity to improved community health.

A focus group research study was employed as a means to collect qualitative data from health department directors. Of the seven Public Health Directors who participated in the study, 100% reported that their health department had been directly affected by budget cuts from the state; 42.67% of participants had decreased program services to offset the budget cuts, 28.41% utilized local monies, 14.46% cut training and travel expenditures and 14.46% reduced staff.

Team “Show Me The Money” has completed all processes in establishing EKPHI and are awaiting IRS 501(C)3 determination to further our project objectives. To assist others with the process of establishing a public non-profit charity we developed an in-depth “Step-by-Step Reference Guide to Creating a 501(C)3.”

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND:

As Kentucky faces its most severe budget crisis, public health departments and the communities they serve suffer the consequences. The termination of successful public health programs due to budget shortfalls has contributed to the declining health status of the Commonwealth. The Kentucky Economic Justice Alliance has described the state’s economic standing as “severe and worsening,” estimating that Kentucky lacks as much as \$1.8 billion in unmet needs (1).

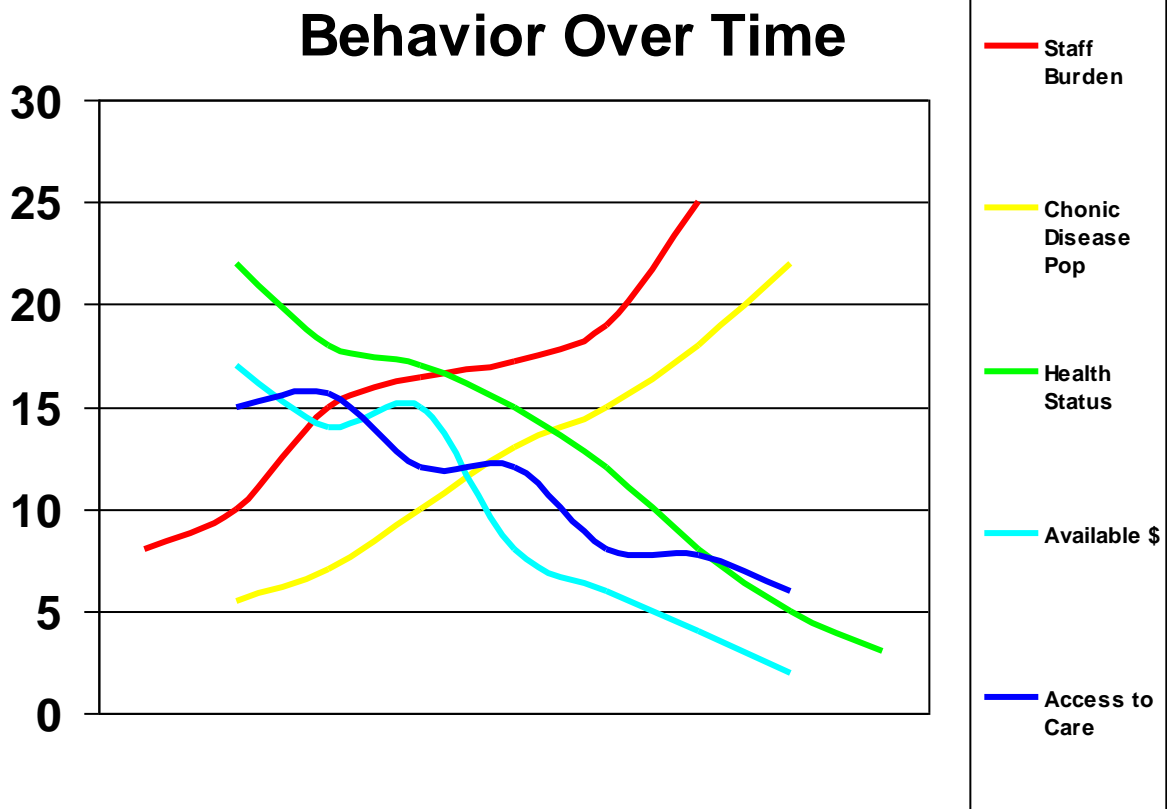
A depressed economy has left Kentucky public health departments severely under-funded in critical areas, preventing sustained operation of effective health programs available to the uninsured and economically disadvantaged. Eastern Kentucky’s health and socioeconomic data speaks volumes to our need for increased health services. Shocking mortality rates of heart disease (928), cancer (827) cerebrovascular disease (212) and respiratory disease (232) were reported throughout the region over a one-year period (2). In addition, Eastern Kentucky’s prevalence of obesity (31% per adult population), diabetes (11% per adult population), and poor oral health (34% adults missing 6 or more teeth) are contingent to our need (2, 3, 4).

Nearly 300,000 individuals live throughout the Eastern Kentucky region. An estimated 17% have no health insurance and over 65,000 persons live in poverty. Public health

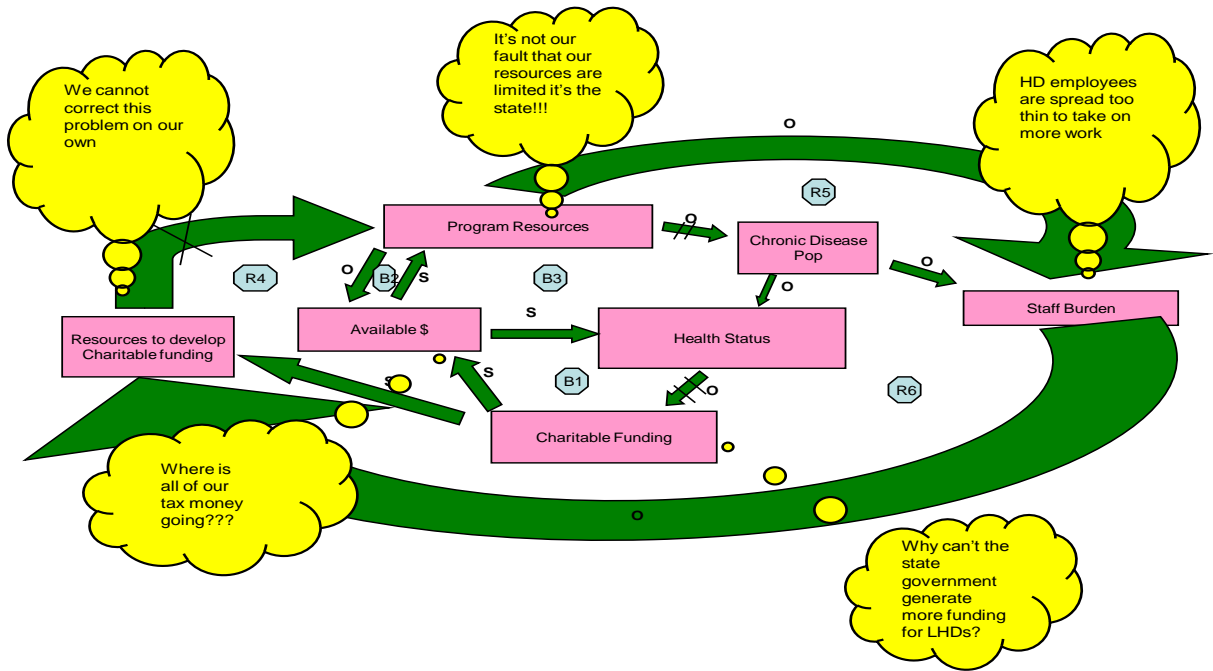
departments serve a wealth of these children and families and struggle to provide the most basic health needs. Our current financial strain threatens progress to improved health in our communities and paints a grim picture of the future of rural Kentucky's health status.

Problem Statement

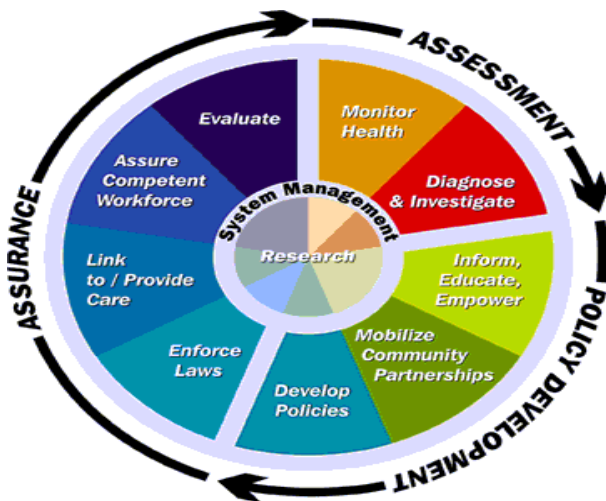
Why, despite statewide budget cuts and declining health status have Kentucky public health departments not successfully developed a public charity as a means to increase funding?



Causal Loop Diagram:



10 Essential Public Health Services/National Goals Supported:



Essential Health Service #3: Inform, educate and empower people about health issues

Essential Health Service #5: Develop policies and plans that support individuals and community health efforts

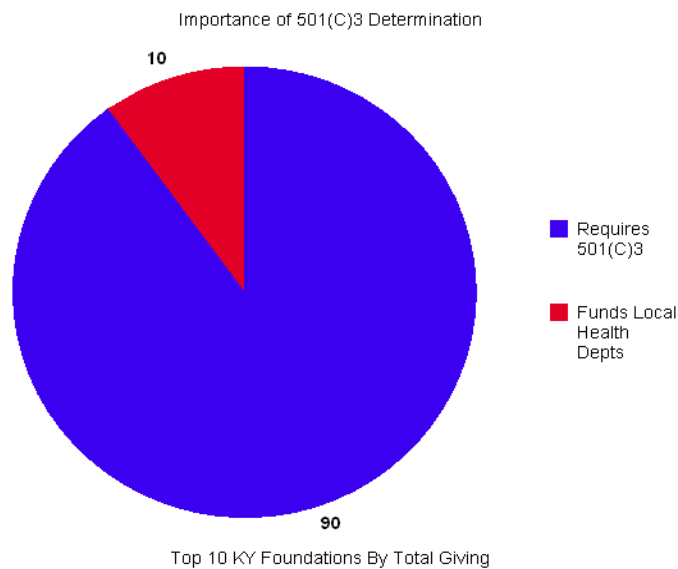
Essential Health Service #7: Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable

Essential Health Service #10: Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems

PROJECT OBJECTIVES/DESCRIPTION/DELIVERABLES:

To relieve some of the financial burden public health departments in Eastern Kentucky are facing and address the unmet health care needs of our communities the Kentucky Public Health Leadership Institute (KPHLI) team “Show Me The Money,” the Ashland-Boyd County Health Department and neighboring health departments set out to form Eastern Kentucky Public Health Inc. (EKPHI), a public non-profit charity.

Public health departments receive a substantial portion of their financial support from state allocations making them ineligible for many grants. For tax deduction purposes, the vast majority of grant giving agencies only fund IRS designated 501(C)3 organizations. This restriction on financial support severely limits funding opportunities available to public health departments.



Through the development of EKPHI, we hope to eliminate this barrier to funding. Our goal is to increase financial support to public health departments and compensate for recent budget cuts that threaten progress and opportunity to improved community health. As a public charity with greater lobbying rights, EKPHI will also increase our advocacy efforts to raise community awareness and inform policy makers on key public health issues.

DELIVERABLES:

To date, no public health department in Kentucky has completed the process of forming a public charity. “Eastern Kentucky Public Health Inc.” will serve as a pioneer for other health departments wishing to initiate this process in their communities. To assist others with the process of establishing a public non-profit charity, team “\$how Me The Money” developed an in-depth “Step-by-Step Reference Guide to Creating a 501(C)3.”

METHODOLOGY:

A mini focus group study was chosen as the method of data collection for our project. Extensive effort was necessary to achieve UK IRB approval for our project due to the fact that a focus group presented greater risk of disclosing personal information and negatively impacting participant confidentiality. This type of study was chosen to elicit and in-depth discussion about our proposed project. Twelve Eastern Kentucky Health Department Directors were invited to participate in study. Focus group invitations were delivered by U.S. mail and via e-mail (See Appendix 1).

A total of seven Health Department Directors participated in the one-hour study. Each were given detailed informed consents and assigned letters as name substitution to protect their privacy (Health Department “A” etc., See Appendix 2). Though it is expected that many of the participants had met prior to the focus group, no-one was made aware of another’s identity through participation in this study.

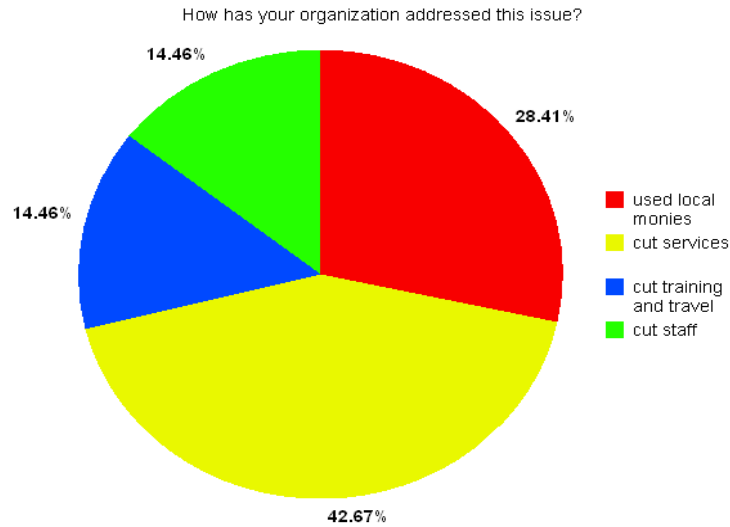
Each available participant was asked to provide responses to these five pre-selected open-ended questions.

1. To what extent has your health department been affected by recent funding restrictions? How has your organization addressed this issue?
2. Has your health department considered developing a separate non-profit public charity as a means to increase funding opportunities?
3. We want to better understand why more public health departments have not formed a public charity. Based on your experience, why do you think so few public health departments have completed this process?
4. What suggestions or reservations do you have regarding this process?
5. Will you support our efforts to form a non-profit public charity in the Eastern Kentucky area?

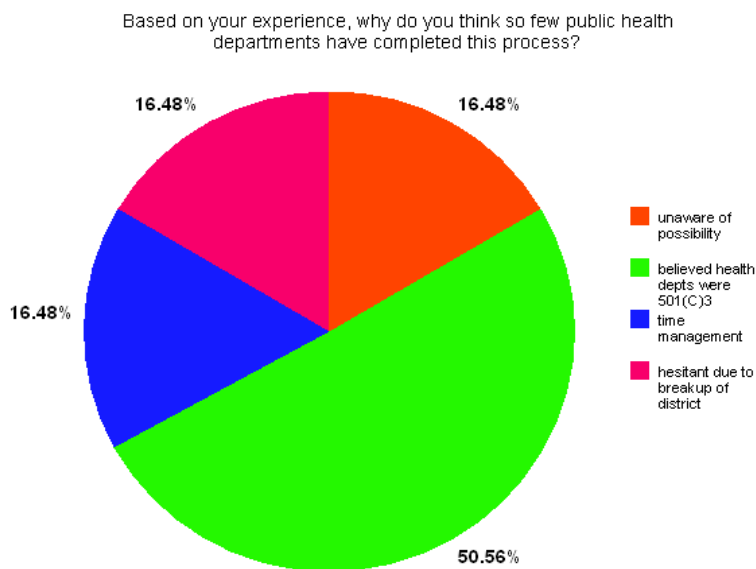
RESULTS:

Of the seven Public Health Directors who participated in the study, 100% reported that their health department had been directly affected by budget cuts from the state. Several different solutions, however, were being employed to address the issue. Results indicate

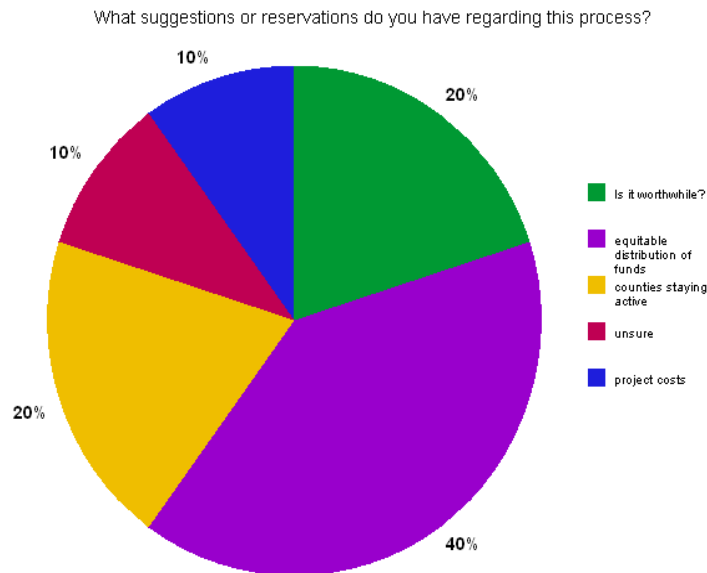
that 42.67% of participants had decreased program services, 28.41% utilized local monies, 14.46% cut training and travel expenditures and 14.46% reduced staff.



Despite funding restrictions, less than half (43%) of the respondents reported that they had considered developing a public charity as a means to increase funding. Misunderstanding of current health department IRS determination, however, likely contributed to this outcome. Nearly 51% of participants were unaware that health departments are non-501(C)3 organizations. Other reasons for not completing the process were, time management (16.48%), hesitant due to breakup of district (16.48%) and unaware of the possibility of developing a separate public non-profit charity (16.48%).



Many reservations were voiced by directors regarding our intent to develop Eastern Kentucky Public Health Inc. Equitable distribution of grant funding was the greatest concern (40%), followed by continued commitment from all parties (20%), project disadvantages (20%) and associated costs (10%). Another 10% of respondents were unsure of their suggestions/reservations at the current time.



When asked to support us in developing Eastern Kentucky Public Health Inc., 71% of participants agreed without delay and 29% felt unsure of the process. Since the conclusion of our focus group, however, all seven Health Department Directors have joined in our efforts as well as an additional three that were unable to attend the study. Eastern Kentucky Public Health Inc. will support the Eastern Kentucky counties of Boyd, Carter, Elliot, Floyd, Greenup, Johnson, Lawrence, Lewis, Magoffin and Pike.

CONCLUSIONS:

A great deal of work was employed by our KPHLI team to complete this project. Several meetings have taken place since the conclusion of the focus group study as well as extensive effort in establishing organization bylaws and filing articles of incorporation. We were blessed to find an attorney and accountant to volunteer their time to help form Eastern Kentucky Public Health Inc. and simplify a very difficult and time-consuming process. To date, we have completed all processes in establishing EKPPI and are

awaiting IRS 501(C)3 determination to further our project objectives. Please refer to our “Step-by-Step Reference Guide to Creating a 501(C)3” for additional information.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES:

Holly West

My KPHLI experience has been invaluable. In one short year, I have grown tremendously as a student, a teammate, an employee, a friend, and as a leader. The skills and insight that I have gained throughout this process has definitely been worth the challenge. I am overwhelmed by the completion of our KPHLI project. My teammates and I have worked very hard and I am proud of what we have accomplished. Thank you KPHLI for connecting me with two amazing women who I look forward to working with in the future!

Rhonda Woolum

I really didn't know what to expect when I was accepted for KPHLI. It has been a challenging, enlightening, and rewarding experience. At times it has been difficult getting back into student mode, juggling a very different role in my position within the public health system, and an ever-demanding role in my personal life. I wasn't able to put as much time into KPHLI as I would have liked, however I've learned much about networking, teamwork, organization, leadership skills and communication. I've learned how to find the many resources that are readily available if you know where to look for them, and a wealth of information that I can refer to as I can.

I've learned a lot about myself and how others see me. I've learned my strengths and how to build on them and how to accept my weaknesses and things that I can do to accept what I can't change but develop and overcome the things that I can change. I will set daily goals and continually work towards accomplishing them and continually strive to build my leadership skills. I am very grateful for my KPHLI experience. It has been a great motivator.

Erin Schaffner

KPHLI has been a wonderful and valuable experience. The opportunity to self reflect and have peers and supervisors reflect, through the Bar-On IQ and 360 degrees, has been challenging and insightful. Through the new connections and various speakers, my love for public health has grown profoundly.

I got to work with three unique and sensational women for this project. I am so proud of the challenges that our team took on. It has been a privilege to work alongside my teammates. They have made a tremendous difference in their community. I look forward to following the progression of our project over time.

Special Thanks

Team “Show Me The Money” would like to give a very special thank you to everyone who helped us successfully complete this project!!!!

First and foremost we would like to thank Maria Hardy, Public Health Director for Ashland-Boyd County Health Department for giving us the opportunity to participate in KPHLI and encouraging us in our endeavor to complete this very tedious project.

A special thank you is also deserved to Mr. John Spears, CPA and Attorney Travis Sanders for all their efforts with Eastern Kentucky Public Health Inc. Completing the articles of incorporation, bylaws and tax forms for a new business is an enormous task. Without their assistance, we could not have finished this process in a mere 8 months. From the bottom of our hearts.....THANK YOU!

We would also like to acknowledge Louise Kent, KPHLI fellow and Administrator for the Northern Kentucky Independent Health Department, who provided support and guidance from the very beginning stages of this project. When we didn't know where to begin, you gave us hope!

Thank you to all of the Health Department Directors who joined in our efforts to develop Eastern Kentucky Public Health Inc. Without your support, this would not have been possible.

Great thanks to our Mentor, Karen Hunter, who was always there to pick us up when we didn't want to carry on. WE DID IT!!!

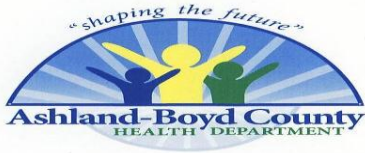
Thanks to Cynthia, Erin and all the KPHLI staff. What a great program! You have inspired us to take challenges and become better leaders in public health.

And finally thank you to Dr. Davis and the Kentucky Department for Public Health for their support of this project. We hope the establishment of Eastern Kentucky Public Health Inc. will positively impact the future of public health in Eastern Kentucky and encourage other public health departments to take the “Show Me The Money” Challenge.

REFERENCES

1. Kentucky Economic Justice Alliance (2005). Raising the bar: Kentucky's real budget report. Retrieved from: www.kej.org
2. Kentucky State Center For Health Statistics (2004). Kentucky county health profiles. Frankfort, KY.
3. Kentucky Institute of Medicine (2007). The health of Kentucky: A county assessment. Retrieved from: www.kiom.org
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2008). Surveillance of certain health behaviors and conditions among states and selected local areas—Behavioral risk factor surveillance system. Retrieved from: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss5707a1.htm>

Appendix 1



**Administrative Office
2924 Holt Street
Ashland, KY. 41101**

Dear Eastern Kentucky Area Directors,

The Ashland-Boyd County Health Department is pleased to announce that two of our staff members, Holly West and Rhonda Woolum, have been chosen as 2008-2009 Kentucky Public Health Leadership Institute (KPHLI) scholars! KPHLI is a yearlong development program for practitioners in the field of public health. Graduation from this institute requires extensive research and completion of a change master team project that addresses a public health issue or concern.

You are being invited to take part in the research portion of their project. The study will be in a focus group format and will discuss the need for increased financial support for public health department programs. We look forward to the insight you may offer for will take special precautions to protect your identity. Ms. West and Ms. Woolum have completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative for human subjects to prepare them for this research.

Please join us in our effort to address Kentucky's budget shortfall. A focus group scheduled to discuss this project is scheduled for _____. Please contact Holly West, Public Health Services Coordinator for Ashland-Boyd County Health Department at 606-329-9444 by _____ to register. Thank you so much for your time and interest in this project and for helping us to make Kentucky a better place to live.

Sincerely,

*Maria C. Hardy, MSN, RN
Public Health Director, II*

Appendix 2

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Eastern Kentucky Public Health Incorporated

You are being invited to take part in a focus group research study addressing Kentucky's budget crisis and the chronic under-funding of Eastern Kentucky public health department programs. You are being invited to take part in this research study because you are the director of an Eastern Kentucky public health department and can offer us increased insight into this matter. If you volunteer to take part in this study, you will be one of about 5 people to do so.

The person in charge of this study is Ms. Holly West, Kentucky Public Health Leadership Institute scholar. She is being guided in this research by Mrs. Erin Louis. There may be other people on the research team assisting at different times during the study.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate current funding problems endured by public health departments in the Eastern Kentucky region and to introduce our proposal to relieve this financial burden.

You will be excluded from this study if you are no longer employed as a Public Health Director at an Eastern Kentucky public health department. No other exclusions apply.

The research procedures will be conducted at Ashland-Boyd County Health Department. You will need to come to the conference room at the administrative offices located at 2924 Holt Street, Ashland, KY. 41101. The study will take approximately 60 minutes to complete.

The study will be administered in a focus group format. During the study each participant will be asked to share his or her thoughts and ideas pertaining to five open-ended questions. Participants will spend approximately 7-8 minutes discussing each question.

Due to the nature of this study, potential risks do exist. Anonymity of participants cannot be guaranteed during this study. Considering the small number of public health department directors in Eastern Kentucky, there is an excellent chance that subjects will be familiar with one another or will interact in the future.

Use of an audiotape will also be used during this study and notes will be taken to outline the most important factors discussed. Special precautions, however, will be taken to protect your privacy during this study. No participant will be made aware of another's identity through participation in this study. As a participant you will be assigned a letter from the alphabet to serve as your name substitution in order to protect your confidentiality. No names will be used at any time during this study. Each participant will be addressed only by his or her pseudo name.

Despite the minimal risks associated with this study, all subjects will benefit from participation. Results of this research study are expected to unveil significant findings relating to increased understanding of Eastern Kentucky public health departments current financial status and the impact of recent state budget cuts on program stability, as well as potential funding opportunities.

Participation in this focus group study is strictly voluntary. If you decide not to participate, there is no penalty or loss of benefit. Participants may choose not to answer any or all questions asked by project researchers. No costs are associated with the present research and no compensation of any form will be granted.

We will make every effort to keep private all research records that identify you to the extent allowed by law. Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write about the study to share it with other researchers, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. You will not be personally identified in these written materials. We may publish the results of the study; however, we will keep your name and other identifying information private. We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us information, or what that information is. The use of pseudo names will be used to protect your identity.

Information collected during this study will only be reviewed by team “\$how Me The Money” researchers. All materials will be placed in sealed envelopes and stored in a locked cabinet at Ashland-Boyd County Health Department. All data will be destroyed upon completion of this project on April 30, 2009.

If you decide to take part in the study you still have the right to decide at any time that you no longer want to continue. You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study.

You may take part in this study if you are currently involved in another research study.

You will not receive any rewards or payment for taking part in the study.

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about the study, you can contact the investigator, Holly West at 606-329-9444 ext. 2223. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the staff in the Office of Research Integrity at the University of Kentucky at 859-257-9428 or toll free at 1-866-400-9428. You may also contact the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services at 502-564-5497 for more information.

If the researcher learns of new information in regards to this study, and it might change your willingness to stay in this study, the information will be provided to you. You may

be asked to sign a new informed consent form if the information is provided to you after you have joined the study.

To participate in this study please provide your signature below. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study

Date

Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

Date

Name of authorized person obtaining informed consent

Date

Signature of Investigator

Date

