

# Training Wheels

## Prepared by

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# Executive Summary

State audit and assessment processes have consistently revealed over the past several years that public health employees lack-sufficient uniform training necessary for them to deliver quality services across the full spectrum of public health. Based on this information, in-services with leadership and the numerous years of combined experience of the work group, we began to explore the development of a more accessible statewide training program. The Change Master Group decided the most efficient and effective solution was to develop a program of onsite training delivery for health departments and their partners throughout the state. The Group named the project “Training Wheels.” The creation of a mobile training delivery program would assist health departments statewide in receiving consistent, affordable and convenient training. The Training Wheels program would enable staff to consistently formulate, promote, maintain, implement, conduct and execute policies, plans and programs to safeguard the health of Kentuckians and protect overall public health.

The Change Master group developed a survey assessment tool, which established that mobile computer training would assist with meeting training needs. Based on the evaluation of the results of the assessment, we developed three (3) computer curricula, which included a pre- and a post-test for each participant. The group chose basic computer training as the project focus due to the fact computer operations support the entire spectrum of public health services. This project is being piloted in five locations including an urban area, a rural area and a geographically diverse eleven (11) county district to provide comprehensive feedback. Following these pilots, results were

evaluated and minor revisions were made. These pilots revealed that this concept would be effective and result in Kentucky health care workers being better trained.

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### **Introduction /Background**

It would be great if all Kentucky public health employees were better trained to provide the necessary services to the clients of the communities throughout the state of Kentucky. The Commonwealth of Kentucky, as with other states, has a challenge in delivering comprehensive health, management, leadership, bio-terrorism prevention and response, and health program training to health departments across the state. Staff at health departments, while dedicated and hard working, must be adequately trained and empowered to perform to the highest potential. It is, therefore, imperative that a consistent and convenient training program and the means to deliver this training program be developed. The training program must be affordable, meet the needs of staff and management statewide, and be both consistent and convenient to all public health staff. This was the daunting task undertaken successfully by the master change group.

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## **Project Description**

The first task was to develop the assessment tool and establish the need for training and what types were needed. After evaluation of the surveys and the economic situation of the state, the most efficient and cost effective mode to achieve the needed training was through a mobile training unit. The specifications for the unit were established and funding for the unit was secured.

The next task was to develop a training program and assessment tool that could be delivered to all health departments via this mobile training unit. At this time, the state imposed a moratorium on vehicle acquisitions due to economic conditions. The group then re-evaluated options and chose to join forces with State Workforce Development Cabinet and deliver our services utilizing their mobile training units. This joint venture is unusual in state government, but the project has been very successful for all part

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## Objectives

The objectives of the program are:

**Objective One:** Assess the training needs of health department employees throughout the state of Kentucky.

**Objective Two:** Develop specifications for a mobile training unit.

**Objective Three:** Develop and implement a computer training course. This training course will consist of a pre-test to establish knowledge base of participants, information packages for future reference, and a post-test to determine the comprehension of participants and effectiveness of instruction and material.

**Objective Four:** Secure continuing source of funding for personnel, vehicle maintenance and/or operations.

**Objective Five:** Development a plan to promote the product and inform health department leadership and employees.

**Objective Six:** Devise a needs assessment instrument to continually identify evolving training need areas.

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## **Methodology**

When new programs are identified and implemented on the state level, the state training branch will develop the training curriculum for this program. After developing the training program, each health department will schedule the mobile unit to visit their health department or departments and produce a list of employees to be trained.

The unit will arrive on the scheduled day and begin training the necessary employees.

There will be a pre-test and a post-test to evaluate the effectiveness and consistency of training. Instruction will be the same for all health departments for each individual training module.

## **Essential Public Health Services**

### **Essential Public Health Services # 8:**

Assure a competent public health care workforce. This Training Wheels program is a mechanism that establishes uniform training and disbursement of information that allows public health staff, of all disciplines, to better serve the population of the Commonwealth.

## **Results**

This project has been more successful than the group had expected. The group wanted to get all the unit specifications finalized and all the training tools in place with the hope that another change master group would implement the program. After beginning this project, the group decided that with much hard work we could implement this program ourselves.

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The implementation has been successful and encouraging. This pilot program is producing well informed, well educated and empowered employees.

## **Conclusion**

This project has been an exciting and productive endeavor. We set our goals high and with persistence and teamwork we were able to overcome much adversity. Our project will have an impact on the future of Kentucky public health and the service provided by its employees.

Employees who have participated in the training courses have been very pleased and made many positive comments. Training Wheels has delivered valuable public health training directly to the employee work site. Education is the key element in maintaining and strengthening the public health employee workforce across the state of Kentucky.

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## **Leadership Development Opportunities**

*Clyde Bolton*

KPHLI has provided an excellent opportunity to re-visit management and leadership principles as they relate to public health. The student environment, with a full spectrum of classmates from around the state, was refreshing. Together, we were able to explore problems and issues in public health, identify root issues, and work together to create solutions. The Change Master project was an opportunity to work on something of significant importance to each of us, and collectively work to make a positive change in our state.

*Sheri Erwin*

Personally and professionally this has been a wonderful experience. I believe this project will have a positive impact on public health and I am very proud to have been a part of this endeavor. This project will not only benefit employees in my discipline but in all disciplines and most importantly, will result in more consistent services to our citizens in the Commonwealth. Another benefit from this project that I will always treasure are the friendships and the professional relationships that I have formed with the other scholars, mentors and the members of my change master project. I am very gratified with the product produced by this master change group and grateful to those that afforded me this opportunity.

***Vivian Gaines***

Wow! What an enlightening experience to enhance my leadership skills and public health knowledge. Being a KPHLI scholar this past year has provided me an opportunity to interact with a multi-disciplinary group of Public Health professionals. Thanks to those responsible for giving me this opportunity.

Participating in the Training Wheels Change Master Project has been very rewarding. I get this really good feeling when I think about being on the creation team of Training Wheels. This project will have a great impact on Kentucky in meeting the training needs of all Public Health workers to ensure quality services are provided. Thanks to those on the team, you are all great people with a wealth of knowledge and I have really enjoyed working with you and getting to know you. A big thank you to Workforce Development staff.

***Kathy Hembree***

As a student in the Kentucky Public Health Leadership Institute and a team member of the Training Wheels Change Master Project, I have been given the opportunity to collaborate with other Public Health Leaders and to strengthen my leadership skills in a friendly, encouraging, and positive environment. My communication skills and systems concepts have been strengthened and will serve to help me be a better leader.

***Traci Powell***

It was great to be a part of Project Training Wheels. The project is so fundamental. Computer training is such a basic skill set that every employee needs. I also enjoyed the material about Systems Theory. The Personal Assessment process was very valuable.

*Russ Rakestraw*

Participating in the training wheels project has been a very positive experience for me. As the end of one's career draws nigh, one looks for ways to leave a positive legacy for those that follow. My personal belief that the most lasting legacy that a leader can leave is through the training and development of those that follow. The Training Wheels project has allowed me to be a part of a fledgling program that can positively impact public health in Kentucky for years to come. I can't imagine a more positive and satisfying outcome for me personally.

I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the positive impact that this project and KPHLI have had on my personal and professional life. Our team, our group of scholars and, most importantly, the leadership and guidance of Cynthia Lamberth, have all served to make KPHLI a lasting and wonderful experience for me. My gratitude goes out to all; scholars, graduate assistants, mentors and Cynthia, for the education, guidance and fellowship that you have shared with me over the past year. It is my sincere hope that I can give back to the program by actively participating as a mentor to future groups of scholars.