

**North Carolina Association of County Commissioners
2006 Ralph W. Ketner Employee Productivity Awards Application**

County:	Gaston	Employee:	Chris Dobbins	Email:	cdobbins@co.gaston.nc.us
County Department:	Health	Employee Title:	Assistant Health Director		
County Phone:	704-853-5196	County Mailing Address:	991 W. Hudson Blvd., Gastonia, NC 28052		
Is this project being submitted on behalf of two or more employees?				No	Yes - X

If yes, please provide below a listing of all project employees in Number 6. Employee & title as listed above should be for lead team member.

Fair Labors Standards Act Designation: In order for your project to be eligible, you MUST indicate one of the following. If you do not know, please contact your personnel director

EXEMPT: **NON-EXEMPT:** **BOTH (if applicable to team):**

1.	Productivity Improvement Title:	Health Department "Electronic" Accreditation
2.	Implementation Date (must be between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2006)	April 2006
3.	Please describe the productivity improvement. (Please limit response to these 2 pages.)	
In an attempt to maximize existing information technologies and minimize staff time and resources necessary to prepare for our 2006 Health Department Accreditation, we sought out and were granted permission by the North Carolina Division of Public Health and the North Carolina Institute for Public Health to undergo the state's first "Electronic" Accreditation site review. The overall goal of this project was to use existing scanning, computer software, on-line filing, and other user friendly electronic media to reduce extensive hard copy reproduction time and costs necessary to produce "evidence" for Accreditation Site Visitation Teams. Up until this point, Health Dept's were making paper copies (many times, multiple copies of the same report) to serve as evidence in answering Accreditation Benchmarks (there were a total of 41 Benchmarks with multiple evidence requirements within each Benchmark). Under this "old" method a Health Department would produce hard-copy evidence for each of these Benchmarks, creating an accreditation library of on average 10-20 3-inch binders full of copied materials for Site Visitors to review during their limited time with the organization. Under the "new" electronic method we simply scanned the hard-copy and created a computer link that allowed site visitor's to "point and click" their way to an image of the evidence. All Benchmark evidence was saved to both shared Health Department computer drives (for Dept use) and CD/Flash Drives for Accreditation Site Visitors. Since Health Department Accreditation reviews are currently conducted every four years, it's very rare that much of the evidence would be reused during the departments next visit, which means most of the paper copies produced under the "old" method would be of little to no value after a visit, while electronic copies are simply deleted, updated, or replaced by newer versions.		

4. Please describe why this project was initiated or what problem it addressed:

Tax payers trust us to deliver quality health care while making the best use of limited dollars and resources. By eliminating unnecessary paper copies of documents, and greatly reducing staff time to reproduce and file such documentation, we feel we are able to direct these savings to improving other health care areas of need. Additionally, we have shared our "template" with over 30 other North Carolina Public Health agencies who have been or are scheduled to be accredited, significantly reducing their preparation time and costs. This new method also has the potential to reduce Accreditation Site Visit Teams time "on-site" as they can be sent 90% of all reviewable evidence via a CD or Flash Drive prior to their actual visit (this is not practical under the old method in that it would require shipping multiple binders of copied materials). Also, it gives site visitors great flexibility during the visit as they can review evidence at the facility or in the comfort of their hotel room "after hours". All of these savings equate to saving time and resources, which ultimately equals saving money at both the local and state level.

5. Please quantify the improvement's results in terms of cost savings, cost avoidance and/or a higher level of services provided.

(Please indicate what resources were used to achieve your results, and what was done with the time savings, if any accrued).

The following depicts conservative estimates in preparing (90-days) and conducting (3-days) an accreditation visit at a SINGLE agency:

(Old Method) Dedicated Staff: 30 Avg. Staff Salary: \$20 per hour X 45 hours = \$27,000

(New Method) Dedicated Staff: 25 Avg. Staff Salary: \$20 per hour X 40 hours = \$20,000 (\$7,000 Savings)

(Old Method) Copying Costs: \$20 Per Paper Binder X 20 Binders = \$400

(New Method) Copying Costs: \$1 Per Reusable CD X 20 CD's = \$20 (\$380 Savings--plus they are reusable)

(Old Method) Site Visitors On-Site: Currently 3 Days X 4 Visitors X \$105 per day = \$1,260

(New Method) Site Visitors On-Site: Recommend 2 Days X 4 Visitors X \$105 per day = \$840 (\$420 Savings)

NOTE: Although it's difficult to quantify, we feel the electronic template that we've shared with the 30-plus other public health agencies has significantly reduced their respective preparation costs and times.

6. Please provide any other descriptive information you would like to be considered by the review committee.

Our Management Team Members are Colleen Bridger, Chris Dobbins, Paula Black, Selenna Moss, Curtis Hopper, William Gross, Dr. Velma Taormina, and Martha Keever. As with many projects you sometimes realize other benefits that were not necessarily one of the original goals. For us it was the review and updating of our department's Policies & Procedures Manual. By using the same methods of "linking" information electronically, we were able to update and place each of our policies on-line for our staff to access. We are now able to conduct periodic updates and annual reviews with a simple click of a computer mouse allowing us to maintain much more accurate policies and procedures for our staff.

County Manager's Name:	Jan Winters	Supervisor's Name:	Colleen Bridger
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Return by June 15, 2007, via e-mail to Rebecca.Troutman@ncacc.org.