

# Tips for Securing Data Analytic Capability

Data analytic capability is important because a PHAST uses data and other intelligence gathered by multi-sector partners to gain a shared understanding of the local overdose crisis.

- If a jurisdiction has an existing overdose-related taskforce with a data workgroup, it may be restructured to place a greater emphasis on data analysis and use.
- Some jurisdictions may already have a centralized data analytics team that has access to existing public health or public safety data. Consider partnering with these organizations to gain access to data reports.
- Similar agencies may be able to pool their efforts to analyze data or rely on the best resourced among them to manage the data and conduct analyses, while the others may simply arrange for routine transfer of specific data files (this may require data sharing agreements<sup>1</sup>). For example, in NYC, each of the five counties has an independent prosecutor, but one office uses its resources to prepare the data for all five prosecutor offices. Agencies may also consider sharing an analyst's time across agencies.
- In communities with very limited resources, building data analytics capacity can be a challenge. In these cases, it may be possible to connect with experts at a local college or university or offer internships to graduate students.
- Teams should also consider changing resource needs over time. For example, PHAST activities may yield additional analytic and research needs, calling for additional funding. Agencies with extensive data sources may choose to invest in an internal data analysis unit as they consider new uses for these data. In addition, both quantitative and qualitative research may be needed to explain a local level phenomenon, or a new data surveillance or reporting system may be deemed necessary to help identify and respond to real-time needs. All these possibilities could warrant additional resources. A collaborative plan that lays out why the data would be used by PHAST stakeholders is critical to make the case for additional resources in grant applications.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> A data sharing agreement (DSA) - or data use agreement (DUA) - is a legal contract between partner agencies that documents the terms in which data will be shared and how they will be used. These agreements can protect the entity providing the data as well as serve as a channel for communicating data needs and expectations between agencies. For more information on DSAs and DUAs, please refer to Module 1 in the PHAST Toolkit.

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