EMSC
Emergency Medical Services for Children

Pediatric Readiness Recognition Program

IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTIONS



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Overview

Emergency departments (EDs) that participate in a pediatric readiness recognition program score significantly higher on the National Pediatric Readiness Project (NPRP) assessment, scoring a median of 24 points higher than EDs not involved in a formal recognition program.[1] High Pediatric Readiness scores are associated with improved outcomes – as much as a 76% lower mortality for children.[2]

Pediatric readiness recognition programs are state- and territory-wide initiatives that recognize EDs and emergency medical service (EMS) agencies for taking steps to become "pediatric ready." Programs may differ based on local resources and the health care landscape but are grounded in the latest national guidelines on pediatric emergency care. The programs are largely voluntary. EDs and EMS agencies must apply, provide documentation, and engage in a verification site visit to show their hospital or agency meet the criteria requirements. Programs typically require reverification every several years.

Guide Purpose

This guide was developed with the assistance of EMSC State Partnership (SP) Program managers through the 2024 Pediatric Readiness Recognition Programs Collaborative, which was jointly hosted by the EMSC Innovation and Improvement Center and the Pediatric Pandemic Network. This document is intended to provide guidance on establishing a recognition program and recommended processes for accepting applications and performing verification visits. While not a mandatory process for adoption by SP Programs, this resource is a starting point to adapt and utilize when creating or revising pediatric readiness recognition programs.



Phases of Development

Developing a pediatric readiness recognition program is a multiphase process. The following steps are recommended to develop a program based on the **2023 Implementation Manual for State Partnership Grantees** and discussions during the 2024 Pediatric Readiness Recognition Programs Collaborative. Figure 1 illustrates a summary of the recommended development phases.

Below, we provide additional information to support the Action Plan Recommendations outlined by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) in the **2023 Implementation Manual for State Partnership Grantees**.

Phase 1 – Research & Planning

- **Build a core team.** Build a core advisory team to assist with the recognition program development.
- **Understand your state/territory system.** Understand your emergency care system and regulatory authority in order to better plan for pediatric readiness advancement.
    - Identify barriers and enablers.
        Consider:
        - What organizations should be involved in recognition programs?
        - What other specialty systems of care recognition programs are in place?
        - What legislative rules/laws are in place that could affect a recognition program?
- **Create the program development action plan and timeline. Use this template** for your action plan.
- **Review other states' and territories' programs.** Review, in particular, **HRSA-verified recognition programs here**. Note that this map is only of HRSA-verified recognition programs (i.e., is not a complete list of all recognition programs) and is updated based on the submission of the prior year's Grant Recipient Performance Report (i.e., is not updated in real-time).
    - Review additional resources from developing ED and EMS recognition programs in the Performance Measure toolkit:
        - **ED resources**
        - **EMS resources**

Phase 2 – Development

- **Determine criteria with collaborators' input.** Take into consideration standardized criteria (effective April 1, 2024) as defined in the **2023 Implementation Manual for State Partnership Grantees** and the 2024 PRRPC consensus minimum criteria.
- **Outline application and verification process.** See following sections for additional details.

Phase 3 – Process/Plan

- **Create a recognition program pilot plan**
- **Gain partner agreement for program implementation**. Buy-in from partners will be important for enlisting them to support implementation and marketing.
- **Submit the program to HRSA Project Officer for review**. Work with the HRSA Project Officer and have supporting documents reviewed by the Federal EMSC Program before starting a pilot program.
- **Incorporate suggestions from HRSA Project Officer.**

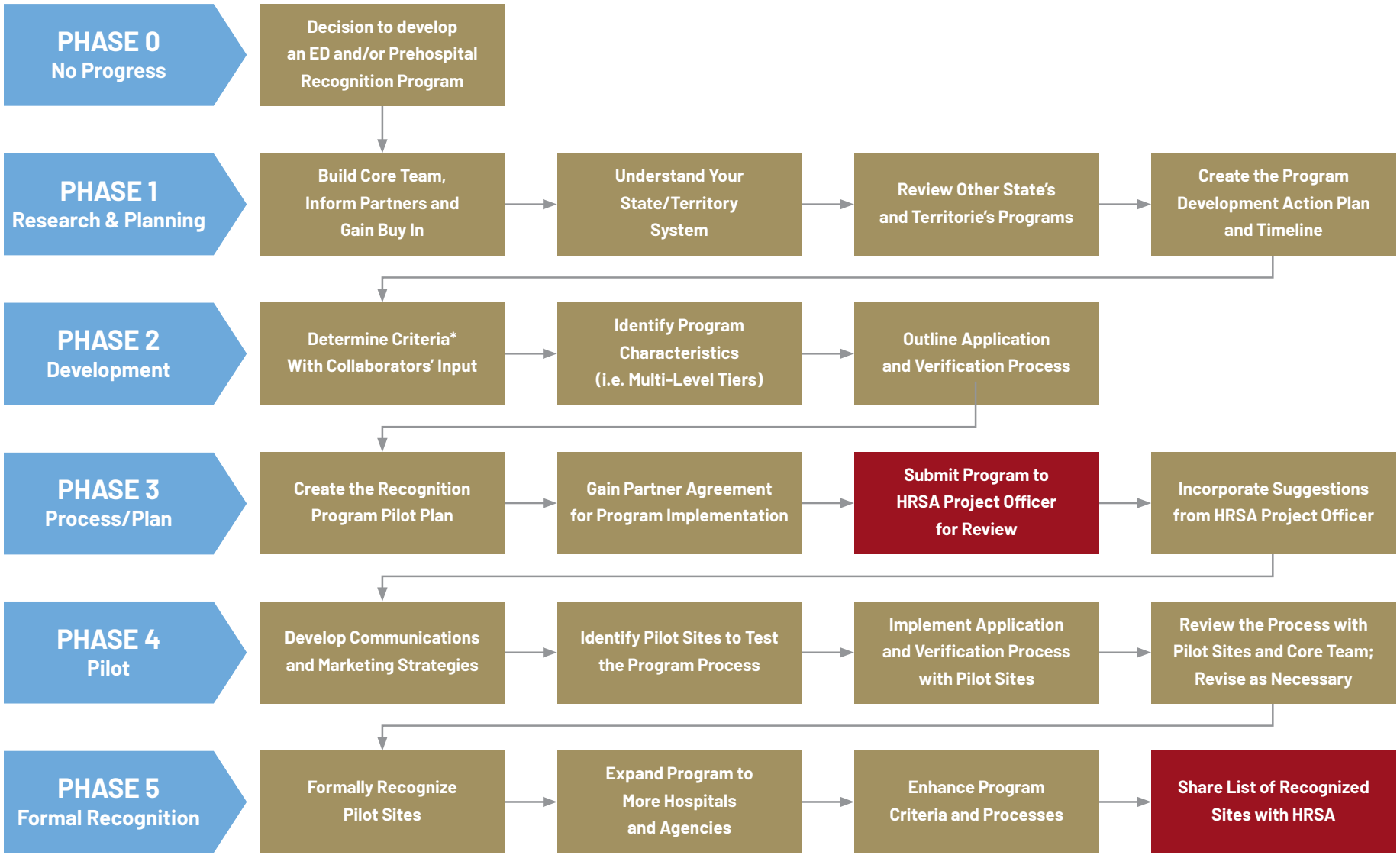
Phase 4 – Pilot

- **Develop communications and marketing strategies**. Remember that your program is only as effective as its dissemination. If EMS agencies and EDs don't know it exists, it can't be effective
  - Decide whether you can use your existing EMSC branding (recommended) or if you need to create a distinct brand (e.g., because of partner involvement)
  - Develop a brief communications plan
  - Consider using marketing templates, which include:
    - Key messaging/talking points
    - Sample web and newsletter text
    - Sample social media graphics and posts
    - Sample PowerPoint deck
    - Sample press release
    - Sample flyers
    - Sample certificate
- **Identify pilot sites to test the program**. Identify 2–3 sites to start.
- **Implement application and verification process with pilot sites**. This will help you identify any gaps or issues with your processes
- **Review the process with pilot sites and the core advisory team; revise as necessary**. Resubmit to HRSA Project Officer.

Phase 5 – Formal Recognition

- **Formally recognize pilot sites**. You're off to a great start!
- **Expand the program to more hospitals and agencies** Refine and increase marketing. Continue promoting your efforts and enlist partners to help you spread the word. Use the referral information gathered via the application to hone in on the most effective promotion methods
- **Enhance program criteria and processes.** Aim to move toward adopting standardized HRSA criteria and/or joint policy recommendations
- **Share with HRSA Project Officer a list of hospitals and/or EMS agencies that have been formally recognized**

Figure 1: Summary of Phases of Development



* Consider the 2024 PRRPC minimum consensus criteria in addition to the HRSA criteria outlined in the 2023 Implementation Manual for State Partnership Grantees.

Developing an Application and Verification Processes

Application

States can adapt the following list of steps to develop their application process:

1. **Build a core advisory team**.
2. **Review other states'/territories' application processes**.
3. **Define application overview**:
    a. Define the review frequency of submitted applications (e.g., monthly, quarterly, yearly).
    b. Establish the period of time a site will be recognized before requiring reverification.
    c. Create a process to track applicant information, including:
        - Address
        - Region (if applicable)
        - Site characteristics as listed in the application form (e.g., trauma, critical care, inpatient units; fire–rescue, transport, ALS/BLS)
        - Submitted policies and other information
    d. Develop a process to track recognition program metrics, including:
        - Number of applications
        - Number of sites in evaluation/review phase
        - Common deficiencies at sites
    e. Develop a process for sites to express interest or get more information.
4. **Create an application form**.
    a. Recommended elements to collect from the application include:
        - Site's point of contact and other key support staff (e.g., administrator, pediatric emergency care coordinator (PECC)/pediatric champion) and include names, titles, phone, email
        - Information about how they heard about the recognition program (e.g., from the SP manager, from another ED or agency, or any other marketing strategies you may use)
        - Site demographic information (e.g., geographic location, pediatric patient volume, volunteer/non–volunteer, etc.)
        - National Pediatric Readiness Project (NPRP) or National Prehospital Pediatric Readiness Project (PPRP) assessment gap report
        - Recognition level names and definitions (for multilevel recognition programs)
        - Criteria:
            - Request information on each of the required criteria; these may be more in–depth or simple yes/no questions (e.g., "Do you maintain a weight–based pediatric crash cart in the ED?" "Provide a copy of your ED's policy on child maltreatment.")
            - Determine how you will verify responses (e.g., attestation checklist, supporting documentation, upload materials to a secure website)
    b. Determine how sites will access the application (e.g., website, via email) and in what format (e.g., PDF, Word, or online form).
    c. Determine who will be the authorizing signatory on submitted applications.
    d. Develop a rubric for reviewers to have as a guide when reviewing applications.
5. **Create application instructions, including**:
    a. Develop a manual or guidebook with a simple step–by–step process (see Appendix A).
        - Determine whether it will be posted openly online or provided directly once interest is shown.
    b. Offer technical assistance webinars or other informational sessions and provide contact information for questions.

6. **Create an application submission plan covering**:
    a. Who receives the application (e.g., SP manager, generic email address)?
    b. Will there be a processing/site visit fee?
    c. How does the site submit the application (e.g., email, secure document upload, mail, etc.)?
7. **Develop an application review process covering**:
    a. Who will review and approve the applications?
        - Consider identifying 1–2 individuals on the core Advisory Committee or from key stakeholder organizations
    b. How will the reviewers take additional steps with the sites through email or phone with the applicant's main point of contact?) to address the following:
        - Identified gaps
        - Recommended remedial steps
        - Resources to provide guidance
        - Providing a summary report of the application
8. **Develop a process for regular review of the application process, considering**:
    a. The percentage of ED and EMS applied
    b. The geographic locations of the applicants
9. **Determine a verification process** (see next section).

Verification

States can adapt the following list of steps to develop a verification process:

1. **Build a core team to assist with the development and implementation of the verification process**.
    a. Consider developing a subcommittee of the core advisory team and decide if other partners should be included.
    b. Consider maintaining a list of multidisciplinary subject matter experts willing to serve as external reviewers for site visits. Consider enlisting individuals from distinct geographic regions of your state or territory to help facilitate verification within those regions.
2. **Define the elements to be reviewed during the verification visit and the process to verify each element**.
    a. Select a verification tracking system (could be incorporated into the application tracking system).
    b. Develop a verification checklist and the rubric to be used, including:
        - Determining questions the sites need to answer during the visit with the purpose of gaining context around policies and other items in place.
        - Consider reviewing requested policies for gaps before the visit.
        - Considering requesting presentations from the site.

3. **Outline the process for site visits**.
    a. Determine whether your site visits will be virtual, in-person, or hybrid, and follow these respective steps:
        - Virtual visit
            - Select a virtual platform
            - Ensure site can access the selected platform
            - Review any legal concerns related to video conferencing in common spaces/patient care areas
            - Confirm that the virtual reviewers will be able to navigate presentations/department tours/demonstrations as needed
            - Determine the amount of time available and be diligent in staying true to the agenda
        - In-person visit
            - Consider the costs of travel (hotel, gas, meals, etc.)
                - Determine reimbursement and/or honorarium for those performing site visits
                - Consider charging the sites to cover some or all of the costs
            - Review any legal concerns related to visiting common spaces/patient care areas
            - Determine the amount of time available and be diligent in staying true to the agenda
            - Determine appropriate meeting space to accommodate the reviewers and site representatives
        - Hybrid
            - Consider utilizing a virtual platform for members of your review team to attend the verification visit virtually
            - Have at least one person onsite facilitating the meeting
    b. Consider creating a resource, such as a checklist, manual, guidebook, or outline for the applicant, to be shared after the application is accepted in advance of a verification visit. Such a resource can help the site prepare and pave the way for a successful site visit.
        - Include a simple step-by-step process of what to expect (see Appendix B)
        - Discuss the expectations and resources needed in advance of the visit
        - Can be a printable online document or a hard copy
4. **Conduct a verification site visit**.
    a. Perform staff interviews and inspections as defined in your criteria
5. **Determine the process for verification review**.
    a. Identify team member(s) who will review and approve the verification process utilizing the established rubric
    b. Consider additional steps for sites needing additional support:
        - Identify gaps
        - Recommend remedial steps
        - Refer to resources to provide guidance
        - Provide a summary of the visit
6. **Consider the process and frequency of reverification**.
    a. Develop a process to provide reminders
    b. Identify what will be required for reverification (e.g., updated application, new site visit, attestation, etc.)

Appendices

Appendix A – Implementing an Application Process (Site Perspective)

The following steps are a suggested outline of the steps a site will take to achieve recognition. Each program should adjust the steps to provide sites a clear path to obtaining pediatric readiness recognition. This process may be included in your application materials.

Application
Process for sites applying for pediatric readiness recognition

1. The site decides if they are ready to apply for pediatric readiness recognition
2. Obtain buy-in from leadership and stakeholders for recognition
    a. Criteria, fees, time, sustainability
3. Complete the application form by [Insert your process]
4. Return the application form, fees, and all required documents to [Your email here or other processes for submitting application materials]
5. Applications reviewed by [Your process here]
    a. Additional questions and clarifications could be requested
    b. Address site visit checklist discrepancies if needed
6. Work with the recognition program team to schedule your verification visit

Appendix B – Implementing a Verification Process (Site Perspective)

The following steps are a suggested outline of the steps a site will take to achieve recognition. Each program should adjust the steps to provide sites a clear path to obtaining pediatric readiness recognition.

Verification
Process for sites taking part in verification visits

1. Expectations of both the review and site teams clarified
2. Ensure all appropriate staff and EMS or hospital leadership will be present or available during the visit
3. Plan for how patient care will be affected by site visit
4. Address discrepancies found during site visit
5. When recognition is obtained, CELEBRATE!
6. Promote and market the achievement
7. Follow up questions can be directed to [Your contact information here]
8. Submit for reverification at [Insert frequency/process]

Appendix C – References

1. https://emscdatacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/EMSC-NPRP-Hospital-Recognition-Factsheet_082422-1.pdf
2. https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article-abstract/144/3/e20190568/76984/Emergency-Department-Pediatric-Readiness-and?redirectedFrom=fulltext?autologincheck=redirected
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