



National Organization of
State Offices of Rural Health

SORH Proficiencies: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



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Frequently Asked Questions

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document has been compiled to provide SORH with a quick reference to understand the purpose of the SORH Proficiencies Guide and self-assessment. Details on these resources and how to use them are provided in the SORH Proficiencies Guide. This FAQ document does not replace the need for reading the SORH Proficiencies Guide, but rather clarifies commonly asked questions.

What are the SORH Proficiencies?

Simply put, the SORH Proficiencies are a way to assess your office on how it performs across a variety of functions related to SORH operations. It's not a "test" or a "competition", but rather a way to help SORH ensure they are focusing their resources in a way that is most helpful for their state - and to do it the same way for every office across the country, regardless of size or location. A Benchmarking Report will be released to SORH that will help you compare your scores to national averages of your peers, along with currently available resources to address capacity-building initiatives, to better help your office decide what you want to work on.

What is the purpose of the SORH Proficiencies?

The SORH Proficiencies serve three main purposes:

1. Assist SORH in evaluating their internal and state-wide capacity, and identifying areas for potential growth or strategic partnerships.
2. Assist NOSORH to develop relevant educational opportunities and resources that build the capacity of SORH in a strategic manner.
3. Provide a framework and outline of topics for discussion with key state and national SORH partners.

Who came up with these Proficiencies?

The Proficiencies were created by a group of SORH staff from across the country, including a variety of office sizes and office locations (state government, non-profit, and university-based). They have been vetted with the NOSORH Educational Exchange Committee leadership, the NOSORH Board of Directors, a working group of SORH "testers" and have been vetted by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy. They have truly have been developed by State Offices of Rural Health for State Offices of Rural Health.

Who is going to see my information?

NOSORH cares about the privacy of all of our members. The SORH leadership that initially proposed the idea of the Proficiencies were thoughtful of privacy concerns from the start. No other entity, organization, or individual outside of select NOSORH staff will have access to your results. The decision to share "scores" with your partners, your Project Officer, or others is solely the decision of the individual SORH. NOSORH will, release the results in an aggregate Benchmarking Report.

What happens if one of the items doesn't really pertain to my office?

Every question within the self-assessment, whether it is marked as a "grant requirement" or not, has the option of "not applicable (N/A)". If selected, this line is removed entirely from the scoring on the section, and overall. If the item is a "grant requirement" be mindful that these are a core requirement of the grant and if you are unable to meet the requirements that you seek assistance immediately from your Project Officer or NOSORH.

Why does selecting N/A remove that line from the scoring?

The SORH peer group that created the Proficiencies didn't want offices to be penalized for things which they did not do – especially if it is outside of the SORH's control. Recognizing this, we ensured that every SORH could skip those questions which they don't feel comfortable answering. But don't just skip the question all together, be sure to select "N/A" so that you don't receive an error in the self-assessment.

Why are some of the response options bold, and the others not?

Bolded lettering may be shown for the "Competent" option – this indicates that being labeled as "competent" in this section is a requirement as a SORH grantee. FORHP has reviewed all the components of the SORH Proficiencies and identified all areas that are required, to ensure that the wording matches expectations of managing the SORH grant. You are not required in any way to respond with a "competent" selection, you may select any of the other three options. However, please be mindful that if you are not able to meet the "competent" level within that line item, you should connect with your Project Officer or NOSORH immediately to identify opportunities for assistance.

How long will it take me to complete the process?

From the start to finish, it is expected to take you approximately 2 or 2.5 hours to complete the entire process in one sitting. That includes the time it takes to read through the Proficiencies Guide, including instructions and definitions, and complete the actual self-assessment. The majority of your time will be spent reading the Proficiencies Guide to learn about the individual components. Most of the SORH who tested the Proficiencies noted that the self-assessment itself only took about 15-30 minutes to complete.

How do I access the Self-Assessment?

The self-assessment can be accessed online at: https://survey.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8ob4NAR5WNm8TjL

How long does it take to get my score back?

You will receive your results of the self-assessment immediately following the completion of the online self-assessment. The results will show in a table, providing you with your response choice, a score for each rubric, and an aggregate score. Please be sure to save and/or print this page as you are unable to return to this page.

If more than one person in my office takes it, can I get total scores for everyone combined?

If multiple people from your office are completing the self-assessment independently, NOSORH can compile all of those responses into an individual report. This will not identify who responded to each question in what way, but rather a combination of all the results from your office. To do this, respondents must indicate their “State” on the first page of the self-assessment. Otherwise, NOSORH staff will be unable to identify what state the responses are from.

What do I do with my score?

There are several options for using the score of the self-assessment. NOSORH recommends leveraging the score to conduct strategic planning for targeted capacity building. NOSORH is available to help facilitate a discussion between SORH staff, including contractors as necessary, on the best way to direct their capacity-building efforts.

What will NOSORH do with my score?

NOSORH will not use individual scores for any of their work, without the express permission of the SORH. However, NOSORH will not be responsible for providing any FORHP Project Officer with the individual state responses. NOSORH’s use of the results include:

1. Evaluating the capacity-building efforts of the organization,
2. Building the capacity of SORH through efforts of the Educational Exchange Committee, and
3. Guiding the development of additional rubrics on specific subject matter (i.e., workforce, etc.).

When can I expect to see the Benchmarking Report?

The Benchmarking Report will be made available to SORH once a majority of SORH offices (26) have completed the self-assessment. The Benchmarking Report will not only show the average or median scores for each rubric item but will point SORH to existing resources that are available for capacity-building within the respective area.

Still have more questions?

NOSORH is here to help guide you and your office through the process of completing the SORH Proficiencies. Please contact us if you need assistance in completing the self-assessment, or would like NOSORH to facilitate a group process for completing the self-assessment.

For more information, please contact:

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