Video Transcript: August 2025 Program Review Vignette Video 3

Angie (00:00): This video is designed to support Title X program staff during the post-federal review process. This video was produced by the Reproductive Health National Training Center, RHNTC. The Office of Population Affairs, or OPA, conducts Title X federal program reviews to ensure grant recipient compliance, provision of high-quality clinical care, and Title X program integrity. This video is designed to support Title X grantees in the process that follows a federal program review. Today, we will hear from Haley Johnston, who will offer insight and tips for a successful post-review experience from the OPA perspective. We will also hear from Nikki Krier from South Dakota and Cora Rabenberg from North Dakota, who will reflect on their recent post-review experiences. Haley Johnston has more than eight years of experience in reproductive and sexual health at both state and federal levels. She currently serves as a Title X Project Officer with the Office of Population Affairs, or OPA, where she works to ensure that Title X programs are aligned with federal regulation and responsive to their community's needs. Nikki Krier has been the nurse consultant for South Dakota's Prepare, Learn, Advocate, Navigate, or PLAN program, for two and a half years and a registered nurse for six years. Cora Rabenberg has served as Title X Family Planning Program Director at the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services for a decade and is also Assistant Director for the DHHS Family Health and Wellness Unit. Welcome, Haley. Please tell us about the post-program review process. What can a grantee expect following their federal review?

Haley (02:01): OPA’s goal is to provide you with clear, actionable feedback that supports continuous improvement and program excellence. You'll receive your program review report four to six weeks after the review. The report outlines areas of improvement, also referred to as AOIs, and any required follow-up actions, along with best practice recommendations. The report also highlights grantee and subrecipient strengths noted during the review. Along with your report, your OPA project officer will provide a Program Review Response Plan Template, which she'll use to create a SMART plan, that is, one that's Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. In this plan, you'll respond to each AOI including the actions you intend to take and your timeline for completing them. You'll be asked to submit the completed response plan to your project officer within 30 days of receiving your program review report. Once your project officer approves your response plan, you'll have another 60 days to complete all the tasks identified in your plan.

Angie (03:11): What tips would you offer to grantees preparing for the post-review phase, particularly around addressing areas of improvement and sustaining those improvements?

Haley (03:23): Grantees can begin preparing for their post-review phase early, even before you receive the program review report. Take notes throughout the review and debrief with your team while the review is still fresh. When addressing AOIs, create a response plan that's realistic and tailored to your program. Prioritize what's most critical, and think long-term, by embedding changes into daily workflows like updating policies, training staff, or setting regular check-ins. That's how improvements really stick.

Angie (03:57): Thank you, Haley. This OPA perspective is so valuable. Now we'll turn to Cora and Nikki. Thank you for being with us. Could you describe how the post-review process supported your program's growth or improvement?

Cora (04:13): Two areas of improvement that OPA identified during our program review, were to prevent billing third party insurance for confidential clients, and to verify income, rather than relying on the client's self-declared income.

Cora (04:29): We addressed these AOIs by engaging the RHNTC to provide training on how to safeguard confidentiality and steps to take in verifying income. We use the RHNTC's Fiscal Chart Audit Tool, and the training did what we needed it to. Before the training, chart audits showed that four out of eight subrecipients had errors, while the post-training audit demonstrated that only one of the eight subrecipients had an error. Another thing we did after the program review was update our subrecipient deliverable list to include staff training records and community engagement and outreach activities. This has strengthened our monitoring practices and made them more efficient.

Angie (05:16): Thank you, Cora. Nikki, tell us about South Dakota.

Nikki (05:21): Post-review, our agency implemented changes to support stronger policy and procedure development, as well as better subrecipient engagement, monitoring and input. First, we implemented a new policy and procedure structure that gives subrecipients better guidance on which policies need to be on site, and which policies are followed through South Dakota plan. We also implemented a new policy on policies as well as put into play a Microsoft form that allows subrecipients to provide feedback on our South Dakota plan policies. Additionally, we created a new self-review form for our subrecipients. This form captures the good, the bad, and the in-between of all activities implemented throughout the year by our subrecipients. Understanding program outcomes in real time allows our program staff to be more supportive in areas disclosed on the form, and it has improved our processes for monitoring improvements in subrecipient provision of the program. We were also super grateful for the willingness, friendliness, kindness and grace the reviewers provided us during the review.

Angie (06:36): What advice do you have for grantees with upcoming program reviews to help them with the post-review period?

Cora (06:46): Work with your RHNTC liaison! As soon as we received our report, we sent it to our liaison. We went through the report together, and our liaison identified that we could submit a fiscal TA request, which led to the work we did to improve our confidential billing and income verification processes.

Nikki (07:09): My advice is to be very organized with all of the deliverables expected from both the grantee and the subrecipients. Both have a role in providing OPA with deliverables, collections, response plans. Throughout this process, it's important to provide support to your subrecipients, and you can do this through checklists, check-ins, and even cheesecake, because emotional support dessert is still support.

Angie (07:36): No question about that! One more question for you, Hayley: What do you value most about the program review process?

Haley (07:45): What I value most about the program review process is that it's a chance to step back and see the full picture of a grantee's work. Their strengths, challenges they face, and the impact they're making in their communities. The review process is not about gotcha's, it's about supporting programs to do the best they can be. I especially appreciate the opportunity to have meaningful conversations with Title X project staff. During federal reviews, I learned so much about innovative practices and identifying ways to strengthen systems so that services are more equitable, client-centered, and sustainable over time.

Angie (08:26): Thank you so much, Haley, Cora, and Nikki for enlightening us on what to expect from the post-review process. I know grantees will appreciate your insight and expertise as they prepare for their federal program reviews. This video has been brought to you by the RHNTC. Please check out these resources for further support: the Title X Program Review Tool, the Title X Policy and Procedure Checklist, the Title X Policy Templates, and the Title X site visit requested documents list. Reach out to the RHNTC for program review questions and potential TA support.