

Eastern Idaho Public Health District

Marlyn Anderson, District Training Specialist

Interview conducted via telephone on December 14, 2007, 11am

Easter Idaho Public Health District (or District 7) has about 100 employees and serves eight counties with roughly 170,000 residents.

They have been using the Core Competencies for about four years, mostly as the basis for trainings, often in settings such as staff meetings. The Core Competencies are used in employee evaluations. Staff must work toward at least two competencies per evaluation period.

There are some online courses offered through Idaho State's online learning management system, but most trainings are done in person. Trainings are sometimes divided between professionals and non-professionals. The Department does not use any other sets of competencies.

Ms. Anderson expressed frustration with the Core Competencies in that there is no background information or resources which help health departments plan their trainings. Her department lacks experts in many of the areas covered by the Core Competencies, so the responsibility falls to Ms. Anderson to learn all there is to know about a topic in order to teach a training. She suggested some sort of bibliography that would have more "meat" for departments to use to train. The problem is not with the wording/phrasing of the Core Competencies, but with the fact that there is little behind it to provide straightforward teaching instruments. Another suggestion she had was for a 1-2 page brochure for each domain (or, ideally, for each competency) that would have a short background explanation, as well as resources for further education and to help plan trainings.

Ms. Anderson also expressed frustration with the fact that the staff, in general, does not value or see any usefulness in the Core Competencies or in training activities. They are viewed as simply an annoying part of the evaluation process. Staff, such as public health nurses, just do not have time to deal with training.