

Competency Assessment

Modified Version of the Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals (June 2017)

Adapted by the Public Health Foundation from an assessment developed by Janet Place, MPH, University of North Carolina (now at the University of South Carolina). Provided by the Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice. May be modified as needed.

Technical Note: This assessment was designed for use with Adobe Acrobat/Reader. Scoring and other functions may not operate properly in other PDF viewers. To use the assessment, download and save this PDF form before entering your scores.

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Introduction

The [Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals](#) (Core Competencies) are a consensus set of foundational skills for the broad practice of public health, as defined by the 10 Essential Public Health Services. The [Modified Version of the Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals](#) (Modified Core Competencies) was developed to offer a simplified version of the Core Competencies for use in workforce development efforts. This version was created by grouping similar competency statements together into categories that capture the general intent of the statements. A [Crosswalk of the Modified and 2014 Core Competencies](#) is available for more information about how these two sets of competencies relate to each other.

The Core Competencies are organized into [three tiers](#) based on professional roles within organizations. The Modified Core Competencies were developed using Tier 2 of the 2014 version of the Core Competencies, with competencies pulled from Tier 3 when there was no equivalent competency at the Tier 2 level. Although developed using Tier 2 of the Core Competencies, the Modified Core Competencies are designed to be used by all public health professionals and are not divided into tiers.

As with the 2014 Core Competencies, the Modified Core Competencies are organized into eight skill areas, or [domains](#), that cut across public health disciplines. The purpose of this assessment is to help you explore your level of competence within these eight domains.

This competency assessment is primarily designed as a self-assessment. However, once you have completed the assessment, it may also be useful to discuss this information with a supervisor, mentor, coach, or colleagues who can help to guide you in your professional development. Results of the assessment may be useful in developing professional development goals, choosing learning opportunities that will help you reach your goals or meet requirements for your occupation or discipline, or developing a learning plan, among other activities. Organizations may also wish to use this assessment with all staff and aggregate results to inform workforce development activities within the organization.

By assessing your level of knowledge or skill for each competency statement described, you will be able to prioritize your learning time to focus on those areas that are most important to you and to concentrate where the need for training and learning may be greatest.

How to Complete This Competency Assessment

The competency assessment should take about 20 minutes to complete. It is divided into the following eight domains:

- Analytical/Assessment Skills
- Policy Development/Program Planning Skills
- Communication Skills
- Cultural Competency Skills
- Community Dimensions of Practice Skills
- Public Health Sciences Skills
- Financial Planning and Management Skills
- Leadership and Systems Thinking Skills

- 1) Read each competency statement listed within a domain.
- 2) In each domain, and for each competency statement, think about the level at which you are currently able to perform the skill. Then rate your level of proficiency on each competency statement by selecting the number on the following continuum that best describes your perceived level of expertise for that statement:

1 = None	I am unaware or have very little knowledge of the skill
2 = Aware	I have heard of, but have limited knowledge or ability to apply the skill
3 = Knowledgeable	I am comfortable with my knowledge or ability to apply the skill
4 = Proficient	I am very comfortable, am an expert, or could teach this skill to others

Note: The competency statements listed in each domain should be interpreted as broadly as possible to apply to your position and principal setting of employment. In the example below, you would select “4” for “Proficient” if you think you are excelling at this competency or select “1” for “None” if you feel you need a great deal of improvement. For each competency, rate yourself with respect to the bold heading provided, taking into consideration the statements below the headings.

Example:

To what degree are you able to effectively engage in...data collection?

1 = None	I am unaware or have very little knowledge of the skill
2 = Aware	I have heard of, but have limited knowledge or ability to apply the skill
3 = Knowledgeable	I am comfortable with my knowledge or ability to apply the skill
4 = Proficient	I am very comfortable, am an expert, or could teach this skill to others

- 3) At the end of each domain, there is a place to write any comments you have. For example, if you feel like an expert but may still want training or learning opportunities in a particular skill, please enter those comments in the comments section. If you feel more confident about some aspects of the skill and less confident about others, you could note that in the comments. Additionally, if particular areas are highly relevant or less relevant for your job, you may wish to note those. This information can help you in determining where to place emphasis on building knowledge and skills. You may also want to share this assessment with your supervisor, mentor, coach, colleagues, or others and ask them to add comments as well. Their perspectives can help you identify areas where you may have underestimated or overestimated your skills, as well as prioritize strategic areas for growth based on your job responsibilities and the priorities of your organization. All of these comments may be helpful to you and your supervisor in planning for your professional development.
- 4) After you have entered your responses for each domain, the sum of your scores will appear in the column next to "Total Score." Your average score will also appear in the column next to "Average Score" and in the corresponding row of the "Your Results" section at the end of the competency assessment.
- 5) Review your results and follow the guidance offered in the "Interpreting Your Results" section to determine your next steps.

Analytical/Assessment Skills

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 1 = None | I am unaware or have very little knowledge of the skill |
| 2 = Aware | I have heard of, but have limited knowledge or ability to apply the skill |
| 3 = Knowledgeable | I am comfortable with my knowledge or ability to apply the skill |
| 4 = Proficient | I am very comfortable, am an expert, or could teach this skill to others |

To what degree are you able to effectively engage in...		
1	Data collection Collect quantitative and qualitative data and information on community health needs Collect quantitative and qualitative data and information on community assets	
2	Data analysis Determine validity, reliability, and comparability of data Analyze quantitative and qualitative data Interpret quantitative and qualitative data	
3	Community health assessment Assess community health status Develop community health assessment	
4	Evidence-based decision making Make evidence-based decisions Advocate for the use of evidence	
5	Ethical use of data Apply ethical principles in the use of data and information	
6	Information technology Apply information technology in the use of data and information	
	Total Score (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	Average Score (Divide the "Total Score" by 6 and enter the result here and into the corresponding row of the "Your Results" section)	

Comments:

Policy Development/Program Planning Skills

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 1 = None | I am unaware or have very little knowledge of the skill |
| 2 = Aware | I have heard of, but have limited knowledge or ability to apply the skill |
| 3 = Knowledgeable | I am comfortable with my knowledge or ability to apply the skill |
| 4 = Proficient | I am very comfortable, am an expert, or could teach this skill to others |

To what degree are you able to effectively engage in...		
1	Community health improvement planning Use community health assessment in developing community health improvement plan	
2	Strategic planning Contribute to development of strategic plan Implement strategic plan	
3	Policy, program, and service development Develop goals and objectives Monitor trends Develop and recommend options	
4	Policy, program, and service implementation Implement policies, programs, and services Manage within budgets and staffing levels	
5	Policy, program, and service improvement Evaluate policies, programs, and services Implement strategies for continuous improvement	
6	External policies, programs, and services Influence policies, programs, and services external to the organization	
7	Public health informatics Apply public health informatics to policies, programs, and services	
	Total Score (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	Average Score (Divide the "Total Score" by 7 and enter the result here and into the corresponding row of the "Your Results" section)	

Comments:

Communication Skills

1 = None	I am unaware or have very little knowledge of the skill
2 = Aware	I have heard of, but have limited knowledge or ability to apply the skill
3 = Knowledgeable	I am comfortable with my knowledge or ability to apply the skill
4 = Proficient	I am very comfortable, am an expert, or could teach this skill to others

To what degree are you able to effectively engage in...		
1	Literacy assessment Assess the literacy of populations served	
2	Written and oral communication Communicate in writing and orally with linguistic and cultural proficiency	
3	Community input Solicit input from the community	
4	Information dissemination Determine approaches for disseminating data and information Convey data and information	
5	Behavior change Communicate to influence behavior	
6	Facilitation Facilitate communication	
7	Agency and organization roles Communicate the roles of governmental public health, health care, and other partners	
	Total Score (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	Average Score (Divide the "Total Score" by 7 and enter the result here and into the corresponding row of the "Your Results" section)	

Comments:

Cultural Competency Skills

1 = None	I am unaware or have very little knowledge of the skill
2 = Aware	I have heard of, but have limited knowledge or ability to apply the skill
3 = Knowledgeable	I am comfortable with my knowledge or ability to apply the skill
4 = Proficient	I am very comfortable, am an expert, or could teach this skill to others

To what degree are you able to effectively engage in...		
1	Population diversity Describe the concept of diversity Describe the diversity within a community	
2	Workforce diversity Describe the value of a diverse workforce Advocate for a diverse workforce	
3	Cultural influences on policies, programs, and services Recognize the influence of population diversity on programs, policies, and services Address population diversity in policies, programs, and services	
4	Policy, program, and service impacts Assess the effects of policies, programs, and services on different populations	
	Total Score (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	Average Score (Divide the "Total Score" by 4 and enter the result here and into the corresponding row of the "Your Results" section)	

Comments:

Community Dimensions of Practice Skills

1 = None	I am unaware or have very little knowledge of the skill
2 = Aware	I have heard of, but have limited knowledge or ability to apply the skill
3 = Knowledgeable	I am comfortable with my knowledge or ability to apply the skill
4 = Proficient	I am very comfortable, am an expert, or could teach this skill to others

To what degree are you able to effectively engage in...		
1	Community programs and services Distinguish the roles and responsibilities of governmental and non-governmental organizations	
2	Relationship building Identify relationships that are affecting health Develop relationships Maintain relationships	
3	Partner collaboration Facilitate collaboration among partners	
4	Community engagement Engage community members Use community input for policies, programs, and services	
5	Community assets Explain the ways assets and resources can be used	
6	Advocacy Advocate for policies, programs, and resources	
7	Community-based participatory research Collaborate in community-based participatory research	
	Total Score (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	Average Score (Divide the "Total Score" by 7 and enter the result here and into the corresponding row of the "Your Results" section)	

Comments:

Public Health Sciences Skills

1 = None	I am unaware or have very little knowledge of the skill
2 = Aware	I have heard of, but have limited knowledge or ability to apply the skill
3 = Knowledgeable	I am comfortable with my knowledge or ability to apply the skill
4 = Proficient	I am very comfortable, am an expert, or could teach this skill to others

To what degree are you able to effectively engage in...		
1	Foundation of public health Discuss the scientific foundation of public health Describe prominent events in public health	
2	Application of public health sciences Use public health sciences for policies, programs, services, and research Apply public health sciences in administration and management	
3	Public health evidence Retrieve evidence from print and electronic sources Determine limitations of evidence Use evidence for policies, programs, and services	
4	Research ethics Identify the laws, regulations, policies, and procedures for ethical research	
5	Evidence-based public health Contribute to the public health evidence base Develop partnerships to increase use of evidence	
	Total Score (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	Average Score (Divide the "Total Score" by 5 and enter the result here and into the corresponding row of the "Your Results" section)	

Comments:

Financial Planning and Management Skills

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 1 = None | I am unaware or have very little knowledge of the skill |
| 2 = Aware | I have heard of, but have limited knowledge or ability to apply the skill |
| 3 = Knowledgeable | I am comfortable with my knowledge or ability to apply the skill |
| 4 = Proficient | I am very comfortable, am an expert, or could teach this skill to others |

To what degree are you able to effectively engage in...		
1	Governmental agencies Explain the structures, functions, and authorizations of governmental public health Identify government agencies with authority to address community health needs	
2	Governance Implement policies and procedures of the governing body	
3	Public health and health care funding Explain public health and health care funding mechanisms and procedures	
4	Budgeting Justify programs for inclusion in budgets Develop budgets Defend budgets	
5	Proposal writing Prepare funding proposals	
6	Contract negotiation Negotiate contracts and other agreements	
7	Financial analysis Use financial analysis methods for policies, programs, and services	
8	Team building Establish teams	
9	Motivation Motivate personnel	
10	Performance management Develop performance management system Use performance management system	
	Total Score (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	Average Score (Divide the "Total Score" by 10 and enter the result here and into the corresponding row of the "Your Results" section)	

Comments:

Leadership and Systems Thinking Skills

1 = None	I am unaware or have very little knowledge of the skill
2 = Aware	I have heard of, but have limited knowledge or ability to apply the skill
3 = Knowledgeable	I am comfortable with my knowledge or ability to apply the skill
4 = Proficient	I am very comfortable, am an expert, or could teach this skill to others

To what degree are you able to effectively engage in...		
1	Ethics Incorporate ethical standards of practice into all interactions	
2	Systems thinking Describe public health as part of a larger system Explain how public health, health care, and other organizations can work together or individually	
3	Vision Collaborate in developing a vision for a healthy community	
4	Factors impacting effectiveness Analyze facilitators and barriers that may affect policies, programs, services, and research	
5	Professional development Provide opportunities for professional development Ensure use of professional development opportunities	
6	Change management Modify practices in consideration of changes	
7	Continuous improvement Contribute to continuous performance improvement	
8	Advocacy for public health Advocate for the role of public health in population health	
	Total Score (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	Average Score (Divide the "Total Score" by 8 and enter the result here and into the corresponding row of the "Your Results" section)	

Comments:

Your Results

The average score from each domain should appear in the corresponding row below.

Domain	Average Score
Analytical/Assessment Skills	
Policy Development/Program Planning Skills	
Communication Skills	
Cultural Competency Skills	
Community Dimensions of Practice Skills	
Public Health Sciences Skills	
Financial Planning and Management Skills	
Leadership and Systems Thinking Skills	

Interpreting Your Results

Based on the averages you have for each domain in the “Your Results” section above, you are now ready to identify the strengths in your practice and the areas that you would like to improve or strengthen.

For example, if you have scored a “1” in any domain that is highly relevant to your job responsibilities, you will want to consider focusing your time and energy toward achieving the competencies in that domain, followed by domains in which you scored a “2,” with a lower priority given to domains in which you scored a “3” or higher.

Once you have identified your priorities, you can use this information to guide you in engaging in a discussion with your supervisor, mentor, or coach; in choosing learning opportunities that will help you reach your goals and meet the requirements for continuing competence in your occupation or discipline; and in developing a learning plan with one or more personal professional goals for the next year.

Engaging with your supervisor, mentor, or coach offers a valuable way to get feedback to round out and interpret your assessment results. Their perspectives can help you identify areas where you may have underestimated or overestimated your skills, as well as prioritize strategic areas for growth based on your job responsibilities and the priorities of your organization. Competency assessments are not meant to be punitive, but to help identify opportunities for professional development to help you grow within your organization and achieve your career goals. Having an open conversation with your supervisor can allow you to explore what opportunities are available to you and determine steps for pursuing them.

Training offers a way to begin building knowledge and skills in the competency areas you have identified as priorities. Relevant training may be provided by a variety of organizations such as government agencies, academic institutions, public health training centers, and nonprofit organizations. One resource for locating such training is the [TRAIN Learning Network](#), which offers training and other learning opportunities for public health, health care, behavioral health, preparedness, and other health professionals from thousands of training providers. The Core Competencies are built into TRAIN, allowing you to search for courses that help build knowledge and skills related to the competency domains you have identified. Visit the [TRAIN Course Catalog](#) and filter by *Competencies and Capabilities* to get started. As you set your professional development goals and develop a learning plan, you can incorporate these courses and keep track of your progress over time.

Assistance with using this assessment and the TRAIN Learning Network is available through the [Public Health Foundation](#) (PHF). For assistance using this resource, please contact competencies@phf.org.

For More Information

Additional information about the Modified Core Competencies can be found at phf.org/modifiedcorecompetencies. General information about the Core Competencies is available at phf.org/aboutcorecompetencies. Questions or requests for information may be sent to competencies@phf.org.

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