

# Competency Assessment

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## Tier 1 Public Health Professionals

January 2012

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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.

# Competency Assessment for Tier 1<sup>1</sup> Public Health Professionals

January 2012

## Introduction

The purpose of this competency assessment is to help you discover your level of competence on key dimensions of public health practice.

A competency is any knowledge or skill of an individual or organization that has been shown to cause or predict outstanding performance. A collection of competencies make up a behavioral roadmap that is directly related to both individual and organizational performance.

By assessing your level of knowledge or skill for each competency indicator 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 key dimensions of public health practice:

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

- 1) Read each competency indicator listed under the key dimension.
- 2) In each dimension, and for each competency indicator, think about *what level* you are currently able to perform the skill. Then rate your level of proficiency on each indicator by selecting the number on the continuum from “None” (1) to “Proficient” (4) that best describes your self-reported level of expertise for that indicator. **Note:** The competency indicators listed in each key dimension should be interpreted as broadly as possible to apply to your position and principal setting of employment.

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<sup>1</sup> Tier 1 public health professionals are (typically) individuals who carry out the day-to-day tasks of public health organizations and are not in management positions. Responsibilities of these individuals may include basic data collection and analysis, fieldwork, program planning, outreach activities, programmatic support, and other organizational tasks.

In the example below, you would select number “4” for “Proficient” if you think you are excelling at this competency or select “1” for “None” if feel you need a great deal of improvement.

**Example:**

To what degree are you able to effectively...describe the characteristics of a population-based public health problem?

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

- 3) At the end of each key dimension 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 your comments in the comments section. You may also want to share this assessment with your supervisor, colleagues, or others and ask them to add comments as well. These comments may be helpful to you and your supervisor in planning for your professional development.
- 4) After you have entered in your responses for each key dimension, 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 total” 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

2=Aware

3=Knowledgeable

4=Proficient

I am unaware, or have very little knowledge of the item

I have heard of it; limited knowledge and/or ability to apply the skill

I am comfortable with knowledge or ability to apply the skill

I am very comfortable, an expert; could teach this to others

To what degree are you able to effectively...		
1	Identify the health status of populations and their related determinants of health and illness (e.g. factors contributing to health promotion and disease prevention, the quality, availability and use of health services)	
2	Describe the characteristics of a population-based health problem (e.g. equity, social determinants, environment)	
3	Use variables that measure public health conditions	
4	Use methods and instruments for collecting valid and reliable quantitative and qualitative data	
5	Identify sources of public health data and information	
6	Recognize the integrity and comparability of data	
7	Identify gaps in data sources	
8	Adhere to ethical principles in the collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of data and information	
9	Describe the public health applications of quantitative and qualitative data	
10	Collect quantitative and qualitative community data (e.g. risks and benefits to the community, health and resource needs)	
11	Use information technology to collect, store, and retrieve data	
12	Describe how data are used to address scientific, political, ethical, and social public health issues	
	<b>Total score</b> (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	<b>Average total</b> (Divide the "Total score" by 12 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 item
2=Aware	I have heard of it; limited knowledge and/or ability to apply the skill
3=Knowledgeable	I am comfortable with knowledge or ability to apply the skill
4=Proficient	I am very comfortable, an expert; could teach this to others

To what degree are you able to effectively...		
1	Gather information relevant to specific public health policy issues	
2	Describe how policy options can influence public health programs	
3	Explain the expected outcomes of policy options (e.g. health, fiscal, administrative, legal, ethical, social, political)	
4	Gather information that will inform policy decisions (e.g. health, fiscal, administrative, legal, ethical, social, political)	
5	Describe the public health laws and regulations governing public health programs	
6	Participate in program planning processes	
7	Incorporate policies and procedures into program plans and structures	
8	Identify mechanisms to monitor and evaluate programs for their effectiveness and quality	
9	Demonstrate the use of public health informatics practices and procedures (e.g. use of information systems infrastructure to improve health outcomes)	
10	Apply strategies for continuous quality improvement	
	<b>Total score</b> (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	<b>Average total</b> (Divide the "Total score" by <b>10</b> and enter the result here and into the corresponding row of the "Your results" section)	

**Comments:**

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## Communication Skills

1=None

2=Aware

3=Knowledgeable

4=Proficient

I am unaware, or have very little knowledge of the item

I have heard of it; limited knowledge and/or ability to apply the skill

I am comfortable with knowledge or ability to apply the skill

I am very comfortable, an expert; could teach this to others

### To what degree are you able to effectively...

1	Identify the health literacy of populations served	
2	Communicate in writing and orally, in person, and through electronic means, with linguistic and cultural proficiency	
3	Solicit community-based input from individuals and organizations	
4	Convey public health information using a variety of approaches (e.g. social networks, media, blogs)	
5	Participate in the development of demographic, statistical, programmatic and scientific presentations	
6	Apply communication and group dynamic strategies (e.g. principled negotiation, conflict resolution, active listening, risk communication) in interactions with individuals and groups	
	<b>Total score</b> (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	<b>Average total</b> (Divide the "Total score" by 6 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 item
2=Aware	I have heard of it; limited knowledge and/or ability to apply the skill
3=Knowledgeable	I am comfortable with knowledge or ability to apply the skill
4=Proficient	I am very comfortable, an expert; could teach this to others

<b>To what degree are you able to effectively...</b>		
1	Incorporate strategies for interacting with persons from diverse backgrounds (e.g. cultural, socioeconomic, educational, racial, gender, age, ethnic, sexual orientation, professional, religious affiliation, mental and physical capabilities)	
2	Recognize the role of cultural, social, and behavioral factors in the accessibility, availability, acceptability, and delivery of public health services	
3	Respond to diverse needs that are the result of cultural differences	
4	Describe the dynamic forces that contribute to cultural diversity	
5	Describe the need for a diverse public health workforce	
6	Participate in the assessment of the cultural competence of the public health organization	
<b>Total score</b> (Add all scores and enter total here)		
<b>Average total</b> (Divide the "Total score" by <b>6</b> and enter the result here and into the corresponding row of the "Your results" section)		

### Comments

## Community Dimensions of Practice Skills

1=None

2=Aware

3=Knowledgeable

4=Proficient

I am unaware, or have very little knowledge of the item

I have heard of it; limited knowledge and/or ability to apply the skill

I am comfortable with knowledge or ability to apply the skill

I am very comfortable, an expert; could teach this to others

<b>To what degree are you able to effectively...</b>		
1	Recognize community linkages and relationships among multiple factors (or determinants) affecting health (e.g. The Socio-Ecological Model)	
2	Demonstrate the capacity to work in community-based participatory research efforts	
3	Identify stakeholders	
4	Collaborate with community partners to promote the health of the population	
5	Maintain partnerships with key stakeholders	
6	Use group processes to advance community involvement	
7	Describe the role of governmental and non-governmental organizations in the delivery of community health services	
8	Identify community assets and resources	
9	Gather input from the community to inform the development of public health policy and programs	
10	Inform the public about policies, programs, and resources	
	<b>Total score</b> (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	<b>Average total</b> (Divide the "Total score" by <b>10</b> and enter the result here and into the corresponding row of the "Your results" section)	

**Comments:**

## Public Health Scienceg Skills

1=None

2=Aware

3=Knowledgeable

4=Proficient

I am unaware, or have very little knowledge of the item

I have heard of it; limited knowledge and/or ability to apply the skill

I am comfortable with knowledge or ability to apply the skill

I am very comfortable, an expert; could teach this to others

<b>To what degree are you able to effectively...</b>		
1	Describe the scientific foundation of the field of public health	
2	Identify prominent events in the history of the public health profession	
3	Relate public health science skills to the Core Public Health Functions and Ten Essential Services of Public Health	
4	Identify the basic public health sciences (including, but not limited to, biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental health sciences, health services administration, and social and behavioral health sciences)	
5	Describe the scientific evidence related to a public health issue, concern, or intervention	
6	Retrieve scientific evidence from a variety of text and electronic sources	
7	Discuss the limitations of research findings (e.g. limitations of data sources, importance of observations and interrelationships)	
8	Describe the laws, regulations, policies, and procedures for the ethical conduct of research (e.g. patient confidentiality, human subject processes)	
9	Partner with other public health professionals in building the scientific base of public health	
	<b>Total score</b> (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	<b>Average total</b> (Divide the "Total score" by <b>9</b> 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 item                 |
| 2=Aware         | I have heard of it; limited knowledge and/or ability to apply the skill |
| 3=Knowledgeable | I am comfortable with knowledge or ability to apply the skill           |
| 4=Proficient    | I am very comfortable, an expert; could teach this to others            |

<b>To what degree are you able to effectively...</b>		
1	Describe the local, state, and federal public health and health care systems	
2	Describe the organizational structures, functions, and authorities of local, state, and federal public health agencies	
3	Adhere to the organization's policies and procedures	
4	Participate in the development of a programmatic budget	
5	Operate programs within current and forecasted budget constraints	
6	Identify strategies for determining budget priorities based on federal, state, and local financial contributions	
7	Report program performance	
8	Translate evaluation report information into program performance improvement action steps	
9	Contribute to the preparation of proposals for funding from external sources	
10	Apply basic human relations skills to internal collaborations, motivation of colleagues, and resolution of conflicts	
11	Demonstrate public health informatics skills to improve program and business operations (e.g. performance management and improvement)	

## Financial Planning and Management Skills (continued)

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

<b>To what degree are you able to effectively...</b>		
12	Participate in the development of contracts and other agreements for the provision of services	
13	Describe how cost-effectiveness, cost-benefit, and cost-utility analyses affect programmatic prioritization and decision making	
	<b>Total score</b> (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	<b>Average total</b> (Divide the "Total score" by <b>13</b> 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 item
2=Aware	I have heard of it; limited knowledge and/or ability to apply the skill
3=Knowledgeable	I am comfortable with knowledge or ability to apply the skill
4=Proficient	I am very comfortable, an expert; could teach this to others

<b>To what degree are you able to effectively...</b>		
1	Incorporate ethical standards of practice as the basis of all interactions with organizations, communities, and individuals	
2	Describe how public health operates within a larger system	
3	Participate with stakeholders in identifying key public health values and a shared public health vision as guiding principles for community action	
4	Identify internal and external problems that may affect the delivery of Essential Public Health Services	
5	Use individual, team, and organizational learning opportunities for personal and professional development	
6	Participate in mentoring and peer review or coaching opportunities	
7	Participate in the measuring, reporting, and continuous improvement of organizational performance	
8	Describe the impact of changes in the public health system, and larger social, political, economic environment on organizational practices	
<b>Total score</b> (Add all scores and enter total here)		
<b>Average total</b> (Divide the "Total score" by <b>8</b> and enter the result here and into the corresponding row of the "Your results" section)		

**Comments:**

## Your results

Enter the average total from each key dimension in the corresponding row below.

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

### Interpreting your results

Based on the averages you have for each key dimension 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 dimension, you will want to consider focusing your time and energy towards achieving the competency indicators in that dimension, followed by dimensions in which you score a “2,” with a lower priority given to dimensions in which you scored a “3” or higher.

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

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Original tool developed by Janet Place, MPH - North Carolina Public Health Academy at the University of North Carolina (modified by the Public Health Foundation). It may be modified as needed.