

Competency Assessment

Tier 1 Public Health Professionals

2014 Version

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.

Competency Assessment for Tier 1 Public Health Professionals¹

2014 Version

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 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.

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 makes 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 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 continuum from “None” (1) to “Proficient” (4) that best describes your self-reported level of expertise for that statement. **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 number “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.

¹ **Tier 1 – Front Line Staff/Entry Level:** Tier 1 competencies apply to public health professionals who carry out the day-to-day tasks of public health organizations and are not in management positions. Responsibilities of these professionals may include data collection and analysis, fieldwork, program planning, outreach, communications, customer service, and program support.

Example:

To what degree are you able to effectively...describe factors affecting the health of a community (e.g., equity, income, education, environment)?

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 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 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 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 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...		
1	Describe factors affecting the health of a community (e.g., equity, income, education, environment)	
2	Identify quantitative and qualitative data and information (e.g., vital statistics, electronic health records, transportation patterns, unemployment rates, community input, health equity impact assessments) that can be used for assessing the health of a community	
3	Apply ethical principles in accessing, collecting, analyzing, using, maintaining, and disseminating data and information	
4	Use information technology in accessing, collecting, analyzing, using, maintaining, and disseminating data and information	
5	Select valid and reliable data	
6	Select comparable data (e.g., data being age-adjusted to the same year, data variables across datasets having similar definitions)	
7	Identify gaps in data	
8	Collect valid and reliable quantitative and qualitative data	
9	Describe public health applications of quantitative and qualitative data	
10	Use quantitative and qualitative data	
11	Describe assets and resources that can be used for improving the health of a community (e.g., Boys & Girls Clubs, public libraries, hospitals, faith-based organizations, academic institutions, federal grants, fellowship programs)	
12	Contribute to assessments of community health status and factors influencing health in a community (e.g., quality, availability, accessibility, and use of health services; access to affordable housing)	
13	Explain how community health assessments use information about health status, factors influencing health, and assets and resources	
14	Describe how evidence (e.g., data, findings reported in peer-reviewed literature) is used in decision making	

	Total Score (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	Average Total (Divide the "Total Score" by 14 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...		
1	Contribute to state/Tribal/community health improvement planning (e.g., providing data to supplement community health assessments, communicating observations from work in the field)	
2	Contribute to development of program goals and objectives	
3	Describe organizational strategic plan (e.g., includes measurable objectives and targets; relationship to community health improvement plan, workforce development plan, quality improvement plan, and other plans)	
4	Contribute to implementation of organizational strategic plan	
5	Identify current trends (e.g., health, fiscal, social, political, environmental) affecting the health of a community	
6	Gather information that can inform options for policies, programs, and services (e.g., secondhand smoking policies, data use policies, HR policies, immunization programs, food safety programs)	
7	Describe implications of policies, programs, and services	
8	Implement policies, programs, and services	
9	Explain the importance of evaluations for improving policies, programs, and services	
10	Gather information for evaluating policies, programs, and services (e.g., outputs, outcomes, processes, procedures, return on investment)	
11	Apply strategies for continuous quality improvement	
12	Describe how public health informatics is used in developing, implementing, evaluating, and improving policies, programs, and services (e.g., integrated data systems, electronic reporting, knowledge management systems, geographic information systems)	
	Total Score (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	Average Total (Divide the "Total Score" by 12 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...		
1	Identify the literacy of populations served (e.g., ability to obtain, interpret, and use health and other information; social media literacy)	
2	Communicate in writing and orally with linguistic and cultural proficiency (e.g., using age-appropriate materials, incorporating images)	
3	Solicit input from individuals and organizations (e.g., chambers of commerce, religious organizations, schools, social service organizations, hospitals, government, community-based organizations, various populations served) for improving the health of a community	
4	Suggest approaches for disseminating public health data and information (e.g., social media, newspapers, newsletters, journals, town hall meetings, libraries, neighborhood gatherings)	
5	Convey data and information to professionals and the public using a variety of approaches (e.g., reports, presentations, email, letters)	
6	Communicate information to influence behavior and improve health (e.g., use social marketing methods, consider behavioral theories such as the Health Belief Model or Stages of Change Model)	
7	Facilitate communication among individuals, groups, and organizations	
8	Describe the roles of governmental public health, health care, and other partners in improving the health of a community	
	Total Score (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	Average Total (Divide the "Total Score" by 8 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...		
1	Describe the concept of diversity as it applies to individuals and populations (e.g., language, culture, values, socioeconomic status, geography, education, race, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, profession, religious affiliation, mental and physical abilities, historical experiences)	
2	Describe the diversity of individuals and populations in a community	
3	Describe the ways diversity may influence policies, programs, services, and the health of a community	
4	Recognize the contribution of diverse perspectives in developing, implementing, and evaluating policies, programs, and services that affect the health of a community	
5	Address the diversity of individuals and populations when implementing policies, programs, and services that affect the health of a community	
6	Describe the effects of policies, programs, and services on different populations in a community	
7	Describe the value of a diverse public health workforce	
	Total Score (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	Average Total (Divide the "Total Score" by 7 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...		
1	Describe the programs and services provided by governmental and non-governmental organizations to improve the health of a community	
2	Recognize relationships that are affecting health in a community (e.g., relationships among health departments, hospitals, community health centers, primary care providers, schools, community-based organizations, and other types of organizations)	
3	Suggest relationships that may be needed to improve health in a community	
4	Support relationships that improve health in a community	
5	Collaborate with community partners to improve health in a community (e.g., participate in committees, share data and information, connect people to resources)	
6	Engage community members (e.g., focus groups, talking circles, formal meetings, key informant interviews) to improve health in a community	
7	Provide input for developing, implementing, evaluating, and improving policies, programs, and services	
8	Use assets and resources (e.g., Boys & Girls Clubs, public libraries, hospitals, faith-based organizations, academic institutions, federal grants, fellowship programs) to improve health in a community	
9	Inform the public about policies, programs, and resources that improve health in a community	
10	Describe the importance of community-based participatory research	
	Total Score (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	Average Total (Divide the "Total Score" by 10 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...		
1	Describe the scientific foundation of the field of public health	
2	Identify prominent events in the history of public health (e.g., smallpox eradication, development of vaccinations, infectious disease control, safe drinking water, emphasis on hygiene and hand washing, access to health care for people with disabilities)	
3	Describe how public health sciences (e.g., biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental health sciences, health services administration, social and behavioral sciences, and public health informatics) are used in the delivery of the 10 Essential Public Health Services	
4	Retrieve evidence (e.g., research findings, case reports, community surveys) from print and electronic sources (e.g., PubMed, <i>Journal of Public Health Management and Practice</i> , <i>Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report</i> , <i>The World Health Report</i>) to support decision making	
5	Recognize limitations of evidence (e.g., validity, reliability, sample size, bias, generalizability)	
6	Describe evidence used in developing, implementing, evaluating, and improving policies, programs, and services	
7	Describe the laws, regulations, policies, and procedures for the ethical conduct of research (e.g., patient confidentiality, protection of human subjects, Americans with Disabilities Act)	
8	Contribute to the public health evidence base (e.g., participating in Public Health Practice-Based Research Networks, community-based participatory research, and academic health departments; authoring articles; making data available to researchers)	
9	Suggest partnerships that may increase use of evidence in public health practice (e.g., between practice and academic organizations, with health sciences libraries)	
	Total Score (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	Average Total (Divide the "Total Score" by 9 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...		
1	Describe the structures, functions, and authorizations of governmental public health programs and organizations	
2	Describe government agencies with authority to impact the health of a community	
3	Adhere to organizational policies and procedures	
4	Describe public health funding mechanisms (e.g., categorical grants, fees, third-party reimbursement, tobacco taxes)	
5	Contribute to development of program budgets	
6	Provide information for proposals for funding (e.g., foundations, government agencies, corporations)	
7	Provide information for development of contracts and other agreements for programs and services	
8	Describe financial analysis methods used in making decisions about policies, programs, and services (e.g., cost-effectiveness, cost-benefit, cost-utility analysis, return on investment)	
9	Operate programs within budget	
10	Describe how teams help achieve program and organizational goals (e.g., the value of different disciplines, sectors, skills, experiences, and perspectives; scope of work and timeline)	
11	Motivate colleagues for the purpose of achieving program and organizational goals (e.g., participating in teams, encouraging sharing of ideas, respecting different points of view)	
12	Use evaluation results to improve program and organizational performance	
13	Describe program performance standards and measures	

To what degree are you able to effectively...		
14	Use performance management systems for program and organizational improvement (e.g., achieving performance objectives and targets, increasing efficiency, refining processes, meeting <i>Healthy People</i> objectives, sustaining accreditation)	
	Total Score (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	Average Total (Divide the "Total Score" by 14 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...		
1	Incorporate ethical standards of practice (e.g., Public Health Code of Ethics) into all interactions with individuals, organizations, and communities	
2	Describe public health as part of a larger inter-related system of organizations that influence the health of populations at local, national, and global levels	
3	Describe the ways public health, health care, and other organizations can work together or individually to impact the health of a community	
4	Contribute to development of a vision for a healthy community (e.g., emphasis on prevention, health equity for all, excellence and innovation)	
5	Identify internal and external facilitators and barriers that may affect the delivery of the 10 Essential Public Health Services (e.g., using root cause analysis and other quality improvement methods and tools, problem solving)	
6	Describe needs for professional development (e.g., training, mentoring, peer advising, coaching)	
7	Participate in professional development opportunities	
8	Describe the impact of changes (e.g., social, political, economic, scientific) on organizational practices	
9	Describe ways to improve individual and program performance	
	Total Score (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	Average Total (Divide the "Total Score" by 9 and enter the result here and into the corresponding row of the "Your Results" section)	

Comments:

Your Results

Enter the average total from each domain in the corresponding row below.

Domain	Average Total
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, 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 developing a learning plan with one or more personal professional goals for the next year; in engaging in 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.