

Performance Management Toolkit FAQs

This list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) is a compilation of questions that PHF has received about developing, implementing, and improving performance management systems. The tools, resources, stories, and other material in the Performance Toolkit can help to address many of these questions. PHF will continue to share questions and answers, like the ones below, and add new resources to the Performance Management Toolkit to meet the needs of the Toolkit's users.

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Questions about Getting Started:

- **What are good resources for a team that is just getting started with performance management that needs to learn about the fundamentals of performance management systems?**
 - The Performance Management Toolkit includes a few resources that can be used to help educate teams that are just getting started with performance management. Visit the [Getting Started with Performance Management section](#) of the toolkit to check out [PHF's introductory slide show](#) about performance management systems, [a primer](#) by the Michigan Public Health Institute, and many other introductory materials.
- **Where is a good place to begin when developing a performance management system?**
 - The [Performance Management Self-Assessment](#) is a great place to get started. Designed to be completed by a team of colleagues, the assessment generates group discussions around the components of a performance management system that can help identify organizational or programmatic strengths and areas for improvement. Even without completing the self-assessment, teams can find great value in simply reviewing the questions to focus their thoughts about areas of strength and opportunities for improvement that may influence the development of a performance management system.
- **When getting started with performance management, is there a particular component of the Performance Management System Framework on which it is best to focus efforts?**
 - No, there is not a specific component of the Performance Management System Framework that serves as a starting point. An organization or program should start wherever it has identified the organization's or program's strengths and devise a plan

for developing the other parts of a performance management system. The Performance Management Toolkit includes material such as the [Performance Management System Framework slides](#) and a [Short History of Performance Management in Public Health](#) that can help teams understand more about the components of the Performance Management System Framework and where to get started.

Questions about the Performance Management Self-Assessment:

- **How should a team approach the Performance Management Self-Assessment?**
 - Designed to be completed by a team of colleagues, the assessment should be used to generate group discussions around the components of a performance management system. It is often useful to convene a small group of colleagues who can bring different perspectives about the questions to ensure that there is thoughtful deliberation about the questions that represents a range of experiences. In some cases, groups may find it useful to engage help from a neutral facilitator to help guide the discussion, and PHF offers [technical assistance services](#) to meet this need.

Questions about Components of the Performance Management System Framework:

- **What is the difference between a performance standard and a performance measure?**
 - A performance standard sets a goal, a standard you hope to achieve or surpass. The performance measure is simply a measurement of where you are at a point in time. The measure can be used to determine how well the standard is being met. To illustrate these ideas, the Performance Management Toolkit links to [Healthy People 2020](#) which provides national health objectives and targets for health departments and others to develop their own performance standards. The [Public Health Accreditation Board's Standards and Measures version 1.5](#) document also includes several examples of performance standards for state and local public health systems, and boards of health. The Performance Management Toolkit also links to a [resource from the National Public Health Improvement Initiative](#) that includes examples of performance measures.
- **Securing support from visible leadership is difficult. What are some ways to understand the value of a performance management system?**
 - Knowing how to report and share progress is important for getting support from those in leadership roles. To gain support from your leadership for developing a performance management system, be sure to share information about expected measureable impact, and other positive outcomes that can show the value of putting time and resources into developing a performance management system. Communicate with your leadership that implementing a performance management system will help to provide clarity for people in the organization about organizational objectives, provide a way to monitor progress over time, and lead to refining strategies to better assure that targets

are met. Approach your leadership from a point of strength and communicate about goals and strategies clearly and concisely. Examples of how others have developed and implemented performance management systems are available in the [Performance Management Case Stories section](#) of the Performance Management Toolkit and may be useful in talking to leadership about the benefits of a performance management system. Once your performance management system has been implemented, check out the [Reporting Progress section](#) of the Performance Management Toolkit for resources on how to report about progress that will resonate with the priorities of those with whom you are sharing the report.

- **Is it possible to engage in quality improvement (QI) efforts even if the performance management system is not finished yet?**
 - Yes, it is possible to engage in QI while a performance management system is in development. When the Performance Management System Framework was refreshed in 2012, the shape was changed from a square to a circle, indicating the need for continuous movement through the components and encouraging any organization to “start where they are” in the process. This model for developing a performance management system includes many of the elements of the [Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle](#), which is a process for engaging in [continuous quality improvement](#) and can be applied at any point of performance management. Additionally QI processes should be reassessed to ensure that efforts to meet performance standards are supported. For this reason, the development of a performance management system is never truly finished. By using QI methods and tools to continuously examine the existing performance management system being used by the organization or program the system can be updated to reflect organizational changes. Check out the [Continuous Improvement section](#) of the Performance Management Toolkit to access additional resources.

Questions about Developing and Using a Performance Management System:

- **Who should use performance management and the Performance Management Toolkit?**
 - Anyone can use performance management to help manage the performance of programs and organizations. While the resources in the Performance Management Toolkit address performance management as it pertains to public health, the principles of performance management remain the same when applied to healthcare or other sectors. For a variety of examples of how performance management has been used, check out the [Performance Management Case Stories section](#) of the Performance Management Toolkit.

- **Is it necessary to hire an expert to develop a performance management system?**
 - No, it is not always necessary to work with a performance management expert in order to develop a sound performance management system. However, convening the right team to provide input on the development of the performance management system is crucial. Successful performance management systems are not typically built from the management level and up; they often require input from operational program staff to develop meaningful performance measures. Convening a team that can provide accurate and valuable input on the development of the performance management system is crucial. In addition to management and program staff, public health accreditation managers/coordinators, performance improvement managers and QI leaders within the organization should also be included. While not required, subject matter experts in the field of performance management can be used as a resource to facilitate a collective process through the steps of building a performance management system.

If you have a question about performance management systems or any of the resources in the Performance Management Toolkit, contact Micaela Kirshy, mkirshy@phf.org or (202)218-4410.

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