Competency Assessment

2021 Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals: Competency Statements Only

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 or crosscutting knowledge and skills for the broad practice of public health, as defined by the 10 Essential Public Health Services. The Core Competencies contain 56 competency statements that apply across the public health workforce for those engaged in the practice, education, and research of public health. 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.

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:

- Data Analytics and Assessment Skills
- Policy Development and Program Planning Skills
- Communication Skills
- Health Equity Skills
- Community Partnership Skills
- Public Health Sciences Skills
- Management and Finance 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.

Example:
To what degree are you able to effectively…describe factors that affect the health of a community?

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.

Domain 1: Data Analytics and 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 that affect the health of a community (e.g., income, education, laws, environment, climate change, resilience, homelessness, food security, access to healthcare, racial equity, distribution of resources and power, social and community engagement, changing demographics)	
2	Access existing quantitative and qualitative data (e.g., community input, big data, vital statistics, electronic health records, transportation patterns, employment statistics, environmental monitoring, health equity impact assessments, revenue and expenditures)	
3	Collect quantitative and qualitative data	
4	Analyze quantitative and qualitative data	
5	Manage quantitative and qualitative data	
6	Use quantitative and qualitative data	
7	Apply public health informatics in using data, information, and knowledge	
8	Assess community health status	
	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:

Domain 2: Policy Development and 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	Develop policies, programs, and services	
2	Implement policies, programs, and services (e.g., within the organization, external to the organization, in collaboration with others)	
3	Evaluate policies, programs, services, and organizational performance (e.g., outputs, outcomes, processes, procedures, return on investment)	
4	Improve policies, programs, services, and organizational performance	
5	Influence policies, programs, and services external to the organization (e.g., zoning, transportation, housing, education)	
6	Engage in organizational strategic planning	
7	Engage in community health improvement planning	
	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:

Domain 3: 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	Determine communication strategies	
2	Communicate with internal and external audiences (e.g., staff, elected officials, students, volunteers, community-based organizations, healthcare professionals, the public)	
3	Respond to information, misinformation, and disinformation (e.g., through social media, town hall meetings, commentaries, letters to the editor)	
4	Facilitate communication among individuals, groups, and organizations	
	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:

Domain 4: Health Equity 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	Apply principles of ethics, diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (e.g., Public Health Code of Ethics, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act)	
2	Engage in continuous self-reflection about one's biases (e.g., perceptions, assumptions, stereotypes)	
3	Recognize the diversity of individuals and populations	
4	Reduce systemic and structural barriers that perpetuate health inequities (e.g., racism, sexism, bigotry, poverty, gender discrimination)	
5	Implement organizational policies, programs, and services to achieve health equity and social and environmental justice	
6	Contribute to achieving and sustaining a diverse, inclusive, and competent public health workforce	
7	Advocate for health equity and social and environmental justice (e.g., for reforming systems contributing to racism, advancing fair housing practices, changing labor laws and policies, protecting communities from environmental hazards)	
	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:

Domain 5: Community Partnership 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 conditions, systems, and policies affecting community health and resilience (e.g., social and institutional inequities, determinants of health, structural racism, historical trauma, gender discrimination, power dynamics, natural disasters, poverty, housing, trust, local politics, competition, redlining)	
2	Establish relationships to improve community health and resilience (e.g., partnerships with organizations serving the same population, health departments, healthcare institutions, academic institutions, politicians and other policymakers, environmental agencies and organizations, emergency response organizations, businesses, financial institutions, housing authorities, public transit, customers/clients)	
3	Maintain relationships that improve community health and resilience	
4	Collaborate with community members and organizations	
5	Share power and ownership with community members and others	
	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:

Domain 6: 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 systems, policies, and events impacting public health (e.g., slavery, colonialism, John Snow and the London cholera outbreak, smallpox eradication, development of vaccines, Tuskegee Syphilis Study, fluoridation of drinking water, Jim Crow laws, establishment of Medicare and Medicaid, Americans with Disabilities Act, seatbelt legislation, banning tobacco in public buildings, death penalty, gun violence, globalization, deforestation, climate change, COVID-19 pandemic)	
2	Apply public health sciences (e.g., biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental health, health services administration, social and behavioral sciences, and public health informatics) in delivering the 10 Essential Public Health Services	
3	Use evidence in developing, implementing, evaluating, and improving policies, programs, and services	
4	Contribute to the evidence base for improving health	
	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:

Domain 7: Management and Finance 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 that affect the health of an organization (e.g., equitable and fair treatment of employees, support from the governing body and community, sustainability of funding, training of managers)	
2	Secure human resources (e.g., staff, interns, consultants, volunteers)	
3	Manage human resources	
4	Engage in professional development (e.g., training, mentoring, peer advising, coaching, drills, exercises)	
5	Secure financial resources	
6	Manage financial resources	
7	Implement organizational policies, programs, and services to achieve diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice	
8	Manage programs and services	
9	Engage in contingency planning (e.g., for emergencies, succession, cross-training staff, continuity of operations, economic downturns)	
10	Apply critical thinking in decision making	
11	Engage individuals and teams to achieve program and organizational goals	
12	Facilitate collaboration among individuals, groups, and organizations	
13	Engage in performance management	
	Total Score (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	Average Score (Divide the "Total Score" by **13** and enter the result here and into the corresponding row of the "Your Results" section)	

Comments:

Domain 8: 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	Create opportunities to achieve cross-sector alignment (e.g., community coalitions, academic health department partnerships)	
2	Implement a vision for a healthy community	
3	Address facilitators and barriers impacting delivery of the 10 Essential Public Health Services	
4	Create opportunities for creativity and innovation	
5	Respond to emerging needs	
6	Manage organizational change	
7	Engage politicians, policymakers, and the public to support public health infrastructure (e.g., funding, workforce, legal authority, facilities, data systems)	
8	Advocate for public 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
1: Data Analytics and Assessment Skills	
2: Policy Development and Program Planning Skills	
3: Communication Skills	
4: Health Equity Skills	
5: Community Partnership Skills	
6: Public Health Sciences Skills	
7: Management and Finance Skills	
8: 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; choosing learning opportunities that will help you reach your goals and meet the requirements for continuing competence in your occupation or discipline; and 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, healthcare, behavioral health, preparedness, and other health professionals from thousands of training providers. 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 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 Core Competencies can be found at phf.org/corecompetencies. Questions or requests for information may be sent to competencies@phf.org.

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