

# Domain 8: Maintain a Competent Public Health Workforce

Domain 8 focuses on the need for health departments to strategically approach the development of a competent workforce to perform public health duties. Effective public health practice requires a well prepared workforce. A multi-disciplinary workforce that is matched to the specific community being served facilitates the interdisciplinary approaches required to address health equity and the population's public health issues. The manner in which services are provided to the public determines the effectiveness of those services and influences the population's understanding of, and appreciation for, public health. A strategic workforce includes the alignment of workforce development with the health department's overall mission and goals and the development of strategies for acquiring, developing, and retaining staff.

## DOMAIN 8 INCLUDES TWO STANDARDS:

<b>Standard 8.1:</b>	Encourage the Development of a Sufficient Number of Qualified Public Health Workers
<b>Standard 8.2:</b>	Ensure a Competent Workforce through Assessment of Staff Competencies, the Provision of Individual Training and Professional Development, and the Provision of a Supportive Work Environment

## STANDARD 8.1: Encourage the development of a sufficient number of qualified public health workers.

Maintaining a competent public health workforce requires a supply of qualified public health workers sufficient to meet public health needs. As public health workers retire or seek other employment opportunities, newly trained public health workers must enter the field. Trained and competent workers are needed in such diverse areas as epidemiology, health education, community health, public health laboratory science, public health nursing, environmental public health, and public health administration and management. Every health department has a responsibility to collaborate with others to encourage the development of a sufficient number of public health students and to encourage qualified individuals to enter the field of public health to meet the staffing needs of public health departments and other public health related organizations.

## Standard 8.1: Encourage the development of a sufficient number of qualified public health workers.

MEASURE	PURPOSE	SIGNIFICANCE	
<b>Measure 8.1.1 S</b> Relationship and collaboration with educational programs that promote the development of future public health workers	The purpose of this measure is to assess the state health department’s contributions to the development of qualified public health workers.	Working with schools of public health and other related academic and educational programs (for example, public health nursing, public health laboratory services, health promotion, environmental public health, public policy, colleges of veterinary medicine) is a means to promote public health as an attractive career choice. Collaborative efforts promote the health department as an employer of choice and open new pathways for recruitment. Collaboration with academic programs can create opportunities for internships, guest lecturers, and other ways to expose students or new graduates to public health practice.	
REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION	GUIDANCE	NUMBER OF EXAMPLES	DATED WITHIN
<b>1. Partnership or ongoing collaboration with educational programs to promote public health as a career or to provide training in public health fields</b>	<b>1. The state health department must document a partnership or collaboration with a school of public health and/or other related academic programs that prepare public health workers.</b> The documentation must show strategies for promoting public health careers or enhancing training in public health.  Examples of partnership or collaboration include: a practicum; student placements/academic service learning; internship opportunities; faculty positions or guest lectures by health department staff; participation in high school, university, college, or Tribal college programs; and/or job/career fairs.	<b>1 partnership or ongoing collaboration</b>	<b>5 years</b>

## Standard 8.1: Encourage the development of a sufficient number of qualified public health workers.

MEASURE	PURPOSE	SIGNIFICANCE	
<b>Measure 8.1.1 T/L</b> Relationships and/or collaborations that promote the development of future public health workers	The purpose of this measure is to assess the health department's activities to encourage public health as a career choice.	Working with schools, academic programs, or other organizations is a means to promote public health as an attractive career choice. Collaborations can create paths for exposing students or new graduates to public health practice.	
REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION	GUIDANCE	NUMBER OF EXAMPLES	DATED WITHIN
<b>1. Relationship or collaboration that promotes public health as a career</b>	<b>1. The health department must document a partnership or collaboration that promotes public health as a career choice.</b>  Examples of partnerships or collaborations include collaboration with a school or college of public health, working with organizations such as AmeriCorps, coordinating with a high school to make presentations to students about public health and public careers, working with a vocational training school to promote public health, partnering with a 4H club to provide information about public health to members, guest lecturing at a community college, or providing after school experiences for high school students.	<b>1 example</b>	<b>5 years</b>

## **STANDARD 8.2: Ensure a competent workforce through the assessment of staff competencies, the provision of individual training and professional development, and the provision of a supportive work environment.**

A health department workforce development plan ensures that staff development is addressed, coordinated, and appropriate for the health department's needs. Staff job duties and performance should be regularly reviewed to note accomplishments and areas that need improvement. This should not be a punitive process but one that identifies needs for employee training or education. This approach can point out gaps in competencies and skills for the health department and provide workforce development guidance for individual staff members.

## Standard 8.2: Ensure a competent workforce through the assessment of staff competencies, the provision of individual training and professional development, and the provision of a supportive work environment.

MEASURE	PURPOSE	SIGNIFICANCE	
<b>Measure 8.2.1 A</b> Workforce development strategies	The purpose of this measure is to assess the health department’s planning for employee training, implementation of those plans, and the development of core competencies.	Health departments must have a competent workforce with the skills and experience needed to perform their duties and carry out the health department’s mission. Workforce development strategies support the health department, individual staff members, staff development, and the overall workplace environment. Employee training and core staff competencies assure a competent workforce.	
REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION	GUIDANCE	NUMBER OF EXAMPLES	DATED WITHIN
<b>1. Workforce development plan</b>	<p><b>1. The health department must provide a health department-specific workforce development plan.</b> The workforce development plan must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Address the collective capacity and capability of the department workforce and its units.</li><li>• Address gaps in capacity and capabilities and include strategies to address them.</li><li>• Be responsive to the changing environment and include consideration of areas where the technology advances quickly such as information management and (digital) communication science.</li><li>• Be responsive to the changing environment and include considerations of areas where the field is advancing, for example, emergency preparedness training, health equity, and cultural competence.</li></ul> <p>The plan must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An assessment of current staff competencies against the adopted core competencies. An example of nationally adopted core competencies is the “Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals” from the Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice. The plan may also use state developed or specialty focused sets of competencies, for example, nursing, public health preparedness, informatics, and health equity competencies.</li></ul>	<b>1 plan</b>	<b>2 years</b>

## MEASURE 8.2.1 A, continued

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training schedules and a description of the material or topics to be addressed in the training curricula to address gaps in staff competencies.</li> <li>• A description of barriers/inhibitors to the achievement of closing gaps or addressing future needs in capacity and capabilities and strategies to address those barriers/inhibitors.</li> </ul>		
<b>2. Implemented workforce development strategies</b>	<b>2. The health department must document implementation of its workforce development strategies.</b> Examples must demonstrate how the health department addresses gaps in capacity and capabilities.	<b>2 examples</b>	<b>2 years</b>

## Standard 8.2: Ensure a competent workforce through the assessment of staff competencies, the provision of individual training and professional development, and the provision of a supportive work environment.

MEASURE	PURPOSE	SIGNIFICANCE	
<b>Measure 8.2.2 A</b>  A competent health department workforce	The purpose of this measure is to assess the health department's execution of its workforce development plan related to recruitment, retention, and staff qualifications.	Health departments' success, as in all organizations, depends on the capabilities and performance of its staff. Actions that maximize staff capabilities and performance are necessary for a health department to function at a high level.	
REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION	GUIDANCE	NUMBER OF EXAMPLES	DATED WITHIN
<b>1. Recruitment of qualified individuals for specific positions</b>	<b>1. The health department must document the recruitment of individuals who are qualified for their public health specific specialty position.</b>  Examples of the evidence of the efforts of the health department to achieve the desired applicant pool are required.  Documentation could be, for example, a competency-based job description and requirement for specific certification posting that specifies the level of skills, training, experience, and education that the applicant needs to possess to qualify for the position.	<b>2 examples</b>	<b>5 years</b>
<b>2. Recruitment of individuals who reflect the population served</b>	<b>2. The health department must document the recruitment of individuals who reflect the demographics (e.g., race, ethnicity, language, etc.) of the population that the health department serves.</b>  Examples of the evidence of the efforts of the health department are required, not the success or failure to achieve the desired applicant pool.  Tribal health departments may use Indian Preference hiring policies.	<b>2 examples</b>	<b>5 years</b>
<b>3. Retention activities</b>	<b>3. The health department must document activities to retain staff.</b> Examples include: employee satisfaction survey results, needs assessments of work environment, reward and recognition programs, career ladders, promotion opportunities, and supervisor mentoring programs.	<b>2 examples</b>	<b>5 years</b>



## MEASURE 8.2.2 A, continued

<b>4. Position descriptions, available to staff</b>	<b>4. The health department must provide position descriptions or job descriptions.</b> Position or job descriptions must include the competencies that are required for the position and must address both public health specialty needs (e.g., epidemiologist, public health laboratory technician, etc.) and generalist needs.  The health department must also document how the descriptions are made available to staff. They may be made available for example, through the internet/intranet, a policy procedures manual, or through the human resources department.	<b>2 examples</b>	<b>3 years</b>
<b>5. A process to verify staff qualifications</b>	<b>5. The health department must document the process used to verify staff qualifications.</b> This process may be defined in policy or it may be found in personnel guidelines that are part of the human resources system or a central administrative unit, such as a civil service system. Other examples include: guidelines used by all Tribal/county/state agencies or a separate process defined and used by the health department. The process may include: reference checks; confirmation of transcripts with the issuing academic institution; confirmation of any registration, certification, or license with the issuing institution; or other check of credentials provided by the staff member. Tribal health departments may include using the Indian Preference hiring policies and/or proof of enrollment.	<b>1 process</b>	<b>2 years</b>
<b>6. Verified qualifications for all staff hired</b>	<b>6. The health department must document that qualifications have been verified for all staff hired in the past two years.</b> Reviews include tracking required recertification.  Documentation could be, for example, personnel files, a log or spreadsheet, or a template or form used by the health department; civil service commission certification; or evidence from a county or state personnel office demonstrating that the person is qualified for the position.  Tribes often operate a human resources department to support its administration, including the Tribal health department. If this is the case, the health department must demonstrate how it works with human resources to ensure that it follows the appropriate policies and procedures.	<b>2 examples</b>	<b>2 years</b>

## Standard 8.2: Ensure a competent workforce through the assessment of staff competencies, the provision of individual training and professional development, and the provision of a supportive work environment.

MEASURE	PURPOSE	SIGNIFICANCE		
<b>Measure 8.2.3 A</b> Professional and career development for all staff	The purpose of this measure is to assess the health department's comprehensive approach to the provision of opportunities for professional career development for all staff and the department's implementation of staff development activities.	<p>All staff should have opportunities for professional development. All employees need to have a basic understanding of public health in order to coordinate program efforts, especially in the case of working with the public and in the case of emergency situations. All staff should have opportunities to learn and to grow in their positions both to improve their own skills and also to address the changing needs of the health department.</p> <p>In addition to their specific public health activities, leaders and managers must oversee the health department, interact with stakeholders and constituencies, seek resources, interact with governance, and inspire employees and the community to engage in healthful public health activities. Development activities can assist leadership and management to employ state-of-the-art theory, management processes, public health knowledge, and management techniques.</p>		
REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION	GUIDANCE		NUMBER OF EXAMPLES	DATED WITHIN
<b>1. Participation in personal professional development activities by staff of the department (other than management and leadership staff, who are addressed below)</b>	<b>1. The health department must document staff's completion of their annual personal professional development plan.</b> <p>Professional development activities could include: education assistance (e.g., time off for classes, tuition reimbursement, bringing classes to the health department), continuing education, training opportunities, mentoring, job shadowing, certification in public health, etc.</p> <p>Topics could be, for example, HIPAA, emergency response, methods for the presentation of data, health equity, communications, and courses required for Certified Public Health continuing education.</p> <p>Documentation could be, for example, a training completion certificate, an attendance record for a class, or a report written by the staff person documenting the activities and learnings.</p>		2 examples	2 years

## MEASURE 8.2.3 A, continued

<b>2. Development activities for leadership and management staff</b>	<b>2. The health department must document the provision of department training and development programs for department leaders and managers.</b>  Activities could include, for example, education assistance, continuing education, support for membership in professional organizations, and training opportunities.	<b>2 examples</b>	<b>2 years</b>
<b>3. Participation of department leaders and managers in training provided by others, outside of the health department</b>	<b>3. The health department must document leaders' and/or managers' attendance at a leadership and/or management development training. Online courses are acceptable.</b>  Examples of providers include National Public Health Leadership Institutes; Public Health Training Centers Network, Environmental Public Health Leadership Institute; executive management seminars or programs; graduate programs in leadership/management; and related meetings and conferences.  Examples of course topics include negotiation skills, CQI, systems thinking, change management, intercultural or intergenerational management, collaborative intelligence, handling conflict, coaching and mentoring skills, communications skills for managers, leadership styles, effective networks, concepts of public health informatics, leading teams and collaborations, health equity, community resilience, relationship building, marketing/branding, business process improvement, digital media, and crisis/risk communication.	<b>2 examples</b>	<b>2 years</b>

## Standard 8.2: Ensure a competent workforce through the assessment of staff competencies, the provision of individual training and professional development, and the provision of a supportive work environment.

MEASURE	PURPOSE	SIGNIFICANCE		
<b>Measure 8.2.4 A</b>  Work environment that is supportive to the workforce	The purpose of this measure is to assess the health department’s efforts to create an organizational culture and work environment that is supportive of the staff and their maximum productivity.	A positive work environment is vital to the success of any organization. The work environment impacts job satisfaction, employee retention, and employee creativity and productivity. The work environment should support and foster each employee’s ability to contribute to the achievement of the department’s mission, goals, and objectives.		
REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION	GUIDANCE		NUMBER OF EXAMPLES	DATED WITHIN
<b>1. Policies that provide an environment in which employees are supported in their jobs</b>	<b>1. The health department must provide policies that provide a supportive work environment.</b> Policies could include, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A work/life balance, for example, telecommuting, flex time, and breastfeeding/lactation support;</li><li>• Diversity (especially for staffing to match the diversity of the population);</li><li>• Leadership attributes, for example, setting a professional tone; fair and equitable management decisions; focus on the department’s vision and mission;</li><li>• Regular assessments of the organizational climate, for example, regular staff surveys and 360 reviews of the management team;</li><li>• The provision of the tools, information, and freedom to allow staff to perform their responsibilities;</li><li>• The maintenance of institutional memory, the transfer of knowledge, and the celebration of past and current accomplishments, for example, partnerships with retirees, sharing of stories, celebration events, etc.</li><li>• Supervisors’ encouragement of systems thinking, change management, data use for decisions, and a culture of quality improvement; and</li><li>• Collaborative learning, for example participation of staff on boards, committees, and task forces in community, collaborative planning sessions, shared reviews of program evaluations, etc.</li></ul>		<b>1 policy or set of policies, plans, or program descriptions</b>	<b>5 years</b>

## MEASURE 8.2.4 A, continued

<b>2. A process for employee recognition</b>	<b>2. The health department must provide employee recognition policies. Examples can address both team and individual recognition and recognition for employee improvement.</b>  <p>Examples of employee recognition include a call out in a newsletter, employee of the month program, posting an employee honor roll, recognition letters, regularly organized recognition lunch, etc.</p>	<b>1 set of policies, plans, or program descriptions</b>	<b>5 years</b>
<b>3. Employee wellness activities</b>	<b>3. The health department must provide a policy, plan, or description of opportunities provided to staff to promote health and wellness and prevent disease.</b>  <p>Activities may include, for example, health screenings and risk assessments, flu shots, exercise programs, nutrition information, stress reduction methods, breastfeeding and lactation support, and tobacco use cessation. Examples may also include healthy food policies and efforts to create a culture of health and wellness.</p>	<b>1 policy, plan, or program description</b>	<b>5 years</b>

## Standard 8.2: Ensure a competent workforce through the assessment of staff competencies, the provision of individual training and professional development, and the provision of a supportive work environment.

MEASURE	PURPOSE	SIGNIFICANCE	
<b>Measure 8.2.5 S</b>  Consultation and/or technical assistance provided to Tribal and local health departments regarding evidence-based and/or promising practices in the development of workforce capacity, training, and continuing education	The purpose of this measure is to assess the state health department’s provision of consultation and/or technical assistance to Tribal and local health departments on evidence-based and/or promising practices in the development of workforce capacity, workforce training, and/or continuing education.	The state health department has knowledge and experience to share about workforce capacity, workforce training, and continuing education to address organizational gaps in the public health workforce. A trained and competent Tribal or local health department workforce enhances the capacity of the state health department.	
REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION	GUIDANCE	NUMBER OF EXAMPLES	DATED WITHIN
<b>1. The provision of consultation and/or technical assistance to Tribal or local health departments</b>	<b>1. The state health department must document consultation or technical assistance provided to Tribal or local health departments.</b>  Documentation could include, for example, emails, phone calls, webinars, documents/materials, site-visits, meetings, training sessions, and web postings.	<b>2 examples</b>  The state health department must include one example of assistance provided to a Tribal health department, and one example of assistance provided to a local health department. If the state does not contain any Tribal health departments, then the two examples must be from local health departments.	<b>5 years</b>