

# Competency Assessment

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## Tier 3 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 3 Public Health Professionals<sup>1</sup>

## 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

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<sup>1</sup> **Tier 3 – Senior Management/Executive Level:** Tier 3 competencies apply to public health professionals at a senior management level and to leaders of public health organizations. These professionals typically have staff who report to them and may be responsible for overseeing major programs or operations of the organization, setting a strategy and vision for the organization, creating a culture of quality within the organization, and working with the community to improve health.

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 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	Determine quantitative and qualitative data and information (e.g., vital statistics, electronic health records, transportation patterns, unemployment rates, community input, health equity impact assessments) needed for assessing the health of a community	
3	Ensure ethical principles are applied 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	Evaluate the validity and reliability of data	
6	Evaluate the comparability of data (e.g., data being age-adjusted to the same year, data variables across datasets having similar definitions)	
7	Resolve gaps in data	
8	Ensure collection of valid and reliable quantitative and qualitative data	
9	Determine trends from quantitative and qualitative data	
10	Integrate findings from quantitative and qualitative data into organizational plans and operations (e.g., strategic plan, quality improvement plan, professional development)	
11	Assess 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	Determine 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	Ensure development of community health assessments using information about health status, factors influencing health, and assets and resources	

<b>To what degree are you able to effectively...</b>		
14	Make evidence-based decisions (e.g., determining research agendas, using recommendations from <i>The Guide to Community Preventive Services</i> in planning population health services)	
15	Advocate for the use of evidence in decision making that affects the health of a community (e.g., helping elected officials understand community health needs, demonstrating the impact of programs)	
	<b>Total Score</b> (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	<b>Average Total</b> (Divide the "Total Score" by <b>15</b> 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	Ensure development of a state/Tribal/community health improvement plan (e.g., describing measurable outcomes, determining needed policy changes, identifying parties responsible for implementation)	
2	Develop organizational goals and objectives	
3	Develop organizational strategic plan (e.g., includes measurable objectives and targets; incorporates community health improvement plan, workforce development plan, quality improvement plan, and other plans) with input from the governing body or administrative unit that oversees the organization	
4	Monitor implementation of organizational strategic plan	
5	Integrate current and projected trends (e.g., health, fiscal, social, political, environmental) into organizational strategic planning	
6	Select options for policies, programs, and services for further exploration (e.g., secondhand smoking policies, data use policies, HR policies, immunization programs, food safety programs)	
7	Determine the feasibility (e.g., fiscal, social, political, legal, geographic) and implications of policies, programs, and services	
8	Select policies, programs, and services for implementation	
9	Ensure implementation of policies, programs, and services is consistent with laws and regulations	
10	Influence policies, programs, and services external to the organization that affect the health of the community (e.g., zoning, transportation routes)	
11	Explain the importance of evaluations for improving policies, programs, and services	
12	Ensure the evaluation of policies, programs, and services (e.g., outputs, outcomes, processes, procedures, return on investment)	
13	Develop strategies for continuous quality improvement	

<b>To what degree are you able to effectively...</b>		
14	Assess the use of public health informatics in developing, implementing, evaluating, and improving policies, programs, and services (e.g., integrated data systems, electronic reporting, knowledge management systems, geographic information systems)	
	<b>Total Score</b> (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	<b>Average Total</b> (Divide the "Total Score" by <b>14</b> 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	Ensure that the literacy of populations served (e.g., ability to obtain, interpret, and use health and other information; social media literacy) is reflected in the organization's policies, programs, and services	
2	Communicate in writing and orally with linguistic and cultural proficiency (e.g., using age-appropriate materials, incorporating images)	
3	Ensure that the organization seeks input from other organizations and individuals (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	Evaluate 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, testimony, press interviews)	
6	Evaluate strategies for communicating 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	Communicate the roles of governmental public health, health care, and other partners in improving the health of a community	
	<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:**

## 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

<b>To what degree are you able to effectively...</b>		
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	Recognize the ways diversity influences policies, programs, services, and the health of a community	
4	Incorporate diverse perspectives in developing, implementing, and evaluating policies, programs, and services that affect the health of a community	
5	Advocate for the diversity of individuals and populations being addressed in policies, programs, and services that affect the health of a community	
6	Evaluate the effects of policies, programs, and services on different populations in a community	
7	Demonstrate the value of a diverse public health workforce	
8	Take measures to support a diverse public health workforce	
	<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:**

## 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	Assess the roles and responsibilities of governmental and non-governmental organizations in providing programs and services to improve the health of a community	
2	Explain the ways relationships 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	Establish relationships to improve health in a community (e.g., partnerships with organizations serving the same population, academic institutions, policy makers, customers/clients, and others)	
5	Maintain relationships that improve health in a community	
6	Establish written agreements (e.g., memoranda-of-understanding [MOUs], contracts, letters of endorsement) that describe the purpose and scope of partnerships	
7	Ensure that community members are engaged to improve health in a community (e.g., input in developing and implementing community health assessments and improvement plans, feedback about programs and services)	
8	Ensure that community input is used for developing, implementing, evaluating, and improving policies, programs, and services	
9	Negotiate for use of 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	
10	Defend policies, programs, and resources that improve health in a community (e.g., using evidence to demonstrate the need for a program, communicating the impact of a program)	
11	Engage the organization in community-based participatory research	

	<b>Total Score</b> (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	<b>Average Total</b> (Divide the "Total Score" by <b>11</b> 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	Critique the scientific foundation of the field of public health	
2	Explain lessons to be learned from 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	Ensure public health sciences (e.g., biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental health sciences, health services administration, and social and behavioral sciences, and public health informatics) are applied in the delivery of the 10 Essential Public Health Services	
4	Apply public health sciences in the administration and management of the organization	
5	Synthesize 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	
6	Explain limitations of evidence (e.g., validity, reliability, sample size, bias, generalizability)	
7	Ensure the use of evidence in developing, implementing, evaluating, and improving policies, programs, and services	
8	Ensure the ethical conduct of research (e.g., patient confidentiality, protection of human subjects, Americans with Disabilities Act)	
9	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; reviewing manuscripts; making data available to researchers)	
10	Maintain partnerships that increase use of evidence in public health practice (e.g., between practice and academic organizations, with health sciences libraries)	
	<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)	
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**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	Assess the structures, functions, and authorizations of governmental public health programs and organizations	
2	Engage governmental agencies with authority to address specific community health needs (e.g., lead in housing, water fluoridation, bike lanes, emergency preparedness)	
3	Manage the implementation of policies and procedures of the governing body or administrative unit that oversees the organization (e.g., board of health, chief executive's office, Tribal council)	
4	Leverage public health and health care funding mechanisms and procedures (e.g., categorical grants, fees, third-party reimbursement, tobacco taxes, value-based purchasing, budget approval process) for supporting population health services	
5	Determine priorities for organizational budgets	
6	Develop organizational budgets	
7	Defend organizational budgets	
8	Approve proposals for funding (e.g., foundations, government agencies, corporations)	
9	Approve contracts and other agreements for programs and services	
10	Ensure the use of financial analysis methods in making decisions about policies, programs, and services (e.g., cost-effectiveness, cost-benefit, cost-utility analysis, return on investment)	
11	Ensure that programs are managed within current and projected budgets and staffing levels (e.g., sustaining a program when funding and staff are cut, recruiting and retaining staff)	
12	Establish teams for the purpose of achieving program and organizational goals (e.g., considering the value of different disciplines, sectors, skills, experiences, and perspectives; determining scope of work and timeline)	

<b>To what degree are you able to effectively...</b>		
13	Motivate personnel for the purpose of achieving program and organizational goals (e.g., participating in teams, encouraging sharing of ideas, respecting different points of view)	
14	Oversee the use of evaluation results to improve program and organizational performance	
15	Establish performance management systems (e.g., visible leadership, performance standards, performance measurement, reporting progress, quality improvement)	
16	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)	
	<b>Total Score</b> (Add all scores and enter total here)	
	<b>Average Total</b> (Divide the "Total Score" by <b>16</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 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	Interact with the larger inter-related system of organizations that influence the health of populations at local, national, and global levels	
3	Create opportunities for organizations to work together or individually to improve the health of a community	
4	Collaborate with individuals and organizations in developing a vision for a healthy community (e.g., emphasis on prevention, health equity for all, excellence and innovation)	
5	Take measures to minimize internal and external 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	Ensure availability (e.g., assessing competencies, workforce development planning, advocating) of professional development opportunities for the organization (e.g., training, mentoring, peer advising, coaching)	
7	Ensure use of professional development opportunities throughout the organization	
8	Ensure the management of organizational change (e.g., refocusing a program or an entire organization, minimizing disruption, maximizing effectiveness of change, engaging individuals affected by change)	
9	Ensure continuous improvement of individual, program, and organizational performance (e.g., mentoring, monitoring progress, adjusting programs to achieve better results)	
10	Advocate for the role of public health in providing population health services	
	<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)	
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**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.