



June 2014

Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals

Revised and Adopted by the Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice:
June 26, 2014

Available from: phf.org/corecompetencies

Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice

The Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice (Council on Linkages) is a collaborative of 20 national organizations that aims to improve public health education and training, practice, and research. Established in 1992 to implement the recommendations of the Public Health Faculty/Agency Forum regarding increasing the relevance of public health education to the practice of public health, the Council on Linkages works to further academic/practice collaboration to ensure a well-trained, competent workforce and the development and use of a strong evidence base for public health practice.

Mission

The Council on Linkages strives to improve public health practice, education, and research by fostering, coordinating, and monitoring links among academia and the public health practice and healthcare communities; developing and advancing innovative strategies to build and strengthen public health infrastructure; and creating a process for continuing public health education throughout one's career.

Membership

Twenty national organizations are members of the Council on Linkages:

- American Association of Colleges of Nursing
- American College of Preventive Medicine
- American Public Health Association
- Association for Prevention Teaching and Research
- Association of Accredited Public Health Programs
- Association of Public Health Laboratories
- Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
- Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
- Association of University Programs in Health Administration
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Community-Campus Partnerships for Health
- Health Resources and Services Administration
- National Association of County and City Health Officials
- National Association of Local Boards of Health
- National Environmental Health Association
- National Library of Medicine
- National Network of Public Health Institutes
- National Public Health Leadership Development Network
- Quad Council of Public Health Nursing Organizations
- Society for Public Health Education

The Council on Linkages is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Staff support is provided by the Public Health Foundation.

For More Information

Additional information about the Council on Linkages can be found at phf.org/councilonlinkages. Questions or requests for information may be sent to councilonlinkages@phf.org.

Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals

The Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals (Core Competencies) are a consensus set of skills for the broad practice of public health, as defined by the 10 Essential Public Health Services. Developed by the Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice (Council on Linkages), the Core Competencies reflect foundational skills desirable for professionals engaging in the practice, education, and research of public health.

The Core Competencies support workforce development within public health and can serve as a starting point for public health professionals and organizations as they work to better understand and meet workforce development needs, improve performance, prepare for accreditation, and enhance the health of the communities they serve. More specifically, the Core Competencies can be used in assessing workforce knowledge and skills, identifying training needs, developing workforce development and training plans, crafting job descriptions, and conducting performance evaluations. The Core Competencies have been integrated into curricula for education and training, provide a reference for developing public health courses, and serve as a base for sets of discipline-specific competencies.

The Core Competencies provide a framework for workforce development planning and action. Public health organizations are encouraged to interpret and adapt the Core Competencies in ways that meet their specific organizational needs.

Development of the Core Competencies

The Core Competencies grew from a desire to help strengthen the public health workforce by identifying basic skills for the effective delivery of public health services. Building on the Universal Competencies developed by the Public Health Faculty/Agency Forum in 1991, the current Core Competencies are the result of more than two decades of work by the Council on Linkages and other academic and practice organizations dedicated to public health.

Transitioning from a general set of Universal Competencies to a more specific set of Core Competencies began in 1998 and involved public health professionals from across the country through Council on Linkages member organizations, the Council on Linkages' Core Competencies Workgroup, and a public comment period that resulted in over 1,000 comments. This extensive development process was designed to produce a set of foundational competencies that truly reflected the practice of public health. These competencies were organized into eight skill areas or "domains" that cut across public health disciplines. The first version of the Core Competencies was adopted by the Council on Linkages in April 2001, and the Council on Linkages committed to revisiting the Core Competencies every three years to determine if revisions were needed to ensure the continued relevance of the competency set.

The Core Competencies were reviewed in 2004, with the Council on Linkages concluding that there was inadequate evidence about use of the Core Competencies to support a significant revision. At the second review in 2007, the Council on Linkages decided that revision was warranted based on usage data, changes in the practice of public health, and requests to make the Core Competencies more measurable.

Similar to the development process, the revision process begun in 2007 was led by the Core Competencies Workgroup and involved the consideration of more than 800 comments from public health professionals. A major focus of the revision process was on improving measurability of the competencies, and the revisions both updated the content of the competencies within the eight domains and added three “tiers” representing stages of career development for public health professionals. The Council on Linkages adopted a revised version of the Core Competencies in May 2010.

Review of the May 2010 Core Competencies began in early 2013, and the Council on Linkages again decided to undertake revisions. In addition to updating the content of the competencies, this revision process was aimed at simplifying and clarifying the wording of competencies and improving the order and grouping of competencies to make the competency set easier to use. This revision process was guided by the Core Competencies Workgroup and over 1,000 comments from the public health community, and culminated in the adoption by the Council on Linkages of the current set of Core Competencies in June 2014.

Key Dates

Since development began in 1998, the Core Competencies have gone through three versions:

- 2001 version – Adopted April 11, 2001 (*original version*)
- 2010 version – Adopted May 3, 2010
- 2014 version – Adopted June 26, 2014 (*current version*)

Currently, the Core Competencies are on a three year review cycle and will next be considered for revision in 2017. This timing may change as a result of feedback that this can be too frequent for disciplines that base competency sets on the Core Competencies.

Organization of the Core Competencies

The Core Competencies are organized into eight domains, reflecting skill areas within public health, and three tiers, representing career stages for public health professionals.

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

These eight domains have remained consistent in all versions of the Core Competencies.

Tiers

- *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.
- *Tier 2 – Program Management/Supervisory Level.* Tier 2 competencies apply to public health professionals in program management or supervisory roles. Responsibilities of these professionals may include developing, implementing, and evaluating programs; supervising staff; establishing and maintaining community partnerships; managing timelines and work plans; making policy recommendations; and providing technical expertise.
- *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.

During the 2014 revision of the Core Competencies, minor changes were made to clarify these tier definitions. In general, competencies progress from lower to higher levels of skill complexity both within each domain in a given tier and across the tiers. Similar competencies within Tiers 1, 2, and 3 are presented next to each other to show connections between tiers. In some cases, a single competency appears in multiple tiers; however, the way competence in that area is demonstrated may vary from one tier to another.

Core Competencies Resources and Tools

A variety of resources and tools to assist public health professionals and organizations with using the Core Competencies exist or are under development. These include crosswalks of different versions of the Core Competencies, competency assessments, examples demonstrating attainment of competence, competency-based job descriptions, quality improvement tools, and workforce development plans. Core Competencies resources and tools can be found online at phf.org/corecompetenciestools. Examples of how organizations have used the Core Competencies are available at phf.org/corecompetenciesexamples.

Feedback on the Core Competencies

The Council on Linkages thanks the public health community for its tremendous contributions to the Core Competencies and welcomes feedback about the Core Competencies. Examples illustrating how public health professionals and organizations are using the Core Competencies and tools that facilitate Core Competencies use are also appreciated. Feedback, suggestions, and resources can be shared by emailing competencies@phf.org.

For More Information

Additional information about the Core Competencies, including background on development and revisions, resources and tools to facilitate use, and current activities and events, can be found at phf.org/aboutcorecompetencies. Questions or requests for information may be sent to competencies@phf.org.

Analytical/Assessment Skills		
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
1A1. Describes factors affecting the health of a community (e.g., equity, income, education, environment)	1B1. Describes factors affecting the health of a community (e.g., equity, income, education, environment)	1C1. Describes factors affecting the health of a community (e.g., equity, income, education, environment)
1A2. Identifies 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	1B2. Determines 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	1C2. Determines 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
1A3. Applies ethical principles in accessing, collecting, analyzing, using, maintaining, and disseminating data and information	1B3. Applies ethical principles in accessing, collecting, analyzing, using, maintaining, and disseminating data and information	1C3. Ensures ethical principles are applied in accessing, collecting, analyzing, using, maintaining, and disseminating data and information
1A4. Uses information technology in accessing, collecting, analyzing, using, maintaining, and disseminating data and information	1B4. Uses information technology in accessing, collecting, analyzing, using, maintaining, and disseminating data and information	1C4. Uses information technology in accessing, collecting, analyzing, using, maintaining, and disseminating data and information
1A5. Selects valid and reliable data	1B5. Analyzes the validity and reliability of data	1C5. Evaluates the validity and reliability of data
1A6. Selects comparable data (e.g., data being age-adjusted to the same year, data variables across datasets having similar definitions)	1B6. Analyzes the comparability of data (e.g., data being age-adjusted to the same year, data variables across datasets having similar definitions)	1C6. Evaluates the comparability of data (e.g., data being age-adjusted to the same year, data variables across datasets having similar definitions)
1A7. Identifies gaps in data	1B7. Resolves gaps in data	1C7. Resolves gaps in data

Analytical/Assessment Skills		
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
1A8. Collects valid and reliable quantitative and qualitative data	1B8. Collects valid and reliable quantitative and qualitative data	1C8. Ensures collection of valid and reliable quantitative and qualitative data
1A9. Describes public health applications of quantitative and qualitative data	1B9. Analyzes quantitative and qualitative data	1C9. Determines trends from quantitative and qualitative data
1A10. Uses quantitative and qualitative data	1B10. Interprets quantitative and qualitative data	1C10. Integrates findings from quantitative and qualitative data into organizational plans and operations (e.g., strategic plan, quality improvement plan, professional development)
1A11. Describes 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)	1B11. Identifies 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)	1C11. Assesses 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)
1A12. Contributes 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)	1B12. Assesses community health status and factors influencing health in a community (e.g., quality, availability, accessibility, and use of health services; access to affordable housing)	1C12. Determines community health status and factors influencing health in a community (e.g., quality, availability, accessibility, and use of health services; access to affordable housing)
1A13. Explains how community health assessments use information about health status, factors influencing health, and assets and resources	1B13. Develops community health assessments using information about health status, factors influencing health, and assets and resources	1C13. Ensures development of community health assessments using information about health status, factors influencing health, and assets and resources

Analytical/Assessment Skills		
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
1A14. Describes how evidence (e.g., data, findings reported in peer-reviewed literature) is used in decision making	1B14. Makes evidence-based decisions (e.g., determining research agendas, using recommendations from <i>The Guide to Community Preventive Services</i> in planning population health services)	1C14. Makes evidence-based decisions (e.g., determining research agendas, using recommendations from <i>The Guide to Community Preventive Services</i> in planning population health services)
	1B15. Advocates for the use of evidence in decision making that affects the health of a community (e.g., helping policy makers understand community health needs, demonstrating the impact of programs)	1C15. Advocates 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)

Policy Development/Program Planning Skills		
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
2A1. Contributes to state/Tribal/community health improvement planning (e.g., providing data to supplement community health assessments, communicating observations from work in the field)	2B1. Ensures state/Tribal/community health improvement planning uses community health assessments and other information related to the health of a community (e.g., current data and trends; proposed federal, state, and local legislation; commitments from organizations to take action)	2C1. Ensures development of a state/Tribal/community health improvement plan (e.g., describing measurable outcomes, determining needed policy changes, identifying parties responsible for implementation)
2A2. Contributes to development of program goals and objectives	2B2. Develops program goals and objectives	2C2. Develops organizational goals and objectives
2A3. Describes 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)	2B3. Contributes to development of organizational strategic plan (e.g., includes measurable objectives and targets; incorporates community health improvement plan, workforce development plan, quality improvement plan, and other plans)	2C3. Develops 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
2A4. Contributes to implementation of organizational strategic plan	2B4. Implements organizational strategic plan	2C4. Monitors implementation of organizational strategic plan
2A5. Identifies current trends (e.g., health, fiscal, social, political, environmental) affecting the health of a community	2B5. Monitors current and projected trends (e.g., health, fiscal, social, political, environmental) representing the health of a community	2C5. Integrates current and projected trends (e.g., health, fiscal, social, political, environmental) into organizational strategic planning

Policy Development/Program Planning Skills		
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
2A6. Gathers 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)	2B6. Develops options for policies, programs, and services (e.g., secondhand smoking policies, data use policies, HR policies, immunization programs, food safety programs)	2C6. Selects options for policies, programs, and services for further exploration (e.g., secondhand smoking policies, data use policies, HR policies, immunization programs, food safety programs)
2A7. Describes implications of policies, programs, and services	2B7. Examines the feasibility (e.g., fiscal, social, political, legal, geographic) and implications of policies, programs, and services	2C7. Determines the feasibility (e.g., fiscal, social, political, legal, geographic) and implications of policies, programs, and services
	2B8. Recommends policies, programs, and services for implementation	2C8. Selects policies, programs, and services for implementation
2A8. Implements policies, programs, and services	2B9. Implements policies, programs, and services	2C9. Ensures implementation of policies, programs, and services is consistent with laws and regulations
		2C10. Influences policies, programs, and services external to the organization that affect the health of the community (e.g., zoning, transportation routes)
2A9. Explains the importance of evaluations for improving policies, programs, and services	2B10. Explains the importance of evaluations for improving policies, programs, and services	2C11. Explains the importance of evaluations for improving policies, programs, and services
2A10. Gathers information for evaluating policies, programs, and services (e.g., outputs, outcomes, processes, procedures, return on investment)	2B11. Evaluates policies, programs, and services (e.g., outputs, outcomes, processes, procedures, return on investment)	2C12. Ensures the evaluation of policies, programs, and services (e.g., outputs, outcomes, processes, procedures, return on investment)

Policy Development/Program Planning Skills		
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
2A11. Applies strategies for continuous quality improvement	2B12. Implements strategies for continuous quality improvement	2C13. Develops strategies for continuous quality improvement
2A12. Describes 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)	2B13. Uses 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)	2C14. Assesses 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)

Communication Skills		
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
3A1. Identifies the literacy of populations served (e.g., ability to obtain, interpret, and use health and other information; social media literacy)	3B1. Assesses the literacy of populations served (e.g., ability to obtain, interpret, and use health and other information; social media literacy)	3C1. Ensures 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
3A2. Communicates in writing and orally with linguistic and cultural proficiency (e.g., using age-appropriate materials, incorporating images)	3B2. Communicates in writing and orally with linguistic and cultural proficiency (e.g., using age-appropriate materials, incorporating images)	3C2. Communicates in writing and orally with linguistic and cultural proficiency (e.g., using age-appropriate materials, incorporating images)
3A3. Solicits 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	3B3. Solicits 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	3C3. Ensures 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
3A4. Suggests approaches for disseminating public health data and information (e.g., social media, newspapers, newsletters, journals, town hall meetings, libraries, neighborhood gatherings)	3B4. Selects approaches for disseminating public health data and information (e.g., social media, newspapers, newsletters, journals, town hall meetings, libraries, neighborhood gatherings)	3C4. Evaluates approaches for disseminating public health data and information (e.g., social media, newspapers, newsletters, journals, town hall meetings, libraries, neighborhood gatherings)

Communication Skills		
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
3A5. Conveys data and information to professionals and the public using a variety of approaches (e.g., reports, presentations, email, letters)	3B5. Conveys data and information to professionals and the public using a variety of approaches (e.g., reports, presentations, email, letters, press releases)	3C5. Conveys data and information to professionals and the public using a variety of approaches (e.g., reports, presentations, email, letters, testimony, press interviews)
3A6. Communicates information to influence behavior and improve health (e.g., uses social marketing methods, considers behavioral theories such as the Health Belief Model or Stages of Change Model)	3B6. Communicates information to influence behavior and improve health (e.g., uses social marketing methods, considers behavioral theories such as the Health Belief Model or Stages of Change Model)	3C6. Evaluates strategies for communicating information to influence behavior and improve health (e.g., uses social marketing methods, considers behavioral theories such as the Health Belief Model or Stages of Change Model)
3A7. Facilitates communication among individuals, groups, and organizations	3B7. Facilitates communication among individuals, groups, and organizations	3C7. Facilitates communication among individuals, groups, and organizations
3A8. Describes the roles of governmental public health, health care, and other partners in improving the health of a community	3B8. Communicates the roles of governmental public health, health care, and other partners in improving the health of a community	3C8. Communicates the roles of governmental public health, health care, and other partners in improving the health of a community

Cultural Competency Skills		
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
4A1. Describes 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)	4B1. Describes 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)	4C1. Describes 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)
4A2. Describes the diversity of individuals and populations in a community	4B2. Describes the diversity of individuals and populations in a community	4C2. Describes the diversity of individuals and populations in a community
4A3. Describes the ways diversity may influence policies, programs, services, and the health of a community	4B3. Recognizes the ways diversity influences policies, programs, services, and the health of a community	4C3. Recognizes the ways diversity influences policies, programs, services, and the health of a community
4A4. Recognizes the contribution of diverse perspectives in developing, implementing, and evaluating policies, programs, and services that affect the health of a community	4B4. Supports diverse perspectives in developing, implementing, and evaluating policies, programs, and services that affect the health of a community	4C4. Incorporates diverse perspectives in developing, implementing, and evaluating policies, programs, and services that affect the health of a community
4A5. Addresses the diversity of individuals and populations when implementing policies, programs, and services that affect the health of a community	4B5. Ensures the diversity of individuals and populations is addressed in policies, programs, and services that affect the health of a community	4C5. Advocates for the diversity of individuals and populations being addressed in policies, programs, and services that affect the health of a community

Cultural Competency Skills		
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
4A6. Describes the effects of policies, programs, and services on different populations in a community	4B6. Assesses the effects of policies, programs, and services on different populations in a community (e.g., customer satisfaction surveys, use of services by the target population)	4C6. Evaluates the effects of policies, programs, and services on different populations in a community
4A7. Describes the value of a diverse public health workforce	4B7. Describes the value of a diverse public health workforce	4C7. Demonstrates the value of a diverse public health workforce
	4B8. Advocates for a diverse public health workforce	4C8. Takes measures to support a diverse public health workforce

Community Dimensions of Practice Skills		
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
5A1. Describes the programs and services provided by governmental and non-governmental organizations to improve the health of a community	5B1. Distinguishes the roles and responsibilities of governmental and non-governmental organizations in providing programs and services to improve the health of a community	5C1. Assesses the roles and responsibilities of governmental and non-governmental organizations in providing programs and services to improve the health of a community
5A2. Recognizes 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)	5B2. Identifies 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)	5C2. Explains 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)
5A3. Suggests relationships that may be needed to improve health in a community	5B3. Suggests relationships that may be needed to improve health in a community	5C3. Suggests relationships that may be needed to improve health in a community
	5B4. Establishes relationships to improve health in a community (e.g., partnerships with organizations serving the same population, academic institutions, policy makers, customers/clients, and others)	5C4. Establishes relationships to improve health in a community (e.g., partnerships with organizations serving the same population, academic institutions, policy makers, customers/clients, and others)
5A4. Supports relationships that improve health in a community	5B5. Maintains relationships that improve health in a community	5C5. Maintains relationships that improve health in a community
5A5. Collaborates with community partners to improve health in a community (e.g., participates in committees, shares data and information, connects people to resources)	5B6. Facilitates collaborations among partners to improve health in a community (e.g., coalition building)	5C6. Establishes written agreements (e.g., memoranda-of-understanding [MOUs], contracts, letters of endorsement) that describe the purpose and scope of partnerships

Community Dimensions of Practice Skills		
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
5A6. Engages community members (e.g., focus groups, talking circles, formal meetings, key informant interviews) to improve health in a community	5B7. Engages community members to improve health in a community (e.g., input in developing and implementing community health assessments and improvement plans, feedback about programs and services)	5C7. Ensures 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)
5A7. Provides input for developing, implementing, evaluating, and improving policies, programs, and services	5B8. Uses community input for developing, implementing, evaluating, and improving policies, programs, and services	5C8. Ensures that community input is used for developing, implementing, evaluating, and improving policies, programs, and services
5A8. Uses 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	5B9. Explains the ways assets and resources (e.g., Boys & Girls Clubs, public libraries, hospitals, faith-based organizations, academic institutions, federal grants, fellowship programs) can be used to improve health in a community	5C9. Negotiates 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
5A9. Informs the public about policies, programs, and resources that improve health in a community	5B10. Advocates for 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)	5C10. Defends 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)
5A10. Describes the importance of community-based participatory research	5B11. Collaborates in community-based participatory research	5C11. Engages the organization in community-based participatory research

Public Health Sciences Skills		
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
6A1. Describes the scientific foundation of the field of public health	6B1. Discusses the scientific foundation of the field of public health	6C1. Critiques the scientific foundation of the field of public health
6A2. Identifies 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)	6B2. Describes 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)	6C2. Explains 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)
6A3. Describes 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	6B3. Applies public health sciences (e.g., biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental health sciences, health services administration, social and behavioral sciences, and public health informatics) in the delivery of the 10 Essential Public Health Services	6C3. Ensures public health sciences (e.g., biostatistics, epidemiology, environmental health sciences, health services administration, social and behavioral sciences, and public health informatics) are applied in the delivery of the 10 Essential Public Health Services
	6B4. Applies public health sciences in the administration and management of programs	6C4. Applies public health sciences in the administration and management of the organization
6A4. Retrieves 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	6B5. Retrieves 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	6C5. Synthesizes 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

Public Health Sciences Skills		
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
6A5. Recognizes limitations of evidence (e.g., validity, reliability, sample size, bias, generalizability)	6B6. Determines limitations of evidence (e.g., validity, reliability, sample size, bias, generalizability)	6C6. Explains limitations of evidence (e.g., validity, reliability, sample size, bias, generalizability)
6A6. Describes evidence used in developing, implementing, evaluating, and improving policies, programs, and services	6B7. Uses evidence in developing, implementing, evaluating, and improving policies, programs, and services	6C7. Ensures the use of evidence in developing, implementing, evaluating, and improving policies, programs, and services
6A7. Describes the laws, regulations, policies, and procedures for the ethical conduct of research (e.g., patient confidentiality, protection of human subjects, Americans with Disabilities Act)	6B8. Identifies the laws, regulations, policies, and procedures for the ethical conduct of research (e.g., patient confidentiality, protection of human subjects, Americans with Disabilities Act)	6C8. Ensures the ethical conduct of research (e.g., patient confidentiality, protection of human subjects, Americans with Disabilities Act)
6A8. Contributes 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)	6B9. Contributes 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)	6C9. Contributes 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)
6A9. Suggests partnerships that may increase use of evidence in public health practice (e.g., between practice and academic organizations, with health sciences libraries)	6B10. Develops partnerships that will increase use of evidence in public health practice (e.g., between practice and academic organizations, with health sciences libraries)	6C10. Maintains partnerships that increase use of evidence in public health practice (e.g., between practice and academic organizations, with health sciences libraries)

Financial Planning and Management Skills		
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
7A1. Describes the structures, functions, and authorizations of governmental public health programs and organizations	7B1. Explains the structures, functions, and authorizations of governmental public health programs and organizations	7C1. Assesses the structures, functions, and authorizations of governmental public health programs and organizations
7A2. Describes government agencies with authority to impact the health of a community	7B2. Identifies government agencies with authority to address specific community health needs (e.g., lead in housing, water fluoridation, bike lanes, emergency preparedness)	7C2. Engages governmental agencies with authority to address specific community health needs (e.g., lead in housing, water fluoridation, bike lanes, emergency preparedness)
7A3. Adheres to organizational policies and procedures	7B3. Implements 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)	7C3. Manages 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)
7A4. Describes public health funding mechanisms (e.g., categorical grants, fees, third-party reimbursement, tobacco taxes)	7B4. Explains 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)	7C4. Leverages 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
	7B5. Justifies programs for inclusion in organizational budgets	7C5. Determines priorities for organizational budgets
7A5. Contributes to development of program budgets	7B6. Develops program budgets	7C6. Develops organizational budgets
	7B7. Defends program budgets	7C7. Defends organizational budgets

Financial Planning and Management Skills		
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
7A6. Provides information for proposals for funding (e.g., foundations, government agencies, corporations)	7B8. Prepares proposals for funding (e.g., foundations, government agencies, corporations)	7C8. Approves proposals for funding (e.g., foundations, government agencies, corporations)
7A7. Provides information for development of contracts and other agreements for programs and services	7B9. Negotiates contracts and other agreements for programs and services	7C9. Approves contracts and other agreements for programs and services
7A8. Describes financial analysis methods used in making decisions about policies, programs, and services (e.g., cost-effectiveness, cost-benefit, cost-utility analysis, return on investment)	7B10. Uses financial analysis methods in making decisions about policies, programs, and services (e.g., cost-effectiveness, cost-benefit, cost-utility analysis, return on investment)	7C10. Ensures 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)
7A9. Operates programs within budget	7B11. Manages programs within current and projected budgets and staffing levels (e.g., sustaining a program when funding and staff are cut, recruiting and retaining staff)	7C11. Ensures 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)
7A10. Describes 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)	7B12. Establishes 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)	7C12. Establishes 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)
7A11. Motivates colleagues for the purpose of achieving program and organizational goals (e.g., participating in teams, encouraging sharing of ideas, respecting different points of view)	7B13. Motivates personnel for the purpose of achieving program and organizational goals (e.g., participating in teams, encouraging sharing of ideas, respecting different points of view)	7C13. Motivates personnel for the purpose of achieving program and organizational goals (e.g., participating in teams, encouraging sharing of ideas, respecting different points of view)

Financial Planning and Management Skills		
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
7A12. Uses evaluation results to improve program and organizational performance	7B14. Uses evaluation results to improve program and organizational performance	7C14. Oversees the use of evaluation results to improve program and organizational performance
7A13. Describes program performance standards and measures	7B15. Develops performance management systems (e.g., using informatics skills to determine minimum technology requirements and guide system design, identifying and incorporating performance standards and measures, training staff to use system)	7C15. Establishes performance management systems (e.g., visible leadership, performance standards, performance measurement, reporting progress, quality improvement)
7A14. Uses 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)	7B16. Uses 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)	7C16. Uses 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)

Leadership and Systems Thinking Skills		
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
8A1. Incorporates ethical standards of practice (e.g., Public Health Code of Ethics) into all interactions with individuals, organizations, and communities	8B1. Incorporates ethical standards of practice (e.g., Public Health Code of Ethics) into all interactions with individuals, organizations, and communities	8C1. Incorporates ethical standards of practice (e.g., Public Health Code of Ethics) into all interactions with individuals, organizations, and communities
8A2. Describes public health as part of a larger inter-related system of organizations that influence the health of populations at local, national, and global levels	8B2. Describes public health as part of a larger inter-related system of organizations that influence the health of populations at local, national, and global levels	8C2. Interacts with the larger inter-related system of organizations that influence the health of populations at local, national, and global levels
8A3. Describes the ways public health, health care, and other organizations can work together or individually to impact the health of a community	8B3. Explains the ways public health, health care, and other organizations can work together or individually to impact the health of a community	8C3. Creates opportunities for organizations to work together or individually to improve the health of a community
8A4. Contributes to development of a vision for a healthy community (e.g., emphasis on prevention, health equity for all, excellence and innovation)	8B4. Collaborates with individuals and organizations in developing a vision for a healthy community (e.g., emphasis on prevention, health equity for all, excellence and innovation)	8C4. Collaborates with individuals and organizations in developing a vision for a healthy community (e.g., emphasis on prevention, health equity for all, excellence and innovation)
8A5. Identifies 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)	8B5. Analyzes 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)	8C5. Takes 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)

Leadership and Systems Thinking Skills		
Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
8A6. Describes needs for professional development (e.g., training, mentoring, peer advising, coaching)	8B6. Provides opportunities for professional development for individuals and teams (e.g., training, mentoring, peer advising, coaching)	8C6. Ensures availability (e.g., assessing competencies, workforce development planning, advocating) of professional development opportunities for the organization (e.g., training, mentoring, peer advising, coaching)
8A7. Participates in professional development opportunities	8B7. Ensures use of professional development opportunities by individuals and teams	8C7. Ensures use of professional development opportunities throughout the organization
8A8. Describes the impact of changes (e.g., social, political, economic, scientific) on organizational practices	8B8. Modifies organizational practices in consideration of changes (e.g., social, political, economic, scientific)	8C8. Ensures 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)
8A9. Describes ways to improve individual and program performance	8B9. Contributes to continuous improvement of individual, program, and organizational performance (e.g., mentoring, monitoring progress, adjusting programs to achieve better results)	8C9. Ensures continuous improvement of individual, program, and organizational performance (e.g., mentoring, monitoring progress, adjusting programs to achieve better results)
	8B10. Advocates for the role of public health in providing population health services	8C10. Advocates for the role of public health in providing population health services

Tier Definitions

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.

Tier 2 – Program Management/Supervisory Level

Tier 2 competencies apply to public health professionals in program management or supervisory roles. Responsibilities of these professionals may include developing, implementing, and evaluating programs; supervising staff; establishing and maintaining community partnerships; managing timelines and work plans; making policy recommendations; and providing technical expertise.

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.

For more information about the Core Competencies, please contact Kathleen Amos at kamos@phf.org or 202.218.4418.