

Competencies for Performance Improvement Professionals in Public Health

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The Competencies for Performance Improvement Professionals in Public Health (PI Competencies) are a set of skills desirable for performance improvement (PI) professionals working in public health. Based on the [Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals](#) (Core Competencies) and the [Core Competencies for Performance Improvement Managers](#), these competencies were developed to offer additional guidance in PI for public health professionals with responsibilities related to developing or implementing plans and activities in the areas of quality improvement, performance management, workforce development, accreditation readiness, or community health assessment and improvement planning.

The PI Competencies describe areas of skills and knowledge beneficial to PI professionals. These competencies do not describe specific tasks or activities performed by PI professionals, as those are determined by places of employment. As the field of PI encompasses a number of distinct jobs or positions within public health organizations, individual competencies within the PI Competencies may be more or less relevant for individual PI professionals based on their specific job responsibilities. Individual PI professionals are encouraged to focus on developing competencies in the areas most relevant to their jobs.

Connection with the Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals

The PI Competencies align with the Core Competencies, a set of foundational skills for all professionals working in public health. The PI Competencies expand upon PI concepts present in the Core Competencies and describe additional skills focused more specifically on the work of PI professionals in public health settings, such as state, Tribal, local, and territorial health departments. PI-related skills addressed in the Core Competencies are not repeated in the PI Competencies. The PI Competencies are designed to be used along with the Core Competencies to help guide development of job descriptions, performance objectives, training, workforce development plans, academic curricula, tools, and other resources to support the activities and growth of PI professionals.

Development of the PI Competencies

Development of the PI Competencies was supported by the [Performance Improvement Competencies Subgroup](#) of the [Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice's Core Competencies Workgroup](#) and shaped by input from numerous PI professionals working in public health. Development was informed by a comprehensive environmental scan that included a review of literature and resources related to competency development and opportunities for PI professionals to provide feedback about the key knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for working in this area. In addition, the PI Competencies reflect input from national organizations and technical assistance providers and trainers who have worked with over 500 health departments on PI activities.

Organization of the PI Competencies

To facilitate use with the Core Competencies, the PI Competencies are organized using the same [domain structure and names](#) used in the Core Competencies. The PI Competencies expand on competencies addressed in the Core Competencies within five of the Core Competencies domains:

- Analytical/Assessment Skills
- Policy Development/Program Planning Skills
- Community Dimensions of Practice Skills
- Financial Planning and Management Skills
- Leadership and Systems Thinking Skills

It is important to note that competencies within the Core Competencies are also beneficial for PI professionals. A list of competencies within all eight domains of the Core Competencies that may be especially relevant for PI professionals can be found in the supplemental resource, [*Competencies for Performance Improvement Professionals in Public Health: Alignment with the Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals*](#).

Feedback on the PI Competencies

The [Public Health Foundation](#) thanks the public health community for its contributions to the PI Competencies and welcomes feedback about the PI Competencies. Examples illustrating how public health professionals and organizations are using the PI Competencies and tools that facilitate PI Competencies use are also appreciated. Feedback, suggestions, examples of use, and resources can be shared by emailing competencies@phf.org.

For More Information

Additional information about the PI Competencies can be found at phf.org/PICompetencies. Questions or requests for information may be sent to competencies@phf.org.

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Competencies for Performance Improvement Professionals in Public Health

Analytical/Assessment Skills

1. Demonstrates how data and information are used to improve individual, program, and organizational performance (e.g., selection and use of valid and reliable quantitative and qualitative data, data-driven decision making, data management, performance measurement)
2. Uses evidence (e.g., literature, best practices, model/promising/emerging practices) in determining how to evaluate and improve performance

Policy Development/Program Planning Skills

3. Describes how quality improvement, performance management, and workforce development are used to improve individual, program, and organizational performance
4. Coordinates development and implementation of an organization-wide quality improvement plan
5. Coordinates development and implementation of an organization-wide workforce development plan
6. Applies quality improvement, performance management, and workforce development frameworks, methods, tools, and models to improve individual, program, and organizational performance
7. Evaluates the effectiveness and quality of the organization's quality improvement, performance management, and workforce development plans and practices
8. Integrates quality improvement methods into organizational policies, plans, programs, and services
9. Aligns quality improvement plan and performance management system with other organization and community plans (e.g., strategic plan, community health improvement plan, workforce development plan, communication plan, all hazards emergency operations plan)

Community Dimensions of Practice Skills

10. Describes how quality improvement, performance management, and workforce development can be used to achieve equity within the organization and health equity within the community
11. Uses input of and feedback from internal and external customers in developing, implementing, and evaluating quality improvement, performance management, and workforce development activities
12. Collaborates with others internal and external to the organization (e.g., relationships with HR office, partnerships with health systems) in developing, implementing, and evaluating activities to improve individual, program, and organizational performance

Financial Planning and Management Skills

13. Demonstrates interpersonal skills that support activities to improve individual, program, and organizational performance (e.g., encouragement, optimism, compassion, empathy, resilience, recognition of the value of performance improvement)
14. Builds teams from all levels of the organization to improve program and organizational performance
15. Coordinates development and implementation of an organization-wide performance management system
16. Uses evaluation results and the performance management system to improve individual, program, and organizational performance

Leadership and Systems Thinking Skills

17. Develops skills of others within the organization in quality improvement and performance management
18. Ensures continuous improvement of quality improvement policies and programs, the performance management system, and workforce development policies and programs
19. Advocates for the use of quality improvement, performance management, and workforce development methods, tools, and practices throughout the organization (e.g., creates organization buy-in, overcomes resistance, communicates value, develops a culture of quality, supports a culture of learning, encourages innovation)