

ENHANCING PUBLIC HEALTH STRATEGIC SKILLS: A GUIDE TO HIGH QUALITY TRAININGS

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Public Health in America

The field of public health aims to support the health and well-being of people and communities by leading activities to prevent illness, injury, or harm, and to promote health and wellbeing.

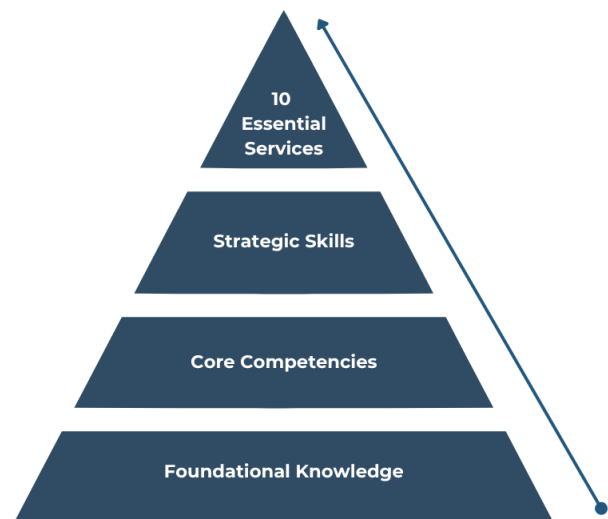
To ensure community health and well-being, State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial public health programs center on providing the [Foundational Public Health Services](#), including communicable disease control, chronic disease and injury prevention, environmental public health, maternal/ child/family health, and access to/linkage with clinical care. Day-to-day public health work focuses on ensuring delivery of the [10 Essential Public Health Services](#), inclusive of assessment of needs and opportunities, design and implementation of programs and policies, and assuring access and use of resources to meet needs, close gaps, and improve well-being.

This essential work is implemented by a professional public health workforce comprised of governmental public health workers and their community-based collaborators. To equip this workforce, organizations have assessed and defined practical competencies and skills that help workers be confident in and excel at their work. For example, *The Council on Linkages* defines [core competencies for public health workers](#) across three tiers: (1) Front Line + Program Support, (2) Program Management + Supervision, and (3) Senior Management and Executive Leadership. These knowledge and skill areas are used to assess worker or workforce training needs, and to help focus training initiatives.

The Core Competencies are complemented by the [Public Health Strategic Skills](#) (PHSS), cross-cutting abilities that help each worker amplify, accelerate, and ensure delivery of the foundational services and essential services. The PHSS include:

- Effective communication
- Data-based decision making
- Resource management
- Cross-sectoral partnerships
- Systems and strategic thinking
- Community engagement
- Change management
- Policy engagement

Having a grounding in foundational public health knowledge supports the work that you do every day helping everyone in the field to perform the 10 essential services and improve population health.



Enhancing Public Health Workers' Strategic Skills

Current data from the national [Public Health Workforce Interest and Needs Survey](#) suggest that some 50% of the governmental public health workforce seek further training in one or more PHSS. This training guide has been developed as a tool to help any public health worker meet that need via accessible, high quality online training resources. Investing in life-long learning serves as a foundation for advancing public health through a common framework, language, and skill set. Thank you for investing in you, and in our shared healthy future.

A Guide to Enhancing Strategic Skills

Overview

Many public health workers want to invest in professional development; knowing where to start can be overwhelming! We have developed this guide to help you get started with courses that have been reviewed for quality and accessibility, and that are recommended by public health experts. As you follow the three steps and access courses that are listed in this guide, you will become familiar with key training resources and tools; assets to help you continue your journey as a life-long learner in expanded ways.











Step 1: Decide Where to Start

Each of us has many skills and abilities already, but we all know there is room to grow. As you scan this guide you might wonder... **where should I start?**

- One answer is: start where it feels right, start exploring a course or topic that excites you. Any learning is great learning.
- Another answer is: are there areas you've highlighted with your supervisor, areas that will help you take that next big step in your career? That is another place to start.
- One more answer is: do you recall what your responses to [PH WINS](#) highlighted? PH WINS asked you a series of questions about (a) how important a certain skill is to your work, and (b) how equipped you feel to perform in that area. Skill areas that you noted as important to your work, but for which you feel not-yet-fully-equipped, were identified as "Skill Gaps" or "Training Needs". This guide is developed to help you meet those needs and close those gaps. If you don't recall the areas that you highlighted, try the self-assessment tool ([see Appendix 1](#)) that is developed with the same methodology.

Step 2: Focus In

Once you choose a skill area to start with, jump to that page in the guide and choose a training resource to start with. To help you choose—based on your functional tier, or the time you have available—we've coded each high-quality and accessible training with a legend. For quick reference, check out this legend and use these icons to help you select your course.

	Ideal for Tier 1 Staff: Front Line + Program Support		Length: 30-59m
	Ideal for Tier 2 Staff: Program Management		Length: 1-2 hours
	Ideal for Tier 3 Staff: Senior Management		Length: 2-9 hours
	Availability: Free		Length: >10 hours
	Availability: Paid		Course includes applied learning activities

Step 3: Expand Out

Once you are done your first course, revisit this guide.

- Maybe you want to dive deeper and do another training in that same area to further expand that strategic skill?
- Maybe you want to transition to another strategic skill?

At any time, you can use or re-visit the self-assessment tool ([see Appendix 1](#)) to help point you to priority trainings; you can also use this guide—or the TRAIN Learning Network or any other learning tools—in the way that feels right to you. For example, while the focus of the guide is on the PHSS, you will also find resources for complementary career development, such as leadership and management, and special topics that speak to the needs and challenges of working in public health.

Methods

The trainings included in this guide were selected using a rigorous evaluation process. We searched [TRAIN](#) for all trainings tagged as strategic skills, training plans including courses related to the strategic skills, as well as seeking recommendations from experts. All identified trainings were evaluated using the CDC's quality standards criteria as well as our own evaluation criteria. We then piloted each training below to ensure they delivered on their learning objectives and our evaluation criteria.

Training Evaluation Criteria

To ensure on the highest quality of trainings were included in this guide, we verified that each course has:

- › Clear learning objective
- › Easily accessible
- › Opportunity for engagement
- › Opportunity for learner assessment or feedback
- › Follow up support





Notes on the Trainings

- Most of the trainings listed in this guide are found in CDC TRAIN clearinghouse, hosted by the TRAIN Learning Navigator, and meet the CDC Quality Training Standards. However, there are fantastic trainings available from other organizations that may not have made their way onto TRAIN. We hope this will be a living document that is updated as new trainings become available.
- Please note we are aware that some courses have expiry dates listed on TRAIN, course organizers have been contacted, and expiry dates are in the process of being extended.

Foundations of Public Health Practice

Public health workers implement [diverse activities](#) in five [foundational areas](#) to assess and improve health and well-being. At present, however, some 86% of the governmental public health workforce do not hold a degree in public health;¹ this may leave some workers looking for ways to build their foundational knowledge and skills to solidify their ability to perform the [10 Essential Public Health Services](#). Foundational knowledge refers to the essential understanding of public health principles, systems, and practices that underpin all professional activities in the field.

Foundational public health knowledge and skills are directly aligned with the [Core Competencies for Public Health Professionals](#), and support the performance of the [Public Health Strategic Skills](#). The following courses all require more than 10 hours to complete, but are a great introduction to/ review of the core building blocks of public health practice.

Training	Author(s)	Legend	Detail
Introduction to Public Health Practice	Multiple authors, see individual courses within training plan		This is a free introductory training pathway made up of multiple courses, available on the TRAIN website. This training pathway is split into 9 sections starting with foundational knowledge and then focusing on some of the key strategic skills necessary to engage in public health practice. Sign up for a free TRAIN account to access the pathway; some courses may require additional log-in/account creation.
Public Health Essentials Certificate Program	G Meredith A Travis Cornell University		This is a 15-week certificate program, offered via eCornell. The course focuses on building capacity in all public health strategic skills, including community engagement, cross-sectoral partnerships, systems and strategic thinking, effective communication, data-based decision making, and program planning.
Public Health Foundations	National Network of Public Health Institutes		This is a self-paced course available through NNPHI's learning navigator. This training pathway delivers courses focusing on foundational knowledge to enable public health workers to engage in public health practice. There are 8 courses in this pathway overall. To access the course, register your interest by emailing: trainings@nnphi.org .
Building Strategic Skills for Better Health	M Fraser B Castrucci de Beaumont Foundation		This is a book which looks at the various strategic skills and how the public health workforce can develop these skills.

¹ Data reported by PH WINS (2021) as presented on the National Dashboard: <https://phwins.org/national>

Effective Communication

Community health thrives when people share information openly, listen carefully, and work together toward common goals. Communication—the ability to give and receive information effectively—is the foundation for building trust, relationships, and collective action. In public health, strong communication ensures that people understand health risks, know where to turn for help, and feel engaged in decision-making processes. Whether explaining data, coordinating responses to emergencies, or educating the public related to health risks or wellness and health promotion, communication must be clear, timely, honest, and respectful of different cultures and languages. Effective communication is a skill that turns knowledge into impact.












Specific actions that are a part of effective communication include:






- Communicate the roles of governmental public health, health care, and other partners in improving the health of a community.
- Describe public health as part of a larger inter-related system of organizations that influence the health of populations at local, national, and global levels.
- Assess the health literacy of populations served.
- Communicate in writing and orally with proficiency for different audiences, using a variety of approaches.
- Communicate information to influence behavior and improve health.
- Facilitate communication among individuals, groups, and organizations.

Effective Communication in Practice

The NE Louisiana Regional Pre-Diabetes Prevention Project (RPDP) was designed to promote and increase prediabetes screening and disseminate prevention information amongst rural communities using media outlets. By adapting their communication strategy so that they specifically targeted the populations of interest, the RPDP was able to increase screenings and exceed their goals by 125% as well as improving re-screening. Learn more about their initiatives [here](#).

The RPDP highlights how application of the Effective Communication competencies to public health problems can make a big difference.

Training	Author(s)	Legend	Detail
Health Literacy and Communication	C Higginbotham Middle Tennessee State University	    	This training focuses on health literacy and the importance of understanding this when we consider public health communication. Certificate of completion available
Improving your Communication Skill	T Keogh Region 6 South Central Public Health Training Center	     	This training provides an overview of the skills needed to communicate successfully as a leader in public health. The course focuses on building skills in communicating in personal and professional setting, as well as how to navigate differing communication styles amongst your colleagues.

<u>Communicating Effectively</u>	Northwest Center for Public Health Practice		This course focuses on principles of effective communication, and helps learners understand how to communicate data to public audiences, through problem-based learning. This module is part of a longer training series focused on health in rural communities
<u>Introduction to Persuasive Communication</u>	N Linardopoulous Rutgers University		This training dives into the science and art of strategic communication, with a focus on different theories of persuasion in the public health context. Theories such as Elaboration Likelihood Model, Cognitive Dissonance Theory and Social Judgement Theory are examined for influencing behavior and attitudes to improve health outcomes. This training is part of a Chief Health Strategist training series.
<u>Data Visualization Training Series</u>	Multiple authors (see individual courses)		This multi-part training series focuses on communicating data to support health promotion. Learners will identify data visualization principles and explore the best practices for communicating data with different audiences. Learners will also develop skills in visualizing data in an aesthetically pleasing way.
<u>Risk Communication in Public Health Emergencies</u>	AV Lanfreniere Region 6 South Central Public Health Training Center		This training focuses on communicating risks during public health emergencies. While the content is geared towards Tier 2 professionals, it is a great course for any public health professionals who is involved in emergency preparedness or response roles.
<u>Emergency Preparedness Communications for Vulnerable Populations</u>	M Levy University of Memphis		This training focuses on the skills needed to support accessible and actionable communication, before, during, and after an emergency situation, particularly with groups of people who may be harder to reach.

Data-Based Decision Making

A key priority in public health work is to get the right thing to the right place at the right time to meet needs, close gaps, and ensure health and well-being. To be effective, this work must be driven by data. Public health workers collect, analyze, track trends, and interpret data to understand community needs, guide policies, and evaluate outcomes. But data alone are not enough. Evidence-based decision-making must also consider research, professional expertise, and community perspectives which bring lived experience into the decision-making process. Grounding public health practice in both data and evidence enables decision makers to take informed, effective, and responsive actions that lead to tangible, lasting change.





Specific actions that are a part of data-based decision making include:







- Determine quantitative and qualitative data and information needed for assessing the health of a community and to resolve data gaps.
- Analyze the validity, reliability, limitations, and comparability of data.
- Collects, analyzes, and interprets valid and reliable quantitative and qualitative data.
- Assess community health status and factors influencing health in a community (e.g., quality, availability, accessibility, and use of health services, access to affordable housing).
- Develop, and advocate for the use of, evidence-based decisions in developing, implementing, evaluating, and improving policies, programs, and services.
- Explain the importance of evaluations for improving policies, programs, and services.
- Describe the diversity of individuals and populations in a community.

Data-Based Decision Making in Practice

The Core State Injury Prevention Program (Core SIPP) in Wisconsin, uses National Survey of Children’s Health data, specifically statewide needs assessments, to guide decisions. This data provided valuable information about which populations were at greater risk for experiencing trauma and adversity in childhood which then inform ongoing program activities. The same data was also used in an educational presentation to decision-makers on Wisconsin’s Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board, an organization that works to prevent child abuse and ensure Wisconsin’s children develop safe, supportive, and nurturing relationships. [Learn more about the Core SIPP here.](#)

The work of the Core SIPP highlights how application of the data-based decision making competencies to program activity can help direct our efforts where they are most needed as well as influencing decision makers.

Training	Author(s)	Legend	Detail
Understanding Population Health Concepts	Northwest Center for Public Health Practice	   	This course focuses on what population health is, and how population level data can help to inform effective public health actions. Learners examine social and environmental factors that can help or harm health outcomes for individuals through problem-based learning. This session is part of a longer training series focused on health in rural communities.

<u>Promoting Health by Uniting Sectors Around Shared Data</u>	<p>J Cunningham et.al.</p> <p>Region V Public Health Training Center</p>		<p>This webinar discusses effective practices for data sharing to improve multi-sector collaboration in public health initiatives. The webinar also highlights resources and tools to help develop local solutions to multi-sector collaboration and data sharing.</p> <p><i>**Small fee if opting for CE credits**</i></p>
<u>Applied Qualitative Methods for Community Health Improvement</u>	<p>K Beatty L Ventura</p> <p>East Tennessee State University</p>		<p>This course provides step-by-step guidance on how to develop a qualitative research project to improve community health. Learners will understand how to develop a research question and how to use two types of qualitative data, interviews and focus groups to identify needs and develop solutions for community health.</p>
<u>Visualizing Data Stories</u>	<p>Northwest Center for Public Health Practice</p>		<p>This course focuses on the tenets of effective data visualization that can help you communicate health information to different audiences and tell a story with your data. This is part of a longer training series focused on health in rural communities</p>
<u>Foundations of Data Visualization</u>	<p>M Taylor</p> <p>University of Memphis</p>		<p>This course introduces and reinforces the foundations of data visualization to support public health decision-making. How data are presented has a powerful role in informing action or seeding change.</p>
<u>Data Visualization Training Series</u>	<p>Multiple authors (see individual courses)</p>		<p>This multi-part training series focuses on communicating data to support health promotion. The first three modules provide an introduction to data visualization principles. The five remaining modules focus on applying data visualization skills for communicating with decision-makers and other audiences and tailoring messages to different stakeholders.</p>
<u>Navigating Data Avoiding Common Statistical Pitfalls in Public Health Analysis</u>	<p>X Mou</p> <p>University of Memphis</p>		<p>This course provides an overview of common statistical pitfalls we might come across as public health professionals. Learners work through different real-world scenarios to practice common challenges faced when working with data, that can be messy or incomplete.</p>

Resource Management

Resource management involves the allocation and management of current and future resources, including the time, staff, funding, equipment, data systems, consultants, and community partnerships needed to get public health work done. An important part of resource management is financial management. While not everyone working in public health needs to build or manage a budget or payroll, understanding the basics helps. Whether planning for a multi-year public health improvement initiative, maintaining core operations, or responding to an emergency need, the aim of resource management is to ensure these resources are used efficiently, effectively, and fairly to maximize organizational and programmatic success, while also minimizing waste.




Specific actions that are a part of resource management include:

- Explain public health and health care funding mechanisms and procedures.
- Develop and defend program budgets and justifies program inclusion in organizational budgets.
- Prepare proposals for funding and negotiate contracts and other agreements for programs and services.
- Manage programs within current and projected budgets and staffing levels.
- Establish teams and motivate personnel for the purpose of achieving program and organizational goals.
- Provide opportunities for and encourage the use of professional development for individuals and teams.
- Contribute to continuous improvement of individual, program, and organizational performance.

Resource Management in Practice

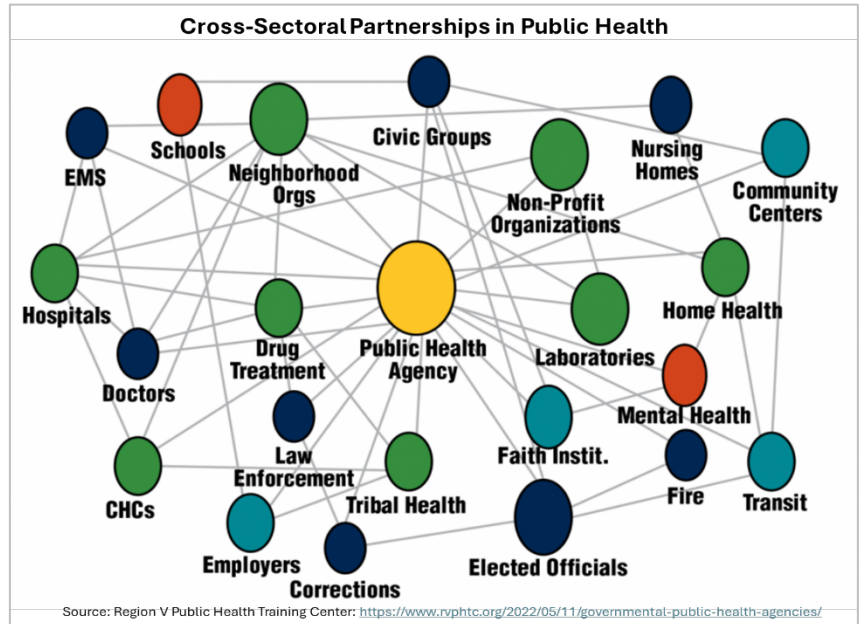
Norwalk (CT) Health Department, as part of NNPHI's Strategic Scholars Program, developed tools and processes to determine how their city's Travel and Adult Immunization Clinics were working. This project was stimulated by a change in population and NHD's desire to meet the needs of their new residents, for example the expansion of the adult immunization clinic. More information can be found [here](#).

This project shows how the Resource Management competencies are applied to improve the service provided by health departments to their community and work towards improving community health.

Training	Author(s)	Legend	Detail
Federal Grants Management Training Series	Multiple authors (see individual courses)		This training series provides public health workers with the skills needed to develop a strong grant application, and to be compliant with cooperative agreement management.
Organizational Planning	J Hunt East Tennessee State University		This training provides an overview and introduction to organizational planning and the types of management skills that help a public health worker become a leader. Learners will understand how to engage in goal setting, relationship building, and conflict resolution for a well-organized work environment.
Building Expertise in Administration Management	Multiple authors University of Miami		This in-depth course will help learners develop financial and managerial skills, building a strong foundation in administration. Learners engage in applied learning related to real-world public health scenarios, while practicing problem-solving, budgeting, procurement, contracts, and financial well-being.

Cross-Sectoral Partnerships

Public health is most effective when it brings people and organizations together to address shared challenges by leveraging community strengths and assets. Cross-sectoral partnerships in public health practice emphasizes the importance of engagement and interdisciplinarity. Public health issues are complex, and public health resources are often scarce. However, when public health departments work in partnership with key and trusted community resources—such as schools, public transportation, housing agencies, businesses, health care settings, faith communities, and community leaders—right-fit and sustainable solutions can be found.






Specific actions that are a part of cross-sectoral partnerships include:

- Establish and maintain relationships to improve health in a community.
- Facilitate collaborations among partners to improve health in a community.
- Collaborate with individuals and organizations in developing a vision for a healthy community.
- Identify and engage assets and resources.

Cross-Sectoral Partnerships in Practice

Starting in 2024, Utah's Dept. of Health and Human Services started a partnership with the state's Office of Homeless Services to provide more beds during extreme cold. Through this cross-sectoral partnership, the state is able to provide an additional 300 beds when the temperature drops below 32 degrees, or during Code Blue events. Learn more [here](#).

This project shows how the Cross-Sectoral Partnerships competencies are applied to improve the service provided by health departments to their community, especially in an emergency.

Training	Author(s)	Legend	Detail
Cross-Sector Collaboration: Making Partnerships Work for Your Community	R Bialek J Moran K Amos		This webinar discusses the importance of cross-sectoral partnerships and provides tools to help develop and foster partnerships. Learners will see examples and tools used to improve collaboration across sectors. The webinar highlights how these partnerships can help with sharing resources, funding and expertise to improve health outcomes.
Assessing your Audience for More effective Cross-Sector Collaboration	N Linardopoulous Rutgers University		This self-guided study focuses on the importance of assessing your audience to tailor communication strategies and build collaborative partnerships. Learners work through a scenario in a fictitious county to learn how different types of data can lead to a better understanding of your audience, including stakeholder analysis, direct observation and demographic and psychographic data.
Embracing Public Health 3.0 and Creating Cross-Sector Partnerships	E Harkness L Hall K Frederic Region IV Public Health Training Center		This webinar discusses how minor adjustments in communication and approaches can lead to stronger cross-sectoral community partnerships. Profiles ideas and lessons learned by local health departments when changing their approach to community communication strategies.

Systems & Strategic Thinking

Public health isn't about treating one person at a time—it's about improving the health of entire communities. This requires looking at the big picture, understanding how different parts of society—from data and policies to transportation and education—work together to affect health outcomes. Systems and strategic thinking helps public health professionals see how pieces connect, identify root causes, and design solutions that improve the whole. Systems and strategic thinking means recognizing complex interactions and designing interventions that can prevent problems before they occur. By examining the whole system and assessing infrastructure, public health professionals can help to break harmful cycles, invest in resilience, create lasting improvements, and build a healthier future for everyone.

Specific actions that are a part of systems and strategic thinking include:





- Describe public health as part of a larger inter-related system of organizations that influence the health of populations at local, national, and global levels.
- Explain the ways public health, health care, and other organizations can work together or individually to impact the health of a community.
- Analyze internal and external facilitators and barriers that may affect the delivery of the 10 Essential Public Health Services.
- Assess community health status and factors influencing health in a community.
- Distinguish the roles and responsibilities of governmental and non-governmental organizations in providing programs and services to improve the health of a community.
- Identify relationships that are affecting health in a community.

Systems and Strategic Thinking in Practice

This [ASTHO report](#) on the work of three states on food security during childhood highlights the importance of systems and strategic thinking. The background of the report reminds us of the importance of good nutrition in the first 1,000 days and the impact it can have on a child's health. The report emphasizes a systems approach because improving early childhood nutrition security requires coordinated action across multiple sectors, including healthcare, education, and community organizations. By aligning policies, programs, and stakeholders, the approach ensures sustainable, equitable solutions that address the root causes of food insecurity.

One highlighted example is from New York, which has taken a multipronged approach to improving nutrition security in 0–3-year-olds across the state. Their work involved collaborating with the community, hospitals, parents, teachers, and health insurers to develop their implementation plans.

This report demonstrates how the competencies of Systems and Strategic Thinking can be put into practice and leveraged to address key health issues.

Training	Author(s)	Legend	Detail
Introduction to Systems Thinking	H de Pinho Columbia University		<p>This course introduces the foundational concepts of systems thinking and explores how this approach can be used to understand and address complex public health challenges. Using a case-study approach, learners will gain tools to identify patterns, relationships, and leverage points within systems. This training is part of a Chief Health Strategist training series.</p>
Systems Thinking and Systems Science Methods for Public Health	Y Yang University of Memphis		<p>This training provides an overview of how to apply systems thinking to the work of public health. In the course, learners explore key concepts and frameworks which are essential when thinking about upstream factors.</p>
Strategic Foresight and Public Health 3.0	NNPHI A Hines University of Houston		<p>This course helps learners consider how strategic foresight methodology can be incorporated into achieving the vision of Public Health 3.0. Learners take steps towards action by identifying emerging trends, imagining alternative futures, and developing resilient strategies.</p>
Rural Health Equity: Exploring Disparities and Solutions	A Root University of Arizona		<p>This course provides learners with an overview of the specific issues facing rural communities and the unique solutions public health professionals can consider to improve health outcomes.</p>

Community Engagement

Public health actions are most effective when they're designed and implemented *with* communities, not *for* communities. Community engagement means building trusting and reciprocal relationships with the communities we aim to serve by listening to their experiences, learning from their knowledge, and inviting them to co-create solutions. This approach helps ensure that public health programs are relevant, respectful, and effective. True engagement also requires sharing power, it involves recognizing that lasting health improvements come from community-driven ideas and leadership. Strong communication, trust, and cultural humility are key to this work. By engaging communities meaningfully, we support healthier neighborhoods, stronger partnerships, and more equitable public health outcomes.

Specific actions that are a part of community engagement include:

- Establish relationships to improve health in a community
- Engage community members in the design and implementation of programs to improve health in a community
- Identify assets and resources that can be used for improving the health of a community
- Develop community health assessments using information about health status, factors influencing health, and assets and resources
- Collaborate in community-based participatory research and with individuals and organizations in developing a vision for a healthy community

Community Engagement in Practice

Winnebago (NE) Public Health Department (WPHD), as part of NNPHI's Strategic Scholars Program sought to strengthen their infrastructure by engaging Winnebago's Native youth in an internship program. To achieve this, WPHD created a workforce committee which included a variety of local voices. More information can be found [here](#).

This project shows how the Community Engagement competencies can be applied and how working with your community can help strengthen your department and improve overall health.

Training	Author(s)	Legend	Detail
Community Engagement in Research and Population Health	T Green University of Rochester		This self-guided course helps learners explore the role of community engagement in improving population health. Learners will examine health disparities, social determinants of health, and the importance of community-based participatory research. This course highlights how engaging communities can lead to more effective interventions and better outcomes.
Community Engagement: The People's Approach to Improving Health + Social Outcomes	R. Schiavo Region 2 Public Health Training Center		This self-guided course emphasizes the value of community-driven approaches in shaping health and social outcomes. Learners will examine strategies for collaborating with communities. The training highlights how local health departments can partner with community members and leaders to design, implement, and evaluate effective public health interventions.
Shift Your Power	J Bierens Region V Public Health Training Center		This self-paced course allows learners to study different aspects of power and how to develop strategies for better health outcomes for all. Small fee associated with the 4-credit hour course.
Community Dimensions of Public Health Practice Series	University of Albany		This self-paced course focuses on building strong community partnerships for improving health outcomes, and how to build, implement and evaluate community health programs. <i>**There is a fee if CE credits are desired**</i>

Change Management

Change management is the process of guiding people, teams, and systems through transitions, whether shifting priorities, adopting new tools, or responding to crises. In public health, change is constant: pandemics, climate threats, funding changes, and evolving community needs all demand quick, thoughtful action. The use of effective change management processes help organizations adapt without losing momentum. Change management involves establishing a shared vision, engaging in collaborative planning, committing to clear communication, and helping people stay grounded during uncertainty. Practitioners skilled in change management model resilience, reduce resistance, and support a smoother path towards change. This ensures public health agencies can keep delivering essential services—even when the ground beneath them is shifting.

Specific actions that are a part of change management include:






- Contribute to and implement development of organizational strategic plan
- Modify organizational practices in consideration of changes
- Contribute to continuous improvement of individual, program, and organizational performance
- Modify programmatic practices in consideration of internal and external changes

Change Management in Practice

Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) is NACCHO's structure to help communities and organizations develop and improve on their strategic plans. Learn more about MAPP [here](#). One example of MAPP in action is from Washington where they used MAPP processes, notably assessment, planning, monitoring and evaluation to develop a Community Health Improvement Plan. Learn more about their efforts [here](#).

These projects show how Change Management competencies are applied in real life to support change and improve health.

Training	Author(s)	Legend	Detail
Program Evaluation	K Beatty M Smith East Tennessee State University		This course provides an introduction to program evaluation in public health, focusing on how to assess the effectiveness and impact of programs. Learners will explore key evaluation concepts, types of evaluations and steps in the evaluation process. The training highlights how evaluation can inform decisions-making, improve program design, and demonstrate accountability to stakeholders.
Making Evaluation Work for You	D Bartelli University of Memphis		This practical training is geared towards developing skills required to perform program evaluations – something essential to the successful continued implementation of public health initiatives. Learners will also be introduced to some practical strategies for integrating evaluation into everyday public health practices.

Introduction to Change Management	E Sadloch Rutgers University		This course focuses on the fundamentals of change management in the public health setting. You will learn why change efforts often fail and how to apply structure approaches to lead successful change. Using a case-study approach, learners will explore the essential skills required to lead people and organizations through change. This training is part of a Chief Health Strategist training series.
Creating a Context for Change	SW Chauvin Region 6 Public Health Training Center		This training helps learners consider how to be effective in leadership, particularly when leading people and organizations through change.
Change Management During a Crisis	E Sadloch Rutgers University		This course focuses on how public health leaders can effectively manage during a crisis. Learners will explore leadership and change management strategies for managing uncertainty, maintaining team cohesion, and communicating under pressure. This training is part of a Chief Health Strategist training series.
Change Management for Public Health	NACCHO		Change Management for Public Health is a 6 module, interactive learning course that is informed by field experts and is supplemented by examples and stories from local health departments.
Leading Change in Informatics and Data Analysis	Kelley Chester, Emory University		This course provides an introduction to change management, providing an overview of several frameworks for change within an organization. The course also helps learners decide which framework may be best for creating effective change in different scenarios or circumstances.

Policy Engagement

Policy engagement is the ability to shape the laws, regulations, and systems that influence health. Public health professionals do this by informing, influencing, implementing, and evaluating policies at the Local, State, and/or Federal level, and even within institutions and organizations. At the core of shaping policies and practices are many of the other strategic skills: engaging community members and those with lived experience, building relationships with decision-makers, using data and evidence to inform and advocate for change, and supporting people and organizations through change. Through policy engagement, public health practitioners can improve population well-being at scale. From advancing evidence-based laws, to enforcing health protections, to securing funding for right-fit solutions, this skill turns ideas into action, and action into lasting impact.





Specific actions that are a part of policy engagement include:

- Contribute to, implement and advocate for policies, programs, and resources that improve health in a community.
- Examine the feasibility and implications of policies, programs, and services.
- Evaluate policies, programs, and services.
- Support diverse perspectives in developing, implementing, and evaluating policies, programs, and services that affect the health of a community.
- Assess the effects of policies, programs, and services on different populations in a community.
- Use community input for developing, implementing, evaluating, and improving policies, programs, and services.

Policy Engagement in Practice

Washington State Department of Health held listening sessions with stakeholders to better understand how to meet community health needs and improve policy-making processes. This included improving accessibility of the processes to both members of the workforce and the public. More information can be found [here](#).

This project demonstrates how recognizing challenges, collaborating with the workforce and community, and refining existing processes can activate Policy Engagement competencies and integrate them into everyday public health practice.

Training	Author(s)	Legend	Detail
An Overview of the Policy Process in Public Health	H de Pinho Columbia University		This course looks at how public health agencies engage in the policy making process. Throughout the course, examples from the COVID-19 pandemic are used to discuss the challenges that we face when working in the policy-making process.
Problem Identification in the Policy Process	H de Pinho Columbia University		Using a case study approach, this course describes how to implement policy starting with problem identification – the first step in policy engagement. The case study is used in other courses by the same author however, these are not a prerequisite for the course.
Introduction to Policy Analysis in Public Health	CDC Office of Policy Analysis and Engagement		This introduces the idea of policy analysis in public health. The focus is on learning the CDC policy process and is a great introduction or reminder.
Introduction to Policy Evaluation in Public Health	CDC Office of Policy Analysis and Engagement		This course focuses on policy evaluation, while building on content from the CDC introduction to policy analysis course. This is a great course for those with no knowledge of the process, or those needing a refresher.

References/Other Resources

There are many brilliant resources out there for public health professionals to advance their skills and continue their education. In addition to training sites listed above, also summarized here, we highly recommend exploring the following for resources to enhance your lifelong learning journey:

Resource	What It's Focused On	What You'll Find
NNPHI Learning Navigator	The Public Health Learning Navigator is a free online platform that helps public health professionals find high-quality training. It features a curated collection of courses that are reviewed for quality and relevance, ensuring they meet professional standards. The site supports skill-building across a range of public health topics and is part of a broader effort to strengthen the public health workforce.	<p>A variety of high quality individual trainings and training pathways for public health professionals in multiple disciplines.</p> <p>Some of their trainings have been included in this guide, other popular training topics include project management, environmental scanning, and health literacy.</p>
Cornell Health Impact Core	The Cornell Health Impact Core (CHIC) uses evidence-informed approaches to help partners explore, plan, implement and evaluate public health initiatives. One of their areas of focus is workforce development and CHIC has developed various trainings in this field.	<p>In the “resources and trainings” page you will find freely available, high quality trainings based on the following four public health domains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Preparedness • Public Health Workforce Development • Social Determinants of Health • Environment and Health
Rural Health Hub	The Rural Health Information Hub is a comprehensive online resource dedicated to improving health and healthcare in rural communities. It offers access to a wide range of tools, data, funding opportunities, and evidence-based practices tailored to rural health needs.	Here you will find a variety of resources including topic guides, state-specific guides, data visualizations, and case studies.
TRAIN Learning Network	The TRAIN Learning Network is a national platform that offers thousands of free or low-cost training opportunities for professionals in public health, healthcare, and emergency preparedness. Managed by the Public Health Foundation, it connects learners with courses from trusted sources like government agencies, universities, and nonprofits.	<p>The repository of individual courses, training plans, and additional resources available on TRAIN is extensive and covers almost all elements of public health practice and education.</p> <p>Most of the courses in this guide are hosted on TRAIN. To search TRAIN for further learnings, use the search function found in the middle of the home page.</p> <p><i>Note – you must search for individual courses in the “courses” section, and training plans in the “training plans” section (they are often not cross posted across both)</i></p>

Resource	What It's Focused On	What You'll Find
NACCHO	<p>The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) offers a wide range of training opportunities to support local public health professionals. Through its platform NACCHO University, learners can access virtual courses, self-paced modules, and specialized programs. These resources are designed to strengthen local health departments and promote effective, equitable public health practices.</p>	<p>You can access the large repository of virtual courses through NACCHO U using your MyNACCHO account (anyone can sign up for this). Courses range from leadership skills, administrative preparedness, topic-specific materials and more.</p>
ASTHO	<p>The Association for State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) offers a Learning Experience Platform comprised of free, self-paced training for public health professionals. Designed for both members and non-members, the platform supports skill-building through interactive modules, learning series, and specialized programs.</p>	<p>You can access the Learning Experience Platform whether or not you are a member of ASTHO. It features a wide variety of courses on topics like leadership, health equity, data visualization, emergency preparedness, and disease prevention.</p>

Appendix 1: Self-Assessment Tool

Instructions:

(1) For each skill listed below, answer two questions:

- Is this skill important in your day-to-day work? **If YES, put a checkmark in the box.**
- Might I benefit from more training in this area? **If YES, put a checkmark in the box.**

(2) Consider the domains where you have the most checkmarks. Domains that have skills that are **Important to your work, and where you'd value more training** will be a good place to start. Check out the section in this guide!

Skill	Important in my work	More training?	Domain
Effectively target communications to different audiences (e.g., public, community organizations, external partners)			Effective Communication
Communicate in a way that different audiences can understand			
Communicate in a way that persuades others to act			
Collect and use valid data for use in decision making			Data-Based Decisions
Identify and apply evidence-based approaches to address public health issues			
Incorporate health promoting principles into planning for programs and services			
Use resource analysis methods in managing programs and services			Resource Management
Identify funding mechanisms and procedures to develop sustainable funding models for programs and services			
Implement a management and administration plan for agency programs and services			
Assess the physical, political, social, fiscal drivers in your environment that may influence public health programs and services			Change Management
Modify programmatic practices in consideration of internal and external changes (e.g., social, political, economic)			
Apply quality improvement processes (e.g., Plan-Do-Check-Act, SWOT) to improve agency programs and services			
Analyze internal and external facilitators and barriers that may affect the delivery of the 10 Essential Public Health Services			Systems & Strategic Thinking
Integrate current and projected trends (e.g., physical, political, social, fiscal, etc.) into strategic planning for programs and services			
Build partnerships with diverse organizations to address upstream drivers of health (e.g., transportation, housing, education, law enforcement)			
Assess how agency policies, programs, and services advance population health			Community Engagement
Engage community members in the design and implementation of programs to improve health in a community			
Apply findings from a community health assessment or community health improvement plan to agency programs and services			
Identify and engage community resources (e.g., public libraries, hospitals, faith-based organizations) to improve community health			Cross-Sectoral Partnerships
Establish and maintain relationships to improve health in a community			
Facilitate collaborations among partners to improve health in a community			
Assess the effects of policies, programs, and services on different populations in a community			Policy Engagement
Examine the feasibility (e.g., fiscal, social, political, legal, geographic) of policy in improving public health problems			
Advocate for policies, programs, and resources that improve health in a community			

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Share Your Feedback

We hope the trainings provided in this guide have been useful. If you have ideas on how to improve this guide, or suggestions for other trainings or topics to include, please share your feedback. You can reach us at health_impacts@cornell.edu.