Development of Competency-based Position Descriptions and Career Ladder Initiatives in a Local Public Health Laboratory

Sanjib Bhattacharyya, PhD
City of Milwaukee Health Department Laboratory, Milwaukee, WI

APHL Annual Meeting, 2016
Outlines

• PHL Competency overview & Resources
• Current Practices and Challenges in PDs
• Development of competency-based PDs
• Career ladder Initiatives
• Competency-based Assessment and beyond
PHL Competency Guidelines

- Divided into 15 domains, or topic areas, which are categorized as *general*, *crosscutting technical*, or *specialized*

- Can be applied both at the individual and organizational levels

- Menu-based, allowing for selection and utilization based on needs of end-user

- Beginner, Competent, Proficient and Expert levels

Ref. MMWR, May 2015
### CDC-APHL Competency Assessment Tool

**PHL PD Assessment Builder**

e.g. Used for BioSafety Official PD

**Select**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Sub-competency</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Beginner</th>
<th>Competent</th>
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**PHL Competency Matrix**

[Image of competency matrix with Xs and Cs]

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MHDL Involvement in APHL- CDC PHL Competency Efforts

- APHL CDC-Advisory committee and workgroups
- Contribution to QMS and Management domains
- PHL Competency Tool Development Committee
- Comp Implementation and Adoption Steering Committee
- Participation in multiple comp workgroups
- Workforce Development Committee
  - NOLLA- ELP
    - Coaching
    - Mentoring
    - Workforce promotion
Standard Practices for Developing PDs

• Department of Employee Relations (DER) and MHD Human Resources (HR) guidelines

• Role of Laboratory Management
  • Develop PD based on position responsibilities
  • Periodic updates per HR/DER
  • Post position/hiring process
  • Staff assessment and evaluation
  • Provide guidelines and resources for staff development

- Tasks and Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs)
  Competencies evolve from the identification of KSAs and other characteristics. KSAs are developed after identifying important job tasks.

Definitions:
  Tasks – are a coordinated succession of work activities used to produce a distinguishable and discernable output that can be independently used or consumed.

  Knowledge – is a body of information, usually of a factual or procedural type, that is applied directly to the successful performance of a task.

  Skill – describes a present observable capability or competence to perform a job operation with precision. Performance is usually based on a learned psychomotor act and implies a standard that is required for effective performance.

  Ability – describes a more general capability or competence to perform an observable behavior or a behavior that is necessary to perform a job function resulting in an observable product.
Working with DER & HR

• To be in alignment with City of Milwaukee Civil Service rules

• Understanding DER guidelines for Training & Experience Rating (T&E)

• Share DER benchmarks for the T&E process (City-wide)
  • Building benchmarks for (laboratory) competencies
  • Review “Career Ladders Toolkit”
    • DER’s website: http://city.milwaukee.gov/DER/Compensation/CLT#.VrUGH8v2aRE.
Template for PDs

Current Positions at MHDL

- Microbiologist (I/II/III)
- Virologist (I/II/III)
- Chemist (I/II/III)
- MLTs
- LIS Admin
- Office Assistants
- Lab Ops Manager
- Deputy Lab Director
- Lab Director

### JOB DESCRIPTION

**City of Milwaukee**  
**CS-25, Rev. 11/14**

**FOR DER USE ONLY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vacancy No.</th>
<th>City Service</th>
<th>Commission:</th>
<th>Finance</th>
<th>Committee:</th>
<th>Fire &amp; Police</th>
<th>Common</th>
<th>Council:</th>
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**Instructions:** Complete all sections. Refer to the Guidelines for Preparing Job Descriptions for instructions on completing specific items.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1. Date Prepared/Revised:</th>
<th>2. Present Incumbent:</th>
<th>Is incumbent underfilling position?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>YES</strong> ☐ <strong>NO</strong> ☐</td>
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If YES, indicate Underfill Title in box 10.

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<thead>
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<th>3. Date Filled:</th>
<th>4. Previous Incumbent:</th>
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<th>Bureau:</th>
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<td>Division:</td>
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<td>Unit:</td>
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<td>Section:</td>
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<th>6. Work Location:</th>
<th>Telephone:</th>
<th>Email:</th>
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<td>☐ Yes</td>
<td>If in District Council 48, which local?</td>
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<td>☐ No</td>
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<th>9. FLSA Status</th>
<th>(check one)</th>
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<td>☐ Exempt</td>
<td>☐ Non-Exempt</td>
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<th>10. Official Title: Underfill Title (if applicable):</th>
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<td>Pay Range</td>
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<td>Requested Title (if applicable):</td>
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<th>Recommended Title (DER Use Only):</th>
<th>Approved by:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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11. **BASIC FUNCTION OF POSITION:**

12. **DESCRIPTION OF JOB** (Check if description applies to Official Title ☐ or Underfill Title ☐):

**A. ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS/Duties and Responsibilities:** (Refer to the “Guidelines for Preparing Job Descriptions” for instructions on determining Essential Functions.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of Time</th>
<th>ESSENTIAL FUNCTION</th>
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**B. PERIPHERAL DUTIES:**

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Challenges for Developing PDs

• General competency-based, not per CDC APHL PHL Comp guidelines
• Disjoint between competency and position expectations (*specialized*)
• Less flexible to changes (e.g. change in roles; other duties as assigned)
• Lack of clarity on Overlapping responsibilities
• Challenging to evaluate staff
  • Career ladder issue
  • Varied staff pool and their initiatives
    • High achievers vs. generalized staff
    • Measure staff achieving milestones
Mapping Competencies to Positions

• Use Comp triangle
  • Map with current positions
  • Where we fit in now
  • Where we would like to be on such PDs

• A competency-based approach identify position expectations and identify gaps

• Aligned with MHD/L professional development plan and DER guidelines
Competency-based PD:

• Varied - how to capture all job positions
  • Managers Vs. non-manager
  • Technical Vs. Non-technical

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING JOB DESCRIPTIONS

The purpose of a Job Description is to provide employees and department with written statements that summarize the major duties and responsibilities of a particular position. Because job descriptions have the potential to become the subject of contention, including grievances or litigation, it is critical that accuracy be maintained. To ensure this, job descriptions should be reviewed on a periodic basis so they accurately reflect the general nature of work and level of responsibility.
## Competency-based Position Description
(Work in progress)

### Description of Job (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of Time</th>
<th>ESSENTIAL FUNCTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Specimen Accessioning and LIS assistance: <strong>Follows policies, processes and procedures for the management of samples.</strong> Tracks specimen shipments to the laboratory, performs specimen accessioning in LIS; verifies the assignment of samples to individual test process or test processing combinations; Ensures utilization of established paper and electronic documentation methods or systems; provide daily assistance to laboratory LIS issues, including result reporting, verifying electronic accessioning activities to ensure completeness and accuracy; use predefined LIS modules to track and document custody of samples from receipt to disposal or return to submitted and to track samples assigned to laboratory programs during analytical processes, documenting errors in spreadsheets, and assist laboratory managers in compiling data for trend analysis upon strict adherence to patient confidentiality per HIPAA and other regulatory agencies Protecting Healthcare Information (PHI) policies and guidelines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45%</td>
<td>Quality controls: <strong>Monitors and documents receipt and proper distribution of incoming supply shipments through a supply management system; follows established inventory management processes, including receipt and inspection processes; Ensures compliance with policies, processes and procedures for use and storage of reagents and supplies, and verify the tracking, management and maintenance of inventory. Keep quality laboratory data/records, participates laboratory QA/QC, and Lean activities for Quality Improvements (QI), monitors equipment, safety and answers queries from clients and other duties as assigned by the supervisor.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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A competency-based approach allows organizations to identify gaps in employee knowledge, skills, or abilities, and develop a “treatment”; e.g. an organizational professional development plan to address gaps.

• 8-step Infinity Cycle created by the International Food Protection Training Institute (IFPTI)
Career Ladder in Local Public Health Agency

A structure for professional and technical growth and development

• DER & HR guides and Career Ladder toolkit
• Staff evaluation
  • Current practices vs. competency-based
  • Use of revised PDs
• MHD accreditation
  • Role of all divisions- DCEH, CEH, MHDL
• MHD strategic planning
  • Goals toward workforce development
  • Identify those relevant
  • Career ladder advantages
MHD Career Ladder

......boosting staff morals

• Consumer and Environmental Health (CEH)
  • Developed in Fall 2013 and currently being implemented

• Public Health Nurses
  • Proposed Fall 2015 and implementation beginning 2016

• Public Health Laboratory
  • Work in-progress (2016)
MHD Laboratory Strategic Plan

Goal #1: Partnerships: Strengthen existing and explore new partnerships to assure public health outcomes

Goal #2: Quality: Provide quality services and best practices to MHDL clients and stakeholders

Goal #3: Communication: Communicate effectively with all partners to understand and assure needs are met and PH information and policies are understood

Goal #4: Employee Development: Create an Employee Development Plan
MHDL Career Ladder Outlines

• Core Competencies, followed by cross-cutting and specialized comp
  • Allows for customization
• Market study
  • Possible equity adjustments based on market survey
• Revise PDs
  • Competency-based, DER guidelines
• Technology track and Leadership track
  • Advance education, certification
  • Skill inventories
  • Coaching/mentoring- leadership development
• Performance and developmental goals
  • Set up mutually agreed upon career track (personal & professional)
• Performance-based evaluation
  • Pay progression or promotion
  • Staff recognition
Use of PHL Competency Guidelines:

-Beyond PDs and Career Ladder

• **Staff Safety competency**
  • New staff training
  • Staff training (in-service)

• **Assist in MHD accreditation**
  • use “big picture” of PH Competencies of entire MHD staff
  • Adopt model for PH lab

• **Annual staff evaluation**
  • Regulatory requirement
    • Impetus- suspect Brucella exposure- heightened alert and updated bio-safety comp for reference culture

• **PHL competencies used for proper response goals to AIHA (ISO) inspection**

• **Quality Improvement**
  • Lean practices

• **Communication strategies**
  • Lab-Epi overlap competencies, internal/external clients and stakeholders, media

• **Grant writing**
  • publications discussion PHL functions across many disciplines
Competency-based Assessment for Tier 1 & 2 Public Health Professionals

- Conducted by MPH fellow
- Assess PH/L staff understanding on competency

**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

**Tier 2 – Program Management/Supervisory Level:**
- Tier 2 competencies apply to public health professionals in program management or supervisory roles
Health Equity, Workforce Diversity and Retention in Public Health Laboratories

• **Increase diversity in PHL workforce**
  • Promote PHL career for pre-professional K-12 STEM
  • Attract and retain underrepresented minority students and educators

• **Retention and Career Advancement**
  • Promote diversity in the PH workforce from associated degree programs
  • Provide opportunity for higher education for career advancement
  • Distance education- online learning for improved access for those who face time-related barriers and competing life demands- greater social ease, and mentoring

• **Diversity within Healthcare Organizations**
  • Plan and evaluate diversity initiatives
  • Engage systems partners and key stakeholders
Acknowledgements

**MHDL**
- Steve Gradus
- Barbara Henry
- Angela Hagy
- Tiffany Barta
- Ali Reed
- Marty Cargill
- Sandy Rotar
- Bevan Baker
- Many others MHD staff members

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- John Ridderhof
- Renee Ned-Sykes
- Leah Gillis
- Kajari Shah
- Pandora Ray
- Steve Marshall
- Chris Bean
- Eva Perlman
- Many others- Competency Steering Committee, workgroup and APHL members
Questions?

Contact: Sanjib Bhattacharyya
sbhatt@milwaukee.gov