

How Immunization Competencies Framework was developed

Project Objectives

1. Develop a description of the attributes of a successful EPI
2. Define the competencies of the key functions throughout an EPI system

The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) led a working group of key partners to define standard competencies. The working group used four data collection methods in a step-wise approach to define competencies.

1. **Organizational objectives** of an immunization program were defined using a literature review of existing immunization strategy, guideline and reference documents.
2. Using the organization objectives as a guide, a development committee of the working group conducted a literature review. The development committee also queried subject matter experts to define the **attributes** of a successful immunization system (“successful” meaning an immunization system that was meeting its objectives). The larger working group reviewed and revised the attributes.
3. Using the attributes as a guide, the development committee again conducted a literature review and interviewed subject matter experts to develop a draft of the **work functions** that are required at each of the four levels. The draft was reviewed and revised by the larger working group.
4. To develop the **competencies**, in addition to the three data collection methods described for the first three steps, key informant interviews were conducted with immunization officers, largely at the national and district level.

Project Key Activities

Task
1. Project kick-off
2. Determine research methods
3. Research attributes of successful EPI programs
4. Prepare summary of successful EPI program
5. SME review of successful EPI summary
6. Final changes to EPI summary
7. Literature review of job functions
8. Summary of literature findings
9. Develop interview protocol
10. Test interview protocol
11. Identify key informants
12. Interview key informants
13. Analyze interview findings
14. Update stakeholders as needed
15. Develop competency recommendations
16. Present findings
17. Determine next steps

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Publishing as Normative Guidance for Countries

After completion of the first draft in late 2016, the World Health Organization (WHO) proposed publishing the standard competencies as normative guidance for countries' immunization programs. This work was presented at the April 2017 meeting of the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE). SAGE agreed with the WHO proposal and emphasized the importance of looking at functions and competencies from a health system perspective. SAGE also recommended piloting in a variety of country contexts.

In October 2017, WHO convened a group of immunization experts to review and make recommendations on the first draft of domains, work functions and standard competencies at the national level of the immunization program. Those recommendations were integrated into the draft document.

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