COMPETENCY OVERVIEW

What is a competency/skill?

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) defines a competency as "a measurable pattern of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics that an individual needs to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully."

Why is it important?

- Competencies/skills pinpoint what is important to be successful at USPHS Commissioned Corps in your current role as a PHS officer

- They define the knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors and other characteristics to build and grow over time to progress your career

USPHS commissioned corps developed a set of competencies/skills that apply to all PHS officers regardless of the professional category and career pathway.

- **Competencies/skills are grouped into 4 areas:** Officership, Deployment, Leadership, and Specialty Skills

- Key competencies/skills within each track are based on unique requirements to guide learning and development opportunities throughout your career

Competencies/skills and suggested learnings listed in higher levels assume mastery/achievement of those listed in lower levels; competencies/skills and additional learning are provided at multiple levels to account for mandatory Officership training and development of critical Specialty Skills.

Learning and development opportunities curated for each track and officer level are **not intended to be an exhaustive list of all possible opportunities** available to you (additional learning opportunities can be obtained from PACs, professional associations, and/or CCHQ).

USPHS COMPETENCIES/SKILLS*

USPHS COMPETENCIES/SKILLS ARE GROUPED INTO FOUR AREAS:

1. OFFICERSHIP

2. DEPLOYMENT

3. SPECIALTY SKILLS

4. LEADERSHIP

OFFICERSHIP COMPETENCIES/SKILLS

- Commitment to Officer Doctrine
- Promote Ethics
- Accountable to Self and Others
- Cultural Awareness
- Public Health Steward
- Effective Communicator
- Public Affairs

OFFICERSHIP

SPECIALTY SKILLS

SPECIALTY SKILLS COMPETENCIES/SKILLS

- Clinical Assessor
- Clinical Care and Management
- Public Health and Clinical Educator
- Public Health Population Medicine
- Public Health Effector
- Public Health Program Manager
- Regulatory Science Implementation and Management

DEPLOYMENT COMPETENCIES/SKILLS

- Incident Command Structure
- All Hazards Awareness and Safety
- Trauma and Resiliency
- National Response Framework
- National Recovery Framework
- Deployment Lifecycle
- Disaster Public Health (ESF-8)
- USPHS Readiness and Deployment

USPHS COMPETENCIES / SKILLS

DEPLOYMENT

LEADERSHIP

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES/SKILLS

- Lead Others
- Extend Influence
- Responsibility and Accountability
- Life-long Learning
- Communicate
- Create Positive Environments
- Develop Others
- Optimize Resources
- Think Strategically
- Monitor Results
- Make Decisions
- Preparation

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COMPETENCY/SKILL DEFINITIONS*

Accountable to Self and Others	Officers must understand and demonstrate mastery of customer service skills sufficient to provide communication and feedback that support continuity of operations.
All Hazards Awareness and Safety	All hazards awareness develops the personal, group and leadership safety mindset to ensure force protection during operations to support events and incidents.
Clinical Assessor	Officers providing clinical medicine and veterinary activities must demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and skills to effectively diagnose patients in dynamic settings.
Clinical Care and Management	Officers providing clinical medicine and veterinary activities must demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and skills to support the dynamic care and treatment, medical analysis, and case management.
Commitment to Officer Doctrine	Officers must understand and demonstrate mastery of the policies and laws that support the readiness and conduct required of a commissioned officers in the USPHS.
Communicate	Leaders must hone their written and oral communication skills throughout their careers. They must develop skills to communicate with a variety of audiences, both within their professional area and outside. The communication must be coordinated among leadership echelon and must not conflict with the messages originating from above; nor should the communication preempt that from more senior leadership.
Create Positive Environments	Effective leaders inspire and support creativity, encouraging growth within the group. Concurrently, they do not permit conflicts to persist or escalate, and actively combat disruptive behaviors such as bullying, scapegoating, setting of disparate expectations, or inconsistent application of rules. Conduct that interferes with group harmony is corrected quickly and decisively. Inherent in this competency is recognition that the leader is also a member of the team.
Cultural Awareness	Officers must understand and demonstrate masterly of dynamic and unique genders, races, religions, and cultures both domestically and internationally; and utilize skills and understanding to ensure healthy interactions.
Deployment Lifecycle	The deployment lifecycle encompasses the concepts and stages to support temporary duty assignments for operations that occur in response to natural and man-created disasters.

Develop Others	The best leaders are happy to see their most effective subordinates leave to take on assignments with greater responsibility. They are on continuous surveillance for opportunities to enhance the skills and competencies of their staff members, share their own personal experiences of success and failure, identify the strengths and weaknesses of those around them, and provide timely and constructive feedback regularly. Effective leadership requires leveraging subordinate staff members' strengths and trusting them to take risks.
Disaster Public Health (ESF-8)	Public Health and Medical Services provides the mechanism for coordinated Federal assistance to supplement State, tribal, and local resources in response to a public health and medical disaster, potential or actual incidents requiring a coordinated Federal response, and/or during a developing potential health and medical emergency.
Effective Communicator	Officers must understand and demonstrate skills to communicate with a variety of audiences, both within their professional area and outside.
Extend Influence	One must identify key stakeholders, the nature of the relationships with each, develop networks of contacts and colleagues, seek to build new relationships as needed, and motivate those stakeholders to work collaboratively toward shared goals.
Incident Command Structure	Incident Command Structure concepts involve establishing a management structure during an incident or event; developing effective lines and methods of communication; establishing clear personnel position descriptions; and ensuring operations follow standard protocols for consistency.
Lead Others	The ability to understand the mission, embrace the vision, and bring others along as the agency's/Corps' mission is advanced. Because different people and different situations respond differently to leadership interventions, mastery of leadership theory is essential, as is understanding one's position in the hierarchy of the Corps, and the sphere of influence one may have.
Life-Long Learning	Effective leaders set an example for their subordinates by continually working to improve their leadership skills, understanding of their programs, and the internal and external forces that influence them.
Make Decisions	Leaders are required to make decisions. They are also required to identify problems, then propose and implement solutions. Indecisive leaders are barriers to achieving missions, and leaders who identify problems without proposing solutions are not exercising strategic thinking behavior.

Monitor Results	In addition to assigning work, leaders must assess he quality, completeness and timeliness of that work. Continuous assessment will also reveal if expected results on advancing the mission are being achieved and will inform adjustments as needed. High quality work should be publicly and promptly rewarded, and poor quality work should be privately and promptly addressed.
National Response Framework	NRF concepts involve establishing a coordinated and comprehensive approach of government and non-government support during natural and man-created disasters and destructive events.
National Recovery Framework	NRF concepts involve establishing a coordinated and comprehensive approach of government and non-government support during post natural and man-created disasters and destructive events often defined as recovery operations.
Optimize Resources	To lead a program or personnel, irrespective of size, leadership requires one to identify what must be accomplished, and the resources available to accomplish those tasks. Effective leaders know the strengths of their staff members, the priorities of the work to be done, the limitations that exist, and how to best apply resources to tasks. They must know how to justify requests for additional resources, even in an era of budget constraints.
Preparation	Effective leaders at all levels demonstrate in-depth knowledge of their areas of responsibility and participate actively in discussions that involve their programs. They are aware of program requirements, resource allocations, internal and external influences that may affect their programs or organizations. This situational awareness includes development of responses if programs are adversely impacted. Effective leaders are rarely unprepared to respond to inquiries from internal or external stakeholders.
Promote Ethics	Officers must understand and demonstrate mastery of ethical ideals to support activities conducted as a commissioned officer.
Public Affairs	Officers must understand the concepts required to communicate and interact via information sources with individuals internal and external.
Public Health and Clinical Educator	Officers providing public health and clinical education activities must demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and skills to support increasing the understanding of medical and public health concepts.
Public Health Effector	Officers providing public health activities must demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and skills to support the continual improvement of the health and safety of the nation.

Public Health Population Medicine	Officers providing population medicine must demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and skills to support the identification, diagnosis, and public health programs for the continual improvement of the health and safety of the nation.
Public Health Program Manager	Officers providing public health program manager activities must demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and skills to support the oversite, review and project management for comprehensive programs in support of the health and safety of the nation.
Public Health Steward	Officers must understand and demonstrate masterly of dynamic and unique environmental affecters that impact the public health both domestically and across the world.
Regulatory Science Implementation and Management	Officers providing regulatory science activities and management must demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and skills to support the research and project management to create, update and review policy; and the implementation and regulatory actions in support of those policies.
Responsibility and Accountability	Responsibility relates to one's sphere of control. Accountability relates to the requirement to take ownership of one's area of responsibility. As officers move to assignments of increasing responsibility, they are held to account for greater programmatic and personnel actions. Effective leaders do not skirt blame for actions of their teams; nor do they accept sole credit when their teams excel.
Think Strategically	Planning and resource decisions must align with programmatic and organizational missions. Such planning requires leaders to exercise reflective thought about second- and third-order effects on their decisions, and how those decisions will advance the mission. Strategic thinking includes considering multiple perspectives and options.
Trauma and Resiliency	Understanding the impacts of trauma during events and incidents prepares officers to face unsettling impacts on people and the environment. Development of resiliency and mindfulness establishes a behavioral health approach to combating the impacts of trauma.
USPHS Readiness and Deployment	Concepts to provide a comprehensive understand of how the Commissioned Corps ensures compliance to 42 USC 204a.

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RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES/SKILLS

THESE ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES/SKILLS WILL ENHANCE YOUR CAPABILITIES AND PROMOTE SUCCESS WITHIN YOUR CHOSEN CAREER PATHWAY

COMPETENCY / SKILL	DEFINITION *(SOURCE)*
Change Management	Knowledge of change management principles, strategies, and techniques required for effectively planning, implementing, and evaluating change in the organization. (OPM)
Collaboration	The capacity to form partnerships and alliances with other individuals and organizations in order to enhance performance on the job. (CDC)
Conflict Management	Encourages creative tension and differences of opinions. Anticipates and takes steps to prevent counter-productive confrontations. Manages and resolves conflicts and disagreements in a constructive manner. (OPM)
Creative Thinking	Uses imagination to develop new insights into situations and applies innovative solutions to problems; designs new methods where established methods and procedures are inapplicable or are unavailable. (OPM)
Creativity and Innovation	Develops new insights into situations; questions conventional approaches; encourages new ideas and innovations; designs and implements new or cutting-edge programs/processes. (OPM)
Data Analysis and Interpretation	The capacity to analyze data, recognize meaningful test results, interpret results, and present the results in an appropriate way to different types of audiences. *(CDC)*
External Awareness	Understands and keeps up-to-date on local, national, and international policies and trends that affect the organization and shape stakeholders' views; is aware of the organization's impact on the external environment. *(OPM)*
Financial Management	Understands the organization's financial processes. Prepares, justifies, and administers the program budget. Oversees procurement and contracting to achieve desired results. Monitors expenditures and uses cost-benefit thinking to set priorities. (OPM)
Grants Management Laws, Regulations, and Guidelines	Knowledge of principles, laws, regulations, policies, practices, and guidelines (for example, Executive Orders, Code of Federal Regulations, OMB circulars) of grant or agreement programs, including their order of precedence. (OPM)

Competency / Skill	Definition (Source)
Human Capital Management	Builds and manages workforce based on organizational goals, budget considerations, and staffing needs. Ensures that employees are appropriately recruited, selected, appraised, and rewarded; takes action to address performance problems. Manages a multi-sector workforce and a variety of work situations. (OPM)
Information Technology Program Management	Knowledge of the principles, methods, and tools for the coordinated management of an IT program to include providing oversight of multiple IT projects, integrating dependent schedules and deliverables, and related activities (for example, benefits management, life cycle management, program governance). *(OPM)*
Information Technology Research and Development	Knowledge of scientific principles, methods, and tools of basic and applied research used to conduct a systematic inquiry into a subject matter area. *(OPM)*
Leveraging Diversity	Fosters an inclusive workplace where diversity and individual differences are valued and leveraged to achieve the vision and mission of the organization. (OPM)
Marketing	The capacity to articulate basic concepts of environmental health and public health and convey an understanding of their value and importance to clients and the public. (CDC)
Mathematical Reasoning	Solves practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical and statistical techniques. (OPM)
Oral Communication	Makes clear and convincing oral presentations. Listens effectively; clarifies information as needed. (OPM)
Partnering	Develops networks and builds alliances; collaborates across boundaries to build strategic relationships and achieve common goals. (OPM)
Planning and Evaluating	Organizes work, sets priorities, and determines resource requirements; determines short- or long-term goals and strategies to achieve them; coordinates with other organizations or parts of the organization to accomplish goals; monitors progress and evaluates outcomes. *(OPM)*
Policy Development	Ensures the development, implementation, and review of internal policies. (CDC)
Political Savvy	Identifies the internal and external politics that impact the work of the organization. Perceives organizational and political reality and acts accordingly. (OPM)

COMPETENCY / SKILL	DEFINITION *(SOURCE)*
Problem Solving	Identifies problems; determines accuracy and relevance of information; uses sound judgment to generate and evaluate alternatives, and to make recommendations. (OPM)
Product Evaluation	Knowledge of methods for researching and analyzing external products to determine their potential for meeting organizational standards and business needs. *(OPM)*
Project Management	Knowledge of the principles, methods, or tools for developing, scheduling, coordinating, and managing projects and resources, including monitoring and inspecting costs, work, and contractor performance. (OPM)
Public Safety and Security	Knowledge of military, weaponry, and intelligence operations; public safety and security operations; occupational health and safety; investigation and inspection techniques; or rules, regulations, precautions, and prevention techniques for the protection of people, data, and property. (OPM)
Research	Knowledge of the scientific principles, methods, and processes used to conduct a systematic and objective inquiry; including study design, collection, analysis, and interpretation of data; and the reporting of results. (OPM)
Stakeholder Management	Knowledge of the concepts, practices, and techniques used to identify, engage, influence, and monitor relationships with individuals and groups connected to a work effort; including those actively involved, those who exert influence over the process and its results, and those who have a vested interest in the outcome (positive or negative). (OPM)
Technical Credibility	Understands and appropriately applies principles, procedures, requirements, regulations, and policies related to specialized expertise. (OPM)
Technology Awareness	Knowledge of developments and new applications of information technology (hardware, software, telecommunications), emerging technologies and their applications to business processes, and applications and implementation of information systems to meet organizational requirements. *(OPM)*
Vision	Takes a long-term view and builds a shared vision with others; acts as a catalyst for organizational change. Influences others to translate vision into action. (OPM)

OPM EXECUTIVE CORE QUALIFICATIONS (ECQs) FOR SENIOR OFFICER/EXECUTIVE

OPM HAS IDENTIFIED 5 ECQs FOLLOWED BY COMPETENCIES NEEDED TO BE ON THE PATH TO IMPACTFUL LEADERSHIP

EXECUTIVE CORE QUALIFICATION	DEFINITION *(SOURCE)*
ECQ 1: Leading Change *(for Senior Officer / Executive)* **The following competencies support ECQ 1:** ▪ Creativity and Innovation ▪ External Awareness ▪ Flexibility ▪ Resilience ▪ Strategic Thinking ▪ Vision	This core qualification involves the ability to bring about strategic change, both within and outside the organization, to meet organizational goals. Inherent to this ECQ is the ability to establish an organizational vision and to implement it in a continuously changing environment. *(OPM)*
ECQ 2: Leading People *(for Senior Officer / Executive)* **The following competencies support ECQ 2:** ▪ Conflict Management ▪ Leveraging Diversity ▪ Developing Others ▪ Team Building	This core qualification involves the ability to lead people toward meeting the organization's vision, mission, and goals. Inherent to this ECQ is the ability to provide an inclusive workplace that fosters the development of others, facilitates cooperation and teamwork, and supports constructive resolution of conflicts. *(OPM)*
ECQ 3: Results Driven *(for Senior Officer / Executive)* ***The following competencies support ECQ 3:*** ▪ Accountability ▪ Customer Service ▪ Decisiveness ▪ Entrepreneurship ▪ Problem Solving ▪ Technical Credibility	This core qualification involves the ability to meet organizational goals and customer expectations. Inherent to this ECQ is the ability to make decisions that produce high-quality results by applying technical knowledge, analyzing problems, and calculating risks. *(OPM)*

EXECUTIVE CORE QUALIFICATION	DEFINITION *(SOURCE)*
ECQ 4: Business Acumen *(for Senior Officer / Executive)* *The following competencies support ECQ 4:* ▪ Financial Management ▪ Human Capital Management ▪ Technology Management	This core qualification involves the ability to manage human, financial, and information resources strategically. *(OPM)*
ECQ 5: Building Coalitions *(for Senior Officer / Executive)* *The following competencies support ECQ 5:* ▪ Partnering ▪ Political Savvy ▪ Influencing/Negotiating	This core qualification involves the ability to build coalitions internally and with other Federal agencies, State and local governments, nonprofit and private sector organizations, foreign governments, or international organizations to achieve common goals. *(OPM)*