

# Foundational Skills Recommendations to Support the Title V National Performance Measures



## 1. Advancing Equity

Advancing equity is key to making change happen in the social determinants of health. With the release of the MCHB Health Equity Blueprint, Title V professionals have the opportunity to assess current programs and practices and plan future initiatives through an equity lens.

- a. Ability to examine the historical and cultural practices related to a given national performance measure
- b. Ability to develop a shared vision for equity with partners
- c. Ability to analyze the equity of current and proposed interventions
- d. Ability to use findings of analysis to intentionally influence policy, program and funding choices
- e. Ability to apply cultural and linguistic competency skills, including:
  - i. The ability to understand the role that social norms play in diverse communities
  - ii. The ability to include stakeholders and communities in assessment of the cultural competence of current and proposed programs and policies
- f. Ability to identify and address structural inequities and their consequences within communities and the institutions that serve them that limit opportunities for optimal maternal and child health (MCH) outcomes

## 2. Analytical/Assessment Skills

These skills include competencies from the traditional MCH toolbox of needs assessment and data collection and analysis. These skills also include more advanced technical skills from implementation science, quality improvement and systems science to allow MCH programs to understand and use data for effective program selection and implementation. To advance outcomes in the current areas of focus, skills that focus on assessment of current systems vs. a future desired state are a critical first step before beginning the implementation of selected strategies for change.

- a. Ability to use population health surveillance data to:
  - i. Identify subgroups of the MCH population that are disproportionately affected by poor outcomes
  - ii. Inform proposed changes to current systems, policies, and programs
- b. Ability to access peer-reviewed literature, analyze findings, and apply findings to practice
- c. Skills to analyze the 'Strengthen the Evidence' guidance from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and other MCHB resources to examine whether evidence-based interventions are available, and to select interventions that are effective but also appropriate for context, funding, and current staff capacity
- d. Skills to effectively select client-based vs. population level interventions
- e. Skills to conduct effective needs assessment with consumers
- f. Ability to use implementation tools to assess readiness of state and local agencies to implement selected evidence-based interventions
- g. Ability to use systems tools to:
  - i. Map current systems vs. desired systems
  - ii. Engage consumers in analysis of current and desired future systems
  - iii. Engage system stakeholders in problem solving
  - iv. Identify service gaps, duplications, and service barriers
  - v. Identify unintended consequences of interventions
- h. Ability to develop information systems, data sharing structures, data gathering tools and data agreements to simplify reporting and improve data quality and consistency across sectors

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## 2. Analytical/Assessment Skills (cont.)

- i. Ability to use basic quality improvement tools and methods to assess and improve current systems (such as Lean and/or Model for Improvement, Plan Do Study Act cycles, run charts, root cause analysis, process maps, etc.)
- j. Ability to effectively and efficiently test and implement changes to systems and processes using improvement and implementation science
- k. Ability to develop, utilize, display, and interpret data from performance measures, including trend data/run charts, and ability to use the data to drive improvements
- l. Skills to monitor and evaluate outcomes/impact of policies and programs selected to address a given national performance measure
- m. Ability to translate data to lay audiences
- n. Ability to contribute to research documenting effective policies and programs

## 3. Building & Sustaining Partnerships

These skills focus on the role of partnerships and collaboration to align initiatives among many sectors. The Title V workforce has historically strong workforce capacity in this area, and strategic alliances and effective partnerships continue to surface as a particularly important competency for Title V professionals in rapidly changing environments.

- a. Ability to identify new stakeholders and their perspectives around given national performance measures
- b. Ability to determine which non-traditional partners are already working in a given area and/or should be asked to participate in Title V efforts
- c. Ability to leverage mutually reinforcing activities and integrate Title V national performance measures with other public health, privately funded, and cross-sector initiatives
- d. Skills to effectively convene diverse stakeholder groups and lead collaborative learning efforts
- e. Ability to effectively collaborate with community partners and manage shared challenges
- f. Ability to convene and/or participate in multi-sector initiatives such as collective impact
- g. Ability to be sensitive to all stakeholders' interests in multi-sector initiatives
- h. Ability to effectively facilitate partnerships and ongoing partnership processes
- i. Ability to train local MCH staff to effectively convene, collaborate, and facilitate partnerships
- j. Ability to partner effectively in advocacy efforts, including aligning messaging for communications related to each measure

## 4. Financial & Management Skills

Complementary to leadership and systems thinking skills are the essential financial planning and management skills required to move complex endeavors forward. The specific skills listed below have been identified as particularly relevant to the management of Title V programs in a transformative environment.

### *1. Financial Skills*

- a. Skills to effectively align Title V funding with other public and private funding streams already supporting selected national performance measures
- b. Ability to effectively align block grant funds with specific national performance measures
- c. Ability to effectively distribute funds in alignment with specific national performance measures
- d. Ability to effectively monitor use of funds to maintain alignment with national performance measures
- e. Ability to understand and leverage Medicaid administrative match funds
- f. Ability to obtain and manage diverse funding streams, including private and public funds, relevant to national performance measures

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## 4. Financial & Management Skills (cont.)

### *II. Management skills*

- a. Ability to provide effective staff training specific to a given national performance measure
- b. Ability to provide appropriate technical guidance to local partners regarding the effective implementation of evidence-based interventions
- c. Ability to connect program planning, implementation and evaluation skills to staff performance measures, activities, and timelines in order to clearly align work plans with specific national performance measure
- d. Ability to calculate return on investment of policies and programs supported by Title V
- e. Ability to effectively leverage project timelines and understand the relationship between short-, medium- and long-term goals
- f. Ability to develop, use and communicate “SMART” goals (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) for teams and coalitions to guide health transformation efforts
- g. Project management skills, including:
  - i. Meeting facilitation and management
  - ii. Planning and timeline management
  - iii. Project scoping
  - iv. Effective communication and follow-up
  - v. Eliminating waste by designing effective processes and systems
- h. Ability to spread and sustain successful changes to larger systems and processes
- i. Ability to effectively develop subcontracts that ensure adherence to evidence-based interventions
- j. Ability to effectively terminate partnerships/subcontracts that do not support national performance measures
- k. Ability to effectively monitor and support sub-recipients
- l. Ability to develop data-sharing agreements

## 5. Implementation

Implementation is defined as a set of activities that put evidence-based interventions into practice, in a way that produces results. Implementation processes must be purposeful and well-defined so that collaborators can learn, utilize, assess and improve. Implementation science integrates the expertise of many disciplines, including change management, systems thinking and quality improvement. Many of the workforce capacities listed below are also included in categories listed throughout this document. They are included separately here to illustrate the scope of the necessary skill set for Title V staff involved in translating evidence based interventions into practice.

- a. Ability to support Title V and local MCH agencies to identify, assess, and select appropriate evidence-based interventions
- b. Ability to assess the effectiveness and usability of evidence-based programs or practices in the local context
- c. Ability to develop effective relationships and build strategic connections with established and emergent leaders and stakeholders to guide implementation and systems change efforts
- d. Ability to assess context for implementation in order to develop tailored implementation support strategies
- e. Ability to build and support teams to actively guide program design, delivery, and improvement
- f. Ability to support stakeholder co-creation of evidence-informed implementation processes and structures to translate research-based interventions into practice
- g. Ability to assess the degree to which evidence-based interventions are implemented with fidelity in state and local agencies, and the appropriate role of Title V in supporting effective implementation

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## 5. Implementation (cont.)

- i. Ability to develop and use data systems to measure progress and guide improvement efforts
- j. Ability to utilize appropriate strategies for improvement to identify and address locally relevant changes (specific to local root causes, processes, and systems)
- k. Ability to build the capacity of others to use practices of implementation science and transform their systems by engaging in competent systems coaching

## 6. Leadership & Systems Thinking Skills

Leadership and systems thinking skills are key to unlocking workforce capacity in any organization. Even individuals with highly developed technical skills that serve to advance a specific strategy may fail to have impact in an organization or system that lacks high functioning leadership and systems thinking skills. Furthermore, organizations with high functioning leadership and systems thinking skills can operate even more effectively in supportive political, financial, and social climates.

### *I. Human Resources Skills*

- a. Skills to recruit and manage a diverse and inter-professional workforce
- b. Ability to recruit and manage a workforce capable of leading population-level initiatives
- c. Ability to analyze current Title V and local MCH workforce educational backgrounds and experience to determine best fits for work assignments on individual-level interventions versus population health interventions
- d. Ability to provide effective oversight for staff, specifically in effective execution of work plans
- e. Ability to find and engage with peer mentors involved in similar transformation challenges
- f. Succession planning skills to effectively plan for turnover and retirements
- g. Ability to train early-career staff to ensure the maintenance of critical knowledge and skills

### *II. Leadership Skills*

- a. Ability to translate leadership and change management theory and practice into daily activities
- b. Adaptive leadership skills to form, manage, and lead teams in adaptive and evolving environments
- c. Ability to lead change efforts with an eye toward sustainability of human resources and funding
- d. Ability to lead and influence without authority, including willingness to challenge cultural norms
- e. Skills associated with emotional intelligence: self-awareness; self-regulation; motivation; empathy; and social skills
- f. Ability to identify, communicate, and leverage Title V's role in cross-sector efforts to address selected outcomes
- g. Ability to lead both MCH and external coalitions, including intergovernmental initiatives, partnerships outside government, and state initiatives
- h. Ability to convene public health and primary care professionals to align strategies and communication related to national performance measures

### *III. Systems Thinking Skills*

- a. Ability to identify systems causes of persistent challenges
- b. Ability to identify adaptive and technical challenges and respond appropriately to each using a systems thinking skill set
- c. Diagnostic skills to identify leverage points for Title V involvement in national performance measure activities, including shaping and framing the MCH role in a way that is complementary to that of partners
- d. Ability to scale up (and/or translate) interventions at the individual, group and community levels