

Purpose:

Create an actionable training plan for enhancing skills as an epidemiologist utilizing the Applied Epidemiology Competencies (AECs).

What is a Training Plan/Individual Professional Development Plan?

A training plan, also called an individual professional development plan (IPDP) or individual development plan (IDP), serves to create an actionable path for developing new skills and fostering career growth and advancement. These plans involve collaboration between the employee and their supervisor and a commitment to following through on items identified in the training plan. They can also be a collaborative effort between peers or an employee and their mentor.

Review the following steps to create a training plan for yourself or your employee using the accompanying AECs Training Plan/Individual Professional Development Plan Fillable Resource.

Step 1:

Assessing areas for improvement

To evaluate your (or your employee's) knowledge, skills, and abilities as they relate to your job duties, a great place to start is reviewing the job description for competencies that are expected for this role. Once you have done this you can identify where you (or they) are meeting the expected level of proficiency and where you (or they) may not be. Whether or not the job descriptions were created based on the Applied Epidemiology Competencies (AECs), the AECs self-assessment and/or the AECs assessment for supervisors can be used to identify areas of improvement needed based on assigned job duties and the individual's professional development goals.

Tip: this assessment can be done as part of or immediately after an individual's annual performance review.

Step 2:

Creating a training plan with SMART goals

Once these areas for improvement have been identified, they should be written down soon after into a draft training plan. This plan should include a description of the area(s) for improvement or training development goals and relevant AECs subcompetencies, what actionable steps are planned to develop each competency, the timeline for completion, and the progress, resources needed, and/or roadblocks to progress for obtaining that improvement. See "Sample Training Plan" image below for an example of how to complete the fillable resource.

Wherever possible, the actionable step and timeline for each area for improvement should be drafted as a “SMART” goal. A SMART goal is a goal that is:

Specific- the goal has a clearly understood outcome

Measurable- the goal is quantifiable to track progress

Achievable- the goal is realistic and can be achieved

Relevant- the goal is aligned with the individual’s training plan

Time-Bound- the goal has a deadline for completion

How to Complete the AECs Training Plan/Individual Professional Development Plan Fillable Resource:

When filling out the fillable resource, consider asking yourself the following questions to complete the training plan with your identified areas for improvement.

Column- Short-Term Career Goals

- What career goals do you have that you would like to accomplish in the short-term (within one year)?

Column- Areas for Improvement

- What do you consider your areas for improvement?
- Which areas of improvement do you feel you can prioritize?
- What AECs sub-competencies are relevant to your areas for improvement?
- How can you measure successful improvement in that area?

Column- Actionable Steps

- What do you feel you need to improve in those areas? (e.g., training, stretch assignments, job shadowing, volunteer activities, mentorship)
- How can you ensure your SMART goals are specific, measurable, and attainable?

Column- Timeline

- When will you have the actionable step completed?
- Is this a reasonable deadline?
- Can you break the action into incremental steps with deadlines? (consider this if goal completion is complex or will take an extended amount of time)

Column- Notes on Progress

- What activities have you completed to progress towards your training goal?
- When were these activities completed?
- What additional resources do you need to meet your training plan goals?
- Are you experiencing any roadblocks to progressing on gaining new competencies? (e.g., lack of time, funding, physical or personnel resources)

Sample Training Plan



Employee Signature: _____
 Supervisor Signature: _____

Training Plan/Individual Professional Development Plan Fillable Resource

Employee Name: Jane Doe		Employee ID#: 0001		
Supervisor Name: Jill Smith		Department/Position: Epidemiology/Epidemiologist II		
Short-Term Career Goals (one year goal): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve knowledge of and coordination with informatics Evaluate surveillance systems using identified population categories Gain knowledge on health equity principles 		Date Prepared: 01/01/2024		
		Effective Dates of Plan: From: 01/01/2024 To: 12/31/2024		
Follow-up Review	Date 1: 3/15/24	Date 2: 6/28/24	Date 3:	Date 4:
Date 5:	Date 6:	Date 7:	Date 8:	Date 9:

Area for Improvement (list training development goal and relevant AECs sub-competencies here)	Actionable Steps (list actions to be taken here)	Timeline (list when each step will be completed here)	Notes on Progress (list progress towards goals, resources needed, and any roadblocks to progress here)
Learn how to analyze epidemiology data using informatics tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> T2: 1.6.1. Collaborates with informaticians to collect, parse, prepare, and provision data to design and maintain databases and tools T2: 2.3.1. Uses information technologies and communication tools that support data acquisition, entry, abstraction, management, analysis, planning, mapping, visualization, and reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review "The Epidemiologist R Handbook" Participate in the training on Reportable Conditions Knowledge Management System (RCKMS) on CSTE Learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete two chapters of "The Epidemiologist R Handbook" every two weeks Complete all fifty Epi R Handbook chapters by 12/31/24 Complete RCKMS CSTE Learn course by 6/30/24 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed chapters 1-8 of Epi R Handbook Registered for free CSTE Learn account

Step 3:

Sharing progress and following up

Progress should be shared between the employee and the supervisor on the completion of these training goals regularly. The time between follow-ups will depend on the timeline of the SMART goal but should occur often enough to address any issues that may come up during the completion of the goal. Consider adding an action step of identifying an accountability partner to keep you motivated and on track.

Sharing these goals with your supervisor and others can help with getting support, overcoming challenges as they arise, and maintaining accountability for completing the professional development activities. Although the process of developing new skills can take a while, it is beneficial to share progress and celebrate achievements and identify any issues encountered along the way towards goal completion.

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