APHL ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORIES™

Analysis. Answers. Action.

www.aphl.org

PHL Career Ladders and Using Competencies to Guide Your Career

Susanne Norris Zanto

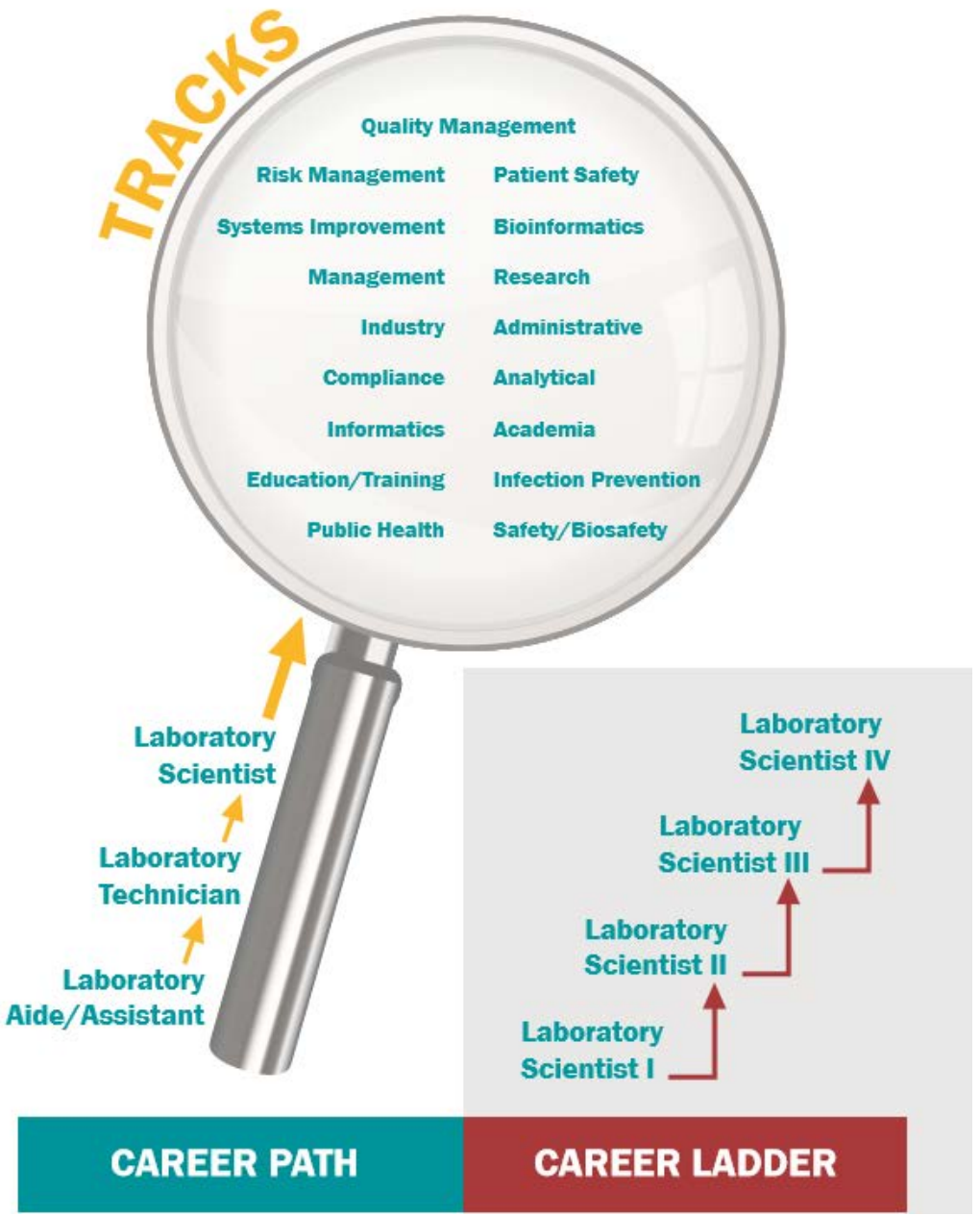
Laboratory SolutionZ

Career Path:

A track of employment with a progression of acquired education, experience, achievement and responsibility, moving through job positions within a professional field or organization.

Career Ladder:

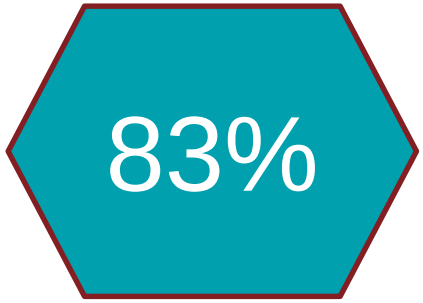
A series of steps within a job classification, each with increasing responsibility as expertise is developed, allowing for recognition of professional growth.



PH Laboratories are Challenged

2013 MMWR: *National Assessment of Capacity in Public Health Laboratories – US, 2011*

of laboratories cite the lack of a career path for advancement as a barrier to recruitment



of laboratories cite the lack of promotion opportunities as a barrier to retention

Making the case for a career ladder

- Many public health laboratories have:
  - One level of Public Health Laboratory Scientist
  - No room for advancement
  - No incentive/compensation for certification
    - ASCP, AMT, etc.
  - No incentive/compensation for advanced degrees
  - Compensation rates not competitive with private sector

Case in Point: Fairfax Co HD Laboratory

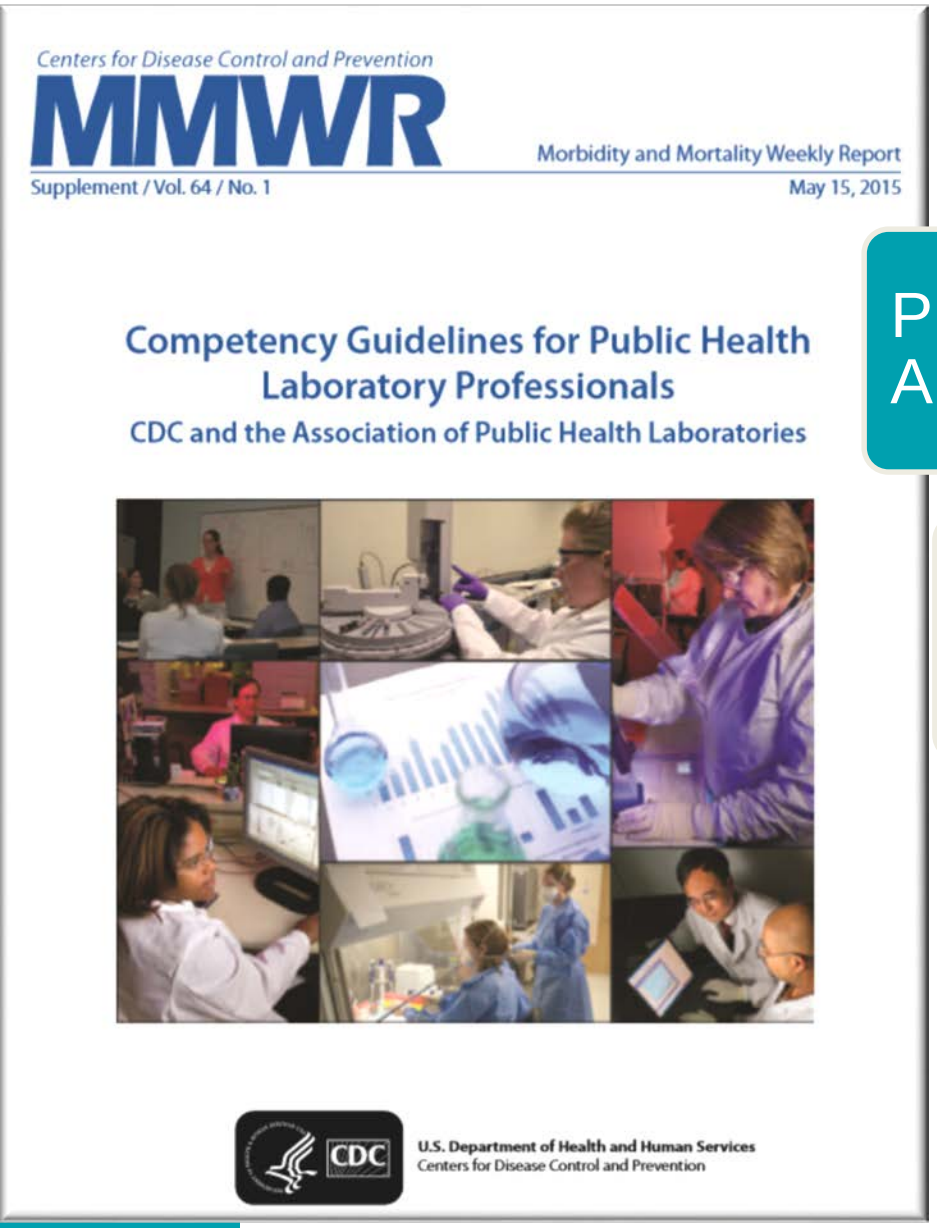
- Loss of personnel
  - Attrition, Retirement, Relocation
  - Higher salary offers
- High turnover over last six years
  - 56% technologist, 50% management
  - 44% FTE eligible for retirement
- Difficulty in recruitment and retention of qualified personnel
- Qualified candidates declined interviews due to salary
- Low Morale

Thanks to Deborah Severson, Laboratory Director Fairfax County HD Lab in Virginia for sharing her story

What can be done?

Many Fortune 500 companies and other health care professions are looking closely at competency models to address recruitment and retention challenges

Why Not Public Health Laboratories?



Project started
August 2012

Published
May 15, 2015

Developed and reviewed by 170 SMEs with diverse backgrounds and experience

Available on line at http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/other/su6401.pdf

Competency Guidelines for PHL Professionals

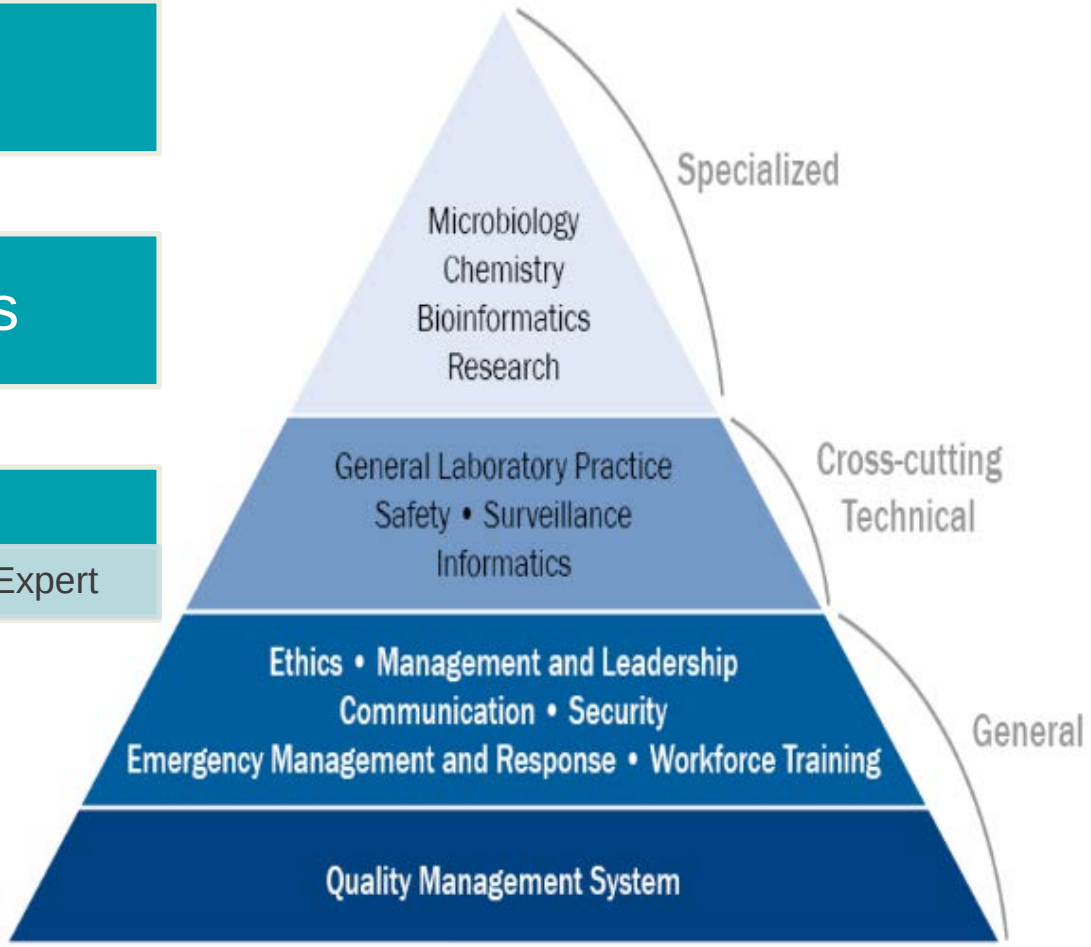
15 Domains

122 Competencies

519 Subcompetencies

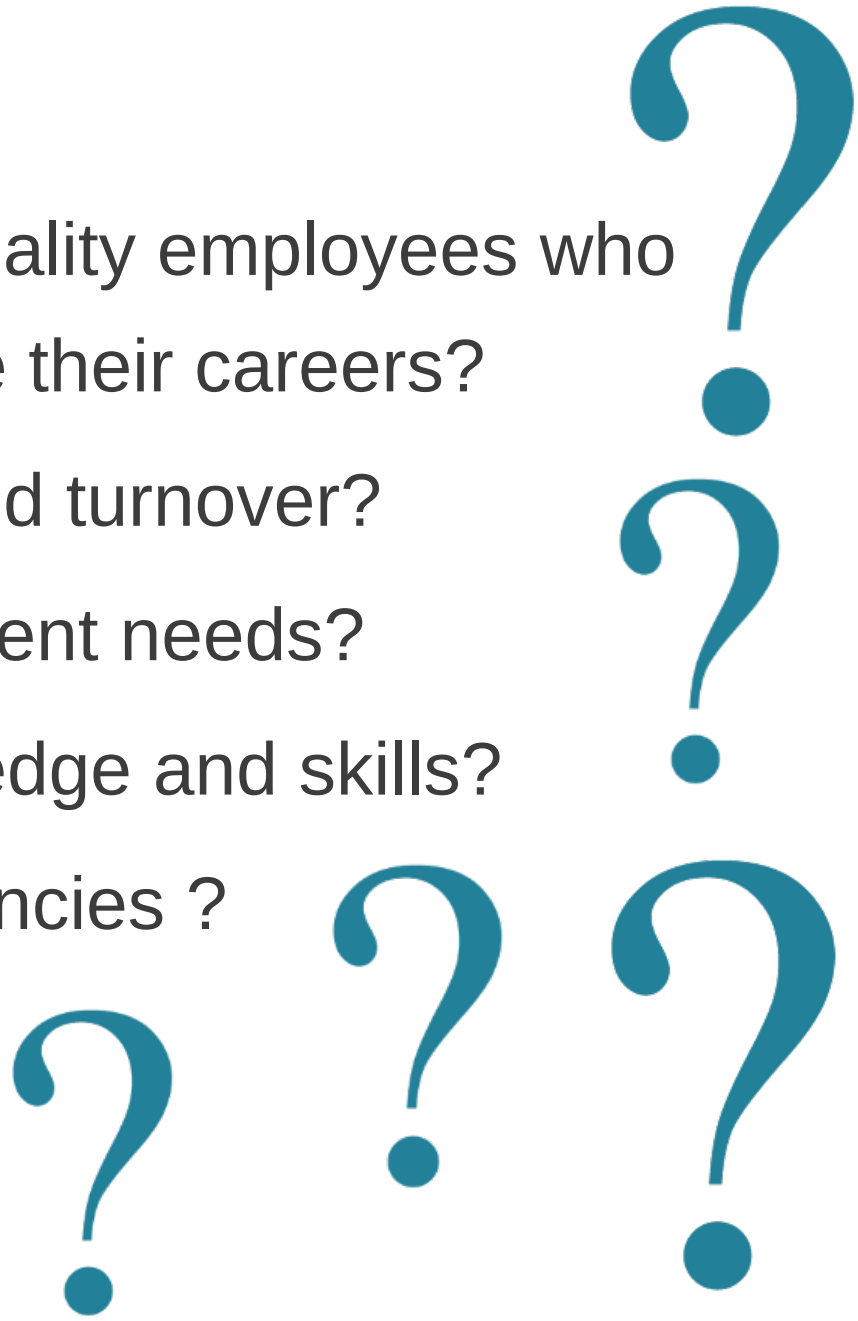
Tier Statements

Beginner	Competent	Proficient	Expert



How Do We.....

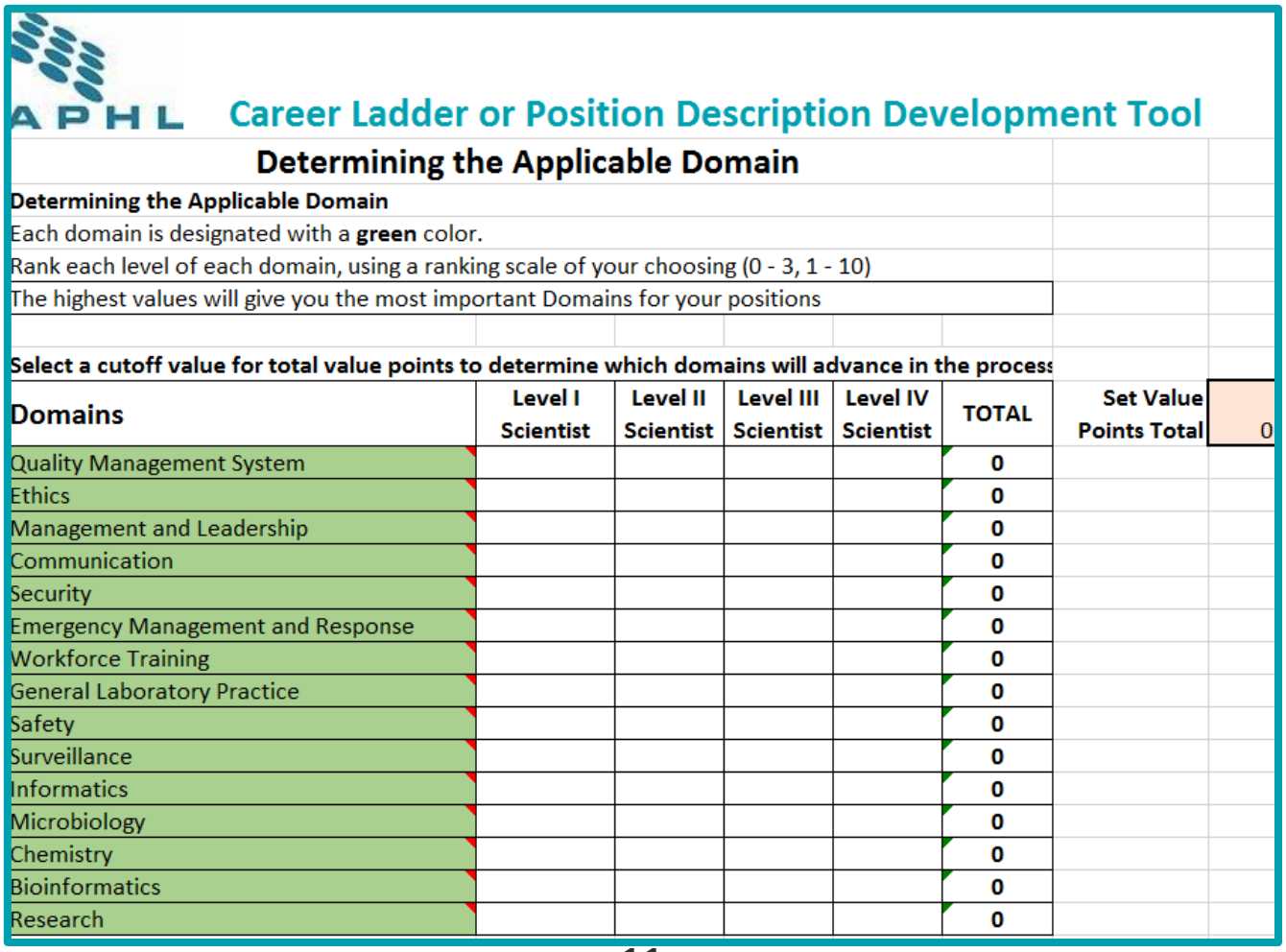
- Attract and retain high quality employees who are motivated to advance their careers?
- Prepare for retirement and turnover?
- Meet technical development needs?
- Improve technical knowledge and skills?
- Maintain critical competencies ?



Creation of a Career Ladder

Career Ladder Based on Competencies

- APHL Career Ladder Spreadsheet Tool
  - Identify “Steps” in a Career Ladder



APHL Career Ladder or Position Description Development Tool

Determining the Applicable Domain

Determining the Applicable Domain

Each domain is designated with a **green** color.

Rank each level of each domain, using a ranking scale of your choosing (0 - 3, 1 - 10)

The highest values will give you the most important Domains for your positions

Select a cutoff value for total value points to determine which domains will advance in the process

Domains	Level I Scientist	Level II Scientist	Level III Scientist	Level IV Scientist	TOTAL	Set Value Points Total	0
Quality Management System					0		
Ethics					0		
Management and Leadership					0		
Communication					0		
Security					0		
Emergency Management and Response					0		
Workforce Training					0		
General Laboratory Practice					0		
Safety					0		
Surveillance					0		
Informatics					0		
Microbiology					0		
Chemistry					0		
Bioinformatics					0		
Research					0		

Creation of a Career Ladder - Domains

Domains	Level I Scientist	Level II Scientist	Supervisor Level III	Quality Manager	TOTAL	Set Value Points Total for	6
Quality Management System	6	7	10	10	33		
Ethics	8	8	9	9	34		
Management and Leadership		6	10	8	24		
Communication	8	8	8	9	33		
Security			7	7	14		
Emergency Management and Response			7		7		
Workforce Training		7	9	8	24		
General Laboratory Practice	10	9	9	8	36		
Safety	9	9	9	8	35		
Surveillance		6	9		15		
Informatics		6	8	8	22		
Microbiology	10	10	9	8	37		
Chemistry	10	10	9	8	37		
Bioinformatics		6	8		14		
Research			6		6		

Creation of a Career Ladder - Competencies

Competency	GO	RESET	Competency Value Points					Total for Advancement:	6
Quality Management Systems			**Level I Scientist**	**Level II Scientist**	**Supervisor Level III Scientist**	**Quality Manager**	**TOTAL**		
QMS 1.00 - Organization: ensures that the laboratory's organizational structure is committed to achieving and maintaining quality				6	8	10	24		
QMS 2.00 - Customer Focus: ensures that customer needs, expectations, and requirements are consistently met			6	8	9	9	32		
QMS 3.00 - Facilities and Safety: ensures that the laboratory's physical environment, maintenance, and safety programs meet applicable requirements					9	9	18		
QMS 4.00 - Personnel: ensures recruitment and retention of a qualified, well-trained, and competent workforce					9	9	18		
QMS 5.00 - Purchasing and Inventory: ensures that requirements for supplies and services are consistently met					9	9	18		
QMS 6.00 - Laboratory Equipment: ensures that laboratory equipment selection, installation, use, maintenance, and troubleshooting meet performance standards					9	7	16		
QMS 7.00 - Process Management: ensures that operational processes meet organizational requirements					9	8	17		
records					8	9	17		
QMS 9.00 - Information Management: ensures the confidentiality, security, and integrity of generated and disseminated information					9	9	18		
QMS 10.00 - Nonconforming Event Management: ensures that processes are in place for detecting and managing nonconforming events					9	10	19		
QMS 11.00 - Assessments: ensures that processes are in place to perform internal audits and external assessments					9	10	19		
QMS 12.00 - Continual Improvement: ensures mechanisms for continuous quality improvement					9	10	19		
Ethics			**Level I Scientist**	**Level II Scientist**	**Supervisor Level III Scientist**	**Quality Manager**	**TOTAL**		
ETH 1.00 - Profession Code of Conduct: adheres to policies and principles governing professional ethics and rules of conduct when working in a public health laboratory			10	10	10	10	40		
ETH 2.00 - Scientific Code of Conduct: adheres to policies and principles governing scientific ethics and rules of conduct when working in a public health laboratory			10	10	10	10	40		
Management and Leadership			**Level I Scientist**	**Level II Scientist**	**Supervisor Level III Scientist**	**Quality Manager**	**TOTAL**		
MLD 1.00 - General Management: ensures sound management of laboratory operations					10		10		

Creation of a Career Ladder – Subcompetencies

Subcompetency GO RESET	Subcompetency Value Points					Set Value Points Total for Advancement: 6
Quality Management System Domain	**Level I Scientist**	**Level II Scientist**	**Supervisor Level III Scientist**	**Quality Manager**	**TOTAL**	
QMS 1.00 - Organization						
QMS 1.01 - Commitment to Quality			9	10	19	
QMS 1.02 - Organizational Structure			9	10	19	
QMS 1.03 - Quality Culture	6	8	9	10	33	
QMS 1.04 - Resources			9	10	19	
QMS 1.05 - Cost of Quality			9	10	19	
Quality Management System Domain	**Level I Scientist**	**Level II Scientist**	**Supervisor Level III**	**Quality Manager**	**TOTAL**	
QMS 2.00 - Customer Focus						
QMS 2.01 - Customer Satisfaction	6	8	9	10	33	
QMS 2.02 - Customer Services		8	9	10	27	
Quality Management System Domain	**Level I Scientist**	**Level II Scientist**	**Supervisor Level III**	**Quality Manager**	**TOTAL**	
QMS 3.00 - Facilities and Safety						
QMS 3.01 - Workplace Safety			9	10	19	
QMS 3.02 - Facilities			9	10	19	
QMS 3.03 - Waste Management			9	9	18	
QMS 3.04 - Emergency Management and Response			9	9	18	
Quality Management System Domain	**Level I Scientist**	**Level II Scientist**	**Supervisor Level III**	**Quality Manager**	**TOTAL**	
QMS 4.00 - Personnel						
QMS 4.01 - Staff Qualification Process			10	10	20	
QMS 4.02 - Orientation and End-of-Employment			10	10	20	
QMS 4.03 - Training		6	9	9	24	
QMS 4.04 - Competence Assessment Plan			8	10	18	
QMS 4.05 - Professional Development Plan	6	6	8	10	30	
QMS 4.06 - Performance Evaluation Process	6	6	8	10	30	
QMS 4.07 - Recruitment, Retention and Succession Plans			9	10	19	
Quality Management System Domain	**Level I Scientist**	**Level II Scientist**	**Supervisor Level III**	**Quality Manager**	**TOTAL**	
QMS 5.00 - Purchasing and Inventory						
QMS 5.01 - Procurement Process			8	8	16	
QMS 5.02 - Inventory Processes	6	6	8	8	28	

Creation of a Career Ladder – Tier Statements

Quality Management Systems	GO	RES			
	Tier Determination			
QMS 01.00 Organization: ensures that the laboratory's organizational structure is committed to achieving and maintaining quality	Level I Scientist	Level II Scientist	Supervisor Level III Scientist	Quality Manager
QMS 1.01 Commitment to quality				
Describes quality concepts and good professional practice (B)				
Demonstrates actions consistent with quality concepts and good professional practice (C)	x	x		
Sustains laboratory quality management system (QMS) processes and procedures to ensure good professional practice (P)			x	
Oversees the development of policies, processes, and procedures for review and maintenance of the QMS (E)				x
QMS 1.02 Organizational structure				
Identifies the laboratory's organizational structure that ensures quality (B)	x			
Explains how the laboratory's organizational structure ensures quality (C)		x		
Manages organizational structure to ensure quality (P)			x	
Coordinates organizational structure to ensure the QMS is well integrated into all levels of laboratory operations (E)				x
QMS 1.03 Quality culture				
Describes the culture, programs, and communication processes regarding quality, safety, and ethical practices (B)				
Adheres to the culture, programs, and communication processes regarding quality, safety, and ethical practices (C)	x	x		
Advocates for a culture of quality, safety, and ethics (P)			x	
Fosters a culture of quality, safety, and ethics (E)				x
QMS 1.04 Resources				
Identifies resources used to support the QMS (B)	x			
Requests resources to support the QMS (C)		x		
Makes resource allocation decisions to support the QMS (P)			x	
Ensures the ability to respond to unanticipated needs for resources to support the QMS (E)				x
QMS 1.05 Cost of quality				
Describes how cost effective quality measures can improve laboratory performance (B)	x			
Analyzes quality measures to evaluate the costs of maintaining quality (C)		x		
Develops the procedures to estimate and compare quality costs (P)			x	
Creates an action plan to address the impact of quality costs on regulatory compliance, customer service, and the operating budget (E)				x
QMS 02.00 Customer focus: ensures that customer needs, expectations, and requirements are consistently met				
QMS 2.01 Customer satisfaction				
Recognizes the laboratory's internal and external customers (B)	x			
Responds to internal and external customer inquiries and feedback (C)		x		
Analyzes feedback and satisfaction data from internal and external customers (P)			x	
Oversees the system for measuring customer and user satisfaction (E)				x

Workforce Training	G	RESE		
	Tier Determination			
	Level I Scientist	Level II Scientist	Supervisor Level III Scientist	Quality Manager
WFT 1.00 Content: gathers training content				
WFT 2.00 Training design: designs training				
WFT 3.00 Delivery set-up: manages the logistics of set-up for training delivery				
WFT 4.00 Training delivery: applies principles of learning to training implementation and delivery				
WFT 5.00 Training evaluation: evaluates learner knowledge and skill development				
WFT 6.00 Marketing: markets training opportunities				

Creation of a Career Ladder – Tier Statements

Ethics

GO RE

	Tier Determination			
ETH 1.00 Professional Code of Conduct: adheres to policies and principles governing professional ethics and rules of conduct when working in a public health	Level I Scientist	Level II Scientist	Supervisor Level III Scientist	Quality Manager
ETH 1.01 - Personal Integrity				
Aligns personal integrity with organizational culture (B)	x			
Exemplifies integrity in interactions and activities (C)		x	x	x
Coaches staff in behaviors that exemplify integrity (P)			x	
Creates a culture where integrity is the foundation for all interactions and activities (E)				
ETH 1.02 - General ethical practices				
Applies ethical principles and professional rules of conduct to the workplace (B)	x			
Serves as a role model of ethical behavior by consistently conforming to the highest ethical standards and practices (C)		x	x	x
Ensures staff compliance with policies and procedures related to ethical principles and professional rules of conduct (P)			x	
Oversees the policies, processes and procedures related to ethical principles and professional rules of conduct (E)				
ETH 1.03 - Stewardship of resources				
Acts as a good steward of public funds and resources (B)	x			
Identifies methods to improve stewardship of resources (C)		x		
Ensures that the use of public funds and resources meet the policies for stewardship (P)			x	x
Oversees the policies, processes and procedures to ensure the environment supports excellence in stewardship of resources (E)				
ETH 2.00 Scientific Code of Conduct: adheres to policies and principles governing scientific ethics and rules of conduct when working in a public health laboratory				
ETH 2.01 - Scientific Integrity				
Verifies scientific integrity of test results and findings (B)	x			
Instructs others in policies, processes, and procedures regarding scientific integrity of test results and findings (C)		x		
Ensures staff compliance with policies and procedures regarding scientific integrity of all results and findings (P)			x	
Oversees the policies, processes and procedures to ensure practices are consistent with guidelines for scientific integrity (E)				x
ETH 2.02 - Scientific Ethics				

Serves as a

Security

GO RE

	Tier Determination			
SEC 1.00 Risk mitigation: ensures that the laboratory's risk mitigation plan meets organizational goals, regulatory requirements, and established standards	Level I Scientist	Level II Scientist	Supervisor Level III Scientist	Quality Manager
.00 Security plan: ensures that the laboratory's security plan meets organizational goals, regulatory requirements, and established standards				
SEC 3.00 Physical security: ensures that physical security is maintained				
SEC 4.00 Personnel security program: implements a personnel security program to meet organizational goals, regulatory requirements, and established standards				
standards				
SEC 6.00 Transportation security program: implements a transportation security plan				

Emergency Management and Response

G RESET

	Tier Determination			
EMR 1.00 Mitigation of emergency events: mitigates emergency events	Level I Scientist	Level II Scientist	Supervisor Level III	Quality Manager
EMR 2.00 Preparation for emergency events: prepares for emergency events				
EMR 3.00 Responding to emergency events: responds to emergency events				
EMR 4.00 Recovering from emergency events: recovers from emergency events				

Creation of a Career Ladder – Tier Statements

Management and Leadership

GO RES

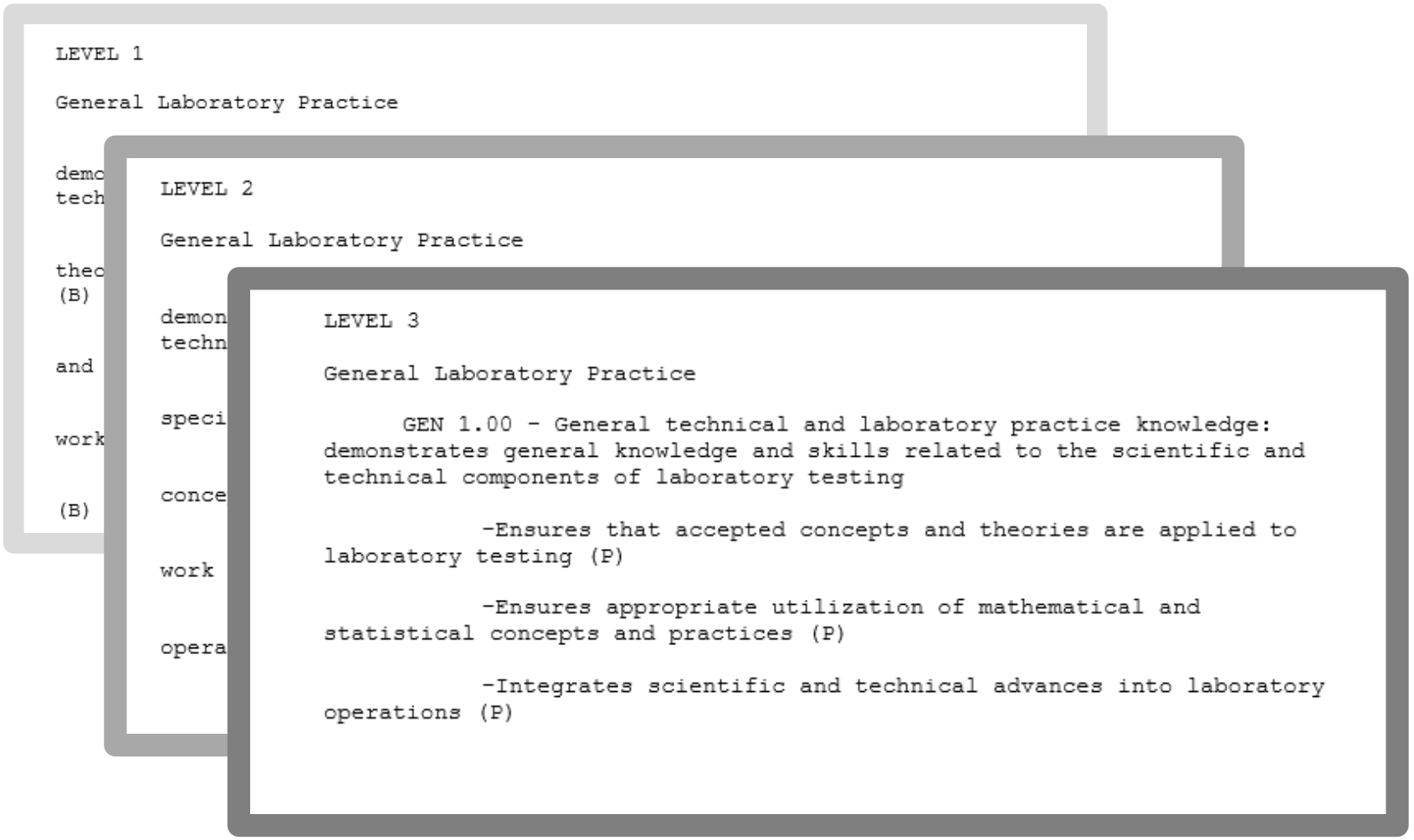
	Tier Determination			
MLD 1.00 General management: ensures sound management of laboratory operations	Level I Scientist	Level II Scientist	Supervisor Level III Scientist	Quality Manager
MLD 1.01 Mission, vision, and values				
Contributes to activities that support the mission, vision, and values of the laboratory (B)				
Explains the relationships between activities that support the mission, vision, and values (C)				
Exemplifies the mission, vision and values for the laboratory (P)			x	

Communications

GO RE

	Tier Determination			
COM 1.00 Communication techniques: deploys formal written and oral communication strategies	Level I Scientist	Level II Scientist	Supervisor Level III Scientist	Quality Manager
COM 2.00 Active listening skills: displays active listening skills when interacting with others				
COM 2.03 Respectful exchange				
Defers judgment during dialogue exchanges (B)	x			
Provides counterpoints while being respectful of disagreements (C)		x		
Coaches others in techniques of respectful exchange (P)			x	
Facilitates respectful dialogue among participants in the exchange (E)			x	
COM 3.00 Comprehension of materials: demonstrates comprehension of written documents and directions				
COM 3.01 Reading comprehension				
Follows written directions (B)	x	x		
Applies knowledge acquired from written text to situations (C)		x		
Adapts concepts from written text for use in new situations (P)			x	
Extrapolates information from written text to develop new ideas that enhance work processes (E)			x	
COM 4.00 Communication technology: utilizes technology to communicate information to internal and external partners				
COM 4.01 Technology capability				
Describes the laboratory's and partner's technological capabilities (B)				
Selects laboratory's technology options to align with partner's capabilities (C)				
Evaluates existing and potential technology to align with partner's capabilities (P)				
Establishes technology policies that integrate with the partner's capabilities (E)				
COM 4.02 Use of technology				
Describes employer's policies and procedures for sharing information (B)	x	x		
Uses designated technology for sharing information (C)	x	x	x	
Manages technology policies and procedures used for sharing information (P)				
Evaluates the effectiveness of the technology used for sharing information (E)				
COM 5.00 Communication professionalism: ensures professionalism in communication with customers and stakeholders				
COM 5.01 Professional attitude				
Uses tone of voice and language tailored to interactions with customers and stakeholders (B)				
Displays professional demeanor in all situations with customers and stakeholders (C)	x	x	x	
Monitors interactions with customers and stakeholders to ensure they are conducted professionally (P)			x	
Establishes policies for professional customer and stakeholder interactions (E)				x
COM 5.03 Information sharing opportunities				

Career Ladder



Fairfax Co PHL Template

- Class Specifications

DEFINITION AND DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:
TITLE: PUBLIC HEALTH LAB SCIENTIST II

GRADE: S-XXX

DEFINITION:
Under minimal supervision, performs full performance moderate and high complexity clinical and environmental testing in all areas of the Fairfax County Health Department Laboratory including; Clinical Chemistry, Immunology, Microbiology, Molecular Biology, Mycobacteriology, Parasitology, Serology, Urinalysis, Rabies, Toxicology, Environmental Chemistry and Environmental Bacteriology. In addition, serves as lead scientist in one or more specialty areas, providing technical assistance, guidance and oversight of PH Lab Scientist I work for completeness, accuracy, and regulatory compliance. This position provides technical guidance for laboratory staff and external or internal clients. Performs related work as required.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CLASS:
This class is distinguished from the Public Health Lab Scientist I in that the Public Health Lab Scientist I incumbents perform entry level moderate and high complexity laboratory testing under general supervision while the Public Health Lab Scientist II serves as lead scientist with greater independence and decision making responsibilities performing progressively more difficult and complex laboratory processes under minimal supervision. This class is distinguished from the Public Health Lab Scientist III in that the Public Health Lab Scientist III incumbent has greater management responsibilities, exercising supervision over professional and paraprofessional staff, serves as technical and administrative expert, and has budget responsibilities including capital equipment personnel, and physical space.

Illustrative Duties:
General Laboratory Practice: Serves as lead analyst and mentor, providing advice, guidance and interpretation of laboratory results; Collects essential data for the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of communicable disease and for the identification and prevention of environmental health hazards; Performs, evaluates, analyzes, and interprets test results for medical providers and environmental health specialists. Participates in processes for the on-boarding and training of new employee; Works independently using evidence based criteria to interpret laboratory testing data; Instructs others in concepts and theories related to specific testing in their area;

Fairfax Co PHL Template

- Position Description

DUTY 1 OF 7	FREQUENCY:	CRITICALITY:	PERCENT: **100%**

OVERVIEW STATEMENT OF POSITION DUTIES

Meets all requirements of PH Scientist I & II.

Under minimal supervision of the laboratory director, this position is responsible for the direct supervision of professional and paraprofessional laboratory staff in one or more sections of the laboratory; including clinical and/or environmental testing and laboratory support services. Responsible for planning, developing, and coordinating public health laboratory (PHL) services and quality assurance program for assigned section(s). In coordination with the laboratory director, participates in the development of division goals and objectives; ensures compliance with multiple regulatory agencies and assesses competency of PHLS I & II annually; and assists with preparation of annual budget. Prepares internal policies based on evaluation of short- and long-term consequences of potential policies. Reviews, analyzes, and interprets scientific data; reviews PHLT work; monitors accuracy/quality of lab data; researches, evaluates method validation and performance verification results. Investigates and resolves complex technical problems and presents corrective actions as required. Provides consultation services to medical professionals and environmental specialists regarding laboratory testing, regulatory compliance, laboratory safety, and quality assurance. Orients and trains staff as required. This position is designated as a Waste Management Facility Operator and will be responsible for managing appropriate treatment and disposal of regulated medical waste; this position performs high complexity laboratory testing in complex situations in one or more specialty areas of the Fairfax County Health Department Laboratory.

Career Ladder Template

Career Ladder Editable Template

This template is meant to be a guideline only, and can be edited to fit your organizational requirements or limitations.

Job Classification: [Enter the name of the job classification]

Brief Description of Job Classification:

[Write a brief general description of the responsibilities of the positions in this job classification]

Purpose:
Career Ladders formally advance employees to a higher level of job proficiency and responsibility.

A career ladder defines the competencies needed to progress through a job classification by demonstrating increased responsibilities and enhanced knowledge, skills and abilities. A career ladder is intended to encourage and assist staff to further their professional development and recognize them for their commitment and excellence without moving to a new job classification. Note that the steps in the career ladder may require competition for advancement.

The competencies illustrate the nature, extent and scope of duties and responsibilities of the job classification. Competencies cannot and do not include all of the tasks or functions that might be appropriately performed within a job classification.

Scope:
The *[Public Health Laboratory]* may provide advancement opportunities for *[job classification]* upon completion of standardized requirements. Advancement under this process is based upon successful job performance of the work duties and successful completion of the competency-based career ladder plan for that level of work. Advancement is based on the employee's proficiency within the job classification, their qualifications, and the achievement of the selected competency-based proficiency statements.

This process applies to the [*Public Health Laboratory*] for the progression through the following targeted positions in the job classification:

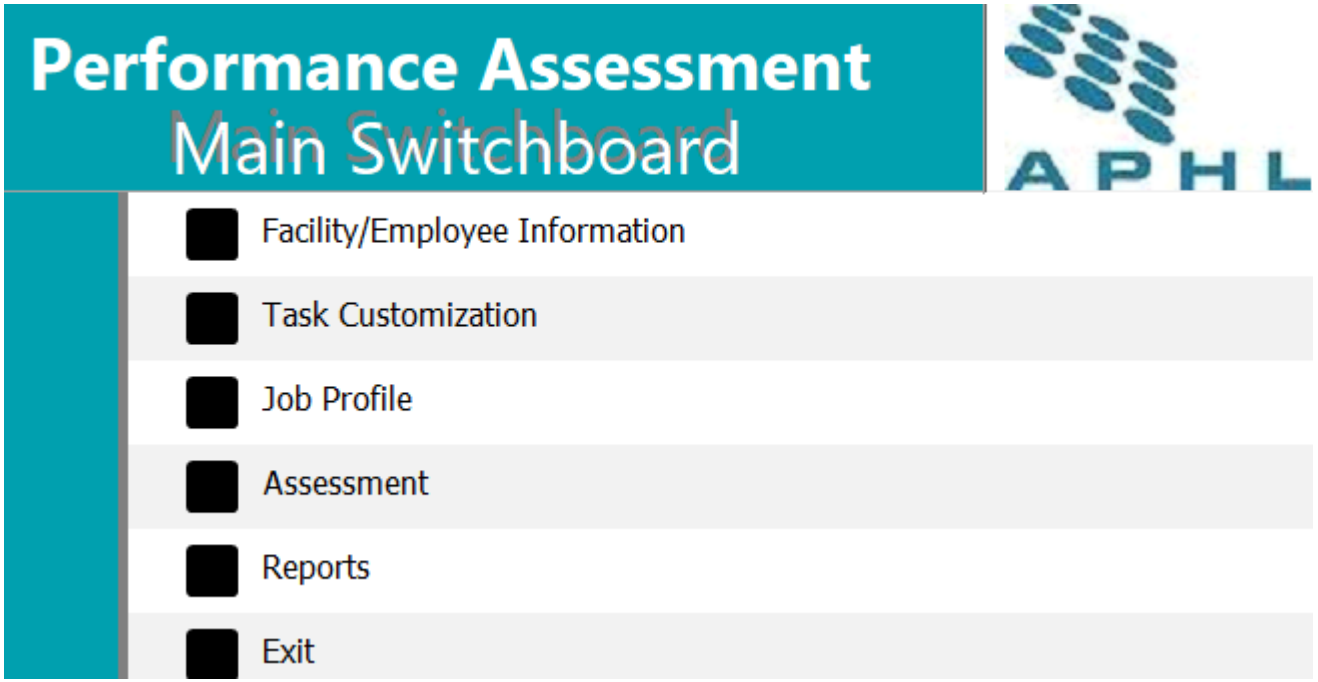
[Laboratory Scientist I] → [Laboratory Scientist II] → [Laboratory Scientist III] → [Laboratory Scientist IV]]

Career Ladder Plan

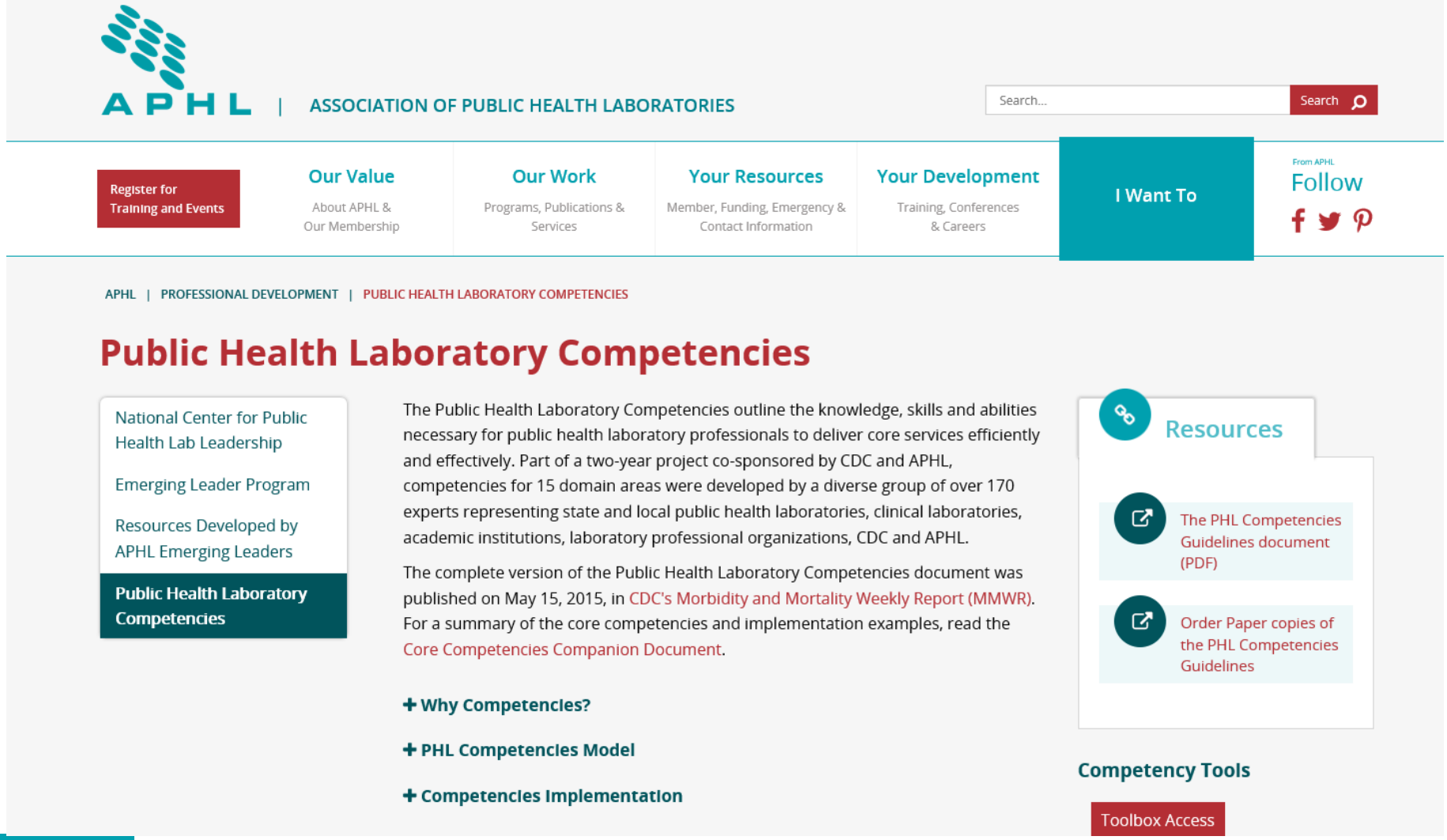
- An agreement between the supervisor and the employee for documenting the achievement of the applicable competency statements, using behavioral anchors
- This plan is developed by both the supervisor and the employee and will include time frames, accountability and feedback opportunities

Assessment Tool

- Access database to assess individuals with either tier statements or task-level behavioral statements, and to identify training needs
- The database allows the user to customize assessments for specific job profiles in their laboratory, or customize an assessment for an individual



For more information, tools and resources, go to:



APHL | ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORIES

Search... Search

Register for Training and Events

Our Value
About APHL & Our Membership

Our Work
Programs, Publications & Services

Your Resources
Member, Funding, Emergency & Contact Information

Your Development
Training, Conferences & Careers

I Want To

From APHL
Follow

APHL | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | LABORATORY COMPETENCY IMPLEMENTATION TOOLBOX

Laboratory Competency Implementation Toolbox

- National Center for Public Health Lab Leadership
- Emerging Leader Program
- Resources Developed by APHL Emerging Leaders
- Public Health Laboratory Competencies

APHL members have developed resources, tools and examples to assist laboratories in their efforts to implement behavior-based laboratory competencies, and incorporate them into their workplace processes. Click below to access the Laboratory Competency Implementation Toolbox.

+ **Informational Tools and Resources**
+ **Position Description Tools and Resources**
+ **Career Ladder Tools and Resources**
+ **Workforce Assessment and Training Needs Tools and Resources**
+ **Forum Tools and Resources**

Laboratory Competency Implementation Toolbox

- National Center for Public Health Lab Leadership
- Emerging Leader Program
- Resources Developed by APHL Emerging Leaders
- Public Health Laboratory Competencies

APHL members have developed resources, tools and examples to assist laboratories in their efforts to implement behavior-based laboratory competencies, and incorporate them into their workplace processes. Click below to access the Laboratory Competency Implementation Toolbox.

+ Informational Tools and Resources

+ Position Description Tools and Resources

− Career Ladder Tools and Resources

Studies of the laboratory workforce have drawn attention to several concerns in maintaining a sufficient number of highly skilled and competent workers.[1] The lack of a progressive job series, also known as a career ladder or career advancement, has been identified as a significant barrier to worker recruitment and retention.[2]

Benefits of a career ladder include the following:

By using the *Competency Guidelines for Public Health Laboratory Professionals*, a framework of competency statements for a progressive job series of increasing responsibility and expertise can be developed. These competency statements are concrete and defined, making it easy to differentiate between steps of the career ladder. Other resources are available for self-assessment and training needs assessment, and can be used as a companion to the career ladder process (See the section of this toolbox on Assessments).

The Career Ladder Section of the toolbox contains the following resources:

1. A pamphlet describing the difference between a career path and a career ladder
2. A career ladder template
3. An Excel spreadsheet tool that will allow the user to distill the domains, competencies, sub-competencies and tier statements into a manageable group of competency statements to be achieved at each progressive level of the career ladder.
4. A sample career ladder for a laboratory scientist job series, having responsibilities for general laboratory practice and microbiology.
5. A sample managerial series career ladder.

[1] Competency Guidelines for Public Health Laboratory Professionals, MMWR / May 15, 2015 / Vol. 64 / No. 1, http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/other/su6401.pdf

[2] CDC. National assessment of capacity in public health, environmental, and agricultural laboratories—United States, 2011. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2013;62:161–4.

+ Workforce Assessment and Training Needs Tools and Resources

+ Forum Tools and Resources

Laboratory Competency Implementation Toolbox

National Center for Public Health Lab Leadership

Emerging Leader Program

Resources Developed by APHL Emerging Leaders

Public Health Laboratory Competencies

APHL members have developed resources, tools and examples to assist laboratories in their efforts to implement behavior-based laboratory competencies, and incorporate them into their workplace processes. Click below to access the Laboratory Competency Implementation Toolbox.

+ Informational Tools and Resources

+ Position Description Tools and Resources

+ Career Ladder Tools and Resources

− Workforce Assessment and Training Needs Tools and Resources

The Competency Guidelines for Public Health Laboratory Professionals provides a framework of competency statements that can provide a benchmark for the evaluation of current staff knowledge, skills and abilities. Competency-based assessments can also help focus the identification of professional development needs, and can do so at an individual or organizational level. Such assessments will allow for the determination of training needs and the development of a professional growth plan, which can lead to enhanced staff engagement and satisfaction.
As these competencies are integrated into assessments, they can be used to provide measureable benchmarks of employee's professional growth and expertise. This has the potential to be used as evidence for staff advancement along a career ladder, which could lead to increased compensation and assist with increased staff retention.

The Workforce Assessment and Training Needs Section of the toolbox contains the following resources:

1. A Competencies Assessment Excel tool which will allow staff to assess their knowledge, skills and abilities using competency statements and to determine training needs. The tool is intended to aid the user in selecting the competencies that are relevant to their situation while adhering to their agency's human resources (HR) guidelines. Although originally designed for individuals, the tool can be customized for use by management for performance appraisals.

2. A Competencies Assessment database that can be used to assess individuals with either tier statements or task-level behavioral statements, and to identify training needs (instructions for installing and using the database). The database allows the user to customize assessments for specific job profiles in their laboratory, or customize an assessment for an individual. Currently all tier statements are populated in the database, but tasks have only been developed for one competency in the General Laboratory Practice domain. Additional tasks can be added to the database, which has the ability to store assessment data for comparisons. Future efforts will expand this tool to include tasks for the remaining competencies.

3. Laboratory Competency Assessment Tool (LCAT): A self-assessment survey tool, developed as a proof-of-concept instrument using one competency from the General Laboratory Practice domain. This tool contains behavioral anchors, which are specific, easy-to-apply examples of behaviors that demonstrate the competency and proficiency level. The inclusion of behavioral anchors aids users in determining their current tier level for a given competency.

+ Forum Tools and Resources

Career Ladder Summary

- Opportunity for professional and personal development
- Opportunity for career advancement
- Essential in attracting and retaining qualified individuals in laboratory science
  - Provide a high level of technical expertise
  - Career ladder based on competencies assures quality results
  - Motivate individuals to continue education and advance career
  - Provides a basis for mentoring and developing employees
  - Succession planning – preparing for turnover
  - Increase earning potential

Resources

Contact the Competencies Implementation Team at PHLCompetencies@aphl.org

Questions?