

Making a training plan for career development

Traveling around North Carolina, I asked people to share thoughts on challenges they face when deciding on professional development opportunities. Here is a small sample of those comments.

- I have restricted funds, time, and options.
- I feel overwhelmed by the number of options—online, traditional university, community college, AHEC programs. It is hard to choose what is right for me.
- I have limited supervisory/management support for training and career development.
- I feel that urgent or mandatory trainings push aside valuable, long-term development.
- I don't know what training I need most, so I settle for easily available or convenient.

As our job tasks increase in complexity and necessarily integrate with other public health functions, we must continually develop professional and public health competencies. More than ever, we must become Life Long Learners, who are increasingly flexible and adapt to rapid changes and greater demands.



Learning for career and job success is imperative. Combined with increased job demands and decreased time and resources, how do you decide what is necessary to keep on track?

First, brainstorm where you want to go in your career, job, or organization. Get a sense of your direction and personal goals.

Next, discern where you are now. Talk with your supervisor and colleagues. Consider assessing competencies online to determine the gap between where you are and where you want to be.

Third, create an individual development plan. Discover and outline skills and knowledge needed to reach your goals. Chart your course, just as if you were taking a journey. Use programs, books, and learning sources as your map. Brainstorm a future timeline for your Life Long Learning quest and progress. Note key future accomplishments you desire to achieve.

Fourth, identify learning resources beneficial to you, helping you build, strengthen, and fulfill fundamental, crucial skills and competencies, as well as those driven by emergencies. Begin your search for ideas and tools with the internet, libraries, and bookstores.

Build a set of key resources that support your ongoing learning—materials, people, programs, and places.

You face difficult challenges—providing key public health services under less than optimal conditions. In this context, it often seems burdensome and even abstract to plan for your training and development.

The Office of Continuing Education is here to assist you with Life Long Learning. Staff continually ensure we offer the most relevant training and development, improving your current job performance and increasing your capability to take advantage of future career opportunities.

The North Carolina Public Health Academy site will help you build a development plan. It includes assessment tools, orientation materials, professional guidance, and other resources. Also visit the Link to Learn resource page (sample sites below).

- www.ncpublichealthacademy.org/
- www.ncpublichealthacademy.org/link_to_learn.htm
- aheconnect.org/ (AHEConnect)
- www.asksphere.org (Asksphere)
- www2.sph.unc.edu/nccphp/training/ (Preparedness Center)
- www.train.org (TRAIN)
- ncpublichealthnursing.org/ncbontools.htm (PHN Competency Assessment)

If we can support you in any way, please contact us at info@ncpublichealth.org.

We will do our best to assist you in finding the right learning resources—those that meet your personal needs for Life Long Learning and career development.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Hicks". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Director, Office of Continuing Education