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Human Services Staff Development and Training Roles and Competencies: Communications Specialist

APHSA American Public Human Services Association
NSDTA National Staff Development and Training Association

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The National Staff Development and Training Association

(an affiliate of the American Public Human Services Association)

The National Staff Development and Training Association (NSDTA) was founded in 1983 and incorporated as an affiliate of APHSA in 1985 to support persons responsible for human service training and staff development on the local, state, or federal level.

VISION: NSDTA has a vision of competent and caring people in effective organizations creatively working together to improve the well-being of society's children, adults, and families.

MISSION: NSDTA builds professional and organizational capacity in the human services through a national network of membership sharing ideas and resources on organizational development, staff development, and training.

OBJECTIVES:

- To promote a network of contacts to discuss and disseminate best practice methods and strategies.
- To provide a national forum for discussion of staff development and training issues.
- To provide leadership in the development of local, state, and federal programs and procedures that enhance the skills of staff and develop standards and evaluation criteria for training programs nationwide.
- To develop public policy recommendations and advocate for staff development and training issues.
- To create opportunities for continual learning and professional development for itself as an organization and for its members.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of NSDTA consists of persons who are responsible for consultation, delivery, promotion, or management of staff development, training, personnel, or human resource development on the local, state, or federal level. Membership in NSDTA requires APHSA membership. Please designate NSDTA as your choice of an affiliate organization. To join APHSA, contact Doris Pollard at:

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FOREWORD

This manual is part of a series of guidebooks developed by the Standards Committee of the National Staff Development and Training Association (NSDTA). As such, it continues and develops the work begun in the first manual, *A Key to Success: Guidelines for Effective Staff Development & Training Programs in Human Service Agencies* (NSDTA/APWA, 1993). *A Key to Success* provides basic information about the essential components for effective staff development and training programs. Such areas as the organization of the staff development and training function, staffing, resources, processes, policies, and procedures are examined.

In 1997, as chair of the Standards Committee, I coordinated the production of the first competency model: the Instructor Competency Model. This proved to be such a useful tool for the field that NSDTA decided to continue the work of developing competency models under the guidance of Freda Bernotavicz who became the new chair of the Standards Committee.

I wish to acknowledge the care and rigorous work of the committee in researching and developing additional models. The committee has developed a comprehensive matrix of the competencies and functions of staff development and training staff. This is the eighth in a proposed series of nine publications which includes a revision of the original Instructor model.

Leadership for this effort is provided by Freda Bernotavicz, who is the senior author of this series. Jim McGroarty provided invaluable advice to the group in drawing their attention to the 1982 study of Public Child Welfare Staff Development and reminding them of the importance of continuity in our work. In addition to developing the conceptual framework for the roles, outputs and competencies, Freda coordinates the work of the Standards Committee, did background research for additional competency data and made the necessary edits to move the process along. Rose Wentz is responsible for reviewing all of the reports for consistency. Final editing was done by Freda with the patient assistance of Louise Nicholas who formatted and reformatted multiple drafts throughout the process.

It is with great admiration that I acknowledge the teamwork and dedication of the following members of the Standards Committee in producing this information.

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COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST COMPETENCY MODEL

BACKGROUND

In 1993, the National Staff Development and Training Association (NSDTA) Standards Committee published *A Key to Success: Guidelines for Effective Staff Development and Training Programs in Human Service Agencies* (NSDTA/APWA, 1993). One of the guidelines addresses staff competencies: “The function is staffed by competent, qualified professional and clerical personnel.” (p. 6).

The NSDTA Standards Committee decided to take this guideline and develop a set of competencies (knowledge, skills, and characteristics) that define the role of instructor. The resulting publication in 1997 was the first in a planned series that at the time was described as not definitive, but as work that can be modified or added to as needs and professional evolution dictate. Since that time, the Standards Committee has further refined the concept of staffing of the field and expanded the roles that need to be performed.

DEFINITION OF ROLES

The Staff Development and Training field is staffed by people who perform a different mix of roles. Roles are not synonymous with jobs or people. In a large organization, a higher degree of specialization exists and it is possible that individuals may have only one key role. However, in smaller organizations staff often wear multiple hats and may perform multiple roles.

Based upon a review of the literature and several rounds of review and discussion with leaders in the field, the committee identified nine major roles. Two major sources from the literature were utilized in developing this listing: *Models for HRD Practice* (McLagan and Suhadolnik, 1989) which describes the eleven roles in the training and development field and tends to reflect private sector staffing and *Public Welfare Staff Development: A Role and Competency Framework for Curriculum Development and Instruction* (Kinney, Cooke and Fox, 1982) which identifies six roles for staffing in public welfare training programs. Both studies provided invaluable information which was updated to reflect emerging priorities. The following chart shows how the roles are reflected in the proposed NSDTA listing.

Communications Specialist Competency Model

ROLES AND COMPETENCIES IN PUBLIC HUMAN SERVICES STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING (NSDTA 2000)	PUBLIC WELFARE STAFF DEVELOPMENT: A ROLE AND COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND INSTRUCTION (Kinney, Cooke and Fox, 1982)	MODELS FOR HRD PRACTICE (McLagan and Suhadolnik, 1989)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative Support • Communications Specialist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrator • Marketer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluator/Researcher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluator/Researcher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluator • Researcher
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resource Planner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manpower Planner 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional Media Specialist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional Media Designer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRD Materials Developer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor/Trainer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor/Trainer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Development Advisor • Instructor or Facilitator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRD Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational Development Specialist • Training Program and Curriculum Designer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessor/Consultant • Curriculum Designer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs Analyst • Organizational Change Agent • Program Designer

Definitions of NSDTA Roles

Administrative Support: The role of providing the administrative support to ensure that the facilities, equipment, materials, participants and other components of a learning event are present and that program and organizational logistics run smoothly.

Communications Specialist: The role of analyzing customer needs and using multiple communication strategies to convey coordinated messages and materials related to products, services, and programs to targeted internal and external audiences.

Evaluator/Researcher: The role of identifying the impact of an intervention and of developing and testing theories of learning, training, development and transfer of learning.

Human Resource Planner: The role of planning for the utilization and development of human resources.

Instructional Media Specialist: The role of designing systems for and producing written or electronically-mediated instruction.

Instructor/Trainer: The role of facilitating individual performance improvement including delivering training, directing structured learning and facilitating groups.

Manager: The role of facilitating and leading a group's work including linking training and development with other organizational units and monitoring contract activities.

Organizational Development Specialist: The role of facilitating organizational improvement, including assessing training needs, diagnosing organizational problem areas, consulting on OD strategies, and conducting team building sessions.

Training Program and Curriculum Designer: The role of developing programs and curriculum including defining the content and outcomes, selecting and sequencing appropriate learning activities, writing modules and developing case studies.

Discussion of NSDTA Roles

Administrative Support: This role is similar to the Program Administrator role in the ASTD model (McLagan, 1989). However, in the NSDTA model, this role is conceptualized as the logistical support role most often played by classified staff. The competency model for this role is based on a model developed for secretarial support (Bernotavitz and Clasby 1984).

Communications Specialist: This role corresponds with the Marketer role in the ASTD study. However, unlike that role which focuses on "selling", this role also reflects the need within the public arena to develop mechanisms to share information both within the training agency, with the client agencies and with the field as a whole. In addition, this

role incorporates the librarian function of storage and retrieval of information and products in both hard copy and electronic forms.

Evaluator/Researcher: Two trends in the human services training and development field are making this role more critical. One is the increased demand for accountability resulting in the need to demonstrate a relationship between training and improved program outcomes. The other is the need to design training which is most efficient and effective both in terms of learning activities and delivery systems and which builds on theories of learning.

Human Resource Planner: In some states, such as New York, this role is a large part of the job of individuals who work for the public agency. Their responsibility is to predict future manpower needs of the agency and assist in planning for the necessary types of training. The name of the role has been updated from Manpower Planner to Human Resource Planner.

Instructional Media Specialist: This role draws on instructional media rather than program content expertise. The individual in this role converts and formats materials which have already been designed, selecting the most appropriate media to fit the learning goals.

Instructor/Trainer: This role focuses on performance improvement for individuals or groups and includes both preparation of individuals for training (development planning), direct delivery of instruction and follow up activities to promote transfer of learning.

Manager: This role reflects both the traditional role of the manager in planning, organizing, and staffing operations or projects and the strategic role of developing long-range plans to accomplish the mission of the training and development program.

Organizational Development Specialist: In contrast to the Instructor/Trainer role, this role focuses on organizational performance improvement and includes a number of functions outside the scope of traditional classroom training.

Training Program and Curriculum Designer: Unlike the Instructional Media Specialist, this role requires program knowledge and includes both specifying learning goals, the design of interventions and writing content.

Outputs of NSDTA Roles

Outputs are the tangible results or products of the roles. The following list is intended to be illustrative and can act as a guide to clarifying roles and responsibilities within a specific program or agency.

Administrative Support Facility and equipment selections and schedules; inventory and projections of future equipment needs; records of programs and clients (training transcripts, Continuing Education Credits (CEUs), attendance and evaluation documents);

Communications Specialist Competency Model

logistical support and service to participants; on-site program support and staff management; functioning equipment; contracts and agreements to provide services.

Communications Specialist: Positive image for products, services and programs; plans to disseminate products, services and programs; promotional and information material; articles, presentations, catalogs of training materials and curriculum, reports, articles, websites, resource libraries, public service announcements.

Evaluator/Researcher: Evaluation and research designs and plans; instruments; evaluation processes; evaluation feedback; concepts, theories or models of development or change; data analysis and interpretation; current evaluation and research findings, conclusions and recommendations; best practices; information on future forces and trends.

Human Resource Planner: Predictions of future staffing needs; analysis of retention issues; recruitment strategies; plans for program staffing requirements; skill surveys; data on staff; analysis of legislation and regulations to determine agency staff needs; competency models; task analysis; job descriptions; employee development plans, tools for performance management.

Instructional Media Specialist: Graphic, video-based material or live broadcasts; audio or computer-based material; print-based learner material; job aids; instructor and facilitator guides; hardware and software purchasing specifications; advice on media use; recommendations on appropriateness of media-based training.

Instructor/Trainer: Learning environment; presentation of materials; facilitation of structured learning events (such as case studies, role plays, games, simulations and tests); facilitation of group discussions; facilitation of media-based learning events (such as videotapes, films, audiotapes, teleconferences, and computer-assisted instruction); test delivery and feedback; group members' awareness of their own group process; feedback to learners; individual action plans for learning transfer; individuals with new knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Manager: Staff work direction, plans and performance management; resource acquisition and allocation; linkage to other groups or organizations; budgets and financial management; work environment, strategy, structure and long range plans; policy; negotiating and monitoring of agency and contract training and consultation; project plans and progress reports; training program priorities; evaluation of process (goals, outcomes and activities); management of training tracking system.

Organizational Development Specialist: Teams; resolved conflicts for an organization or groups; diagnosis of organizational problem areas; performance analysis; assessment of training needs; consultation on O.D. strategies: changes in group norms, values or culture; designs for change; client awareness of relationships within and around the organization; plans to implement organization change; implementation of change strategies; recommendations to management regarding training and development

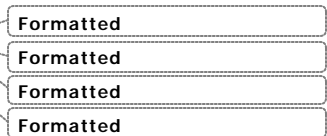
systems; strategies for analyzing individual or organizational behavior; tools to measure individual, workgroup or organizational performance discrepancies; recommendations for needed change in individual, work-group or organizational performance; definitions and descriptions of desired individual or group performance.

Training Program and Curriculum Designer: Program or intervention objectives and designs; learning activities; role plays; case studies; training and curriculum modules; learning objectives; competency-based approaches, transfer of learning techniques, adult learning principles.

Definitions of Competencies

Prior to developing the Instructor model, the committee reviewed a number of definitions of competencies and made a conscious decision not to endorse a single definition or approach, but to develop a set of competencies that embraced multiple approaches. Those definitions that were most useful in guiding the work were the following:

- “A competency is a grouping of the knowledge and skills necessary for the performance of a job task. Competent workers have the knowledge and skills they need to perform their jobs.” (Hughes and Rycus, 1989, p. 9).
- “A competency is any attribute of a person that underlies effective performance; a job competency is simply an attribute related to doing a job effectively. People carry with them a wide assortment of knowledge, abilities, interests, traits, and motives, but unless these attributes relate demonstrably to doing a job well, they are not job competencies.” (Klemp, 1981, p. 55).
- “A competency is an underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to criterion-referenced effective and/or superior performance in a job situation.” (Spencer and Spencer, 1993, p. 9).
- “Competencies are internal capabilities that people bring to their jobs. They may be expressed in a broad, even infinite, array of on-the-job behaviors.” (McLagan, 1989, p. 77).
- “Skill -- those activities at which one is proficient or capable of being proficient. For example, a tennis player must be proficient at using a racket (a skill); a musician must be proficient at playing an instrument (also a skill).” (Powers, 1992, p. 15).
- “Knowledge -- the state of knowing about or understanding something, such as knowing about tennis or understanding music.” (Powers, 1992, p. 15,16).
- “Characteristics -- those traits that constitute a person’s character, such as enthusiasm, honesty, integrity, and so on.” (Powers, 1992, p. 16).



Role/Competency Matrix

To help organize the data, the committee built upon the competency clusters previously identified: Administration, Communications, Course Design, Evaluation, Group dynamics/Process, Instructional Techniques, Learning Theory, Manpower Planning, Person/Organization Interface, Research and Development, Training Equipment and materials, Training Needs Analysis (Kinney, Coke and Fox, 1982). The following changes were made to the listing:

- Conceptual Knowledge/Skills, Information Management and Self-Management Skills were added;
- Human Resource Management replaced Manpower Planning and Logistics replaced Training Equipment and Materials;
- Evaluation was added to Research and Development.

A matrix showing all of the roles and competencies is available as an addendum to this report.

While each role requires a different mix of competencies, there are also core competencies which are common to all of the roles. These include: Cultural Sensitivity, Conceptual Knowledge/Skills (Problem Analysis, Judgment, Conceptual Thinking) and Self-Management Skills (Self-Responsibility, Self-Control, Flexibility and Professional Standards/Ethics). Recognizing the growing importance of competencies related to Information Management, this function was added and Basic Computer Skills has been included as a core competency.

Comprehensive competency models have now been developed for several roles (Administrative Support, Evaluator/Researcher, Instructional Media Specialist, Manager, and Organizational Development Specialist) and the Instructor/Trainer model has been updated to make it consistent with the role/competency matrix. To promote consistency across all of the roles, the following format is utilized for each of the competencies:

- Competency name,
- Brief definition of the competency, and
- Behavioral indicators or examples of ways in which the individual demonstrates the competencies stated as action verbs.

Note that while some competencies are common to more than one role, the behavioral indicators may be different reflecting a different focus.

Uses

A set of competencies translates the functions of a role into the specific skills, knowledge, and characteristics needed to perform on the job. Any agency or organization that has a training and staff development component can take these competency statements and rate their importance (high, moderate, low, none) to that particular agency. Once rated, the remaining competencies can be used in several ways:

- **Human Resource Planning**

The role/competency matrix can be used to look at functions across a staff development program to identify gaps or needs, to reallocate responsibilities and roles to existing staff and to plan for new roles and positions.

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- **Developing Job Descriptions**

The role/competency matrix can also be used as the basis for developing job descriptions. The role definitions and outputs can guide defining job responsibilities and the matrix provides a framework for grouping roles into positions.

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- **Career Pathing**

The matrix can be used to identify both horizontal and vertical career paths for professional growth and development.

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- **Recruiting/Selecting Applicants for a Position**

The competency statements can be used to more clearly frame job descriptions and interview questions, to help both managers responsible for hiring and job candidates better determine if they have the attributes, interest, and experiences suitable to the role(s) in question.

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- **Strengths Inventory and Professional Development**

The competency statements can be used as an inventory instrument by a person in the role to determine the degree (high, moderate, low, none) to which s/he possesses the needed knowledge, skills, and characteristics. This in turn can guide an individual's professional development plan to acquire needed competencies or enhance existing ones through courses, workshops, mentoring/coaching, and other methods of professional development. A sample assessment instrument is provided as an appendix in this report.

- **Performance Management/Appraisal**

The competency statements can be used as the basis of the yearly performance appraisal cycle, providing clear articulation of expectations, on-going feedback and coaching, plans for professional development, and other components of the appraisal process.

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- **Curriculum Development**

Certain agencies (particularly state agencies or universities which manage training functions) undertake the development of courses or workshops addressing the development of skills for staff development and training staff. Competency statements can usefully drive the development of these curricula.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST COMPETENCY MODEL

NSDTA Standards Committee developed an initial list of competency clusters as part of the “Definition of Roles” process described above. Source material for the fully developed model was selected to reflect the work of communications specialists in a public human services setting. Deep listening and honest response are essential understanding and meeting the needs of human services staff and, through them, clients. Resources for the model include test specifications and skill areas considered in professional certifications awarded by the American Marketing Association and International Association of Business Communicators. Conant et al (1990) provided an academic resource. The Turning Point initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation applies commercial marketing and communication principles to the task of social marketing, specifically to influence health behaviors. Additional references for the communications role in a public setting were Brinkerhoff (1997), Kotler and Andreasen (1996), and National Institutes of Health (1992).

As a result of this research, the initial list of competency clusters was modified in the following ways:

- Administration: Human service policy framework, financial management, and project management were added.
- Communication: This cluster was re-conceptualized. Changes include a new section on marketing and communications principles. In addition to public relations, three other crafts that contribute to the role are described: written communication, visual communication, and electronic communication.
- Evaluation and research: This cluster was added because while sophisticated research is rarely part of this role, competency is needed in simple survey and qualitative research. Communicators also need to be able to work with researchers on complex projects. The competency described as “tracking” addresses gauging response to communication.
- Information management: “Distribution, storage, and retrieval strategies” consolidates previously identified information.
- Self-management: This cluster has been tailored to the role, especially in the important area of ethics and legal issues.

The draft competency model was presented at the Standards Committee meeting in Washington, D.C., in May 2004.

**COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST COMPETENCY
MODEL OUTLINE**

Administration

1. Organizational ability
2. Human service policy and framework
3. Financial management
4. Project Planning

Communication

5. Interpersonal communication
6. Cultural sensitivity
7. Marketing and communication principles
8. Marketing and communications planning
9. Written communication
10. Visual communication
11. Electronic communication
12. Public relations

Conceptual Knowledge/Skills

13. Problem analysis
14. Judgment
15. Conceptual thinking

Evaluation and Research

16. Market research
17. Tracking and evaluation

Group Dynamics/Process

18. Interpersonal skills
19. Teamwork and cooperation

Information Management

20. Basic computer skills
21. Distribution, storage, and retrieval strategies
22. Information systems thinking

Instructional Management

23. Training systems

Person/Organization Interface

24. Impact and influence
25. Initiative
26. Information seeking

Self-Management Skills

- 27. Self-responsibility
 - 28. Self-control
 - 29. Flexibility
 - 30. Job Commitment
 - 31. Professional standards and ethics
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COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST COMPETENCY MODEL
COMPREHENSIVE LISTING

ADMINISTRATION

1.00 Organizational ability

Ability to demonstrate organizational skills

- 01.01 **Work management:** Demonstrates ability to plan, schedule, and direct the work of self and others.
- 01.02 **Work assignments:** Balances task requirements and individual abilities (matching people and assignments). Has the ability to supervise staff. Is clear about each assignment's product(s).
- 01.03 **Work organization:** Organizes materials or activities to accomplish tasks efficiently and in a timely manner.
- 01.04 **Goal setting:** Sets challenging yet achievable goals for self and others.
- 01.05 **Planning:** Demonstrates knowledge of strategic, operational, and long-range planning.
- 01.06 **Organizational mission:** Understands the mission of the organization and promotes its mission and values in internal and external communication.

2.00 Human service policy and framework

Ability to demonstrate understanding of human services policy, regulations, and laws

- 02.01 **Human services philosophy and history:** Demonstrates understanding of relevant human services history, theory, values, and ethical considerations.
- 02.02 **Federal, state laws and regulations:** Demonstrates knowledge of federal/state laws and regulations and agency guidelines.
- 02.03 **Human services information:** Demonstrates knowledge of current literature on human services and human services training, including major information sources (e.g., texts, journals, clearinghouses), how to access those sources (e.g., through the Internet), and how to extract, integrate, synthesize, and organize information from those sources.

3.00 Financial management

Ability to demonstrate understanding of financial management

03.01 **Budget issues:** Understands budgeting techniques and procedures for operating within a planned budget.

03.02 **Fiscal responsibility:** Exercises sound accountability procedures and is prudent with the allocation and expenditure of resources.

4.00 Project planning

Ability to demonstrate understanding of project planning

04.01 **Project planning process:** Understands operational (project) planning; knows its role in a comprehensive agency planning process; and knows the proper role of various levels of agency management in project planning.

04.02 **Planning steps:** Applies the steps common to any planning process, i.e., gathering and analyzing information, defining the problem(s) or opportunity(ies), determining goals and objectives, evaluating available resources, identifying action steps, managing implementation of the plan, and evaluating success.

04.03 **Impact assessment:** Knowledge of techniques of assessing the potential impact of internal and external barriers on the planning process, both from within the agency and from outside sources.

COMMUNICATION

5.00 Interpersonal communication

Ability to communicate effectively with individuals and groups

05.01 **Versatility:** Recognizes different communication patterns and strategies and demonstrates the ability to think and speak in response to immediate situations.

05.02 **Style:** Speaks and writes clearly and to the point.

05.03 **Listening:** Responds to verbal/nonverbal communication, listens attentively, and interprets, clarifies, and influences communication.

6.00 Cultural sensitivity

Ability to demonstrate effective cross-cultural communication techniques

- 06.01 **Culturally inclusive:** Visual and verbal communications are culturally inclusive, diverse, and respectful.
- 06.02 **Culturally appropriate:** Understands differences in cultural, ethnic, and religious values, perceptions, customs, and beliefs. Develops culturally appropriate communications.

7.00 Marketing and communication principles

Ability to demonstrate understanding of key marketing and communication principles

- 07.01 **Customer focus:** Knowledge of issues and approaches to customer relations and customer service. Uses understanding of consumer behavior and market segmentation to maintain a customer focus in communications.
- 07.02 **Marketing mix:** Uses knowledge of product or service characteristics, promotional strategies, “place” strategies (for distribution), and pricing strategies to achieve marketing goals.
- 07.03 **Positioning:** Demonstrates ability to communicate the position of an organization in the field and of a product or service in relation to other products and services.
- 07.04 **Branding and identity management:** Establishes and communicates a unique identity for the organization and for product or service lines.
- 07.05 **Integrated marketing:** Uses multiple communication strategies—including interpersonal communication, advertising, and publicity—to convey coordinated messages.
- 07.06 **Product lifecycles and diffusion of innovation:** Uses knowledge of product or service history, market maturity, and audience orientation to innovation in developing marketing and communication strategies.

8.00 Marketing and communications planning

Ability to develop marketing and communication plans and projects that meet organizational objectives and address customer needs

- 08.01 **Analysis:** Develops plans based on analysis of the field, organization, customers, and product or service.
- 08.02 **Goals and objectives:** Establishes achievable goals and objectives for overall organizational communication and individual projects.

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- 08.03 **Target audiences:** Defines target audiences for communication. Describes in terms of demographics and psychographics. Establishes primary and secondary audiences.
- 08.04 **Messages:** Identifies key messages and information to be communicated in terms of benefits to customers.
- 08.05 **Timelines:** Establishes reasonable project timelines, identifying tasks to be completed, persons responsible, and due dates.

9.00 Written communication

Ability to write effectively for a variety of audiences and media

- 09.01 **Editorial style:** Establishes and follows editorial stylesheets. Selects and uses standard style guide(s) as supplemental resource(s).
- 09.02 **Versatility:** Writes and edits copy for a variety of internal and external audiences. Addresses unique needs of each format or medium, including promotional brochures, advertisements, newsletters, news articles, feature articles, press releases, public service announcements, speeches, and websites.
- 09.03 **Persuasion:** Uses knowledge of persuasion theory(ies) to develop credible messages for targeted audiences.

10.00 Visual communication

Ability to design and produce artwork for a variety of purposes and media

- 10.01 **Graphics standards:** Establishes and follows graphics standards to convey consistent visual identities for organization and for product or service lines.
- 10.02 **Versatility:** Designs and produces originals for a variety of internal and external audiences. Addresses unique needs of each format or medium, including promotional brochures, advertisements, collateral material (e.g., letterhead, displays), and websites.
- 10.03 **Design principles:** Applies principles of effective layout, typography, and illustration appropriate to the medium and purpose of the project.
- 10.04 **Computer skills:** Uses a variety of layout and illustration software packages. Coordinates electronic formats with printers and webmasters.

11.00 Electronic communication

Ability to develop and maintain websites

Communications Specialist Competency Model

- 11.01 **Website management:** Structures, organizes, and tests websites. Establishes appropriate means and level(s) of access and security.
- 11.02 **Design:** Organizes and links content using appropriate authoring and scripting languages.
- 11.03 **Graphics and multimedia:** Creates and modifies graphics. Incorporates audio and video when required.

12.00 Public relations

Ability to use unpaid media and to promote the organization and its products and services

- 12.01 **Media relations:** Identifies key media outlets and establishes relationships. Provides information in a variety of formats (e.g., press releases, feature articles, public service announcements). Responds promptly to media inquiries. Acts as organizational spokesperson and prepares others for media interviews.
- 12.02 **Speakers bureau:** Identifies organizational resources and seeks opportunities for public presentations.
- 12.03 **Event management:** Identifies opportunities to participate in community or professional events. Coordinates conference exhibits.

CONCEPTUAL KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS

13.00 Problem analysis

Ability to demonstrate effective problem analysis skills

- 13.01 **Identifying elements:** Seeks out relevant data and analyzes complex information to determine the important elements of a problem situation.
- 13.02 **Approaches:** Uses critical judgment to assess alternative approaches to problems or decisions.
- 13.03 **Analysis:** Identifies underlying issues or causes and gaps between theory and practice.

14.00 Judgment

Ability to demonstrate sound judgment

- 14.01 **Using information:** Reaches sound conclusions and makes reasonable decisions based on available information.

Communications Specialist Competency Model

- 14.02 **Balance:** Balances short- and long-term considerations.
- 14.03 **Priorities:** Sets priorities for tasks in order of importance.
- 14.04 **Objectivity:** Maintains objectivity in handling difficult issues, events, or decisions.

15.00 Conceptual thinking

Ability to see patterns and synthesize related items

- 15.01 **Frameworks and experience:** Uses theoretical frameworks as well as learning from past experience to guide analysis or actions.
- 15.02 **Past experience:** Applies past experience to interpret events, seeing crucial similarities and differences in present and past situations.
- 15.03 **Systems view:** Looks at the big picture to assess a situation, focuses on interactions and dynamics thereby creating a climate for action, recognizes tension as a catalyst for positive change.

EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

16.00 Market research

Ability to conduct and utilize market research

- 16.01 **Market research process:** Ability to develop objectives, gather data from primary and secondary resources, and present an analysis.
- 16.02 **Data collection:** Knowledge of qualitative and quantitative methods.
- 16.03 **Carry out simple research projects:** Ability to research secondary resources, field elementary surveys, interview individuals, and lead focus groups.
- 16.04 **Manage complex research projects:** Ability to identify objectives for more complex research (requiring sophisticated design and/or statistical analysis), work with a researcher, and evaluate data provided.
- 16.05 **Information integration:** Ability to integrate information from various sources.

17.00 Tracking and evaluation

Ability to track responses to communication efforts and evaluate effectiveness

- 17.01 **Planning:** Establishes objectives of evaluation and data to collect.

- 17.02 **Tracking mechanism:** Incorporates response mechanism in communication (e.g., priority codes, bounce-back cards).
- 17.03 **Analysis:** Compiles and reports response data and makes recommendations for future communication efforts.

GROUP DYNAMICS/PROCESS

18.00 Interpersonal skills

Ability to apply interpersonal understanding and skills

- 18.01 **Builds trust:** Remains neutral and objective during development of stakeholder relationships by: employing reflective listening techniques; remaining flexible while expressing confidence in process suggestions; and conducting safe discussions concerning issues or cultural norms affecting the organization
- 18.02 **Feedback:** Provides timely, sensitive, and relevant feedback. When necessary, challenges participants' ideas in a way that maintains their self-esteem.
- 18.03 **Understanding others:** Perceives strengths, needs, challenges, and feelings of others.
- 18.04 **Diversity:** Understands and values diversity and different styles of perceiving, learning, communicating, and operating.
- 18.05 **Emotional sensitivity:** Recognizes emotion-laden issues or situations and handles them with sensitivity.
- 18.06 **Responding to others:** Uses understanding based on listening and observing in order to anticipate and prepare for others' reactions.

19.00 Teamwork and cooperation

Ability to demonstrate effective teamwork and cooperation skills

- 19.01 **Project development and implementation:** Seeks input from internal stakeholders and incorporates that input into communication plans and projects. Assesses needs, presents rationale for recommendations, and uses the review and approval process to improve communication products.
- 19.02 **Group process:** Utilizes group process skills needed to get diverse groups of people to work together effectively to achieve a common goal.
- 19.03 **Conflict management:** Prevents or defuses unnecessary conflict.

- 19.04 **Information:** Keeps stakeholders informed and up-to-date about activities, sharing all relevant or useful information that affects the project team.
- 19.05 **Alliances:** Builds alliances and teams to achieve project outcomes.
- 19.06 **Reflection on results:** Presents intermediate and final products to stakeholders in readily understandable formats.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

20.00 Basic computer skills

Ability to demonstrate basic computer skills, including e-mail, scheduling, and word processing

- 20.01 **Computer basics:** Applies basic computer concepts, including the ability to turn on the computer, log on and turn off, display start and help menus, open programs, use the mouse, move cursor within documents, delete files, and use recycle bin.
- 20.02 **E-mail:** Uses email to compose, reply to and forward messages, attach files and save attachments, set up files, and file messages.
- 20.03 **Scheduling:** Uses scheduling, including creating new tasks; viewing, editing, and deleting appointments; printing appointments.
- 20.04 **Word processing:** Uses the word processing function, including editing and maneuvering; selecting, deleting, and inserting text; indenting paragraphs; cutting, copying, and pasting; saving and securing documents.

21.00 Distribution, storage, and retrieval strategies

Ability to use a variety of media to communicate with customers and organize information

- 21.01 **Media usage:** Knowledge of benefits and drawbacks of various media (mail, Internet, and print and broadcast media). Ability to select, purchase, and utilize appropriate media to meet communication objectives.
- 21.02 **List acquisition and maintenance:** Obtains mailing lists for one-time use and compiles and maintains database of internal mailing lists and listserves.
- 21.03 **Inventory:** Establishes and maintains inventory of print materials.

21.04 **Archives:** Establishes and maintains archives of print and electronic materials.

22.00 Information systems thinking

Ability to demonstrate information systems thinking

22.01 **Information systems concept:** Understands the concept of information systems in general and is aware of the core interfaces with program information and plans for future development.

22.02 **Data and information:** Understands the distinction between data and information and is able to convert data into information in internal and external communication.

22.03 **Policy and practice link:** Understands and conveys to others the link between program policy and practice via information systems.

22.04 **Importance of quality data:** Takes appropriate measures (e.g., proofreading, verification) to ensure accuracy of documents and records. Conveys to others the link between accuracy and confidence in public communication.

INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT

23.00 Training systems

Ability to demonstrate understanding of issues related to training systems

23.01 **Job-related training:** Understands the role of training in the ongoing professional development of the individual within the context of bureaucracy; and communicates the role of training in enhancing the human resource component of the organization.

23.02 **Learning organizations:** Understands the role of generative, continual learning in promoting high performance organizations.

23.03 **Competency-based approaches:** Understands the principles and techniques of competency-based approaches to human resource management.

23.04 **Knowledge of instructional media:** Understands the types of instructional media and the role of each in a comprehensive staff development and training program.

PERSON/ORGANIZATION INTERFACE

24.00 Impact and influence

Ability to demonstrate understanding and skills of impact and influence

- 24.01 **Anticipation:** Anticipates effects of an action on people, programs, or events.
- 24.02 **Organizational awareness:** Demonstrates awareness of organizational goals and concern for image and reputation of the agency and program.
- 24.03 **Approaches:** Uses appropriate approaches to achieve desired results.
- 24.04 **Using information:** Anticipates significant information necessary for decision-making.
- 24.05 **Versatility:** Relates effectively with all levels of administration inside and outside the organization.

25.00 Initiative

Ability to take the first step

- 25.01 **Action:** Initiates timely action rather than waiting to react as situations develop.
- 25.02 **Opportunities:** Recognizes and seizes opportunities.
- 25.03 **Confronts barriers:** Confronts barriers to effective performance and takes action to overcome them.
- 25.04 **System knowledge:** Uses knowledge of the system to identify long-term opportunities and problems.

26.00 Information seeking

Ability to demonstrate information-seeking skills

- 26.01 **Information identification:** Identifies what information is needed and the proper source for it
- 26.02 **Questioning:** Seeks out exact information or resolution of discrepancies by asking a series of pertinent questions.
- 26.03 **Open to cues:** Looks for potential opportunities or for miscellaneous information that may be of future use.
- 26.04 **Interaction:** Observes and interacts with personnel in action.

SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS

27.00 Self-responsibility

Ability to engage in ongoing learning to improve professional capabilities

- 27.01 **Self-knowledge:** Describes and evaluates own performance and acknowledges personal strengths and challenges.
- 27.02 **Personal responsibility:** Takes responsibility for mistakes, failures, and shortcomings.
- 27.03 **Reflects on personal behavior:** Learns from mistakes and successes and analyzes own performance to learn from failures and to improve future performance.
- 27.04 **Continuing development:** Engages in continuous efforts to clarify personal values, strengths, and needs, and to engage annually in professional development.

28.00 Self-control

Ability to maintain emotional equilibrium and optimism

- 28.01 **Self-discipline:** Maintains self-control in high stress situations.
- 28.02 **Grace under pressure:** Performs effectively when under pressure and during opposition.
- 28.03 **Impulse control:** Holds back on impulse to say or do something; replaces impulsive behavior with more appropriate response.

29.00 Flexibility

Ability to respond effectively to challenges and change

- 29.01 **Fairness:** Recognizes the pros and cons of alternates and accepts the validity of opposing views.
- 29.02 **Open to change:** Shows willingness and ability to change structure and processes when needed to implement change.
- 29.03 **Flexibility application:** Flexibly applies rules and procedures, depending on the individual situations, to accomplish agency's larger objectives.

30.00 Job Commitment

Ability to demonstrate commitment to the role and responsibilities of communications specialist

- 30.01 **Extra-Role Efforts:** Pitches in on efforts not in job description; willingly undertakes tedious or menial tasks.
- 30.02 **Extra Distance:** Goes the extra distance, makes personal sacrifices to get the job done.
- 30.03 **Representing Organization:** Sees self as representative/image-maker of the organization.
- 30.04 **Open to Learning:** Learns basic knowledge about the role willingly, function and methodology of Training programs.

31.00 Professional standards and ethics

Ability to conduct self in an ethical and honest manner

- 31.01 **Ethics:** Communicates about products and services in honest, complete, and non-manipulative manner.
- 31.02 **Legal issues:** Complies with copyright and patent laws pertaining to images, text, audio and video recording, trademarks, and other elements adapted for use in print and electronic communications. Complies with licensing agreements associated with software.
- 31.03 **Confidentiality:** Maintains confidentiality and integrity in practice.
- 31.04 **Professional conduct:** Supports peers and avoids conduct that impedes the work of the organization.
- 31.05 **Public service:** Improves public understanding of human services and human resource development and management.
- 31.06 **Accurate representation:** Represents credentials, qualifications, experience, and abilities fairly and accurately.

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**ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT FOR
TRAINING PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM DESIGNER COMPETENCIES**

The following rating scale may be used as an individual assessment tool. After rating the individual on the degree to which he/she possesses each competency, the instrument can function as a guide in the following areas: hiring, professional development, performance appraisal, and training of trainers.

Individual Demonstrates the Competency

123
Low.....Moderate.....High

ADMINISTRATION

1.00 **Organizational ability** – *Ability to demonstrate organizational skills*

01.01 Work management _____

01.02 Work assignments _____

01.03 Work organization _____

01.04 Goal setting _____

01.05 Planning _____

01.06 Organizational mission _____

2.00 **Human service policy and framework** – *Ability to demonstrate understanding of human services policy, regulations, and laws.*

02.01 Human services philosophy and history _____

02.02 Federal, state laws and regulations _____

02.03 Human services information _____

3.00 **Financial management** – *Ability to demonstrate understanding of financial management.*

03.01 Budget Issues _____

03.02 Fiscal responsibility _____

4.00 **Project planning** – *Ability to demonstrate understanding of project planning*

04.01 Project planning process _____

04.02 Planning steps _____

04.03 Impact assessment _____

COMMUNICATION

5.00 **Interpersonal Communication** – *Ability to communicate effectively with individuals and groups*

05.01 Versatility _____

05.02 Style _____

05.03 Listening _____

6.00 **Cultural Sensitivity** – *Ability to demonstrate effective cross-cultural communication techniques.*

06.01 Cultural inclusive _____

06.02 Culturally appropriate _____

7.00 **Marketing and communication principles** – *Ability to demonstrate understanding of key marketing and communication principles.*

07.01 Customer focus _____

07.02 Marketing mix _____

07.03 Positioning _____

07.04 Branding and identity management _____

07.05 Integrated marketing _____

07.06 Product lifecycles and diffusion of innovation _____

8.00 **Marketing and communications planning** – *Ability to develop marketing and communication plans and projects that meet organizational objectives and address customer needs.*

8.01 Analysis _____

8.02 Goals and objectives _____

8.03 Target audiences _____

8.04 Messages _____

8.05 Timelines _____

9.00 **Written communication** – *Ability to write effectively for a variety of audiences and media.*

9.01 Editorial style _____

9.02 Versatility _____

9.03 Persuasion _____

10.00 **Visual communication** – *Ability to design and produce artwork for a variety of purposes and media*

10.01 Graphic standards _____

10.02 Versatility _____

10.03 Design principles _____

10.04 Computer skills _____

11.00 **Electronic communication** – *Ability to develop and maintain websites*

11.01 Website management _____

11.02 Design _____

11.03 Design _____

12.00 Public relations – *Ability to use unpaid media and to promote the organization and its products and services.*

12.01 Media relations _____

12.02 Speakers bureau _____

12.03 Event management _____

CONCEPTUAL KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS

13.00 Problem analysis – *Ability to demonstrate effective problem analysis skills.*

13.01 Identifying elements _____

13.02 Approaches _____

13.03 Analysis _____

14.00 Judgment – *Ability to demonstrate effective problem analysis skills.*

14.01 Using Information _____

14.02 Balance _____

14.03 Priorities _____

14.04 Objectivity _____

15.00 Conceptual thinking – *Ability to see patterns and synthesize related items.*

15.01 Frameworks and experience _____

15.02 Past experience _____

15.03 Systems view _____

EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

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16.00 **Market research** – *Ability to conduct and utilize market research.*

16.01 Market research process _____

16.02 Data collection _____

16.03 Carry out simple research projects _____

16.04 Manage complex research projects _____

16.05 Information integration _____

17.00 **Tracking and evaluation** – *Ability to track responses to communication efforts and evaluate effectiveness.*

17.01 Planning _____

17.02 Tracking mechanism _____

17.03 Analysis _____

GROUP DYNAMICS/PROCESS

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18.0 **Interpersonal skills** – *Ability to apply interpersonal understanding and skills.*

18.01 Builds trust _____

18.02 Feedback _____

18.03 Understanding others _____

18.04 Diversity _____

18.05 Emotional sensitivity _____

18.06 Responding to others _____

19.00 **Teamwork and cooperation** - *Ability to work with formal and informal groups of stakeholders in developing communication plans and projects.*

19.01 Project development and implementation _____

19.02 Group process _____

19.03 Conflict management _____

19.04 Information _____

19.05 Alliances _____

19.06 Reflection on results _____

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

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20.00 **Basic computer skills** – *Ability to demonstrate basic computer skills, including e-mail, scheduling, and work processing.*

20.01 Computer basics _____

20.02 E-Mail _____

20.03 Scheduling _____

20.04 Word processing _____

21.00 **Distribution, storage, and retrieval strategies** – *Ability to use a variety of media to communicate with customers and organize information.*

21.01 Media usage _____

21.02 List acquisition and maintenance _____

21.03 Inventory _____

21.04 Archives _____

22.00 **Information systems thinking** – *Ability to demonstrate information systems thinking*

22.01 Information systems concept _____

22.02 Data and information _____

22.03 Policy and practice link _____

22.04 Importance of quality data _____

INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT

23.00 **Training systems** – *Ability to demonstrate understanding of issues related to training systems.*

23.01 Job-related training _____

23.02 Learning organizations _____

23.03 Competency-based approaches _____

23.04 Knowledge of instructional media _____

PERSON/ORGANIZATION INTERFACE

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24.00 **Impact and influence** – *Ability to demonstrate understanding and skills of impact and influence.*

24.01 Anticipation _____

24.02 Organizational awareness _____

24.03 Approaches _____

24.04 Using information _____

24.05 Versatility _____

25.00 **Initiative** – *Ability to take the first step*

25.01 Action _____

- 25.02 Opportunities _____
- 25.03 Confronts barriers _____
- 25.04 System knowledge _____

26.00 **Information seeking** – *Ability to demonstrate information-seeking skills.*

- 26.01 Information identification _____
- 26.02 Questioning _____
- 26.03 Open to cues _____
- 26.04 Interaction _____

SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS

27.00 **Self-responsibility** – *Ability to engage in ongoing learning to improve professional capabilities.*

- 27.01 Self-knowledge _____
- 27.02 Personal responsibility _____
- 27.03 Reflects on personal behavior _____
- 27.04 Continuing development _____

28.00 **Self-Control** – *Ability to maintain emotional equilibrium and optimism.*

- 28.01 Self-discipline _____
- 28.02 Grace under pressure _____
- 28.03 Impulse control _____

29.00 **Flexibility** – *Ability to demonstrate ability to respond effectively to challenges and change.*

- 29.01 Fairness _____

Communications Specialist Competency Model

29.02	Open to change	_____
29.03	Flexibility application	_____
30.00	Job Commitment – <i>Ability to demonstrate commitment to the role and responsibilities of communications specialist</i>	
30.01	Extra-Role Efforts	_____
30.02	Extra Distance	_____
30.03	Representing Organization	_____
30.04	Open to Learning	_____
31.00	Professional standards/ethics – <i>Ability to demonstrate self-conduct in an ethical and honest manner.</i>	
31.01	Ethics	_____
31.02	Legal issues	_____
31.03	Confidentiality	_____
31.04	Professional conduct	_____
31.05	Public service	_____
31.06	Accurate representation	_____