

Alaskan Core Competencies

Collaborative Competency Building



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The *Alaskan Core Competencies* involve a set of skills shared by all types of direct care workers providing health and social services. The skills of each worker can best be assessed and improved through a strong collaboration between a supervisor and worker. The following steps describe how the supervisor and worker can work together in a process called Collaborative Competency Building. Agencies can incorporate some or all of these steps in their efforts to build a stronger workforce.

1. **Education** of the supervisor and worker about the Alaskan Core Competencies.
(Tool: Alaskan Core Competencies)

Assessing and building competencies requires a good understanding of the competencies. The supervisor and worker can acquire this knowledge by: reviewing the published document that contains the competencies; participating in trainings where the competencies are taught; or participating in continuing education events about the competencies.

2. **Self-Assessment** by the worker of his or her strengths and learning needs.
(Tool: Employee Self Assessment)

The worker has a unique and valuable view of his or her strengths and weaknesses and is often best able to identify learning needs. A simple Self-Assessment tool helps the worker clarify areas of strength as well as the areas in which an effort to build new skills or improve existing skills would be helpful. This can be completed during the initial orientation period and immediately before performance reviews are completed.

3. **Learning Plan** created by the worker and supervisor.
(Tool: Skill Building Plan)

Competencies are most likely to improve when there is a specific plan to help the worker develop his or her skills. A supervisor and worker should share their views on the worker's learning needs, agree on some learning objectives, and select specific steps to accomplish those objectives. The objectives and the steps are documented in the Skill Building Plan.

4. Continuous **Observation** of strengths and learning needs by the supervisor and worker.
(Tool: Competency Logbook)

The process of assessing and improving competencies should not be limited to a single point in time during the year. The supervisor and worker should constantly be observing and noting strengths and skills in need of improvement. These observations can be easily documented in the Competency Logbook, which is a recording tool. This tool can be used by the worker to identify skills that need further development. The supervisor can use the information in the Logbook to help complete Skill Building Plans and Performance Reviews.

5. **Feedback** from others about the competency of the worker.

(Tool: 360 Degree Feedback Form)

The strongest assessments are those that are informed by individuals who interact with the worker in different roles. In addition to the supervisor, these roles can include: co-worker, client, family member, or trainer. The 360 Degree Feedback form can be used gather constructive feedback from these individuals about the strengths and weaknesses of the worker.

6. Periodic **Performance Appraisal** conducted by the supervisor in collaboration with the worker.

(Tool: Performance Review Form)

Performance reviews or appraisals are conducted routinely, most often on an annual basis. The Performance Review form is a tool for pulling together information from the Employee Self-Assessment, Skill Building Plan, Competency Logbook, and 360 Degree Feedback forms. Prior to being finalized, a draft of the Performance Review should be discussed with the worker in order to obtain the worker's perspective on the evaluation. The objective is to build a shared or common understanding between the supervisor and worker about the worker's strengths and the skills in need of improvement.

7. **Portfolio** of learning activities assembled by the worker.

(Tool: Portfolio Guide)

A worker will likely have numerous learning opportunities, including mandatory orientation and training, work-based continuing education, and off-site or on-line workshops, seminars, conferences, and classes. Recording these experiences in a Portfolio helps the learner track personal skill development activities, show progress on a learning plan, and create a new or updated Skill Building Plan. The Portfolio Guide provides instructions for assembling a portfolio.

In summary, the seven elements of a collaborative approach to building competencies are:

1. Education
2. Self-assessment
3. Learning plan
4. Observation
5. Feedback
6. Performance appraisal
7. Portfolio