



# An Update and Conversation on Core Competencies for Quality Service in the Profession

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# Building a Team

## A Thought Experiment

- Think of your favorite Sports team
- Think of the team as a **unit** and as individual **players** that make up the unit
- Describe to yourself why the unit is successful?
- Describe to yourself why a given player is successful?

# Who uses competencies?

## We all do-implicitly or explicitly

- Building a youth soccer team
  - Which players do I want ?
- Teacher performance
  - Which class should my child be in?
- Medical care
  - Which Dr. do I choose?
- Sports Teams have qualities they rate players given qualities needed
- States define competencies of teacher and principals
- Medical Doctors have competencies defined for practice

And we all are not perfect...we can gain competencies over time....which is needed as the landscape of our work matures.

# What are Competencies?

- Characteristic of a member of a unit (school, office, restaurant kitchen) that contributes to successful performance in the assigned role and to the achievement of the unit's results.
  - These include knowledge, skills, and abilities
  - And other “non-cognitive” characteristics:
    - values, motivation, initiative, and self-control.

# Why care about competencies?

- Competencies are an essential tool--
  - Identify capabilities, attitudes, and attributes needed to meet staffing needs (current and future) as priorities and strategies shift within a unit (e.g., school, organization)
  - Focus development efforts for persons to eliminate the gap between capabilities needed and those available.
- The goal is to make a strong, efficient, and sustainable unit

# Consider two levels of Competencies

- Unit level

- Organizational competencies can include process improvement, teamwork, performance measurement, values, project management, new ways of thinking or performing, knowledge management, etc.
- These are built, in part, on individuals having the competency or related competencies.

- Person level

- Person competencies can critical technical skills specific to the position and “people” skills critical to a healthy environment (e.g., motivation, approachable, commitment, ethical).
- These are built, in part, on values by the larger units and support and through what the person enters the unit with (e.g., desire to succeed).

# Take-home message

- Competencies matter for many areas
  - Accounts
  - Teachers
  - Doctors
  - Parents
  - Welders
- AgrAbility is working on what are the essential competencies we need in our offices to be successful units over time. Especially as the landscape of our work changes.

# Motivation for the work at NTW

- Requests from SRAPS for assistance in developing appropriate job descriptions for AgrAbility positions
- Better align the training provided by the NAP with the skills needed by new and current SRAPS' staff.
- Contribute to the development of an online graduate course that could be used for professional development and as part of a formal graduate program of study.



# Many reasons cited in 2015

- AgrAbility Program has matured in 25 years; are commonalities in the knowledge and skills needed to be effective serving the needs of AgrAbility clientele.
- Client expectations have increased; “no harm to client” attitude.
- Concern over professional liability has increased.
- Need to align the training needs of the AgrAbility staff and the training provided by the NAP through the NTW.
- Some AgrAbility staff are involved in graduate level education that could benefit from an online graduate course relevant to their role as an AgrAbility service provider

# Update on Criteria

- Core criteria:
  - A valid driver's license and the ability to travel
  - Willingness to submit to a criminal background check
  - Demonstrated mastery of the primary language of the AgrAbility clientele being served
  - Understand and being able to explain the scope and limitations of authorized AgrAbility services
  - Identify and list the primary sources of AgrAbility client-related solutions and demonstrate how to access them
  - Explain the importance of maintaining client confidentiality and protecting the professional/client relationship

# Update at the organizational level

- Being able to effectively assess the needs of AgrAbility clients.
- Communicate to clients the key resources currently available.
- Understand the signs that indicate the need to refer AgrAbility clients to appropriate professionals for assistance.
- Having the capacity to identify and network with related organizations to provide comprehensive AgrAbility client services.

# Update at the personnel level

- Interpersonal skills demonstrated in the ability to relate to AgrAbility clientele and their families, and other professionals.
- Communication skills demonstrated in the ability to be an active listener.
- Technical understanding of basic agricultural practices in the area being served and the culture in the community.

# What is needed now?

## Guiding Questions:

- Do we have the essential list of competencies for our units to be successful in serving our population?
- What aspects of the work environment (personnel and unit level) are missing from the overview?
  - What aspects do you think are not understand?
  - What aspects are location specific?
- What barriers exist to adaption of competencies?
  - What strategies can you think of to overcome barriers?

# Review the proposed syllabus

Dr. Field will distribute copies of this, provide background, and discuss the proposed syllabus.