

Sample Position Description for Tier 3a: Senior-Level Epidemiologist, Supervisor or Manager

Introduction

Incumbent serves as chief or head of a major epidemiology program unit within the Epidemiology Department and is responsible for overall management and supervision of the program and assigned personnel. As a Management Senior Scientist/Epidemiologist, performs supervisory and advanced professional analytical work in surveillance, detection, and prevention of diseases and injuries. Work involves overseeing and conducting advanced-level professional epidemiologic work by managing methods of collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data related to leading causes of morbidity and mortality. Incumbent oversees or performs advanced or specialized professional work, which includes expert knowledge and management in a specific field, such as chronic disease, infectious disease, maternal and child health, environmental health, injury clusters, trend analysis, geographic distribution of disease, or other specific epidemiology program area.

Major Duties and Responsibilities

The purpose of the work is to oversee, manage, and supervise the work of epidemiologists and associated staff conducting health surveillance aimed at monitoring health status and its correlates to identify trends or outbreaks of diseases or other adverse health events, provide data and information about corrective actions or programs to alleviate adverse health effects, and propose practices or policies based on such data and information that will promote and protect public health. Work requires considerable independent judgment and advanced knowledge of applied epidemiology for public health practice. Knowledge of managerial techniques and personnel policies and procedures is also required.

1. Supervision and Management

Incumbent provides scientific, administrative, and program direction and leadership for assigned program units within the epidemiology department.

Through Senior Scientists/Team Leaders, plans, assigns, schedules, prioritizes, directs and coordinates the work of assigned epidemiologists, research analysts, and other staff. Conducts employee performance reviews of epidemiologists and other staff within the epidemiology unit, ensuring the accuracy and quality of work and overall work performance. Participates in the selection and assignment of epidemiology and other professional and administrative staff. Approves leave and develops performance standards and ratings.

Gives advice and counsel to employees and instructs them on both work and administrative matters. Resolves complaints from employees; effects minor disciplinary actions; refers major disciplinary issues to human resources; and identifies developmental needs and arranges for necessary training.



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Responsible for budget planning and tracking and making decisions about budgetary issues, such as training, overtime, employee travel, and employee awards and promotions.

Makes decisions on work problems presented by Senior Scientists/Team Leaders. Responsible for eliminating problems within the Program Unit, improving operating practices and procedures, promoting team-building, and effectively interacting and coordinating with officials of other units or organizations.

2. Epidemiologic Studies and Urgent Outbreak Investigations

Plans, directs, oversees, and manages epidemiologic studies and urgent outbreak investigations.

Oversees the design and use of databases for analysis of health problems. Oversees the design and management of surveillance systems for diseases of public health importance. Oversees the design of instruments for the collection of surveillance information and data. Leads the development and conduct of epidemiologic studies for program planning.

Conducts and develops methods for advanced descriptive and comprehensive analyses of surveillance data for multiple purposes.

3. Dissemination of Program Data, Information, and Findings

Conducts and oversees literature reviews for design of programs, preparation of publications, and planning and evaluation. Designs, prepares, and reviews reports from analyses of surveillance data, literature reviews, and other information.

Makes oral presentations on results of data analyses and other information to diverse audiences. Reviews and prepares responses to requests for information.

Develops and provides recommendations to high-ranking officials about the control of disease and injury problems based on the results of surveillance, field investigations, and laboratory tests and on available and acceptable methods of control.

4. Program Administration/Support

Directs state program planning efforts with respect to surveillance and other epidemiologic data and evaluation. Develops, implements, and monitors organizational performance measures that demonstrate program effectiveness. Reviews and conducts literature reviews and data analyses to evaluate program progress and effectiveness.

Participates in writing grants and other funding proposals with respect to surveillance, epidemiology, and program evaluation. Develops requests for proposals and contracts for data analysis and evaluation projects and directs and reviews contract work.

Develops and evaluates methods of training for health care providers and local staff about appropriate methods of controlling diseases and preventing injuries.

Provides and reviews technical assistance to communities and outside partners with respect to surveillance and other epidemiologic data and evaluation. Works as a liaison to outside data-generating entities to develop and maintain partnerships for sharing and using data.

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Formulates policies, procedures, and plans for the conduct of existing and new subprograms in epidemiologic analysis and assessment.

5. Performance of Other Duties as Assigned

Supervision Received

Works under the limited supervision of the epidemiology department head or other employee of higher grade. Receives guidance in the form of general goals to be accomplished and broad program policy. Works within this general framework and has full responsibility to carry out unit programs to achieve the desired objectives. Takes complete responsibility for formulating research plans and hypotheses and carrying them through to completion; for planning and organizing programs and activities; and for interpreting findings, including their applicability to activities and interests of the program and their broader applicability to epidemiologic investigation. High degrees of originality, initiative, and independent judgment are required. Conclusions and recommendations are considered authoritative and may result in vital management decisions. Supervision is provided through direct contact, written policy, and informal discussions.

Applied Epidemiology Competencies – Work Applications

The Tier 3a Epidemiologist is expected to have significant strengths in many of the skill domains enumerated below. Under limited guidance, the Tier 3a Epidemiologist may be expected to learn, demonstrate, and attain the following skills¹, as appropriate to his or her position:

1. Lead Epidemiologic Assessment and Analysis
 - A. Ensure identification of public health problems pertinent to the population
 - B. Oversee surveillance activities
 - C. Ensure investigation of acute and chronic conditions or other adverse outcomes in the population
 - D. Ensure study design and data collection, dissemination, and use of ethical/legal principles
 - E. Ensure management of data from surveillance, investigations, or other sources
 - F. Evaluate analysis of data from an epidemiologic investigation or study
 - G. Evaluate conclusions and interpretations from investigation
 - H. Determine evidence-based interventions and control measures in response to epidemiologic findings
 - I. Ensure evaluation of programs
2. Apply Basic Public Health Sciences to Epidemiology Practice
 - A. Use current knowledge of causes of disease to guide epidemiologic practice
 - B. Ensure use of laboratory resources to support epidemiologic activities
 - C. Ensure application of principles of informatics, including data collection, processing, and analysis, in support of epidemiologic practice
 - D. Develop and manage information systems to improve effectiveness of surveillance, investigation, and other epidemiologic practices
3. Ensure Communication with Various Audiences is Timely and Relevant
 - A. Ensure preparation of written and oral reports and presentations that communicate necessary information to professional audiences, policymakers, and the general public
 - B. Ensure the basic principles of risk communication are followed in all communication of epidemiologic findings
 - C. Model interpersonal skills in communication with agency personnel, colleagues, and the public
 - D. Ensure use of effective communication technologies
4. Integrate Community Dimensions into Epidemiology Practice
 - A. Lead epidemiologic studies, public health programs, and community public health planning processes at the state, local, or tribal level
 - B. Develop community partnerships to support epidemiologic investigations
5. Work in a Culturally Competent Manner
 - A. Differentiate special populations by race; ethnicity; culture; societal, educational, and professional backgrounds; age; gender; religion; disability; and sexual orientation
 - B. Establish relationships with groups of special concern (e.g., disadvantaged or minority groups, groups subject to health disparities, historically underrepresented groups)
 - C. Ensure that surveillance systems are designed to include groups subject to health disparities or other potentially underrepresented groups (using standard categories where available)
 - D. Ensure that investigations use languages and approaches tailored to the population
 - E. Ensure that standard population categories or subcategories are used for data analysis

¹ From the CDC/CSTE Competencies for Applied Epidemiologists in Governmental Public Health Agencies (AECs). For more information visit www.cste.org/competencies.asp or www.cdc.gov/od/owcd/cdd/aec/.

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- F. Use knowledge of specific sociocultural factors in the population to interpret findings
 - G. Ensure that actions are relevant to the affected community
6. Practice Financial and Operational Planning and Management
- A. Create operational and financial plans for future epidemiologic activities
 - B. Formulate a fiscally sound budget that will support the activities defined in the operational plan and is consistent with the financial rules of the agency
 - C. Oversee implementation of operational and financial plans
 - D. Develop requests for proposals for extramural funding to support additional epidemiologic activities and special projects
 - E. Use management skills
 - F. Promote collaborations, strong partnerships, and team-building to accomplish epidemiology program objectives
7. Model Leadership and Systems Thinking
- A. Promote the epidemiologic perspective in the agency strategic planning process
 - B. Lead the creation of epidemiology program's vision in the context of the agency's plan
 - C. Use performance measures to evaluate and improve epidemiology program effectiveness
 - D. Promote ethical conduct in epidemiologic practice
 - E. Ensure professional development of epidemiology workforce
 - F. Lead epidemiology unit in preparing for emergency response
8. Bring Epidemiologist Perspective in the Development and Analysis of Public health Policies

Recommended Qualification Requirements

Education and Experience:

- A master's degree with a focus in epidemiology and ≥ 4 years' work experience in epidemiology in a public health agency

OR

- A doctoral-level degree in epidemiology, supplemented with ≥ 2 years' work experience at a Tier 2 Epidemiologist level

OR

- Other non epidemiology professional degree or certification (e.g., RN, MD/DO, DDS/DMD, DVM, PhD, RS) with specific epidemiology training (e.g., MPH degree, CDC Epidemic Intelligence Service program) and ≥ 4 years' work experience at a Tier 2 epidemiologist level

Special Requirements That May Apply:

- Incumbent must be willing to receive vaccinations for communicable diseases, as necessary and appropriate.
- Incumbent may be required to gain security clearance with local, state, and federal agencies for emergency preparedness.
- Incumbent may be required to travel.