

Master of Public Health

Applied Practice Experience

by

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MPH Candidate

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1 - Portfolio Products	2
Table 1.1 Summary of Portfolio Products	2
Table 1.2 Portfolio Products and Competency Addressed.....	4
Chapter 2 - Competencies	5
Table 2.1 Summary of MPH Foundational Competencies	5
Table 2.2 MPH Foundational Competencies Course Mapping	8
Chapter 3 - Information Needed if Completing a Thesis Only	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Student Attainment of MPH Emphasis Area Competencies	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Table 3.1 Summary of MPH Emphasis Area Competencies....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

Chapter 1 - Portfolio Products

The Nutrition Incentive Program National Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation and Information Center (NTAE) served as my Applied Practicum Experience (APE) site. The NTAE is funded by a 2019 Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) award totaling \$31.5 million over four years. The NTAE provides evaluation for nutrition incentive programs and is overseen by the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition. The Nutrition Incentive Hub serves as the technical assistance arm of the NTAE and is led by the Fair Food Network. Overall, the NTAE is a coalition of national partners supporting nutrition incentive grantees and practitioners. As the Food Systems Equity & Advocacy Specialist for Michigan State University Center for Regional Food Systems, I am the principal investigator for our GusNIP subcontract with the Nutrition Incentive Hub providing technical assistance to nutrition incentive grantees and practitioners in diversity, equity, and inclusion; partnership development; and local and regional sourcing for brick-and-mortar retail (specifically grocery) as well as develop relevant tools and resources and facilitate internal subcommittees and external communities of practice. For the APE, I led interviews among 37 nutrition incentive grantees and practitioners that produced a three-part *Partnership Development for Higher Impact Nutrition Incentive Programs* webinar training series focused on local and regional food system development, facilitated several corresponding Local and Regional Sourcing in Grocery communities of practice, and created a partnership development tool for local and regional food systems.

Table 1.1 Summary of Portfolio Products

Portfolio Product		Description
1	Webinar #1: Considerations for Incorporating Stakeholder Values into Nutrition Incentive Program Local & Regional Sourcing Efforts	This webinar explored how partner values inform local and regional sourcing strategies and translate to the nutrition incentive program context beginning with lessons being learned in a national initiative to compile farm-to-institution values and standards. The session continued with an overview of a GusNIP grantee's efforts to provide training support to local and regional farmers as well as challenges of program implementation in grocery retail and a retail grocery industry perspective on the value of local produce. The session concluded with tips for working with grocery retailers.

2	Webinar #2: Building Local & Regional Food Systems Partnerships for Nutrition Incentive Programs	This webinar discussed the role of diverse partnerships in the development of a healthy, thriving local or regional food system that supports nutrition incentive programming, highlighting the evolution of Michigan's collaboration infrastructure.
3	Webinar #3: Developing Value Chain Partnerships for Nutrition Incentive Programs	This webinar featured three programs that have developed robust partnerships and strategies to support local and regional sourcing efforts across production, processing, and wholesale and retail distribution.
4	Community of practice (1.27.2021)	This Local and Regional Sourcing in Grocery session provided an overview of highlights from the Nutrition Incentive Hub annual survey followed by discussion about the Hub's local sourcing objectives and intersection with grantee and practitioner projects. The session concluded with a preview of the activities and offerings planned for 2021 related to local sourcing.
5	Community of practice (3.24.2021)	This session provided a quick update on an emerging theme from the local & regional sourcing interviews: political influences on funding. Nutrition incentive practitioners discussed how organizational mission, values, and political interests influence local and regional sourcing goals.
6	Community of practice (8.25.2021)	This session previewed the <i>Partnership Development for Higher Impact Nutrition Incentive Programs</i> series and provided an update on the local & regional sourcing interview findings, including how they informed the development of the series.
7	Community of practice (11.3.2021)	This session hosted two initiatives working on grocery supply chain development and succession planning.
8	Community of practice (12.15.2021)	This session reported the remaining results of the local & regional sourcing interviews (supports/challenges in local & regional sourcing, how grantees started sourcing locally and processes established, metrics used) and announced a new structure for the community of practice in 2022.
9	The Local & Regional Food System Partnership Planning Tool: A Guide for Nutrition Incentive Practitioners	This tool provides a step-by-step process to help practitioners identify and prioritize food system partnerships for nutrition incentive programs.

Table 1.2 Portfolio Products and Competency Addressed

Portfolio Product		Number and Competency Addressed	
	<i>Partnership Development for Higher Impact Nutrition Incentive Programs</i> webinar training series	13	Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes
		18	Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors
	Local & Regional Sourcing in Grocery community of practice	4	Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy or practice
		18	Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors
		21	Perform effectively on interprofessional teams
	The Local & Regional Food System Partnership Planning Tool: A Guide for Nutrition Incentive Program Practitioners	18	Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors
		22	Apply systems thinking tools to a public health issue

Chapter 2 - Competencies

Table 2.1 Summary of MPH Foundational Competencies

Number and Competency		Description
4	Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy or practice	Interviews were conducted and analyzed for emergent themes informing local & regional sourcing program development to increase fruit and vegetable availability.
13	Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes	<i>A Partnership Development for Higher Impact Nutrition Incentive Programs</i> webinar-based training series and a partnership development tool were developed as a result of the research conducted in addition to informing Local & Regional Sourcing in Grocery community of practice topics.
18	Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors	A suite of multi-media deliverables was created for multiple stakeholder audiences as a result of the research conducted.
21	Perform effectively on interprofessional teams	In addition to acting as a partner within the Nutrition Incentive Hub, collaborative data collection, analysis, resource development, and reporting was conducted with a core Nutrition Incentive Hub partner. The Local & Regional Sourcing in Grocery community of practice also served as an opportunity to develop working relationships with grantees and practitioners.
22	Apply systems thinking tools to a public health issue	Emergent themes identified through the research conducted resulted in multiple evidence-based tools and resources to increase nutrition incentive grantee and practitioner capacity to develop local & regional sourcing programs to increase fruit and vegetable availability.

Competency 4: As a partner within the Nutrition Incentive Hub, my organization's skills and expertise are called upon to develop evidence-based solutions in support of GusNIP goals and grantee and practitioner capacity building. As a technical assistance provider, it is my responsibility to translate any research conducted into resources and tools as need arises. This can be seemingly in contrast to research conducted to develop evidence-based solutions. It is an involved process that takes considerable time and capacity to complete. This project pushed me to strike a balance between research and practical application, translating emergent findings from stakeholder interviews into a community of practice topics, a webinar-based training series, and a corresponding tool. The research indicated partnerships were being leveraged to establish local and regional sourcing programs and, in creating these resources, I incorporated

aspects of local and regional food systems development to support the development of a strong supply chain that increases fruit and vegetable availability.

Competency 13: The *Partnership Development for Higher Impact Nutrition Incentive Programs* webinar-based training series was informational media created to help nutrition incentive grantees and practitioners identify local food system stakeholders to help build stronger fruit and vegetable supply chains. The series featured three webinars:

- *Considerations for Incorporating Stakeholder Values into Nutrition Incentive Program Local & Regional Sourcing Efforts* explored how partner values inform local and regional sourcing strategies and translate to the nutrition incentive program context. The webinar shared lessons being learned in a national initiative to compile farm-to-institution values and standards then continued with an overview of a GusNIP grantee efforts to provide training support to local and regional farmers as well as challenges of program implementation in grocery retail. The webinar wrapped up with a retail grocery industry perspective on the value of local produce plus tips for working with grocery retailers.
- *Building Local & Regional Food Systems Partnerships for Nutrition Incentive Programs* discussed the role of diverse partnerships in the development of a healthy, thriving local or regional food system that supports nutrition incentive programming. Acknowledging that how well a program can source local and regional product is dependent on a multitude of factors that together create a local or regional food system. The relationships among actors within this system were highlighted through the evolution of Michigan's collaborative infrastructure, providing practical strategies to help nutrition incentive grantees and practitioners play a key role in creating supportive, collaborative infrastructure.
- *Developing Value Chain Partnerships for Nutrition Incentive Programs* focused on local and regional production, processing, and wholesale and retail distribution, hosting a panel of supply chain actors to discuss their regional food system development efforts. Three programs – a GusNIP grantee, a food hub, and a regional food system development initiative providing farmer training and market development – that developed robust partnerships and strategies to support local and regional sourcing efforts across these stages were highlighted.

The Local & Regional Food System Partnership Planning Tool: A Guide for Nutrition Incentive Program Practitioners complemented the webinar training series as well as the Local

& Regional Sourcing in Grocery community of practice. These media provided the means for partnership development strategic planning and networking, respectively.

Competency 18: The suite of deliverables created for this project were tailored according to purpose of each communication channel being utilized. The Local and Regional Sourcing in Grocery community of practice serves as an interactive learning space for grantees and practitioners to network, obtain new information, and share resources. Emerging interview results were shared in this space to stimulate discussion and gather feedback on grantee and practitioner experience as well as inform the development of additional resources. The webinar-based training series was created for information dissemination among a broad audience. The partnership development tool was designed to provide grantees and practitioners with downloadable worksheets for use among organizational stakeholders, including those not affiliated with the Nutrition Incentive Hub.

Competency 21: In addition to nutrition incentive grantees and practitioners, I regularly interface with a coalition of national stakeholders as a Nutrition Incentive Hub partner. We all regularly attend internal subcommittee meetings and collaborate across projects and in technical assistance provision. My facilitation of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Nutrition Incentives community of practice has allowed me to develop relationships with stakeholders outside of Nutrition Incentive Hub, including the CDC Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (DNPAO); Harvard Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation; and Rockefeller Foundation. These partnerships have led to collaborations on national reports and a request to participate on national advisory council. I have also collaborated with several organizations to develop and conduct presentations and trainings including Veggie Van Toolkit based at the University of Buffalo, New York State SNAP-Ed, MSU Extension, and Mid-America Regional Council.

Competency 22: This research project was designed to identify drivers and inhibitors of local and regional sourcing programs in an effort to understand system dynamics across different environmental, social, and economic grantee and practitioner contexts. Through this research, my research teammates and I identified patterns in local sourcing program establishment, several macro-level barriers (e.g., federal program constraints, technology access, produce traceability systems, seasonality, etc.), and geographic and political supports. The in-progress framework for establishing local and regional sourcing programs – further supported by the community of practice, webinar-based training series, and partnership planning tool – serves as the simplified expression of a system archetype that builds grantee

and practitioner understanding of supply chain development and skills/competencies to develop critical supply chain relationships.

Table 2.2 MPH Foundational Competencies Course Mapping

22 Public Health Foundational Competencies Course Mapping	MPH 701	MPH 720	MPH 754	MPH 802	MPH 818
Evidence-based Approaches to Public Health					
1. Apply epidemiological methods to the breadth of settings and situations in public health practice	x		x		
2. Select quantitative and qualitative data collection methods appropriate for a given public health context	x	x	x		
3. Analyze quantitative and qualitative data using biostatistics, informatics, computer-based programming and software, as appropriate	x	x	x		
4. Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy or practice	x		x		
Public Health and Health Care Systems					
5. Compare the organization, structure and function of health care, public health and regulatory systems across national and international settings		x			
6. Discuss the means by which structural bias, social inequities and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity at organizational, community and societal levels					x
Planning and Management to Promote Health					
7. Assess population needs, assets and capacities that affect communities' health		x		x	
8. Apply awareness of cultural values and practices to the design or implementation of public health policies or programs					x
9. Design a population-based policy, program, project or intervention			x		
10. Explain basic principles and tools of budget and resource management		x	x		
11. Select methods to evaluate public health programs	x	x	x		
Policy in Public Health					
12. Discuss multiple dimensions of the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence		x	x	x	
13. Propose strategies to identify stakeholders and build coalitions and partnerships for influencing public health outcomes		x		x	x
14. Advocate for political, social or economic policies and programs that will improve health in diverse populations		x			x
15. Evaluate policies for their impact on public health and health equity		x		x	
Leadership					
16. Apply principles of leadership, governance and management, which include creating a vision, empowering others, fostering collaboration and guiding decision making		x			x

17. Apply negotiation and mediation skills to address organizational or community challenges		x			
Communication					
18. Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors	DMP 815, FNDH 880 or KIN 796				
19. Communicate audience-appropriate public health content, both in writing and through oral presentation	DMP 815, FNDH 880 or KIN 796				
20. Describe the importance of cultural competence in communicating public health content		x			x
Interprofessional Practice					
21. Perform effectively on interprofessional teams		x			x
Systems Thinking					
22. Apply systems thinking tools to a public health issue			x	x	