DOMAIN 7 POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

Facilitator Guide

Domain 7: Policy and Governance Instructional Materials

This facilitator guide is for instructors in schools and programs of public health who are teaching students about policy and governance in governmental public health.

- Clarify what policy and governance means within governmental public health practice
- Explain how policy and governance job tasks are essential to governmental public health practice
- Contextualize how policy and governance influence state, Tribal, local, and territorial (STLT) health departments
- Align policy and governance job tasks with the CEPH MPH Foundational Competencies[1]
- Support instructional delivery in academic settings

This guide supports instructors in helping students understand the importance of policy and governance in public health practice. The Facilitator Guide is informed by the 2024 Governmental Public Health Job Task Analysis.

1. https://media.ceph.org/documents/2024.Criteria.pdf

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Alignment with the CEPH MPH Foundational Competencies

This section of the facilitator guide is intended to support instructors in showing students how classroom learning connects to real-world governmental public health practice. Governmental public health job tasks were mapped to the CEPH MPH Foundational Competencies[1] to illustrate how the knowledge and skills taught in public health degree programs are applied in health department settings. This mapping demonstrates how academic preparation supports workforce readiness and professional growth in governmental public health. As students learn and practice these competencies, they build the knowledge and skills needed to develop proficiency in governmental public health job tasks through experience and training in the field.

Domain 7 Job Task		Related CEPH MPH Foundational Competencies
7.1	Adhere to the rules and regulations that apply to the department (e.g., Rules, Regulations, Statutes, Laws, Policies)	*No direct CEPH MPH Foundational Competency alignment identified.*
7.2	Educate key partners and policymakers on the importance and impact of public health or policies impacting governmental public health systems	**Competency 18:** Select communication strategies for different audiences and sectors.
7.3	Coordinate with other local, state, Tribal, territorial, and federal government agencies and departments for policy development and implementation	**Competency 12:** Discuss the policy-making process, including the roles of ethics and evidence. **Competency 21:** Integrate perspectives from other sectors and/or professions to promote and advance population health.
7.4	Engage with the agency's governing body(ies) to ensure delivery of public health programs	**Competency 16:** Apply leadership and/or management principles to address a relevant issue.

Policy and Governance in Governmental Public Health

In governmental public health, policy refers to the formal rules that authorize and structure public health activity. Governance refers to the decision-making structures and oversight systems that determine how authority is exercised and how accountability is maintained. This domain includes job tasks related to legal authority, regulatory compliance, intergovernmental coordination, governance engagement, and delivery of governmental public health programs.

STLT health departments operate within clearly defined legal authority. They:

- Derive authority directly from statute
- Must act within legally defined limits
- Are subject to open meetings laws and public records requirements
- Follow procurement and financial regulations
- Report to governing body(ies) for oversight and accountability

Unlike nonprofit or private-sector organizations, STLT health departments cannot act outside their legally defined scope. Every significant action – issuing a regulation, reallocating funds, declaring an emergency, enforcing a mandate – must be grounded in statutory or regulatory authority.

Policy and governance define:

- What programs may be implemented
- What enforcement authority exists
- How funds may be spent
- How data may be shared
- Who approves strategic plans and governmental public health priorities
- How performance is reported publicly

Policy and governance job tasks can be understood as the frameworks and decision-making structures that guide public health action and ensure it is legitimate, transparent, and accountable.

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Policy and Governance: Job Tasks

The Domain 7 job tasks (7.1-7.4) were identified in the 2024 Governmental Public Health Job Task Analysis and describe validated, practice-based responsibilities within STLT health departments.

7.1 Adhere to the rules and regulations that apply to the department (e.g., rules, regulations, statutes, laws, policies)
7.2 Educate key partners and policymakers on the importance and impact of public health or policies impacting governmental public health systems
7.3 Coordinate with other local, state, Tribal, territorial, and federal governmental agencies and departments for policy development and implementation
7.4 Engage with the department's governing body(ies) to ensure delivery of public health programs

These responsibilities occur across career levels, from supporting compliance and communication to contributing to policy development and governance engagement.

Policy and Governance in Action

Policy and governance are often discussed at the legislative or theoretical level. Within STLT health departments, however, they are embedded in routine operational decisions.

In STLT health departments, policy and governance work may include:

- Ensuring programs comply with legal requirements and department policy
- Preparing briefings or talking points for leadership and governing bodies
- Supporting development, implementation, and interpretation of regulations, ordinances, guidance, and public health policy
- Participating in governance meetings, hearings, advisory boards, or legislative processes
- Interpreting statutes, regulations, and mandates that shape program delivery
- Communicating governmental public health evidence, data, and program impacts to policymakers and community leaders
- Coordinating with other governmental departments (e.g., housing, education, emergency management)

Operationally, this work often involves:

- Reviewing statutory authority before launching a new initiative
- Aligning public communications with approved policy language and governmental public health guidance
- Coordinating with legal counsel when rules are unclear
- Ensuring confidentiality and data-sharing rules are followed
- Preparing concise updates for boards of health or legislative committees
- Documenting decisions to support transparency and due process

Much of this work occurs behind the scenes but is essential to legitimacy, accountability, and sustained public trust.

Policy and governance strengthen governmental public health by:

- Ensuring compliance with laws and regulations that govern public health practice
- Strengthening coordination across levels of government
- Improving communication between public health professionals and decision-makers
- Supporting effective policy development and implementation
- Supporting accountability and transparency in public decision-making
- Strengthening public trust through credible and consistent governance engagement

Without strong policy and governance capacity, STLT health departments may face barriers to implementing programs effectively, communicating with governing bodies, or responding to political and community pressures.

The policy and governance job tasks emphasize that public health impact depends not only on scientific evidence, but on lawful authority, structured decision-making, and credible engagement with oversight bodies. In many roles, public health professionals support policy and governance through analysis, coordination, and communication rather than by making final decisions.

How to Use This Guide in Academic Settings

In academic instruction, this domain emphasizes that public health impact is shaped not only by programs and services, but also by the policy frameworks and governance structures that guide them. Many students associate public health with direct service delivery, health education, or epidemiology. However, effective public health systems depend on governance processes and policy environments that support accountability, guide decision-making, allocate resources, and sustain long-term capacity.

This guide is adaptable throughout schools and programs of public health, as well as other related educational disciplines, supporting instruction at the undergraduate and graduate levels, including but not limited to courses in public health policy, leadership and management, and emergency preparedness.

SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONAL FLOW

1. Introduce policy and governance and what these job tasks mean in governmental public health.
2. Provide simple working definitions of policy and governance (policy = "rules of the road"; governance = "who decides and oversees").
3. Review Job Tasks 7.1-7.4 through applied examples.
4. Integrate real-world examples to contextualize policy and governance job tasks.
5. Align job tasks to CEPH MPH Foundational Competencies.
6. Conclude with reflection and practicum relevance.

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SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

1. **Rule-in-Action Analysis**
    a. Present a compliance scenario – such as notifiable disease reporting or emergency authority – and ask students to brainstorm applicable statutes, regulations, and operational implications. This activity reinforces that legal authority shapes how public health work is conducted.
2. **Concise Policy Brief Exercise**
    a. Ask students to prepare a brief update for a decision-maker that defines the issue, summarizes evidence, and presents a clear recommendation. Emphasize clarity, neutrality, and actionable framing.
3. **Interagency Coordination Mapping**
    a. Using a cross-sector scenario, have students identify required governmental partners, authority boundaries, and coordination challenges. This highlights how policy implementation depends on structured collaboration.
4. **Governance Engagement Simulation**
    a. Have students prepare a short update for a governing body, including performance indicators and a defined decision request. This demonstrates how oversight and accountability shape public health programs.
5. **Integrated Case Application**
    a. Use a complex scenario to examine how rules, communication, coordination, and governance interact within a single initiative. This reinforces the interconnected nature of policy and governance functions.

These activities help move students from conceptual understanding to applied systems thinking within governmental public health practice.

Implementation in Schools and Programs of Public Health

The Domain 7: Policy and Governance slide deck and instructional materials are adaptable for:

Single or multi-week modules in public health courses, including:

- Introduction to Public Health Policy
- Politics of Health and Healthcare
- Public Health Law and Ethics
- Environmental Health Policy and Regulation
- Global Health Policy and Governance

Guest lectures, seminars, and grand rounds

Applied learning intensives or capstone preparation sessions

Strengthening Practice Understanding for Instructors

Instructors may consider the following examples when explaining policy and governance job tasks. Concrete examples strengthen academic delivery and help students connect abstract policy and governance concepts to operational systems within STLT health departments.

EXAMPLE 1: **HIPAA + NOTIFIABLE DISEASE REPORTING**

A communicable disease reporting system must:

- Operate under statutory authority requiring reporting
- Apply federal and state confidentiality protections
- Define what conditions must be reported and within what timeframe
- Use secure data systems and approved documentation protocols
- Coordinate with healthcare providers and laboratories
- Ensure consistent enforcement of privacy and data security standards

EXAMPLE 2: **ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON IMMUNIZATION PRACTICES (ACIP) RECOMMENDATIONS**

A state immunization program must:

- Translate federal vaccine recommendations into state-level guidance
- Brief leadership and governing body(ies) on policy implications
- Communicate evidence to providers and community partners
- Align funding and procurement decisions with updated guidance
- Respond to public and policymaker questions regarding safety and impact
- Support implementation through coordinated messaging

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EXAMPLE 3: **NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NIMS)/INCIDENT COMMAND SYSTEM (ICS)**

An emergency response structure must:

- Clarify authority and roles across governmental departments and agencies
- Align decision-making through a shared command structure
- Coordinate messaging across agencies
- Document actions for accountability and after-action review
- Ensure consistency between policy decisions and operational response
- Maintain compliance with emergency powers and procedural requirements

EXAMPLE 4: **LOCAL BOARDS OF HEALTH**

A local board of health engagement process must:

- Provide formal reporting on program performance and outcomes
- Seek approval for regulations, budgets, or emergency actions
- Respond to public comment in open meetings
- Document decisions in accordance with transparency laws
- Align public health recommendations with statutory authority
- Maintain ongoing accountability through follow-up reporting

Toolkit Components – Instructional Materials for Domain 7: Policy and Governance

The Domain 7: Policy and Governance toolkit is structured to help instructors teach policy and governance in a way that is conceptually clear, grounded in governmental public health systems, and aligned with the CEPH MPH Foundational Competencies.

Student-Facing Instructional Slides

These slides introduce each Domain 7 job task and provide:

- Overview of each job task
- Explanation of how the job task functions operationally
- Realistic on-the-job examples
- Identification of skills strengthened (legal literacy, communication, coordination, governance awareness) through the job task

The slide deck is designed to build shared vocabulary and normalize policy and governance job tasks as everyday components of governmental public health practice.

Real-World Example Slides

Each Domain 7 job task is paired with a real-world example:

Job Task 7.1 – HIPAA + Notifiable Disease Reporting
- Demonstrates how statutory authority and confidentiality requirements structure lawful disease reporting, data sharing, and enforcement within STLT health departments

Job Task 7.2 – CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) Recommendations
- Illustrates how public health evidence is translated into vaccine policy recommendations that influence state and local implementation, funding decisions, and communication with policymakers

Job Task 7.3 – National Incident Management System (NIMS)/Incident Command System (ICS)
- Shows how interagency governance structures clarify authority, align roles, and coordinate decision-making across governmental departments during emergencies

Job Task 7.4 – Local Boards of Health
- Highlights how governing body(ies) provide oversight, adopt regulations, approve budgets, and maintain public accountability for STLT health department operations

These examples ground abstract concepts in recognizable governmental structures and reinforce operational realism.

Instructor Guidance Slides

Instructor slides include:

- Framing notes for each job task
- Suggested instructional emphasis
- Discussion prompts
- Explicit alignment with CEPH MPH Foundational Competencies

Domain 7 Example Activities

This collection includes sample activities that instructors can incorporate into courses to reinforce the competencies and job tasks within this domain. Each activity is designed to engage students in authentic governmental public health scenarios while building practical workforce skills.

Instructional Emphasis

When facilitating instruction on policy and governance, instructors should prioritize applied systems understanding over procedural detail.

Instructors should:

- Reinforce that public health authority is grounded in law
- Emphasize that compliance strengthens legitimacy and trust
- Clarify that educating decision-makers is distinct from partisan advocacy
- Highlight coordination as infrastructure built over time
- Explain governance structures and oversight mechanisms clearly
- Emphasize transparency and accountability
- Connect policy and governance decisions to operational realities
- Encourage students to identify how rules, coordination, and oversight appear in practicum settings

Effective instruction should continually reconnect students to the central question:

How does Domain 7: Policy and Governance enable public health agencies to act lawfully, effectively, and accountably?