

Training Needs Assessment

CORE QUESTIONS

Integrated Food Safety Centers of Excellence

PURPOSE

The Integrated Food Safety Centers of Excellence (CoE) Training and Education Workgroup has developed core questions to improve compatibility and standardization between surveys and assessments that evaluate training needs. These questions are not exhaustive, but serve as a core set of questions to include in more comprehensive training needs assessments of public health agencies on needs related to foodborne illness outbreak detection and investigation.

SCOPE

The core questions were developed to be used in multiple survey styles and sampling schemes. The primary intended audience for these core questions are state and local public health agencies, and the questions are structured such that the participant would answer on behalf of the agency, as opposed to individual needs.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful for the feedback and support provided by the survey research team at the Community Epidemiology and Program Evaluation Group (CEPEG), including Arnold Levinson, Ali Billings, Emily Burns, Kathy James, and Sara Cooper, as well as by Yvonne Kellar-Guenther, program evaluator at the Colorado School of Public Health.

CORE QUESTIONS

Agency background

CQ1: Which of the following best describes your agency?

- County/Local/Regional Health Department
- Tribal Health Department
- State Health Department
- Federal Agency
- Other, please specify: _____

CQ2: Which of the following best describes you?

- Environmental Health Professional
- Public Health Nurse
- Epidemiologist
- Director
- Student or intern
- Other, please specify: _____

CQ3: What is the average number of foodborne outbreaks your agency investigates per year?

- 0-1 outbreaks
- 2-4 outbreaks
- ≥ 5 outbreaks
- I don't know the average number of foodborne outbreaks my agency investigates

Foodborne outbreak investigation experience

CQ4: Which one of the following best describes how foodborne outbreaks in your agency are usually detected?

- Outbreaks are usually detected by complaints to our agency
- Outbreaks are usually detected by disease surveillance conducted by our agency
- Outbreaks are usually detected by notification from an external entity (i.e., state health department, CDC)
- Other, please specify: _____

CQ5: During foodborne outbreak investigations, how often does your agency conduct an analytical study (such as a cohort or case-control study)?

- The agency conducts an analytical study in all outbreak investigations
- The agency conducts an analytical study in most outbreak investigations
- The agency conducts an analytical study in some outbreak investigations
- The agency does not conduct analytical studies in outbreak investigations
- The agency does not investigate foodborne outbreaks
- I don't know whether the agency conducts analytical studies in outbreak investigations

CQ6: What are the most common epidemiologic study designs used by your agency?

- Case-control studies
- Cohort studies
- Cohort and case-control studies equally
- Other, please specify: _____
- I don't know what type of epidemiology studies are most common in my agency

CQ7: Below is a list of some common challenges that may be encountered when working on an outbreak. *Select the five most critical challenges* your agency faces when responding to foodborne outbreak investigations.

- Delayed reporting/identification of illness
- Inability to contact/interview sufficient cases or controls
- Inability to gather sufficient specimens to diagnose/confirm etiology
- Insufficient laboratory resources/training to test food for pathogens
- Poor recall of food exposures
- Unwillingness of implicated facility to respond
- Difficulty coordinating response across agencies
- Insufficient staff (support or investigative)
- Inadequately trained investigative staff
- Political pressure or media scrutiny
- I don't know what challenges my agency faces
- My agency did not face any challenges
- Other, please specify: _____

Past trainings and available trainings

CQ8: During the past year, which of the following foodborne outbreak investigation trainings have you or others at your agency attended? Please select all that apply

- In-person training offered by my agency
- In-person training offered by another agency (i.e. State Health Office, CDC, CoE, FDA, etc.)
- Online training offered by my agency
- Online training offered by another agency (i.e. State Health Office, CDC, CoE, FDA, etc.)
- There have not been any trainings offered on foodborne outbreak investigation this past year.

Identify training topic area needs

CQ9: Listed below are four topic areas related to foodborne disease training needs. Rate each item using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means "not useful" and 5 means "very useful" to you and your agency

	Not Useful		Very Useful		
TOPIC AREA 1 (TA1): Planning and Preparation					
Relationships, roles and responsibilities of local, state, and federal agencies	1	2	3	4	5
Roles and responsibilities of outbreak investigation team members	1	2	3	4	5
Assembling the necessary resources for an investigation	1	2	3	4	5
Developing and implementing model communication practices	1	2	3	4	5
TOPIC AREA 2 (TA2): Surveillance and Outbreak Detection					
Establishing and implementing notification/complaint systems	1	2	3	4	5
Pathogen-specific surveillance	1	2	3	4	5
Legal issues	1	2	3	4	5
Trends in surveillance	1	2	3	4	5
Syndromic surveillance	1	2	3	4	5
TOPIC AREA 3 (TA3): Cluster and Outbreak Investigation					
General					
Cluster and outbreak investigation procedures	1	2	3	4	5
Characteristics of an investigation	1	2	3	4	5
Principles of investigation	1	2	3	4	5
Report writing and dissemination of results	1	2	3	4	5
Epidemiology					
Overview of epidemiology investigation	1	2	3	4	5
Interviewing skills	1	2	3	4	5
Descriptive epidemiological methods					
Hypothesis generation	1	2	3	4	5
Interviews using hypothesis-generating questionnaires	1	2	3	4	5
Epidemiologic study design	1	2	3	4	5
Questionnaire design	1	2	3	4	5
Environmental					
Overview of environmental investigation	1	2	3	4	5
Overview of food production processes	1	2	3	4	5
Overview of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP)	1	2	3	4	5
Overview of environmental health assessment	1	2	3	4	5
Laboratory					
Overview of laboratory investigation	1	2	3	4	5
Appropriate collection, storage, and transportation of clinical and environmental specimens	1	2	3	4	5

Analysis and interpretation of clinical specimens and food and environmental samples	1	2	3	4	5
Pulsed-field gel electrophoresis (PFGE)	1	2	3	4	5
Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS)	1	2	3	4	5

TOPIC AREA 4 (TA4): Control Measures

Control of source	1	2	3	4	5
Food recall	1	2	3	4	5
Control of secondary spread	1	2	3	4	5
Communicating with media	1	2	3	4	5
Communicating with at risk population	1	2	3	4	5
After-action reviews	1	2	3	4	5

Challenges or barriers to participating in online/in-person trainings

CQ10: What challenges or barriers does your agency face to participating in **online** trainings?
(Select all that apply)

- Lack of funding
- Lack of awareness of trainings
- Lack of communication with other health departments/outside resources that provide training
- Lack of management support
- Training not offered at a useful level for my agency
 - Follow-up if yes: What level is your agency looking for?
 - Beginner
 - Advanced
 - Refresher or just-in-time
- Time commitment
- Lack of access to adequate computer equipment, internet capability, or other technology
- Unable to download software needed to access online training
- I have no barriers to participate in online trainings
- Other, please specify: _____

CQ11: What challenges or barriers does your agency face in participating in **in-person** trainings, meetings or conferences? (Select all that apply)

- Lack of funding
- Lack of staff or coverage (i.e. cannot get time off)
- Lack of awareness of trainings
- Lack of communication with other health departments/outside resources that provide training
- Training not offered at a useful level for my agency
 - Follow-up if yes: What level is your agency looking for?

- Beginner
- Advanced
- Refresher or just-in-time
- Travel restrictions not related to funding
- Time commitment
- I have no barriers to attend in-person trainings
- Other, please specify: _____

CQ12: Which of the following represent the benefits your agency associates with training?
(Select all that apply)

- Professional development and growth for employees
- Opportunity to network and interact with colleagues
- Continuing education credits for employees
- Other, please specify: _____

CQ13: Which incentives that are offered as part of training increase the likelihood your agency will allow employees to attend?

- Continuing education credits for employees
- Coverage of lodging expenses (hotel)
- Coverage of commute expenses (mileage)
- Supplying meals (i.e. lunch served during day trainings)
- Holding trainings in conjunction with other work-related conferences/trainings
- Other, please specify: _____
- No incentives increase the likelihood my agency will allow employees to attend

Training modalities and preferences

CQ14: Which of the following would be most useful to your agency? (Rank 1-7)

- Classroom-based trainings at your agency
- Classroom-based trainings at a remote location
- Online or distance learning
- Classroom case studies (interactive outbreak exercises led by a facilitator)
- One-on-one technical assistance (outbreak consultation from external agencies or organizations)
- Online tools
- Other, please specify: _____

CQ15: Which of the following distance learning styles would be most useful to your agency?
(Rank 1-10).

- Long online trainings (longer than 1 hour)
- Short online trainings (shorter than 1 hour)
- Academic courses (1, 2 or 3 credit courses)

- Live learning series (e.g., 4-6 week long courses that meet every week for an hour via bi-directional video)
- Videos
- Webinars
- Self-study case studies (interactive outbreak exercises completed independently online)
- Podcasts
- Other, please specify: _____
- My agency prefers that employees do not participate in distance learning

Questions about CoE-specific trainings and access

CQ16: Whom do you or others at your agency contact when you have a question or need consultation about foodborne disease-related activities? (Select all that apply)

- State health agency foodborne disease expert
- Regional health agency foodborne disease expert
- Local staff at other state or local health agency foodborne disease expert
- Food safety regulator
- Private physician
- University or medical school clinician
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- US Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- Integrated Food Safety Center of Excellence (CoE)
- I do not contact anyone
- I do not know who to contact when I have a question about foodborne disease
- Other, please specify: _____

CQ17: How often does your agency use the following resources for finding foodborne disease-related educational materials?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Usually	Always
Integrated Food Safety Regional Center of Excellence (CoE) website(s)						
CIFOR website						
State health agency website						
State agriculture agency website						
Local health agency website						
CDC website						
FDA website						
USDA website						
Search engines (i.e. Google)						
Printed materials (i.e. Red Book, textbooks, etc)						
Other						

If "Other", please specify: