

Public Health System Workforce Plan Recommendations

A workgroup of the Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) formed in January 2024, called the PHAB Public Health System Workforce Workgroup. The workgroup met monthly from January – December 2024 to review existing data on workforce needs, gaps, recommendations, and feedback from engagement sessions conducted in June–September 2024 with workers in the public health system. The recommendations outlined below are intended for the PHAB to review, edit, approve and ultimately will be utilized by the OHA Public Health Division to meet a Public Health Modernization deliverable of developing a comprehensive statewide public health workforce plan.

Training and Development Recommendations

Introduction: this section includes recommendations intended to address gaps in knowledge, skills, and abilities through training and workforce development.

1. **Expand access to emergency preparedness and response workforce training:** Provide access to emergency preparedness training, including FEMA, first aid, and disaster navigation across the public health system. (Emergency, 2024)
2. **Develop culturally specific trainings and include public health specific components (offer remote) for CHW, THW, Doula certification programs.** As an example, for CHWs, THWs, and Doulas, support language, culture and identity specific trainings to enable diversification of the public health workforce. (Communication, 2024) (HealthEquity, 2024). Include continued education with focus on public health assessment and epidemiology related connections with these underutilized yet critical positions for epidemiology in rural and marginalized populations. (Assessment-and-Epidemiology, 2024)
3. **Provide trainings to build health equity and cultural competency capacity in existing governmental public health workforce.** Provide specialized training for staff in governmental public health to meet the diverse needs of communities, especially new immigrants and refugees. (HealthEquity, 2024)
4. **Provide system-wide trainings to develop shared knowledge of public health system: the workforce of the public health system does not have a shared understanding of the “public health system”. (HealthEquity, 2024)**
5. **Build workforce capacity for community engagement:** Build skills and provide resources to effectively engage with diverse communities, including trainings in data collection, partnership building, and cultural competency. (Partnership, 2024)
6. **Provide trainings for improved health education and communication:** Address current challenges in adapting to new technologies and digital tools that

could improve public health education, service delivery and data management. (Communication, 2024)

7. **Enhance data skills:** train and develop public health staff for advanced data analysis skills, including big data, small data, qualitative and quantitative methods, and data justice principles. (Assessment-and-Epidemiology, 2024)
8. **Address inadequate language and accessibility services and resources;** access to interpreters, appropriate language translations, reading level accessibility, physical accessibility. (Communication, 2024)

Recruitment Recommendations

Introduction: This section includes recommendations for addressing statewide workforce recruitment gaps and needs.

1. **Invest in emergency response workforce:** Increase staffing levels for critical emergency response positions, such as community health workers, community navigators, and call center staff. (Emergency, 2024)
2. **Diversify the public health workforce:** Invest in programs and initiatives to increase the representation and perspectives of rural communities, tribal communities, people of color and other marginalized groups in the public health workforce. (HealthEquity, 2024)
3. **Address workforce recruitment and retention barriers:** Collaborate with HR departments to remove organizational and institutional barriers to hiring and retaining public health staff. (PolicyPlanning, 2024)

Retention Recommendations

Introduction: This section includes recommendations to retain public health workforce.

- **Enhance workforce stability & retention:** Implement strategies to reduce turnover and promote long-term career paths in public health. (Leadership-and-Organizational, 2024)
- **Support and retain diverse professionals:** including those from immigrant and refugee backgrounds, to better reflect and serve the community in public health emergency work. (Emergency, 2024)
- **Support diverse leadership development & retention:** Create mentorship and sponsorship programs for public health leaders from historically marginalized and underrepresented backgrounds and populations. (Leadership-and-Organizational, 2024)

Leadership Development

This section includes recommendations for leadership development in the public health workforce.

1. **Develop sustainable public health leadership:** Invest in leadership development programs to prepare the next generation of public health leaders and build sustainable organizational succession opportunities. (Leadership-and-Organizational, 2024)
2. **Support diverse leadership development & retention:** Create mentorship and sponsorship programs for public health leaders from historically marginalized and underrepresented backgrounds and populations. (Leadership-and-Organizational, 2024)

Workforce Organizational Strategy

Introduction: This section includes recommendations for organizational and operational strategy for the public health workforce.

1. **Invest in workforce partnership development:** Create dedicated positions to build and maintain strong partnerships with community organizations. (Partnership, 2024)
2. **Enhance Statewide and Regional Coalitions to address regional specific issues:** such as lack of public transportation; community can't get to the places to access services; workforce isn't supported by regional infrastructure. Extreme weather events like smoke from wildfires and extreme heat are displacing public health workforce. (Emergency, 2024)
3. **Provide more frequent, consistent, and clear communications in technical assistance for Community-based Organizations.** Clear communications for CBOs reduce ambiguity and communication barriers. (Communication, 2024)
4. **Create a collaboration space for sharing tools that reduce workforce recruitment and retention barriers across the system:** create shared templates, language, and desired attributes for positions, hiring processes, interview questions, etc. (PolicyPlanning, 2024)
5. **Build workforce partnerships across the system to strategize on diversifying the public health workforce at a system level. (HealthEquity, 2024) (Partnership, 2024)**
6. **Invest in communication and promotion strategies with academic partners to introduce and invite students into the public health field.** This includes expanding their understanding of public health beyond clinical public health positions. (Communication, 2024)

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