

PHEP Notice of Funding Opportunity: Workforce Development Supplemental Guidance and Resources

February 2024

Purpose

The purpose of this guidance is to provide details on how recipients can achieve the PHEP NOFO requirements and build workforce capacity to meet jurisdictional surge management needs and improve staff recruitment, retention, resilience, and mental health. These requirements are outlined in the workforce (WKF) activities of the [2024-2028 PHEP NOFO](#). Improving public health workforce capacity will advance surge management and response capability by increasing the number of response-ready staff available to support public health responses.

Programmatic Requirements

WKF-A Develop plans, processes, and procedures to hire, recruit, train, and retain a highly qualified and diverse workforce.

Recommendations for consideration:

- Consider filling emergency staffing requirements by identifying a pool of health department retirees with emergency preparedness and response expertise willing to assist the health department for a limited time during a response.
- Expedite the hiring process by not requiring qualified former or retired health department personnel to complete all application paperwork and interviews.
- Consider waiving state, tribal, local, and territorial personnel qualifications, and certification processes for emergency temporary appointments.
- Engage key staff in human resources, legal, procurement, information technology, communications, and financial management roles in discussions about available authorities and procurement options to augment staffing.
- Establish a work group to include internal and external partners for updating staffing and emergency staffing plans. This work group can help develop surge capacity plans to support emergency incidents.
- Engage with local university and college programs to use nursing, medical, public health, communications, and counseling/psychology students to support emergency responses. Consider having exercise participation added to the university and college curriculums.
- Include surge staff and volunteers in exercises so they gain valuable response experience.
- Consult with various federal programs about ability to use their preparedness field assignees to support response staffing needs. Consider both their availability for general response support and response roles involving their assigned program areas, such as maternal and child health, tuberculosis, sexually transmitted diseases, and immunizations.
- Consult with partner organizations, such as Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL), Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE), National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), and CDC Foundation, about their support of surge staffing needs for response. Develop administrative procedures to expedite use of this resource.
- Consider short-term internships, full-time fellowships, work experience opportunities, and working with national volunteer organizations.



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WKF-B Provide guidance, direction, and training to maintain a ready responder workforce across the entire health department.

Recommendations for consideration:

- Engage with local university and college programs to incorporate emergency management and public health training into the curriculum.
- Include surge staff and volunteers in exercises to gain valuable response experience.
- Include surge staff in response training and encourage staff to complete FEMA independent study courses: [Emergency Management Institute - Independent Study \(IS\) | Course List \(fema.gov\)](#)

WKF-C Actively engage in at least one community of practice that identifies problems, solutions, and best practices in workforce recruitment, hiring, training, retention, or resiliency.

Examples of communities of practice include:

NACCHO

- [NACCHO Virtual Communities](#) is a dynamic forum that allows public health communities to connect with one another, exchange ideas or best practices, and foster the NACCHO community.

APHL

- [colLABorate](#) is an online community of practice hub to engage members and partners.
 - 4,000 unique participants across these communities of practice.
 - Designed for peer-to-peer discussion and resource sharing, connecting member laboratory representatives and APHL staff.
- [APHL Lab Transitions Toolkit](#): This toolkit provides resources for both the laboratory leaders who are recruiting, hiring, and onboarding a new director and for other leaders and laboratory directors on keeping the workforce transitions smooth.
 - Audience: incoming laboratory directors, laboratory leadership, state health officials, or deputies



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Suggested Resources

Title	Description	Link/Location
Research the University of Minnesota: The Consortium for Workforce Research in Public Health (CWORPH)		www.sph.umn.edu/research/centers/cphs/cworph/
NACCHO University -- Building Workforce Resilience through the Practice of Psychological First Aid: A Course for Leaders and Teams	This course offers you the opportunity to consider and pursue strategies for supporting colleagues and team members during a disaster response as stress levels increase for workers and the demands on your organization become more urgent. The goal of this course is to help individuals you work with cope with stress at manageable levels making it possible for them to effectively function and build resilience with each successive event they encounter. Time: 90-120 minutes	www.pathlms.com/naccho/courses/46371
Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) – Managing for Employee Retention	This article provides information on how to manage retention, key retention strategies, and best practice implementation.	www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools
American Psychiatric Association Foundation/Center for Workplace Mental Health – Resilience: A strong Workforce Needs It	Resilience is important for those who wish to avoid stress and burnout.	https://workplacementalhealth.org/mental-health-topics/resilience
International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM)		www.iaem.org/
American Association of Critical-Care Nurses		www.aacn.org/
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO)		www.astho.org/
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE)		www.cste.org/
National Public Health Information Coalition (NPHIC)		www.nphic.org/
Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL)	This toolkit is designed to capture and retain explicit and tacit knowledge	APHL-Knowledge-Retention-Toolkit.xlsx



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Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL)	APHL members have developed resources, tools, and examples to assist laboratories in their efforts to implement behavior-based laboratory competencies and incorporate them into their workplace processes.	Competencies Toolbox (aphl.org)
Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL)	New laboratory employees can use this workbook to explore the most critical competencies required for a successful public health laboratory career as part of their on-boarding process.	Orientation Guide for New Laboratory Employees: An Employee On-boarding Tool

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