

2021 QUALITATIVE TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

Background

The Region V Public Health Training Center is interested in and committed to meeting the training needs of the public health workforce. To help us do this, we develop and implement annual training needs assessments (TNAs) to inform the services we provide.

Purpose

The 2021 TNA aims were two-fold: 1) to reflect on key training gaps identified in the 2020 assessment, and 2) to learn more about emerging needs, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods

In March-May 2021, we held interviews with 23 representatives from 17 public health departments, associations, agencies, and organizations from our region. The subject population included state health department representatives, State Associations of County & City Health Officials (SACCHOs) representatives, state affiliate Public Health Association (PHA) representatives, and tribal health organization representatives. See table for the breakdown of participant type by geographical jurisdiction.

Table 1. Respondent breakdown of participant type by geographical jurisdiction.

Participant Type	State						Regional
	IL	IN	MI	MN	OH	WI	
State Health Department	0	0	2	3	2	1	0
SACCHO/PHA	3	2	2	0	3	1	0
Tribal Health Agency/Organization	0	0	1	1	0	1*	1

*Also serves IL, MI, MN.

Main Themes

A Wisconsin participant described many emergent themes that were common among participants in this assessment:

“How are we setting the stage for [public health professionals], not just our incoming folks? That's really important for the development of our next leaders in terms of, sort of the strategic thinking leadership. How do we engage partners? ... How do we tell the story of public health? How do we advance and advocate for this profession to have the infrastructure and support that it needs?”



Findings and Implications

Findings were grouped into five key areas:

1. Training Gaps from 2020 TNA

In the 2020 TNA, the greatest training needs were identified as resource management; change management; and justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI). The majority of participants in the present assessment indicated that skill development is still needed in these three strategic skill domains.

2. COVID-19 Challenges and Needs

Survey respondents overwhelmingly indicated that COVID-19 affected the practices of the workforces they serve in these three areas: organizational/operations changes, engaging with the community, and addressing training needs.

3. General Skill and Training Needs

Participants indicated a need for more training support in recruitment, retention, and professional development of the public health workforce. Insufficient staffing was a large issue, and recruitment of a diverse workforce competent in both technical and soft skills was also a challenge.

4. Difference in Needs by Audience Type

Particular needs were identified for different audience groups. **Mid-level managers** identified training needs around resource management and change management. **Small local health departments** indicated a need for tailored training and support. **Accredited/accreditation-seeking agencies** identified training needs around performance management support, staffing, peer-to-peer learning, and reaccreditation.

5. Student Development

The most frequently mentioned areas in need of development for student success, as identified by survey participants, were: communicating effectively, demonstrating adaptive leadership skills, possessing some familiarity of the agency/organization, and demonstrating readiness.

Key Training Recommendations for the Public Health Workforce

Resource Management	Change Management	Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI)	Effective Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment/retention Securing/managing funding Management skills: how to manage remotely, and manage "the whole person, not just the person that comes to work", particularly for new mid-level managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adaptive leadership skills: understanding drivers of and leading through change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness level: JEDI basics and historical context Application level: putting JEDI principles into practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Among teams at all levels With the public and community partners Advocating for public health funding and support (public perception of the field's value)



Addressing Public Health Training Needs

The 2021 TNA findings demonstrate the breadth and depth of training and workforce gaps across the field of public health practice. Below are some of the trainings currently offered by the Region V Public Health Training Center aimed at addressing training needs that fall under the top themes identified above.

Resource Management

- [Key Aspects of Financial Management](#)
- [Utilizing Financial Health Indicators for Informed Decision Making](#)
- [Community-Based Participatory Research: A Partnership Approach for Public Health](#)
- [How to Maintain Your CHES/MCHES Credential 2020](#)
- [The Importance of Resiliency & Self Care in Public Health, Part 2 Leaders](#)

Change Management

- [Managing Change: The Essential Leadership Skill](#)
- [Leadership and Whole-Systems Change](#)
- [Organizational Sustainability in Changing Times Series, Part 1 - Succession Planning](#)
- [Organizational Sustainability in Changing Times Series, Part 2 - Mentoring Staff](#)

Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI)

- [Changing Internal Practices to Advance Health Equity](#)
- [Population Health and Health Equity](#)
- [Advancing Health Equity Through Power Building and Narrative Change](#)
- [Enhancing the Diversity of the Public Health Workforce](#)
- [Implicit Bias: Using Brain Science to Understand, Recognize, and Counter It](#)
- [LGBTQ+ Cultural Humility Training for Health Center Staff](#)
- [Rural LGBTQ+ Populations: Creating Welcoming and Inclusive Health Care Experiences](#)
- [OPHA Public Policy Institute Series: Declaration of Racism as a Public Health Crisis and Health Equity Impact Assessments](#)

Effective Communication

- [Effective Communications](#)
- [Cooperative Communication](#)
- [Advocacy Communications for Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change](#)
- [PH 3.0/Accreditation #2 - Community Engagement](#)
- [Effective COVID-19 Vaccine Communication Series: Interpersonal- and Community-Level Approaches](#)