



Strategies for Enhancing Governmental Public Health Workforce Well-Being and Retention Recommendation to Action Worksheet

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Recommendation to Action Worksheet

This worksheet helps identify needs and gaps related to workforce well-being and retention at public health agencies and sparking action to address these areas. It is a companion piece to ASTHO's technical package "[Strategies for Enhancing Governmental Public Health Workforce Well-Being and Retention](#)," which recommends focusing on four main areas for governmental public health:

- Effective and Skilled Managers
- Positive Workplace Culture and Connection
- Supported and Fairly Compensated Workforce
- Adequate Staffing to Advance Workforce Priorities and Effectively Manage Workload

This worksheet can be used in a variety of settings. Some examples include conducting a landscape assessment of current workforce well-being efforts taking place, setting goals for workforce well-being, assessments for workforce development plans, and strengthening partnerships to break down agency silos. This worksheet can be completed individually, but the best practice is to work in groups that include representation from several departments within the agency.

Instructions:

Whether completing individually or as a group, become familiar with the four recommendations from ASTHO's Workforce Technical Package on the graphic below. Then, focus on one of the four areas at a time to assess existing assets and successful practices, gaps and needs, and ideas for improvement. This baseline assessment will help gauge organizational strengths and opportunities for growth.

1.

Existing Assets and Practices includes current programs, policies, or practices that support workforce well-being and engagement. To the extent possible, conduct an inventory to identify practices that might exist within smaller teams that could be recognized and scaled to agency level.

2.

Gaps and Needs provides an honest assessment of each recommendation within the technical package. Specific focus on the governmental agency public health workforce well-being is often a newer priority, so these gaps should be seen as opportunities rather than deficiencies. Refer to any data (PH WINS, employee engagement surveys, exit/stay interview data, employee focus groups, or other informal means of soliciting feedback) to inform this section.

3.

Ideas for Improvement and Implementation considers opportunities to address specific agency culture and well-being needs. Ensure that the voices of traditionally underrepresented groups are heard. Collecting ideas can take place via leadership-initiated staff listening sessions, examples from other industries, examples from other public health agencies, or developed through technical assistance with ASTHO.

4.

Actions and Next Steps addresses how to operationalize and implement ideas. Identify champions that will help practice, model, and communicate about planned changes. Also, consider how agency executive leadership will be engaged and participate in implementation of each policy or practice.

Area 1: Effective and Skilled Managers

- Upon reviewing PH WINS data or other staff surveys that collect feedback, what surprises you about the responses from supervisors/management? What does not surprise you?
- How would you describe the agency’s readiness, commitment, and implementation of [trauma-informed supervision](#)?
- What is the biggest training need for leadership and supervisory skills at your agency?
- How are middle and first-line managers supported by their supervisors in modeling trauma-informed or related supportive leadership practices?
- Are supervisors at all levels in the agency provided with training and practice opportunities to address cultural humility, racial equity, inclusion and belonging?



Existing Assets and Practices:



Needs/gaps:



Ideas for improvement/
implementation:



Action/next steps:

Area 2: Positive Workplace Culture and Connection

- How does your agency utilize working groups or plans to focus on workplace culture and connection? How are these groups or plans referenced in policy development for the agency?
- What are some challenges your agency encounters in fostering [meaningful connections](#) within teams? What are some ideas or actions to take when facing these challenges?
- How does your agency create a space for difficult conversations to address work situations that may impact workforce well-being?
- How does your agency recognize staff success? How are staff preferences considered in formal staff recognition practices?
- How does your agency foster understanding and belonging across cultures and identities in its workplace connections?



Existing Assets and Practices:



Needs/gaps:



**Ideas for improvement/
implementation:**



Action/next steps:

Area 3: Supported and Fairly Compensated Workforce

- Describe the partnership between agency leaders and human resources in your organization. How can this partnership be strengthened in efforts to promote fair and equitable classifications, benefits offered, and discretionary pay mechanisms?
- Who is the contact person or team that connects staff to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) in your agency? Describe the strategies that are used to promote and encourage staff to utilize the offerings of the EAP.
- Does your agency offer tuition assistance or loan repayment programs? Are there other monetary and non-monetary (e.g. mentoring) offerings that could improve retention rates of staff?
- What flexible working arrangements are available to staff (e.g. telework, alternate work schedules)?
- Does your agency have a formalized onboarding program to support new staff? If so, how long is the employee supported through onboarding?
- Has your agency conducted a pay analysis to identify possible pay equity issues (including by location or demographic factors)?



Existing Assets and Practices:



Needs/gaps:



**Ideas for improvement/
implementation:**



Action/next steps:

Area 4: Adequate Staffing to Advance Workforce Priorities and Effectively Manage Workload

- How would you describe the recruitment and hiring practices at your agency? Are there specific roadblocks that delay the timeline of job posting to job hiring?
- What are the main contributors to unmanageable workloads in your organization? What are some of the short-term, mid-term, and long-term steps that leadership can take to address the contributors?
- Is there a uniform succession planning process or template that your agency uses? What is the best way for your agency to ensure seamless transitions when people depart from their roles? How are exit interviews conducted and used to inform agency improvement?
- Is your agency's workforce staff supported and resourced to focus on workforce well-being priorities (including the ones identified and planned in this assessment process)?



Existing Assets and Practices:



Needs/gaps:



**Ideas for improvement/
implementation:**



Action/next steps:

Next Steps

This self-assessment is the first step towards creating or strengthening an agency's efforts to support a positive workplace culture, engagement, and well-being. Completing the assessment should create a starting point to address specific needs with plans to support ongoing implementation efforts. Ongoing challenges will include maintaining focus, prioritizing identified efforts, and supporting staff agencywide to understand and implement planned initiatives. As highlighted above, innovative approaches to supporting the governmental public health workforce require change. In order to build lasting change and trust, agencies will be required to commit to consistency, prioritizing well-being efforts, equitable workforce policies, and an ongoing dialogue with staff. This takes time, and staff will be observing how committed the agency is to prioritizing well-being. The goal is to strengthen the agency by better retaining and recruiting talent to advance the agency's mission more effectively.

ASTHO's workforce team is prepared to provide on-demand technical assistance (TA) to support your individual agency needs throughout planning and implementation of your identified actions. This TA can take the form of support calls, information requests, or on-site planning and facilitation for strategic planning.

Additional Resources

- The Management Center offers resources specific to SMARTIE goals
 - [From SMART to SMARTIE: How to Embed Inclusion and Equity in Your Goals](#)
 - [The Management Center SMARTIE Goals Worksheet](#)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention resources for developing SMARTIE objectives with additional resources.
 - [CDC Writing Effective \(SMARTIE\) Objectives](#)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention resource for inclusive language.
 - [CDC Health Equity Guiding Principles for Inclusive Communication](#)
- Minnesota Department of Health resources for authentic community engagement.
 - [MN Department of Health: Principles of Authentic Engagement](#)