

POST-PANDEMIC POSSIBILITIES:



TRANSFORMING IOWA'S PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE

Global Context; Local Impacts

The many challenges currently facing the public health sector should not overshadow the strengths and opportunities that are also present. Laid bare by the global pandemic, the public now acknowledges and better understands what public health is and the critical importance of this work.

Further, the pandemic created the opportunity for public health practitioners to form creative partnerships with new populations and sectors. The public health workforce also remains extremely resilient, adaptive, generous, and passionate. These strengths provide the foundation for an evolution of Iowa's public health workforce and the next iteration of the public health practitioner.

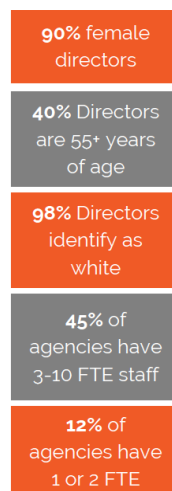
Iowa's Public Health Workforce Coalition is Born

In 2019, the Iowa Public Health Association (IPHA) and the [Midwestern Public Health Training Center \(MPHTC\)](#) partnered to identify the critical needs of the public health workforce and develop a coalition to support Iowa's public health workforce through this time of recovery and transition.

Through two assessments, a survey, and focus groups in 2019-2020, they measured workforce interests, needs, barriers, and a

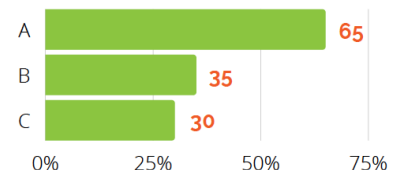
Data from IDPH FY20 Local Public Health Systems Survey

WHO: WORKFORCE



WHERE: STRUCTURE

Local Boards of Health decide if public health services will be offered by county employees or if they will contract with other health organizations to provide services on their behalf.



- A: Board of Health directly employs staff (county-based)
- B: Board of Health contracts staff (health services-based)
- C: Environmental health and public health within same table of organization

Source: IDPH, 2021

vision for the future state of Iowa's public health workforce. The results were shared in a report, "[2021 Public Health Workforce Development in Iowa](#)," released in Spring 2021.

One of the resounding findings of this work was the need for a coalition dedicated to fostering a skilled, nimble, responsive, diverse, and resilient public health workforce across Iowa.

Coalition Structure and Activities

The previous work of IPHA and MPHTC engaged a small group of dedicated public health practitioners, academics, researchers, and stakeholders. This Core Group informed the design of the assessments, survey, and focus groups and the resulting report, "[2021 Public Health Workforce Development in Iowa](#)."

The Core Group reconvened in February 2022 to start the process of organizing a strong and diverse coalition and create an actionable plan for local public health to

strengthen their workforce. In addition to meeting monthly, the Core Group split into three small work groups to focus on key topic areas: ***Vision, Capacities, and Partnerships***.

Each work group and the Core Group are meeting through 2022. Their work will culminate in the Fall of 2022 with a convening of statewide coalition partners and a plan that public health stakeholders can use to advocate for strengthening the public health workforce in their communities.

Vision Work Group:

Creating a Relatable & Actionable Vision for our Public Health Workforce

This group is focused on creating a vision for the public health workforce that is easily digestible and understandable by public health stakeholders, decision makers, and Iowans.

Capacities Work Group:

Ensuring a Strong Public Health Workforce and System

This small group is working on the capacities the public health system needs to focus on to have a strong public health workforce. Examples of capacities that have been identified are: succession planning; mental health and burnout; leadership development; and training on key topics.

Partnerships Work Group:

Strengthening Public Health through Non-Traditional Partnerships

This group is focused on expanding public health partnerships that promote change and improve health outcomes. In addition to identifying sectors that need to be engaged, they are also creating tools to help local public health practitioners identify and create effective partnerships in their communities.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

The feedback of Iowa Public Health Association members is vital. There are several ways for you to share your input. Watch for announcements from IPHA about upcoming:

- surveys
- feedback opportunities
- town hall forums

To learn more about this work or get involved, please contact Sharon Miller, IPHA Director of Programs, sharon@iowapha.org.