

# The Colorado Blueprint for Innovative Public Health Workforce Development

Developed by Trailhead Institute and partners of the Colorado Public Health Workforce Collaborative.

The purpose of **RESTORE: The Colorado Blueprint for Innovative Public Health Workforce Development**, and the aim of the Colorado Public Health Workforce Collaborative (CPHWC), is to build and sustain a diverse public health workforce that reflects all communities served in Colorado.

## Addressing a National Need to Restore the Public Health Workforce



80%



Public health financial cuts due to 2008 recession

Operational & resource gaps upon start of COVID-19 pandemic

Mass exit of the public health workforce from the top down

Significant loss of institutional and practical knowledge

An estimated 80% increase in the public health workforce is needed

- Public health experienced financial cuts due to the 2008 recession, and resources were not fully restored.
- Despite chronic underfunding, the already stretched public health workforce was forced to quickly evolve to meet the needs of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- According to the **2021 Public Health Workforce Interest and Needs Survey (PH WINS)** completed by the de Beaumont Foundation, nearly a third of the governmental public health workforce plans to leave their organizations in the next year.
- To respond to current and future public health emergencies and concerns, Colorado must have a resilient, skilled, and sustained public health workforce.
- In addition to rebuilding and retaining the public health workforce, a critical need exists to preserve the emergency response, communications, and relationship-building capacities honed during the pandemic while re-balancing the workforce to better support non-emergent core services.

# A New Action-Planning Tool for Building the Future of the Public Health Workforce

## Areas of Focus

With an intentional focus on actionability, the Blueprint offers a toolbox of strategies and a fillable action plan template for engaging in four focus areas of public health workforce development identified by CPHWC. These focus areas include:

1. **Recruit** and attract a diverse workforce into public health;
2. Develop **career and educational pathways** including training for those pursuing a career in public health;
3. **Retain** the public health workforce to keep talented employees, sustain positive outcomes, and foster a positive work atmosphere; and
4. Inform public health decisions with **workforce data** to identify trends, gaps, and development metrics.

Together, the strategies across each focus area aim to prepare an inclusive public health ecosystem that produces positive and equitable health outcomes for all people living in Colorado.

For each of the focus areas to be successful, they must each address the following six fundamental areas of support:

- ▶ 1. System alignment and coordination
- ▶ 2. Communication
- ▶ 3. Equity, diversity, and inclusion
- ▶ 4. Advocacy
- ▶ 5. Legislation
- ▶ 6. Funding

## Who the Blueprint Aims to Engage

Collaboration and partnership across sectors is imperative for public health workforce development. The Blueprint aims to engage public and environmental health employers, local public health agencies, institutes and community-based organizations, colleges and universities, policymakers, hospitals, healthcare providers, faith-based organizations, schools, civic leaders, and members of the larger public health community to transform Colorado's public health system, together.

## Taking Action with the Blueprint

Action planning for each of the Blueprint's focus areas is actively underway through corresponding workgroups facilitated through CPHWC. Employers are also encouraged to utilize the Blueprint and the fillable action planning template to create plans that meet the unique needs of the public health workforce in their community.

To learn more about the Blueprint, Trailhead Institute's Workforce Programs & Initiatives, or the Colorado Public Health Workforce Collaborative, visit [www.trailhead.institute/workforce-programs-initiatives](http://www.trailhead.institute/workforce-programs-initiatives) or contact [workforce@trailhead.institute](mailto:workforce@trailhead.institute).