# Public Health Turnover Threatens Community Health and Safety





#### THE PROBLEM

Nearly half of state and local public health employees left their organizations from 2017 to 2021, creating a critical lack of skills and experience across the nation.



of state and local public health employees

#### WHO LEFT



of employees with <5 years' experience at their organizations



of employees under age 35



#### WHY IT MATTERS

In addition to eroding services that improve chronic disease, injury prevention, maternal and child health, environmental health, and other needs, this loss of public health experience and institutional knowledge puts communities at significant risk for infectious diseases and other health crises.

#### SERVICES AT RISK



**Chronic disease** 



Injury prevention



Maternal and child health



**Environmental health** 

### IF TRENDS CONTINUE



nearly 130,000

staff will have left their jobs by 2025

This is on top of an existing shortage of 80,000 staff
needed to provide basic, necessary, public health services.



# SOLUTIONS

Public health departments need to dramatically improve their recruitment and retention.

## WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE



hiring systems.

Reform and streamline



people with bachelor's degrees.

Create **recruitment pathways** for



by extending loan forgiveness and service scholarships for public health practitioners.

Offer accessible and affordable

Reduce the burden of student debt



prepare early-career professionals for leadership roles.

Improve systems to monitor and

Create **mentorship programs** to



**supervisory training** tailored to government practice.



track **workforce trends** over time, to be able to anticipate and proactively mitigate future workforce crises.

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These data are taken from a study that compared intent to leave or retire in 2017 with actual separations from 2017 through 2021 among state and local public

members were present across the analytic sample of 96 agencies that participated in PH WINS 2017 and 2021. The PH WINS survey is conducted by the de Beaumont Foundation and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials.

health agency staff, using pandemic-era data from the Public Health Workforce Interests and Needs Survey fielded in 2017 and 2021. Overall, 150,352 staff

Leider JP, Castrucci BC, Robins M, Hare Bork R, Fraser MR, Savoia E, Piltch-Loeb R, Koh HK. (March 2023). The Exodus of