PH WINS
PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE INTERESTS AND NEEDS SURVEY

2021 SUMMARY REPORT:

State Health Agency Workforce

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BOLD SOLUTIONS FOR HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & CITATION

The Public Health Workforce Interests and Needs Survey (PH WINS) was developed by the de Beaumont Foundation and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials to understand the interests and needs of the state and local governmental public health workforce in the United States, and was fielded in 2014, 2017, and 2021. For more information, visit www.phwins.org.

Citation: de Beaumont Foundation and Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, *Public Health Workforce Interests and Needs Survey: 2021 Dashboard.* August 3, 2022.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report summarizes key findings about the **state health agency workforce (States)** from the 2021 Public Health Workforce Interests and Needs Survey (PH WINS).

- Key findings are organized by the main sections of PH WINS 2021:
  - Demographics
  - Workforce Characteristics
  - Staying & Leaving
  - Training Needs
  - Engagement & Satisfaction
  - Well-being

WHAT IS PH WINS?

Public Health Workforce Interests and Needs Survey

- PH WINS, a partnership between the de Beaumont Foundation and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), was fielded in 2014, 2017, and 2021.

- **First and only nationally representative source of data** about the governmental public health workforce.

- Supports the governmental public health workforce in **understanding their strengths and gaps** and informs future investments in workforce development efforts.

2021 METHODS

- PH WINS 2021 was distributed via web survey to **137,446 state and local governmental public health workers:**

  - 47 state health agencies

  - 29 big city health departments

  - 259 local health departments

- The PH WINS 2021 instrument had five domains: workplace environment, COVID-19 response, training needs, addressing public health issues, and demographics.

- One important change in 2021: non-permanent employees of centralized state health agencies were included in the nationally representative data set.

SETTING DEFINITIONS

- **States** setting includes respondents in a State Health Agency Central Office.

- **Big Cities** setting includes respondents in a health department that is a member of the Big Cities Health Coalition.

- **Other locals** setting includes respondents in local health departments with staff>25 and serving a population>25,000.

  - This includes local health departments in HHS Regions V and X as well as local health departments in other regions.

NATIONAL PARTICIPATION

- Nationally, the survey was completed by 44,732 individuals, for a **35% response rate.**

- Response rates varied by frame:

  - **States:** 34%

  - **Big Cities:** 28%

  - **Other locals:** 52%

    - **Locals in Regions V and X*:** 56%

*HHS Regions V and X participated in the PH WINS for All pilot programming, recruiting all locals in those regions, regardless of size, to participate in PH WINS.

NATIONAL PARTICIPATION MAP

- PARTICIPATING STATES
- LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS
- BCHC CITIES

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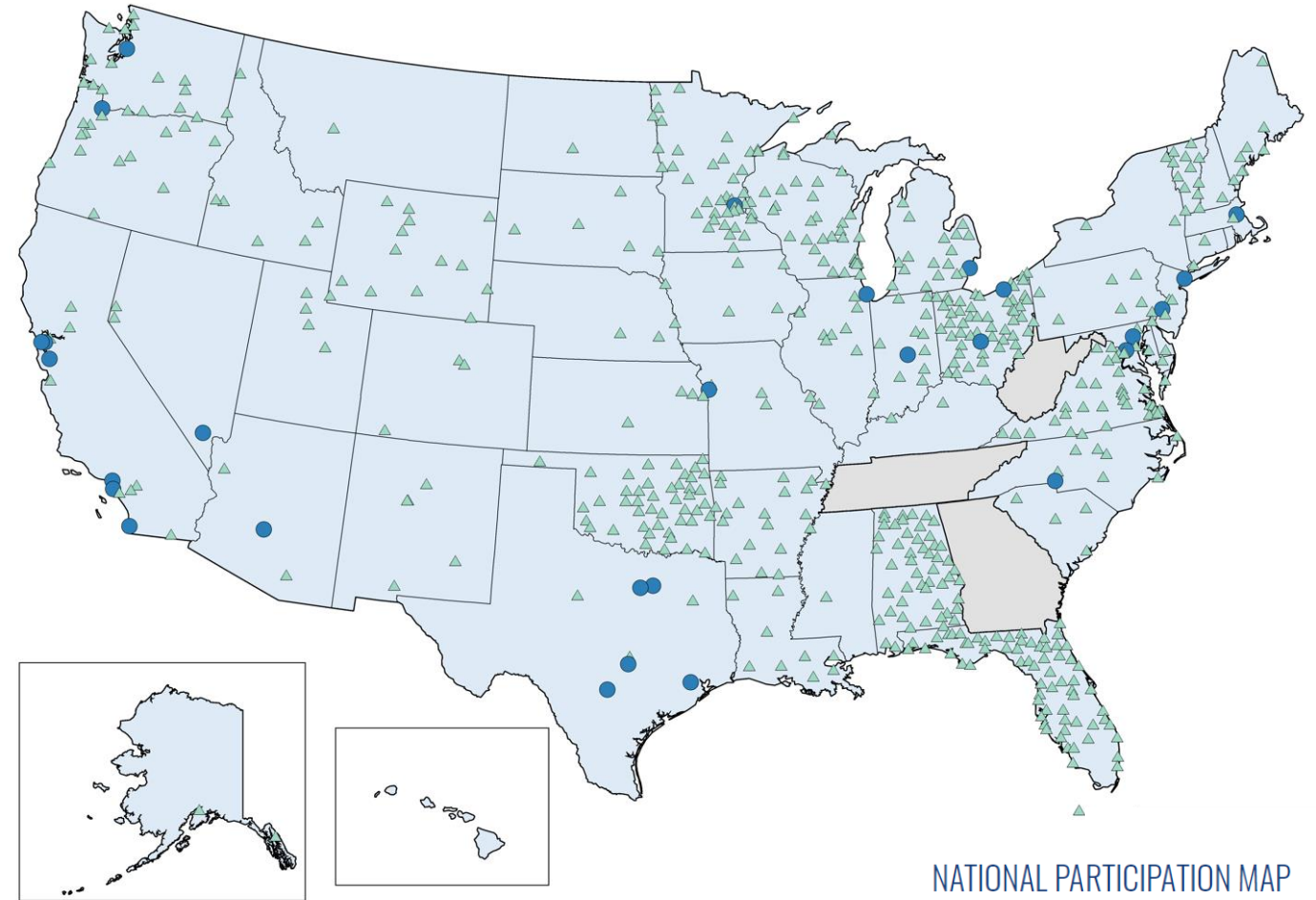
The state health agency workforce accounts for **29%** of the national governmental public health workforce.

NATIONAL PARTICIPATION MAP

- PARTICIPATING STATES
- △ LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS
- ● BCHC CITIES

2021 KEY FINDINGS: DEMOGRAPHICS

- PH WINS respondents self-reported demographic (personal) characteristics like their gender, race/ ethnicity, and age.

- Respondents also self-reported the highest level of education attained and whether they have a specialized degree in public health.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- **76%** of the states workforce **self-identifies as a woman.**

- **65%** of the states workforce **self-identifies as White.**

GENDER COLLAPSED
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

	Estimate	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
Woman	76%					
Not a woman	24%					
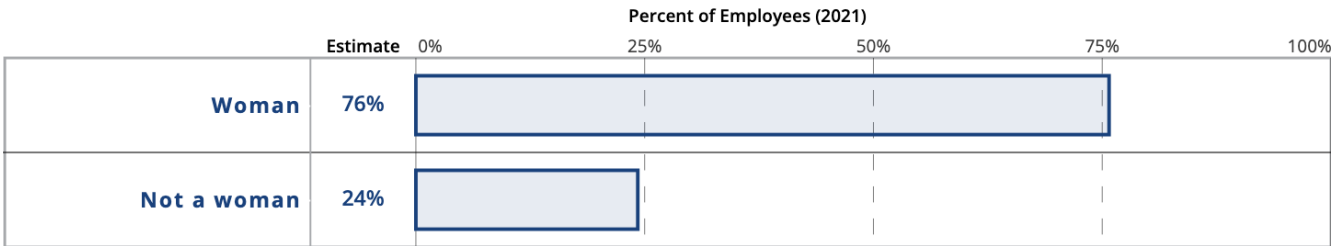
RACE & ETHNICITY COLLAPSED
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

	Estimate	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
BIPOC	35%					
White	65%					
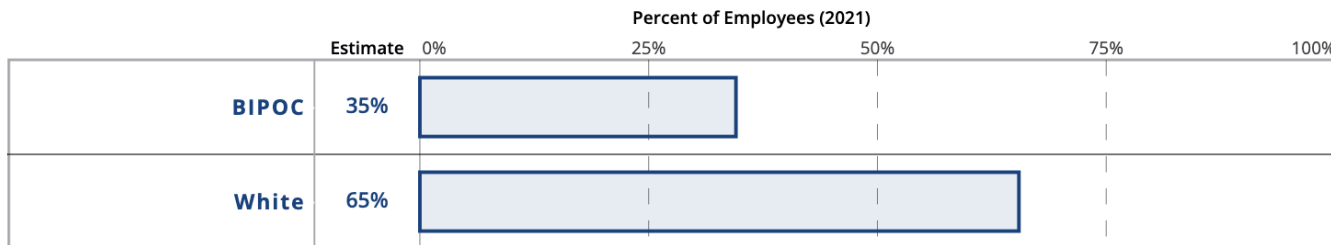
DEMOGRAPHICS

- **Nearly half** of the states workforce is between the **ages of 31 and 50 years.**

AGE COLLAPSED
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

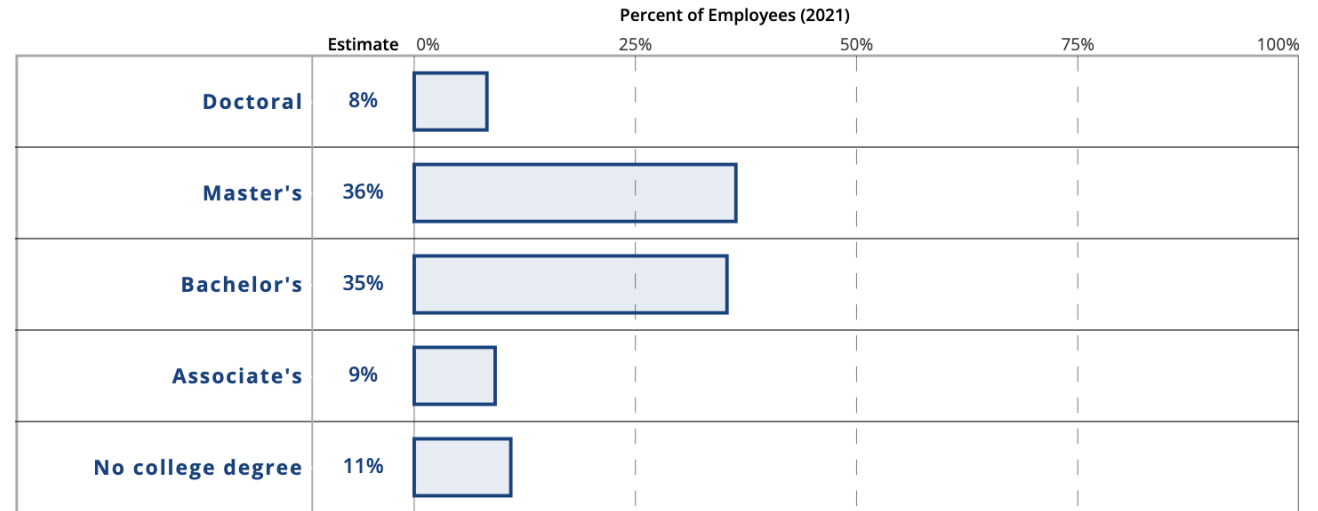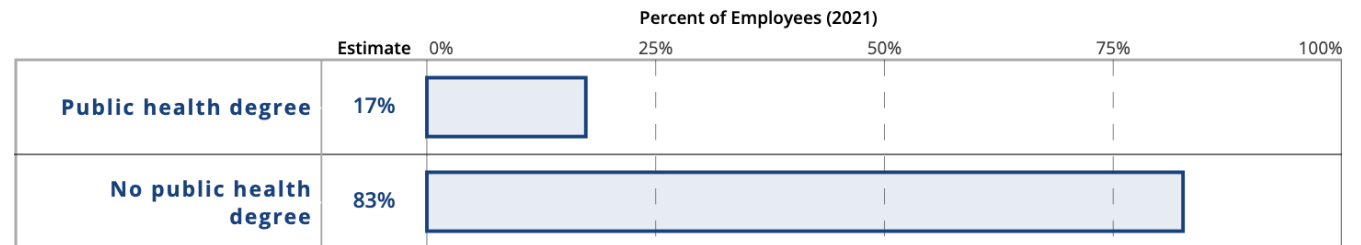|	Estimate	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
<31 years of age	11%					
31-50 years of age	49%					
51+ years of age	40%					
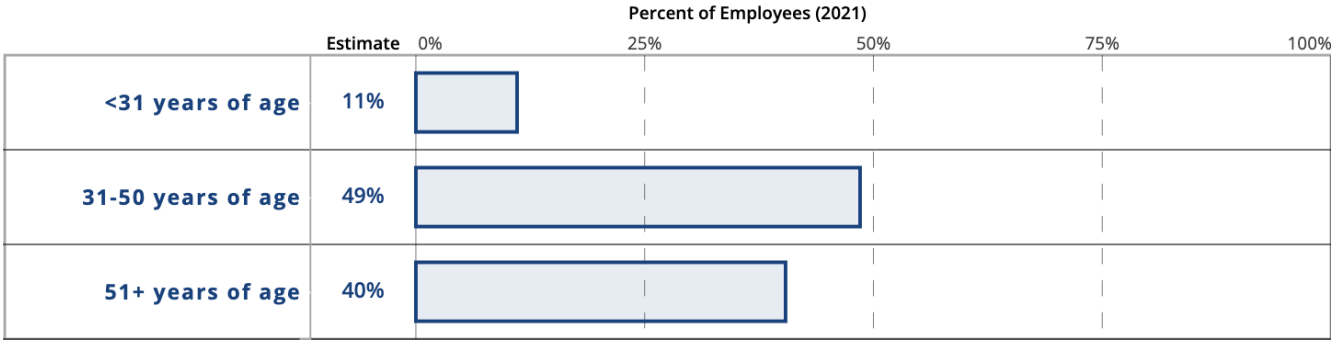
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

- **44%** of the states workforce **has an advanced degree.**

  - 36% has a Master's degree.

  - 8% has a Doctoral degree.

- **17%** has a specialized **degree in public health.**

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

	Estimate	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
Doctoral	8%					
Master's	36%					
Bachelor's	35%					
Associate's	9%					
No college degree	11%					

PUBLIC HEALTH TRAINING
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

	Estimate	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
Public health degree	17%					
No public health degree	83%					

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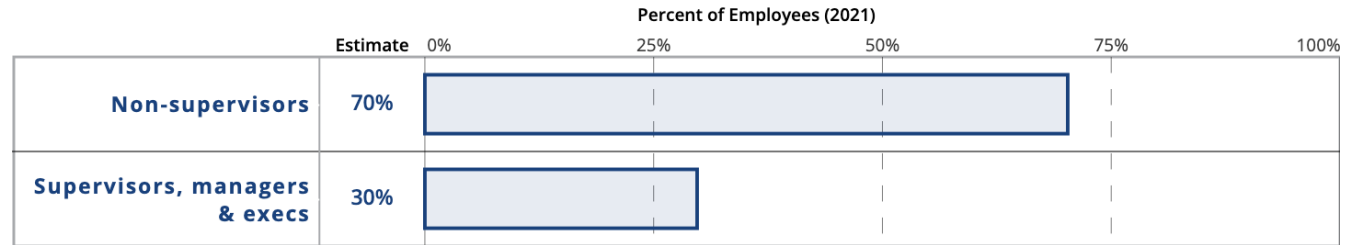
2021 KEY FINDINGS: WORKFORCE CHARACTERISTICS

- PH WINS respondents were asked a series of questions related specifically to their job and the work they do, including:

  - Supervisory status

  - Job role

  - Tenure in public health overall, at their agency, and in their current job.

- Respondents also reported full-time/part-time status and salary information.
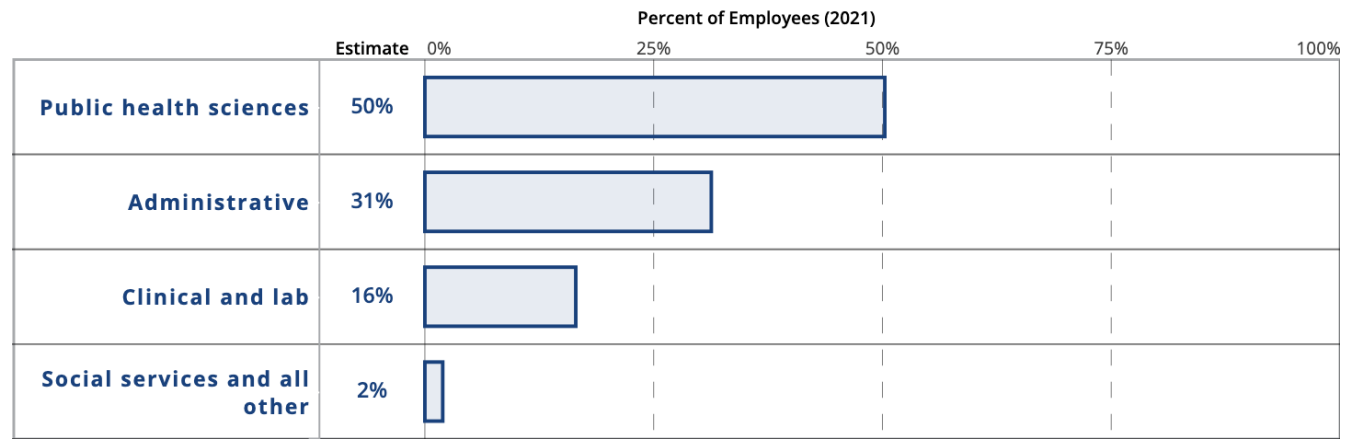
SUPERVISORY STATUS/JOB ROLE

- **70%** of state staff work in a **non-supervisory role**.

- **50%** of staff worked in a **public health sciences job role**, which includes program staff, epidemiologists, and contact tracers, among others.

SUPERVISORY STATUS COLLAPSED
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

	Estimate	Percent of Employees (2021)
Non-supervisors	70%	
Supervisors, managers & execs	30%	

JOB CLASSIFICATION
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

	Estimate	Percent of Employees (2021)
Public health sciences	50%	
Administrative	31%	
Clinical and lab	16%	
Social services and all other	2%	

PROGRAM AREA

- More than half of the state workforce is distributed across **three primary program areas**:

  - **Organizational Competencies,** including administrative support, workforce development, and other business services.

  - **Communicable Disease**

  - **Other Health Care**, including certain clinical services, immunizations, mental, oral, and school health, and substance misuse.

PROGRAM AREA
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

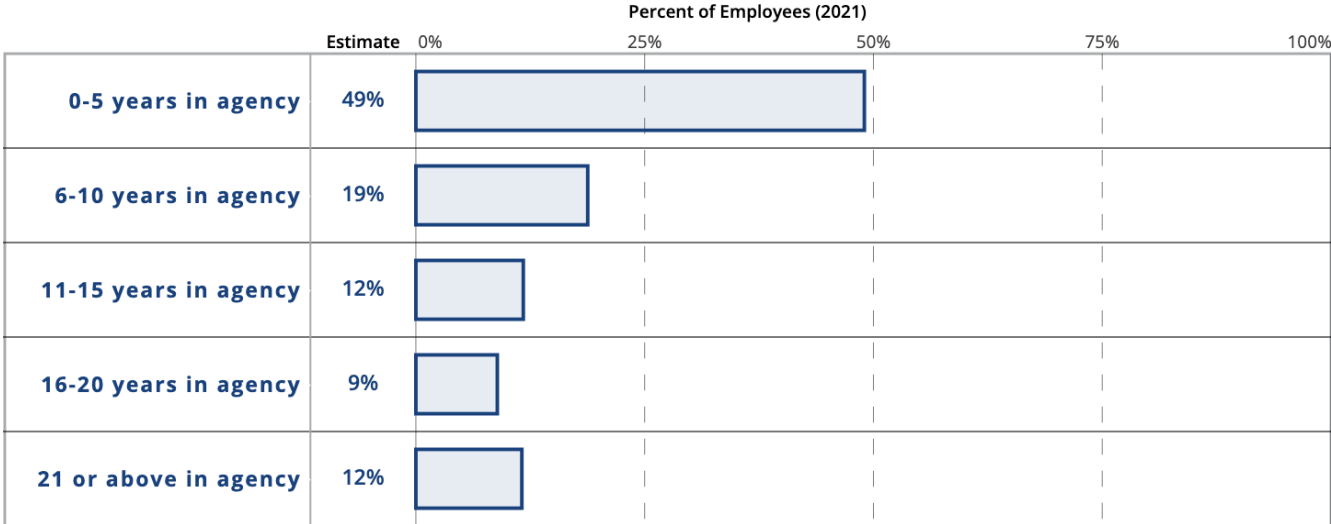| Program Area	Estimate
Organizational competencies	21%
Communicable disease	19%
Other health care	17%
Assessment	13%
Maternal and child health	10%
Environmental health	8%
Chronic disease & injury	6%
Other	4%
All hazards	2%
Communications	1%
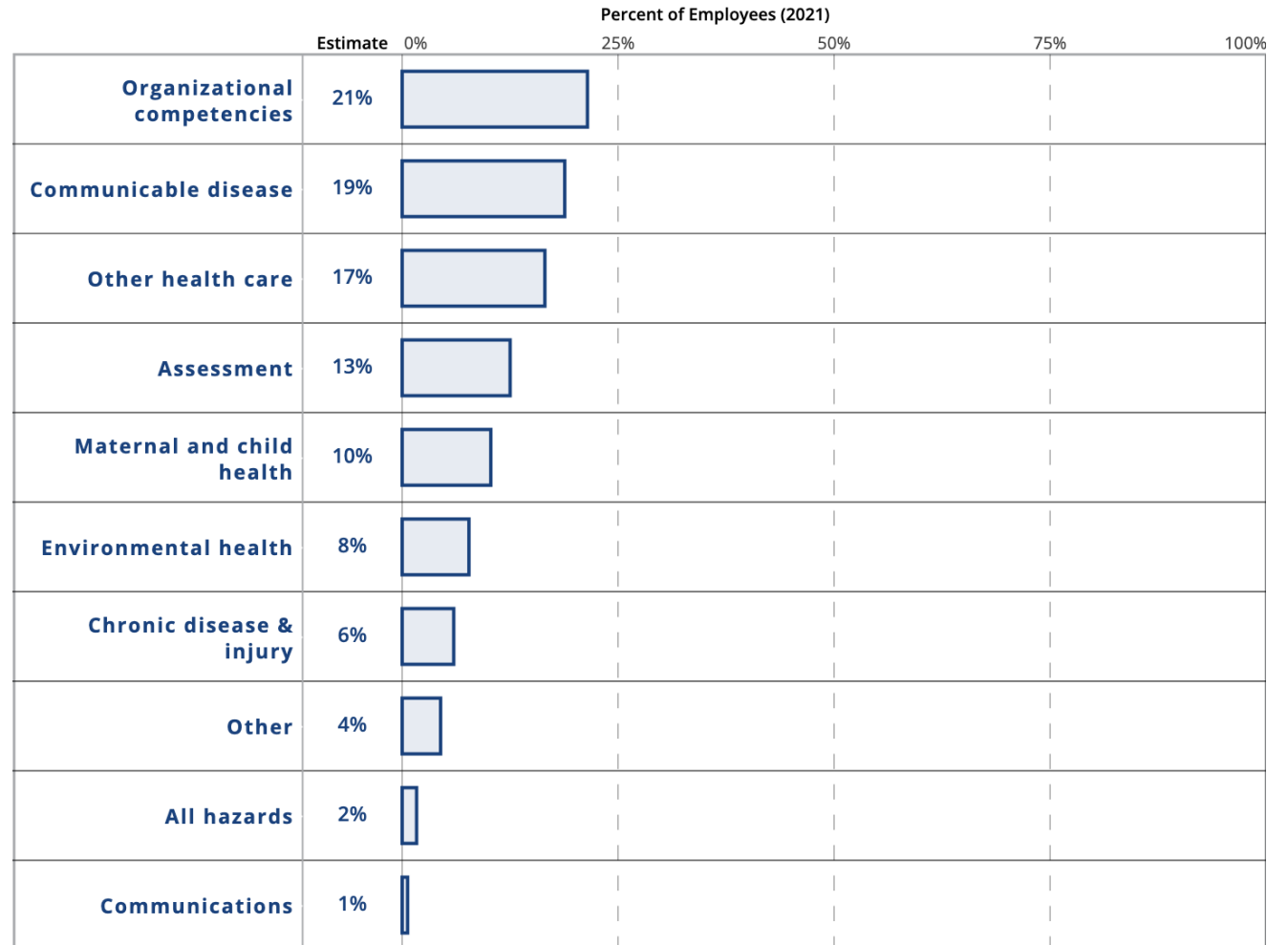
TENURE AT AGENCY

- **Nearly half of the states workforce** in 2021 had served at their agency **for 5 years or less.**

- 12% had served 21 or more years.

AGENCY TENURE
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

	Estimate	0% — 100%
0-5 years in agency	49%	
6-10 years in agency	19%	
11-15 years in agency	12%	
16-20 years in agency	9%	
21 or above in agency	12%	

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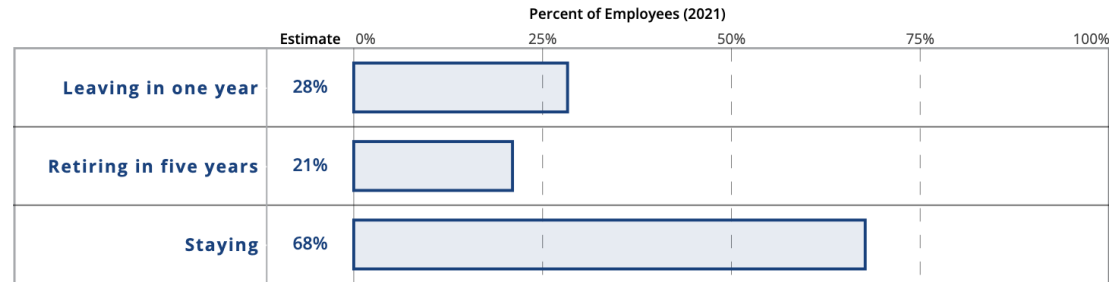BOLD SOLUTIONS FOR HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES.
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2021 KEY FINDINGS: STAYING & LEAVING

- PH WINS respondents were asked a series of questions related to their intent to leave or stay at their agency and whether the COVID-19 pandemic affected their decision.

- Respondents were also asked to select reasons why they intend to stay or leave.
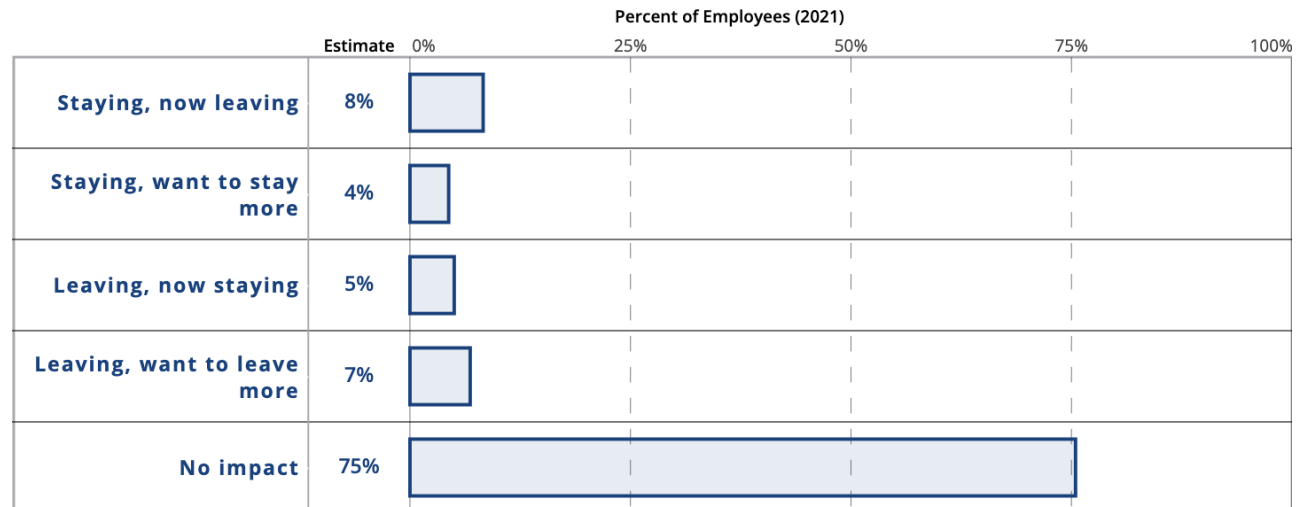
INTENT TO LEAVE/STAY

- **28%** of state employees **are considering leaving** their organization within the next year.

- 25% reported that the **COVID-19 pandemic impacted their decision** to stay or leave.

  - Among those who intend to leave, 36% said the pandemic impacted their decision (*data not shown*).

INTENT TO LEAVE
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

	Estimate	0% — 25% — 50% — 75% — 100%
Leaving in one year	28%	
Retiring in five years	21%	
Staying	68%	

IMPACT OF COVID ON STAYING & LEAVING
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

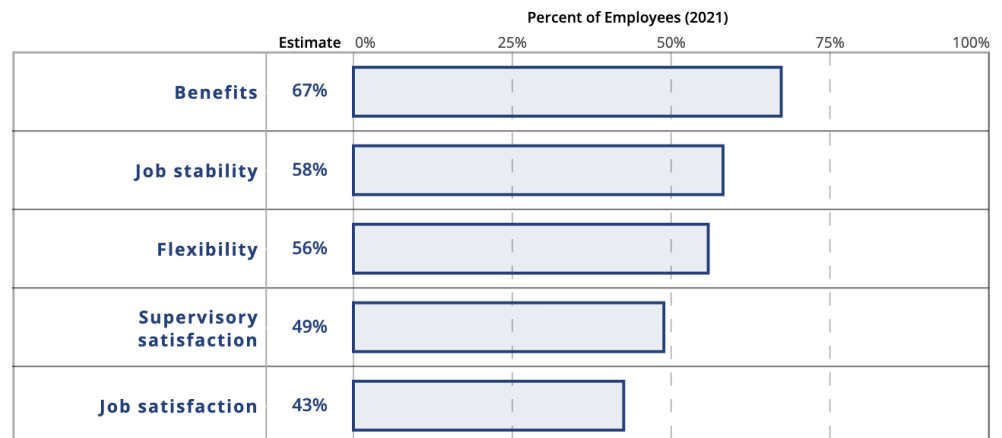|	Estimate	0% — 25% — 50% — 75% — 100%
Staying, now leaving	8%	
Staying, want to stay more	4%	
Leaving, now staying	5%	
Leaving, want to leave more	7%	
No impact	75%	

REASONS FOR LEAVING/STAYING

- Understanding employees' reasons for leaving is critical for improving recruitment and retention.

- **Top reasons for leaving** among state staff who intend to leave include:

  - **Work overload/burnout** (reported by 41%)

  - **Stress** (reported by 35%).

REASONS FOR LEAVING
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

	Estimate	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
Pay	49%					
Lack of advancement opportunities	42%					
Work overload/burnout	41%					
Organizational culture	40%					
Stress	35%					
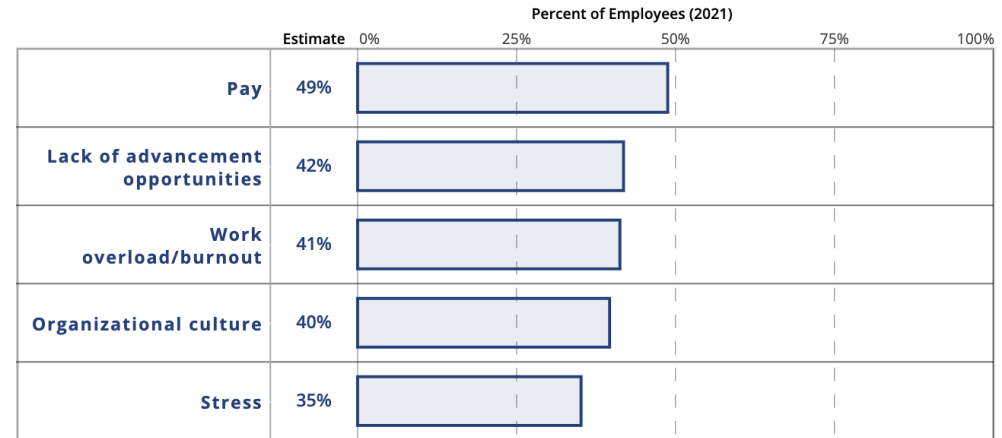
REASONS FOR STAYING
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

|	Estimate	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
Benefits	67%					
Job stability	58%					
Flexibility	56%					
Supervisory satisfaction	49%					
Job satisfaction	43%					

2021 KEY FINDINGS: TRAINING NEEDS

- PH WINS respondents were asked to rate the day-to-day importance of and their own proficiency with 25-26 skill items, tailored for their supervisory level.

- Skills were collapsed into 10 strategic skill categories.

- A **training need** is a skill item reported as having **high importance, but low proficiency**.

- Identifying training needs can help support strategies to produce T-employees, or those who have depth in technical skills and breadth in strategic skills.

FIGURE 2.

The Public Health T: Complementing Specialized Skills with a Cohesive Cross-Cutting Skill Framework

Note: T-shaped employees have depth in specialized skills related to a specific program or topic area (e.g., communicable disease control, environmental public health, etc.) and breadth in cross-cutting skills that include the Strategic Skills and Core Competencies.
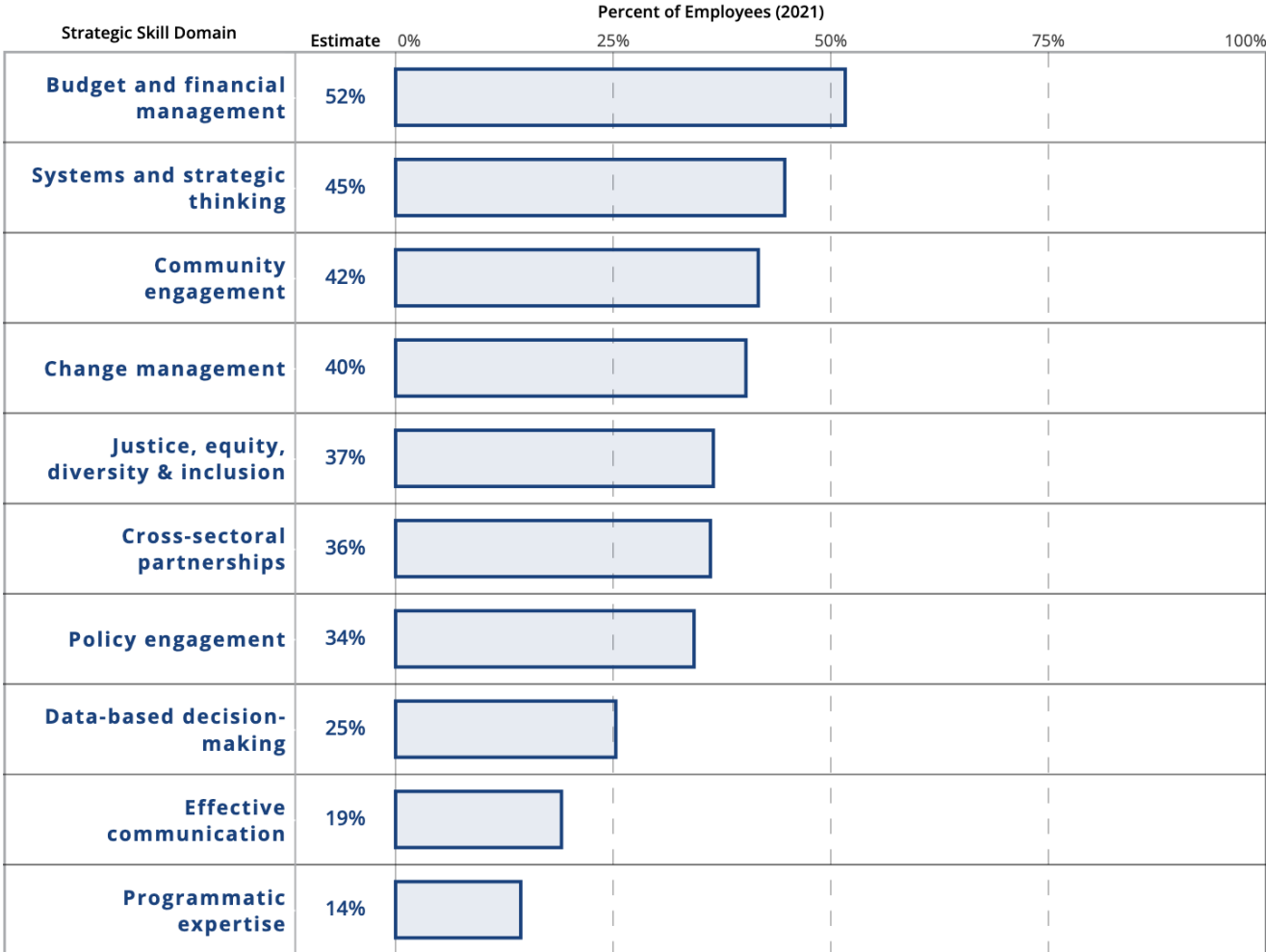
STRATEGIC SKILLS + CORE COMPETENCIES

SPECIALIZED SKILLS
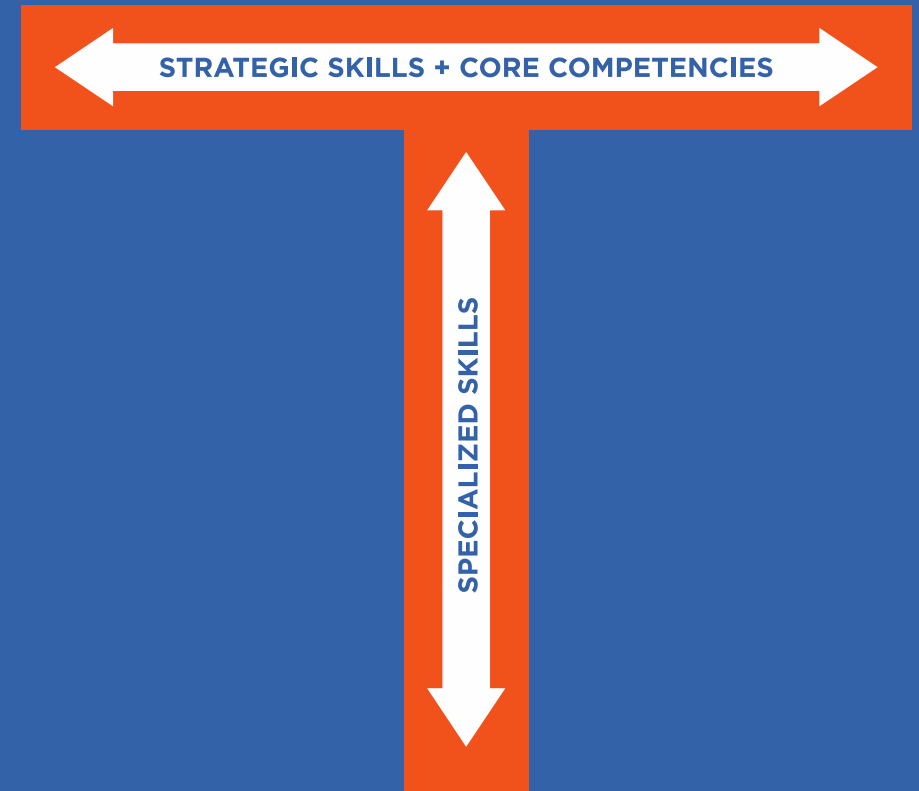
Source: de Beaumont Foundation. "Adapting and Aligning Public Health Strategic Skills,". March 2021.

TRAINING NEEDS: OVERALL

The top 5 areas of training needs **across all supervisory levels** are:

- Budget and financial management

- Systems and strategic thinking

- Community engagement

- Change management

- Justice, equity, diversity & inclusion

TRAINING NEEDS
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Strategic Skill Domain	Estimate
Budget and financial management	52%
Systems and strategic thinking	45%
Community engagement	42%
Change management	40%
Justice, equity, diversity & inclusion	37%
Cross-sectoral partnerships	36%
Policy engagement	34%
Data-based decision-making	25%
Effective communication	19%
Programmatic expertise	14%

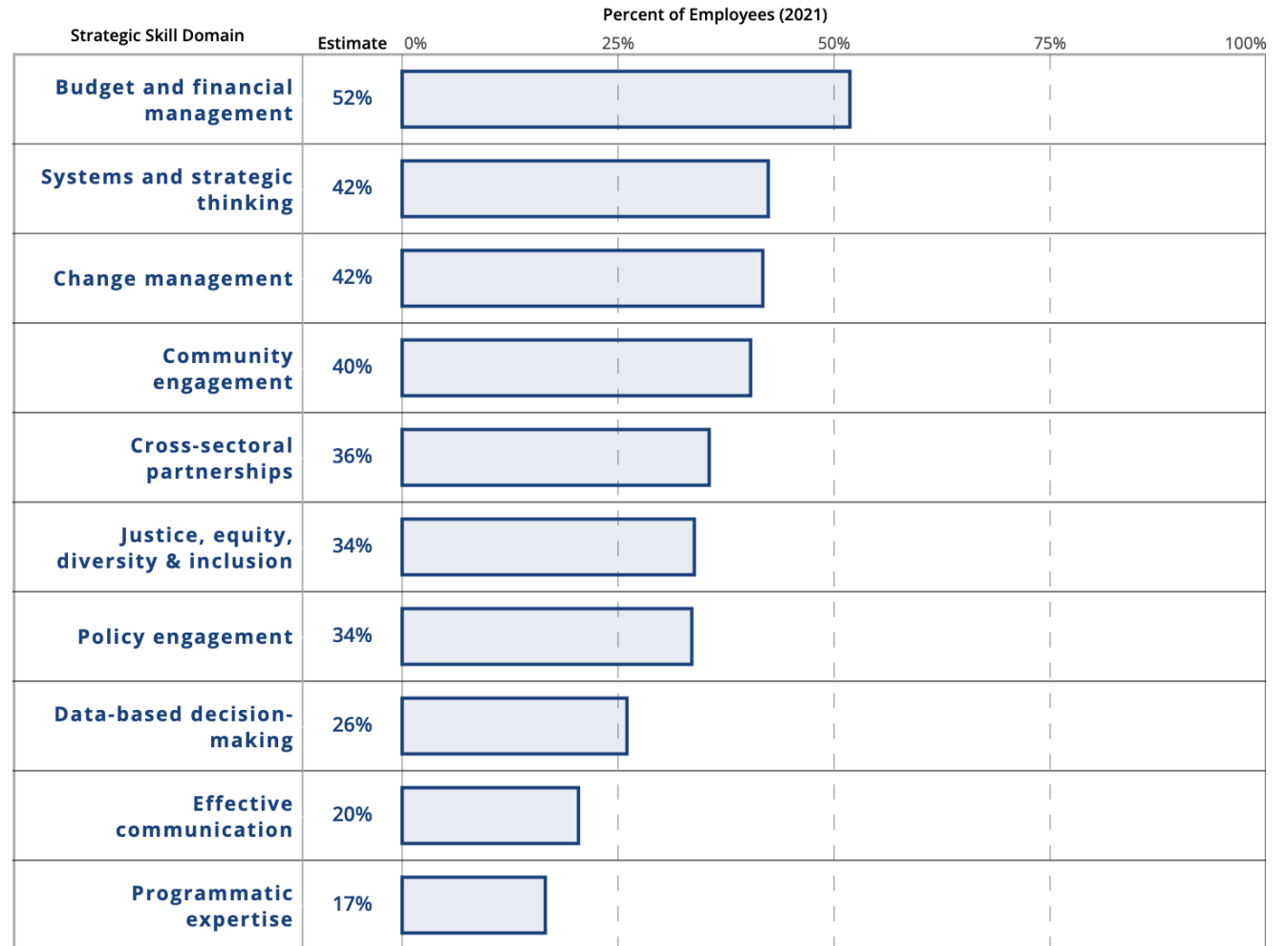Percent of Employees (2021): 0% – 25% – 50% – 75% – 100%

TRAINING NEEDS: NON-SUPERVISORS

The top 5 areas of training needs **among non-supervisors** are:

- Budget and financial management

- Systems and strategic thinking

- Change management

- Community engagement

- Cross-sectoral partnerships

TRAINING NEEDS: NON-SUPERVISORS
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

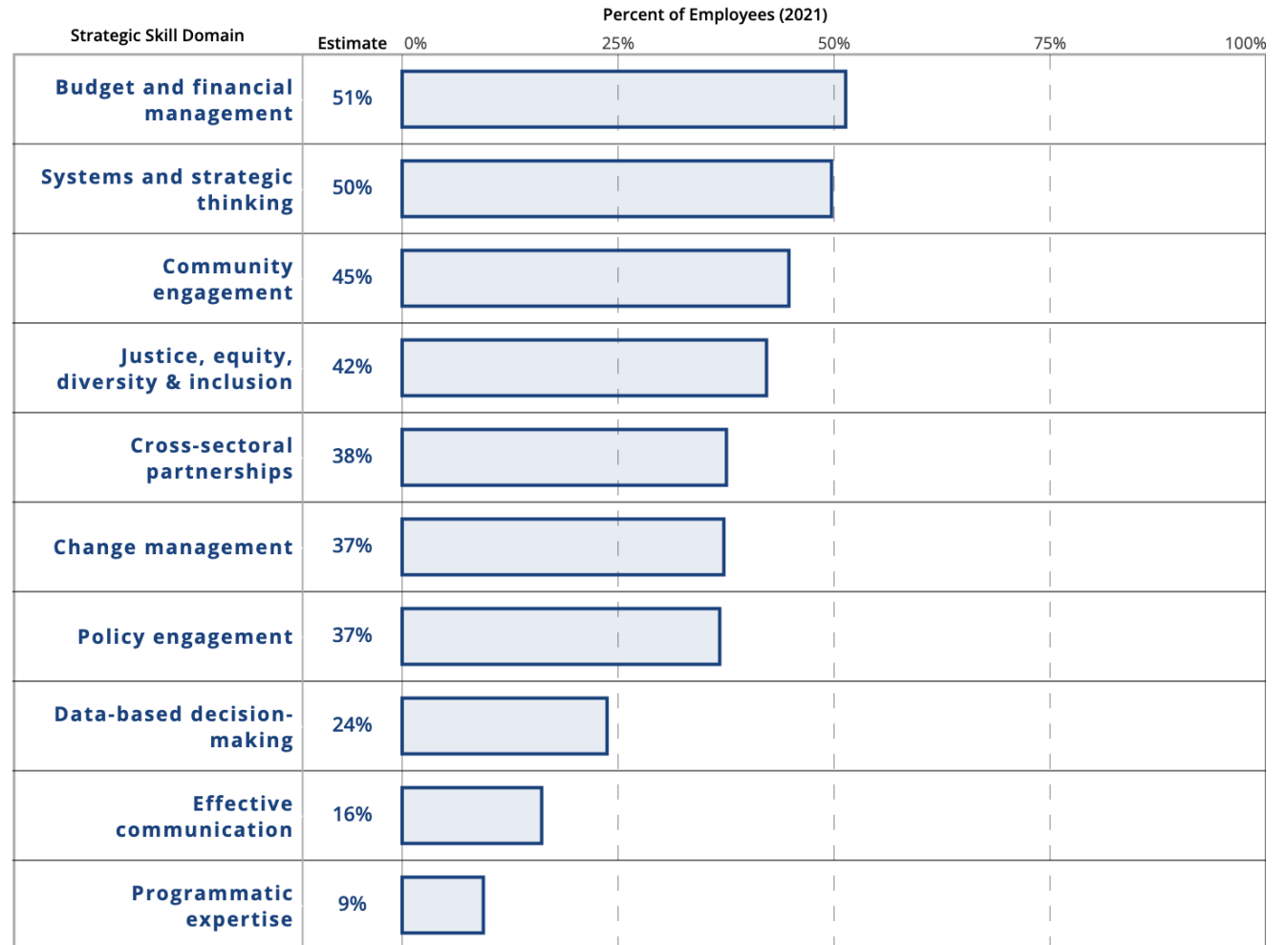| Strategic Skill Domain	Estimate	Percent of Employees (2021)
Budget and financial management	52%	
Systems and strategic thinking	42%	
Change management	42%	
Community engagement	40%	
Cross-sectoral partnerships	36%	
Justice, equity, diversity & inclusion	34%	
Policy engagement	34%	
Data-based decision-making	26%	
Effective communication	20%	
Programmatic expertise	17%	

TRAINING NEEDS: SUPERVISORS, MANAGERS, & EXECUTIVES

The top 5 areas of training needs **among supervisors, managers, & executives** are:

- Budget and financial management

- Systems and strategic thinking

- Community engagement

- Justice, equity, diversity & inclusion

- Cross-sectoral partnerships

TRAINING NEEDS: SUPERVISORS, MANAGERS, & EXECUTIVES
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Strategic Skill Domain	Estimate	Percent of Employees (2021)
Budget and financial management	51%	
Systems and strategic thinking	50%	
Community engagement	45%	
Justice, equity, diversity & inclusion	42%	
Cross-sectoral partnerships	38%	
Change management	37%	
Policy engagement	37%	
Data-based decision-making	24%	
Effective communication	16%	
Programmatic expertise	9%	

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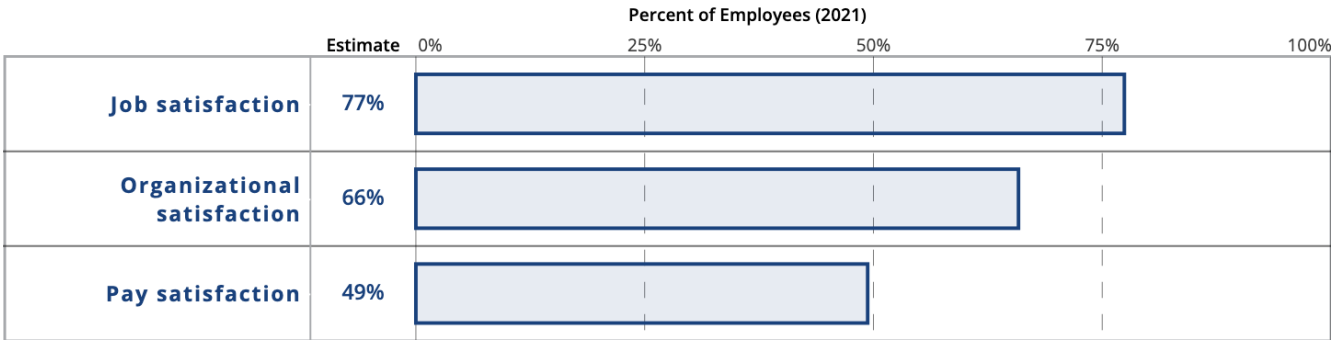# 2021 KEY FINDINGS: ENGAGEMENT & SATISFACTION

PH WINS respondents were asked to rate their agreement with several statements related to:

- Job, organizational, and pay satisfaction
- Perceptions about their workplace
- Perceptions about their supervisors
- Perceptions about their organization

SATISFACTION

- The states workforce is **largely satisfied** with their **job** (77%) and **organization** (66%).
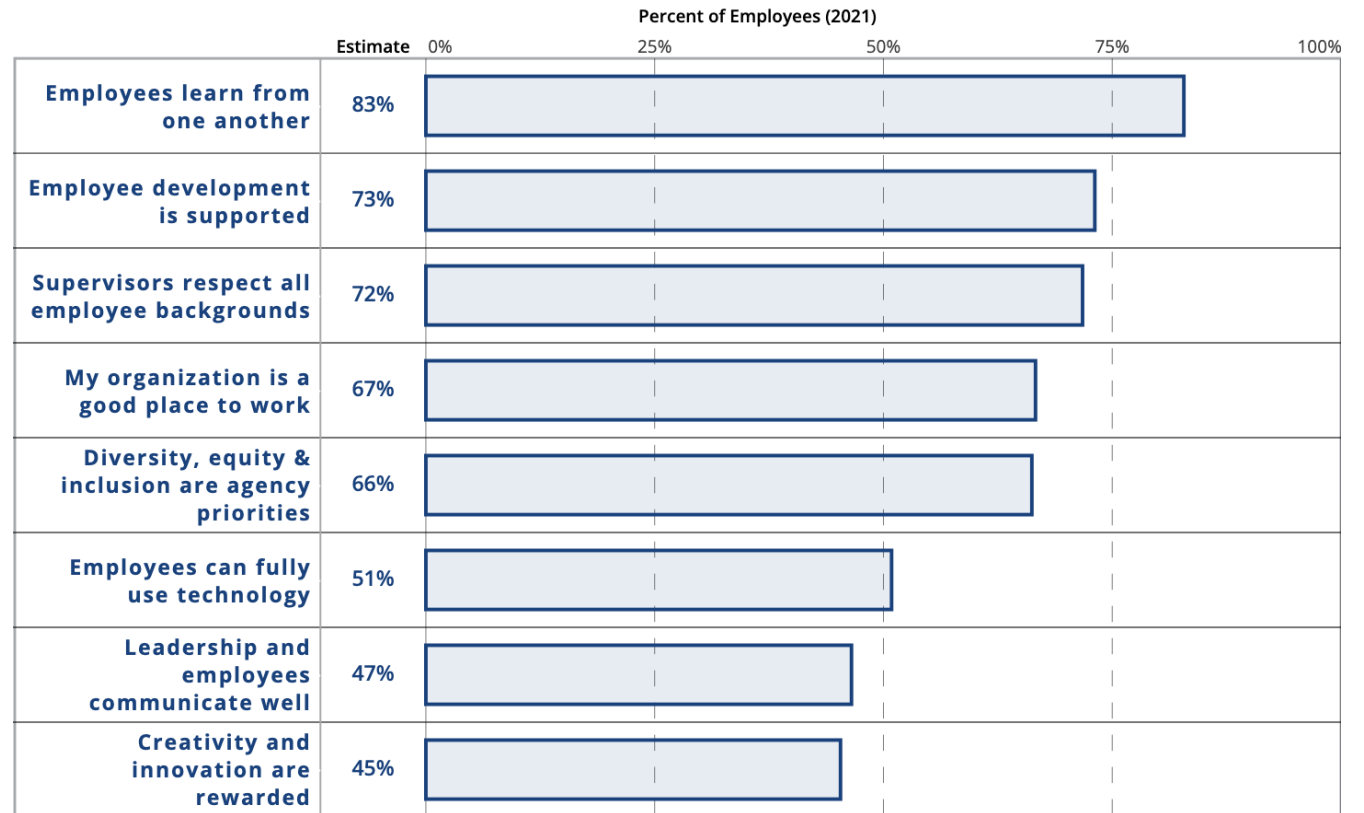
- Less than half (49%) are satisfied with their pay.

EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

	Estimate	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
Job satisfaction	77%					
Organizational satisfaction	66%					
Pay satisfaction	49%					

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT ORGANIZATION

- State staff's **overall perceptions of their organizations are positive**.

- However, there is room for improvement:

  - 47% of the workforce agrees that leadership staff and employees communicate well.

  - 45% agree that creativity and innovation are rewarded.

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT ORGANIZATION
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

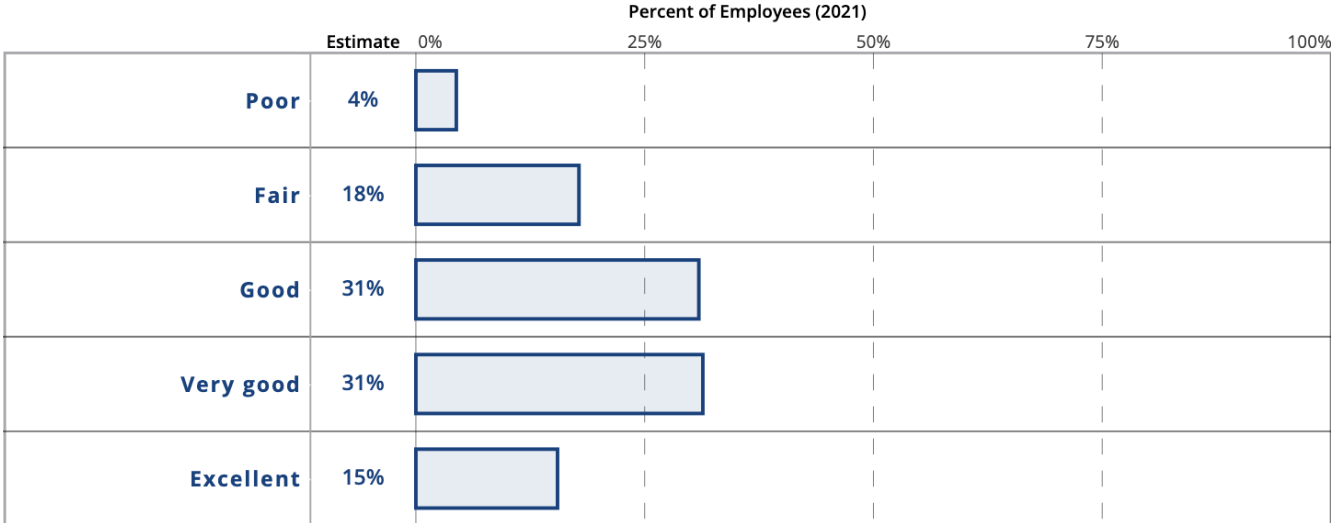|	Estimate	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
Employees learn from one another	83%					
Employee development is supported	73%					
Supervisors respect all employee backgrounds	72%					
My organization is a good place to work	67%					
Diversity, equity & inclusion are agency priorities	66%					
Employees can fully use technology	51%					
Leadership and employees communicate well	47%					
Creativity and innovation are rewarded	45%					

2021 KEY FINDINGS: WELL-BEING

- The 2021 PH WINS survey included questions specifically about employees' mental and emotional well-being.

WELL-BEING

- 1 in 5 state staff rate their mental health as either **"poor" or "fair."**

OVERALL MENTAL & EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

	Estimate	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
Poor	4%					
Fair	18%					
Good	31%					
Very good	31%					
Excellent	15%					

2021 KEY FINDINGS: HEALTH EQUITY CONCEPTS

The 2021 PH WINS survey asked respondents to rate their level of awareness of and confidence in applying five health equity concepts:

- Health Equity
- Social Determinants of Equity
- Social Determinants of Health
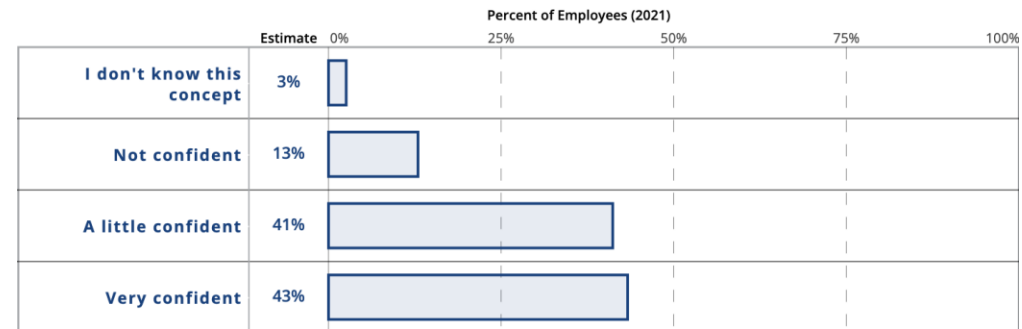- Structural Racism
- Environmental Justice

HEALTH EQUITY CONCEPTS:
HEALTH EQUITY

- **70%** of the state workforce rated their **awareness** of Health Equity as **a lot**.

- **43%** of the state workforce is **very confident** in applying the concept of Health Equity to their work.

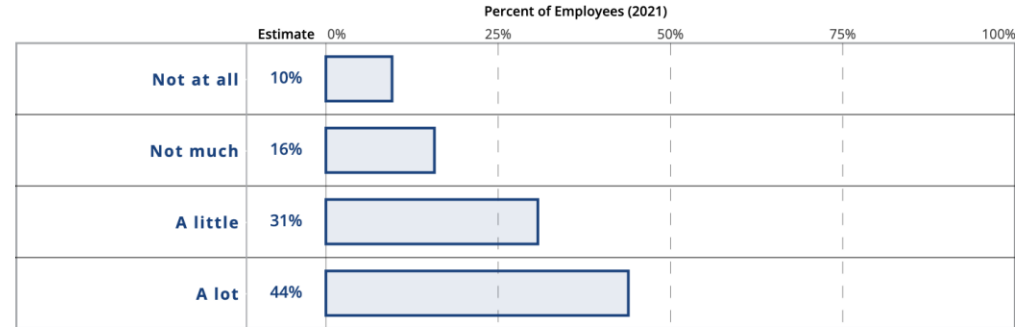### AWARENESS: HEALTH EQUITY
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

	Estimate	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
Not at all	4%					
Not much	6%					
A little	20%					
A lot	70%					
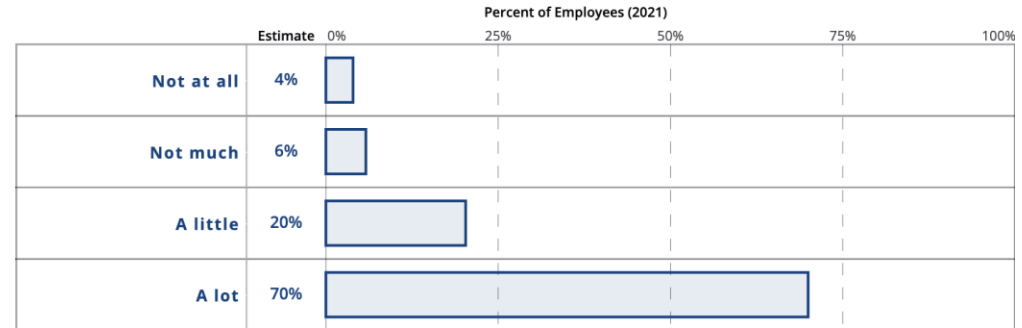
CONFIDENCE: HEALTH EQUITY
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

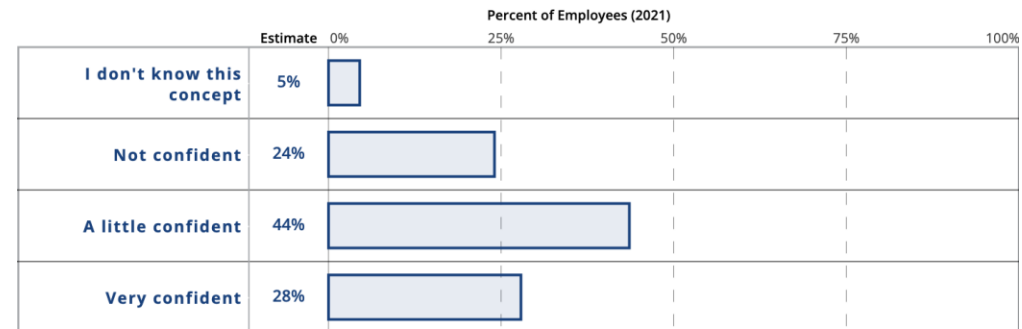|	Estimate	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
I don't know this concept	3%					
Not confident	13%					
A little confident	41%					
Very confident	43%					

HEALTH EQUITY CONCEPTS:
SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF EQUITY

- **44%** of the state workforce rated their **awareness** of Social Determinants of Equity as **a lot**.

- **28%** of the state workforce is **very confident** in applying the concept of Social Determinants of Equity to their work.

AWARENESS: SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF EQUITY
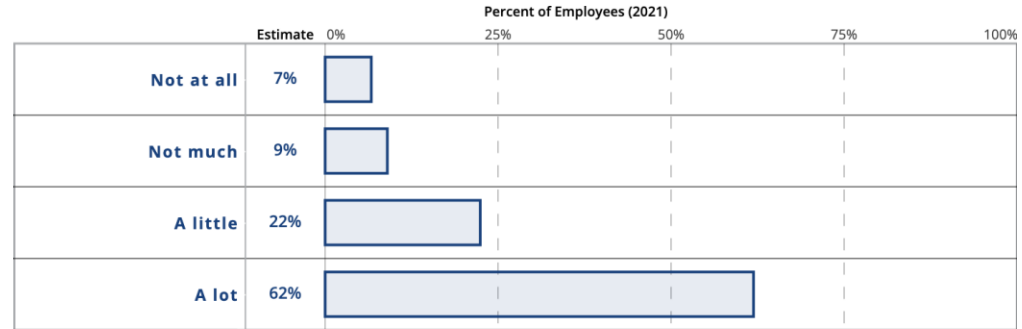#### STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

	Estimate
Not at all	10%
Not much	16%
A little	31%
A lot	44%

CONFIDENCE: SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF EQUITY
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

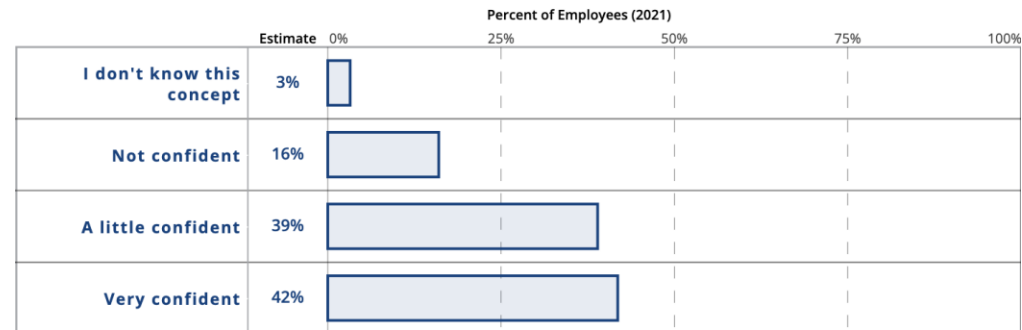|	Estimate
I don't know this concept	5%
Not confident	24%
A little confident	44%
Very confident	28%

HEALTH EQUITY CONCEPTS:
SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

- **62%** of the state workforce rated their **awareness** of Social Determinants of Health as **a lot**.

- **42%** of the state workforce is **very confident** in applying the concept of Social Determinants of Health to their work.

AWARENESS: SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH
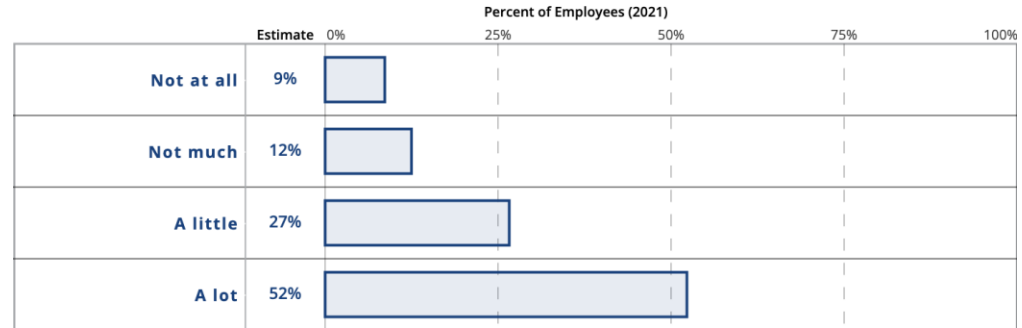STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

	Estimate
Not at all	7%
Not much	9%
A little	22%
A lot	62%

CONFIDENCE: SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

	Estimate
I don't know this concept	3%
Not confident	16%
A little confident	39%
Very confident	42%

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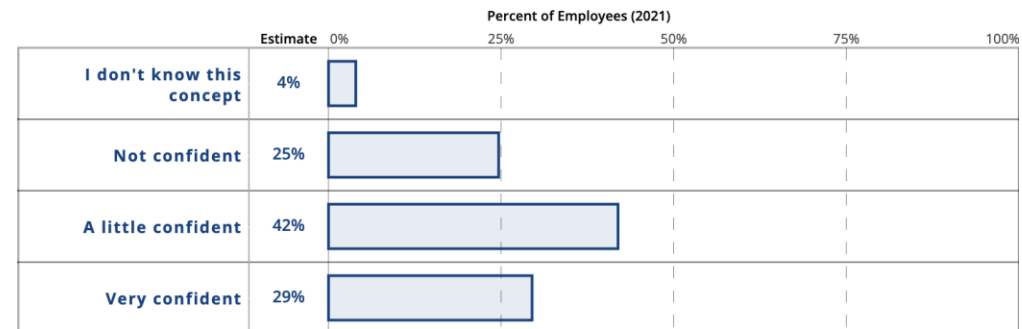BOLD SOLUTIONS FOR HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES.

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HEALTH EQUITY CONCEPTS:
STRUCTURAL RACISM

- **52%** of the state workforce rated their **awareness** of Structural Racism as **a lot**.

- **29%** of the state workforce is **very confident** in applying the concept of Structural Racism to their work.

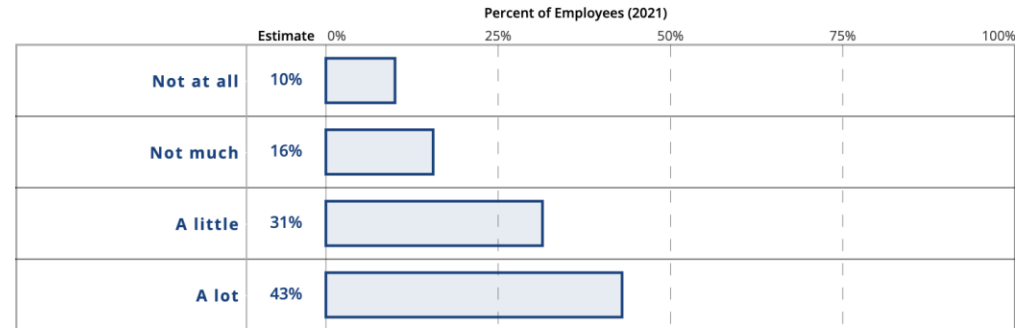**AWARENESS: STRUCTURAL RACISM**
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

	Estimate	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
Not at all	9%					
Not much	12%					
A little	27%					
A lot	52%					

CONFIDENCE: STRUCTURAL RACISM
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

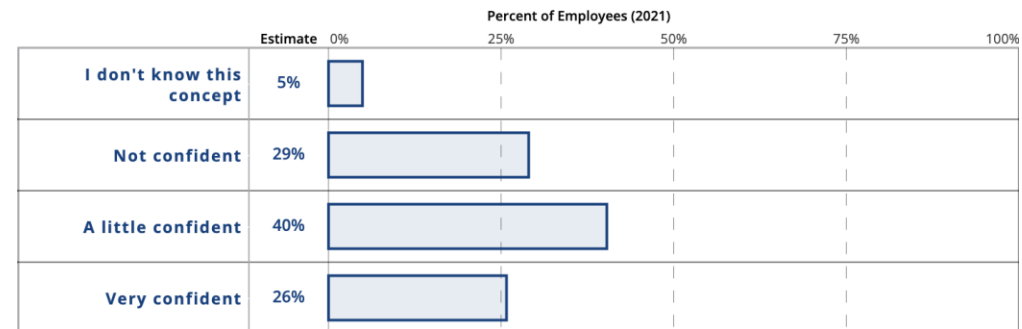|	Estimate	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
I don't know this concept	4%					
Not confident	25%					
A little confident	42%					
Very confident	29%					

HEALTH EQUITY CONCEPTS:
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

- **43%** of the state workforce rated their **awareness** of Environmental Justice as **a lot**.

- **26%** of the state workforce is **very confident** in applying the concept of Environmental Justice to their work.

AWARENESS: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

	Estimate	
Not at all	10%	
Not much	16%	
A little	31%	
A lot	43%	

CONFIDENCE: ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
STATES: ALL EMPLOYEES

Percent of Employees (2021)

	Estimate	
I don't know this concept	5%	
Not confident	29%	
A little confident	40%	
Very confident	26%	

FIND OUT MORE *(delete this slide before printing or presenting!)*

- **Looking for more data and graphs?**

    - This report represents only a small portion of the data that are available from the 2021 PH WINS.

    - Go to the **national PH WINS Dashboard** to view more data, download graph images, and more. You can find the dashboard at www.phwins.org/national

- **Want to learn more about the survey?**

    - Go to https://debeaumont.org/phwins/2021-findings/ for more information about PH WINS 2021, including key findings, links to publications and survey methods.

- **Have questions?**

    - Contact the PH WINS team at: phwins@debeaumont.org

Click the image to go to the national PH WINS Dashboard.