



How-to Guide: Language to Use when Recruiting

Insights to Action is a suite of resources meant to help state and local public health agencies improve recruitment and retention by acting on their data from the Public Health Workforce Interests and Needs Survey (PH WINS). Find more tools like this at <http://debeaumont.org/programs/insights-to-action/>.

Recruitment is notoriously difficult in government public health. Low pay bands and complex civil service requirements can make it challenging to market public health jobs to prospective employees. However, there are aspects of government public health jobs that can make these careers more appealing than their private sector counterparts. When advertising and recruiting for public health positions, be sure to emphasize the following:

- **Mission-driven work:** many candidates, particularly young people, are looking for work that is fulfilling, meaningful, and mission-driven. They want to positively impact their community. Public health agencies and careers are mission-driven, but do not always lead with that in job postings and recruitment materials.
- **Hands-on community interaction:** many candidates are also interested in working directly with members of the community. There are several public health positions that fit this description, and explicitly naming this opportunity can help attract job seekers.
- **Professional development:** many job seekers are looking for organizations where they can learn and develop. List the skills they'll develop, the connections they'll make, and any potential mentorship opportunities.

The Public Health Workforce Interests and Needs Survey (PH WINS), conducted in 2014, 2017, 2021, and 2024, supports the government public health workforce by measuring strengths and gaps to inform future investments in funding, training, recruitment, and retention.



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- **Collaboration:** most public health work is done in teams, and candidates are often looking for fun, collaborative, team-based environments. Emphasize opportunities for collaboration and connection.
 - **Job security and benefits:** while the salaries may be lower than in other fields, government work generally has good job security and excellent benefits. Being explicit about this in hiring materials can help make the case for the tradeoff.
 - **Work/life balance:** government positions often offer better work/life balance than positions in the private sector, and this is something that is top priority to many workers, particularly those in the youngest generations.
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Sample language:

Want to work alongside dedicated, passionate individuals while doing important work that improves community health and prevents disease? Join the health department. You'll have opportunities to work directly with community members, develop and hone your skills in a variety of areas, and build relationships with seasoned public health professionals at the agency. We offer a collaborative, team-based environment, good work/life balance, excellent job security and a comprehensive benefits package.