



How-to Guide: Redacting Personal Information

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/>.

Why use redaction?

Redacting – or eliminating – personal identifying information before the screening process allows for blind screening of job candidates. The purpose of blind screening is to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to receive an interview for a particular position. Redaction practice works; in orchestra auditions, for example, blind screening **increased the likelihood of a female being advanced to the next round by 30%**. And a recent study by the University of Chicago found that resumes with “white-sounding” names were **up to 24% more likely to receive a callback** than “black-sounding” names.

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.

PHWINS

PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE
INTERESTS AND NEEDS SURVEY

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How-to:

Best practice calls for redacting any personally identifying information, such as name, schools, graduation dates, and home address.

Step 1: Decide what personally identifying information you plan to redact from applications.

Step 2: Go through applications and manually redact personally identifying information, or purchase and leverage a redaction software like **redactable**.

- On PDFs: highlight, right click, and select, "redact." If using hard copies, redact information with a black marker.
- Assign each candidate a number, which can be used to track applications until they are invited for an interview.

Step 3: Create hiring goals and monitor progress.

Other considerations:

Redaction is most effective when part of a broader strategy to ensure equal opportunity in the hiring process. Additional tactics could include hiring panels that represent people of all backgrounds, removing unnecessary minimum qualifications, and substituting work experience for education.