

# Investing in Kentucky's Public Health Workforce – A Pathway Approach





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June 16, 2025



# Objectives

-  Describe the organizational structure, goal and partnerships of the Kentucky Department for Public Health's (KDPH) Center for Foundational Health (C4FH) in supporting workforce development programs for Kentucky's Public Health workforce.
-  Describe the purpose and membership of the KDPH's workforce development committee and subcommittee.
-  Describe the two workforce-related projects that the Kentucky Health Departments Association (KHDA) manages through collaboration with the KDPH.
-  Describe the public health career pathway programs available for high school students, university students and public health employees through the KDPH and KHDA.

***How can Public Health Career Pathways be incorporated into YOUR Harm Reduction Program?***

# Center for Foundational Health



**Established:** January 2022



**Goal:** Recruit, train and sustain a competent and diverse response-ready public health workforce for Kentucky through *Public Health Career Pathways*:

- High School Students
- University Students
- Public Health Workforce



**Staffing:** Nine Employees + Three Interns

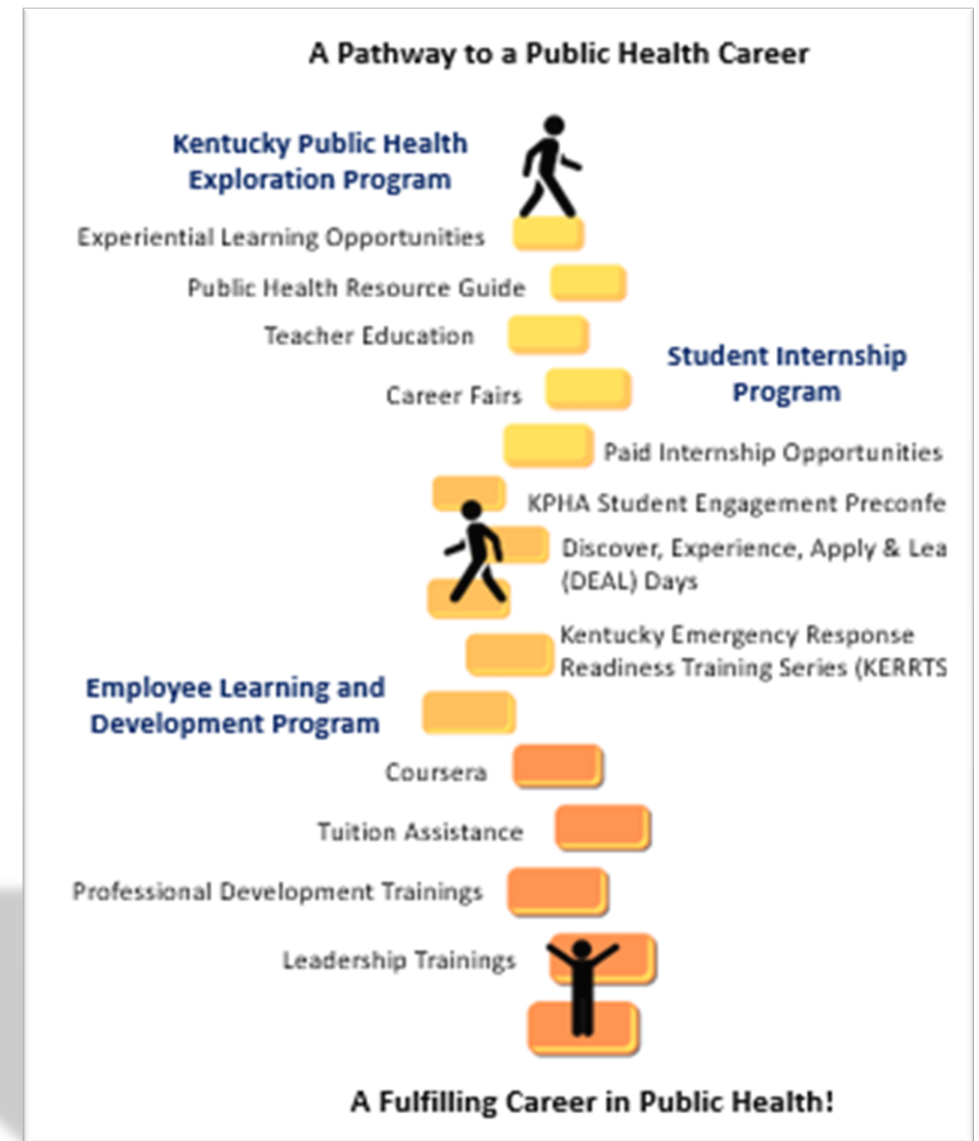


Image Source: Yerges, M., A Pathway to a Public Health Career, 2024, Canva

# Public Health Workforce Readiness Committees



## Public Health Workforce Development and Infrastructure Advisory Committee

- **Chair:** Rebecca Gillis, MPH, CHES, RS, Director, Division of Public Health Protection and Safety
- **Purpose:** Provide guidance to recruit, hire, train and retain a public health workforce that can support current and future public health programs.
- **Membership:** Leadership from KDPH, KHDA and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services' Office of Human Resources and Management.



## Public Health Workforce Readiness Subcommittee

- **Chairperson:** James House, MEP, Health Program Administrator C4FH/Workforce Director for the Public Health Infrastructure Grant (PHIG)
- **Intent:** Reinforce and expand the public health workforce by recruiting, hiring, training and retaining the workforce in alignment with KDPH's Strategic Plan and the PHIG.
- **Membership:** Program leaders from KDPH, KHDA, KPHA and Kentucky's Academic Institutions.

# Partnerships

## Organizations

1. Area Health Education Centers (AHEC)
2. Cabinet for Health and Family Services
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
4. \*Kentucky Department for Public Health
5. Kentucky Health Departments Association (KHDA)
6. Kentucky Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA)
7. Kentucky Public Health Association
8. \*Louisville Metro Public Health and Wellness Department
9. Region IV Public Health Training Center

\*Recipients of CDC's Public Health Infrastructure Grant (PHIG)

## Academic Institutions

1. Bellarmine University
2. Eastern Kentucky University
3. Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS)
4. Kentucky State University
5. Midway University
6. Murray State University
7. Northern Kentucky University
8. Simmons College of Kentucky
9. University of Kentucky
10. University of Louisville
11. University of Pikeville
12. Western Kentucky University

# Public Health Career Pathways for High School Students

- **Program:** Kentucky Public Health Exploration Program (KY-PHEP)
- **Goal:** Inform high school students, parents and educators about public health career opportunities.
- **Pathway Approaches**
  - Inform high school students, parents and educators about pathways to public health careers.
  - Conduct experiential learning opportunities in collaboration with academic institutions and local health departments.
- **Outcome:** *Conducted 6 experiential learning opportunities and provided public health career information to over 2900 high school students since June 30, 2022.*

# Public Health Career Pathways for University Students

- **Program:** Student Internship Program
- **Goal:** Enhance the future of the public health workforce through education, training and hands-on experiences.
- **Pathway Approaches**
  - Disseminate a practicum catalog each academic semester to universities/colleges.
  - Host paid/unpaid internships through an application, interview and selection process.
  - Conduct experiential learning through Discover, Experience, Apply and Learn (DEAL) Days.
- **Outcome:** *Hosted 152 Student Interns since January 2022 – nine have been hired by KDPH!*

# Public Health Career Pathways for State Employees

- **Program:** Employee Learning and Development (ELD) Program
- **Goal:** Recruit, train and sustain the state public health workforce through education and training in partnership with universities and professional organizations.
- **Pathway Approaches**
  - Implement the ELD Program through formal agreements with eight (8) universities and Coursera.
    - Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)
    - Professional Development Program
  - Keep employees informed of educational/professional development opportunities.
- **Outcomes:** *Public health employees have participated in 2201 professional training sessions / 43 employees have participated in the TAP – five persons have earned a degree or completed a certificate program.*



# Local Health Department (LHD) Workforce Readiness Program



Ashley Carroll, MPH  
Local Health Department Workforce Training Program Administrator

June 16, 2025








# LHD Workforce Training Program Administrator

## Role

-  Provides support to the Kentucky Health Departments Association (KHDA) on Local Health Department (LHD) workforce development initiatives.
-  Support initiatives to update and increase access to public health-related trainings for LHD employees.
  - Local board of health (LBOH) training and educational materials
  - LHD Training Needs Assessment
  - Supervisor training
  - LHD Student Internship Availability Dashboard

## Collaboration

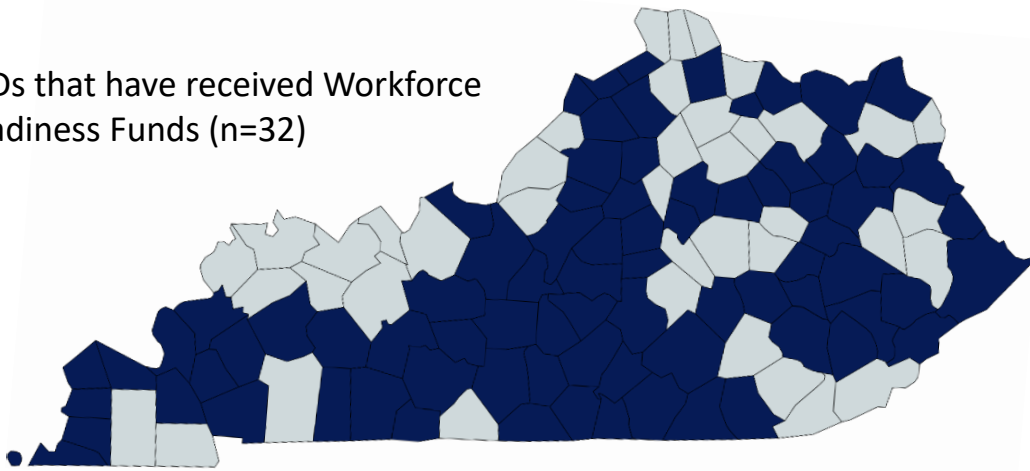
-  LHDs
-  KHDA
-  Kentucky Universities/Colleges
-  KDPH Divisions/Programs
-  Other supporting organizations that will help develop and implement program initiatives

# KHDA and KDPH Partnership – 2024 & 2025

## Public Health Workforce Readiness Project Successes

 Funds: CDC Crisis Cooperative Agreement - \$4 million

LHDs that have received Workforce Readiness Funds (n=32)



**90** LHD staff received tuition assistance.

**224** Training Opportunities conducted.

**23** LHD Student Interns were funded.

**1,310** LHD participants that completed training.

## Shared Services Project Successes

 Funds: Public Health Infrastructure Grant (PHIG) - \$400,000 per year

**120** KALBOH Memberships Funded

**1** New KHDA Position hired

**8** KHDA Regional Meetings supported

**61** LHDs participated in a Data Inventory and Needs Assessment



New [KHDA Website](#) developed.



Contracts with Gooch Financial Services and Stacy Blankenship/KKHB Law Firm secured.

# Program Foundation 6000 Funding (PGF 6000)



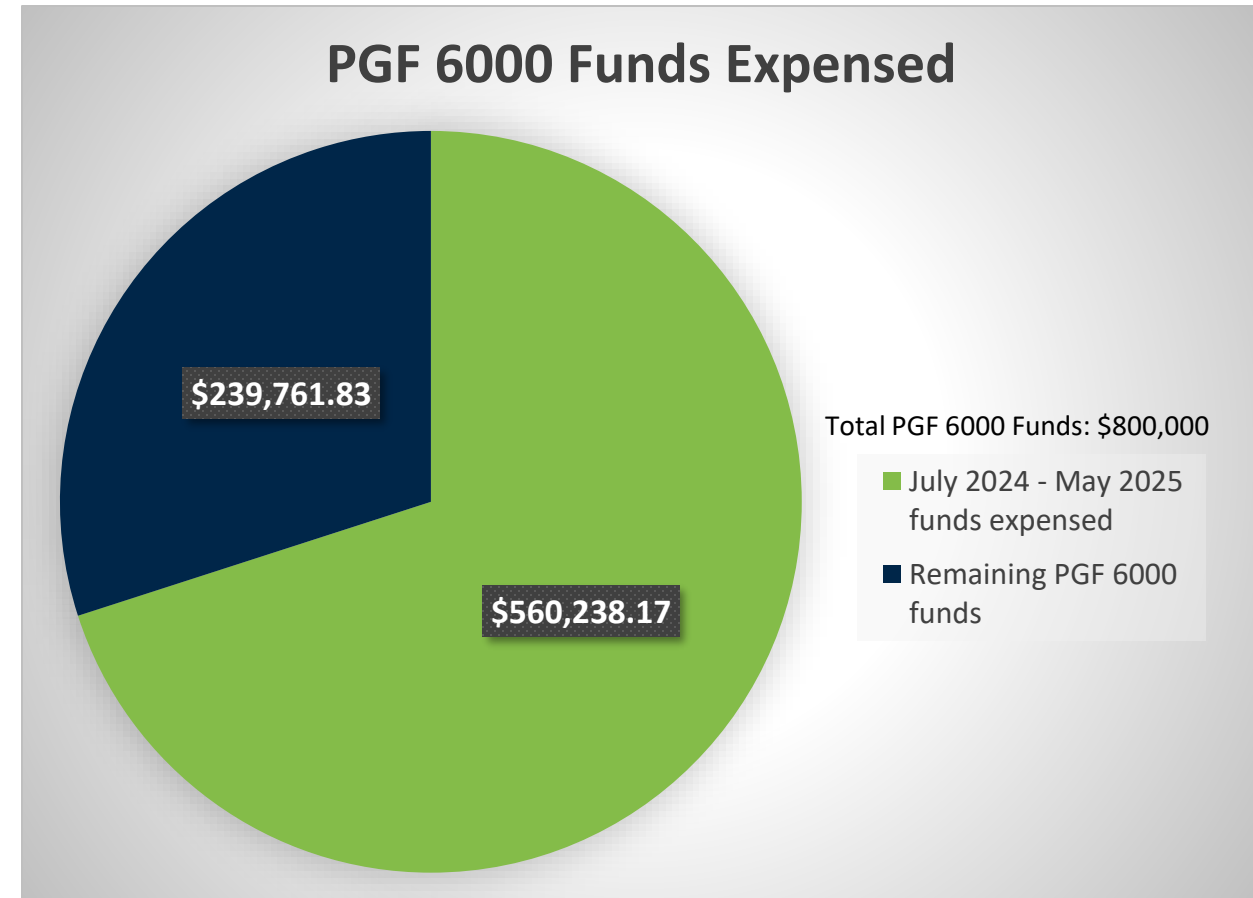
Purpose - 60 of 61 LHDs will be provided funds to:

- Support workforce capacity building efforts
- Meet public health transformation regulations



Project Period

- July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

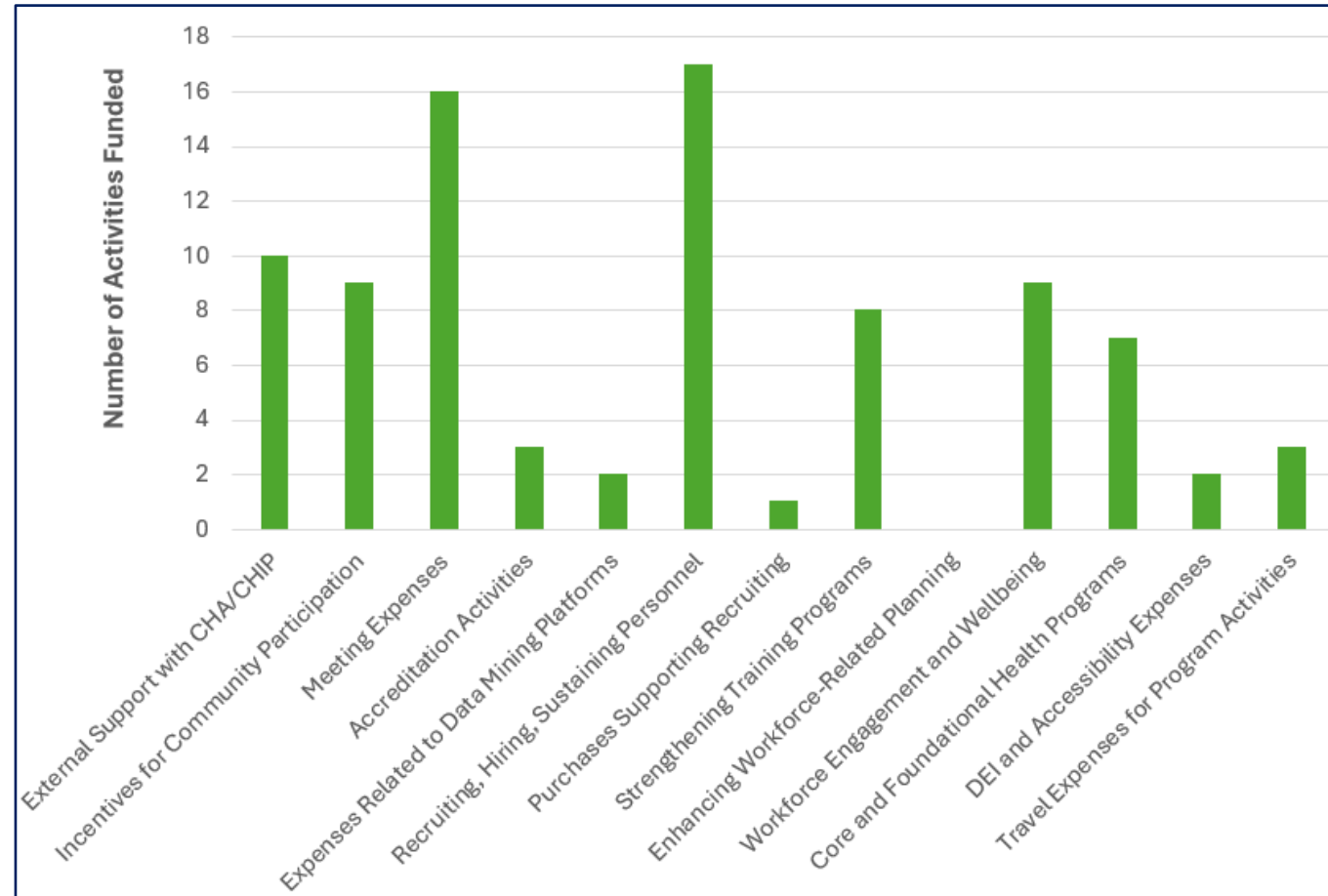


# PGF 6000 Funding cont.



## LHD Activities funded since January 2025:

1. Recruiting, hiring, or sustaining LHD personnel (n=17)
2. Meeting Expenses (n=16)
3. External support to assist with Community Health Assessments (CHA), Community Health Improvement Planning (CHIP), and Strategic Planning (n=10)
4. Incentives, transportation, and food for community member participation in LNA/CHA (n=9)
5. Expenses related to Core and Foundational Public Health Programs (n=9)



# KHDA's Training Needs Assessment – Harm Reduction Results



**Question:** Write-in and rank harm reduction training areas based on how much you agree that it is a high-priority need within your agency (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree)

5 Ranking	4 Ranking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communication with local Government.</li><li>• Harm Reduction activities for LHDs that do not have a SSP.</li><li>• REDCap Reporting</li><li>• Services other than SSP</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Grant Writing</li><li>• Reducing Stigma</li><li>• Use of test strips</li></ul>

# For More Information



**Kentucky Public Health**

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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**Center for Foundational Health**



<https://www.chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/Pages/cfh.aspx>

# Thank you.

**James R. House, B.S., MEP**

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