5 STRATEGIES

to Strengthen Marketing of
LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT
Recruiting Efforts

Acknowledgements

Workforce and Leadership Workgroup

NACCHO's Workforce and Leadership Workgroup (Workgroup) has dedicated significant time to advising on issues, needs, gaps, and opportunities to support the current and future public health workforce. In addition to initial guidance on the need for this Toolkit, the Workgroup provided ongoing input and a voice for local health department (LHD) needs in this area.

The Workgroup provides key functions for NACCHO as it provides recommendations, direction and guidance to NACCHO's Board of Directors and staff to facilitate efforts to expand and improve the public health workforce. It provides leadership, advocates for, and advises NACCHO and its partners on comprehensive, innovative workforce and leadership development policies and practices.

Public health voices

Additionally, it was important to gather insights and feedback along the way directly from public health professionals and job seekers. In addition to focus groups with the Workgroup, contributors to this Toolkit included Adam Forker, Executive Director, DuPage County Health Department, Larisa Olson, Director of Organizational Development, DuPage County Health Department, Aimee Snavley, St. Louis County Health Department, William Freitas, Quality Control Administrator, Florida Department of Health, Sarasota County, and participants from the University of Maryland Public Health Student Focus Group.

Funding and support

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About This Toolkit

Purpose

The *5 Strategies to Strengthen Marketing of Local Health Department Recruiting Efforts* is meant to provide tangible ideas for promoting health departments as a great place to work and getting job openings in front of viable candidates. It provides actionable information, helpful links, and real-world examples from local health departments and private sector recruitment efforts. This was developed at the direction of NACCHO's Workforce and Leadership Development Workgroup to bring you best practices in attracting the next generation of public health workers.

Intended audience

Throughout the development of this tool, it became clear that the types of roles that may be involved in promoting and filling open positions can vary greatly. The structures and procedures related to each role and organization also vary. As a result, this Toolkit is designed to support professionals from various roles and types of local health departments. In most cases, users may not be human resources staff, but instead may be individuals such as department heads, project leadership roles, or any LHD staff looking to extend and diversify reach of hiring efforts..

Across the variety of roles using this Toolkit, there may be limitations for making modifications to parts of the brand strategy or communications plan. The Toolkit works to provide solutions across several areas to allow users to find solutions that best work for their organization. For example, a user may not be able to modify job descriptions but may be able to adapt language in job ads or social media posts. Even with limited opportunity or approval to modify certain components, there are likely small ways to adapt the resources and support the work the department is already offering related to recruitment.

How to use this toolkit

The information that follows is structured to allow the user to move freely between gaining knowledge and taking clear actions supported by tools and templates. The Toolkit is meant to make the process behind those actions easier. It centers around 5 primary strategies:

1 Brand your organization as a great place to work.

2 Develop candidate segments and personas.

3 Prepare a communications plan with key dates and messages.

4 Decide where to promote and advertise.

5 Leverage partnerships to increase recruitment reach.

Within each strategy, there is information showing why the strategy is important and how it is defined, specific actions to support the strategy, and innovations or campaigns already in practice from the public and private sectors. There are also links to move directly from the strategy to supporting templates and tools (found in **Appendix 1**).

A fundamental component of the Toolkit is a Communications Plan. Beginning in Strategy 3, users should begin making key decisions informed by the Toolkit and populating this into a clear plan. A template is provided that can be used side by side with the narrative portion of the Toolkit.
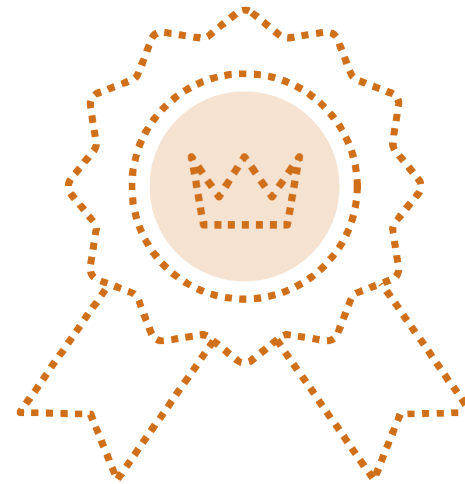
STRATEGY 01

Brand your organization as a great place to work.

This strategy includes information on:

- Importance of building an employer brand

- The difference between an employer brand and an organizational brand

- Components of an employer brand

- Applying a brand approach to public health broadly and local health departments specifically

STRATEGY 1:

Brand your organization as a great place to work.

Brand basics

Brands add value. Presented successfully, strong brands become more valuable and desirable. They represent the full impression a company, organization, product, or service leaves with its intended audience. A brand is much more than a logo. In fact, it is ultimately how people feel about the product or organization, how much they value it, and how relevant it is to their world.

Building an employer brand

Creating an employer brand is a growing trend for organizations of all types and sizes. As the job market continues to be highly competitive, the organization's external brand may not be enough to stand out. **An employer brand is grounded in the external brand, with a specific focus on articulating what is meaningful to a potential or current employee.** The employer brand often sits at the intersection of marketing and human resource functions, but the unique structure of LHDs offers a great opportunity to consider how to specifically create a brand that is attractive not only to community members but also potential applicants.

A well-constructed brand makes the organization more valuable. How?

It is recognizable and memorable.

People go out of their way to find it.

They give it the benefit of the doubt.

They recommend it more often.

They keep coming back to it.

They are more loyal to it.

SPOTLIGHT

SALESFORCE LEVERAGES CORPORATE CULTURE FOR RECRUITMENT

Salesforce, the large customer service technology company, was an early adopter of the employer branding trend and is viewed as a leader in this area. Through a thoughtful, strategic process, SalesForce identified core organizational values they felt were important to highlight in marketing their recruitment efforts. Their corporate culture, and specifically their strong concept of Ohana, or family, was identified as a key strategy to engage new potential candidates to join their team. This has been a fundamental tenant of their hiring and recruiting campaigns, SalesForce has been recognized as a Best Place to Work for multiple consecutive years. You can learn more here.

LHD ADAPTATION IDEA:

With many strong values at the core of each LHD, it's easy to embrace the concept of family, or even simply a tight-knit work unit. Be sure to highlight what it is really like to work at the department as a core part of the employer brand.

When it comes to building an employer brand, SalesForce suggests that it is a combination of your organization's Unique Selling Proposition (USP) and Employee Value Proposition (EVP). The following sections consider what this may mean for an LHD.
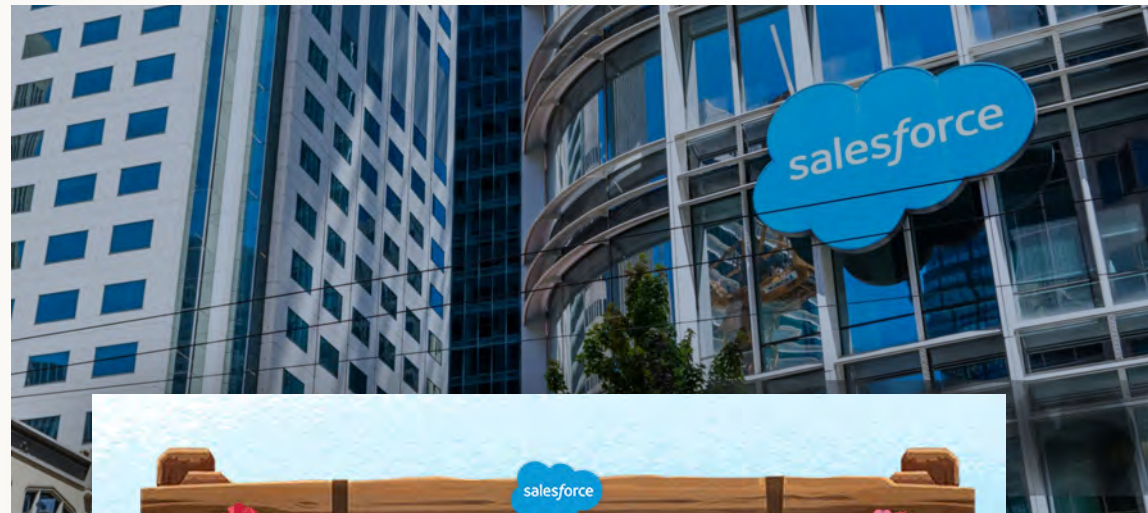
The unique selling proposition of local health departments

What makes your LHD special? What makes it, along with the specific services you offer, stand out to members of the community? This is referred to as the Unique Selling Proposition (USP).

Define the LHD unique selling proposition

Creating a USP starts with thinking about what a product or organization offers that is different and ends with a clear statement that can be easily conveyed through all related marketing and branding efforts. This is the first step in defining the employer brand.

There are organizational traits and attributes unique to both public health broadly and local health departments specifically. Presented well, public health and LHDs should attract candidates who are driven by serving others and want to make a difference in their community.

A strong USP should capture what is special about your organization in a single sentence.

Sample USPs:

- *No one does more to ensure Wellnesstown is healthy now and even healthier in the years to come.*

- *We set the standard when it comes to preventing chronic illnesses in this state.*

- *Our team is uniquely qualified to address health issues that are common in this area.*

- *We help more people than any other health department in the region.*

UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION

EMPLOYER BRAND

EMPLOYEE VALUE PROPOSITION

A Unique Selling Proposition (USP) is how an organization differentiates itself and its products or services from others.

An Employee Value Proposition (EVP) focuses on those elements of the work that bring direct value to the employee.

Public health as a brand

Positioning public health as a brand is the first step in getting to the USP for local public health. For some, working for a government agency may seem like a limitation. For others, there's no other place to find the intangible benefits of being part of the public health community. As a brand, public health represents many important values that should be attractive to the current and potential workforce.

- Public health looks out for the greater good and betterment of the overall population.
- It is service oriented, selfless, and is driven by common good.
- It attracts people with similar service values.
- It represents more than a transaction of money for work.
- It is a pathway to the elusive goal of finding fulfillment in work.

By presenting the public health brand successfully, jobs in a local health department can feel like more than just a job. Not everyone knows what "public health" is or does, or as a result of the COVID-19 response, may have negative views on the role that public health agencies, and especially local health departments, play. A strong public health brand can help re-focus people on the positive attributes.

"

Improving communication on the value of public health will allow public health workers and their supporters to better advocate for policies and funding. With the general public and different sectors not fully aware of what public health does or achieves, it is increasingly important for public health officials to effectively communicate the value and role public health plays. Public health officials must share stories of the impact their work has and illustrate the value that public health brings to people's lives.

—**Challenges and Opportunities for Strengthening the US Public Health Infrastructure,** *National Network of Public Health Institutions*

> "
> We have some cool initiatives people can latch onto, like… we are at early stages of building a new crisis stabilization center for mental health. Things like this could make for a great campaign to hire and demonstrate what we are really doing. We have to bring the public health passion and mentality to our recruitment efforts.
>
> **—Adam Forker,** *DuPage County Health Department, Illinois*

Local public health as a brand

Thinking about local health departments as part of public health overall presents an opportunity to make both more relevant. Public health at the local level takes everything right about public health and brings it home:

- Improving each community and making a difference where we live, work, and play.
- As a local effort, public health becomes more approachable and visible. Programs impact neighbors.
- Solutions become more practical and relevant to backyard issues. The work of local health departments helps everyone see results firsthand.

During a small focus group of public health graduate students, they were asked to offer the first words that came to mind for various levels of public health. The response speaks for itself, and emphasizes why it's important to differentiate between other types of public health and local public health:

Public health	Epidemiology
	Population
	Population well-being
Federal public health	Mandates
	Policy
	Funding
Local public health	Community access
	Health initiatives
	Implementation

The LHD employee value proposition

Think about the parts of working at an LHD that bring value directly to the employee. That's the employee value proposition, or EVP. **An EVP is the second input to create your employer brand.** It is important to build this out fully, and think broadly about what the organization offers employees in areas such as pay, benefits, career development, and job flexibility.

While it is distinct from the USP and organizational brand, the EVP should clearly align with the mission, vision, and strategic objectives of the LHD. It should offer a clear sense of what it is like to work for the department and inspire candidates who may be a good fit. It can be helpful to create multiple EVPs that can appeal to different audiences.

Highlight benefits beyond purpose and pay.

There are so many great reasons to work for local health departments that will influence the right applicants to apply. The reality is there are some factors that may discourage applicants, such as pay. The good news is government agencies often come with other great benefits and perks! Take some time and think about what these may include, such as:

- Career stability and growth
- Retirement benefits
- Flexible work schedule

- Paid days off
- Student loan reimbursement
- Medical benefits
- Community discounts and partnerships

It's likely that the Human Resource office can offer specific guidance on how to position a full compensation package that includes not only pay, but also considers benefits and perks that bring value to the employee. When you financially quantify the value of a comprehensive benefits package, it can account for improved wages of almost 50%!

Consider the following:

- What **organizational factors** bring value directly to our employees, like supportive leadership, close networks of colleagues, and a trusting and safe work culture? These may be hard to quantify, so think of key words to describe the value these bring.

- How can you articulate **professional and personal development** opportunities, including training and education, and clear communication about career pathways beyond initial LHD positions? What supports do your employees currently receive? What could that mean financially for an employee?

- What aspects of the **physical work environment** bring value to employees? Consider physical location assets, equipment, technology, and parking.

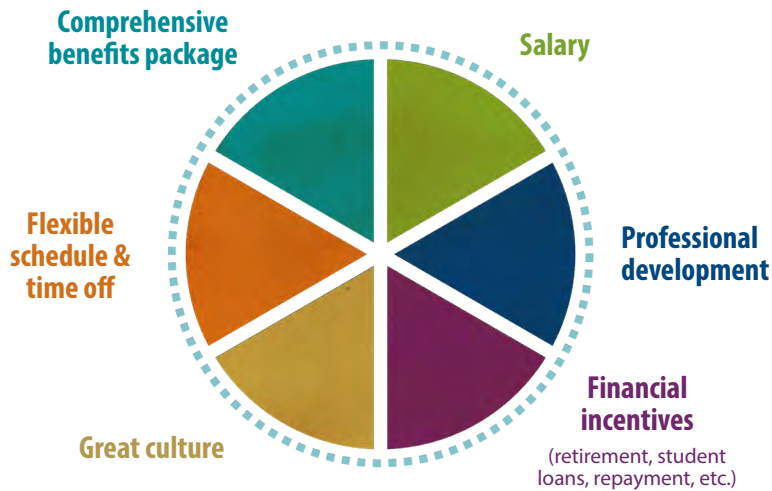**Top reasons for staying at an LHD:**

65%
Benefits package

52%
Job stability

44%
Flexibility

—2021 Public Health Workforce Interests and Needs Survey

- **Comprehensive benefits package**
- **Salary**
- **Professional development**
- **Financial incentives** (retirement, student loans, repayment, etc.)
- **Great culture**
- **Flexible schedule & time off**

- Beyond direct pay, what **other financial incentives** do employees receive that puts money directly back into their pocket? Paint a picture that includes things like performance-based incentives, frequency of raises, and simplicity of payments. Paid time off also has financial incentive!

- What does your **comprehensive benefits package** look like? Consider traditional benefits like medical, dental, disability, and retirement, as well as additional incentives such as tuition reimbursement, onsite health and wellness, and employee assistance programs.

Define the intangibles.

There are critically important intangible benefits people seek that make a job fulfilling. These are the things where LHD's have an advantage. They are the why behind the what. Offering a career with purpose is a competitive advantage that pays off every day. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Identify 5 things that are noteworthy about working for the LHD.

- Make a list of the intangibles this position offers. These are the things that make people feel something about what they do. They make people proud to talk about what they do. They endure over time, and they are easily understood when people share their work stories. They are things that can't easily be matched by the private sector.

- Think about how this job makes its workforce feel, i.e. "Most days, you'll go home feeling proud of the way you helped people".

- Find the "whys." For example: Why is this LHD important as an employer in the community? Why is this particular position important?

- Why do people in this role continue to do the work they do? What do they have in common that drives them?

Building your employer brand should be a creative, energetic process and is best achieved with a team to bring different perspectives. Consider using the **Define your Employer Brand meeting materials** in Appendix 1 to assist you in developing your USP and EVP.

What we heard

During interviews and focus groups we asked LHD staff:

"What do you wish the community, your potential employees, understood about your organization and why LHDs are a great place to work?"

We heard these succinct themes over again:

- **Make a difference**
- **Tangible impact**
- **Heart of local community**
- **Sense of belonging**
- **More than clinical**
- **Great benefits**
- **Work-life balance**

Tips to leverage an employer brand

Communicate from the candidate's perspective.

It is important to describe the brand from the candidate's perspective. Too often brands are described from the brand perspective, i.e. "We have 14 people on our team, three offices, etc.…." Instead, speak from the candidate's perspective to help your communications resonate. You might say:

- "Think of the feeling you'll get from knowing you showed people how to create their own urban garden with fresh produce available year-round."
- "This is a way for you to make a difference every day and actually see the impact of what you are doing."
- Working with our passionate team of 14 makes coming to work not just fulfilling, but also fun.

Deliver on the brand promise.

A brand is truly the reputation the organization earns in everything it does. It is the sum total of how the organization presents itself AND the full experience people have when they interact with the organization. With this in mind, to create a healthy brand, it is important to deliver on the things that make the brand special. Think of the employer brand as a promise, explicit or implied. It is the team's responsibility to deliver on this brand promise repeatedly and consistently.

Use the employer brand throughout marketing activities.

With a clear Unique Selling Proposition and Employee Value Proposition now established, place this at the core of marketing activities that support recruitment. This brand should become the LHD's identity and should impact messaging and placement of outreach activities. Plan ahead to increase consistency to the brand across materials, audiences, and platforms.

SPOTLIGHT

LHD ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

LHDs often have a unique organizational culture that can be very attractive to the right candidate and can help current employees feel appreciated for their hard work. LHDs have been working hard to establish an organizational culture aimed at improving job satisfaction, such as establishing mentorship programs, workplace wellness opportunities, and increased opportunities for employee feedback. Fridays tend to be a fun day for many, with themes such as "Pizza Friday" and "No Meeting Fridays."

STRATEGY

02

Develop candidate segments and personas.

This strategy includes information on:

- Importance of tailoring marketing strategies

- Using qualitative and quantitative data to segment the workforce

- Why candidate personas are useful and how to create them

- Tips for effectively using candidate personas

STRATEGY 2:

Develop candidate segments and personas.

One size doesn't fit all.

The local health department workforce is typically diverse in many ways, including education, roles, demographics, and job settings. The individuals that comprise the workforce, and in turn the potential candidate pool, have unique preferences related to how they receive information and what resonates for them. Gathering information in advance and spending time segmenting and personifying key roles can lead to a marketing strategy that leverages unique messages across various platforms to reach specific audiences. By reaching the right candidates more directly, broad marketing campaign costs and time from application to hire can be reduced.

Segment the workforce.

The first step in tailoring a marketing strategy for recruitment efforts is to segment the workforce into various populations that may have unique characteristics. One way to do this is by job type or role. Consider focusing on roles that account for most of the workforce, or on those roles that are harder to fill as a starting point.

QUESTIONS
to help identify hard-to-fill positions

? In the past year, which job types have taken the longest to fill once posted?

? What were the main causes of the long fill time?

? Where was the opening promoted?

? How many applicants applied?

? How many positions remain open?

? What is the projected need for this position in the future?

Use data to understand candidate segments.

Next, take time to collect data to create the profile of an ideal applicant for each identified segment. Ideally, this should include both quantitative data that is likely readily available, as well as qualitative data that requires additional information gathering. Begin by understanding demographic and psychographic data about current employees and recent applicants, such as those factors in Table 1 to the right.

Gather employee insights.

To create the most representative personas, reach out to current employees and gain insights such as job strengths, challenges, and how they describe their role to others. It can also be helpful to gain information about what they consider their biggest accomplishments, their motivators, and how their work really improves the lives of community members. Inquire about communication preferences, including where and how they typically receive industry related information.

The data gathering process should inform brief statements for each segment, such as:

- The typical epidemiologist employed by the LHD is a 42-year-old male.
- Nurses that have applied in the past year have responded from Indeed 60% of the time.

TABLE 1: Data to support candidate persona development

DATA TYPE	DATA ELEMENTS	DATA SOURCES
Demographics	• Age • Gender • Race • Education & Income • Location (e.g., rural vs urban)	• Human Resource Information System (current employees) • Bureau of Labor Statistics (general, by industry and job types)
Psychographics *Motivators behind behaviors*	• Personality • Values • Interests • Beliefs	• Employee satisfaction surveys • Aptitude tests • Employee focus groups & interviews • Participation rates in various activities

Create candidate personas.

A candidate persona is a fictional profile of the ideal applicant for a specific role. A persona is not meant to limit or stereotype, but to bring life to the individual candidate and preferences that may impact marketing recruitment efforts. This can be useful in understanding the target candidate pool's needs and motivations, while also helping the hiring team understand where to best reach candidates with marketing and outreach.

It may be helpful to work with the HR team to understand if these personas already exist, and if not, if there is an opportunity to collaboratively develop them for specific job types. Additionally, some Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) have sample personas. Use the information gathered during data gathering to inform this process.

Initially, it may be helpful to start very simple and list what immediately comes to mind in a concise way to help focus the person. For example, reference Table 2.

TABLE 2: Sample candidate personas

CANDIDATE PERSONA	BIOGRAPHICAL INFO	TRAITS
Epidemiologist	• **Name:** Sarah • **Age:** 32 • **Education:** PhD • **Experience:** Recent grad with background & interest in research	• Adaptable • Inclusive
Nurse Manager	• **Name:** Jane • **Age:** 45 • **Education:** Master's Degree • **Experience:** 10+ years leadership experience	• Local or willing to relocate • Change agent • Empathetic
Accounting Manager	• **Name:** Alex • **Age:** 35 • **Education:** Bachelor's Degree • **Experience:** 8-10 years	• Detail oriented • Strong communicator • Continuous learner
Environmental Health Specialist	• **Name:** Andy • **Age:** 25 • **Education:** Bachelor's Degree • **Experience:** Recent grad	• Single • Community oriented • Problem solver • Tech-savvy • Environmental steward

Visit Appendix I for a candidate persona template that can be modified based on organizational needs. The following sections below should be used with the provided template.

Define the "Who."

Fields in Section 1 of the candidate persona template focus on defining the "who" elements that comprise the candidate.

- Name the candidate and consider using a stock photo that might represent the candidate. This helps personify and bring to life the persona being created on paper.

- Use collected data about employees and candidates to best populate fields including:

  - Age, gender, education, professional experience, past employers, skills, and career goals. By this point, a persona should start to emerge.

  - Complete fields such as interests, characteristics, and traits that may be notable or common for someone in this role.

  - Add how this persona may prefer to receive information. Specifically, identify preferred social networks and trusted sources of industry information this individual may use.

Health Communications Specialist — Section 1: Who?

Demographics: (Age, gender, etc)

Possible Current Employer: (These are companies where you can target your search)

Experience: (Include career level and possible past roles)

Educational Background:

Skills: (Include skills you can search for)

Preferred Social Networks:

Interests:

Trusted Sources of Industry Information:

Characteristics and Traits:

Career Goals:

Persona Name: Mary

Health Communication Specialist — Section 2: What?

What is good culture for her?

What does she love about working at the LHD?

What motivates her?

What are her interests outside of work?

Persona Name: Mary

Define the "What."

Fields in Section 2 of the candidate persona template focus on defining the "what" elements behind the candidate that may inform their motivators and drivers related to her work experience.

Consider factors such as:

- Preferred work culture
- Personal passion for LHD work
- Motivations
- Interests outside of work

The "what" can often be harder to define, but it is critical to consider. Ultimately, this gets at what makes a job fulfilling related to one's purpose, the reason they do something. Finding a career purpose can prove to be elusive. If the position can be framed in a way to relate to one's purpose it will be quite attractive. From the persona perspective, ask these two questions:

- What are you passionate about?
- What are you skilled at doing?

Where these two areas intersect, you'll find that elusive purpose. For example, someone's passion might be how much they care about leaving their mark on their community. Then, what are they good at doing?

Tips for candidate personas

Avoid unintentional bias.

A persona is meant to depict an ideal candidate and makes assumptions in the process. To avoid unintentional bias, be sure to level set with any other stakeholders that may assist in the persona development process. Starting from strong data is a great way to reduce unintentional bias. This is especially true related to demographic elements of the persona.

Engage others in the process.

The best candidate personas come from a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. Consider engaging others like current employees in the selected segments, or key leaders from these segments. A group brainstorm can be a great way to create thoughtful, informed personas.

Don't over complicate it.

While it's important to base the persona on data, it is also important to remain flexible enough to accept some assumptions. Remember, the persona is meant for illustrative purposes to inform later marketing strategies. It is not meant to depict every asset or be limited by challenges with making assumptions. Think freely and start somewhere.

STRATEGY
03

Prepare a comprehensive, tailored communications plan for recruitment activities.

This strategy includes information on:

- Basic concepts of developing a communications plan for recruitment

- Developing key messages to resonate with candidate segments

- Using job ads as a messaging tool

STRATEGY 3:

Prepare a comprehensive, tailored communications plan for recruitment activities.

Elements of a communications plan

An effective way of capturing an audience's attention is with a steady, even stream of communications, using different channels to reach them and to reinforce your messages. The remaining strategies in the Toolkit support development of a communications plan that can tie together various activities aimed at promoting specific job openings. Similar to many public health functions, marketing efforts should be planned in advance. This will greatly increase consistency and successful implementation of messaging and outreach.

A typical communications plan will include defining messages to promote, where to promote them, when to deliver messages, and who is responsible for delivery. A communications plan can cover any period of time, but for a strong brand strategy to emerge, a one-year plan is a good option.

COMMUNICATION PLAN:

Marketing strategies for (LHD Name) Recruitment efforts

TIMEFRAME:

January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024

OBJECTIVE:

Increase the number of qualified candidates submitting applications to LHD openings.

TIMING	AUDIENCE (Candidate segment)	ACTIVITY	KEY MESSAGES	CHANNELS	LEAD	NOTES
Mid-January 2024 – March 1, 2024	General	Employer brand campaign		· LinkedIn · Local career forums · Earned media	Public health worker	Purpose: Increase awareness of LHD employer brand in the community.
February 6, 2024	Public health students	Job fair at local university	· LHDs are a great place close to home to gain experience. · Student loan forgiveness and professional development programs	· Job fair	Public health worker	Purpose: Increase awareness of LHD employer brand in the community.

▲

TABLE 3: Communication Plan Template

Use the Communications Plan template in **Appendix I** along with information in **Strategies 3, 4, and 5** to develop a comprehensive, strategic plan that aligns with the employer brand and candidate segmentation and personas.

Consider timing and duration.

Key dates are a great place to begin filling in the communications plan. Think about:

- Date-based observances, such as "Public Health Thank You Day" annually the Monday before Thanksgiving, "National Community Health Worker Awareness Week" in early September, and condition specific observances like February for Heart Month and October for cancer awareness. Consider reviewing existing LHD calendars to identify other observances that may lend to tailored campaigns and messages.

- Upcoming events, such as job fairs and events where the LHD has a significant community presence. It may also be helpful to think about large local events that other partners may be hosting, or community observances.

- Dates that may be less appropriate to share messages and spend recruitment dollars, such as times when hiring efforts may be slower or candidates may be more distracted.

Additionally, determine how long a given activity may go on. Some, like job fairs, are a point in time, while others may be longer recruitment campaigns. Thinking about this in advance can assist with any staff time or other resource allocation planning.

Create key messages and themes by persona.

Another step in building a communication plan to support recruitment activities is defining what messages will best resonate with the various segments identified during the development of candidate personas. Leveraging individual communication preferences, value, and purpose for various personas alongside the key messaging from employer brand development should create a series of effective, flexible, and targeted messages.

It can be helpful to begin by identifying broad key messages to promote, then continue to refine over time in advance of the actual promotion activity. For example, a broad key message for an upcoming job fair at a local university may be "LHDs are a great place close to home to gain experience." As the job fair approaches, the messaging will need to become more specific and creative, such as "AnyTown LHD has helped 200 students like you start their career right here in AnyTown over the past two years" and "Keep your roots strong and stay local while continuing to develop your career skills."

Tailor Messages and Channels to Fit Personas

Candidate personas are especially useful in selecting appropriate messages, channels, and platforms to advertise openings and source candidates from.

The right message

Understanding personas will make it easier to recognize what messages may be most meaningful. The motivation and interest behind choosing a new employer may be very different for an RN than for an Environmental Health Specialist, for example. The job features that are highlighted in recruitment messaging should be thoughtful and reflective of this. See **Table 4** on the following page for examples of how this might look different based on audience segments.

The right channel

Part of persona development is defining potential channels for receiving information, such as social networks and trusted sources of industry information. Platforms and channels may vary based on specific job openings and your candidate personas. For instance, perhaps data indicates that nurses in the region tend to be easier to reach through Facebook, while administrative and operations positions spend more time on LinkedIn. Beyond social media, also explore local or state-based industry groups related to each job type. What is their web presence like? What about upcoming events? Now you know where to invest!

For each candidate segment, consider these sources of information as you begin to develop a communications plan. The table below shares examples specific to 4 job types that can be used as a model. More information

about determining where to promote recruitment efforts can be found in Strategy 4.

Create job ads with impactful messages.

A common approach to attracting qualified candidates is to adapt the job description itself. However, in thinking about how to market recruiting efforts, it's important to look beyond job descriptions and consider job ads. This increases flexibility and creativity, allowing the employer brand to emerge.

- A job description is developed as an internal document that describes the roles and functions of the position, often driven by compliance requirements.
- A job ad is designed to attract and market the open position and should highlight positive features of the position and should serve as a sales piece.

Note: Some organizations find it easier to start by modifying the marketing piece — the job ad — due to policy or job requirement restrictions. Compelling language in an introductory or cover email to share the position can also be effective if limitations exist.

TABLE 4: Sample Messaging and Channels by Candidate Segment

AUDIENCE	SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA RECRUITING POST	WHERE THEY MAY RECEIVE INFORMATION		
Epidemiology	Love working with data? So do we! At [Local Health Department Name], we empower our epidemiologists to use data to drive impactful decisions and strategies. Join us and turn data into action. #DataScience #EpidemiologyJobs We're all about groundbreaking research. Join us in conducting meaningful studies and research that shapes public health policies. Make your mark with us. #ResearchJobs #EpidemiologistJobs	**Social networks:** • X • LinkedIn	**Industry groups / sources:** • American College of Epidemiology • Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists • Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America • International Epidemiological Association • The Epidemiology Monitor • American Journal of Epidemiology	**Job boards:** • Science careers
Environmental Health	Calling all environmental enthusiasts! 🌍If you're dedicated to creating a healthier, safer community, we want you on our team. Explore our Environmental Health Specialist position and apply now [Link]. #EnvironmentalHealth #CommunityWellbeing #JobOpportunity 🌿Want to make a positive impact on your community's health and environment? We're hiring Environmental Health Specialists! Apply now [Link]. #PublicHealth #EnvironmentalJobs #JoinOurTeam	**Social networks:** • X • LinkedIn • Meta	**Industry groups / sources:** • National Environmental Health Association • Environmental Health Perspectives • Journal of Environmental Health	**Job boards:** • Association of Environmental and Resource Economists • The Green Jobs Board
Nursing	At [Local Health Department], we value your well-being. Our Nurse Managers enjoy a healthy work-life balance, allowing you to excel in your career while cherishing your personal life. Discover a better way to work in healthcare. #WorkLifeBalance #NursingLeadership Are you passionate about closing healthcare disparities? Join us in the fight for health equity. As a Nurse Manager, you'll lead initiatives to ensure everyone in our community has equal access to quality care. Make a difference with us. #HealthEquity #NursingLeadership	**Social networks:** • X • LinkedIn • Meta	**Industry groups / sources:** • American Nurses Association • Council of Public Health Nursing Organizations • Nurse.org	**Job boards:** • The American Nurses Association • Nurse.com • NursingJobCafe.com
Accounting *(as example of administrative roles)*	📊💲We're looking for an Accounting Manager to be the financial steward of community health. If you're dedicated to making a difference, apply now and help us create a healthier future together! 🧰💼 #CommunityHealth #AccountingManager Join Our Team of Financial Heroes 📊🧰➕🧑‍⚕️👩‍⚕️Make a difference with your accounting skills! We're seeking an Accounting Manager to support community health initiatives. Join us in the fight for a healthier community! 💼💚 #AccountingJobs #PublicHealth #JoinOurTeam	**Social networks:** • X • LinkedIn	**Industry groups / sources:** • American Institute of CPAs • Accountant Forums • The Journal of Accountancy	**Job boards:** • Career Bank • Going Concern

Tips for effective job ads

- Be clear. Write job ads in such a way that they are easy to understand without a lot of explanation. Simplifying things will take more time, but it will pay off.

- Describe what's in it for the applicant. Instead of 'we are looking for…' use language like "You will have the opportunity to…"

- Convey the brand tone and feel within the description. Keep in mind that the LHD is a service organization, doing good for the community. The description should reflect that with a warm and caring in your tone.

- Align with the LHD employer brand. This is a great opportunity to leverage the employer brand! What elements of this brand might be compelling to someone who is less familiar with the great work of public health?

- Describe the tangible aspects of the position such as pay and benefits. If there are other less traditional benefits, you should describe them here. These can range from 'hybrid work model' to 'involvement in the community', 'get your hands dirty in our community garden', etc.

- Include a clear call-to-action, or CTA. This refers to whatever you want them to do. For example, 'Apply here,' 'call to speak with us,' or 'click here for more information.'

Video-based job ads

According to the Society for Human Resource Managers (SHRM), including a short video in a job ad has been shown to increase applicants by 46%. Learn more **here**. Click the image below for a recruitment video from the U.S. Space Force:

SPOTLIGHT

SPOTIFY JOB ADS HIT THE RIGHT NOTE

Spotify, the streaming music service, leveraged it's core deliverable, music, for recruitment. They created a **customized playlist** and circulated it widely. When looking across the playlist's song titles, listeners see a clear call to action emerge to help them apply for developer jobs.

LHD ADAPTATION IDEA:

What is it about LHD's that can be a fun, representative innovation that candidates remember? Scavenger hunts at community functions? Geocaching of job openings? Or maybe embracing **songs about healthcare** for a fun musical campaign like Spotify.

Join the Band
with spotify
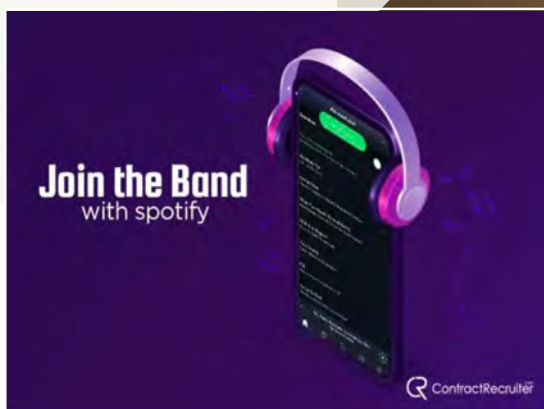
STRATEGY

04

Decide where to promote and advertise.

This strategy includes information on:

- Ways to assess current recruitment advertising effectiveness

- 4 channels to increase visibility
  - Job boards
  - Job fairs
  - Social media
  - Word of mouth

- Innovations in advertising

STRATEGY 4:
Decide where to promote and advertise.

Understanding current advertising effectiveness

In a fast-changing, tight hiring environment like most organizations across the country are working under, it's critical to stand out from the crowd. Waiting for the right candidates to come to an organization's website isn't enough. Before setting up new strategies, it can be useful to assess the effectiveness of efforts the LHD is already using.

How do you know if advertising efforts are achieving what you expect them to? There are a few metrics to explore to get a baseline understanding of what has worked well in the past.

Source of hire

What drove the candidate to complete the application? A specific partner's website or a social media ad promoting working for the LHD? A job board or a QR code shared at a Job Fair? If your communications team has capability to set up analytics for you, you'll be able to easily pull reports. In many cases, your job website likely asks "How did you

learn about this opening?". This can be another great place to collect source of hire data.

Number reached

Each advertising strategy in this section can quantify how many were reached, whether it's in-person or online engagement. Specific metrics could include things like the number of clicks on job board post or digital ad or number of visitors to Job Fair booth.

Job boards

The LHD likely has a handful of identified job boards that openings are regularly posted Depending on organizational policies and opportunities, review current strategies for job boards and consider if there are other opportunities. While job boards like Indeed and Google for Jobs offer a wide audience, you may find that there are others that are more niche for those you are looking to hire.

Depending on the type of job opening, it may be best to use job boards with a wide reach, or job boards that are very specific to candidate segments. Top job boards include Indeed, Google for Jobs, GlassDoor, and LinkedIn. Each of these offers significant national reach and a variety of job posting options. Pricing and content options vary.
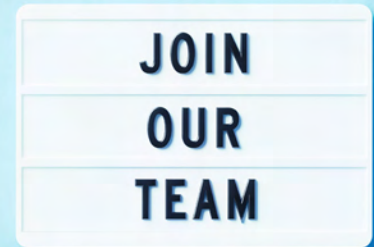
See **Appendix 1** for a job boards list with some options more specific to healthcare, public health, and the specific roles your organization may be hiring the most for.

What to consider in selecting job boards

- Price: Is it a flat fee, monthly subscription, or something different? How does the overall cost fit with your budget and needs?

- Audience and reach: How many candidates does the board reach overall? How many do they reach for roles and positions you are likely to seek to fill the most often? Remember, quantity isn't the only thing that matters, and consider the quality of the lead you would be receiving for your specific openings.

- Skills tests, screenings, and other features: Do they have any specialized features related to skills you are seeking? What can the job board offer to help you better screen candidates?

- Formats and promotions: Does the job board limit how you create your job ad in a way that would impact your employer brand strategy? Are you able to promote, boost, or otherwise raise visibility of your posting to stand out from the crowd?

Job fairs

Job fairs are a great strategy, as long as it is promoted effectively in advance to get the right candidates to attend. Whether the health department is hosting the event or participating in an external job fair, it is worth it to invest time to get the word out to those who may already be in your candidate pipeline. This can create an efficient way to reach a higher volume of people in one setting, especially for roles with to multiple openings.

Creative ways to promote your upcoming job fair participation

Many of the advertising strategies within this Toolkit can be used to specifically highlight an upcoming job fair. Here are a few innovative ways to consider getting the word out to reach a diverse, skilled workforce:

- Work with the job fair host to amplify their planned promotion of the event.

- Use QR codes on places that are highly visible within the community, and especially within partner organizations that may have reach.

- Add testimonials from existing employees to social media campaigns.

- Create physical, visual displays at the job fair location in advance to help increase attention of nearby traffic, such as bright signage with clear messaging.

- Provide flyers that can be easily distributed in community and faith-based settings with event location and time.

- Use the department's network. Create a simple incentive program to encourage your broad staff to reach out to people and community organizations they know so they can invite them to your job fairs. They can also share social media

posts via their own profiles. Make sure you provide a description of openings so they can represent them accurately.

Have a presence at job fairs, even next to the "big guys"

It can sometimes feel overwhelming to participate in larger job fairs in a room of potential competitors for the same candidate pool. This is the time to let the department's employer brand shine! While the LHD may not have the biggest display at the booth, or the most expensive raffle or game to offer, they do have the brand of public health, the organization, and the community members to stand strong in.

- Do research in advance to understand who may be attending the event. While you may not have names, you can likely get profile information of who has attended similar events in the past, or demographics on who has registered for this event, if there is a function for this.
- Use visual elements that showcase more about the good work of the organization. Consider videos such as "day in the life" to help really bring the experience to life for attendees.
- Focus on where the department shines! You won't be able to compete with everyone on salary, but you may be able to win them over with the non-salary benefits like the culture of health within the organization.
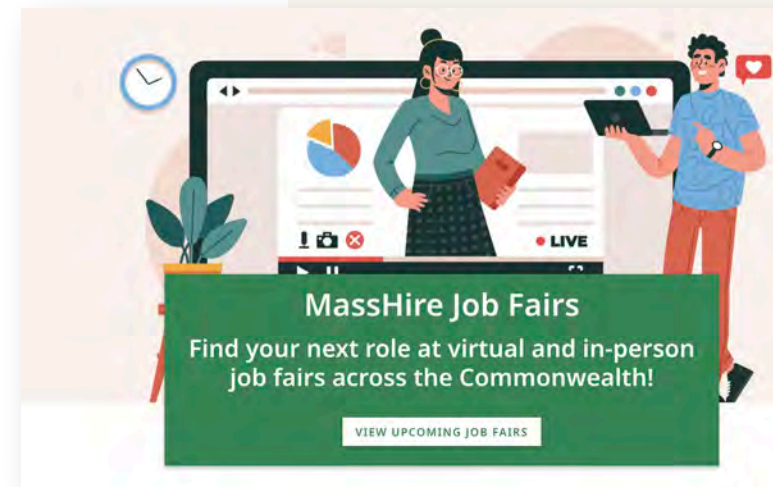
Social media

Social media can be an effective way to increase reach to new candidate pools. It's important to note that social media changes quickly, and it is best to seek the most current updates prior to conducting recruitment campaigns through these channels. Be sure to review any company policies for use of each platform prior to developing a communications plan. Information in the following section is current as of December 2023.

SPOTLIGHT

MASSHIRE STATEWIDE JOB FAIR

In 2021, a number of agencies across Massachusetts joined together to host the MassHire Statewide Job Fair. This included partners from the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, and the Massachusetts Department of Revenue.

MassHire Job Fairs
Find your next role at virtual and in-person job fairs across the Commonwealth!
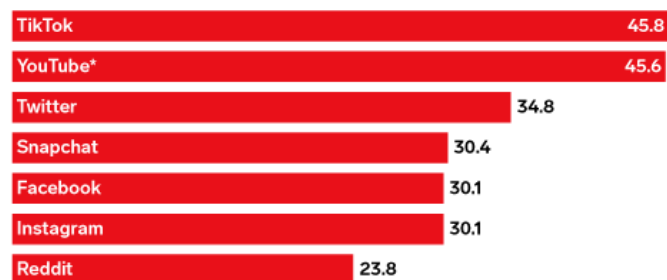
VIEW UPCOMING JOB FAIRS

Platforms

Each platform comes with unique opportunities and limitations, and communications can be thought of as either organic or paid, as described below. Some of the current top social media platforms are described in Table 5 to the right, along with a brief description. Information about users may be helpful in determining which location may be most suited for various candidate personas. The content types can inform specific assets that are developed for different platforms.

It can also be helpful to think about the amount of time users spend on each social media platform. If paid social media (described below) is part of the communications plan, time spent on a site can give insights into likelihood candidates may see promoted content.

Average Time Spent per Day by US Adult Users on Select Social Media Platforms, 2022

minutes

Platform	Minutes
TikTok	45.8
YouTube*	45.6
Twitter	34.8
Snapchat	30.4
Facebook	30.1
Instagram	30.1
Reddit	23.8

Note: ages 18+; time spent with each medium includes all time spent with that medium, regardless of multitasking; for example, 1 hour of multitasking on desktop/laptop while watching TV is counted as 1 hour for TV and 1 hour for desktop/laptop; *YouTube includes all time watching video on YouTube via any device; includes YouTube TV
Source: eMarketer, April 2022

275182   eMarketer | InsiderIntelligence.com

TABLE 5: Social Media Platform Snapshot*

PLATFORM	USERS	CONTENT
LinkedIn	930 million members. Largest age group is 30-39, with 57% male. Usage is more often weekly.	B2B text, image, video
Facebook (Parent company Meta)	Largest site with over 3 billion monthly users, 200 million business accounts, and over 7 million advertisers. Largest age group is 25-34, and 56% male.	Text, image, video, and story formats.
Instagram (Parent company Meta)	2 billion monthly users. Largest age group is 18-24, with a strong footprint for Millenials and Gen Z. 52% male.	Photo, video, and reels formats.
X (Formerly Twitter)	556 million monthly users. Largest age group is 18-29, and 61% male. 1/3 of users are college educated.	Short-form text
Youtube (Parent company Google)	2.5 billion monthly users. Largest age group is 15-35, the widest range of current platforms, and 52% female.	Video, short-form video
Tiktok	Fastest growing site with 1 billion monthly users. Largest age group is 18-24, and 54% female.	Short-form video

Current as of Toolkit publication.

◀ *Usage data is updated each year, and more details can be found* **here***.*

Consistency is key

Social media is only as effective as the number of impressions it makes (individuals who view it). Across any platform, this is directly related to the number of connections or followers. To increase these followers, it is important to post on a consistent basis. Think about the type of content that can be posted when there are not current job ads or openings being promoted. For each platform the LHD uses, consider how to establish a regular cadence relating to recruitment. Be sure to update the Communications Plan with dates of planned outreach and define how this will be carried out (by who and when).

Basics of social media content development

Each platform has unique requirements for types of content, and even parameters within those types. These continue to evolve quickly, but information below is current as of release of this Toolkit.

Text based content

Character limits
Most social media platforms have specific character limits that must be followed for text or written content, especially for their paid ad formats. This means key themes and messages that may have been defined for candidate segments must be written in very concise, direct ways. Here are current character

limits on popular social media platforms:

- *X (Formerly Twitter):* 280 characters
- *Instagram:* 125 characters (recommended max for ads)
- *Facebook:* 125 characters (recommended max for ads)
- *LinkedIn:* 150 characters (recommended max for ads)

How to use hashtags
There are a lot of do's and don'ts when it comes to effectively using hashtags – the # sign on keyboards that serves as a way to tag topics and themes on various platforms. Using hashtags is essentially a way to group together conversations or content around a certain topic, making it easy for people to find content that interests them. This creative use of a key phrase allows users to quickly find terms that relate to them. In many instances, social media users may have set up a variety of hashtags that relate to things they are looking for. This means that while they may not be specifically searching for information about the department, they may find posts by hashtag topic and find the LHD opening. Hashtags can be used on just about any social media platform, but they're most popular on Twitter and Instagram.

Here are a few things to consider:

- The phrase should start with # and not use any spaces or additional symbols or punctuation.

- Accounts that are using hashtags must be public, or non-followers will not be able to see and interact with the post.

- The best hashtags are concise (use fewer words) and specific enough to allow potential candidates to more easily use or view the tag.

- Limit the number of hashtags per post to avoid creating a post that is perceived as spam.

Images

Including photos and/or graphics can help make the content more compelling. Free resources like Canva can be used for this, as there are many free templates that are relatively easy to customize in social media-friendly sizes. These resources were made to be user-friendly, so you do not need to have design skills or any special software to create visuals. A few things to consider:

- **Consistency with brand:** Images should clearly support the employer brand. Think about the feelings the brand conveys. Does the image support this?

- **Representative of candidate pool:** Images should reflect diverse individuals that reflect the community the LHD serves and receives candidates from.

- **Accessibility:** Be sure all images meet accessibility standards as defined by the American Disability Association (ADA). This includes adaptations such

as alt-text, closed captioning, and color contrast. Confirm the latest ADA standards online before new design work.

- **Meets requirements for specific social media platform:** Each platform has specific requirements for image types and sizes. Here are specifications as of Toolkit release:

TABLE 6: Social Media Image Sizes 2024*

|	INSTAGRAM	FACEBOOK	X	LINKEDIN	TIKTOK
Profile photo	320 x 320	170 x 170	400 x 400	400 x 400	200 x 200
Landscape	1080 x 566	1200 x 630	1600 x 900	1200 x 627	1920 x 1080
Portrait	1080 x 1350	630 x 1200	1080 x 1350	627 x 1200	1080 x 1920
Square	1080 x 1080	1200 x 1200	1080 x 1080	1080 x 1080	1080 x 1080
Stories	1080 x 1920	1080 x 1920	N/A	N/A	1080 x 1920
Cover photo	N/A	851 x 315	1500 x 1500	1128 x 191	N/A

Current as of Toolkit publication.

Videos

The best videos for social media may not be those that cost a lot to professionally produce. Sometimes, the more candid and real-world a social media post feels, the wider it may spread (think viral posts!). Of course, it is best to use a quality camera to capture any video, but don't feel like it has to be sent to a production company to be cleaned up before it is used. Shorter videos (:10-:30 seconds) typically work better across platforms, especially stories or reels and should be used to entice potential candidates to click deeper into the application process. Longer videos can also be utilized but should be under 2 minutes and are better suited for YouTube.

When possible, videos should capture the people and places that define the health department. Think about opportunities to capture employees at work doing activities that reinforce the brand of the department. These can yield great "day in the life" videos. Another great opportunity includes employee testimonials. Brief video clips that allow current employees to highlight things about their role and the organization can be very impactful for candidates.

SPOTLIGHT
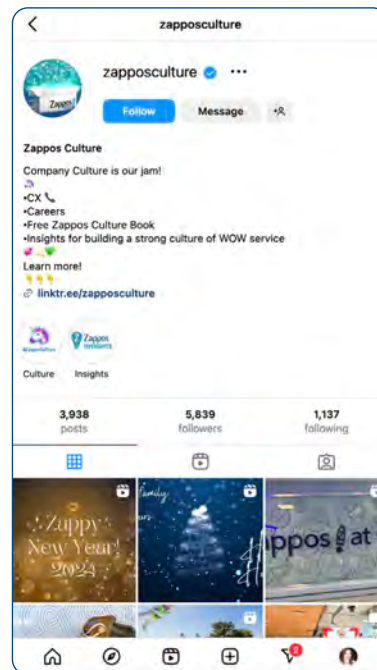
ZAPPOS EMBRACES INSTAGRAM TO HIGHLIGHT EMPLOYER BRAND

Zappos, a large retailer, uses Instagram to bring to life what it is like to work for their company. They use behind-the-scenes photos and videos to highlight key activities and events, as well as day-to-day office happenings. Employee stories and hashtags keep it active, so it's a great place for them to also post new job openings.

LHD ADAPTATION IDEA:

Capture images of employees making an impact in the community. There may be existing photos that can be repurposed to better align with the employer brand, or capture photos and videos that depict the fun and rewarding environment of the LHD. The list below includes the types of content that would support this effort. If the department has an Instagram page, find out if it can be added. If not, consider posting this from a personal account (if allowed) and tagging the department (use the @ symbol). You can increase visibility by using hashtags (the # symbol) with key phrases, such as #workforAnyTown and #publichealthcareers.

VETERANS UNITED HOME LOANS BRINGS BRAND TOGETHER ACROSS PLATFORMS

Veterans United used their employer brand to bring word-of-mouth and social media campaigns together. They created a referral network for current employees and encourage promotion of the hashtag #VUrocks. The hashtag and related pages have a strong, consistently branded presence on Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and X. Employees post pictures from throughout their day and share highlights of the great things about their job. The collegial tone continues to their online job portal.

LHD ADAPTATION IDEA:

Consider identifying a series of consistent hashtags employees can use to share work experiences. Make sure the terms you select are clearly tied to your organization, and if possible strengthen the employer brand. Find ways to spread the word with employees about using the hashtag(s) you identify.

Organic social media

Organic social media posts (e.g., posts on the department's owned sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook, or Instagram) are an effective way to connect with potential candidates, reinforce the employer brand and provide engaging messages such as:

- Highlighting non-salary benefits of working at your LHD
- Providing "day in the life" content
- Celebrating current employee milestones
- Sharing information specific to the community (e.g., "why it's great to live in [county]").
- Showcasing LHD presence at job fairs, community events, etc.

Tips for effective organic social media

- **Use various messages and content formats.** Having a variety of posts makes it easier to connect with more potential employees, including those who aren't local, It can also make positions at the LHD more compelling, even before someone reads a job description.
- **Build consistency.** Plan to post 1-2 times total per week. Use the communications plan to prepare for this, and where various platforms allow, set posts up in advance to send on a schedule.

- **Build habits to support social media posts.** When new job openings are posted on the department's website, promote them right away on social media.

Paid social media

Paid social media, such as placing display ads or creating keyword searches to promote the employer brand, are a great way to target specific segments of a population. Each platform has different requirements, but they are relatively easy to navigate by working directly through their instructions to create a simple campaign. Here are a few to consider, if budget allows:

- LinkedIn
- Meta
- Google Search

Consider how to use this in a very targeted way to help create awareness of the job opportunities at the LHD, attract qualified candidates, and showcase the department as an employer that values public health and well-being.

Tips to monitor and adapt paid campaigns

- Use tools like Google Analytics or platform-specific data to monitor performance of your targeted ads regularly. This will provide information such as number of impressions (views), clicks, and as desired, monitoring of a specific action taken,

like visiting the department's career page or downloading a job description.

- Adapt the paid digital strategy and budget allocations based on which messages and placements are reaching the persona you are seeking to reach in the most effective way. For example, a specific image and tagline may resonate more and produce more clicks than a different ad. The ad creating more action may need to be promoted more in the future.

See **Appendix 1** for sample social media templates.

Use the right keywords to set up audiences for paid ads.
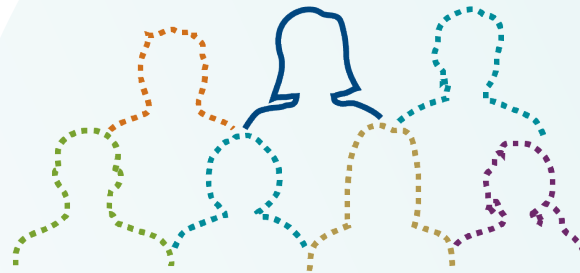
- Simply use the title with a career term, such as: "Accountant jobs," "Accounting positions," "Environmental Health Careers."
- If you are looking to fill leadership positions, add additional key words such as: "Nurse Manager careers," "Accounting Manager positions."
- Focus even more by adding public health terms, such as: "Public health epidemiology jobs," "Nursing careers health department."
- Keep it local by adding geographic parameters such as: "Environmental health jobs in (State / City)."

Word of mouth – get current employees talking!

Word of mouth and referral efforts among current employees can be a highly valuable recruitment tool for LHDs for a number of reasons, including:

- **Quality Candidates:** Current employees are likely to refer individuals who they believe are a good fit for the organization. This can lead to a higher quality pool of candidates who are already pre-vetted to some extent.

- **Cultural Fit:** Employees are more likely to refer individuals who they believe will align with the department's culture, values, and mission. This can improve overall team cohesion and productivity.

- **Cost-Effective:** Compared to traditional recruitment methods, employee referrals are often more cost-effective. They can reduce advertising and recruitment agency costs.

- **Retention:** Referred candidates tend to have higher job satisfaction and better retention rates because they often have a better understanding of the organization's expectations and culture.

Tips for employee referral programs

It can be very effective to develop (or enhance) a more structured employee referral program with clear guidelines and incentives. This might even include

rewards such as bonuses, additional time off, or recognition for successful referrals.

- **Engage Leadership:** Encourage department leaders and managers to actively participate in the referral program. When leadership is involved, employees are more likely to follow suit. This may mean creating a testimonial video or sharing a job post on social media.

- **Offer Regular Internal Communication:** Regularly communicate the importance of referrals and the types of candidates the department is looking for. Use staff meetings, newsletters, and intranet to spread the message. You can also host referral workshops, training sessions, or an online portal to educate employees on how to effectively refer candidates. Provide them with tools and resources to make the process easier.

- **Provide a Clear Feedback Loop:** Establish a feedback loop with employees who make referrals. Keep them informed about the progress of their referrals and thank them for their efforts.

- **Maintain Confidentiality:** Assure employees that their referrals will be treated confidentially and that there won't be any negative consequences for referring unsuccessful candidates.

SPOTLIGHT

IKEA GETS CREATIVE WITH JOB AD PLACEMENT

Ikea, the widely known furniture company, found a new way to get their job openings in the hands of candidates. Recognizing their own customers could be a great source of employees, they created "career instructions" that resembled their well known assembly instructions. By adding these to furniture packaging, Ikea got job postings directly into candidate's homes. This led to over 4000 applicants and 280 new hires. **Here's a quick video** to see more about their story.

IKEA is expanding rapidly in Australia
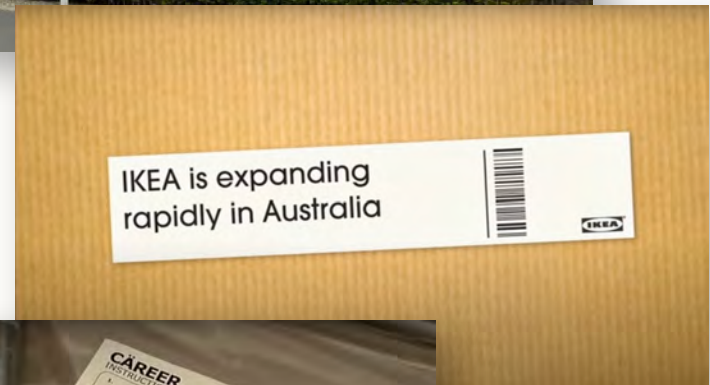
STRATEGY
05

Leverage partnerships to increase recruitment reach.

This strategy includes information on:

- Role of partnerships in recruitment marketing

- Ways to assess existing partnerships

- Types of partners to consider

- Actions to strengthen partnerships for recruitment

STRATEGY 5:
Leverage partnerships to increase recruitment reach.

Importance of partnerships in recruitment marketing

Partnerships are an essential component of the work public health does daily. Partners are considered in how to fund, implement, and evaluate the work your organization does. Is the department leveraging partners for workforce development efforts? Specifically, how are partners helping to get the word out to qualified candidates, particularly in communities or neighborhoods where they may have more influence? Consider the impact on reach, and in turn the ability to better fill the department's candidate pipeline if mutually beneficial partnerships were in place to support promotion efforts related to open positions. Formats and promotions: Does the job board limit how you create your job ad in a way that would impact your employer brand strategy? Are you able to promote, boost, or otherwise raise visibility of your posting to stand out from the crowd?Job boards

Assess your partnerships

Across the department, it is likely that there are partnerships with a significant number of organizations to support planning, implementation, and monitoring of various services. A first step in leveraging these partnerships for recruitment is to identify who key partners are, who can influence decision makers at the partner organizations, and understand existing working dynamics.

Who to partner with

There are three key stakeholder types detailed each in the sections that follow:

- Federal, state, and local government agencies
- Academic institutions
- Community and non-profit organizations

Federal, state, and local government agencies

Local health departments sit alongside several other departments that can be leveraged in marketing and recruiting efforts. Here are a few ideas that can be tailored:

- Reach out to the state Department of Labor to learn more about workforce development and career center programs and priorities.
- Partner with the state Department of Education to identify and leverage existing partnerships with academic institutions to create referral networks.
- Coordinate with unions that represent your workforce to raise the importance of reach into new candidate pools.
- Leverage employees to help build word-of-mouth referrals and better understand perspectives on employment.

Academic institutions

While 76% of LHDs accept students from academic institutions as trainees, interns, or volunteers, only 31% are actively recruiting graduates from academic institutions. LHDs serving small markets (<50,000) and those in rural areas are considerably less likely to engage in active recruitment[2]. These represent missed opportunities with potential partners who can create a pipeline of public health workers. While it takes time to build and maintain

this partnership, it is an investment every LHD should consider.

Collaborating with university career services can bring several benefits to a local health department. Universities are a valuable source of talent, particularly for entry-level and internship positions. By working together, LHDs can tap into a pool of motivated and educated individuals who are often eager to contribute to their communities. Additionally, partnerships with universities can enhance the department's reputation, build relationships with academic institutions, and foster a pipeline of future public health professionals.

Think beyond big universities and their public health programs.

It's easy to focus on the big universities, especially those with schools of public health, yet the 2021 Public Health Workforce Interests and Needs Survey showed that **only 9% of LHD respondents hold a specialized degree in public health[3].** To widen the candidate pool, LHDs should consider other academic settings to reach potential employees. Community colleges are a great option, yet less than half of all LHDs are engaging with them. The sections that follow highlight other opportunities beyond large, traditional universities with schools of public health.

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[2] NACCHO 2019 profile, p 34
[3] NACCHO 2019 profile, p 36

Community colleges and technical schools

Community colleges and technical schools can offer a motivated, racially, geographically, and ethnically diverse group of students to pursue public health related training and education. This may include more students who are already in the workforce and seeking technical based certificates. Additionally, community colleges offer an opportunity for LHDs to better align with a workforce that is reflective of their local community.

Minority serving colleges and universities

Partnerships with historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and other universities advancing minority enrollment can be extremely valuable to the LHD, the university, and the students by bringing public health and candidates who may otherwise not be reached. Another key benefit of working with these institutions is the vast networking opportunities they offer. Whether through alumni groups, clubs, or simply the personal networks they offer.

Local school districts

Some LHDs already provide clinical services within some area school settings. This can be a great opportunity to open doors to reach students earlier in their career contemplation, such as middle or high school. Consider working with the local school district to incorporate public health into career planning activities or curriculum.

STRATEGY IN PRACTICE

REACHING HISPANIC & LATINO UNDERGRAD STUDENTS

Led by the Society of Public Health Education (SOPHE), the Step-Up Pipelines Program encourages Hispanic and Latino students to pursue undergraduate degrees in public health and health education. Six partnering Hispanic Serving Institutions participate, and support students to attend sessions, meet with a mentor, and connect with local SOPHE chapters.

ENGAGING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Reaching job candidates even sooner can increase understanding of what public health does, and why it should be a potential future career consideration. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation implemented a Young Epidemiology Scholars (YES) program for high school students to engage in research projects on specific public health challenges. Nearly 5000 students submitted projects to the competition, with 976 receiving scholarships over the course of 11 years. Of program participants, 74% said their experience in the YES program influenced them to pursue public health work.

TIP FOR LHDS

Remember, students are a vital part of the community and can have an influence on how your brand is received. Increasing visibility to these groups with a strong brand can go beyond filling a recruitment pipeline!

Actions to consider

- **Participate in Career Fairs and Workshops:** Career fairs, job expos, and workshops provides an opportunity to showcase the LHD's work, job opportunities, and career paths within public health. Representatives from the department can interact with students directly, answer questions, and create a positive impression.

- **Offer Internship Programs:** Internships are a great way to introduce students to the workings of a local health department. This can be a great way to overcome misunderstandings about what it's like to work in an LHD. LHDs can collaborate with universities to establish structured internship programs that provide students with hands-on experience. These programs can be credited towards academic requirements, making them attractive to students.

- **Host Mentorship and Networking Events:** Organize mentorship programs or networking events that connect LHD staff with students. These events can facilitate the exchange of information, advice, and experiences, helping students gain insights into public health careers and fostering relationships with potential future employees.

- **Coordinate Guest Lectures and Seminars:** LHD staff can be invited to give guest lectures or seminars in university classes related to public health. This not only helps students learn from professionals in the field but also promotes the LHD as a potential employer. Identify current LHD employees who may already be teaching, or those with interest in expanding their skills. Alumni from the university that are your employees are a great ambassador to engage!

- **Create a Tailored Recruitment Programs:** Work with career services to create targeted recruitment strategies aimed at specific majors or programs related to public health, such as epidemiology, environmental health, or community health. Customize job ads and outreach materials to appeal to students in these fields.

- **Offer Day-in-the-Life Job Shadow opportunities:** Work with community colleges or local schools to offer a day or half-day 'job shadow' program where students follow people on your current team. They would be there as observers and offered the chance to have front row seats to a day-in-the-life of a local public health workers.

Community organizations and non-profits

It's likely that the LHD already has strong partnerships with a variety of community-based organizations and local non-profits. Consider also partnering with these organizations both to recruit workers and to apply for federal or state funding to develop apprenticeship and pipeline programs.

Common goals mean common workforce interests

- **Community-focused:** Both entities prioritize the needs and well-being of the local community they serve. They work to address specific health challenges and provide tailored solutions to improve community health outcomes.

- **Collaboration:** Local health departments and community-based organizations often collaborate with each other and other stakeholders, such as hospitals, schools, and government agencies. This collaboration enhances their collective impact on public health initiatives.

- **Prevention-oriented:** Both entities emphasize preventive measures to reduce health disparities and address health issues proactively. They work to educate and empower individuals to make healthier choices and prevent health problems before they arise.

- **Outreach and education:** Both organizations engage in community outreach and education programs. They disseminate vital information and raise awareness about critical issues. They work to address social determinants of health and remove barriers to equity.

- **Tailored services:** Both organizations often provide services that are tailored to the unique needs of the local population. This customization ensures that the services offered are relevant and

NATIONAL PARTNERS AND PROGRAMS TO HELP DIVERSIFY THE HIRING POOL:

Tear the Paper Ceiling
**www.tearthepaperceiling.org**

This campaign focuses on employees who are skilled through alternative routes (STARs), including up to 50% of the workforce that have developed skill through military, community college, training programs, partial college completion, or on-the-job experience.

Employing Abilities at Work
www.employingabilities.org

This partner is committed to education and resources that build inclusive workplaces. They support HR professionals and others to support the employment lifecycle for individuals with disabilities, who account for approximately 25% of adults.
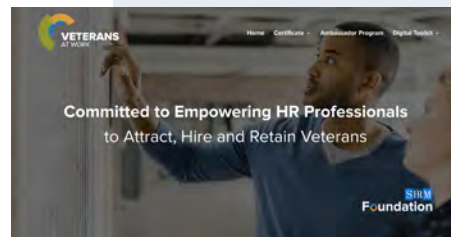
Veterans at Work
www.veteransatwork.org

This partner is committed to empowering HR professionals to attract, hire, and retain veterans. With support from the SHRM foundation, they work to break down barriers in the hiring process and increase support throughout the employment lifecycle.

effective in addressing specific health challenges.

- **Resource management:** Both organizations operate with limited resources and strive to make the most of available funding, volunteers, and partnerships to maximize their impact.

- **Cultural competence:** Both entities recognize the importance of cultural competence. They strive to understand and respect the cultural beliefs and practices of the communities they serve to provide more effective and inclusive services.

Where to start

- **Identify existing partners** across your organization by talking to staff or mining any available partner reports. Take time to understand the existing partnership, and how you may be able to build on it.

- **Find the sweet spot — understand where both organizations' mission and priorities align.** This will help you make a more effective pitch for expanding your partnership into supporting your recruitment efforts.

- **Consider funding key CBOs** to distribute your recruitment efforts. These organizations often have less budget but more reach into the community you are trying to reach.

Actions you can take

A local health department can collaborate with government institutions, academic institutions, and community organizations in several ways to enhance recruitment and hiring of new employees. This is a mutually beneficial relationship that includes joint recruitment efforts, share candidate pools, and coordinate outreach activities.

- **Sharing job postings** through their respective communication channels, such as websites, newsletters, and social media platforms. This broader exposure increases the likelihood of attracting qualified candidates.

- **Coordinating job fairs** that pool their resources to attract a larger number of job seekers. This collaborative effort provides candidates with a comprehensive view of employment opportunities in the local healthcare sector.

- **Facilitating internships** and rotations for students and recent graduates. This provides valuable hands-on experience and serves as a potential talent pipeline for both organizations.

- **Offering training** and professional development opportunities to respective employees on topics that most align with the organizational skills. By enhancing the skill sets of healthcare professionals, this collaboration contributes to an attractive work environment and encourages talent retention.

- **Conducting joint recruitment** and advertising campaigns to promote the advantages of working in the local healthcare system. These campaigns can emphasize the benefits of community involvement and the opportunities for professional growth.

- **Sharing recruitment resources** such as applicant tracking systems, resume databases, and interview tools streamlines the hiring process and optimizes resource allocation.

Refer to **Strategy 4** to learn more about these advertising opportunities.

Summary

Thank you for reviewing the 5 Strategies to Strengthen Marketing of Local Health Department Recruiting Efforts. The strategies contained in this Toolkit should provide LHDs of any size and sophistication to identify ways to take action. As the hiring environment and organizational needs change, it can be useful to revisit this Toolkit over time to consider if additional strategies may be useful to adopt.

The Appendix that follows contains templates to make it easier for LHDs to tailor and adopt the strategies within this Toolkit.

APPENDIX I:
Tools and Templates

This appendix contains tools and templates meant to generate ideas and save time in establishing marketing strategies for the LHD recruitment efforts. Recognizing each LHD has unique needs, these should be adapted to meet the organization's requirements and preferences. Save or copy and paste from these tools to adapt for the LHD's own organization's needs.

- **Tool 1: Meeting Materials** – Establish the LHD Employer Brand and Unique Selling Proposition

- **Tool 2: Candidate persona template**

- **Tool 3: Communications plan**

- **Tool 4: Job board list**

- **Tool 5: Sample social media recruitment messages**

TOOL 1:
Meeting Materials: Establish the LHD Employer Brand and Unique Selling Proposition

This tool supports Strategy 1: Brand your organization as a great place to work.

Purpose:

Convening a meeting with a diverse group of internal team members to gain candid thoughts about the organization's internal and external image can be an effective way to gather perspectives necessary to clearly refine the LHD employer brand and unique selling proposition (USP). Use the information that follows to prepare for and facilitate this type of meeting.able to promote, boost, or otherwise raise visibility of your posting to stand out from the crowd?

Prework:

- Develop a thoughtful invitation list that will allow for distinct perspectives and ideas. This may include those with current marketing or human resource roles, as well as employees who may not be directly involved in the hiring process but are representative of the organization.

- Create excitement and energy with engaging, creative invitation language and if possible, consider related "gifts" like pens, markers and sticky notes that can be shared in advance to set the tone.

- Secure a meeting space and set it up with white boards or other places for participants to add sticky notes for specific questions.

- Copy the Activity 2 Worksheet onto your letterhead and make copies (or send electronically) for meeting attendees.

- Consider developing a few meeting ground rules you can share with participants to lead to increased trust and comfort in an open brainstorming forum.

Sample agenda (90-minute meeting):

- Welcome and overview (5 min)
- What we mean and why it matters: Unique Selling Proposition (5 min)
- Our LHD Unique Selling Proposition: Activity 1 plus debrief (35 min)
- What we mean and why it matters: Employer Value Proposition (5 min)
- Our LHD Employer Value Proposition: Activity 2 plus debrief (35 min)
- Wrap up (5 min)

Facilitator instructions:

Activity 1: Our LHD Unique Selling Proposition

- Remind participants that the USP will focus on "how it will make the applicant feel" about the idea of working at your LHD.

- Provide each participant with the table below. Ask them to brainstorm quietly and make notes for 5 minutes.

- After 5 minutes, break into small groups of 4 (if enough participants) and encourage team discussion and refinement of responses for 10 – 15 minutes.

- Convene all participants together and ask for volunteers to share what their group developed.

- Summarize key themes across groups.

Activity 1 Worksheet: Our Unique Selling Proposition (USP) Brainstorm

CONSIDER THIS ABOUT OUR LHD:	YOUR PERSPECTIVE:
What are our 'only's'? (i.e. "This is the only place where you can____")	
What are our firsts? (This was the first health department where_____ ")	
What are some extraordinary things our LHD or – if possible – this job will do?	
What are our intangibles about the work environment and benefits? (i.e. "Where else would you be able to_____ ")	

Activity 2: Our LHD Employer Value Proposition

- Ask each participant to consider the following and write one response on at least 3 sticky notes. Ask participants to initial their sticky note for follow-up discussion if needed.

  - Think about three ways your LHD adds value to those who work there. Beyond a paycheck and benefits, what does it provide them? Being part of a like-minded team? Pride? Service? The satisfaction of making a tangible difference in their community? What comes to mind for you?

- Instruct participants to take sticky notes to the wall or whiteboard surface. Encourage them to look for other similar topics from their peers, and group their notes in the same area.

- After ten minutes of independent work, reconvene the group. Read aloud some of the common themes from the sticky note and encourage open discussion among the group.

- Use the last 5 minutes of the activity time to ask participants to reflect on what they heard and create 3 updated sticky notes based on this. The notes may say the same thing as the first round, or they may have learned something new they want to include.

TOOL 2:
Candidate Persona Template

The following template supports Strategy 2: Develop candidate personas and segments.

Purpose:

Use the following candidate persona template that can be modified based on organizational data and needs. Refer to sections in Strategy 2 for additional guidance on completing various sections of the template.

Add LHD logo and details here as desired. ▶

HEALTH COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST		SECTION 1: WHO?
	Demographics: *(Age, gender, etc.)*	**Possible Current Employer:** *(Companies for targeting your search)*
	Experience: *(Career level and possible past roles)*	**Educational Background:**
Persona Name: Mary	**Skills:** *(Include skills you can search for)*	**Preferred Social Networks:**
	Interests:	**Trusted Sources of Industry Information:**
	Characteristics and Traits:	**Career Goals:**

HEALTH COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST	SECTION 2: WHAT?
	What is good culture for her?
	What does she love about working at the LHD?
Persona Name: Mary	**What motivates her?**
	What are her interests outside of work?

TOOL 3:
Communications Plan

Purpose:

Use the template below along with information in Strategies 3, 4, and 5 to create a clear plan of what will be communicated to which candidates and when. Replace highlighted fields with information specific to the LHD's planned activities, and add rows as needed.

COMMUNICATION PLAN:

Marketing strategies for (LHD Name) Recruitment efforts

TIMEFRAME:

January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024

OBJECTIVE:

Increase the number of qualified candidates submitting applications to LHD openings.

TIMING	AUDIENCE (Candidate Segment)	ACTIVITY	KEY MESSAGES	CHANNELS	LEAD	NOTES
Mid-January 2024 – March 1, 2024	General	Employer brand campaign		• LinkedIn • Local Career Forums • Earned media		Purpose: Increase awareness of LHD employer brand in the community.
February 6, 2024	Public health students	Job fair at local university	• LHDs are a great place close to home to gain experience. • Student loan forgiveness and professional development programs	Job fair		

TOOL 4:
Job Board List

This resource supports Strategy 4: Decide where to promote and advertise.

Purpose:

The table below provides some online job boards that are more common, as well as some niche boards that may be less familiar. Weigh the importance of each type of posting with the costs and requirements for each job board. Add other known sources to the list, and make available to other team members as desired.

AUDIENCE	SOURCE
General	**Indeed**
General	**Google Jobs**
General	**LinkedIn**
General	**ZipRecruiter**
Public health students and alumni	**Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health (ASPPH)**
Governmental public health *Typically state level*	**Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (NACCHO)**
Nurses	**The American Nurses Association**
Nurses	**Nurse.com**
Nurses	**NursingJobCafe.com**
Nurses	**Health eCareers**
Public health	**American Public Health Association**
Nonprofit	**Nonprofit Connect**
Nonprofit	**Idealist**
Environmental health	**Association of Environmental and Resource Economists**
Environmental health	**The Green Jobs Board**
Accounting and finance	**Career Bank**

TOOL 5:
Sample Social Media Recruitment Messages

These sample messages support Strategy 4: Decide where to promote and advertise.

Purpose:

Consider how these samples could be easily adapted and used with the LHD's existing channels to increase reach and promotion of open positions.

Sample Messages:

- We've made exciting changes to our vacation policy! New, full time employees receive [vacation day/hour details]. This is just one of the many benefits we offer at [LHD] For more information about our benefits and to join our team, visit our Careers page [LINK]

- Our [department name] has a great opportunity for a [position title]. Click on the link to check out the details on this hybrid position and apply today. We look forward to welcoming you to our team!

- We have multiple open positions! Spread the word! We're looking to fill the following roles. APPLY NOW!

- Calling all health care workers: we are seeking new colleagues to join our dedicated and amazing team! See our open positions here: [LINK]

- We're hiring! The [department/program] is looking for a [job title] who wants a great work/life balance of Monday - Friday hours, paid holidays, good benefits and retirement. At [LHD/department], you'll have a positive and healthy environment that offers workforce development, encourages growth and workplace wellness. Interested? Apply today! [LINK]