Northwest Center
FOR PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE

Stories and Science from the Field: Tailored Digital Training to Strengthen the Environmental Health Workforce

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Session Objectives

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- Identify one or more current **key skill areas** for environmental health professionals to succeed in their roles.
- Explain the importance of **customized training** in supporting the sustainability of today's environmental health professionals.
- Review key elements of a **new, no-cost training** series to support environmental public health practice.



Public Health Trivia!

What percentage of the public health workforce is comprised of environmental health professionals?

A. 1%

B. 6%

C. 12%

D. 18%

E. 24%



Who Is the Environmental Health Workforce?

Environmental health (EH) professionals work in areas like:

- Food safety and protection
- Water safety and protection
- Emergency preparedness and response
- School safety
- Vector control

Challenges facing the EH workforce include:

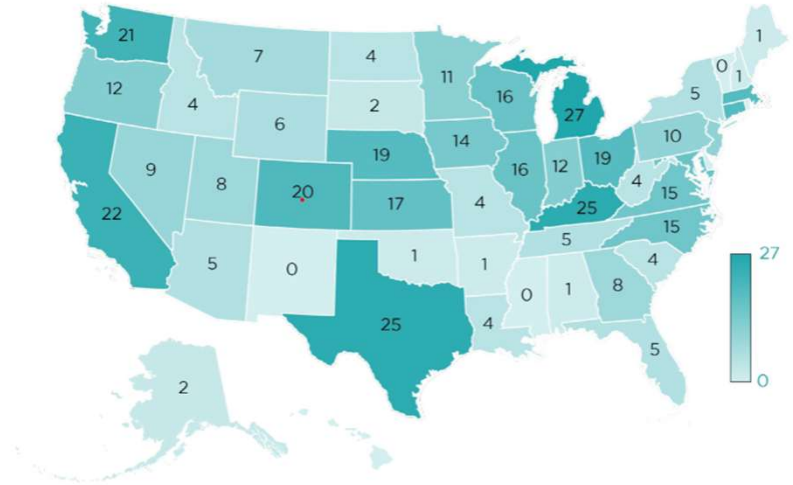
- Aging workforce population
- Recruitment and retention
- Gaps in training/background in environmental health basics

Environmental Health Training Needs Assessment

In 2024, NEHA and NNPHI conducted a **training needs assessment** that was disseminated to hundreds of environmental health professionals across the country.

Responses were collected across a diverse group of jurisdictions and respondents.

FIGURE 1. *State Representation in Training Needs Assessment (n = 477)*



PHIG PARTNERS
Public Health Infrastructure Grant

Source: [Environmental Public Health Training Needs Assessment, Summary of Findings | 2024]

Core Training Needs

Respondents prioritized content by *relevance* and staff *preparedness* in key EH topic areas, including:

- Food safety and protection
- Intersection of environmental and public health
- Pollution prevention
- Hazmat response
- More!



Scientific Competencies

Results showed that the EH workforce needs a **solid grounding in basic sciences** and **greater capability to correlate scientific principles with environmental determinants and human health**.

Data suggested that staff also required training in **explaining scientific justifications for connecting EH hazards to health outcomes**.



Professional Skills

Respondents suggested additional training content on:

- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Cultural competency
- Safety and awareness
- Legal and ethical considerations
- Specialized training needs



Customization of Training

Training needs based on roles and experience:

- Variability in staff background
- Staffing size—small or large agencies
- Specialization in work

Training needs based on regional and geographic differences:

- Resource and access limitations
- Rural vs. Urban training needs

Training Delivery Needs

Preferred training methods include a multifaceted approach, including:

- Blended learning
- Interactive techniques (e.g., video)
- Modular learning
- Mobile-friendly learning

Additionally, recommendations for training content included:

- Introductory orientation
- Scenario-based learning
- Innovative training methods



Think-Pair-Share:

Imagine that you are seeking foundational public health training for yourself or your organization.

What does that training look like? Think creatively!

Kentucky Training Development Partnership



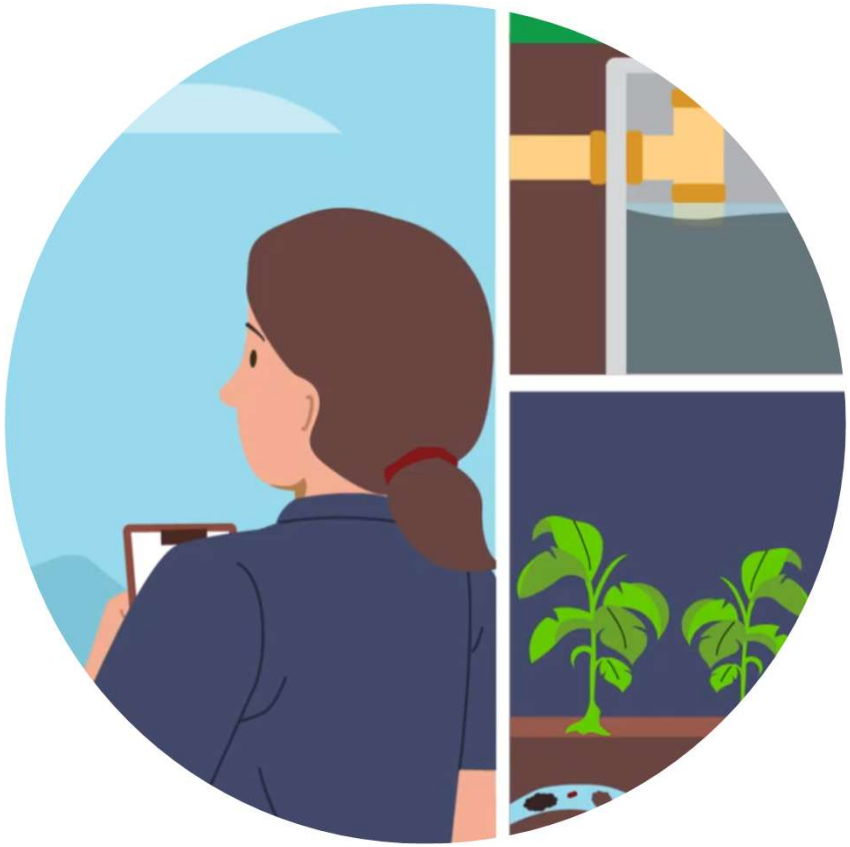
Partnership sought to determine training content that is data-informed and addresses broad EH workforce challenges

Course Topics



- **Module 1: Food Safety**
- **Module 2: Clean Water**
- **Module 3: Recreational Waters**
- **Module 4: Solid and Hazardous Waste**
- **Module 5: Housing and Institutional Health**
- **Module 6: Industrial Hygiene**
- **Module 7: Pests and Vector Control**
- **Module 8: Air Quality**
- **Module 9: Disaster Management**

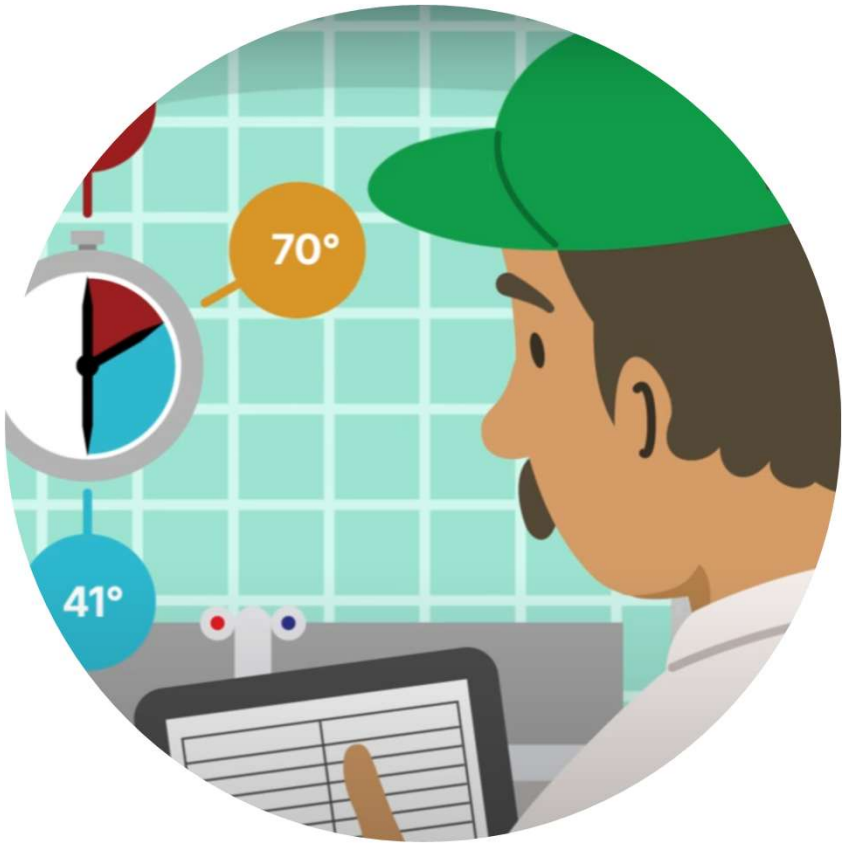
Content Focus



Learning content provides focus on:

- Scientific and professional competencies
- Core skill areas with specialized elements
- Reflection and critical thinking
- Structured learning pathway

Customized Features



Asynchronous delivery with tailored features:

- Persona-based scenarios
- Storytelling elements
- Meets learners/organizations where they are

Start Learning Today!



Environmental Health Essentials:
FROM SCIENCE TO PRACTICE



Environmental Health Essentials:
FROM SCIENCE TO PRACTICE

www.nwcphp.org/training/environmental-health-essentials-science-practice

Acknowledgments

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New Podcast Alert!



From the Washington Integrated Food Safety Center of Excellence and the Northwest Center for Public Health Practice, ***Foodborne*** is a new podcast that shares experiences from the food safety workforce.

Check out Season 1, wherever you get your podcasts!

- RSS Feed
- Apple
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