

In the US, the public health workforce faces significant challenges in recruitment, retention, and development. Addressing these issues is crucial for ensuring a sustainable and competent workforce capable of delivering essential public health services. According to the American Public Health Association, years of underfunding has hurt the ability of the nation's public health system to prepare for public health emergencies and address the growing burden of chronic disease.

Fortunately, your Meigs County Health Department (MCHD) has benefited from Public Health Workforce Grant funds [which are federal funds passed through the Ohio Department of Health (ODH)] since 2021. The current grant, which ends 11/30/27, supports MCHD efforts to recruit, retain and develop its workforce.

Public Health Workforce funding has allowed the MCHD to do the following while saving the General Fund (which is supported by Meigs County residents' property tax levy monies) hundreds of thousands of dollars:

1. Compensate fully one position and partially fund five other staff members
2. Have support for its state-required, national Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) accreditation efforts including community health assessment, Social Return on Investment (SRoI), payment of the annual PHAB fee, software expenses, etc.
3. Provide numerous supervisor and staff trainings (some of which were provided by Holzer's Leadership and Innovation Institute)
4. Purchase supplies including those for employee recognition and a computer
5. Have professional staff portraits and candid photographs of the MCHD at work taken for its website, social media and other promotional materials and agency plans
6. Have the MCHD Employee Policy and Procedure Manual updated by Human Resource professionals at Clemans-Nelson & Associates
7. Contract with a digital marketing firm for website development, maintenance and marketing support
8. Contract for technical assistance with the development of the MCHD's Strategic Plan as well as development of Public Health Core Competency job descriptions
9. Develop the MCHD Employee Wellness Room, which allows for exercise and other stress relief during breaks, lunches and even virtual meetings as well as to contract with The Nook for wellness activities such as stretching, mindfulness and sound therapies for staff
10. Reimburse licensed staff (i.e. registered nurses and environmental health specialists) for biannual renewal fees
11. Contract for development of a Succession Plan for the agency
12. Contract for conduction of an employee engagement survey
13. Grant one-time retention bonuses

Meanwhile, the ODH and Association of Ohio Health Commissioners (AOHC) also receive funding via the Public Health Workforce Grant. Locally, a MCHD employee applied for and received a \$10,000 reimbursement (with a two-year work commitment) toward obtainment of her Bachelor's Degree through the AOHC Tuition Reimbursement Initiative, which was aimed to support employees furthering their skills and education. Overall, a total of 535 individual Ohio health department employees participated and were reimbursed over \$3,000,000 between April 2023 and Aug. 2025.

In conclusion, the MCHD is committed to its vision of being a leader in public health, providing solutions to community health challenges so that people enjoy optimal health in a clean and safe environment and to being a good steward of public funds. This requires the MCHD to recruit, retain and develop competent employees to fulfill its mission to prevent, promote, and protect the health and well-being of Meigs County.

For more information, please contact me via telephone at 740-992-6626 or email Courtney.midkiff@meigs-health.com Monday through Friday from 8AM-4PM. For current job opportunities at the MCHD, visit www.meigs-health.com.

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