

Health Workforce Strategies

Concerns about the supply, diversity, cultural responsiveness, geographic distribution, and safety of the health workforce have reached a critical level across the country. Philanthropy has a role to play in maximizing the health workforce to achieve patient safety, provider wellbeing, equitable access, care quality, and improved health outcomes. Therefore, GIH recently conducted a survey to learn about funders' strategies related to their health workforce investments. This fact sheet summarizes the responses to that survey, which was conducted between October–November 2023 with 57 respondents. The complexity of the survey answers points to the fact that there is not just one unmet need, but a variety of factors causing strain on the system and a range of approaches funders are using to tackle the problem.

Key Takeaways

1 Health workforce is a priority area for respondents.

Of the 57 survey respondents, 98% are investing in or supporting health workforce. All are planning on supporting health workforce activities in the future and 50% are planning to increase funding in the future.

2 Funders support both health workforce retention and the pipeline.

Most respondents (73%) indicated they support continuous learning, training, leadership, and career development activities. Many respondents (69%) indicated they fund pathway programs and scholarships. Significant opportunities exist for more funders to support research and policy, to maximize the impact of recruitment and retention efforts.

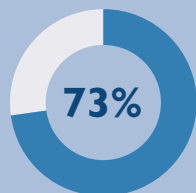
3 Geographic focus remains close to home.

The majority of respondents indicated they fund at the state and local levels (81%) rather than the federal level (17%). This reflects the fact that many survey respondent organizations operate solely at the state and regional levels. However, there are opportunities for funders to collaborate to advance important health workforce policy issues at the federal level, which may alleviate barriers faced at the state and local levels.

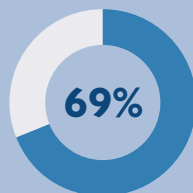
4 Partnership is a key interest.

Most respondents (92%) indicated they are interested in working with other funders on health workforce issues. A majority report partnering with educational institutions and care delivery entities. Funders might also expand their partnerships by engaging with taskforces, commissions, or other state-level agencies.

Health Workforce Strategies Funded



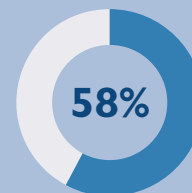
Continuous Learning, Training, Leadership, and Career Development



Pathway Programs and Scholarships



Research, Data, and Evaluation



Policy and Advocacy

Types of Health Practitioners Supported



Types of Partners

Schools, Colleges, Universities



Hospitals, Federally Qualified Health Centers, Other Providers



Other*



State Health Department



State Workforce Commission



*"Other" entities most commonly mentioned were community-based organizations, social service agencies, and nonprofit organizations.

Primary Focus Areas



Primary Care **(71%)**



Behavioral Health **(71%)**



Public Health **(38%)**



Reproductive Health **(27%)**



Oral Health **(25%)**



Long-term Care **(23%)**



Emergency Services **(14%)**

Successes

- Building coalitions with stakeholders, including state health workforce commissions, higher education, care delivery entities, and community members.
- Supporting scholarships, implementing mentoring programs, training community health workers, and strengthening racial diversity in medical schools.
- Championing policy issues that impact recruitment and retention.

Barriers

- Addressing licensure, credentialing, and reimbursement policies.
- Confronting the strong lobbying power of medical associations.
- Encountering bottlenecks for training, including culturally appropriate guidance and lack of available supervision.

Unmet Needs

- Concentrating on the challenges facing the behavioral health and oral health workforce amidst competing priorities in the system.
- Unwavering commitment to increasing the diversity of the health workforce so it reflects the community it services.
- Mitigating turnover and career burnout by focusing on workplace wellness and safety.



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Share this infosheet with your colleagues and funder peers.