

IDENTIFYING NEEDS FOR ADVANCING THE PROFESSION AND WORKFORCE IN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH: A VISUAL ABSTRACT



The environmental health (EH) workforce and evolving leadership

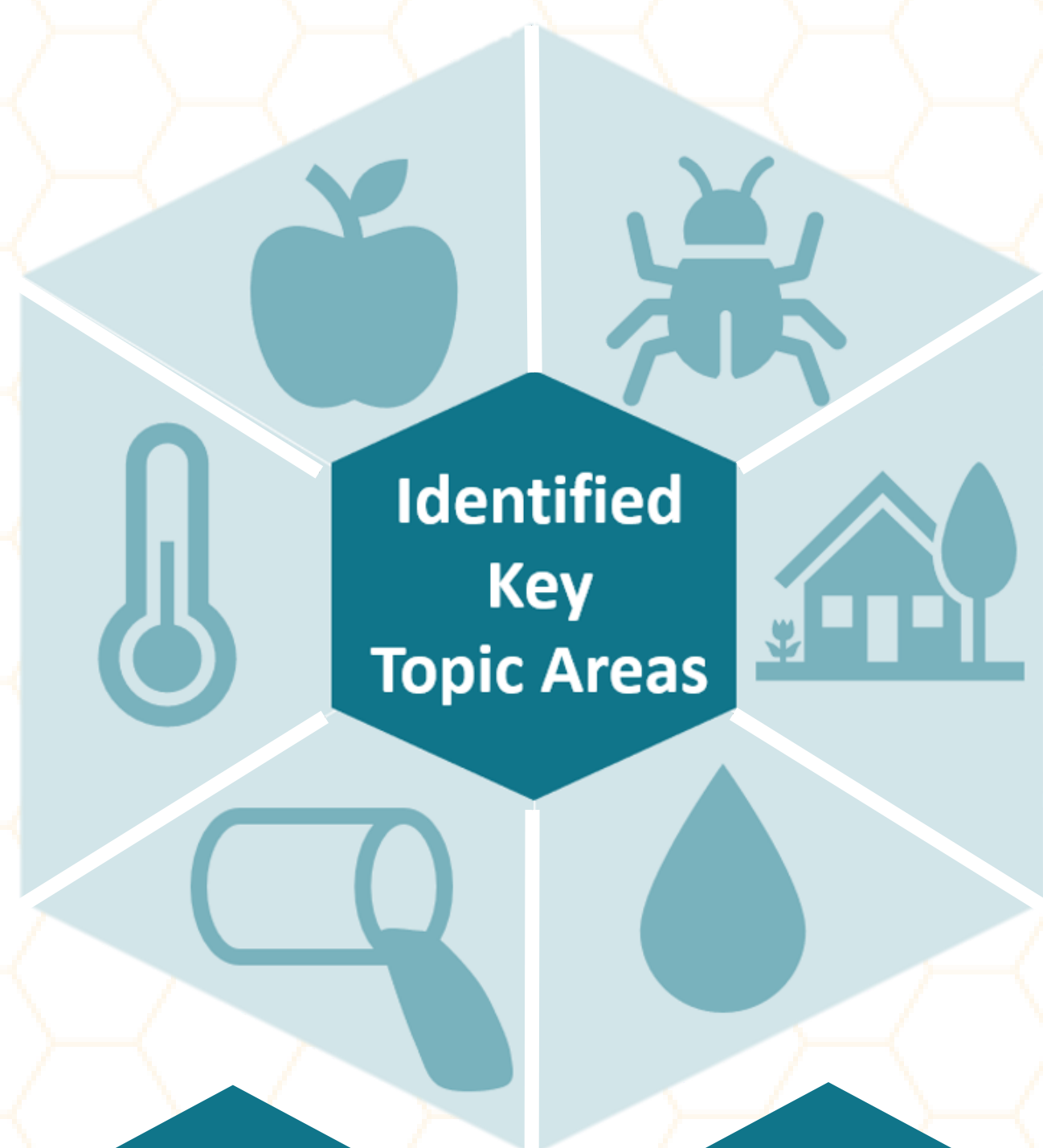
UNCOVER EH is a groundbreaking research initiative that describes the practice, work and challenges of EH professionals. Study participants identified priority workforce issues and challenges facing the EH profession. The recommendations identified in this study offer opportunities to strengthen EH practice.



UNCOVER EH is fulfilling a longstanding need

- UNCOVER EH revealed a range of priority challenges and needs for ensuring the EH workforce is enabled, capable, supported and prepared to respond to current and future public health threats.
- Addressing the 6 challenges for strengthening the EH workforce is crucial for the future of the EH profession.

Online
Survey



Challenges for Strengthening the EH Profession and Workforce

- 1 Equipment and technology** - EH professionals routinely conduct inspections and complex investigations that require sophisticated equipment and technological resources.
- 2 Effective leadership** - Increased knowledge, skills, and competencies are imperative for effectively leading EH programs and professionals.
- 3 Garnering support** - Support for the EH profession fluctuates with changing economic and political conditions and influences, which can lead to inconsistent and unsustainable programs and services.
- 4 Partnerships and collaboration** - Relationships and networking need to be strengthened between EH and partners or stakeholders across regions to address complex traditional and emerging public health issues.
- 5 Information systems and data** - EH information and data management systems are commonly available, yet jurisdictions vary in their capacity and utility of existing data.
- 6 Workforce development** - Standardization of EH professional qualifications, education requirements, and credentialing is necessary to document the profession's effectiveness and value and support workforce development initiatives.

Focus
Groups

Determination
of priority
problems and
needs

1 Equipment and technology. Establish a method for sharing information and resources such as best practices, success stories, and training. These materials demonstrate the utility and benefit of various EH inspection equipment and technologies.

2 Effective leadership. Explore options for leadership development, training and mentorship programs to build competencies. This will require stakeholders to establish the frameworks, develop curriculum, and provide resources and tools.

3 Garnering support. Conduct studies to determine the impact of EH services on improving health outcomes. Resulting data can be used to support awareness, promotion of the profession, and ongoing EH surveillance.

4 Partnerships and collaboration. Produce a framework to assist EH professionals with identifying potential partners and fostering strong, collaborative relationships with governmental and non-governmental agencies, organizations, and other stakeholders.

6 Workforce development. Develop a strategy for standardizing EH professional qualifications, educational requirements, and credentialing. A standardized identity is needed to support accurate and effective workforce development efforts.

5 Information systems and data. Develop guidance and tools, promote resources and training to increase informatics-related workforce competencies. Conduct an evaluation of surveillance systems and the impact of EH services.



Leaders and decision-makers at all governmental and nongovernmental levels have an unprecedented opportunity to consider these findings, derived directly from practicing EH professionals, as they determine strategies, approaches, or allocation of resources to strengthen and enhance the EH profession and workforce.

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Environmental Health Association, and Baylor University have partnered on the Understanding the Needs, Challenges, Opportunities, Vision, and Emerging Roles in Environmental Health (UNCOVER EH) initiative. UNCOVER EH seeks to assess and improve the profession and practice of environmental health. Learn more at www.neha.org/uncover-eh and www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/uncover-eh.