



# Alabama

## Preparing for a Better Tomorrow

Leaders at the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) have recognized that 21st century trends—public health threats, ongoing baby boomer retirements, and shrinking budgets—are converging to change their work and staffing needs in coming years. To meet these challenges, ADPH began working with Auburn University at Montgomery to create a sustainable pipeline of skilled talent. This partnership has trained 80% of the ADPH workforce and prepared the department and its employees to meet the challenges ahead.

### Public Health Problem

Greater numbers of capable public health professionals are needed now in ADPH to tackle and resolve immediate and emerging public health threats successfully. Traditional recruiting, loan repayment help, and training classes are not producing the needed talent pool.

### Key Insights:

- ADPH has 3,000 employees who serve nearly 5 million residents.
- ADPH's Office of Human Resources estimates that more than one-third of department employees will be eligible for retirement in the next 3 years. Because of aging baby boomers in the workforce, this trend will continue.
- Department studies found that certain jobs are essential to ADPH. These include key leadership positions and nine critical job categories, such as epidemiologists, microbiologists, laboratory technologists, and environmental staff.
- Shrinking budgets have limited new hiring at the same time that they have increased employee workloads.
- With the perils of natural disasters, pandemic flus, and other public health emergencies, losing employees with specialized knowledge could put Alabamians at increased risk for disease and injury.

### Taking Action

In 2008, with funding from the PHHS Block Grant, ADPH launched a department-wide workforce development program—the first of its kind in their history—to lessen the adverse effects of so many valued employees' retiring.

During 2008–2012, the following core activities made a difference:

- A task force was formed to conduct employee assessments, examine various succession planning programs, and identify critical job classifications. ADPH used the task force's report to develop a framework and action plan.
- ADPH established a partnership with Auburn University at Montgomery to create the department-wide program, Training and Experience to Advance Managers in Public Health Academy, known as TEAM.
- Staff members wrote and developed training scenarios for TEAM, based on information collected in succession planning meetings and focus groups.
- ADPH set a goal to send every manager and supervisor to TEAM within a 2-year time frame.

### Healthy People Objective

Continuing Education and Training

### PHHS Block Grant Funding

Represents 100%—Total source of funding



### PHHS Block Grant Coordinator

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**For more information on the PHHS Block Grant, go to**  
<http://www.cdc.gov/phhsblockgrant>



**For more information on Healthy People, go to**  
<http://www.healthypeople.gov>

## Impact

Thanks to the PHHS Block Grant, ADPH and their partners Auburn University at Montgomery and TEAM have produced the following results:

- Junior and senior managers participated in a 5-day, intensive management development program that focused on critical skills required to be effective managers.
- Eighty percent of the managerial workforce completed the TEAM program, a new pipeline to identify talented managers interested in pursuing additional training opportunities.
- Precept Training, a new program that grooms individuals for leadership positions, used an internship program to help ADPH fill vacancies created by attrition and retirement.
- Multidisciplinary teams pairing seasoned managers with junior managers have gone beyond the classroom experience to resolve departmental issues.
- Virtual webinars have increased participation in training opportunities and have helped to address staff professional development needs and interests.

These ongoing improvements have accelerated the department's readiness to face the public health challenges of the 21st century.

The Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant is managed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Population Health, in collaboration with state health departments. The PHHS Block Grant supports prevention efforts in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, 8 US territories, and 2 American Indian tribes.

## PHHS Block Grant Supports Alabama Healthy People Priorities

The PHHS Block Grant provides flexible funding that states can use to prevent and control chronic diseases, respond quickly to outbreaks of infections and waterborne diseases, and address their specific public health needs. States can align their programs with health objectives from [\*Healthy People 2020\*](#).

Alabama uses its funds to address seven health objective priorities, including

- Tuberculosis.
- Infections Caused by Key Foodborne Pathogens.
- Continuing Education of Public Health Personnel.
- Sexual Violence (Rape Prevention).
- Waterborne Disease Outbreaks.

For a complete list of funded health objectives, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/phhsblockgrant/stateHPprior.htm>.