Understanding the Recruitment and Retention Needs of the Next Generation

The public health laboratory (PHL) community is challenged to find creative yet practical solutions it can implement to attract, support and sustain the next generation of laboratorians. Data shows that this group, known as millennials*, tends to be a more mobile workforce as compared to previous generations.

### Laboratory Directors

Lab directors identified their top 5 barriers in recruitment and retention of millennials in their laboratory.

#### Barriers to Recruitment

1. The salary scale for employees
2. Lack of required experience
3. Lack of career path for employee growth/opportunity for promotion
4. Lack of required certification or licensure
5. The complexity of administrative bureaucracy

#### Barriers to Retention

1. The salary scale for employees
2. Lack of career path for employee growth/opportunity for promotion
3. The complexity of administrative bureaucracy
4. Continuing education opportunities
5. Lack of workforce engagement, such as reward and recognition, volunteering, potlucks, etc.

### Millennials

Millennials gave suggestions for recruiting, hiring and retaining their generation.

#### Recruitment Suggestions

- Use bench level staff at career fairs / Use personal stories and case studies for recruitment
- Share benefits and other incentives
- Promote university and web-based job sites
- Promote PHLs on social media

#### Retention Suggestions

- Career paths to promote or increase skills and responsibilities
- Competitive pay
- Cross train to reduce redundancy and support growth
- Increased opportunities for networking
- Continuous opportunities for training

### What’s working from a laboratory director perspective?

- "I find free webinars and training for the staff. When I go to conferences I give a presentation on topics that were discussed." — Supervisors meet with their direct reports monthly, one on one, solely focused on professional growth.
- "We advocate for staff to attend trainings and conferences. Our state has union dollars that staff can use for trainings, certifications, etc." 

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