

Millennials in governmental public health similar to their peers

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Millennials are similar in job satisfaction compared to other generations working in public health, a new analysis finds.

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When it comes to job satisfaction, millennials who work in governmental public health agencies are not so different from their colleagues, a recent study finds.

Published in January in the *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*, the study found that governmental public health workers ages 21-36 were similarly satisfied with their jobs, organizations and pay security as their peers. They also planned to leave their jobs for similar reasons as workers from other generations.

“The generations by and large responded pretty similarly,” Rachel Locke, MPH, the study’s lead author, told *The Nation’s Health*. “The same job satisfaction and workplace satisfaction factors that matter to other generations also matter to millennials.”

Researchers examined survey data from the 2017 Public Health Workforce Interests and Needs Survey, the largest assessment of workers in government public health. About 48,000 workers from a range of ages participated.

While there were many similarities, millennials were not the same across the board as their peers, the study found. Workers from the generation were more likely to say that their creativity and innovation was recognized and that they had adequate training to use technology, for example.

As the U.S. public health workforce ages and retires, officials are looking for ways to attract millennials to governmental public health. While 35% of the U.S. workforce is made up of millennials, they only make up 22% of the governmental public health workforce, the study authors noted. Research has found that many recent public health graduates instead work in the private or nonprofit sector.

The study also found that millennials who work in governmental health agencies tend to feel less involved in their work and less motivated to perform well. But Locke noted that the attitude was only slightly more prevalent in the generation.

Millennial-specific outreach plans are not necessary for hiring millennials in governmental public health agencies, the study said. However, study authors suggested that agencies increase compensation and focus on opportunities that appeal to the generation.

“Programs that help forgive debt would probably be really attractive to millennials,” Locke said, as well as providing mission-driven work.

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