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# Strengthening Public Health: How Counties Are Leveraging NY HELPS to Build Their Workforce

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Webinar | April 21, 2025 | 2:00pm-3:00pm



# Stephen J. Acquario

Executive Director



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Associate Program Director  
Workforce Development



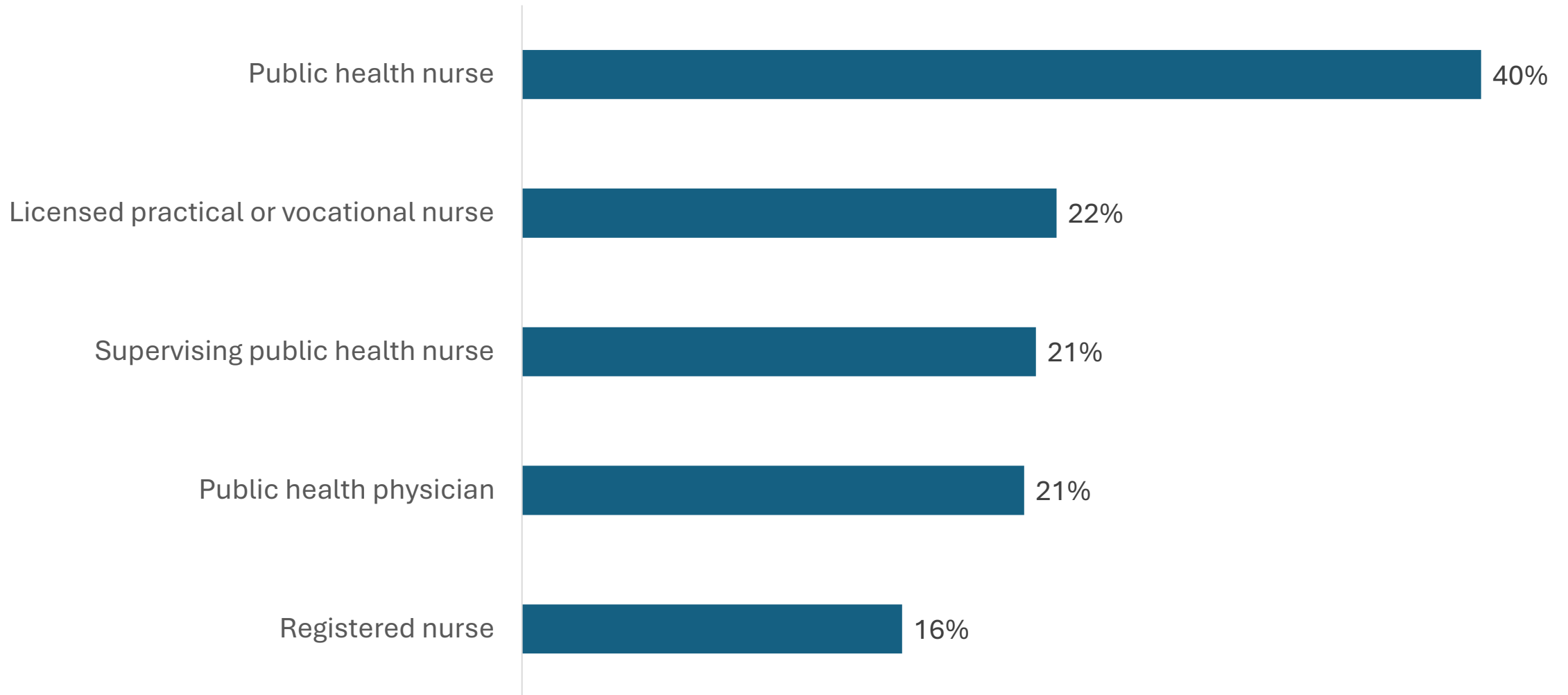
# STATEWIDE OCCUPATIONAL VACANCY RATES IN LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS



**NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION  
OF COUNTY HEALTH OFFICIALS**

*Leading the Way to Healthier Communities*

# Nursing and Clinical Roles

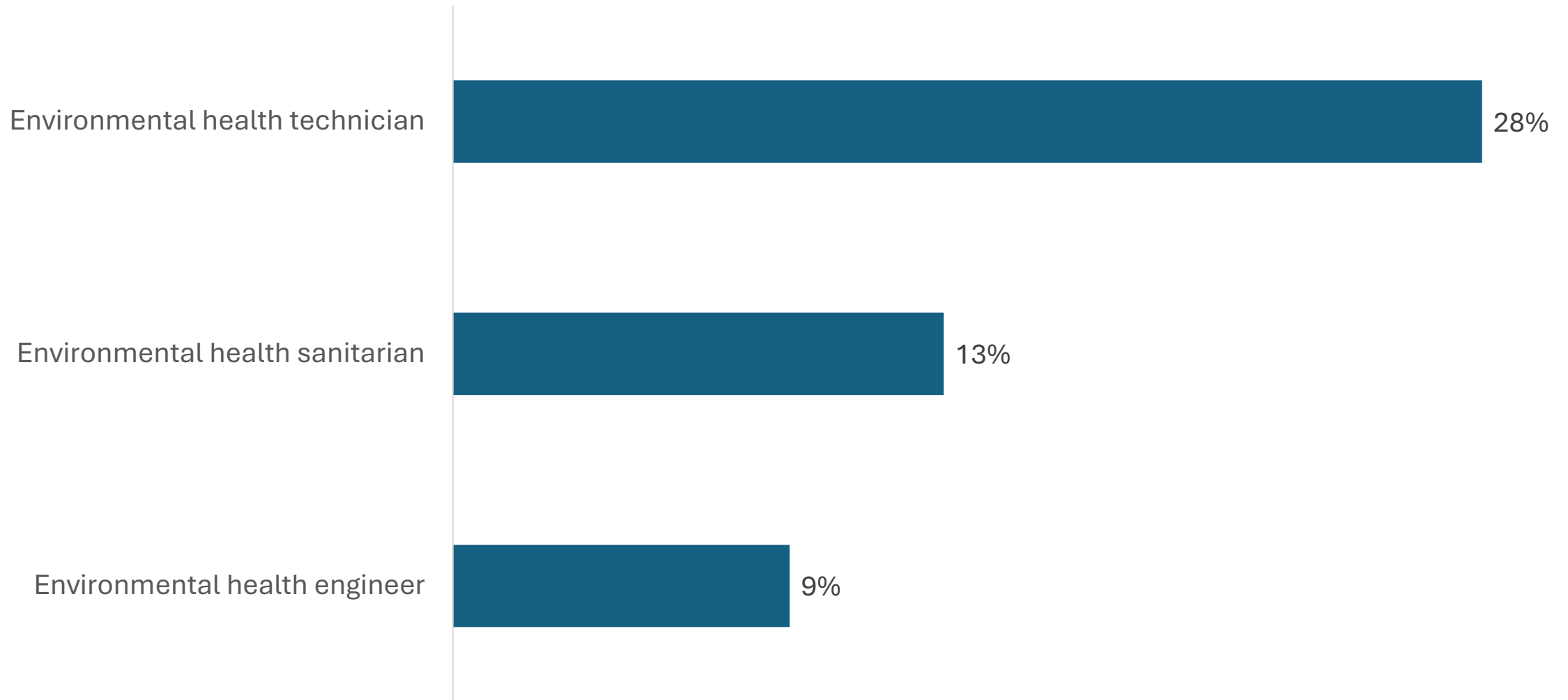


*Preliminary Findings from NYSACHO's 2024 Enumeration Survey (n=54)*

# Environmental Health Positions



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*Preliminary Findings from NYSACHO's 2024 Enumeration Survey (n=54)*

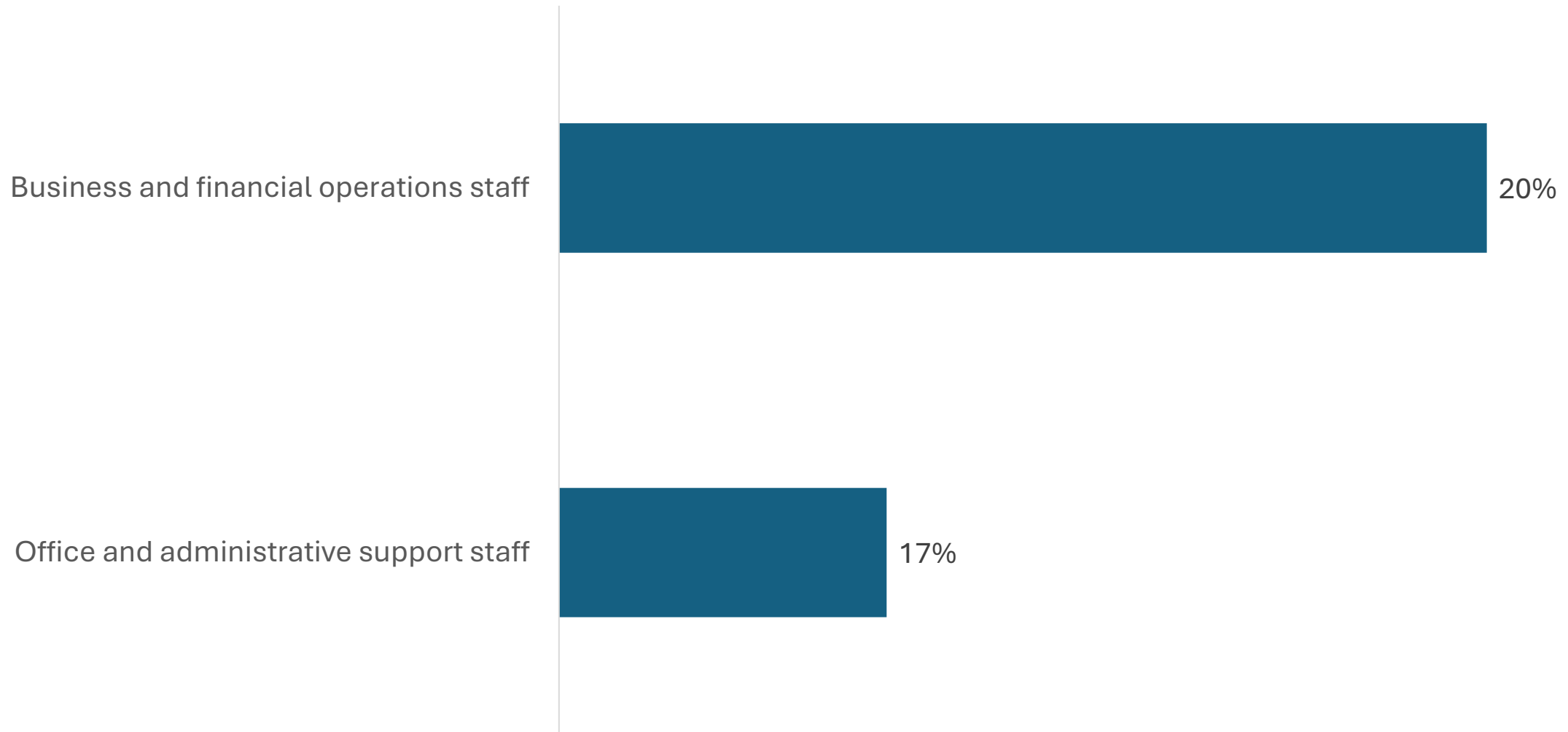
# Data & Technical Roles



*Preliminary Findings from NYSACHO's 2024 Enumeration Survey (n=54)*



# Administrative Roles

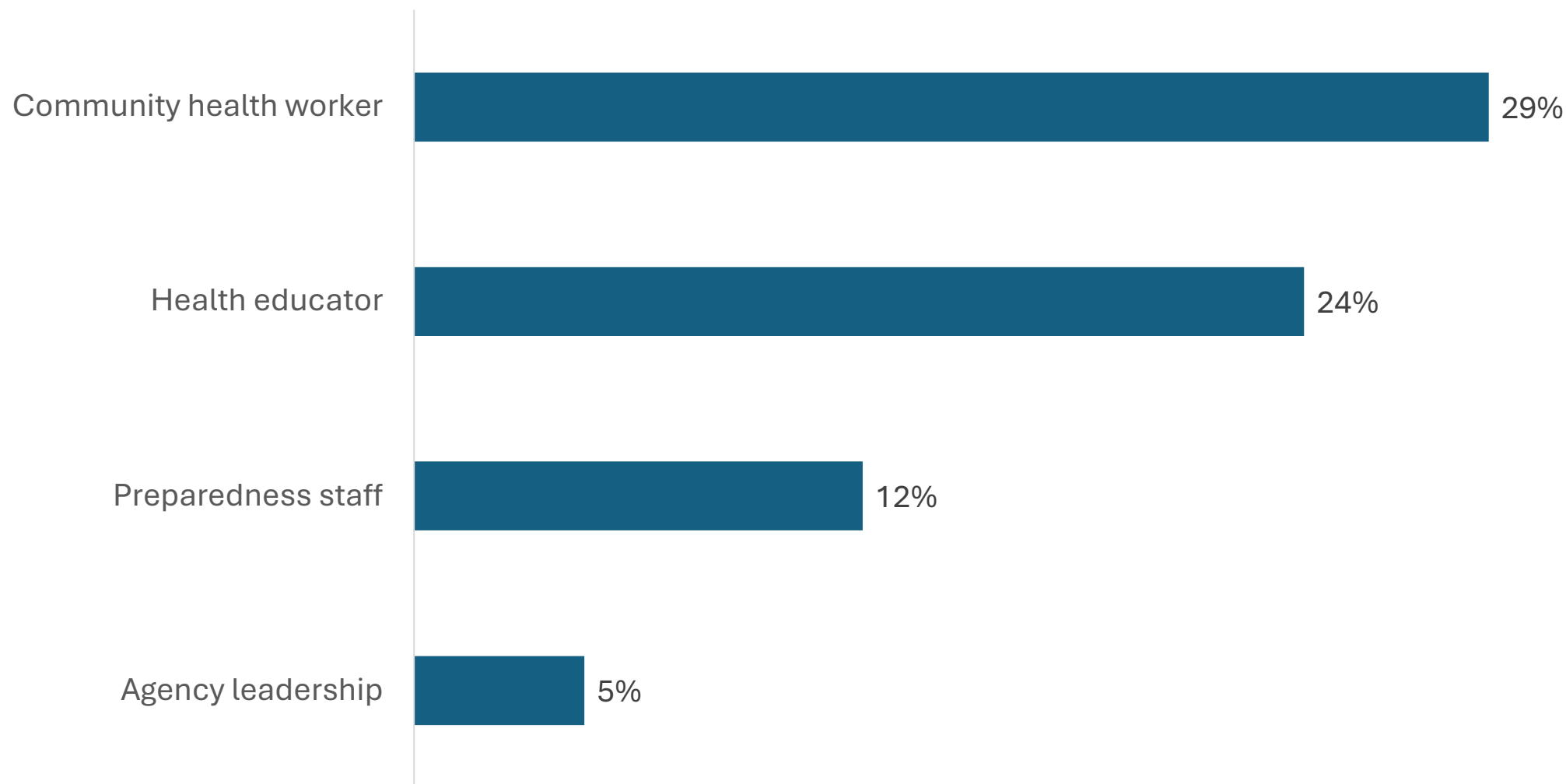


# Agency Leadership & Other Public Facing Roles



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*Preliminary Findings from NYSACHO's 2024 Enumeration Survey (n=54)*



Department of  
Civil Service

# NY HELPS PROGRAM UPDATE



NY HELPS Program - Local

APRIL 21, 2025

# NY HELPS PROGRAM UPDATE

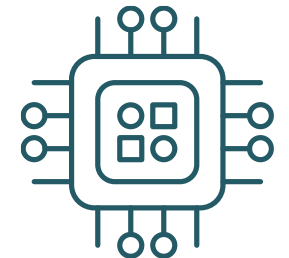
## Municipal Services Division (MSD)

Assist municipal agencies with civil service administration of more than 360,000 local government employees by providing ongoing support and technical assistance.

Conduct training at the NYS Association of Personnel and Civil Service Officers conference and coordinate the Civil Service Institute for municipal governments, which provides comprehensive training for individuals newly appointed to local civil service administration positions.

Review and analyze rules change requests from local civil service agencies and make recommendations to the New York State Civil Service Commission.

- **Anthony Rotundo**, [Anthony.Rotundo@cs.ny.gov](mailto:Anthony.Rotundo@cs.ny.gov) or (518) 473-5037

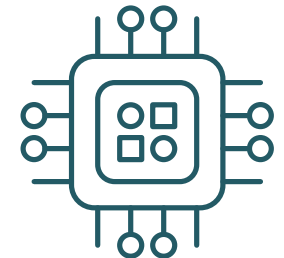


# NY HELPS PROGRAM UPDATE

## What is the NY HELPS Program - Local?

The program is intended to help local government agencies fill positions that are typically filled through a civil service examination open to the public (open-competitive). The eligible list does not need to be exhausted.

Positions typically filled on a promotional basis may also be eligible for inclusion if the eligible list is not mandatory.



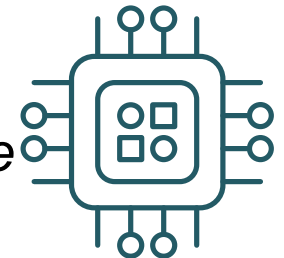
# NY HELPS PROGRAM UPDATE

## What positions are eligible for the NY HELPS Program?

All positions for which the following criteria is met, excluding peace officers, police officers or members of the fire service:

- There is no mandatory preferred list;
- Diversity, inclusion, and equity principles are integrated into outreach, recruitment, interview and hiring efforts associated with NY HELPS Program - Local positions; and
- There is no mandatory promotion list.

*The existence of a mandatory open-competitive eligible list would not prevent a title from qualifying for the Program.*



# NY HELPS PROGRAM UPDATE



**2186  
JOBS**

Positions filled through the NY HELPS Program in local government to date.



**672  
TITLES**

Titles approved by the State Civil Service Commission to date.



**48  
COUNTIES**

Counties participating in the NY HELPS Program.

# NY HELPS PROGRAM UPDATE



**6,876  
JOBS**

Positions filled through the NY HELPS Program in local government to date.



**3,484  
TITLES**

Titles approved by the State Civil Service Commission to date.



**52  
COUNTIES**

Counties participating in the NY HELPS Program.



# NY HELPS PROGRAM UPDATE

## What positions have been approved under NY HELPS?

Positions approved as part of the program can be found on the Department's website at: <https://www.cs.ny.gov/help/local-help-list.cfm>

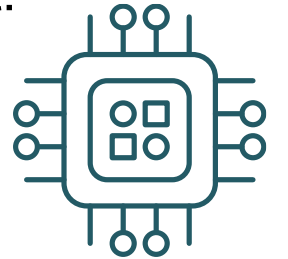
## How do I add a position to NY HELPS?

Local government employers interested in participating in NY HELPS should contact their local civil service agency for assistance.

Civil service agencies must follow the requirements in section 20 of the Civil Service Law when adding titles to the NY HELPS program.

A listing of local civil service agencies is available at: <https://www.cs.ny.gov/jobseeker/local.cfm>.

The local civil service agency can work with you to submit a position for inclusion in the program for approval by the New York State Civil Service Commission.



# NY HELPS PROGRAM UPDATE

## Top Ten Agencies by Number of Appointments:

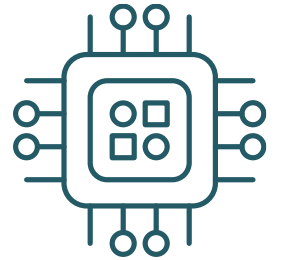
ALBANY COUNTY	818	11.90%
SUFFOLK COUNTY	463	6.73%
ONONDAGA COUNTY	453	6.59%
MONROE COUNTY	435	6.33%
SCHENECTADY COUNTY	314	4.57%
BROOME COUNTY	280	4.07%
NIAGARA COUNTY	255	3.71%
ERIE COUNTY	249	3.62%
OSWEGO COUNTY	245	3.56%
ONTARIO COUNTY	205	2.98%

## NY HELPS PROGRAM UPDATE

### Would the NY HELPS Program – Local be a good way to hire former Public Health Fellows?

Yes.

With the loss of funding for the Public Health Corps Fellowship Program there is now a pool of trained people who are likely seeking employment in the field of public health. If positions can be budgeted, you may be able to hire those people permanently through the NY HELPS Program – Local.

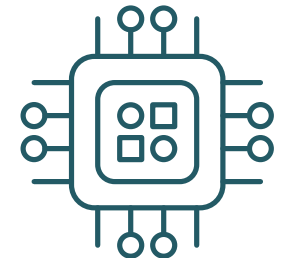


# NY HELPS PROGRAM UPDATE

## Common questions about the NY HELPS Program

### How long can a position stay in HELP status?

- A position stays in HELP status until the title is deleted from the appendices of the local civil service agency through the Rules Resolution process. Non-competitive appointments can not be made to that title once the Program ends (scheduled for June 30, 2026).

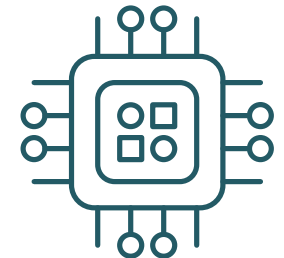


# NY HELPS PROGRAM UPDATE

## Common questions about the NY HELPS Program

How does a NY HELPS Program – Local appointment mature into a permanent competitive class appointment?

- Any incumbents of positions with NY HELPS Program – Local titles will be granted permanent competitive class status when the local civil service agency takes the overt action of deleting the NY HELPS Program – Local title from their rules.
- If the local civil service agency has adopted a rule allowing for Qualified Incumbent Examinations (QIEs), such an examination may be administered to make the employee permanent in the competitive class position. A QIE is an exam that is developed by the local civil service agency

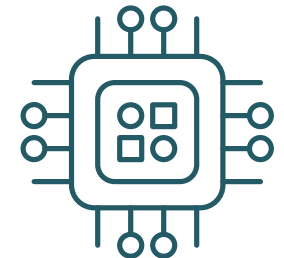


# NY HELPS PROGRAM UPDATE

## Common questions about the NY HELPS Program

### Does the criteria change county by county?

- The criteria used by the State Civil Service Commission to approve titles into the NY HELPS program remains the same for each county, but each local civil service agency must go through the Rules Resolution process for the titles they wish added to the HELPS Program, so the list of approved titles will be different for each local civil service agency.

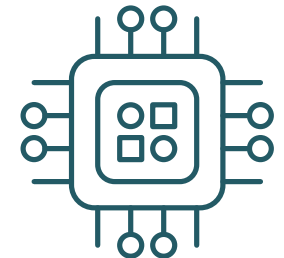


# NY HELPS PROGRAM UPDATE

## Common questions about the NY HELPS Program

If the HELP program is successful, will we migrate to a permanent system?

- No. But we are working hard to transform our testing program to be significantly faster so that public employers can compete more fairly with private employers.
- Although NY HELPS has been a useful short-term solution, we are looking forward to a more modern long-term way to fill government jobs incorporating many of the lessons learned through the NY HELPS program.



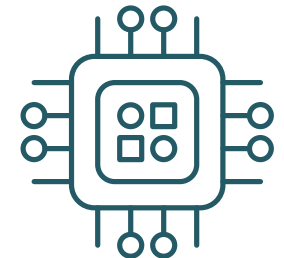
# NY HELPS PROGRAM UPDATE

## Common questions about the NY HELPS Program

Testing and scoring is a long process - how does this process work?

Each Year the Centralized Exam Program includes the following for 95 local civil service agencies:

- Managing over 5,000 exam requests grouped into over 70 exam series scheduled to 15 exam dates.
- Creating over 700 test plans with job-related subject areas.
- Processing and analyzing exam results for over 45,000 candidates.
- Processing candidate reviews and appeals of new test material.
- Reviewing and releasing over 5,000 electronic score rosters





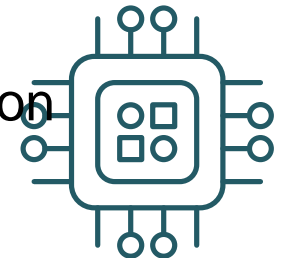
# NY HELPS PROGRAM UPDATE

## Common questions about the NY HELPS Program

Long-term, what can we expect?

### Goals of Merit System Transformation:

- Increased opportunities for individuals to compete for positions in public employment.
- Creation of refreshed talent pools of diverse, highly qualified candidates.
- Make public service more competitive with the private sector in recruitment.
- Eliminate rigid structures that are barriers to entry for jobseekers.
- Hire talented and diverse candidates in a compressed timeframe from application to employment.





**Department of  
Civil Service**

# Hiring for Emergency Limited Placement Statewide (H.E.L.P.S) Program



Michele O. Smith

Director of Human Resources

April 22, 2025

# What is the NYS H.E.L.P.S. Program

(Hiring for Emergency Limited Placement Statewide)?

- The [NYS Department of Civil Service](#) developed the HELPS Program to assist local agencies with filling critical positions.
- This program temporarily removes NYS Civil Service Exam requirements for many competitive titles.
- The Program has been extended to June 2026.

# What H.E.L.P.S does for Hiring

- Candidates are not required to take the NYS Civil Service Exam for these normally competitive titles and can be eligible for consideration for appointment by meeting the minimum qualifications as stated in the job posting.
- New employees hired under the NY HELPS Program are appointed on a permanent, non-competitive basis.
- By temporarily lifting exam requirements, the HELPS Program streamlines the appointment process to allow agencies to hire **diverse, qualified, permanent employees** quickly and **without examinations**.

## H.E.L.P.S. in ONTARIO COUNTY

- Submitted 173 Civil Service titles for approval by the NYS Civil Service Commission under the H.E.L.P.S. program.
- 119 Approved titles – so far!
- Prioritized titles with Provisional appointments, then vacant positions. (Currently have only 26 provisional appointments in all Ontario County jurisdictions.)
- Approved titles have benefitted 31 different agencies in Ontario County through the appointments of 179 people.

# H.E.L.P.S in the Public Health Department

## Ontario County Titles approved by NYS Civil Service

- Public Health Educator (provisional)
- Public Health Specialist (provisional)
- Senior Clerk

## Ontario County Titles pending approval by NYS Civil Service

- Director of Quality Improvement (provisional)
- Coordinator, Children with Special Needs (Part-time)  
(provisional)

# How to get Titles Approved under HELPS

The Local Civil Service Agency must modify its own Civil Service Rules.

- Advertise and conduct Public Hearing on Proposed Rule change
- Adopt the Resolution Amending the appendix of the Rules
- Submit to the NYS Civil Service Commission for review and approval:
  - Proof of the advertising of the public hearing,
  - Minutes from the public hearing,
  - The resolution of the amended rules, and
  - any other supporting justification (ex. # of years since last exam, # of provisional appointments, limited # of approved applications for last several postings).







# Criteria for Classifying Local H.E.L.P.S Program Titles

- There can be No Preferred List for the title.
- Any promotion eligible list must be non-mandatory.
- If there are 3 or more interested and qualified candidates in promotional chain, appointment must be offered to them first.
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive principles must be integrated into outreach, recruitment, interview, and hiring efforts.

# STATUS of H.E.L.P.S Program Appointees

- Candidates are appointed non-competitively to positions in approved HELPS titles.
- Remain in the non-competitive class until the title is deleted from your Civil Service Rule Appendices as HELPS title.
- Alternatively, the Civil Service Commission/ Personnel Officer may adopt a new Rule which provides for the use of a Qualified Incumbent Examination (QIE) for the employee to allow appointment in the competitive class.

# QUESTIONS

