



WHAT MATTERS TO NEW HIRES

In this competitive market, it's essential to optimize your recruitment and retention strategy for new hires based on what they really want and need in a job. Below are the most and least important factors that recently hired public health laboratory staff cited in their decisions to accept and stay at a new job.

Top 5 Factors

Recruitment Factors

Retention Factors

Appropriate work/life balance (96%)	1	Appropriate work/life balance (99%)
Safe/secure work environment (93%)	2	Competitive Salary (98%)
Job Security (92%)	3	Safe/secure work environment (97%)
Competitive Salary (91%)	4	Benefits (97%)
Benefits (90%)	5	Flexible work days/times (92%)

Compared to the [2022 Workforce Profiles survey data](#), the top five recruitment factors remained unchanged. However, “job security,” which ranked as the fourth most important factor in 2022, dropped to the third-lowest position in 2024. It was replaced by “flexible workdays/work times.”

Bottom 5 Factors

Recruitment Factors

Retention Factors

Access to online resources (55%)	5	Creativity and innovation are rewarded (60%)
Student loan forgiveness option (46%)	4	Opportunities for applied research/teaching (44%)
Opportunities for applied research/teaching (44%)	3	Job security (49%)
Opportunity for joint academic appointment (33%)	2	Opportunity for joint academic appointment (47%)
On-site child care (16%)	1	On-site child care (27%)

Keep in mind that at least some of these factors may be influenced by individual circumstance rather than the overall value of these benefits. For example, a childless person is not likely to be motivated by on-site childcare; conversely, if that benefit was a major factor in an employment decision and was not an option, that person may not have joined the laboratory workforce, precluding them from our survey.

* These data are based on a 2024 Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) anonymous survey of 1,928 total individuals from state, territorial and local public health laboratories, but only data from 624 individuals who started working at their laboratory within two years of the survey date are reported here.

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