

OPEN FORUM
NEXT GENERATION

INSPIRING INNOVATION FOR THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC HEALTH

OCT. 8-10, 2025

PITTSBURGH, PA



INTRODUCING OUR AWARD WINNERS!

Open Forum celebrates our rising stars and leaders in public health. Every year we honor public health professionals who have contributed to the field of public health. These awards recognize exceptional leadership, innovation, and dedication to advancing public health practices and policies.



CATALYST AWARD

Megan Sheffield, MPH

Program Planner for Sacramento County Public Health

This award recognizes individuals, organizations, or companies that, while not always in the public eye, significantly advance the goals of public health. It honors those who work behind the scenes to strengthen systems, promote collaboration, or achieve tangible results in roles such as administrative support, data coordination, IT, grants management, or intersectoral partnerships. This award acknowledges the interdisciplinary roots of our profession, and that we are greater because of the sum of our parts.



PHIG IMPACT AWARD

Zubin Khan, MS

Sr. Health Informaticist | Data Modernization Lead
Salt Lake County Health Department

The PHIG Impact Award honors outstanding individuals, initiatives, or organizations who have leveraged the transformative investment of the Public Health Infrastructure Grant (PHIG) to drive system-wide improvements in public health. The awardee recognized by this award exemplify the power of strategic investment in public health infrastructure, driven by the core principles of PHIG.

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Dynamic Duo Award

The Dynamic Duo Award celebrates the transformative power of mentorship in shaping the future of public health. Mentorship extends beyond guidance—it is a collaborative exchange that sparks new ideas, strengthens leadership, and drives change.

This award recognizes two individuals in a mentor/mentee partnership that have cultivated dynamic, bidirectional relationships that foster growth and meaningful impact in the field.



Venise White, MPH, MHPE
Public Health Strategist/Consultant
The Public Health CLINIC

Ajayi Pickering-Haynes, MPH
Principal Consultant
The Public Health, Writing, & Innovation Lab, LLC.



NxGen Leader Award

The NxGen Leader Award celebrates our trailblazers of tomorrow: early-career public health professionals who are already making waves in the field. NxGen Leaders are individuals who are driving innovation and leading by example for a safer, healthier future for all. This award recognizes public health workforce members with less than five years of experience who embody leadership potential and are actively working towards transformative change in public health.



Anni Crook
Interim Regional Health Equity and Inclusion Director
South Carolina Department of Public Health

Performance Improvement Champion

This award recognizes an outstanding individual or organization that has demonstrated exceptional leadership in advancing performance improvement within public health. It honors those who have championed innovative strategies, strengthened organizational effectiveness, and driven measurable improvements in public health systems, services, and outcomes.



Aubrienie Jones, MPH
Local Engagement and Action Director
Tennessee Department of Health