

# WHO ARE NEW HAMPSHIRE'S HEALTH OFFICERS?

*Provided by the NHDHHS Health Officer Liaison Program*

The Local Health Officer (LHO) is a municipal employee, appointed by the NH Department of Health and Human Services (NHDHHS), who responds to local concerns and issues as directed by municipal leadership and completes inspections at the request of state agencies such as NHDHHS, NHDES, and NHDOE.



LHOs are an important and trusted point of contact for local concerns and fulfill a critical role in enforcing public health laws at the local level.



## HEALTH OFFICERS IN ACTION

LHOs have statutory authority to conduct sanitary investigations and enforce public health laws, which protect and improve the health of people and their communities. Under State law, LHO SHALL:

- Make **sanitary investigations** - RSA 128
- Enforce **public health laws** - RSA 128
- Inquire into **causes of danger** to the public health – RSA 147

Under state law, LHOs MAY:

- Make regulations for the **prevention and removal of nuisances** and such other regulations - RSA 147

**“NH Health Officers are the ‘boots’ on the ground connecting towns, cities and the state to residents and citizens responding to their public health concern.”**

*– New Hampshire Health Officer Association Board Member*

In practice, LHOs commonly respond to various environmental and sanitary issues. They work to address hazards that pose public health threats to communities.



Pest infestations



Septic failures



Housing violations



Hoarding conditions



Drinking water



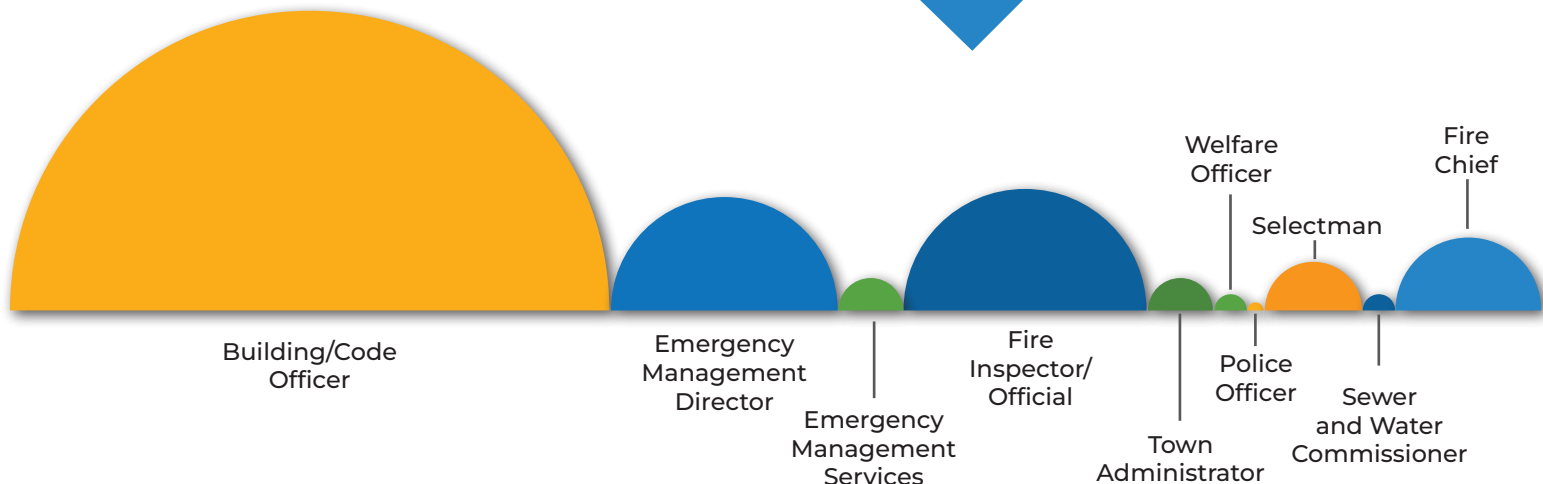
Emergency response



Facility inspections

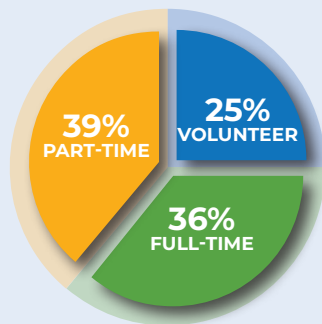
# HEALTH OFFICERS FULFILL MULTIPLE MUNICIPAL ROLES

59% of LHOs report simultaneously serving in other municipal roles.



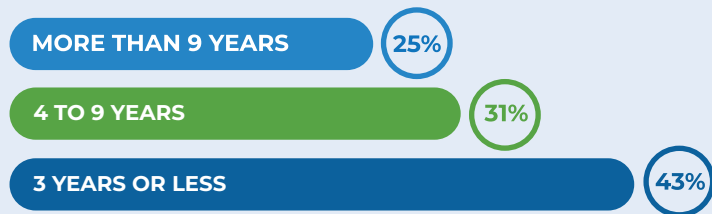
## HEALTH OFFICER POSITIONS

LHO positions vary significantly across the state. While a slight majority of LHOs serve in a part-time capacity, some are full-time employees, while others are volunteers.



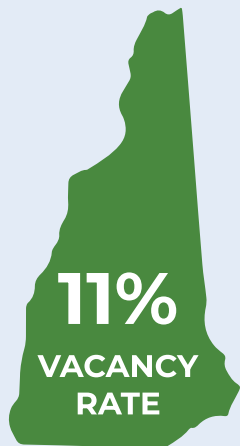
## HEALTH OFFICER TENURE

LHOs are appointed for a 3-year term but can be re-appointed for multiple terms. A majority of health officers have served for 3 years or less.



## VACANCY RATE

As of 2022, NH has an 11% LHO vacancy rate. Approximately 26 municipalities across the state do not have a LHO.



## NHDHHS HEALTH OFFICER LIAISON PROGRAM

The NHDHHS Health Officer Liaison Program fulfills the legislative mandates of NHDHHS to appoint and support local health officers. In executing this mission, our work is in three major areas;

- Appointments
- Training
- Technical assistance

## HAVE QUESTIONS?

Contact: [healthofficer@dhhs.nh.gov](mailto:healthofficer@dhhs.nh.gov)  
or call 603-271-3468



NEW HAMPSHIRE  
Health Officer  
Liaison Program



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