

# Towards a National Prevention Workforce Assessment Instrument

Blending the workforce development assessment experiences  
and practices of California, Connecticut and Massachusetts



# Reflection with a Partner

**If your state/region has not conducted a workforce survey:**

- What do you want to know about the prevention workforce in your state or region? For example:
  - How educated is your workforce?
  - Is your prevention workforce younger? older?
  - How stable is your workforce?
  - Is your prevention workforce representative of their communities?
  - What else do you want to know?
- What would you do with this information?

**If your state has conducted a workforce survey:**

- What did you learn from the data?
- Were there any surprises?
- Have you used survey data to improve prevention outcomes in your state/region?  
If yes, how?

# What is the value of collecting this data?

- Using the SPF in workforce development.
- Assessing the stability, skill level and diversity of the prevention workforce
- Improving outcomes of the prevention workforce
- Increasing the value of the field to decision and policy makers





# The California Prevention Field

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# The Landscape

- 58 diverse rural and urban counties funded through SABG funds to provide prevention services.
- Local control with minimal state-level requirements.
- Long-term training and technical assistance support institutionalized across the state.



# Survey Methodology





# Collecting the Data

Online survey implemented in 2013 and 2015

- First of its kind to collect detailed information about California's prevention workforce
- Characteristics, capacities, trends of professional workforce
- Distributed to over two thousand professionals statewide

# Survey Says



**2013**

- 420 complete responses
- 52 out of 58 counties represented
- The majority of the sample are prevention professionals who provide direct services at the county level.

**2015**

- 398 complete responses
- 45 out of 58 counties represented
- The majority of the sample are prevention professionals who provide direct services at the county level.





# KEY FINDINGS

# THERE IS A **SHORTAGE OF EXPERIENCED,** **MID-CAREER PREVENTION PROFESSIONALS.**



2013

- Median age is 47 years
- 63% are 40 years old or older
- 32% are new to the prevention field
- 46% are new to their current positions

2015

- Median age is 45
- 61% are 40 years old or older
- 33% are new to the prevention field
- 43% are new to their current positions

# PREVENTION PROFESSIONALS ARE **HIGHLY EDUCATED** BUT NOT PREVENTION CERTIFIED.



2013

- 80% have Bachelor's degrees
- 45% have graduate degrees
- 3% have specialized prevention certifications

2015

- 80% have Bachelor's degrees
- 40% have graduate degrees
- 2% have specialized prevention certifications



# ALTHOUGH THERE IS **HIGH JOB SATISFACTION** WITHIN THE FIELD, **TURNOVER WITHIN** THE NEXT THREE YEARS IS LIKELY.



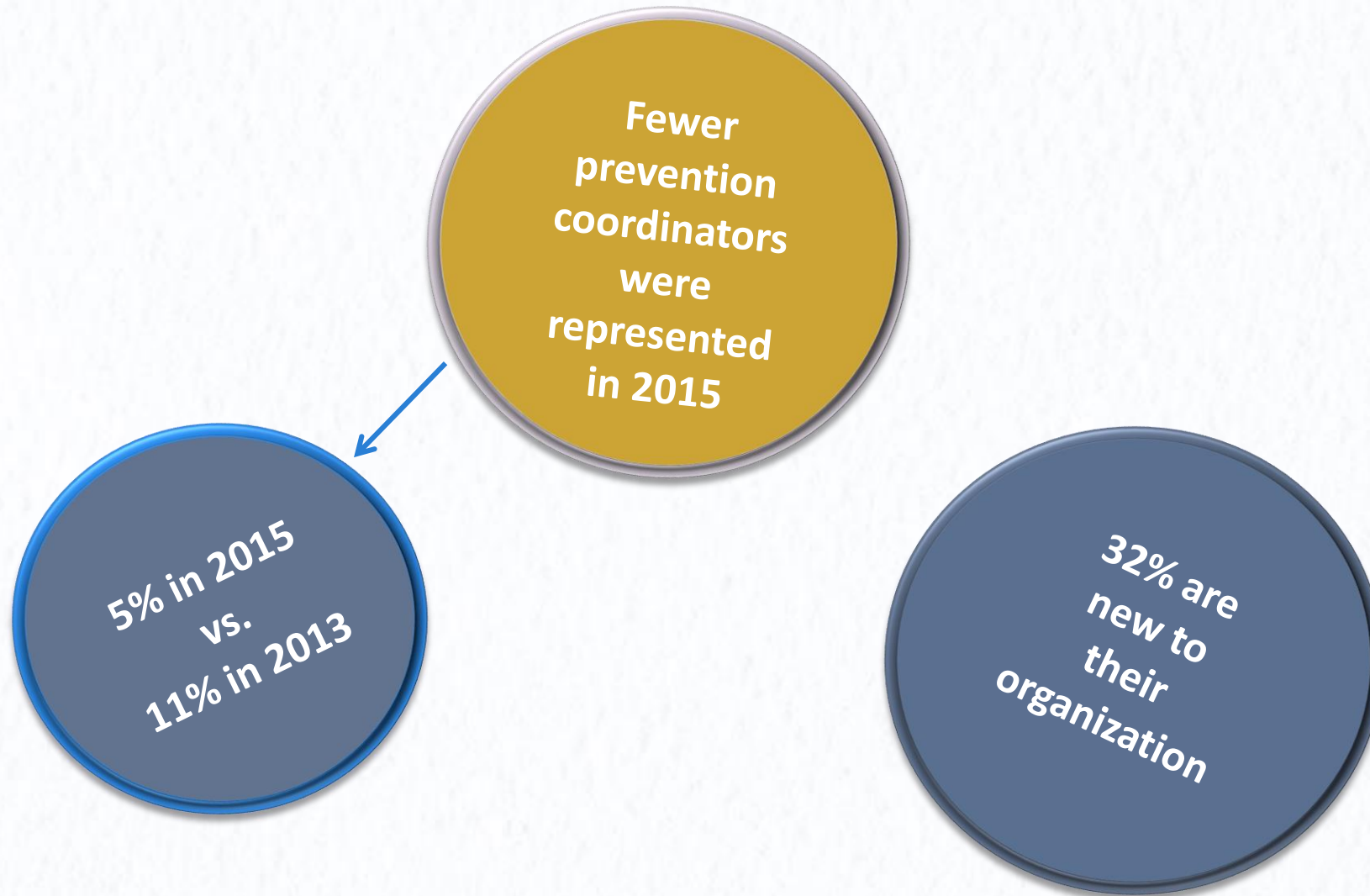
2013

- 40% perceive a lack of career advancement opportunities
- 33% may leave their current positions
- Of this third, 46% may leave the prevention field

2015

- 48% perceive a lack of career advancement opportunities
- 46% may leave their current positions
- 47% may leave the prevention field

# TWO-THIRDS OF RESPONDENTS IN 2015 DID NOT COMPLETE THE SURVEY IN 2013.



# Workforce Development in Massachusetts

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# Goal of the Project

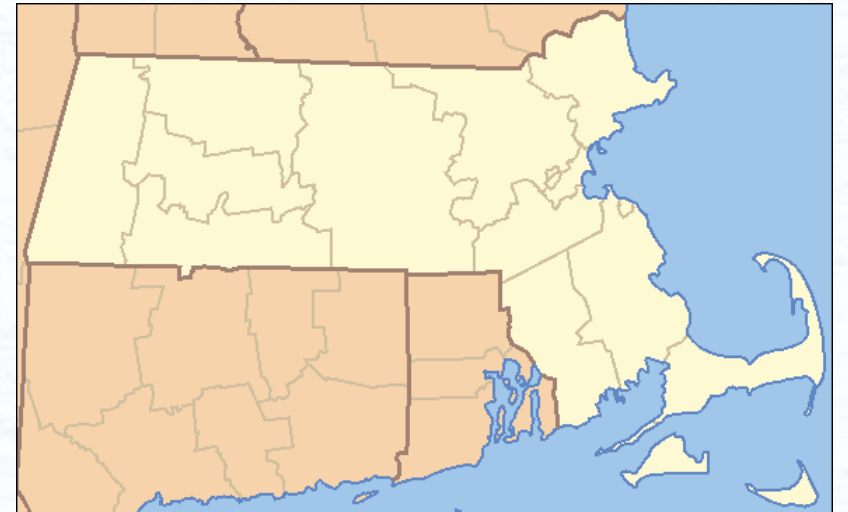
To develop a comprehensive workforce development plan to enhance the delivery of substance misuse prevention services in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts



# Why a Workforce Development Plan?



- High turnover at the community level → “musical chairs”
- Lack of available trainings towards certification
- Need to build capacity in leadership and other advanced prevention skills
- Lack of workforce diversity



# The Assessment Process

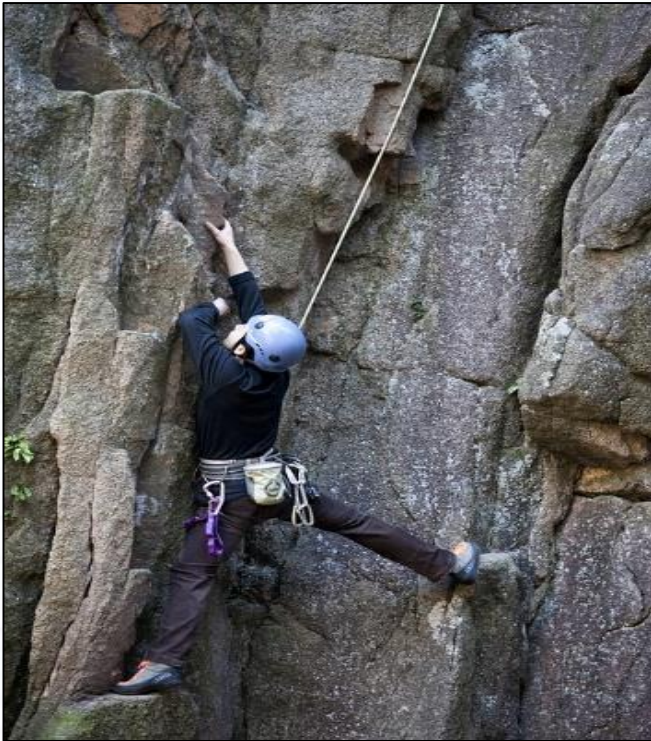


- ✓ Created a project leadership team
- ✓ Identified and interviewed key informants
- ✓ Identified key constituency groups and conducted focus groups
- ✓ Surveyed all funded substance misuse prevention practitioners
- ✓ Summarized assessment results
- ✓ Recommended priorities in a workforce development plan





# Assessment Findings: Challenges



- Coordination and sequencing of training and technical assistance (TA)
- Retention of trained staff
- Absence of a career ladder
- Certification process is cumbersome
- New populations and issues
- Lack of workforce diversity

# Key Recommendations

## *System-wide Workforce Development*



- Create a coordinated, sequenced, and responsive training pathway
- Create a plan for coordinating all existing prevention initiatives
- Build a workforce that better reflects the diversity of the communities served





# Key Recommendations (cont.)

## *System-wide Workforce Development*

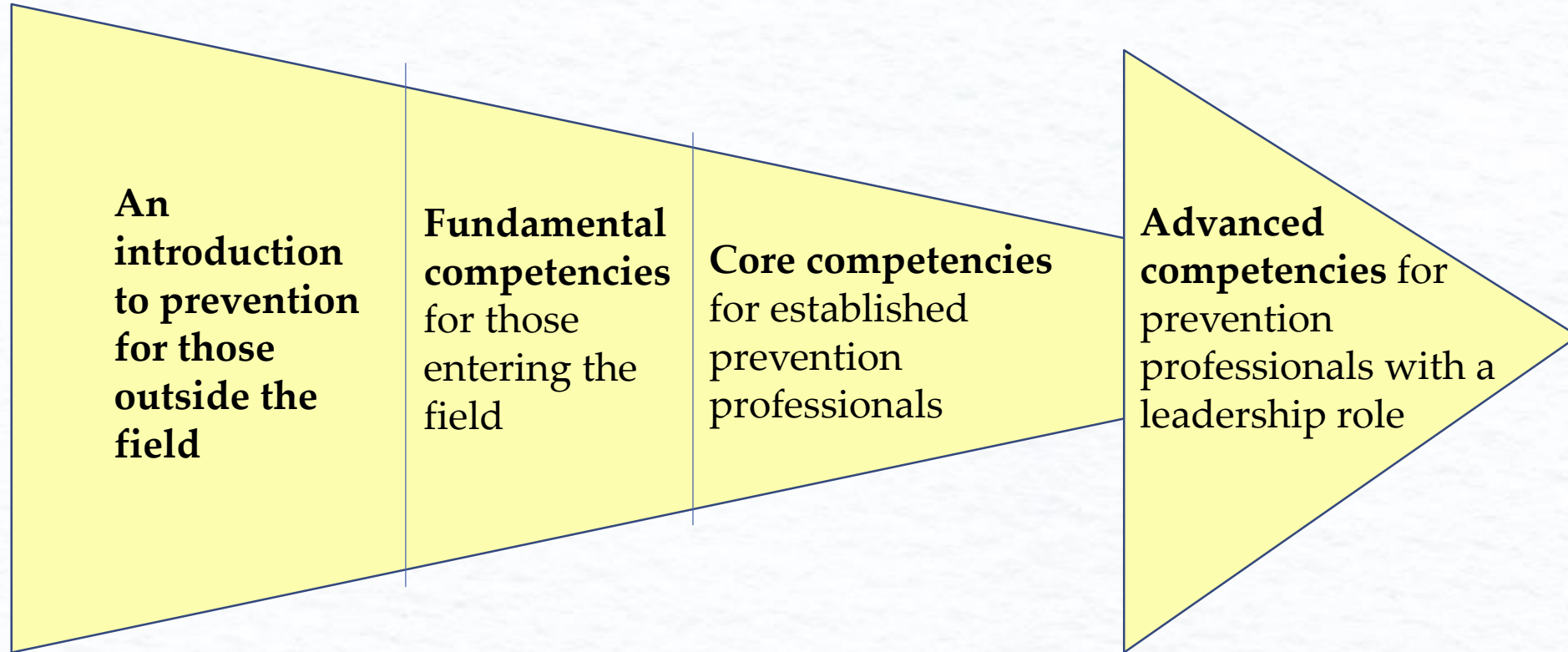


- Provide a structured training mechanism
- Develop a career ladder
  - Enhance the skills and knowledge of critical community professionals
  - Consider increasing funding levels for grants
  - Require baseline training and TA for all grantees

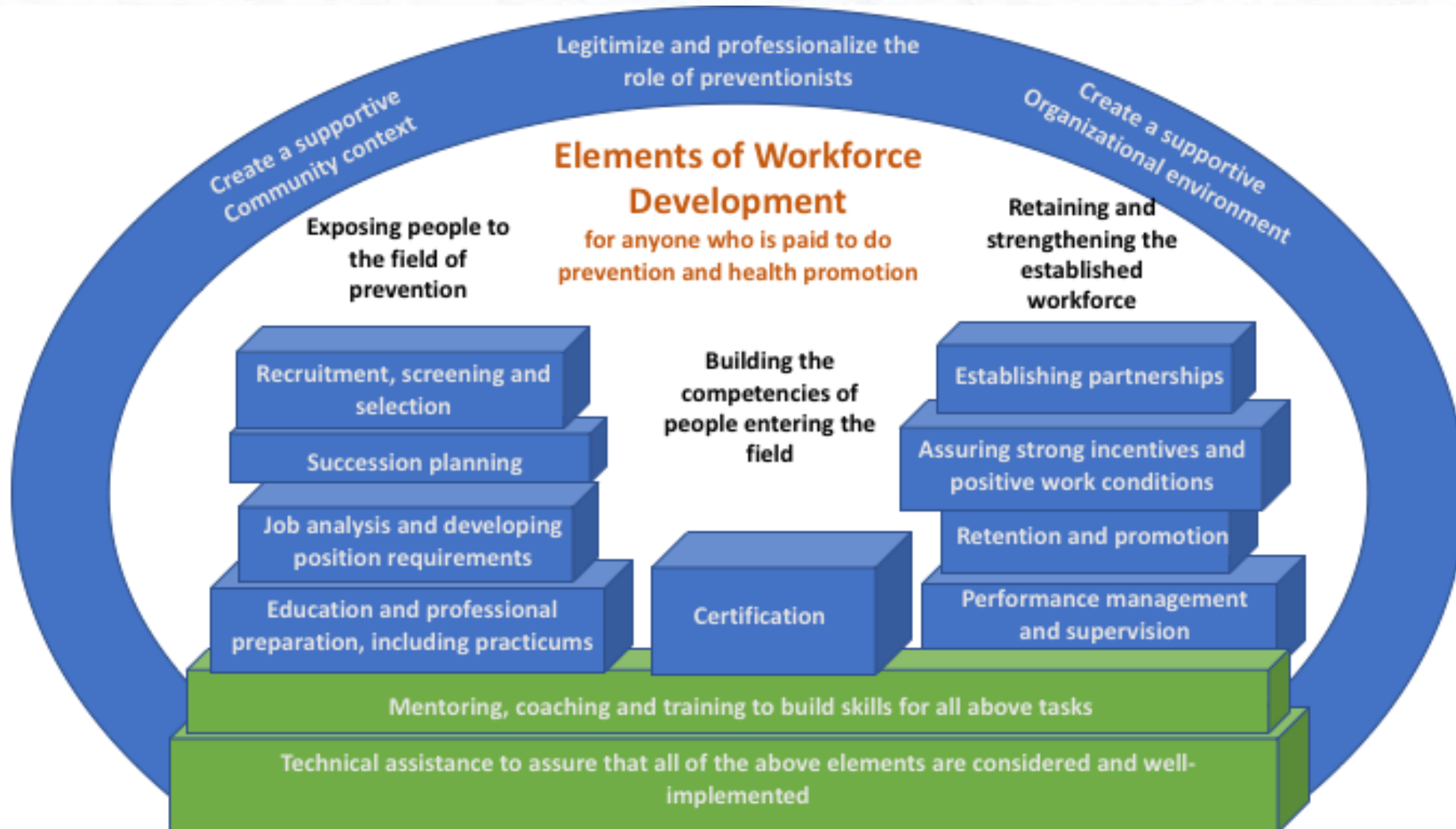




# Professional Development Continuum



# Framework for Recommendations





# Connecticut's Prevention Workforce Survey 2016

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# Why Assess The Prevention Workforce In Connecticut?



- Assessment is the first step of the Strategic Prevention Framework.
- Need to Identify the current “state of the field” and its workers
- Need to develop competency-based trainings to match worker needs
- Assess desire and means to attain Certified Prevention Specialist credential

# Who participated in CT's prevention workforce survey in 2016?



- 252 paid professionals and volunteer respondents completed all or part of the survey
- 73.4% were paid professionals
- 26.6% were coalition members/ volunteers

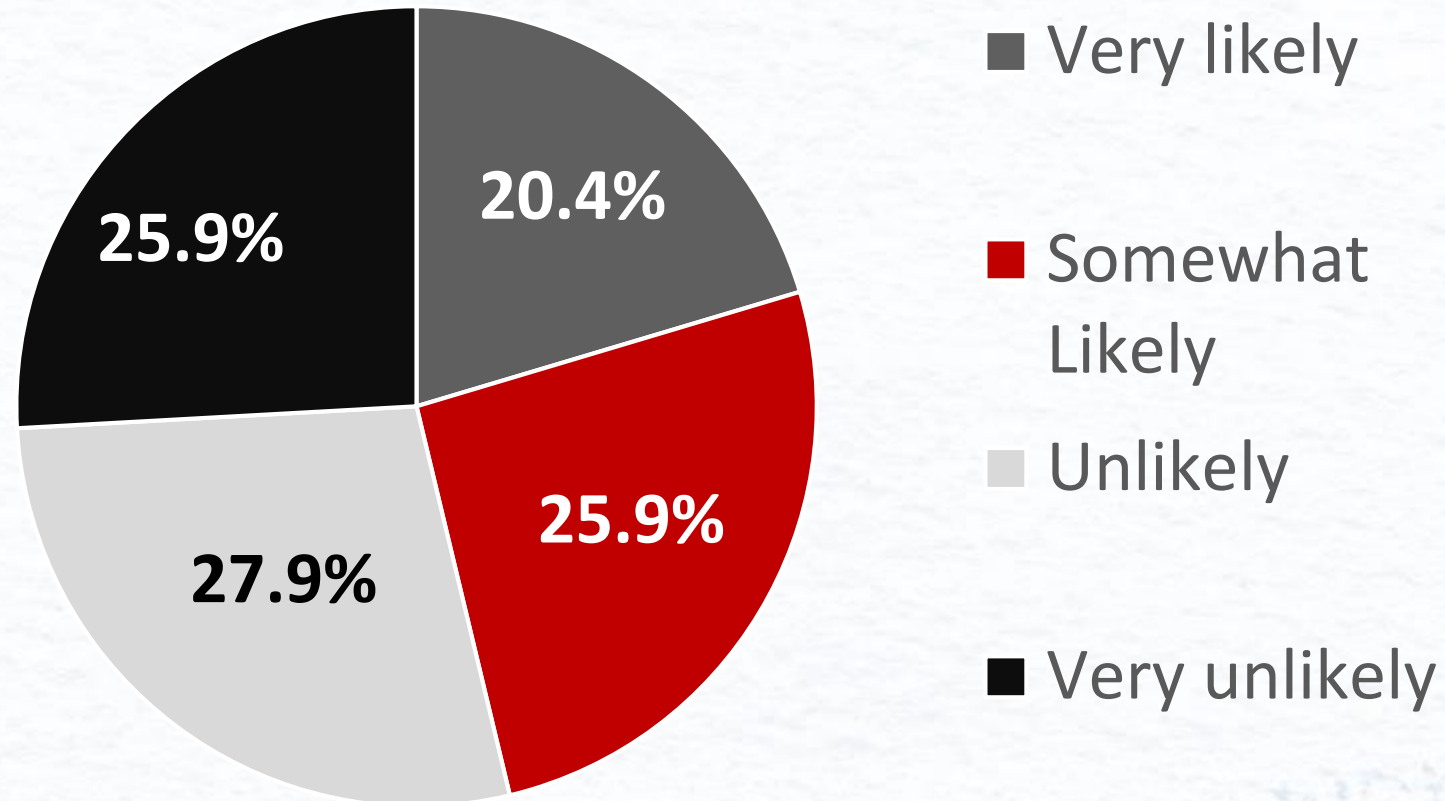
# CT's prevention workforce in 2016



- 59% of respondents in the field for ten or more years, 75% for 7 or more years.
- 61% of respondents had graduate degrees, 24% have bachelor's degrees and an additional 4.4% had professional or doctoral degree



# How likely are you to voluntarily leave your job within the next 3 years?



# The top 5 factors causing respondents to leave their jobs in the next 3 years



1. 55% - Salary/Compensation
2. 51% - Family/Personal
3. 42% - Lack of career advancement
4. 38% - Retirement
5. 35% - I feel overwhelmed at work

# Training and Professional Networking Resources



- Respondents reported few prevention specific training opportunities within the state
- 22% cannot get advice/assistance from a network of professionals.



# Prevention Volunteers



- Volunteers tend to work 1-3 hours per week with half of volunteer respondents working 10+years in the field.
- 26% of volunteers do not feel connected to prevention professionals or volunteers
- Most volunteers would attend a statewide conference and participate networking in their area (78% and 83% respectively)

# Prevention Leader Survey



- Cost of training is the biggest barrier to workforce training
- Traditional education pathways are not adequate for prevention
- Most respondents would value prevention certification.
- 60% of prevention leaders say the workforce does not reflect the racial/ethnic diversity nor language diversity of their market populations

# Goal of CT's Prevention Workforce Development Plan



**To create a robust, well-informed and well-educated prevention workforce in Connecticut.**

1. Increasing the vitality of coalition-based prevention efforts
2. Increasing access to competency-based training for the prevention workforce
3. Improving the quality and relevance of the prevention field as a whole



# Prevention Workforce Survey Core Questions – Learning Task

- Divide into four groups:
  - Demographics
  - Education & professional background
  - Prevention skills & knowledge
  - Workforce stability and sustainability
- Prepare a brief 2-minute summary of the section, including any feedback on the Core Questions

# Questions?



## Contact Us

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