

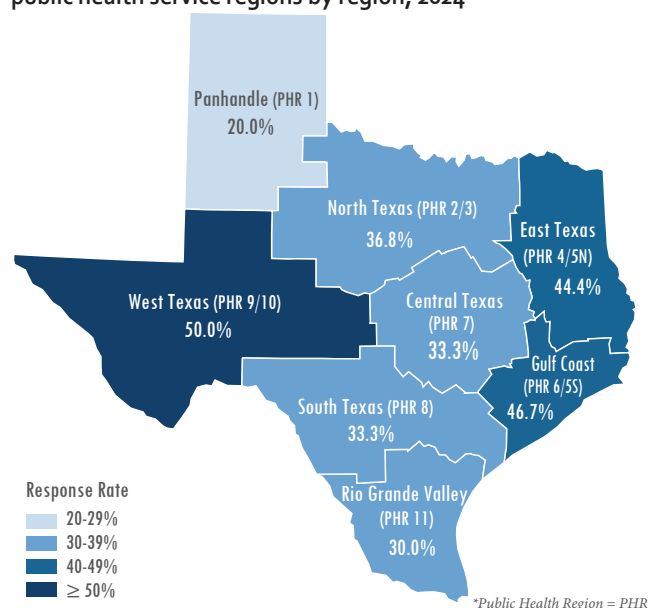
The Texas Governmental Public Health Nurse Staffing Survey (TGPHNSS) assesses nurse staffing and related issues in Texas governmental public health agencies. In the spring of 2024, the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies (TCNWS) administered the TGPHNSS to 74 local health departments and 8 public health service regions. A total of 31 responses were collected for a response rate of 37.8%.

Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and Health and Human Services (HHS) central offices in Austin were also surveyed and a total of 13 responses were collected. These agencies and programs change year to year and the total number of programs is unknown. Therefore, no response rate is reported.

This report provides data on agency types as well as the response rate for the local health departments and public health service regions by agency type, region, and geographic designation. DSHS and HHS central offices are not included in the geographic characteristics of agencies. Agency characteristics such as administration of nursing services and nurses on boards are also included in the report. It is important to note that those receiving the survey for DSHS and HHS central offices were individual programs under these agencies and, therefore, do not represent the agencies as a whole.

Geographic Characteristics of Agencies

Figure 1. Response rate for local health departments and public health service regions by region, 2024



Response Rate by Region

Figure 1 and Table 1 show the response rate of local health departments and public health service regions by the region they are located in.

- West Texas had the highest response rate with 50.0% of agencies in the region completing the survey.

Table 1. Response rate for local health departments and public health service regions by region, 2024

Region	# of Respondents in Region	Total # of Public Health Agencies in Region	Response Rate
Panhandle (PHR 1)	1	5	20.0%
North Texas (PHR 2/3)	7	19	36.8%
East Texas (PHR 4/5N)	4	9	44.4%
Gulf Coast (PHR 6/5S)	7	15	46.7%
Central Texas (PHR 7)	3	9	33.3%
South Texas (PHR 8)	3	9	33.3%
West Texas (PHR 9/10)	3	6	50.0%
Rio Grande Valley (PHR 11)	3	10	30.0%
Texas	31	82	37.8%

Note: DSHS and HHS central offices are not included in the above table or map.

- The Panhandle had the lowest response rate in the state (20.0%).
- Analysis found that there was no significant difference between responding and non-responding agencies by region, meaning the sample is likely representative across regions¹. However, the small sample size is a limitation to this analysis due to its affect on validity.

¹ (7, N = 82) = .038, p = .846

Response Rate by Geographic Designation

Table 2 displays the response rate by geographic designations of metropolitan and border status.

- Local health departments and public health service regions in metropolitan counties had a response rate of 66.7%, and an 18.8% response rate in non-metropolitan counties.
- Agencies in border counties had a 44.4% response rate and non-border counties had a response rate of 18.8%.
- Non-metro border counties had the lowest response rate (0%), with 0 responses among the two agencies in the geographic designation.

Table 2. Response rate by geographic designation

Geographic Designation	# of Respondents in Designation	Total # of Agencies in Designation	Response Rate
Metro Border	4	7	57.1%
Metro Non-Border	24	57	42.1%
Non-Metro Border	0	2	0%
Non-Metro Non-Border	3	16	18.8%

Response Rate by Agency Type

Agencies were asked to best characterize their agency.

- County health departments had the highest response rate of 43.5% from the 39 total agencies.
- Local health districts had the second highest response rate with 33.3% of the 15 agencies responding.
- City health departments had a response rate of 13.6% from the 22 total agencies.

Table 3 displays the response rate by agency type. City, health district, and county agencies are consolidated and represented by local health departments. Public Health Service Regions are reported separately.

- 6 of the 8 (75.0%) DSHS public health service region offices responded to the survey.
- 25 of 74 (33.8%) local health departments responded to the survey.

Table 3. Response rate by agency type

Agency Type	# of Respondents	# of Agencies in Population	Response Rate
Local Health Departments	25	74	33.8%
Public Health Service Regions	6	9	66.7%
DSHS and HHS central offices	13	-	-

Administration of Nursing Services and Nurses on Boards

Agencies were asked if they had a position designated with overall administrative responsibility for nursing services. Of the 44 agencies that responded to this question, 32 said they had a designated position.

- Among respondents who did have a person with administrative responsibility for nursing services, 25 agencies (78.1%) reported that the person was a RN.
- 2 agencies said this position was held by an APRN, and 1 said it was held by an LVN.
- 4 agencies reported that the person responsible for nursing services had credentials such as Registered Dietitian (1 agency), physician (1 agency), or a Masters of Public Health (2 agencies).

Like previous iterations of the survey, the 2024 TGPHNSS asked respondents if they had any RN members on their organization's board. Table 4 shows how the 2024 results compare to those over the past 4 iterations of the survey.

- 7 of 43 (16.3%) agencies reported having a RN on their board.
- Over half of respondents (n=27) selected “not applicable or unknown” and 20.9% (n=9) of agencies selected “no” on the question.
- All of the respondents who did have RN board members reported the RNs had voting privileges.

Table 4. Number of responding agencies with RNs on boards and voting privileges, 2024

Year	n	RNs on Boards	Voting Privileges
2015	58	15 (25.9%)	15 (25.9%)
2017	48	10 (20.8%)	8 (16.7%)
2019	50	10 (20.0%)	10 (20.0%)
2022	46	8 (17.4%)	7 (15.2%)
2024	43	7 (16.3%)	7 (16.3%)

Note: n=number of responding agencies or programs in Texas

Conclusion

The final response rate for local health departments and public health service regions was 37.8%. Public health service regions had the highest response rate (66.7%), with 6 of the 8 regions responding to the survey. West Texas had the highest response rate with 50.0% of agencies in the region completing the survey. The Panhandle had the lowest response rate in the state (20.0%).

There were also 13 responses from the DSHS and HHS central offices' programs.

Of the responding agencies, 72.7% reported having a position designated with overall administrative responsibility, and among those that had such a position, 78.1% staffed the position with a RN. This is in line with

the Institute of Medicine recommendation that public health implement formal career ladders and collaborative governance structures that provide public health nurses with greater autonomy, responsibility, and opportunities to serve in leadership roles.² The 2024 TGPHNSS also tracked nurses on boards and 16.3% of responding agencies had a RN board member. Of the RNs that were board members, all had voting privileges.

²Institute of Medicine, Committee on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Initiative on the Future of Nursing. (2011). Front matter. The future of nursing: Leading change, advancing health.