

Invest in Oregon Public Health

Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials, 2024



Oregonians flourish when their communities are safe and healthy and when everyone has the opportunity to thrive. **Oregon's 33 local public health authorities (LPHAs) are a key partner in making this happen.** LPHAs work behind the scenes to protect and support communities so that people can prosper and live fulfilling lives. LPHAs serve Oregonians in many ways, including (but not limited to):

- Nurse home-visiting for new families
- Providing clinical services (immunizations, reproductive health, and STI testing)
- Health promotion (nutrition, physical activities, overdose prevention, etc.)
- Building community partnerships & coalitions
- Communicating about public health in culturally & linguistically relevant ways
- Tracking & preventing the spread of infectious diseases
- Responding to public health emergencies
- Collecting and analyzing public health data
- Ensuring water quality & food safety
- Promoting community resilience in the face of climate change
- And more!

There are many examples of this wide-ranging work from Oregon's LPHAs:



Douglas Public Health Network (DPHN) works with organizations and communities in Douglas County and around the state to make sure everyone is ready for emergencies. They created Umpqua Prepared, an emergency preparedness handbook for Douglas County residents “to help them be the help until help arrives” (available in English and Spanish). DPHN also recognized that rural seniors are some of the most vulnerable people during emergencies and partnered with senior centers, senior meal sites, and Meals on Wheels programs to distribute the handbook and starter “Go Kits” to older adults.

In 2022, Washington County and Linn County both won awards of excellence for their **WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) breastfeeding peer support programs**. The WIC program provides financial assistance for food to ensure kids are getting a good nutritional start in life, and the breastfeeding peer support program offers classes, education, and support for breastfeeding infants.



Klamath County and Lake County use federal funds to support a shared Overdose Prevention Coordinator position that works across both counties. In **Klamath County**, this coordinator leveraged strong rural relationships with law enforcement, local EMS providers, the hospital, schools, and community mental health programs to create a Overdose Spike Emergency Response Plan. This plan alerts all partners to rises in overdoses so they can act quickly.

But in order to keep doing this work, public health departments need your help!

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Public health departments need sustained and flexible funding.

Public health funding often follows a boom-bust cycle - there are large investments during a crisis and then funding is diverted to other programs once the immediate crisis has ended. Public health funding is also notoriously "siloed" and disease-specific, which makes it challenging for health departments to build up their workforce and serve their communities.

- **Please support** \$1 billion for the Public Health Infrastructure and Capacity Program.
- **Please support and fund** Senator Murray's Public Health Infrastructure Saves Lives Act (S. 1995).
- **Please oppose** all attempts to cut or divert public health funding, including the use of the Prevention and Public Health Fund as an offset in H.R. 485, the Protecting Health Care for All Patients Act.

ASK:



Core public health programs need increased funding.

Core public health programs are needed more than ever. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we saw the importance of having a public health system that is continuously supported and ready to respond to crises. We have also seen increased participation in programs like Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), which provides critical nutrition support to postpartum women and their young children. With inflation and growing child poverty, this increase in WIC participants is expected to continue.

- **Please support** \$943.2 million for the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program (PHEP).
- **Please fully fund** WIC for fiscal year 2024 to prevent nearly 2 million vulnerable families from losing benefits and to support increasing participation.

ASK:



We must support and build up the public health workforce.

The local public health workforce, across the country and in Oregon, is in crisis. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, public health was understaffed and under-resourced, and the stress and burnout of the last four years has added to that. Between 2017 and 2021, nearly one half of state and local public health professionals left their organization. We need to support this workforce and find ways to bring in new public health professionals.

ASK:

- **Please support** the public health workforce by requesting \$100 million for the Public Health Workforce Loan Repayment Program in FY 2024.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



About CLHO: CLHO is a 501(c)(6) non-profit organization that represents the 33 Local Public Health Authorities (LPHAs) in Oregon. CLHO ensures that LPHAs have the ability and resources to improve and protect the health of all people living in Oregon through policy development, advocating to the Oregon Legislature for public health funding, and supporting workforce development among LPHA staff. For more information, visit oregonclho.org or contact CLHO Staff:

Sarah Lochner, Executive Director, sarah@oregonclho.org, 503-507-7786

Laura Daily, Senior Program Manager, laura@oregonclho.org, 503-709-7932