

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

FUTURE OF PUBLIC HEALTH OVERVIEW

Through the 2022 Budget Act, California took a transformational step toward rebuilding our state and local public health workforce and infrastructure that was devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic and decades of disinvestment. The \$276 million ongoing General Fund investment (roughly \$188 million for local health departments, \$98 million for CDPH), referred to as the Future of Public Health, is a critical investment in our state's public health readiness and response to protect local communities from existing and emerging public health threats.

FUTURE OF PUBLIC HEALTH INVESTMENTS REBUILD OUR LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH WORKFORCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- FoPH supported the development and implementation of a comprehensive training curriculum and cross trained Disease Control staff to build competencies in disease investigations of STDs, HIV, tuberculosis, vaccine preventable diseases, and other infectious conditions.
- The funding expanded the county's epidemiology team to enhance the department's capacity to effectively address communicable disease needs of the community. Its team completed customer satisfaction surveys for the department's vital records, maternal health, animal services, and environmental health programs to help provide insight and awareness of customer concerns and commentary to improve services to residents.
- FoPH has enabled the county to create and fill full-time positions including but not limited to a health educator to improve access to health services, a manager focused on equity, wellness, promotion, and prevention, a deputy director of operations to centralize grants, contracts, and project management, and a systems data analyst to support public health accreditation and strategic planning efforts. These positions have strengthened the department's operations to enable greater readiness and capacity to protect the community from public health threats. FoPH funding has enhanced the department's quality assurance by expanding internal capacities for analyzing, synthesizing, and communicating key health metrics and data to support public health efforts.

- FoPH supported the county's community health assessment, including the Santa Maria Rapid Needs Assessment that is a crucial component of the now completed Community Health Assessment (CHA) that identified key health priorities related to access to care, maternal health, and behavioral health. This effort involved 10 staff members conducting in-person surveys to understand the health needs in Santa Maria, the county's largest city.
- The funding has established expanded internal capacities for analyzing, synthesizing, and communicating key health metrics and data to support public health efforts. FoPH supports key health officer positions to ensure 24/7 coverage and communication to the public on important public health matters.
- FoPH has supported the hiring of a deputy director of operations to oversee regulatory services, public information, information technology, and administration, providing key departmental operations support to all public health programs and services.
- FoPH allowed the local health department to hire a health educator to conduct tuberculosis contact investigations and perform targeted outreach to at-risk groups. This position works with community partners and providers on strategies for equity-focused care.
- FoPH continued to support a full-time talent acquisition position, filling critical long-standing vacancies in staff positions of the department.
- FoPH has supported a public-facing dashboard to report on public health outcome measures of the county.