

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

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

- ▶▶▶ Funding stabilized its public health department in times when rapid responses to emerging disease outbreaks and climate change related emergencies overwhelm day-to-day operations to improve the wellbeing of the entire county's population.
- ▶▶▶ Supported 24/7 local health officer coverage, supports clinical oversight, and leadership across emerging diseases and emergencies present throughout the county.
- ▶▶▶ Supported the epidemiological and disease control support and activation of the Departmental Operations Center for emergencies, including for a shigella outbreak and syphilis outbreak among persons experiencing homelessness in 2024.
- ▶▶▶ Supported community health assessment (CHA) in 2024, using collective action through community engagement and supported the community health improvement plan (CHIP) update in 2025.
- ▶▶▶ Expanded health informatics capacity to better address health disparities and support equity-focused initiatives by supporting improved program evaluation processes and streamlining data management systems. Ongoing improvements continue to advance organizational capacity and support evidence-based public health practices, centering health equity across division activities.
- ▶▶▶ Supported workforce development and training, particularly around trauma informed systems, diversity, equity and inclusion. Supporting resiliency among staff who were recovering from burnout post-pandemic was essential.
- ▶▶▶ Allowed for the implementation of a customer management system, improving core infrastructure efficiency by centralizing data, automating processes, and enhancing real-time collaboration. This has enabled more nimble and responsive operations in areas such as contracting, grants management, and workforce support, especially during emerging crises.