

National Center for State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial  
Public Health Infrastructure and Workforce  
*(Public Health Infrastructure Center)*

# Strategic Plan

Fiscal Years 2025 – 2030



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Public Health Infrastructure is made up of the  
**people, services, and systems**  
needed to promote and protect  
health in every US community.

# Message from the Director

CDC's Public Health Infrastructure Center was created to directly support health department delivery of effective and efficient services. This Strategic Plan guides our journey to deliver high-quality public health programs, services, and public facing products based on evidence-based best practices and engagement with our customers and partners.

Our portfolio bolsters the nation's public health infrastructure – the people, services, and systems needed to promote and protect health in every US community. To do this, we focus on providing support to strengthen critical and cross-cutting foundational public health capabilities and quality improvement efforts, reinforce results-based partnerships, and enhance workforce development programs within CDC and in state, tribal, local, and territorial health departments.

A strong public health infrastructure provides a solid base for health departments working every day to build healthy communities. The priorities and efforts outlined in this plan contribute to CDC's mission to promote health and improve lives, resulting in a nation better prepared to meet daily public health needs and respond to emergencies, either small or large.



Sincerely,

**Leslie Ann Dauphin, PhD**

Director

National Center for State,  
Tribal, Local, and Territorial  
Public Health Infrastructure  
and Workforce

Centers for Disease Control  
and Prevention

# Introduction

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The Public Health Infrastructure Center (PHIC) was formed in 2023 with a mission to improve public health outcomes by strengthening the public health infrastructure and workforce of the United States (US).

## Scope of the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan is not intended to comprehensively reflect all that PHIC is doing; rather, it focuses the Center on **five priorities** which move us toward our vision. Specific efforts to drive each priority were identified, including a “**signature effort**” which will serve as the primary focus for Center-wide action and monitoring. The following criteria guided the selection of each signature effort:

- ▶ Builds upon the PHIC Strategic Framework
- ▶ Elevates and solidifies the Center’s unique contributions and expertise
- ▶ Supports the Center’s focus on state, tribal, local, and territorial health departments
- ▶ Aligns with one or more existing strategic goals from PHIC divisions or offices, major programmatic investments, and policy priorities
- ▶ Aligns with recommendations or priorities identified at CDC

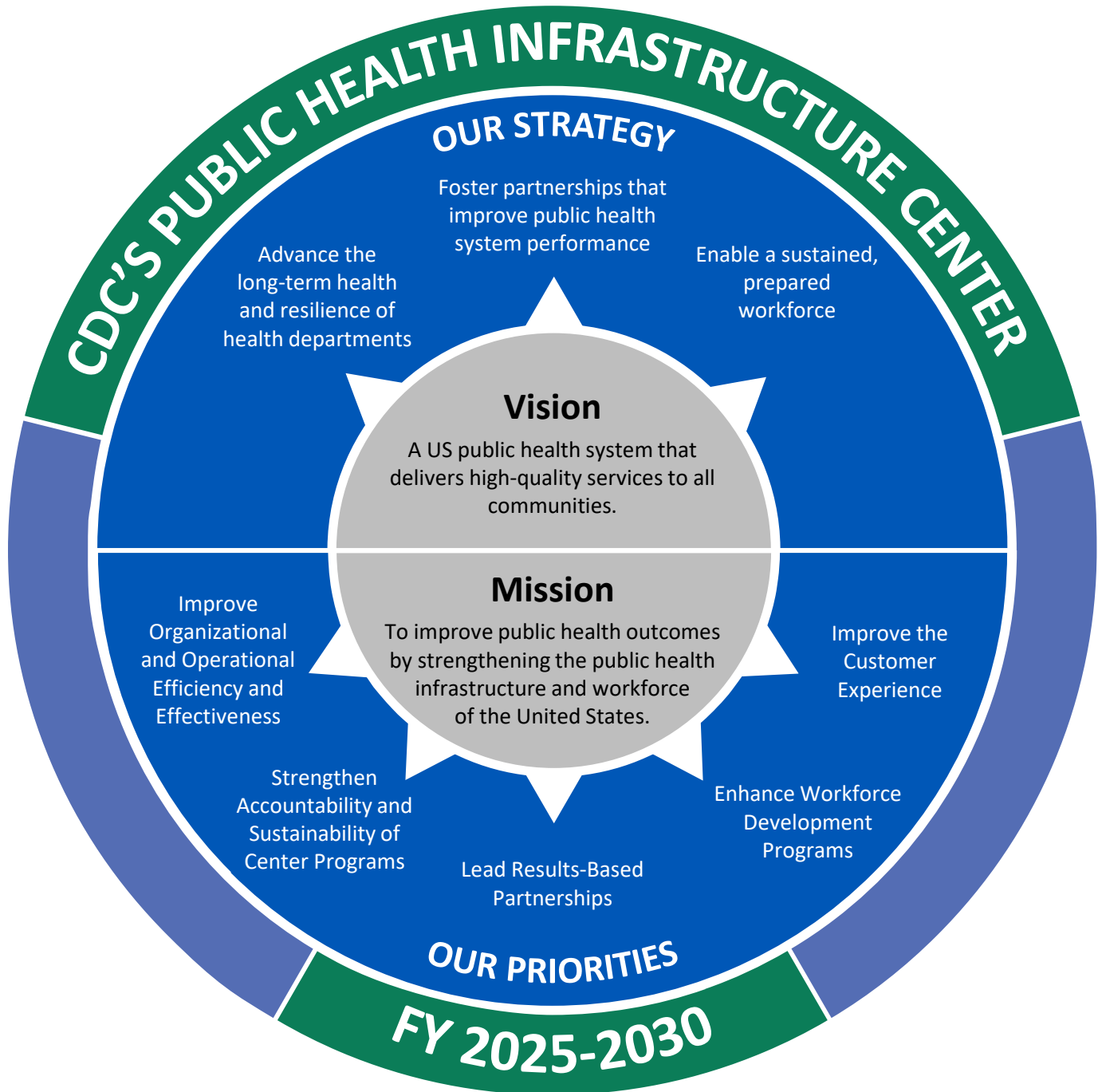
## Developing the Plan

Many sources of input informed the strategic planning process. Center staff engaged in a process to inform identification of the organization’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). The Center also convened a strategic planning leadership retreat to discuss Center-wide priorities. To further consider the broader public health landscape, key public health partners were consulted, and insights were drawn from broader initiatives, such as Healthy People 2030. In addition, other CDC strategic plans, the strategic planning efforts of divisions and offices within the Center, and other activities provided insights. To build shared ownership, multiple drafts were iteratively shared with leadership for input, major decision points were discussed in leadership meetings, and a draft was distributed to all staff for feedback.

## Maintaining a Flexible Plan

The plan will be assessed each year to ensure continued alignment with agency priorities and to identify new considerations or significant shifts in the environment. While a clear and stable strategic plan plays a vital role in driving toward the Center's vision and mission, it is equally important to remain flexible and responsive to changing circumstances.

# Strategic Plan Visual



# Priorities and Signature Efforts At-a-Glance



**Priority 1: Improve Organizational and Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness**

**Signature Effort: Establish an organizational culture that creates a healthy and rewarding work environment**



**Priority 2: Strengthen Accountability and Sustainability of Center Programs**

**Signature Effort: Maximize the investments made through the Public Health Infrastructure Grant by ensuring effective use of funding and creating a path to long-term support for foundational capabilities**



**Priority 3: Lead Results-Based Partnerships**

**Signature Effort: Advance partnerships for building infrastructure in health departments serving communities historically in need, including rural, tribal, and island jurisdictions**



**Priority 4: Enhance Workforce Development Programs**

**Signature Effort: Address health department workforce needs by strengthening pathways to public health careers**

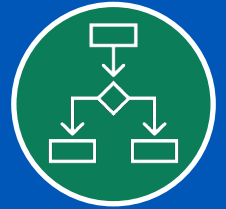


**Priority 5: Improve the Customer Experience**

**Signature Effort: Reduce recipient burden through agency-wide coordination of the CDC Grants Governance Board**

# Priority 1

## Improve Organizational and Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness



An efficient and effective organization plays a vital role in maximizing productivity and ensuring a healthy and rewarding work environment. By strengthening the Center’s workforce, resources, policies, systems, and processes, we can optimize our organizational capacity to achieve our mission.

### Signature Effort

### Establish an organizational culture that creates a healthy and rewarding work environment

A healthy and rewarding work environment emphasizing employee satisfaction, trust, and wellness is a vital component of a high-performing organization. Staff engagement data, such as SWOT input, yielded considerable insights around this priority in areas such as culture, burnout, hiring processes, transparency, and resources. In addition to Center-driven activities, CDC initiatives and resources can also be leveraged to support the Center workforce.

- OBJECTIVES**
- 1.1. Strengthen PHIC leadership through development of new supervisors and a center-wide coaching program
  - 1.2. Promote and enhance training and succession planning for the Center’s workforce
  - 1.3. Implement initiatives to promote belonging, wellness, and work life balance

- OUTCOMES**
- ▶ Improved satisfaction across the workforce
  - ▶ Improved recruitment of highly qualified staff
  - ▶ Improved culture, including trust and transparency, as measured through Employee Viewpoint Survey (EVS) and PHIC culture assessment metrics

### Additional Efforts to Accomplish this Priority

- ▶ Implement a PHIC workforce strategic plan to assess and address Center staffing needs
- ▶ Improve administrative processes and systems by using quality improvement methods, data, and technology
- ▶ Strengthen Center-wide messaging and communications practices to more effectively support collaboration and herald staff accomplishments

# Priority 2

## Strengthen Accountability and Sustainability of Center Programs



Long-term success of the Center and its role in strengthening public health infrastructure relies on accountability and sustainability of Center programs. By holding ourselves and our partners accountable and by sustaining critical investments, we will continue to make advancements in demonstrating the value of our programs.

### Signature Effort

**Maximize the investments made through the Public Health Infrastructure Grant by ensuring effective use of funding and creating a path to long-term support for foundational capabilities**

The Public Health Infrastructure Grant (PHIG) represents a landmark opportunity to support critical infrastructure impacted by decades of underfunding to health departments. This groundbreaking and flexible five-year grant, which began in 2022, is structured around three areas: workforce, foundational capabilities, and data modernization. Sustained support relies on demonstrating accountability for funds as well as communicating the impact and continued importance of these investments to the public health system.

- OBJECTIVES**
- 2.1. Implement an evaluation approach that provides timely and relevant data and scientific evidence of the impact and value of PHIG investments
  - 2.2. Communicate messages, evaluation findings, and examples of impact about the value of public health infrastructure funding using public-facing platforms
  - 2.3. Collaborate with health departments and technical assistance providers to share promising and best practices for sustainability
  - 2.4. Work with recipients to monitor PHIG investments and understand the full reach of these investments
  - 2.5. Plan for and execute a new Notice of Funding Opportunity (FY 2027) to provide ongoing public health infrastructure funding

- OUTCOMES**
- ▶ Reported improvements in PHIG identified metrics
  - ▶ Implementation of a new PHIG that is informed by evolving health departments' needs
  - ▶ Sustained investments for foundational capabilities
  - ▶ Established evidence base on effectiveness of PHIG strategies

### Additional Efforts to Accomplish this Priority

- ▶ Ensure PHIC cooperative agreement and grant programs have a robust evaluation approach and plan
- ▶ Strengthen the use of available data, evaluation and other analytic methods, and scientific evidence to inform and continually improve programs and better describe the impact of investments
- ▶ Utilize public facing products to amplify promising and best practices and innovations related to funding for health departments



# Priority 3

## Lead Results-Based Partnerships



The Center seeks to develop and sustain partnerships focused on health departments and their communities. Meaningful impact can be best achieved by engaging in partnerships that demonstrate identifiable results and effective collaboration.

### Signature Effort

### Advance partnerships for building infrastructure in health departments serving communities historically in need, including rural, tribal, and island jurisdictions

The PHIC portfolio enables the Center to achieve efforts intended to strengthen infrastructure in jurisdictions that are often most in need, through offices dedicated to rural public health, CDC's tribal government-to-government engagement, and US territories and freely associated states. With enhanced attention, the Center can optimize its long-standing expertise and networks to strengthen opportunities to improve public health infrastructure in all communities.

- OBJECTIVES**
- 3.1. Identify urgent tribal public health needs and implement collaborative approaches to solve issues through the CDC/ATSDR Tribal Advisory Committee
  - 3.2. Expand rural outreach and engagement among state, tribal, local, and territorial public health and rural partner organizations
  - 3.3. Strengthen capacity to address the unique challenges for program implementation, funding, and geography of the US territories and freely associated states
  - 3.4. Utilize scientific evidence-based models to strengthen PHIC programs and partnerships and support health departments most in need

- OUTCOMES**
- ▶ Increased partnerships and assistance for supporting public health infrastructure in rural, tribal and island jurisdictions
  - ▶ Increased evidence-based interventions and promising practices to enhance capacity, shared using public-facing platforms
  - ▶ Evidence of stronger infrastructure among health departments, particularly those serving communities historically in need

### Additional Efforts to Accomplish this Priority

- ▶ Operate efficient and flexible grants and cooperative agreements that engage other CDC centers, institutes, and offices and support partner organizations to provide capacity building assistance for the public health system
- ▶ Establish and achieve mutually identified goals with leadership of partner organizations to pursue solutions to public health challenges
- ▶ Enhance the national accreditation program to maximize its use for accountability and performance improvement of health departments

# Priority 4

## Enhance Workforce Development Programs



The critical work of health departments relies on a workforce that is skilled, effective, and responsive. The Center plays a role in supporting a span of workforce development programs that benefit CDC's workforce as well as public health professionals in the field. These efforts align with key national report recommendations, the HHS Strategic Plan, and CDC strategic priorities.

### Signature Effort

### Address health department workforce needs by strengthening pathways to public health careers

National reports and peer reviewed literature highlight the creation of pathways to careers in public health as being a critical priority for the US public health system. While there are many contributors and forces at play, PHIC can leverage its unique expertise and span of programs to serve a much-needed role in this critical work by promoting career pathways in governmental public health. For example, the Center can support this work through its fellowship programs and workforce development activities.

- OBJECTIVES**
- 4.1. Promote public health as a career through CDC's secondary school programs such as the NERD Academy and the Science Ambassador Fellowship
  - 4.2. Advance fellowship programs to strengthen the capacity of pathway program participants to understand, serve, and support the needs of health departments
  - 4.3. Support health department short-term technical assistance needs through Epi Aids, Lab Aids, and other deployments while providing fellows with opportunities to respond to acute events
  - 4.4. Support uptake and expansion of pathways to careers in public health (e.g., hiring, loan repayment, non-competitive conversion processes)
  - 4.5. Strengthen scientific evidence to further advance pathway programs, policies, and practices

- OUTCOMES**
- ▶ Improved utilization and impact of PHIC fellowship programs
  - ▶ Increased practice-based evidence for workforce development, recruitment, and retention shared using public-facing platforms

### Additional Efforts to Accomplish this Priority

- ▶ Advance use of effective recruitment and retention strategies to build the health department workforce
- ▶ Build and share knowledge and evidence of the status of the health department workforce, including challenges and opportunities to build capacity
- ▶ Upskill and reskill the health department workforce using competencies, learning resources, and generalist and discipline-specific trainings

# Priority 5

## Improve the Customer Experience



Creating a customer-focused organization and culture ensures that public health programs, services, and public facing products meet customer needs and will be effectively used. PHIC views its customers as state, tribal, local, and territorial health departments as well as other CDC centers, institutes, and offices. Other entities, including partner organizations, play important roles as collaborators with the Center in supporting its customers.

### Signature Effort

### Reduce recipient burden through agency-wide coordination of the CDC Grants Governance Board

The Grants Governance Board was established by CDC in 2023 and is co-led by PHIC and the Office of Financial Resources (OFR), Office of Grants Services (OGS). It aims to improve how CDC administers grants and recommends solutions for enterprise-wide adoption. This is an agency-wide internal board supported by PHIC as the Executive Secretariat. It presents a major opportunity for improving the grantee experiences of the Center's main customers – health departments.

- OBJECTIVES**
- 5.1. Lead and coordinate operations of the Grants Governance Board, including ongoing processes to set priorities for reducing recipient burden
  - 5.2. Drive the development of high-impact and feasible recommendations for enterprise solutions, policy, and process improvements
  - 5.3. Maintain ongoing engagement within CDC and with grant recipients on priorities and recommendations

- OUTCOMES**
- ▶ Reduced number of grant management systems
  - ▶ Reduced burden associated with applying for CDC funding opportunities
  - ▶ Reduced burden associated with monitoring and reporting requirements through grants and cooperative agreements
  - ▶ Improvements in customer satisfaction, as measured by the recipient experience survey

### Additional Efforts to Accomplish this Priority

- ▶ Improve programmatic operations and implement efficiencies to better serve customer needs
- ▶ Use recipient experience data to inform and monitor improvements in operations and relationships with health department recipients
- ▶ Serve customer needs through high-quality products, technical assistance, and leadership in areas such as public health law, island affairs, and health department performance

# Implementation and Monitoring

The Center Strategic Plan provides direction for how the Center will make progress related to each priority. PHIC will develop action plans, milestones, and measures for each signature effort to be tracked at the Center level. Additional efforts will be aligned with division and office priorities to promote collective action. Periodic reports and reviews will support performance monitoring and inform necessary updates.

Through the performance monitoring process, we aim to:

- ▶ Communicate transparently to our staff, CDC leadership, and customers
- ▶ Use feedback loops with staff, partners, and customers to drive continuous improvement
- ▶ Inform decisions around Center resources
- ▶ Celebrate the successful implementation of Center-led initiatives
- ▶ Reflect on and learn from our experiences
- ▶ Identify potential implementation risks and mitigation strategies
- ▶ Enhance cross Center connections
- ▶ Ensure the Center's Strategic Plan remains flexible and up to date

Success of this Strategic Plan will require PHIC to ensure ongoing alignment of the Center plan with division and office plans and priorities, promote engagement with all staff, and monitor and communicate progress regularly. Performance monitoring efforts will also contribute to the Center's strong commitment to evaluation, continuous learning, and improving the science that underpins our work.



*Public Health  
Infrastructure Center*

# Strategic Plan Appendix

Fiscal Years 2025-2030



# Key Terminology

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**Accreditation** – the Center Strategic Plan’s reference to accreditation is specific to health department accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). PHAB serves as the accrediting entity and manages the national voluntary program for state, tribal, local, and territorial health departments. PHAB standards and measures are aligned to foundational public health capabilities. Additional information about accreditation is available at [phaboard.org](http://phaboard.org)

**Collaborators** – entities within the public health system that serve customer needs through relationship-building and coordinated efforts

**Customers** – PHIC views its customers as those who directly receive or benefit from PHIC’s products or services: state, tribal, local, and territorial health departments and other Centers, Institutes and Offices within CDC, and fellows, associates, and other learners who are direct recipients of the Center’s programs and services

**Fellowships** – full-time competency-based, paid, service-learning programs. They include programs that are both managed and implemented by the PHIC Division of Workforce Development and PHIC-funded programs that are managed or implemented by partner organizations. Additional information about fellowships is available at [cdc.gov/fellowships](http://cdc.gov/fellowships)

**Foundational Public Health Capabilities (Foundational Capabilities)** – the cross-cutting skills and capacities needed to support basic public health protections, programs, and activities key to ensuring community health, well-being and achieving equitable outcomes. These foundational capabilities include Assessment and Surveillance, Policy Development and Support, Community Partnership Development, Accountability and Performance Management, Equity, Emergency Preparedness and Response, Organizational Competencies, and Communications. The Foundational Capabilities are part of the broader Foundational Public Health Services framework. Additional information is available at [phaboard.org/FPHS](http://phaboard.org/FPHS)

**Partnerships** – relationships founded on the mutual purpose to strengthen the public health system through the coordination and exchange of products, resources, and services

**Pathway** – route someone takes to a career in public health. A pathway into public health may include formal training or education in public health or a related field, or a public health internship or fellowship. Additional information about pathways is available at [cdc.gov/pathways](http://cdc.gov/pathways)

**Public Health Infrastructure** – the people, services, and systems needed to promote and protect health in every U.S. community. Traditionally, this has been defined as including components such as: a capable and qualified workforce, up-to-date data and information systems, and agencies that can assess and respond to public health needs

**Public Health System** – all public, private, and voluntary entities that contribute to the delivery of essential public health services within a jurisdiction

**Recipients** – CDC funding guidance defines recipients as entities that are successfully awarded funding through federal grants and cooperative agreements

**Signature Effort** – major area of work associated with a priority, and which will be the primary focus of Center-wide monitoring

*These definitions are provided within the context of the Center Strategic Plan.*

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# Strategic Plan

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