

Policy Brief

Public Health Funding

To ensure strong public health funding and infrastructure that provides every Hoosier access to core public health services that allow them to achieve their optimal health and wellbeing.

Introduction & Problem Statement

Insufficient public health funding is a long-standing challenge that has led to an under-resourced workforce and a weak infrastructure unable to adequately address public health emergencies or routine community needs. While the public health field occasionally sees a substantial influx of funding during crises, this one-time funding is catered toward addressing an emergent need, rather than establishing and strengthening the infrastructure as a whole.

Public health funding is essential to creating and maintaining healthier communities. Funding enables public health agencies to implement preventative measures against disease, promote healthy lifestyles, and respond to outbreaks by providing essential services like immunizations, disease surveillance, and health education. Overall, this improves population health and reduces healthcare costs in the long run.

Most federal public health funding coming to Indiana consists of grants tied to specific diseases or categories, which limits how local public health agencies can use those dollars. Additionally, local health departments have typically been largely funded through property taxes.

Before [Health First Indiana](#), Indiana ranked 45th nationally for state government public health spending in 2021. Pre-pandemic (2018-2019), the average spending on public health per person statewide was \$55, well below the national average of \$91. Since 2000, the state budget had only provided \$6.7 - \$6.9M of direct funding each year to local health departments.

It's essential for the state legislature to invest in local public health to ensure that core public health services can be provided equitably to all Hoosiers regardless of where they live. We must invest in prevention. Overall, this improves population health, reduces healthcare costs, and supports a thriving workforce and economy.

Policy Implications & Recommendations

To ensure the continuation of strong core service delivery across all Indiana counties, the state must commit to providing stable, recurring, and flexible funding for local public health agencies to build and sustain core public health services to all Hoosiers. This investment will

lead to healthier communities and workforce, which attracts businesses and benefits the economy.

Cuts to Health First Indiana funding will have a direct impact on local health departments' momentum and ability to continue the expansion and enhancement of services for their communities, including ensuring food inspections for safe and clean restaurants, access to safe and reliable sewers and septic tanks, access to safe water via wells, and access to routine vaccinations. Indiana should continue to support this investment in prevention to ensure the greatest possible impact for Hoosier wellness and a thriving economy thriving as 'a state that works'.

References & Resources

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[About the Commission](#)

[Health First Indiana Quick Facts](#)



Indiana ranked
45th for state
government
public health
spending