

DENVER DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT

2018 Annual Report



DENVER
PUBLIC HEALTH &
ENVIRONMENT

EMPOWERING DENVER'S COMMUNITIES
TO LIVE BETTER, LONGER



DENVERGOV.ORG/DPHE

 @DDPHE

 311

Denver Department of Public Health & Environment

Welcome to our look back at 2018!



<i>Who We Are</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Letter from the Executive Director</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>The Big Picture</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Financials</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Division and Office Highlights</i>	<i>8</i>
 <i>Administration</i>	<i>8</i>
 <i>Animal Protection</i>	<i>9</i>
 <i>Community & Behavioral Health</i>	<i>10</i>
 <i>Environmental Quality</i>	<i>11</i>
 <i>Medical Examiner</i>	<i>12</i>
 <i>Public Health Investigations</i>	<i>13</i>
 <i>Sustainability</i>	<i>14</i>

Greetings,

As our community grows, the Denver Department of Public Health & Environment (DDPHE) continually renews our commitment to deliver programs and services that improve and enhance the quality of life of our residents, and 2018 was no exception.

As Denver's nationally accredited local public health agency, DDPHE found itself focusing on a broader public health scope in 2018, one that surpassed traditional public health department functions and programs. Thanks to our innovative and dedicated staff, and to our many professional and community partnerships, we met the challenges presented and closed the year with more functionality, flexibility, and capacity.

Our growth as a department provided us with an impressive foundation from which to address both policy- and systems-level actions.



- With the addition of the Office of Behavioral Health Strategies to the now-named Community & Behavioral Health (CBH) division, we can ensure that our approach to mental well-being is connected, creative, and effective.
- DDPHE also welcomed the Office of Sustainability (OOS), whose work will protect our city's resources for the future and will greatly complement the work of our Environmental Quality (EQ) division, a team that specializes in environmental protection.
- With an expanding portfolio, DDPHE created a new division, the Division of Administration (ADMIN), to focus on internal operations, initiatives, services, communications, process improvements, and employee engagement.

In addition to CBH, OOS, EQ, and ADMIN, DDPHE is also home to Denver Animal Protection (DAP), the Office of the Medical Examiner (OME), and Public Health Investigations (PHI). It is through the work of all of our seven (7) divisions that DDPHE is able to serve the entire community and fulfill its mission of "Empowering Denver's Communities to Live Better, Longer."

This report is only a snapshot of our department's efforts and accomplishments. Inside you'll also find highlights from our strategic plan, which will undergo another update in 2019. We're proud that employee engagement continues to improve departmentwide, and our communications efforts are seeing a broader reach. We continue to strengthen our relationship with our partners at Denver Public Health and Denver Health through close collaboration and concerted efforts to strengthen joint initiatives and programs.

Thank you to everyone on the DDPHE team for making 2018 a stellar year, and for creating a stronger department that is more able and ready to serve the City of Denver than ever before. Although there is much work ahead, I hope you share my excitement that as Denver's public health authority, we are engaged with community and we are listening, learning, and serving Denver every day.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert M. McDonald".

Robert M. McDonald
Executive Director and Public Health Administrator
Department of Public Health & Environment
City and County of Denver

The Big Picture

Supporting innovation, flexibility, and agility in order to address the growing and changing needs of residents, the Denver Department of Public Health & Environment (DDPHE) **revised its 2018 Strategic Plan and extended it through 2022**. The plan outlines five strategic priorities: customer experience; environmental stewardship, sustainability & health equity; workforce development; operational excellence; and diversity & inclusion.



Innovating Toward Excellence

Stemming from the Operational Excellence priority, DDPHE has **deployed a dynamic and vigorous approach for generating departmentwide cost savings and improving the customer experience**. In collaboration with Denver Peak Academy, DDPHE employees are training on the principles of lean enterprise—a continuous improvement system teaching how to eliminate waste and improve efficiency. To become certified lean Green Belts, employees will create and submit “innovation” ideas that:

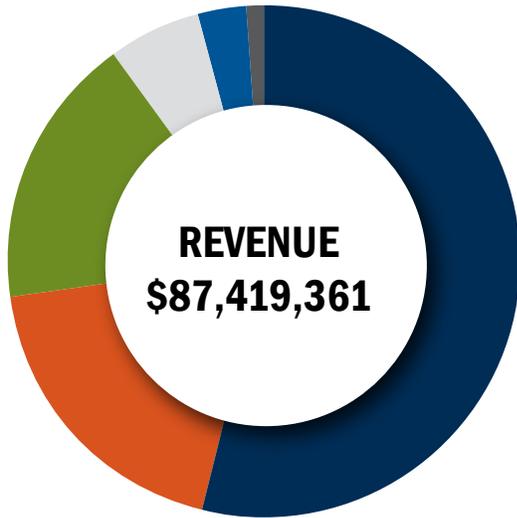
- + Align with the strategic plan
- + Improve internal processes
- + Enhance customer service
- + Provide a multidivisional reach
- + Save City resources

73%
of trained Green Belts
were certified in 2018

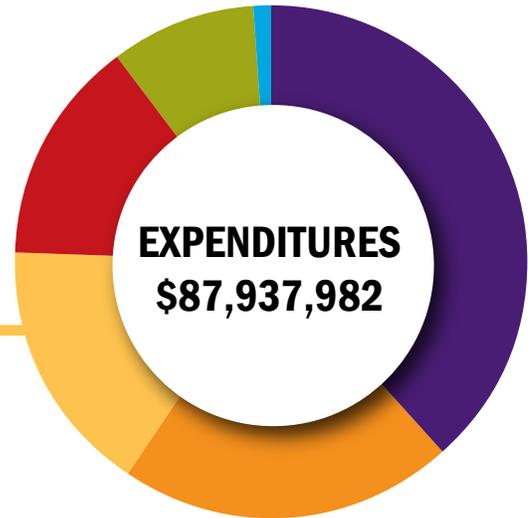
Committing to Staff Success

Recognizing that **employee success is paramount** not only to achieving departmentwide goals, but to the mission of empowering its own staff community to “live better, longer,” DDPHE remains committed to its 2017-2019 Employee Engagement Action Plan. In 2018, efforts continued toward leadership development, qualified promotions, training and development, and onboarding/offboarding. Additionally, **DDPHE leadership made a formal statement emphasizing its commitment to staff** through the practices below.





- General Fund (54%)
- Federal Grants (19%)
- Environmental Services Enterprise Fund (17%)
- State Grants & Contracts (6%)
- Agency-generated Revenue (3%)
- Private or Other (1%)



- General Fund—Payments to DHHA (38%)
- Grants (21%)
- General Fund—Operating (16%)
- Enterprise Fund—Operating (14%)
- Capital Improvements—CIP & ESEF (9%)
- Special Revenue Funds (1%)

PERCENTAGE OF OPERATING BUDGET PER DIVISION*



* The divisional breakdown above DOES NOT include grants or special revenue funds.



Administration (ADMIN) empowers Denver’s communities to “live better, longer” by providing leadership, support, and resources to all DDPHE divisions as they develop creative solutions to challenges; use teamwork to achieve shared goals; serve customers and engage with partners; and deliver high-quality outcomes enhanced by learning and continuous performance improvement. ADMIN promotes effective, efficient, safe, and secure operations; innovation at all levels; workforce development; and open and transparent government. *Below are just a few highlights of ADMIN’s accomplishments in 2018.*



\$2.0+
million saved

Staff Development and Quality Improvement

In 2018, the Administration division reorganized and hired new staff to better support the department, creating and filling the positions of director of administration, contract administrator, and performance management and quality improvement analyst. ADMIN enacted a new policy in 2018 requiring all staff to be trained in lean process improvement through Denver’s Peak Academy Green Belt course, helping DDPHE identify and eliminate process waste and increase value to our customers. This resulted in over \$2 million in savings—a **rare accomplishment for a public health department.**

New Name, New Plan and Opportunities

A new strategic plan (2018-2022) will guide the department’s work moving forward. This includes use of a new, voter-approved name (formally changed from Denver Environmental Health to the Denver Department of Public Health & Environment in late 2017); expansion of the Board of Public Health & Environment (from five to nine members, also voter-approved in late 2017); professional development opportunities for staff (including lean process Green Belt certification); and clarification of mandates and its role as Denver County’s local public health agency. The plan lays out five strategies with 20 metrics. Each metric has a target percentage, with a target average across all metrics of 84%. At the end of 2018, **DDPHE reached 88% of its goal average.**



88%
of goal reached



\$1.5
million in new contracts

Increased Revenue and Diversification

Revenue supporting behavioral health and core public health services expanded significantly in 2018 through grants and via the City’s general fund—**adding over \$1.5 million in new contracts and special revenue fund (SRF) dollars.** These dollars funded programs and partners, including substance misuse treatment planning and programs, emergency preparedness and response, and core public health functions at DDPHE (and at Denver Public Health).



Denver Animal Protection (DAP) empowers Denver’s communities to “live better, longer” by protecting the safety and welfare of Denver’s animals and people; providing humane care to companion animals; reuniting lost pets with their owners; connecting pets with loving homes; and enforcing Denver County animal ordinances. DAP proactively educates the public about animal welfare, believes in the socially conscious sheltering of animals, and operates the Denver Animal Shelter, providing care to more than 8,500 animals each year. **Below are just a few highlights of DAP’s accomplishments in 2018.**

Improving Community Health

Poor pet health, lost pets, and pet overpopulation affect people as well as animals, resulting in the abuse of animals (which often leads to human violence), animal bites, spread of disease, damage to or destruction of property, and traffic accidents involving animals. DAP provides multiple solutions to address these issues. **Microchipping** adoptable and owned pets (3,200 in 2018) greatly improves their chances of being reunited with their families if they’re lost. **Spaying/neutering** pets (2,300) not only helps reduce the pet overpopulation problem, but along with **vaccinations** (12,000), it also improves the lives of pets by reducing diseases and behavioral concerns.



12,000
vaccinations
given



1,100+
residents
supported

Pets for Life: Neighborhood Outreach

Pets for Life (PFL) uses proactive outreach strategies to extend animal services, resources, and information to undeserved communities. This year, DAP expanded service into Montbello, **providing proactive door-to-door outreach, community events, and a consistent presence in the neighborhood.** PFL allows DAP to reach those who have the least access to information and services, improving quality of life for both animals and people. In collaboration with Denver Dumb Friends League, PFL served approximately 1,100 people and 1,900 animals in 2018. Additionally, over 1,200 animals were vaccinated, 700 were microchipped, and more than 800 pets were spayed or neutered.

A Place to Be in a Time of Need

DAP partners with several referral organizations to provide the Safe Haven Program, which offers **two to four weeks of shelter for pets of families experiencing temporary homelessness.** This could be due to fire, domestic violence, or hospitalization. DAP also provides this service to pet owners experiencing homelessness during severe weather (under 15 degrees) with a referral from Denver Police. Many pet owners do not want to give up their animals but need short-term assistance to focus on tasks that can help them secure housing. Last year, the program **offered a safe haven for over 62 animals.**



62
animals
served

DENVER DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT

Animal Protection



Community & Behavioral Health (CBH) empowers Denver’s communities to live better, longer by providing safe, accessible, sustainable, and healthy environments for Denver residents, and by advancing equity at all levels of planning and policy. CBH also connects people to supports for mental well-being and brings together partners across Denver to find innovations that strengthen the network of services supporting mental health for our entire community. *Below are just a few highlights of CBH’s accomplishments in 2018.*



99/100
grant application
score

Grant Win Supports HIV Services

The Denver Office of HIV Resources (part of CBH) is responsible for investing federal funding in HIV-specific care and related services through a network of comprehensive, cost-effective programs. One of these federal programs is the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program Part A. In DDPHE’s 2018 application for this program’s HIV Emergency Relief Grant Program, not only did DDPHE **receive notice it would receive the full award (which last occurred in 1996)**, but it also received an **overall application score of 99/100, with no weaknesses noted**. This score impacts the amount of funding received in fiscal year 2019, which includes nearly a 4% increase.

Addressing Substance Misuse, Recovery

Supporting efforts to reduce substance misuse and its impacts, the Office of Behavioral Health Strategies (OBHS, part of CBH) provided seven community-based organizations with funding to **distribute tools and equipment to prevent overdoses, including emergency kits**. These kits contain medication lock boxes, naloxone, wound care kits, fentanyl test strips, and biohazard and sharps disposal containers. Additionally, OBHS **funded a 24/7 medication-assisted-treatment pilot project** at Denver Health to engage substance misuse treatment programs more immediately. OBHS also **received \$3.1 million to fund strategies within the Opioid Response Strategic Plan**.



\$3.1
million
received



\$1.5
million in
grant awards

Making Walks and Rides to School Safe

The Denver Community Active Living Coalition received new funds from the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE) to expand community and school outreach that supports safe environments for physical activity. This **three-year grant worth over \$1.5 million** was implemented starting July 1, 2019, and supports the Safe Routes to School and Vision Zero programs. These programs aim to identify and support efforts that **spotlight safe routes, educate residents, and encourage active participation in reducing deaths from traffic crashes**.



Environmental Quality (EQ) empowers Denver’s communities to “live better, longer” by providing scientific assessment, regulatory compliance, technical assistance, environmental education, and resource conservation initiatives. EQ advocates for federal, state, and local environmental policies that protect public health in the areas of air quality, water quality, site assessment and remediation, solid/hazardous waste management, climate mitigation and adaptation, energy efficiency, business sustainability and technical advising, neighborhood sustainability, and emergency preparedness and response. *Below are just a few highlights of EQ’s accomplishments in 2018.*

Bloomberg Win Backs Anti-asthma Efforts

DDPHE was awarded \$1.1 million through the Bloomberg Mayor’s Challenge to partner with Denver Public Schools (DPS) to deploy up to 40 real-time fine particulate matter air sensors at schools to better protect children from air pollution exposure and/or asthma triggers. Staff led the yearlong coordination with Bloomberg, the Mayor’s Office, DPS nurses and administrators, and parents to develop a menu of actions to minimize exposure to air pollution while at school, ultimately aiming to reduce the prevalence of childhood asthma. **An initial 10 schools were identified for deployment in 2018, with an additional 10 to be on board by October 2019.**



10
schools received
sensors

Making Green Roofs Work for Everyone

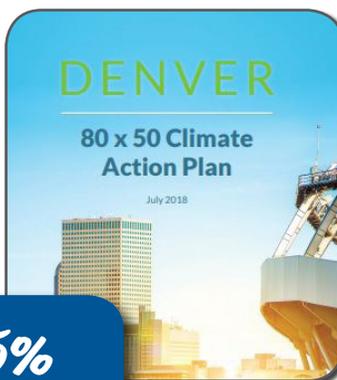
Voter-approved in 2017, the Green Roofs Ordinance is intended to reduce the impacts of urban heat island effects, help building owners lower operational costs, improve comfort for residents and tenants, and achieve maximum benefits while providing flexibility to building owners. In 2018, EQ staff engaged stakeholders to identify additional compliance pathways that maintain the original spirit of the vote while offering additional flexibility. Final rules and regulations governing implementation of the ordinance were approved in April 2019. Results so far include **a 4.5% cut in energy use by 1,161 buildings (from 2016 and 2017), with a savings of \$13.5 million in 2018.**



\$13.5
million saved
in 2018

Taking Action on Climate Concerns

In partnership with the Mayor’s Office, local communities, environmental groups, and the private sector, EQ saw the adoption of the 80 x 50 Climate Plan in July 2018. The **plan aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050**, from 2005 levels. Through the yearlong stakeholder effort, this plan provides quantifiable strategies to reach “80 x 50” and ensures that those most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change are protected. Denver is one of the first cities nationwide to quantify the impacts for strategies that, if achieved, will meet the goal. **As of the end of 2018, Denver saw a 15% reduction of emissions**, which is already on track to exceed the 2050 goal.



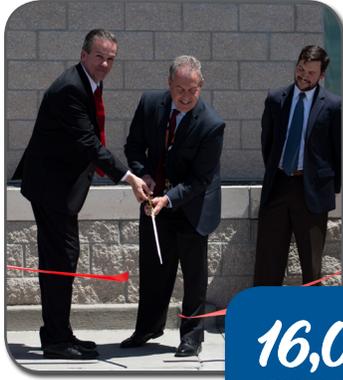
15%
reduction of
emissions

DENVER DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Quality



The **Office of the Medical Examiner (OME)** empowers Denver’s communities to “live better, longer” by conducting independent investigations using advanced forensic science in the service of families, communities, and the criminal justice system. OME does this by providing answers to those affected by sudden and traumatic loss, helping to protect public health by contributing to education and research, increasing public understanding of the forensic sciences, and encouraging and training the next generation of leaders in the field. *Below are just a few highlights of OME’s accomplishments in 2018.*



16,000
more square
feet

World-Class Facility for a World-Class City

OME transitioned into a new forensic facility on April 30, 2018, incorporating modern scientific tools and accessories required to investigate deaths. The state-of-the-art building’s design was created in partnership with OME staff and features over twice the square footage (29,000 vs. 13,000) of the previous facility. This expansion provides **more room for daily work, body storage (240% increase), teaching, advanced imaging equipment, and other modern tools.** The impact stretches beyond internal staff, as OME supports the entire community with world-class death investigation services, which are necessary for any county to thrive from a public health perspective.

Increasing the Teaching Role of OME

One of the fundamental roles of a medical examiner’s office is to provide training for future specialists in the field. In 2018, in addition to providing internships, **OME hosted three international physicians for one-month-long externships** that provided in-depth, firsthand training in all facets of medicolegal death investigation. Ultimately these **programs support a highly talented and well-trained workforce** that can address stressors on the death investigation system, such as the opioid crisis and an increase in deaths by suicide. This helps ensure that medical examiner and coroner offices can adequately investigate deaths that require increased scrutiny and provide appropriate disposition.



3
physicians
hosted



4,638
pieces of data
in 2018

Real-time Data for City Leadership

OME provides information on deaths of high public health interest—such as overdoses due to substance misuse, homicides, deaths involving individuals experiencing homelessness, deaths due to exposure (hypothermia), and suicides. Community organizations, law enforcement, other city agencies, and the media have a stake in, and benefit from, this data. Ultimately, though, this work most significantly impacts the citizens of Denver by allowing City and County leadership to **strategically align assets and deploy limited resources.** OME is preparing to launch a new state-of-the-art case management system in 2019 that will provide this critical information in real time, creating valuable efficiencies for staff.



Public Health Investigations (PHI) empowers Denver’s communities to “live better, longer” by ensuring that food service establishments, child care facilities, body art establishments, cannabis businesses, pools, syringe access programs, and others are complying with applicable laws. PHI also provides public education to consumers and technical assistance to businesses. PHI is committed to resolving situations posing the greatest risk to public health and prioritizes customer responsiveness, industry partnerships, and training efforts through regular inspections and assessments. *Below are just a few highlights of PHI’s accomplishments in 2018.*

Cannabis Consumer Protection

Amid the evolution of the cannabis industry, PHI is on the forefront of identifying and addressing hazards that may pose a risk to the public—including those associated with cultivation, processing, handling, and consumption. In 2018, **PHI conducted 601 inspections and 16 microbial and pesticide contamination investigations.** The team focused on creating health guidance and education for the industry, as well as educating regulators in other jurisdictions. Additionally, DDPHE convened the Cannabis Health and Safety Advisory Committee, composed of industry and public health experts, to provide input and guidance.



601
inspections of
businesses

Lead, Radon Education and Abatement

Radon and lead pose health-related challenges in Denver. PHI continues to develop resources educating the public on potential dangers and providing tools on how best to protect oneself and one’s family from these hazards. In line with the Mayor’s Equity Platform—part of which aims to **keep homes livable, safe, and healthy regardless of inhabitants’ socioeconomic status**—PHI is focusing its efforts on low- to moderate-income qualifying homes to provide lead abatement, as well as other health and safety upgrades. The goal is to improve 130 homes by January 2021. Additionally, **PHI has provided over 1,600 short-term radon testing kits to residents.**



1,600+
kits provided
to residents

Clarifying Donation Guidelines for Impact

Food donations help to close the hunger gap by providing nutritious meals to those experiencing food insecurity, and they reduce food waste by diverting excess food from landfills. Denver has an incredible system of food donation partners, including restaurants (providing food), PHI investigators (promoting food donation), hunger relief organizations (providing links to available resources), and the community (receiving donated foods). Helping to **create a process as safe and effective as possible**, PHI has supported various educational events with marketing materials, including the distribution of over 1,700 fliers to retail food establishments.



1,700+
flyers
distributed

DENVER DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT
Public Health Investigations



The **Office of Sustainability (OOS)** empowers Denver’s communities to “live better, longer” by leading efforts by the City and County of Denver (all departments) to secure the economy and enhance quality of life by ensuring that basic resources are available and affordable for all Denver residents, now and in the future. OOS was created to support and motivate the advancement of bold programs, policies and practices that help protect Denver’s natural, social and built environments. *Below are just a few highlights of OOS’ accomplishments in 2018.*



200+
commitments

Gathering to Share Ideas and Successes

2018 marked the **fourth-annual (and sold-out) Sustainable Denver Summit**, with over 850 attendees, 20 sponsors, and 50 exhibitors. Serving as an opportunity to share sustainability successes and connect with the broader community, the summit results in action. Businesses, nonprofits, and government representatives develop public commitments that help Denver achieve its sustainability vision. Since initiating the conference, the group has made **more than 200 commitments addressing air quality, cross-cutting, energy, food and health, housing, materials, mobility, and water.**

Denver Featured in 10th-Anniversary Issue

Based on the incredible, collaborative-based sustainability work going on in the Denver community, **Denver was asked to be the first city in history to have a Solutions Journal issue devoted to it.** Chief Sustainability Officer Jerry Tinianow was the guest editor for the piece. While OOS led the charge, both internal and external partners contributed to the showcasing of success stories throughout the city and county. **Denver is seen as a thought leader and success template** for other cities to learn from when working on their own sustainability solutions. The readership base for the journal is greater than 100,000 people from across the globe.



100K
readers of
journal



80
LEED score
(top category)

Denver Scores Platinum LEED for Cities

LEED for Cities is a U.S. Green Building Council initiative that provides a consistent way to measure and communicate the performance of entire communities and their work toward responsible and sustainable planning for natural systems, energy, water, waste, transportation, and many other factors that contribute to quality of life. In 2018, the necessary data was gathered for Denver to ultimately **receive a score of 80 (out of 100), ranking it in the platinum category—the highest available.** As is the case with LEED buildings standards, metrics will continue to become more stringent; therefore, OOS will continue to focus on its partnerships and build on this great work.



DENVER

PUBLIC HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT





#LiveBetter

(720) 913-1311 | 101 W. Colfax Ave., Denver, CO 80202

Photos used throughout this publication are either property of DDPHE or were appropriately licensed. Please contact DDPHE for additional attribution information as needed.