EMPOWERING DENVER’S COMMUNITIES TO LIVE BETTER, LONGER

Supporting the well-being of our entire community with services and opportunities that enrich lives.

OUR VALUES

DIVERSITY
INTEGRITY
ACCOUNTABILITY
TRANSPARENCY
COLLABORATION
TEAMWORK

Nationally Accredited since March 2017
LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The events of the last several years have shown the world the importance of a strong and united public health system.

Under unprecedented demands, the team at the Denver Department of Public Health & Environment (DDPHE) has worked tirelessly to protect and improve the health of our residents and ensure a safe community. Our department has grown to include additional public health services that are essential in strengthening our work operationally and addressing policy and systems-level change.

As Denver’s nationally accredited local public health agency, we use a data-driven approach and a health equity lens to empower Denver’s communities to live better, longer.

Bob McDonald
Executive Director & Public Health Administrator
Department of Public Health & Environment
City and County of Denver

Our Divisions

It takes a holistic approach to create the most healthy, vibrant life possible for our residents. DDPHE implements equitable public health strategies that impact the lives of those in our community, while serving as leaders and conveners among our partners. The result is a stronger, healthier, safer Denver.

The diversity of services, programs and expertise that comprise DDPHE make it possible for us to be a public health department like no other in the country: providing everything from traditional public health services like restaurant inspections and community health services, to caring for homeless pets and tracking deadly substance use trends through our medical examiner.

COMMUNITY & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Ensuring equitable access to mental and physical health services and opportunities for wellness

We inform, educate and empower Denver’s communities to live a healthy lifestyle, to reduce chronic disease through awareness and prevention programs and to implement population-based strategies to address social determinants of health. We work to reduce barriers to accessing mental and physical health care.
DDPHE’s 2022 budget comprised funding from various sources, including the city’s general fund, special revenue funds, the enterprise fund, and local, state and federal grants.


The general fund also supports the city’s annual funding to Denver Health and Hospital Authority for clinical services. The enterprise fund supports our Environmental Quality division. The special revenue funds encompass ballot initiative programs. Grant funding supported programming and services in all divisions across the department.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Budget (in dollars)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total 2022 Budget</td>
<td>$189,613,684</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Revenues Funds</td>
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<td>Denver Health Payments</td>
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<td>Grants, est.</td>
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<td>Environmental Quality</td>
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<td>Community &amp; Behavioral Health</td>
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<td>Public Health Investigations</td>
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<td>Denver Animal Protection</td>
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<td>Office of the Medical Examiner</td>
<td>$5,398,702</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shared Services &amp; Business Operations</td>
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Total # of Full Time Employees in 2022: 322
Ensuring a Healthy & Safe Denver

The addition of the Epidemiology and Disease Intervention program and School Inspection program to DDPHE in 2022 means we can provide better service and more direct oversight of the health and wellness of our community.

Additionally, the Public Health Investigations team continued to support the city’s endemic COVID-19 response, including vaccination work and disease surveillance, and connecting people with COVID-19 to resources like food, health care and rent assistance.

Environmental Programs for Healthier Spaces to Live, Work & Play

The Environmental Quality team installed nearly 50 air quality sensors around Denver Public School sites.

This completed a four-year grant from the 2018 Bloomberg Mayors Challenge for the Love My Air program. The sensors provide real-time data, which is accessible via an app, to help the community make smart decisions based on air quality. While the grant is complete, DDPHE will continue the program in 2023.

Easy Access to Health & Data Records

2022 was the first year Denver residents could access original and replacement birth and death certificates through DDPHE.

Our Vital Records team provided nearly 60,000 birth and death certificates in 2022. Additionally, the Office of the Medical Examiner brought on a full-time statistician and launched new online dashboards to provide the public with more information about causes of death in Denver.

Funding Projects that Serve our Residents & Stimulate the Economy

The Shared Services & Business Operations Division managed more than 200 grants and contracts totaling more than $250 million to provide responsive public health services to the people of Denver.
DENVER ANIMAL PROTECTION AND SHELTER
Improving the lives of animals and people

The city’s only full-service, open admission animal shelter providing public safety, animal welfare and care services 24/7, 365 days a year. We foster the human-animal bond by providing care to Denver’s neediest pets, adopting pets to loving homes and enforcing city animal ordinances.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Advocating for the air, land and water quality our city needs and deserves

We respond to environmental concerns around air, land and water, and we advocate for policies to improve environmental quality through federal, state and local regulations. We work to effectively address environmental challenges through a diverse portfolio of solutions and resources. As the city’s environmental consultant, we ensure all city agencies minimize their environmental impact.

PUBLIC HEALTH INVESTIGATIONS
Monitoring and ensuring the fidelity and safety of our public resources and businesses city-wide

We keep Denver’s homes, schools, restaurants, swimming pools, child care facilities, marijuana businesses and body art facilities safe. We are committed to resolving situations posing the greatest risk to public health and prioritize customer responsiveness, industry partnerships and training efforts through regular inspections and assessments.

OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINER
Working proactively to ensure public safety by conducting independent investigations using advanced forensic science in the service of families, communities, and the criminal justice system

We identify public health trends impacting the health of our communities and work 24/7 to provide answers to those affected by sudden and traumatic loss. The data we collect and analyze informs the work of our department and guides the decisions of policymakers. We also issue certified birth and death certificates for any birth or death in Colorado.

SHARED SERVICES & BUSINESS OPERATIONS
Coordinating and leveraging partners and city services for the greatest good for our community

We amplify the work of all other DDPHE divisions, city agencies and community partners and provide Denver residents with critical information, data and emergency response. We are committed to providing equitable, innovative, transparent and accountable leadership, collaboration and operational support.
Putting American Rescue Plan Funding to Work

DDPHE put nearly $2.8 million to work through Denver’s American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocation for behavioral health programming.

Programs were developed using feedback from Denver residents and include:

- Funding to build on prior mental health studies and conduct a comprehensive needs assessment.
- We Got This! Youth Mental Health Summit, which brought together over 300 Denver-area students to explore a variety of coping mechanisms shared by professionals and their peers.
- Funding for the Denver Food Resiliency Fund focused on improving infrastructure, operations and food systems.
- A second Wellness Winnie, Denver’s mobile behavioral health vehicle.
- The 2022 Fentanyl Action Summit, which brought together metro area public health professionals from different fields to share resources and best practices to mobilize action related to substance misuse to save lives.

DDPHE’s vision, to be the best public health department in the country, is achieved by addressing bias, inequity and access. With a focus on those we serve, we are working together to build the public health system of the future.
Supporting Denver’s Communities in Need

Over the course of the year, Community & Behavioral Health teams reached residents across the city with resources to help them live better, longer.

- Through the Wellness Winnie, our mobile behavioral health unit, we engaged with over 3,000 residents, helping meet immediate physical needs and providing referrals to behavioral healthcare.
- The Overdose Prevention team distributed over 5,000 overdose prevention kits to residents of Denver.
- The Support Team Assisted Response (STAR) program responded to over 6,000 behavioral health emergency calls with the Support Team Assisted Response (STAR) program, where a paramedic and behavioral health clinician are dispatched instead of uniformed police.
- Through the Healthy Food for Denver Kids initiative, DDPHE supported 17,249,272 healthy meals served to children and engaged over 15,550 youth in food nutrition classes.

Welcoming a New Chief Medical Officer

In January 2022, DDPHE welcomed Dr. Sterling McLaren as Denver’s Chief Medical Officer, who administers health programs and services intended to protect and improve the health of residents.

This is the first time this position is held within DDPHE, giving the department an opportunity to serve the community directly.

Findings Homes for a Record Number of Pets

Across the country, a historic number of pets were surrendered to local animal shelters.

In 2022, Denver Animal Protection took in 51% more surrendered animals than in 2019 (pre-pandemic) and significantly increased foster home participation. Over the course of the year, our team cared for over 6,000 animals at the shelter, responded to around 20,000 animal welfare calls, and as an open-admission shelter, never refused an animal that came to our doors.
DDPHE is a resource to our partners in other City of Denver agencies, and throughout the state, and we proactively work together to break down silos on every level. Our diversity of programming and services means we need partnerships to make an even bigger impact on the city we serve. We are proud to partner with regional public health agencies to protect and improve the lives of the people in our community.

PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE AT DENVER HEALTH (PHIDH)
DDPHE partners with PHIDH to provide clinical care and educational opportunities to Denver residents.

METRO DENVER PARTNERSHIP FOR HEALTH
DDPHE is a member of the Metro Denver Partnership for Health, a collaboration of regional leaders from the seven-county Denver metro area partnering to achieve their common goals of advancing health equity across the region.

BIG CITIES HEALTH COALITION (BCHC)
BCHC is a forum for the leaders of America’s largest metropolitan health departments to exchange strategies and jointly address issues to promote and protect the health and safety of the 61 million people they serve. Together, these public health officials directly affect the health and well-being of nearly one in five Americans.

DENVER BOARD OF PUBLIC HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT
The Board of Public Health & Environment consists of nine members who are appointed by the mayor and approved by the Denver City Council. The Board’s primary functions include adopting rules and regulations, renewing requests for variances from Denver’s public health laws and hearing appeals of decisions of the department.

COLORADO ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS (CALPHO)
CALPHO is the professional association representing the leadership, staff and partners of Colorado’s local public health agencies. CALPHO supports their vital, community-focused public health activities by encouraging system-level improvements.