



CALPHO

Colorado Association of Local Public Health Officials

PROTECT LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH FUNDING

November 2025

Key Takeaways

- THANK YOU for your steadfast support in a difficult budget environment.
- Local public health provides essential services, delivers a strong return on investment, and faces a perpetual funding shortfall.
- Local agencies experienced a \$3M cut following the latest Special Session and now face an ongoing reduction of \$3.3M.

The Case for Public Health

Local public health agencies (LPHAs) deliver essential services that *protect and promote the well-being of communities* across Colorado. They range from immunizations and communicable disease response to emergency preparedness and foodborne illness prevention. Evidence consistently demonstrates that public health programs:

- Save lives
- Reduce health care costs
- Avoid preventable outbreaks
- Support a productive workforce
- Enhance community safety

This is a statewide priority that impacts every legislative district in a state with a decentralized public health governance model, where local control is paramount and local agencies are creative, effective, and lean.

Despite significant state budget pressures, it is more important than ever to mitigate General Fund cuts to LPHAs as tens of thousands of Coloradans are likely to lose their health coverage due to federal funding cuts and policy changes, and as many counties are forced to slash their own contributions. *Reducing already limited public health infrastructure funds only increases costs, sick days, and chronic disease, exacerbating the state’s budget shortfall and further harming Coloradans.*

Why State Funding Matters

- Funds Local Priorities: Unlike restricted funding tied to state and federal mandates, which makes up most of public health agencies’ budgets, Local Planning & Support (LPS) dollars from the General Fund allow LPHAs to address local needs.
- Fills Critical Gaps: LPS dollars help braid and blend funding to cover essential programs and services that would otherwise be without financial resources.
- Enables Long-Term Planning: While short-term grants fluctuate with political changes, LPS dollars provide stability, supporting sustained efforts and strong community relationships.

A Smart Investment That Saves Money

Public health funding isn’t just a cost — it’s a smart investment. Strong public health infrastructure reduces health care costs by preventing conditions that drive excessive health care use. Even small amounts of flexible funding make a big impact: A recent study in El Paso County found that *every \$1 spent on public health resulted in \$14.30 in county savings.*

By the Numbers



LPHAs in Colorado



Local & State Public Health Employees



Savings for Every \$1 Invested in Public Health



Proposed General Fund Cut for LPHAs

Impacts of Funding Reductions on Local Communities

The recent General Fund cut represented a 15% decrease and has already had *significant and wide-ranging impacts that hurt LPHAs' ability to serve their communities*, including:

- A reduction in core public health services such as emergency preparedness and response, maternal and child health programs, food safety inspections, sexually transmitted infection testing, and mental health and substance use disorder services.
- Exacerbated challenges for rural communities, as smaller LPHAs outside the Front Range already operate with limited staff and resources.
- Weakened capacity for strategic planning and securing grant funding, which further shrinks resources and widens existing funding gaps.
- Workforce reductions following a period of high turnover since the pandemic, resulting in continued loss of both expertise and capacity.

An Already Strained Workforce

As of 2023, Colorado had *nearly 4,500 state and local public health employees*, including about 2,500 people across the state's 56 LPHAs. At least six full-time staff are needed for an LPHA to adequately provide core public health services in Colorado, and about one in four LPHAs does not meet that benchmark. Just five LPHAs report that they have adequate funding to cover all the required public health capabilities for their community.

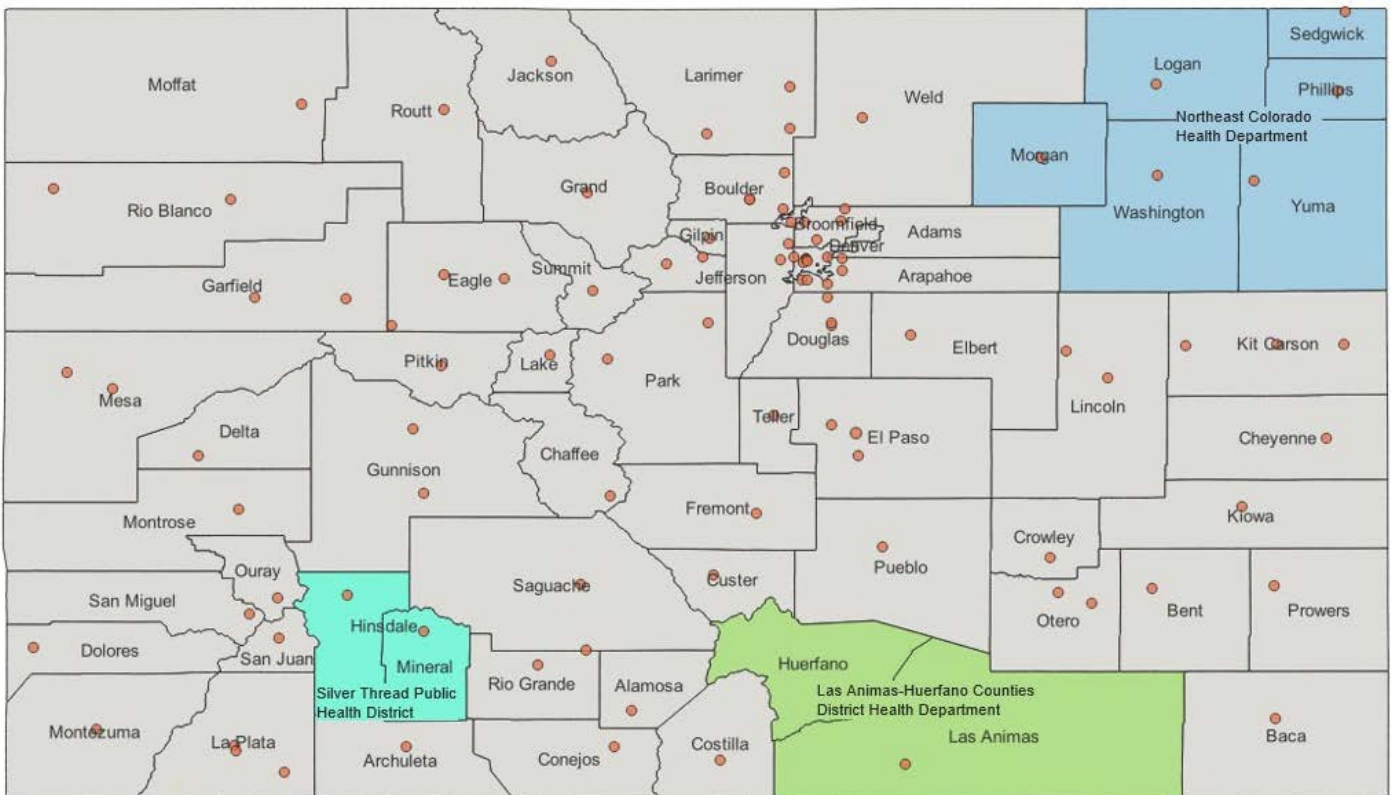
Thank You for Your Support!

CALPHO urges the Joint Budget Committee and all legislators to continue to advocate for local public health and *mitigate proposed funding cuts*. Thank you for your recent support and ongoing partnership.

We are available to connect you with local public health leaders and staff to share more about the impact of recent budget cuts and the implications of larger, ongoing reductions for your community.

Colorado Local Public Health Agencies 2025

- Single-county agencies
- Multi-county agencies
- Agency office and clinic locations



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