

Local Health Departments Promote Healthy and Safe Environments

Local health departments protect people from exposure to hazardous substances or dangerous events. Local health departments are involved in a wide array of activities including groundwater protection, protection of the food supply, pollution prevention and hazardous waste disposal.

To increase the ability of local health departments to protect people from environmental hazards, NACCHO recommends in FY2016:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases

Food Safety

FY2015: \$48 million | **FY2016 President:** \$50 million

FY2016 NACCHO Request: \$55 million

CDC funds 57 state and local health departments to enhance vital national surveillance, outbreak detection and response, and food safety prevention efforts. CDC provides technology, expert advice, guidance and training to local health departments to more quickly identify and stop outbreaks of foodborne disease.

National Center for Environmental Health

Climate and Health

FY2015: \$9 million | **FY2016 President:** \$19 million

FY2016 NACCHO Request: \$19 million

Local health departments address the health effects of a changing climate. CDC's Climate and Health program funds 16 state and two local health departments to create and implement climate and health adaptation plans. CDC funding improves the readiness of communities to respond to extreme weather events, floods, droughts, increases in climate-related infectious diseases leading to public health impact. These successful projects can provide models for others to adapt for their needs.

Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention

FY2015: \$16 million | **FY2016 President:** \$16 million

FY2016 NACCHO Request: \$20 million

Lead poisoning still is a major public health threat in the U.S. today. Over half a million children have blood lead levels high enough to threaten their health. CDC funds 29 state and 6 local health departments to identify families with harmful exposure to lead, track incidence and causes, inspect homes and remove environmental threats, connect children with appropriate services and educate the public and health care providers. In FY2012, the program was virtually eliminated. In FY2014 the program received only half of its previous funding and should be fully restored as soon as possible.



According to the World Health Organization, nearly 25% of all diseases are caused by exposures to the environment.

Local Health Departments Educate the Public and Protect the Environment

Some of the most common environmental health services provided by local health departments are food safety education, control of animals that carry disease (vector control), and measures to promote clean air. Environmental health services provided may vary by local health department and size of population served.

Local Health Departments Providing Select Environmental Health Services

Environmental Health Services	All LHDs	Size of Population Served				
		<25,000	25,000–49,999	50,000–99,999	100,000–499,999	500,000+
Food Safety Education	72%	63%	76%	83%	79%	78%
Vector Control	48%	39%	51%	55%	57%	62%
Groundwater Protection	40%	31%	40%	44%	57%	53%
Surface Water Protection	33%	25%	34%	37%	43%	46%
Indoor Air Quality	31%	27%	29%	35%	34%	45%
Pollution Prevention	22%	14%	20%	26%	29%	44%
Hazmat Response	17%	13%	13%	19%	25%	32%
Collection of Unused Pharmaceuticals	16%	15%	21%	16%	16%	15%
Air Pollution	16%	12%	14%	19%	19%	32%
Hazardous Waste Disposal	15%	13%	12%	15%	19%	29%
Land Use Planning	14%	11%	13%	20%	17%	17%
Radiation Control	13%	10%	11%	14%	17%	20%
Noise Pollution	12%	10%	12%	14%	14%	21%

n ranged from 1,910 to 1,954

Source: 2013 National Profile of Local Health Departments

Many local health departments are currently operating at a diminished capacity due to budget pressures on state and local governments. Since 2008, local health departments have lost nearly 50,000 staff, 15% of their overall workforce. NACCHO research has found that some jurisdictions have reduced their food safety inspections, tracking and mitigation of West Nile Virus from mosquitoes, eliminated inspections of most household sewage systems, and discontinued replacing old equipment.

The **National Association of County and City Health Officials** is the voice of the approximately 2,800 local health departments across the country. These city, county, metropolitan, district, and tribal departments work every day to ensure the safety of the water we drink, the food we eat, and the air we breathe.

For more information, go to <http://naccho.org/topics/environmental/>.

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