
Fiscal Year 2025



Office of Local and
Regional Health

Office of Local and
Regional Health

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

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Message from the Director

Dear Partners,

At the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Office of Local and Regional Health (OLRH), our mission remains clear: to strengthen local public health systems and promote the health and well-being of all communities across Massachusetts. In fiscal year 2025 (July 1, 2024–June 30, 2025), OLRH continued to build momentum by deepening our partnerships with municipalities, expanding service delivery, and addressing the pressing needs of our communities. The passage of the [State Action for Public Health Excellence Act \(SAPHE\) 2.0](#) in this fiscal year emphasizes transparency, inclusivity, and adaptability, ensuring our work aligns with the needs of diverse populations, now and into the future. [SAPHE 2.0](#)¹ will elevate local public health’s capabilities to provide equitable public health services and build stronger, more resilient communities across the Commonwealth.

We are proud to share OLRH’s milestones from this fiscal year. This report highlights not only the tangible impact of our team’s collective voice and collaborative internal planning strategy, but also the dedication of our partners in advancing equity throughout Massachusetts. Together, we are strengthening the foundation for sustainable, coordinated solutions that will drive lasting and meaningful change. This collective effort is a significant step in our ongoing journey to transform local public health, bringing hope for a healthier Commonwealth in the future.

Samuel S. Wong, PhD

Director, Office of Local and Regional Health
Massachusetts Department of Public Health

¹ *M.G.L. c. 111 s. 27D and Sections 307-309 of Chapter 238 of the Acts of 2024 (known colloquially as SAPHE 2.0)*

About the Office of Local and Regional Health

The Office of Local and Regional Health (OLRH) leads the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's efforts to strengthen and modernize the local public health system. OLRH partners with local public health (LPH) departments, Tribes, and statewide partners across the Commonwealth to build a stronger, more coordinated, and equitable public health infrastructure. We provide tools, resources, and guidance to protect and promote community health, grounding all efforts in racial and health equity to reduce disparities and advance fair health outcomes.

Our equity commitment

Equity is the foundation of OLRH's initiatives and is integrated into every aspect of decision-making, funding strategies, program design, and relationship building. Through staff development, key partnerships, and structural investments, we work to dismantle systemic inequities and promote public health for every community in Massachusetts.

A pivotal moment for local public health: SAPHE 2.0

Fiscal year (FY) 2025 marked a historic milestone for local public health in Massachusetts. In November 2024, Governor Maura Healey signed the Economic Development Bill into law, which included amendments to M.G.L. c. 111 s. 27D and [Sections 307–309 of Chapter 238 of the Acts of 2024](#), commonly known as the State Action for Public Health Excellence (SAPHE) 2.0.

With the passage of this landmark legislation, Massachusetts is taking a transformative step to sustainably modernize its local public health system. Building on the recommendations from the 2016 Special Commission on Local and Regional Public Health's [Blueprint](#) report, along with the prior language of M.G.L. c. 111 s. 27D, now known as SAPHE 1.0 (2020), SAPHE 2.0 establishes the structures, standards, and mechanisms to ensure all residents (regardless of race, income, or ZIP code) have access to essential public health protections.

Throughout FY25, OLRH and our partners laid the groundwork for this legislative achievement by advancing milestones that strengthened accountability, expanded local capacity, and formalized cross-jurisdictional collaboration. SAPHE 2.0 continues to build upon these efforts, positioning Massachusetts to transform into a modern, equitable, and resilient public health system.

The following key components and new responsibilities reflect the commitment of OLRH and LPH to advance the work outlined by SAPHE 2.0:

SAPHE 2.0 key components

Performance Standards

95%

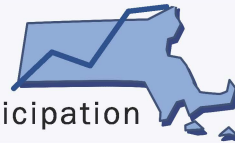
Statewide assessment participation



Public Health Excellence (PHE) Grant program

92%

Municipal participation



Engagement with local public health

300+

Attendees join LPH webinars each month



Workforce development

1000+

Online modules completed



Data Solution

300+

Research hours completed during discovery phase



New responsibilities under SAPHE 2.0



Equity

For the first time, equity is codified into law, ensuring services are delivered fairly and historically underserved communities remain our top priority.



Reporting

Local boards of health are required to submit annual reports on meeting the Performance Standards. DPH will develop annual reports on resource needs and biennial reports on broader system impacts, promoting accountability and transparency.



Special Commission on Local and Regional Public Health

DPH will convene the Special Commission, who will review SAPHE 2.0 implementation, assess funding needs, and make recommendations to support and enhance the state's local and regional public health system.

Through these initiatives and requirements, SAPHE 2.0 is not only transforming local public health today but also laying the foundation for a stronger, more equitable, and sustainable system for generations to come. As Massachusetts continues to implement this vision, OLRH remains committed to advancing equity, strengthening accountability, and empowering local public health to meet tomorrow's challenges.

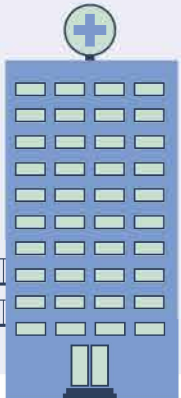
Fiscal Year 2025 projects, achievements, and milestones

In FY25, OLRH advanced initiatives to strengthen Massachusetts' public health system. Guided by SAPHE 2.0, the Office focused on equitable service delivery, workforce capacity, and sustainable systems. Notable highlights include:



178

PHNs & all LPH departments supported

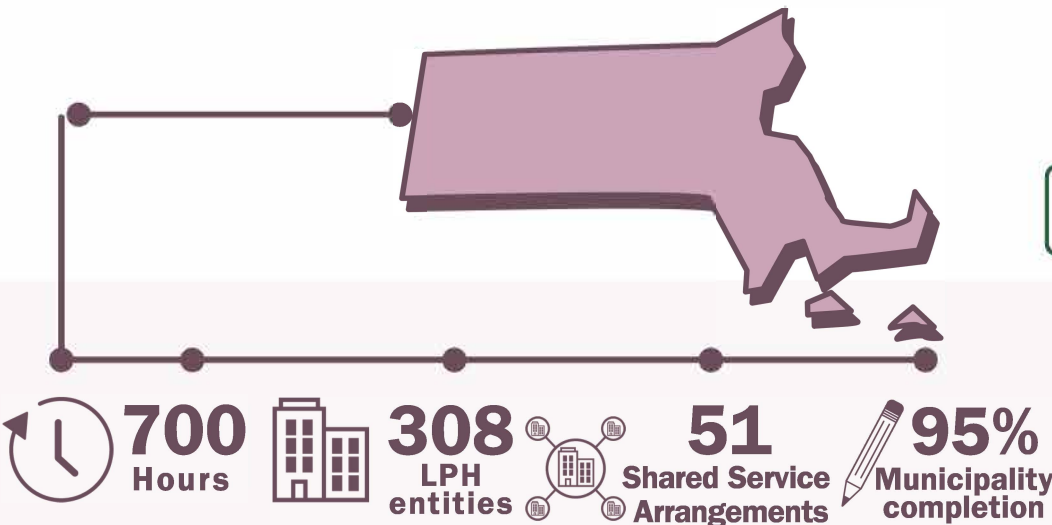


Local Public Health Nurse Consultant Program

In partnership with UMass Amherst, OLRH launched the Local Public Health Nurse (PHN) Consultant Program, supporting 178 public health nurses and all local health departments with tailored consulting and technical assistance.

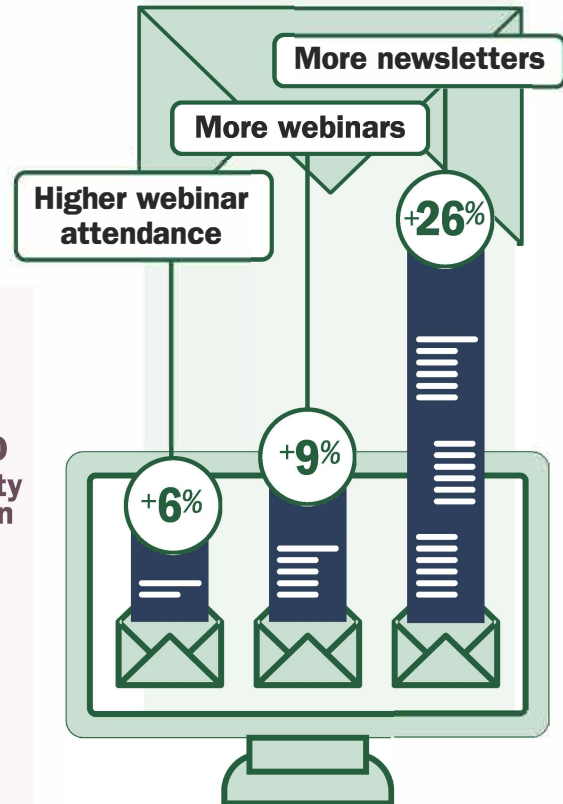
Enhanced engagement with local public health

OLRH boosted partner engagement with 26% more newsletters, 9% more webinars, and 6% higher webinar attendance – ensuring local public health receives timely, accessible information.



Foundational Public Health Services (FPHS) Review

In FY25, OLRH delivered 700+ hours of technical support to 308 local health entities across 51 Shared Service Arrangements (SSAs), achieving a 95% municipality completion rate. The FPHS Review provided Massachusetts' first comprehensive view of local health departments' resources, structures, and workforce capacity to meet statewide benchmarks.




Fiscal Year 2025 projects, achievements, and milestones (cont.)

18-week

Research: Metrik discovery phase **Data solution development**

Launched the 18-week discovery phase of Metrik, a statewide LPH data solution, in collaboration with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and local public health partners. Conducted 33 office hours, 27 activities, and 12 listening sessions with 375+ participants to ensure the system's design meets local needs.

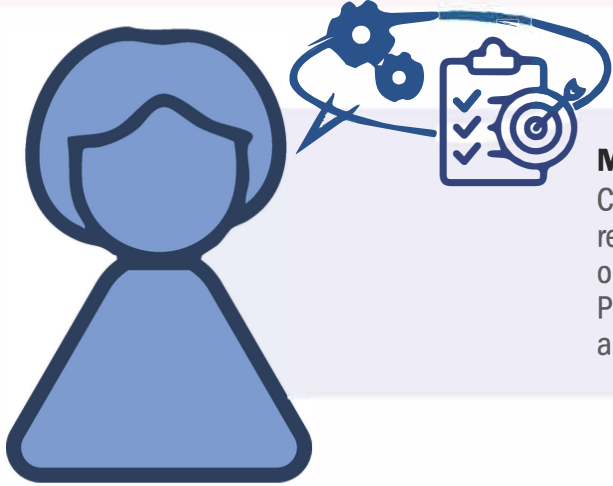
- 
- 33 office hours
 - 27 activities
 - 12 listening sessions
 - 375+ participants



\$24.7M through the
PHE Grant
in LPH funding *Program*

Shared Services expansion

Distributed \$24.7M in funding through the Public Health Excellence Grant Program. Of the total funding amount, 67% was allocated to support staffing, resulting in a 13% workforce increase. This investment strengthened local capacity to meet the Performance Standards, improve measurable health outcomes, and grow the LPH workforce.



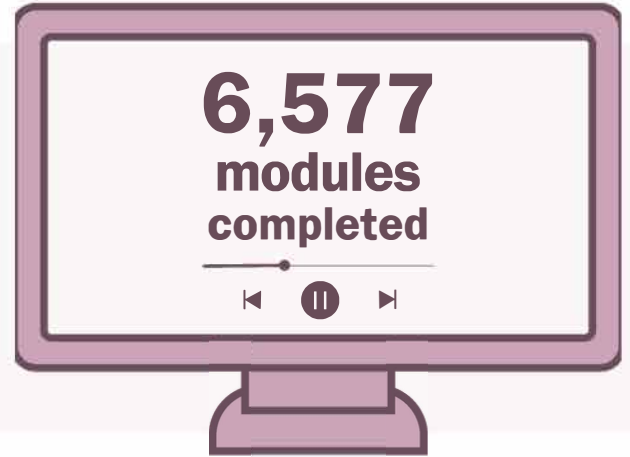
Model workplans and sustainability tools

Collaborated across OLRH and DPH to create a refined workplan for SSAs, with 26 model objectives and 136 activities, helping LPH advance Performance Standards, link data to results, and access ongoing technical support.

Fiscal Year 2025 projects, achievements, and milestones (cont.)

Training and workforce development

Trained the LPH workforce through free, self-paced eLearning, resulting in 6,577 module completions by 1,191 unique users. Additionally, 99 unique users accessed account support via the OLRH Training Support inbox for the TRAIN platform.



LPH training program

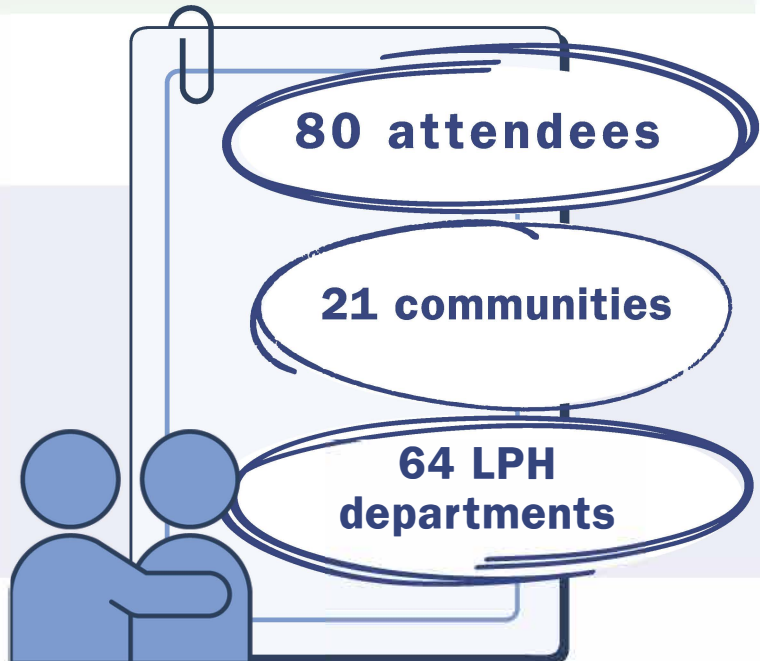


Environmental health training

Designed and implemented a series of trainings, in partnership with the Massachusetts Training Hub Program and Boston University School of Public Health. The hybrid online and classroom portion of [the training program](#) provided three Food and three Housing courses, which trained a total of 174 LPH professionals across the state. This program enables more public health professionals access to critical training opportunities, strengthening the statewide workforce and public health infrastructure.

Racial and health equity

Expanded capacity for racial and health equity by offering trainings (Broadening the Lens and Dialogues Across Differences) to LPH, local boards of health (LBOH), Tribes, staff, partners, and subject matter experts (SMEs) – engaging nearly 80 participants from 21 communities. Additionally, 64 LPH departments and LBOH received targeted equity technical support in FY25.



Fiscal Year 2025 projects, achievements, and milestones (cont.)

Improved grant management and data transparency

Moved to a cloud-based grant management platform for 51 SSAs, enabling real-time progress and expense reporting, improved spending oversight, aggregated staffing data, and streamlined review of workplan and equity metrics through internal dashboards.

Real-time reporting

51 SSAs



Pathway to Local Public Health Program

Launched the Pathway to Local Public Health Program, a pilot program designed for currently enrolled community college students interested in a career in local public health. The program places participants in a nearby health department for 6-12 months, enabling them to gain the essential skills and knowledge needed to successfully enter a local public health career in Massachusetts.



29 LPH ENTITIES SUPPORTED



Subject Matter Expert (SME) support

In partnership with Massachusetts Health Officers Association, OLRH supported 29 LPH entities with SME technical support. LPH benefited from the experience of diverse subject matter experts, building SSA capacity to achieve the Performance Standards.

Looking ahead: Commitment to Fiscal Year 2026 priorities

As we look ahead to FY26, OLRH's initiatives and projects will focus on sustainability, data modernization, and capacity building. OLRH will also explore new opportunities to expand impact and maintain efficiency of local public health services. With SAPHE 2.0 successfully setting a new standard for public health systems across Massachusetts, the Office is excited to partner with LPH to leverage real-time data, community-driven insights, and cross-sector collaboration.

These priorities strive to empower decision-makers to respond more effectively to emerging health challenges, address long-standing disparities, and allocate resources where they are needed most. OLRH remains dedicated to advancing the progress made in FY25 and deepening collaborative partnerships to strengthen our Commonwealth.

Connect with OLRH

Driven by a continued commitment to sustainable infrastructure and resilient public health systems, the Office of Local and Regional Health celebrates the essential contributions of our partners, whose collaboration has been essential throughout the fiscal year. We extend our deepest gratitude and look forward to building on this momentum together in FY26.



Phone
(617) 753-8018



Website
mass.gov/olrh



Email
localregionalpublichealth@mass.gov



Glossary

Acronyms

DEP	Department of Environmental Protection
DPH	Department of Public Health
EOHHS	Executive Office of Health and Human Services
FPHS	Foundational Public Health Services
FY	Fiscal year
LBOH	Local board(s) of health
LPH	Local public health
OLRH	Office of Local and Regional Health
PHE	Public Health Excellence
PHN(s)	Public health nurse(s)
SAPHE 2.0	State Action for Public Health Excellence Act 2.0
SME(s)	Subject matter expert(s)
SSA(s)	Shared Service Arrangement(s)

Resources

- [Blueprint for Public Health Excellence](#)
- [Capacity Assessment Summary Report](#)
- [Foundational Public Health Services for Local Public Health](#)
- [Local Public Health Nurse Consultant Program](#)
- [Local Public Health Training Program](#)
- [OLRH Five-Year Strategic Plan](#)
- [OLRH Racial Equity Statement](#)
- [Performance Standards for Local Public Health](#)
- [Public Health Excellence Grant Program](#)
- [SAPHE 2.0](#)
 - [SAPHE M.G.L. c. 111 s. 27D](#)
 - [SAPHE Sections 307-309 of Chapter 238 of the Acts of 2024](#)
 - [SAPHE 2.0 LPH One-Pager](#)
 - [SAPHE 2.0 Road Map](#)