

# Detroit Health Department

# Memo

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**To:** Mary Sheffield, President, Detroit City Council

Initial  
DFR

**From:** Denise Fair Razo, Executive Director and Health Officer, Department of Health & Wellness Promotion

**Date:** March 25, 2025

**Re:** Responses to 2025-2026 Health Department Budget Analysis

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Please find below responses to your questions sent on 3/18/2025 regarding the Fiscal Year 2026 Proposed Budget for the Health Department.

1. What capital improvements are needed at the Detroit Health Department? And what is the cost associated with such projects?

**There is currently no capital improvement need for the department.**

2. How many vacancies does the department have? Does the department have issues with employee retention?

**The Department currently has 15 vacancies funded by the general fund and 71 vacancies funded by grants, where 40 of the 71 vacancies are in the recruitment phase. We consistently maintain a retention rate of approximately 94% and diligently work with the City of Detroit Human Resources Recruitment division to fill all vacant positions.**

4. The Community Violence Intervention Program is implemented through the Health Department and is proposed to receive \$5,361,235, please explain the impact of the program? How long do we see this program being implemented?

**The ShotStoppers program received a total of \$11M in ARPA funding to fund an initial 2-year community violence intervention (CVI) program. CVI uses evidence-based, community driven strategies to prevent and interrupt violence by establishing relationships with people involved in or affected by violence in the community. The CVI program measures homicides and non-fatal shootings within hotspot CVI Zones quarterly. The areas of the city with CVI groups present have seen reductions in violent crime by as much as 83% in previous quarters, contributing to Detroit's historic crime reductions over the last 2 years.**

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Gun violence is a public health issue, and this program applies a public health approach by defining and monitoring the problem, identifying risk factors, and developing prevention strategies. The next step in this approach is to ensure widespread adoption of effective strategies. The continued investment in the ShotStoppers program will allow for this program to operate for an additional year post ARPA, allowing CVI groups to maintain their base funding. The contribution of general funds over the coming years in addition to the Public Safety Trust Fund dollars that should come from the State would allow the program to continue, expand by adding additional CVI groups to cover more hotspots across the city, and establish more violence prevention partnerships as well.

5. What programs implemented by the Health Department receive Federal funding?

The following Health Department programs receive federal funding:

- Ryan White Part A
- Ending the HIV Epidemic
- HIV & STI Testing and Prevention
- Reproductive Health (iDecide)
- Lead Prevention
- Children Special Healthcare Services
- HIV Data to Care
- HIV Housing Assistance
- Hearing & Vision
- Infant Safe Sleep
- Infection Prevention & Response
- Medical Reserve Corps
- Public Health Emergency Preparedness
- Quality Management
- Maternal Child Health Services
- Immunizations
- COVID
- WIC
- Safe Routes to School
- HOPWA

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- Hepatitis C
- Fetal Infant Mortality Review
- Ceasefire Detroit
- Essential Local Public Health Services

Are any programs at risk of losing funding?

The federal Department of Health and Human Services is considering reducing funding for Ending the HIV Epidemic initiatives, HIV & STI Testing and Prevention, and ELPHS – HIV/STI funded activities. However, to date, the Department has not experienced any significant decreases or cuts to that funding or any other federal or state funded programs.

We are working on a contingency plan to address these potential cuts and their impact on operations.

6. What programs does the health department have specifically for children and seniors?

- **Safe Routes Detroit-** Instructing Detroiters (youth and seniors) on how to properly use bike lanes, crosswalks, bicycle hand signals, bicycle and pedestrian laws and overall safety/injury prevention
- **RESET- ReEngaging in Self-care and Enjoying Today:** The Health Department has partnered with U of M to assist older adults “reset” from the pandemic and improve their well-being via 7 telephonic educational session led by a Community Health Worker.
- **Behavioral Health organizes prescription drug safety groups for seniors** twice a month, focusing on topics such as medication management, proper usage, avoiding harmful drug interactions, and safe storage and disposal. These sessions aim to promote safe practices and empower seniors to take control of their health and well-being.
- We also **facilitate mental health groups focused on senior peer support**, depression, anxiety, and grief, offering participants a safe space for meaningful discussions. These sessions also explore topics such as dating later in life, mindfulness practices, and strategies to enhance mental health and resilience.
- Marijuana Tax funding – **Behavioral Health educates middle and high school students on the dangers of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (ATOD)** while promoting the importance of maintaining good mental health. We are empowering youth ambassadors to become peer educators, equipping them to lead by example. Additionally, we are planning the creation of mental health clubs in schools and youth

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programs to raise awareness, foster open discussions, and break the stigma surrounding mental health.

- The **iDecide** program provides a wide range of confidential reproductive health services to clients 13 years of age to adulthood. A myriad of birth control options, comprehensive counseling, STI testing and treatment, opportunities for youth to share input regarding the future of their health services on the Youth Advisory Board, and access to the other Health Department programming and services.
- **Immunizations** for both children and adults are regularly accessible at the Health Department which include, but are not limited to: COVID, measles, mumps, rubella, influenza, chicken pox, and more.
- The **Childhood Lead Prevention Program** screens children in heavily populated areas of the city with known residential dwellings impacted by lead which culminates in children aged 0-6 years to have elevated blood lead levels. Families that have children diagnosed with high levels of lead are provided case management assistance from the Health Department and those families that need greater assistance are relocated through the programs from the Housing & Revitalization Department until the dwelling has been remediated of the sources of lead.
- **Vision & Hearing** technicians partner with private, public, charter schools, and daycare centers conducting screenings on children in the grades of HeadStart to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. This service is in partnership with Vision to Learn, an organization that provides free glasses to children that have been deemed in need of corrective eye ware to help them matriculate through school. As well, children that do not pass the hearing test are referred to specialists that further assess the children for hearing damage or loss and take steps to improve the issue.
- **Children's Special Health Care Services** ensure Detroit children from the ages of 0-26 years and for some illnesses, their lifetime, living with over 2700 chronic illnesses has the necessary supplemental insurance and health care coverage to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The RN Case Managers work closely with the state Medicaid and providers to obtain durable medical equipment, medication, and specialized health care services for clients and respite services for their care givers.
- Over 16,000 families rely on the **Women, Infant, and Children (WIC)** nutritional services for their children ages 0 years to 6 years of age. Benefits of the WIC program include nutrition classes, healthy food shopping experiences, formula and food provisions, along with evidence-based breastfeeding classes and support.
- **Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment** program is partnership with a local dental group to provide routine dental health assessments on HeadStart, daycare, and private, public, and charter school kindergarteners prior to reaching the 1<sup>st</sup> grade to

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combat the devastating impacts of unidentified oral health concerns. Students and children found to have severe dental abnormalities are referred to dental specialists for more follow up care.

7. Having access to healthy foods is a major concern of the citizens and coalition groups, in your opinion what can be done to increase access to health foods?

- **Collaborate with food banks and other community-based organizations to add Neighborhood Wellness and Rec Center sites to their distribution lists.**
- **Coordinate Nutrition education with food distribution services for best practices of use for healthy food integration.**
- **Collaborate with the Detroit Food Policy Council on their efforts to ensure healthy foods and snacks in DPSCD.**
- **The biggest barriers for more availability of healthier foods are that fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthier foods are less profitable and often have shorter shelf lives than unhealthy food. Bending the curve on this with zoning, tax, and regulatory improvements could encourage increased availability.**

8. What is the status of the stray animal management program? How many stray animals were managed by the department last year? What is the process of receiving and treating stray animals?

**As of FY 2024, the Detroit Animal Care program was transferred to the General Services Department to combine with the Animal Control program to create the Detroit Animal Care and Control Division.**

9. The City of Detroit is seeing an increase in coyotes, possums, and other wildlife? Are any studies or plans being considered for animal management as we attempt to increase the population in the City?

**Currently, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manages the wildlife and their habitation for the state of Michigan that includes both rural and residential areas. Therefore, DNR would have oversight and conduct any studies relating to wildlife containment.**

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10. What services are provided for emergency animal care? How many people are on staff for animal control? Are additional hours needed for animal care services? What happens if there is an animal emergency after 4pm?

**This question is best directed to the General Services Department which oversees Animal Care & Control.**

11. How many mobile health units does the department have in its inventory? What services are provided on the mobile health unit? How much does each mobile unit cost?

**The Health Department has two mobile health units in inventory. Services provided on the units include immunizations, outreach and education, and emergency response. Each custom-built mobile unit costs \$302,093 each to procure and the units are 6 years old.**

12. How much money has the health department received from cannabis tax revenue to be used for substance abuse programs?

**The Health Department has received \$63,200 for youth substance programs.**

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13. What is the status of the rides to care program, which provides transportation for pregnant women. What is the capacity of the program? How many women utilized the service last year? How is the program advertised?

**The Rides to Care program was initiated on November 18, 2024, and has currently provided over 5,300+ rides to 660+ Detroiters for prenatal, post-partum, and up to one year of age pediatric medical visits. There are three staff members; two Provider Facilitators to provide outreach and technical support and assistance to medical providers on best practices to utilize the program; one Customer Service Associate to provide follow up service to clients referred to the Rides to Care program for such services as Sisterfriends, SafeSleep, Fatherhood, and many more department programs. There was a comprehensive communications strategy to implement the program effectively that included face to face outreach to local medical providers, billboard and radio ads, Q-Line advertising, social media outreach, press releases, and press conferences with the administration and City Council members.**

14. What issues are arising as departmental employees are conducting restaurant inspections?

**There have been several issues that have arisen in the field, but the team has been able to resolve them with education, effective communication, steps to address factors within their control. These include but are not limited to:**

- **Restaurants are asking for an early inspection due to the placard placement which the inspectors provide constant education for how the program works to the owners benefit of following regularly scheduled inspections.**
- **Restaurant management and owners resistant to the white placard (i.e., not qualifying for green placards due to violations that need to be corrected, or they are under "enforcement" processes).**