

Help rural health departments prepare for the next emergency

During the COVID-19 pandemic, rural local health departments faced many challenges, including:

- Insufficient funding and tedious funding application processes
- Staff burnout and high turnover
- Constantly evolving information
- Inconsistent support from leaders at the local, state, and national level

But with support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as well as training and technical assistance providers, the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) helped rural local health departments meet these challenges through the COVID-19 Workforce Project.

Funders and elected officials from the local to the federal level: Rural health departments need your support so they're ready for the next public health emergency.

Here's what public health professionals who participated in the COVID-19 Workforce Project say they need.

“ During the pandemic, funding was really important — but it lagged. And to get it, we needed so many written documents and so many stats. With our department being short-staffed, it was very, very hard on us. **During a crisis, we need money quicker than usual.**

Pamela Elliott, Lewis County Health Department (Vanceburg, Kentucky)



“ In larger health departments, there's money to invest into emergency preparedness — but that doesn't exist in smaller health departments. **Small health departments need consistent investment so we're ready when the next pandemic or public health crisis comes.**

Ron Sprong, Greene County Health Department (Carrollton, Illinois)

“ We need national-level education, outreach, and advocacy about public health. We need to invest in the United States — in healthy lives and our future. **To be a healthy nation, to increase our longevity, to be a place where people feel safe and healthy — we need to invest in public health.**

Linda Conlon, Oneida County Health Department (Rhineland, Wisconsin)



“ There's more to public health than COVID-19 — in order to grow, we need to start realizing that. **It's time to start building the future — not always looking in the rearview at 2020.**

Amber Gossett-Bailey, Marietta/Belpre Health Department (Marietta, Ohio)



“ We want to work with our local, state, and federal elected officials whenever possible. **Work with us — help us help you so we can all serve the community better.**

Jennifer Demuth, Tuscarawas County Health Department (Dover, Ohio)

Visit www.naccho.org/covid-19-workforce-project to learn more about the COVID-19 Workforce Project.

