

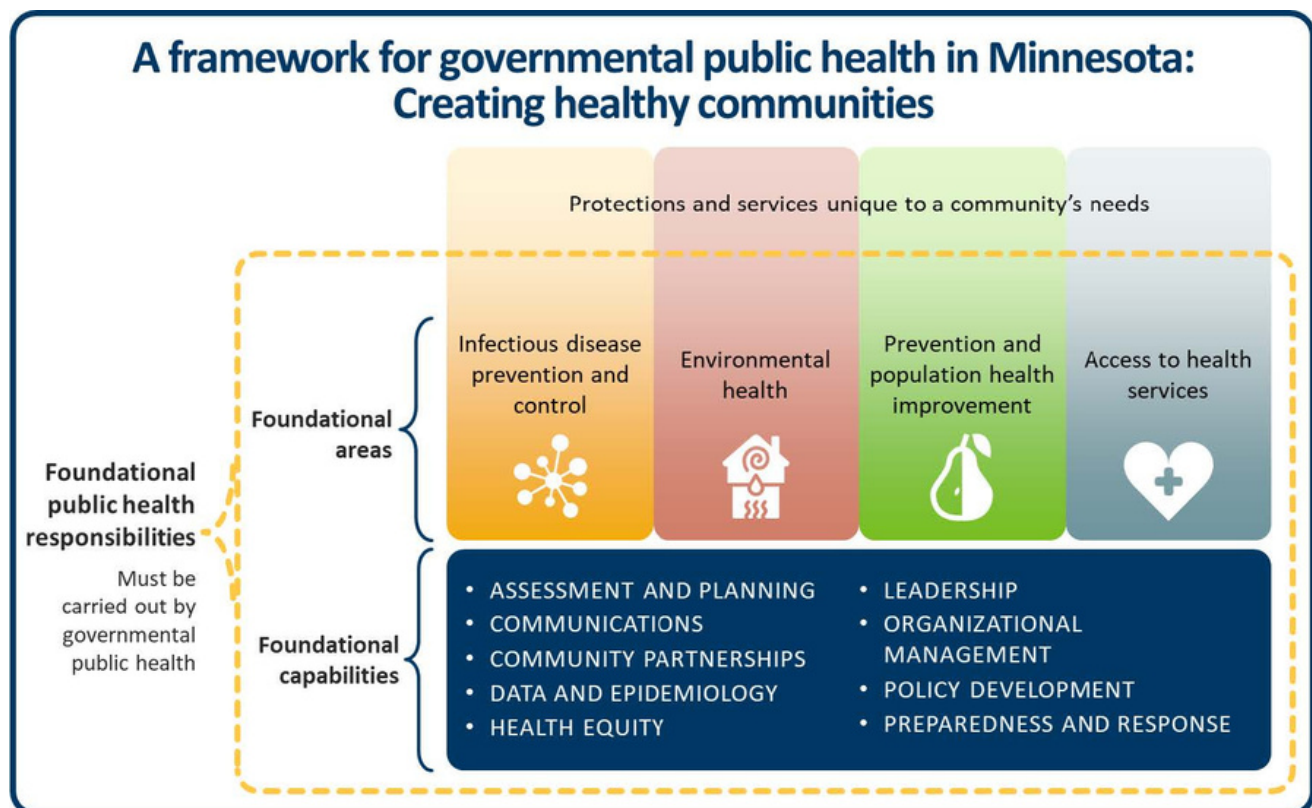
# 21st Century Public Health Transformation

## MINNESOTA

Minnesota is in the Midwestern region of the United States and has a population of 5.6 million people. While categorized as a decentralized state, Minnesota's governmental public health system is best described as a state and local partnership. There are eleven federally recognized Tribal nations in Minnesota who each have their own public health authority. State, local, and Tribal health departments work together towards a vision of health equity in Minnesota, where all communities are thriving, and all people have what they need to be healthy.

### Transformation Approach

Leaders from the state health department, local health departments, local boards of health, and Tribal public health departments from across the state believe now is the time to make the entire public health system work better for all communities. Minnesota's public health system was established in the 1970s and served Minnesotans well for many years. Over time, eroding funding, emerging health threats, widening health inequities, and the need for new skills and capabilities left Minnesotan communities at risk. The state needs to move from a patchwork quilt of public health services and activities that are driven by a complex mix of inconsistent and inflexible funding to one where every community can expect a basic level of public health protections. Minnesota's public health leaders are committed to taking action to transform the public health system and make sure it has the leadership, workforce, and foundational capacity necessary to fulfill its responsibilities, now and into the future.



## Transformation & Equity Activities

In its 2021 session, the Minnesota Legislature recognized the important role of public health. In addition to other investments, the legislature provided \$6M for local and Tribal public health projects to build public health capacity and pilot new organizational models. The first round of projects will focus on Foundational Capabilities in communications; data and epidemiology; community partnerships; and/or health equity and include deep rural, rural, suburban, and urban settings. Funds were also provided by the state legislature to assess the public health system's capacity and estimated cost to fulfill foundational public health responsibilities. By February 2023, findings from this assessment, in addition to initial learnings from the funded projects will be used to provide recommendations on changes to the organization and funding of Minnesota's public health system.

As noted above, Minnesota is building health equity in as a Foundational Capability and providing funding, training, and technical assistance to build knowledge, skills, and abilities across the state. Minnesota is initiating a Tribal led process to define and build foundational public health infrastructure. Minnesota is also working to increase racial/ethnic diversity in the workforce.

## Learnings & Next Steps

Minnesota is currently in the process of distributing funds to local jurisdictions following a period of training, technical assistance, and other support, and will have more to share in the near future.

## Recommendations & Call to Action

COVID-19 has presented Minnesota with a once in a lifetime opportunity to build a public health system that works for everyone – now is the time to build the coalition of leaders necessary to initiate and sustain this work for the long haul. Local relationships matter and make a difference in state legislature funding decisions. Local health directors and local elected officials are best positioned to advocate for funding support by telling local stories and sharing what is happening in their communities. Local public health should spend the time needed to build and sustain relationships with legislators and community partners who will advocate on their behalf.

**“Just like our COVID-19 response, transformation of the governmental public health system takes grit and grace among partners.”**

*Sarah Reese, Director, Polk County Public Health*