

CDC's Public Health Law Program

Helping public health departments and partners understand how laws are used to protect health and safety



About the Program

Public health laws govern everyday activities—guiding everything from tracking infectious disease outbreaks to coordinating evacuations before hurricanes strike.

The Public Health Infrastructure Center's Public Health Law Program (PHLP) provides health departments and partners with resources to apply public health law, address their unique problems, and better safeguard their communities. This program:

- **Analyzes and reports on how laws impact** the public's health.
- **Prepares guidance, articles, reports, and toolkits** to share data-driven solutions to address public health concerns.
- **Connects and supports partners to facilitate risk-informed decision-making** about legal preparedness and emergency responses.
- **Develops and disseminates curricula**, such as learning sessions, workshops, and tabletop exercises, to train public health professionals on how law impacts public health.
- **Builds IT tools that inform changes** in public health law in near-real time, facilitating better decision-making during emergency responses.

By the Numbers

Since its inception in 2000, PHLP has:

Assisted with **20+** emergency responses



Provided **1,000+** learning sessions to state and local practitioners

Wrote and contributed to **500+** CDC and journal publications

Provided **20,000+** hours of direct assistance to jurisdictions

Published nearly **300** editions of *Public Health Law News*



A Closer Look

PHLP offers a range of initiatives that strengthen the legal skills of the public health workforce—helping public health practitioners use law more effectively during infectious disease outbreaks and other emergencies to improve community health. Some examples of this work include:



Expanding access to public health law training through the *Public Health Law Academy*.

This free online platform was developed with ChangeLab Solutions and offers courses for learners at all levels.



Strengthening public health department legal capacity through the *Legal Epidemiology Learning Cohort*.

This program builds legal literacy, boosts confidence in applying legal principles, and equips practitioners to lead research, policy, and partnership efforts.



Developing early-career attorneys through the *STLT Attorney Institute*. This hands-on training, led by experienced CDC and health department attorneys, covers key public health law areas, such as emergency preparedness and public health authority.

A Tool to Gauge Workforce Competency in Public Health Emergency Law



Many public health practitioners need additional skills to understand and apply relevant laws during public health emergencies.

To address this need, PHLP developed the **Public Health Emergency Law Competency Model Version 1.0**, a tool that helps partners and their staff gain the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities through performance standards, self-assessments, and other workforce development resources.

CDC's Commitment to Public Health Law

Public health professionals can positively impact their communities by understanding the legal system and its role in public health. Partners use PHLP's resources to:

- **Improve emergency response efforts** by using tools provided through the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Clearinghouse, a centralized resource for health departments during emergencies.
- **Analyze new laws that impact** infectious disease threats, such as healthcare-associated infections, disease reporting, and outbreak tracking.
- **Build workforce capacity** to strengthen skills in public health law, from emergency preparedness to infectious disease.