

2025
—
2030

**Strategic
Plan**



OUR VISION

To ensure that all New Jerseyans live long, healthy lives and reach their fullest potential.



OUR MISSION

To protect the public's health, promote healthy communities, and continue to improve the quality of health care in New Jersey.

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**Together, we can create a future
where every resident has the
opportunity to thrive.**

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MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING COMMISSIONER



JEFF BROWN

I am honored to present our vision for the future of public health in New Jersey. At the New Jersey Department of Health, we are proud to lead efforts focused on chronic disease prevention, wellness promotion, emergency preparedness, and more – essential priorities that safeguard the health and well-being of every New Jersey resident. I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to all NJDOH staff and external collaborators whose ideas and dedication have shaped this Strategic Plan and who work tirelessly every day to advance these critical goals. I am also grateful for my predecessor, Dr. Kaitlan Baston, whose vision helped shape a Strategic Plan that will serve as a roadmap for the Department's next five years.

As a nationally accredited public health department, our commitment is unwavering. With our focus on health equity and improving outcomes for all residents, we strive to ensure that no matter who you are or where you live, you have access to the resources needed to live a long, healthy life. This Strategic Plan reflects our mission and aligns with the ongoing efforts of the Healthy New Jersey 2030 initiative, setting a path forward to address the evolving needs of our communities.

Our Strategic Plan reflects this vision, with **five key priorities**:

1. **Improve population health outcomes**, with a focus on prevention, by ensuring successful program delivery for New Jersey residents.
2. **Advance health equity** for all by **eliminating health disparities**.
3. **Modernize our data infrastructure**, optimize its use for decision-making, and foster a culture of data sharing and transparency.
4. **Strengthen the resilience and improve the infrastructure of public health systems** to ensure they can effectively respond to resident needs.
5. **Build sustainable emergency response capabilities** to ensure continuous readiness.

In addition to these priorities, this Strategic Plan outlines **four internally focused enablers** that will ensure sustained progress toward achieving our goals:

- 1. Develop the public health workforce in New Jersey** by building a skilled public health team, identifying workforce growth and development opportunities in health systems, and fueling the pipeline for future public health leaders.
- 2. Improve collaboration, including with other members of the public health ecosystems, such as health care systems, local health departments, other state government agencies, and community-based organizations** to effectively anticipate, understand, and advance population health outcomes.
- 3. Enhance communication processes both internally and externally**, prioritizing proactive connections to build trust, increase awareness, and boost engagement within and outside the Department.
- 4. Increase internal efficiency through improved processes and workflows**, fostering better communication and coordination to unleash the ability to serve the NJDOH mission.

To achieve this vision, collaboration is essential. NJDOH is committed to working hand-in-hand with our partners across the state to implement the priorities in this Strategic Plan to build a healthier, more equitable New Jersey. Together, we can create a future where every resident has the opportunity to thrive.

Thank you,



Jeffrey A. Brown
Acting Health Commissioner



STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

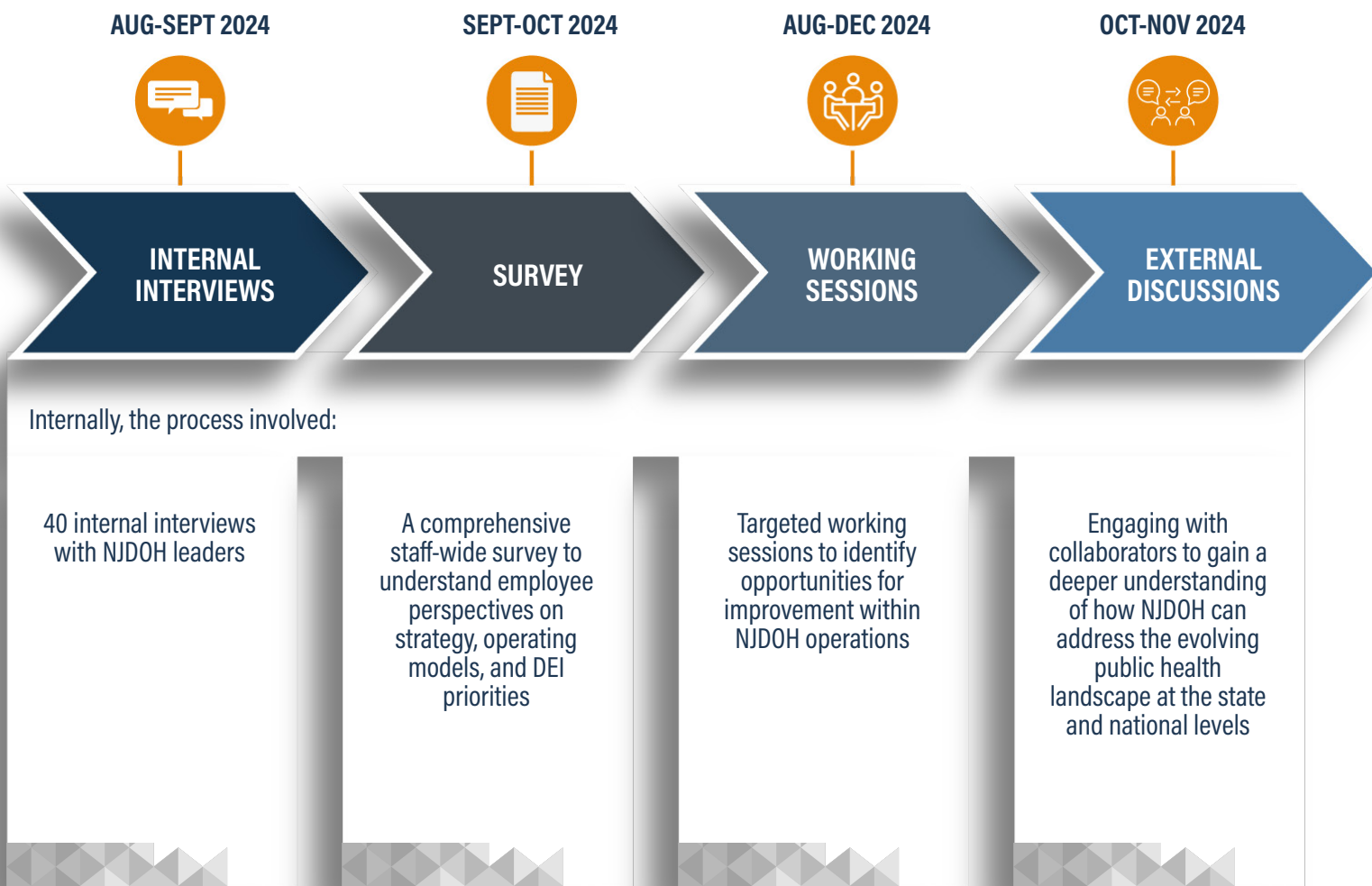
The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) is proud to present its Strategic Plan for 2025-2030. This plan marks a critical milestone in defining the Department's future and strengthening its role as a leader in public health.

This Strategic Plan was developed through a collaborative effort that incorporated input from a broad spectrum of stakeholders. Interviews were conducted with NJDOH employees, key partners such as non-profits and local organizations, and representatives from other government agencies, including the Governor's Office, totaling more than 40 conversations. Across NJDOH, 847 central office employees and 481 psychiatric hospital employees shared their perspectives on working for the Department via an online survey. To create a forward-looking and robust approach, best practices from peer states were benchmarked, and emerging public health trends were thoroughly analyzed. These insights were synthesized through internal working groups, including senior leaders, to create clear Strategic Priorities and Enablers. The plan aligns with the State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) and other initiatives, such as Healthy New Jersey 2030, serving as a unified guide for NJDOH's action plan over the next five years.

This Strategic Plan is a vital tool for realizing NJDOH's vision: "Ensure that all New Jerseyans live long, healthy lives and reach their fullest potential." By focusing on clear priorities and actionable strategies, it is designed to help the Department adapt to evolving public health challenges, drive measurable improvements in health outcomes, and strengthen partnerships across the state. This plan positions NJDOH to lead with purpose, ensuring that resources are directed where they can have the greatest impact. It not only sets the path for achieving an enhanced NJDOH, but it also enables the Department to be a national leader in public health innovation and excellence. The aim is to continue building a healthier, more equitable future for all New Jerseyans.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

To ensure the Strategic Priorities and Enablers in this plan reflect the diverse needs and perspectives of the Department and its stakeholders, NJDOH leaders launched a collaborative planning process that sought input from both internal staff and external partners. This effort included broad engagement across all levels of the Department and external stakeholders critical to public health in New Jersey.



Collaborative Leadership and Vision

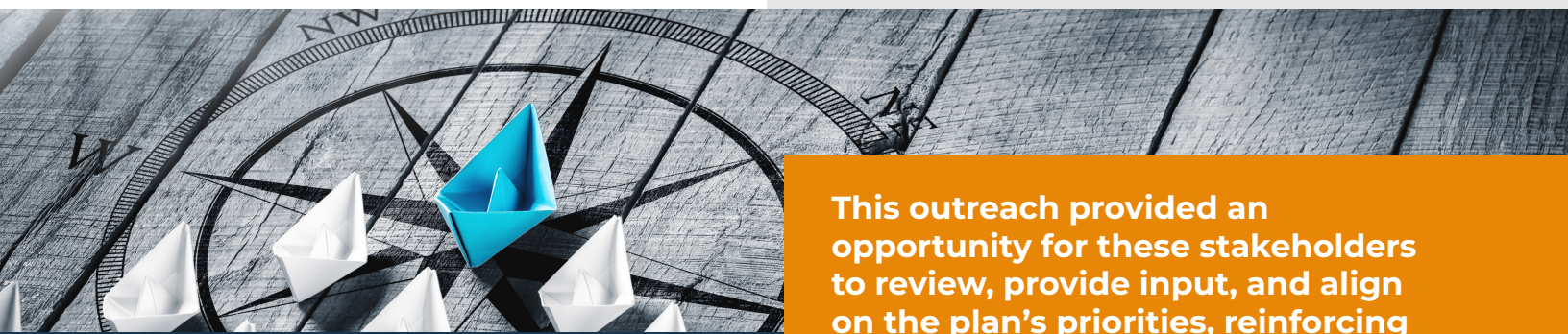
NJDOH leaders met regularly over several months to synthesize these insights into five strategic priorities and four enablers that form the foundation of this plan. To further develop the plan, leads were assigned to each priority and enabler based on their programmatic expertise and departmental experience. These leads collaborated with cross-functional teams to draft initiatives and milestones for their assigned areas. Through iterative

review and feedback from NJDOH leaders, these components were refined into the finalized elements of the Strategic Plan.

Stakeholder Engagement

To ensure that the plan reflected insights from key collaborators, NJDOH shared the draft with:

- The Governor's Office
- Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Department of Children and Families (DCF)
- Center for Health Equity and Wellbeing, the State's first-ever designated public



National Benchmarking

This outreach provided an opportunity for these stakeholders to review, provide input, and align on the plan's priorities, reinforcing its relevance and impact.

In parallel, NJDOH conducted a rigorous benchmarking analysis to understand the broader public health landscape and how other departments of health across the United States have adapted, particularly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This analysis ensured that NJDOH's 2025-2030 Strategic Priorities are aligned with key public health trends and effectively address the most pressing population health challenges.

Alignment with National Standards

The 2025-2030 NJDOH Strategic Plan has been developed in alignment with the standards and requirements set forth by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). This ensures the planning framework meets nationally recognized metrics for quality and performance in public health.

Our Values

The priorities outlined in this Strategic Plan are designed to foster collaboration across all branches of the NJDOH, ensuring their collective ability to advance the Department's Mission and Vision for all New Jersey residents.

Mission Statement

Protect the public's health, promote healthy communities, and continue to improve the quality of health care in New Jersey.

Vision Statement

Ensure that all New Jerseyans live long, healthy lives and reach their fullest potential.

Core Values and Guiding Principles:

INTEGRITY

Strengthen New Jersey's public health and health care infrastructure by adopting best practices, inspecting and monitoring health care facilities and services, and improving the delivery system.

EQUITY

Strive to eliminate disparities in access to health care, treatment, and clinical outcomes.

DIVERSITY

Deliver services that are inclusive and diverse and strengthen public health engagement through cultural humility and education.

TRANSPARENCY

Use data and metrics to drive decision making and provide information to the public.

INNOVATION

Promote access to services through technology and innovative strategies.

PARTNERSHIP

Partner with members of the public health ecosystem to promote wellness and activities related to the prevention of illness and the management of chronic diseases.

COMMUNITY

Strengthen the state's local public health system and improve the performance and practice of local health departments.

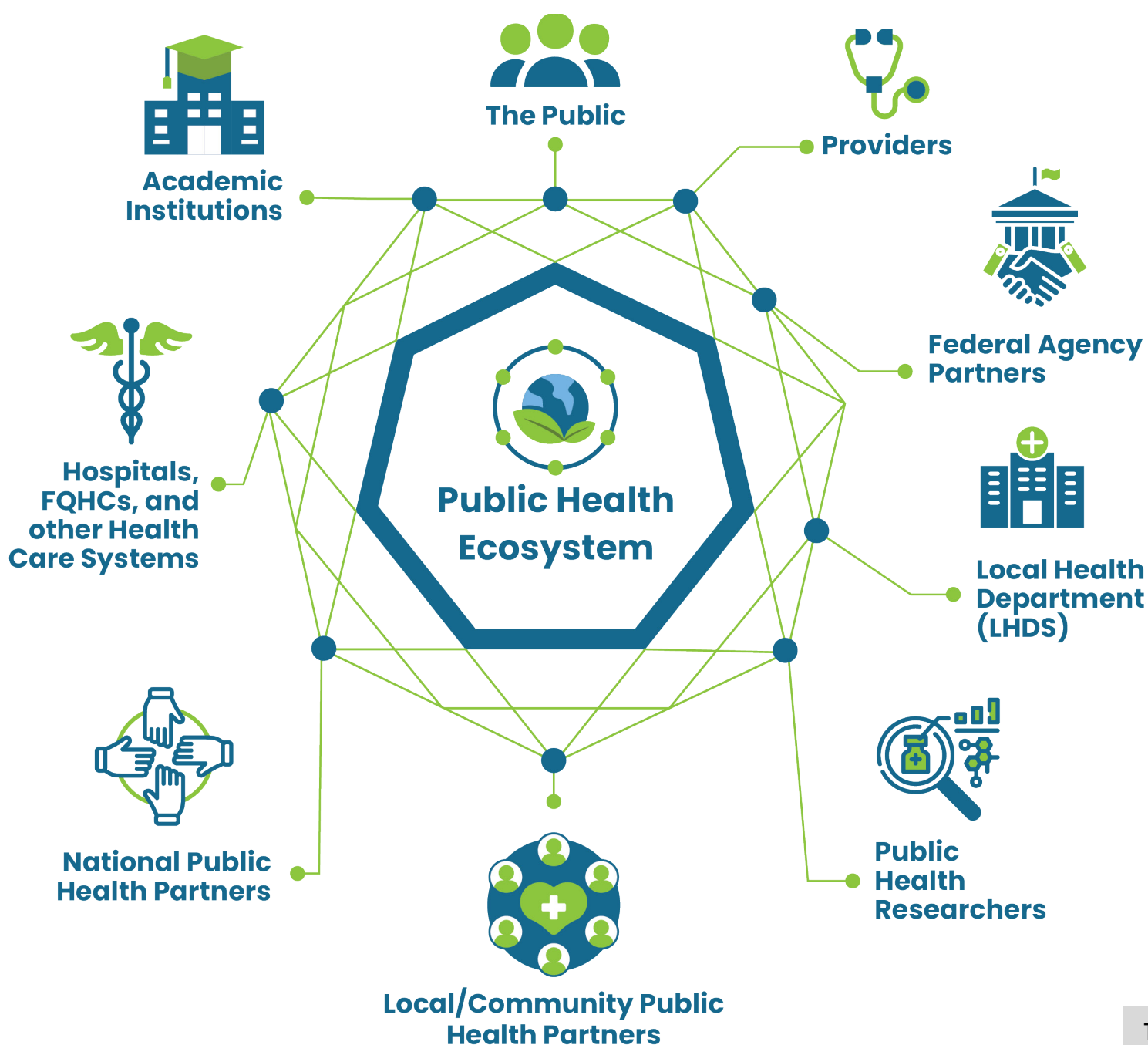
CREDIBILITY

Engage partners to strategically focus on evidence-based prevention and treatment programs.



The public health ecosystem — made up of state and local agencies, federal partners, health care providers, labs, the CDC, national public health partners, health care systems, and the public — functions best when its parts are connected and working in synergy. Each component plays a vital role but together their collaboration strengthens the system, making the whole greater than the sum of its parts.

The interconnectedness allows for more coordinated, timely responses to health emergencies and risks, more equitable access to care, and more effective prevention strategies. When all partners work together, the public health ecosystem becomes more resilient, responsive, and inclusive. Ultimately, this serves everyone by fostering healthier, safer communities.



Trends Shaping Public Health

The future of public health will be shaped by five key themes, each driven by emerging challenges and opportunities that state departments of health (DOHs) must address. Increasing reliance on data for decision-making, lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, and the growing recognition of systemic inequities are some of the forces propelling these trends. Additionally, evolving health needs and technological advancements necessitate strategic investments in infrastructure, workforce, and partnerships. **These five themes shaping public health's trajectory are:**

1.

Advancing a holistic health ecosystem that fosters strong connections between health care and public health.

2.

Accelerating data modernization to create interoperable systems across providers, government agencies, and private sector partners.

3.

Strengthening infectious disease preparedness in the wake of COVID-19.

4.

Expanding efforts to reduce health disparities and address social determinants of health.

5.

Increasing infrastructure investments to support public health, including crisis response capabilities and workforce development.

Building a holistic health ecosystem will require robust partnerships between health care and public health entities, supported by systems that incorporate community feedback into decision-making.



Data Modernization

will demand enhancements in data architecture and IT infrastructure to enable real-time, interoperable data exchange, as well as workforce training in analytics, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence and data visualization tools.



Infectious Disease Preparedness

will focus on enhancing immunization infrastructure and epidemiological capacity to improve outbreak detection and response.



Advancing Health Equity

will involve scaling programs targeting social determinants of health, such as climate change, while fostering partnerships with non-health sectors to broaden impact.



Infrastructure Investments

including expanded laboratory capacity and cross-agency collaboration, will ensure readiness for future challenges.

PARTNER COLLABORATION



Partner collaboration will be critical to achieving these goals. Health care providers, local health departments, community organizations, and IT vendors will work together to build the systems and relationships necessary for holistic health and data modernization.

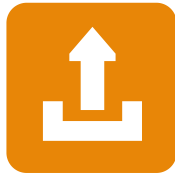


Federal agencies like the CDC and Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), alongside private-sector partners, will play a pivotal role in strengthening infectious disease preparedness through funding and resource support. Efforts to advance health equity and address social determinants of health will engage education departments, housing authorities, and community-based organizations to drive cross-sector solutions.

Partnerships with federal and state legislators, funders, and philanthropic entities will be key to securing infrastructure investments and fostering innovation. Through coordinated efforts, state DOHs can enhance their public health capabilities, ensuring sustainable improvements in care delivery and population health outcomes.

What We Heard from Our Team

As part of the strategic planning process, NJDOH conducted a Department-wide survey to capture insights from staff at all levels and across all program areas. This effort ensured that those closest to the work had a clear voice in shaping the Department's future. **The survey received:**



1,328 submitted responses



847 from central office staff



481 from psychiatric hospital staff

Key Themes Identified

Staff Priorities for Strategic Planning

Survey feedback highlighted key themes such as:



Equity



Workforce support



Improving program outcomes

Employee Perspectives:

"The greatest opportunity would be the partners we have built through the COVID-19 pandemic. We need to continue collaborating together."

"We need to be the leader in providing accurate information to the population we serve. There is too much misinformation."

"As a whole, I feel the people employed by NJDOH are passionate about their work."

Staff expressed a strong commitment to public health and NJDOH's mission



Opportunities Identified by Staff

- ✓ Clearer communication to build trust
- ✓ Strengthen cross-sector collaboration
- ✓ Improve communication and data-sharing
- ✓ Develop public health workforce pipelines



Challenges Shared

- ✗ Public misinformation and distrust
- ✗ Workforce burnout and staffing shortages
- ✗ Outdated technology systems
- ✗ Leadership changes and shifting priorities

How This Informed the Plan

Survey feedback helped inform themes reflected in the Strategic Priorities and Enablers. For example:



Themes around **improving communication and trust** emerged from staff feedback, and were reflected in the Strategic Plan's Strategic Enablers.



A focus on workforce development reflects staff concerns about burnout, turnover, and future staffing needs.



Emphasis on **partnership and collaboration** is reflected in both the strategic priorities and enablers.



Strategic Priorities Overview



Population Health

Improve population health outcomes, with a focus on prevention, by ensuring successful program delivery for New Jersey residents.



Equity

Advance health equity for all by eliminating health disparities.



Data

Modernize data infrastructure, optimize its use for decision-making, and foster a culture of data sharing and transparency.



Infrastructure

Strengthen the resilience and improve the infrastructure of public health systems (long-term care, behavioral health, FQHCs) to ensure they can effectively respond to resident needs.



Emergency Response

Build sustainable emergency response capabilities to ensure continuous readiness.

Population Health

Improve population health outcomes, with a focus on prevention, by ensuring successful program delivery for New Jersey residents.



Develop and embed a clear, shared definition of Population Health across NJDOH; ensure the definition is communicated and integrated into programmatic objectives.



Design and implement guidance framework for NJDOH leaders to incorporate population health principles into strategic planning and public health program development, including mechanisms to assess progress.



Create a unified data framework that captures and uses demographic, geographic, and health outcome data to support informed decision-making on population health priorities.



Establish and/or adapt a forum, such as a task force or committee for NJDOH to engage with NJ government agencies and other key collaborators to promote a unified Population Health approach statewide.



Partner with health systems to integrate Population Health principles into care delivery, advancing the alignment of health care and public health systems.

Strategic Priority

Health Equity

Advance health equity for all by eliminating health disparities.



Prioritize Health Equity

Commit resources and build ways of working towards a fair change for optimal health.

Measure Health Disparities to Improve Health Outcomes Across Population Groups

Incorporate measurement plans to collect and analyze outcome data across key demographics that will investigate health disparities and share with partners.

Integrate Health Equity into Policy

Utilize legal and regulatory actions for health equity.

Build and Strengthen Partnerships to Enhance Health Equity

Build a collaborative ecosystem for health equity.

Expand Service Access & Assurance

Ensure NJDOH programs, services, and resources are available and accessible to all New Jersey communities.

Data

Modernize data infrastructure, optimize its use for decision-making, and foster a culture of data sharing and transparency.



Establish a data governance council within the department.



Update NJDOH data and IT infrastructure.



Enhance data utilization in decision-making processes.



Establish robust data-sharing practices between NJDOH and key collaborators.



Establish and expand a state-of-the-art data workforce within NJDOH.

Strategic Priority

Infrastructure

Strengthen the resilience and improve the infrastructure of public health systems to ensure they can effectively respond to resident needs.



STRATEGY

Enhance statewide health planning to integrate community needs assessment, financial resilience, and comprehensive analysis of health care trends across all care settings.



DATA & TECHNOLOGY

Provide timely and accurate insights for identifying health system needs and evaluating the effectiveness of certain policies and programs by establishing a robust data infrastructure that captures high-quality, easily navigable data for users.



STAFFING

Implement a staffing plan to strengthen health system support, including expanding survey team capacity for timely inspections and enhancing crisis operations teams with diverse expertise for effective response and support.



SUPPORT

Coordinate regulatory, financial, and technical assistance for health systems with a balanced approach that promotes proactive support, fosters a solutions-oriented culture, and prevents mismanagement or fraud.

Emergency Response

Build sustainable emergency response capabilities to ensure continuous readiness.



Establish a sustainable staffing model to ensure adequate resources for emergency preparedness, reducing dependence on short-term funding sources.



Establish comprehensive protocols for responder safety, including robust health, wellness, and financial support systems for emergency personnel.



Enhance training frequency and depth by incorporating scenario-based exercises to evaluate, refine, and strengthen core emergency readiness capabilities and performance of critical tasks to established standards and metrics.



Implement prepositioned internal protocols and external contracts with suppliers for essential services and supplies to ensure readiness during emergencies and reduce reliance on ad-hoc contractors.

Enabler A: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Develop the public health workforce in New Jersey by building a skilled public health team, identifying workforce growth and development opportunities in health systems, and fueling the pipeline of future public health leaders.



Increase public health workforce across the State.



Within NJDOH Learning Academy- Professional Development Unit:

Identify critical training needs for NJDOH staff and barriers to that training to create an updated workforce training curriculum implemented across the Department.



Develop and implement a comprehensive, department-wide onboarding program

with clear, standardized content and training modules for all core processes (e.g., finance, procurement, grants).



Build an NJDOH Culture inclusive of Core Values, Engagement, Wellness, Resiliency, Recognition and Belonging; support employee engagement by department-wide activities that address employee wellness and belonging.



Develop targeted and innovative recruitment strategies to attract future NJDOH talent and efficiently channel them through the recruitment processes as successful hires.

Enabler B: COLLABORATION

Improve collaboration, including with health care systems, LHDs, other state government agencies, and community-based organizations, to effectively anticipate, understand, and advance population health outcomes.

Build a culture of collaboration within NJDOH:

Create a central repository to document NJDOH roles, teams, and programmatic activities to improve internal awareness and coordination and build a culture of recognizing and celebrating collaborative work.

Enhance collaboration on cross-team programs:

Establish structured opportunities for programmatic collaboration among individuals or teams engaged in related initiatives (e.g., lead, obesity).

Establish a collaborative grants process:

Establish a coordinated process to identify and pursue grant opportunities collaboratively across programs and with external partners to maximize and diversify funding streams.

Compile a list of external partner relationships:

Build a comprehensive list of existing relationships with external partners, including NJDOH point of contact for each relationship; make list accessible to all in a central location.

Build collaboration model for working with other state agencies:

Establish a regular collaboration model, with a particular focus on areas for program coordination and partnership.

Build two-way collaboration model with LHDs, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and other non-traditional partners:

Establish a two-way communication model to foster mutual support and provide guidance and support beyond grant funding; actively gather feedback and input from these groups to inform and improve support provided by NJDOH.

Enabler C: COMMUNICATION

Enhance communication processes both internally and externally, prioritizing proactive connections to build trust, increase awareness, and boost engagement within and outside the department.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS



Implement regular communication processes, such as newsletters, podcasts, and recurring Town Halls, to provide updates on priority topics and initiatives.



Use communication channels to build a shared understanding of NJDOH's mission and strategic alignment across the organization to guide daily work.



Create a process for collecting input from staff on key initiatives and events to incorporate ground-level perspectives into departmental communications.

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS



Develop a proactive public engagement strategy to highlight NJDOH's role in community well-being, sharing initiatives, stories, and employee profiles to build a positive narrative and move beyond reactive or crisis communication.



Modernize communication channels to meet the needs of various NJ demographics, leveraging a multichannel approach to ensure NJDOH communications engage diverse audiences.



Enabler D: INTERNAL EFFICIENCY

Enhance internal efficiency through improved processes workflows, and operations, fostering better communication and coordination to unleash the ability to serve the mission.

Document and update core processes, roles and responsibilities, and timelines to ensure processes are efficient and transparent.



Store processes in a centrally accessible location with clear guidance for when/how to use each process.



Ensure processes are clearly communicated and implemented via training to all NJDOH staff via onboarding training and annual training.



Provide visibility into key processes (e.g., Communications, Hiring) via queues, dashboards, etc.



Set cadence and ownership for regular review/update of processes.



The NJDOH Strategic Plan (2025–2030) is built to align closely with and serve as a bridge between the 2020 and 2025 State Health Improvement Plans (SHIPs). This alignment ensures continuity and builds on the progress NJDOH has made over the last decade while advancing key priorities such as health equity, data modernization, and system transformation.

**Aligned with
Healthy New Jersey
2030**

NJDOH STRATEGIC PRIORITY	ALIGNMENT WITH 2020 SHIP	ALIGNMENT WITH 2025 SHIP
Improve population health outcomes	Emphasizes community collaboration and the need to tailor strategies to specific demographic needs.	Elevates prevention as a key lever to improve mental health, reduce substance use, and address chronic disease.
Advance health equity for all by eliminating disparities	Commits to equity through strengthened partnerships, data analysis, and community engagement.	Centers equity in every priority area, with a focus on removing barriers to care.
Modernize data infrastructure and foster transparency	Recognizes importance of data but not a central focus in 2020 plan.	Prioritizes interoperable, real-time data systems to track population health.
Strengthen infrastructure of public health systems	Calls for better coordination to improve outcomes, especially in maternal health, mental health, and substance use.	Prioritizes infrastructure improvements across systems and expanded access to high-quality care.
Build sustainable emergency response capabilities	Focused on immunization access and readiness pre-COVID-19.	Explicitly includes system readiness and improved surveillance based on lessons learned from the pandemic.

Our Vision for the Future of NJDOH

By fully enacting this Strategic Plan, NJDOH will take bold strides toward creating a healthier, more equitable New Jersey, positioning it as a national leader in public health innovation and impact for our residents, collaborators, and workforce.

Improving the health of New Jersey residents is the primary focus of this Strategic Plan, which aims to ensure that all New Jerseyans can achieve their full potential for health and well-being across their lifespan. To achieve this, NJDOH will strengthen the responsiveness and adaptability of public health systems, leveraging its expertise in forecasting, strategic planning, and the deployment of public health resources. These efforts will be critical to meeting the evolving population health needs of New Jersey.

Collaboration is central to achieving NJDOH's vision.

The Department will work consistently and collaboratively with partner agencies, community groups, and other partners to reduce barriers to health care access and promote healthier living for all New Jersey residents. Additionally, NJDOH and its partners will be well-prepared to address a wide range of public health emergencies. They will ensure rapid, coordinated responses while maintaining continuity of essential health services, enabling residents to receive the care they need even during crises.

This Strategic Plan will solidify NJDOH as an innovative and thriving workplace for the public health workforce in New Jersey. Efforts in data modernization will position NJDOH leaders as trusted experts in public health data interpretation and communication, fostering data-driven decision-making statewide. These advancements will deliver accessible health insights to the public, supported by integrated and interoperable systems. Moreover, dedicated efforts in workforce development and retention will build a robust pipeline of public health professionals in New Jersey.



Turning Strategy into Action

The Strategic Plan lays out NJDOH's long-term vision — but real impact happens through day-to-day work. This page shows how the high-level plan turns into specific actions through initiatives that support each objective.

The structure is simple:

Strategic Priority



Objective



Initiative

Each priority includes four to six objectives. Each objective is supported by specific initiatives that are being implemented by program teams across the Department. These initiatives are the engine of progress — the projects and work-streams that bring the strategy to life.

As NJDOH builds out its implementation plan, teams will identify:

- Initiative leads and collaborators
- Target milestones
- Resources required
- And eventually, SMART goals for tracking progress

Bringing the Plan to Life

The Strategic Plan is not a one-time document — it's a living guide for how NJDOH will operate over the next five years. To make sure the goals in this plan turn into real progress, NJDOH is putting an implementation structure in place that includes assigned leads, performance tracking, and regular check-ins.



Designated leaders for each Strategic Priority and Enabler area will ensure implementation, while a Quality Improvement Coordinating Team will track progress against objectives and a Performance Management Unit will report results.



Clear milestones and outcomes for each objective will be tracked, with updates shared to internal and external audiences along the way.



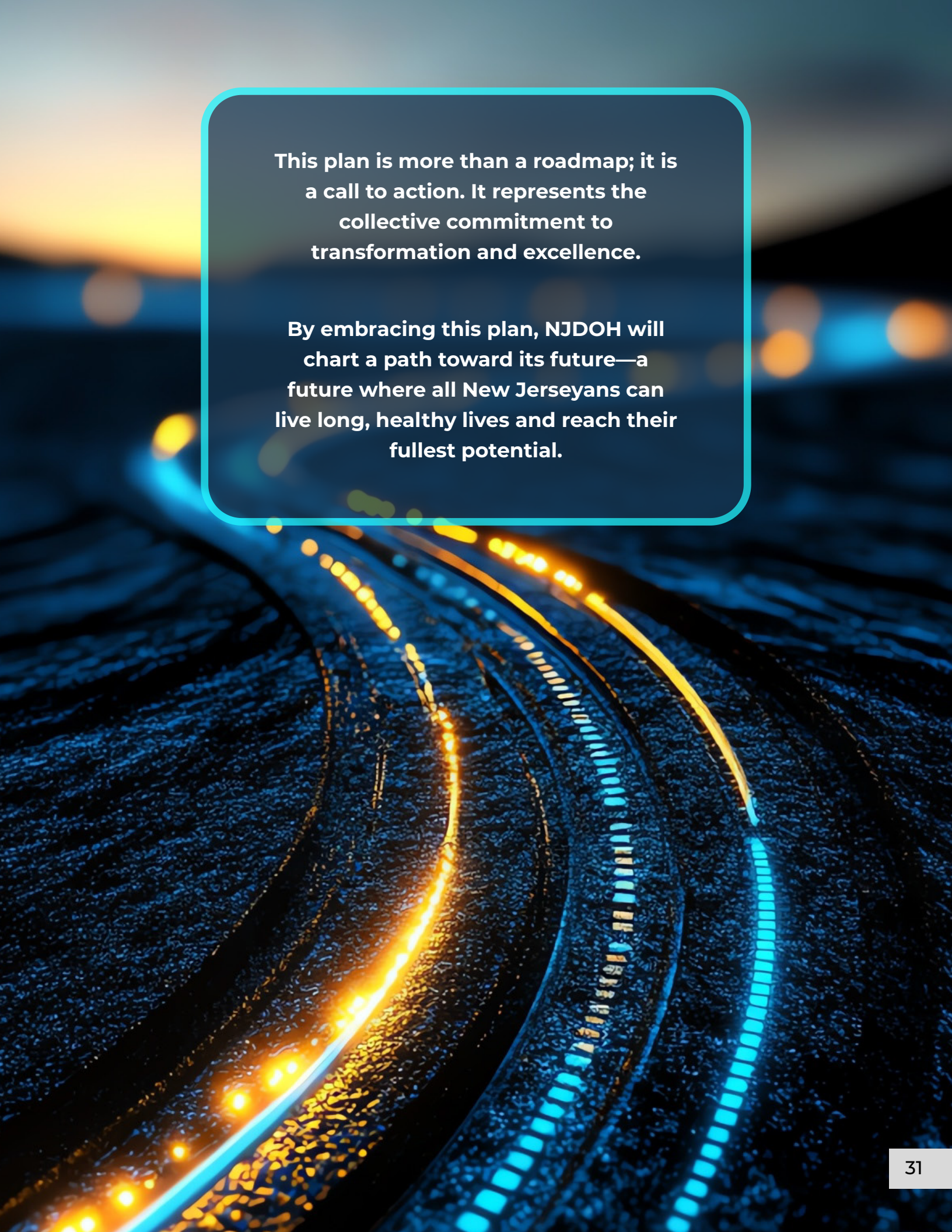
All implementation efforts will be reviewed with an equity lens, looking at how they advance **fairness in health outcomes**.



Continuous improvement and transparency are built into the process, allowing teams time and space to reflect on what's working and make changes as needed.



Annual reviews will inform future planning and help keep the Department on track with its vision and strategic priorities.



**This plan is more than a roadmap; it is
a call to action. It represents the
collective commitment to
transformation and excellence.**

**By embracing this plan, NJDOH will
chart a path toward its future—a
future where all New Jerseyans can
live long, healthy lives and reach their
fullest potential.**

