

SUMMIT 3 ACCELERATING ACTION REPORT

Strengthening Public Health Law, Governance and Finance to Support a Modern System

The theme of the summits—Lights, Camera, Action—provides a framework through which public health and its partners at all levels can evolve to meet present and future needs.

A new national summit series launched in December 2021 to explore the future of public health with the theme of Lights, Camera, Action: The Future of Public Health.

This series presents a comprehensive and critical view of the current landscape of public health in the United States and convenes public health workers and key stakeholders across disciplines and across the nation to collaboratively construct a harmonized, strategic and action-oriented approach to move the field forward following decades of underinvestment and two years of a devastating pandemic. The series focuses on four areas to build public health capacity for the future—**workforce, data modernization, finance/public health law and partnerships**.

The series is a collaboration of the CDC Foundation, the National Association of County and City Health Officials, Association of State and Territorial Health Officials and Big Cities Health Coalition. Summit support is generously provided by United Health Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Summit 3 Overview

The third summit, held on February 23, 2022, focused on the key issues of law, governance and finance. The summit brought together nearly 1,500 participants including representatives from national, state and local public health agencies; policy makers; the health care sector; philanthropy; nonprofit organizations; and the private sector and built on previous reports on the importance of foundational aspects of public health, including two recent reports, [Public Health Forward: Modernizing the U.S. public health system](#) and [The Future of Public Health: A synthesis report for the field](#).

Through the plenary discussions, breakout groups and chat, numerous ideas were voiced about how to use law, governance and finance to improve the provision of public health services for all Americans.

This Accelerating Action Report frames the discussion and the initial list of actions. It is organized in two parts. The first part focuses on finance, and the second on governance and law.

The theme of the summits—Lights, Camera, Action—provides a framework through which public health and its partners at all levels can evolve to meet present and future needs.

FINANCE



LIGHTS:

Understanding the current moment as pivotal for funding due to the amount of support provided through the federal government during the past two years means:

- overseeing and strategically utilizing unprecedented federal funding flowing to federal agencies, states, territories and local communities for a variety of purposes, including public health;
- gaining an overall perspective to see all of the funding in the system from all sources;
- evolving public health funding partnerships—moving from transactional to transformational; and
- ensuring all levels of the public health system institutionalize financial stewardship.



CAMERA:

Making money work for public health is critical to ensure all communities get the support they need by:

- employing innovative approaches to public health financing;
- engaging impacted communities in developing financial strategies and stewarding resources; and
- ensuring funding is used to advance equity by addressing social determinants of health, involving the wider community in program planning, and using comprehensive sociodemographic data to determine areas of greatest need.



ACTION:

Ensuring that funding provides a sustainable future for public health requires:

- assembling and sustainably deploying financial resources;
- supporting public health leaders as they navigate the complex web of funding opportunities;
- dismantling financial barriers and breaking through red tape at federal and state levels;
- creating a financial innovation center for the integration of funding for social services, public health and health care; and
- increasing community engagement to build trust, share power and build equity.

Themes for Action

Public health sits at the center of a web of financial resources that is currently growing in size and complexity. Being able to recognize, assemble and sustainably deploy financial resources are critical skills for public health leaders. During the summit, attendees explored the financing mindset, the funding sources and the methods to support financing population health. The following themes emerged from those discussions:

- Public health leaders must have the skills to **see the funding in the system** and to assemble and sustainably deploy these financial resources.
- **Financing innovations** can be used to improve public health.
- **Unprecedented federal funding** from COVID-19 relief and recovery acts is currently available.
- **Support is needed for public health leaders** to take advantage of these funding opportunities.
- **Engaging community members** in budgeting can develop trust, share power and build equity.

Strengthening public health finance to create a modern system requires evolution of public health funding partnerships from transactional to transformational relationships.

The Way Forward for Public Health Finance: Initial Actions Informed by the National Summit



Cross-cutting Actions for All Sectors

- Prioritize programs that [advance equity and justice](#) by:
 - Addressing social determinants of health,
 - Involving the wider community in program planning, and
 - Using comprehensive sociodemographic data to determine areas of greatest need.



Federal Government

- Allow more financial innovation, such as blending and braiding of funds, by federal grantees.
- Establish financial or other incentives for grantees to develop financial innovations.
- Provide flexibility for impacted communities to guide the use of funding.
- Create mechanisms for funding public health programs from multiple government agencies at the same time, rather than having to seek funds separately from each applicable agency.
- Foster public/private funding partnerships, such as [local wellness funds](#) and [Community Development Financial Institutions \(CDFI\)](#), to improve health.
- Ensure that funding targeting local agencies is received in the manner intended and does not pick up additional restrictive requirements or is substantially reduced when passing through state agencies.



National Public Health Organizations

- Establish [funding navigator](#) programs to help local organizations and public health practitioners develop funding navigation skills, including [systems thinking](#) and identifying money in the system.
- Create a financial innovation center to share ideas and resources with other organizations, government agencies and communities.
- Change rules for foundation grant programs to allow more financing innovation by philanthropic grantees.
- Provide intermediary support to local organizations, cities, counties and states to plan and carry out work related to the current unprecedented federal funding and beyond. National organizations can also provide fiscal intermediary support to manage and braid different funding streams in cohesive, coordinated ways for smaller grantee organizations.



State and Local Governments

- Allow more financial innovation, such as blending and braiding of funds, by states' grantees.
- Create and provide financial incentivize mechanisms for multiple agency funding of public health programs.
- Through contracting, require that [Medicaid managed care organizations](#) invest in building community capacity.
- State and Local Health Departments and Public Health Organizations
- Develop and leverage linkages to government and nongovernment funders and partners outside the public health sector.
- Develop solutions that come from the community and are owned by the community to increase buy-in and effectiveness in the community being served.
- Utilize funding navigators to find the funding in the system and leverage it for cross-sector impact.
- Build infrastructure to better manage funding from across the system including IT systems and ensure that staff are well-trained to manage across systems.



Academia

- Prepare the public health workforce with expertise to identify funding opportunities.
- Educate public health leaders about all funding options and systems thinking through classroom instruction, continuing education programs and professional seminars.
- House and manage the financing innovation center (suggested above) for sharing ideas and creating tools and resources.
- Train funding navigation and intermediary organization skill sets.



Communities

- Work closely with public health leaders to understand how public health programs are financed and engage on funding decisions that address community needs, priorities and inequities.
- Use financial innovations, such as [local wellness funds](#) and participatory budgeting, to fund population health.
- Recognize the value of community members' lived experiences and use that information to advocate for funding decisions that benefit the community.

GOVERNANCE AND LAW



LIGHTS:

Supporting public health leaders in addressing the constraints they face to be effective involves:

- accepting that public health is inherently political because it is public policy;
- appreciating that public health practitioners, communities and sectors come to this work with strengths and assets that make collective change possible; and
- understanding how laws are powerful tools to address public health and promote health equity.



CAMERA:

Strengthening public health by embedding law into education, training and practice requires:

- recognizing that laws, and legal concepts like preemption, are affecting public health authority and weakening the field's ability to address health and equity;
- acknowledging that public health misinformation and disinformation abounds, which is leading to an assault on public health officials' ability to act to protect the public's health; and
- addressing ways that funding and staffing shortages have limited the implementation of governance practices.



ACTION:

Building stronger public health governance can be achieved by aligning with community priorities.

Practicing good governance requires aligning public health priorities with those of the most marginalized and historically excluded communities.

Themes for Action

Governance, law and policy make up the backbone of the future of public health. Only when trust and engagement in governance and legal integrity are prioritized will success in meeting the next public health challenge be achieved. During the summit, attendees explored ways to support equitable public health governance and laws. The following themes emerged from those discussions:

- Bring the **public** into public health and its governance.
- Build **legal capacity** among public health practitioners.
- Embed **racial justice and equity** in public health governance and law.
- Build, disseminate and evaluate **tools for effective and equitable** public health governance, practice and policy making.

The Way Forward for Public Health Law and Governance: Initial Actions Informed by the National Summit



Cross-cutting Action for All Sectors

- Engage in [cross-sectoral](#) and [community level partnerships](#) to bring the public into governance practices¹.
- Embed [law into public health practice](#) across all levels of government by building and maintaining legal capacity among practitioners and key stakeholders.
- Embed equity into public health governance and law to ensure policy [design](#), [implementation](#) and [enforcement](#) address persistent disparities and inequities.
- Align public health leadership and governance strategies with community health priorities and equitable resource distribution.
- [Evaluate the impact of laws](#) on public health and health equity to inform the design, implementation and enforcement of laws.



State and Local Governments, Public Health Departments and Governmental Associations

- Adopt [governance strategies](#) that strengthen community trust and engagement².
- Integrate and collaborate with tribal and territorial governments in governance strategies, practices and decision-making³.
- Equip public health leaders and staff with tools and strategies on governance, [law](#), [health equity](#) and [asset-based frameworks](#)⁴.
- Support public health's interdisciplinary approach by building, protecting and retaining a diverse workforce that includes attorneys, analysts and community experts.
- Explicitly allow for and encourage contracting for legal expertise and guidance in grants, contracts, projects and programs.



Community and Business Leaders

- Participate in public engagement processes and help recruit and build capacity of community and business leaders and members to participate in the governmental governance processes.
- Develop [best practices](#) for engaging historically and currently disinvested and marginalized communities in governance and decision-making strategies⁵.
- Adopt and advocate for policies like [paid leave](#), [minimum wage](#), and other policies that affect the fundamental drivers of inequities within their own organizations to support their own employees.
- Work with government and other stakeholders on [messaging](#) and [communications](#) to encourage trust and combat disinformation and misinformation⁶.
- Work collaboratively to manage diverse and sometimes conflicting agendas between community and business.



National Public Health and Law Organizations & Associations

- Train public health practitioners on [governance](#), [law](#) and [equity frameworks](#) and provide strategies for working across all types of political and social environments⁷.
- Work with government and other stakeholders on [messaging](#) and [communications](#) to encourage trust and combat disinformation and misinformation.
- Coordinate with [tribal](#) and territorial government partners to support partnerships, resources and decision-making for the health of these nations.
- Encourage and support advocacy by public health organizations and partners in other sectors for effective public health laws and policies and to support sufficient and sustained resources for public health.
- Develop guidance and strategies on adopting effective and equitable public health laws, including addressing the misuse of [preemption](#) and [structural racism](#) and discrimination.



Education and Academia

- Develop and implement curricula across educational trajectories in governance, law, public finance, public health and advocacy from [elementary through high school](#).
- Develop incentives and programs within collegiate and graduate level institutions and accrediting bodies to train and build capacity on public health law, advocacy, governance and finance⁸.
- [Train](#) public health practitioners on [evaluation of public health and other laws](#) to articulate, design for, implement and enforce laws that improve public health and health equity.



Philanthropy

- Convene and connect policy makers, academia, government and community leaders to facilitate communication and partnerships for stronger, more inclusive governance strategies.
- Disseminate research, policy solutions and communications tools to encourage equitable and effective governance practices.
- Support training programs and opportunities for community organizations, governmental public health practitioners and other government leaders to embed effective approaches to law and policy in public health governance and practice.
- Serve as intermediaries to leverage federal, state and local funding streams to support the integration of law into public health agencies.
- Support organizations to engage in legal analysis, advocacy and lobbying to advance equitable public health governance and legal strategies.



Federal Government

- Support public health's interdisciplinary approach by building, protecting and retaining a diverse workforce that includes attorneys, analysts and community experts.
- Integrate tribal and territorial governments in governance and decision-making strategies and practices.
- Develop and evaluate national standards for public health and promulgate regulations that guide state and local actions to protect public health and prevent the misuse of preemption⁹.
- Permit the use of funding for organizations and entities to provide public health law and other legal expertise.

Sharing Ideas and Learning More

Summit participants and others are encouraged to share ideas and examples of innovative public health law, governance and finance actions. To share examples and ideas and for more information on this summit, go to the [Lights, Camera, Action: Future of Public Health website](#) to view a recording of the third summit, read the full report and listen to the podcast.

GUIDING LIGHTS

Resources for innovative and equitable public health finance:

- [CNE's 7 Actionable Principles for a Strong Social Sector](#)
- localwellnessfunds.org
- [U.S. Department of the Treasury Community Development Financial Institutions \(CDFI\) Fund](#)
- [Environmental Policy Innovation Center - Funding Navigator Overview](#)
- [A Systems Approach to the Opioid Epidemic](#)
- [MACPAC Medicaid Managed Care Overview](#)

Resources for the future of public health law and governance:

- [ChangeLab Solutions - Health in All Policies](#)
- [How California's Community-Based Organizations Filled the Gaps for Underserved Communities](#)
- [Better Health Faster: The 5 Essential Public Health Law Services](#)
- [Blueprint for Changemakers: Achieving health equity through law & policy](#)
- [Equitable Enforcement to Achieve Health Equity: An introductory guide for policymakers & practitioners](#)
- [Legal Epidemiology: Public Health Law Academy's in-depth series on the scientific study of how laws affect public health](#)
- [United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific - What Is Good Governance?](#)
- [Asset-Based Community Approaches](#)
- [Seattle Department of Neighborhoods - Early Community Outreach for Design Review](#)
- [ChangeLab Solutions - Paid Leave Protections](#)
- [APHA - Improving Health by Increasing the Minimum Wage](#)
- The [Network for Public Health Law - Becoming Better Messengers](#)
- The [Network for Public Health Law - Guidance for Framing COVID-19 Messaging Using the Moral Foundations Theory Framework](#)
- [Northwest Center for Public Health Practice - Strengthening Tribal Public Health Partnerships](#)
- [ChangeLab Solutions - Connecting preemption, public health & equity](#)
- The [Network for Public Health Law - Racism as a Public Health Crisis](#)
- [CDC NERD Academy - Epidemiology 101 curriculum for middle and high school](#)
- [Temple University Beasley School of Law Center for Public Health Law Research](#)

Endnotes

¹See also: [Cross-Sector-Approach-to-Removing-Barriers-to-OAT.pdf \(networkforphl.org\)](#)

²United Nations, [What Is Good Governance?](#) and [Learning from the Flint Water Crisis: Restoring and Improving Public Health Practice, Accountability, and Trust.](#)

³[Data Governance Strategies for States and Tribal Nations](#)

⁴See also: <https://www.networkforphl.org/resources/topics/mechanisms-for-advancing-health-equity/>

⁵See also: <https://www.policylink.org/resources-tools/housing-inclusive-processes-covid> and <https://www.changelabsolutions.org/product/planners-playbook>

⁶See also: [Public Health Communication Collaborative \(publichealthcollaborative.org\)](#)

⁷<https://www.nalboh.org/page/GovernanceResources>; [Better Health Faster: The Five Essential Public Health Law Services](#) <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0033354916667496>; [Racial Equity Throughout Data Integration](#) <https://www.networkforphl.org/resources/racial-equity-throughout-data-integration/>

⁸See also: <https://www.changelabsolutions.org/product/public-health-law-academy-certificate>

⁹See: [Covid Policy Playbook II: https://www.publichealthlawwatch.org/covid-playbook-ii](#)