Lake County Health Department

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

219-755-3655
2900 West 93rd Avenue
Crown Point, IN 46307

A Message From Our Health Officer



Looking back at 2025, I felt a real sense of hope and enthusiasm fueled by Health First Indiana (HFI) funding alongside our team's drive, community spirit, and shared purpose. Together, those strengths gave us the freedom to dream boldly, reach further, and achieve even more. Althought the HFI funding began in 2024, each year has brought stronger confidence without the constant fear of short-lived grants drying up right after a program starts. As Indiana's second-largest county, Lake County shows what sustained, long-term investment in public health paired with strong local commitment can do, moving us closer to our vision that public health is public wealth.

That stability turned into real progress across our community:

- **Expanding Reach & Partnerships:** We purchased a brand-new mobile unit, strengthened our outreach team, and teamed up with more than 30 organizations, including IU School of Medicine, Mobile Integrated Health, Purdue University, the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana, Geminus, local hospital organizations, and many, many more to build a healthier Lake County.
- **Maternal and Child Health:** We invested in improving outcomes for mothers and infants to help drive down maternal and infant mortality rates, hired three school liaisons to support student health, and worked with young children and families to build lifelong healthy habits, boost self-esteem, and empower young people.
- **Injury Prevention & Chronic Disease Prevention:** We launched initiatives focused on reducing community injuries and preventing chronic disease, alongside expanding food access and supporting mental wellness so families have healthier options and stronger care connections.
- **Modernizing & Showing Up:** We began digitizing vital records for nationwide access, streamlining workflows toward a fully digital department, hosting health fairs, and "walking the walk" with residents on Friday mornings.

I am deeply proud of our achievements and progress this past year. None of what we have achieved or what we are dreaming up next would be possible without so many people in our corner: our hardworking staff, who step up time and again with energy and heart; our community partners across Lake County and beyond; the community members who hold us accountable; our dedicated health board members; our supportive Lake County Commissioners and Council members; and, last but not least, all of our predecessors whose shoulders we stand on.
With a strong foundation, deep partnerships, and an energetic, enthusiastic team, we are charged up for bigger and bigger things—Together for a Healthier Lake County.

With gratitude and momentum,

Dr. Chandana Vavilala
Health Officer
Lake County Health Department

A Message From Our Admininstrator



As I reflect on 2025, I am incredibly proud of what we have accomplished together. It was a transformative year for the Health Department, marked by growth, new opportunities, stronger partnerships, and a renewed commitment to improving the health and well-being of our communities.

While we made meaningful progress, I recognize that this work did not begin with us. We built on the dedication, relationships, and important public health efforts that came before us. The foundation established over many years, and more recently with Health First Lake County, gave us the opportunity to strengthen existing programs, reach more residents, and explore new ways to meet the changing needs of Lake County.

What made this year truly special was the people behind the progress. Our team continued to show extraordinary commitment to serving our residents, often going above and beyond to make a difference. Our community partners brought their knowledge, resources, and passion to our shared efforts. Lastly, community leaders helped create opportunities and move important conversations forward.

We know there is still much work to do. The health needs of our communities are always evolving, and no single organization can address them alone. That is why we remain committed to listening, collaborating, and making thoughtful investments to expand our impact.

As we look ahead, our goal is to continue building on this momentum, strengthening the relationships that make our work possible, and ensuring that public health remains a resource and a partner for every community in Lake County.

Thank you to our staff, partners, community leaders, and residents for being part of this journey. The accomplishments highlighted in this report belong to all of us. We are proud of how far we have come and excited about what we can accomplish together in the years ahead.

With gratitude,

Sheila Paul
Administrator
Lake County Health Department

Summary

In 2025, the Lake County Health Department continued its transformation into a modern, responsive public health agency focused on improving community health outcomes. Through strategic investments in infrastructure, workforce development, and community partnerships, the department strengthened its ability to deliver essential services while positioning itself to meet the evolving health needs of Lake County residents. These efforts were recognized when the department received the **2025 Public Health Transformation Award** from the Indiana Department of Health, honoring its leadership in advancing innovative public health solutions.

This year focused on strengthening operational systems, expanding community outreach, supporting student health, and aligning resources with priority health needs. The department advanced key initiatives including expanded mobile health services, improved clinical operations, enhanced outreach partnerships through Community Health Workers, and strategic financial restructuring to ensure long-term sustainability.

Through collaboration, data driven decision making, and proactive engagement with local stakeholders, the department positioned itself for continued growth and improved health outcomes for the residents of Lake County.







2025 Department Overview

The Lake County Health Department is supported by a dedicated Board of Health, Health Officer, and staff who provide leadership, oversight, and expertise to advance the health of our community.

Health Officer
Dr. Chandana Vavilala

Administrator
Sheila Paul

Lake County Board of Health Members
Chiedu Nchekwube, M.D., President
Philip Golden
Marla Hoyer-Lareau
Deborah McCullough, M.D.
Michael Foreit, DO
Cynthia M. Hoess, M.D.
Leona Chandler-Felton

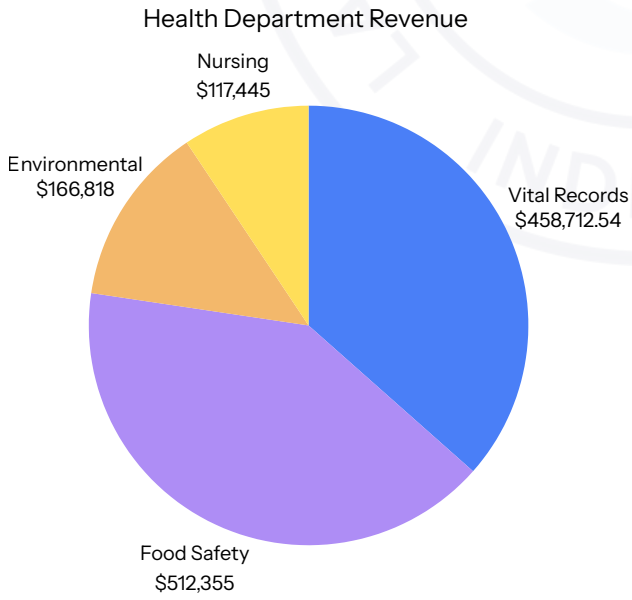
Department Leadership
Michelle Arnold, Deputy Administrator
Denice Trulley, HFI Project Coordinator
Anna Zurisk, Communications Coordinator
Ray Nieves, Environmental Director
Araceli Barrientez, Vector Program Director
Sara McKinney, Recreational Program Director
Marianne Kundich, Nursing Director
Sarah Anderson, Foods Program Director

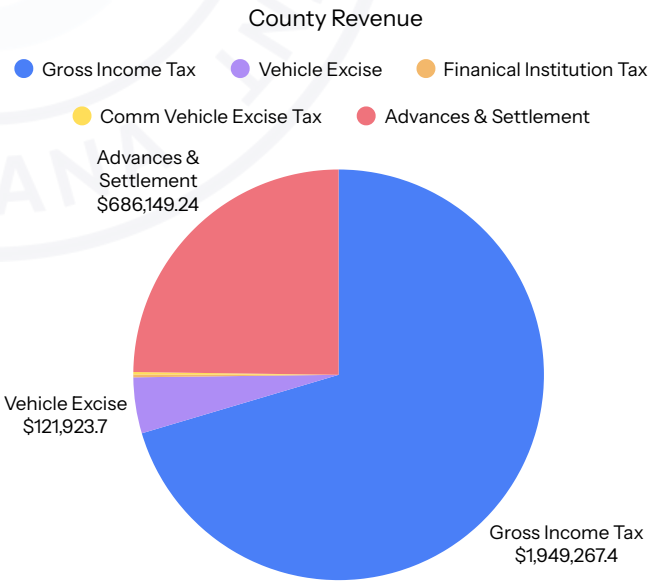


Left to Right: Ray Nieves, Araceli Barrientez, Sara McKinney, Marianne Kundich, Michelle Arnold, Dr. Chandana Vavilala, Sheila Paul, Denice Trulley, Anna Zurisk, Sarah Anderson

Financial Report

Funds	Description	Beginning Balance	Total Revenue	Total Expenses	Balance
1105	County Health	702,314.00	4,024,818.17	-3,018,000.21	1,709,131.96
1153	Health Maintenance Fund	295,915.03	0.00	-50,069.49	245,845.54
1161	LC Health Dept. Local Public Health Services	4,117,803.08	9,404,143.06	-4,458,766.18	9,063,179.96
1296	Health Dept Tobacco Settlement	583,738.25	0.00	-201,140.34	382,597.91
4736	COVID19 Vaccine Disbursements	812,175.86	0.00	0.00	812,175.86
8443	LC Health Dept. PHEP Grant	-1,356.74	116,064.10	-115,778.43	-1,071.07
9359	Health Dept. CRF/ELCID Grant	-6,772.27	-215.30	-215.30	-6,987.57
9432	PubHlth Crisis Respone Coop	2,000.00	0.00	0.00	2,000.00
9449	LC Health Dept Public Health Crisis Response for COVID-19 Testing Grant	39,772.25	0.00	0.00	39,772.25
				Total	12,246,644.84





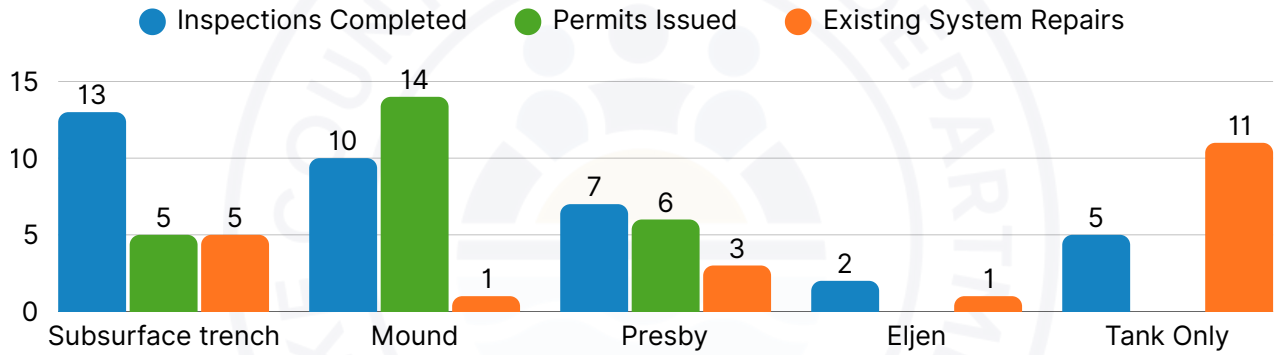
Funds	Description	Balance
1105	Employee Compensation	$2,840,409.53
	Supplies	$49,511.08
	Services & Travel	$124,428.75
	Equipment	$3,650.85
1153	Employee Compensation	$40,594.82
	Supplies	$0
	Services & Travel	$9,474.67
	Equipment	$0
1161	Employee Compensation	$994,038.33
	Supplies	$103,315.66
	Services & Travel	$3,188,773.90
	Equipment	$172,638.29
1296	Employee Compensation	$199,590.59
	Supplies	$0
	Services & Travel	$0
	Equipment	$1,549.75
Public Health Emergency Preparedness Grant	Employee Compensation	$0
	Supplies	$12,748.96
	Services & Travel	$56,133.00
	Equipment	$45,896.47
CFR Grant	Employee Compensation	$215.30
	Supplies	$0
	Services & Travel	$0
	Equipment	$0

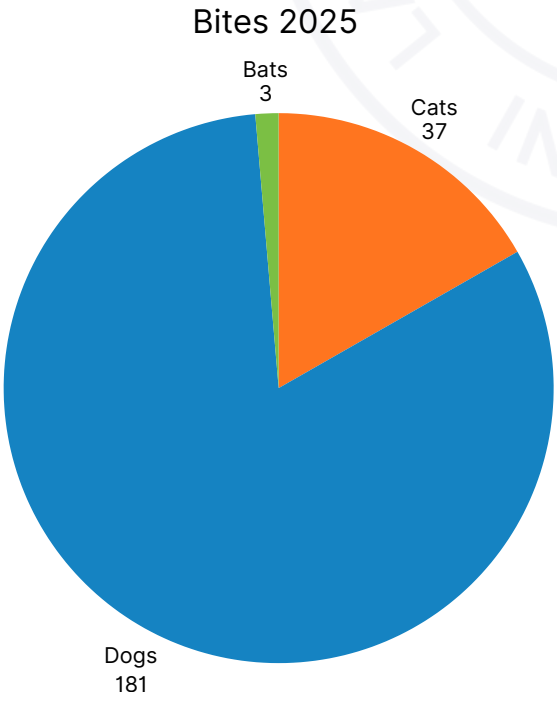
Environmental

SEPTIC STYSTEMS, ENVIRONMENTAL CASES, & WATER COLLECTIONS

Lake County Environmental Services is tasked with managing and safeguarding the natural environment within county's jurisdiction. This department oversees a wide range of responsibilities aimed at promoting environmental health, sustainability, and compliance with regulatory standards.







Environmental Activity	2025
Well Water Collections	4
Subdivision Approvals	32
Mold Kits Issued	108
Radon Kits Issued	58
Environmental Cases	188

Complaint Type	Compaints Investigated
Property	245
Nuisance	100
Sewage	36
Indoor Air	33

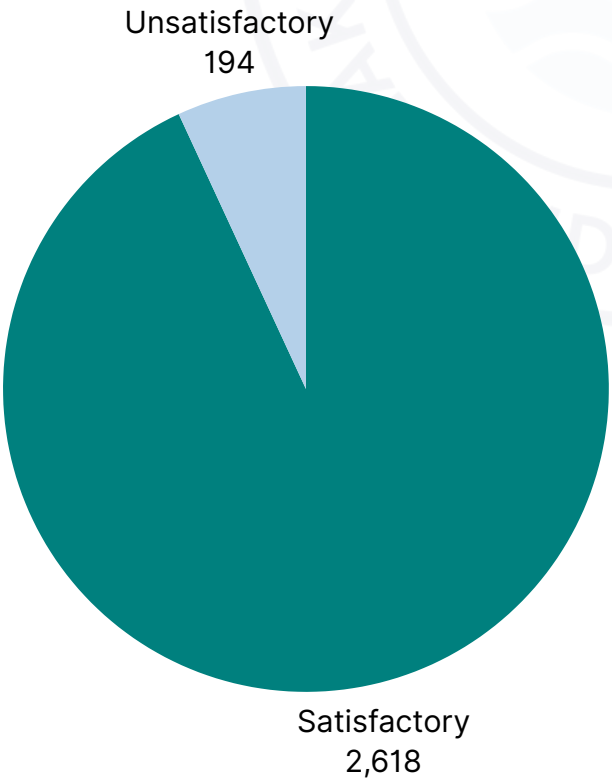
Environmental

POOLS & RECREATIONAL WATER PROGRAM

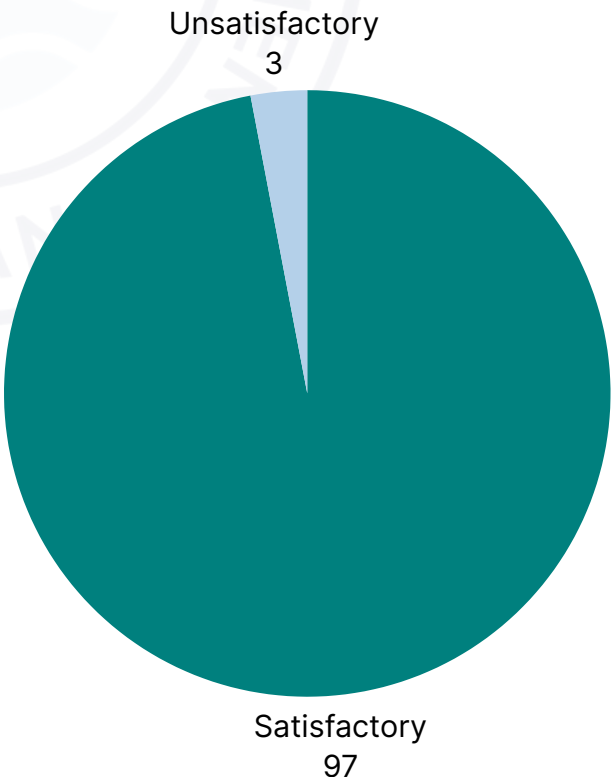
Type of Permit	Total Permits Issues	Fee-exempt permits	Fee-due permits
Annual	50	13	33
Seasonal	58	7	55

SAMPLING & COMPLIANCE

Number of Pool Samples Recorded



Number of Lake Samples Recorded



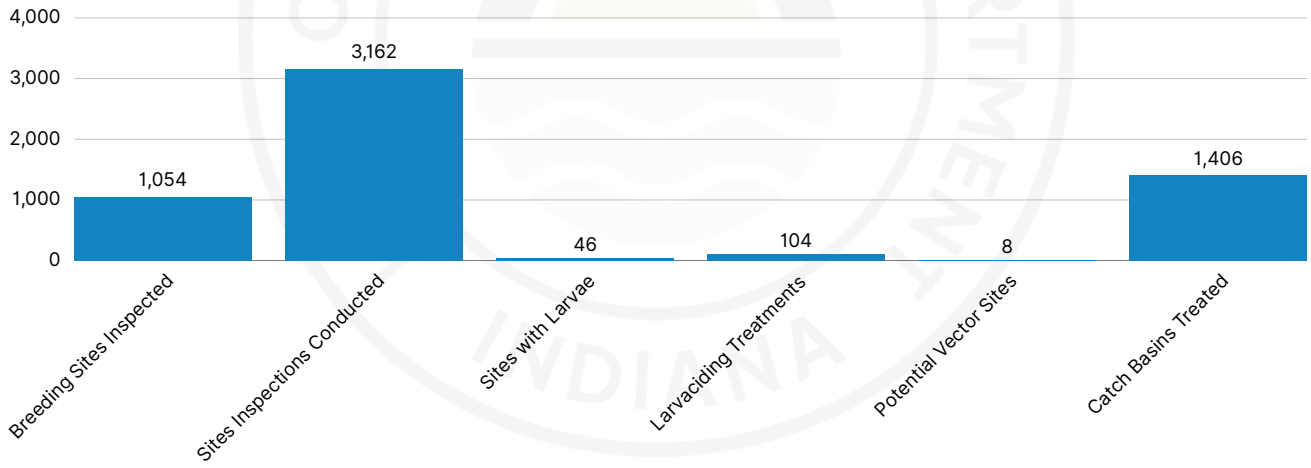
Environmental

VECTOR CONTROL

Vector-borne diseases are illnesses caused by pathogens such as viruses, bacteria, or parasites that are transmitted to humans through the bite of infected vectors like mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, and flies.Vector control measures, such as insecticide-treated bed nets, environmental management, and vaccination programs, play crucial roles in mitigating the spread of these diseases, highlighting the importance of integrated approaches to disease prevention and control.



MOSQUITO ABATEMENT PROGRAM



Gavid Trap Surveillance	2025
Trap Sites	5
Survey Days	56
Trap Collections	152 Pools Tested
Trap Period	6/5-10/01
Positive Pools Collected	28

Outcomes & Complaints	2025
Mosquito Complaints	2
Human West Nile Virus Cases	2

ULV (Street Spraying	2025
Spraying Period	0
Acres Treated	0
Gallons Dispersed	0

Food Safety

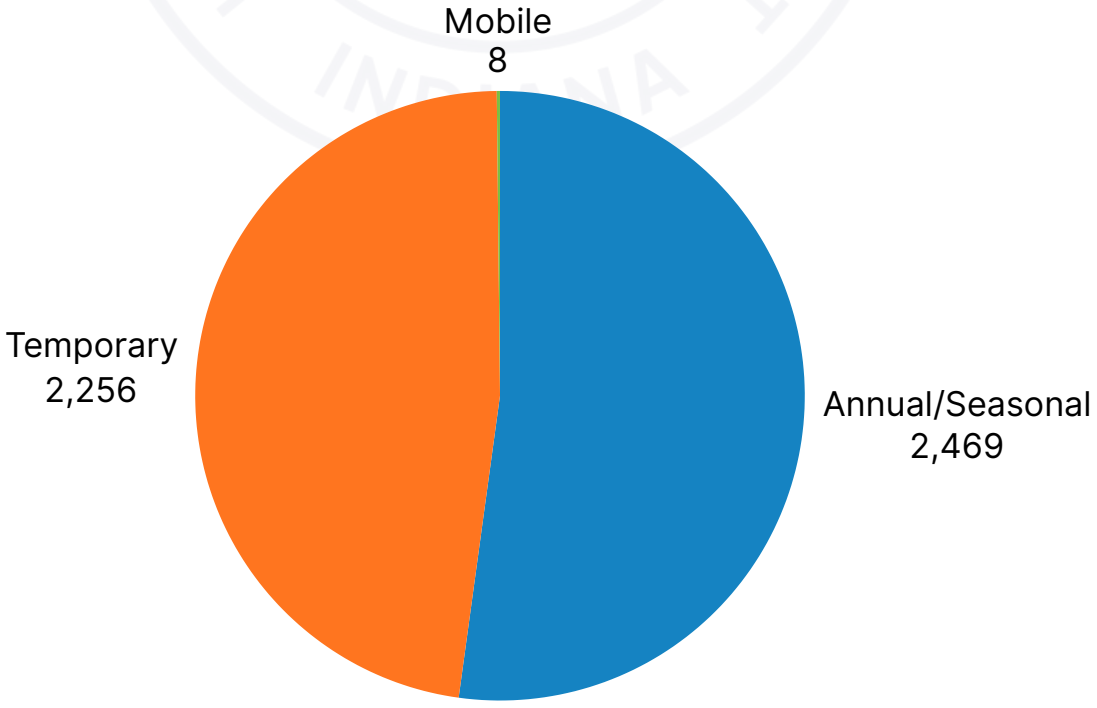
FOOD PROTECTION ACTIVITY



The Lake County Food Safety Services Department ensures the safety and integrity of the food supply. Through inspections, education, enforcement, and collaboration, we work to prevent foodborne illnesses, promote food safety awareness, and maintain high standards of food hygiene throughout the community.

Food Protection Activity	2025
Food Complaints Investigated	197
Routine Inspections Conducted	3,176
Temporary Inspections Conducted	1,574
Education/Training Provided to Retail Food Establishments	172

Types of Permits Issued



Nursing

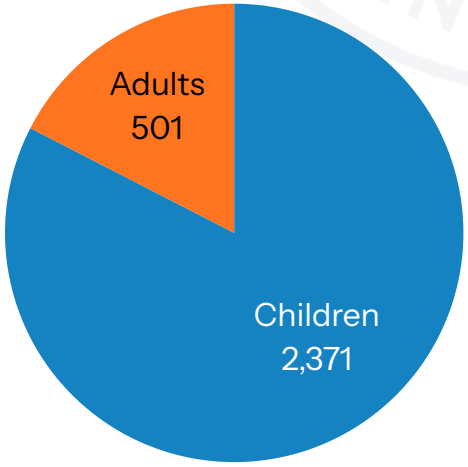
CORE SERVICES & IMPACT

Lake County Public Clinic provides essential services such as comprehensive blood tests, immunizations, and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) testing. This accessible healthcare hub promotes preventive care and educates patients on the importance of regular screenings and immunizations in maintaining optimal health.



Tuberculosis & Case Management	Number of People
People Provided TB Testing	406
People Provided Treatent for Latent TB Infection	17
People Educated on TB	141

Lead Case Management	Number of People
Children Tested for Blood Lead Level	45
Children with an EBLL Started with Case Management	31
Children with EBLL with Home Assessments	14



Received Immunizations at the Health Department

44

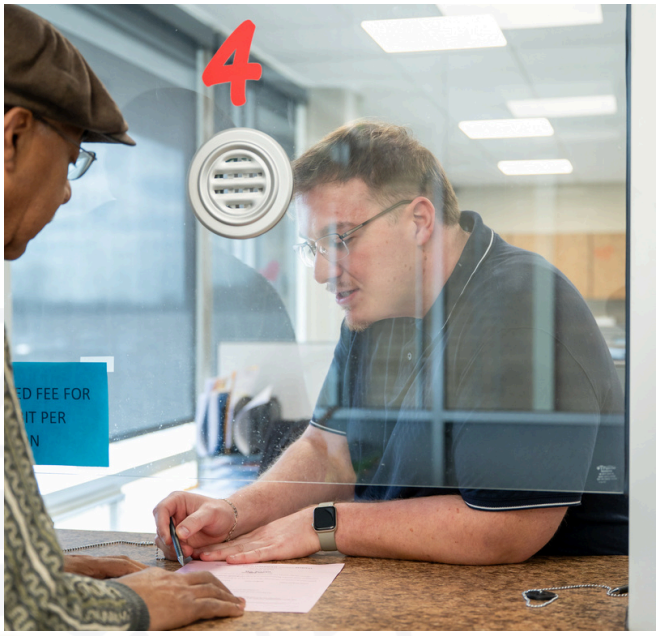
Vaccination Clinics held off-site

Shared Services

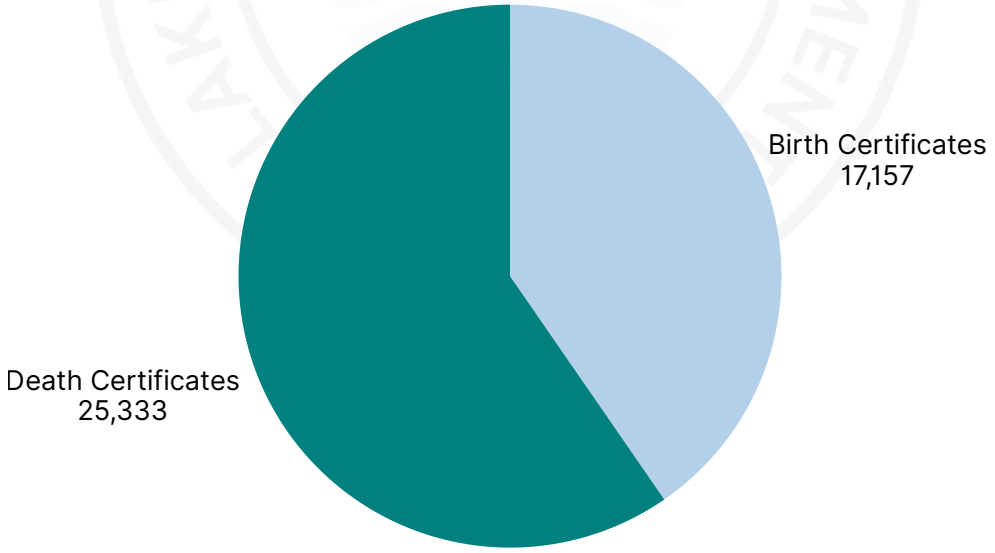
VITAL RECORDS

The Department of Vital Records provides accurate and secure life records to Lake County in a timely manner. Staff work closely with hospitals and funeral homes to ensure records are registered properly.

In 2025, Vital Records provided 41,641 services to residents in Lake County.



Certificates Issued by the Lake County Health Department



Certificates	Number of People Served
Paternity - All Types	135
Court Ordered Change	16

Emergency Preparedness

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & DISASTER RESPONSE



Preparedness involves training responders, educating the public, and maintaining essential resources for rapid emergency response. It reduces harm, strengthens resilience, and supports faster recovery.

PREPARED PLANNING & COORDINATION

Activity/Deliverable	Status
Annual PHEP Work Plan Submission	Completed
Hazard Vulnerability Assessment (HVA) Update	Completed
Attend Regional IPPWs	Completed
Participate Jurisdiction Risk Assessment (JRA) with IDOH	Completed
Participation in First County Health Fair	Completed
Social Vulnerabililty Index (SVI) Presentation	Completed
Attendance at HCC, D1 PHEP, and LEPC Meetings	Monthly, Ongoing
MOU Renewals	Ongoing
PHEP Budget Submission	Completed
PHEP Invoice Submission	Monthly
End-of-the-Year Financial & Performance Report Submission	Completed
PHEP Grant Deliverables Submsission RED Cap CRI & Base	Quarterly
Attending Virtual IDOH Financial Workshop	Completed

Emergency Preparedness

WORKFORCE READINESS & TRAINING

Activity/Deliverable	Status
Staff Incident Command System (ICS) Refresher Training	Completed
Medical Countermeasures (MCM) Distribution Training	Monthly
Narcan Training	Completed
Suicide Prevention	Ongoing
Volunteer (MRC) Distribution Training	Completed
Active Shooter Preparedness Training / Excercise	Completed
New Employee Onboarding Slideshow Development	Ongoing

RESPONSE CAPABILITY & EVALUATION

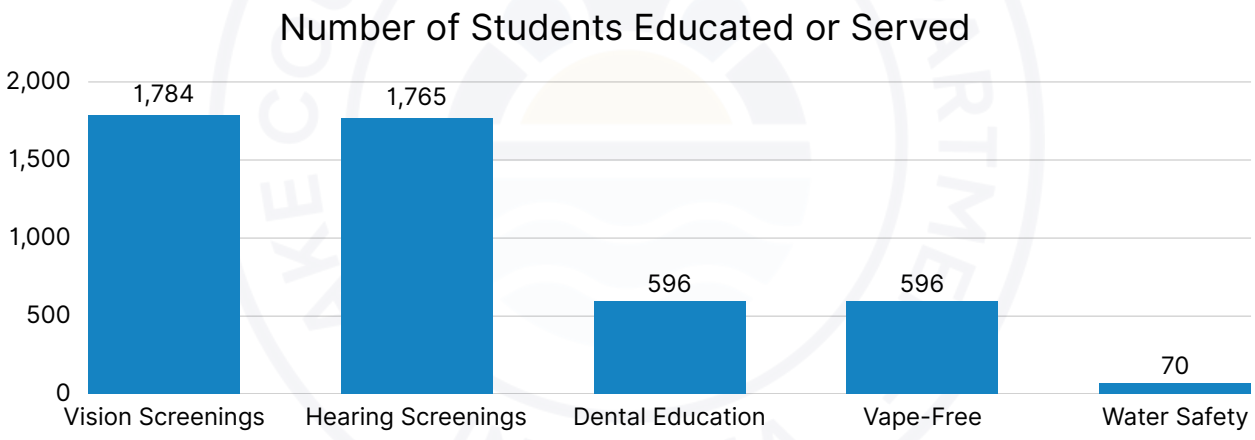
Activity/Deliverable	Status
Staff Incident Command System (ICS) Refresher Training	Completed
Medical Countermeasures (MCM) Distribution Training	Completed
Narcan Training	Completed
Suicide Prevention	Ongoing
Volunteer (MRC) Distribution Training	Completed
Active Shooter Preparedness Training / Excercise	Completed
New Employee Onboarding Slideshow Development	Ongoing

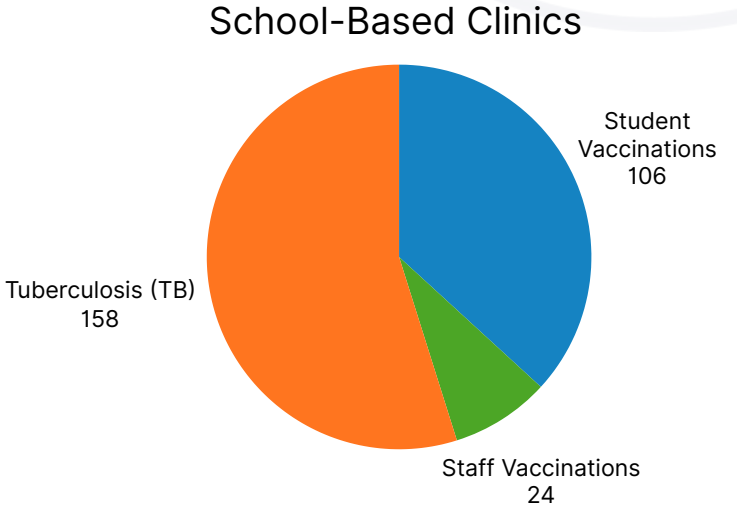
Education

SCHOOL HEALTH LIASIONS

School Liaisons connect schools with public health resources to support student well-being. They promote programs like vaccinations and health education, coordinate services such as mental health support, and serve as a key contact for health communication and policy. They also track health trends and help ensure schools meet public health requirements, playing an important role in maintaining healthy school environments.









28
Epi-pen Injectors Distributed



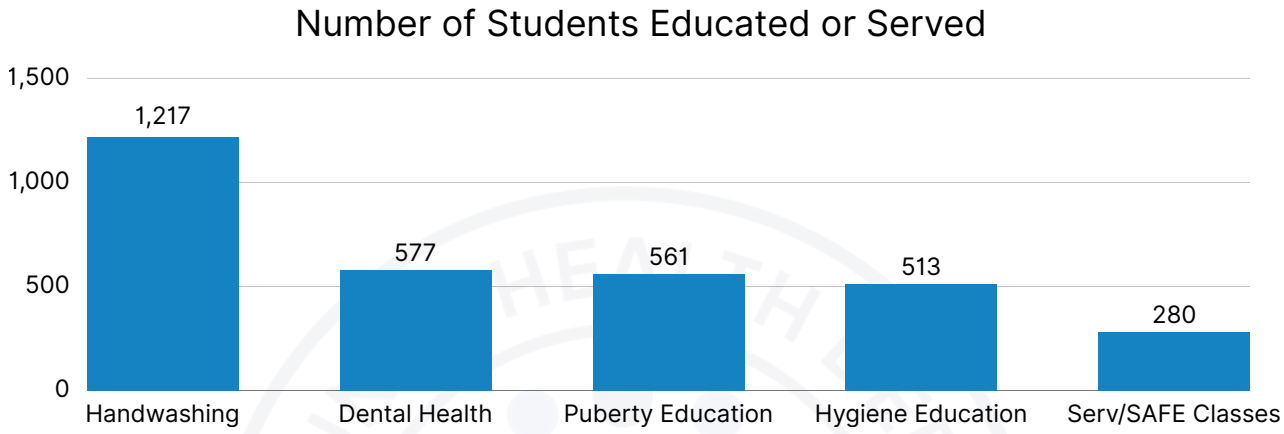
209
Narcan Distributions



8
Stop the Bleed Kits Distributed

Education

HEALTH EDUCATOR







Health First Indiana

Health First Indiana is a statewide investment in local public health focused on prevention, early intervention, and building healthier communities.
Through HFI, the Lake County Health Department works to expand access to essential public health services, address local health priorities, and strengthen partnerships that improve the health and well-being of our residents.
The following report highlights the services delivered, residents reached, and progress made in Lake County through HFI-supported efforts.

LAKE COUNTY

Population: 407,116 (Excluding Gary & East Chicago)
Total Number of Preventative Services Provided: 76,815

ACCESS & LINKAGE TO CLINICAL CARE

Screening & Referrals (46)	
Number of people screened for high blood pressure through local health department or partners	24
Number of people screened for diabetes risk factors through local health department or partners	22
Number of adults referrals for clinical care (6)	
Number of individuals referred to insurance navigations or Medicade/Medicare	6
Other (10)	
Other services provided	10

CHILD & ADULT IMMUNIZATIONS

Number of children who received immunizations at the local health department or a contractor/partner of the LHD	3,390
Number of individuals connected with insurance navigation services	1,359
Number of adults who received immunizations at the LHD or a contractor/partner of the LHD	612
Number of vaccination clinics held off-site of primary LHD location	78

Health First Indiana

CHILDHOOD LEAD SCREENING & CASE MANAGEMENT

Testing (192)	
Number of children tested for blood lead level	78
Number of children identified with an elevated blood lead level (EBLL) above 3.5 µg/dL	61
Number of children identified with an EBLL for whom case management was started	53
Home Services (36)	
Number of homes of children with EBLLs at which the LHD was able to conduct a risk assessment	16
Number of children identified with an EBLL whose homes had an identified lead hazard	13
Number of individuals connected with financial assistance for home lead remediation services	7
Education (214)	
Number of families provided lead education	126
Number of health care providers or early childhood providers given lead testing/lead reduction education	88

CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION & REDUCTION

Screening & Referrals (1,097)	
Number of people screened for high blood pressure through local health department or partners	307
Number of people identified with undiagnosed high blood pressure through local health department or partners	26
Number of people screened with a hemoglobin A1c through local health department or partners	32

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Number of people identified with elevated hemoglobin A1c	11
Number of people screened for diabetes risk factors through local health department or partners	131
Number of people referred to or enrolled in a diabetes prevention program	53
Number of people referred to or enrolled in a diabetes self-management education support program	97
Number of people screened for high cholesterol through local health department or partners	12
Number of people identified with high cholesterol	2
Number of people screened for cancer through local health department activity (breast, colon cancer, etc.)	4
Number of people screened for BMI	10
Number of people referred to a weight treatment or obesity prevention program	7
Number of people identified as having a BMI over 30	17
Number of individuals with asthma who receive an in-home trigger assessment	3
Number of people referred for chronic disease preventative care	281
Number of people referred for cancer screening	5
Number of people provided for cancer screening	5
Number of people provided for cancer screening	5
Number of people screening positive for food insecurity	38
Number of people referred to a food assistance program	56
Programming (1,376)	
Number of adults participating in nutrition and physical activity education programming	774
Number of seniors participating in nutrition and physical activity education programming	602
Other (1,101)	
Other services provided	1,101

Health First Indiana

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Number of emergency preparedness drills/exercises conducted between LHD and other preparedness partners	17

FATALITY REVIEW (CHILD, INFANT, FETAL, SUICIDE, OVERDOSE)

Education (418)	
Number of people trained in an evidence-based suicide prevention training (QPR, ASIST, MHFA, etc.)	62
Number of people educated about 988 and crisis resources	356
Referrals/Screenings (41)	
Number of individuals connected to grief and bereavement resources	41
Community Support (5)	
Number of certified peer recovery coaches in county with support of LHD	5
Other (61)	
Other services provided	61

INFECTIOUS DISEASE PREVENTION & CONTROL

Disease Prevention & Control (2)	
Number of outbreaks (or suspected outbreaks) that were investigated	2
Testing (457)	
Number of people provided HIV testing	241
Number of people provided Hepatitis C testing	175
Number of people provided Syphilis testing	20
Number of people provided Chlamydia testing	19
Number of people provided Gonorrhea testing	2

Health First Indiana

Referrals & Treatment (149)	
Number of referrals to counseling and/or care for HIV	59
Number of referrals to counseling and/or care for Hepatitis	77
Number of referrals to counseling and/or care for Syphilis	2
Number of referrals to counseling and/or care for Chlamydia	1
Number of referrals to counseling and/or care for Gonorrhea	1
Number of individuals treated for HCV/HIV/STI (not including Syphilis)	8
Number of individuals treated for Syphilis	1
Community Outreach (957)	
Number of people educated on HIV/HCV/STI	957
Other (673)	
Other services provided	673

MATERNAL & CHILD HEATLH

Prenatal Services (up to time of delivery) (1,208)	
Number of pregnancy tests provided	294
Number of women referred to prenatal care	112
Number of women provided prenatal services - Vitamins	86
Number of women provided prenatal services - Syphilis testing	86
Number of women provided prenatal services - HIV testing	92
Number of women provided prenatal services - Hepatitis C testing	86
Number of women provided prenatal services - Chlamydia testing	86
Number of women provided prenatal services - Gonorrhea testing	86
Number of women provided prenatal services - Nutrition education	15

Health First Indiana

Number of women provided prenatal services - Nutrition support	8
Number of women provided prenatal services - Mental health/substance use disorder services	41
Number of women provided prenatal services - Clinical care (healthcare provider, such as physician, nurse practitioner, clinic, midwife)	31
Number of referrals to counseling and/or care for Gonorrhea	1
Number of women provided prenatal services - Immunizations, such as RSV and Tdap	1
Number of women provided prenatal services - Other prenatal services	76
Number of women referred to My Healthy Baby	2
Number of women provided mental health/substance use disorder services - Prenatal	83
Number of women referred to health/substance use disorder services - Prenatal	23
Postpartum Services (following delivery) (460)	
Number of women referred to postpartum care	14
Number of women provided postpartum services - Clinical care (healthcare provider, such as physician, nurse practitioner, clinic)	60
Number of women provided postpartum services - Mental health/substance use disorder services	4
Number of women provided mental health/substance use disorder services - Postpartum	60
Number of women referred to health/substance use disorder services - Postpartum	77
Number of women referred to breastfeeding education or support	5
Number of women provided breastfeeding education or support	100

Health First Indiana

Number of families referred to pediatric care	5
Number of people provided with parenting classes/education	118
Number of families referred to childcare assistance (such as CCDF program)	17
Health & Safety Services (1,559)	
Number of people provided safe sleep education	157
Number of people receiving sleep sacks	130
Number of cribs provided by LHD or partner	128
Number of Handle with Care (HWC) alerts issued	4
Number of women and children referred for active domestic violence assistance	1
Number of women and children referred for assistance with physical and mental health recovery from domestic violence	64
Number of period products distributed	1,075
Community Assistance (585)	
Number of people referred to substance use disorder treatment/support	101
Number of referrals to housing supports or resources	197
Number of families provided with utility/rent assistance	54
Number of families screened or referred to developmental services, such as First Steps	7
Number of people receiving life skills courses	14
Number of families receiving home visiting services, such as a home visiting program	132
Number of families referred to home visiting services, such as a home visiting program	8
Number of youth and parent cafés hosted	35
Number of families referred to an insurance navigator or Medicaid	37

Health First Indiana

Contraceptions/STIs (117)	
Number of people provided contraceptive education	117
Food & Nutrition (269)	
Number of women referred to WIC	138
Number of families referred or connected to local food pantries	131
Other (695)	
Other services provided	695

STUDENT HEALTH/SCHOOL HEALTH LIAISON

Screenings (3,099)	
Number of children receiving vision screening through support of liaison	1,236
Number of children receiving hearing screening through support of liaison	1,863
Education (23)	
Number of schools requesting support with mental health education, resources through school liaison	16
Number of schools in county with supported evidence-based anti-bullying programs and groups that support student mental health (e.g., Bring Change to Mind)	7
Number of schools partnering with school liaisons to provide health promotion and education for: (60)	
Trauma and Injury Prevention	7
Nutrition	7
Physical Activity	7
Child Safety Topics - Water Safety	39

Health First Indiana

Number of schools receiving emergency preparedness education (staff and students): (40)	
Stop the Bleed	34
Overdose/naloxone	6
Equipment / Supplies (4)	
Number of Stop the Bleed kits distributed through school liaisons	1
Number of schools who received other public health-related equipment from their LHD (such as vision screeners, etc.)	3
LHD Support (252)	
Number of schools stocking emergency medications through LHD/school liaison - Epinephrine	7
Number of schools stocking emergency medications through LHD/school liaison - Naloxone	65
Number of immunizations given at LHD/Liaison clinics for students/staff	180
Number of student support initiatives provided by school (or county) with support of LHD/school liaison: (13)	
Hygiene Supplies	3
Feminine Hygiene Supplies	10
Tobacco and Vaping Prevention and Cessation (57)	
Number of schools providing vaping prevention education through local health department/school liaison	26
Number of youth provided education on the harms of vaping/tobacco	30
Number of individuals age 13-17 years referred to Indiana Tobacco Quitline/Quit Now/Live Vape Free Indiana or other cessation resource	1
Other (4,489)	
Other services provided	4,489

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TRAUMA & INJURY PREVENTION & EDUCATION

Training/Education (3,136)	
Number of people receiving CPR training	64
Number of people educated and/or trained on vehicle passenger safety and seat belt use	41
Number of people educated or trained on RTV (ATV) and golf cart passenger safety	24
Number of people educated and/or trained on substance use prevention	2,927
Number of people educated and/or trained on mental health and suicide prevention	69
Number of certified peer recovery coaches in county with support of LHD	11
Referrals (169)	
Number of people referred/linked to substance use/mental health treatment	68
Number of women and children referred for active domestic violence assistance	39
Number of women and children provided safe, anonymous transport to shelter for victims of domestic violence and interim care/assistance provided	6
Other (4,913)	
Other services provided	4,913

TUBERCULOSIS (TB) PREVENTION AND CASE MANAGEMENT

Number of people provided TB testing (IGRA or TST)	682
Number of people provided treatment for latent TB infection (LTBI)	28
Number of people educated on TB	47

Health First Indiana

VITAL RECORDS

Certificates (42,490)	
Number of birth certificates issued by the LHD within jurisdiction	17,157
Number of death certificates issued by the LHD within jurisdiction	25,333
Number of other vital record services performed (123)	
Paternity - (All Types)	107
Court Ordered Change	16

NOTES

- This report contains data pertaining to preventative core services as reported by local health departments in the activity tracker from 1/1/2025-12/31/2025.
- Data pertaining to youth/schools that were previously listed under the Tobacco Prevention and Cessation core service prior to July 2025 have been moved to Student Health/School Health Liaison.
- Calculations focused on number of services provided summing the subfields when data was available; when unavailable, the number of unique individuals served was used.
- Changes to these data and/or associated collection methods may affect the comparability of counts to previous or future reports.
- Reported counts may also contain duplications of unique individuals and activities.
- Population data are based on the 2023 U.S. Bureau of Census estimate population counts for Indiana and its county populations.

Data is current as of 1/5/2026.