

Public Health Modernization funding is critical for Jackson County Public Health to build capacity to address foundational public health programs and capabilities. Traditional and historic funding streams for public health are categorical, inflexible, and also often insufficient in most cases to perform the work without supplemental county General Funds. Modernization allows us to identify areas needed for improvement, and work in a more holistic manner to improve the health of our community in a way that is inclusive and responsive to the specific needs of our community. All voices in our community need to be heard, understood, and involved in the Public Health system.

A key priority for Jackson County's Modernization efforts is to build and strengthen capacity for the foundational capabilities – health equity and cultural responsiveness, community partnership development, assessment and epidemiology, policy and planning, communications, emergency preparedness and response, and leadership and organizational competencies. These are the necessary elements that support and strengthen all public health programs, but have been difficult to develop due to the limited and categorical nature of traditional public health funding. Jackson County is building out multiple new positions and efforts to support the foundational capabilities. As an example, Modernization funding has provided the ability for Jackson and Josephine Counties to lead a regional health improvement partnership bringing together dozens of agencies in the community to work together, solve problems, and strengthen the health of the region through a regional Community Health Assessment and Community Health Improvement Plan. This effort utilizes the capabilities of health equity and cultural responsiveness, community partnership development, assessment and epidemiology, policy and planning, and communications and the health improvement partnership builds capacity for these capabilities not only for Jackson and Josephine County public health departments, but for all participating organizations within the region as a whole.

Within foundational public health programs, a priority for Jackson County's Modernization efforts is to build a robust Communicable Disease program that we can tailor to the needs of our community and public health system. Modernization is enabling us to hire Communicable Disease Investigators, Epidemiologists, and other specialists to respond to reportable diseases, outbreaks, and emerging infectious diseases. As demonstrated by the COVID Pandemic, local public health needs to have sufficient staffing to prepared

for and respond to the everchanging disease landscape, especially as climate change causes diseases to emerge in areas where they were previously nonexistent.