

CITY OF MERIDEN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

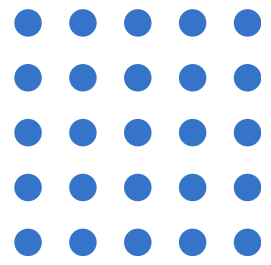


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Mission and Vision

MISSION

The mission of the Meriden Department of Health and Human Services is to protect the health and social well-being of the people in Meriden, to promote an environment conducive to healthy lifestyles, and to prevent adverse health outcomes. Whenever possible, the Department will endeavor to employ strategies, policies, and intervention through community engagement and partnerships to ensure health equity.

VISION

The Meriden Department of Health and Human Services will be a progressive leader providing innovative solutions to achieve optimal health and well-being status for all Meriden residents.

Ten Essential Public Health Services

THE 10 ESSENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

To protect and promote the health of all people in all communities

The 10 Essential Public Health Services provide a framework for public health to protect and promote the health of all people in all communities. To achieve optimal health for all, the Essential Public Health Services actively promote policies, systems, and services that enable good health and seek to remove obstacles and systemic and structural barriers, such as poverty, racism, gender discrimination, and other forms of oppression, that have resulted in health inequities. Everyone should have a fair and just opportunity to achieve good health and well-being.



State Code, Chapter 368 - Municipal Health Authorities - outlines basic health programs that each district department of health and municipal health department shall ensure is provided in each community served by the district or department. To the left is a graphic outlining these 10 essential services.

This annual report is outlined to list a sampling of the main services we provide under each essential service, and should not be considered a complete list of all programs and services provided or situations our encountered by our Department.

Scan the QR code to be directed to our website: www.meridenhealth.com



SCAN ME

1. Community Assessment

Assess and monitor population health status, factors that influence health, and community needs and assets.

Our programs and services strive to reflect the current needs of the community. One way we determine which programs and services to provide directly (outside of those required by state or local code) or recommend to our community partners is to conduct and/or participate in community assessments and review current data sets and reports. Below is a sampling of the reports reviewed this past year.

Meriden 2025 Equity Report

Completed by Data Haven every two years, this report features 2020 Census data and data on social and economic well-being, equity, and quality of life.

211 Counts Connecticut

An interactive dashboard that reflects all calls and service requests to the 211 call center during a selected time range and geographic location in Connecticut.

The State of Housing in Connecticut

Created by the Partnership for Strong Communities, this report features data on housing affordability, creation, choice, stability, emerging topics in housing, and housing related legislation.

Hartford Healthcare 2026 Community Health Needs Assessment

Community health data and input provided by community stakeholders, this report identified significant health needs in the community served by MidState Medical Center.

Additional data and statistic resources for our community can be found at www.meridenhealth.com.

2. Investigate Health Problems/Hazards

Investigate, diagnose, and address health problems and hazards affecting the population.

169

Childhood lead screenings done in our Public Health Clinic.

2,398

Communicable disease reports reviewed.

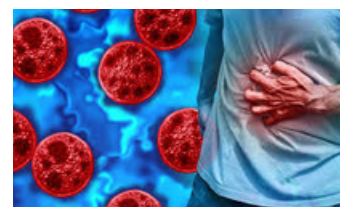
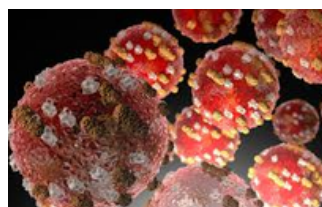
447

Potential public health issues identified by staff through proactive sweeps.

Our staff actively monitored several emerging public health issues and nationwide outbreaks in FY26, including:

- Hantavirus
- Ebola
- Measles
- Cyclosporiasis

Staff remained vigilant by monitoring updates, case trends, and guidance from the Connecticut Department of Public Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other public health agencies. Staff also met regularly to review and discuss current data, isolation and quarantine protocols, case investigation procedures, community messaging, and recommended response measures, all with a goal of ensuring that everyone understood roles, responsibilities, guidance, and protocols to respond quickly and effectively if a suspected or confirmed case occurred in our city.



3. Inform and Educate

Communicate effectively to inform and educate people about health, factors that influence it, and how to improve it.

28

Newsletters Published

- Health news
- Connections (Senior Center)
- Life-saving overdose prevention and response (quarterly)

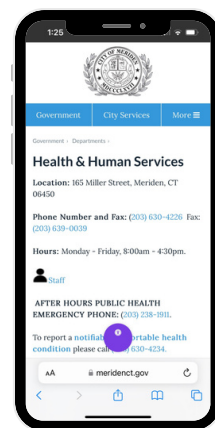
772

Facebook Posts

- Public health news and alerts
- Activities and services
- Upcoming events
- Recognized health observances

OTHER KEY WORK:

Public health alerts/updates were also shared by email with community partners and agencies, through various community newsletters, and at community presentations, events, and meetings.

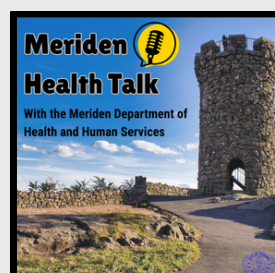


NEW! A Moment with Marley and Meriden Health Talk Podcasts

We launched two podcasts, available on Apple Podcasts, Podbean, Spotify, and iHeartRadio.



A Moment with Marley features Marley, the Meriden Lion, our Public Health Clinic's mascot. This podcast is family-focused and highlights topics including child and family wellness, prevention tips, and information on services offered at our Public Health Clinic. **48 episodes** were published in FY26.



Meriden Health Talk provides residents with timely information on disease prevention, seasonal health concerns, emergency preparedness, community initiatives, and local public health updates. **53 episodes** were published in FY26.

Teddy Bear Clinics: Partnering with Southern Connecticut State University's School of Nursing, we hosted two clinics at the Meriden Public Library, **reaching 18 children and their families.**

Through play and "checkups" of their stuffed animals, children learned healthy habits and skills to become more comfortable when visiting healthcare settings. Children were provided with play doctor kits to do a "check up" on their favorite stuffed animal or teddy bear. SCSU nursing students were able to practice interacting with children and their caregivers while teaching them about different ways to stay healthy.



Senior Center Health and Wellness Presentations and Events: Our Senior Center hosted presentations and screenings on:

- Senior health - including cognitive health, colorectal health, diabetes management, and breast cancer awareness.
- Homecare resources.
- Mental health.
- Safe driving.

In FY26, programs were offered at least twice a month and averaged over 20 attendees per session.



By the Numbers: Meriden Opioid Referral for Recovery (MORR) Program

227 Persons trained in naloxone administration.

655 Naloxone kits distributed.

12 Overdose wall emergency kits (with naloxone) distributed to Meriden businesses and organization to increase access to naloxone, a life-saving medication.

43 Persons trained in Question, Persuade, Refer suicide prevention.

23 Persons trained and certified in Adult Mental Health First Aid.

6,496 Views to our life-saving overdose response and prevention website.

QR codes directing persons to our webpage were placed on MORR health education materials and naloxone kits. In FY26 the code was scanned **67 times**.

MORR
Meriden
Opioid
Referral for
Recovery

Save a Life Day: As part of National Public Health Week, in April 2026 our office coordinated a state-wide naloxone training among local health department and districts.

This collaboration of 25 local health department and districts (including us) trained over 300 persons and distributed over 300 naloxone kits.



4. Community Engagement

Strengthen, support, and mobilize communities and partnerships to improve health.

This past year staff attended several community events and meetings to engage with members of our community. Staff answered questions and provided community resources, pop-up trainings, department information, promoted public health as a profession and made referrals to community agencies. Events included (not all inclusive):

- Council of Neighborhoods meetings
- Meriden Pride Center's Pride Fest
- Overdose Awareness Day
- Meriden Daffodil Festival
- Meriden Library Pride Fest
- Christmas in the Village
- CT Foodshare Mobile Food Pantry visits
- Hartford HealthCare's Mini-Medical Mission
- Meriden Public Schools Winter Wellness Fair
- Kiwanis Club meetings



Did you know this past year we distributed over 1,700 resource bags at community events?

Mammogram Van: Hartford Hospital's Digital Mobile Mammography van visited 165 Miller Street in October 2025 and April 2026, providing mammograms to women between the ages of 35 and 40 who have not had a mammogram, and for women 40 and older who have not had a mammogram in over a year. We will be hosting the van in July and October of 2026 and hope to continue this partnership in 2027.



Meriden Early Start (Formerly School Readiness): FY26 marked a major transition for early childhood services in Meriden as Connecticut implemented the Early Start Local Governance Partner (LGP) model, replacing the School Readiness Council structure. Meriden launched the Meriden Early Learning Connection (MELC) as the community's early childhood hub, shifting its focus from funding administration to family engagement, provider support, community collaboration, and strategic planning to improve equitable access to high-quality early childhood services.

599

Funded childcare spaces, including
101 Infant/Toddler spaces, and **498** Preschool spaces.

15

Center-based and Family
Child Care Providers in
Meriden.

3

Parent Ambassadors hired to
connect families with early
childhood resources, conduct
outreach, attend community
events, and promote
Meriden Early Start programs.



OTHER KEY WORK: Meriden Early Start

- **Community Partnerships:** offered workshops on autism awareness, kindergarten transitions, healthy screen time, and social-emotional development in partnership with Collaborative ABA, Inc. and United Way 211 Child Development.
- **Data-Driven Planning:** completed a Local Needs Assessment using surveys, focus groups, stakeholder input, and community data to guide the FY26–27 Community Plan.
- **Provider Support:** provided professional development for early childhood educators focused on intentional teaching, inclusion, early literacy, family engagement, and challenging conversations.



Looking Ahead: In FY27, MELC will focus on implementing the Community Plan, expanding Parent Ambassador outreach and the Growing Together workshop series, supporting newly funded Family Child Care providers, strengthening partnerships, continuing professional development, and increasing equitable access to high-quality early childhood programs.



Youth Services: In FY26 the Juvenile Review Board program saw **112 cases**. Breach of peace, assault, and larceny were the most common types of offenses. Ninety-three (93) Juvenile Review Board meetings were held and 83 on-going cases were closed.

Our Youth Service Bureau grant provided financial support to the following projects/city offices for positive youth programming:

- Project Graduation adult supervised, drug/alcohol free night for graduating seniors.
- Meriden Parks & Recreation for summer camp support.
- Prom Angels annual prom dress give-away, held in our building.
- Meriden Public Library for a variety of teen and children library programming.

Coalition to End Homelessness: In an effort to pursue a collaborative approach for outreach, engagement, and assistance for people experiencing homelessness within the city, in January 2025 Mayor Kevin Scarpati established the Meriden Coalition to End Homelessness. The Director of Health and Human Services was appointed as a member of the Coalition, which met throughout FY26 to:

- Identify and define aspects of homelessness to be addressed.
- Articulate appropriate benchmarks and metrics to measure success.
- Develop sustainable programs and proposals to achieve success by using the resources and skills of the Coalitions' participants and their partners.
- Report back to the City Council on the Coalition's actions no less than annually.

The report is scheduled to be submitted to City Council in September 2026, and will include recommendations for consideration to reduce/end/best approach homelessness in the city.

By the Numbers: Meriden Senior Center

17,311

Visits to the Senior Center
(duplicated).

14,541

Rides provided (including
medical appointments).

4,399

Dedicated
volunteer hours.

120

Gifts provided to seniors at
the 11th Annual 'Tis the
Season for a Senior program.

OTHER KEY WORK: Senior Center

- **Meals served:** 9,086 lunches and 2,299 breakfast meals were served through our elderly nutrition program.
- **Intergenerational Engagement:** Staff partnered with **Meriden Public Schools** on nutrition, recreation and crafts, and established a free clothing corner with the Community Classroom Collaborative. The Center hosted the 13th Annual Josephine Bradley Spelling Bee, and partnered with **Wilcox Technical High School** for a beauty day, providing affordable services while giving students hands-on experience. The **Benjamin Franklin Elementary School Kindness Club** connected with seniors through crafts, Bingo, and a musical performance.
- **Wellness & Independence:** The Center launched **Senior Tech Help** with MidState Arc and introduced a 26-week healthy lifestyle series through the **Monitor My Health Diabetes Prevention Program**.
- **Movement & Fitness:** Through a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Hartford Healthcare grant award, the Center increased the number of arthritis, aerobics, weight training, dance and yoga classes offered and added a new Balance Exercise class.
- **Special Day for Special People Picnic:** This event, now in its 54th year, welcomed 150 seniors to Hubbard Park for a day celebrating community, inclusion, and connection. The event featured a picnic lunch, Bingo with prizes, live entertainment by **Star Dance Academy** and **DJ Anodrac**, and giveaways and raffles donated by local businesses and community partners. **Hartford HealthCare** sponsored T-shirts for the first 100 attendees.
- **AARP Community Challenge Grant:** The Department received a \$2,500 grant to offer an emergency preparedness program for seniors. Classes will be held in FY27.
- **5310 Transportation Grant:** A grant was submitted to the CT Department of Transportation for a new Mini-Bus; as of June 30 the grant application is still pending.



5. Policies and Plans

Create, champion, and implement policies, plans, and laws that impact health.

Providing input into policies, plans, and laws: Through the CT Association of Directors of Health, our Director signed on to testimony in favor of Bill No. 5044: *An Act Establishing Connecticut Vaccine Standards*, SB 450: *An Act Concerning the Standard of Care for Immunization*, and to preserve per-capita funding for local health departments as provided under Connecticut General Statutes §19a-202 and §19a-245.

Examining and improving existing policies, plans, and laws: Environmental Health staff completed a comprehensive review of the city codes we are responsible for enforcing. See the following section for updates to City Codes and fee schedules.

Policy, planning, and preparedness: Under the MORR program, staff revised the Naloxone Education and Distribution and Community Outreach plans. Following the City's cybersecurity incident in February, we also updated our Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) to address our operations during a complete loss of access to internet, electronic files, and email. We also did a full review of our Public Health Emergency Response Plan, submitting sections for state review. Under emergency preparedness, we reviewed and provided feedback to the the Region 2 risk communication and high impact pathogen plans.



NEW! Watermain Break Plan: Following several large, long-term watermain breaks in other cities, we developed a formal watermain break plan outlining public health response if a similar event was to happen in Meriden.

NEW! Senior Center Volunteer Handbook: Staff created a handbook outlining opportunities, expectations, and position descriptions for those wishing to volunteer at the Senior Center. The handbook is posted at www.meridenhealth.com.

6. Public Health Laws

Utilize legal and regulatory actions designed to improve and protect the public's health.

Licensing and Inspections: Our Environmental Health staff play an important role in preventing foodborne illness and ensuring a safe and healthy environment. Our Sanitarians are responsible for licensing and inspecting food service establishments (including temporary vendors such as food trucks), public swimming pools, massage establishments, and barbershops/hair salons/nail salons. In addition, staff conducts septic system inspections and issues well and septic system permits. They also respond to public complaints and elevated childhood lead cases. Both local and state public health codes lay the foundation and guidance for much of their work.



By the Numbers: Environmental Health

1,244

Food service establishment inspections conducted under the FDA Food Code.

Issued **144** temporary food service licenses.

71

Barbershop/hair/nail salon inspections, and an additional **82** re-inspections and license checks.

50

Public pool inspections, and **37** re-inspections and chemical checks.

179

Nuisance complaints addressed including trash/bulky waste (**92**), food service (**42**), sewage (**8**), infestation of rodents/bugs (**28**), and hoarding/community safety assessment (**9**).

494

Follow-up inspections of cases of children with elevated blood lead levels. Staff took **381** dust wipe, **14** water, and **22** soil samples during investigations, and did **2,721** XRF (X-ray Fluorescence) readings to test surfaces for lead based paint. Staff followed up on **53** cases of childhood lead poisoning, closing **60**.

NEW! OpenGov: On June 1, 2026 the City of Meriden transitioned to a new licensing and permitting software system called OpenGov, which, for our Department, allows business owners and residents to complete various applications for food service licenses, barbershop/hair/nail salons, and massage establishments, engineered plan review, soil testing, septic system installation, well permit, or public swimming pool permit. Residents can also report health code violations through this portal. To view the portal visit:

<https://meridencn.portal.opengov.com/>.

NEW! City Code Updates - Effective July 1, 2026: On June 15, 2026 Meriden City Council approved updates to the following city codes and the Environmental Health [fee schedule](#).

- [Chapter 70](#) Barbershops, Hairdressing and Cosmetology Shops
- [Chapter 112](#) Food and Food Services Establishments
- [Chapter 133](#) Massage Establishments
- [Chapter 185](#) Swimming Pools

During the legislative session, we regularly review raised bills and assess their impact to public health and human services in Meriden. Below are some of the raised bills we followed this past legislative session.

HB 5167: An Act Concerning The Disclosure Of Water Quality Test Results for Certain Private & Semipublic Wells:

This bill would require any laboratory or firm that conducts a water quality test on a private well serving a resident property or semipublic well in Connecticut to report results to the local health department in that jurisdiction. The revised private well language ended up in HB 5514 which is now [Public Act 26-13](#).



HB 5164: An Act Concerning The Use of Funds In The Tobacco Settlement Fund: This bill would require funding of tobacco control programs to prevent and reduce tobacco use at the amount recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

HB 5044: An Act Establishing Connecticut Vaccine Standards: This bill establishes independent state vaccine standards, creates an adult immunization program, and clarifies school exemption rules. This bill passed and was signed into law as [PA-26-3](#).

SB 450: An Act Concerning The Standard of Care For Immunizations: This bill proposed expanding the Department of Public Health Commissioner's authority to set immunization standards of care for both adults and children and adjusting insurance and vaccine access rules.

7. Access to Health Care

Assure an effective system that enables equitable access to the individual services and care needed to be healthy.

Vaccines Given: Our Public Health Clinic provides adult and child vaccinations to our community.

405

Adult vaccines administered in FY26.
This compares to
430 administered in FY25.

834

Child vaccines administered in FY26.
This compares to 2,154
administered in FY25.



During this fiscal year, the Public Health Clinic experienced a decline in the number of vaccines administered. This decrease was attributed to a reduction in the number of families relocating to Meriden from outside the United States. Children arriving from other countries often require catch-up immunizations because differences in vaccine schedules, required doses, and methods of administration (such as oral vaccines versus injections) in order to meet Connecticut's school immunization requirements. Additionally, Connecticut revised kindergarten entry age requirement which now requires children to be five years old by September 1. This reduced the number of students eligible to enroll in kindergarten and as a result, fewer children required immunizations to meet school entry requirements.

286 Tuberculosis skin tests were placed by our Clinic nurses.

69

Students received back to school physicals in our Public Health Clinic through our partnership with Community Health Center's School Based Health Center program.

Mobile Food Pantry: In an effort to address food insecurity in Meriden, New Opportunities hosted the CT Food Share Mobile Pantry every-other Thursday from 1:00-2:00pm.

This past winter, due to a significant amount of snowfall, the pantry was moved from the Miller/Center Street lot to Ceppa Field on Gale Avenue. Bi-weekly visits will remain at Ceppa Field until further notice. The van visited **24 times** in FY26 and served close to **150 families** at each visit.



School Health: Our School Health program provides comprehensive school health services in Meriden's 8 elementary, 3 middle, and 2 high schools, as well as Venture Academy. The program has 16 full time 10-month Public Health Nurses, 3 part time Public Health Nurses, 9 Health Aides, overseen by our Public Health Nursing Supervisor. We are fortunate to have a Registered Nurse in every school!



56,104

Sick care visits
(students - illness,
injury, psychosocial,
other).

828

Sick care visits (staff -
illness, injury,
psychosocial, other).

12,856

Specialized
procedures (G-tube
feedings, tracheotomy
care, etc.).

5,478

Screenings (hearing,
visions, scoliosis).

22,027

Medications
administered.

Senior Center Mini-Bus Transportation: This service provides one-way rides and medical rides to in-town appointments. Our 4 mini-buses are wheelchair accessible. This program is a vital lifeline to keep seniors independent and socially engaged.

12,151

One-way rides (not including
medical rides).

2,390

Medical rides



Community Services: Community Services experienced meaningful growth in staffing and professional capacity during this fiscal year. A Community Services Supervisor, a Social Services Worker, and a newly hired Community Services Worker work out of the Senior Center to assist Meriden residents with housing, healthcare, food insecurity, home care services, and other needs. All members of the team are bilingual, significantly enhancing equitable service delivery and improving communication with residents who speak languages other than English. Two staff are certified CHOICES counselors, with a third staff member working toward certification to further expand Medicare and Medicaid counseling services.



1,821

Residents assisted with Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP, housing, and other social services programs.

941

Renters' Rebate applications processed for eligible older adults and individuals with disabilities.

OTHER KEY WORK:

- Easier and more efficient access to the **Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS)** online portal has allowed staff to better assist clients with applications and renewals for Medicaid, SNAP, and other state-administered programs. The improved functionality of the DSS website has reduced processing delays and enhanced the overall client experience.
- The **Eviction Prevention Fund 2.0** is another program in which we referred many of our clients to who were facing eviction due to a recent financial hardship. Staff also established a significantly stronger working relationship with the Agency on Aging's Homecare Program as well as Protective Services for the Elderly. Through improved coordination and communication, staff were able to expedite referrals and case processing for older adults requiring in-home care and support services.

8. Maintain a Competent Workforce

Build and support a diverse and skilled public health workforce.

Staff Training: We recognize that regular staff training is essential to stay current in best practices related to public health and human services. Continuing education is also necessary to maintain certifications required to carry out services, such as food service inspections, lead testing, and CHOICES counseling. In FY26 staff participated in trainings on (not an inclusive list):

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| • Vaccine handling and storage | • Public health communications | • Tuberculosis case management |
| • Early childhood education | • Bloodborne pathogens | • CHOICES open enrollment training |
| • Hoarding-like conditions | • School nursing best practices | • Emergency preparedness exercises |
| • Housing and homelessness | • Motivational interviewing | • FDA foodborne outbreak investigations |
| • Wheelchair lifts and securement | • First Aid/Stop the Bleed | • Burnout and self care |
| • Mental Health First Aid at work | • Trauma informed care practices | |

Professional Organizations: Staff are members of many professional organizations that provide grant opportunities, continuing education, health alerts, access to research journals, best practices, data and advocacy.



9. Evaluation

Improve and innovate public health functions through ongoing evaluation, research, and continuous quality improvement.

Evaluation is essential to measuring program effectiveness and improving public health and human services. We use program participant surveys, community surveys and focus groups, and monthly/quarterly reports to monitor outcomes, identify trends, and ensure grant goals and objectives are met.

MORR Program Evaluation: Community training opportunities under the MORR program, such as naloxone administration, QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) and Adult Mental Health First Aid are all evaluated through brief post-training questionnaires via Survey Monkey or curriculum-specific portals. Surveys assess changes in participants' knowledge, behaviors, or skills; collect basic demographic information, and measure overall satisfaction with the training.



Meriden Early Start: The Early Start program completed a comprehensive Local Needs Assessment, using surveys, focus groups, stakeholder engagement, and community data collection. Findings will guide the FY26–27 Community Plan to ensure future investments reflect the needs of children, families, and providers.

Meriden Senior Center Transportation Program: The Senior Center conducts an annual survey to assess how our transportation services meet - or do not meet - older residents' needs. Each winter, paper surveys are distributed in English and Spanish to members and entered into Survey Monkey for analysis. Feedback gathered leads to insights and improvements to the service.

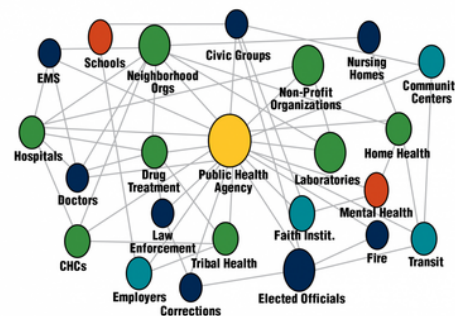
Quality Improvement: Supervisors regularly review the work done in their offices for continuous quality improvement, including reviewing food service inspections, vaccine administration records, and social service applications. Opportunities for improvement are discussed with staff to ensure we provide a high level of service to our community.

10. Public Health Infrastructure

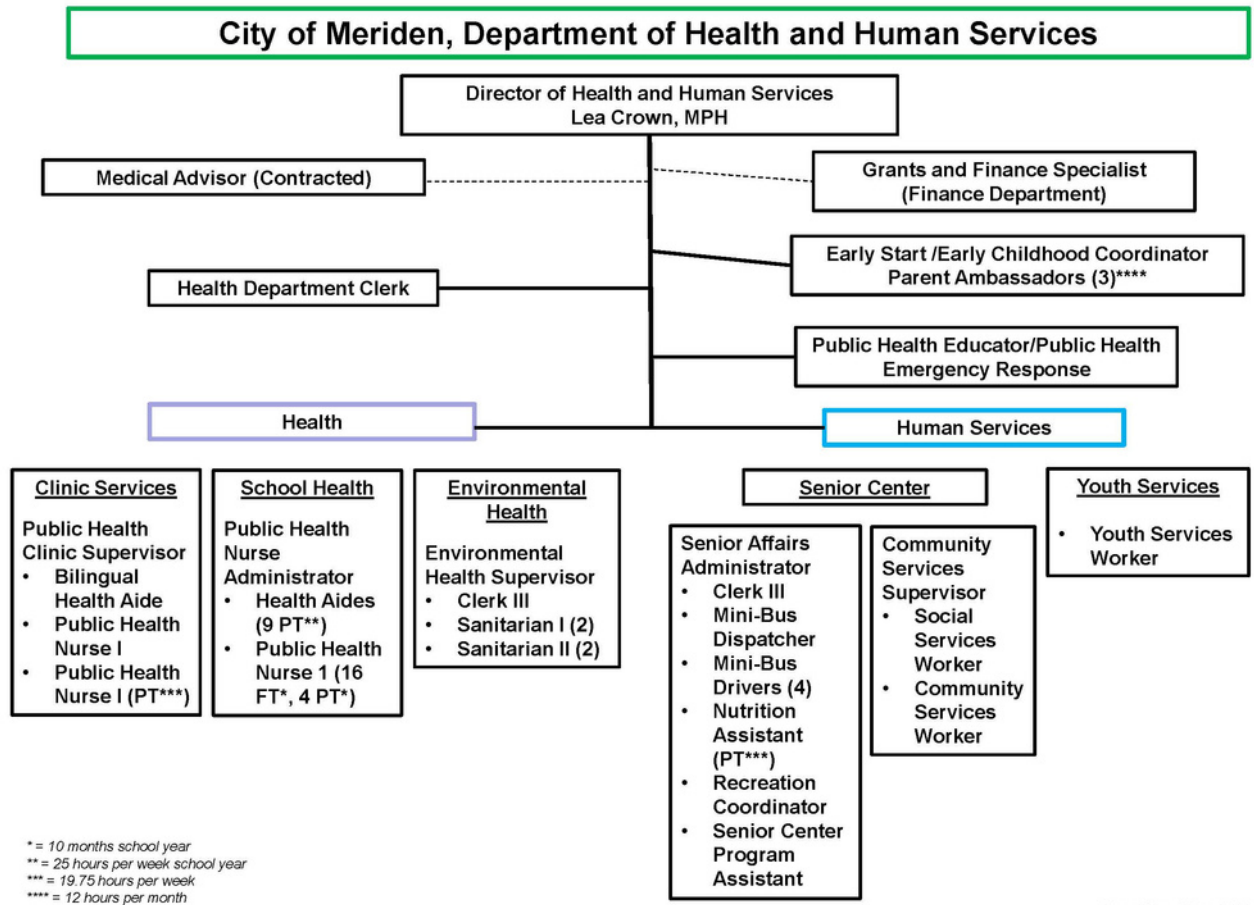
Build and maintain a strong organizational infrastructure for public health.

Public health infrastructure provides the foundation for everything we do. To maintain a strong, effective, and resilient public health infrastructure, our Department:

- **Builds partnerships** and understands the roles of government agencies, elected officials, community organizations, and other partners that support the public health system. We are a part of several community coalitions and present regularly at City Council meetings.
- **Allocates resources equitably** to address community health needs and priorities, using current data and evidence-based practices.
- **Demonstrates effective leadership** through ethical decision-making, accountability, and sound governance.
- **Manages** financial and human resources responsibly and effectively. We manage our general fund budget as well as multiple single and multi-year grants, ensuring we are good stewards of tax payer dollars.
- **Strengthens communication and strategic planning** to support organizational goals and community health outcomes. We strive to ensure programming is meeting the needs of the community.
- **Maintains** secure and reliable technology that meets current privacy and information security standards.
- **Promotes** transparency, inclusivity, and accountability in collaboration with partners and the community. We ensure grant goals and objectives are met and reported on, sharing this data with our partners and posting updates on our website.



Department Information



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