

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Steuben County Health Department

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Financial Overview.....	3
Operational Performance	3
Board of Health	5
Health Department Staff	5
Onsite Sewage Systems Program	6
Food Protection Program	6
Water Well Program.....	7
Vector Surveillance and Control Program	7
Animal Bite Reporting and Rabies Program	7
Communicable Disease Reporting.....	8
Vaccine Clinic and Program	8
STD/STI Outreach Clinic of Steuben County	9
School Liaison and School Outreach.....	9
Harm Reduction and Community Outreach	9
Vital Statistics	10
Public Health Preparedness.....	11
Advocacy.....	11
Health First Steuben County.....	13
2024 Budget.....	15

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Welcome! This is the summary and activities of the Steuben County Health Department in Angola, IN. This report is compliant with IC 16-20-1-7 including all program activities, achievements, and financial reporting. Steuben County is located in Northeast Indiana sharing borders with Michigan and Ohio. This location coupled with the many lakes and seasonal population fluctuations make the activities and programs within the Health Department varied and robust. This report will have facts, figures and metrics on the Department's work in county for 2024.

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The Steuben County Health Department operated within an overall budget of approximately \$1,091,000 for 2024. This funding has been identified into three distinct streams: County appropriations, State direct funding, and Grant funding. The county appropriated \$518,840 in Fund 1159 County Health. The Health Department also received \$447,655 from the State of Indiana biennium budget. This was for the purposes of the Health First Indiana campaign and initiatives. All other monies and grants received totaled over \$124,000 for specific programs or initiatives.

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The Steuben County Board of Health, along with the Health Officer, oversees the personnel and programs within the Health Department. In 2024, the Health Department had ten full-time employees and two part-time employees supporting its programs and initiatives. At the beginning of 2024, a full-time environmental health specialist was added to the Environmental Health program. In the third quarter of 2024, the health department parted ways with the STI/STD Nurse. While the nursing program felt the loss of the part-time nurse in the STI/STD clinic, the addition of an environmental health specialist allowed for additional time and energy to be spent on overseeing the watershed water monitoring program and vector surveillance.

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As the Health Officer, I am pleased to present an overview of our recent public health initiatives under Health First Indiana, highlighting our committed efforts to foster healthier, safer, and more resilient communities. Over the past year, we have launched a series of programs designed to improve health outcomes, promote preventive care, and address emerging health challenges with innovation and compassion.

Our vaccination outreach campaigns are working to increase immunization rates, protect vulnerable populations and reduce the incidence of preventable diseases. We have also expanded access to mental health resources with our partnership with Bowen Center, recognizing the importance of emotional well-being in overall health, and free community-based screening services to facilitate early detection of chronic conditions with the Faith Community Health Clinic.

In addition, we have strengthened partnerships with local school districts and organizations to promote health education and healthy lifestyles, empowering students and residents to make informed choices. These initiatives are supported by data-driven strategies and community engagement, ensuring that our efforts are timely and effective.

Looking ahead, we remain dedicated to building on this momentum, continuously adapting our programs to meet the evolving needs of our community. Together, we are making significant progress toward a healthier future, driven by passion of our role, and a shared commitment to public well-being in our communities and schools.

In Health,

Dr. Ted J. Crisman, MD

Health Officer

Steuben County Health Department

RD

Dr. Todd Rumsey, M.D.; President

Julie Clary, Vice President

Dr. Jonathan Alley, D.O.

Barb Julian, R.N.

Vick Meek

Susan Weicht, R.N.

Kathleen Vaughn, R.N.

D R M

Dr. Ted Crisman, M.D., Health Officer and Secretary of Board

Alicia Walsh, B.S; B.A.; Administrator

Mickinna Lothamer, B.S.N; R.N.; Director of Public Health Nursing

Jason Armey, B.S.P.H. CEDP, Chief Environmental Health Specialist

Stacey Sherburne, Financial Manager

Carrie Allen, Environmental Health Specialist I

Nicole Corwin, Environmental Health Specialist II

Robyn Hinman, Deputy Registrar

Manda Kleeberg, Environmental Health Specialist III

Angie Middleton, R.N. Immunization Nurse

LaKeisha Wertz, LPN, STI/STD Nurse/ Community Health Worker

Environmental Health

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The onsite sewage system program underwent drastic changes in 2024 across all counties in the State of Indiana. These were changes that occurred in the Indiana General Assembly session, which have a direct impact on the statutory language in 410 IAC 6.8-3 Residential Onsite Sewage Systems. This included invalidating any existing sewage ordinances at the county level and requiring any new ordinances to pass the Technical Review Panel or TRP at the State Department of Health. This led the environmental health staff on a long and winding road to understanding the changes through the submission and approval of three versions of the same ordinance. We currently do not have an approved on-site sewage system ordinance.



The Onsite Sewage System program successfully met community needs by issuing permits, as shown on the left, and conducting over 150 construction inspections. This total does not include 23 investigations related to sewage or septic complaints.

D R R R M

The Retail Food Protection Program has jurisdiction over all retail food locations in Steuben County. This would include restaurants, delis, grocery stores, and even meat markets. There are some businesses that are under the jurisdiction of the Indiana State Department of Health, mainly because being a commercial producer of food products. In Steuben County, there are 132 brick-and-mortar retail food establishments. This does not include the 54 mobile food permits that are issued to food trucks from across the region that operate in Steuben County. The Environmental Health staff are responsible for permitting, inspections, and enforcement to ensure that community members can enjoy restaurants without becoming sick from a foodborne illness.

In 2024, the health department received 21 food-related complaints and was involved with three (3) food emergencies, like a fire or overturned transport truck carrying food products. The ability to investigate and



identify the best course of action comes from routine and in-depth training and education for the environmental health staff. As the retail food landscape changes, so do the environmental health specialists. In the picture to the right, a new handwashing station was being utilized by a retail food vendor, and was told it could be purchased from a popular online retailer.

R R R M

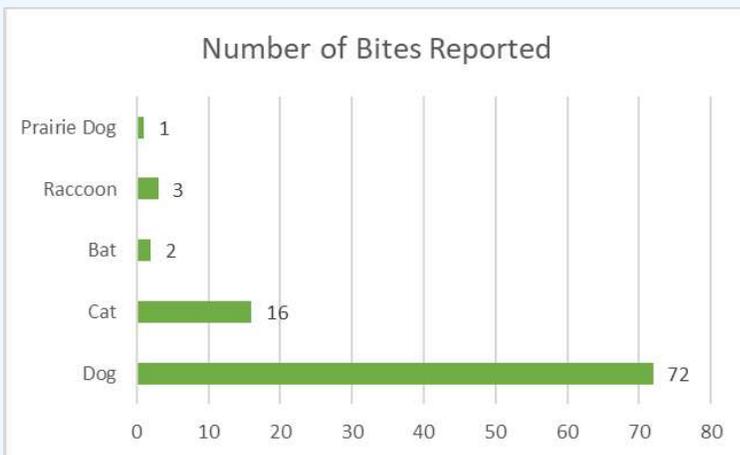
Steuben County has had an active and enforced well ordinance and program since the 1980s. It has been the intention of the Health Officer and Board of Health to update and modernize the well ordinance to reflect the current standards from the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Environmental Management. In the summer of 2024, the Health Department staff used a model ordinance from the Indiana Environmental Health Association to revamp Steuben County’s well ordinance. The draft well ordinance copy was sent to all well drillers who worked in the region, soliciting for comments and feedback. Additional requests for feedback and comments were posted in communal areas and on social media. All comments were collected and reviewed. The finalized draft was taken to the Board of Health for review and approval.

R R D R R R M

The Environmental Health staff conducted mosquito surveillance throughout the summer months and submitted the collected mosquitoes to the Indiana Department of Health vector laboratory for testing. The environmental health representatives collected 3,679 mosquitos, with the majority being Culex pipiens or the main host in transmitting the pathogens causing West Nile Virus and other viruses of public health importance. In total, 195 pools of mosquitoes were sent to the IDOH Vector Laboratory, and three (3) pools were positive for the presence of West Nile Virus.

M R R DR R R M

Animal Bite reports and investigations take a substantial amount of time for environmental staff in the summer months. When the tourist season brings individuals and families into the area, this also can and routinely includes their pets. Animal bite reporting and follow-up is one of the essential tasks that environmental health staff are responsible for overseeing in the Health Department. In 2024, the Health Department received 94 animal bite reports that required investigation and communication with the owner and victim of the incident.



Animal Bite reporting is important due to the danger that rabies can pose to humans and animals alike. The Health Department has the ability to send animal specimens to the State Department of Health rabies lab for testing and results. This allows the Health Department to assist community members, area veterinarians, and the Community Human Shelter of Steuben County in testing and reporting of animal bites and rabies testing. In 2024, seven (7) samples were sent to the state rabies laboratory for testing, including: three (3) dog, two (2) cat, and two (2) bats. One

bat sample sent in for testing did have a positive result as a host for the rabies virus.

Nursing

The Nursing Program is overseen by Mickinna Lothamer, BSN, RN, Director of Public Health Nursing, under the direction of Dr. Crisman. There are two additional nurses who work with Dr. Crisman and Lothamer on daily activities within the Health Department. Angie Middleton, R.N., Immunization nurse, works within the immunization clinic and oversees the administration of blood lead testing for any patients who schedule with the clinic. LaKeisha Wertz, LPN, was the STI/STD nurse in the satellite clinic on the third floor of the Community Center, performing rapid tests for HIV/Hep C as requested by patients.

MM D R R

The State of Indiana has 87 different reportable diseases that fall under the supervision of the public health nursing umbrella in the health department. In 2024, 729 cases were reported to the health department, and the table to the right indicates the highest frequency of cases. COVID-19 was removed as a disease because of the number of probable and confirmed cases at 629.

Diseases	Count
Salmonellosis	18
Shigellosis	17
Lead	12
Scarlet fever	6
Streptococcal infections	6

Throughout 2024, the nursing staff, administrator, and health officer received continuous updates from state and federal entities on diseases of public health importance: H5N1 Avian flu, Measles outbreaks in regional areas, and whooping cough or pertussis cases rising. The health department staff used this information to tailor messaging and education with the community to ensure the most accurate, up-to-date guidance was shared with local schools, businesses, and the general community.

D R R M

Angie Middleton, R.N., is the lead immunization nurse who welcomes all community members and patients into the vaccine clinic. In 2024, Nurse Middleton’s position was made full-time compared to the previous part-time schedule. This allowed the clinic to be open five (5) days a week and to strengthen partnerships with community partners like the school corporations, businesses, and nonprofits. The immunization clinic administered 1473 doses of vaccine during 2024. Specifically, 1083 vaccine doses to individuals on Medicaid and 317 programs; in comparison, the clinic administered 390 vaccine doses to individuals on Medicare, private insurance, or private pay individuals.

The nursing staff worked together on outreach events at different locations, and they have the ability to vaccinate at remote and rural locations across Steuben County. The nursing staff conducted remote vaccine clinics at the Clear Lake Beach in Clear Lake township, Salem Fire Department in Salem township, Orland American Legion in Millgrove township, and Gnagy Park in the Town of Hamilton in Otsego township. These locations were selected to meet the needs of the community members in the area who struggled to reach the Health Department in Angola. Although participation varied at the

clinics across the county, the Health Department was able to provide access and education to vaccines and reduce the risk of vaccine-preventable diseases.

D R

As a community partner in Steuben, the health department identified a shortage of STI/STD screening and treatment options that were low-cost to community members. There are options available in the community, but they are limited to certain demographics or only through a medical provider's office. The Board of Health, Health Officer, and staff were notified that community response to a newly established clinic for screening and treatment could take over 12 months for community recognition and acceptance to build. This was true in the case of the STI/STD Outreach Clinic of Steuben County. There was very low usage of the clinic's services in 2024.

Although the number of patients screened was low, the STI clinic nurse supplemented the time with outreach to different area restaurants, bars, and grocery stores to share advertisements and information so the community could gain awareness of the clinic. The nursing staff had information and advertisements at all vaccine events and partner events as well. The main message was that this service was now available and would be low-cost to patients and partners, costing \$20 at a maximum.

The administrator and nursing staff spend a substantial amount of time on the policy and procedures related to how patients would be referred to area services, strong checks and balances in the clinic space, and how to operate the clinic safely with consultation from the Indiana Department of Health, local hospital, Sheriff's Department, and Department of Child Services.

D R

The Health Department has historically had a strong relationship with area school districts in Steuben County. During 2019-2023, when the COVID-19 pandemic was at its strongest, the health department established close working ties with the different school districts to ensure an open line of communication and assistance if needed. This relationship was strengthened and made permanent by recognizing that public health played a role in the school systems and the districts would benefit from the collaboration. In 2024, the director of public health nursing was identified as the school health liaison for any collaboration on Health First Indiana initiatives.

Nurse Lothamer focused on a selection of initiatives that the school district identified for its staff and students. The initiatives that the school districts requested assistance on were education on smoking cessation, vaccinations, and stop the bleed training. The Health Department routinely provided assistance with reminder recalls and guidance on diseases of public health importance like measles, flu, and RSV.

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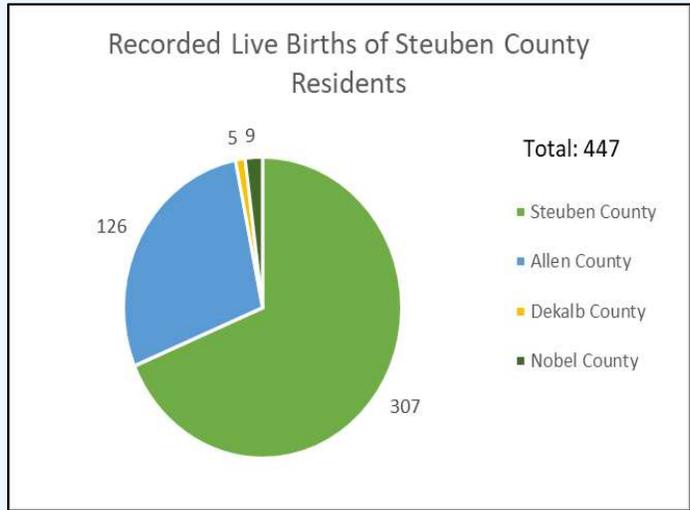
One of the most rewarding outreach events the Health Department participates in is the Fremont Youth Community Outreach food distribution. This happens each month at a local church in Fremont, IN, and is very well attended by community members. The health department uses the event to share information on resources in the community, like low/no cost health clinics, access to mental



health care, and distribution of Naloxone, the opioid reversal drug. In 2024, 153 doses were distributed to community partners and members free of charge.

Vital Statistics

The Vital Statistics or Records Program is kept busy year-round with requests for certified birth or death records, amendments, ancestral searches, or paternity affidavits. The staff who are primarily responsible for all of the work done within the Vital Records program are Stacey Sherburne and Robyn Hinman. They also act as the initial faces of the health department when customers come into the health department or call in to conduct business.



Vital Statistics of the County	
Total Number of Live Births	447
Total Number of Deaths	260
Birth Certificates Issued	1048
Death Certificates Issued	1594
Interim Death Certificates Issued	49
Paternity Affidavits Issued	5
Adoptions Processed	2
Genealogical Search	1
Seal and Release	3

Public Health Preparedness

The Health Department has participated in a yearly grant called the Public Health Emergency Preparedness grant that is administered through the Centers for Disease Control under a cooperative agreement with the Indiana Department of Health. This grant allows the health department to staff a part-time Preparedness Coordinator filled by Clayton Greenamy, Firefighter/EMT with the Northeast Allen County. His experience within the fire service and Emergency medical service, combined with his educational background in emergency management, has proved an asset in planning activities. In 2024, the main goals of the grant period were to focus on existing integrated preparedness plans, strengthening the public health workforce, and working on after-action reports from the COVID pandemic, and finally, updating training and exercise schedules for the next master grant period.



Pictured Left to Right: Alicia Walsh, Administrator, Steuben County Health Department; Lee Greenamy, Director, Steuben County Emergency Management Agency; Andy Grote, Paramedic, Chief of Operations and Training, EMS; Clayton Greenamy, PHEP Coordinator, Steuben County Health Department

In the photograph to the right, a cooperative agreement between the Steuben County Emergency Management Agency, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and the Steuben County Health Department to fund and create Rescue Taskforce bags/kits. These bags contained supplies for the area volunteer fire departments to respond to traumatic bleeding events in an effective and timely manner.

Advocacy

One important task that the administrator tackled in 2024 was speaking to the effects and impacts of the recently started Health First Indiana on local health departments. One of the largest initiatives the State of Indiana undertook was the Governor’s Public Health Commission on the conclusion of the pandemic. The report that was generated from the Commission was used to form the Health First Indiana program and to determine how local health departments would implement it at a local level.

Public Health Day at the State of Indiana Capitol building occurred on February 24th, 2024. This event was attended by Alicia Walsh, Administrator for the Steuben County Health Department, and Andy Aldred, Chief Operating Officer at Cameron Memorial Community



Hospital, to speak as part of a panel discussion during the activities. Traditionally, it is a day of advocacy and outreach to State Senators and Representatives to bring awareness to the work being done within local health departments and affiliated partners.

Health First Steuben County

The Governor’s Public Health Commission was a historic undertaking to resolve identified issues with the public health infrastructure in Indiana. The Commission’s report gave clear guidance and recommendations on foundational capabilities that all public health entities should have. The Health First Indiana legislation allowed and encouraged each county to identify issues within its jurisdiction to focus on.

R R R R 2024

In 2024, there were three main priority areas that were identified. Identification was done with consultation on the 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) by Cameron Memorial Hospital and Indiana Rural Health Association. The CHNA was utilized because it had a broad view of the needs of the community, including community partners across the county.

1. SCHOOL LIAISON – assist schools with needs assessment and provide vaccine clinics, lead testing, resources and trainings.
2. TRAUMA AND INJURY PREVENTION – offer harm reduction services and work with local mental health provider.
3. HEALTH RELATED AREAS DURING EMERGENCIES - Redo the Continuity of Operation plan for the Health Department.

The priorities identified also led to the development of key performance indicators or goals for the health department to achieve.

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The Health Department identified three KPIs to focus efforts on:

1. ***Decrease the percentage of maternal smoking during pregnancy in Steuben County from 20.9 in June of 2024 to 15% by June 1 of 2026, with quarterly reporting from Steuben County WIC on pregnancy and risk factors.***

This indicator focuses attention and efforts on the Maternal and Child health core service by reducing tobacco and nicotine usage during pregnancy and exposure to second-hand smoke in homes with newborns with their respective families. A substantial portion of this KPI is spent on referral and education on tobacco cessation and the Indiana Quit Now program that is available.

The Steuben County Office of Women, Infants, and Children collects responses related to appointments with clients and administers survey questions. The survey question about maternal smoking during pregnancy was used as a baseline data set due to easy data extraction and accessibility.

2. ***Increase the compliance rate of children under the age of 3 years old completing the recommended vaccine series (4:3:1:3:3:1:4) from 63% in 2024 to 67% by January 1 of 2026 as reported by the Immunization Division at the Indiana Department of Health for Steuben County, Indiana.***

The rate of compliance for childhood immunization is a strong indicator of how one of our most vulnerable populations, children, are protected against vaccine preventable-diseases. The State of Indiana calculates the compliance rate across all providers that provide vaccinations to children. In 2023, Steuben County had an average series completion rate of 59.80% across all four quarters. In 2024, the childhood series completion rate was 63.56% of all eligible children.

The health department planned to boost interaction with young children and potential opportunities to provide the required vaccinations with the following measures. The nursing staff aligned the immunization clinic hours to complement the evening clinic hours that Steuben County WIC was open. The staff implemented consistent messaging on vaccine education and where vaccines were available. Weekend clinics were broadcast via social media and public calendars to increase visibility and foot traffic. The Health Department nursing staff also attended many events with outreach materials and education, like fairs or open houses, to meeting community members.

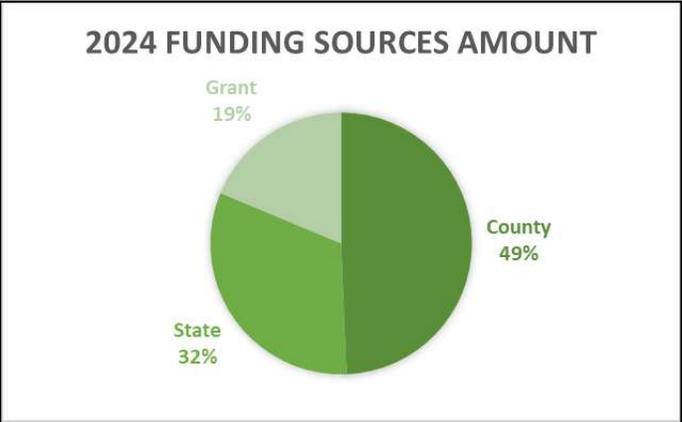
3. *Decrease the rate of suicide from 20.1 instances per 100,000 individuals to 15 per 100,000 individuals adjusted in 2030, as reported by the Indiana Department of Health in the Indiana Mortality report.*

Steuben County has a noticeably higher rate of suicide than DeKalb, Lagrange, and Noble counties when looking at the 5-year crude rate. The dataset from the Indiana Department of Health Vital Records Mortality dataset shows a crude 5-year average of 22.5 per 100,00 persons. This crude rate places Steuben County at 60th out of 70 in the State of Indiana.

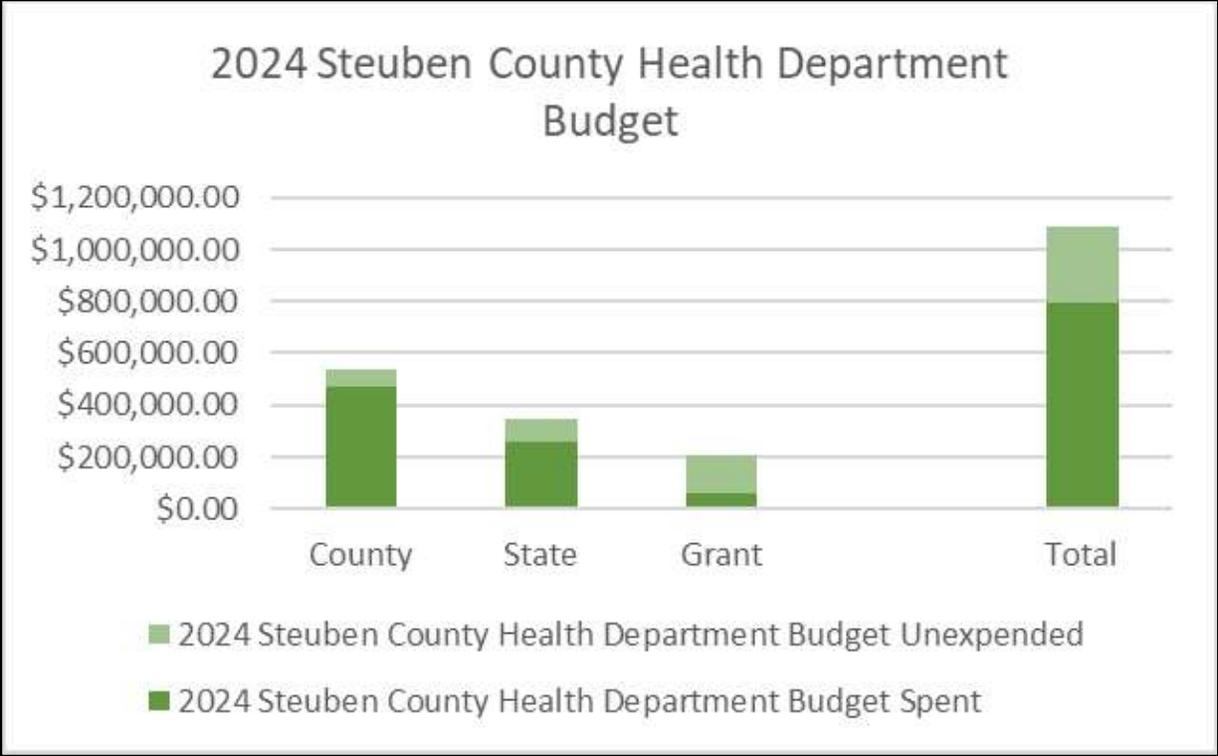
This data shows a clear problem with suicide in the county. The cause of such a high rate is not known or has not been identified. The Health Department, in an attempt to understand the background and problem surrounding suicide in Steuben County, planned and established a Suicide and Overdose Fatality Review Team. This included training and education on how SOFR teams operate and review cases with community partners such as mental health providers, coroner, schools, and funeral homes, to mention a few.

2024 Adopted Budget

The Health Department receives annual funding from three types of sources: county appropriations, the State of Indiana, and grant awards. The majority of funding is from Steuben County Government through the annual budget request and appropriations process. The health department also receives funding through the State of Indiana in the biannual state budget. This funds the Health First Indiana program and initiatives. The smallest portion of the annual operating budget is from various federal, state and local grants.



In the graph displayed to the right, the overall total of the health department’s budget was \$1,091,183.44. The County provided \$538,462.45 or 49% of the 2024 annual funding. The State of Indiana appropriated 348,509.43 or 32% of the 2024 operating budget. The final amount of \$204,211.56 reflects grants awarded to the health department for awards on different initiatives and programs.



The 2024 Budget vs. Expended in 2024

Fund 1159 Health	
Ledger	Amount
Beginning Balance	\$157,230.77
Revenue	\$507,060.39
Disbursements	\$475,070.65
Balance as of December 31, 2024	\$189,220.51
Revenue Sources	
General Property Taxes	\$415,093.53
Excise Tax	\$13,259.29
Financial Institution Tax	\$1,828.67
Commercial Vehicle Excise Tax	\$1,311.80
Department Fees	\$68,238.00
Remittance Reimbursement (Nursing)	\$7,329.10
Department Fees	
Vital Records Fees	\$21,678.00
Food Permits & Related	\$27,210.00
Onsite Sewage System Permit & Related	\$4,320.00
Well Permit	\$6,080.00
Letters of Non Objection	\$9,000.00

Fund 1161 Local Health Services	
Ledger	Amount
Beginning Balance	\$0.00
Revenue total	\$348,509.43
>Preventative Core Services (Non-Regulatory)	\$214,179.50
>Regulatory Core Services	\$134,329.93
Disbursements	\$253,762.03
Balance as of December 31, 2024	\$94,747.39

Fund 1168 Local Health Maintenance	
Ledger	Amount
Beginning Cash Balance	\$211,985.52
Revenue	\$0.00
Appropriated Budget	\$10,000.00
Disbursements	\$6,885.27
Ending Cash Balance	\$205,100.25

Fund 1206 Indiana Local Health Department Trust Account	
Ledger	Amount
Beginning Cash Balance	\$58,030.93
Appropriated Budget	\$0.00
Disbursements	\$0.00
Ending Cash Balance	\$58,030.93

Fund 7376	
Ledger	Amount
Beginning Cash Balance	\$244,355.26
Appropriated Budget	\$19,622.45
Disbursements	\$0.00
Ending Cash Balance	\$244,355.26