

Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Department Overview

Divisions within PHSS:

Community Wellness Division
Maternal and Child Health Division
Disease Control and Prevention Division
COVID-19 Incident Management Team
Environmental Health Division
Vital Services Division
Office of Housing and Homeless Prevention
Treatment Sales Tax Office

Community Wellness Division builds community health and well-being, with a particular focus on children, families, and vulnerable individuals.

● **Community Engagement, Evidence, and Partnerships (CEEP) includes:**

- Thurston Thrives, a public-private community health initiative focused on improving social determinants of health through collective impact. CEEP provides leadership, support, and funding to Thurston Thrives and its eight action teams.
- Chronic disease prevention & management (e.g., asthma, obesity, heart disease, diabetes)
- Children’s oral health
- Tobacco, alcohol, vaping, and substance use prevention programs, including those with an emphasis on youth
- Community & school partnerships, such as healthy lunchrooms and community gardens, which promote healthy eating, physical activity, and safe routes to school
- Community events and campaigns focused on education, outreach, and prevention to promote public health awareness
- Healthy Homes and other programs that reduce exposure to toxins and hazardous materials
- Women’s Health Coalition support and breastfeeding promotion
- Community-level data, evaluation, information sharing to support good decisions, policies, and practices

● **Social Services**

- Veterans’ Assistance Fund and Programs provide financial assistance and support services to military veterans and their families.
- Developmental Disabilities supports youth and adults with developmental disabilities with multi-county employment opportunities, high school transition, training programs, and other services through funding and partnerships.
- Specialized Recreation provides social connections, support, and recreational activities for adults with disabilities

Maternal and Child Health Division

- The Nurse-Family Partnership Program is an evidence-based community health program that pairs nurses with high-risk pregnant and parenting mothers to improve birth outcomes, child health and development, and economic stability.
- Children with Special Health Care Needs provides advocacy, education, support, and connection with resources for families who have a child with special needs.
- Child Death Review Prevention Program reviews child fatalities, collects data, and convenes a team of experts and community partners to prevent child deaths and improve health and safety for all children.

Disease Control and Prevention Division provides surveillance, investigation, follow-up, and control of reportable notifiable conditions (emerging threats, outbreaks, sexually transmitted illnesses, vaccine preventable diseases, food borne illnesses, tuberculosis, etc.), works to increase community immunization rates, and provides comprehensive harm reduction services focused on the prevention of disease transmission.

- The Syringe Service Program provides: a one-for-one exchange for sterile needles, syringes, and injection equipment; containers for safe disposal of needles and syringes; referral to substance use disorder treatment such as medication-assisted treatment; education about overdose prevention and safer injection practices; naloxone kits to block or reverse effects of opioid medication and prevent death; referral to medical, mental health, and social services; and tools to prevent HIV, sexually transmitted illnesses, and viral hepatitis, such as counseling and condoms. The Syringe Service Program operates both fixed and mobile sites.
 - Opioid Response provides coordination, data, public information, and leadership to the Thurston County Opioid Task Force and advances Thurston County policies and strategies that responds to the declared public health emergency and works with other stakeholders to prevent and reduce opioid use disorders and the prevalence of opioid overdoses in Thurston County.
- Investigation and Control of Disease collects data to identify and control sources of infection, describe disease trends, and prevent spread of disease. Provides active tuberculosis treatment and management. Works to control, prevent, and intervene in the spread of disease by investigating, conducting follow-up, and instituting prevention and intervention measures when reports about diseases of public health concern are received from health care providers, schools, and the public.

COVID-19 Incident Management Team provides emergency response coordination for the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff assigned to the IMT investigate, control, and prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 as a component of our county-wide strategies which include testing, vaccinations, quarantine and isolation, investigation/contact tracing, etc. The IMT has been activated continuously since March 2020 and is expected to continue until the public health emergency is declared over. We expect the response work to extend for the next biennium and due to the large number of staff, programs, and activities.

Environmental Health Division protects public health and ensures the environment contributes to the health of the community through programs and services as mandated by state law and county codes, including:

- Food safety permits and inspections
- Ground and surface water monitoring and protection
- On-site sewage system permitting and management
- Solid and hazardous waste permitting and management
- Thurston County Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program administration
- School safety consultations and inspections
- Swimming pool and spa permitting and inspections
- Vector response and consulting (e.g., bats, animal bites, mosquitos)
- Lake and beach safety
- Noise reduction
- Registering and inspecting gravel mines

Vital Services Division provides the public and department with information, financial accountability, and other foundational services and core capabilities necessary for successful and emergency operations.

- Vital Records issues birth certificates for those born in Washington State with birth dates from July 1, 1907 to present and death certificates for deaths that occurred in Thurston County from January 1, 2008 to present. Authority is granted in RCW 70.58.030.
- Emergency Preparedness and Response provides planning and response activities that support the complex challenges that arise in a public health emergency. The program continually plans to anticipate and mitigate health risks from the impact of such an emergency on the community.
- Administrative Services assists in developing and overseeing administrative support operations, leadership, infrastructure, records management, information technology, policies and procedures, travel, supplies, contract/grant management, human resources, customer service, and facility maintenance.
- Fiscal Services provides sound financial management, practices, and accountability for funds entrusted to the department. This work includes ensuring that customers and staff are paid, funding partners are billed, deposits are completed, and all fiscal activity is in conformity with county, state, and/or federal regulations.

Office of Housing and Homeless Prevention provides leadership and opportunities in the community to create safe, affordable housing and works together with public and private partners to prevent, reduce, respond to, and end the declared public health emergency of homelessness in Thurston County. This office manages state and federal contracts and local recording surcharge funds designated for affordable and homeless housing and serves as a regional coordinator and leader on behalf of Thurston County.

Treatment Sales Tax Office promotes expanded access to mental health and substance use disorder treatment and related services by funding programs in the following areas:

- Therapeutic courts, such as Drug Court, DUI Court, Mental Health Court, and Veterans Court
- Behavioral health programs for adults, with a focus on individuals involved in the justice system
- Behavioral health services and supports for children and families