

FY 2026-27 Budget Briefing Summary

Public Health and Environment (Health Divisions)

The Department of Public Health and Environment is responsible for protecting and improving the health of the people of Colorado and ensuring the quality of Colorado's environment. The Department's FY 2025-26 appropriation represents approximately 1.9 percent of statewide operating appropriations and 0.8 percent of statewide General Fund appropriations.

The divisions included in this document are the Center for Health and Environmental Data, the Division of Disease Control and Public Health Response, the Office of HIV/Viral Hepatitis/STI's, the Prevention Services Division, and Health Facilities and Emergency Medical Services Division.

Summary of Request

Department of Public Health and Environment

Item	Total Funds	General Fund [1]	Cash Funds	Reapprop. Funds	Federal Funds	FTE
FY 2025-26 Appropriation						
SB 25-206 (Long Bill)	\$865,843,328	\$140,447,999	\$337,516,417	\$63,464,208	\$324,414,704	1,831.9
Other Legislation	2,926,011	-405,406	3,331,417	0	0	21.7
Total	\$868,769,339	\$140,042,593	\$340,847,834	\$63,464,208	\$324,414,704	1,853.6
FY 2026-27 Requested Appropriation						
FY 2025-26 Appropriation	\$868,769,339	\$140,042,593	\$340,847,834	\$63,464,208	\$324,414,704	1,853.6
R1 Laboratory renewal [2]	5,039,850	4,889,850	150,000	0	0	27.8
R2 Clean water in schools	-1,099,600	-1,099,600	0	0	0	0.0
R3 Closed landfill remed grant spend	5,079,079	0	5,079,079	0	0	0.0
R4 Eliminate comprehensive sex ed [2]	-1,010,453	-1,010,453	0	0	0	-1.3
R5 Reduce mental health first aid [2]	-210,000	-210,000	0	0	0	0.0
R6 Eliminate community behavioral health disaster program [2]	-592,345	-592,345	0	0	0	-2.0
R7 Eliminate CARE network [2]	-927,020	-927,020	0	0	0	-0.4
R8/S2 Reduce health disparities grants [2]	-2,500,000	-2,500,000	0	0	0	0.0
R9/S3 Reduce LPHA distributions [2]	-3,300,000	-3,300,000	0	0	0	0.0
Impacts driven by other agencies	257,424	29,857	-18,219	245,786	0	1.8
Employee compensation common policies	13,218,508	1,057,677	8,159,172	1,362,909	2,638,750	0.0
Technical adjustments	6,344,021	0	6,344,021	0	0	2.8
Operating common policies	602,906	819,314	343,575	-592,572	32,589	0.0
Prior year actions	-3,162,903	-695,389	-248,988	0	-2,218,526	-1.2
Total	\$886,508,806	\$136,504,484	\$360,656,474	\$64,480,331	\$324,867,517	1,881.1
Increase/-Decrease	\$17,739,467	-\$3,538,109	\$19,808,640	\$1,016,123	\$452,813	27.5
Percentage Change	2.0%	-2.5%	5.8%	1.6%	0.1%	1.5%

[1] Includes General Fund Exempt.

[2] Items addressed in this document. Other requests will be addressed in separate staff briefings.

Changes are assumed to be ongoing unless otherwise noted.

R1 Laboratory renewal: The Department asks to expand on its November 1331 request and increase support for the state laboratory through increased staffing, supplies, equipment, technology, a quality assurance contractor.

Year 1: The total cost is \$5.0 million and 27.8 FTE. This includes \$4.9 million General Fund and \$150,000 from the Laboratory Cash Fund.

Year 2: The total cost reduce to \$4.5 million and 27.8 FTE. This includes \$4.4 million General Fund and \$150,000 from the Laboratory Cash Fund.

The request includes the following:

- \$1.5 million and 10.0 FTE for new staff
- \$1.9 million and 17.8 FTE for existing staff that are funded with expiring COVID-19 and other federal funds
- \$500,000 for operating expenses including supplies for outbreak response and technology costs
- \$500,000 for an instrument replacement fund
- \$575,000 (one-time) for a quality assurance contractor to address recent audit findings about the lab's lack of adequate quality management procedures

R4 Eliminate comprehensive sexual education [legislation]: The Department asks to eliminate funding for the Comprehensive Sexual Education Grant Program.

Year 1: The total reduction is \$1.0 million General Fund and 1.3 FTE.

The grant program, created in H.B. 19-1032 (Comprehensive Human Sexuality Education), funds schools and school districts to provide research-based education on topics like anatomy, puberty, healthy relationships, consent, and sexually transmitted infections. As outlined in the program's annual report, in FY 2023-24, 79 schools received grant funding and 11,818 students received comprehensive sexual education. The Department has noted that the program is evidence-informed.

R5 Reduce mental health first aid: The Department asks to reduce funding for Mental Health First Aid training.

Year 1: The total reduction is \$210,000 General Fund.

The reduction is 45.6 percent of the total General Fund appropriation for Mental Health First Aid training, which prepares individuals to recognize and respond to suicide warning signs. The Department contracts with a statewide organization to provide this training at no cost to community members and educators. They have indicated that this is unlikely to significantly disrupt the Office of Suicide Prevention's strategies and coordination. The Department has noted that the program is evidence-informed.

R6 Eliminate community behavioral health disaster program [legislation]: The Department asks to eliminate funding for the Community Behavioral Health Disaster Program.

Year 1: The total reduction is \$592,345 General Fund and 2.0 FTE.

The program, created in H.B. 21-1281 (Community Behavioral Health Disaster Program), funds community behavioral health organizations to integrate behavioral health into emergency preparedness and response planning. It was informed by findings from the Department of Human Services Behavioral Health Task Force in 2020 that investigated the behavioral health impacts of the pandemic. The Department indicates that the reduction is anticipated to have minimal adverse impact on core functions. The Department has noted that the program is evidence-informed.

R7 Eliminate CARE network [legislation]: The Department asks to eliminate funding for the Child Abuse Response and Evaluation (CARE) Network.

Year 1: The total reduction is \$592,345 General Fund and 2.0 FTE.

Created through H.B. 19-1133 (Colorado Child Abuse Response and Evaluation Network), the network serves as a resource center for training, mentorship, consultation, streamlined referrals, and reimbursements to improve medical exams for children who are subject to abuse or neglect. The Department contracts with the Kempe Center to perform this work, and notes that it anticipates reduced programming as a result of the reduction. The Department has noted that the program is evidence-informed.

R8/S2 Reduce health disparities grants [legislation]: The Department asks to reduce funding for the Health Disparities and Community Grant Program and to reduce costs by amending statute to remove the requirement for a third-party evaluation of the program.

Current year: The total reduction is \$837,267 General Fund.

Year 1: The reduction increases to \$2,500,000 General Fund in future years.

The reduction represents a 53.2 percent decrease to the program’s General Fund appropriation. The program aims to reduce the risk of disease and health disparities in underrepresented populations. Grantees include local public health departments, non-profits, a food bank, health clinic, and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. The program is funded by General Fund (initiated through S.B. 21-181) and 2.4 percent of Amendment 35 tax revenues.

R9/S3 Reduce LPHA distributions [legislation]: The Department asks to reduce funding for Local Public Health Agency (LPHA) distributions.

Current year: The total reduction is \$3,000,000 General Fund.

Year 1: The reduction increases to \$3,300,000 General Fund in future years.

This request includes an ongoing cut of 17.5 percent for distributions to LPHAs for Local Planning and Support Dollars (\$2,970,000) and for environmental health services (\$330,000). These are the same fund sources that received an additional \$11.0 million in FY 24-25 and ongoing after the expiration of COVID-19 funds from S.B. 21-243. The distribution is the Department’s largest single General Fund appropriation.

Impacts driven by other agencies: The request includes a net increase of \$257,424 total funds, including \$29,857 General Fund, for requests from other state agencies. These are also called “non-prioritized requests.”

Impacts driven by other agencies

Item	Total Funds	General Fund	Cash Funds	Reapprop. Funds	Federal Funds	FTE
NP IT accessibility	\$257,630	\$0	\$0	\$257,630	\$0	0.9
Statewide R7 MTCF balancing	200,000	0	200,000	0	0	0.0
NP8 SB24-205 AI compliance	133,760	133,760	0	0	0	0.9
NP State accounting system (CORE) staff	65,451	65,451	0	0	0	0.0
NP4 SB24-205 AI compliance	52,725	22,356	28,806	1,563	0	0.0
NP Statewide enable AI	26,458	11,218	14,455	785	0	0.0
NP IT operating offset	-349,891	-148,355	-191,161	-10,375	0	0.0
NP IT efficiencies	-128,709	-54,573	-70,319	-3,817	0	0.0
Total	\$257,424	\$29,857	-\$18,219	\$245,786	\$0	1.8

The amount shown in the table above applies only to this department and does not necessarily reflect the total value of the request. One item (highlighted) is specifically relevant to public health divisions, and includes an increase of \$200,000 from the Marijuana Tax Cash Fund for the Department’s Retail Marijuana Education Program.

Employee compensation common policies: The request includes a net increase of \$13.2 million total funds, including \$1.1 million General Fund, for employee compensation common policies. A common policy refers to general policies applied consistently to all departments. These items will be described in more detail in Andrew McLeer’s briefing this afternoon that includes the Executive Director’s Office.

Technical adjustments: The request includes a net increase of \$6.3 million cash funds to accommodate for the increased revenue to tobacco education programs as a result of Proposition EE and for the CERCLA costs within the Department of Law.

Technical adjustments

Item	Total Funds	General Fund	Cash Funds	FTE
Admin and FTE adjust for tobacco ed	\$6,223,809	\$0	\$6,223,809	2.8
Transfer to Dept of Law for CERCLA costs	120,212	0	120,212	0.0
Total	\$6,344,021	\$0	\$6,344,021	2.8

Operating common policies: The request includes a net increase of \$602,906 total funds, including 819,314 General Fund, for operating common policies. These items will be described in more detail in Andrew McLeer’s briefing this afternoon that includes the Executive Director’s Office.

Prior year actions: The request includes a net decrease of \$3.2 million total funds, including \$695,389 General Fund, for the impact of prior year budget decisions and legislation. Items highlighted in blue pertain to public health divisions.

Prior year actions

Item	Total Funds	General Fund	Cash Funds	Reapprop. Funds	Federal Funds	FTE
FY 24-25 R10 HB 23-1257 implement savings	\$1,141,880	\$1,141,880	0	0	0	0.0
SB 25-285 Update food inspect fees	346,677	0	\$346,677	\$0	\$0	0.0
FY 24-25 R3 HB 24-1417 Health facility funding	313,402	-167,630	481,032	0	0	0.0
HB 21-1286 Energy perform. for bldgs	194,564	194,564	0	0	0	1.8
HB 24-1379 Reg dredge & fill	104,585	-370,921	475,506	0	0	0.0
SB 25-130 Providing EMS	98,070	0	98,070	0	0	0.3
SB 25-008 Adj. necessary doc storage	48,945	48,945	0	0	0	0.3
FY 23-24 R15 DETC lease space	1,522	0	1,522	0	0	0.0
FY 25-26 Salary survey	-2,091,348	0	-18,525	0	-2,072,823	0.0
FY 24-25 BA1 Closed landfills	-1,608,270	0	-1,608,270	0	0	0.0
HB 24-1338 Cumulative impacts env. just.	-1,297,241	-1,297,241	0	0	0	-3.0
HB 23-1213 Stop the Bleed	-156,045	-156,045	0	0	0	-0.1
FY 25-26 Step Plan	-145,703	0	0	0	-145,703	0.0
HB 24-1262 Maternal health midwives	-43,063	-43,063	0	0	0	-0.5
HB 25-1082 Qualified individuals death certificates	-25,000	0	-25,000	0	0	0.0
SB 24-142 School oral health screenings	-23,846	-23,846	0	0	0	0.0
SB 24-037 Study grn. infrastr. for water qual.	-22,032	-22,032	0	0	0	0.0
Total	-\$3,162,903	-\$695,389	-\$248,988	\$0	-\$2,218,526	-1.2

Issues Presented

This is a summary of the briefing issues presented to the Joint Budget Committee by their dedicated non-partisan staff.

Budget Reduction Options: The Executive Budget Request includes reductions of \$8.5 million General Fund for the Department's public health divisions. The reduction represents 12.6 percent of the current General Fund appropriations in this section of the budget.¹ These reductions are offset by proposed increases of \$4.9 million, so that the divisions' total General Fund is requested to decrease by 5.4 percent. This issue brief reviews these proposals and additional options identified by staff.

Health Facility Program Solvency and Performance Audit: The Office of the State Auditor recently completed a performance audit of the Health Facility Licensing Program. This issue brief details the program's recent budgetary changes as well as findings from the August 2025 audit.

For More Information

JBC Staff Analyst:

Kelly Shen
(303) 866-5434
kelly.shen@coleg.gov

To read the entire briefing: Go to leg.colorado.gov/content/budget/budget-documents to use the budget document search tool. Select this department's name under Department/Topic, "Briefing" under Type, and select a Start date and End date to show documents released in November and December of 2025.

¹ Current FY 2025-26 appropriations do not include mid-year reductions in executive orders.