



# Department of Health Strategic Plan 2024-2029: Year 2 Report

March 2026

**HealthVermont.gov**  
802-863-7200

 **VERMONT**  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

## Introduction

The Department of Health Strategic Plan is a five-year roadmap for improving internal systems and functions that are critical to our ability to promote the health and well-being of people in Vermont. This report is the second annual update about efforts to achieve the goals of the Strategic Plan. You can also track our performance on key measures in this [Scorecard](#).

If you need help accessing or understanding this information, contact [katie.stetler@vermont.gov](mailto:katie.stetler@vermont.gov).

### Vision

All people and communities in Vermont have equitable opportunities to achieve their highest level of health and well-being.



### Mission

Promote the physical, mental, and social well-being of people in Vermont by advancing equity, protecting against disease and injury, and preparing for health emergencies.

### Values

Equity • Collaboration • Inclusion • Harmony • Data



### Strategic Goals

Foster an inclusive workplace culture that promotes employee well-being and satisfaction.

Ensure the capacity to build, restore and sustain trusting relationships with communities and partners.

Increase data accessibility, equitable data collection, and meaningful analysis.

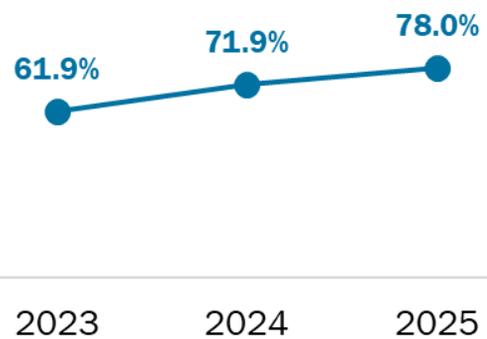
Increase capacity of the department to adapt and respond to the threat of climate change.

# Goal: Foster an inclusive workplace culture that promotes employee well-being and satisfaction.

## Successes

- Established a peer support team to reduce the stigma of help-seeking by offering immediate emotional support from trusted peers with similar lived experiences.
- Offered supervisors training on supporting staff with psychiatric disabilities, container building, active listening, InvestEAP resources, and supporting staff who are navigating grief.
- Created the Cross-Division Worksite Wellness Committee. The primary activity of this committee is publishing a weekly roundup of positive news, activities, and resources.
- Created or expanded resources to support staff managing the employee lifecycle, such as the Recruiting & Hiring Guide, Hire Into Range Template, Job Requisition Template, and Separation & Offboarding Guide.
- Developed new pages and refreshed resources about working in a digital workspace, including a form to request support from the Operations Team.

**An increasing percentage of VDH staff agree that management demonstrates a commitment to meeting the needs of all employees.**



Source: Employee Engagement Survey

## Plans for the Coming Year

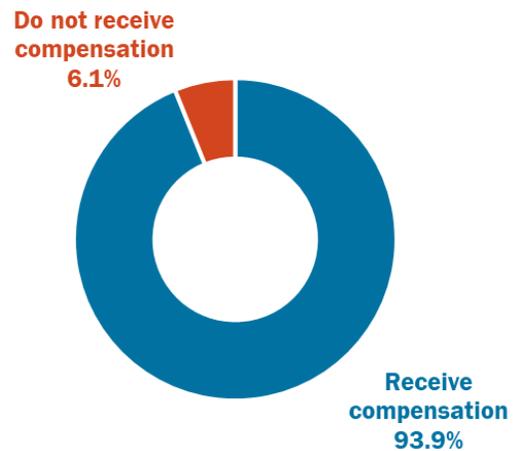
- Conduct rapid continuous improvement cycles to improve efficiency of the recruitment and hiring process.
- Develop a process for conducting “Stay Interviews” (based on a pilot with the Division of Substance Use) and implement the process across the department.
- Provide ongoing education on topics related to psychological safety, including taking professional risks, speaking up, and exposing issues or problems.
- Offer professional development opportunities for staff related to mapping their career development.
- Begin improvements to our internship processes, procedures, and policies.

## Goal: Ensure the capacity to build, restore and sustain trusting relationships with communities and partners.

### Successes

- Hosted roundtable discussions with seven community organizations to receive feedback and recommendations on implementation of the Strategic Plan.
- Began facilitating a community engagement Community of Practice across state government using the Department's [Community Engagement Guide](#) as a foundation for learning and discussion.
- Released the Subrecipient Grant Issuance and Monitoring Procedure to clarify and standardize this process across divisions.
- Developed an inventory of VDH grantees to support internal coordination and collaboration with community organizations.
- Provided training and technical assistance for staff on how to make our documents accessible, focusing on one skill at a time (e.g., setting file properties, alt text).
- Published guidance for staff about why and when it is necessary to translate information, and the steps in the translation process.

**Most eligible community members who sit on VDH committees are compensated for their time and expertise.**



Source: Committees & Workgroups List

### Plans for the Coming Year

- Implement a survey to ask community partners about how well relationships with the district offices are functioning to meet community needs.
- Meet biannually with community partners to review and advise on implementation of the Strategic Plan, improve transparency, and strengthen relationships.
- Establish a Grant Manager University to provide more formal training for grant/program managers and division administrators.
- Ensure the department complies with federal requirements regarding accessibility of our digital communications (e.g., documents on HealthVermont.gov, social media).

## Goal: Increase data accessibility, equitable data collection, and meaningful analysis.

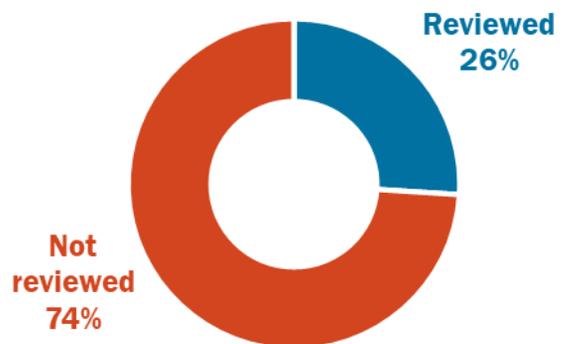
### Successes

- Published an [A-Z Data Library](#) on HealthVermont.gov that acts as the website's landing page for people seeking Health Department data.
- Updated the [Data Encyclopedia](#), a catalog of data sources and resources available through the Department. Among other uses, it describes the key health equity and social determinants of health indicators that are collected in each data source.
- Created a tip sheet for analysts about reporting small numbers in data briefs and reports (due to the size of the Vermont population, we cannot always report data disaggregated by geography or demographics). The tip sheet includes language about how to talk to the public about when and why this happens.
- Offered training and technical assistance to staff on using the new data visualization templates, leading to the creation of more accessible data products and quicker review processes.
- Began meeting with each district office to understand their data needs and the data needs of community partners to better provide technical and analytic support.

### Plans for the Coming Year

- Continue to provide tools and training for staff to ensure our data products meet accessibility standards, such as building dashboards, designing tables and charts, and the outputs of statistical programming (e.g., R, SAS).
- Design training for staff in equitable data methodology, interpretation, and communication.
- Leverage data governance workgroups to modernize the department's approach to data collection, storage and dissemination and increase transparency in how to access Health Department data sets.

**About one quarter of dashboards have been reviewed for compliance with accessibility standards.**



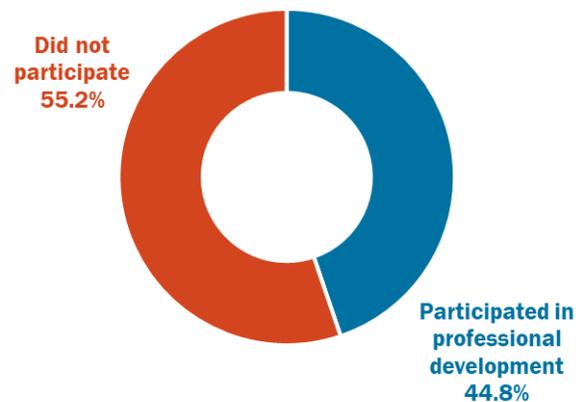
Source: GIS and Data Visualization Inventory

## Goal: Increase the capacity of the department to adapt and respond to the threat of climate change.

### Successes

- Created a framework for understanding [the indirect impacts of climate change on public health](#), as part of Vermont’s 2025 Climate Action Plan.
- Hosted the inaugural Dr. Levine Speaker Series on Climate and Health with 186 attendees.
- Completed a Hot Weather Response Plan for the Health Department.
- Published heat safety guidance for [caregivers](#), people with [diabetes](#), [children](#) and [older Vermonters](#).

**In 2025, nearly half of staff participated in professional development opportunities about climate and health.**



### Plans for the Coming Year

Source: Meeting attendance records

- Establish a dedicated HIVE (intranet) page about climate and health to highlight learning opportunities, tools, and resources for staff.
- Convene a Climate Health Interest Group to meet regularly to talk about how to leverage the work of different divisions and programs to adapt and respond to the threat of climate change.
- Support divisions and offices across the Department to complete an assessment of climate-related impacts on their operations, program/service delivery, and populations served.