

Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health Strategic Plan 2025–2028



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health

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This plan was facilitated and led by Renae Moch, MBA, FACMPE, Public Health Director for Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health, with input from staff, partners, and community stakeholders.

Letter from the Director

I am proud to present the 2025–2028 Strategic Plan for Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health (BBPH). This plan reflects our continued commitment to protecting and improving the health of all who live, work, and visit our community and our readiness to meet ongoing and emerging challenges head-on.

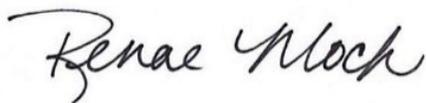
In recent years, BBPH has navigated a shifting landscape of public health needs. From infectious disease outbreaks to behavioral health concerns, housing instability, and growing service demands, we have adapted and responded with determination and purpose. Through it all, our team has remained focused on delivering high-quality services, expanding partnerships, and finding innovative ways to reach individuals who need support.

This strategic plan was shaped by local data, community input, and our internal reflections. It outlines strategic focus areas for the coming years: behavioral health, healthy living, access to healthcare, and preparedness and public safety. These priorities guide our work and remind us that improving health requires more than just clinical care, it requires understanding the everyday realities that shape people’s overall health and well-being.

As we move forward, our work will remain centered on people. That means strengthening relationships, delivering services that are respectful, welcoming, and ensuring that programs are accessible to everyone. It means creating an environment where our staff are supported, and our partnerships are strong.

Thank you to the BBPH team, our community partners, and all who contributed to the development of this plan. Your voices and insights will help shape a healthier future for our community. Together, we will continue to build a strong, responsive public health system that improves lives and strengthens our community.

Sincerely,



Renae Moch, MBA, FACMPE
Public Health Director

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Our Foundation

Our Service Area

Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health (BBPH) serves the City of Bismarck and all of Burleigh County, North Dakota. Bismarck, the state capital and county seat, is the second-largest city in the state and a key economic hub for the south-central region. The area continues to experience steady growth, with Burleigh County’s population rising from 98,458 in 2020 to an estimated 103,107 in 2024.

Bismarck’s economy is anchored by healthcare, government, retail, and education, and the region hosts several higher education institutions, including Bismarck State College, the University of Mary, North Dakota State University School of Nursing, and United Tribes Technical College. Burleigh County is also home to major state government operations and correctional facilities, including the North Dakota State Penitentiary and the Burleigh-Morton Detention Center.

Our Agency

Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health (BBPH) operates as a department of the City of Bismarck and provides comprehensive public health services through the following sections: Administration, Health Services, Health Maintenance, Health Promotion & Nutrition Services, Environmental Health, Emergency Preparedness and Response, Substance Abuse Prevention, Women’s Way/Ryan White Programs, and the Business Office. Burleigh County contracts with the City of Bismarck to deliver these services to residents countywide.

Our team of dedicated public health professionals works to protect and improve the health of all who live, work, and visit Bismarck and Burleigh County. We focus on preventing the spread of infectious and foodborne diseases, promoting preventive care, and encouraging healthy living for individuals and families. BBPH also safeguards the community by preparing for and responding to natural disasters, public health emergencies, and environmental hazards.

In addition to direct services, BBPH plays a critical role in shaping policies, setting standards, and building partnerships to address the evolving health challenges of our community. Through prevention, protection, and policy, we strive to create a healthier, safer, and more resilient community for everyone.

Our Mission

Dedicated to improving the health and safety of our community.

Our Vision

Optimal health in a thriving community.

Our Values & Guiding Principles (WE CARE)

Our values and guiding principles reflect the foundation for how we work and the impact we strive to achieve. These principles guide our decision-making, shape our partnerships and ensure our work remains focused on building a healthier, safer, and more resilient community.

W ell-being	We promote healthy living and environments through all stages of life.
E mpowerment	We educate and empower individuals to make informed decisions to live healthier lives.
C ollaboration	We collaborate across sectors to develop solutions that improve community health.
A dvocacy	We advocate for policies and practices that remove barriers so everyone can thrive.
R esilience	We build resilient communities by protecting the health and safety of those we serve.
E ngagement	We engage the community to create opportunities for health and well-being for all.



Our Framework

Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health’s 2025–2028 Strategic Plan is grounded in a strong, data-driven framework that combines national public health standards, local assessment findings, and a focus on removing barriers to health care. This approach ensures our priorities are responsive to community needs, aligned with proven public health practices, and adaptable to emerging challenges.

Community Health Needs Assessment

In 2024, Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health partnered with Western Plains Public Health, CHI St. Alexius Health, and Sanford Health to conduct a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) for Burleigh and Morton Counties. Supported by the North Dakota State University Center for Social Research, the CHNA combined community and stakeholder surveys, secondary data analysis, and asset mapping to identify key health concerns and guide collaborative improvement strategies.

More than 1,100 residents participated in the survey, with intentional outreach to underserved populations, and over 70 community stakeholders contributed their perspectives. The top community concerns identified included:

1. **Mental and Behavioral Health:** High need for behavioral health services, addiction treatment, and early intervention.
2. **Affordable, Safe, and Accessible Housing:** Increased housing costs with limited affordability for families and seniors.
3. **Access to Affordable Healthcare:** High cost of healthcare, insurance barriers, and gaps in preventive services.
4. **Quality Childcare:** Limited availability, high costs, and capacity constraints.
5. **Public Transportation:** Limited routes, inconvenient schedules, and cost creating barriers to care and services.

Additional concerns included the need for 24/7 low-barrier emergency shelter, availability of long-term senior care, limited social/medical detoxification services, healthy living and aging initiatives, access to specialty healthcare, and expanded residential support services. Stakeholders prioritized Mental and Behavioral Health as the most urgent need, citing the impact of substance use on emergency services, the link between mental health and housing instability, and the influence of financial strain and other social determinants of health.

The CHNA informed the 2025–2028 Strategic Plan, ensuring BBPH’s priorities reflect the needs and voices of the community while leveraging existing capacity and partnerships.

Essential Services and Core Functions

Our work is guided by the nationally recognized Ten Essential Public Health Services, which define the activities necessary to protect and promote community health, and the Three Core Functions of Public Health: Assessment, Policy Development, and Assurance. These principles help determine our areas of focus, direct resource allocation, and ensure accountability to the populations we serve. We place an emphasis on removing barriers to health, ensuring our strategies address root causes, improve access, and support better outcomes for all residents.

Healthy People 2030

Our priorities align with the objectives of Healthy People 2030, the nation’s blueprint for improving health and well-being. By aligning local goals with these evidence-based national objectives, BBPH ensures our work is comparable to national benchmarks, supports federal and state grant alignment, and focuses on measurable outcomes in areas such as mental health, housing stability, access to care, and health literacy.

Social Determinants of Health

Public health outcomes are shaped not only by access to healthcare, but also by the conditions in which people live, learn, work, and play. Social Determinants of Health (SDOH), such as access to safe housing, reliable transportation, quality education, job opportunities, nutritious foods, and protection from violence, have a profound impact on well-being.

Addressing SDOH is essential to reducing gaps in health outcomes. BBPH works alongside community partners and policymakers to improve these conditions, recognizing that promoting healthy choices alone will not eliminate disparities. By improving the environments where people live and work, we create a stronger foundation for lasting health improvements.



Our SWOC Analysis Summary

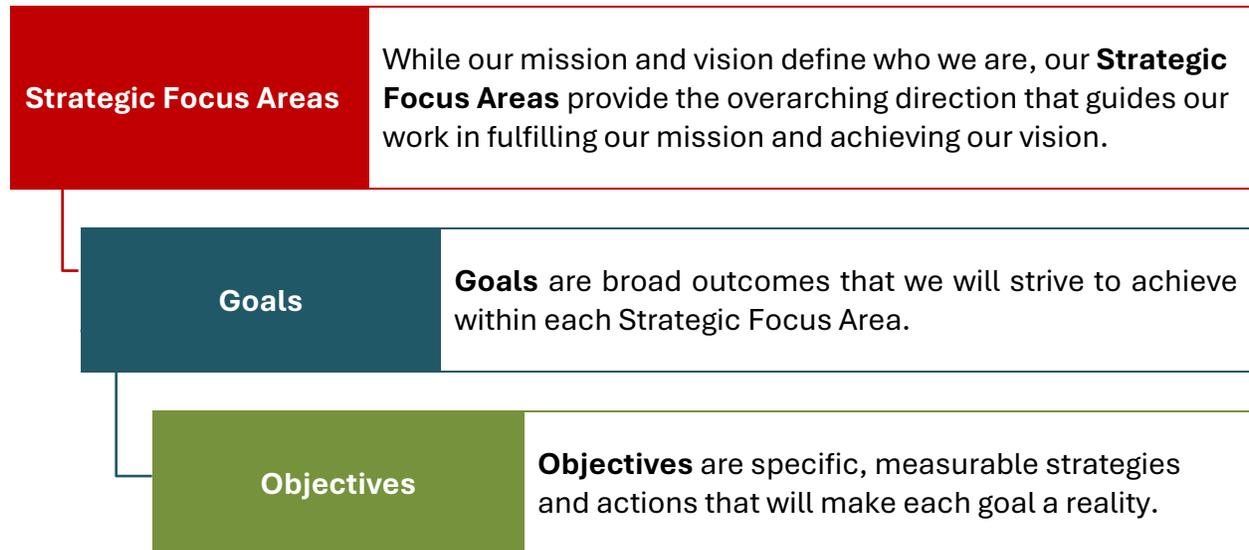
As part of the strategic planning process, participants assessed the organization’s Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges (SWOC). This analysis provided a clear picture of BBPH’s current capacity, the environment in which we operate, and the factors that will influence our ability to achieve strategic priorities over the next three years.

The SWOC analysis confirms BBPH’s strong foundation in public health expertise, partnerships, and community trust, while acknowledging workforce limitations, infrastructure needs, and a challenging external environment. The insights gained from this process inform strategic priorities that build on strengths, address weaknesses, capitalize on opportunities, and mitigate challenges ensuring BBPH remains responsive, resilient, and effective in protecting and promoting the health our community.

SWOC ANALYSIS	
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong public health programs and service delivery models • Rapid infectious disease responsiveness • Innovative home-based care models • Cross-sector and community partnerships that drive results • Successful grant writing • Adaptable, community-focused service delivery • Proven ability to address social determinants of health • Robust community outreach and education strategies • Dedicated and skilled public health workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce capacity limitations • Staff burnout, fatigue • Demand to deliver more services with fewer resources • Complex partnership structures require ongoing coordination • Gaps in behavioral health crisis infrastructure • Persistent transportation barriers to care • Increasing complexity of client and social health needs
OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage community in planning & policy advocacy • Explore creative, sustainable local funding strategies • Strengthen public trust and strategic partnerships • Enhance workforce training, recruitment, & retention • Strengthen integrated systems to address social determinants of health • Advance data modernization and technology integration • Expand on innovative models of service delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instability of federal and state funding streams • Increased demand for mental health and substance use services • Transportation access gaps • Navigating diverse expectations with department capacity • Shifting political and policy dynamics • Fragmented or siloed social health systems • Overlapping crises stretching public health infrastructure • Persistent financial barriers to care despite health insurance coverage • Workforce shortages in health occupations

Our Terminology

To ensure clarity and consistency throughout this strategic plan, we've used the following terms to describe the structure of our work:



Our Strategic Focus Areas

Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health has chosen to include the following Strategic Focus Areas in our 2025-2028 Strategic Plan:

Strategic Focus Area 1:	▪ Behavioral Health
Strategic Focus Area 2:	▪ Healthy Living
Strategic Focus Area 3:	▪ Access to Healthcare
Strategic Focus Area 4:	▪ Preparedness and Public Safety

These focus areas align with BBPH's mission, vision, values, guiding principles, and the core functions of public health. They reflect the most pressing needs identified through local data, community input, and our Community Health Needs Assessment.

Goals and objectives within each focus area will direct our work, guide resource allocation, and measure progress toward improving the health and wellness of all residents.

It is important to note that this plan does not capture every program, service, or activity of BBPH. Some initiatives operate under separate work plans, goals, and objectives defined through grants and contractual agreements, which are evaluated independently from this strategic plan.

Our Goals & Objectives

Strategic Focus Area 1: Behavioral Health	
Goal 1.1:	Strengthen community mental health and recovery systems by promoting mental well-being, expanding crisis response, and improving access to prevention, treatment, and recovery supports for mental illness and substance misuse.
Objectives	<p>1.1.1: Identify and implement coordinated, community-driven solutions to support individuals experiencing homelessness, behavioral health crises, and substance misuse.</p> <p>1.1.2: Advocate for and support the development of safe, stable, and affordable housing options as a foundation for health, recovery, and well-being.</p> <p>1.1.3: Expand access to comprehensive, integrated healthcare and behavioral health services by strengthening local partnerships and reducing systemic barriers to care.</p> <p>1.1.4: Enhance proactive community outreach strategies to connect residents with mental health, substance misuse, and recovery support services especially those in underserved or high-need populations.</p>
Goal 1.2:	Enhance community-based services and supports that address the broader needs of vulnerable populations, including housing stability, access to food and healthcare, transportation, and other social determinants that impact health and well-being.
Objectives	<p>1.2.1: Strengthen partnerships with local organizations to expand access to essential resources such as housing, food, transportation, and healthcare for individuals and families facing socioeconomic challenges.</p> <p>1.2.2: Support and promote initiatives that improve the availability, affordability, and accessibility of safe housing options for low-income and high-need populations.</p> <p>1.2.3: Collaborate with cross-sector partners to reduce barriers to transportation that limit access to medical, behavioral health, and social services.</p> <p>1.2.4: Facilitate community outreach and engagement efforts to better understand the needs of underserved populations and tailor services to reflect their lived experiences.</p>

Strategic Focus Area 2:

Healthy Living

Goal 2.1: Encourage healthy lifestyles, prevent chronic disease, and promote nutrition and physical activity through all stages of life.

Objectives

- 2.1.1:** Improve access to nutritious, affordable food options through community partnerships, education, and support for local food systems.
- 2.1.2:** Promote physical activity by supporting efforts to integrate movement into daily routines at schools, workplaces, and across community settings.
- 2.1.3:** Reduce the prevalence of obesity and related chronic conditions by expanding prevention-focused programs and promoting evidence-based health education.
- 2.1.4:** Promote breastfeeding as an essential strategy for infant nutrition and maternal-child health by supporting policies, education, and environments that normalize and sustain breastfeeding practices.
- 2.1.5:** Promote mental well-being by encouraging resilience, strong social connections, and healthy lifestyles in the community.

Strategic Focus Area 3:

Access to Healthcare

Goal 3.1: Remove barriers to care and ensure timely access to medical, dental, behavioral, and maternal child health services for all residents.

Objectives

- 3.1.1:** Expand community outreach, care coordination, and referral navigation to ensure individuals are connected to appropriate services and follow-up care.
- 3.1.2:** Advocate for policy and system improvements that enhance provider availability, healthcare infrastructure, and equal distribution of services across the community.
- 3.1.3:** Collaborate with healthcare providers, public programs, and community partners to improve access to medical, dental, behavioral, and maternal-child health services.
- 3.1.4:** Strengthen access to preventive services, including screenings, prenatal and postnatal care, early childhood supports, and chronic disease management.
- 3.1.5:** Enhance data systems and technology tools that improve care coordination, program referrals, and outcome tracking.

Strategic Focus Area 4:

Preparedness & Public Safety

Goal 4.1: Strengthen readiness, response, and recovery efforts to protect the community from public health threats and emergencies.

Objectives

- 4.1.1:** Maintain and regularly update public health emergency preparedness and response plans in alignment with federal, state, and local guidelines.
- 4.1.2:** Conduct multi-agency trainings, drills, and exercises to evaluate response capacity and strengthen coordination with community partners.
- 4.1.3:** Enhance communication strategies to ensure timely, accurate, and accessible public messaging during emergencies and emerging health threats.
- 4.1.4:** Support community resilience through proactive outreach, education, and partnerships that enhance community preparedness.
- 4.1.5:** Strengthen public health workforce capacity by supporting recruitment, retention, cross-training, and staff well-being initiatives to ensure readiness across all BBPH program areas.