

Public Health – Seattle & King County 2024 - 2029 Strategic Plan Summary



Letter from the Director

I know what you're thinking: *Another boring strategic plan*. Please believe me when I say that this is not your typical strategic plan.

For one, it does not simply list what we do: all of the critical activities that our department undertakes every day. There are too many to list and, in any event, we are choosing to do things differently.

Surprised? Good.

I'm delighted to share Public Health's new strategic plan with you. In this new plan, we're doing things differently. We start by focusing on *why* we do our work – addressing Racism as a public health crisis – and *how* we will do our work – by centering anti-racism, health equity, workforce well-being, and partnerships. The *why* and the *how* will guide how we address some of the most pressing health issues of our time – the *what* in this plan.

This approach prepares us to be ready for anything. We believe that the *what* evolves constantly in public health: old threats re-emerge and new ones arise.

If we have consensus on the *why* and the *how*, we can deal with whatever may come our way.

Public Health – Seattle & King County is transitioning out of an intense, multi-year emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in which racial inequities were our greatest challenge. The COVID-19 pandemic created trauma and burnout among our workforce and forced our department, and public health departments across the nation, to fundamentally rethink how we do our work.

As we move together into the future, Public Health is pleased to share our 2024–2029 strategic plan, which builds on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, includes the voices of community and staff, and sets our department's path for the next six years. While eliminating health disparities has long been part of Public Health's core work, we deliberately strove to develop this plan using an anti-racist process, and the plan itself embeds anti-racism and racial equity throughout.

Our department has not been immune to the decades of underfunding that have left the national public health system underprepared to protect the health of the people of King County. Recent federal and state investments in public health infrastructure and foundational public health services are welcome and important steps, and the need remains for increased, flexible, and sustained funding to avoid returning to the historical boom-and-bust cycles of public health funding.



Dr. Faisal Khan, Director of Public Health – Seattle & King County

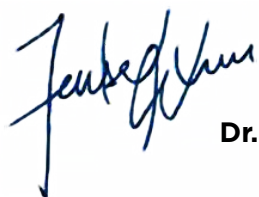
This new strategic plan comes at a time when Public Health is facing key decisions about its future state. As we develop our budget in coming years, this plan will inform decisions about the department's strategic investments and provide direction as we meet the most urgent health challenges facing King County.

As we achieve the objectives set out in this plan, we aim to make strides in addressing the health impacts of racism, climate change, gun violence, overdoses, and homelessness, and other challenges to the well-being of the communities we serve. We will strengthen our department's core prevention, promotion, and assurance activities, as well as our partnerships, collaboration, and infrastructure. This plan will have wide-reaching impacts, but what will remain constant over the next 6 years is our commitment to modernizing and transforming our work to provide high quality public health services based on Washington's Foundational Public Health Services as a strategy for implementing the national 10 Essential Public Health Services and Public Health 3.0 frameworks.

This plan would not have been possible without the participation of our staff and partner organizations across our many King County communities. I particularly want to thank the members of our Staff Advisory Group and community partners for their input and guidance to ensure our new strategic plan is staff- and community-centered. Their effort, insightful contributions, and commitment to our community's health have been pivotal in shaping this strategic plan.

Although the challenges ahead will not be easy, we remain steadfast in our commitment to creating a King County where health, well-being, and racial equity are experienced every day, by everyone. We look forward to sharing our progress with you and invite your partnership in realizing these ambitions for the health of our friends, neighbors, and communities.

Got your attention? Thank you. Please do read on.



Dr. Faisal Khan, Director of Public Health — Seattle & King County



Executive Summary

Public Health – Seattle & King County’s 2024-2029 strategic plan describes how we will meet the most persistent and urgent health challenges facing King County, embed Racism is a Public Health Crisis into our everyday work, and strengthen our core functions to protect and promote health.

The health issues facing the people of King County are significant. These complex issues must be addressed by multiple sectors and partners working together. This plan describes how Public Health will focus the department’s activities and resources to address these threats to community health. The strategic plan will also guide Public Health in strengthening internal capacity and infrastructure in ways that support all programs throughout the department to better meet population health needs.

In the course of developing this plan, approximately 100 of our community and public health system partners, as well as hundreds of employees throughout the department, provided feedback in listening sessions and interviews. In the fall of 2023, we convened a series of Strategic Planning Conversations, in which staff worked alongside community partners to use this feedback as a foundation to collaboratively develop Public Health’s new vision, mission, values, and priorities:



Priority Areas



Public Health relies on a complex set of federal, state, and local funding sources, including grants. Successful implementation of many activities outlined in this strategic plan depends upon alignment of existing resources or identification of new resources and partnerships. Public Health intends to be proactive in seeking these resources and in using this plan to inform our department’s strategic investments as we continue our journey towards becoming a racially just health department.

To learn more, please see
our full report available at
kingcounty.gov/health/strategicplan

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Public Health
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