



UTAH DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH**

Report on COVID-19 Impact

*Vulnerabilities Exacerbated by COVID-19*

Social Services Appropriations Subcommittee

October 19, 2021



# Vulnerabilities Exacerbated by COVID-19

## **Programs with Increased Demand.**

Some highlights include:

- Department operations related to food insecurity
- Increased demand for reporting
- Staff capacity and retention
- Medicaid Home and Community Based Services

## **Programs with Delayed or Disrupted Services.**

Some highlights include:

- Reductions or delays in preventive screenings for HIV, STDs, and cancer
- Decrease in WIC participation
- Decrease in Office of Home Visiting-funded programs

## **Internal Vulnerabilities.**

- Staffing
- Contract and grant writing and management
- Purchasing and payables process
- Information Technology systems



# Recommendations

The report provides a summary of the vulnerabilities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the vulnerabilities identified, the Department identifies three main areas where additional funding is recommended to support public health infrastructure and readiness:





# Recommended Areas for Further Funding

**Investment in workforce.** As indicated throughout the report submitted, staffing has been a constant source of concern during the PHE. The Department recommends the following with regards to workforce readiness:

Agile and robust Human Resources system and personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Rapid onboarding</li><li>•Development and access to comprehensive training resources</li><li>•Faster and more efficient access to funding for hiring time-limited staff when appropriate.</li></ul>
Investment in programmers and project managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•IT Programmers</li><li>•Project Managers</li><li>•Remote work resources</li></ul>
Community Health Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Investment</li><li>•Expansion</li><li>•Support</li></ul>



# Recommended Areas for Further Funding

**Information Technology Systems.** Modernize our public health database systems. The Department recommends a number of investments to upgrade, optimize and enhance the technology system infrastructure for public health, such as:



Utah Statewide  
Immunization  
Information System

Vital Records  
Application Portal

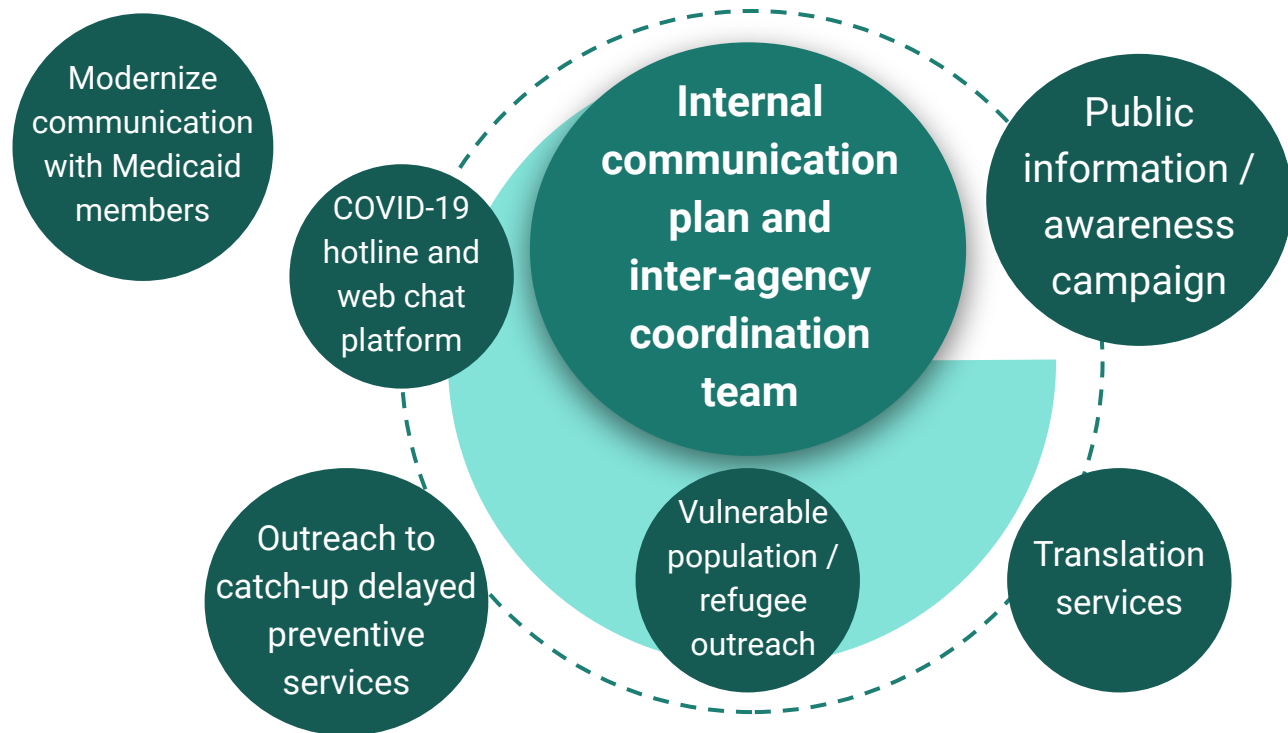


Laboratory Information  
Management System



# Recommended Areas for Further Funding

**Communication.** The Department recommends funding and support for more effective and efficient communication strategies, internally and externally.



# APPENDIX

# QUESTIONS

You recommend more funding for IT projects. How much more funding might be needed beyond the \$20 million recently approved from American Rescue Act Plan funds?

\$20 million for cloud modernization previously approved;  
priorities for additional IT projects enumerated in this  
proposal



# QUESTIONS

For the staff redirected to work on COVID19, were COVID-19 funds used to pay for that staff time? If not, why?

Staff redirected to work on COVID-19 were paid with either COVID-19 funds or existing federal funds with approval from HHS for this use