



The Center for Health Equity & Wellbeing

NJ's Public Health Institute

Strategic Plan

2025–2027

equityandwellbeing.org



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Executive Summary

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Public health is the cornerstone of our society. It is an honor and a privilege to lead New Jersey’s newly designated public health institute. **We are the people’s institute, acting as conveners, collaborators, listeners, communicators, and supporters** for everyone from residents and communities to health systems and service providers. Together, we can build a healthier, fairer, and more resilient New Jersey for generations to come.”

Dr. Denise Anderson, Ph.D., MPH

The Center for Health Equity & Wellbeing (CHEW) is dedicated to advancing equity, strengthening public health infrastructure, and enhancing the quality of life for all residents. As New Jersey’s Public Health Institute (NJPHI), CHEW-NJPHI champions a bold, data-informed, and people-centered strategy to address persistent disparities and create healthier communities.

CHEW-NJPHI operates as a 501(c)(3) statewide, non-governmental organization with a remote structure that ensures reach and accessibility across New Jersey. Its establishment and growth have been made possible through the essential back-end support services from Acenda Integrated Health, and the initial and ongoing funding support and capacity-building investment from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF).

This strong operational foundation has been further reinforced through state action: On April 22, 2025, Governor Phil Murphy signed legislation authorizing the Department of Health to designate a Public Health Institute, and on June 17, 2025, the New Jersey Department of Health formally designated CHEW-NJPHI as the state’s Public Health Institute. Together, these elements position CHEW-NJPHI with the infrastructure, partnerships, and legitimacy required to lead cross-sector initiatives that advance health equity and strengthen New Jersey’s public health system.

This Strategic Plan (2025–2027) outlines a comprehensive approach structured around four interrelated priority areas:

- 01 Health Opportunity Zones (HOZs):** CHEW-NJPHI will identify, pilot, and scale HOZs across New Jersey's northern, central, and southern regions to advance place-based health equity. These zones will serve as collaborative platforms to address social determinants of health through targeted investment, asset mapping, community engagement, and cross-sector coordination.
- 02 Democracy and Health: Civic Engagement and Public Policy:** CHEW-NJPHI will strengthen democratic processes as tools for public health by expanding non-partisan civic participation and equipping residents and organizations with such tools to shape equitable policies. This includes hosting civic engagement workshops, tracking and analyzing health-related legislation, and advocating for equity-focused policies addressing housing, education, economic stability, and community conditions.
- 03 Public Health Infrastructure and Workforce Development:** CHEW-NJPHI will launch a statewide initiative that engages students and professionals through structured placements, mentorship, webinars, emergency preparedness training, and a statewide public health workforce development conference. This effort will continue building a skilled, diverse, and resilient workforce capable of responding to evolving health challenges.
- 04 Trust in Science: Advancing Evidence-Based Action:** CHEW-NJPHI will support direct service providers in implementing evidence-based or -informed prevention and care interventions while expanding access to inclusive clinical trials to reduce preventable morbidity and mortality. This work includes building provider capacity, conducting fidelity assessments, and partnering with pharmaceutical companies and the safety-net system to address systemic barriers.

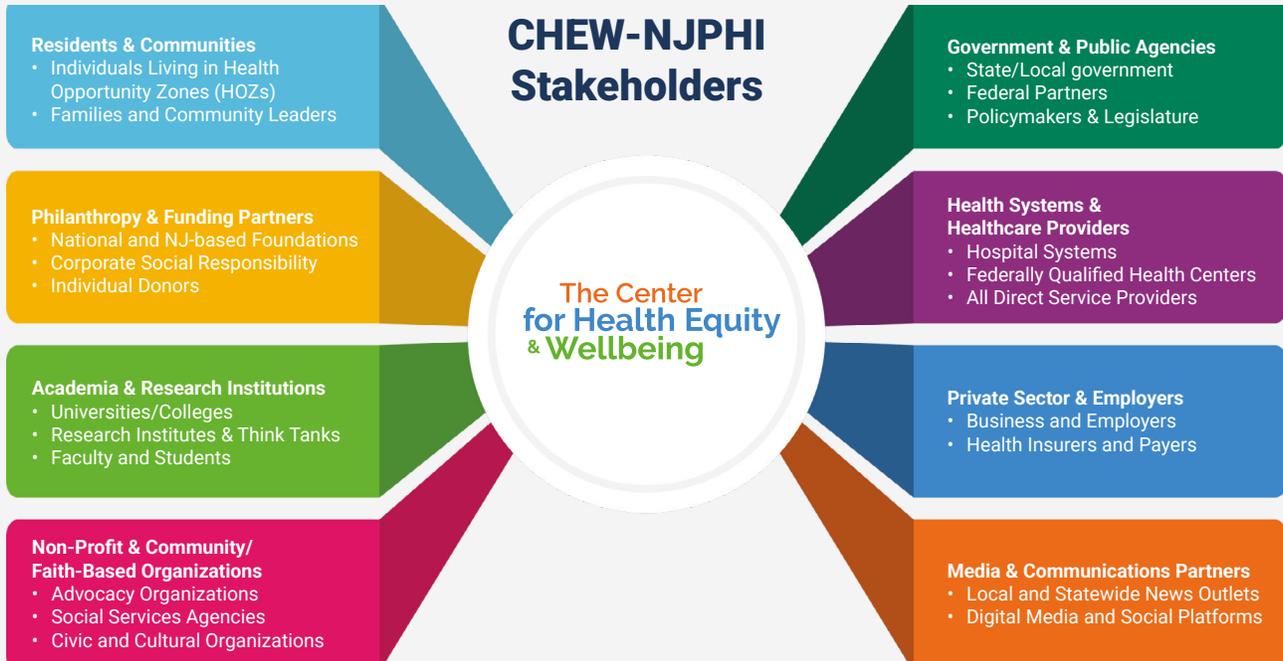
Strategic Purpose and Intended Outcomes

Amid complex political, economic, and social shifts, CHEW-NJPHI's strategy is grounded in the institute's core values and designed to be adaptive, resilient, and equity-driven. The plan addresses environmental pressures, including fluctuating funding, demographic shifts, health workforce shortages, and technological advancements, by investing in sustainable infrastructure and fostering inclusive engagement. With detailed implementation strategies, risk mitigation protocols, and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation frameworks, CHEW-NJPHI will track outcomes, share insights, and adapt practices in real time.

The intended outcomes include:

- Measurable reductions in health disparities across HOZ communities.
- Greater non-partisan civic participation and influence among historically underserved populations.
- A more representative, prepared, and networked public health workforce.
- Increased provider adoption of evidence-based interventions and more equitable clinical research participation.

Through this strategic plan, CHEW-NJPHI reaffirms its role as a catalyst for collective action, an engine for policy innovation, and a steward of health equity for all New Jerseyans.



Mission Statement

We aim to actively promote collaborative and community-driven partnerships to effect policies and practices that improve health, strengthen public health infrastructure, leverage resources to foster collective impact and social justice, and systemically advance equity and quality of life for all.

Vision Statement

A New Jersey where every person and every community has a fair and just opportunity to experience health and quality of life to their full potential.

Core Values

Equity: We believe that public health is what we do as a society to ensure the conditions in which everyone can be healthy.

Vitality (Population Health): We believe the public health system is essential in advancing individual, community, and population health.

Activation: Our work prioritizes eliminating disparities and supporting community engagement, elevating advocates as leaders in advancing equity and quality of life.

Integrity: We pursue progress with independence and transparency, as we strive to build sustainable and equitable systems through innovation, collaboration, and shared leadership.

Accountability: Our work is data-driven, guided by engaged communities, serves those most in need, follows and creates best practices, and addresses social and structural determinants of health.

Trustworthiness: Our team is nonpartisan, inclusive, diverse, and committed. We continue to learn, evolve, and foster collaborative relationships to advance our goals.

Introduction to the Strategic Plan

Public health is the foundation of thriving communities. It safeguards not only individual wellbeing but also the collective resilience and prosperity of society. In New Jersey, the creation of the Center for Health Equity & Wellbeing (CHEW), designated as the state's public health institute, presents a unique opportunity to strengthen the systems, partnerships, and policies that shape health across every community.

The health of New Jersey residents is determined by far more than access to healthcare. Factors such as economic stability, quality education, safe environments, and strong community networks all influence whether people can live healthy, fulfilling lives. Yet, persistent inequities, magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic, have underscored the urgent need for a bold, coordinated response.

This strategic plan serves as a roadmap for action. It outlines a clear vision, guiding priorities, and measurable strategies to advance health equity and wellbeing statewide over the next three years. By modernizing New Jersey's public health infrastructure, addressing systemic barriers, and aligning partners across sectors, CHEW-NJPHI strives to build a healthier, more just, and more resilient future for all residents. **To that end, we seek to ensure that our work is anchored in principles that define both how we operate and what we aspire to achieve:**

- **Health Equity as a Foundation**
Advancing fairness and opportunity for all people, regardless of race, income, geography, or circumstance.
- **Community Voice**
Elevating the lived experiences of residents as essential expertise in shaping programs and policies.
- **Evidence & Data**
Grounding decisions in rigorous, reliable data and continuous evaluation.
- **Collaboration**
Fostering partnerships across public, private, and community sectors to drive shared solutions.
- **Sustainability & Accountability**
Committing to transparent practices, measurable outcomes, and long-term impact.

CHEW-NJPHI's approach also unites scientific evidence with community wisdom. This plan reflects our commitment to collaborate with residents, community-based organizations (CBOs), health systems, academic partners, and government leaders to ensure strategies address real needs. Grounded in data and driven by inclusion, CHEW-NJPHI designs programs that are both evidence-based and authentically rooted in community priorities.

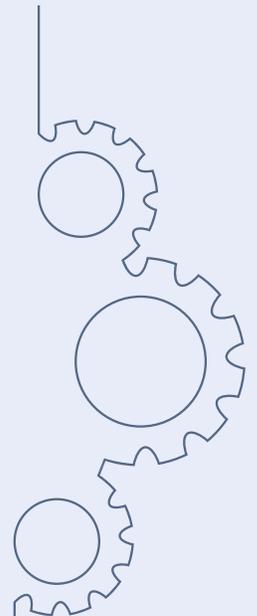


How This Plan is Organized

This strategic plan is organized around four core pillars that support CHEW-NJPHI's mission and vision:

- 01 Health Equity (Health Opportunity Zones)**
Advancing targeted, place-based strategies to reduce disparities.
- 02 Democracy & Health (Civic Engagement & Public Policy)**
Strengthening non-partisan civic participation and health policy advocacy.
- 03 Public Health Infrastructure and Workforce Development**
Building, training, and sustaining the next generation of public health leaders.
- 04 Trust in Science (Evidence-Based Action & Clinical Trials Diversification)**
Advancing public trust through transparent, inclusive engagement with science.

Each pillar includes clear goals, measurable objectives, and actionable strategies that drive progress. The plan also outlines an implementation framework that details timelines and accountability structures. A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework is also outlined, ensuring that CHEW-NJPHI adapts responsively to emerging needs and opportunities while maintaining focus on long-term outcomes.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Health Opportunity Zones (Health Equity)



This strategic priority aims to identify and establish Health Opportunity Zones (HOZs) in New Jersey's northern, central, and southern regions. These zones will be selected based on health disparities and other characteristics, with at least one HOZ per region chosen for a pilot program in the first year. The multi-year strategy aims to reduce health disparities and enhance community wellbeing by addressing key social determinants through targeted funding, stakeholder collaboration, community-driven partnerships, and capacity-building efforts.

Grounded in a place-based framework, the HOZ initiative will mobilize resources to address the root causes of poor health outcomes, catalyzing local communities as active partners in shaping solutions that reflect their lived experiences and priorities.

This strategy is guided by best practices in equity-centered planning and designed to serve those most in need by systematically addressing social and structural determinants of health. The HOZs will operate as innovation hubs where evidence-informed practices can be piloted, refined, and scaled, building a replicable model for multi-sector collaboration and impact.

CHEW-NJPHI will leverage its position as a trusted convener to support grassroots organizations and coordinate across sectors, building community capacity and resilience. By embedding data collection, equity metrics, and sustained community engagement throughout the life cycle of the HOZs, this strategic priority positions New Jersey as a national leader in advancing social justice and community wellbeing through targeted, data-informed public health investment.

Goals and Objectives

Goal

By December 2027, establish Health Opportunity Zones (HOZs) in New Jersey, initiate a pilot with three HOZs, and expand HOZs.

Objectives for Year 1 2025

- Develop a standardized, equity-focused algorithm for ranking potential HOZs by aligning key definitions, methodologies, and data sources.
- Strategically rank HOZs to prioritize communities with the most significant health disparities, select initial pilot HOZs for implementation (one from each of New Jersey's regions), collect baseline demographic, health, and socioeconomic data, and conduct field scans, data mapping, and key interviews with diverse stakeholders and community members to develop detailed community asset maps.
- Launch and award competitive Request for Applications (RFAs), after stakeholder meetings and facilitated sessions, to provide funding, continuous training, technical assistance, and resources to community-informed, social determinants of health interventions.

Objectives for Year 2 2026

- Refine Year One criteria and ranking tools to identify and onboard at least three additional HOZs, one per region, based on health needs and funding availability.
- Actively pursue diversified funding streams, including federal, state, foundation, philanthropic, and corporate sources, to expand and sustain HOZ activities across all regions.
- Strengthen implementation and promote cross-site learning and collaboration by continuing to deliver tailored training, technical assistance, and capacity-building support to all funded entities, emphasizing scaling effective practices and fostering cross-HOZ collaboration.

Objectives for Year 3 2027

- Contingent on funding availability, conduct a new round of HOZ identification and selection to support at least three additional zones per region, building on prior implementation frameworks and lessons learned to streamline and revise protocols as needed.
- Continue pursuing diversified funding to support long-term sustainability, scale promising practices, deepen impact across existing and new HOZs, and form strategic alliances with anchor institutions to support co-investment and shared services or cost-sharing models that optimize resources across HOZs.
- Maintain and enhance the delivery of high-quality training, specialized modules, technical assistance, and performance evaluation across all HOZs to support evidence-driven decision-making of local implementation capacity and fidelity to program goals.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

Democracy and Health: Civic Engagement and Public Policy

This strategic priority aims to deepen non-partisan civic participation and strengthen policy advocacy across HOZs in New Jersey. Through formal partnerships with CBOs, CHEW-NJPHI will enhance resident capacity for community power-building and host civic engagement workshops that focus on the intersection of democracy and health, ensuring that local voices have a meaningful influence on decision-making. Concurrently, CHEW-NJPHI will lead policy advocacy efforts by adopting equity-focused policy analysis frameworks, utilizing legislative tracking tools, and partnering with think tanks and advocacy groups to monitor, analyze, and advocate for equitable policies that address the social determinants of health. By fostering

informed civic action and driving policy change through coordinated public health leadership, community collaboration, and sustained advocacy, CHEW-NJPHI aims to support the power of communities in shaping the policies that impact their health and advance equity across New Jersey.

This priority advances the principle that a healthy democracy contributes to better population health, endorsed by public health authorities such as the American Public Health Association (APHA) and Association of Schools & Programs of Public Health (ASPPH). As voting access and civic engagement improve, so does the opportunity to shape equitable policies that address social determinants of health.

Goals and Objectives

Civic Engagement

Goal

By 2027, increase civic engagement among community members in nine HOZs through inclusive and equitable strategies that support residents to participate in local decision-making processes and influence systems that affect their health and wellbeing.

Objectives for Year 1 2025

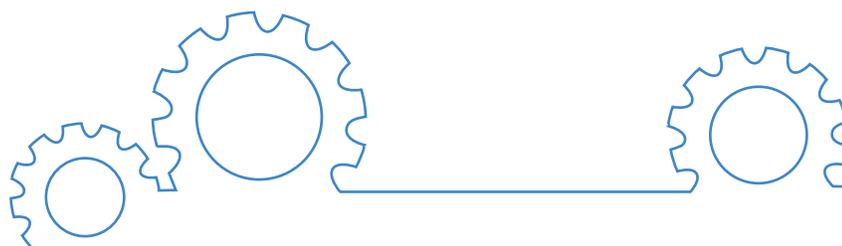
- Integrate non-partisan civic engagement requirements into CHEW-NJPHI program RFAs and grantee contracts to ensure all funded grantees host and convene one to two civic engagement workshops per contract period.
- Identify and establish formal partnerships with CBOs specializing in civic engagement training to support capacity-building efforts for CHEW-NJPHI grantees and their communities.
- Coordinate and deliver at least three civic engagement workshops – in collaboration with grantees, training partners, and historically underrepresented residents – to strengthen knowledge, leadership, and participation in local decision-making processes and the role of civic participation in advancing health equity.

Objectives for Year 2 2026

- Sustain and expand efforts to identify, engage, and formalize partnerships with CBOs that provide civic engagement training, continuously strengthening the capacity of CHEW-NJPHI grantees and deepening community impact.
- Expand civic engagement efforts by coordinating and implementing at least three additional workshops with grantees and training partners.

Objectives for Year 3 2027

- Sustain efforts to identify and formalize partnerships with CBOs that offer civic engagement training to support the capacity-building of CHEW-NJPHI grantees and diversify and expand the pool of partners.
- Expand civic engagement efforts by coordinating and implementing at least three additional workshops with grantees and training partners.



Goals and Objectives

Public Policy

Goal

By 2027, raise awareness and actively advocate for at least five equitable policies that address systemic determinants of health and promote improved health outcomes for New Jersey residents.

Objectives for Year 1 2025

- To establish a standardized approach for equity-focused policy analysis, identify and adopt a health equity framework(s) to analyze proposed legislation from the New Jersey State Legislature.
- Identify and collaborate with think tanks and research and policy organizations focused on economic stability, education access and quality, health care access and quality, neighborhood and built environment, and social and community context.
- Explore, identify, and secure a legislative tracking service to monitor and respond to relevant state policy developments.
- Develop a standardized process to engage in responsive advocacy with local and national partners, including but not limited to public statements and communications, social media amplification, joining coalitions, engaging in advocacy events, participating in briefings or roundtables, and developing policy memos or fact sheets.



Objectives for Year 2 2026

- Continue to leverage legislative tracking tools to systematically monitor, assess, and respond to state policy developments that impact health equity across New Jersey.
- As CHEW-NJPHI, lead the selection, equity-focused analysis, progress tracking, awareness-raising, and advocacy for at least two policy issues related to economic stability, education access and quality, health care access and quality, neighborhood and built environment, or social and community context.
- Sustain active participation in responsive advocacy efforts in collaboration with local and national partners through the continued implementation of coordinated strategies that advance health equity and systems change.



Objectives for Year 3 2027

- Maintain continuous legislative tracking to monitor and assess key policy developments impacting public health and health equity in New Jersey, ensuring timely analysis and informed advocacy in the third year and beyond.
- Lead the selection, health equity analysis, awareness-building, and advocacy efforts for an additional three priority policy issues, advancing systems-level change through an equity-focused policy agenda.
- Maintain consistent engagement in responsive advocacy efforts by collaborating with local and national partners through coordinated actions that advance public health, promote equity, and support timely policy responses.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Public Health Infrastructure and Workforce Development



This strategic priority aims to strengthen the state's public health infrastructure through a comprehensive, equity-centered workforce development program designed to engage students, early-career professionals, and seasoned practitioners alike. The initiative will provide structured pathways for training, mentorship, and placement with host organizations. Core components include a public health mentorship program, a running list of potential sites for fieldwork and capstone opportunities, and a statewide workforce development conference and webinar series

that engages and supports individuals through innovative, practical training programs. CHEW-NJPHI will also collaborate with the NJDOH to enhance emergency preparedness through training, exercises, and enhanced coordination.

Together, with an emphasis on cross-sector partnerships, policy advocacy, and education, these efforts create a cohesive framework to build capacity, strengthen collaboration, and ensure New Jersey's public health workforce is well-equipped to advance equity and improve community wellbeing statewide.

Goals and Objectives

Goal

By December 2027, design, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive public health workforce development program that trains and supports at least 500 individuals, including students, early-career professionals, mid-career practitioners, and seasoned experts, through structured programming, facilitated practice experiences, and cutting-edge training.

Objectives for Year 1 2025

- Design and implement a structured service, Public Health Connection Program (PHCP), that connects public health students and early-career professionals with meaningful volunteer opportunities, internships, field placements, and capstone projects in partnership with organizations offering public health programs, services, and community-based initiatives.
- Design, implement, manage, and evaluate a multi-part webinar series focused on legislative policymaking and advocacy at the local and national levels, equipping participants with the knowledge, tools, and strategies to engage in the policy process and advance health equity effectively.
- Research, design, and draft a comprehensive plan for a one-day statewide public health workforce development conference.

Objectives for Year 2 2026

- Sustain and enhance the PHCP to connect public health students and early-career professionals with opportunities.
- Continue to promote and disseminate the recorded legislative policymaking and advocacy webinar series.
- Implement the comprehensive plan for a one-day statewide public health workforce development conference.
- Partner with the NJDOH to strengthen emergency preparedness by supporting the training and exercising of emergency response plans, enhancing governmental coordination and communication, and effectively resourcing statewide emergency response efforts.
- Research, design, implement, manage, and evaluate a structured public health mentorship program, PHutures (Public Health + Futures), that fosters professional growth, skill development, and cross-generational learning across all levels of the public health workforce.



Objectives for Year 3 2027

- Sustain and enhance the PHCP.
- Continue to promote and disseminate the recorded legislative policymaking and advocacy webinar series.
- Execute and evaluate CHEW-NJPHI's inaugural statewide public health workforce development conference, collecting feedback to inform future planning and continuous improvement.
- Sustain and expand the partnership with the NJDOH to strengthen emergency preparedness by enhancing the scope and frequency of training and emergency response exercises, deepening coordination and communication, and advancing strategic resource planning and deployment for statewide emergency response efforts.
- Strengthen and expand PHutures by increasing mentor-mentee engagement, enhancing programmatic resources and training, incorporating participant feedback into continuous improvement efforts, and evaluating outcomes.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

Trust in Science: Advancing Evidence- Based Action



This strategic priority is centered on increasing the number of prevention, care, and treatment providers in New Jersey who implement evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions to reduce morbidity and premature death. CHEW-NJPHI will support direct service providers in adopting these interventions, with a deliberate focus on historically underserved populations and addressing systemic barriers. Additionally, the strategy emphasizes expanding access to clinical trials by addressing systemic barriers and promoting inclusive, community-engaged recruitment practices.

A multi-phased approach will be utilized, beginning with identifying and assessing relevant evidence-based models, fostering cross-sector partnerships, particularly with

pharmaceutical companies and safety-net providers, and building provider capacity through training, technical assistance, and structured implementation support.

This strategy prioritizes individual, community, and population health; infrastructure through sustainable and collaborative partnerships with safety-net providers and pharmaceutical entities; and accountability by grounding implementation in data-driven strategies and shared metrics. The emphasis on expanding access to inclusive clinical trials and using peer learning and structured support to scale effective models further reflects a commitment to strengthening trust in science, reducing preventable mortality, and embedding equity into the fabric of public health practice statewide.

Goals and Objectives

Goal

By 2027, increase the number of prevention and care treatment direct service providers in New Jersey using evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions to reduce morbidity risk factors and improve management of the state's leading causes of death.

Objectives for Year 1 2025

- Develop the EBImpact program by identifying and assessing evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions, such as the National Diabetes Prevention Program, Million Hearts, and evidence-based cancer control programs, to align with program goals.
- Design the Every Body Matters program by convening and facilitating ongoing dialogue with pharmaceutical companies and safety-net providers, to identify and address barriers and facilitators that can increase access to research and clinical trials among underrepresented and historically disinvested populations.

Objectives for Year 2 2026

- Participate in relevant training on selected evidence-based or -informed models, identify and engage direct service providers for implementation support of EBImpact, and establish a process to monitor fidelity, outcomes, and impact.
- Advance understanding of systemic and operational barriers to equitable clinical trial access by conducting structured listening sessions with key stakeholders, developing a comprehensive learning agenda, mapping current trial activity across New Jersey, and facilitating focused discussions on regulatory, financial, and logistical challenges, particularly those affecting underrepresented communities (Every Body Matters program).

Objectives for Year 3 2027

- Strengthen and scale the implementation of selected evidence-based or -informed models by supporting direct service providers in sustaining intervention delivery, analyzing fidelity and outcome data collected during the initial year, and refining the monitoring process based on evaluation findings and provider feedback to enhance effectiveness and impact (EBImpact program).
- Promote equitable clinical trial participation by supporting the adoption of community-engaged recruitment strategies, disseminating practical resources on inclusive trial design and implementation, and establishing shared metrics to monitor progress and strengthen accountability among partners (Every Body Matters program).

Risk Assessment & Mitigation Strategies



Each strategic priority carries inherent risks that could affect implementation, including funding uncertainties, operational challenges, political sensitivities, and stakeholder perceptions.

Financial risks stem from reliance on competitive or shifting funding sources at the federal, state, or philanthropic levels. Operationally, workforce capacity limits, provider readiness, and leadership turnover may slow progress or compromise fidelity. Political and reputational risks also arise, particularly in initiatives involving civic engagement or policy advocacy, where perceptions of partisanship or lack of transparency can undermine credibility. Finally, external factors such as evolving policy environments, public health crises, or other unforeseen disruptions pose additional uncertainty that may require rapid adaptation.

To address these risks, this strategic plan emphasizes proactive planning, transparency, and adaptability. Diversifying funding sources

and maintaining contingency budgets will reduce vulnerability to financial disruption. Transparent processes, such as open, well-structured Requests for Applications (RFAs) and consistent stakeholder communication will foster trust and accountability. Clear nonpartisan safeguards and unified messaging will preserve credibility and ensure all civic and policy activities remain grounded in neutrality. Operational resilience will be strengthened through early readiness assessments, targeted technical assistance, and ongoing training to maintain workforce engagement and program fidelity.

Regular risk reviews, cross-training, and clear documentation will ensure institutional continuity, despite leadership or environmental changes. By embedding these practices across all initiatives, the plan creates a responsive and sustainable framework capable of adapting to emerging challenges while maintaining focus on equitable health outcomes and long-term impact.

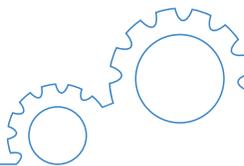
Monitoring & Evaluation

CHEW-NJPHI employs a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to assess effectiveness, reach, and equity impact across all strategic priorities. This unified approach integrates quantitative and qualitative data, real-time dashboards, and structured reviews to drive continuous improvement, strengthen transparency, and ensure accountability to communities and funders.

- **Health Opportunity Zones (HOZs)** will be guided by a robust tracking process, with outcome indicators aligned with key social determinants of health. A data dashboard will visualize trends across zones, while quarterly grantee check-ins and annual reviews will assess progress, identify challenges, and refine strategies to ensure informed decision-making and transparent reporting.
- **Democracy and Health: Civic Engagement and Public Policy** will be evaluated through indicators capturing both civic participation and policy influence. Metrics will include workshops held, participant demographics, and partnerships with civic groups, complemented by digital engagement tracking through the VoT-ER dashboard. On the policy side, an equity-based framework will analyze proposed legislation, monitor advocacy activities, and assess CHEW-NJPHI's leadership in advancing civic participation and health equity.
- **Workforce and Leadership Development** will be assessed for reach, effectiveness, and improvement across key programs, including the Public Health Connection Program, the Statewide Public Health Workforce Conference, and the PHutures Mentorship Program. Data collection will track participation, demographics, and learning outcomes, while surveys and feedback tools will measure satisfaction, relevance, and perceived benefits to inform program refinement and scaling.
- **Trust in Science** will track the effectiveness and equity impact of initiatives advancing evidence-based public health and clinical research inclusion. Evaluation will include the number and type of interventions implemented, providers trained, and capacity-building outcomes. For Every Body Matters, data will capture convenings, stakeholder participation, and shared metrics for clinical trial diversity, with findings informing statewide collaboration and strategies to strengthen equitable participation in research.

Together, these monitoring and evaluation strategies reflect CHEW-NJPHI's commitment to data-informed action, accountability, and continuous learning. By embedding evaluation across all priorities, CHEW-NJPHI ensures that progress is both measurable, meaningful, and responsive to emerging needs while maintaining focus on sustainable, long-term health equity outcomes for communities across New Jersey.

Appendix



PESTEL Environmental Analysis

CHEW-NJPHI conducted a PESTEL analysis to better understand the current macro-landscape in order to identify risks and uncover opportunities that may impact our work.

Political:

- The political landscape is undergoing significant national and local shifts: new federal administration (2025 to 2028) and upcoming gubernatorial transition in New Jersey (2026 to 2029).
- Changing government priorities have led to revised executive orders, reassessments of emergency management operations, and reevaluations of international partnerships.
- Political developments shaping administrative direction and policy focus are influencing funding structures, public health priorities, and intergovernmental collaboration.

Economic:

- Economic environment marked by uncertainty—fluctuating federal funding and inflation increasing operational costs.
- Newer organizations face challenges without reserve funding, requiring careful resource management and strategic investment.
- Focus is needed on sustainability planning and adaptive budgeting to maintain long-term impact.

Social:

- Social determinants of health – housing, transportation, education, and employment – remain uneven, disproportionately affecting underserved populations.
- Post-pandemic declines in literacy and higher education enrollment threaten long-term workforce readiness and health coverage, while current health professional shortages persist amid a rising demand for culturally and linguistically responsive care.
- Social cohesion is weakening amid persistent segregation, discrimination, and social isolation, deepening inequities across communities.
- Uncertainty around key federal programs (Head Start, Medicare, Medicaid, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP]) raises concerns about the continuity of essential supports for children, older adults, and working families.
- Strengthening local systems, inclusive infrastructure, and resilient community networks is critical to promoting equity, connectivity, and collective wellbeing.

Technological:

- Rapidly evolving technologies – including automation, AI, and machine learning – offer opportunities to improve public health operations and data analysis.
- Adoption must be intentional and mission-aligned to enhance, not replace, human-centered approaches.
- Responsible integration requires balancing innovation with equity, privacy, and accessibility. Ongoing evaluation of technological benefits and risks ensures alignment with ethical standards, community trust, and long-term sustainability.

Environmental:

- Environmental stressors – shifting weather patterns, more frequent severe storms – affect infrastructure, housing, and public health, particularly in under-resourced areas.
- Higher temperatures and worsening air quality are contributing to heat-related illnesses and vector-borne diseases.
- Proactive resilience strategies – including climate education, emergency preparedness, and sustainable infrastructure – are vital to protect community health and safety.

Legal:

- Evolving legal and policy frameworks continue to shape how organizations and communities operate.
- Legal developments around health data, equity mandates, and funding eligibility directly affect public health practice.
- Proactive engagement with legal and policy shifts is essential to support health and equity assessments and to ensure organizations can identify and mitigate risks as warranted.



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