





"In the decade since the launch of the Network, we have worked hand-in-hand with public health agencies and their partners and we know it is this dedication that keeps us strong, despite unprecedented challenges."

A message from our National Director

In September of 2010, the Network for Public Health Law launched as a national initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to provide legal capacity support to public health agencies around the country. The Network now reaches tens of thousands in the public health workforce — as well as health care providers, policymakers, advocates, educators and researchers — with much-needed legal technical assistance, resources and training.

No one could have predicted then, that a decade later the Network's support would become essential to the public health community's efforts to address the most devastating infectious disease pandemic in the nation's history. In early February of 2020, when there were only five cases of coronavirus identified in the United States, we conducted our first webinar on COVID-19 legal emergency preparedness and response. Since then we have worked tirelessly to provide real-time information and direct guidance to those working on measures to mitigate harm from the pandemic.

Tragically, at a time when the nation needed the expertise of public health professionals more than ever before, these emergency measures were increasingly politicized and public health professionals themselves became targets for harassment and threats. We were distressed to hear from front line public health officials and practitioners who were harassed, threatened and sued for their efforts. Hundreds have left the field. The practice of public health itself also came under fire. Even as the numbers of infections and deaths from the pandemic reached staggering levels, lawmakers in at least 15 states drafted legislation to weaken public health powers. Historically underfunded and underresourced, public health agencies are facing extraordinary challenges in their important work.

Against this backdrop, a national racial reckoning emerged as communities across the country witnessed repeated, fatal incidents of police brutality against Black people. This, combined with the extent to which Black people were disparately impacted by COVID-19, was an awakening for many Americans to the devastating consequences of structural racism, where laws and policies create and maintain barriers to equal justice, power, health, and economic advancement for people of color. Those in public health who have for years called for racism to be declared a public health emergency saw many more join their ranks.

Throughout the turmoil and in spite of significant obstacles, the public health workforce remained steadfast in their prevention and mitigation efforts to protect the health of our communities. In the decade since the launch of the Network, we have worked hand-in-hand with public health agencies and their partners and we know it is this dedication that keeps us strong, despite unprecedented challenges.

With the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines in early 2021, we had a glimmer of hope for recovery. Sadly, due to the delta variant, combined with vaccine disinformation, political opposition to mitigation measures, and rampant misinformation, we faced heavy setbacks.

Nevertheless, the country has started rebuilding from the pandemic, and the Network will monitor law and policy changes to find solutions in support of efforts in equitable recovery on many fronts, including access to health and mental health services and vaccinations, safe and secure housing, food security, substance use treatment and harm reduction, public health and community data sharing, and climate resiliency. We will also assess the actions proposed in declarations of racism as a public health emergency and how they can be implemented to improve health outcomes for communities of color and immigrant populations.

We have seen ten years of collaboration, ten years of trust, and ten years of impact with our friends and partners who are working to keep communities safe across the country, and we hope to continue to support and amplify their important work for years to come.

Donna E. LevinNational Director
The Network for Public Health Law





A National Health Crisis and Growing Social Tensions

The months between the summer of 2020 and 2021 were some of the most tumultuous in the United States. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the deaths of Black people from police and other violence combined with the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on people of color sparked a racial reckoning in the country. The end of 2020 saw a presidential election steeped in controversy due to concerns over the safety of voters, as well as a toxic political divide, leading to an unprecedented attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6 of 2021.

With COVID-19 vaccines distributed in early 2021, communities across the country were hopeful that the pandemic might end, but with the emergence of the delta variant and vaccine opposition, in June 2021, an average of more than 300 people per day were dying of COVID-19, making COVID-19 the 7th leading cause of death in the U.S. Public health harms exacerbated by the pandemic, including opioid overdose, mental health, food and housing insecurity, and health disparities continued to mount.

Tragically, at a time when the nation needed the expertise of public health professionals more than ever before, emergency measures to mitigate harm from the pandemic were increasingly politicized: social distancing, masking, contact tracing, public health data collection, and vaccinations became divisive issues. Public health professionals became targets as widespread disinformation added to the dangers of the pandemic. The practice of public health itself also came under fire as lawmakers in more than 15 states drafted legislation to weaken public health powers. This weakening of public health authority has dangerous consequences for the health of communities across the country.

"Whether dealing with the opioid epidemic or public health data sharing and privacy issues, figuring out how to communicate with populations around public health, or more recently dealing with COVID or the racial unrest that we've had, the Network has been there to provide trusted and valuable resources to people to deal with these public health challenges."

Angie McGowan, Senior Director,
 APHA Alliance for Disease Prevention and Response



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Addressing the Systems that Drive **Health Inequities**

Health inequities are preventable differences in the burden of disease, injury, violence, or opportunities to achieve optimal health, and are directly related to continued unequal distribution of social, political, economic, and environmental resources. The opportunity exists to make decisions and implement laws and policies that promote and further health equity in all fields. This past year, the Network joined with the National Action Agenda to Advance Upstream Social Determinants and Health Equity, a multi-disciplinary group of collaborators working to identify tangible, systems-level strategies for change across health, human services, education, public health, public safety and other sectors. The Network also served as an advisor to the Satcher Health Leadership Institute and Google.org Health Equity Task Force on the development of a Health Equity Tracker that launched in April 2021.

Recognizing Racism as a Public Health Crisis

Communities around the country have made formal statements and declarations outlining their commitment to changing the laws, policies, and practices that create and reinforce racist power structures. In support of these community-wide initiatives, the Network reached out to our partners at the American Public Health Association, the Institute for Healing Justice & Equity at Saint Louis University, Change Lab Solutions, the Public Health Law Center, the CDC Public Health Law Program, Salud America!, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, the National Association of County and City Health Officials, and the Council on Black Health to create Racism as a Public Health Crisis Research Collaborative. The collaborative will serve as a platform for identifying opportunities for research and resource development; will work to raise awareness of strategies, partners, and opportunities to address racism from a public health perspective, and will provide communities and stakeholders with streamlined access to the information and resources needed to take action.

Protecting Voter Health and Participation

Civic engagement, particularly participating in elections, encourages community involvement in policy and decision-making, which can be used as one strategy to achieve health equity. Voting affects the adoption or rejection of policies that impact individual and community health. Those policies then shape who is more likely to vote and who will continue to do so across their life span. For many Americans, particularly those who have historically been disproportionately burdened by the voting process, voting during the pandemic meant the added burden of risking their health. Concerned about the health implications for voters in the 2020 Presidential Election, the Network partnered with the Voting Rights Lab to identify the challenges the voting process posed to health, and to raise awareness of practices that prioritized voter safety. This work included educating public health agencies about the key policy interventions taken by jurisdictions to protect the right to vote.

Reducing Drug Related Harm

Over 93,000 people died of drug-related overdose in 2020, the highest number ever recorded. The ongoing epidemic has been exacerbated by a confluence of factors including the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing contamination of illicit drugs with fentanyl, and an influx of methamphetamine-based stimulants. The Network's Harm Reduction Legal Project is working to reduce this harm by assisting public health agencies, harm reduction organizations, and advocates to both leverage existing law and modify law and policy to reflect evidencebased practice. Through a combination of responsive legal technical assistance and proactive education and advocacy, the Harm Reduction Legal Project has helped advocates expand access to sterile syringes, the overdose reversal medication naloxone, and evidence-based treatment for substance use disorder.

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Addressing Food and Housing Insecurity

Record levels of housing insecurity across the U.S. were further exacerbated by the pandemic and its economic fallout, putting millions at risk of eviction. In response, the CDC issued an unprecedented order placing a moratorium on evictions. The Network served as a resource and provided guidance on this first-of-its-kind order and the implications for tenants and landlords. Additionally, the Network outlined key state and local legislative approaches to preventing eviction, homelessness, and housing instability, including Eviction Diversion Programs, the right to counsel for tenants in landlord-tenant matters, voucher programs, and limiting public access to eviction-related court records. The Network also identified five key strategies that courts can deploy to respond to the eviction crisis in a manner that contributes to the health of the communities they serve.

The number of people experiencing food insecurity also skyrocketed during the COVID-19 pandemic, with an estimated 42 million U.S. residents lacking sufficient food to lead healthy lives. The Network closely monitored and reported on actions taken by the Biden administration to address the mounting hunger crisis as part of the administration's plan for COVID-19 recovery. These actions included directing the USDA to expand and extend federal nutrition assistance programs, the provision of temporary emergency nutrition benefits to eligible families with children, and increases to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.



Unlocking the Power of Data for Improving Community Health

Data are essential for robust public health practices, including surveillance, epidemiological investigation, research, program development implementation and evaluation. However, the complex legal landscape surrounding data collection and sharing frequently results in lost opportunities to use data to improve community health. The pandemic presented uniquely urgent needs for the sharing of data across sectors. Public health entities turned to the Network to assist them in navigating difficult issues including what information can be disclosed to media and managing contact tracing conducted by third parties. The Network also conducted trainings on the use of the IZ Gateway system to facilitate secure data sharing for jurisdictions' Immunization Information Systems, which also tracks COVID-19 vaccinations.

Recognizing that tribes face unique challenges in their efforts to obtain important data from the U.S. government to support their efforts to improve the health of their communities, the Network is assisting tribal partners to create systemic change in the data sharing process. As a first step, the Network reached out to the U.S. Office of Civil Rights (OCR) to discuss the problems tribes are experiencing in obtaining needed data, and identified existing OCR guidance that should be expanded to include tribes and Tribal Epidemiology Centers.

"Thanks so much for this substantial step forward in ensuring equal protection of the law for Indian tribes and their members, and in eliminating the disparate impact upon American Indians and Alaska Natives."

- Charles Abourezk, General Counsel, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Great Plains Tribal Leaders Health Board

Engaging at the Community Level to Effect Change

Some of the most effective efforts to advance health and health equity are led by community organizations that work directly with, and advocate for, individuals, families, and neighborhoods. The Network expanded our collaborations with, and support to, these organizations.

The Network continues our multi-year collaboration with the National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership (NCMLP), which integrates lawyers as members of holistic health teams to meet the unaddressed legal needs that are contributing to health inequities. The Network and the NCMLP have launched a Safe and Healthy Housing Cohort for MLPs working to address housing conditions and issues in their communities.

As a member of the East Side Health and Well-Being Collaborative in St. Paul, Minnesota, the Network continues to provide training on the intersection between health, public health, and law and policy; and helps identify specific policies that support the Collaborative's program goals. The Collaborative works with more than 20 local community organizations to build and share power and advance coordinated initiatives that strengthen the health of their communities.

Recognizing that climate change is an urgent public health issue, the Network identified, through a call for applications, a cohort of community-led organizations to receive legal and policy support for efforts to mitigate or adapt to the public health impacts of climate change. The Network plans to issue an additional call for applications for the newly created Climate Change and Health Equity Learning and Practice Collaborative (CC LPC). The CC LPC will engage partners interested in the intersection of climate change and health equity to discuss law and policy solutions to mitigate the public health impacts from climate change.

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Confronting the Opposition and Threats to Public Health Measures and Authority

In response to the growing number of state legislative actions severely limiting the authority of public health to take necessary actions to protect the public's health, the Network and the National Association of County and City Health Officials authored a report, *Proposed Limits on Public Health Authority: Dangerous for Public Health*, which explains the important role of public health authority and provides examples of specific laws that would limit that authority. It clearly outlines what is at stake if public health powers are weakened. The report further raised awareness through presentations to public health officials, policymakers, lawyers, and others in the field.

Complicating public health emergency response efforts further, vaccine mandates, essential to reducing the harms caused by COVID, became the subject of considerable debate. The Network worked to bring clarity on the legal basis for, and challenges to, such measures by providing resources referencing key legislative and executive actions related to vaccine requirements. The Network also provided guidance on issues associated with the return to in-person learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and actions that can be taken to protect K–12 students, as well as school faculty and staff, from COVID-19 in a school setting.

Nationwide, as state and local public health officials working to protect the public from COVID-19 were on the receiving end of threatening and harassing conduct for simply fulfilling their duty to protect the public health, the Network provided a detailed outline of the state criminal statutes that might be used to hold accountable individuals who impede public health officials' duties with such behavior. The Network also tracked legislative solutions during the 2021 state legislative sessions to determine whether additional protections were proposed or enacted into law.



Supporting Public Health: **2021 Highlights**

Research and Analysis

The Network provides valuable guides and applied tools for leveraging law and policy to advance health and health equity.

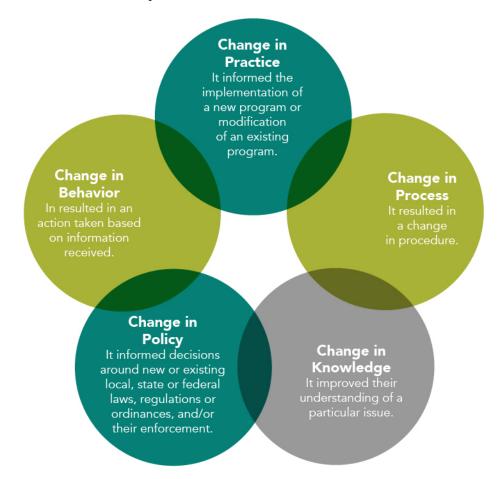
This past year the Network:

- Developed **107 briefs, surveys, research articles** and other resources on pressing and emerging issues in public health.
- Reached more than 159,200 individuals online with our research, reports and resources.

Strategic Consultation and Guidance

As trained issue-spotters, the Network helped public health agencies and organizations understand the laws and regulations central to their unique challenges and provided them with legal pathways they could leverage to make a difference.

 Over 616 individuals and organizations received this critical assistance from our national network of public health law and policy experts.
 Recipients of Network Legal Technical Assistance reported that the information they received resulted in one or more of the following:



- "This [legal technical assistance] gave me the knowledge to continue working on changing policy. I feel like this has helped arm me with facts that will make me a more effective advocate."
- Marc Burrows, Challenges INC.
- "The response from the Network helped me better understand existing policies related to Good Samaritan Laws. Current legislative changes are being considered for this law and may help inform changes advocated for by my organization in the future."
 - James Kowalsky, Illinois Department of Human Services
- "Thank you so much it has been truly wonderful to work with the Network on the issue of threats to local public health officials. I have deeply appreciated the engagement and attention to this matter and the seriousness with which the Network addressed the question and response."
- Lori Tremmel Freeman, National Association of County and City Health Officials
- "This group has always been so helpful, and I can't imagine trying to get through this pandemic without them! Thank you for all you do!"
- Lillian Colasurdo, Vermont Office of the Attorney General— Department of Health
- "The Network is the life blood of public health law... You all are the best and having practiced in the public health law arena for more than 30 years, I am forever grateful for all you do."
- Kim Tendrich, Senior Attorney, Florida Department of Health
- "The Network for Public Health Law is a mighty champion in emergency preparedness support efforts in Arizonia."
- Antonio Hernandez, Public Health Emergency Section Chief, Arizona Department of Health Services

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The majority of Network Legal Technical Assistance requests reflected issues related to:

Food Environment, Food Safety & Nutrition Laws

Health Information & Data Sharing Vaccinations Injury Prevention & Safety Cannabis Health Inequities

Environmental Public Health

Substance Use & Harm Reduction **Emergency Legal Preparedness**

Knowledge Building and Training

We help empower those working in public health and other sectors expand their capacity to leverage laws and policies to make critical advances in health and health equity.

We provided education and training through 32 webinars, workshops and presentations with a total of more than 5,800 attendees in public health and other sectors.

Raising Awareness and Connecting

We serve a community of people who are engaged in the important work of advancing health and health equity, as well as those interested in advocating for change. This community looks to the Network as a resource to help them advance the nation's health through law and policy.



Our Network Report bi-weekly e-newsletter and monthly Judicial Trends in Public Health reporter kept more than 15,793 subscribers informed about key emerging issues in public health policy and law.

Subscribers included:

- Officials, lawyers and practitioners at the local, state, tribal and federal levels.
- Researchers and educators.
- Community health advocates, local and national.
- Health care professionals.

We reach thousands of members in our online communities to raise awareness about laws and policies that impact health.



9.712 Facebook followers



5,452 Twitter followers



in 3,080 LinkedIn followers

More than 50 national and local media outlets and publications turned to the Network as a trusted source for their reporting on public health laws and policies. These included:

































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Guided in our work by leaders committed to improving the health of communities.

The Network's National Advisory Board represents some of the country's leading experts and practitioners working at the intersection law, policy, health care, housing, education and public health. We, and the many others with whom we partner, could not have achieved all that we have without their leadership and guidance. We are deeply grateful for their service.



Adrian E. Dominguez
Chief Data Officer, Urban Indian Health Institute
A recognized expert in epidemiology with valuable knowledge of tribal and minority health, and experience working on critical public health issues including pediatric



Barbara Ferrer

A nationally known public health leader with over 30 years of experience as a philanthropic strategist, public health director, educational leader, researcher and community advocate.



Steven Gravely

Strategic and Legal Advisor to Health Care Organizations, the Gravely Group organizations for over 20 years in a full spectrum of health care legal issues.



Senior Vice President for Civic and Community Initiatives, Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce

Dedicated to advancing the health and wellness of his community, Mr. Hall leads the Kansas City Chamber's "Health KC" project, an initiative focused on making Greater Kansas City a destination for healthy living.



A recipient of more than 70 awards and honors for interdisciplinary accomplishments in medicine and public health, Dr. Koh served as Assistant Secretary for Health for



McClain Bryant Macklin

Director of Policy and Strategic Initiatives, the Health Forward Foundation Acknowledged for her extensive background in policy at local, state, and national levels with a focus on the nexus of health, economics, and equity, Bryant Macklin previously served as the Director of Policy and Research for the Greater Kansas City Civic Council and the Director of Policy for Mayor Sly James of Kansas City, Missouri.



John T. Monahan

Senior Advisor for Global Initiatives to the President of Georgetown University
A respected leader and advisor who has held senior leadership roles in
government, diplomacy, politics, philanthropy and academia, including the United
States Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of State, Capitol Hill and the Annie E. Casey Foundation.



Umair Shah

A nationally known public health leader with much experience at national, state and local levels. Dr. Shah served as the Executive Director and Local Health Authority for Harris County Public Health, the nation's 3rd largest county, and has also served as a Chief Medical Officer and an emergency department physician.



Aaron Wernham

An experienced family physician turned health policy advocate and expert, Dr. Wernham has worked with underserved communities at the state level and on



Kimberlydawn Wisdom

Senior Vice President of Community Health & Equity and Chief Wellness & Diversity Officer, Henry Ford Health System

A respected leader in efforts to improve the health of those disproportionately affected by poor health outcomes and a former member of President Obama's Advisory Group on Prevention, Health Promotion and Integrative and Public

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Our National and Regional Office Directors



Donna E. Levin
J.D., National Director
Before joining the Network, Ms. Levin spent over 25 years as general counsel at the
Massachusetts Department of Public Health.



Denise ChryslerJ.D., Director, Mid-States Region Office at the University of Michigan School of Public Health
A recognized expert in public health data and information sharing, Ms. Chrysler served for 20 years as assistant attorney general in Michigan.



James G. Hodge, Jr.
J.D., LL.M., Director, Western Region Office at the Arizona State University Sandra
Day O'Connor College of Law
Mr. Hodge provides leadership in addressing emergency preparedness and response
to public health threats, including infectious disease outbreaks like COVID-19 and Ebola.



Kathleen Hoke
J.D., Director, Eastern Region Office at the University of Maryland Carey School of Law
Ms. Hoke draws on her many years of experience as director of the Legal Resource
Center for Public Health Policy at the University of Maryland Carey School of Law,
a position she continues to hold.



Dawn Hunter
J.D. Director, Southeastern Region Office
An experienced legislative analyst and state health department policymaker, Ms. Hunter provides leadership in examining legislation impacting health and racial equity.



Jill Krueger
J.D., Director, Northern Region Office
Before joining the Network, Ms. Krueger served as assistant attorney general in the
Minnesota Attorney General's office and as senior staff attorney at Farmers' Legal
Action Group.

Our Funding

In fiscal year 2021 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021) the Network received \$3.5 million in core funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. We received an additional \$1.4M in project funding from government agencies, public health and philanthropic organizations, and earned income.

RWJF Core Funding	\$3.5M
Public Health & Other Philanthropic Organizations	\$1.1M
Earned Income Revenue Total	\$300 K \$4.9M

Program Services Strategic Consultation and Guidance	\$2.7M	\$4M
Research and Analysis	\$1.1M	
Knowledge Building & Training	\$125K	
Awareness & Connecting	\$75K	
Management and General Operations		\$400K
Expense Total		\$4.4M

Note: The financial information above is a general snapshot of the Network's overall revenues and expenses and does not represent an audited financial statement.

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The Network for Public Health Law

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Thank you to our partners and supporters

AARP

All In: Data for Community Health

American Bar Association – Public Health & Policy Interest Group

American Health Law Association

American Heart Association

American Immunization Registry Association

American Public Health Association

American Society of Law, Medicine & Ethics

Arnold Ventures

Association of State and Territorial Health Officials

ASU Center for Public Health Law and Policy

CDC Foundation

Center for Public Health Law Research at Temple University

Center for Secure and Modern Elections

Center for Sharing Public Health Services

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

ChangeLab Solutions

Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists

Data Across Sectors for Health

de Beaumont Foundation

East Side Health and Well-Being Collaborative

Food Safety Inspection Services of the USDA

Great Lakes Integrated Sciences and Assessments

Harris County Public Health

Health Impact Project

Illinois Public Health Institute

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Joint Public Health Informatics Task Force

Kaiser Permanente

Kresge Foundation

Lawrence/Douglas County Health Department

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

Michigan University

Minnesota Department of Health

National Action Agenda Legal Services Workgroup

National Association of Attorneys General

National Association of Chronic Disease Directors

National Association of County and City Health Officials

National Association of Local Boards of Health

National Association of School Nurses

National Center for Medical-Legal Partnerships

National Association of State and Territorial AIDS Directors

National Conference of State Legislatures

National Congress of American Indians

National Governors Association

National Health Law Program

National Network of Public Health Institutes

Newborn Screening Translational Research Network

NEXT Distro

Public Health Accreditation Board

Public Health Informatics Institute

Public Health Law Center at Mitchell Hamline School of Law

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Safe States Alliance

Satcher Health Leadership Institute

Stanford Medicine Center for Population Health Sciences

Stewards of Change

The Council of State Governments/Eastern Regional Conference

Transform Research Center

Trust for America's Health

UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health

University of Maryland Carey School of Law

University of Michigan School of Public Health

Voting Rights Lab

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Looking ahead: Building the Capacity of Agencies and Organizations to Protect Health and Promote Health Equity in Communities

Public health agencies and organizations are integral partners in community health. Throughout the pandemic, these entities have worked tirelessly to mitigate harms to individuals and families across the country. Tragically, for their efforts, public health officials are bearing the brunt of public animosity fueled by misinformation and political vitriol. Legislation has been proposed or passed in more than half of states to limit the ability of public health agencies to implement critical evidence-based disease response measures. In addition to endangering the health of millions of people during the current COVID-19 crisis, particularly communities of color who are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, these legislative actions have the potential to hamper public health efforts in a multitude of ways and for years to come.

In the coming year, the Network will launch an initiative with public health law partners to help health agencies retain and effectively exercise their public health authority to address infectious diseases and other public health threats. We will also focus our efforts on assisting public health agencies and their community partners strengthen their capacity to navigate and leverage law and policy to implement effective measures in health equity, COVID-19 response and mitigation, structural racism, access to health and mental health care, substance use treatment and harm reduction, food and housing security, and climate change and environmental health.

Through our legal technical assistance, consultation, trainings and other services, the Network will help increase awareness and knowledge among public health agencies and their community partners of the evidence-based laws and policies they can employ to improve public health; the extent to which they can use public health legal authority; legal options for responding to public health threats and concerns; and how to improve communication and coordination within and between public health entities.

