



2025 Annual Report

Evanston Department of Health and Human Services

Celebrating Over 150 Years of Public Health Service

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Letter from the Director

It is our pleasure to share our 2025 Health and Human Services Annual Report.

Highlights from the past year include:

- **Training 227 community members in Mental Health First Aid, increasing our community's capacity to respond to mental health crises with knowledge, compassion, and confidence.** As part of the Department's EPLAN goals, HHS partnered with the Naomi Ruth Cohen Institute for Mental Health Education to establish a mental health first aid series that provides training for community members on how to identify, understand and respond appropriately to signs of mental illness.
- **Stabilizing housing for over 200 Evanston households at risk of homelessness or displacement.** Providing housing stability, wrap-around services and addressing homelessness continues to remain a priority for the department. In 2025, staff worked to connect community members with vital housing resources.
- **Providing free COVID 19 and flu vaccines for over 200 residents.** Building on our past successes with increasing vaccine access for community members who may not otherwise be able to access them, the department hosted vaccination clinics at easily accessible community sites.
- **Conducting over 1100 disease investigations and responding to 18 disease outbreaks.** The Communicable Disease Prevention Unit works to limit and prevent the spread of diseases in the community through monitoring, education, surveillance, outbreak investigation, and response.
- **Piloting innovative new technologies to control rodents with minimal environmental harm.** This year we established a rat infertility program using non-toxic and all natural food and contraceptives to reduce rat population by making rats infertile, demonstrating our commitment to finding better strategies to supplement or potentially replace traditional methods such as the use of rodenticides.

The accomplishments of the past year outlined in this report would not have been possible without the dedication of our small but mighty staff, collaboration from our many partners, and the support of Evanston City Council. And, most importantly, our achievements would not have been possible without the Evanston community's strong support and commitment to public health.

Sincerely yours,

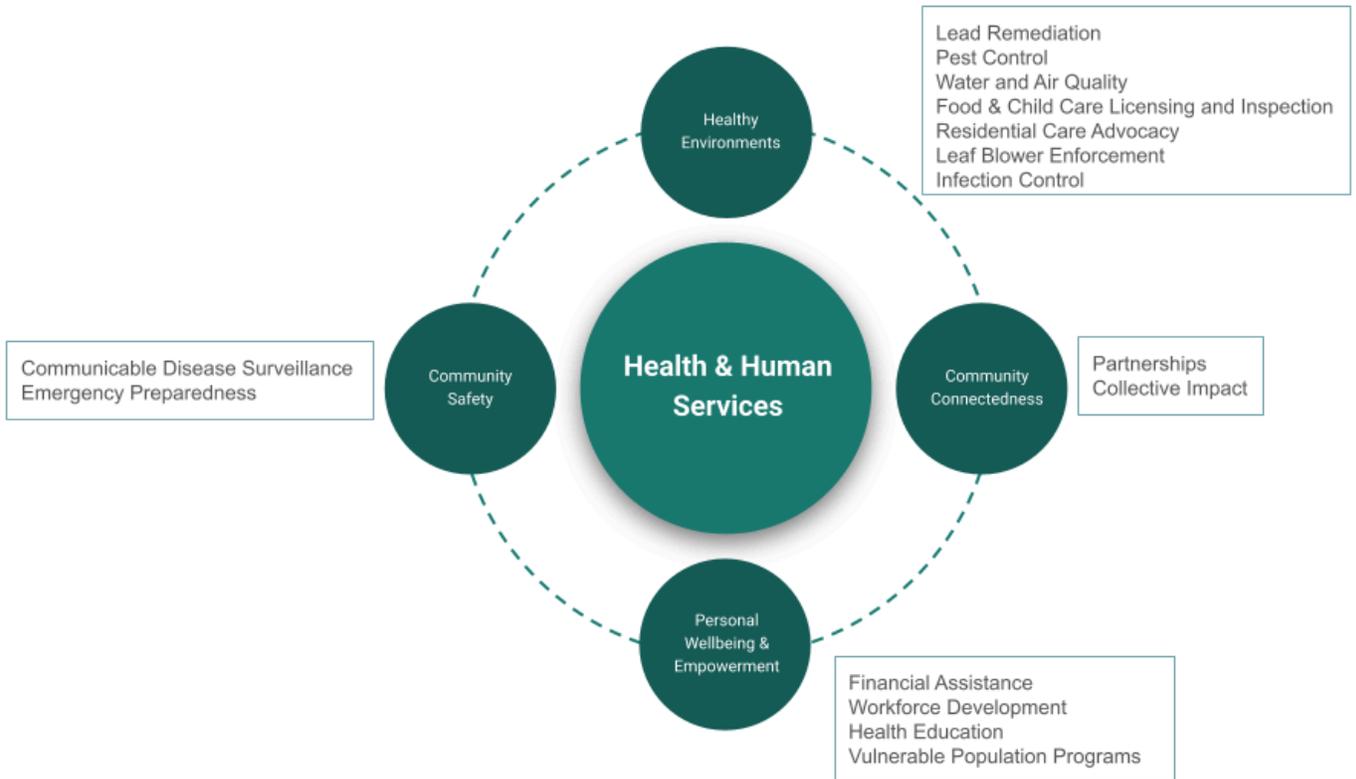


Ike Ogbo, MPH, LEHP
Director, Evanston Health and Human Services Department

About the City of Evanston Health & Human Services

The Health and Human Services Department's mission is to protect, preserve, and promote wellness for people who live, work, and play in Evanston through creative and sustainable partnerships. The Department is instrumental in improving and supporting the health and well-being of Evanston. We serve intentionally in partnership with residents and community stakeholders. The Health and Human Services Department's deliverables are based on the idea that health is influenced by more than just individual choices. One's physical and psychosocial environment, culture, and government all play a role in influencing and determining overall health. It is the Department's goal for the people of Evanston to experience significant gains in health and wellbeing. This will be achieved as our community works collectively to make the shift from a costly, crisis-oriented response to health and social service problems to one that focuses on prevention, embraces recovery, and eliminates inequities.

Health and Human Services Holistic Approach to Community Health



The model above demonstrates our holistic approach to protecting and advancing community health and wellbeing.

History of Evanston Health and Human Services

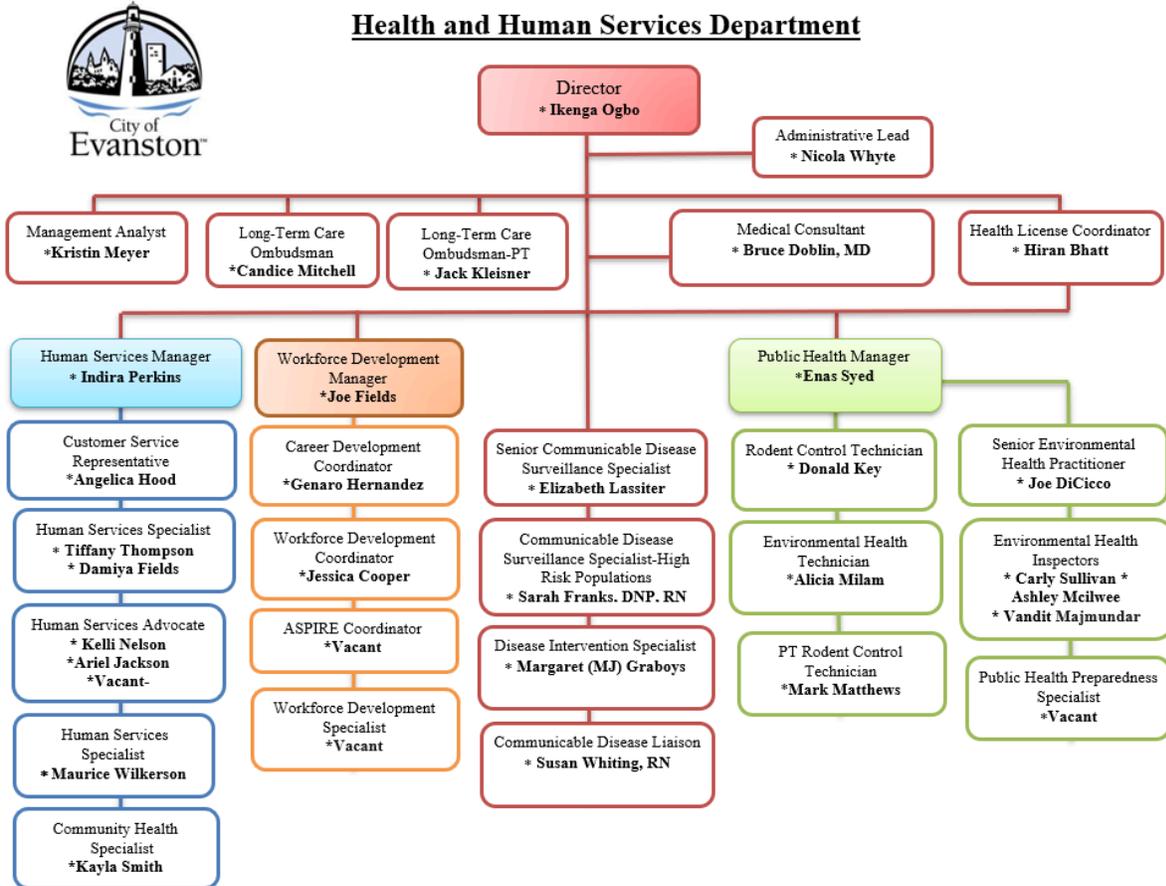
In 1874, a group of local physicians formed the first Evanston Board of Health in a building at 1806 Maple Ave, Evanston. Those doctors' actions were especially significant because the founding of the Board preceded the creation of the Illinois Board of Health. The first full-time health commissioner was not appointed until 1927 when the City's first comprehensive health ordinance was adopted. Initial services offered were sanitation and nursing, but as needed and demand grew, so did the Health Department.

In 1964, as the only Health Department in the area, our services extended to Glencoe, Winnetka, Northfield, and Kenilworth, and four years later to New Trier Township via a contract. We have had several name changes throughout the 150 years, but the services have remained steadfast. Our efforts were led by many distinctions, including Evanston's designation in 1933 as the healthiest city in its population class in the United States.

Today, our services still protect the community through food establishment licensing and inspection, communicable disease prevention, water safety, rodent control, health promotions including human service programs such as victim services, general/emergency assistance, workforce development and Ombudsman Programs, among many more services.

To view a timeline of our accomplishments over the past century and a half, please visit our [150th Anniversary Webpage](#).

Health and Human Services Organizational Chart



Public Health Division



Food Safety & Licensing

The Evanston Health & Human Services Department [licenses and inspects all Evanston facilities that prepare, process, serve, sell and store food](#) that will be consumed by the public, even if that is not the principal use of the facility. These facilities include restaurants, food stores, bakeries, convenience stores, schools, daycare centers, religious institutions, food processors and more. Additionally, HHS licenses and inspects [apiaries](#) and [hen coops](#).

In 2025:

- HHS issued 420 food establishment licenses.
- HHS performed 1100 inspections of food-handling establishments.
- HHS licensed 25 hen coops and 18 apiaries.
- HHS inspected 120 special events to ensure food safety protocol was being followed.
- HHS investigated and responded to over 20 food-related illnesses and complaints.
- HHS licensed one bodyart/ tattoo parlor, and one tanning facility in accordance with IDPH rules and regulations.

Tobacco Control

The Health and Human Services Department is committed to employ strategies, policies and activities to reduce tobacco use in Evanston that as a result will decrease deaths, hospitalizations and prevent chronic diseases associated with tobacco. Over the years the department has embarked on a number of interventions and legislation to promote tobacco cessation activities, create smoke free environments and develop actions to prevent youth from starting to use tobacco.

Evanston is known throughout the state as a trailblazer in tobacco control policy. Evanston was the first jurisdiction in the state to ban indoor smoking in public places and to raise the purchase age for tobacco products to 21. In both cases, other jurisdictions in Illinois increasingly followed suit until the policy was eventually adopted statewide.

In April 2024, Evanston became the first jurisdiction in Illinois to implement a [comprehensive ban on all flavored tobacco products, including menthol](#). As in the past, other jurisdictions throughout the state are beginning to look to Evanston's example and trying to replicate it in their area. Throughout 2025, Evanston HHS has provided technical assistance to multiple communities in Illinois interested in replicating this policy. This work is likely to pave the way for regional, and perhaps eventually statewide adoption, making Evanston once again a leader and influential player in tobacco control work throughout the state.

In 2025:

- Evanston achieved over a year of enforcement on its ban of the sale of flavored tobacco products.
- Evanston provided technical assistance to three jurisdictions interested in replicating its flavor ban policy.

Vector and Rodent Control

Insects, rodents, and other animals may be considered pests as they can present negative health effects to residents and can cause property damage.

In addition to our in-house rodent control activities, the department continued its partnership with the Northshore Mosquito Abatement District (NSMAD) in mosquito control. This partnership ensures that activities such as mosquito surveillance, source reduction, larval and adult mosquito control, and public outreach and education are provided and implemented. In 2025, there were no human deaths that might have resulted due to mosquito-borne diseases such as West Nile Virus.

Over the past year, we saw a rapid increase in an invasive species, the Asian Tiger mosquito (*Aedes albopictus*). Populations of this mosquito have grown exponentially in the area over the last 2-3 years. The best methods that were applied to control this type of mosquito included identifying the source of the habitat and eliminating the source.

The Department also partnered with the NSMAD in tick surveillance. Tick-borne illnesses are a public health challenge that requires monitoring for the species of ticks and pathogens present. Establishing a surveillance system with NSMAD has helped guide our public health responses

In 2025:

- Our environmental health technicians responded to over 680 [rodent-related complaints](#).
- Our continued partnership with the Northshore Mosquito Abatement District helped reduce risk of mosquito-borne diseases.
- HHS hired a tick surveillance intern responsible for active tick surveillance, sample collection to IDPH, and liaison with the Northshore Mosquito Abatement District in order to monitor tick-borne diseases and participate in educational outreach.

Beach Water Quality

Recreational beach water in Evanston is an open system, meaning contamination can come from a variety of sources. The water is tested daily in order to determine if it poses an increased risk of spreading illness. Last year, we implemented a new qPCR testing method providing confirmed results within 3-4 hours, an 80% decrease in wait time from our former testing protocol. The improvement was immediate in terms of being able to provide Evanston beach patrons with timely, accurate information on water safety and swimming conditions. A new flag warning system was also implemented to help visitors understand swimming conditions more effectively based on weather conditions such as lightning or high winds, high waves or water quality. Green indicates swimming is permitted with no restrictions, yellow indicates swim advisory in place and swimmers should use caution in water, and red indicates a swimming ban due to hazardous conditions. Flags are located on the lifeguard chairs in each beach. In 2025, a total of 21 beach water advisories were issued, alerting the community to use caution in water.

In 2025:

- HHS continued to benefit from modernization of its beach water testing system, resulting in timely guidance to the public on water safety.
- 620 water quality samples were collected throughout the beach season to monitor for the presence of microbial contamination.
- A total of 21 beach advisories were issued during the 2025 season due to microbial contamination.

Lead Abatement

Lead exposure is a major public health threat, particularly for young children and pregnant women. Even low levels of lead exposure can be harmful and potentially cause neurodevelopmental effects in children.

[Our HHS Environmental Health Practitioners are all licensed lead risk assessors that respond to and investigate cases of childhood lead poisoning.](#) Staff conduct a clinical interview with the parents to understand the health behavior, practices and nutrition of the child, as well as conduct an environmental risk assessment to identify potential lead hazards in the home and collect samples for lab analysis and confirmation.

If a lead hazard is present, staff work with the family and property owner to ensure the hazard is mitigated in a way that does not cause more contamination or negative health impacts. HHS also offers limited lead risk assessments for households with young children or pregnant women who live in a building built prior to 1978 when the US banned lead-based paint.

Effective on January 1, 2025, the Illinois Department of Public Health changed the intervention of Blood Lead Levels (BLL) from $\geq 5\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ (micrograms per deciliter of blood) to $\geq 3.5\ \mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$, in alignment with recommendations for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The State also expanded the age eligibility for environmental investigation and intervention from children 5 and under, plus pregnant women, to children 15 and under, plus pregnant women.

These changes resulted in a twofold increase in Elevated Blood Lead (EBL) cases and risk assessments for the health department compared to the previous year.

In 2025:

- HHS conducted risk assessment and mitigation activities for 28 households with children with elevated blood lead levels, an almost twofold increase from the previous year.
- HHS distributed over 60 educational materials on lead safety to families with children during the City's annual Trunk-Or-Treat event on October 31, 2025.

Communicable Disease

The Communicable Disease Unit is charged with protecting the Evanston community from infectious diseases. This is done primarily through [disease surveillance, outbreak response and education with the goals of preventing illness and controlling the spread of disease](#).

The Illinois administrative code provides the legal authority for health departments to follow up on reports of communicable disease cases. There are approximately 100 notifiable diseases and conditions in the state.

Anytime a person is diagnosed with one of those diseases or conditions, the LHD must be notified by law. Then, based on the disease, the LHD conducts an investigation to ensure the person, their contacts and the community are protected from the disease. Each year on average, the CD unit responds to over 600 cases of confirmed (non-COVID-19) communicable diseases, over 200 suspected cases of communicable diseases and many outbreaks. The unit is established not only to respond to existing communicable diseases, but to also respond to emerging and novel disease threats.

In 2025:

- HHS investigated over 1,100 reports of communicable diseases from providers, labs, congregate settings and schools/daycares, and led responses to 18 outbreaks including COVID-19, influenza, and norovirus.
- HHS conducted over 1,000 phone, email and in-person consultations to our long-term care and congregate living facilities on topics such as infection control, multidrug resistant organisms, respiratory disease prevention and control, and vaccinations.
- HHS provided education on STI prevention to an estimated 414 residents.
- Due to the large increase in measles cases seen nationwide in 2025, the CD team spent significant time preparing to see local cases. We worked closely with our clinics and hospitals to plan for safe and timely access to medical evaluations, measles testing, and post-exposure prophylaxis. We also answered questions from residents and responded to testing requests from providers. Evanston did not have any measles cases in 2025.

Health Promotion

Evanston HHS conducts many activities to educate the public on health issues, from mental health, to tobacco cessation, to the importance of physical activity. In 2025, HHS took a step to pilot resuming provision of direct clinical services through a one year pilot grant from the Evanston Community Foundation to partner with TBF Health and Ebenezer AME Church to provide basic clinical and diagnostic services to the community via the [Evanston Health Hub](#). While the Health Hub provided critical frontline care for a number of people who otherwise might not have received it, it did not receive high foot traffic. Following the pilot funding, the program is currently on pause as we work to secure a new funding source.

In 2025, HHS expanded its community health education and wellness programming offerings, including sponsoring a 3 week community-centered wellness series for 20 Evanston residents, providing domestic violence prevention education to over 100 high school students, and training 227 community members in Mental Health First Aid.

The Department worked on an effort to expand free access to COVID-19 and flu vaccines for Evanston community members who may otherwise face barriers to vaccination. Hundreds of Evanston community members were vaccinated through this effort.

In 2025:

- HHS received a pilot grant from the Evanston Community Foundation to partner with TBF Health and Ebenezer AME Church to provide basic clinical and diagnostic services to the community via the [Evanston Health Hub](#), providing services to 48 individuals who otherwise may not have received care.
- With \$50,000 in funding over a two year period from the City's Participatory Budget process, HHS began providing [Mental Health First Aid training](#) to community members and service providers throughout Evanston. In the first year of funding, 227 people were trained. Following the training, 98% of participants reported that they now have the knowledge to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health or substance use challenges that may impact adults.
- Over 330 community members participated in We're Out Walking, a sixteen week community fitness program.
- HHS partnered with the YMCA, Whole Woman Fitness, and Black Women of Evanston to provide a 3-week community-centered wellness series initiative focused on health education and practical tips to improve overall well-being to 20 participants.
- HHS victim advocates led educational presentations at three local schools as part of a targeted youth education initiative for Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Sessions focused on recognizing the signs of abuse, promoting healthy relationships, dispelling myths, and connecting over 100 students with supportive resources.
- In collaboration with the Reparations Committee and TAKiR, HHS distributed over 100 DNA kits to community members for the Family Roots Pilot Program, to provide African American descendants with the opportunity to explore their heritage through advanced genetic genealogy and deepen their connection to their ancestral history.
- HHS partnered with 3 local barbershops: Ebony Barbershop, Church Street Barbershop, and Reese's Barber Studio to offer thousands of free condoms to the community.
- HHS vaccinated over 200 community members against flu and COVID-19 through a series of free vaccination clinics.

Public Health Preparedness

The Evanston Health & Human Services Department has been responding to public health emergencies for over 140 years. Originally, these emergencies were limited to infectious disease outbreaks, but our scope has broadened to include planning, response, and mitigation of everything from deliberate releases of biological agents, to mass care and shelter needs, to

disaster psychology, family preparedness and epidemics of influenza or other prevalent communicable diseases.

Similar to the principles set forth by FEMA, [our work focuses on four main areas: mitigation, preparation, response and recovery](#). We strive to reduce the negative impacts of a disaster, while planning for a response in advance, so that we are better prepared in times of emergency. In order to protect Evanston's diverse population, we strive to integrate health equity principles within our planning and exercises to ensure health and safety for all community members.

HHS regularly collaborates with various City departments, local health departments, and the Illinois Department of Public Health's Office of Preparedness and Response. Our closest City partner is the City's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) housed in the Fire Department. In addition to public health threats, OEM provides extensive planning and response on health and safety threats including severe weather, hazard evacuation, incident management, disaster recovery, and more.

Our non-governmental partners include local healthcare coalitions comprised of hospitals, health centers, and EMS spanning from Cook County to Lake, Dupage, and as far as Dekalb, in addition to our local schools, businesses and congregate settings to ensure an effective whole community response.

In 2025:

- HHS maintains a robust network of 27 active and 53 reserve Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers who serve in medical and non-medical capacities during public health emergencies and health-related events as needed.
- HHS actively participated in 5 local, state, and regional training exercises tailored towards emergency response planning and coordination, as it relates to chemical emergencies, infection control, hospital surge support, emergency response communication and volunteer management.
- HHS trained over 26 department staff by executing a series of training workshops tailored towards Medical Countermeasures Point of Distribution site set up and Incident Command System (ICS).
- HHS planned and executed 7 local preparedness drills testing the capabilities of our department's emergency communication systems, mutual aid networks, radios, hospital resources and mass dispensing site activation.
- HHS participated in over 25 regional preparedness drills hosted by partners in the Northern Illinois Public Health Consortium which includes over 15 local health departments including City of Chicago, Village of Skokie, Stickney township, Village of Oak Park and counties as near and far as Cook and Kendall County.

Human Services Division



Financial Assistance

The City of Evanston is committed to promoting the highest quality of life for all residents by providing fiscally sound, responsive City services as allowed by law and delivering those services equitably, professionally and with the highest degree of integrity. The City of Evanston also provides extensive case management that may enable one to overcome life barriers in order to achieve sufficiency and to relieve uncontrollable circumstances threatening one's basic life needs. The City believes in "People Helping People" to change their lives, one person at a time.

General Assistance

[The General Assistance Program](#) is a locally-administered program that is mandated by the State of Illinois and funded by the taxpayers of Evanston. The City of Evanston General Assistance Program provides assistance to persons who are not eligible for any other state or federal financial assistance programs and who do not have income or resources to provide for their basic needs. The General Assistance program works in partnership with various City programs and community organizations to assist individuals with becoming employment-ready and self-sufficient.

Emergency Assistance Services

[The Emergency Assistance Services Program](#) is administered through the General Assistance Program and is available to all City of Evanston residents who meet income and asset guidelines as established by the General Assistance Office. The Emergency Assistance Program is operated and funded by the General Assistance Program and is provided according to adopted and written standards set forth by the General Assistance Program. Emergency Assistance can only be issued once in a 12-month period and must meet the definition of an "Emergency" or "Life-Threatening" situation (evictions, utility disconnections or food).

In 2025:

- HHS provided general assistance for 103 households.
- With support from the department, 9 households secured employment that allowed them to transition off general assistance.
- 90 households received emergency assistance services.
- 100 lower income households with young children received monthly guaranteed income payments.
- Staff worked on stabilizing housing and connecting housing resources for over 200 Evanston households.

Victim Services

[Victim Services](#) provides social services to crime victims and witnesses and to residents seeking social service assistance in non-crime situations. Services include:

- Crisis Intervention Counseling, Information and Resources for Crime Victims and Witnesses
- Medical Advocacy for Sexual Assaults, Domestic Violence and Physical Abuse cases.
- Referrals or Assistance in obtaining Orders of Protection

- Court Advocacy to assist victims and witnesses through the criminal justice system, including status on court dates and meetings with State's Attorney
- Assist Domestic Violence Victims with Warning Signs of Domestic Violence, Safety Planning and provide Shelter Referrals.
- Assist eligible Victims with filing for Monetary Reimbursement under the Illinois Crime Victims Compensation Act
- Personal Advocacy such as interceding with employers so that Victims and Witnesses may attend court and intervening with medical billing issues related to injuries sustained during crime
- Legal Resources and Referrals regarding Domestic Violence & Custody Issues

In 2025:

- HHS managed 1,363 Victim Services cases.
- HHS staff spent over 570 hours in court providing victim advocacy and support.
- HHS conducted 120 follow ups with significant others whose family members were victims of a crime.
- HHS staff responded to 21 after hours crisis calls, and 10 daytime crisis calls.

Long-Term Care Ombudsman

Mandated by the federal Older Americans Act and the Illinois Act on Aging, the [Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program](#) protects and promotes the rights and quality of life for people who reside in long-term care facilities, such as nursing homes and specialized mental health rehabilitation facilities. This is done through regional ombudsmen who have a hands-on working relationship with the residents and staff of the facilities within their program areas.

Long-Term Care Ombudsmen protect, defend and advocate for residents by informing residents and their families of their rights, resolving complaints, providing information on residents needs/concerns to their families, facility staff and their community; and advocating for high-quality, person-centered, and individualized care.

In 2025:

- The ombudsman conducted 170 facility visits, and provided information and assistance to 609 residents.
- The ombudsman facilitated 60 resident council meetings, over 40% higher than the expected state number.
- The Ombudsman Program closed 98 cases for residents
- The Ombudsman Program attended 30 outreach events to promote advocacy for residents in congregate living placements.
- The ombudsman program facilitated a monthly Evanston Community Resources Coalition, designed to create deeper collaboration among local partners who serve seniors and populations living with disabilities. Featured presenters included speakers from the following agencies: North West Center for Sexual Assault (NWCASA), Open

Communities, Connections for Homeless, Meals on Wheels, Japanese American Service Committee (JASC), CJE SeniorLife, City of Evanston Property Standards, City of Evanston City Policing Unit, Alzheimer's Association, Impact Behavioral, Adult Protective Services, and YMCA.

- The Ombudsman Program participated in legislation to successfully mandate Automated Emergency Defibrillators (AEDs) in Assisted Living Facilities (ALFs). This measure is designed to improve outcomes when emergencies require additional measures to simple cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

Workforce Development Division



The City of Evanston's [Workforce Development Division](#) aims to support local businesses and develop a diverse skilled workforce by empowering, educating, training and equipping participants with the skills required to obtain sustainable career and advancement opportunities leading to economic prosperity in Evanston.

Division priorities include:

- Expand workforce opportunities for underserved populations in the City of Evanston and the broader community, particularly 18 to 30 years old.
- Reduce barriers that prevent job seekers from successfully entering the workforce by empowering Evanston's underserved community members that are unemployed, underemployed, have disabilities or reentering citizens impacted by the carceral system.
- Enhance public-private partnerships through better connectivity and alignment.
- Increase the opportunities for Minority and Women-owned businesses (MWDEBEs) to thrive and grow in Evanston.

The Evanston Workforce Development Division is committed to supporting local businesses and fostering a diverse, skilled workforce by empowering, educating, and connecting residents with training opportunities. These efforts aim to equip individuals with the in-demand skills required for sustainable careers and advancement, contributing to economic prosperity.

The division's ongoing commitment to addressing the employment needs of the community has produced significant outcomes, reinforcing its dedication to developing a skilled workforce. Moving forward, the division aims to build upon these successes and continue serving as a vital resource for job seekers and employers alike. Gratitude is extended to the staff, community partners, employers, and participants for their continued support and commitment to workforce development. Together, these efforts are making a tangible difference in the lives of individuals and the growth of the community.

In 2025:

- The workforce division has been responsible for the direct employment/or job training placement of 61 Evanston residents.
- The workforce division made direct resource referrals (i.e. vacant employment opportunities, job training opportunities, food and housing insecurity resources, expungement resources, etc.) for 72 Evanston residents.
- In collaboration with Community Partners for Affordable Housing and the Evanston Public Library, the Getting Your House in Order – Homebuying Workshop Series delivered an eight-week program designed specifically for African American individuals and families. The series integrated historical context, cultural awareness, and practical financial strategies to create a comprehensive learning experience. Through two facilitated cohorts, 14 participants completed the program and gained the knowledge and tools needed to pursue sustainable homeownership.

ASPIRE

[In collaboration with Endeavor Health, Evanston Township High School, and Oakton Community College, the division expanded the range of activities for this initiative.](#) This comprehensive exploratory program offers high school students and community members opportunities to pursue careers in healthcare through job shadowing, internships, and scholarships.

In 2025:

- This past year, the ASPIRE program has been quite active. The program concluded the first quarter with its annual Spring Break Job Shadow Week, in partnership with Evanston Township High School (ETHS) and Endeavor Health. This past year, we hosted the largest number of participants to date, with 20 students from grades 10-12 participating. Each student participant received a stipend of \$300 for their participation.
- Furthermore, we successfully presented the inaugural ASPIRE Healthcare Community Scholarships. Eight Evanston students, enrolled in seven different colleges and universities across the nation, were awarded Spring '25 grants ranging from \$1,875 to \$5,000. These combined funds, amounting to \$22.5k, are intended to alleviate the financial burden for these students.
- During the past summer, our internship program attained a significant milestone by hosting its largest cohort to date, enrolling 62 participants. Following the conclusion of the internship, four participants secured employment with Endeavor Health System and remain employed.
- Through the Endeavor Health Community Investment Fund, The ASPIRE Evanston Program received additional funding of \$150,000 in 2025 and \$100,000 in 2026, which will have a profound impact on our ability to deliver transformative services, including paid job shadows and internships, scholarships, and staffing support. These resources will enable us to enhance our programs' reach and ensure its sustainability.

Evanston Local Employment Program

The intent of the LEP is to have qualified Evanston Residents employed at the construction site as laborers, apprentices and journeymen in such trades as electrical, HVAC, carpentry, masonry, concrete, finishing, truck drivers and other construction occupations necessary for the project. According to the city ordinance, for any successful bidder awarded a capital improvement project over \$250,000, they are required to employ an Evanston resident for at least 15% of all hours worked at the construction site by construction trade workers.

In 2025:

- This program has employed 16 community members (14 union trade members and 2 non union trade members) for municipal capital improvement projects and three community members received union dues assistance for 2025.

Interdepartmental Workforce Trainings

In collaboration with the City of Evanston's Public Works Department - Public Services & Water Production Division, the Workforce Development Division has placed four people within entry level apprenticeship positions for 2025. All four apprentices have completed their six-month employment review and are still employed.

Workforce Development Worker - Lead Service Line Apprenticeship

This program is an entry-level manual labor workforce development initiative, providing on-the-job training for lead service line replacements (city-owned), as well as maintenance and repair of the municipal water distribution and sewer conveyance systems, and pavement. Program activities include participation in lead service line replacements, street, sidewalk, alley, and parkway repairs and restoration, water/sewer line leak detection, and water/sewer system maintenance and repair. Two residents were hired as apprentices, and they completed their six-month employment review in December 2025.

Cross-Departmental Collaborations



Guaranteed Income

This program is a collaborative effort between HHS and the City Manager's Office. In response to EPLAN findings detailing disproportionate harm resulting in poor health and economic outcomes in Census Tract 8092, City Council voted to allocate \$150,000 of ARPA funds towards creating a [Guaranteed Income program](#) for this area, called Project 8092.

To date, we are providing monthly stipends to 101 households with young children in Census Tract 8092. Participants report strong satisfaction with the program.

Envision Evanston 2045 Comprehensive Plan

Health and Human Services played a key role in the development of the [Envision Evanston 2045 Comprehensive Plan](#), supporting community outreach efforts and authoring a chapter outlining health goals for the City over the next 20 years. The Comprehensive Plan was officially adopted on January 26, 2026.

Sustainability

Health and Human Services and the Division of Sustainability and Resilience partnered closely on a number of efforts over the past year to address threats to environmental health.

Public Education and Enforcement of Ban on Plastic Bags and Bag Tax

HHS partnered with the Sustainability and Resilience team to provide public and retailer education on benefits and compliance directions for the [2023 Retail Single Use Bag Tax and Plastic Bag Ban](#). The 2023 ordinance was a derivative of the City of Evanston Climate Action and Resilience Plan (CARP), which aims to eliminate petroleum-based, single-use products by phasing out the use of single-use plastics by 2025. The implementation of this action draws Evanston closer to its environmental goals by encouraging source reduction and minimizing the direct impacts of pollution, water use, greenhouse gas emissions, and litter. In 2025, HHS enforced compliance with the ordinance, and the City collected \$226,052 in revenue from the

single use bag tax, which was allocated to the City's Solid Waste Fund and to the Department of Health and Human Services.

Green Homes Initiative

HHS partnered with the Sustainability and Resilience team on project management and planning for the [Green Homes initiative](#), a pilot residential retrofit program that offers Evanston homeowners and rental properties no-cost health and safety improvements, along with energy conservation and efficiency upgrades, with the goal of creating green development and healthier living spaces while increasing affordability by reducing utility costs. This initiative was highlighted as a key strategy in our 2022 EPLAN to advance our goal of making housing healthier and greener without unintentionally contributing to gentrification. In March 2025, the initiative completed its first all-electric home retrofit for a home in the Fifth Ward.

Environmental Equity Investigation

HHS partnered with the Sustainability and Resilience team on the City's [Environmental Equity Investigation](#), a project designed to document current environmental injustices in our community and to engage the community in creating strategies to advance environmental equity across our city. The Environmental Equity Investigation Report was adopted and placed on file by City Council on January 12, 2026.

Participatory Budgeting Projects

In March 2022, the Evanston City Council Participatory Budgeting Committee allocated \$3 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to the participatory budgeting process, which provided an opportunity for community members to propose and vote on community improvement ideas that would improve community wellbeing, health, and vibrancy. Of the seven initiatives funded through this process, three were initiatives created with input and collaboration from HHS.

Mental Health First Aid Training

The City allocated \$50,000 of ARPA funding to support [mental health training](#) for community members and local service providers who frequently interface with the community. In the first year of this two year program, 227 community members received Mental Health First Aid training, increasing our community's capacity to identify and respond to mental health crises with knowledge, compassion, and confidence. Following the training, 99% of participants reported that they are likely to have a supportive conversation with an adult experiencing signs and symptoms of a mental health or substance use challenge or crisis, and 98% reported that they now have the knowledge to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health or substance use challenges that may impact adults.

The Affordable Rental Housing Program

Community Development and Health and Human Services Department staff collaborated on the Affordable Rental Housing Assistance program, which allocated \$810,000 to help Evanston residents who are unstably housed and vulnerable to displacement due to the high cost of renting in Evanston to be placed in stable housing.

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