

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

2026 Director's Award Criteria For Excellence in Local Public Health

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is accepting nominations from local health departments for the 2026 Director's Award. This year's award recognizes local health departments (LHDs) that are using innovative approaches to improve health, well-being and equity. Successful awardees will demonstrate they are using innovative approaches by addressing health behaviors, community safety, built environment, and/or social/environmental factors.

The program, intervention or policy has:

1. **Adopted and adapted strategies to combat the evolving leading causes of illness, injury, and premature death.** *Example: Preventing and responding to today's leading causes of illness and death: heart disease, cancer, respiratory illness, stroke, and unintentional injuries and overdoses.*
2. **Developed strategies for promoting health and well-being that work most effectively for communities of today and tomorrow.** *Example: Tapping new strategies to more effectively confront and reduce health disparities and using health equity approaches that specifically improve health in poorly resourced areas.*
3. **Identified, analyzed, and distributed information from new and/or real time data sources.** *Example: Using data from novel sources or in innovative ways to address social, economic, and/or environmental determinants of health. This includes using data in innovative ways (or from new sources) to inform public health policy, action, or decision-making toward improved health outcomes.*
4. **Built a more integrated, effective health system through collaboration between clinical care and public health.** *Example: Forming close and interactive relationships with clinical providers and health insurers within the jurisdiction/municipality to increase efficiency and achieve better outcomes.*
5. **Collaborated with a broad array of partners, including those at the neighborhood level and the non-health sectors, to build health and more vital communities.** *Example: Engaging with public and private community stakeholders to form vibrant structured cross-sector partnerships to foster shared funding, services, governance, and collective action. This entails working beyond a limited circle of partnerships, utilizing cross-disciplinary collaboration, and forging close partnerships with non-health oriented organizations.*

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARATION OF THE NOMINATION

1. Application must be no longer than five (5) pages. Only one program (application) per local health department will be considered.
2. Application must contain a minimum of three of the five sections that directly correspond to the Director's Award criteria for excellence in local public health.
3. One complete electronic copy of the application transmitted as an email attachment, is due to MDHHS Local Health Services to MDHHS-LocalHealthServices@michigan.gov by: **5:00 pm EST on Friday, June 12, 2026.**

SELECTION PROCESS TIMELINE

- June 12, 2026: Submission deadline for all applications.
- June 26, 2026: Completed review of applications by the 2026 Director's Award Application Review Committee.
- July 10, 2026: All applicants notified of their application status.
- October 8, 2026: MDHHS Director's Award presentation at the Michigan Premier Public Health Conference.