

2025



Annual Report



**St. Joseph County
Department of Health**

County-City Building
227 West Jefferson Boulevard
South Bend, IN 46601
Phone: (574) 235-9750





Letter to the Community

2025 was a year of meaningful progress and community impact for the St. Joseph County Department of Health. The department strengthened partnerships with schools, healthcare providers, and local organizations. This collaboration helped to expand access to maternal-infant health education and support, preventive services, and lead and radon testing. Public health programs saw increased participation, reflecting growing community need and trust. Investments in data-driven planning and modernized services continued to improve our responsiveness and efficiency, while nursing outreach efforts brought resources directly to neighborhoods. Overall, 2025 marked a year of steady growth, collaboration, and a renewed commitment to building a healthier St. Joseph County.

—Michelle Migliore DO



Dr. Michelle Migliore
Health Officer

2026 GOALS FOR THE SJC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Our focus for 2026 is to strengthen organizational performance through four key pillars:

- **Accountability:** Ensure clear ownership of responsibilities and measurable outcomes across all units.
- **Transparency:** Promote open access to information and decision-making processes to build trust internally and externally.
- **Communication:** Enhance timely, clear, and consistent communication channels to improve collaboration and stakeholder engagement.
- **Efficiency:** Streamline workflows and optimize resource utilization through incorporating technology and best practices to deliver high-quality services with minimal waste.



Vision

Optimal health for a thriving St. Joseph County.

Mission

To promote health and wellness with compassion and integrity through partnerships, education, protection, and advocacy for all who reside in and visit St. Joseph County.



Board of Health

The Board of Health sets policy and oversees the Department of Health. It is composed of community members appointed by the mayors of South Bend, Mishawaka, and the County Commissioners.

CHAIRMAN—John W. Linn, PE

VICE CHAIRMAN—Elizabeth Lindenman, MD

COUNSEL—Marcel M. Lebbin, Esq.

MEMBERS—Robert Hays, MD, Michael A. Harding, EdD, Ellen Reilander, Esq., Jill Kaps VanBrouaene, Kristin Lynn Vincent, CNM



Our Team

Administration

Health Officer | Michelle Migliore, D.O.
Consultant | Diana Purushotham, M.D.
Director of Operations | Michael Wruble
Director of Finance | Amy Ruppe
Executive Administrative Assistant | Jennifer Parcell
Data Analysts | Brandon Gary, Peter Duffy

Environmental Health

Director | Briannah McCall
Assistant Director | Kara Dishman
Administrative Assistant | Melanie Martinez
Staff Assistant | Jozie Mikel
Environmental Health Specialists | Amelia (Amy) Lyczynski, David Ekkens, Jessica Dilling, Katey Myers, Leila Burley-Sanford, Patrick Sovinski

Nursing

Director | Ashley Helman
Assistant Director | Michelle Haluda
Administrative Assistant | Mary VanVooren
School Health Liason | Hope Eck
Lead Coordinator | Micaela Enright
Disease Investigation Specialists | Fran Woodcox, Loida Acosta
Public Health & Immunization Nurses | Lauren Gunderson, Lori Montgomery, Abby Maxwell, Stephanie Swanson
Registrars/Medical Assistants | Ana Otero-Torres, Delores Washington, Judi Shehan, Marisol Cruz-Casteneda

Community Access, Resources, and Education (CARE)

Director | Renata Williams
Assistant Director | Alissa Balke
Administrative Assistant | Amy Schnick
Health Promotion Specialists | Lindsey Stevenson, Tiffany Chukwuma
Maternal/Infant Health Coordinator | Chaquisha Jordan
Perinatal Education & Program Coordinator | Nancy Coiro
CHW Supervisor | Brandy Anderson-Willis
Community Health Workers (CHWs) | Andrea Romo, Jessica Robinson, Jonathan Carmona, Kim Dreibelbeis, Koraima Lopez-Santacruz, La Rhonda Hosea, LaShawna Love, Maria Canul, Virginia Solis

Food Services & Pool Program

Director | Carolyn Smith
Assistant Director | Karen Teague
Administrative Assistant | Sarah DeFreeuw
Staff Assistant | Jasmine Seay
Food Safety Inspection Officers/CPOs® | Jacob (Jake) Parcell, Jamie Young, Kaitlyn Hammes, Lynette Wesby, Meagan McNinch, Sara Schaefer

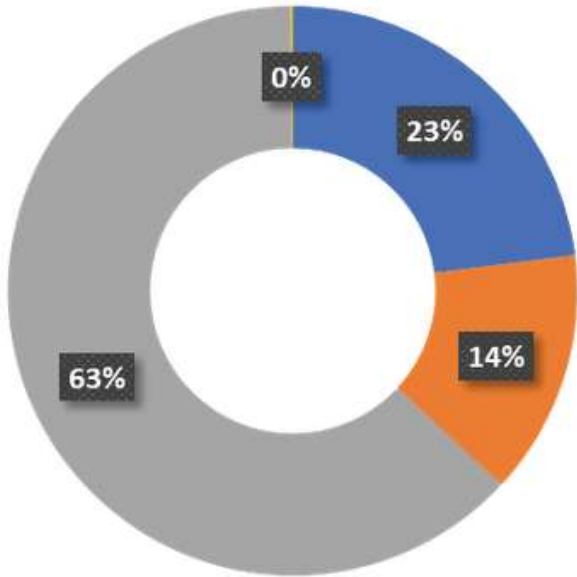
Vital Records

Director | Ericka Tijerina
Assistant Director | Denise Kingsberry
Registrars | Angie Weatherspoon, Lisa Murray, Shannon Koziatsek

Left the Department

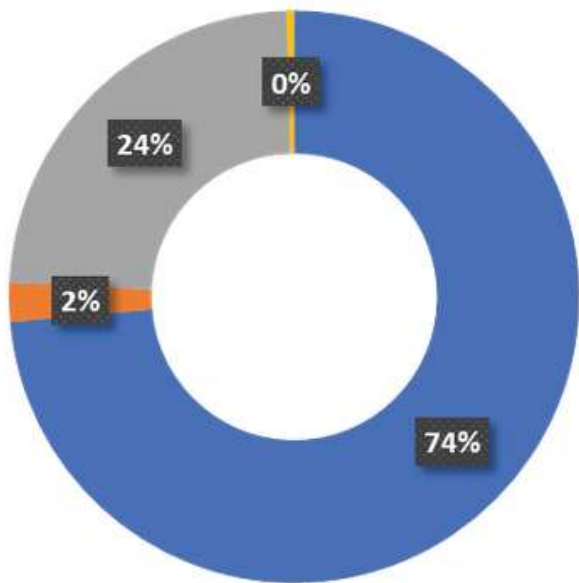
Andrea Tobar, Andrew Toney, Barbara James, Benjamin Torres, Brett Davis, Cameron Harris, Danielle Sims, Deborah Hahn, Emily Miller, Gloria White, Jeffery Murawski, Jenna Rose, Josiah Hartman, Kayla Clemons, Kayla Mondich, Mark Espich, Matthew Gotsch, Melissa Papp, Page Dewald, Paula Sulentic, Veronica Escobedo, Vicki Figueroa

Financials



2025 REVENUE BUDGET

- Levy support = \$2,643,654.12
- Fees for Service, Licenses & Permits = \$1,602,146.81
- Contracts & Grants = \$7,235,179.84
- Other = \$15,291.00



2025 EXPENDITURE BUDGET

- Salary & Benefits = \$5,698,654.46
- Supplies = \$170,234.20
- Other Services & Charges = \$1,840,490.44
- Capital = \$33,374.38

Communications



COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

The Department of Health utilizes a wide range of communication strategies to increase awareness of our programs and communicate important health information to the public:

- We maintained regular contact with local news and media organizations, providing expert commentary and updates on our programming.
- We continued to develop new flyers, brochures, and educational materials in 2025. Over the year, 47 requests were processed for new, updated, or reprinted materials. To the greatest extent possible, materials were designed or updated to also be “web-friendly” in order to be attractive and eye-catching when displayed online.
- Our website traffic continues to be active. Over 59,000 people sought our website for information, and the average visitor clicked on approximately 3 pages with each visit in 2025. Importantly, our event count was well over half a million. Event counts are an indication of how much visitors interact with your website beyond simply clicking the page. We have retained high user engagement, such as scrolling for more information, clicking links to other portions of our website, downloading information, etc.
- Our goal of developing more video education was met via a short series of videos regarding Radon education. Starting in January, videos focused on explaining what radon is, why it is a concern, how to test for it, and how to mitigate the risk, were published on our website and social media.

2026 GOALS

Our goals in 2026 for communications are to continue to engage the public on social media and to continue development of engaging virtual and printed materials. We plan to re-launch a departmental Instagram page, as we have identified this platform as having the most potential reach to populations we serve.

SOCIAL MEDIA

In 2025, we achieved our goals of increasing our internet and social media presence and raising awareness of health topics in areas we have identified as priorities. Facebook is our primary social media platform, and we saw a rise of 78.1% new followers compared to 2024. Additionally, our content interactions rose by 167.7% over 2024 numbers, and we saw a substantial rise of 704.1% of more visitors clicking links in our posts as they encountered our content. We actively posted about events, programming, health education and related topics. Popular topics included our EMBER programming, the CARE Resource Fair and the Lakeville Health & Wellness Fair in August, Radon Action Month in January, Immunization events, and our School Health Liaison programming. We highlighted information on topics such as nutrition, Lyme disease, cold and hot weather health concerns, lead awareness, flu, and measles.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

- Press Releases: 10
- Printed Materials Requested: 47
- Webpage Views: 187,077
- Active Users: 59,562
- Views Per Active User: 3.14
- Event Count: 556,654
- Facebook:
 - Views - 3.1 M
 - Link Clicks - 19,740
 - Page Visits - 18,618
 - Content Interactions - 9,696
 - New Followers - 520
 - Total Followers - 7,624



Community Access, Resources, and Education (CARE)



CHRONIC DISEASE COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER (CHW) PROGRAM

The Chronic Disease (CD) CHWs assist community members in St. Joseph County with accessing resources to support their health and wellbeing. The CD CHWs build relationships with residents and community organizations while providing insurance navigation, resource referrals, and outreach events for residents. To participate in this program, community members filled out a Social Needs Assessment (SNA) through our website or partner organizations. In 2025, 667 individuals filled out an SNA requesting assistance accessing community resources. In total, the CHWs assisted 433 people, connecting them to 874 resources, and helped 139 residents apply for insurance. Those who were ineligible for insurance were referred to health providers offering sliding-scale services.

We are excited to announce the launch of our new Chronic Disease CHW program in the first quarter of 2026. This initiative shifts our primary focus toward chronic disease prevention through health education and free community health screenings. These screenings will include A1C, cholesterol panels, BMI, and blood pressure, as well as connections to primary care services and health insurance. To ensure a successful launch, our team dedicated the final quarter of 2025 to specialized training and transitioning our workflows while closing out the previous SNA project.



To broaden the awareness and impact of our programs, CARE Unit staff regularly engage in community outreach. These efforts include hosting lead awareness events, attending community health outreach events, canvassing, and making regular visits to partner sites. In 2025, our team participated in 605 outreach activities.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

- Conducted 667 Social Needs Assessments
- Provided social support resources to 433 St. Joseph County residents
- Provided insurance assistance to 139 St. Joseph County residents
- Participated in 605 outreach activities



Community Access, Resources, and Education (CARE)



The Chronic Disease Education Program offers community-based health education presentations on hypertension, diabetes, nutrition/obesity, and fall prevention. These sessions simplify the definitions of these chronic conditions, provide prevention strategies, and deliver essential information for those diagnosed. The goal is to promote community health and enhance understanding and awareness of these chronic medical conditions. In 2025, our Chronic Disease Health Promotion Specialist taught 25 classes in the community, engaging a total of 297 total participants.

HEALTH PROMOTION

The Mental Health and Substance Abuse Education Program aims to educate the community about addiction, substance use, mental health, and available resources. Our Mental Health and Substance Abuse Health Promotion Specialist participates in events to provide education on these topics and reduce the associated stigma. In 2025, we provided 2 Mental Health First Aid and 34 naloxone training sessions to community members and organizations. We installed 30 new naloxone boxes and distributed 7532 doses of naloxone throughout the community to ensure this lifesaving medication is readily accessible.



NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

- 7532 doses of naloxone distributed to community members & partners
- 30 Public Access Naloxone Cabinets installed

Classes held:

- 5 hypertension classes
- 4 diabetes classes
- 9 nutrition classes
- 7 Fall Prevention classes
- 34 naloxone training sessions
- 2 Mental Health First Aid sessions



CARE: Maternal & Infant Health



The CARE Unit has several initiatives designed to improve the mental and physical health of women and infants in St. Joseph County, including our Perinatal Lead Poisoning Prevention, EMBER, and Maternal and Infant Health (MIH) CHW programs.

The Maternal and Infant Health (MIH) CHWs support women in St. Joseph County who are pregnant or recently gave birth by providing relevant health education, insurance navigation services, connection to prenatal care providers, and referrals to other resources as identified through SNAs. The St. Joseph County Department of Health has an ongoing collaboration with Women's Care Center (WCC) to provide two MIH CHWs to serve clients at three WCC facilities. We also have a home visiting program, in which MIH CHWs provide education and additional support for women before, during, and after birth. In 2025, MIH CHWs served 207 clients. For 92 of these individuals, it was their first pregnancy. 17 clients were classified as high risk due to current or past medical conditions. Overall, MIH CHWs received 198 social needs assessments (SNAs) which reported 543 social needs and assisted 180 individuals in applying for or switching to a pregnancy insurance plan.

The Perinatal Lead Poisoning Prevention Program focuses on assessing and mitigating potential lead hazards in residential homes during and after pregnancy. We aim to address these hazards before the child is born and begins exploring their environment. In 2025, our Perinatal Education and Program Coordinator referred 27 mothers to our licensed lead risk assessor in the SJCDoH Environmental Unit.

The Empowering Mothers & Babies Through Education & Resilience (EMBER) program is designed to equip and empower women who are pregnant or of childbearing age with essential information for a safe and healthy pregnancy. The maternal education classes cover a range of subjects to promote positive maternal and infant health outcomes, including nutrition, exercise, safe sleep, maternal mental health, management of preexisting medical conditions, and recognizing pregnancy warning signs. The program also offers a postpartum peer support group, providing resources and emotional support to women during and after pregnancy. In 2025, we engaged with 103 unique women and 26 support people, with a total of 1362 participants across all classes and support groups.



NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

- Supported 207 pregnant clients
- Assisted 180 pregnant individuals with insurance navigation
- Supported 92 first-time mothers
- Referred 27 pregnant women to lead home risk assessments
- 1362 maternal education and support group attendees



Emergency Preparedness

EMERGENCY SUPPORT FUNCTION

The St. Joseph County Department of Health is responsible for supporting Emergency Support Function (ESF) 8 for the county. ESF 8 involves health-related aspects of emergency planning, and as part of this preparation the Department hosted two informational meetings to encourage communication among county and city agencies and first responders. We also held two communication drills with the same groups to ensure open lines of communications during future emergency events.

Additionally, Our Public Health Coordinator worked with our Nursing Unit and Ducomb Center to hold a Point of Dispensing Drill. This drill allows us to work with a county partner department to simulate what our emergency response would look like should we have an actual emergency where medical supplies, medications, and/or immunizations must be distributed quickly to the community. Although our drill went well, it was still an opportunity to practice our response and learn where we can be more efficient and effective in the future.

ASSISTING OUR COMMUNITY

In 2025, we provided a total of 348 COVID test kits at no cost to community members and partner agencies. We also distributed a total of 292 hygiene kits to local agencies that provide assistance to the homeless or in unstable living situations. The kits included basic hygienic items to allow individuals to maintain cleanliness and the basics of good health as they navigate their housing situations.



In 2025, our focus remained on fostering partnerships to protect residents of St. Joseph County. We actively worked with the Indiana Department of Health, and local emergency management, first responders, and community groups.

LOOKING AHEAD

2025 was a year of transition for Preparedness. This was due in part to a large reduction in the Health First Indiana funding, which impacted our ability to employ a full-time Public Health Coordinator. Over the summer and fall, those duties have been transitioned to our CARE Unit and will be shared by two staff members. Our emphasis in 2026 will be to continue to support our ESF-8 response, develop additional Point Of Dispensing relationships to allow us to better distribute emergency supplies to the public, and to continue to develop needed relationships with agencies and groups to enhance our ability to help protect St. Joseph County residents.



NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

- COVID Tests Provided: 348
- Emergency Preparedness Drills: 2
- Emergency Support Function Meetings: 2
- Hygiene Kits Provided: 292
- Point of Dispensing Drill: 1



Environmental

RADON

The EPA estimates that 1 in 15 homes in the United States will have elevated radon levels, but the current statistic for St. Joseph County is 1 in 4. The Environmental team partnered with all libraries located within St. Joseph County, and together distributed 834 free radon kits through the Radon Free Homes Initiative. Of the 834 kits distributed to the public, 322 were completed and sent for analysis. This gives us a return rate of 39%. However, of the 322 analyzed kits, 104 had failing results, meaning roughly 1 in 3 homes tested had elevated levels of radon. To help decrease the risk of radon exposure in the community, the Environmental team provided free remediation systems for 54 of those 104 homes.



MASSAGE

To better protect the public health and safety of those who visit and work in massage establishments in St. Joseph County, the Environmental team revised Chapter 113 of the County Ordinance. A few of the several key revisions include harsher penalties for establishments that utilize unlicensed therapists, therapists and/or establishments that indicate false information on applications, and therapists and/or establishments that advertise explicit ads. This is the Department's best effort to prevent human trafficking and protect public health.



VECTOR

Continuing the success of the Vector program's development in 2024, 2025 was spent redesigning key aspects of the program to ensure it aligns with the Indiana Department of Health recommendations. We will be moving forward with more of a preventative approach, with an emphasis on larvicidal treatment and spraying.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

- Conducted 103 lead risk assessments
- Conducted 935 septic inspections/ consultations
- Conducted 108 Wellhead Protection Area inspections
- Conducted 88 routine massage establishment inspections and 40 tattoo/body piercing establishments
- 844 complaint responses regarding housing (pests, cleanliness, water shutoff, waste disposal)
- Sent 431 Orders of Abatement

Food Services & Pool Program

FOOD SERVICES

Mid April, IDoH rolled out the long-awaited revised code 410 IAC 7-26, with 35% changes from the previous code and instructions that as regulators, the emphasis was to be education over enforcement relative to the top changes. Education resulted in longer inspection times, and although the 2793 routine inspections completed in 2025 was 12.9% fewer than the 3206 inspections completed in 2024, all permitted establishments received at least one compliance inspection that also included discussions relative to new code changes and distribution of printed handouts detailing the changes. Safeguarding the consumer's health and wellness remained the goal of all inspections.



In 2025, our dedicated team of inspectors and administrative staff navigated innumerable challenges and changes with ever-increasing commitment, compassion, and competency. The unit celebrated victories and even took a few blows...but as a team, we persevered remembering St. Joseph County Department of Health's vision of Optimal health for a thriving St. Joseph County.

TEMPORARY EVENTS

327 temporary events were registered with our department in 2025. These transitory gatherings, held in conjunction with a single event or celebration, resulted in 685 inspections. Food vendors operating at temporary events must adhere to the same food safety rules and requirements as any daily food operation. Food prepared and served during temporary events can present greater risks for potential contamination and improper food handling due to increased environmental conditions.

POOL PROGRAM

119 pool inspections were conducted, which includes spas, therapy pools, and recirculating splash pads in addition to traditional pools.

77 pool closures were documented either during an inspection due to a required "reason to close" or for failure to meet weekly bacteriological water sampling standards. Four complaints were investigated regarding bacteriological water quality and water clarity.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

- Service Complaints: 174
- Food Store Complaints: 34
- Perfect Inspections certificates: 846
- Abatement Correspondence: 15
- Opening Inspections: 118
- Retail Inspections : 2793
- Temporary Events: 327
- Temporary Inspections: 685
- Possible Food Borne Illness Investigations: 0
- Smoking Complaints: 2
- Fire Investigations: 9
- Pool Inspections: 119
- Pool Consultations: 1
- Pool complaints: 4
- Pools Closed: 77



Lead Poisoning Prevention

Our multi-unit Lead Program consists of the Nursing, Environmental Health, and Community, Access, Resources, and Education (CARE) units at the St. Joseph County Department of Health. We utilize a collaborative approach to provide lead-related services to St. Joseph County residents to prevent and combat the harmful impacts that lead poses to young children.



COMBINED EFFORTS

The three units of the Department of Health's Lead Program collaborated on several projects to strengthen the community's awareness of lead poisoning. We hosted a conference for daycare providers in St. Joseph County to discuss childhood lead poisoning, ways to mitigate lead exposure, and to build relationships with local childcare providers. We also hosted two events during National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week to bring community members together to increase awareness and test children for lead.

The **ST. JOSEPH COUNTY** DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH presents

Test and Treat

3-7pm on
October 21st @
 The Charles Black Center
 AND
October 23rd @
 OneRoof Southeast
 Neighborhood Center

NURSING

The Disease Investigation Specialist/Lead Program Coordinator receives all elevated blood lead levels (EBLLs) from the Indiana Department of Health and assigns each case to either a Public Health Nurse (PHN) or a Lead Community Health Worker (CHW) to investigate. Our PHNs received five new case management investigations with confirmed lead levels of 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ or greater in 2025. Our Lead Program Coordinator presented to five healthcare provider offices to educate their staff about the importance of lead testing and reporting.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

The Licensed Lead Risk Assessors completed 103 risk assessments in 2025, with 41 of those assessments being in response to a case managed child, and 62 from parent requests. Additionally, they performed 88 property clearances.

COMMUNITY, ACCESS, RESOURCES, AND EDUCATION (CARE)

The Lead CHWs work with families to provide community-based lead screenings, education, case management/case monitoring services, and support for the social needs of families with children who have EBLLs. In 2025, the Lead CHWs participated in 73 lead events and tested a record-breaking 500 children for EBLLs. The Lead CHWs received 178 case monitoring investigations and 27 case management investigations in 2025.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

- Lead Managed Cases ($>5 \mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$): 32
- Lead Monitoring Cases ($3.5\text{--}4.9 \mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$): 179
- Risk Assessments: 103
- 73 lead poisoning prevention events
- 500 children tested for lead



Nursing



PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING

The Public Health Team works closely with health care providers to ensure appropriate follow-up and continuity of care for individuals diagnosed with communicable diseases. Staff contact patients directly to conduct interviews, provide education, and support timely treatment to reduce the spread of illness. The team also responds to animal bite exposures by contacting affected individuals, assessing risk, and encouraging appropriate medical evaluation and treatment. In 2025, the team managed 1,030 communicable disease cases. In addition, Public Health staff provide ongoing case management for individuals with elevated blood lead levels greater than 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$, coordinating care and monitoring progress to support improved health outcomes.

TUBERCULOSIS (TB)

The Tuberculosis (TB) Team provides directly observed therapy (DOT) and case management for individuals with active TB disease and latent TB infection. Medications are provided at no cost through the St. Joseph County Department of Health. The team works closely with immigrants and refugees with TB Class B status to ensure compliance with CDC requirements.

In addition, the TB Team conducts education and contact tracing for individuals exposed to active TB and serves as a resource to local health care providers for TB-related guidance and support.

In 2025, the team increased TB screenings by more than 80% through skin and blood testing, allowing for earlier identification and more timely treatment of St. Joseph County residents.

SCHOOL HEALTH

In 2025, the School Health Program continued to support all K–12 schools across the county through a combination of in-person services and remote assistance. Staff provided 568 individual contacts through trainings, community resource coordination, and phone/email support related to infectious disease guidance and hearing, vision, and dental screening referrals. The program supported 147 schools with essential items, including clothing, hygiene and food supplies, health materials, and lifesaving Narcan medication. We also concluded our community partner program with the Phair Foundation, supplying 85 participating schools with resources that resulted in more than 60,475 hours of classroom time saved.





Nursing

IMMUNIZATIONS

In 2025, our South Bend Immunization Clinic and Mobile Team expanded vaccine access across the county, with a focus on underserved populations and community-based care. The program added 13 new community partners and delivered services through mobile, workplace, school-based, pop-up, and fixed-site clinics, reducing barriers related to time, transportation, and access. The South Bend Immunization Clinic experienced increased demand this fall, remaining fully booked for several months and serving a higher volume of individuals while maintaining access to essential vaccines.

The Mobile Team established a monthly community-based partnership to provide vaccine education and on-site administration of vaccines. Additional efforts included tuberculosis skin testing at local businesses, ERV clinics held during Food Bank distribution hours with strong turnout, 35 school-aged clinics, and 90 total clinics. The team also conducted multiple vaccination events in long-term care settings. In 2025, our team administered 6,464 vaccines to 2,984 individuals, providing compassionate, high-quality care and supporting the prevention of vaccine-preventable disease.



NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

- Mobile Clinics Conducted: 90
- Immunizations Provided: 6,464
- Number of Individuals Immunized: 2,984
- Active TB Case Management: 11
- Latent TB Case Management: 78
- Directly Observed Therapies (DOT): 1185
- TB Nurse Visits: 317
- Lead Managed Cases (>5ug/dL): 32
- Lead Monitoring Cases (3.5-4.9ug/dL): 179



Vital Records



As a division of St. Joseph County Government, we are dedicated to delivering accessible, efficient, and customer-focused service. Residents and authorized requesters can obtain certified records through convenient in-person services, secure online ordering options, and traditional mail requests. Each method is designed to ensure accuracy, confidentiality, and compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

BACKGROUND AND UPDATES

The St. Joseph County Vital Records Unit is responsible for the accurate maintenance, preservation, and issuance of official birth and death records for events occurring within St. Joseph County. Our record-keeping history dates back to 1882, reflecting more than a century of commitment to safeguarding vital information for our community. Over the years, our processes have continually evolved to align with advancements in technology, updated State mandates, and best practices in public records management.

RECENT UPDATES AND ENHANCEMENTS

In support of our ongoing digital transformation efforts, we have introduced modern kiosk stations within our office. These self-service stations provide customers with a streamlined, user-friendly, and environmentally conscious option for ordering records. By reducing paper usage and improving processing efficiency, the kiosks represent an important step toward a more sustainable and technology-driven service model. Throughout all services and improvements, we remain committed to upholding State, Federal, and Local regulations. Our priority is to provide accurate, secure, and timely records while maintaining the highest standards of professionalism and customer care.



Additional services offered by the Vital Records Unit:

- Establishment of Paternity (by appointment): Assisting parents with the legal process of establishing paternity to ensure accurate birth record documentation.
- Minor Corrections to Birth Certificates: Facilitating eligible amendments to correct clerical errors and maintain the integrity of official records.
- Expanded Access to Death Certificates: St. Joseph County now provides the ability to obtain an Indiana death certificate for deaths occurring after 2020, regardless of the county of origin within the state, offering greater convenience to families and legal representatives.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

- Total Births: 4175
- Total Deaths: 3176
- Births Records Issued: 14779
- Deaths Records Issued: 16604
- Corrections/Amendments: 31
- Correction/Amendment Copy: 1
- Genealogy: 12
- Paternities: 43
- Paternity Copy: 96



Health First Indiana (HFI)

HEALTH FIRST ST. JOSEPH COUNTY

During 2025, SJCDoH partnered with a cross-section of community partners to improve numerous health outcomes across St. Joseph County. This was accomplished via our Health First St. Joseph County program, which was funded by Health First Indiana. We focused on various Core Services in Access and Linkage to Clinical Care, Chronic Disease Prevention, Infectious Disease Surveillance and Prevention, Maternal and Child Health, School Wellness, and Tobacco Prevention and Cessation.

Awarded grants funded local programs that included:

- Helping to provide partial or full dentures to those in need.
- Nutrition classes to teach better and affordable food choices to vulnerable populations.
- Health screenings and education programs for chronic health conditions to the elderly and at-risk populations.
- Kiosks to increase access to infectious diseases testing.
- Outreach to increase STI testing and awareness.
- New youth sports programs to increase young student participation in physical fitness activities.
- Peer support programs to address mental health concerns for at-risk mothers and children.
- Programs to increase home visits for at-risk new mothers and their children.
- Programs to provide education to prenatal, pregnant, and postpartum women.
- Distribution of meals to children in need.
- Programs to teach gardening and importance of nutrition to school age children.
- Tobacco cessation and vaping education at schools and youth-serving organizations (*Note: This program ended in June 2025 related to state mandated changes in funding rules for these programs*).



NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

- \$1,289,848 total grants to local community partners' programs
- \$50,000 for Access & Linkage to Clinical Care programs
- \$548,944 for Chronic Disease Prevention programs
- \$125,000 for Infectious Disease Surveillance & Prevention programs
- \$416,139 for Maternal & Child Health programs
- \$130,500 for School Wellness programs
- \$19,265 for Tobacco Prevention & Cessation programs


Health First Indiana (HFI)

ASSISTING OUR COMMUNITY

Health First Indiana funding in 2025 allowed us to support several initiatives within our department that directly made positive impacts on local health outcomes.

Examples of our impact include:

- HFI funded several initiatives for our CARE program, including our EMBER program which promotes child safe sleep practices. We provided cribs and safe sleep sacks for babies, provided educational classes and programs, and distributed over 1,000 educational items to our local hospitals.
- 2025 immunization rates for children aged 19-to-35 months rose to 61.5% from 57.7% in 2024 (an increase of 3.8%). We emphasized use of our mobile immunization team to increase access to our services.
- Lead surveillance increased to 18% of the population of children aged 6 and under in 2025, up from 15.3% in 2023. We tested 500 children in 2025- an increase of 100 more than in 2024. We also provided a lead conference for county daycare providers to increase awareness of the dangers of lead.



ST. JOSEPH COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

GIVE YOUR BABY ROOM TO BREATHE

Babies should ALWAYS sleep **A**lone, on their **B**ack, in a **C**rib

Keep your baby away from all types of smoke

Breastfeed sitting up, and set an alarm if you're tired

No toys, blankets, bedding, or pillows in the crib

Room-share, don't bed-share

GIVE YOUR BABY ROOM TO BREATHE
With the ABCs

Alone, on their Back, in their Crib

For more information:
 (574)-235-9750, Opt 8
 MIH@sjcindiana.gov
<https://www.sjcindiana.gov/>

Scan here



BY THE NUMBERS: A bountiful summer harvest.

This summer, the **Growing Together Garden** grew 17 different fruits and vegetables for meals served at St. Margaret's House! This project is made possible through a collaboration of the Purdue Extension Master Gardeners and Unity Gardens. We are so very grateful for their hard work and especially: the delicious bounty.



LOOKING AHEAD

2026 will be challenging as Health First Indiana funding received deep cuts from the Indiana legislature. This will prevent us from funding community partners with grants for their programs. However, we will continue to use HFI funding to focus on internal DoH programs that benefit our community. We will partner with community agencies in other non-monetary efforts to increase education and awareness of public health related issues. Our very successful EMBER classes will expand in 2026 and offer online maternal and child health classes. We will continue to address chronic health conditions in our county. We will work towards raising immunization rates in the county, and to increase measles outreach specifically through our school health liaison working with our county's schools.