



# NACCHO Survey of Local Health Departments' Budget Cuts and Workforce Reductions

## Background

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) surveyed 2,422 local health departments nationally in November–December 2008 to assess the impact of current economic conditions on local health departments' budgets and workforce. The survey, to which 1,079 local health departments distributed across 46 states responded, found that a majority of respondents are experiencing adverse impacts and expect those to continue next year.

## Jobs Provided By Local Health Departments are Dwindling

In 2008, more than half of local health departments have either laid off employees or lost them through attrition and have been unable to replace them due to budget limitations. About one-third predict layoffs in 2009. Among the largest health departments, 84 percent reduced their staff in 2008, and 45 percent expect to lay off staff in 2009. Extrapolating the survey results to all local health departments, there has already been an estimated total loss of between 3,000–6,000 local public health workers nationally, and those numbers will increase in 2009.

## Local Health Departments' Budgets are Eroding

Nationally, 27 percent of local health departments are working under a current budget that is less than the previous year, and 44 percent expect to do so next year. The impact falls disproportionately on health departments serving large jurisdictions, of which two-thirds expect next year's budget to be lower than this year's. For local health departments in large jurisdictions that experienced budget declines this year, the median budget reduction was \$1.5 million.

The burden of declining budgets also is falling disproportionately on health departments in certain states. More than 50 percent of the local health departments in nine states (Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia, and Vermont) have already experienced cuts. More than 80 percent in 10 states anticipate cuts next year (Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia, Vermont and Washington).

**TABLE 1: PERCENTAGE OF LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS REPORTING STAFF REDUCTIONS (BY JURISDICTION POPULATION)**

Jurisdiction Population	Percentage of Local Health Departments that:			
	Laid Off or Lost through Attrition in 2008	Laid Off Staff in 2008	Lost Positions through Attrition in 2008	Expect to Lay Off in 2009
All LHDs	53%	21%	46%	32%
<25,000	31%	15%	21%	21%
25,000–49,999	46%	15%	41%	25%
50,000–99,999	62%	19%	56%	40%
100,000–499,999	77%	34%	70%	51%
500,000+	84%	40%	83%	45%

**TABLE 2: PERCENTAGE OF LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS REPORTING DECLINING BUDGETS (BY JURISDICTION POPULATION)**

Jurisdiction Population	Percentage of Local Health Departments Reporting Declining Budgets	
	Current budget compared to prior year	Next year's budget compared to current year
All LHDs	27%	44%
<25,000	22%	38%
25,000–49,999	19%	38%
50,000–99,999	25%	45%
100,000–499,999	37%	55%
500,000+	44%	67%

# NACCHO

National Association of County & City Health Officials

The National Connection for Local Public Health



Public Health

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

NACCHO is the national organization representing local health departments. NACCHO supports efforts that protect and improve the health of all people and all communities by promoting national policy, developing resources and programs, seeking health equity, and supporting effective local public health practice and systems.

1100 17th St, NW, 2nd Floor Washington, DC 20036

P (202) 783 5550 F (202) 783 1583

[www.naccho.org](http://www.naccho.org)