



City of Racine  
**Public Health Department**

# 2024

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

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# Department Overview

## MISSION

Provide comprehensive services, education, and advocacy for the protection, promotion, and improvement of community health and the environment.

## VISION

Achieve a high quality of life for everyone within the City of Racine through vibrant partnerships that create:

- Healthy People
- Healthy Environment
- Healthy Community

## VALUES

**Integrity:** Ensure honesty, fairness, and ethical behavior in every service delivered.

**Professional Excellence:** Achieve and maintain quality outcomes through continuous assessment, improvement, and training.

**Accountability:** Take full responsibility for actions and performance.

**Professionalism:** Promote development of highly qualified, skilled, and accountable staff.

**Commitment to Service:** Provide excellent services unconditionally and without partiality.

**Diversity:** Respect and understand differences, value the worth and dignity of each person and the importance of treating all people in a non-judgmental manner.

**Accessibility:** Promote access to healthcare services and reduce disparities in health outcomes for all citizens.

**Advocacy:** Provide leadership to promote optimal health through education and the development of public health policies and programs, raising community awareness and promoting healthy lifestyles.

**Teamwork:** Encourage active collaboration to solve problems, make decisions, and achieve common goals.

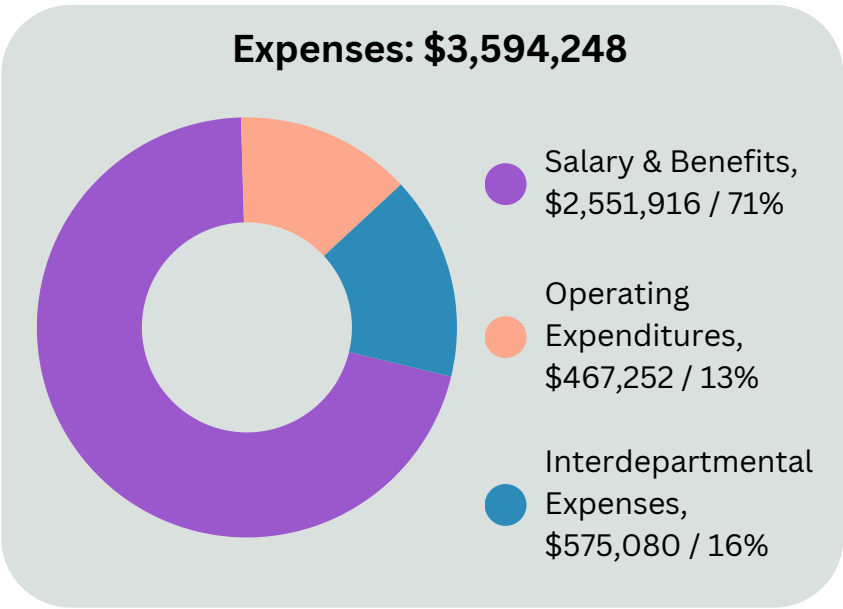
**Empowerment:** Create a culture that encourages people to exercise their judgment and initiative in pursuit of organizational goals.

**Collaboration:** Build and maintain strategic alliances and work together with other organizations in order to assess and understand emerging public health needs within the community.

**Respect:** Recognize and honor the contributions of one another in daily activities and create an environment where diversity is appreciated and encouraged.

OPERATING BUDGET

City tax levy, Federal and State grants, and various fees provide operational funds for the Public Health Department. For expenses, the majority of the Public Health Department’s budget is allocated to salary and benefits for personnel, followed by interdepartmental expenses (building operational expenses) and operating expenses (budgets for supplies, training, contracted services, etc.).



MEDICAL ADVISORS

Medical oversight of the Public Health Department’s services and programs is provided by licensed physicians. The Department’s two Medical Advisors provide expertise and guidance on procedures, policies, and programs, ensure compliance with regulations, develop and authorize medical orders for delegated functions, and advise on public health matters as necessary.

- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Robert M. Gullberg, MD</b> | <b>General Public Health Operations</b> |
| <b>Crystal D. Ruffin, MD</b>  | <b>Reproductive Health Services</b>     |

BOARD OF HEALTH

The Board of Health is responsible for ensuring the enforcement of state and local public health laws and regulations, and for adopting rules to implement the policies established by the Common Council. The Board of Health provides oversight for the Public Health Department’s operations.

The City of Racine Board of Health meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 4:30 PM.

- |                               |                       |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Sarah Fouse, PhD, RN</b>   | <b>President</b>      |
| <b>John Brennan, MD</b>       | <b>Vice President</b> |
| <b>Maurice Horton</b>         | <b>Alderman</b>       |
| <b>Olivia Turquoise-Davis</b> | <b>Alderman</b>       |
| <b>John Berge, PhD</b>        | <b>Member</b>         |
| <b>Jaya Phookan, MD</b>       | <b>Member</b>         |
| <b>Laura Martinez</b>         | <b>Member</b>         |
| <b>Betty Brown</b>            | <b>Member</b>         |

PERSONNEL

Administration

**Public Health Administrator**  
Dottie-Kay Bowersox, MSA

**Deputy Public Health Administrator**  
Bobbi Fergus, MSN, RN

Community Health Division

**Community Health Director**  
Cody Pearce, MPH, CPH, LRA

**Community Health Coordinator**  
Sarah Clemons, BS, CHES

**Epidemiologist / Preparedness Coordinator**  
Valentin Calvillo, MSGH

**Public Health Educators**  
Kendra Krebsbach, MPH  
Kaitlyn McKnight, MPH

**WI Well Woman Program Coordinator**  
Rosalyn Smith, BS

Environmental Health Division

**Environmental Health Director**  
Sadie Schuldt, MPS, RS/REHS, CPI, LRA

**Sanitarians**  
Erin Cimbalknik, RS/REHS, CPO, LRA  
Ciara Rahn, MS, REHS/RS, CPO, LRA  
Quinn Shannon, BS, CPI

**Research Assistant**  
Brook Miller, BS, CPI

**Administrative Assistant**  
Wynn Brown

**Public Health Nurses**  
Tamra Black, BSN, RN  
Gina Brehm, BSN, RN  
Susan Chiapete, BSN, RN  
Lauren DeVries, MSN, RN  
Nolan Gundlach, BA, BSN, RN  
Sandra Hansen, BSN, RN  
Jane Laurent, BSN, RN  
Susan Merrill, BSN, RN

**Technical Assistants**  
Leonor Espinoza  
Mary Rodman

Laboratory Division

**Laboratory Services Coordinator**  
Stephan Kurdas, MUP, REHS/RS, CPI, LRA

**Research Assistant II**  
Jennifer Creekmur, AS, CPO

**Research Assistant III / Grant Coordinator**  
Adrian Koski, MS

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND QUALIFICATIONS

Personnel completed a wide variety of trainings, certifications, and refreshers in 2024, covering topics including emergency preparedness, child passenger safety, harm reduction, food safety, and lead risk assessments. Beyond trainings, the majority of employees hold one or more certifications (i.e. Certified Health Education Specialist), licenses/ registrations (i.e. Registered Nurse or Registered Environmental Health Specialist), and/or advanced degrees.

Ongoing educational and training opportunities ensure personnel provide the highest level of service for the community across all Divisions, programs, and services.

2024 Highlights

150+  
TRAININGS COMPLETED

81%  
ADVANCED DEGREES,  
LICENSES, AND/OR  
CERTIFICATIONS

# Community Health Division

The Community Health Division enhances health and well-being for those who live, work, and play in Racine through services and programs that provide prevention, education, and access to care. The City of Racine Public Health Department promotes health equity with programs that ensure all residents have access to necessary health care services, such as immunizations, childhood blood lead testing and education, and a wide range of services within the Sexual & Reproductive Health Clinic.

Further programming, including child passenger safety seat installations, safe sleep education, and harm reduction programming, aim to reduce disparities, meet community needs, and create a safer environment where injuries and illness are prevented. Through comprehensive outreach, support, and services, a healthier and more resilient community can be created.

## Community Health Activities



**3,432**

Narcan Doses  
Dispensed



**162**

Car Seats  
Installed



**768**

Immunizations  
Provided



**671**

STI Clients  
Served



Public Health Department staff participate in health observance and awareness days, bringing attention to issues such as opioid overdose and heart health while promoting programs to address these issues.

## WISCONSIN WELL WOMAN PROGRAM

The Wisconsin Well Woman Program (WWWP) assists women ages 40 to 64 who are uninsured or underinsured and meet program guidelines to receive important breast and cervical cancer screenings. WWWP pays for mammograms and pap tests and necessary follow up work, ensuring clients receive these services at no cost. The program also connects participants with the Well Woman Medicaid program, which pays for cancer treatments as needed. This ensures screenings and treatments are accessible to all participants.

The Wisconsin Well Woman Program at the City of Racine Public Health Department serves women across Racine County as well as suburban parts of Milwaukee County (areas outside the City of Milwaukee).

### 2024 Highlight

**410**

WOMEN SERVED

### 2024 Highlights

**2**

NEW HIV PS  
STAFF TRAINED

**16**

HIV PS CASES  
MANAGED

## HIV PARTNER SERVICES

HIV Partner Services (PS) works with people living with HIV (PLWH) to provide notification of test results, referrals, and other services. The HIV PS program consists of highly trained staff including Public Health Nurses and Public Health Educators.

Partner Services staff assist PLWH in notifying partners of potential exposure, work to connect them with additional testing, and ensure individuals are enrolled in medical care and other needed services. The program provides education, counseling, and support to promote healthier outcomes for those affected by HIV.

## TUBERCULOSIS SKIN TESTS

Tuberculosis (TB) is a highly contagious disease caused by the *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* bacteria. It generally affects the lungs, but can also infect other parts of the body. More than 10 million people were infected with TB worldwide in 2023 and more than 1.25 million died from it, making it the deadliest infectious disease in the world in 2023.

The City of Racine Public Health Department provides TB skin tests to screen for potential TB infection. Skin tests are used when someone may have been exposed to TB, as well as to screen for infection.

### 2024 Highlight

**376**

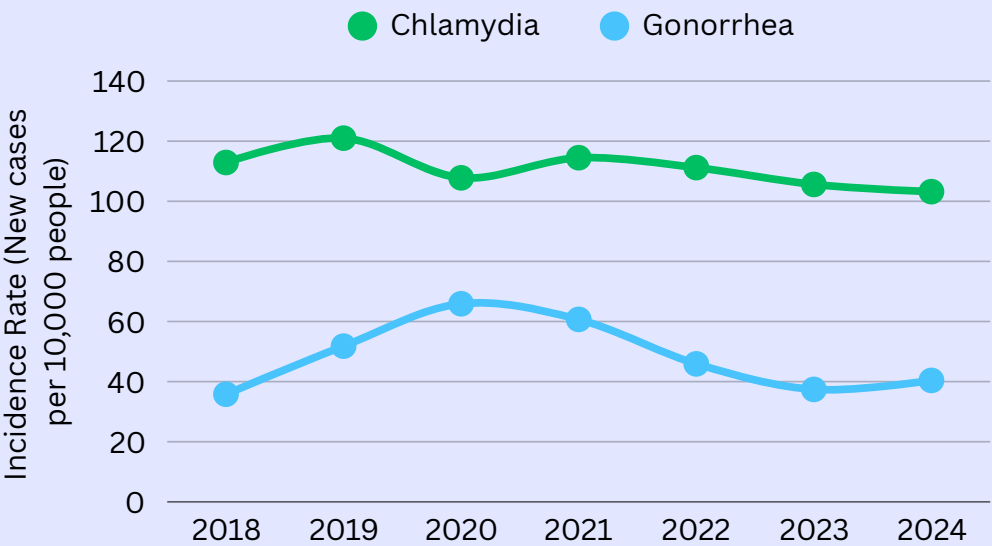
TESTS ADMINISTERED

# SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CLINIC

Sexual health is crucial for overall well-being, encompassing physical, emotional, mental, and social aspects. The Public Health Department’s Sexual & Reproductive Health Clinic (SRHC) offers confidential care to help clients maintain optimal sexual and reproductive health. Regular screenings are vital, as some infections can be asymptomatic.

Services include Sexually Transmitted Infection and HIV testing, treatment, and/or referrals, pregnancy testing, emergency contraception, birth control, and free sexual health supplies such as condoms. Timely care and education aim to reduce disease transmission, prevent unplanned pregnancies, and enhance community health. In 2024, the HIV PrEP Navigation program was launched. This program assists HIV negative individuals in accessing pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) medications to prevent HIV transmission. The program uses grant funding to pay for laboratory services for uninsured clients.

STI Incidence Over Time



## 2024 Highlights

**671**  
CLIENTS SERVED

**11,000+**  
CONDOMS  
DISTRIBUTED

## 2024 Highlights

**765**  
IMMUNIZATIONS  
ADMINISTERED

**329**  
PEOPLE VACCINATED

Immunizations protect individuals and the community by preventing or limiting the spread of diseases such as influenza, measles, hepatitis, and COVID-19. Some diseases, such as smallpox, have even been eliminated from parts of the world after successful, widespread vaccination campaigns. Vaccines are rigorously tested and shown to be safe and effective prior to entering widespread use.

The Public Health Department provides vaccines through the *Vaccines for Children* and *Vaccines for Adults* programs. These initiatives ensure people who have limited or no health insurance or those meeting strict eligibility criteria can still access these basic prevention services.

## IMMUNIZATIONS

# CHILDHOOD INJURY PREVENTION PROGRAMS

The City of Racine Public Health Department is dedicated to reducing the occurrence of preventable childhood injuries and fatalities. This is primarily achieved through comprehensive safe sleep education programs and child passenger safety initiatives.

The Public Health Department employs a team of four Child Passenger Safety Technicians (CPSTs) and one CPST Instructor. All are highly trained to guide caregivers on the correct installation and usage of car seats. They also provide education about potential hazards that may exist inside the vehicle. For families in need, the Department also offers low-cost car seats to further improve child safety across Racine County.

The Public Health Department also employs four staff members trained in providing safe sleep education. They teach the basics of safe sleep, ensuring infants have a secure sleeping environment at home. For eligible families with infants under one year old, the program supplies portable cribs along with other necessary items to promote safe sleeping practices.

These initiatives collectively aim to create a safer environment for children living in Racine County, reducing infant and child mortality rates within the community.

## 2024 Highlights

2

ADDITIONAL CPST & SAFE SLEEP EDUCATORS TRAINED

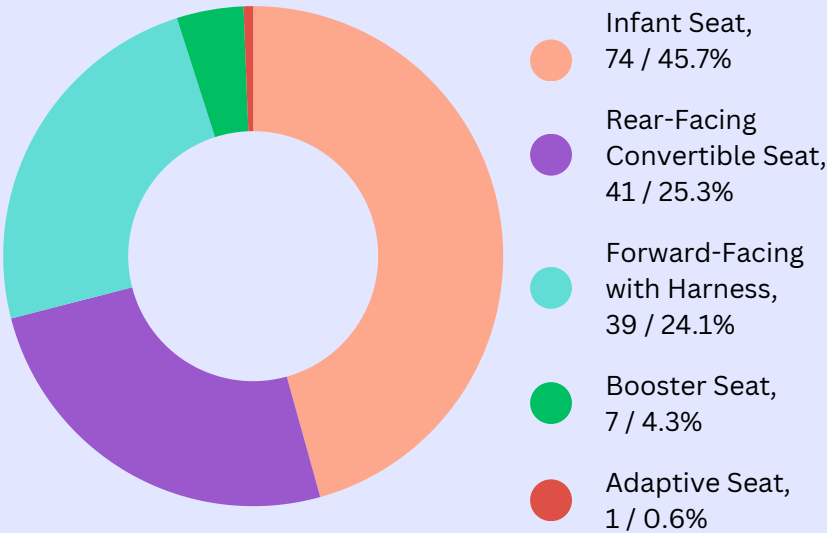
162

CAR SEATS INSTALLED

37

SAFE SLEEP EDUCATION SESSIONS

### Car Seats Installed, by Type



Right: CPST Kendra teaches a caregiver how to properly install a car seat.



Left: CPSTs Kaitlyn & Valentin during their certification course in 2024.

## HARM REDUCTION & OVERDOSE PREVENTION

### Supporting Health Through Harm Reduction

Harm reduction is an approach that supports those who use drugs by providing tools, information, and support for safer choices. It aims to prevent overdoses and the spread of infections like HIV and hepatitis C while reducing discrimination and stigma. Harm reduction programs ensure equitable access to essential healthcare, guided by respect and compassion without judgment.

### Local Efforts and Effects from the Overdose Crisis

In 2024, at least 28 Racine residents were lost to drug overdose, many involving opioids. Overdose affects people of all backgrounds but has a disproportionate impact on Black and Latinx communities. Staff participate in the Racine County Overdose Fatality Review team, an interdisciplinary group studying what leads to overdose in order to address those factors and prevent future deaths.

The Public Health Department placed two additional Public Health Vending Machines (PHVMs) in 2024—one inside the **Dr. John Bryant Community Center** and an outdoor machine at the **Racine Public Library** (accessible 24 hours per day, 7 days a week). Narcan, fentanyl test strips, safer sex items, and other supplies are distributed at no charge. Overdose prevention trainings are also held throughout Racine at local businesses and community organizations.

### What the Harm Reduction Program Offers

The program supports community health with:

- Overdose prevention education and tools.
- Supplies to keep individuals safe and stop the spread of infections.
- Referrals to medical care, mental health support, and treatment.
- Testing for conditions like HIV, Syphilis, and Hepatitis C.

### 2024 Highlights

2

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC  
HEALTH VENDING  
MACHINES

467

TRAINED IN OVERDOSE  
PREVENTION

3,432

DOSES OF  
NARCAN DISPENSED

518

SERVED THROUGH  
SYRINGE ACCESS

3,414

USED SYRINGES  
COLLECTED



Above Left: Public health vending machine located at the Racine Public Library.

Above Right: Poster within RYDE Racine buses and distributed throughout the community, promoting the vending machines and other resources.

# Environmental Health Division

The Environmental Health Division protects public health for those who live, work, and play in Racine through services and programs that ensure food safety, maintain sanitary conditions, enforce health standards and regulations, and address environmental health risks.

The Environmental Health Division permits and regularly inspects businesses and other operations that have the potential to impact public health. These include restaurants, grocery stores, school lunch service programs, temporary food service vendors/events, lodging facilities (hotels, motels, and bed & breakfasts), short-term rentals, body art facilities, public pools and other water attractions, pet shops, petting zoos, and those wishing to keep restricted animals within the City of Racine.

The Division also protects human and animal health and wellbeing by responding to animal bites, facilitating chicken and beekeeping permits, investigating human health hazards, and conducting lead risk assessments and education. The public is educated about healthy homes concerns related to radon, mold, pest infestations, and hoarding including material possession and animals. The Division performs noise complaint investigations and facilitates medication collection across Racine County. Trained personnel also respond to and investigate foodborne illness outbreaks and complaints.

## Environmental Health Activities



67

Dangerous &  
Prohibited  
Dangerous  
Animal Cases



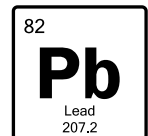
979

Inquiries  
Received &  
Addressed



0

Foodborne  
Illness  
Outbreaks  
Reported



12

Lead Risk  
Assessments  
Performed



*A rooster was found living in a residence during an animal complaint investigation. Roosters are prohibited in the City of Racine.*



*Sanitarians regularly inspect food service establishments to prevent foodborne illness and protect the health of customers.*

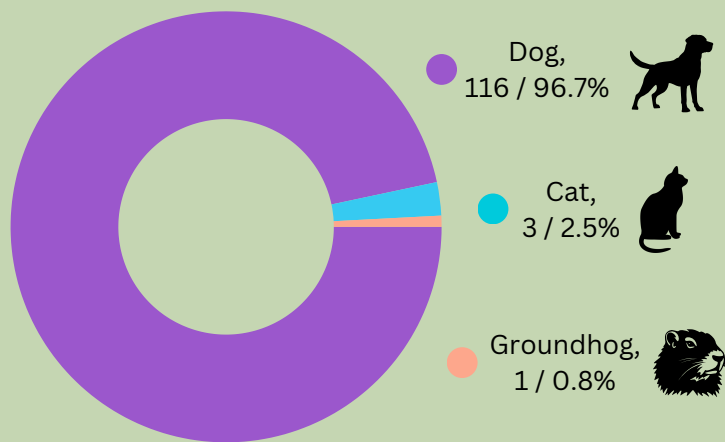
## RABIES AND ANIMAL CONTROL

### Animal Bites

The Environmental Health Division monitors animal bites, ensuring victims and pet owners take necessary actions to avoid infections and transmission of diseases such as rabies.

When a human is bitten by a dog, cat, or ferret, the bite must be reported to the Police and Public Health Departments (other animal bites may also be reported). Sanitarians work with Racine Police Department Community Service Officers (RAPD CSOs) to complete bite follow up. Staff coordinate with the Wisconsin Humane Society and veterinarians to process potentially rabid animals (often dogs and bats) for rabies testing.

### Reported Bites by Animal Type



### 2024 Highlights

**19**

URBAN CHICKEN  
INSPECTIONS

**55**

PET FANCIER  
INSPECTIONS

**51**

ANIMAL COMPLAINTS  
INVESTIGATED

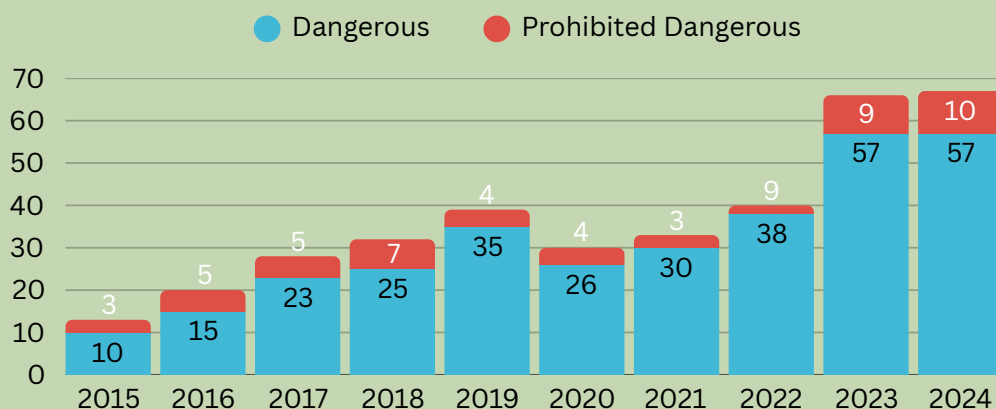
**33**

ANIMAL APPEAL  
HEARINGS FACILITATED

### Dangerous Animals

When an animal bites or attacks, it may be deemed a Dangerous Animal under Racine Municipal Code. This requires owners to follow guidelines to ensure public safety. Animals causing serious harm, death, or repeated offenses may be labeled Prohibited Dangerous Animals. Owners may appeal these classifications through a formal process. Dangerous and Prohibited Dangerous cases reached their highest level in 2024.

### Dangerous/Prohibited Dangerous Animal Cases



### Animal Complaints

Complaints about animals at large, unlicensed/unpermitted animals, animal welfare issues, animal waste, and other animal-related concerns (including illegal animals) are referred to the Public Health Department or RAPD CSOs for follow up. Personnel investigate and take necessary steps to resolve the concern in a timely and efficient manner.

## FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTIONS

### Permitted Establishment Inspections

The City of Racine boasts a diverse array of food options through its numerous restaurants and food service providers. To safeguard the health and safety of both residents and visitors, it is essential to maintain confidence in the adherence to food safety guidelines and regulations.

Sanitarians with the Environmental Health Division are responsible for regulating and inspecting retail food establishments, including restaurants, food trucks, and grocery stores, to prevent outbreaks of foodborne illnesses. Inspections are conducted to confirm that establishments are compliant with the Wisconsin Food Code. This includes a detailed plan review of their business model and blueprints. Facilities are inspected prior to opening, with annual inspections to ensure adherence to standards. Businesses that do not pass annual inspections are reinspected to ensure deficiencies have been corrected, and in severe cases may be ordered to cease operations until all critical violations have been corrected.



*Environmental Health Director Sadie (center) and Sanitarian Erin (right) speak with two members of the public while conducting inspections at Party on the Pavement.*

### Temporary Event Inspections

The City of Racine hosts many events throughout the year that bring in a wide variety of vendors serving foods to the public, including festivals, parades, and markets. These events hold a great potential to cause foodborne illness outbreaks among residents and visitors. Sanitarians visit and inspect vendors at these events, working with them to correct issues in real time.

### Foodborne Illnesses

Sanitarians receive complaints from individuals who suspect they became ill from food purchased at a restaurant or temporary event. These complaints are investigated to ensure there is not a wider threat to public health. Sanitarians also coordinate with staff in the Community Health Division when there are reports of communicable disease, especially gastrointestinal illness, in individuals who work in food service.

In the event of a large scale outbreak, the Environmental Health Division is trained in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Environmental Assessment Reporting System (NEARS), administered by Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection.

### 2024 Highlights

**55**

PRE-INSPECTIONS  
COMPLETED

**349**

ROUTINE INSPECTIONS  
COMPLETED

**131**

INITIAL  
REINSPECTIONS  
COMPLETED

**73**

TEMPORARY EVENT  
VENDORS INSPECTED

**40**

FOOD-RELATED  
COMPLAINTS  
INVESTIGATED

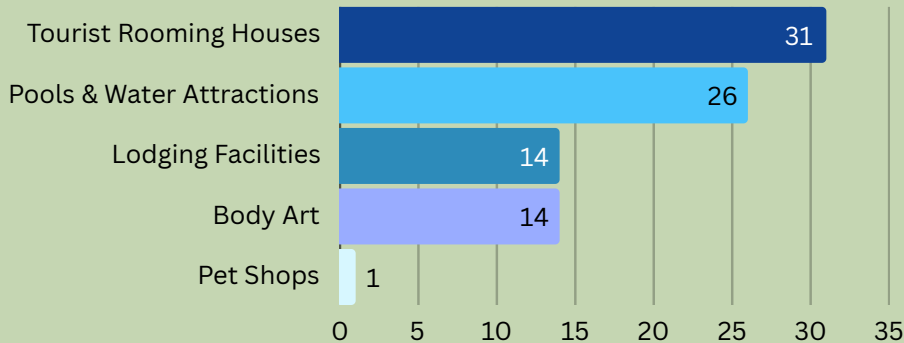
**8**

FOODBORNE ILLNESS  
COMPLAINTS  
INVESTIGATED

## OTHER PERMITTED FACILITY INSPECTIONS

The Environmental Health Division permits and inspects many other types of businesses that can affect public health, including public pools and water attractions, hotels, motels, bed & breakfasts, tourist rooming houses (short-term rentals), body art facilities, and pet shops. Similar to food service businesses such as restaurants, these facilities are inspected prior to business permits being issued, on an annual basis, and as necessary based on complaints or other concerns.

### Other Facility Inspections



*Regular inspections at public pools like the SC Johnson Community Aquatic Center ensure safety for all who use the facility.*

Inspection counts above are representative of all inspections (pre-inspection, annual, and reinspection) completed at these facilities.

## MEDICATION COLLECTION

### 2024 Highlights

**12**

MEDICATION DROP BOXES FACILITATED

**2,520**

TOTAL POUNDS OF MEDICATIONS COLLECTED

Prescription and over-the-counter medications can pose safety and environmental risks if they are not disposed of properly. Proper disposal means ensuring the medications are destroyed, not simply flushed down a toilet or thrown in the trash. The City of Racine Public Health Department oversees the Clean Sweep grant program for partners across Racine County. Through this program, 12 medication disposal drop boxes are available across the county in locations such as police departments and local pharmacies. The Public Health Department works with partners to promote the use of these drop boxes as well as Drug Take Back events held multiple times each year.



*One of 12 medication collection boxes located throughout Racine County to encourage and enable proper medication disposal.*

# Laboratory Division

The Laboratory Division protects public health for those who live, work, and play in Racine through efforts that seek to enhance and protect water quality and natural resources in Racine and neighboring municipalities. This is done through water quality assessment, site assessments and monitoring, pollution control, water safety efforts, and collaboration with various governmental and organizational partners.

The Laboratory has highly qualified personnel committed to maintaining the integrity of water resources, coastal recreational areas, and natural spaces in Racine and surrounding communities. Personnel use innovative methods and industry best practices in the fields of water resource management, environmental planning, habitat restoration, and laboratory technology. The Laboratory acts as a research entity, frequently engaging in cooperative opportunities with local, state, and national partners.

## Laboratory Activities at a Glance



**442**

Beach water  
samples  
evaluated



**725**

Trees/Shrubs  
planted at  
Samuel Myers Park



**10,440**

Herbaceous native  
plants added at  
Samuel Myers Park

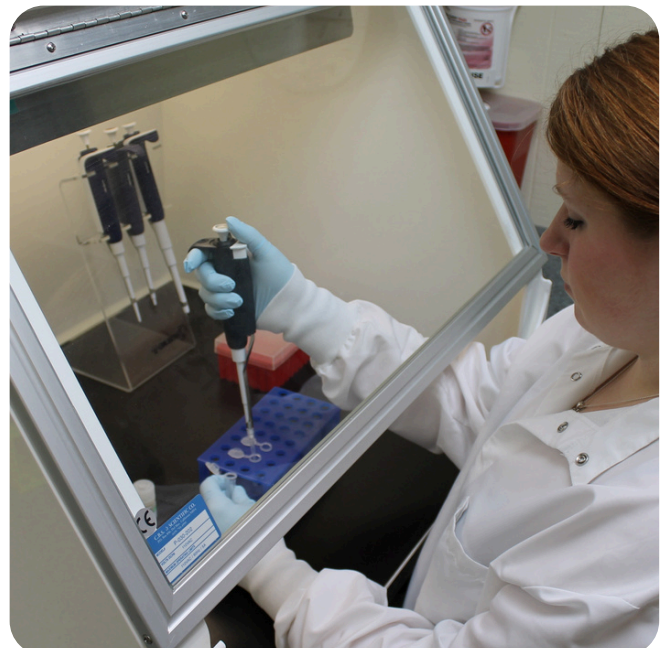


**13**

Area beaches  
monitored



*Left: Research Assistant III Adrian tests one of the Public Health Department's E-Bikes, a pilot program to allow staff a more environmentally friendly method of travelling to work assignments.*



*Right: Research Assistant II Jenni performs water quality testing on a sample from Lake Michigan during the 2024 beach season.*

# COASTAL WATER QUALITY MONITORING

The Laboratory Division actively monitors 13 beaches along Lake Michigan, spanning from Milwaukee to Kenosha Counties in southeastern Wisconsin. These include North and Zoo Beaches as well as Samuel Myers Park in Racine. Personnel conduct an extensive array of tests to evaluate water quality and the overall health of these beach environments. The tests involve analysis for contaminants, bacterial levels, and other environmental factors that may affect public health and safety.

By regularly assessing beach waters, the Laboratory ensures that both residents and visitors have access to safe, clean, and healthy beach environments. Furthermore, the data collected is instrumental in guiding public health decisions, allowing for prompt warnings and advisories when it may be necessary to post advisories or warnings regarding poor water quality. Through this continuous monitoring effort, the Laboratory plays a vital role in safeguarding the health of local ecosystems and protecting the well-being of the community.

Beach/Park	Advisories	Closures
North Beach	7	1
Zoo Beach	3	4
Samuel Myers	2	0

In 2024, between North Beach and Zoo Beach there were eight total days with subpar water quality. Samuel Myers Park only experienced two days with low water quality in the 2024 beach season.

*E. coli* serves as an indicator for the potential presence of more harmful bacteria. To assess the level of bacteria present, water is collected and analyzed. The Laboratory Division was at the forefront of developing and testing the qPCR (quantitative-Polymerase Chain Reaction) method, which is used to detect and quantify *E. coli* in water samples. However, this technology has significant operational costs when used daily through the beach season.

Recently, the Laboratory Division developed and implemented predictive models for North and Zoo Beach, aimed at improving public health and safety while lowering overall operational expenses. These models utilize recent water quality data alongside various weather and water current information to forecast water quality, eliminating the need for daily sample collection and processing.

2024 Highlights

442

CULTURE-BASED BEACH  
SAMPLES

91

COMPOSITE  
VERIFICATION SAMPLES

35

POLLUTION SOURCES  
EVALUATED

44

qPCR SAMPLES  
PROCESSED

\$6,000

SAVED ANNUALLY  
THROUGH PREDICTIVE  
MODEL

## ROOT RIVER WATER QUALITY MONITORING

The Laboratory Division collects water samples from the Root River and storm water outfalls along the river. Monitoring is conducted along the Root River throughout the year to ensure environmental hazards and other factors affecting water quality are detected and can be addressed in a timely manner. This work protects community and environmental health, safeguarding local ecosystems, residents, and visitors from waterborne pollutants.



*The Horlick Dam, one of six established monitoring sites along the Root River in the Racine area.*

### 2024 Highlights

**398**

WATER QUALITY  
SAMPLES

**6**

ROOT RIVER  
MONITORING SITES

## ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION

### 2024 Highlights

**41**

COMMUNITY PARTNER  
WORK DAYS

**9**

BENCHES INSTALLED  
IN COLONIAL PARK

**11,000+**

NATIVE SPECIES  
PLANTED IN  
SAMUEL MYERS PARK

The Laboratory Division works at locations throughout Racine and surrounding areas to conduct site assessments, then plan and implement environmental remediation projects. In 2024, personnel and community partners installed new pathways and fencing at Samuel Myers Park and undertook efforts to expand dune environments to enhance coastal resilience, protect water quality, and provide vital habitat for wildlife. Additionally, staff implemented invasive species management work at North Beach, Zoo Beach, Samuel Myers Park, and Colonial Park to protect those environments.

Lab staff engaged in 41 workdays collaborating with community groups, including the Great Lakes Community Conservation Corps, where they planted thousands of native trees, shrubs, and other plants. Additionally, the Division organized two events in partnership with Weed Out! Racine, the Root River Council, and Friends of Island Park.



*Ongoing remediation efforts at Samuel Myers Park enhance the environment's health and increase accessibility for both residents and visitors.*

# Special Focus: Childhood Lead Poisoning

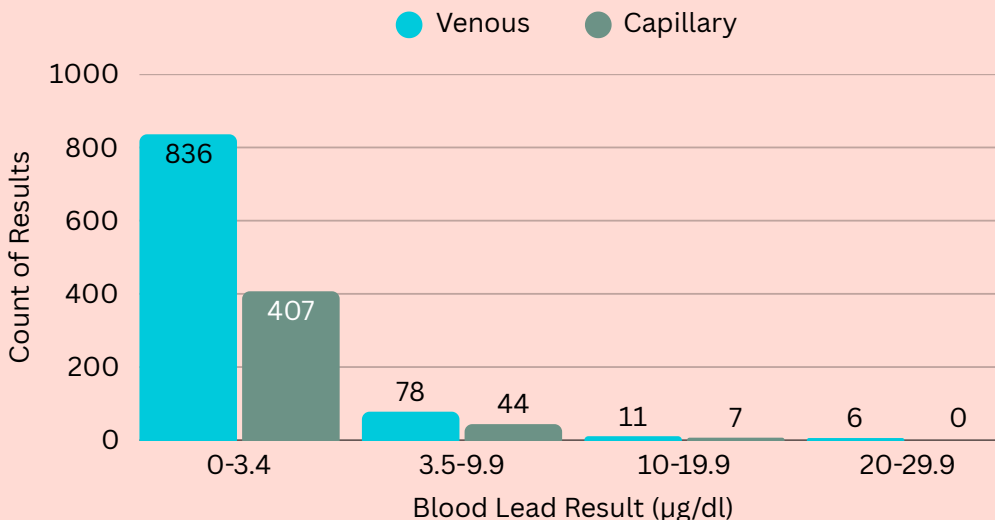
Lead poisoning has detrimental effects on the brain and other bodily systems and can result in lifelong consequences, with children under six years old particularly vulnerable. Lead is often found in homes built before 1978. Due to the age of Racine's housing stock, lead poisoning continues to be a top health issue in the community. The Public Health Department takes a collaborative approach to protect children from the dangers of lead exposure.

The Public Health Department's Divisions collaborate to address childhood lead poisoning. Families receive education and resources on proper cleaning, nutrition, and other topics. Public Health Nurses provide case management and assess children for learning and developmental delays, and Lead Risk Assessors conduct lead risk assessments to determine lead sources. Families and property owners are linked to resources to assist with lead abatement costs. The Department offers blood lead testing to ensure families have access to lead testing. By combining resources and expertise, significant progress is being made toward addressing childhood lead poisoning.



*A Lead Risk Assessor uses an XRF analyzer to determine if lead is present in a painted surface.*

## Highest Reported Blood Lead Results



*Shown are the highest reported blood lead test results per child for those under age 6 in the City of Racine. Results are divided by type (venous or capillary) and shown per action level (<3.5 µg/dl, 3.5-9.9 µg/dl, and subgroups of 10 µg/dl and higher).*

## 2024 Highlights

**75**  
LEAD POISONING/  
EXPOSURE CASES  
MANAGED

**25**  
AGES & STAGES  
QUESTIONNAIRES  
COMPLETED

**29**  
HOME VISITS  
COMPLETED

**18**  
HOMES REMEDIATED  
BY LIVE LEAD SAFE

# Looking Ahead to 2025

## YOUFIRST INFANT MORTALITY REDUCTION INITIATIVE

The Public Health Department's YouFirst program focuses on serving the diverse needs of Racine residents. The program will work to decrease the incidence of unplanned pregnancies and the rate of low-birth-weight infants, lessen chronic health conditions, and promote pre-pregnancy planning and comprehensive prenatal care. Ultimately, the goal is to increase maternal wellness thus reducing the infant mortality rate as well as maternal morbidity caused by chronic health conditions.



## LINCOLN-KING BUILDING

The City of Racine broke ground in late 2024 on the new Lincoln-King Community Center and Health Center, a space designed to provide vital services and support for the community. The facility will offer healthcare in partnership with Pillar Health of Racine, public health and wellness programs through the Public Health Department, and a variety of programs from the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Department to improve quality of life for Racine residents. This project marks a major investment in Racine's future.

## ROOT RIVER REPORT CARD & MONITORING

The Laboratory Division is continually working on new and innovative ways to educate the public about water quality issues and efforts. Throughout 2024, Personnel have been preparing an online resource that will spread knowledge about the Root River's water quality, factors affecting it, and opportunities for the community to improve this natural resource.

The **2024 Root River Report Card** will be launched in early 2025. Along with this online educational tool, additional water monitoring equipment will be installed in the river to measure water levels, flow, and other water quality factors.



# Stay in Touch with the Public Health Department

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PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT