

Pittsburg County Health Department is requesting IREN to provide the current salary and future pay scale based off the Oklahoma State Department of Health for a Health Educator III, Community Health Epidemiologist III, Advanced Practice Registered Nurse II, and two Community Health Worker III for the duration of the TIF/TID or lifespan of the project. PCHD receives the lowest percentage of Ad Valorem taxes, this would significantly help and support public health in Pittsburg County. If approved by the TIF Board, Board of County Commissioners, and agreed to by IREN as part of the Economic Development plan, project plan, we would like to implement as soon as possible.

Health Educator III

Hiring a dedicated Health Educator at a county health department to provide education about a proposed data center can create significant value for both the public and local government. Rather than advocating for or against the project, the Health Educator's role would be to provide accurate, science-based information, answer questions, and help residents make informed decisions.

Some key benefits include:

1. Provides trusted, unbiased health information
 - Explains potential health impacts using scientific evidence rather than rumors or social media.
 - Helps residents understand what is known, what is uncertain, and what is being monitored.
2. Improves public understanding of technical issues

A Health Educator can explain topics such as:

- Noise (including low-frequency and tonal noise)
- Air quality
- Water consumption
- Wastewater reuse
- Emergency preparedness
- Backup generators and fuel storage

- Heat produced by facilities
- Electromagnetic fields (EMF)

3. Reduces Misinformation

Public meetings often include conflicting information. A Health Educator can:

- Correct common misconceptions.
- Provide peer-reviewed research.
- Explain risk in understandable language.

4. Builds public trust

Residents are more likely to trust information coming from a local public health professional whose mission is protecting community health rather than from a company or advocacy group.

5. Supports local elected officials

County commissioners, city councils, and planning boards frequently receive health-related questions outside their expertise. A Health Educator can serve as a technical resource.

6. Improves emergency preparedness

They can educate the public on:

- Fire response
- Hazardous material incidents
- Utility outages
- Water system disruptions
- Coordination with emergency management and fire departments

7. Protects vulnerable populations

Education can focus on people who may be more sensitive to environmental changes, including:

- Children
- Older adults
- Individuals with chronic illnesses

- Schools
- Nursing homes

8. Facilitates two-way communication

Instead of simply presenting information, a Health Educator can gather community concerns and relay them to health officials, regulators, and the facility.

9. Coordinates with partner agencies

They can work with:

- Local emergency management
- Fire departments
- Water utilities
- Environmental agencies
- Hospitals
- Schools
- State health officials

10. Develops educational resources

Such as:

- Fact sheets
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Public presentations
- Website content
- Social media updates
- Community newsletters

11. Assists with Health Impact Assessments

They can help collect community health data before and after a facility begins operation to identify trends and inform future planning.

12. Promotes transparency

Explaining how environmental monitoring works, including noise measurements, water testing, air quality monitoring, and permit compliance—can help residents understand the oversight process.

For a county like Pittsburg County, where there has already been substantial public interest in a proposed data center, a Health Educator could serve as a neutral resource focused on health education rather than project advocacy. This can improve the quality of community discussions and help ensure decisions are made by credible information.

Community Health Epidemiologist III

A Community Health Epidemiologist could provide significant value to Pittsburg County by helping identify health trends, preventing disease outbreaks, and guiding public health decisions with data.

Keyways they could support the county include:

- **Disease Surveillance:** Monitor communicable diseases such as influenza, COVID-19, RSV, foodborne illnesses, and emerging health threats to detect outbreaks early and coordinate response efforts.
- **Community Health Assessments:** Analyze local health data to identify major health concerns such as diabetes, heart disease, obesity, cancer, substance use disorders, and mental health trends.
- **Emergency Preparedness and Response:** Support the county during public health emergencies, natural disasters, mass vaccination events, and disease outbreaks by tracking impacts and informing response strategies.
- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Provide County leaders, healthcare providers, schools, and community organizations with accurate data to prioritize resources and develop effective interventions.
- **Grant Support:** Collect and analyze data needed for grant applications and reporting requirements, helping secure funding for local health programs and infrastructure.

- Health Equity Analysis: Identify populations experiencing poorer health outcomes due to geographic, economic, transportation, or healthcare access barriers and recommend targeted solutions.
- Environmental Health Monitoring: Evaluate potential public health impacts from industrial development, air quality concerns, water quality issues, wastewater reuse projects, and other environmental factors affecting residents.
- Maternal and Child Health Tracking: Monitor infant mortality, prenatal care access, childhood immunization rates, and other indicators affecting families.
- Public Health Education Support: Work with health educators to ensure community outreach efforts are focused on the most pressing local health issues and reach the populations most at risk.
- Regional Health Intelligence: Analyze trends across the surrounding southeastern Oklahoma counties to identify shared challenges and opportunities for collaboration.

For Pittsburg County specifically, an epidemiologist could provide valuable data and analysis related to:

- Chronic disease rates
- Rural healthcare access
- Substance use and overdose trends
- Aging population needs
- Emergency preparedness capabilities
- Impacts of major industrial or infrastructure projects
- Healthcare workforce shortages
- School health indicators

Epidemiologists could also strengthen planning for Medical Incident Points (MIPs), POD operations, shelter health support, and regional healthcare coalition activities by providing real-time situational awareness and predictive analysis before, during, and after incidents.

Advanced Practice Registered Nurse

An Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) could be a major asset to public health outreach in Pittsburg County, especially given the county's rural geography, healthcare access challenges, and chronic disease burden.

An APRN could support outreach by:

- Providing Community-Based Health Screenings
- Blood pressure checks
- Diabetes screenings (A1C and glucose)
- Cholesterol testing
- Obesity and nutrition assessments
- Mental health screenings
- Expanding Access to Care
- Conducting mobile clinics in underserved communities
- Seeing patients in schools, senior centers, churches, and community events
- Connecting residents to primary care providers and specialists
- Chronic Disease Management

Educating patients on managing diabetes, hypertension, COPD, heart disease, and asthma. Following up with high-risk patients to reduce hospitalizations and emergency room visits

- Preventive Health Education
- Immunizations
- Cancer screenings
- Tobacco cessation
- Healthy eating and physical activity
- Injury prevention
- Maternal and Child Health
- Prenatal education
- Postpartum support
- Child wellness and developmental screenings
- Breastfeeding support
- Behavioral Health Support

- Screening for depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders
- Connecting individuals to local behavioral health services
- Supporting suicide prevention initiatives
- Public Health Emergency Response
- Assisting during outbreaks, POD operations, vaccination clinics, and disaster shelters
- Providing medical oversight during emergency responses
- Supporting health monitoring during Medical Incident Points (MIPs)
- School and Workplace Outreach
- Health education programs
- Employee wellness initiatives
- School health promotion activities

Working alongside a Community Health Worker and an Epidemiologist creates a powerful public health team:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Primary Role</u>
APRN	Clinical expertise, screenings, treatment, and medical guidance
Community Health Worker	Community engagement, education, referrals, and trust-building
Epidemiologist	Data analysis, disease surveillance, and program evaluation

For Pittsburg County, an APRN could be particularly effective in addressing:

- High rates of diabetes and heart disease
- Rural healthcare access gaps
- Tobacco use
- Maternal and child health needs
- Mental health and substance use concerns
- Preventive care utilization

Within the county health department, an APRN could also serve as a clinical leader for outreach events, vaccination programs, preparedness exercises, and partnerships with local healthcare providers, schools, tribal health systems, and community organizations. This combination of direct patient care and population health expertise helps translate public health goals into measurable improvements in community health outcomes.

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Community Health Worker III

A Community Health Worker (CHW) can provide significant value to Pittsburg County by serving as a bridge between residents, healthcare providers, public health agencies, and community resources.

Some of the biggest ways CHW could support Pittsburg County include:

- Improving access to healthcare by helping residents find primary care providers, schedule appointments, understand insurance options, and navigate programs such as Medicaid, Medicare, and SoonerCare.

- Supporting chronic disease management for conditions common in southeast Oklahoma, including diabetes, heart disease, obesity, hypertension, and COPD. CHWs can provide education, follow-up, and encouragement between medical visits.
- Health education and outreach at schools, churches, senior centers, tribal events, community fairs, and worksites on topics such as nutrition, physical activity, tobacco cessation, mental health, and preventive screenings.
- Addressing social determinants of health by connecting residents with transportation, food assistance, housing resources, utility assistance, veteran services, and employment resources.
- Supporting emergency preparedness and response by helping educate the public about severe weather, disease outbreaks, vaccination campaigns, cooling centers during extreme heat, and disaster recovery resources.
- Maternal and child health support through prenatal education, infant safe-sleep education, childhood immunization awareness, and connecting families to available services.
- Mental health and substance use resource navigation by helping residents identify available behavioral health services and reducing barriers to accessing care.
- Rural outreach to communities throughout Pittsburg County, including areas such as McAlester, Canadian, Krebs, Haileyville, Kiowa, Pittsburg, Quinton, and Hartshorne, where transportation and healthcare access can be challenging.

A CHW could also be a force multiplier for the Pittsburg County Health Department by:

- Conducting community assessments.
- Supporting Medical Reserve Corps recruitment.
- Assisting with Points of Dispensing (PODs) during public health emergencies.
- Helping with risk communication and public messaging.

- Identifying vulnerable populations before disasters occur.
- Conducting follow-up wellness checks after emergencies.

For Pittsburg County specifically, a CHW focused on health education, chronic disease prevention, resource navigation, and emergency preparedness outreach would likely provide the greatest return on investment because of the county's rural geography, health disparities, and aging population.

We would also like to request 5,000,000 to buy or have donated the land near Pittsburg County Health Department, ideally the lot across the street from the Pittsburg County Health Department that is owned by regional health care authority. The funding will be used to create Public Health warehouse, training center, Public Health Emergency Operations Center, and a 2 lane drive thru for POD operations. It will also be used to store our Public Health units. Be able to provide a safe, dry, comfortable space for car seat fittings and checks. The rest of the facility will be enclosed and climate-controlled, for a training room and storage. The facility will be fenced, have perimeter lighting, and backup power.

1. Enhanced Mass Incident Plan (MIP) Response

The two-lane drive-through could support multiple emergency operations, including:

- Mass dispensing of medications during a disease outbreak.
- Drive-through vaccination clinics.
- Distribution of bottled water, infant formula, or emergency supplies.
- Distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Radiological exposure screening.
- Distribution of potassium iodide (if ever needed).
- Public health screening during infectious disease outbreaks.

A two-lane design increases throughput while allowing one lane to remain open if another is delayed.

2. Regional Public Health Emergency Supply Warehouse

A warehouse provides secure storage for:

- PPE
- Cots and blankets
- Medical surge supplies
- Vaccine refrigerators and freezers
- Water and sanitation supplies
- Portable generators
- Communications equipment
- Shelter supplies
- Emergency trailers
- Logistics equipment

Instead of relying on deliveries after an incident, supplies are already positioned within the county.

3. Dedicated Public Health Emergency Operations Center and a back up to Pittsburg County Emergency Management Operations Center.

A training room could host:

- Incident Command System (ICS) training
- Emergency Support Function 8 (Public Health and Medical) exercises
- Mass dispensing (POD) training
- Volunteer orientation
- Hospital and EMS tabletop exercises
- Joint exercises with emergency management, law enforcement, fire departments, schools, and hospitals

Regular training improves coordination before an emergency occurs.

4. Faster Response Times

With supplies, equipment, and trained staff in one location, deployment during disasters is faster. Time saved can translate into better health outcomes during tornadoes, floods, disease outbreaks, or hazardous materials incidents.

5. Support for Large Industrial Projects

If large employers or facilities, such as a data center, locate in Pittsburg County, the facility could support:

- Public health education
- Emergency planning with industry
- Distribution of health information
- Joint emergency exercises
- Community meetings
- Worker health initiatives

6. Shelter Support

The warehouse could serve as a logistics hub for shelters by storing:

- Shelter kits
- Hygiene supplies
- Medical equipment
- Wheelchairs
- Oxygen supplies
- Infant care supplies
- Pet shelter equipment

7. Multi-County Resource Hub

Given your work across southeastern Oklahoma, the facility could support surrounding counties during regional emergencies by staging resources for:

- Atoka
- Bryan
- Choctaw
- Coal
- Latimer
- LeFlore
- McCurtain
- Pushmataha
- Pittsburg

8. Community Education Center

Outside emergencies, the training room could host:

- CPR classes
- Stop the Bleed training
- Disaster preparedness workshops
- Health education seminars
- Child passenger safety classes
- Naloxone training
- Chronic disease education
- Community preparedness fairs

9. Cost Savings

Centralized warehouse reduces:

- Expensive last-minute purchases
- Duplicate equipment storage at multiple sites
- Rental costs for temporary facilities
- Delays in obtaining supplies during emergencies

10. Grant Competitiveness

Many state and federal preparedness grants favor jurisdictions with dedicated logistics and training infrastructure because it demonstrates readiness and the ability to sustain emergency operations.

Potential Long-Term Vision

Such a facility could become the Southeast Oklahoma Public Health Preparedness and Response Center, serving not only Pittsburg County but the broader nine-county region. It could support:

- Public health emergency preparedness
- Medical logistics
- Community resilience
- Regional training
- Mass care support
- Disease outbreak response

- Disaster recovery coordination

For a county with major transportation corridors, industrial growth, and regional healthcare responsibilities, this type of facility would strengthen preparedness, improve operational efficiency, and provide a flexible asset that supports routine public health work as well as large-scale emergencies.