

## Environmental Health Sites and Contact Information

### Downtown Seattle Environmental Health

401 5th Ave, Suite 1100  
Seattle, WA 98104-2333

Phone: 206-263-9566

Open: Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM  
Tuesday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Services: Food and Facilities Protection  
Program, Environmental Hazards,  
Community Environmental Health  
Services, Administration Services

### Eastgate Environmental Health

14350 SE Eastgate Way  
Bellevue, WA 98007

Phone: 206-296-4932

Open: Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM  
Thursday 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Services: Community Environmental  
Health Services

**Food worker card class and test now  
online:** [www.kingcounty.gov/health/foodworker](http://www.kingcounty.gov/health/foodworker)

**Permits online:** [www.kingcounty.gov/health/ehs](http://www.kingcounty.gov/health/ehs)  
click on "online services portal"

**Questions?** 206-263-9566 or  
1-800-325-6165 ext: 3-9566

Public Health   
Seattle & King County

2010 Annual Report edited by  
Morgan Barry, Julie West,  
photo of South Park Bridge by Michael Brunk, [nwlens.com](http://nwlens.com),  
design by Christine Thomas Design & Illustration.



Public Health - Seattle & King County  
Environmental Health Services Annual Report 2010  
**PART OF YOUR LIFE EVERY DAY**





David Fleming M.D.

Hello,

Environmental health services are a foundation for healthy communities, and here in King County, these services predate the establishment of Public Health – Seattle & King County. While water, sanitation, food safety and hazards management remain critical to the health and safety of all our residents, new issues and challenges must also be addressed, including making the delivery of services as efficient as possible.

Our customers expect and deserve the highest quality service for their investment. We seek to deliver our services in innovative ways that maximize both efficiency and customer service, and have been very successful. For example, in 2010 we launched a new pilot program to deliver some permits online, saving the hassle and expense of permit applicants coming into our office. Our food establishment customers wanted quicker plan review service, so we engineered a solution that will increase the percentage of restaurant plans approved the first time they're reviewed. Within a regulatory framework that can seem slow to change, the plumbing program has been a national leader in adapting to sustainable building technologies such as rain water harvesting, grey water systems and reclaimed water re-use systems.

Environmental Health also includes services not based on regulations and permits. Recognizing that leading causes of ill health and early death often stem from the ways our environments are built, Environmental Health staff developed guidelines that help regional and city planners integrate health-enhancing options into their planning decisions for the benefit of all who live in the community.

As you'll see from this Annual Report, our Environmental Health division is leading the way towards a healthier future for all by delivering high quality environmental health services that match the needs of today.

Sincerely,

David Fleming, MD  
Director and Health Officer  
Public Health – Seattle & King County



Ngozi Oleru, Ph.D.

Dear King County Residents,

Environmental Health is a foundation of public health. A division of Public Health Seattle & King County, our Environmental Health staff ensures that you have safer, healthier places to live, learn, work and play. Their unique knowledge, skills and dedication to the work they do everyday makes King County a great place to be.

In 2010, two policies passed that support our commitment to healthy people, healthy communities – the King County Council's Equity and Social Justice Ordinance and the King County Board of Health's "Planning for Healthy Communities Guidelines." Both will help us improve environments and health outcomes, particularly in communities disproportionately impacted by challenging social, economic and environmental factors.

2010 was a difficult year financially, in part due to the economic recession that depressed building and development activity. Even so, we did some great work.

This 2010 Annual Report highlights the tremendous and varied work of Environmental Health. In the following pages, you'll read about:

- The Food and Facilities Protection programs, which send staff into the community to make sure that restaurants, schools, swimming pools and other public facilities are operating within health-based codes designed to keep people safe from illness and injury;
- The Environmental Hazards program, in cooperation with other agencies, consults on hazardous materials management, educates residents and businesses about toxic exposures, oversees solid waste disposal, and controls rodent infestations;
- The Community Environmental Health programs, which protect our health by assuring sewage, plumbing, and water system regulations are complied with;
- Cross-cutting programs that work on emergency preparedness, community engagement, enforcement, and creating healthy land use policies;
- The 2010 budget revenues and expenditure.

I hope you enjoy reading the report and I welcome your feedback.

Sincerely,

Ngozi Oleru, Ph.D.  
Director, Environmental Health Services Division



Every day, Environmental Health Services staff strive to prevent disease and support conditions that protect and improve the health of people and communities in King County.



# FOOD & FACILITIES PROTECTION

According to national statistics, 50% of all meals are eaten away from home. If the food we eat isn't stored, prepared and served safely, it can make us sick. Illnesses from disease-causing germs in food make millions of people sick with diarrhea and vomiting each year. Hundreds of thousands of these ill people are hospitalized, and thousands die as a result of their illness. The Food and Facilities Protection Section reduces the risk of foodborne illness from eating in King County's food establishments through education and regulatory oversight. When foodborne illnesses do occur, our staff investigates the source of the disease and ensures the cause is removed.

The Food and Facilities Protection section also protects people from waterborne disease, drowning, and injury in pools and spas by reviewing and approving pool designs and conducting annual pool inspections. Water quality at our local beaches is monitored throughout the summer.

**Food Establishments** in King County reflect our rich cultural diversity. A magnificent variety of foods are on the menus at the nearly 11,000 permitted restaurants and food service operations here. Before any food establishment receives its first permit, the space design plans are reviewed for compliance with regulations. All permitted establishments receive routine inspections and, for the kitchens with complex food preparation, an educational visit each year. Inspectors check for food safety compliance and keep establishments up to date on the latest food safety information. Inspection reports are available online at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/health/foodsafety/>. Customer concerns and complaints about food safety in these establishments are also submitted to this website and inspectors follow up with a visit to the establishment.

**Food Worker Training** classes and tests for the required food worker card are offered by Environmental Health each week. Training ensures that food workers learn the basics of food safety essential to their work in the food industry. Training materials are available in eight languages and an interpreter can be requested when translated material is not available. All food workers in Washington who handle unwrapped or unpackaged food must have a food worker card. Plans were made to offer the class, test and card on the Web in early 2011.

**Temporary Food Event Permits** are required when serving food to the public for both one-time and short term events (those open fewer than 21 days in the same location). Farmers Markets and other recurring events operating no more than 3 days a week are in a special category of temporary events. A pre-opening inspection of the temporary site is completed before each event and booths serving foods with a higher food safety risk are inspected during the events as well.

**Trans Fat** was eliminated from food service establishments in February 2009. Establishments can no longer prepare and serve foods with 0.5 g of trans fat or more per serving. In 2010, over 99 percent of the establishments were in compliance with the no trans fat regulation.

**Nutrition Labeling Rules** became effective in January 2009. Nutrition labeling means customers of chain establishments will see calories on menus and menu boards, or on an approved alternative. Other nutrition information must be available. Chain food establishments are defined as having 15 or more locations nationally and offering 80 percent or more of the same standard menu items. In 2010, 98 percent of the establishments were in compliance.

The **Biotoxin Program** works year-round testing mussels and clams from salt water beaches for Paralytic Shellfish Poison ("red tide") and Amnesic Shellfish Poison. A combination of warm temperatures, sunlight, and nutrient-rich waters can cause the algae that produce biotoxins to grow quickly and become toxic "blooms." While these biotoxins occur naturally in marine waters, contact with blooms can make people sick or even cause death. When we find toxins at dangerous levels, the shellfish harvest areas are closed and shellfish harvest closure signs are posted in seven languages.

**Swimming Beach** waters are monitored for bacteria levels at King County's 19 fresh water and 10 salt water public swimming beaches. King County inspectors take water samples to identify whether bacteria in the water are from bathers, animals, or sewage system overflows. When bacteria levels are too high, we close the beaches to swimmers, and re-open them when the water is safe again. In 2010, three fresh water beaches were closed because of high bacteria levels, and re-opened when they were safe. Two salt water beaches were also closed temporarily, Dash Point due to an oil spill and Lowman Beach because of a sewage spill. This program is a collaboration between Environmental Health, King County's Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Washington State Departments of Ecology and Health, and local cities and parks.

**Pools and Spas** in King County are enjoyed by tens of thousands of residents, tourists and visitors each year. Environmental Health inspectors check every public pool and spa for proper water disinfection, temperature, safety barriers, and safety equipment. Staff also reviews plans for new construction or remodeling of pools, spas, wading pools, and spray pools. During 2010, a primary focus was educating pool operators on new regulations for safety barriers and drains. Any injury, illness, or death including a drowning or near drowning in a pool or spa must be reported to Environmental Health.

## 2010 QUICK FACTS Food & Facility Protection

Trained and tested food workers:

- 107,145 food worker cards

Provided routine food establishment inspections:

- 17,443 inspections

Provided food establishment educational visits:

- 7,111 educational visits

Permitted food establishments:

- 10,992 permits

Temporary events:

- 1,738 permits

Investigated food establishment complaints:

- 840 complaints

Investigated suspected cases of foodborne illness with public health epidemiologists:

- 89 investigations

Reviewed food establishment plans:

- 780 plans

Provided routine pool and spa inspections:

- 3,637 inspections

Reviewed new or remodeled pool plans:

- 1,202 plans





# ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

The proper management of environmental hazards is an essential component of public health work. Working in cooperation with state and local agencies, non-governmental organizations, and communities, Environmental Hazards teams advise on chemical waste management, educate about toxic exposures such as lead and arsenic, supervise solid waste disposal, control rodent infestations, coordinate responses to vector-borne illnesses such as West Nile virus, assess hazardous waste sites, and investigate illegal drug laboratories.

**The Local Hazardous Waste Management Program** in King County is an intergovernmental collaboration between Public Health – Seattle & King County, Seattle Public Utilities, King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, and the Suburban Cities Association. The program's mission is to protect and enhance public health and environmental quality by reducing threats posed by the production, use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials. Program staff helped people and businesses learn what materials are hazardous, how to identify safer alternatives, and how to manage the hazardous waste they may have or produce.

In 2010, we taught local housing authorities and other low-income housing providers about Integrated Pest Management methods to control bed bugs and other pests, and the proper management of hazardous materials and hazardous wastes.

We continued advocating for the proper disposal of pharmaceutical waste. The pilot pharmaceutical "take back" project was expanded, and now Group Health Cooperative and Bartell Drugs collect waste medicine at 40 sites across the state. Seven police and sheriff offices in King County are collecting medicines, including controlled substances. Since the project began, more than 56,101 pounds of unused medicines have been collected for safe and secure destruction. The Washington Legislature did not pass the proposed "Secure Medicine

Return" bill in the 2010 session, but our efforts for legislative action continue. The project, with its partners, has created a new web site: <http://www.takebackyourmeds.org/>.

**The Physical and Chemical Hazards Program** is supported by grants from the Washington Department of Ecology. Environmental Health staff investigated and ranked the contamination level of properties (contamination is most often caused by fuels, oils, and heavy metals). The program also assured clean up of illegal drug labs, and provided education and data on health and environmental impacts from arsenic and lead contamination from the Tacoma ASARCO copper smelter plume. Funding for these programs ends in June, 2011.

**The Solid Waste Program** ensured that garbage (solid waste) was handled safely, thus protecting people and the environment, by reviewing plans for solid waste-handling facilities, issuing permits to operate, inspecting and monitoring these facilities and their garbage trucks. The program also worked directly with residents by investigating complaints about unlawful garbage dumping.

In 2010, the program completed assessing the approximately 150 recycling and material recovery facilities that are currently exempt from requirements to determine regulatory compliance. The assessment identified a number of facilities that are not operating in a manner covered by the exemption and should therefore be under a solid waste facility operating permit. Bringing these facilities into compliance requires staff resources that are not funded at this time.

Garbage and rodents often go hand in hand. Since rodents can carry diseases, destroy property, cause electrical fires, and contaminate food, Solid Waste staff provided information on how to keep your property free of rodents. Educational materials were updated and are available in print as well as online at: <http://kingcounty.gov/health/rats/>.

**The Zoonotic Disease Program** focuses on infectious diseases such as rabies, leptospirosis, salmonella, psittacosis, ringworm, some types of influenza, and West Nile virus, all of which can be spread from animals to humans. The program addresses diseases that can be transmitted to people from pets, livestock, wildlife, rodents, insect vectors, and from contaminated environmental sources. The public's health is more susceptible to zoonotic disease because of our lifestyles, including increased travel, trade, and contact with wildlife. Climate change may also be upsetting the balance of the human/animal ecosystem.

Our staff consulted with veterinarians and other medical professionals on potential cases of zoonotic disease in animals; investigated animal cases or outbreaks; provided infection control recommendations for animal exhibits such as zoos and fairs; conducted active monitoring of disease outbreaks; and provided disease prevention education.

Another major component of the program is permitting, inspecting, and responding to complaints about pet-related businesses -- including pet shops and aquariums, boarding kennels, pet groomers, animal shelters and adoption centers, pet daycares, businesses selling live poultry, and pet food retailers in King County.



## 2010 QUICK FACTS Environmental Hazards Section Activities

Consultations on proper waste management for Local Hazardous Waste Management Program (LHWMP):

- 1,143 phone consultations to small businesses
- 7604 phone calls
- 156 emails to residents

Consultation visits to businesses:

- 515 visits including 361 emergency flood preparation visits with businesses in Green River Valley

Educational visits to nail salon operators:

- 71 salons

Industrial Materials Exchange:

- 16 exchanges

Funding assistance to help with hazardous waste collection:

- 37 King County cities

Issued Waste Clearances to ensure dangerous waste is not going to landfill (Physical and Chemical Hazards):

- 155 clearances

Conducted site hazard assessments:

- 25 assessments

Investigated unlawful dumping complaints (Solid Waste Program):

- 1,711 field investigations

Investigated rodent complaints:

- 807 field investigations

Aided in controlling rat population:

- 3,717 manholes inspected (City of Seattle)
- 1,825 manholes baited (City of Seattle)

Consultations and investigations by the Zoonotic Disease Program:

- 184 evaluations of potential animal rabies exposure
- 459 rabies consultations
- 28 bats tested for rabies, 2 confirmed with rabies
- 27 animal Leptospirosis case investigations
- 1 psittacosis investigation
- 63 other zoonotic disease consultations
- 135 office consultations, 249 inspections and
- 2 complaint investigations of pet shops, kennels, and dog daycares

Surveillance for West Nile virus (WNV):

- 628 public reports of dead birds collected
- 43 dead birds tested for WNV
- No dead birds found positive for WNV

Consulted with residents on questions about mosquitoes, birds and WNV:

- 153 consultations



# COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH      ENGAGEMENT, EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE

The **Community Environmental Health Section** includes programs for onsite sewage, small drinking water systems, and plumbing. These programs assure that water stays clean until you use it and that wastewater does not contaminate clean water on its way to a municipal sewer or individual onsite system for treatment.

The continued economic downturn and slow recovery is reflected in fewer permits and inspections, which in turn resulted in additional staff cuts in 2010. However, when the State Department of Health took over the small drinking water (“Group B”) systems program in October, 2010, it allowed for other permit applications in this section to be processed more quickly.

**Wastewater Systems** are small “onsite” (on the property) sewage treatment systems for properties without sewer connections. When an onsite sewer is failing, the improperly treated sewage can contaminate water. Starting in 2009, all onsite systems must be evaluated by a qualified inspector whenever a property is sold. The goal of these “time of sale” inspections is to assure that onsite systems receive a periodic inspection and that failing systems are repaired where necessary. 2010 saw the number of “time of sale” reports decrease from 1736 to 1595 due to the slow real estate market. There was an increase in the number of septic system repair permits being processed.

Outreach to onsite sewage owners in the Marine Recovery Areas on Vashon Island continued in 2010. The Vashon Island Septic Solutions Committee, the Ground Water Management Committee, Environmental Health, and King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks sponsored a second “onsite sewage” fair. The fair brought together onsite product vendors, experts from the Washington Onsite Sewage System Association, and residents who have onsite systems. The fair

## 2010 QUICK FACTS Community Environmental Health Activities

Approved new Group B wells:

- 6 wells

Provided plumbing and gas piping permits:

- 9,445 permits

Reviewed onsite septic system site applications:

- 773 applications

Approved as-built designs for onsite:

- 211 designs

Received Operation & Maintenance Reports:

- 2,196 reports

enabled residents to learn about available alternative systems and how these systems might work for them. Residents attending the fair were able to get answers to their specific questions.

The **Plumbing and Gas Piping Program** inspectors review system plans, then inspect the new or remodeled system to assure it works safely. In 2010, an analysis of permit plan reviews and inspection costs demonstrated that the fee structure did not accurately reflect the cost of service. The plumbing program proposed restructuring permit fees. The fee proposal was adopted by the City of Seattle Council and the King County Council as part of the 2011 budget process.

**Community Engagement** is an essential part of offering equitable services across the diverse communities in King County. Whether the “communities” we engage with are neighborhoods, community based organizations, businesses, or government agencies, collaboration is essential.

In 2010, Environmental Health participated in many community engagement activities, including:

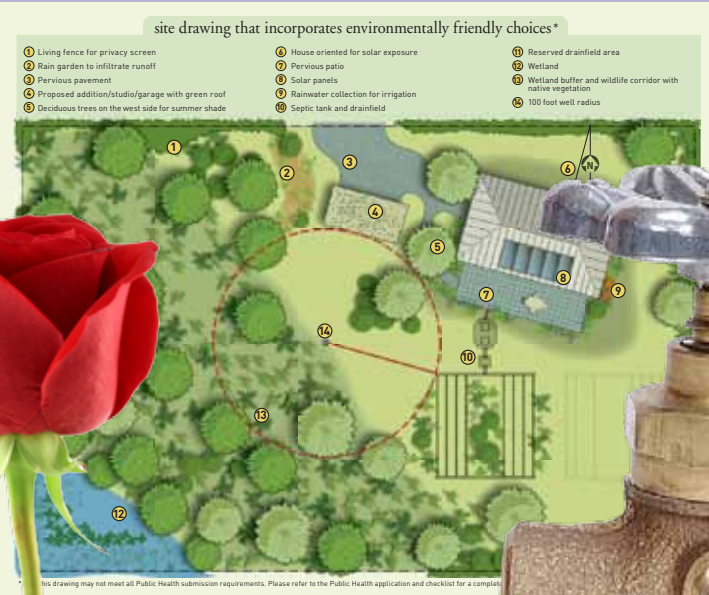
- collaboration with the Environmental Justice communities of South Park and Georgetown, and with federal, state, regional, and local officials to successfully bid for funding to rebuild the closed South Park Bridge;
- partnering with Chinatown International District Business Improvement Area to pilot a process for achieving cleaner, safer alleys in the district; and
- conducting a small sample survey along the Duwamish River Superfund site to learn whether, in spite of fish warning signs, people still fish for and eat resident fish and shellfish from the river. Survey results will contribute to planning for community outreach in the Superfund cleanup plan.

The **Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) Ordinance** began as a King County initiative and was approved as an ordinance by the King County Council in November, 2010. Health disparities are the result of many factors, including poverty, poor housing quality, racial and ethnic discrimination, a disproportionate exposure to toxins, and the stress these conditions cause..

To increase awareness of some of the equity and environmental/social justice issues within our jurisdiction, Environmental Health led several ESJ tours in 2010. Tour participants included elected officials, government groups, and attendees at a Smart Growth planning conference.

We shared the video series “Unnatural Causes” and facilitated discussions on equity, social justice and their impact on health with several partner agencies. This gave us a common language and understanding from which to continue our work together.

The Environmental Health Director co-chairs the ESJ inter-branch team charged with developing guidance on equity and social justice for all King County departments and branches. One document developed and now in use is the Equity Impact Tool, which assists programs in reviewing policy and program proposals through an equity lens.





# BUILT ENVIRONMENT, ENFORCEMENT, & EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The Built Environment and Land Use Program focuses on health promotion strategies to ensure all King County residents have access to environments that encourage healthy lifestyles. Land use planning and public health have been linked for nearly a century, starting from the need to prevent infectious disease outbreaks in the early 1900's. More recently public health agencies have returned to a focus on planning and land use design as it becomes more apparent the leading causes of death and injury are linked to the environments where we live, work, learn, and play. Environmental Health works to encourage policy development that can prevent health problems by removing environmental threats and promoting the opportunities for residents to take healthy actions. See more information online at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/ehs/healthyplaces.aspx>.

Of special importance in 2010, Environmental Health worked with the King County Board of Health and other health department staff to develop the "Planning for Healthy Communities Guidelines" which were adopted as a resolution and then subsequently adopted into the Board's new Guidelines and Recommendations section. The goal of the Guidelines is to influence land use and transportation planning decisions to create environments that allow people to be physically active, eat healthy food, and live in safe and healthy places. These Guidelines are intended to inform regional, county, and city land use and transportation planning decisions so they can explicitly promote healthy living throughout King County. One of the underlying principles is to ensure that all people and communities have the opportunity to make healthy choices regardless of their income, education, or ethnic background. See the complete Guidelines at: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/health-services/health/BOH/guidelines.aspx>.



In 2010, Environmental Health staff used the Planning for Healthy Communities Guidelines as part of a team of King County, Seattle, Bellevue, Suburban Cities Association, and the utility districts representatives that is updating the King County Countywide Planning Policies. These policies provide the framework for the city and county comprehensive plans.

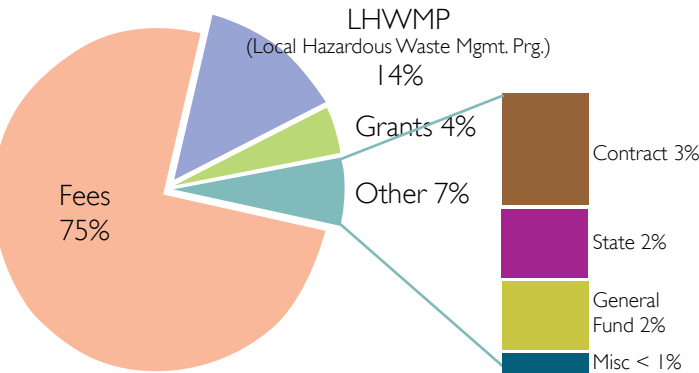
The Enforcement Team provides legal and enforcement support to Environmental Health programs. Their work includes day-to-day legal advice, guiding enforcement processes, drafting Board of Health Rules and Regulations, representing the division in hearings before the King County Hearing Examiner, coordinating communications with the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, responding to Ombudsman inquiries, and recommending positions on proposed state and local legislation. The team works closely with Public Health's Compliance Office to respond to public records disclosure requests. In 2010, 77% (319 requests) of the public records requests submitted to the Compliance Office were for Environmental Health programs. Additionally, the team adopted procedures for coordinating with Public Health – Seattle & King County's translation vendors to ensure the proper drafting and translation of enforcement-related documents for persons proficient in languages other than English.

Environmental Health's Emergency Preparedness staff continued to work with regional planning teams and interagency task forces to develop emergency response plans for potential flooding in the Green River Valley. If flooding does occur, the environmental health consequences could be serious. Environmental Health planned for the possible release of raw sewage and hazardous materials into the floodwaters, water damage to property, and potential contamination of food products. Staff collaborated with the Washington Department of Agriculture to organize and hold a Food Safety Summit for the Green River Valley food industry and regulators to prepare for possible flooding incidents. In addition, we collaborated with the Department of Agriculture to hold a two day seminar on "A Coordinated Response to Food Emergencies: Practice and Execution."



# BUDGET

2010 Environmental Health Division  
Revenue Sources



As was the case in 2009, the 2010 local economy severely impacted Environmental Health's permit revenues, particularly in program areas tied to development and construction. At mid-year, the projections were dire enough that we initiated staff reductions and other actions in an attempt to limit the year end deficit. Even with the loss of 15 of our colleagues, we ended the year with a \$500,000 deficit. The Environmental Health designated reserve and an internal loan were used to mitigate the 2010 revenue shortage.

Much of the financial shortfall was in the plumbing and gas piping program due to a permit fee structure that did not cover the costs of service. New fees were proposed and adopted for 2011 that will prevent future deficits in the program. In addition, money is being saved through the use of technology – more than half of all plumbing and gas permits are now issued online.



Food and Facilities 2010 Revenues

Fees	\$10,473,000
Grants	26,000
Miscellaneous	6,000
Total Revenues	\$10,469,000

Environmental Hazards 2010 Revenues

Contracts	\$515,000
Fees	853,000
Grants	735,000
LHWMP	2,661,000
State Funding	124,000
Total Revenues	\$4,889,000

Community Environmental Health 2010 Revenues

Fees	\$3,011,000
Grants	71,000
Misc	4,000
State Funding	33,000
Total Revenues	\$3,582,000

Environmental Health 2010 Expenditures

Salaries & Benefits	\$14,160,000
Overhead & Indirect Costs	4,018,000
Supplies & Services	1,333,000
Total Expenditures	\$19,511,000

