



The Essex County Tri-Town Health Services Initiative (ECTTHSI) started in May of 2021 with a grant application solicited by the state to begin to align with the Excellence in Public Health Blueprint's recommendations.

Topsfield, as the lead financial community, received the grant award in August. The Health Directors worked with MAPC and the Town Administrators to draft an MOU and proposed job descriptions. In December 2021, the Select Boards of Middleton, Boxford and Topsfield voted to sign the MOU for shared health services for the length of the grant, as extended and/or amended by the state periodically.

Immediately, ECTTHSI contracted with the public health nurse who had been filling the role of Tri-Town Pandemic Response Public Health Nurse for the schools and communities. This transition was completed January 8, 2022, as the funds for CARES and other usable COVID-19 grants were running out. We were able to fill the environmental inspector position in June.

The allowable requirements and costs of the grant have changed significantly since the state initially offered it to the local municipalities, due in part to the pandemic's progress. A better understanding of what is needed to support local public health infrastructure has also created changes including the state grant managers' decision to no longer allow contract employees.

In the continued effort to bring important shared health services to the three communities, the municipalities are working together to support the grant. The Topsfield Select Board voted to approve the addition of the public health nurse as a grant funded employee position under the Topsfield personnel bylaw in August 2022. The Intermunicipal Agreement that is proposed, approved by Topsfield's Select Board on October 17, 2022, and currently before the Middleton and Boxford Select Boards' for approval, will enable the hiring of a grant funded employee position under the Middleton personnel bylaw.

Some of the contributions that have been made by the two new PH Positions:

- Public Health Nurse (PHN)
  - In addition to continuing to working with youth in the school environment, our shared PHN has started to develop and deliver services through our Councils of Aging and Veteran Agents.
  - PHN is working on bringing Tri-town Health Departments into a more visible role with the Tri-Town Council, who works with youth, and are continuing our look into outreach concerning mental health and opioid abuse.

- PHN has provided clinics for flu and COVID vaccinations, providing all types of vaccines and opening them to all eligible ages.
    - Supports existing towns' PHN staff to continue to deliver services.
    - Starting the process of bring innovative public health programs, including senior at-risk initiatives, to the towns' public safety teams.
  - Environmental Health Inspector
    - Reviewing existing town food inspection programs and working to bring them into compliance with Federal Food Code Standards program. This includes applications for grants, bringing current inspection software to the health departments, and assisting new vendors with compliance.
    - Working on a volunteer food worker information flier to provide training opportunities to the community.
    - Started uniform procedures across the tri-town for festival food vendor compliance and ensuring food protection at these types of events.
    - Provide support for existing services during heavy periods of public health cyclical workloads, including camp inspections (majority done in May), soil evaluations (can take up to 9 or 10 hours worst case, more often 4 hour average per lot), and food inspections (most require a minimum of 2 inspections per year, not including follow ups or high risk establishments).
- With new shared staff, we ensure better compliance with required statutes and regulations, or recommendations by state policy, including
  - Food Safety Program permitting and inspectional reporting
  - MAVEN disease reporting
  - Pool and Bathing Beach permitting
  - Children's Camps
  - Indoor Ice-Skating Rinks
  - Housing Program compliance
  - Complaints and follow up
  - Grant funding applications
- Established shared inspectional platform for uniform standards and application of the Food Code during food inspections. This supports field inspections via tablet and desktop access for follow up permitting and other actions.
- Secured new capital supplies for local PH service delivery and emergency preparedness, including:
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Blood Pressure Cuff</li> <li>○ Stethoscope</li> <li>○ AED machine</li> <li>○ First Aid Kit</li> <li>○ Epinephrine</li> <li>○ Charging Port</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Chairs</li> <li>○ Ground Tarps</li> <li>○ Tents</li> <li>○ Trailer for Storage and Transport</li> <li>○ LED message board</li> </ul>
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