

# BOARD LETTER: AUTHORIZE ACCEPTANCE OF LABASPIRE PUBLIC HEALTH EQUITY AND READINESS OPPORTUNITY INITIATIVE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM FUNDING



Epidemiology and Immunizations Services Branch  
Public Health Laboratory  
February 3, 2026  
[SANDIEGOCOUNTY.GOV/HHSA](http://SANDIEGOCOUNTY.GOV/HHSA)



# PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY



## **Mission Statement:**

Providing quality laboratory services to protect community health and prevent the spread of disease.



## **Core Activities:**

Surveillance, Assessment, and Assurance.

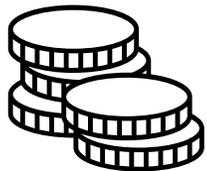
# LABASPIRE PUBLIC HERO PROGRAM FUNDING



California has an **urgent** need to **increase** workforce **training programs** that address recruitment challenges in public health labs.



The California Department of Public Health, Center for Laboratory Sciences is implementing the Public HERO Initiative, also known as the **LabAspire Fellowship Program**.



The grant total is **\$1,023,641** through **June 30, 2027**.



# LABASPIRE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM



- Sponsored by:
  - California Department of Public Health, Office of the State Public Health Laboratory Director and Laboratory Field Services
  - California Association of Public Health Laboratory Directors



- Trains and prepares qualified professionals to direct and work in Public Health Laboratories:
  - Public Health Microbiologist Training Program
  - LabAspire Training Program – Lab Director

# Workforce Development



## Public Health Microbiologist (PHM) Training Program

- Must have PHM certification to work at PHL in CA
- San Diego is an Approved Training site
- 1040 hours covering 23 different units
- 2026 Cohort: 2 fulltime Jr. PHM trainees
  - Additionally, 2 feeder Jr. PHM positions supporting ddPCR testing
    - Crucial to being competitive and retaining talent



## LabAspire Training Program – Laboratory Director Pathway

- DrPH Track via University of South Florida – Anna Liza
- Assistant Director Track – Dr. Sam Hallis, Dr. Nick Rhoades
- Current Laboratory Director - LabAspire and DrPH graduate



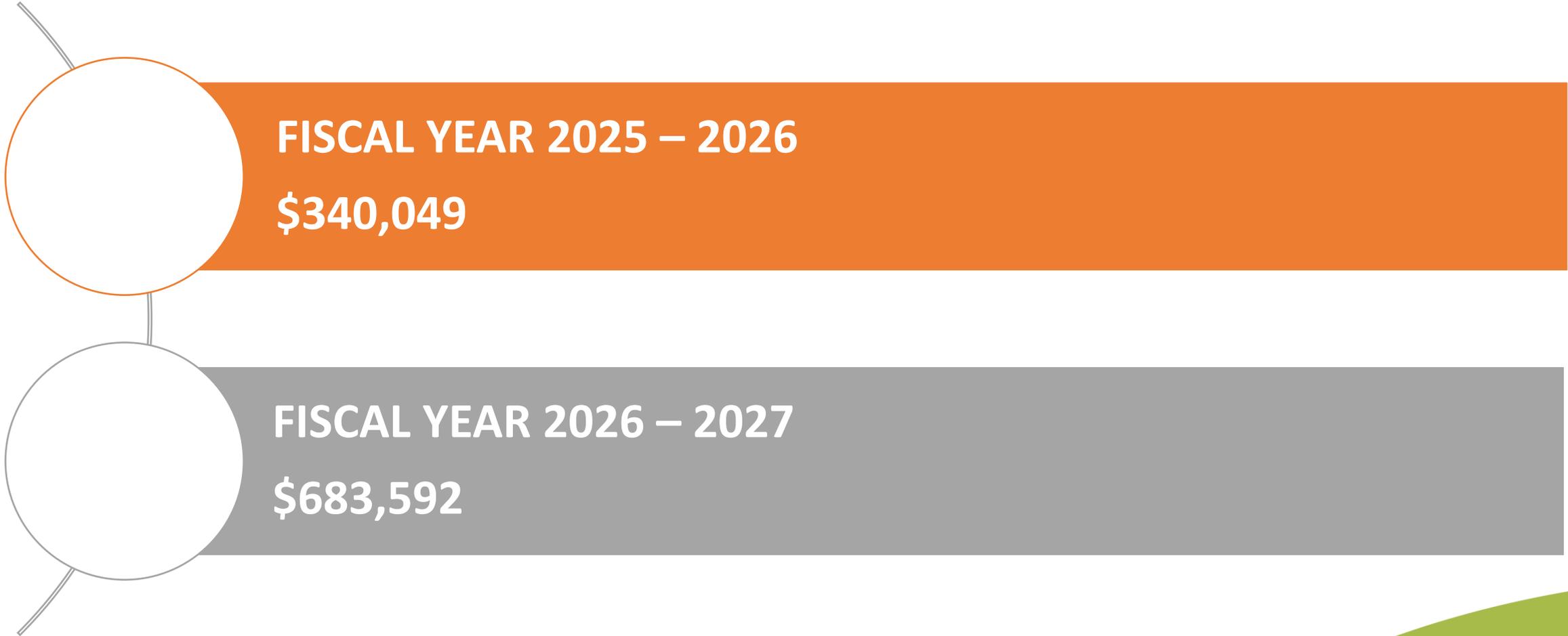
# BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES



- Filling long-standing vacancies
- Increased knowledge and leadership skills
- Opportunities for staff to attend conferences and trainings
- Succession planning
- Opportunity to collaborate with APHL and CDPH to support training needs locally and in CA



# Recommendations



# Recommendations



1. Waive Board Policy B-29, Fees, Grants, Revenue Contracts – Department Responsibility for Cost Recovery, which requires prior approval of grant applications and full-cost recovery of grants.
2. Authorize acceptance of \$1,023,641 from the California Department of Public Health, Center for Laboratory Sciences for the Public Health Equity and Readiness Opportunity LabAspire Fellowship Program, for the period of July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2027, for laboratory workforce training, and authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, or designee, to execute all required documents, upon receipt, including any annual extensions, amendments, and/or revisions thereto that do not materially impact or alter the services or funding level.
3. Authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, or designee, to apply for additional funding opportunity announcements, if available, to support the continuing education and training of lab personnel.

# Contact Information



For additional information, contact:

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# THANK YOU

[SANDIEGOCOUNTY.GOV/HHSA](https://sandiegocounty.gov/hhsa)



*The Public Health Services department, County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, has maintained national public health accreditation, since May 17, 2016, and was re-accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board on August 21, 2023.*