



VCU

School of Public Health

STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2029

VISION

Every person. Every community. Healthy.

MISSION

To advance health locally and globally through excellence in education, research, partnership, and evidence-driven action.

VALUES

Care

We foster a culture of respect, well-being, and compassion.

Leadership

We cultivate leadership at every level—empowering students, faculty, and partners as change agents.

Innovation

We welcome bold ideas, new methods, and interdisciplinary, creative approaches to solve complex challenges.

Translation

We transform evidence into action—influencing policy, practice, and systems change.

Community

We work with communities to identify public health priorities, co-design solutions, and build trust.





Pillars, Goals, and Strategies

Pillar 1: Educate & Launch Public Health Leaders

Prepare the next generation of public health professionals, innovators, and advocates.

GOALS

1. Align Educational Opportunities to Demand

- Launch first cohort of BSPH with at least three pathways in undergraduates to engage with public health coursework (e.g., minors, general education, microcredentials, certificates)
- Offer at least ten pathways for VCU undergraduates to matriculate to School of Public Health graduate programs (e.g., Honors College Guaranteed Admission, 4 + 1)
- Expand MPH online enrollment to at least 50 students

2. Implement Best-Practice Teaching & Learning Strategies

- Ensure at least 70% of students rate their courses as “more than adequate” or “excellent”
- Incorporate active learning strategies in all courses
- Verify 100% of asynchronous online courses meet standards as designated by LED Studios
- Engage at least 50% of faculty members annually in instructional effectiveness improvement activities

3. Advance Student Success & Workforce Readiness

- Assess capacity for supporting student success and create a plan for growth
- Verify 100% of graduate students and faculty advisors create and sign an advising compact
- Achieve post-graduation rates of 80% or greater employment or enrollment in further education
- Ensure at least 75% of doctoral students complete degree within program-defined timeframes
- Identify strategies for increasing enrollment in MS, PhD, and dual degree programs

4. Promote Student Success Through Research Engagement

- Engage at least 90% of doctoral students in publishing two or more peer-reviewed publications
- Ensure at least 20% of master's students in research during their graduate program



Pillar 2: Generate Evidence & Translate Solutions

Produce cutting-edge research and move it into practice and policy.

GOALS

1. Grow an Office of Research & Strengthen Research Infrastructure

- Establish a centralized Office of Research with defined leadership and staffing structure
- Create centralized research data and performance dashboard
- Develop pre- and post-award grant support services and standardize procedures
- Establish research cores (data, methods, community engagement)
- Increase total research expenditures by 10%
- Increase federally funded proposal submissions by 20%
- Expand postdoctoral positions by 10%

2. Strengthen Scholarly Productivity & Policy Impact

- Increase peer-reviewed publications by 10% annually
- Measurable improvement in citation impact metrics
- Establish policy translation lab/hub
- Support all early-stage investigators to submit award proposals within 18 months of hire
- Increase post-doctoral proposal submissions and post-doctoral publications by 20% (e.g., F32)

3. Foster Interdisciplinary & Translational Research Collaborations

- Launch 2–3 interdisciplinary research clusters (team science/program projects)
- Increase team science implementation and dissemination proposal submissions by 15%
- Identify strategies to incentivize and facilitate multi-PI grant submissions

Pillar 3: Engage & Serve Local and Global Communities

Build strong partnerships for bidirectional innovation and community impact.

GOALS

1. Build Authentic Community Partnerships

- Encourage 75% faculty participation in extramural service activities
- Facilitate 75% student participation in professional and community service activities
- Establish School of Public Health Advisory Council

2. Strengthen Workforce & Community Training

- Implement three community-based service projects annually
- Host three continuing education and professional development events annually

3. Expand Community-Engaged & Equity-Focused Research

- Develop sustainable infrastructure to foster community partnerships and collaborative research
- Build capacity in community-engaged research methods, implementation science, dissemination and knowledge translation
- Measure and demonstrate impact of community-engaged research on health outcomes, policy, and practice

Pillar 4: Build a Thriving School

Strengthen our infrastructure and culture, and secure the resources needed as we grow.

GOALS

1. Create a Culture of Belonging & Well-Being

- Establish professional development strategy for faculty and staff
- Assess culture and climate to enhance the school environment

2. Ensure Operational Excellence & Sustainability

- Create a SOPH faculty handbook
- Document school-level, standard operating procedures
- Ensure 100% compliance with VCU integrity requirements
- Establish operational areas within the dean's office
- Validate 100% of staff roles have written, HR-approved position descriptions

3. Build Infrastructure & Organizational Capacity

- Review academic organizational structure and staffing capacity
- Establish school-wide communications and marketing strategy
- Secure a dedicated space for the School of Public Health and plan for phased expansion
- Identify strategies for increasing scholarships and endowments
- Establish an office/center of global health

Signature Areas

Harnessing Data & Innovative Methods to Transform Health

We develop and apply cutting-edge biostatistics, data science, and clinical trial methods to generate evidence that matters. By analyzing big data, and complex systems, we create actionable insights and translate them into tools that inform policy and practice.

Reimagining Behavioral Health, Substance Use, & Safe Communities

We address the crises of mental health, addiction, and violence through translational research and innovative prevention strategies. Our work strengthens systems and supports communities in creating safer, healthier environments for all.

Turning Evidence into Policy & Systems Change

We work with state agencies, local health departments, and policymakers to turn science into action. Our policy methods analysis, dashboards, and technical assistance shape programs, inform decision-making, and strengthen public health infrastructure.

Preventing Disease & Promoting Lifespan Health

From cancer prevention to women's health to cardio-metabolic conditions, we work to prevent disease before it starts and improve outcomes across the lifespan. Our partnerships with Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center and health systems ensure discoveries move quickly from research to care.

Building Healthier Communities by Addressing Social Drivers

We partner with neighborhoods and local organizations to dismantle barriers to health. Through authentic community-engaged research, leveraging existing data, and place-based interventions, we co-create solutions that rebuild trust in public health and measurably improve well-being.

Connecting Local & Global Health for Shared Solutions

We bridge Virginia with the world, learning from international partners and sharing innovations globally. We connect local and global health through international research collaborations, global training programs, comparative health systems research, and health diplomacy initiatives.