

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



- Chronic Disease
- Environmental Health
- Emergency Preparedness
- Family Health
- Immunizations
- Infectious Disease
- Public Health Laboratory
- Local Public Health
- Minority Health

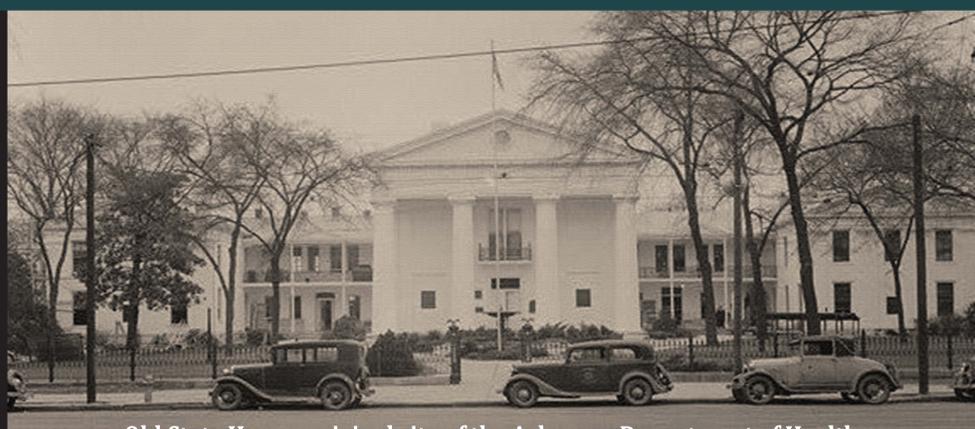
The connection between people and their environment has been a primary focus of the Health Department since the early 1900s.

At that time, nearly half of Arkansas's rural homes lacked proper sanitation, which frequently led to widespread hookworm infections and outbreaks of waterborne illness such as dysentery, typhoid fever, and cholera. In 1917, the Bureau of Sanitary Engineering was created at the Department to improve sanitation and drinking water safety. By 1942, the Health Department and the Works Progress Administration had built more than 50,000 privies for families in need, greatly reducing infectious disease and contaminated water supplies.

By the 1950s, new food safety regulations required that all food establishments be inspected and licensed by the Health Department, while strict water quality standards reduced waterborne illness. Over the course of the next two decades, further improvements in sanitation, water quality standards, septic tank regulations, and plumbing codes would result in nearly 83 percent of the state's residents having access to safe drinking water supplies. In 2011, the Arkansas legislature mandated fluoridation of all water systems serving 5,000 people or more.

Each year, the Environmental Health Protection Branch inspects more than 16,000 food service establishments and tests 1,307 water systems on a regular basis. The Branch also regularly inspects individual wastewater facilities, swimming pools, milk plants and dairy farms, and body art establishments to ensure all Arkansans have access to safe food, water, and services.

100
Years
of Public Health
in Arkansas



Old State House, original site of the Arkansas Department of Health