



## Advocacy and Policy Survey Report Summary 2021

Administered February-March 2021

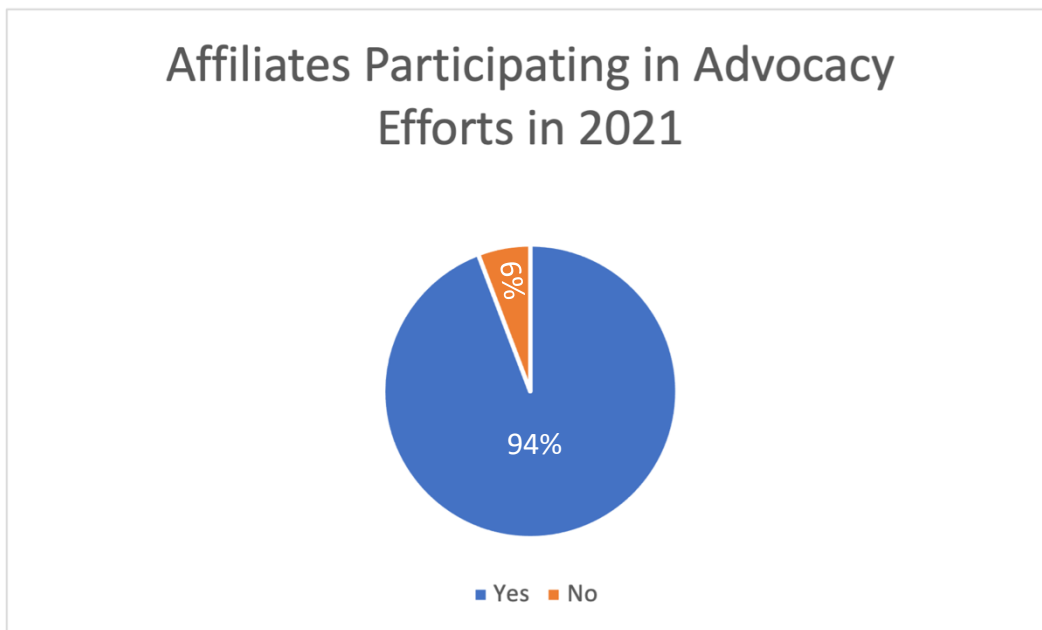
Report prepared by Sakshi Handa, APHA Affiliate Affairs Intern

## Background

The Affiliate Affairs Advocacy and Policy Survey was administered in February and March of 2021. Affiliate leaders were asked to answer questions about what advocacy and policy action they took in 2020 and their plans for 2021. Fifty-two Affiliates responded to the survey (an increase from 49 responses last year), however, not every Affiliate answered every question.

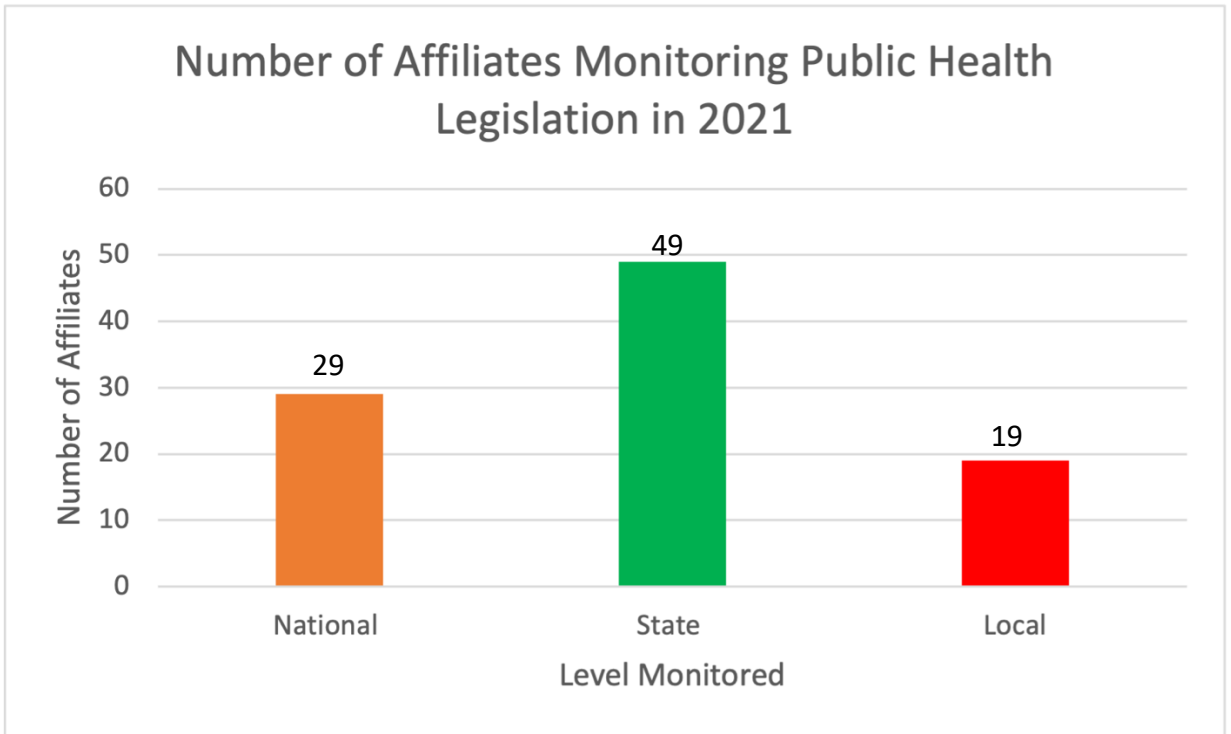
## Advocacy Basics

- 94.2 % (49 out of 52) of Affiliates said they participate in advocacy efforts, and 5.8% (3 out of 52) of Affiliates said they don't. This represents an increase from last year's responses, where only 43 Affiliates reported participation in advocacy efforts.



- 56.9% (29 out of 51) of Affiliates monitored public health-related legislation at the national level, 96.1% (49 out of 51) at the state level and 37.3% (19 out of 51) at the local level. Compared to last year's responses, monitoring public health-related legislation

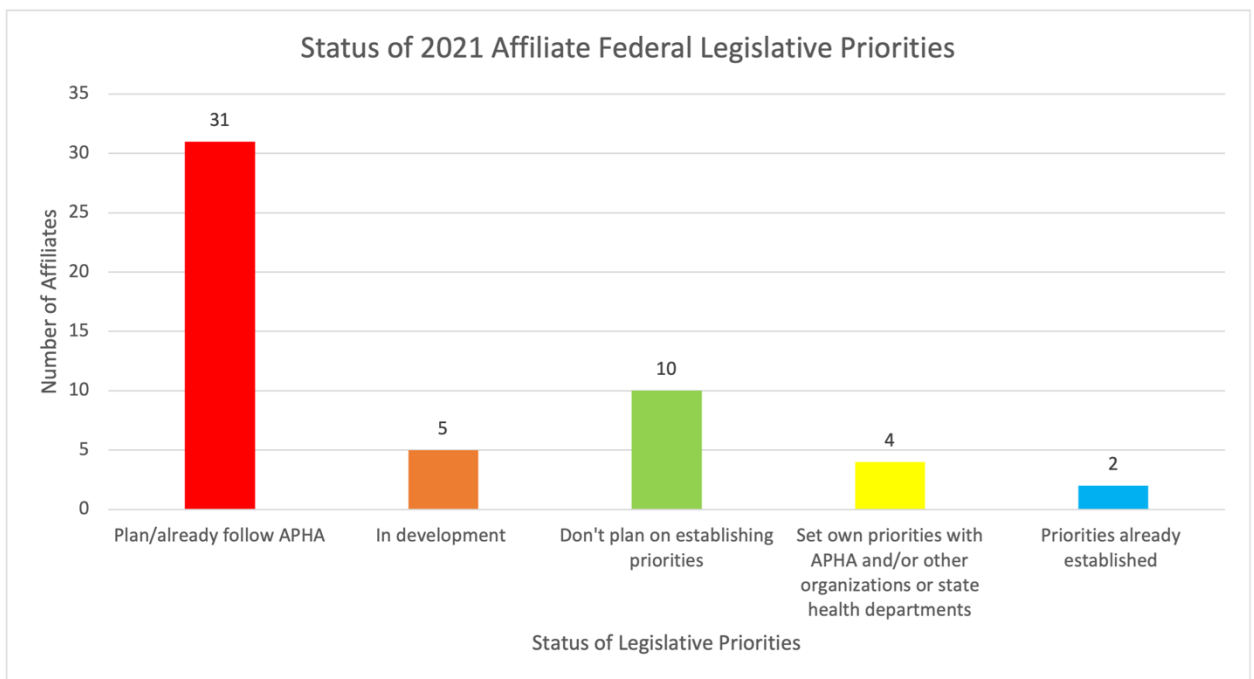
decreased slightly on the national (30 Affiliates reported monitoring in 2020) and local levels (23 Affiliates reported monitoring in 2020).



- 73.1% (38 out of 52) of Affiliates have policy or advocacy relationships with health departments. Affiliates were most likely to have an advocacy or policy relationship with their state or local health department, or a close pragmatic relationship with the health department. This represents a slight decrease from last year's responses, where 40 Affiliates reported having a policy or advocacy relationship with health departments.
- 17.3% (9 out of 52) of Affiliates have ongoing communication with elected members or staffers in local state/district office. 9.6% (5 out of 52) Affiliates have ongoing communication with members or staffers in D.C. office. 57.7% (30 out of 52) of Affiliates have limited communication with their members of Congress and 25% (13 out of 52) of Affiliates have no communication at all with their members of Congress. Some Affiliates choose more than one option when answering this question.

## Policy and Advocacy Priorities

- Federal: Thirty-one Affiliates said they plan to follow or already follow APHA’s federal legislative priorities (representing an increase from just 24 Affiliates in 2020). Five Affiliates said their 2021 federal legislative priorities were still in development (at this time last year, 20 affiliates reported their policies were still in development). Ten Affiliates do not plan on establishing federal priorities. Four Affiliates set their priorities with APHA and/or other organizations or state health departments. Two Affiliates have already established federal legislative priorities. The top five federal priorities reported for 2021 include funding for public health, health equity, climate change, public health infrastructure and COVID-19 relief/funding.

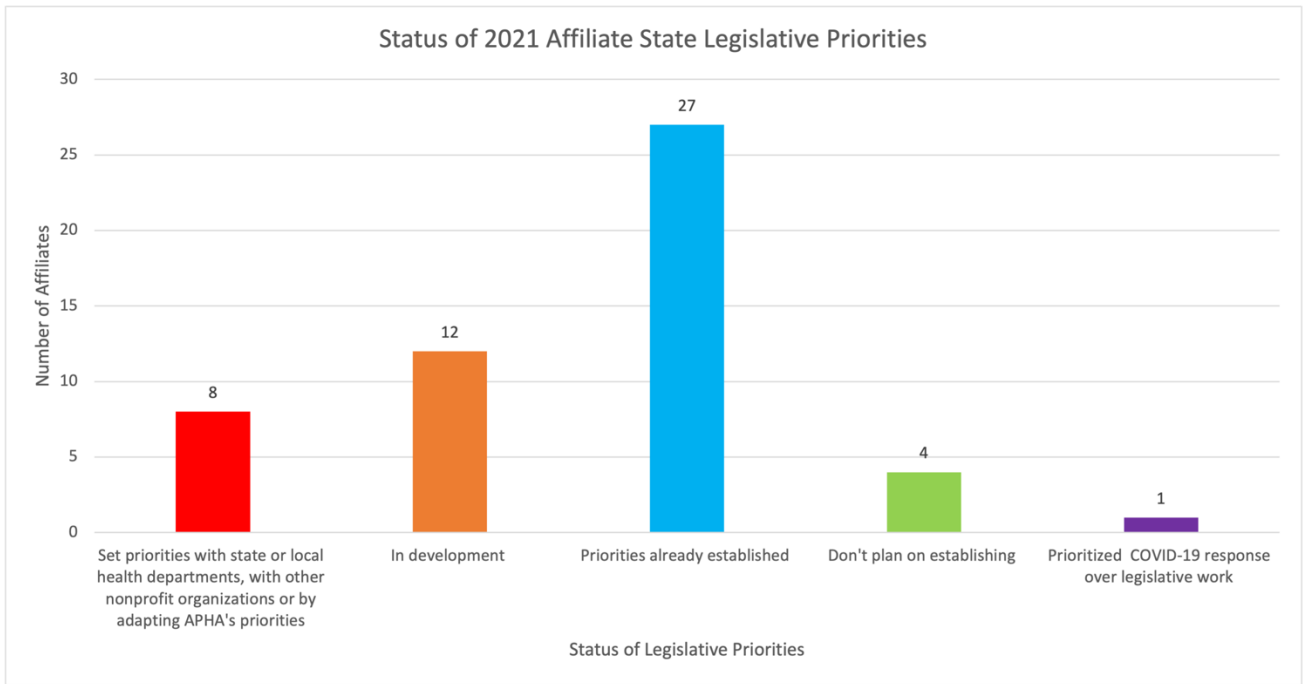


State: Eight Affiliates set their state legislative priorities with state or local health departments, with other nonprofit organizations or by adapting APHA’s priorities.

Twelve Affiliates said their 2021 state legislative priorities are still in development.

Twenty-seven Affiliates have already developed priorities for their state. Four Affiliates

don't plan on developing state priorities. One Affiliate prioritized COVID-19 response rather than legislative priorities. The top five state priorities include tobacco/vaping, health equity/racism as a public health crisis, immunization requirements for children, public health/local health department funding and mental health.



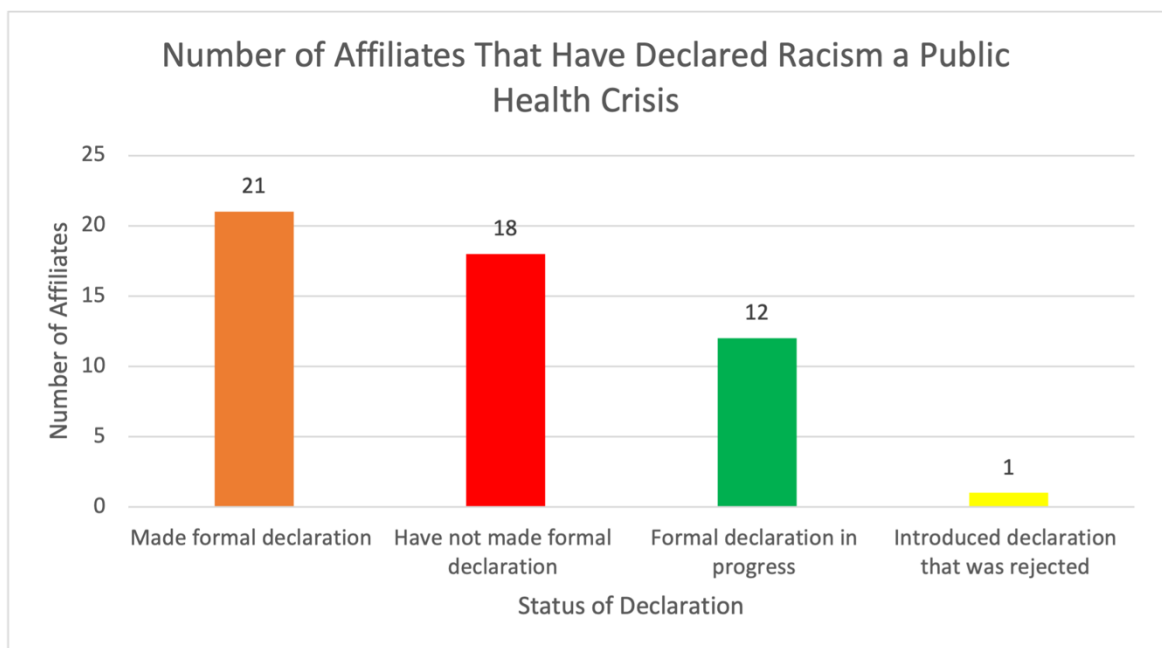
- 46.2% (24 out of 52) of Affiliates said they conducted non-lobbying education to policymakers in 2020. The top five topics discussed with policymakers in 2020 were tobacco, climate change, health equity, public health infrastructure and immunizations. This represents a slight decrease from 2019, with 26 Affiliates reporting they conducted non-lobbying education to policymakers.
- 69.2% (36 out of 52) of Affiliates reported they forwarded APHA Action Alerts to their members.

## Capacity

- 89.1% (41 out of 46) of Affiliates say they partner with other organizations, agencies, or outside lobbying groups to advocate for or promote public health policies, legislation or regulations.
- 86.6% (39 out of 45) of Affiliates have an advocacy or policy committee, subgroup or main contact person(s) that will coordinate policy or advocacy-related activities for 2021.
- 32.7% (17 out of 52) of Affiliates use a professional lobbyist to support their advocacy or policy efforts. This represents an increase from last year, where just 14 Affiliates reported using a professional lobbyist to support their advocacy or policy efforts.

## Priorities

- Twenty-one Affiliates have made a formal declaration of racism as a public health crisis. Eighteen Affiliates have not made a formal declaration of racism as a public health crisis. Twelve Affiliates are in the process of declaring racism a public health crisis. One Affiliate introduced the declaration, but it was rejected.



- 38.5% (20 out of 52) of Affiliates are engaged in advocacy efforts to support declaring racism a public health crisis at the state, county or city level.

## **The Future**

- Best practices from Affiliates concerning advocacy:
  - Building strong partnerships with like-minded local organizations, community members, medical societies and state associations of city and county health officials.
  - Institute a defined process for choosing priorities and focusing advocacy efforts (one Affiliate recommended developing priorities through a membership survey).
  - Focus on both administrative and legislative advocacy.
  - Establish a policy committee; meet weekly for legislative policy/advocacy meetings.
  - Hold annual conferences or forums.
  - Utilize the media to share compelling stories.
  - Mobilize public health students.
- For 2021, Affiliates' most highly requested training topics included:
  - Advocacy 101: how to get started; addressing barriers; and sharing examples, templates and lessons learned
  - Advocacy vs. lobbying
  - Engaging elected officials and effective messaging strategies
  - Writing advocacy/policy briefs or action alerts
- Affiliates said the following are the most helpful training formats:

- Webinars
- Infographics
- Factsheets

## **Wins**

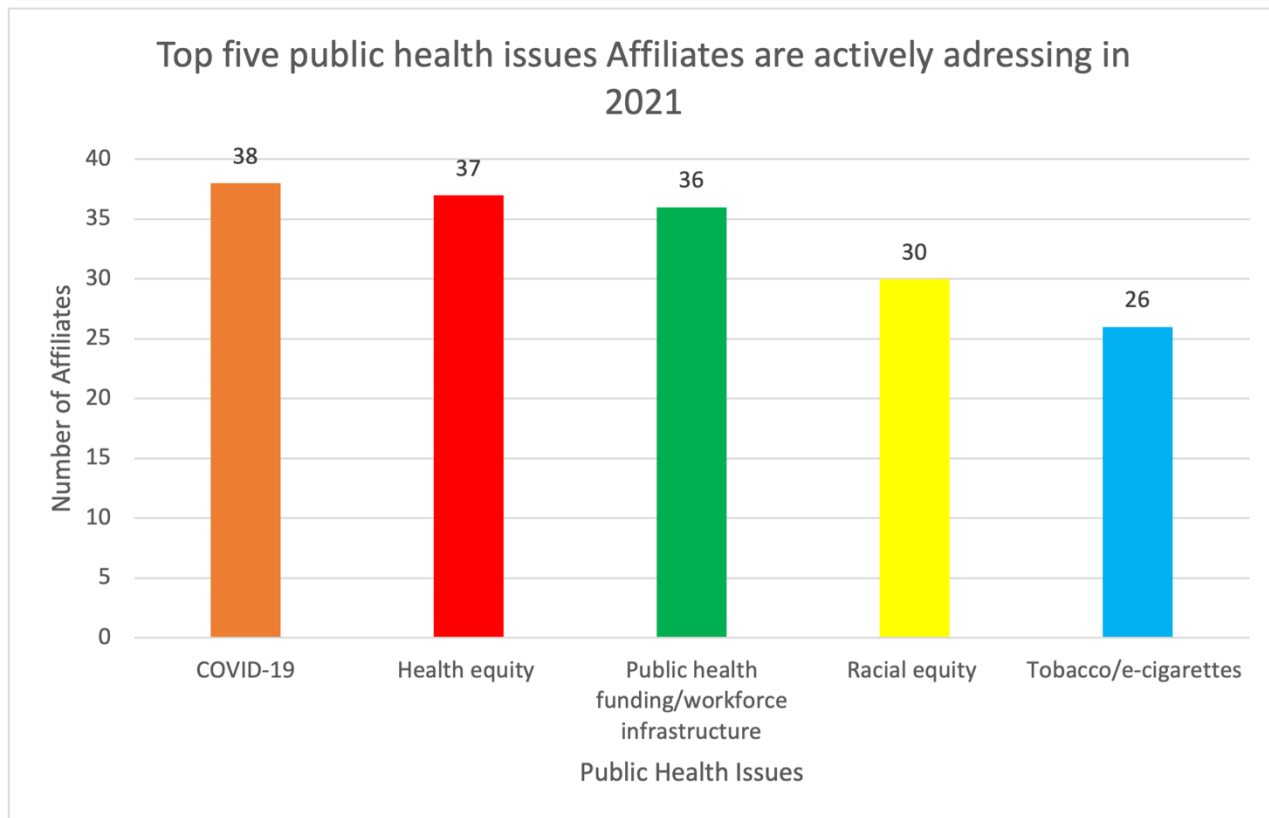
- Affiliate state wins:
  - Tobacco policies
    - Tobacco 21 and enactment of new electronic cigarette product and nicotine product excise tax (Utah)
    - Increase age to purchase cigarettes to 21 (New York)
    - State ban on flavored vaping products (New York)
  - COVID-19
    - Secured COVID funding (Washington State)
    - Passage of bill improving COVID data collection (Massachusetts)
    - Increase in Local Health Protection Grant and COVID-19 funding (Illinois)
  - Sick leave for employees (Colorado)
  - School entry immunization (Colorado)
  - Public health infrastructure (Utah)
  - Expanding Medicaid (Missouri)
  - Public health transformation law passed by state (Kentucky)
  - Passage of bill supporting local public health (Iowa and Massachusetts)
  - Effective eviction moratorium (Massachusetts)
  - Protected childhood immunizations (Mississippi)



- Protected funding for the state department of health (Mississippi)
- Health equity and racism
  - Secured additional funding for health equity and racism work (Louisiana)
  - Supported change in the Mississippi flag (which featured a confederate emblem) (Mississippi)

**Trends:**

- This year, APHA asked the Affiliates the top public health issues they are actively addressing. The top five are:
  1. COVID-19 (38 out of 52 Affiliates)
  2. Health equity (37 out of 52 Affiliates)
  3. Public health funding/workforce infrastructure (36 out of 52 Affiliates)
  4. Racial equity (30 out of 52 Affiliates)
  5. Tobacco/e-cigarettes (26 out of 52 Affiliates)



- In 2020, APHA asked the Affiliates to name the top public health issues that were important to their members. The top five were (note: only 49 Affiliates responded to the 2020 survey):
  1. Public health funding/workforce infrastructure (40 out of 49 Affiliates)
  2. Health equity (39 out of 49 Affiliates)
  3. COVID-19 (36 out of 49 Affiliates)
  4. Tobacco/e-cigarettes (34 out of 49 Affiliates)
  5. Upholding the ACA, including the Prevention and Public Health Fund (31 out of 49 Affiliates)

Although the wording of this question was changed from the 2020 survey to the 2021 survey, 4 out of 5 public health issues Affiliates reported were important to their members in 2020, and

issues they are actively addressing in 2021, remained the same: public health funding/workforce infrastructure, healthy equity, COVID-19 and tobacco/e-cigarettes. In 2020, racial equity was not offered as a multiple-choice response. As part of APHA's continued work on combating racism, racial equity was included in this year's survey.