

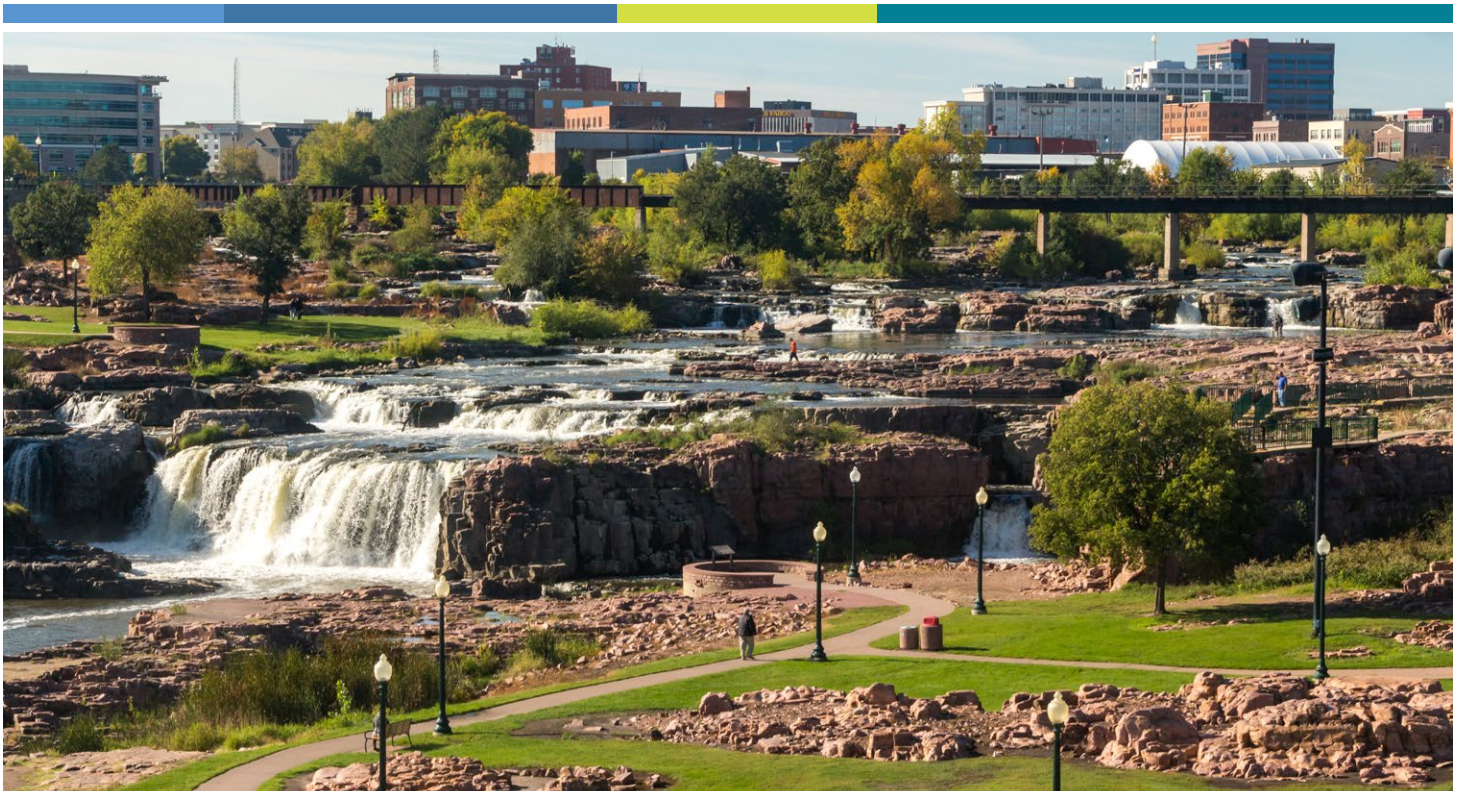
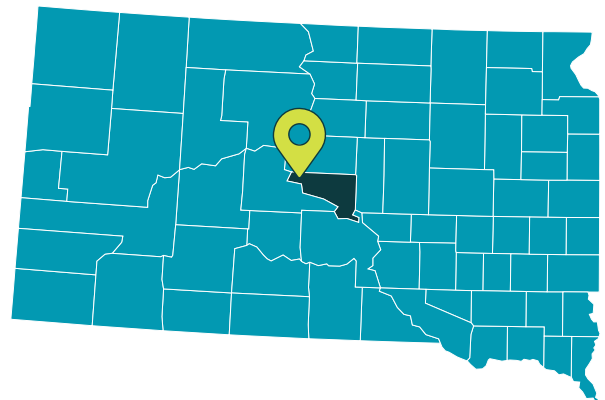
# South Dakota

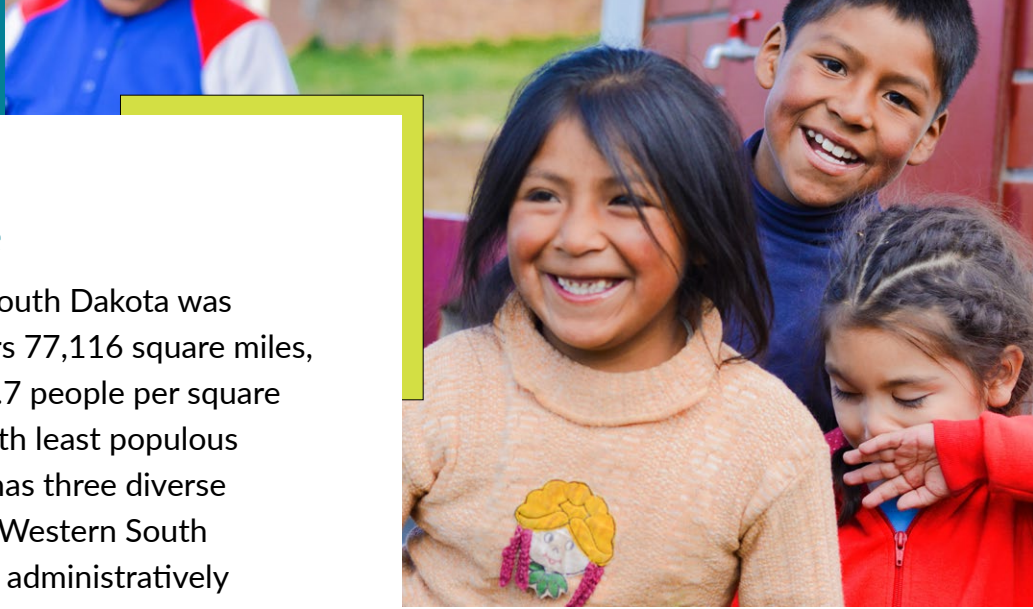
## South Dakota Department of Health Immunizations & Vaccinations

Website: [Immunizations & Vaccinations |  
South Dakota Department of Health \(sd.gov\)](#)

## Immunize South Dakota

Website: [immunizesd.org](#)





## Community Profile

As of 2023, the population of South Dakota was nearly 914,000. The state covers 77,116 square miles, with a population density of 11.7 people per square mile. It is the 17<sup>th</sup> largest and fifth least populous state in the U.S. South Dakota has three diverse regions: Eastern South Dakota, Western South Dakota, and the Black Hills. It is administratively divided into 66 counties. Its most populous cities are Sioux Falls, Rapid City, and Aberdeen.

In terms of sociodemographic factors,



**92.6%**

have health insurance



**2.0%**

unemployment rate



**12.5%**

poverty rate



**\$69,827**

median income



**92.7%**

of residents hold a high school diploma



**31.6%**

have a bachelor's degree or higher

## Coalition Overview

Immunize South Dakota has been a statewide coalition since 2020. Before 2020, it operated as a local coalition of volunteers in Sioux Falls. The state immunization manager wanted the coalition to host a large statewide conference and provide more support outside of the Sioux Falls area, so he encouraged the coalition to expand. However, the state would only be



able to fund them at a higher level if they became a statewide coalition. Now, Immunize South Dakota works to enhance the delivery of safe and effective immunization services across the state. Through outreach, advocacy, workshops, and conferences, Immunize South Dakota works toward their vision of eliminating suffering caused by vaccine-preventable diseases.

## Structure

The coalition is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit led by an executive director and a board that consists of a president, a vice president, a treasurer/secretary, and four directors at large. The only full-time, paid staff member of the coalition is the executive director. In addition to the executive director and the board, the coalition has about 70 members including healthcare and public health professionals, advocates, scientists, parents, community members, and other experts in their fields.

## Funding

The coalition receives 65% of its funding from the state immunization program. Other sources of funding include small Department of Health grants (primarily for HPV-related work), conference revenue, and from vaccine manufacturers.

## Coalition Activities

Some of the main activities of the coalition are:

- Creating and disseminating educational materials, such as a bi-monthly newsletter, social media campaigns, and resources for community and healthcare providers.
- Hosting events, including an annual conference, community events, and an annual partner social.
- Providing education through monthly webinars for professionals.
- Engaging in advocacy work by reaching out to legislators to educate them about vaccine-related issues.

For more information about activities that the coalition is involved in see the [coalition's homepage](#).

## Successes

### Effective Collaboration

Immunize South Dakota initiated a collaboration with the Immunization Program, Medicaid, the SD Pharmacy Association, the state Quality Improve Network, and the quality improvement staff from three of the largest health insurance providers in the state. This group meets quarterly to review individual projects and brainstorm collaborative initiatives that can be implemented concurrently across organizations. Priorities include patient and provider education campaigns, improving data accuracy, identifying vaccine access barriers and opportunities, and addressing vaccine hesitancy. This collaboration has been working together for over a year and has great engagement from all parties.

### Improved Coalition Newsletter

The coalition adjusted how their newsletter was sent and rapidly grew their listserv. Now they create and distribute a newsletter twice a month, that reaches 1,100 people with a 55–60% open rate.

### Annual Immunize South Dakota Conference

Immunize South Dakota holds an annual conference (see [2023 Conference - Immunize South Dakota \(immunizesd.org\)](https://immunizesd.org)) that is well-known and well-attended. The conference typically has about 17-20 vendor tables and serves as a source of revenue for the coalition.

### Partnership

The coalition has existed since 2021, so their partnership with the immunization program is still new and evolving. The immunization program has a small team and could benefit from the support the coalition can provide; however, it has been challenging to identify gaps in the state's immunization work that the coalition can fill. Likewise, the coalition could benefit from the state's support as they grow their membership and programming. As the coalition and program continue to work together, it will be important that they communicate their goals clearly and meet regularly to share new ideas and programmatic updates.



On building relationships with program managers when you're getting started:

*"It's a matter of showing up consistently and asking for the same things...and showing them we're not going away. We're going to keep trying and working... it's the only way to [build up that relationship]."*

**-Dani Gullickson**, Immunize South Dakota Executive Director

## Challenges

Funding is a significant issue in South Dakota. Immunize South Dakota coalition leadership has ideas about how they would like to expand their activities to have a greater impact but feel limited by how much funding they currently have. The South Dakota coalition is working on strategic planning with an ad-hoc committee made up of the board of directors and three more coalition members. The committee's goal is to address these funding challenges by expanding their scope of work and diversifying their sources of income, so they aren't reliant on the state for most of their funding. Sources of income they are exploring are pharmaceutical companies, conferences, local businesses, grants, and donations. It's important to diversify income sources because if funding is cut from one source, there are other funding streams to rely on.

Building and maintaining a productive working relationship between the coalition and the Department of Health has also been a challenge, highlighting the importance of frequent communication and meetings, setting clear expectations, and defining priorities.

## Advice for building and maintaining a coalition

The coalition director and immunization program manager offer the following advice for program managers interested in expanding coalition work or starting a new coalition:

- Identify and collaborate with existing local and regional coalitions.
- If no coalition exists, look for a champion, often a retired person willing to put in the work.
- Partner with a hospital system by including someone from their leadership team on the coalition board.
- Consult other state coalitions nationwide (see [Coalitions – National Network of Immunization Coalitions](#)).

- Consider becoming a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Being a 501(c)(3) can help with grant applications as well as allowing individual donors to make tax-exempt donations.
- Maintain transparency between the coalition staff and immunization program staff.
- Have a plan but remain open to new ideas.
- Work with potential partners to identify mission and goal alignment to support collaboration.
- Build momentum towards a shared vision with input from all stakeholders.

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