

Healthy Communities Theory of Change

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Decisions made using an equity lens improve community health.
- Approaches to healthy communities rely on multi-sectoral collaborations that lift the voices and honor the assets of those communities.
- Efforts that are upstream — addressing prevention, sustained wellness, environmental context and policy — are vital for long-term community health.
- The values of transparency, cultural sensitivity, inclusion, and engagement are integral to healthy communities.

PARTNERS

- Residents, community leaders, and policymakers.
- Community-based organizations, government entities, and educational institutions serving those most in need.

BARRIERS

- Communities are faced both with too many unhealthy messages and food choices, and not enough access to affordable, healthy foods.
- Physical safety and adverse neighborhood conditions are obstacles to active living.
- There is a need for under-resourced community members to increase their awareness, knowledge, and/or prioritization of how to make healthy lifestyle choices.
- Community partners need leadership development, mobilization support, and commitment to building healthier environments.
- Existing policies are inadequate for preventing youth initiation of nicotine use (including e-cigarettes and other tobacco products).

PURPOSE: Support environments and policies that promote equitable opportunities for healthy eating, active living, and tobacco use prevention.

STRATEGIES

Equitable Engagement

- Engage community members in the conversation and solutions for developing healthier communities, environments, and policies.
- Support inclusive efforts that promote community-based solutions.

Mobilization for Action

- Strengthen core organizational operations and sustainability of systems.
- Increase awareness and skills of individuals and communities through culturally relevant education.
- Equip individuals and organizations to influence policy, build public awareness, and accelerate the field through the adoption of community-based solutions.

Multi-Sector Collaboration

- Connect with nontraditional partners to create a strong, unified voice that spans fields and sectors.
- Align strategically with local, regional, or state coalitions and networks.

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

For Individuals

- Increased knowledge and awareness of issues affecting community health.
- Increased engagement in health-related efforts that elevate the community.
- Increased use of programs, services, and environments that contribute to overall improved health.

For Organizations and Communities

- Strengthened collaborations that increase awareness of, and support for, healthy communities.
- Increased community action based on public will and community input.
- Increased affordability and accessibility to healthy foods.
- Greater access to safe environments that promote healthy living.
- Increased community capacity and support for tobacco prevention policies, including those related to retail sales/signage.

For Environments and Policies

- Organizational and city-wide policies that support active, healthy, tobacco-free, and safe living conditions.
- Increased public resources and investment in infrastructure for healthy living.
- Physical environments that support active, healthy, tobacco-free, and safe living.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

More individuals are engaged in healthy practices.

Healthy environments are maintained and used by a mobilized community.

Policies that support healthy communities are sustained through ongoing, collaborative, multi-sectoral efforts.

ULTIMATE IMPACT: Policies and environments optimize choices that support improved health.