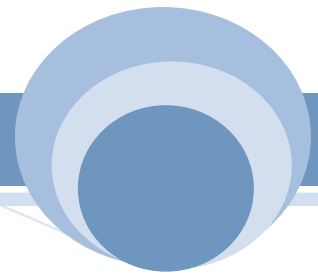


HUD Healthy Communities Transformation Initiative



Defining healthy communities

What makes a community healthy? Is it the number of people with disease? Or is community health a product of neighborhood factors, including quality parks and schools, good housing, accessible shops and services, efficient transportation, and safe, clean environments? Across the country, many communities are taking action to improve the health and well-being of their residents by promoting sustainable and healthy neighborhoods. Identifying the right indicators to track and evaluate neighborhood determinants of health can be challenging because there are very few reliable and standardized measures designed to address the range of physical and social determinants of health at the neighborhood level. As more communities take on the challenge of integrating health into community planning and development, there is an increasing need for a comprehensive, standard set of neighborhood-level indicators of health and well-being to help communities establish baseline conditions, prioritize investments, and evaluate progress towards community health goals.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is a leader in promoting community health by using housing as a platform for improving quality of life. HUD's mission is "to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and affordable homes for all." The recently launched Healthy Communities Transformation Initiative supports and advances this holistic vision of community health.

The Healthy Communities Transformation Initiative (HCTI)

The Healthy Communities Transformation Initiative (HCTI) is a new project, funded by HUD's Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control (OHHLHC), to improve the health systems and the physical, social, and economic service structures that support healthy living and healthy behaviors in our communities. Healthy Housing Solutions, Inc. (Solutions) is leading a team of partners in developing this initiative. Two key elements of the HCTI are the development of a Healthy Communities Index (HCI) and a Healthy Communities Assessment Tool (HCAT).



HUD launched the HCTI with the goal of developing a systematic, evidence-based approach to assist local jurisdictions in assessing the physical, social, and economic roots of community health, and identifying



actionable policy and program activities to improve the health and quality of life for residents. Many communities have started to integrate health into community development and planning, but lack access to standardized, comprehensive and practical tools available to help them measure the most important community determinants of health. The HCI and HCAT developed through this initiative will provide a standardized and evidence-based tool that communities can use as a starting point to identify and prioritize the issues of greatest concern.

The main objective of the HCTI is to create a unified national effort that:

- Defines criteria and metrics for community health;
- Supports healthy communities research; and
- Showcases best and most promising practices for healthy communities.

HCTI AT A GLANCE

OBJECTIVES

To create a unified national effort that:

- Defines healthy community criteria
- Supports healthy communities research
- Showcases best and most promising practices for healthy communities

CATEGORIES/TOPIC AREAS

- Environmental Hazards
- Public Safety
- Neighborhood Facilities & Services
- Transportation Services
- Natural Areas
- Housing Quality
- Employment Opportunities
- Educational Opportunities
- Social Inclusion/Participation
- Fiscal Health

ANTICIPATED PRODUCTS

1. *Community Health Indicator System:*

Indicators of social, environmental and economic conditions can be used to evaluate baseline conditions and monitor progress towards objectives in a neighborhood, planning area or city.

2. *“Healthy Development” Checklist:*

A downloadable checklist of development targets (associated with each indicator) to help jurisdictions assess whether plans and projects help achieve community health objectives.

3. *Menu of Policies and Design Strategies:*

A listing of potential actions that project sponsors or policymakers can take to achieve development targets in the checklist and advance community health objectives.

Contact us for more information:

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The HCTI will support community efforts to improve neighborhood conditions and transform community health through the development and application of standardized healthy community indicators. These indicators will be selected based on their measurability, nexus to health, and relationship to established national public health objectives. All indicators incorporated in the HCI will be evaluated for their ability to be easily interpreted, scalability for a range of communities, and capacity to motivate and create actionable policy and program change.

The HCI indicators will form the foundation for the HCAT, which will be designed for ease of use so that the HCI can be broadly applied in any community. In addition to facilitating the use of the HCI for evaluating community health, the HCAT may also feature tools to help communities set and achieve goals. These may include a Healthy Development Checklist of suggested health or development targets and a menu of policies and design strategies to advance community health objectives.

The HCI and HCAT will be piloted in four cities that have demonstrated an interest in and commitment to measuring and improving community health. The HCTI project team will provide technical assistance to organizations in these pilot cities and will also provide communities with access to national experts and opportunities to integrate healthy community criteria into local policies and programs. Additionally, the initiative will help promote interagency collaboration and create opportunities to define and expand a national commitment to creating healthy communities.

Solutions is leading a team of uniquely qualified partners (ICF International, the International City/County Management Association, the National Center for Healthy Housing, and the Urban Institute) and will be guided by a panel of national experts in developing these innovative tools to support a common vision of healthy communities. We encourage you to contact us for more information.

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