

Planning Inclusive, Healthy Communities Resources

This document provides background on resources available to support efforts to build inclusive, healthy communities with a focus on resources related to efforts with ensuring that people with disabilities benefit from healthy community efforts. These resources are provided for informational purposes only and their inclusion here does not constitute an endorsement of the Rutgers University Bloustein School.

Across the United States, efforts are underway to advance changes to *practices, systems and environmental frameworks* to advance inclusive, healthy communities. Such efforts are intended to go beyond programming and individual behaviors to fundamentally change the systems that create the structure in which we work, live and play in ways that promote health and health equity.

Efforts to promote practice, systems and environmental changes are intended to integrate strategies and approaches into existing infrastructures. For example, strategies that may result in a program or event often have the following characteristics:

- One-time
- Short term
- Behavioral change
- Individual level
- Not sustaining
- Isolated

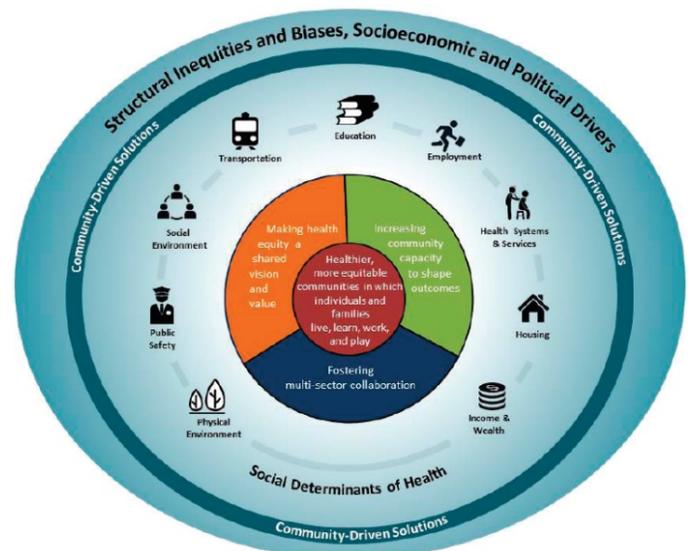
Whereas practice, systems and environmental changes have the following characteristics:

- Ongoing
- Change emerges over time
- Community/population level
- Part of a larger strategic effort
- Long term
- Sustainable

A 2017 Report by the **National Academies Press**, *Communities in Action: Pathways to Health Equity*, outlines a model for effective community-driven solutions to address health equity based on evidence across the United States. A 19-member panel of experts deliberated for a year and found that there are many examples of where multi-sector partnerships led to community interventions to promote health equity. Among its specific insights, the panel pointed to the following conclusions:

- Community-driven solutions should be: community-driven, multi-sectoral, and evidence-informed;

National Academies Press



- The collaboration and engagement of new and diverse partners is essential to promoting health equity;
- Ample tools and other resources already exist to translate knowledge into action to promote health equity.

The Panel concludes that, “regardless of the sectors and organizations that make up these partnerships, a key element of success is the authentic engagement of members of the affected community.” It points to the value of anchor institutions providing key leadership roles given their stable presence and economic resource power. See: <https://www.nap.edu/download/24624#>.

Inherent in the concept of practice, systems and environmental change leading to inclusive, healthy communities are efforts to promote universal design and equitable participatory processes.

- *Universal design* - The term *universal design* is used to describe the design and structure of an environment so that it can be understood, accessed, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age or ability. Universal design necessitates planning around peoples’ diverse needs and abilities (including children, seniors, people with injuries or illnesses, and people with disabilities) to create environments that actually meet those needs and abilities. Universal design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities. Rather than everyone getting, “the same,” universal design incorporates the needs of diverse users. A familiar example of universal design is the curb cut, which provides wheelchair users, people with strollers, and workers using hand trucks better access to streets and curbs at differing levels. A universally designed environment makes life easier, safer, and more inclusive for everyone. For more information on Universal Design, see: <https://www.section508.gov/create/universal-design>.
- *Inclusion* – The concept of inclusion is one that seeks to ensure that decision-making processes are structured in ways that support and allow for the meaningful involvement of all individuals. Inclusion is distinct from equity as outlined by terminology used by the [Ford Foundation](#):
 - Equity seeks to ensure fair treatment, equality of opportunity, and fairness in access to information and resources for all. We believe this is only possible in an environment built on respect and dignity.
 - Inclusion builds a culture of belonging by actively inviting the contribution and participation of all people.

"Nothing About Us Without Us!" is a slogan adopted by the disability rights community when advocating for civil rights protections for people with disabilities, including the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, passed in 1990. The concept behind the slogan is that decision-making processes must be designed in ways that meaningfully involve people with disabilities including with regard to the design, implementation, governance and evaluation of programs, strategies, practices and systems. The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) has identified [5 key steps for inclusive health promotion](#):

- Understand the Needs of People with Disabilities
- Build Partnerships
- Use Inclusive, Accessible Communication
- Provide Accessible Places and Spaces
- Adopt Practice and 5 Evidence-Based Strategies

Below are two examples of practice, systems and environmental change resulting from the Centers for Disease Control's Program Reaching People with Disabilities through Healthy Communities:

- Monday Mile, Syracuse, NY

Approximately one in five adults in New York State has a disability, and compared to adults without disabilities, they are less likely to get leisure-time physical activity. Two nonprofit organizations based in Syracuse, NY – [ARISE](#), a Center for Independent Living, and [HealthConnections](#), a group that supports better population health in Central New York – partnered with NACDD's *Reaching People with Disabilities through Healthy Communities* project to collaborate on several projects to create inclusive health opportunities. One project was done in collaboration with the Lerner Center for Public Health Promotion at Syracuse University, which has a [Monday Mile](#) with 25 designated one mile walking routes. Each mile route is marked with maps, directional arrows and distance markers to encourage residents to be physically active. Although the Lerner Center previously worked with the [Fitness Inclusion Network](#) to address designing inclusive walking routes, no formal policy or established process existed to ensure that new Monday Mile routes would be inclusive of people with all abilities. As a direct result of the NACDD's *Reaching People with Disabilities through Healthy Communities* project, the Lerner Center adopted a new Inclusivity Policy to incorporate the principles of inclusion in the design of new Monday Mile routes. They created a checklist of considerations and a feasibility assessment to help designers implement the policy. Project partners are already using the Inclusivity Policy with local stakeholders to designate a new Monday Mile route in a low-income Syracuse neighborhood that lacks safe, accessible walking paths. Partners are developing Monday Miles routes in parks and public places in Central New York counties where an estimated 95,000 to 115,000 people with disabilities could benefit. The Inclusivity Policy is now an integral part of the [Monday Mile toolkit](#), a planning resource used by local communities to plan accessible walking routes. Source: CDC, Disability and Health Promotion.



https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/reachingpeople/stories.html#anchor_1521552136756

- Mobility device-charging stations in Umatilla County, OR

Approximately one in seven community members in Pendleton, Oregon, are living with a disability and many of them rely on power wheelchairs and other mobility devices to get around and actively participate in their communities. However, all these devices run out of power after a certain period of time and when the battery dies, users can get stuck.

Community Coach Darrin Umbarger, participant in the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors' *Reaching People with Disabilities through Healthy Communities* project and a power wheelchair user himself, found the perfect solution; he developed the mobility device-charging station. This unit, which can easily be mounted anywhere there is an electrical outlet, can assist power wheelchair users who need to charge their batteries while in the community. Ten mobility device-charging stations have been installed in various community settings so far, including a recent installation at the Oregon Statehouse, serving as the first power charging station at a state capitol location in the country. Now power wheelchair users have an added sense of security, safety, engagement in civic leadership, and belonging to the community, where access to healthy living venues like community parks and places of interest are improved. Source: CDC, Disability and Health Promotion.



https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/reachingpeople/stories.html#anchor_1521552690840

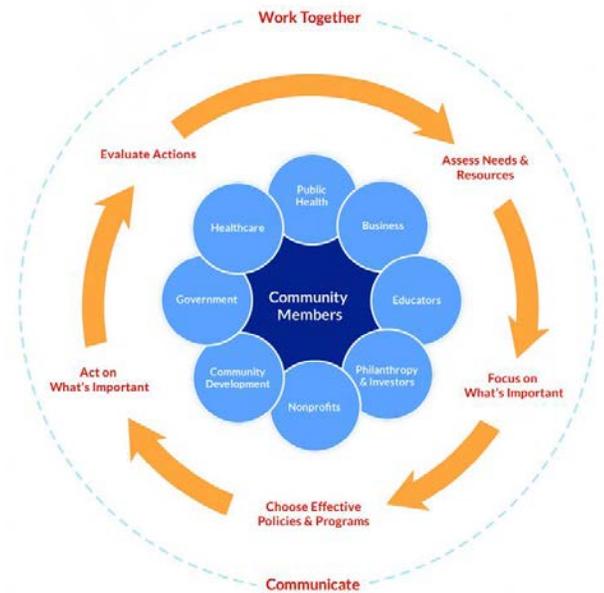
Resources and programs that are designed to promote practice, systems and environmental changes that lead to inclusive, healthy communities are outlined below:

➤ **The Action Center of the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps**, a program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, offers tools and guidance that communities can use to advance health and well-being. See: <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/action-center>. The Action Center organizes its tools and guidance in seven categories:

- Assessing Needs and Resources;
- Focusing on What's Important;
- Choosing Effective Policies and Programs;
- Acting on What's Important;
- Evaluating Actions;
- Working Together Collaboratively; and
- Communicating outcomes, success, and best practices.

The Action Center also provides tools and guidance for development and strengthening of multi-sector coalitions and partnerships within communities:

<https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/partner-center>.



County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Action Cycle

➤ **Plan4Health** is a national collaborative effort of the American Public Health Association and the American Planning Association. The program provides support to community-based coalitions throughout the U.S. that work to increase access to healthy food or increase opportunities for active living where residents live, work, and play. The Plan4Health project aims to build local capacity to address population health goals and promote the inclusion of health in non-traditional sectors. Plan4Health offers a peer-learning network with educational materials, recorded webinars and toolkits to inform efforts of coalitions to advance community-based, inclusive healthy communities. See: <http://plan4health.us/policy-systems-and-environmental-change-strategies/>.

PLAN4Health
An American Planning Association Project

➤ The **United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** offers tools that support healthy community planning: https://www.cdc.gov/healthypaces/health_planning_tools.htm. Its *Reaching People with Disabilities through Healthy Communities* program is a partnership with the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (<https://www.chronicdisease.org/page/disabilities>). The program promotes six phases of action through its [Inclusive Healthy Communities Model](#) that is designed to address needs of people with disabilities through:

- Commitment

- Assessment and Training
- Prioritization and Planning
- Implementation
- Evaluation
- Communication and Dissemination



CDC Six Phases of Action



➤ **Commit to Inclusion** is an international, non-profit effort to end exclusion of people with disabilities from physical activities. The organization provides nine Guidelines for Inclusion designed to assist in updating community health programs to be inclusive of the needs of people with disabilities along with an implementation manual to support efforts to undertake actions that address the guidelines. See: <http://committoinclusion.org/>

➤ **Healthy Places by Design**, is a national non-profit that provides support to community based efforts to build partnerships advancing equitable and lasting impact that improves health and well-being. Its Community Action Model offers guidance on how to assess assets and culture of a community as a foundation for success; define essential practices for success, and undertake an action cycle focused on three elements:

- Building Partnerships, including engaging the community and forming multidisciplinary coalitions;
- Preparing and planning for effective outcomes, including assessing and reassessing priorities, leveraging resources, and enhancing among partners;
- Identifying and implementing strategies, including identifying, implementing and measuring outcomes of effective strategies.

See: <https://healthyplacesbydesign.org/community-action-model/>.



Healthy Places by Design
Community Action model

➤ **New Jersey Health Initiatives (NJHI)** is the statewide grantmaking program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. a New Jersey-based program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. NJHI supports innovations and drives conversations to build healthier communities through grantmaking across the State of New Jersey. To meet the many health needs of our state’s diverse populations, regions and communities, the NJHI program encourages collaboration across sectors in our state’s communities to foster deep relationships committed to long-term change affording everyone the opportunity to live the healthiest life possible. NJHI points partners and other end users to a variety of resources to support efforts at the community level to advance inclusive, healthy communities. See: <https://www.njhi.org/our-impact/resources/>.



- The ***New Jersey Healthy Communities Network*** brings together local, regional and statewide leaders to support communities in developing healthy environments for people to live, work, learn and play. The Network offers resources, educational materials and a community grant program that focus on “policy, systems and environmental change to support long-term, sustainable community change, rather than changing individuals’ behaviors through periodic events, programs or educational activities that end without continued funding.” The Network offers a series of strategies for community adoption organized in several categories: Healthy Eating, Active Living, Social Determinants of Health, Early Care and Education, K-12 Schools, and Worksite. See: <http://www.njhc.org/>

