

THEORY OF CHANGE

DEVELOPED BY THE
**HEALTH COMMUNITIES WORKING GROUP OF
WASHINGTON REGIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GRANTMAKERS
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Vision We Are Working Towards

Metropolitan Washington is a region where communities across all jurisdictions are thriving, and all people are living their lives to their fullest potential.

Communities are:¹

- Meeting everyone's basic needs, such as safe, accessible, affordable, and high quality food, housing, child care, education, health care, and places to walk and play in a culturally competent manner without discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, socio-economic status, age or disability;
- Providing supportive levels of: economic and social development through living wage, safe and healthy job opportunities; convenient and affordable transportation systems; a thriving economy; healthy development of children and adolescents; and healthy and productive adulthood and aging.
- Promoting quality and sustainability of the environment through tobacco and smoke-free spaces, clean air, soil, and drinkable water, green and open spaces, and sustainable energy use; and
- Placing high value on positive social relationships through supportive and cohesive families and neighborhoods, honoring race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, culture and tradition, robust social and civic engagement, and violence prevention.

There is full inclusion of all residents in the economic, social, and political life of the region, regardless of race, ethnicity, and nativity, age, gender, neighborhood of residence, or other characteristics². Racial, ethnic, and gender disparities in health outcomes and health services do not exist.

¹ Based on American Public Health Association definition of a healthy community www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/healthy-communities. References to race, ethnicity, immigration status, socio-economic status, gender and sexual orientation, healthy and productive adulthood and aging, and affordable transportation systems added.

² Policy Link definition

People in the region are:³

- Enjoying good health and expecting to live a full life (Health);
- Learning throughout the lifespan (Knowledge);
- Having the resources for a quality of life (Standard of Living);
- Living in a clean and safe neighborhood (Community); and
- Helping each other to live well (Social).

What It Takes to Get There (what needs to change)

- Ownership of the vision
- Recognition that healthy people and thriving communities are intertwined -- a healthy population is needed for communities to thrive, and to be healthy, people need housing, healthy food, transportation, safe and walkable neighborhoods, clean air, education, living wages, and job opportunities, as well as access to the range of high quality health and human services
- Indicators and accessible, timely data that
 - Help identify need for specific work across interest areas
 - Measure progress
 - Help identify promising or evidence-based policies/practices/programs (i.e. what works)
 - Help stakeholders identify where their work fits
 - Other?
- Strategic Communication
- Political will
- Engagement of the public, business, nonprofit, and philanthropic sectors and people living in the community
- Systems Change – may involve such things as changes in the way policy and program decisions are made, work is accomplished, and/or resources are allocated. Example: Moving to Health in All Policies (i.e. "... a collaborative approach to improving the health of all people by incorporating health considerations into decision-making across sectors and policy areas"⁴) would be a systems change

³ See Live Well San Diego – areas of influence; The link -

<http://www.livewellsd.org/content/dam/livewell/materials/Pyramid%20and%20Measuring%20Progress%20One-Sheet.pdf> - provides an overview of the Live Well Vision, components, strategies, these areas of influence and the top 10 indicators "that measure the collective action of partners and the County in achieving the vision for healthy, safe and thriving communities"

⁴ http://www.phi.org/uploads/files/Four_Pager_Health_in_All_Policies-A_Guide_for_State_and_Local_Governments.pdf

- Multi-sector collaboration (e.g. The BUILD Health Challenge, a collaborative initiative of four national foundations and one statewide foundation, “is designed to encourage communities to build meaningful partnerships among hospitals and health systems, community-based organizations, their local health department, and other organizations to improve the overall health of local residents”⁵)
- Capacity building within communities and within organizations whose mission contributes to achieving thriving communities where all people are living their lives to their fullest potential.⁶
- Leveraging of expertise, lessons learned, and resources
- Work that addresses factors that prevent people from living their lives to their fullest potential and makes it hard for communities to thrive (e.g. social, economic, and environmental factors and health behaviors – see page 1 Vision statement and County Health Rankings for examples).
- A full range of health promotion, disease prevention, and wellness programs and services (including education, immunizations, screenings for early detection)
- Timely access to high quality health services (including behavioral, oral, and vision health services)
- Strong public health structure and programs linked to the community and primary care
- Other??

⁵ <http://www.buildhealthchallenge.org/about/>

⁶ See for example http://research.urban.org/UploadedPDF/building_capacity.PDF; <http://www.ohcc-ccso.ca/en/community-capacity-building-0>; <http://ctb.ku.edu/en>