



COMMUNITY INDICATOR INITIATIVES

A listing of community indicator projects and resources from across the Country.

Community Indicator Initiatives

Numerous organizations and jurisdictions have initiated indicator projects to help evaluate and monitor the state of their communities. HUD's Healthy Communities Index (HCI) is unique in that it is sponsored by a Federal agency, attempts to define common criteria and metrics specifically related to community health (versus, for example, the state of the environment within the community), and aggregates these select number of multi-objective measures into one Index. Learning more about and understanding other indicator projects is a key element in the development of the HCI, which will support community health research and illustrate best practices to promote healthy communities.

Because the HCI is not meant to be duplicative of other sustainable community indicator projects, the HCTI team is reviewing and tracking initiatives to ensure that the tools developed for HUD are complementary. Several HCTI team members are directly involved in other indicator initiatives and bring their knowledge and expertise to the development of the HCI. Members of the NAP engaged in initiatives, at a national, state, or local/regional level have also been encouraged to share their knowledge and understanding to ensure that what is developed for the HCI works in tandem with other community projects.

The following list attempts to recognize many of the other community indicator initiatives underway across the country (and one from Canada). While NAP members shared numerous initiatives that may have potential linkage(s) with the HCI, it should be noted that the list is not exhaustive as it does not cover several small initiatives or initiatives still in the formulation stages. Additionally, some of the listed initiatives provide information about resources that support development of community indicator projects.

America Healing Initiative

In 2010, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation launched the America Healing initiative to support programs that promote racial healing and address racial inequity, with the goal to ensure that all children in America have an equitable and promising future.

W.K. Kellogg believes this is critical to improving the health, well-being, education and financial security of vulnerable children and families because children of color are over-represented among the 29 million low-income children and families in this country, particularly among families living in areas of concentrated poverty. They are less likely to attend high-quality schools, live healthy lives, and eat nutritious food. The America Healing Initiative is a five-year, \$75 million project focused on bringing healing to divided communities and bridging racial gaps in the areas of education, health, juvenile justice, economic success, the media, and other areas. The work focuses on issues at the core of structural racism, i.e., policies and practices that continue to create barriers for children of color, while aligned at the same time with the foundation's primary program areas of Education and Learning; Food, Health and Well-being; and Family Economic Security.

W.K. Kellogg provided grants totaling more than \$14.6 million to 119 organizations to support community-based healing efforts among racial and ethnic groups. The grantees represent 29 states and the District of Columbia and all racial and ethnic population groups. In 2013, Kellogg sponsored the America Healing Conference, which featured ten concurrent issue-specific sessions, in addition to three plenary sessions. The concurrent sessions, held both in the morning and the afternoon, enabled

participants to apply the conference’s theme of “Reclaiming the Narrative” to a variety of timely topics ranging from immigration to food and nutrition.

To learn more about W.K. Kellogg’s Healing America Initiative, please go to <http://www.wkkf.org/what-we-support/racial-equity/america-healing.aspx>.

California Healthy Community Data and Indicators Project

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the California Strategic Growth Council initiated the CA Healthy Community Data and Indicators Project to enhance public health by providing data, a standardized set of statistical measures, and tools that a broad array of sectors can use for planning healthy communities and evaluating the impact of plans, projects, policy, and environmental changes on community health. The project is a 2-year collaboration between the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) to create and disseminate indicators linked to the Healthy Communities Framework, which identifies 20 key attributes of a health community through all stages of life.

The main objectives of the CA Healthy Community Data and Indicator Project are:

- Identify a standardized, core set of valid indicators that define a healthy community;
- Identify methods to construct indicators at different geographic scales (e.g. census tract, zip code, city, county, etc.);
- Disseminate technical documentation that allows local, county, regional, and state stakeholders to produce indicators;
- Develop a multi-agency plan for centralized data collection, analysis, and reporting of indicators; and
- Create a demonstration website that stakeholders and CDPH can use to pilot test selected healthy community indicators.

The Project used the following definition of a “Healthy Community” to identify their potential indicators:

- ❖ *Basic needs of all residents are met through all stages of life*
 - ✓ Safe, sustainable, accessible and affordable transportation options
 - ✓ Affordable, accessible and nutritious foods and safe drinkable water
 - ✓ Affordable, high quality, socially integrated and location-efficient housing
 - ✓ Affordable, accessible and high quality health care
 - ✓ Complete and livable communities including quality schools, parks and recreational facilities, child care, libraries, financial services and other daily needs
 - ✓ Access to affordable and safe opportunities for physical activity
 - ✓ Able to adapt to changing environments, resilient, and prepared for emergencies
 - ✓ Opportunities for engagement with arts, music and culture
- ❖ *Quality and sustainability of environment*
 - ✓ Clean air, soil and water, and environments free of excessive noise
 - ✓ Tobacco- and smoke-free
 - ✓ Green and open spaces, including healthy tree canopy and agricultural lands
 - ✓ Minimized toxics, greenhouse gas emissions and waste
 - ✓ Affordable and sustainable energy use
 - ✓ Aesthetically pleasing

- ❖ *Adequate levels of economic, social development*
 - ✓ Living wage, safe and healthy job opportunities for all, and a thriving economy
 - ✓ Support for healthy development of children and adolescents
 - ✓ Opportunities for high quality and accessible education
- ❖ *Health and social equity*
- ❖ *Social relationships are supportive and respectful*
 - ✓ Robust social and civic engagement
 - ✓ Socially cohesive and supportive relationships, families, homes and neighborhoods
 - ✓ Safe communities, free of crime and violence

Fifty-six draft indicators were considered and reviewed by stakeholders for the CA Healthy Community Initiative. Additional information about the project, including a list of the draft indicators can be found at: <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/Pages/HealthyCommunityIndicators.aspx>

California Healthy Housing Indicators Project

A key element of the CA Healthy Community Data and Indicator Project is the Healthy Housing Indicators Project. A guiding principle in the identification of healthy housing indicators for the Project is the transactional relationship between housing and community health. The CDPH's Healthy Communities Initiative identifies one characteristic of a healthy community as the availability of affordable, high quality, socially integrated, and location-efficient housing for residents in all stages of life. "High quality" housing is determined using the principles of healthy housing: clean, dry, ventilated, contaminant-free, pest-free, safe and maintained; qualities that depend, in part, on community factors. Socially-integrated and location-efficient housing should increase the ease with which residents can attain and get to work, both of which impact a person's ability to afford quality housing. The indicators for this project relate to state-level characteristics.

Information about the project may be found at:

http://www.cdph.ca.gov/Documents/CDPH_Healthy_Community_Indicators1pager5-16-12.pdf

CDC Healthy Community Design

CDC's Healthy Community Design Initiative is part of the National Center for Environmental Health's Division of Emergency and Environmental Health Services. The Initiative was developed with the belief that the way we design and build our communities can affect our physical and mental health. Healthy community design integrates evidence-based health strategies into community planning, transportation, and land-use decisions.

The Initiative works to improve public health by:

- Linking public health surveillance with community design decisions;
- Improving community design decisions through tools such as Health Impact Assessments;
- Educating decision makers on the health impact of community design;
- Building partnerships with community design decision makers and their influencers;
- Conducting research to identify the links between health and community design; and
- Translating research into best practices.

Healthy community design focuses on improving people's health by:

- Increasing physical activity;
- Reducing injury;
- Increasing access to healthy food;
- Improving air and water quality;
- Minimizing the effects of climate change ;
- Decreasing mental health stresses;
- Strengthening the social fabric of a community; and
- Providing fair access to livelihood, education, and resources.

Key Topics Related to the CDC Community Design Initiative

- Accessibility
- Children's Health
- Climate Change
- Healthy Aging
- Health Effects of Gentrification
- Healthy Food Environment
- Healthy Homes
- Health Impact Assessment (HIA)
- Injury
- Mental Health
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Physical Activity
- Respiratory Health
- Social Capital
- Transportation
- Water Quality

More information about the CDC's Community Design Initiative can be found at:
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/default.htm>

Common Community Measures for Obesity Prevention Project (the Measures Project)

States and communities are responding to the obesity epidemic in the United States by working to create environments that support healthy eating and active living and by giving public health practitioners and policy makers an opportunity to learn from community-based efforts to prevent obesity. The CDC initiated the Common Community Measures for Obesity Prevention Project (the Measures Project) to address the absence of measurements to assess policy and environmental changes at the community level. The goal of the Measures Project was to identify and recommend a set of obesity prevention strategies and corresponding suggested measurements that local governments and communities can use to plan, implement, and monitor initiatives to prevent obesity. For the purposes of the Measures Project, a measurement is defined as a single data element that can be collected through an objective assessment of policies or the physical environment and that can be used to quantify the performance of an obesity prevention strategy. Community was defined as a social entity that can be classified spatially on the basis of where persons live, work, learn, worship, and play (e.g., homes, schools, parks, roads, and neighborhoods).

The Measures Project process was guided by expert opinion and included a systematic review of the published scientific literature, resulting in the adoption of 24 recommended environmental and policy level strategies to prevent obesity. This represents the first set of comprehensive recommendations published by CDC to promote healthy eating and active living and reduce the prevalence of obesity in the United States. The Measures Project report describes each of the recommended strategies, summarizes available evidence regarding their effectiveness, and presents a suggested measurement for each strategy that communities can use to assess implementation and track progress over time.

Recommended strategies were developed as a result of a systematic process grounded in available evidence for each strategy, expert opinion, and detailed documentation of the project process and decision-making rationale. A few exploratory strategies for which no evidence was available were included on the basis of expert opinion and to determine the effectiveness of the strategy for preventing obesity.

The Common Community Measures for Obesity Prevention Project Team (the Measures Project Team) is comprised CDC staff, who maintained primary decision-making authority of the project; the CDC Foundation, which provided administrative and fiscal oversight for the Project; ICF Macro, a public health consulting firm that served as the coordinating center for the project; Research Triangle Institute, a public health consulting firm that acted as the coordinating center during the preliminary phase of the project; and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), which provided local government expertise. Multiple subgroups provided input and guidance to the Measures Project Team on specific aspects of the project.

www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/community_strategies_guide.pdf and

www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5807a1.htm

Community Commons

Community Commons is a mapping and data site that helps communities create a variety of topic-based reports and maps that address health, education, economic and other factors.

The site was inspired and managed by Advancing the Movement (ATM), a network of leaders from communities, philanthropy, government agencies, and the private, academic, voluntary and civic sectors. They come from a variety of fields, political perspectives and focus areas to collaborate on policy, systems and environmental changes for a healthier, more equitable and prosperous Country.

ATM is transforming the way resources and best practices are shared and leveraged among communities across the country by inspiring the creation of cutting-edge data, learning and performance platforms and cultivating balanced dialogue for collective impact. By promoting peer learning and innovation, ATM:

- Enhances the reach and impact of currently funded place-based investments;
- Applies an asset-based approach to help grow and sustain impact once the funding is over; and
- Supports communities of highest burden that may not have adequate financing.

ATM's primary partner for Community Commons is "IP3," a consortium of the Center for Applied Research and Environmental Systems at the University of Missouri, Community Initiatives Network, and Transtria. Additional technology, communications, social networking, and evaluation resources come from www.preventobesity.net and the National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research (NCCOR) including the Institute of Medicine and The National Institutes of Health.

Additional ATM Partners Include:

- **Community-Based Initiatives:** Thousands of local and regional partnerships are now engaged on the Community Commons.
- **Funders:** In-kind and technical support has come from scores of individuals and organizations around the nation. Early financial support for Advancing the Movement and The Commons was

made possible by Kaiser Permanente, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Ascension Health, the YMCA of the USA, The Convergence Partnership and IP3.

- **An array of organizations, agencies, state and regional "convergences", program offices, and technical assistance, policy and membership organizations including (but not limited to)** the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, US Department of Health and Human Services, the Surgeon General, The National League of Cities, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Kaiser Permanente, The Partnership for a Healthier America, Trust for America's Health, *Let's Move!*, YUSA, ChangeLab Solutions, Prevention Institute, PolicyLink, Public Health Institute, Bipartisan Policy Center, Alliance for a Healthier Generation, President's Council on Sports, Fitness and Nutrition, Place Matters, National Wildlife Federation, Safe Routes to School, National REACH Coalition, California Convergence, LiveWell Colorado, United Way Worldwide and many others.

More information about the Community Commons Mapping and Data tool can be found at <http://www.communitycommons.org/>

More information about the Advancing the Movement (ATM) network is found at: <http://www.advancingthemovement.org>

Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA.org)

CHNA.ORG is powered by IP3, the Institute for People, Place and Possibility, a not-for-profit organization based in Columbia, Missouri. IP3 also powers the Community Commons and an array of data, learning, and performance improvement platforms for national organizations, philanthropies and governmental agencies. The CHNA.org data engine, is the product of over a decade of site development and refinement by the Center for Applied Research and Environmental Systems (CARES) at the University of Missouri, Columbia. Initial support for chna.org has been provided by Kaiser Permanente, with technical assistance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

CHNA.org is a free web-based platform, currently in beta testing, designed to help hospitals, non-profit organizations, state and local health departments, financial institutions, and other organizations better understand the needs and assets of their communities, and to collaborate to make measurable improvements in community health and well-being. CHNA.org was developed to support collaboration and action to improve health and health equity by providing informative, detailed and easy-to-understand data on the health of communities to organizations and individuals.

The vision behind CHNA.org is that all community members--regardless of training, expertise, and experience--can ask and answer questions about health and quality of life at the local and regional level. This requires ongoing work towards a common language and values among stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and experiences. It also requires commitment and actions to advance public and institutional policies that reinforce and sustain improvements at the community level.

The CHNA platform is designed to provide resources that:

- Democratize the community health needs assessment process by bringing a broad array of publically available data into one site, minimizing duplication of efforts and reducing costs to communities;
- Inform robust civic discourse by supporting community members in developing a shared understanding and common agenda for addressing the realities of their communities;

- Enable community stakeholders from diverse backgrounds to create, implement, and invest in strategies that have been shown to produce measurable improvements in community health and well-being; and
- Support hospitals and health systems conducting quality Community Health Needs Assessments (CHNAs) that meet governmental standards for nonprofit hospitals, public health departments conducting CHNAs and pursuing accreditation, and the requirements and needs of other community sectors.

The site's tools and resources are designed to support an assessment of the determinants of health¹ and the current health status of a community, identify existing resources in the community, and foster public dialogue and collective action. Responses to inquiries will be available in multiple forms, including narrative, graphic, and mapping format, to provide a complete and easy to interpret set of findings.

CHNA.org will provide access to a selected area's demographics and performance using a core set of community indicators linked to evidence-informed interventions. The default is to the "core outcome and action indicators framework" associated with The County Health Rankings/Roadmaps to Health, The Community Guide, Healthy People 2020, and other widely used sources of indicators and evidence-informed program activities. The framework is derived from the shared national priorities identified in the National Prevention Strategy, The Community Transformation Grant Program and the Leading Health Indicators for Healthy People 2020. It also allows a community the ability to see its performance on other "common indicators" on the Community Commons/CARES data engine.

CHNA.org community health indicator sets can be drawn from the following sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); Catholic Health Association; County Health Rankings; Kaiser Permanente; Healthy People 2020; Health Resources and Services Administration; and the National Quality Forum.
<http://www.chna.org>

Community Indicators Consortium (CIC)

The Community Indicators Consortium (CIC) was organized in the belief that information sharing, collaboration and open dialogue -- across geography and disciplines -- are key to the advancement of people, the quality of community life and the sustainability of our shared environment. To that end, CIC seeks bridges that span the gap between community indicators use and performance measurement, providing ways for community groups and governments to coordinate efforts and jointly enhance knowledge about the use of indicators to leverage positive change.

Through these activities, CIC has become a major node in the expanding field of community measurement. The CIC website offers a place where community-based practitioners, academic experts, engaged community residents, public officials, students, civic leaders, planners, media professionals and other stakeholders can learn from one another and participate in an active global learning community.

CIC is led by a Board of Directors elected each year by the membership. CIC's members include individuals and organizations representing public, private, and nonprofit organizations working at all scales, from local and regional to state, national and international-- to promote informed decision-making about community priorities.

¹ Examples of determinants of health used in CHNA.org include, but are not limited to, housing quality, food access, job status, neighborhood safety, K-12 school quality, and exposure to environmental toxins.

In July 2007, the CIC Board adopted five strategic goals for CIC and an Action Plan for 2007-2010. The Plan was built upon the following five strategic goals for CIC:

1. Advance the use of indicators for community awareness and change;
2. Create a global community of practice (COP);
3. Strengthen CIC's international perspective and relevance;
4. Promote connectivity between indicators and performance measurement;
5. Build and sustain the organization.

CIC active partners to improve the use of indicators and information in making better decisions and better communities include:

- Capital Workforce Partners
- Measuring the Progress of Societies Project
- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- Public Performance Measurement and Reporting Network
- State of the USA

CIC also posts a broad selection of indicator projects. Although CIC does not claim involvement or endorse any projects, they have found these particular projects interesting and informative. In addition to the listing of indicator projects from across the country, CIC also hosts a Working Group on Integrating Community Indicators and Performance Measures. More information about the project and examples of places where Community Indicator Projects are being integrated with Performance Measures to improve the use of information in collaborative community decision-making can be found at <http://www.communityindicators.net/communities-of-practice,ci-pm-integration>

As an active learning community and network of practice, CIC also sponsors an annual conference which features workshops focused on practical lessons and networking opportunities for communities interested in designing community indicator projects.

More information about the consortium, its member and the initiative may be found at <http://www.communityindicators.net>.

Connecticut Association of Directors of Health: Health Equity Index

The Health Equity Index (Index) is a community-based electronic tool that profiles and measures the social determinants (including the social, political, economic, and environmental conditions) that affect health and their correlations with specific health outcomes. The Index also generates community-specific scores and GIS maps. The Index provides direction for collecting additional qualitative data—the narrative of those experiencing or witnessing health inequities. This narrative is collected via interviews or recorded through media including photos, video, and audio-taping.

The Index provides community-specific scores on seven social determinants of health and thirteen health outcomes, the correlations between them, and GIS maps that illustrate community-specific scores. Scores range from one to ten, with a ten being the best possible score. Each social determinant of health and each health outcome score is calculated by considering several types of data.

GIS maps can be produced to show neighborhood by neighborhood variations within each municipality for a given social determinant or health outcome. Side-by-side maps featured on the site show Hartford's scores on the "perinatal care" health outcome and scores for the "housing" social

determinant of health. The maps visually depict the strong correlation between housing and perinatal care. That is, poorer housing is strongly associated with poorer care and management of developing fetuses and newborn infants.

The Index has been designed to help communities:

- Examine the root causes of poor health;
- Promote collaboration to address health inequities; and
- Focus on strategic policy efforts and investments.

The ultimate goal of the Index is to promote long-term health improvements for residents who presently experience a disproportionate burden of disease and disability

More information about Connecticut's Health Equity Index can be found at:
<http://www.cadh.org/health-equity/health-equity-index.html>

County Health Rankings and Roadmap

The *County Health Rankings & Roadmaps* program is a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. It helps communities create solutions that make it easier for people to be healthy in their own communities, focusing on specific factors that affect health, such as education and income.

The *County Health Rankings* show the rank of the health of nearly every county in the nation and illustrate that much of what affects health occurs outside of the doctor's office. The *Rankings* help counties understand what influences how healthy residents are and how long they will live. The *Rankings* look at a variety of measures that affect health such as the rate of people dying before age 75, high school graduation rates, unemployment, limited access to healthy foods, air and water quality, income, and rates of smoking, obesity and teen births. Based on data available for each county, the *Rankings* measure the overall health of each county in all 50 states on the many factors that influence health; they have been used to garner support among government agencies, healthcare providers, community organizations, business leaders, policymakers, and the public for local health improvement initiatives.

Rankings are based on a model of population health that emphasizes the many factors that, if improved, can help make communities healthier places to live, learn, work and play. The *Rankings* are compiled using county-level measures from a variety of national and state data sources. These measures are standardized and combined using scientifically-informed weights. They build on the work of America's Health Rankings, which the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute has used to rank the health of Wisconsin's counties annually since 2003.

The *County Health Rankings* are based on counties and county equivalents (ranked places). Any entity that has its own Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) county code is included. The FIPS county code is a five-digit code where the first 2 digits represent the state and the remaining 3 digits designate county or county equivalent. Certain major cities, such as Baltimore and St. Louis, are considered county equivalents and have their own FIPS county code. Other cities, such as Milwaukee, do not have a FIPS code and are not individually ranked.

Although not all states use a county system, the Initiative is currently unable to alter the data to reflect the existing governance structures in all states. They encourage communities within each county of a state to use the *Rankings* as a starting point to delve more deeply into data that are more relevant for their particular governance structure.

County rankings are determined by standardizing measures within each state to the average of counties in that state. This standardization is necessary as measures are in a number of different scales—some are percentages, some are rates, some are averages of survey responses, or other metrics. Standardizing each of these measures transforms them to the same metric—a mean (average) value of 0 and a standard deviation (measure of spread) of 1 (i.e. a Z-Score).

Each Z-score is relative to the other counties in that state—not compared to an absolute standard—and shown in the metric of standard deviations. A positive Z-score indicates a value higher than the average of counties in that state; a negative Z-score indicates a value for that county lower than the average of counties in that state.

Only counties and county equivalents *within* a state are ranked. The major goal of the *Rankings* is to raise awareness about the many factors that influence health and that health varies from place to place, not to produce a list of the healthiest 10 or 20 counties in the nation and only focus on that. The goal of the *County Health Rankings*, coupled with data comparability and availability issues across states, means that only county rankings within states are provided. They generally discourage comparisons between states. However, if a jurisdiction wanted to compare counties across the nation, they have prepared guidelines to describe which measures can be compared across states.

The *County Health Roadmaps* help communities bring people together from all walks of life to look at the many factors that influence health, focus on strategies known to work, learn from other communities so they are not reinventing the wheel, and make changes that will have a lasting impact on health. The project provides grants to coalitions across the U.S. to improve the health of people in their communities; grants to national organizations to mobilize local leaders and affiliates to improve health; the *RWJF Roadmaps to Health Prize* to recognize communities whose promising efforts will likely lead to better health; and guides, tools, and consultation to help improve people's health.

More information about the County Health Rankings and Roadmaps may be found at <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org>.

EPA Built and Natural Environments

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) produces the *Our Built and Natural Environments* guide, which is a detailed literature review of the associations between built environment characteristics and environmental and human health outcomes. Since the built environment has direct and indirect effects on the natural environment, urban form directly affects habitat, ecosystems, endangered species, and water quality through land consumption, habitat fragmentation, and replacement of natural cover with impervious surfaces. Development patterns and practices also indirectly affect environmental quality since urban form influences the travel decisions that people make. Certain patterns of development encourage increased use of motor vehicles, which is associated with growth in emissions of air pollutants and the greenhouse gases that contribute to global climate change. Air pollution and climate change, in turn, can adversely affect water quality and habitat.

Our Built and Natural Environments is designed as a technical reference for analysts in state and local governments, academics, and people studying the implications of development on the natural environment. It can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/pdf/built.pdf>

EPA Eco-Health Relationship Browser

The EPA Eco-Health Relationship Browser illustrates the linkages between human health and ecosystem services, i.e., benefits supplied by Nature. It is an interactive tool that provides information about several of the nation's major ecosystems, the services they provide, and how those services, or their degradation and loss, may affect people.

Ecosystems, such as wetlands and forests, provide a wide variety of goods and services, many of which we use every day. However, some of these services, such as air filtration, are not obvious and it therefore may be hard to understand the impact they have on our daily lives.

Scientific studies have documented the many tangible and intangible services and health benefits that are provided by our surrounding ecosystems. This tool is designed so that users can easily explore the services ecosystems provide and how those services affect human health and well-being.

This tool has the following components:

- 4 ecosystems
- 6 ecosystem services and
- multiple health outcomes.

The site provides a brief introduction video to introduce users to the Eco-Health Browser tool and walks them through the Browser's components and navigation.

A box on the right-hand side of the tool screen describes an item in the center circle (e.g., Urban Ecosystem) and highlights several related issues around the center item. Users wishing to learn about the linkage between two items (e.g., Urban Ecosystem and Clean Air), hover over the "+" symbol and a pop-up box appears to describes the relationship. Users are given two options to navigate the browser: a click on the item of interest or selection from a drop down menu.

Go to <http://www.epa.gov/research/healthscience/browser/introduction.html> to learn more about the Browser or take a test drive.

Healthy People 2020

Healthy People 2020 is the result of a multiyear process that reflects input from a diverse group of individuals and organizations. It provides science-based, 10-year national objectives for improving the health of all Americans. For three decades, Healthy People has established benchmarks and monitored progress over time to:

- Encourage collaborations across communities and sectors.
- Empower individuals toward making informed health decisions.
- Measure the impact of prevention activities.

Healthy People 2020 strives to:

- Identify nationwide health improvement priorities.

- Increase public awareness and understanding of the determinants of health, disease, and disability and the opportunities for progress.
- Provide measurable objectives and goals that are applicable at the national, State, and local levels.
- Engage multiple sectors to take actions to strengthen policies and improve practices that are driven by the best available evidence and knowledge.
- Identify critical research, evaluation, and data collection needs.

The overarching goals of the Initiative include:

- Attaining high-quality, longer lives free of preventable disease, disability, injury, and premature death.
- Achieving health equity, eliminate disparities, and improve the health of all groups.
- Creating social and physical environments that promote good health for all.
- Promoting quality of life, healthy development, and healthy behaviors across all life stages.

Four foundational health measures serve as indicators of progress towards achieving these goals:

- General Health Status
- Health-Related Quality of Life and Well-Being
- Determinants of Health
- Disparities

More information about the Healthy People 2020 Initiative and its framework can be downloaded here:

<http://www.healthypeople.gov>

<http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/Consortium/HP2020Framework.pdf>

Healthy Communities Institute

The Healthy Communities Institute is a multi-disciplinary team comprised of healthcare information technology veterans (professional internet-system developers and evaluators), academicians (health informatics experts, urban planners, epidemiologists) and former senior government officials. The Institute's mission is to improve the health and environmental sustainability of cities, counties and communities worldwide. It is rooted in work started in 2002 in concert with the Healthy Cities Movement and the University of California at Berkeley and its management team from Harvard University, Cornell University and the University of California, Berkeley has expertise in informatics, public health, urban sustainability, community planning and high volume Internet sites.

This for-profit organization, based in Berkley, CA, has designed a system and strategies to help local public health departments, hospitals and community coalitions measure community health, share best practices, identify new funding sources and drive improved community health. The Institute's information system can be used to promote transparency, best practice sharing, collaboration and civic engagement. The web-based technology is being used in several jurisdictions across the United States to address public health and efficiencies. The community tracking, collaborative-building system has tools available for performance measures that are linked to public health interventions that improve health outcomes.

The Healthy Communities Institute provides access to a template of their system, along with supporting services, to communities at low cost. The Institute's intention is that use of the system will measurably

improve quality of life and outcomes for people in cities and communities around the world, becoming a catalyst for enduring and systemic change.

The Institute's Healthy Communities Network (HCN) is a customizable web-based information system designed to provide access to high-quality data and decision support. The HCN provides health indicator tracking, best practice sharing and community development to help improve health and environmental sustainability of communities around the world.

The HCN tracks 75 to 200+ health and quality of life indicators, offers guidance on over 1,800 community-level interventions, and includes features that help community members work with stakeholders – including both government and non-government groups – effect change. The system also collects a region's locally unique knowledge, blending it into the system to provide a common, understandable and constantly updated view for all stakeholders.

System Features Include:

- A fully configured and hosted website tailored to any sized region or community
- Dashboard of 75 to 200+ Health and Quality of Life Indicators
- Promising Practices (1,800+) database of proven programs
- Local Resources
- Community Engagement and Collaboration features: Event Calendar, News, Polls, etc.
- Literature and Education Materials

For more information: <http://www.healthycommunitiesinstitute.com>

HUD Sustainable Indicators Project

The Penn Institute for Urban Research (Penn IUR) is working with the Sustainable Urban Development Working Group (organized by HUD, the White House Office of Urban Affairs, and the Ford Foundation) to support the review of sustainability indicator systems throughout the US and Canada.

In 2011, in conjunction with the American Planning Association (APA), Penn IUR conducted a literature review and analysis of existing sustainability indicators systems, ultimately presenting a lean set of the most operational and consistent 22 indicators currently in use. The project assessed over 350 individual indicators of sustainable communities. The research concluded that indicator systems are often targeted towards a specific area of urban development (for example, environmental quality, economic opportunity, or social wellbeing) and there are opportunities to expand the use of indicators to better understand the broader efforts to make communities more sustainable and livable and to further comprehensive thinking in these areas.

In response to the scan and building off their 2011 project, Penn IUR and Sustainable Urban Development Working Group are currently developing a database of indicators to help local and regional governments and community groups measure how interventions in the built environment affect livability and sustainability. A key final product will be a web-based knowledge-sharing platform, most likely housed on SustainableCommunities.gov where users interested in livable and sustainable communities can find indicators targeted to their community size, projects, and goals. The goal is to help government and community users find ways to measure progress and performance and to help them think more comprehensively about how interventions in the built environment and planning can make their community more livable and sustainable.

It is hoped that this consolidated set of indicators can be employed by U.S. cities and regions to develop increasingly evidence-based sustainability policies, as well as to support the implementation and evaluation of existing national programs, such as the HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities.

More information may be found at <http://penniur.upenn.edu/research/sustainable-cities/projects>. A Powerpoint presentation with details about the 2011 scan is available at www.conference.ifas.ufl.edu/aces/presentations/2%20Tuesday/C-D/Session%20F/YES/0450E%20Birch.pdf

A Penn IUR white paper on the scan is available at:
http://www.penniur.upenn.edu/uploads/media_items/measuring-u-s-sustainable-urban-development.original.pdf

National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network

The Center for Disease Control's (CDC) National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network (Tracking Network) is a system of integrated health, exposure, and hazard information and data from a variety of national, state, and city sources.

The CDC recognizes that environmental causes of chronic diseases are hard to identify. Yet, measuring amounts of hazardous substances in the environment in a standard way, tracing the spread of these over time and area, seeing how they show up in human tissues, and understanding how they may cause illness is critical. The National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network is the start of a system to monitor the impact of hazardous substances on our environment.

While there are many ways to define environmental health, for the purposes of Tracking Network, it means how the environment might affect a person's health and how people might affect the health of the environment.

The environment consists of our air, water, food, and surroundings. Tracking describes how data is collected, interpreted, and reported. The Tracking Network acquires data about hazards in the environment, if a person was exposed to one of them, and health problems that may be related to these exposures. Different types of data are used to learn how the environment affects people's health.

Environmental public health tracking is a type of surveillance. It is a way of incorporating data for analysis and reporting. CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network is a website that brings together data concerning some health and environmental problems. The goal of this network is to provide information to help improve where we live, work, and play.

On the Tracking Network, maps, tables, and charts are available that feature data about:

- chemicals and other substances found in the environment
- some chronic diseases and conditions
- specific communities

The Tracking Network provides information about the following types of data:

- Health effect data: Data about health conditions and diseases, such as asthma and birth defects.
- Environmental hazard data: Data about chemicals or other substances such as carbon monoxide and air pollution in the environment.
- Exposure data: Data about the amount of a chemical in a person's body, such as lead in blood.
- Other data: Data that helps us learn about relationships between exposures and health effects. For example, information about age, sex, race, and behavior or lifestyle choices that may help us understand why a person has a particular health problem.

The following list of data is available through the Tracking Network:

Climate Change: <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showClimateChangeLanding.action>

Community Design: <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showCommunityDesign.action>

Health Behaviors: <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showHealthBehaviorsMain.action>

Homes: <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showBuildEnvironment.action>

Outdoor Air: <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showAirLanding.action>

Water: <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showWaterLanding.action>

Health Effects: <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showHealthEffects.action>

Population Health: <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showPopulationData.action>

The Tracking Network is part of CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program. The Tracking Program includes not only the Tracking Network but the people, resources, and program management involved in building this network. The Tracking Network is a discrete product of the Tracking Program. Learn more about it at www.cdc.gov/nceh/tracking.

CDC provides funds to 23 state and local health departments to develop local tracking networks (see a full list at <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showStateTracking.action>). These networks feed into the National Tracking Network.

More information about the Tracking Network may be found at <http://ephtracking.cdc.gov/showAbout.action>.

National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership (NNIP)

The NNIP was created in 1995 as a collaboration of the Urban Institute and local partners to further the development and use of neighborhood-level information systems in community-building and policymaking. Over the years, NNIP partners have built advanced information systems with integrated and recurrently updated information on neighborhood conditions in their cities. Creation of this capacity, which did not exist in any U.S. city two decades ago, represents an important technical and institutional breakthrough.

In many instances, NNIP partners needed to overcome the resistance of local public agencies to sharing administrative data and, because of major cost reductions made possible through new information technologies, they have shown that such systems can be operated on an ongoing basis at a level that can be locally self-sustaining. Indicators cover topics such as births, deaths, crime, health status, educational performance, public assistance, and property conditions.

NNIP partners operate very differently from traditional planners and researchers: their theme is *democratizing information*. Partners concentrate on facilitating the direct practical use of data by city

and community leaders, rather than preparing independent research reports on their own. All partners use this information to build the capacities of institutions and residents in distressed urban neighborhoods.

The NNIP works to build local capacity, plans joint activities, and works in conjunction with affiliated organizations. It works to catalyze a broad effort by partnering with other national organizations whose missions revolve around improving governance, program performance, and community development at the local level. For example, the NNIP is an outreach partner for the KIDS COUNT network, a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the United States. It also actively participates in the Community Indicators Consortium, which maintains an inventory of indicator projects and information on integrating community indicators with performance management. The NNIP serves as a strong peer learning network and conducts a joint program of work in five areas under the guidance of the Urban Institute and the NNIP Executive Committee:

Advance the state of practice

- Informing local policy initiatives
- Developing tools and guides

Build and strengthen local capacity

- Developing capacity in new communities
- Services to an expanding network

Influence national context

- Leadership in building the field

More information is available at www.neighborhoodindicators.org

Peg

Peg is the community indicator system employed in Winnipeg, Canada. It tracks indicators that reflect and measure the city's wellbeing. The indicators, developed by a wide-cross section of stakeholders, speak to community wellbeing in eight theme areas (basic needs, health, education & learning, social vitality, governance, built environment, economy, and natural environment) and one cross-cutting issue (poverty). Individuals, groups, and organizations in all sectors can use the information to increase their knowledge, inform decisions, and guide action to achieve short- and long-term progress.

Peg evolved out of several city-wide community engagement and planning processes held in Winnipeg. These included the United Way of Winnipeg's Journey Forward process in 1999-2000 as well as the City of Winnipeg's Our Winnipeg process. Through these processes, Winnipeggers were asked how to know if they were making progress on the issues most important to them. Peg helps to answer that question, providing data on key indicators of the community's well-being. The data is supplemented by stories from the community about how the issues underlying the indicators are reflected in the lives of Winnipeggers.

Although spearheaded by United Way of Winnipeg and the International Institute of Sustainable Development (IISD), Peg involves a broad cross-section of Winnipeggers in its development.

The *Steering Committee* provides overall guidance and oversight to Peg efforts, providing checks and balances to keep Peg credible. The Steering Committee consists of approximately 15 individuals reflecting a range of organizations and sectors.

The *Engagement Group* consists of approximately 40 people who provide a testing ground for Peg policy, approaches and next steps. Ultimately, the role of the Engagement Group is to keep Peg relevant to the community.

For each theme, an *Indicators Working Group*, consisting of organizations and individuals with expertise and/or experience in the theme being explored, is organized. The role of the working group is to develop a list of potential indicators and assist in narrowing the list to a reasonable and achievable list of indicators.

Additional feedback has been obtained through community surveys, using mechanisms such as the Urban Exchange (mycitymysay.ca)

This process has led to intensive community engagement to develop the themes and indicators. In addition to the Steering Committee, Engagement Group, Indicators Working Group and the surveys, the process has been guided by the Urban Exchange, a collation of results from previous community consultations, as well as organizational, expert, and individual consultations. Over 500 people provided input into the pilot phase of the project. The Indicators Working Group developed a set of criteria to assist in selecting the indicators for the pilot and future themes and also reviewed approximately 100 possible indicators.

The specific process for the first 14 indicators was the following five-step process:

1. A list of over 400 possible indicators was created through in-depth research of indicators used by local, national, and international organizations. Of these, approximately 100 were chosen as being directly related to poverty, Peg's cross-cutting issue.
2. The 100 indicators were narrowed down to 36 by the Indicators Working Group. The basis for selecting the indicators was a set of 10 criteria, including factors such as relevance and meaningfulness. These 36 indicators specifically focused on four of the eight theme areas that define wellbeing in Winnipeg: basic needs, education & learning, health, and social vitality.
3. The list of 36 was further reduced to 21 by additional local experts such as individuals from the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, The City of Winnipeg's Community Development and Recreation Services Division, and University of Manitoba.
4. The Peg Project Team assessed the availability of data, ease of understanding, and priority level for each indicator. This resulted in 14 manageable indicators.

The final list of 14 pilot indicators was approved by the Indicators Working Group.

A tool that visually shows how the eight themes are connected and the types of indicators included for each theme has also been created (<http://www.mypeg.ca/explorer>).

Peg is a work in progress. The initial site introduced the eight themes and the indicators for poverty, the cross-cutting issue. The site is continuing to be built and developed, with indicators for the eight themes being developed over the next two to three years. More information about the Peg initiative can be found at <http://www.mypeg.ca/about>.

PLACE MATTERS

PLACE MATTERS is a major initiative of the Health Policy Institute at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies (Joint Center) to build the capacity of community leaders to address social, economic and environmental conditions in communities that shape health and health outcomes. The initiative's approach to reducing health disparities involves identifying the complex root causes of health disparities and defining strategies to address them. Addressing upstream causes of health (for example, employment, education, poverty, and housing) is at the core of their work. Through shared learning experiences, the Initiative is intended to improve the health of participating communities by addressing social conditions that lead to poor health. With funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the PLACE MATTERS Initiative attempts to address social determinants through the work of the participating Teams.

PLACE MATTERS employs the World Health Organization (WHO) definition of social determinants to define social determinants of health as the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age, including the health system. These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels. The Initiative believes the social determinants of health are mostly responsible for health inequities--the unfair and avoidable differences in health status seen within and between countries

Sixteen PLACE MATTERS Teams are responsible for designing and implementing strategies to improve health equity within communities in 21 counties and three cities. The premise for structuring Place Matters Teams on a local level was to establish community-based leadership that could focus on specific social conditions tied to health. Members of the Place Matters Teams were drawn from various sectors of society--including local government, public health organizations, business entities, educational systems, faith-based groups, and community-based organizations. Counties and cities were selected based on data compiled and analyzed by the Joint Center. This data indicated that the regions chosen had specific percentages of minority populations, as well as significant indicators of poor health [A list of participating counties and cities is available at <http://www.jointcenter.org/hpi/pages/place-matters-teams>].

The Health Policy Institute provides technical assistance to participating multi-sector/trans-disciplinary Teams in the form of facilitation, Design Lab meetings (including national-level experts and peer-to-peer learning opportunities), technical assistance grants, and access to data. Through the Labs the Initiative supports teams in addressing social factors that lead to poor health. The Labs provide a framework for teams to engage in place-based collaboration and strategies to produce long-term change at a community level. Participating teams target improvements directed at social determinants of health through policy innovation, community engagement, advocacy, and activism. An integral part of the strategy is to convene the teams as a part of national learning experience called Design Labs.

After 14 successful Design Labs, as many teams are gaining momentum in addressing determinants of health, the Initiative found itself at a pivotal point moving from a design to action phase. Consequently the name of the Labs changed from Design to Action. This was important as it is symbolic of a larger shift in what will be asked of the teams, the structure of the Labs themselves, and how the technical assistance is provided to the teams.

Building in salient lessons learned throughout the Initiative's design phase, the Action Labs now focus on implementation of lessons learned and sharing approaches to action through facilitated processes that

will bring the learning of the initiative to all participants. Through the construction of place-based community strategies to address structural inequities that manifest as health, economic, and educational inequities, PLACE MATTERS teams will be able to add their voices to the growing national conversation focused on fundamentally changing the places we live in to support equitable and healthy lives.

More information about the PLACE MATTERS Initiative may be found at:
<http://www.jointcenter.org/hpi/pages/our-purpose>

Smart Location Database

EPA's Smart Location Database characterizes several built environment and regional accessibility variables for every census block group ¹ in the United States. The dataset is available to the public for download, as a web service, or to view online. Key data variables in the Smart Location Database include population, jobs, intersection density, etc. A full description of all available variables, data sources, data currency, and known limitations is available at https://edg.epa.gov/data/Public/OP/SLDv02b_docs.zip. Go to <http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/smartlocationdatabase.htm> for access to the database

Note: EPA is currently updating and enhancing the Smart Location Database. The anticipated completion data is early Summer 2013.

STAR Community Index

The STAR Community Index™ is a voluntary, national, consensus-based rating system for community sustainability. The STAR Community Rating System (STAR) was initiated and supported by ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability USA, the U.S. Green Building Council, National League of Cities and Center for American Progress. STAR, now in beta release, is designed to provide communities a standard, comprehensive set of goals, objectives and performance measures by which to improve their interdependent environmental, economic, and social conditions. Local governments become STAR Communities by subscribing to the STAR Community Rating System (STAR).

Local leaders subscribe to STAR to assess how sustainable they already are, set targets for moving ahead and measure progress along the way. The subscription offers access to the STAR Community Rating System and its Technical Guide. The subscription offers communities an opportunity to use STAR vetted tools and resources, and engage with a network of professionals working to advance local sustainability. Participating communities are able to use a custom-built Self-Assessment Tool to determine their preliminary STAR Community Rating and gain access to training programs and e-communications.

The STAR Community Rating System was developed using an open, consensus-based process led by committee members. Technical Advisory Committees, comprised of experts from across the country, determined scientifically valid, cost-effective ways of evaluating local government progress. A Steering Committee provided oversight and guidance. The goal was to create a comprehensive system flexible enough to serve both large and small jurisdictions, as well as leaders and local governments beginning their journey toward sustainability.

STAR's guiding principles, goals and objectives are designed to collectively define community-scale sustainability, and present a vision of how communities can become more healthy, inclusive, and prosperous across seven specific categories. While many sustainability frameworks focus exclusively on environmental performance, the STAR Community Rating System was developed to advance community

priorities across the three pillars of sustainability: economy, environment, and society. The rating system is organized around the following seven categories/goal areas:

Goal Area	Purpose
Built Environment	Quality, Choice & Access Where We Live, Work & Play
Climate & Energy	Increase Efficiency, Reduce Impact
Economy & Jobs	Quality Jobs, Shared Prosperity
Education, Arts & Community	Vibrant, Connected & Diverse Culture
Equity & Empowerment	Inclusion & Access for All Community Members
Health & Safety	Strong, Resilient & Safe
Natural Systems	Protect & Restore the Resources of Life

More information about the STAR Ranking System can be found at <http://www.starcommunities.org>.

Strong Cities, Strong Communities

Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) is an initiative implemented by the Obama Administration to strengthen neighborhoods, towns, cities, and regions around the country by enhancing the capacity of local governments to develop and execute their economic vision and strategies, providing necessary technical assistance and access to federal agency expertise, and creating new public and private sector partnerships.

The SC2 Economic Planning Challenge is a key component of the initiative; it includes a series of competitions in which six separate cities work closely with the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) to offer cash rewards for new solutions to Strategic Economic Transition planning in each community. Winning plans are selected by local leaders.

Additional information about this initiative may be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2013/04/25/supporting-local-communities-building-capacity-and-cutting-red-tape>
<http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=SC2AnnualReport.pdf>

Sustainable Communities Index (formerly the HDMT)

In 2007, the San Francisco Department of Public Health's Program on Health Equity and Sustainability, along with numerous governmental, non-profit, academic, and business partners, developed the Sustainable Communities Index (SCI) (originally named the Healthy Development Measurement Tool) to support a comprehensive vision for a healthy city that was developed by group of businesses and community organizations with the support of public agencies. Since that time, the SCI team has improved and updated the measures based on both lessons from local applications and international best practices. The SCI site provides currently available indicator data for the City of San Francisco, tools for applying indicators to policy and planning, and links to other city who have adapted the Index.

The SCI is a tool communities can use to track progress towards a livable, equitable and prosperous city. The SCI includes over 100 performance indicators designed to measure diverse sustainable community objectives organized under seven sections: Environment, Transportation, Community, Public Realm, Education, Housing, and Economy. The measures not only look at the city as a whole, but also expose the variation in environmental quality and livability among various city neighborhoods. The data and methods for the SCI Indicators are all publically available.

Designed to reflect local needs and global priorities, the SCI indicators provide the opportunities for an informed public debate necessary for an inclusive and democratic society. Indicators identify the current assets and future challenges of the community. They point to differences among groups or areas in both resources and outcomes.

Sustainable places provide the resources for health. The resources necessary for optimal health and wellbeing include fundamental human needs such as adequate and good quality housing; access to public transit, good schools, and parks; safe routes for pedestrians and bicyclists; meaningful and productive employment with fair wages; unpolluted air, soil, and water; and, cooperation, trust, and civic participation. Better access to these resources increases the chance of living healthy, fulfilling lives and avoiding preventable the diseases and injuries. On the other hand, differences in these resources which currently exist among neighborhoods, cities and countries are the greatest contributors to grave inequities in health and well-being.

SCI information is being used by numerous communities to help them with policy, planning, advocacy, and research, and education.

A number of cities including Denver, Colorado, Galveston, Texas, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Geneva, Switzerland have also applied or adapted the SCI methods for community health assessment or land use planning. Researchers also use the SCI to better understand the connections between neighborhood conditions and health outcomes. For more information: <http://www.sustainablesf.org/>

Sustainable Indicators 101

Sustainable Indicators 101 is a website sponsored by Sustainable Measures, a for-profit consulting firm that offers a wide variety of services to help governments, businesses and non-profits find appropriate, practical ways to contribute to the overall sustainability of their communities.

Sustainable Measures is committed to the development and growth of sustainable communities. Their web site is designed to provide a focal point for dissemination, evaluation and discussion of indicators of sustainable communities. Their goal is to educate and inspire community members from diverse backgrounds, and provide them with a forum for discussion. The site is not meant to be a forum for "experts" to talk among themselves (though experts who wish to contribute are certainly welcome). Instead, it is dedicated to volunteers: the members of a community who give their time and effort to serve on committees, support community government, and organize at a grassroots level. By providing community members with information in a clear, easy-to-use format, they hope to make the information available to a much broader spectrum of people than would otherwise be possible.

The Sustainable Measure site features information about indicators of sustainable community and ways to measure how well a community is meeting the needs and expectations of its present and future members. One of the primary goals of the site is to explain what indicators are, how indicators relate to sustainability, how to identify good indicators of sustainability, and how indicators can be used to measure progress toward building a sustainable community. Although launching an indicators project can be daunting, Sustainable Measures has found – based on their experience working with numerous communities - that nearly every community has the same set of basic questions. To help communities develop and use indicators of sustainability, Sustainable Measures provides a set of frequently asked questions on their site with clear, practical answers to address them.

Additional features of the site include:

- Free training materials
- A searchable database of indicators
- Explanations of indicators and sustainability
- lists of online, print, and other resources
- Answers to frequently asked questions about indicators and Sustainability.

Sustainable Measures offers services such as interactive workshops, consulting, lectures and publications to help educate and activate groups to create effective indicators. These consulting services are provided to communities and organizations working on sustainability, but Sustainable Measures believes sustainability cannot be developed and imposed on a community by someone outside that community; it needs to be developed and implemented by the community itself or it will not work. While outside experts can provide assistance at crucial points or help move the process along, it is ultimately the people in the community who are the experts on *their* community. Consequently, community members need to be the driving force behind developing a community with a sustainable quality of life for all members, now and for future generations.

More information about Sustainable Measures and access to Sustainable Community Indicators 101 may be found at: <http://www.sustainablemeasures.com/indicators>

YMCA Healthier Communities Initiative

The YMCA Healthier Communities Initiatives is built on the concept that local communities can work together to give all community members healthy choices and support the pursuit of healthy lifestyles.

More than 160 Ys are working in collaboration with community leaders to make changes in policies and the physical surroundings in those communities so that healthy living is within reach for individuals of all ages and backgrounds.

Ys engaged in the Healthier Communities Initiatives (Pioneering Healthier Communities, Statewide Pioneering Healthier Communities and ACHIEVE) are helping families put nutritious food on the table by bringing farmers markets with fresh fruits and vegetables to neighborhoods where healthy food options are scarce; giving parents peace of mind when they let their kids walk to school by creating safer routes; and keeping a generation of kids healthier by working with schools to increase physical education and physical activity during the school day.

Creating opportunities for healthy living makes a community stronger. The Community Healthy Living Index (CHLI) helps a community assess its support for healthy living in the places where people live, work, learn, and play, allowing their community members to lead fuller, healthier, lives. Healthy lifestyles are difficult to maintain without supportive environments. Many schools have reduced the number of hours for physical education, fast food restaurants often outnumber produce stands and road construction hasn't taken the needs of pedestrians and cyclists into consideration. The results are visible; more Americans are obese and at risk for chronic disease than ever before. CHLI equips communities with the needed tools to start working to reverse this trend, while building strong partnerships to strengthen the community fabric in the process. More information about the CHLI can be found at: <http://www.ymca.net/communityhealthylivingindex/>

Over the years, YMCA of the USA (Y-USA) has also been asked by numerous communities for help making the case for pursuing strategies to improve healthy eating and active living. Pursuing these strategies can be a challenging task because their results are often not immediate. If desired health outcomes are not immediately seen by decision makers, how do communities convey the potentially significant impact strategies can have on the long-term health and well-being of the community? What evidence can communities provide their decision makers to help demonstrate the positive health effects that can result from pursuing these strategies in their community? Y-USA developed resources that provide the scientific evidence that can help collaborations or coalitions make the case about the need for and efficacy of strategies to reduce the prevalence of chronic disease in their communities. Learn more about the Y-USA's Healthy Community Guide at: <http://www.ymca.net/healthier-communities-guide/>

For additional information about the YMCA's Healthier Communities Initiative, please go to: <http://www.ymca.net/sites/default/files/pdf/overview.pdf>