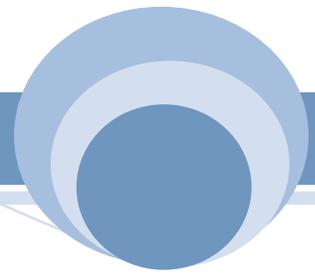


HUD Healthy Communities Transformation Initiative



Defining Healthy Communities

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

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



Healthy Communities Transformation Initiative (HCTI)

The Healthy Communities Transformation Initiative (HCTI), funded by HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes (OLHCHH), is designed to help improve the health systems and the physical, social, and economic service structures that support healthy living and healthy behaviors in our communities. Healthy Housing Solutions, Inc.

(Solutions) is leading the team developing this initiative. Two key elements of the HCTI are development of the Healthy Communities Index (HCI) and Healthy Communities Assessment Tool (HCAT).

HUD launched the HCTI with the goal of developing a systematic, evidence-based approach to assist local jurisdictions assess the physical, social, and economic roots of community health, and identify actionable policy and program activities to improve residents' health and quality of life. Many communities have started to integrate health into community development and planning, but until the HCTI, have lacked access to standardized, comprehensive and practical tools available to help them measure the most important community determinants of health. The HCI and HCAT provide standardized, evidence-based tools that communities can use as a starting point to identify and prioritize issues of greatest concern.



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

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

HCTI AT A GLANCE

OBJECTIVES

To create a unified national effort that:

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

CATEGORIES/TOPIC AREAS

- Environmental Hazards
- Healthy Systems & Public Safety
- Neighborhood Characteristics
- Transportation
- Natural Areas
- Housing
- Employment Opportunities
- Educational Opportunities
- Social Cohesion
- Economic Health

ANTICIPATED PRODUCTS

1. **Community Health Indicator System:** Indicators of social, environmental and economic conditions can be used to evaluate baseline conditions and monitor progress towards objectives in a neighborhood, planning area or city.
2. **“Healthy Development” Checklist:** A downloadable checklist of development targets (associated with each indicator) to help jurisdictions assess whether plans and projects help achieve community health objectives.
3. **Menu of Policies and Design Strategies:** A listing of potential actions that project sponsors or policymakers can take to achieve development targets in the checklist and advance community health objectives.

Contact us for more information:

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HEALTHY HOUSING SOLUTIONS

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

The HCI indicators form the foundation of the HCAT, which is designed to be easily used so the HCI can be broadly applied in any community. In addition to facilitating use of the HCI to evaluate community health, the HCAT also features resources and tools to help communities set and achieve goals. These may include a Healthy Development Checklist of suggested health or development targets and a menu of policies strategies to advance community health objectives.

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

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

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