

Consultation Draft

Principles for Building Healthy and Prosperous Communities

Why Principles? Why Now?

As a nationwide convener at the intersection of healthcare, public health, community development, and finance, the Build Healthy Places Network has seen firsthand how organizations across multiple sectors are working toward a similar goal: ***to improve communities and the lives of people living in them.***

Over the past four years, we have spurred new connections and relationships between leaders across formerly siloed organizations – leaders in community development, public health, healthcare and finance who increasingly understand that by joining forces they can have even more impact in the places where they work. ***The determinants of good health are also the determinants of living a fulfilling life, and everyone should have the opportunity for both.***

Given this growing momentum, the time is right to articulate shared values and the ways we can move forward across sectors to increase our impact. Our goal is to produce a set of national Principles that reflect the commonalities in purpose and aims among the many organizations and individuals, in multiple sectors and places, working to build communities where all people can live fulfilling and healthy lives.

How We Developed Them

We synthesized value statements and identified key themes from more than 30 national organizations working to improve health and wellbeing in communities in the finance, community development, philanthropic, healthcare and public health sectors. We then incorporated feedback from our [National Advisory Council](#), leading to six principles:

- Principle 1: Engage the community
- Principle 2: Embed equity as both process and desired outcome
- Principle 3: Intentionally work across sectors
- Principle 4: Aim to bolster economic mobility and prosperity
- Principle 5: Seek to transform communities
- Principle 6: Commit over the long term

Next Steps: Your Input

We're actively seeking input from every sector before we issue a final set of Principles in the Fall of 2018. We encourage you to review the following pages and provide comments by [filling out the survey linked here](#).

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Principle 1: Engage the community

Interventions should be conducted *with* a community, rather than *for* a community. Through an inclusive and fair process, community members themselves should inform and share in ownership of the work.

A community-focused approach to building healthy and prosperous places:

- Includes community buy-in and builds trust, necessary for lasting positive change
- Identifies community priorities working with community members and leaders
- Recognizes and addresses entrenched barriers such as the effects of discrimination, structural racism, and disenfranchisement
- Leverages and builds existing community assets and capacity
- Amplifies the voices of community leaders and the residents they represent
- Creates a transparent process to sort through friction and conflicts

Principle 2: Embed equity as both process and desired outcome

People marginalized due to factors such as race, ethnicity, ability, gender, and sexual identity experience persistent discrimination, leading to health and economic disparities. Systematically addressing equity in both process and desired outcomes in policy, funding, and programs will help narrow gaps among groups in every community, whether rural, suburban, or urban.

An equitable approach to build healthy and prosperous places:

- Incorporates equity as both a process and an outcome
- Measures decisions and leads conversations with equity and opportunity as a guide
- Breaks down barriers to opportunity
- Values inclusive growth
- Strengthens community resilience and builds upon community assets

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Principle 3: Intentionally work across sectors

The roots of poor health and poverty are complex. A siloed approach is inefficient and ineffective. To be successful, work must effectively engage multiple sectors to improve the health and wellbeing of families and communities.

A holistic approach to build healthy and prosperous places:

- Leverages public and private resources
- Addresses multiple factors, e.g. education, employment, housing, and transportation, engaging sectors that can influence improvements in health and prosperity
- Considers federal, state and local policy environments and needed changes
- Purposefully forges new partnerships
- Addresses the whole community and all people living in it

Principle 4: Aim to bolster economic mobility and prosperity

From rural communities to big cities, many households struggle with tough financial trade-offs that affect their chance to live fulfilling and healthy lives; gaps in health and wealth inhibit individuals' and communities' economic growth. Healthy families and thriving communities are essential for our nation's prosperity.

An economically inclusive approach to build healthy and prosperous places:

- Increases the entire community's prosperity, e.g., higher wages, revenue, and profits
- Recognizes that wealth has accrued unevenly due to barriers such as structural racism and discrimination
- Considers the economic drivers that influence a community's health
- Appropriately harnesses market forces to create opportunity, e.g., in housing, transportation, small business, and other sectors
- Where possible, monetizes the impact to induce additional investment of capital and resources
- Underscores the American values of prosperity, opportunity, and economic mobility

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Principle 5: Seek to transform communities

Quick fixes and one-off projects will not lead to sustained improvements in resource-poor, low-income communities. True transformation commits to systems-level interventions, policy changes, and multi-sector investments that aim to break the cycle of poverty for children and families.

A transformative approach to build healthy and prosperous places:

- Demonstrates and articulates results that spur multi-sector investment and policy change
- Plans for and mitigates against unintended outcomes, such as displacement
- Makes the case for financial investment to a range of stakeholders including financial institutions, philanthropy, public health and healthcare
- Keeps an eye on emergent strategies and economic and political trends, with a willingness to consider a shift to stronger strategies

Principle 6: Commit over the long term

Poverty and poor health are enduring problems, requiring a long-term commitment among funders, whether government, community, and/or business. Improving health and prosperity is unlikely to be achieved through short term initiatives. Identifying and committing to long-term outcomes allows adoption of iterative and innovative approaches and course corrections when needed.

An outcomes-focused approach to build healthy and prosperous places:

- Articulates the lasting change sought
- Adjusts based on what works
- Embeds learning and flexibility
- Establishes measurable short-, medium-, and long-term objectives and adopts mechanisms for tracking success across sectors
- Evaluates priorities - comparing how more and less advantaged groups within a population are faring over time