

Executive Summary

The Federal Plan for Equitable Long-Term Recovery and Resilience (ELTRR) (the Plan) sets an overall vision and common approach for federal agencies to strengthen the vital conditions necessary for improved individual and community resilience and health.

The Plan intends to guide long-term investment, to be executed over the next 10 years and beyond. It provides a new organizing principle, leveraging the [Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework](#), to apply federal resources and cross-agency collaboration optimally to address identified needs. The Plan provides an actionable path for a whole-of-government approach to coordinate steady-state resources to maximize the vital conditions and ultimately elevate national resilience.

The approach calls for a transformational systemic change in federal government through the following actions:

- **Align all relevant federal government** departments and agencies to strengthen the *vital conditions for health and well-being*
- **Foster community-centered collaboration** within and outside of government to ensure an equitable, thriving future
- **Maximize steady-state and other federal investments** within current agency authority to strengthen systems that enable resilience and well-being
- **Achieve equity and aspire to eliminate disparities** by focusing sustained whole-of-government resources on communities that have been historically marginalized or disadvantaged

Context

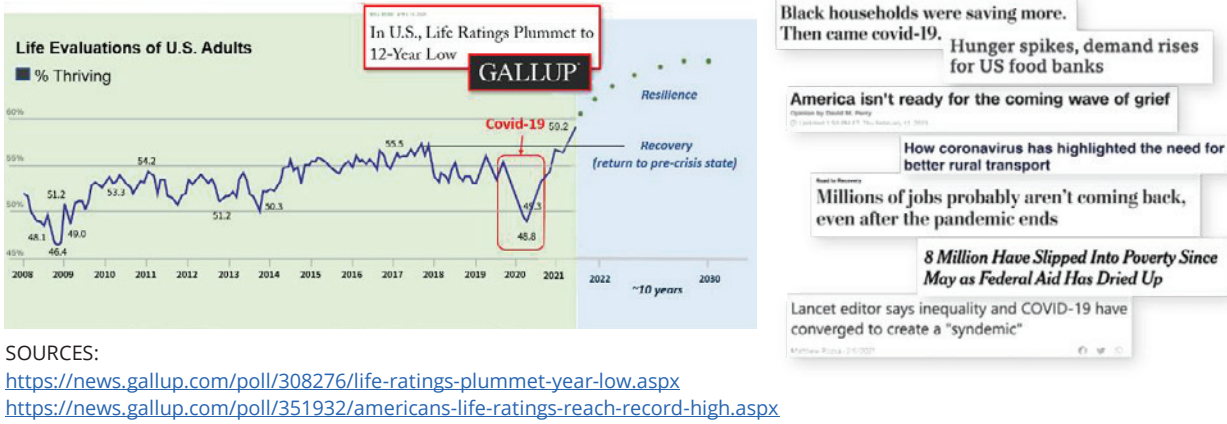
By the spring of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had accelerated and exposed deeply entrenched disparities in health and well-being created by severe inequity across fragile systems (see Figure 1). It was readily apparent how ill-equipped many governing and community institutions were to meet the exacerbated level of health, economic, and socio-emotional need. It is now evident, more than ever, that our collective circumstance prior to the COVID-19 pandemic was far from that of a resilient, thriving, and equitable nation. Disparities in economic opportunity, well-being, baseline morbidity, and premature mortality had not only persisted but expanded, reinforced by systemic inequity over decades.^{1,2,3} Recovery to pre-pandemic conditions is thus unacceptable as doing so would eliminate the likelihood of improved resilience for the nation. Instead, we must better position public systems to evolve in ways that seek to address individual and community well-being as the *primary* outcome of policy, programs, and funding opportunities.

¹ Van Dorn, A., Cooney, R. E., & Sabin, M. L. (2020). COVID-19 exacerbating inequalities in the US. *Lancet*, 395(10232), 1243-1244.

² McKnight-Eily, L. R., Okoro, C. A., Strine, T. W., Verlenden, J., Hollis, N. D., Njai, R., ... & Thomas, C. (2021). Racial and ethnic disparities in the prevalence of stress and worry, mental health conditions, and increased substance use among adults during the COVID-19 pandemic—United States, April and May 2020. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 70(5), 162.

³ Boushey, H., and Park, S. (2020, April). *The coronavirus recession and economic inequality: A roadmap to recovery and long-term structural change*. Washington, DC: Washington Center for Equitable Growth. <https://equitablegrowth.org/the-coronavirus-recession-and-economic-inequality-a-roadmap-to-recovery-and-long-term-structural-change/>

Figure 1. U.S. Adult Thriving Trends and Headlines Demonstrate Struggling and Suffering



Spurred by a specific objective in the COVID-19 Operational Management Plan (COMP) to “develop a federal plan for the long-term recovery and resilience of social, behavioral, and community health,” a cross-sector ELTRR Interagency Workgroup with more than 100 senior career civil servants from 28 departments and agencies worked together to develop the Plan over the past 18 months.⁴

Purpose

The Plan fosters a shared vision that advances a “whole-of-government” approach to build lasting individual and community resilience. It aims to **align federal actions, outline recommendations to improve vital conditions through a complement of federal resources, support community and individual recovery, and improve health and well-being.** The Plan anticipates that adopted recommendations will be integrated and institutionalized into the normal and expected course of policymaking, operations, and funding across federal agencies. The recommendations and guidance within the Plan should serve as a bedrock for continuous advancement and maintenance of an effective and responsive government in service of communities and individuals, with a state of thriving for all as the shared goal.

The Plan and recommendations are not directive at this time. Instead, the Plan is directional and provides a framework and actionable strategy, as defined in the recommendations, for identified actions that federal agencies can collectively take to advance long-term resilience.

Approach

Guiding Framework

The *Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework* (the Vital Conditions Framework) serves as the organizing framework for the Plan. The vital conditions articulate the factors people depend on to reach their full potential, organized into seven categories (see Figure 2a). The strengths-based Vital Conditions Framework presents an **actionable, asset-based approach to improving the social determinants of health and addressing inequities.** Notably, it orients action toward building the core elements of a thriving community, rather than orienting around governing constructs, measures of productivity, or a focus on intractable negative conditions of a community. The Vital Conditions Framework complements other widely accepted frameworks.⁵ Belonging and civic muscle are centered








Figure 2a. The Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework



⁴ The effort is now led by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH) and continues active engagement.
⁵ Complementary key frameworks include the Social Determinants of Health, the FEMA Recovery Core Capabilities, the National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF), and the *Healthy People 2030* emphasis on well-being.

at the core of the vital conditions due to the critical role that civic engagement has in building community capacity and how imperative local, self-driven, tailored solutions are to meeting local needs and ultimately to fostering an equitable, thriving future. The Vital Conditions Framework bridges all sectors to address housing, employment, transportation, climate sustainability, and all conditions essential to well-being and thriving.

Figure 2b. *The Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework*

	BELONGING & CIVIC MUSCLE	Sense of belonging and power to shape a common world Civic agency; civic association; collective efficacy; equitable access to information; freedom from stigma, discrimination, oppression; many opportunities for civic engagement (voting, volunteerism, public work); social support; support for civil rights, human rights; vibrant arts, culture, and spiritual life
	THRIVING NATURAL WORLD	Sustainable resources, contact with nature, freedom from hazards Accessible natural spaces; clean air, water, soil; freedom from extreme heat, flooding, wind, radiation, earthquakes, pathogens; healthy ecosystems able to sustainably provide necessary resources
	BASIC NEEDS FOR HEALTH & SAFETY	Basic requirements for health and safety Freedom from trauma, violence, addiction and crime; fresh air; nutritious food, safe drinking water; routine care for physical and mental health; routine physical activity; safe, satisfying sexuality and reproduction; sufficient sleep
	HUMANE HOUSING	Humane, consistent housing Adequate space per person; affordable costs; close to work, school, food, recreation, and nature; diverse neighborhoods (without gentrification, segregation, concentrated poverty); safe structures
	MEANINGFUL WORK & WEALTH	Rewarding work, careers, and standards of living Family and community wealth; good-paying and fulfilling jobs; job training/retraining; savings and limited debt
	LIFELONG LEARNING	Continuous learning, education, and literacy Career and adult education; continuous development of cognitive, social, emotional abilities; early childhood experiences; elementary, high school, and higher education
	RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION	Reliable, safe, and accessible transportation Active transport; close to work, school, food, leisure; efficient energy use; few environmental hazards; safe transport

Collective Action

Sustaining success will require federal, regional, state, and community partner collaboration and transparency across sectors, bringing together resources to amplify value and unify progress toward a shared goal. The Plan’s framework has potential to serve as a lasting bridge for all these efforts toward achieving increased resilience, equity, and thriving for all individuals and communities.

The Plan links with existing and emerging complementary efforts with a community-based focus on equitable resilience and well-being.

- National and local non-governmental organizations lead the development of a shared vision, leveraging the *Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework* and [consistent with the social determinants of health](#), and spurred action among civil society. The Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) [Thriving Together Springboard](#) framework and actions, released in July 2020 and led by the Well Being Trust, guide this effort. This initiative, funded by the independent non-profit [CDC Foundation](#), stemmed from the COMP objective to “develop a federal plan for the long-term recovery and resilience of social, behavioral, and community health” and is meant to inform federal efforts.
- State governments have adopted their own long-term resilience plans and structures, many also based on the *Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework*, as modeled by the Plan and the *Springboard*.

The momentum of the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup’s vision for systems change and collaborative efforts can drive bold, cross-sector action to achieve the shared goal. The Plan is aligned with existing and emerging federal priority efforts and multiple executive orders and presidential memos related to equity, recovery, and resilience. Ultimately, the Plan provides a skeleton upon which all federal agencies can strengthen their respective and collective body of work. Proponents of several of these priority initiatives have already been engaged and collaborative efforts are underway to evaluate how the Plan’s framework and recommendations can potentially provide an organizing structure.

Equity

The Plan aspires to **eliminate** disparities and achieve equity for all people and communities. Its recommendations are designed to address inequity while improving conditions toward thriving for all. As such, specific populations that historically have been marginalized are noted in relationship to pertinent recommendations, intended as primary beneficiaries of the recommended changes based on known inequities; however, specific populations that historically have been marginalized are not the only groups who will potentially benefit from implementation of these recommendations.

Recommendations

The Plan presents 78 recommendations⁶ for consideration and action, organized by the seven vital conditions and a cross-cutting category. Ten cross-cutting recommendations reflect actions that transcend the vital conditions and have the potential to uniformly align federal assets to equitably foster well-being. Efforts to support recovery have begun important work to expand understanding of how to address short term recovery. These efforts underway can be further amplified through Plan recommendations, advancing actions that may begin immediately within current agency authority and leveraging interagency partnerships to advance long-term resilience. A subset of recommendations – referred to as “multi-solvers” – impact five or more vital conditions. These recommendations may represent areas to prioritize during early implementation. Each recommendation includes detailed starting points as actions for implementation based on existing steady-state agency assets and authorities.

Creating Conditions for Success

The Plan’s guiding framework and recommendations require decisive leadership and intentional service for successful implementation. The following approaches and actions, core to creating conditions for effective implementation of the Plan recommendations, are listed below:

- A.** Form an Executive Steering Committee
- B.** Retain the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup
- C.** Establish a measurement framework and indicators
- D.** Systematically link plan efforts to related executive orders and priorities
- E.** Leverage regional expertise and networks
- F.** Engage with and gather input from non-governmental partners

Success will depend on decisive leadership from senior officials across agencies—proposed to come together as an Executive Steering Committee—to guide and compel coordination across federal agencies at multiple levels.

After receiving final consensus on the Plan from agencies involved in its drafting, the proposed Executive Steering Committee will be established and provide guidance for the implementation of recommendations, establishing agency commitment, actionable steps, and milestones. Additionally, work will continue by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to refine the Plan, develop core enabling approaches including external stakeholder engagement and measurement strategies, and further align with complementary initiatives across the federal government.

Looking Ahead to Greater Long-Term Resilience

By subscribing to the vision of the Plan and implementing the recommendations within it, the federal government seizes this opportunity to fundamentally change how government responds to the needs of communities and individuals, especially those that have been historically marginalized or disadvantaged due to systemic inequities. Together, federal agencies and partners can align federal investments to remove systemic barriers to well-being, foster community resilience, and provide ***a vision of hope for a future with all people and places thriving, no exceptions.***

⁶ A full listing of the recommendations statements is available for reference.