

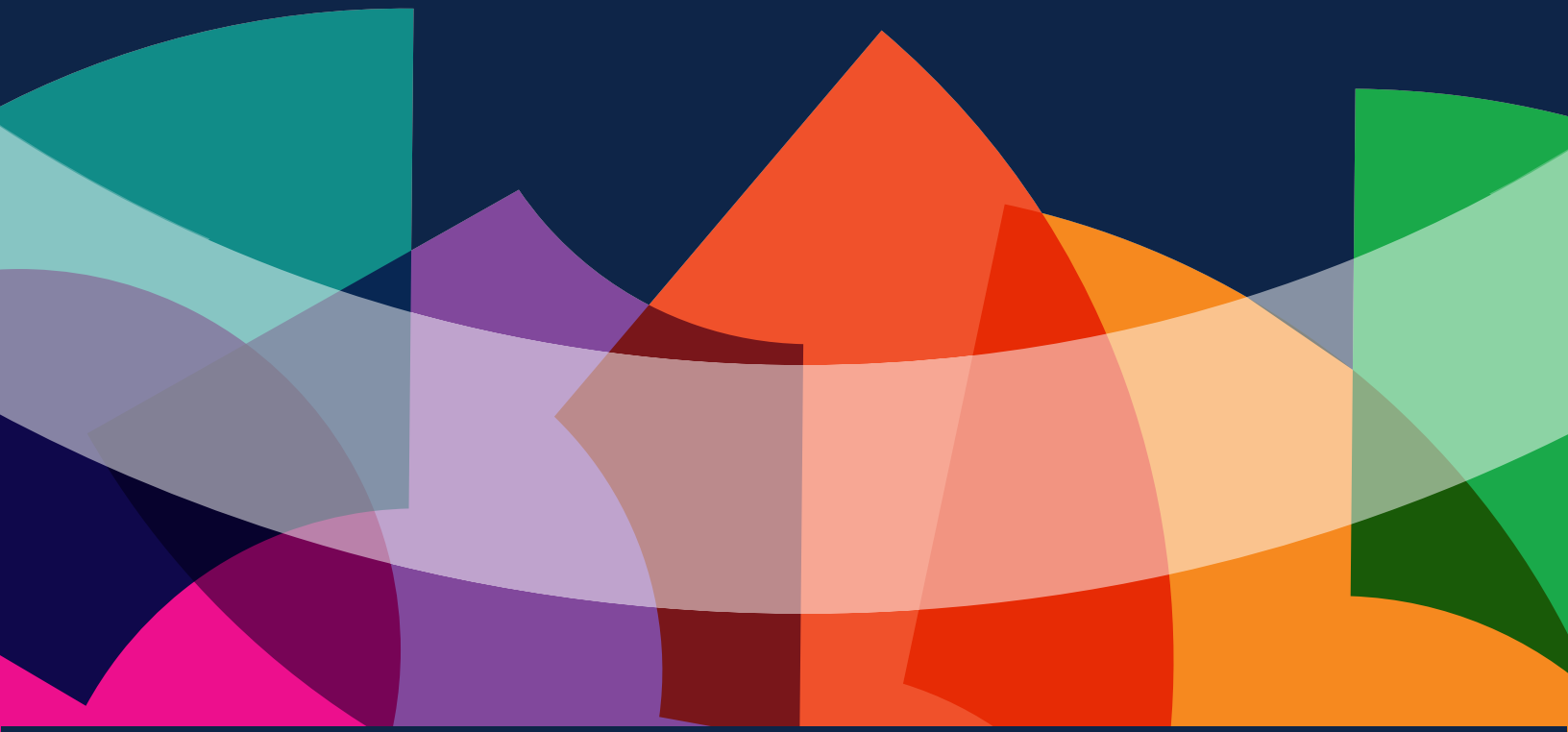


FEDERAL PLAN FOR

Equitable Long-Term Recovery and Resilience

FOR SOCIAL, BEHAVIORAL, AND COMMUNITY HEALTH

1/20/22



ALL PEOPLE AND
PLACES THRIVING,
NO EXCEPTIONS

ELTRR Interagency Workgroup Engagement

The following 28* departments, agencies, and institutions worked together to develop this Plan:

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 - Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)
 - Office of Homeland Security (OHS)
 - Rural Development (RD)
- Department of Commerce (DOC)
 - National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Community Resilience Program
- Department of Education (ED)
 - Office of Safe and Supportive Schools (OSSS)
- Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
 - Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH)
 - Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP)
 - Office of Minority Health (OMH)
 - Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR)
 - Administration for Children and Families (ACF) (Headquarters and Region 3)
 - Administration for Community Living (ACL)¹
 - Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)
 - Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)
 - Indian Health Service (IHS)
 - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
- Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
 - Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Department of the Interior (DOI)
- Department of Transportation (USDOT)
 - Office of the Secretary (OST)
 - Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Federal Reserve Bank (FRB)[#]
 - Richmond
 - Atlanta
- Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)
- National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)
- National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)
- Small Business Administration (SBA)
- Smithsonian Institution (SI)

*Workgroup membership counted at the agency level; departments without sub-agencies were counted at the department level.

[#]Members listed represent the Atlanta and Richmond Federal Reserve Banks (i.e., not the Federal Reserve System or Board of Governors); the Federal Reserve Banks are not government agencies and were founded by Congress to serve as the nation's central bank.

¹Engaged in early Workgroup efforts in 2020 to set the Plan vision; not involved in recommendations development.

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*Former or inactive member at the time of Plan clearance.

[#]Members listed represent the Atlanta and Richmond Federal Reserve Banks (i.e., not the Federal Reserve System or Board of Governors); the Federal Reserve Banks are not government agencies and were founded by Congress to serve as the nation's central bank.

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Executive Summary

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

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:

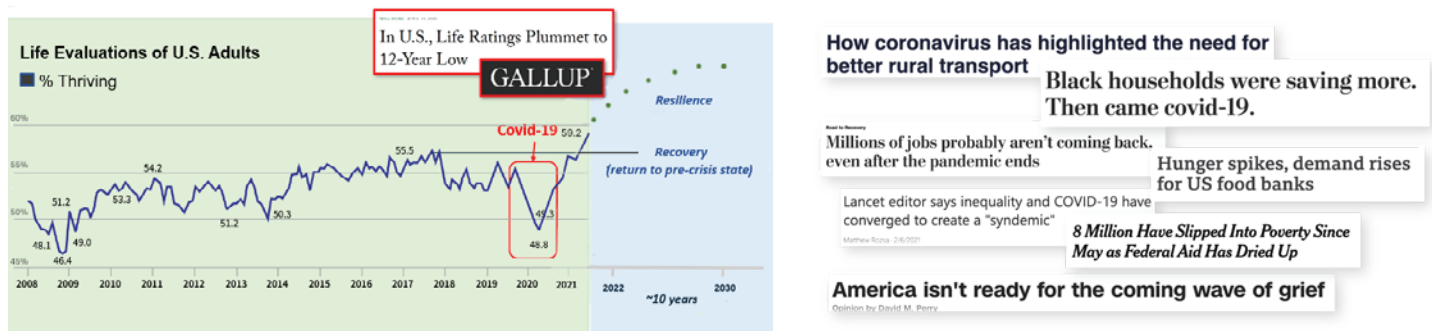
- » **Align all relevant federal government** departments and agencies to strengthen the *vital conditions for health and well-being*
- » **Foster community-centered collaboration** within and outside of government to ensure an equitable, thriving future
- » **Maximize steady-state and other federal 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

The approach calls for a transformational systemic change in federal government.

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

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



SOURCES: Gallup (<https://news.gallup.com/poll/308276/life-ratings-plummet-year-low.aspx>, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/351932/americans-life-ratings-reach-record-high.aspx>)

inequity across fragile systems (See Figure 1). It was readily apparent how ill-equipped many governing and community institutions were to meet the exacerbated levels 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.^{2,3,4} 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 community and individual well-being as the *primary* outcome of policy, programs, and funding opportunities.

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.⁵

Purpose

The Plan fosters a shared vision that advances a “whole-of-government” approach to build lasting community and individual 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.

The Plan’s Aim

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

² Van Dorn, A., Cooney, R. E., & Sabin, M. L. (2020). COVID-19 exacerbating inequalities in the US. *Lancet*, 395(10232), 1243-1244.

³ 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.

⁴ 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/>

⁵ The effort is now led by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH) and continues active engagement.

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 2). 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.⁶ Belonging and civic muscle are centered 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 2a.

The Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework

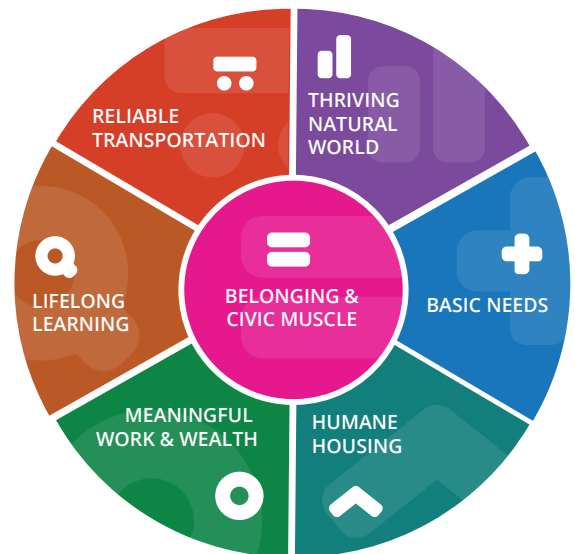


Figure 2b. *The Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework*

	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

⁶Complementary 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.

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 communities and individuals. 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 spur 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 COVID-19 Operational Management Plan (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 *Thriving Together 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 goals. 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 recommendations⁷ 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

Multisolvers

Recommendations that impact five or more vital conditions feature this icon.



⁷ A full listing of the recommendations statements is available for reference.

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, central to creating conditions for effective implementation of the Plan recommendations, are listed in the box to the right.

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.**

Structural Elements Necessary for Sustained Change

- 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

All people and places

THRIVING

no exceptions.

How to Use This Plan: A New Approach for a Thriving Future



How to Use This Plan: A New Approach for a Thriving Future⁸

The Federal Plan for Equitable Long-Term Recovery and Resilience (ELTRR) (the Plan) presents a suite of recommendations for how different agencies and departments of the federal government can work together to promote resilient communities and individuals.

It enables federal departments and agencies to advance their respective roles in service of people beyond sector-specific outcomes and focus instead primarily on a common vision for an equitable future—in which *all people and places thrive, without exception*. In other words, the Plan is designed to achieve greater individual, community, and national resilience.

The Plan:

- **Leverages** the [Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework](#) (the Vital Conditions Framework) to guide and orchestrate federal efforts across sectors and focus areas for greater sustained collective action.
- **Identifies** opportunities to maximize *federal steady-state resources* within current agency authority to *strengthen resilience*.
- **Orients** federal support to prioritize understanding *community-driven* needs and prioritize *tailored solutions*.
- **Shifts** the way federal departments and agencies build *partnership and collaboration with state, local, and cross-sector community-based organizations* to amplify collective resources and strengthen systems that enable *well-being*.
- **Aspires** to *eliminate long-standing disparities* by adapting and coordinating federal resources to address systemic racism and other inequities, prioritizing assistance to communities that have been historically marginalized or disadvantaged.

The Plan describes the necessary steps for successfully adopting the Vital Conditions Framework and implementing the associated recommendations within the federal government to create sustained impact.

The term *community* used throughout the Plan is defined as **“a group of people with diverse characteristics who share a common defined geographic location.”**⁹ For the purposes of the Plan, the term *population* is used to describe “a group or number of people sharing similar characteristics, identity, or sense of belonging that may or may not share a geographic location.”¹⁰ For a community or population to favorably change the conditions

Terms

Community

a group of people with diverse characteristics who share a common defined geographic location.⁹

Population

a group or number of people sharing similar characteristics, identity, or sense of belonging that may or may not share a geographic location.¹⁰

⁸The Plan is complemented by a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) [Thriving Together Springboard](#), which guides parallel community-based efforts to foster collective action toward well-being and thriving.

⁹This definition is used for the purposes of the Plan; other definitions exist.

¹⁰Adapted for the purposes of the Plan to distinguish *populations* from *communities*; see citation in Appendix, Foundational Terms.

in which its members live, members need the capacity and ability to act—they need vision, leadership, voice, and power. Therefore, as defined in the Vital Conditions Framework, building community or population capacity is the primary mechanism to ensure the democratization of decision-making around health equity and enhanced and sustained resilience.

The Plan presents 78 recommendations for federal action, organized by vital condition and related sub-categories. Each section includes an overview of the vital condition, followed by recommendations for advancing the vital condition intent. Each leading statement is supported by an anticipated impact, starting points to initiate action, and federal agencies with aligned missions. A subset of recommendations identifies specific communities and populations for which the federal focus best supports implementation; however, broader communities and populations not specifically acknowledged could also benefit from the recommendations. Departments and agencies are listed as Potential Contributors in each recommendation to acknowledge their respective mission space and the important role a department or agency can play to further develop each recommendation.

The vital conditions are inherently interrelated; thus, some recommendations interconnect across vital conditions. Visuals throughout the Plan demonstrate linkages across recommendations. Some sub-categories within vital conditions do not have recommendations identified for cross-agency action at this time. The Plan does not reaffirm or include the full scope of work across federal agencies that may also support the vital conditions, including across sub-categories. Beyond federal agency action, external non-governmental partners with relevant assets may lead efforts to concurrently support greater well-being and thriving.

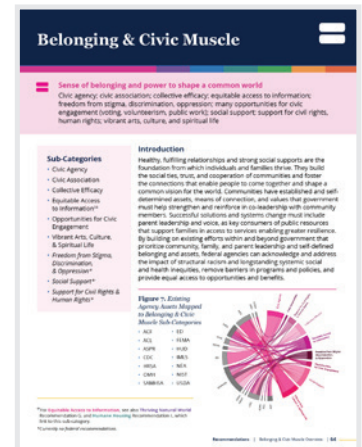
Intended Audiences to Use the Plan

The Plan was developed for use by three types of users and purposes. The user types fall along a gradient of action and contribution from central and active oversight and action to passive engagement and inspirational use of the Plan framework and recommendations. Key elements unify the different use cases of the Plan including (a) a shared lexicon in language, (b) a collective application of the vital conditions, and (c) synergies for shared access to resources that enable long-term resilience.

The three types of user groups include:

- 1. Federal government leaders and departments.** This user type includes federal departments and agencies engaged in the work, the proposed Executive Steering Committee, and the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup. *This group is the primary and core Plan audience and will collectively provide the executive vision and the operational actions to establish and advance the leadership structure and actions identified in the Plan and recommendations.*
- 2. Regional, state, and local public systems.** This user group is characterized as coalitions that support and act on the use of federal resources that address community needs and maximize assets. Coalitions or systems are formed based on identified needs and action

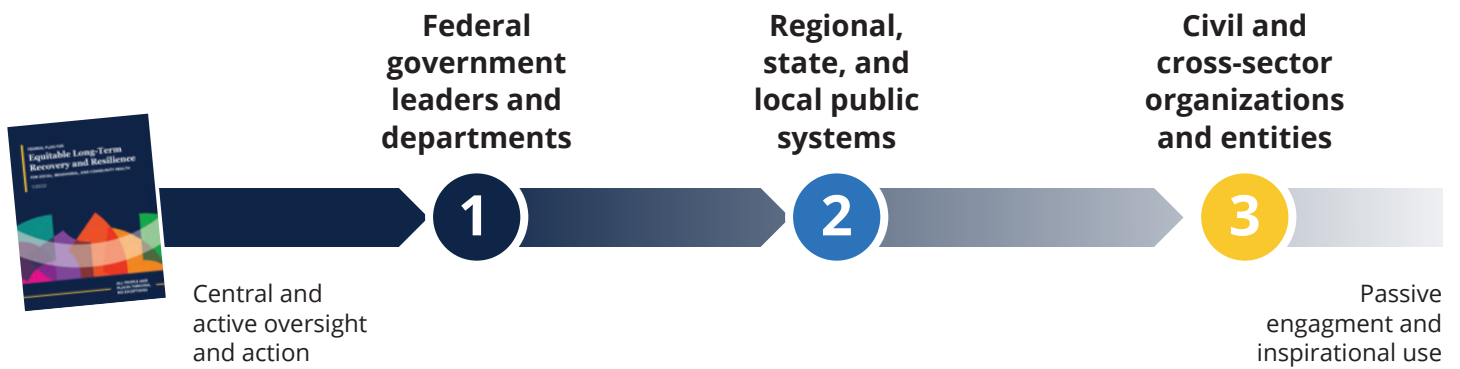
Example image of a vital condition's introductory page and one recommendation page



(at the regional, state, and local levels) and get inspiration from the Plan, not using the Plan and recommendations in a directive manner, but rather harvesting and adapting principles and recommendations to their circumstance and lens. This may include independent action, as well as identifying and utilizing federal resources that may support the identified needs and assets to advance greater long-term resilience.

- 3. **Civil and cross-sector organizations and entities.** This user group may identify the Plan as inspiration and a helpful bridge to accessing a shared lexicon and goal for long-term resilience. This group is leading this work in their own sector from their own perspective. Therefore, this type of user may shape the Plan and recommendations for their own independent use as inspiration for their own work and framework to support well-being and resilience.

The user types for the Plan fall along a gradient of action and contribution from central and active oversight and action to passive engagement and inspirational use of the Plan framework and recommendations.



Context



Context

By the spring of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had accentuated deeply entrenched health disparities created by severe inequity across fragile systems.

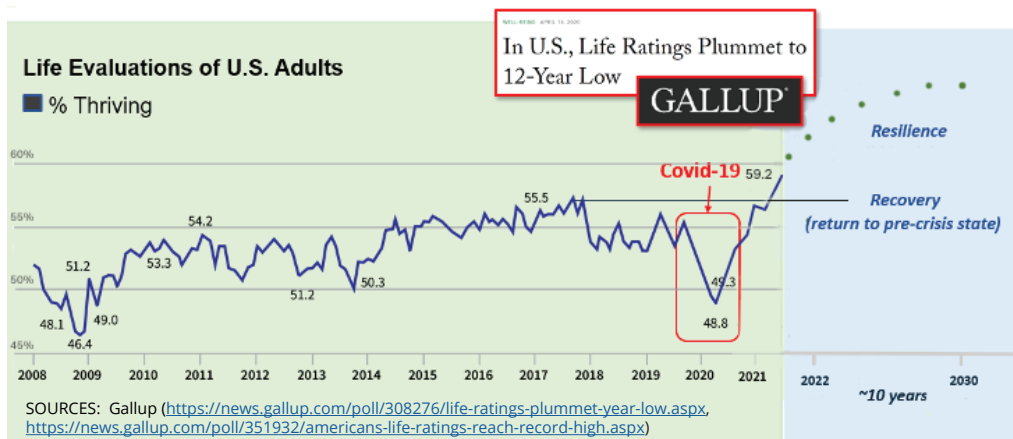
Compounding the infectious disease crisis, the syndemic¹¹ of overlapping economic, educational, behavioral health, substance use, housing, and food insecurity crises pushed communities and individuals into deeper struggles and suffering, and further away from opportunities for thriving. The workforce of “essential workers” that underpins the health and human services sectors, already burdened by declining safety and health workplace protections, was severely impacted.¹²

It was readily apparent how ill-equipped governing and community institutions were to meet the exacerbated level of health, economic, and socio-emotional need. A steep decline in mental health and well-being, an increase in substance misuse and deaths of despair, and limited availability of expected life-sustaining resources resulted (see Figure 3). It is now evident, more than ever, that our collective circumstance before 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 long-standing systemic inequity. The differing impacts of the current syndemic also emphasizes the need to address gaps and structural factors, including racism, and to strengthen systems to first and foremost support equitable opportunities for well-being and thriving.

As the Federal Reserve put it in their October 2020 meeting...

“the longstanding and well-documented conditions affecting the nation’s most vulnerable populations have placed them at higher risk in the current crisis, and the pandemic has brought into sharp focus the immediate and long-term extent of these risks.”

Figure 3. U.S. Adult Thriving Trends Demonstrate Struggling and Suffering



¹¹ A syndemic is a synergistic epidemic characterized by biological and social interactions between conditions and states, interactions that increase a person’s susceptibility to harm or worsen their health outcomes; see Foundational Terms in the Appendix for citation.

¹² Hecker, S. (2020). Hazard pay for COVID-19? Yes, But It’s Not a Substitute for a Living Wage and Enforceable Worker Protections. *NEW SOLUTIONS: A Journal of Environmental and Occupational Health Policy*, 30(2), 95–101. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1048291120933814>

Previous approaches, real and perceived, to recovery tend to prioritize leveraging resources to return to a baseline state known prior to a crisis. However, such efforts have tended to focus largely on the physical environment and not the underlying social, mental, and physical health and economic conditions of communities and individuals. Recovery to the pre-pandemic conditions in our nation is unacceptable, as doing so would eliminate the likelihood of improved resilience for the nation. Instead, we must better position public systems to evolve in transformational ways to address community and individual well-being as the *primary* outcome of collective federal government resources. Such a transformational approach requires interagency, multi-sectoral efforts that overtly address underlying and long-standing inequities in communities and in systems intended to support communities. Acting together across the federal government in an orchestrated way, focused on achieving thriving for all people and places, is likely to reinforce the public system's resilience.

We must better position public systems to evolve in transformational ways to address community and individual well-being as the primary outcome of collective federal government resources.

Our country faces an era of accelerating, recurring compound health, climate, and economic crises and increasingly exists in a perpetual state of crisis and emergency response. As new threats and disruptive hazards continue to emerge¹⁴ (e.g., wildfires, extreme heat, drought, floods, hurricanes, emerging infectious diseases), the urgency to ensure improved and equitable resilience heightens. Past events demonstrate grave risk in focusing attention and resources primarily on crisis preparedness and response without first striving to achieve greater personal and community resilience to withstand future disruptions. Theories of crisis risk reduction suggest that enhanced investment in individual, community, and built environment resilience yields a far greater return on investment than preparedness and response. In time, sustained investment intended to create an enhanced, equitable state of well-being for communities and individuals will reduce the impact of each inevitable hazard, hasten recovery from crises, and enable communities and individuals to thrive.

Disasters Impacted Thriving



The year 2019 marked the **fifth consecutive year** (2015-2019) with **ten or more** separate **billion-dollar disaster events** impacting the country.¹³



That year alone, beyond the swell of the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States experienced **14 different billion-dollar disasters**, including three major inland floods, eight severe storms, two tropical cyclones, and one wildfire event.



Notably, the events do not include low-lying or regularly reoccurring disasters. **These catastrophic events do not affect all communities and individuals equally.** Instead, these events regularly lead to **long-term displacement** and **economic devastation** for many populations, including people with lower incomes and people from racial and ethnic minority groups.

¹³ NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information. (2021). *U.S. Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters*. <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/billions/>

¹⁴ A hazard is something that is potentially dangerous or harmful, often the root cause of an unwanted outcome. Crises and disasters are the results of a hazard's impact and the vulnerabilities of communities and populations to the hazard. A goal of the Plan is to mitigate crisis by elevating resilience in communities nationwide. See Appendix, Foundational Terms for citation.

These realizations prompted the federal government to conduct a sustained engagement in 2020-2021 to strategize and plan for how federal resources can collectively, and in an orchestrated way, help communities and individuals build long-term, enhanced resilience. The Plan was developed in response to the COVID-19 Operational Management Plan (COMP), which mandated federal agencies to *“develop a federal plan for the long-term recovery and resilience of social, behavioral, and community health,”* acknowledging the effects of long-standing disparities impacting communities and fragile support systems. To formulate such a broad interagency federal plan, an Interagency Workgroup (Workgroup) was formed and charged with this objective. In January 2021, the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health became the programmatic office providing executive leadership and advocacy in order to sustain the Plan’s further development and entrance into clearance. It is anticipated the Plan will eventually be governed under an interagency council once further refined and implementation is initiated. Over the ensuing 18 months beginning in April 2020, the Workgroup expanded and built unprecedented momentum around cross-government collaboration. More than 100 senior career civil servants from 28 federal departments and agencies worked together to develop the Federal Plan for Equitable Long-Term Recovery and Resilience (the Plan). The Workgroup remains active and is preparing to implement the Plan.

The Plan’s Origin

The Plan was developed in response to the COVID-19 Operational Management Plan (COMP), which mandated federal agencies to *“develop a federal plan for the long-term recovery and resilience of social, behavioral, and community health.”*

Purpose

The Plan intends to create a shared vision that focuses the federal government on building community and individual resilience and recognizes the potential for federal partners to make significant changes to turn responses to tragedy into opportunities for renewal.

It harnesses this opportunity for government to transform systems to achieve a common purpose. Specifically, the Plan 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** over the next ten years and beyond.

Recommended actions in the Plan prioritize leveraging steady-state federal investments within agency authority—coordinated across agencies and tailored to community-led needs—to shift course toward an equitable, thriving future. Stemming from observations made early in the pandemic, the actions orient long-standing and new federal initiatives and spark sustained commitment to routinely use resources to advance resilient communities. The suite of recommendations aims to identify interdependencies, increase coordination, and remove barriers to eliminate disparities and maximize the use of steady-state federal resources among all communities. Once adopted, recommendations should be integrated into the normal and expected course of policymaking, operations, and funding across federal agencies. Sustained success will require federal, regional, state, and community partner collaboration across sectors, bringing together resources to amplify value and unify progress toward shared goals.

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. Departments and agencies are listed as Potential Contributors in each recommendation to acknowledge their respective mission space and the important role a department or agency can play to further develop each recommendation. In that spirit, after receiving final consensus on the Plan by agencies contributing to 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 align with complementary initiatives across the federal government.

Ultimately, the Plan provides a skeleton upon which all federal agencies can strengthen their respective and collective body of work. The Plan is aligned

Building Momentum

Develop a Vision for Change

Federal Plan & NGO Springboard



Strengthen vital conditions, improve social determinants of health



Eliminate Disparities

All people and places thriving, no exceptions

Elevate underserved communities and individuals



Increase Equitable Resilience

Reduce need for urgent services in future events



Thriving & Well-being

with existing and emerging federal priority efforts and multiple executive orders and presidential memos related to equity, recovery, and resilience. The Plan's framework has potential to serve as a lasting bridge for all of these efforts toward achieving increased resilience, equity, and thriving for all communities and individuals.

The Workgroup has built unprecedented momentum around interagency collaboration. The Plan further empowers the federal workforce to expand upon this new approach to interagency collaboration for its sustained implementation.

Over time, emerging priorities and repeated hazards will demand attention from all federal agencies. The recommendations and guidance within the Plan should transcend these factors and serve as a bedrock for maintaining an effective and responsive government in service of communities and individuals.

Alignment

The Plan is aligned with existing and emerging federal priority efforts and multiple executive orders and presidential memos related to equity, recovery, and resilience.

The Long-Term Resilience Approach

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

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

Guiding Framework

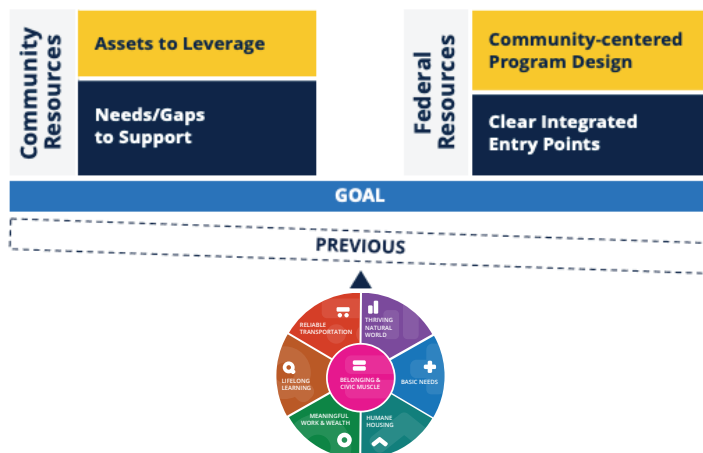
A framework to improve well-being and thriving for all, no exceptions.

The [Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework](#) (the Vital Conditions Framework) serves as the organizing framework for the Plan. The Workgroup reviewed several leading frameworks to determine the most effective foundation for the Plan (see Appendix, Framework Considerations). The unprecedented scale and duration of the syndemic coupled with rapid and exacerbated system failures demonstrated the urgent need for a new and innovative approach capable of addressing the limitations of existing constructs that contributed to inadequately resilient conditions pre-COVID-19. The Plan prescribes a comprehensive, asset-based, community-centric framework to innovatively and constructively disrupt and correct system failures.

The vital conditions reflect the properties needed to reach our full potential as individuals, communities, and society as a whole. The Vital Conditions Framework presents an **actionable, asset-based approach to improve the social determinants of health and address deeply rooted systemic 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 framework is centered on belonging and civic muscle as critical to building capacity for communities to design self-driven, tailored solutions to local needs and to foster an equitable, thriving future. Finally, the vital conditions resonate with all sectors present in a community regardless of their historical orientation toward health. The framework bridges non-health and social service sectors that address housing, employment, transportation, climate sustainability, and other elements essential to well-being and thriving.

The strengths-based *Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework* complements other key frameworks, including Social Determinants of Health, the FEMA Recovery Core Capabilities, and the *Healthy People 2030* emphasis on well-being.

The Plan is a starting point for federal agencies to better coordinate and align steady-state resources in pursuit of well-being.



The federal government inherently contributes to all vital conditions. Individual departments and agencies often have missions aligned with multiple vital conditions, including those not necessarily apparent by their name or primary areas of focus (see Figure 4). However, federal resources historically have been shared with communities based on the source agency and its primary function, rather than being directed and organized to facilitate action to strengthen one or more vital conditions and therefore build equitable, thriving communities. The Vital Conditions Framework provides an energizing and orchestrating foundation to yield complementary, cross-agency action that more effectively builds resilience, as a new typical way government can work.

All departments and agencies have unique opportunities and roles required to foster the transformative change outlined in the Plan. Together, departments and agencies possess a collection of assets that, if adapted or used in coordinated ways, have the potential to drive the system changes necessary for equitable resilience and well-being. An inventory¹⁷ conducted by the Workgroup demonstrates the current breadth of resources available across participating agencies to support and advance each vital condition. Importantly, funding is but one asset among many of the federal levers for action that can improve well-being (see Figure 5). An additional tool developed using the asset inventory is the interactive [network visualization](#) to help staff and leadership at all levels quickly visualize the work already happening around the vital conditions for planning and possible coordination.

The Plan intentionally focuses on opportunities across the types of federal assets that do not require additional authority or funding to be leveraged to advance the recommendations and associated actions. As presented in the recommendations, departments and agencies can act on existing flexibilities across other assets in new and more impactful and efficient ways.

Figure 4. Connections across Agency Assets and the Vital Conditions

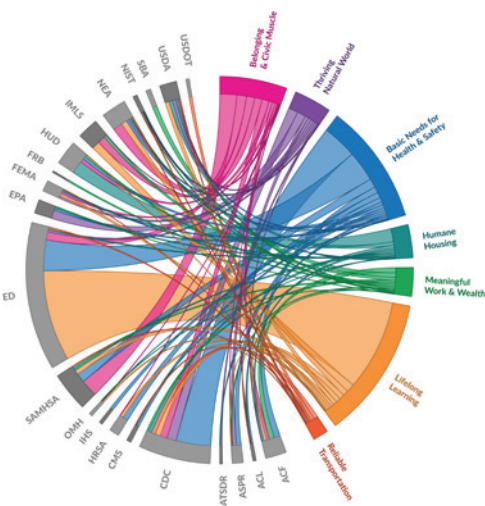
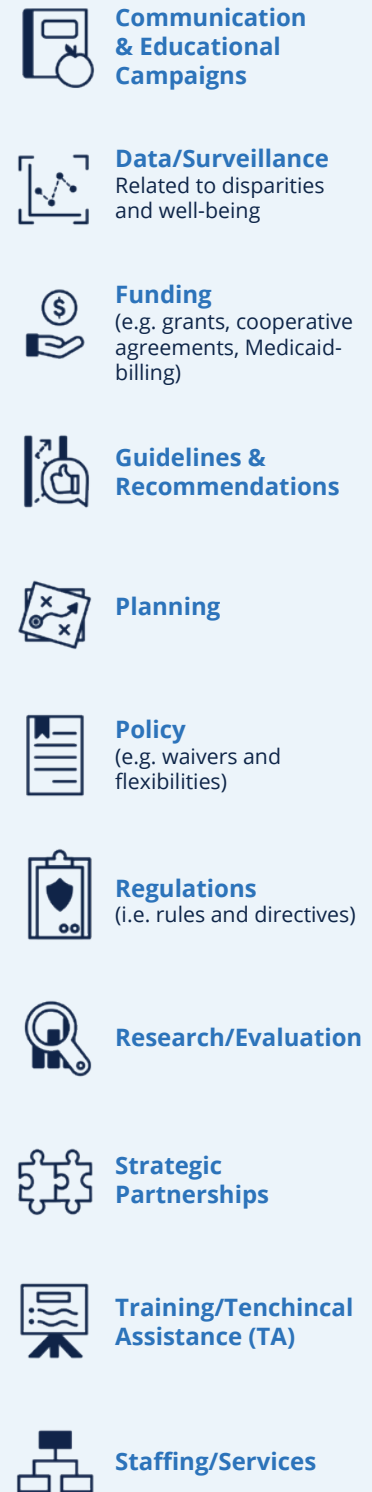


Figure 5.
Types of Federal Agency Levers for Action



¹⁵ The Vital Conditions Asset Mapping Tool provides a sortable table of federal assets displayed by vital condition and related sub-categories that will be available online in the near future. It demonstrates the value and potential impact of looking at assets across departments and agencies to more responsively support the self determination of communities aiming to improve well-being. This tool makes it easier to locate federal resources based on topics aligned to community needs and goals, rather than being organized by governmental organization. The chord diagrams in the Plan are a visual representation of the assets in the inventory connected to the vital conditions. The width of the bands contained on the chord diagrams reflect the number, not budgetary amount, of assets identified by agencies and departments.

Collective Action

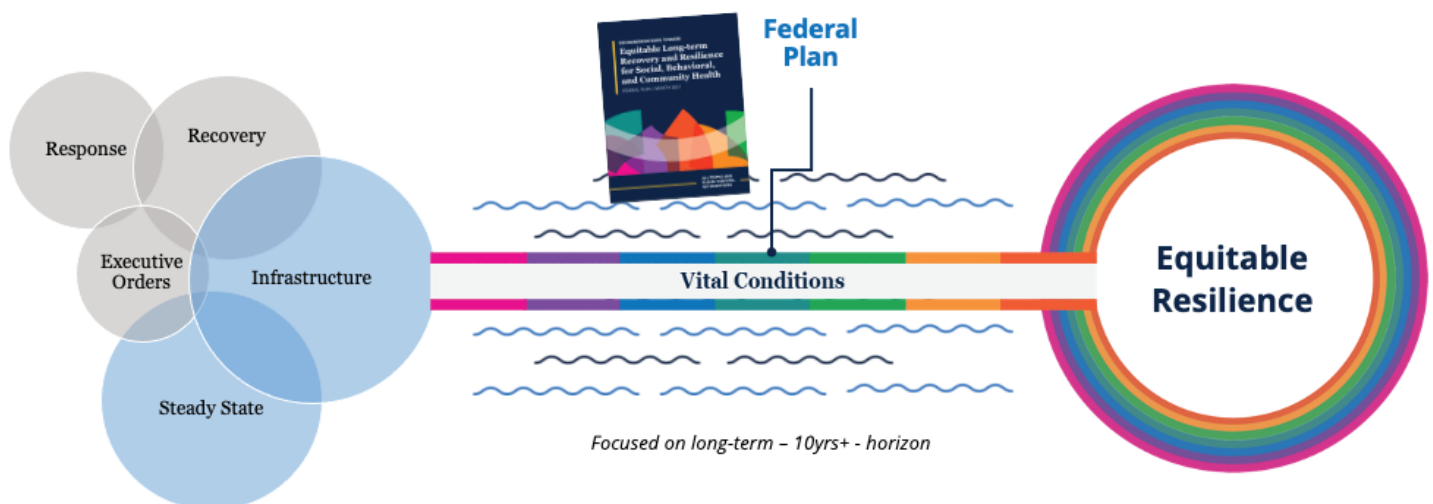
Redressing existing system failures in a sustainable manner will require an all-of-government *and* all-of-society commitment to a community-based focus on equitable health and well-being.

Together, government and society can take a unified, asset-driven approach to pursue the necessary vision of all people and places thriving, no exceptions. In this respect, the Plan is part of existing and potential complementary efforts:

- 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 spur action among civil society. The 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.
- Federal government departments and agencies in the Workgroup establish a vision and set of recommendations for federal resources. The Plan presents the federal approach and opportunities for action.
- State governments adopt their own long-term resilience plans and structures, ideally modeled in a complementary fashion based on the *Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework*.

Implementation of the Plan will serve as a whole-of-government model.

*The Federal Plan’s unique approach can bring together many efforts to **build collective action** on a common bridge toward **equitable resilience**.*

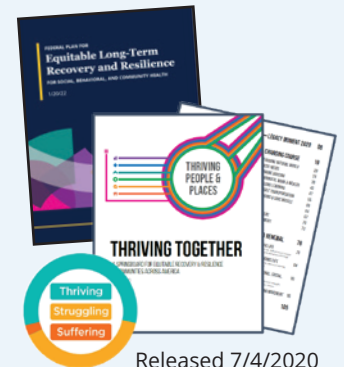


Implementation of the Plan will serve as a whole-of-government strategy and model for other interdepartmental coordination efforts, potentially including state and local governments. Together, Workgroup members and federal staff in general will orient policy, programs, and resources to collective action on the Plan's recommendations. While the Plan has been under development, several executive orders and presidential memos in 2021 have presented agendas and plans that complement and affirm the ELTRR vision of lasting equitable recovery and systemic change. The Plan provides a common structure for immediate and continuous action to synchronize efforts across these agendas and governmental sectors. The structure strengthens collective impact amid growing momentum for this vision.

Given the community-centric approach the Plan pursues, federal agencies and non-governmental community-based organizations must coordinate to realize the common vision. The *Thriving Together Springboard* includes contributions from more than 100 diverse community organizations, leaders, and voices and served as an informal landscape analysis for the Plan.¹⁶ To align the *Thriving Together Springboard* and the Plan, both guiding documents apply the *Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework* to identify opportunities for change toward thriving. An increasing number of state-level resilience plans have also embraced the framework and will focus on strengthening vital conditions to achieve equitable recovery and resilience. Corresponding efforts to align community-based and federal resources supporting locally driven, tailored approaches will achieve maximum impact.

The *Thriving Together Springboard* and the Plan

Both apply the *Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework* to identify opportunities for change toward thriving.



Released 7/4/2020
<https://thriving.us/>

¹⁶Well Being Trust. (n.d.). About us. <https://thriving.us/about-us/>

Equity

The aspiration to *eliminate* disparities is central to the Plan.

The COVID-19 pandemic elucidated and exacerbated existing long-standing and disproportionate injustices, often perpetuated by structural racism. The differential impact of failed systems, while amplified through the pandemic, has long manifested as persistent disparities in morbidity and mortality due to underlying social and structural root causes.

The Vital Conditions Framework demonstrates the relationship of all federal government investments, including and beyond health and human services, toward addressing equity as well as resilience. All recommendations ask federal government partners to identify how their respective policies, programs, and resources can be more intentionally leveraged and designed to remove inequities. As programs and policies change through the Plan's implementation, attention must continue to be paid to mitigating policies that perpetuate injustice. **Specific populations that historically have been marginalized are noted in relationship to key recommendations, intended as primary beneficiaries of the recommended changes based on known inequities;** however, these specific historically marginalized populations are not the only groups who will potentially benefit from implementation. Consideration of equity first in community planning and engagement ultimately influences thriving for all. Meeting the defined needs of communities through culturally appropriate measurement; inclusive and co-led design; and action for well-being serve as guiding principles of the approach.

Historically Marginalized Populations

Specific populations that historically have been marginalized are noted in relationship to key recommendations, intended as primary beneficiaries of the recommended changes based on known inequities

The Plan and Extant Community Resilience Strengthening Factors

A direct connection exists between community and individual resilience, and the underlying tenants of the Plan and the scope of recommendations the Plan sets forth.

The concept of resilience is widely used at the individual, community, and systems levels, yet there is no single conceptual and/or operational definition across context, institution, country, and use case. While there is no one accepted and applied definition at the national level, the most commonly used and cited definitions (included in the Appendix) do share critical elements. Across definitions, it is widely accepted that resilience is not a process, a single measure, or a static state of being. Instead, **resilience is a dynamic and demonstrable outcome of an individual, family, or community's ability to cope with uncertainty, access needed resources, and adjust or bounce back in an often-hazardous environment. Further, all definitions include a proactive, positive approach to disaster risk reduction versus a reactive, responsive approach.** Resilience is therefore a fluid and evolving reflection of an individual or community's adaptability with its environment.¹⁷

Literature supports that building resilience in communities is best done at a local level and through investment in ongoing or steady state systems that support the full range of needs across the lifespan. It is at the hyperlocal or community level where we most directly interact with the people and organizations that make up society. It is where we are most discreetly affected by policy decisions and environmental conditions, such as what jobs are available, how climate plays out, what infrastructure exists, and what rules limit or enable healthy living. Therefore, it is both ethical and practical for community members to be at the heart of resilience building work.^{17, 18, 19}

The preponderance of research, over several decades, continues to demonstrate the importance for individuals, as local community members, to have real power in decisions that affect development of long-term resilience. **Social capital**—people's relationships—is imperative for meaningful action in human systems and is richest at the hyperlocal level. Local connections and presence also create more and tighter opportunities for system feedback, which is essential for adaptation and innovation. Evidence also demonstrates

Resilience

A dynamic and demonstrable outcome of an individual, family, or community's ability to cope with uncertainty, access needed resources, and adjust or bounce back in an often-hazardous environment

¹⁷ Institute of Medicine. (2015). *Healthy, Resilient, and Sustainable Communities After Disasters: Strategies, Opportunities, and Planning for Recovery*. <https://www.nap.edu/read/18996/chapter/1>

¹⁸ Chandra, A., Williams, M., Plough, A., Stayton, A., Wells, K. B., Horta, M., & Tang, J. (2013). Getting Actionable About Community Resilience: The Los Angeles County Community Disaster Resilience Project. *American Journal of Public Health, 103*(7), 1181–1189. <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2013.301270>

¹⁹ Chandra, A., Acosta, J. D., Meredith, L. S., Sanches, K., Howard, S., Uscher-Pines, L., Williams, M. V., & Yeung, D. (2010). *Understanding Community Resilience in the Context of National Health Security: A Literature Review* | RAND. https://www.rand.org/pubs/working_papers/WR737.html

that local decision-making doesn't always lead to equitable access to resources, supports, and greater resilience. Indeed, we know that social determinants of health (SDOH) or the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age are not equally weighted and uniformly supportive of greater resilience.^{17, 18}

This suggests two requirements for building community and individual resilience. First, the **responsibility** for resilience building and the power to decide how it is achieved must ultimately rest with communities at the most discreet level. Second, the **process** of building resilience must equitably address both the particular situation of a given community and the broader challenges facing society. These two requirements are in dynamic tension with each other because they require individuals to have perspective and act beyond their own self-interests, and there is an onus on society as a whole to ensure equity.

This is further called into view when we consider that the six foundations of building community resilience in any state or context (Post Carbon Institute) are foundational community assets that do not exist only in times of disaster. Instead, they are rooted in and grow from steady state periods of community development that must continue to be resourced and advanced to align with the evolving needs of a community, to be effectively activated in times of disruption or disaster to support greater resilience.

1. **People:** The power to envision the future of the community and build its resilience resides with community members.
2. **Systems thinking:** Systems thinking is essential for understanding complex, interrelated crises unfolding and what they mean for similarly or disparately complex communities.
3. **Adaptability:** Because communities and the challenges we face are dynamic, adaptation is an ongoing process.
4. **Transformability:** Some challenges are so big that it's not possible for the community to simply adapt; fundamental, transformative changes may be necessary.
5. **Sustainability:** Community resilience is not sustainable if it serves only us, and only now; it needs to work for other communities, future generations, and the ecosystems in which we all live.
6. **Courage:** As individuals and as a community, we need courage to confront challenging issues and take responsibility for our collective future.

Taking existing literature and a review of the wide range of employed definitions as a whole, nine core elements have been consistently highlighted as constituting community resilience, as it applies to resilience from manmade and environmentally driven hazards.

1. **Local knowledge:** The effects of any hazard, whether short-term or long-term, could be mitigated if a community understands its existing vulnerabilities and assets. These vulnerabilities, if mitigated, and assets, if built upon, prior to a hazard, are key to building resilience within a community.
2. **Community networks and relationships:** The connectedness of a community, sometimes called its 'social network', is defined by the

Six Foundations of Building Community Resilience

1. People
2. Systems thinking
3. Adaptability
4. Transformability
5. Sustainability
6. Courage

Disaster Risk Reduction Equation

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \textit{Disaster} \\
 = \\
 \left(\frac{\textit{Hazard} \times \textit{Vulnerability}}{\textit{Resilience}} \right)
 \end{array}$$

linkages within a community. The connectedness of the networks and their cohesion are important aspects of social capital, which conceptually focuses on bonding, bridging, and linking.

3. **Communication:** Effective communication is identified as having occurred if the community used common meanings for all to understand and if the community provided opportunities for open dialogue.
4. **Health:** The pre-existing health of a community and delivery of health services after any disruption are important for community resilience. Understanding and addressing health vulnerabilities can build resilience before any hazard and mitigate long-term impact following a hazard. Health services are relevant for a disaster-affected community, though a lack of knowledge of a community's pre-existing vulnerabilities among its residents and/or difficulty in delivering quick, high-quality care are key areas of diminished resilience to guard against.
5. **Governance/leadership:** Shape how communities handle crises and have two key sub-elements of: (a) infrastructure and services; and (b) public involvement and support. For community infrastructure and services, effectiveness, efficiency, capacity, and capability to respond quickly are critical and evidence of a community's inherent resilience.
6. **Resources:** Must be widely available and equitably distributed in the community. From tangible supplies, such as food, water and first aid kits, to technical resources such as information, shelter, automobiles and essential machinery, a higher level of resources is generally understood to lead to higher levels of resilience. 'Resources' are also defined more generally as including aspects such as "natural, physical, human, financial, and social resources."
7. **Economic investment:** Direct and indirect economic costs of a disaster can plague an affected community long after it has occurred. Addressing the post-disaster economic resilience of a community can involve: equitable distribution of financial resources, economic programming including cost-effectiveness, and the economic investments in post-disaster infrastructure and increasing the diversity of economic resources.
8. **Preparedness:** Critically must occur at multiple levels including the individual, family and systems. This dimension overlaps strongly with the elements of local knowledge and communication but is itself typified by an emphasis on specific actionable activities and assets (e.g., go bags, emergency meet up plans, or community food and medical supply reserves).
9. **Mental outlook:** Attitudes, feelings and views when facing the uncertainty that typically occurs after a disaster or when contemplating a future hazard. The mental outlook of a community is important in shaping the willingness and ability of community members to proceed in the face of uncertainty. This dimension arguably has the most potential to build resilience within a community through a focus on sub-elements such as **hope** and **adaptability**.

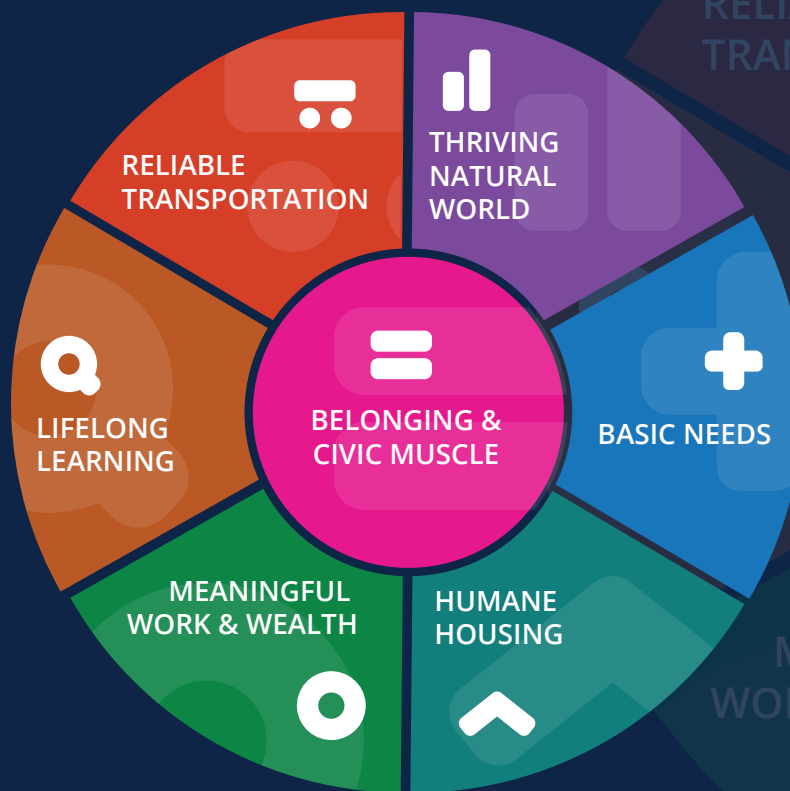
Core Elements of Community Resilience

1. Local knowledge
2. Community networks and relationships
3. Communication
4. Health
5. Governance/ leadership
6. Resources
7. Economic Investment
8. Preparedness
9. Mental outlook

Entertaining these core concepts, a relevant question is, **given the importance of local steady state systems, the importance of the people as civic leaders, and the community networks to achieve resilience, why is the focus for increasing a community’s resilience so often limited to resilience in response to a defined, time-limited disaster?**^{17,20} The *Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework* directly aligns with core tenants of resilience identified in current literature and practice. Further, the Plan is guided by this framework and seeks to build the capacity of individuals, communities, and systems in order to achieve greater resilience across the core concepts demonstrated in these various constructs.

Why is the focus for increasing a community’s resilience so often limited to resilience in response to a defined, time-limited disaster?

While the literature provides a firm basis that demonstrates a strong connection between dimensions of resilience, the Plan recommendations and its organizing framework, there is much more to learn. Advancing the work proposed provides critical opportunities to advance resilience while investing in learning and research that further builds the evidence base and critically guides the work and where greater investment further identifies the mechanisms of advancing long-term resilience.



²⁰ Patel, S. S., Rogers, M. B., Amlôt, R., & Rubin, G. J. (2017). What Do We Mean by “Community Resilience”? A Systematic Literature Review of How It Is Defined in the Literature. *PLoS Currents*, 9, ecurrents.dis.db775aff25efc5ac4f0660ad9c9f7db2. <https://doi.org/10.1371/currents.dis.db775aff25efc5ac4f0660ad9c9f7db2>

Structural Elements Necessary for Sustained Change

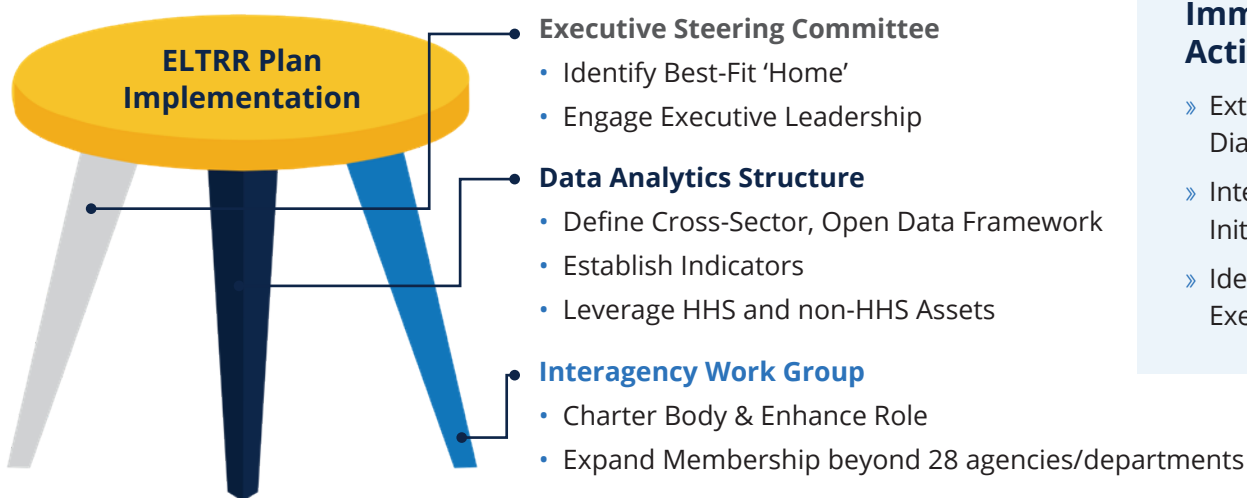


Structural Elements Necessary for Sustained Change

The Plan’s guiding framework and recommendations require decisive leadership and intentional service for successful implementation.

The three approaches composing the three-leg stool of ELTRR implementation, as displayed in Figure 6, are crucial to taking collective action to strengthen long-term equitable resilience. Each “leg” of the stool will bolster the work of the other two, and forged together, can provide the solid foundation needed to compel necessary coordination across federal agencies and departments.

Figure 6. *Three-Leg Stool of ELTRR Implementation*



Immediate Actions

- » External Partner Dialogue
- » Integrate with Initiatives
- » Identify State Exemplars

Key Actions

- Form an Executive Steering Committee or equivalent interagency senior leadership body
 - Retain the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup, preferably under a chartered mandate
 - Establish a measurement framework and indicators for near-, mid-, and long-term outcomes
- The three actions stemming from the three-leg stool of ELTRR implementation are critical activities that will begin immediately to advance the Plan and its implementation.*
- Systematically link Plan efforts to related executive orders and priorities
 - Leverage regional expertise to maximize implementation
 - Engage with and gather input from external, non-governmental partners

These key approaches and actions, core to creating conditions for effective implementation of the Plan recommendations, are described below in more detail.

Form an Executive Steering Committee

Decisive leadership is required to compel coordination, within and across federal departments and subordinate agencies, in service of policies and programs that strengthen what works well and re-engineer what no longer serves. An Executive Steering Committee comprised of senior executive leaders from a significant number of representative departments and agencies will set an overall vision of the role of the federal government in building community and individual resilience and guide implementation of the plan. The Assistant Secretary for Health and one non-HHS agency lead (to be determined) will serve as Committee Co-chairs.

The initial Committee charge is to:

- » Deliberate on the Plan's recommendations,
- » Prioritize strategies for implementation,
- » Delegate actions to respective agencies,
- » Assess the progress and identify opportunities to go further or redirect, and
- » Formally charge and empower the Workgroup with implementation support and monitoring.

Retain the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup

Continuation of Workgroup activity is essential to achieving effective implementation of the Plan. Ongoing, consistent collaboration between senior federal career staff will provide the long-term sustainability necessary to realize the impacts envisioned by the Plan. The existing Workgroup has already moved through initial challenges to highly effective collaboration. The Workgroup has achieved active, sustained, consistent engagement around important long-term planning, laying the groundwork for implementation.

Once established, the Executive Steering Committee can formalize and bolster the Workgroup's functioning by building on the significant momentum already achieved. Specifically, initial actions of the Workgroup may include:

- » Formalizing ongoing senior civil service staff participation in and management support for the Workgroup
- » Affirming the Workgroup's charge and renewing the commitment of member departments and agencies
- » Continuing outreach to and representation by departments and agencies to expand the whole-of-government investment
- » Leveraging existing and creating new collaborative channels and working forums within each agency and department to internalize ELTRR work and actions of the Workgroup
- » Integrating a mandate for the Workgroup to support Executive Steering Committee engagement

The Workgroup's unique focus, momentum, and energy have demonstrated its capacity to solve problems in the interagency space productively. Its more than 100 active members bring together an exceptional combination of perspectives across sectors and agencies for long-term change. Dynamic

Action

Affirm, in charter, the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup and the intent to extend membership participation federal government-wide.

discussions and intensive work oriented around the vital conditions have enabled the Workgroup to identify and assess actionable solutions in an unprecedented way.

Establish a Measurement Framework and Indicators

The Workgroup will develop a strategy and structure for long-term assessment aligned with the Plan vision. This structure will include system-level, process, and outcome metrics to gauge progress on and impact from the implementation of the Plan recommendations. A range of responsive and dynamic measurement and learning structures will be considered and may include a continuous learning system to analyze community-level evidence for scientific forecasting and identifying new opportunities for improvement. Implementation efforts will, by design, establish formal feedback loops to periodically gather input from impacted communities or regional and state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) partners and enable adjustments and improvements. Doing so will maintain the connection to community-based partners and ensure a consistent community-driven approach, essential to the success of the Plan.

The Plan's measurement strategy will draw from existing best practices and existing and potential complementary efforts. The Cantril ladder, collected and published via a Gallup poll and now incorporated into *Healthy People 2030* metrics, will serve as the long-term outcome measure of impact. A set of *Healthy People 2030* objectives and associated measures align to the *Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework*. These well-vetted and widely used measures will serve as the foundation to develop a formal monitoring plan for ELTRR efforts. Additional best practices in metrics that include objective and empirical measures of a community, as well as an individual's physical, psychological, social, behavioral, and spiritual propensity to thrive, will be evaluated and integrated, including measures from the existing [Well-Being in the Nation \(WIN\) Measurement Framework](#). Data sources will be reviewed periodically to ensure use of the best available data (i.e., accurate, complete, reliable, relevant, timely).

Systematically Link Plan Efforts to Related Executive Orders and Priorities

Since its inception, the ELTRR initiative has aligned to a vision to create long-term change in federal engagement over the next 10 years and beyond. The guiding principles transcend political cycles and provide an enduring foundation for continued and evolving governmental efforts that seek to create equitable systems and greater, more consistent thriving. The Plan was designed with strategic alignment to long-standing complementary federal efforts, such as *Healthy People 2030*. Aligning related existing and emerging directives and endeavors will sustain implementation of the Plan, increase efficiency, and optimize positive impact for the country.

A group of executive orders and presidential memoranda released during the Plan development strongly align with the Plan's framework. They share the tenet of whole-of-government action to address critical issues that enable thriving, including health equity, environmental justice and climate change, and economic mobility. A listing of currently aligned executive orders and a sample of coordinated activities is provided (see Appendix). To maximize

Action

Continue identifying existing related priorities, planned efforts, and aligned focus areas of activity (within the federal government, and with regional, SLTT, and other partners).

cross-agency collaboration in service of the Plan, the Executive Steering Committee and Workgroup can coordinate with extant working groups formed under these executive orders and other administration actions.

Leverage Regional Expertise to Maximize Implementation

Federal regional offices possess deep expertise in local contexts, knowledge of community needs and assets, and strong connections to communities with limited resources—all critical elements for the Plan’s community-centered approach. Further, regional offices have key relationships with state, local, and non-governmental partners and real-time awareness of innovative programs and assets within communities that may align with ELTRR recommendations and pilot opportunities.

Engaging with regional administrators and their partners will maximize opportunities to operationalize the ELTRR recommendations. Regional offices and community partners can internalize and champion the Plan to create meaningful opportunities for synergized cross-agency action. Rooting federal work tied to the Plan in and through regional partnerships will maximize community-led assessments of needs and decisions on how to use resources optimally. The Workgroup includes career staff members with vast and varied experience in regional settings. The Workgroup has begun to identify potential regions, states, and localities with strategic opportunities to become early adopters and exemplars of the tenets and implementation of ELTRR planning.

Engage With and Gather Input from External, Non-Governmental Partners

Meaningful implementation of the Plan requires aligning federal actions with community-driven and constituent-driven needs at the regional, and SLTT levels. Listening to the voices of external partners, particularly those historically left behind, to validate and prioritize federal strategy and, more specifically, implementation of ELTRR recommendations is essential to successfully eliminate disparities and enhance equitable resilience. This core practice of partnership engagement in the process of Plan implementation will best inform ELTRR efforts.

As a primary step in plan implementation, the Executive Steering Committee and Workgroup will develop an engagement plan to invite input from community-level partners on the vision, strategy, and specific recommendations. Potential partners include but would not be limited to:

- Communities and individuals with lived experience
- Community and spirituality leaders, as defined by their own constituents
- Regional office federal staff
- SLTT government agencies
- Businesses and community sector members
- Community-based organizations (e.g., spirituality and faith-based organizations, non-profit organizations), particularly those with connections to communities and populations

Action

Leverage federal regional assets and their partners to cultivate and pilot implementation plans tailored to diverse communities.

Action

Develop engagement plan with leadership input.

- Charitable organizations whose mission relates to eliminating long-standing disparities, addressing systemic racism and other inequities, and prioritizing assistance to communities that have been historically marginalized or disadvantaged.

Where applicable, the engagement plan will leverage existing federal structures (e.g., Federal Advisory Committee Acts, FEMA's [Mitigation Framework Leadership Group](#) and [Recovery Support Function Leadership Group](#)), working groups, partnership networks, and professional associations to connect with and listen to these representative groups. Novel engagement strategies will also be necessary to reach groups that currently lack equitable representation and trust to participate with the federal government.

Recommendations

Aim

The recommendations aim to fundamentally refocus how the federal government collectively functions in service of communities. Taken together, they must:

- **Incentivize and support** meaningful cross-agency collaboration in policy and program design and implementation to strengthen vital conditions and promote thriving for all.
- **Increase opportunities** to engage in equitable, community-driven assessments of needs and solutions.
- **Expand avenues** for communities to optimally access federal support.

With these themes in mind, federal agencies can act on the recommendations by adopting a new, integrated application of federal assets to enhance communities' ability to self-define needs and access relevant resources with the goal of building equitable resilience.

Overview

The Plan presents 78 recommendations organized by the seven vital conditions and a cross-cutting category.

The 10 cross-cutting recommendations reflect actions that transcend across the vital conditions and have the potential to more broadly transform the alignment of federal assets to better serve the well-being of communities and individuals who have been underserved. The impact of these recommendations has the potential to build upon itself as more agencies adopt them. It is acknowledged that current authority and flexibility vary by department and agency and, as such, some recommended actions will require a longer timeline. Some actions are underway, and others can begin immediately to demonstrate progress towards the intended outcome and build momentum.

Each vital condition section groups recommendations by sub-categories that describe a desired outcome to strengthen that vital condition (e.g., “Safe Structures” within the **Humane Housing** vital condition). Please note that not all sub-categories within the *Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework* currently have federal recommendations identified. In some cases, existing federal activities and assets already address these sub-categories, and thus related recommendations are not included in the Plan. The asset inventory and interactive [network visualization](#) demonstrate some of these resources. Additional recommendations for federal action to support these sub-categories may be identified in the future and added during Plan implementation and pending iterations. These sub-categories could also represent areas in which non-governmental actors take primary roles. The companion NGO *Thriving Together Springboard* provides examples.

All recommendations include:

- The recommendation statement
- A description of how and why the recommendation contributes to greater thriving
- Starting point actions identified through the Plan development that can be taken to accelerate implementation based on existing agency authority and current steady-state resources
- Potential federal departments and agencies with related missions, assets, or initiatives who may be positioned to assist with and/or join the effort and engage in implementation (*listing may not include all relevant departments or agencies*)

Connections exist across different vital conditions for certain recommendations due to the inherently interconnected nature of the vital conditions. For example, water quality-related recommendations appear in support of both **Thriving Natural World** and **Basic Needs for Health & Safety**. These connections are noted for each recommendation.

Example Recommendation

Recommendations include the following:

- Vital Condition
- Sub-category
- Recommendation Label
- Recommendation statement
- Contribution to greater thriving
- Starting Points
- Potential Federal Contributors
- Connection to other vital conditions

The screenshot shows a recommendation card with the following sections:

- Recommendation Statement:** Allow the use of federal funds to support community-wide drinking water testing and remediation to protect and improve water quality.
- Contributions to Greater Thriving:** Access to safe sources of clean drinking water can result in better health and more productive lives. The presence of contaminants such as lead, chemicals, and bacteria can lead to health problems, including chronic diseases, reproductive problems, and neurological disorders. Investment in infrastructure that protects water quality supports human health, food and public infrastructure, and community resilience. Regular investments in and availability of services that provide routine water testing and transparent and timely communication of findings is critical to build community trust and prevent negative health impacts. Equally, shared responsibility and accountability between systems must lead to consistent action on results to complete remediation and ensure use. Allowing federal funds to be used for accessible testing and remediation by local community organizations can increase local control over water quality testing and knowledge of water systems, and produce opportunities for local employment and development of expertise.
- Starting Points:** Allow the use of federal funds to support communities and municipalities to assess water quality and develop community-driven plans to address deficiencies identified. Foster public-private partnerships to support community-led approaches to protect and improve water quality. Create an independent monitoring system responsible for ensuring action is taken to address drinking water found to be contaminated.
- Potential Contributors:** Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and support to implement this recommendation include:
 - EPA
 - HHS/HRSA
 - HHS/HR2P
 - HHS/HR2DR
 - HHS/HR2A
 - HHS/HR2P*
 - HHS/HR2DR
 - USDA
 - USDA/NRCS*
 - HUD

Footnote: *This recommendation is also included in the *Thriving Together Springboard*. This is a modified list of the 53 federal departments/organizations that are eligible to provide leadership and support to implement this recommendation.

Multi-Solver

Multi-solvers are recommendations in which a change grounded in one vital condition strengthens five or more vital conditions. Thus, these recommendations may suggest areas to prioritize due to the potential to impact multiple vital conditions through one action.

Multi-solvers

The Plan's 12 multi-solver recommendations are presented below; they also appear within the respective vital condition section denoted with a distinguishing icon. Vital condition symbols indicate the recommendation strengthens that vital condition.



Table 1. Multi-Solver Recommendations

Each Multi-Solver Recommendation Strengthens Five or More Vital Conditions	Belonging & Civic Muscle	Thriving Natural World	Basic Needs for Health & Safety	Humane Housing	Meaningful Work & Wealth	Lifelong Learning	Reliable Transportation
Belonging & Civic Muscle							
C. Establish a Center of Excellence in Cultivating Community Well-Being to provide technical assistance and training focused on increasing connections between federal agencies and communities working to improve the vital conditions for health and well-being, prioritizing supports for groups that have been economically and socially marginalized and under-resourced communities.							
Thriving Natural World							
A. Increase coordination of federal investments among agencies to prioritize the existence and creation of safe, healthy, and accessible community open green and blue spaces that increase connection of communities to nature while preserving proximal affordable housing.							
H. Require regional, state, local, tribal, and territorial planning efforts using or applying for federal funds, as allowed pursuant to applicable law, to be multi-sector and to assess and address the environmental stressors and human health, economic, and social effects related to climate change with specific consideration of equity, social justice, and respect for cultural norms.							
Basic Needs for Health & Safety							
F. Incentivize the use of federal funds to catalyze the development of responsible urban agriculture, community and school gardens, and creation and expansion of local farmers' markets.							

Each Multi-Solver Recommendation Strengthens Five or More Vital Conditions

	Belonging & Civic Muscle	Thriving Natural World	Basic Needs for Health & Safety	Humane Housing	Meaningful Work & Wealth	Lifelong Learning	Reliable Transportation
K. Extend flexibilities for federally funded resources to expand availability and affordability of broadband services and affordable hardware for communities with limited access to quality broadband internet services, prioritizing groups that have been economically and socially marginalized and rural communities.							
Q. Increase access to physical activity that is safe and convenient, through expansion of and funding for places such as parks and town squares, walking and biking paths, active and public transportation infrastructure, and supportive programming (e.g., safe routes to schools and parks, school physical education, physical activity groups and classes, programming in dance and creative movement).							
Humane Housing							
G. Coordinate affordable housing development with proximity to comprehensive services for economic participation, socialization, physical activity, and federal and local support services such as food, behavioral health, healthcare, and child care.							
Meaningful Work & Wealth							
A. Address major drivers of the benefits cliff effect, within and across programs, to create greater state flexibilities using regulation changes, programmatic waivers, cross-agency and adjacent system policy alignment, and other tools.							
Lifelong Learning							
B. Allow the use of cross-agency federal funds to increase access to enrichment experiences in and outside of schools for under-resourced communities and that historically have been marginalized.							
Reliable Transportation							
B. Incentivize local partnerships with community-based service delivery organizations to co-locate high-value services and resources at new and existing transportation centers, prioritizing support for groups that have been economically and socially marginalized.							
C. Increase cross-agency alignment and integration of infrastructure planning and design that leverages new and existing transportation centers as integrated hubs for core federally funded services (e.g., food, behavioral health, healthcare, workforce enrollment).							
E. Maximize cross-agency coordination of funding and flexibilities to facilitate the widespread availability of reliable public transportation that is affordable, frequent, and convenient within and between communities to ensure access to resources across vital conditions, prioritizing geographic communities with less access to safe and convenient transportation.							

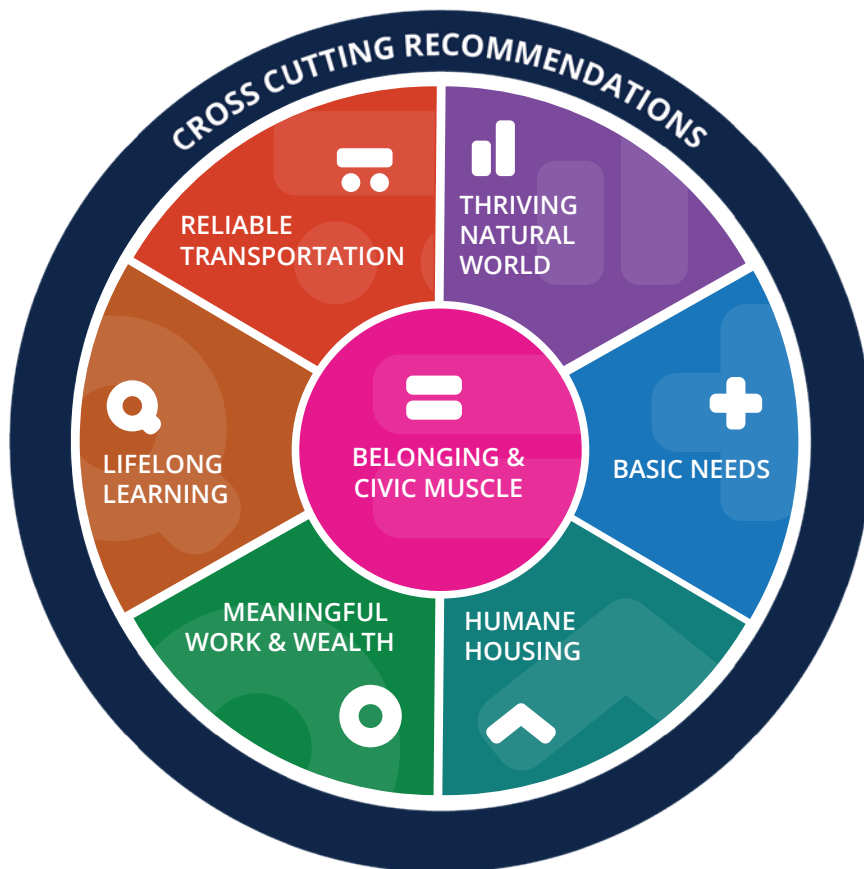
Cross-Cutting



The 10 cross-cutting recommendations reflect actions that transcend the vital conditions and have the potential to transform alignment of federal assets to better serve the well-being of communities and populations historically left behind.

They focus on changes to steady-state infrastructure that enhance federal services, in support of making community-led efforts and whole-person approaches the expectation and the norm. These recommendations will be most effective when integrated into the regular process for policy and regulation development, program design and implementation, and funding across federal agencies. The impact of these recommendations will increase as more agencies adopt them; while it is acknowledged that current authority and flexibility may vary by agency and program, some actions can begin immediately.

Figure 7. *Vital Conditions and Cross Cutting Recommendations*





Recommendation A

Increase Use of the Vital Conditions Framework in Federal Resources—Employ the *Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework* to advance strategic planning, regulation advancements, and initiative development across the federal government.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Orienting efforts across all agencies to the *Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework* shifts federal service provision toward user-focused, community-based needs and away from organizations based on separate federal programmatic and policy structures. Coordinated orientation acknowledges that department and agency missions impact multiple sectors, beyond what may be apparent by name, and increases communities' and individuals' ability to engage with federal government entities, locate services based on their needs, and apply for resources—ultimately improving services for people and communities. Data is a critical tool to bring efforts together and leverage shared outcome measures. *Healthy People 2030* will now measure well-being annually with the potential to include a measure that allows for comparison with other countries.

Several federal agencies and initiatives have prioritized serving the community as fundamental to their programs; they provide important resources from which to build on to form a broader set of federal initiatives. As regional, state, local, and tribal governments and community-based organizations, including faith-based organizations, adopt the Vital Conditions Framework in planning efforts, organizing federal resources by the same framework will help these entities effectively match critical needs, priorities, and community assets to available federal resources. This alignment will help under-resourced communities more easily access federal resources and ensure that governmental and non-governmental efforts are coordinated in pursuit of the shared vision and goal for well-being and thriving.



This is a
Cross-Cutting
Recommendation.

Starting Points

- » **Incorporate identification of relevant vital conditions as a standard step in developing new funding announcements** to provide potential applicants with a common point of reference that is oriented to goals and action.
- » **Integrate the Vital Conditions Framework in efforts focused on improving the social determinants of health** and advancing equity to provide an action-oriented lens to address barriers and issues and to increase the number of federal agencies and sectors that see their role in achieving well-being.
- » **Organize current and upcoming strategic planning efforts by the Vital Conditions Framework** to identify and set goals, objectives, and strategies within a common framework across agencies, allowing for a synchronized vision and set of actions across federal government that advance common intended outcomes (e.g., equity, thriving, well-being).
- » **Identify *Healthy People 2030* objectives for use as common measures** across agency efforts related to well-being.

(Continued)



- » **Identify flexibilities within agency authority to adapt existing measurement and reporting requirements** to reorganize them by the Vital Conditions Framework (e.g., Community Health Needs Assessment; Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance), to align required community- and organization-based efforts within a common framework that aligns with federal service offerings.
- » **Leverage the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup's existing asset mapping tool** and process as a model for federal agencies to review resources, align them to vital conditions, and leverage the information to identify opportunities for integrated work and partnerships; continue efforts to make the information widely available to public audiences for use.

Potential Contributors

All federal departments and agencies can engage in implementation of the cross-cutting recommendations. The federal departments and agencies especially well-positioned to provide leadership and/or critical support to implement this recommendation include:

- HHS/ACF
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/CMS
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/OASH
- IRS*
- SEC*

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.



Recommendation B

Adopt Coordinated Language in Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Announcements—

Develop and implement standardized language across departments and within agencies for funding announcements that facilitate cross-agency collaboration in support of advancing equitable well-being and resilience through the application of federal grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Creating standard language shared and integrated by all departments and agencies into funding announcements is a core method to reframe federal action in support of the shared goal of resilience, while eliminating inequities among communities in their ability to access federal funding opportunities. The term “language” can include frameworks, definitions, performance requirements or outcomes, and other details that promote or require equitable community engagement and strengthen belonging and civic muscle in communities. Use of coordinated language will further support use of the *Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework* across federal resources to make it easier for communities and individuals to find and apply for funding opportunities that align with locally identified goals, instead of working to make local goals meet federal funding structures as the starting point. Meaningful engagement of civil society organizations and communities to inform the development of funding language and mechanisms is important in creating equitable access and addressing long-standing inequities.



**This is a
Cross-Cutting
Recommendation.**

*Links to Cross-Cutting
C., H.*

Starting Points

- » **Develop consistent and shared core or boilerplate language for funding announcements employed by all federal departments and agencies** in support of community building and equitable resilience, including:
 - » Reinforce multi-sector planning with input from communities that have historically been marginalized in planning efforts—expanding any existing coalitions—as the best practice to the extent authority allows (e.g., for community planning activities related to strengthening vital conditions).
 - » Develop a community-based participatory approach, applied across agencies, by requiring intentional and deliberate engagement of groups that have historically been marginalized in planning and implementation (e.g., through minimum criteria for community assistance that describe options for how funders engage and provide opportunity for inclusion, such as public meetings offered through multiple access points that ensure participation of key representatives such as residents, community-based organizations, and community-identified leaders); include this element in the evaluation criteria for funding.
 - » Include language to clarify and incentivize “meaningful engagement” as increasing opportunities for communities to come together in shared learning experiences that span generations, community and cultural backgrounds, and people with a variety of abilities, tailored to different settings and incorporating cultural competency development for various professions.
 - » Use the *Vital Conditions of Health and Well-Being Framework* to organize funding opportunities intended to improve the social determinants of health or advance equity.

(Continued)



Cross-Cutting Recommendations

- » Leverage HHS/Office of the Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources (ASFR*) designation by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as the home agency for Grants Quality Service Management Office (QSMO) to orchestrate and implement consistent language.
- » Formalize practices for timely, proactive consultation by federal agencies related to regulation and funding changes that could affect Tribes and territories.

Potential Contributors

All federal departments and agencies can engage in implementation of the cross-cutting recommendations. The federal departments and agencies especially well-positioned to provide leadership and/or critical support to implement this recommendation include:

- HHS/ACF
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/ASFR*
- HHS/IEA*
- HHS/OASH

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.



Recommendation C

Demonstrate Continuous Community-Led Planning and Design – Integrate requirements for inclusive constituent- and/or community-owned planning (e.g., master plans, capital improvement, needs assessment), co-design, and performance monitoring that prioritize locally defined needs and goals in all federal resource provision.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Enabling communities to establish and engage in their own multi-sector coalition and community engagement planning sets the course for long-term pathways to resilience and thriving that will protect against future hazards and disruptions. Community engagement should prioritize community-based leadership and models empowering community members as both civic leaders and consumers, and affirm community members' perspectives as invaluable. Further, efforts focused on families should prioritize engaging parents as key civic leaders in the development of insights and valuable solutions. The federal government can collectively encourage and enable inclusive community-driven planning and design by providing resources, reducing duplication of required activities across federal resources that seek to support the same vital condition goal, proactively seeking to build community capacity, and consistently ensuring resources and access to effective solutions are available. Federal agencies can also help communities build belonging and civic engagement and leverage insights and experience in service of community needs by requiring demonstration of co-leadership by the community in planning and design efforts.



**This is a
Cross-Cutting
Recommendation.**

*Links to Cross-Cutting
B., H.*

Starting Points

- » **Require that state and local governments allocate any new infrastructure-related funding based on the direct input of the community** and the groups most affected by proposed changes in discussion and decision-making, as authority allows.
 - » Incentivize urban planning efforts to include communities that have historically been marginalized and communities that are most affected by planning decisions.
 - » Incentivize efforts so that proposed changes meet the needs of communities and are inclusive of communities that have historically been marginalized.
 - » Incorporate systematic, collaborative, active listening to the priorities of these communities; assess past decisions and their impact on disparities as starting points for further planning and design activities. Use, as a possible model, HUD's Community Planning and Development Consolidated Plan citizen participation requirements for design and implementation of federal citizen participation guidelines.
- » **Integrate modules into trainings related to federal funding opportunities** regarding the Vital Conditions Framework and how to leverage the framework in community-led planning, funding or program design, evaluation plans, and funding renewal to support the development of aligned community proposals.

(Continued)



- » **Partner to collaborate and identify aligned opportunities** with ongoing federal efforts to develop tools for a range of audiences to articulate best practices in community engagement and to co-develop programs and initiatives with (instead of *for*) communities, such as the ATSDR Principles of Community Engagement and NIH* [Community Engagement Alliance](#) (CEAL) Against COVID-19 Disparities.
- » **Develop and implement training for grant reviewers** on how to critically analyze a funding application to determine whether meaningful engagement is adequately described and planned to address.
- » **Assess existing technical assistance and training** offered by federal agencies for capacity building related to inclusion and decision-making, planning related to workforce development and physical infrastructure, enhancing skills to leverage data during the planning process to identify communities or populations that are experiencing greatest need, and identifying and expanding access to best practices (e.g., NIH National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences [Worker Training Program](#), NIH [RADx-Underserved Populations Coordination and Data Collection Center](#), [The Lab at the Office of Personnel Management](#)).
- » **Create technical assistance and other tools** to educate communities and individuals on options and flexibilities available based on existing funding and policies (e.g., air conditioning units as allowable special supplemental benefits for the chronically ill under Medicare Advantage); provide these resources through the coordinated Technical Assistance Center (see Recommendation H.).
- » **Develop and implement training for agency staff** to support internalizing the framework and equip them to evaluate performance reporting against engagement goals.
- » **Align existing efforts related to community-led planning and design**, such as CDC’s community-level social determinants of health accelerator programs, to the Vital Conditions Framework.
- » **Provide resources (e.g., funding, technical assistance) to regional organizations** that support the development of state and local plans to help amplify incorporation of community-led planning approaches and education about the Vital Conditions Framework across the communities they serve.

Potential Contributors

All federal departments and agencies can engage in implementation of the cross-cutting recommendations. The federal departments and agencies especially well-positioned to provide leadership and/or critical support to implement this recommendation include:

- EPA
- DOC/NIST
- DOI/USGS*
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ASPE
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/CMS
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/OASH
- HUD
- USDA
- USDOT

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.



Recommendation D

Allow Federal Funds to Facilitate Multi-Sector Collaboration—Expand the allowed use and flexibility of federal funds to support locally determined activities and infrastructure to manage multi-sector collaboration and planning processes, prioritizing co-leadership by communities that have been marginalized.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Multi-sector coalitions bring together many facets of a community to enable joint, informed decision-making around key issues that affect the whole community. Federal funds can be leveraged to support multi-sector work, community-owned activities, and meaningful engagement and decision-making influence by populations that have historically been marginalized. Necessary infrastructure to facilitate meaningful engagement includes meeting preparation resources, communication tools, planning facilitation, data collection support, stipends, on-site child care, and transportation to meetings. Often, groups that have historically been marginalized are in greatest need of these supports to be able to participate; it is important that these groups also perceive that these resources honor their expertise and leadership. Federal agencies can support communities to consistently achieve diverse, representative, and highly engaged dialogue that strengthens community planning efforts by expanding inclusion of this infrastructure as reimbursable expenses. Recognizing and supporting the inclusion of community-based, cross-sector expertise and insight in planning also provides the opportunity for federal agencies to learn with and from communities and to create feedback loops to inform how community expertise and experience can be integrated more strategically and transparently into federal action.



This is a
**Cross-Cutting
Recommendation.**

Starting Points

- » **Identify existing models for agency support for multi-sector collaboration** that include allowances for infrastructure costs necessary for equitable engagement of community members and related cross-agency opportunities to provide funding with these allowances, either through flexibilities or collaborative braiding of funds.
 - » Draft standard boilerplate language to require multi-sector community engagement in needs assessments, and incorporate into funding opportunities as appropriate by topic. This resource may leverage the existing authorizing statutes or regulations that articulate citizen engagement requirements to expand in consistent ways that support dynamic collaboration and reduce duplication of engagement across separate federal funding sources.
- » **Identify and incorporate opportunities for feedback loops** that support insight from communities to be transparently employed by federal agencies for continuous quality improvement.

(Continued)



Potential Contributors

All federal departments and agencies can engage in implementation of the cross-cutting recommendations. The federal departments and agencies especially well-positioned to provide leadership and/or critical support to implement this recommendation include:

- EPA
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ASPE
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/OASH
- HHS/NIH*
- HUD
- USDA

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.



Recommendation E

Establish Infrastructure to Enable Meaningful Interagency Collaboration—Create and formalize, through adequate resources and authority, federal infrastructures including interagency action labs, training and capacity at all staff levels, consistent collaboration tools, and leadership review that prioritizes continual strategic collective and coordinated action across federal agencies on programs, policies, and initiatives impacting the vital conditions.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Collaboration across organizations requires investment of time and effort up front; however, once achieved, working together has great impact and potential to improve community vital conditions through collective decision-making and action. Resources that increase ease of working together across agencies can enhance interactions and help build the relationships and connections needed for collaboration. Currently, lack of time and capacity to meaningfully engage community further hampers or may harm the already challenging, but worthwhile, process of collaboration. Technological challenges can further complicate cross-agency collaboration, as agencies have access to different tools and platforms, which can disincentivize continual collaboration and lead to time-consuming troubleshooting and difficulty identifying options that will work for all collaborators.



**This is a
Cross-Cutting
Recommendation.**

Starting Points

- » **Leverage the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup as a model for successful cross-agency collaboration;** assess and identify best practices from other multi-year, cross-administration interagency workgroups as well.
 - » Example: The [Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility](#) (CCAM) serves as an example of meaningful interagency collaboration (specifically, a CCAM meeting was convened [2019]; this group developed the CCAM Program Inventory, Cost-Sharing Policy Statement, and CCAM Report to the President [September 2020]).
 - » Example: Established in 2011 under the National Disaster Recovery Framework, FEMA's Recovery Support Function Leadership Group addresses recovery operation and policy challenges (e.g., [Resource Roadmaps](#)).
 - » Example: The [Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs](#) (IWGYP), chaired by HHS/ASPE, is composed of representatives from 21 federal departments and agencies that support programs and services focusing on youth, and research on place-based and other federal-local initiatives
- » **Establish time and leadership processes and supportive environments** that encourage or incentivize staff to collaborate across agencies to solve problems, remove barriers to well-being, and design programs and strategies together; this requires leadership support and an expectation for meaningful collaboration beyond information sharing.
 - » Provide trainings for all federal staff related to meaningful engagement, civics and civil service, and the *Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework* to provide common, foundational language and awareness that can accelerate collaboration across agencies at all staff levels.

(Continued)



Cross-Cutting Recommendations

- » Incorporate cross-agency collaboration and engagement into performance goal-setting at all staff levels to encourage and support staff to allocate time and effort to collaboration.
 - » Increase opportunities in the design of programs and staff roles for federal staff to detail in other agencies—through interagency agreements or other mechanisms—and return to their home agency for cross-sharing of ideas and increasing interagency awareness of programs and services.
 - » Promote federal career pathways that include experience at multiple federal agencies.
- » **Increase consistent access to collaboration tools and digital platforms** across agencies to reduce barriers to engagement and increase efficient use of collaborative working platforms.
- » Assess existing collaborative tools developed for the federal government for other collaborative purposes to expand the use case and access to these tools for additional initiatives.

Potential Contributors

All federal departments and agencies can engage in implementation of the cross-cutting recommendations. The federal departments and agencies especially well-positioned to provide leadership and/or critical support to implement this recommendation include:

- ED
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/OASH
- HHS/NIH*
- HUD
- USDA
- USDOT

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.



Recommendation F

Facilitate Regional Knowledge Exchange and Collaborative Action—Build regional office partnerships to facilitate the integration of the *Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework* across federal partners and offices, incentivize continued action and leadership to advance opportunities through the Framework, identify pilot opportunities, and expand local partnership networks.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Regional federal staff link local, state, and federal levels and serve as entry points to the federal government for communities and community-based organizations, including spirituality and faith-based organizations. Regional federal leaders are trusted and constant relationship managers with regional, state, and local leaders and can coordinate across agencies to increase and align partnership networks and share knowledge about resources available across programs. Cross-identification of best practices and joint action oriented by the *Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework* can help regional offices increase their service to communities and their impact in strengthening resilience and well-being. Direction by agency leadership to use the Vital Conditions Framework provides a strong foundation upon which to identify existing model projects and communities that would benefit from federal regional office support to advance these goals. Regional federal offices must internalize and understand how to engage and operate within the Vital Conditions Framework as a complement of federal agency partners before engaging with respective regional partner networks.



**This is a
Cross-Cutting
Recommendation.**

Starting Points

- » **Train regional staff across agencies about the *Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework***, its action-oriented approach to strengthening resilience and opportunities for thriving, and how to take collective action based on the Vital Conditions Framework; as a final module, include a joint task for regional staff to work together on to apply their learning and begin to build or expand collaborative relationships.
- » **Advance engagement of federal regional administrators** focused on specific states and territories to each other and to state-funded partners at the state and local levels to:
 - » Raise awareness of relevant federal opportunities for communities from other agencies (using the Vital Conditions Asset Map as one resource to facilitate knowledge exchange).
 - » Serve as full-service entry points to the federal government by providing information about the complement of resources available across agencies based on a specific community-defined need.
 - » Provide information to and enhance partnerships across multiple agencies for community organizations.

(Continued)



- » **Leverage regional staff's awareness of community-based desires or proclivities to exchange knowledge** with regional offices and Central Offices across agencies in a collaborative manner, to enable adaptation of programs and resources to increase equity, access to, and uptake by populations that have historically been marginalized.
- » **Provide opportunities for regional offices across agencies to collaboratively provide feedback** on programs or resources under development, to assess what will work for communities or populations that are experiencing greatest need and to identify what has not worked previously for these groups.
- » **Provide opportunities for regional offices across agencies to collaboratively tailor and adapt programs** to a shared region or community; allow the collaborative regional team to develop a localized plan for how to work with a shared community to implement services or resources.

Potential Contributors

All federal departments and agencies can engage in implementation of the cross-cutting recommendations. The federal departments and agencies especially well-positioned to provide leadership and/or critical support to implement this recommendation include:

- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/IEA*
- HHS/OASH
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/SAMHSA
- HUD
- USDA

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members



Recommendation G

Incentivize Co-Location and Coordinated Access Points for Complementary Federally Funded and Administered Services in Naturally Occurring and Community-Driven Settings—Conduct a cross-agency assessment to identify barriers and advance coordinated opportunities to facilitate greater integration/collaboration among place-based access points for federally funded service and program locations to improve local administration.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Federal agencies can optimize existing access points to improve coordination and optimize service to communities and individuals to better meet their needs. By broadening the range of services grouped or available at one point of service through cross-connections, agencies can increase access, especially for individuals and populations with limited access to disparate place-based access points due to distance, mobility, time, or financial constraints. This change shifts the focus of service provision away from federal agency structure and, appropriately and effectively, toward a human-centered or community-centered orientation. Convenient access to a one-stop, single point of service can help communities and individuals more easily identify and understand resources available to them and apply for these resources. Concurrently, communities must have authority and flexibility to structure services in a manner that is perceived as valuable and co-designed by eligible recipients to ensure uptake and use. By helping connect communities and individuals to resources that are modernized and engage eligible individuals and families in dignified ways, federal agencies can increase effective application of services and programs to increase resilience and well-being, especially for under-resourced communities and populations.



**This is a
Cross-Cutting
Recommendation.**

Starting Points

- » **Incentivize state and local resource recipients to leverage existing locations** that people frequent to provide multiple services in one convenient location (e.g., transportation hubs, Federally Qualified Health Centers [FQHCs], [USDA service centers](#), members and partners in arts and commerce [i.e., through IMLS, NEA, NEH, SBA, FRB#], child care providers).
 - » Leverage federal-to-state relationships to conduct a state-level assessment of state agencies that have primary touchpoints to the local agencies that work to deliver services.
 - » Enumerate services that would be offered at each of the sites and how provision would be coordinated.
 - » *Example: Incentivize local partnerships and collaborations with community-based service delivery organizations to co-locate services and resources at transportation centers for groups that have been economically and socially marginalized.*
 - » *Example: Encourage cross-agency alignment of infrastructure planning and design that leverages transportation centers as integrated hubs for core federally funded services (e.g., food, behavioral health, healthcare, workforce enrollment).*

(Continued)



Cross-Cutting Recommendations

- » **Incentivize use of federal funds to support place-based opportunities for coordinated services** (e.g., wraparound and case management approaches across programs for individuals in transitional/recovery housing or receiving housing assistance) identified by communities, with specific focus on populations that have been historically marginalized or disadvantaged in accessing services due to distance or time constraints.
- » **Build interagency collaborations around sharing data across programs** to reduce burden on individuals receiving services from multiple federal programs (e.g., gathering Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP] and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children [WIC] data in one shared system).
- » **Leverage existing research and training centers within agencies** to assess effective place-based programs for federally funded service and program locations to identify best practices and opportunities to improve local administration in a manner that aligns with and supports community assets and cultural considerations.

Potential Contributors

All federal departments and agencies can engage in implementation of the cross-cutting recommendations. The federal departments and agencies especially well-positioned to provide leadership and/or critical support to implement this recommendation include:

- FRB[#]
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/OASH
- HHS/NIH^{*}
- HUD
- IMLS
- NEA
- NEH
- SBA
- USDA
- USDOT

[#]ELTRR Interagency Workgroup members represent the Atlanta and Richmond Federal Reserve Banks (i.e., not the Federal Reserve System or Board of Governors); the Federal Reserve Banks are not government agencies and were founded by Congress to serve as the nation's central bank

^{*}Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.



Recommendation H

Redesign Interagency Technical Assistance to Increase Equitable Access to Federal Resources

—Establish a federal interagency Technical Assistance Center to facilitate greater federal resource braiding in the service of improving vital conditions, prioritizing communities with lower resources that have historically been underserved.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Current processes for communities and individuals to locate and apply for federal resources (e.g., via grants.gov and sam.gov) are complex and difficult to navigate. This fact is reflected in user feedback from organizations representing under-resourced communities and those very familiar with government structure and procedures alike. Organizations often encounter issues as they try to register and complete applications under deadline, compounding the issue and potential for missed opportunities due to technical difficulty. Navigating to an agency-specific website from these sites poses another round of challenges. As a result, organizations consistently request federal staff assistance as they walk through the registration and application processes. However, most agencies do not have the staffing to help organizations in this way, and many state, local, and community organizations lack the staffing or the expertise to work through the complexities of seeking out clarifying information to submit a complete or competitive application. Redesigning coordinated federal technical assistance can increase the ability to make connections, especially with those historically underserved, through 1) a coordinated Technical Assistance Center²¹ and 2) streamlined tools for community support.

Providing this support is important to advance efforts that encourage organizations representing under-resourced communities to apply for funding opportunities. A central place for all federal technical assistance opportunities will make it easier for entities with high need to identify and apply for opportunities that align with their needs. Technical assistance may also help support implementation of projects, especially for communities that have historically been underserved by federal resources. Centralizing support to help individuals and community-based organizations match self-identified needs with all relevant funding and program opportunities will help connect resources to people and places where they can have the greatest impact.



This is a Cross-Cutting Recommendation.

Links to Cross-Cutting B., C.

Starting Points

- » **Provide central online and phone-based services as single access points** that do not require visiting a physical location (e.g., “Meta-benefits” technology platform, central client serving platform, open learning platform), organized by the *Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework*.
- » **Provide training and technical assistance** on a variety of topics to help community organizations identify and apply for federal resources, leveraging existing examples from USDA as models and including:
 - » Provide training to help community organizations to understand the overall application process and timing, match requirements, and how to complete and assemble federal applications and progress reports.
 - » Provide training on fund draw-down and management.
 - » Offer project coaching support, uplift best practices, and facilitate peer networking and exchange.

(Continued)



Cross-Cutting Recommendations

- » Assess additional opportunities to **enhance individuals’ and communities’ ability to identify and apply for federal resources**, considering the following:
 - » Identify opportunities to simplify the funding process, leveraging HHS/ASFR’s* designation by OMB as the home agency for Grants QSMO.
 - » Provide training and technical assistance for the federal workforce to assist communities that have historically not been well supported in identifying and applying for federal resources.
 - » Allow the use of federal funds to help community-based organizations learn how to write proposals, hire grant writers, and execute billing reimbursement while maintaining a healthy funding environment.
 - » *E.g., the [National Network to Eliminate Disparities](#) in Behavioral Health (SAMHSA)*
- » **Coordinate existing and newly developed tools to aid communities in assessing their needs**, current federal support, and potential related opportunities, organized by vital condition (drawing on existing databases, e.g., the Social Vulnerability Index [CDC]; Resilient American Communities data set [OASH]; OMB data; NIH National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences [COVID-19 Pandemic Vulnerability Index](#)).
- » **Connect and build on existing tools to provide internal centralized cross-agency information** that maps funding and programs available at the state, local, tribal, and territorial levels by the vital conditions to help the Technical Assistance Center and other federal staff to support communities in matching their needs to all related federal support opportunities. Potential tools could include:
 - » Agency assets mapping tool to allow communities to identify opportunities by vital condition and desired change (across agencies).
 - » Past and current funding and support received.
 - » Identification of existing tools at the federal and regional level, and drawing on best practices to reduce differences while also allowing for adaptation for state and local use.
 - » Providing this central mapping to regional federal offices and staff, agencies for internal use, and existing technical assistance call centers.

Potential Contributors

All federal departments and agencies can engage in implementation of the cross-cutting recommendations. The federal departments and agencies especially well-positioned to provide leadership and/or critical support to implement this recommendation include:

- HHS/ASFR*
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/SAMHSA
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/OASH
- USDA
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/NIH*

²¹This recommendation aligns with the 2020 CCAM Report to the President challenge and solution. The CCAM Report to the President, required by Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act Section 3006(c), identifies challenges and barriers to improving access to transportation for people with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with low income. See page 46 of the report for Challenge 2: Improving Technical Assistance Delivery: A multiagency CCAM Technical Assistance Center (<https://www.transit.dot.gov/access/ccam/ccam-report-president>).

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.



Recommendation I

Strengthen Measurement Practices to Increase Collection of Data Measuring Equity and Well-Being—Advance new and existing efforts to assess collection of demographic data across federal agencies to accurately understand disparities and measure progress toward equity.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the implications of how federal agencies collect demographic data. The absence of data collection, or of specific demographic data elements, led to delays in understanding the health and social disparities resulting from COVID-19 infection and disruption. This situation demonstrated agencies' need to collect complete demographic data for the services they provide in a manner that allows meaningful assessment and analysis related to disparities and equity. This enhancement is frequently requested by regions and agencies supporting tribal nations.

Several recent executive orders related to health equity and data collection have spurred action and engagement to address these needs. The Plan highlights connections with existing and new efforts to enhance data collection and data sharing to: 1) provide high-quality, consistent demographic data that can be disaggregated meaningfully; 2) increase transparency across agencies of what data is being collected, aggregated, and analyzed; and 3) enable partners at the state, local, tribal, territorial, regional, and federal levels to understand how equity is defined, as well as baseline values, targets, and progress toward achieving equity and well-being.



**This is a
Cross-Cutting
Recommendation.**

Starting Points

- » **Identify cross-agency strategies for long-term funding** of transparent data collection and analysis.
- » **Align common data with shared measurement frameworks for well-being and thriving** as a shared and institutionalized practice across agencies collecting demographic data.
- » **Align data collection across agencies**, by means such as creating consistent terminology and definitions or linking definitions, identifying a small core set of measures collected across agency services in order to assess directional progress in addressing social determinants of health alongside personal demographic characteristics.
- » **Integrate efforts initiated under executive orders related to data modernization and equity** into the normal course of operation for agencies, considering the following:
 - » Improve data collection to be able to measure impact across different populations (i.e., with disaggregated data) and to increase ability for data sharing, applying data governance best practices to protect data privacy and integrity.
 - » Collect data elements such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity, disability, and income level (e.g., for public transportation ridership or household disaster losses).

(Continued)

Cross-Cutting Recommendations



- » Refine data collection and measurement (e.g., better inclusion of American Indians and Alaska Natives [AI/AN] data and data collection systems and data definitions informed by AI/AN community members [e.g., blood quantum levels, land base, impact of COVID-19]).
- » Facilitate analysis that considers how aspects of identity combine to create modes of discrimination and privilege.
- » Include data collection through listening sessions, crowdsourcing, and citizen science and lived experience as qualitative data, especially in absence of quantitative disaggregated data.
- » Advance shared measurement frameworks to demonstrate how federal programs have increased program utilization at the constituent and state levels in areas with generational poverty and systemic racism.

Potential Contributors

All federal departments and agencies can engage in implementation of the cross-cutting recommendations. The federal departments and agencies especially well-positioned to provide leadership and/or critical support to implement this recommendation include:

- DOI/USGS*
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/AHRQ*
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/IHS
- HHS/OASH
- HHS/NIH*
- HUD
- USDA
- USDOT

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members



Recommendation J

Integrate Arts and Cultural Programs into Core Resilience Resources Across Agencies—

Incentivize the integration of arts and cultural resources across agency programs for all vital conditions.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

The arts and cultural endeavors transcend the vital conditions as an important component of humanity and essential tool to impact well-being in all aspects of life. Arts and humanities programs interconnect with programs and services in all vital conditions, with great potential and opportunity for expansion.^{22,23} The arts offer core tools to deepen trauma recovery, enhance community planning, and strengthen community renewal efforts in ways that preserve cultural assets, increase perceptions of belonging and connection, and inspire creativity and innovation. Each of these components can contribute to increased resilience for communities and individuals.

Despite these benefits and their essential role in society, arts and cultural assets are too often viewed as a side effort or resource to amplify ideas instead of a central driver included from the outset as a meaningful partner and supported financially. In addition to insufficient baseline support and co-leadership, the arts industry continues to be immensely affected by disconnection and distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The arts can be better integrated into efforts across agencies to help address collective trauma from the COVID-19 pandemic and other events over the coming decades.^{22,23} Agencies need to devote federal resources to help make this happen and harness the positive effects of the arts to strengthen all sectors. Additional research is needed to identify generalizable impacts by outcome domain and to understand the optimal conditions for arts and cultural programming that can integrate these traditions and practices with community planning and development initiatives. Federal agencies can work together across domains to support communities through arts, cultural, and faith-based programs with demonstrated effectiveness in achieving positive outcomes for community well-being.



**This is a
Cross-Cutting
Recommendation.**

Starting Points

- » **Require the inclusion of artists and cultural assets** within efforts to improve natural park sites, campaigns/messages about the environment, and efforts to enhance green spaces for public use.
 - » Engage artists and designers to support the preservation of natural park sites.
 - » Make environmental initiatives culturally responsive and salient.
 - » Enhance the design of park space for all to feel welcome.
 - » Lead inclusive community planning processes for new public spaces to ensure broad engagement and adoption.
 - » Leverage arts and cultural strategies to make preservation efforts culturally responsive.
- » **Develop art and cultural policies that nurture accessibility and inclusive access**, including the design of built environments and services that support programmatic inclusion (e.g., sign language and audio description), leveraging cross-agency collaboration to identify opportunities to integrate such policies in all sectors.

(Continued)



Cross-Cutting Recommendations

- » **Apply existing strengths and resources (e.g., funding and technical assistance) across agencies to foster community engagement and co-leadership** of artists, culture-bearers, and cultural organizations in planning, design, and implementation, especially in communities that have limited access to the arts, culture, and civic engagement due to economics, geography, race, ethnicity, and disability (such as ATSDR’s [Principles of Community Engagement](#)).
- » Leverage research from the NEA [Office of Research and Analysis](#) and [Research Labs](#) to provide **expertise and technical assistance to federal agencies and their partner networks**, leveraging arts-driven research to advance service delivery systems and approaches across the vital conditions through arts and creative engagement.
- » **Engage NEA to provide training and technical assistance to other agencies to incorporate arts** into existing programs across sectors for the benefit of public resources, and to evaluate the impact of artists, culture-bearers, and cultural organizations on community well-being.

Potential Contributors

All federal departments and agencies can engage in implementation of the cross-cutting recommendations. The federal departments and agencies especially well-positioned to provide leadership and/or critical support to implement this recommendation include:

- EPA
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/NIH*
- HUD
- IMLS
- NEA
- NEH
- USDA
- USDOT

²² President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. (2011, May). *Reinvesting in arts education: Winning America’s future through creative schools*. Washington, DC: President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

²³ Crossick, G., and Kaszynska, P. (2016, March). *Understanding the value of arts & culture: The AHRC Cultural Value Project*. Swindon, UK: Arts and Humanities Research Council.

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members

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

Sub-Categories

- Civic Agency
- Civic Association
- Collective Efficacy
- Equitable Access to Information²⁴
- Opportunities for Civic Engagement
- Vibrant Arts, Culture, & Spiritual Life
- *Freedom from Stigma, Discrimination, & Oppression**
- *Social Support**
- *Support for Civil Rights & Human Rights**

Introduction

Healthy, fulfilling relationships and strong social supports are the foundation from which individuals and families thrive. They build the social ties, trust, and cooperation of communities and foster the connections that enable people to come together and shape a common vision for the world. Communities have established and self-determined assets, means of connection, and values that government must help strengthen and reinforce in co-leadership with community members. Successful solutions and systems change must include parent leadership and voice, as key consumers of public resources that support families in access to services enabling greater resilience. By building on existing efforts within and beyond government that prioritize community, family, and parent leadership and self-defined belonging and assets, federal agencies can acknowledge and address the impact of structural racism and longstanding systemic social and health inequities, remove barriers in programs and policies, and provide equal access to opportunities and benefits.

Figure 7. Existing Agency Assets Mapped to Belonging & Civic Muscle Sub-Categories

- ACF
- ACL
- ASPR
- CDC
- HRSA
- OMH
- SAMHSA
- ED
- FEMA
- HUD
- IMLS
- NEA
- NIST
- USDA



²⁴ For **Equitable Access to Information**, see also **Thriving Natural World** Recommendation G. and **Humane Housing** Recommendation I., which link to this sub-category.

*Currently no federal recommendations.

Statistics



Nearly 1/4 of Americans aged 65 and older who live in the community are socially isolated.²⁵



4.6 million youth are considered “disconnected” because they are not in school or working. Higher rates of disconnection occur in youth who are AI/AN (26%), Black or African American (17%), or Latino (14%).²⁷



35% of U.S. adults aged 45 and older and 43% of U.S. adults aged 60 and older report feeling lonely.²⁶



Just **53.4%** of people eligible to participate in elections, who are registered, reported voting in the 2018 November election.²⁸

²⁵ Division of Population Health, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (2021, April 29). *Loneliness and social isolation linked to serious health conditions*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/lonely-older-adults.html>

²⁶ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2020). *Social isolation and loneliness in older adults: Opportunities for the healthcare system*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK557974/pdf/Bookshelf_NBK557974.pdf

²⁷ Mendelson, T., Mmari, K., Blum, R. W., Catalano, R. F., & Brindis, C. D. (2018). Opportunity youth: Insights and opportunities for a public health approach to reengage disconnected teenagers and young adults. *Public Health Reports*, 133(Suppl 1), 54S–64S. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033354918799344>

²⁸ Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. (2021, October 14). *Social determinants of health*. Washington, DC: Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/Social-Determinants-of-Health/objectives>

Recommendation A

Enhance cross-agency collaboration to increase inclusion of civics topics in Pre-K and K-12 education, higher education, community education, museums, libraries, and arts programs.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Increasing inclusion of age- and developmental stage-appropriate civics learning opportunities across a range of educational settings facilitates greater awareness, knowledge, and understanding of current events and issues that in turn impact well-being. Civics content must be diverse and inclusive, ensuring equitable support for populations to shape resources that value their identities, experiences, and narratives to increase awareness and appreciation by other groups. Leveraging human-centered approaches to design and implement civic learning will support greater internalization, self-awareness, and self-reflection, which contribute to resilience. Integrating civics education in new spaces and formats may broaden the audience and topics within valued community spaces and in community-led decision-making conversations and processes.



This links to

» **Lifelong Learning**

Starting Points

- » **Expand connections** of the [Arts Education Partnership](#) (housed at the [Education Commission of the States](#) and federally funded for the last 26 years by the NEA and ED) beyond K-12 education to consider inclusive public spaces for community-based and multi-generational civics education.
- » **Deepen pre-service education** for educators to strengthen civics education topics and support ongoing civics professional development, building on and expanding from existing collaboration and partnerships among NEH, IMLS, NEA, and ED.
- » **Assess** federal departments and agencies' community and partner networks to identify opportunities for expanded collaboration and learning spaces outside of the classroom to house and foster interactive civics dialogue and exhibits aligned with local community needs.
- » **Identify federal department and agency resources** that may be tailored for community civics engagement and made available on public websites for community access and use.
- » **Partner with regional federal office leadership** to develop customized, action-oriented strategies that leverage local assets and community networks to create and sustain spaces for equitable and inclusive civic dialogue and action.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- HHS/ACF
- IMLS
- NEH
- ED
- NEA

Recommendation B

Expand federal agency partnerships with federal civic engagement programs, including Citizens Corps and AmeriCorps, to support locally driven community development and resilience programs.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Connecting federal community service and volunteer programs with local initiatives aligns federal resources to community-specific needs for development and building resilience. Existing federal programs focused on civic engagement to recover and build or improve systems within communities can help integrate federal resources on the ground in meaningful ways—aligned to community priorities—and strengthen local networks and resources. The mission set of embedded civics increases focus on community resilience and enable federal resources to be employed to achieve resilience.



This doesn't link to other Vital Conditions.

Starting Points

- » **Assess federal department and agency alignment** of partnerships with civic engagement forces to extend the reach and improve the service delivery of federal services to groups that have been marginalized.
- » **Revise grant, contract, and cooperative agreement structures** to provide flexibility to allow the use of funds for civic engagement programs aligned with locally determined community needs, which prioritizes voices from communities that have been socially and economically marginalized to help define the priorities.
- » **Expand focus and initiatives** of federal civic engagement programs to prioritize support for community recovery and resilience efforts and provide tools to share and employ information to advance community well-being. Consider priority partnerships with community-integrated federal civic engagement programs that advance current and expanded vital conditions of health community needs, such as:
 - » [Public Health AmeriCorps](#), a joint effort between CDC and AmeriCorps to help meet the public health needs of local communities by providing surge capacity for state and local public health agencies.
 - » HHS [COVID-19 Community Corps](#), which engages community members with fact sheets, social media content, news, and resources to build vaccine confidence in communities.
 - » [Citizen Science Projects](#), which engage community members in data collection and analysis to inform decision-making, build social networks and skills, and support scientific advancements.
 - » [Communities for Immunity](#), an IMLS/CDC initiative supporting the work of museums and libraries in engaging their communities in COVID-19 vaccine confidence.

(Continued)

Subcategory: Civic Association

- » NIH [CEAL](#) Against COVID-19 Disparities was launched to reach Americans hit hardest by the pandemic and connects community-engaged researchers to community-based organizations, local leaders, and trusted messengers to help underserved and vulnerable communities get accurate, up-to-date information about COVID-19; to facilitate adoption of COVID-19 mitigation strategies (testing, mask-wearing, physical distancing, and vaccination); and to promote opportunities to participate in and benefit from COVID-19 research.
- » NIH National Cancer Institute [Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities](#), which includes a health education program that leverages community health educators for community outreach and engagement.
- » **Identify established community-based organizations and networks** positioned to act as champions to engage and support other community organizations and networks in advancing community recovery and resilience (e.g., the New Orleans [Resilience Corps](#)).
- » **Enhance access to tools and resources** supporting knowledge development and implementation efforts associated with the vital conditions for federal civic engagement initiatives and communities, particularly groups that have been economically and socially marginalized and under-resourced communities (e.g., a CDC resource developed in partnership with NEA on [engaging the arts to build COVID-19 vaccine confidence](#)). These tools and resources may be housed and exercised through the proposed Center of Excellence in Cultivating Community Well-Being (*see Recommendation C.*).
- » **Increase cross-agency information sharing and community access** through a curated centralized website supporting awareness-raising and applied knowledge tools focused on federal funding opportunities, resources, valuable applied toolkits, and exemplars from a range of communities that focus on well-being and civic engagement initiatives. Leverage existing websites that provide information from multiple federal agencies, offices, and departments in one place and provide roadmaps for resource utilization as models, such as [stopbullying.gov](#), [schoolsafety.gov](#), [benefits.gov](#), [veteranscrisisline.net](#), [youth.gov](#), and the [NEA Federal Funding Resources for Research on the Arts & Human Development](#) website.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ACL
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/NIH*
- HUD
- IMLS
- NEA
- NEH
- USDA

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation an additional member.

Recommendation C

Establish a Center of Excellence in Cultivating Community Well-Being to provide technical assistance and training focused on increasing connections between federal agencies and communities working to improve the vital conditions for health and well-being, prioritizing supports for groups that have been economically and socially marginalized and under-resourced communities.²⁹

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Bringing together and increasing coordination of federal departments, agencies, and resources with a shared commitment to improve well-being will enable communities, particularly those with fewer resources, to have equitable access to federal resources that strengthen the vital conditions. The introduction of a dedicated Center that brings resources together across federal agencies will increase awareness and informed action and maximize the benefits that complementary tools may provide to well-being when aligned with the unique needs of communities. Employing an asset- and community-based leadership model will foster resilience by increasing awareness of and engagement in community participation, design, and planning that work toward all people and places thriving.



This Links to

- » **Thriving Natural World**
- » **Basic Needs for Health & Safety**
- » **Humane Housing**
- » **Meaningful Work & Wealth**
- » **Lifelong Learning**
- » **Reliable Transportation**

Starting Points

- » **Engage federal agencies and communities** in a foundational series of bidirectional dialogue and learning exchanges on the vital conditions, to understand the steps communities are already taking and how they are using resources to build bold solutions, and to identify opportunities to collectively advance well-being.
- » **Assess the most effective model and placement** of a Center for Excellence, prioritizing community accessibility, cross-agency sustained investment, and expediency to timely implementation. Approaches should consider the role of equitable technology access and existing models, including:
 - » HHS [Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships](#), which leads the department's efforts to build and support partnerships with faith-based and community organizations to better serve individuals, families, and communities in need.
 - » HHS/ASPR [Technical Resources, Assistance Center, and Information Exchange](#), which has a demonstrated track record as a space for information and technical assistance exchange on healthcare and public health to meet the needs of regional ASPR staff, healthcare coalitions, healthcare entities, healthcare providers, emergency managers, public health practitioners, and others working in disaster medicine, healthcare system preparedness, and public health emergency preparedness.
 - » [HHS/ASPE Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs \(IWGYP\)](#), which is composed of representatives from 21 federal departments and agencies that support programs and services focusing on youth, and research on place-based and other federal-local initiatives.

(Continued)

Subcategory: Collective Efficacy

- » NIH National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences programs and research, which promote healthier lives through community engagement and research capacity building (e.g., [Community Engagement Cores](#), the [Specialized Centers of Excellence on Environmental Health Disparities Research](#), [Grantee Community Engagement and Research Translation Cores](#), [Partnerships for Environmental Public Health](#)) and NIH [National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences Clinical and Translational Science Awards Program](#), which supports a national network of medical research institutions that work together on turning observations in the laboratory, clinic, and community into interventions that improve the health of communities and individuals.
- » Existing websites like [stopbullying.gov](#), [schoolsafety.gov](#), [benefits.gov](#), [veteranscrisisline.net](#), [youth.gov](#), and the [NEA Federal Funding Resources for Research on the Arts & Human Development](#) website that provide information from multiple federal agencies, offices, and departments in one place and provide roadmaps for resource utilization.
- » **Identify best practice models** valued by communities by partnering with community-based organizations, and provide technical assistance and support to help scale them or implement these models in other communities.
- » **Leverage** museum and library exhibits (e.g., the Federal Reserve rotating exhibit on redlining, Smithsonian and CDC Museum exhibits) to support dialogue and learning opportunities about the vital conditions and ways to create thriving communities.
- » **Leverage the meaningful community engagement framework and measures** under development by the National Academies of Medicine (anticipated Dec 2021) in funding opportunities to assess the quality of representation of groups that have been marginalized in the planning and implementation of federal programs.
- » **Develop a web environment** inclusive of the full complement of ELTRR work and the Center of Excellence to dynamically share tools and resources, data sources, peer support, technical assistance, and training for communities working to improve well-being.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- All ELTRR Interagency Workgroup member departments and agencies

²⁹This recommendation also aligns to the **Equitable Access to Information** sub-category.

Recommendation D

Expand cross-agency collaboration in the development of social cohesion, personal growth, and career exploration among youth by supporting strategic partnerships with community, career development, and educational institutions using positive youth development approaches that align with community workforce needs and engagement goals.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Skills developed through participation in community service and the arts (e.g., creativity, collaboration, problem-solving, perseverance) improve academic achievement in youth and are increasingly valued in the workplace. Innovative and dynamic models that support knowledge growth and engagement are critical to aligning youth interests with whole-person development. Skill and knowledge investment programs also build social cohesion, support, and belonging while increasing the short- and long-term well-being of the youth and families engaged.



This Links to

- » **Meaningful Work & Wealth**
- » **Lifelong Learning**

Starting Points

- » **Conduct a cross-department and agency assessment** to inventory and map youth engagement resources to increase alignment, awareness, and use of the breadth of federal support. Identify models that provide a whole-person approach, foster youth leadership, and tailor and align existing resources in culturally responsive ways. Models for insight include the [USDA 4-H Youth Development Program](#), which serves as a best-practice program for positive youth development by creating positive applied learning experiences; HRSA's Area Health Education Centers Programs, which enhances education and training networks within communities, academic institutions, and community-based organizations, such as by providing community-based training and education to K-12 students who are exploring a career in health professions; the [Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs \(IWGYP\)](#), chaired by HHS/ASPE, which is composed of representatives from 21 federal departments and agencies that support programs and services focusing on youth, and research on place-based and other federal-local initiatives; positive relationships for and between youth and adults; positive, safe environments; and opportunities for positive risk-taking.
- » **Engage an expert group, including youth co-leadership, to consider pathways** to leverage and facilitate greater connection between federal resources and innovative, non-traditional models and initiatives, focusing on key areas such as community youth advisory boards, youth apprenticeships, student-run clubs (e.g., Genders & Sexualities Alliance), and career and technical education (CTE). Consult with existing models of youth editorial boards and youth engagement efforts currently happening in the federal government (e.g., HHS/ASPE's Youth Engaged for Change Editorial Board).
- » **Build key expert partnerships, including youth co-leadership, to explore gaps and value-add opportunities** from a federal cross-agency perspective, including the [Creative Youth Development National Partnership](#).

(Continued)



» **Leverage existing federal and cross-sector partnerships at the regional and community levels** with inclusive youth leadership groups to engage in listening sessions and co-design opportunities to identify value add resources that prioritize engagement of youth from under-resourced communities.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- ED
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/NIH*
- HUD
- NEA
- NEH

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.

Recommendation E

Expand the use of cross-agency federal funds to build and sustain effective local networks that include organizations vital to community development (e.g., non-profit organizations, associations, volunteer organizations, foundations) in proactive planning and collaboration on community-based actions for recovery and resilience.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Local networks of informed and coordinated community organizations and leaders provide critical and trusted resources during crises and in times of stability. Individually and collectively, these networks are important entry points for resources and major sources of information on how to activate and effectively reach communities and populations. Proactively including volunteer organizations, non-profit organizations, associations, and other trusted and knowledgeable partners strengthens local networks and bolsters community-wide development, recovery, and resilience.



This doesn't link to other Vital Conditions.

Starting Points

- » **Conduct a cross-agency assessment** to identify community (including faith-based) and cross-sector partners engaged in recovery and resilience efforts; map shared connections, synergies across connections, and gaps in collaboration; and identify opportunities to enhance coordination of one-to-many partnerships between one community partner or entity (e.g., state or local government agency) and multiple federal departments and agencies.
- » **Engage in cross-agency listening and dialogue sessions** with community partners and entities contributing to disaster or emergency management to bring together respective networks and identify opportunities and strategies to help communities leverage assets to concurrently build resilience during recovery and beyond.
- » **Collaborate with federal regional offices and state partners** to identify existing community partner groups focused on disaster or emergency management and provide technical assistance and resources to support and sustain proactive planning efforts that build community resilience and strengthen the vital conditions.
- » **Identify promising practices and exemplar models** that integrate federal learning and partnership resources with the potential to scale.
- » **Identify and incentivize partnerships with trusted community entities** with missions that contribute to a sense of belonging and promote civic participation (including libraries and museums), expand the breadth of community networks and assets engaged in supporting community development, strengthen the vital conditions, and build resilience during recovery and beyond.

(Continued)



- » **Assess collaborative roles and resources available across federal agencies** to engage an expanded network of federal, state, and local partners adopting and implementing a whole-person approach to recovery and resilience efforts, increasing shared institutional accountability and readiness through training and technical assistance.
- » **Engage Regional and State Health Equity Councils and local leaders** to assess shared priorities, networks, and context considerations to support responsive engagement plans that facilitate expanded and sustained partnerships that build resilience.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DHS/FEMA
- ED
- EPA
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ACL
- HHS/ASPE
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/IHS
- HHS/OMH
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/SAMHSA
- HUD
- IMLS
- NEA
- NEH
- SBA
- USDA
- USDOT

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.

Recommendation F

Increase federal program approaches to meaningfully engage youth who have been marginalized to identify local issues, prioritize needs, and design, implement, and monitor strategies to strengthen the vital conditions.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Federal initiatives and programs can be advanced by integrating youth engagement. Involving youth as valued experts and partners in decision-making that affects their lives ensures programs are responsive to their needs, increases the likelihood that decisions will be accepted, supports long-term adoption and enhancement of federal initiatives and programs, and increases federal credibility. Intentionally engaging and incorporating youth also furthers youth civic engagement more broadly and supports youth's awareness and knowledge of federal resources that may benefit them, their families, and their communities.



This Links to

» **Lifelong Learning**

Starting Points

- » **Assess and map the full complement of federal initiatives and programs** with existing youth engagement and those with the potential to scale, to serve as models for other programs within the federal government.
- » **Engage cross-agency regional leadership** to identify communities that would benefit from greater youth engagement support, assess state and local exemplar models for youth engagement with the potential to scale, and develop tailored plans to leverage exemplar models that best fit local needs.
- » **Expand opportunities for skills and leadership development** for youth across a broader set of federal agency programs that enhance leadership skills, critical awareness, and civic engagement and provide compensation for youth leadership participation.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- ED
- HHS/ATSDR
- NEA
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/HRSA
- NEH

Recommendation G

Allow states to leverage federal funds to support initiatives that meaningfully engage individuals, families, and communities in the design and oversight of service delivery systems.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Initiatives and resources are most effective and valued by communities when they are designed by and with communities themselves. Human-centered design and whole-person approaches are increasingly employed to develop programs and services that prioritize the needs of communities and populations of focus. Models and effective practices of co-design and co-leadership require adequate, flexible, and sustained investments that support equitable, inclusive engagement with groups that have been economically and socially marginalized and under-resourced communities.



This Links to

- » [Basic Needs for Health & Safety](#)

Starting Points

- » **Convene a cross-agency knowledge-sharing body to conduct a landscape analysis of existing federal initiatives, programs, and models** that identifies core tenets, flexibility options, and models that may be scaled across agencies to enable equitable compensation for meaningful community engagement.
- » **Identify and implement cross-agency funding opportunities** that promote civic participation and test the integration of greater flexibilities and requirements for meaningful community engagement and compensation of individuals, families, and communities in the design and oversight of service delivery systems.
- » **Identify and expand successful interjurisdictional partnership models** that can be leveraged to develop and sustain effective cross-agency community relationships, such as the ED's [Family and Community Engagement Team](#), which is an inter-office group expanding efforts to help schools, districts, and states better engage families in education.
- » **Develop and implement consistent outcome measurement** assessing engagement, community participation, and community and individual well-being through community compensation and co-leadership in the design of service delivery systems.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ASPE
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/SAMHSA
- HUD
- USDA

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.

Recommendation H

Facilitate cross-agency collaboration to increase investments and partnerships that will improve inclusive access to the arts, culture, and civic engagement programs and initiatives.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Arts and therapeutic resources serve as community cornerstones that, when supported and integrated, facilitate robust dialogue, identity, and connection. These assets provide the necessary platform to build stronger communication and connectedness within and across groups. Integrating arts and cultural assets into broader community spaces creates conditions for people to come together, expand horizons and understand different perspectives, become more willing to participate in community dialogue and grapple with challenging topics, and contribute to community vibrancy. This partnership can strengthen strategic, efficient connections between resources to reduce barriers to participation and amplify value to communities. Access must be afforded to and inclusive of all residents.



This Links to

» **Lifelong Learning**

Starting Points

- » **Provide guidance and greater support** through departments and agencies that promote and support the arts and humanities (e.g., NEA) to assist other federal departments and agencies in identifying opportunities to integrate arts and cultural approaches valued by communities to enhance the benefit of existing federal resources.
- » **Charge a cross-agency working group** to assess the current state of inclusive access, identify opportunities for improvement, and develop art and cultural policies that nurture accessibility and inclusion, including the design of built environments and services that support programmatic inclusion (e.g., American Sign Language and audio description).
- » **Provide technical assistance and funding** to support community leaders to meaningfully engage community members with limited access to arts, culture, and civic engagement programs and initiatives due to economic status, geography, race, ethnicity, or disability in the design and implementation of such activities.
- » **Increase consistent community co-leadership** in the development and integration of arts and cultural resources, including encouraging government officials' engagement in policy development supporting the arts and cultural sector resources, cultivating community advisory groups that are inclusive and equitable, and expanding interest in and awareness of arts and cultural spaces.
- » **Develop and transform exhibitions** in partnership with philanthropic organizations, museums, and libraries to support dialogue and learning opportunities about the vital conditions and ways to create thriving communities.

(Continued)



- » **Expand funding opportunities** for rigorous studies evaluating the impacts of artists, culture-bearers, and cultural organizations on community well-being and incorporate findings into the Center of Excellence technical assistance, tools, and resources for programs (*see Recommendation C.*).

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- All ELTRR Interagency Workgroup member departments and agencies



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

Sub-Categories

- Accessible Natural Spaces
- Clean Air, Water, & Soil
- Freedom from Extreme Environments & Pathogens
- *Healthy, Sustainable Ecosystems**

Introduction

Healthy, clean environments free from environmental hazards and pathogens are necessary for community and individual well-being. They are also critical for the functioning and resilience of the ecosystems in which we live and upon which we rely. Protecting the natural environment is essential to mitigating climate change; preserving water and air quality necessary for life; promoting reduced stress and improved mental health for children and adults; and increasing opportunities for recreation, socialization, and connection with the natural world and each other.

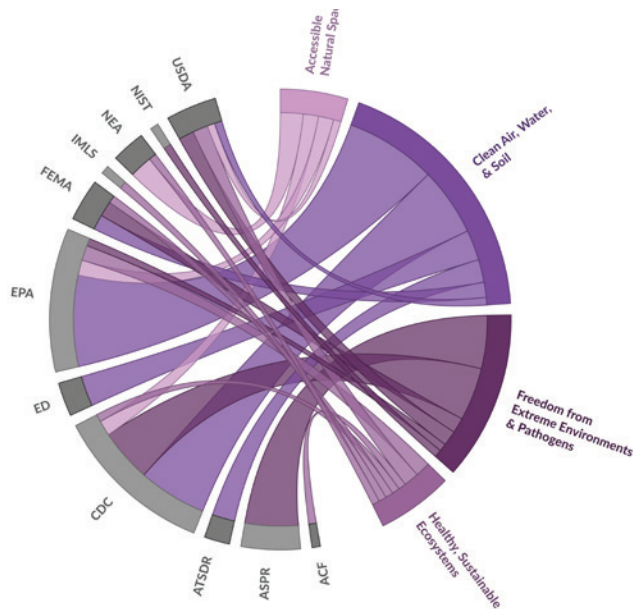
High-quality green spaces and nature must be available and easily accessible for everyone—regardless of ability or transportation access. Development and preservation efforts must prioritize accessible design and equitable proximity to neighborhoods. Similarly, communities can strategically preserve land use and reuse (e.g., brown fields, Superfund sites) to create and expand outdoor, natural spaces for play, recreation, and socialization, using best practices to ensure safety and freedom from environmental exposures, especially for children. Environmental preservation efforts must prioritize consideration of Tribes and respect for cultural norms to promote well-being and thriving of tribal communities.

As our world faces more more high-impact environmental events, we must work to reverse this trend by adapting systems and behaviors to prevent their increased frequency and to be more resilient and reduce the impacts from those events. We can reduce the impacts from natural hazards through resilience of built infrastructure, including the use of nature-based solutions and application of recovery-related models to inform long-term development and planning decisions that strengthen steady-state assets. Efforts to equitably address climate change and environmental justice in these and other ways contribute to sustaining the natural environment and spaces essential to well-being and existence in a manner that supports a thriving state for people, flora, and fauna.

*Currently no federal recommendations.

Figure 8. Existing Agency Assets Mapped to Thriving Natural World Sub-Categories

- ACF
- ASPR
- ATSDR
- CDC
- ED
- EPA
- FEMA
- IMLS
- NEA
- NIST
- USDA



Statistics



Nearly 134 million people live in communities with unhealthy levels of ozone or particulate matter, leading to about a quarter of a million premature deaths each year.³⁰



Green building materials, techniques, and appliances can **reduce energy consumption by an average of 33% and water use by about 30%**. These savings are significant, as energy costs can be as much as 22% of household income after taxes for the lowest-income households.³³



More than 2 million Americans live **without running water** or a **working toilet** at home—and **AI/AN persons** are more likely than any other group to have trouble accessing water.³¹



Several studies in various countries have demonstrated that recreational walking, increased physical activity and reduced sedentary time were associated **with access to, and use of, green spaces** in working-age adults, children and senior citizens. Green spaces provide trees and other vegetation that can **decrease levels of air pollutants and reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide** through carbon storage and sequestration.^{34, 35}



54% of Black Americans face a higher health burden from air pollution than the overall population.³²

³⁰ American Lung Association. (2021). *Populations at risk*. <https://www.lung.org/research/sota/key-findings/people-at-risk>

³¹ US Water Alliance. (2019). *Closing the water access gap in the United States: A national action plan*. http://uswateralliance.org/sites/uswateralliance.org/files/publications/Closing%20the%20Water%20Access%20Gap%20in%20the%20United%20States_DIGITAL.pdf

³² Mikati, I., Benson, A. F., Luben, T. J., Sacks, J. D., & Richmond-Bryant, J. (2018). Disparities in distribution of particulate matter emission sources by race and poverty status. *American Journal of Public Health*, 108(4), 480–485. <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2017.304297>

³³ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (2021, July 8). *Smart growth and affordable housing*. <https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/smart-growth-and-affordable-housing>

³⁴ World Health Organization Regional Office of Europe. (2016). *Urban green spaces and health: A review of evidence*. https://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/321971/Urban-green-spaces-and-health-review-evidence.pdf

³⁵ Cartier, K. M. S. (2021, May 21). *Growing Equity in City Green Space*. <https://eos.org/features/growing-equity-in-city-green-space>

Recommendation A

Increase coordination of federal investments among agencies to prioritize the existence and creation of safe, healthy, and accessible community open green and blue spaces that increase connection of communities to nature while preserving proximal affordable housing.

Contributions to Greater Thriving³⁶

Increasing people's connection to natural green and blue spaces enhances physical and mental health.³⁷ Creating green and blue spaces near affordable housing, and without displacing affordable housing, improves equitable access to nature and its positive effects on health and well-being. Creating more green cover and using building techniques to offer green spaces within housing structure(s) reduces extreme temperatures in physical spaces and supports more energy efficient, environmentally friendly systems. Expanding and protecting green and blue spaces while intentionally prioritizing achievement of equity can help reduce spatial and social inequalities, improve health and mental health, and increase access to the benefits that proximate green space provides for communities that have historically been marginalized.



This Links to

- » **Basic Needs for Health & Safety Q.**
- » **Humane Housing**
- » **Lifelong Learning**
- » **Reliable Transportation**

Starting Points

- » **Leverage funding requirements and technical assistance** for community design, planning, development, and re-development across federal investments to support the creation and enhancement of community sidewalks, green spaces, parks, recreational areas, community gardens, and spaces with water (i.e., blue spaces).
- » **Raise awareness of resources** related to healthy community design, e.g., Healthy Places: Parks, Trails, and Health (CDC) and invest in greater measurement of related community and environmental well-being outcomes.
- » **Increase access to safe outdoor play spaces** for children living in public housing or other settings without public space, leveraging existing resources such as:
 - » Early Childhood Development funding (ACF)
 - » Choose Safe Places for Early Childhood Education guidance (ATSDR)

(Continued)

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DOI
- EPA
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/OCCHE*
- HUD
- IMLS
- NEA
- NEH
- USDA
- USDOT

³⁶ Department of the Interior. (2021). *2021 Climate Adaptation Plan*. <https://www.sustainability.gov/pdfs/doi-2021-cap.pdf>

³⁷ Britton, E., Kinderman, G., Domegan, C., & Carlin, C. (2020). Blue care: a systematic review of blue space interventions for health and wellbeing. *Health Promotion International*, 35(1):50–69. <https://academic.oup.com/heapro/article/35/1/50/5252008>

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.

Recommendation B

Require cross-agency identification of federal programs and resources and incentivize collaborative opportunities to facilitate access to green, open spaces that foster community cohesion and health.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

The underlying relationship between public urban green space and social cohesion is well established.³⁸ Encouraging and supporting communities to go outside and recreationally use safe green spaces can positively influence social cohesion. In turn, promoting social cohesion and social capital increases well-being.³⁹ To facilitate neighborhood social cohesion, the availability, functions, and quality of green areas are important. Related economic development and recreation projects often require several funding sources. Improving cross-agency collaboration around these development opportunities will increase access to programs and resources that enable creation of such green, healthy spaces.



This Links to

- » **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
- » **Basic Needs for Health & Safety Q.**
- » **Reliable Transportation C.**

Starting Points

- » **Assess federal programs and resources** that facilitate expanded and sustained green space for community cohesion and health, including program authorities that are not necessarily geared toward recreation.
- » **Identify opportunities to incentivize and increase access to relevant federal programs** through coordination and collaborative approaches to funding, including considering the implication of community projects through lenses that may expand funding use such as economic development benefits or improvements to essential community facilities (e.g., improvements to a downtown area for expanding tourism in a gateway community, improvements to sidewalks, bridges, accessibility improvements to trails and boardwalks).
- » **Expand cross-agency support** (e.g., offering priority points, increasing staff training, and promoting programmatic flexibilities) to regional organizations that provide technical assistance to targeted communities (e.g., USDA/Rural Development [RD], EPA) and integrate the Center of Excellence for Well-Being resources for supported communities.
 - » Raise awareness of existing communities of practice to share and exchange best practices and examples among communities developing and using green space for cohesion and well-being (e.g., IMLS Communities of Practice approach).

(Continued)



Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DOI
- EPA
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/OCCHE*
- HUD
- IMLS
- NEA
- NEH
- USDA/RD

³⁸Wan, C., Shen, G. Q., & Choi, S. (2021). Underlying relationships between public urban green spaces and social cohesion: A systematic literature review. *City, Culture and Society*, 24. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ccs.2021.100383>

³⁹Elands, B. H. M., Peters, K. B. M., & de Vries, S. (2018, February). Promoting social cohesion and social capital increasing wellbeing. In: van den Bosch, M., and Bird, W., Eds. *Oxford Textbook of Nature and Public Health*, pp. 116–121. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. <https://research.wur.nl/en/publications/promoting-social-cohesion-and-social-capital-increasing-wellbeing>

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.

Recommendation C

Increase the use of federal funds for personal development, learning, and engagement—with other people and with aspects of the natural world—in communities nationwide.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Safe, green outdoor spaces provide a natural place for community members to engage in recreation, build social connections, and participate in civic action. In addition to connecting with each other, these spaces help connect people to nature and foster an appreciation for the natural world that both improves individual well-being and motivates communities and individuals to care for and sustain their surrounding environment.⁴⁰ Positive perceptions of the environment also have been found to contribute to a higher level of social cohesion.⁴¹



This Links to

- » **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
- » **Basic Needs for Health & Safety**
- » **Lifelong Learning B.**

Starting Points

- » **Expand access to grants** for creation of nature centers, botanical gardens, and other educational settings focused on appreciation of nature, maximizing equitable community engagement (e.g., IMLS), and learning about environmental and climate justice.
- » **Support use of cross-agency funding** to facilitate increased community ability to convert unused land or rooftop spaces to create and maintain community gardens, with inclusion of opportunities for community engagement, evidence-based and promising healing-centered mental health programming, and cultural foodways.
- » **Increase resources that bring together mechanisms for support and cross-agency coordination** that integrates local community outdoor curricula into early education settings and multigenerational programming.
- » **Create incentives for programs and policies** that encourage and support environmental and conservation education (e.g., Natural Wildlife Federation [Ranger Rick], park services).
- » **Incentivize creation** of safe playgrounds, athletic fields, and parks in locations that increase equitable access to and use of these assets for communities that currently lack access due to economic limitations, geographic location, or lack of safety.
- » **Leverage existing recovery approaches to community redevelopment** after natural disasters and other disruptions as models for steady-state community-based application of tools and resources to protect, expand, and utilize green space for play and recreation, coordinating across agencies (e.g., FEMA, EPA, ATSDR, CDC).

(Continued)



Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DHS/FEMA
- DOI
- ED
- EPA
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/OCCHE*
- IMLS
- NEA
- NEH
- USDA

⁴⁰ Kruize, H., van der Vliet, N., Staatsen, B., Bell, R., Chiabai, A., Muiños, G., ... & Stegeman, I. (2019). Urban green space: Creating a triple win for environmental sustainability, health, and health equity through behavior change. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(22), 4403. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16224403>

⁴¹ Wan, C., Shen, G. Q., & Choi, S. (2021). Underlying relationships between public urban green spaces and social cohesion: A systematic literature review. *City, Culture and Society*, 24. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ccs.2021.100383>

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.

Recommendation D

Increase access to safe drinking water systems and recreational waters through community-driven efforts.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Clean drinking water is essential for life (including flora and fauna), sustainability of the environment, and supporting residents and communities in daily life; thus, it is a critical infrastructure component in building long-term resilience to withstand disasters. Drinking water is a component of the broader water system and equally depends on the entire hydrological cycle and importance of healthy wastewater management. Communities that have been historically marginalized or disadvantaged may be further compromised as they do not have adequate safe drinking water while also not having adequate wastewater treatment, which composes the whole safe water cycle.

Public drinking water systems are centralized operations; however, they rely on steady support from an interdependent network of systems, such as electrical supply, chemical supply, pipelines, and transportation. To consistently provide clean water access, these systems must remain intact, operate as one overarching interdependent system, and ensure elimination of pathogens (e.g., prions, viruses, bacteria). Many households rely on private wells for drinking water, and while these sources are not subject to EPA regulation or standards, federal agencies provide private well and ground water education resources. Recreational water supports mental and physical health and well-being and provides valued spaces for community engagement and connection to nature. It provides a soothing visual presence that reduces stress and increases life spans⁴² while also supporting activities such as water sports, boating, and fishing. Blue spaces offer cultural and spiritual connections for some communities, often provide access to food through fishing, and serve as drinking water reservoirs. Thus, communities with local coastal oceans, lakes, rivers, watersheds, and other recreational waters must protect the health of these critical natural features amid climate change. Maintaining these bodies of water increases resilience in times of disruption by serving as a source of navigation and transportation and back-up water volume for drinking or fire protection. Supporting community-led efforts through a One Health approach to strengthen the resilience of local water systems helps protect and maintain this essential component of our environment.



This Links to

» **Basic Needs for Health & Safety**

Starting Points

- » **Develop cross-agency tools and communication efforts** to raise awareness and understanding of water scarcity and increase appreciation for water and the stability it provides, as all communities are experiencing or will experience drought conditions with climate change (e.g., EPA [WaterSense](#)).
- » **Expand resources (e.g., funding and technical assistance) to communities for Climate-Resistant Water Utilities** programs (EPA), which include various models, information sources, risk assessment tools, and mitigation strategies to promote and protect safe drinking water.
 - » Align existing technical assistance on climate change trainings and personalized support provided by EPA with existing USDA programs to increase tailored support for rural communities to address water and agricultural issues together.

(Continued)



- » Identify opportunities to engage agencies with complementary missions to expand efforts related to safe drinking water across sectors and community settings.
- » **Expand and adapt existing interactive tools** (e.g., large-scale training and individual technical assistance) for water to include adjacent issue areas that interface with and impact the water infrastructure system (e.g., power, transportation, the economy, healthcare), climate change, and other issues that are disruptive to water services that maintain supply and safety to ensure water considerations are included in key collective infrastructure decisions—focusing efforts on small systems and communities.
- » Increase awareness of government operators of water infrastructure about existing programs and tools and how to access them, and about methods to prioritize water infrastructure needs amid competing priorities and limited resources (e.g., maintaining uninterrupted water access in hospitals).
- » **Increase outreach programs** to communities, educational settings, and workforce spaces through cross-agency collaboration between DOE,* USDA, FEMA, ED, SBA, DOL,* HUD, and others to increase public appreciation of life-giving drinking water and recreational water sources.
- » **Develop or expand community-based programs** with direct joint community and federal agency solution identification for water resilience, including actions to:
 - » Assess communities to determine which can benefit most from water infrastructure system improvement (i.e., identify communities with drinking water services that are vulnerable to hazards, considering compliance with America’s Water Infrastructure Act [Section 2013]).
 - » Engage with communities to determine community-identified needs, focusing on bringing together the water system and local government, power companies, hospitals, and Chambers of Commerce to explore system influences on water and how to increase local water resilience (e.g., strengthening infrastructure, elevating assets, providing backup or alternative power generation).
 - » Encourage systems to develop resilience goals based on community-determined thresholds for a challenging scenario situation; provide technical assistance to support communities in designing systems to meet their resilience goals.
 - » Determine which complement of community-based and federal agency partner assets can best address identified needs and goals, prioritizing local-led implementation that includes local workforces and transfers knowledge through training and partnership.
 - » Provide financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits (e.g., USDA [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#), USDA [Farm Bill](#)).

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DHS/FEMA
- DOC/NOAA*
- DOE*
- DOI*
- DOL*
- ED
- EPA
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/NIH*
- HUD
- SBA
- USDA

⁴² Crouse, D. L., Balram, A., Hystad, P., Pinault, L., van den Bosch, M., Chen, H., ... & Villeneuve, P. J. (2018). Associations between living near water and risk of mortality among urban Canadians. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 126(7). <https://doi.org/10.1289/ehp3397>

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.

Recommendation E

Expand cross-agency research and technical assistance to improve infrastructure and water investment resources.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

As climate change progresses, it is increasingly important to update and adapt infrastructure and systems to strengthen resilience. Preparation for rapidly developing, high-impact environmental events is essential as communities face the potential for sudden, intense disruptions (e.g., hurricanes, flooding). Steady-state planning and development efforts must adapt to this changing environment, factor in emerging geographically relevant hazards, and leverage best practices and innovation to bolster infrastructure across systems. Research related to infrastructure, connections across sectors (e.g., climate, transportation, housing), and resilience can help identify and confirm effective practices for scaling. Prioritizing communities that have been historically marginalized or disadvantaged for support to strengthen infrastructure will help increase equitable resilience.



This Links to

» **Basic Needs for Health & Safety**

Starting Points

- » **Expand intentional use of community-driven participatory research and plan development** to connect community challenges and needs to appropriate steady-state topics and resources across the range offered by the federal government, to protect water systems and help individuals receive appropriate preventive or responsive care.
- » **Expand research** conducted by CDC, ATSDR, DOI/USGS,* and EPA to include emerging contaminants and their potential threats to the environment and health.
 - » Raise awareness and increase use of existing research and findings related to environmental exposures that could affect water run-off, such as ATSDR's [PFAS Pease Study](#) and [Federal Research Action Plan on Recycled Tire Crumb Used on Playing Fields and Playgrounds](#), to inform local community development decisions to ensure water systems and best practices are considered.
- » **Leverage cross-agency collaboration to incentivize and support community-based cross-sector partnerships** related to innovations (e.g., behavioral economic concepts) and solutions (e.g., solar power drive) within the water system and related systems, leveraging university and private sector research and innovation.
- » **Maximize cross-agency resources** available to assess and understand the implications of new chemicals (e.g., in newly introduced prescriptions) that have potential to affect water quality and make water systems more fragile.

(Continued)



Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DOI*
- EPA
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/OCCH*
- HUD
- USDA

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.

Recommendation F

Invest in best practices and tools for the safe location of community assets to eliminate or minimize the risk of environmental exposures, especially for community infrastructure used or frequented by children.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Focus on risks and long-term impacts to children is essential to avoid siting and development decisions that have negative long-term health effects that could impact children's well-being and thriving over the lifespan. While there are numerous guidance documents helping communities conduct effective site selection, communities' options are frequently limited by costs. The federal government can realign and coordinate existing resources to increase communities' ability to put best practices into action. In addition, cross-agency collaboration can combine expertise to identify and incentivize local decision-making that avoids creating hazards for the future and protects children and the environment in the long term.



This Links to

- » [Basic Needs for Health & Safety](#)
- » [Humane Housing](#)

Starting Points

- » **Assess existing building codes** to identify opportunities to strengthen safe siting requirements related to environmental exposures, with special consideration for requirements based on use by children (e.g., playgrounds, child care facilities, learning environments); collaborate across agencies to bring together expertise related to these topics (e.g., DOC/NIST, ATSDR, CDC, DOI), maximize combined use of federal resources, and make related information available to communities for use.
- » **Provide resources (e.g., funding, technical assistance) to support communities to evaluate local land use** decisions with environmental exposures and use by children in mind, leveraging existing resources (e.g., ATSDR's [Land Reuse Health Program](#) and [Land Reuse and Redevelopment: Creating Healthy Communities](#)) as models for tools focused on spaces children frequent.
- » **Identify opportunities for cross-agency braiding or blending of funding** opportunities to reduce costs for communities or to incentivize action through funding.
- » **Incentivize local planning decisions** that consider and avoid implications and externalities that increase environmental exposures or negatively impact the environment. Leverage DOI and other agency expertise to inform incentive models that promote local decisions that provide long-term protection for the environment and preserve natural spaces for children and others to enjoy.

(Continued)



Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DOC
- DOI
- EPA
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/OCCHE*
- USDA

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.

Recommendation G

Maximize cross-agency collaboration to raise awareness of local resources to prevent exposure to household contaminants, including radon, asbestos, mold, and lead, with equitable access to trusted and responsive testing and remediation resources at the community level.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

The ability for people to protect themselves from exposure to household contaminants relies on being informed of potential risks, the resources to address them, and trusting information and remediation resources. For example, awareness of the potential presence of radon, asbestos, lead, or mold at home allows households to identify and proactively prevent and address potential issues. Monitoring for and addressing household contaminant issues as early as possible reduces the scale of remediation needed, the disruption to the household, and negative health impacts, thereby increasing resilience. Equitable access to information about local resources to prevent exposures enables those who are often most affected by household exposures, such as people with fewer financial resources to act and those living in lower quality or sub-standard housing, to have a voice and support to positively shape their housing conditions. Awareness efforts must provide responsive resources that build and reinforce trust in local testing and remediation resources. Federal agencies can collaboratively support increased prevention of exposure to and remediation of household contaminants among several populations with heightened needs by fostering development of trusted local testing and remediation resources with ties to the community that are timely and easily accessible.



This Links to

- » **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
(Equitable Access to Information)
- » **Basic Needs for Health & Safety**
- » **Humane Housing I.**

Starting Points

- » **Assess existing information and resources across agencies** to identify opportunities to increase access to and awareness of these resources at the community level.
 - » Expand the uptake and use of the EPA Healthy Homes Program with greater cross-agency collaboration and resource provision to communities that experience higher risk across federal agency priority areas.
 - » Identify opportunities to establish or increase community-based ownership of prevention and mitigation services and strategies with guidance or technical assistance from the federal government, as needed.
- » **Identify cross-agency opportunities for the federal government to support community-based promotion and awareness-raising** of household contaminant risks, prevention, and remediation, leveraging behavioral economics and human-centered design approaches to communication and knowledge that lead to informed and protective action.
- » **Identify cross-agency opportunities to expand workforce development efforts** at the state, local, tribal, and territorial levels focused on environmental and household exposure testing and remediation, leveraging existing EPA workforce development programs as a model.

(Continued)



- » **Assess additional opportunities to enhance workforce recruitment** from universities and other institutions that educate populations and communities disproportionately affected by climate change and environmental injustice by:
 - » Increasing capacity of universities, colleges, and institutions that serve populations that historically have been marginalized to foster a workforce specializing in environmental health and mediation.
 - » Supporting environmental health fellowship and internship programs to collaborate with universities, colleges, and institutions that serve populations that historically have been marginalized to ensure there is greater diversity and inclusion in state and local health departments.
- » **Identify and implement workforce development opportunities to hire community members** to work on responses to community-led requests for environmental assessments and remediation needs, working across agencies to match job seekers with these training opportunities and staffing needs to provide consistent and local-expert resources within the community.
- » **Expand existing federal training programs in contaminant testing and remediation** to increase access to trusted local community members.
 - » Incentivize communities to identify trusted members to receive training to be able to raise awareness of potential household contaminant exposures and prevention and mitigation strategies and resources.
- » **Increase collaborative research that identifies what makes a resilient home and infrastructure** (e.g., from CDC, HHS, FEMA, EPA, HUD, NIH) and increase awareness of and access to federal national, multi-site research efforts and findings related to household contaminant exposure risks, such as ATSDR's [PFAS Health Studies](#).

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DHS/FEMA
- EPA
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/OCCHE*
- HUD
- USDA

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.

Recommendation H

Require regional, state, local, tribal, and territorial planning efforts using or applying for federal funds, as allowed pursuant to applicable law, to be multi-sector and to assess and address the environmental stressors and human health, economic, and social effects related to climate change with specific consideration of equity, social justice, and respect for cultural norms

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Equitable community engagement ensures the needs, risks, and values of all residents and populations are considered and addressed. Planning and resource allocation processes should require collaborative leadership that prioritizes the needs of communities who face a disproportionate level of economic-, social-, and health-related hardship from climate change and its impacts (e.g., exposure to environmental contaminants) to ensure inequities are not exacerbated. Multi-sector planning efforts must also seek out, understand, and develop solutions that support the cultural, spiritual, and social needs deeply tied to environmental protections and climate preservation actions.



This Links to

- » **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
- » **Basic Needs for Health & Safety**
- » **Humane Housing**
- » **Meaningful Work & Wealth**
- » **Reliable Transportation**

Starting Points

- » **Incentivize development of enforcement and compliance requirements** at jurisdictional levels similar to federal requirements set by EPA.
- » **Leverage funding to be used to maximize multi-sector and community stakeholder engagement in planning and monitoring** functions, as authority allows, prioritizing leadership and engagement for communities most impacted by environmental impacts.
- » **Leverage and combine cross-agency federal community planning resources and partnership networks** to expand integrated planning that includes consideration of climate change in adjacent planning spaces (e.g., transportation planning, infrastructure planning, economic development planning) and solution development, prioritizing equity in participation and decision-making.
- » **Expand the use and integration of programs and reporting structures** to further empower and cultivate the role of community-engaged research and citizen science, including leveraging NIH National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Community-Engaged Research programs.⁴³

(Continued)

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DHS/FEMA
- DOC/NOAA*
- DOI
- EPA
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/IHS
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/OCCH*
- NEA
- NEH
- USDA
- USDOT

⁴³ National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. (2019, December). Community-engaged research and citizen science. <https://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/supported/translational/community/index.cfm>

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.

Recommendation I

Include human health, economic, and social effects and respect for cultural norms in whole-of-government approaches to climate change and environmental justice.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Environmental health risks disproportionately affect people from racial and ethnic minority groups, indigenous communities, and people with low incomes across a wide variety of individual and multi-contaminant sources, including lead, radon, asbestos, mold, air pollution, hazardous waste, chemical and petrochemical facilities, and dumping. Climate change exacerbates disparities in exposures, both directly through increased exposure to air and water contaminants and indirectly due to limited adaptation and resilience planning. Cultural norms (e.g., sovereign foods, cultural farming, fishing, hunting or gathering) are deeply compromised by development and economic growth decisions that do not prioritize preservation of the cultural and spiritual resources of communities, which further disconnects them from cultural history, resources, and the natural environment. Further, the health impacts of individual pollutants are well documented, but research now suggests that pollutants and other environmental stressors often have combined effects, indicating that a more holistic, interdisciplinary approach (e.g., One Health) is needed to address individual components. Alongside the compound effects of poverty, unemployment, and crime, communities are suffering from a lack of healthy, fresh, and culturally appropriate foods; quality infrastructure; environmentally supportive transportation; and access to green space—all environmental variables associated with increased stress, anxiety, and poor health outcomes. Strategic, coordinated cross-agency and community action with co-leadership by representative community members has the potential to eliminate environmental injustices and inequities, including segregation and displacement.



This Links to

- » **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
- » **Basic Needs for Health & Safety**

Starting Points

- » **Identify potential frameworks, approaches, and cultural practices** tailored to the unique needs of the communities served through consistent, equitable engagement of multiple representative organizations (e.g., tribal organizations, NAACP) throughout planning, design, and implementation of community resources.
- » **Leverage existing data collection, education and technical assistance, and federal and state partnerships** focused on reducing people's exposures to toxic substances in the environment (CDC/ATSDR) and proactively bring tools and information sources together to support robust planning, informed decision making, and community monitoring.
- » **Partner with universities, colleges, and institutions that educate and train communities**, Tribes, and territories that historically have been marginalized, and specialize in climate change, health equity, or environmental justice. These institutions can facilitate and communicate outcomes from authentic community-driven research and interventions and assist with workforce development in diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

(Continued)



- » **Partner with community-based, faith-based, and other local non-government organizations** to support community development initiatives focused on climate change and environmental justice.
- » **Assess and identify opportunities to build social science capacity**, especially qualitative approaches to justice, to capture unique perspectives and impacts and compliment vulnerability and environmental justice data.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DOI
- EPA
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/IHS
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/OCCHE*
- NEA
- NEH
- USDA

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.

Recommendation J

Require that training and technical assistance on climate change and environmental justice issues be permanently incorporated into federally funded emergency management grantee programs to help identify local approaches that support the long-term health, economic, and social equity of communities that are disproportionately affected by extreme environments and climate change.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Community-based emergency management systems are an essential component of preparedness, response, and recovery operations. These systems include networks of skilled individuals and volunteers that stand ready to help their communities bounce back from disruptions. In addition, these networks can also contribute to building resilience in their communities in times of non-emergency through preparedness and other enrichment activities. Increasing awareness and skills related to climate change and environmental justice in these networks will strengthen their ability to improve health, economic, and social equity and equitably address impacts of extreme environments and climate change. Taking these factors into consideration in times of planning can help mitigate inequitable effects of hazards and strengthen resilience within communities. Sustaining resources (e.g., funding, training) in local emergency management systems over the long term will increase the ability of local systems to effectively manage response and recovery in the urgent moment when hazards occur.



This Links to

- » **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
- » **Basic Needs for Health & Safety**
- » **Humane Housing H.**

Starting Points

- » **Develop and implement training and technical assistance** for local emergency management systems related to steady-state assets and programs identified by the Justice40 Initiative.
- » **Develop standard funding opportunity language** across agencies for emergency management grants to require that training and technical assistance on climate change and environmental justice issues be permanently incorporated into grantee emergency management programs; identify key components to be incorporated into all training programs regardless of funding agency.
- » **Assess opportunities and flexibilities to maximize existing funding** by re-focusing emergency management grant program authority to support implementation of community-driven training, technical assistance, and preparedness resources tailored to local climate change effects and anticipated disasters and emergencies.
- » **Provide training and technical assistance** along with resources (e.g., crop insurance, farm loans) offered by departments and agencies that have authority to declare disaster and emergency designations (e.g., for drought, hail, oil spills) at the county or community level (e.g., USDA, EPA) to assist with climate-related issues.

(Continued)



» **Partner with emergency management grantees** to identify local organizations with resources to support health, economic, and social equity amidst anticipated effects from climate change and related natural disasters.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DHS/FEMA
- DOC/NOAA*
- DOI
- EPA
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/OCCH*
- HUD
- NEH
- USDA

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.

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

Sub-Categories

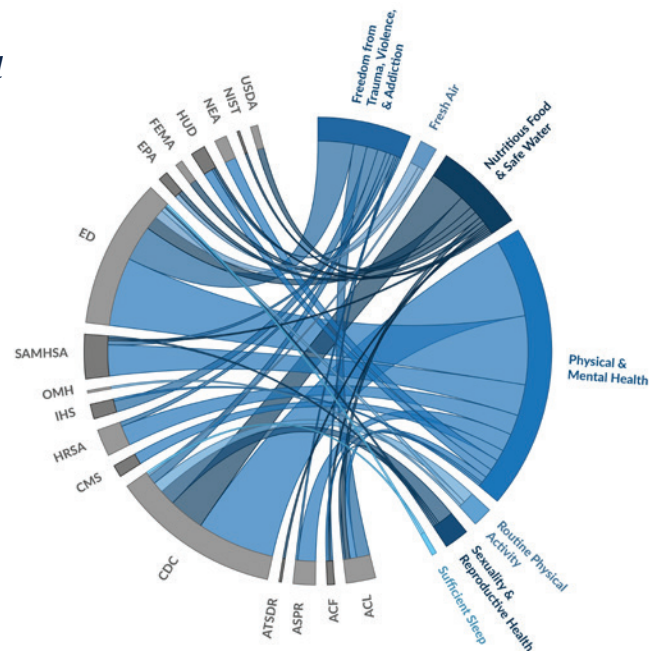
- Freedom from Trauma, Violence, & Addiction
- Nutritious Food & Safe Water
- Physical & Mental Health
- Routine Physical Activity
- *Fresh Air**
- *Sexuality & Reproductive Health**
- *Sufficient Sleep**

Introduction

Well-being is founded on the fulfillment of the cultural, linguistic, psychological, behavioral, and security and safety needs required to live happy, healthy, and thriving lives. Satisfying these basic needs through community-driven initiatives, resources, and support systems enables people across the lifespan to thrive, adapt, and recover from adversity, trauma, loss, and change. Communities are experts in understanding their own needs and in identifying the most effective means to support their members. Partnership with federal agencies must be founded upon this core principle and support the provision of resources through a co-leadership model with community from the outset to equitably address basic needs and achieve well-being for all.

Figure 9. Existing Agency Assets Mapped to Basic Needs to Health & Safety Sub-Categories

- ACL
- ACF
- ASPR
- ATSDR
- CDC
- CMS
- HRSA
- IHS
- OMH
- SAMHSA
- ED
- EPA
- FEMA
- HUD
- NEA
- NIST
- USDA



*Currently no federal recommendations.



Statistics



In 2020, 21.4% of Americans aged 12 or older (or 59.3 million people) reported using illicit drugs in the past year.⁴⁴



22% of U.S. children aged 3-17 had a mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder.^{49, 50}



Food insecurity increased in 2020 with **45 million people**, including **15 million children**, unable to access enough food.^{45, 46}

- Disparities between racial groups increased with **24%** of AI/AN, **19%** of Black, and **16%** of Hispanic individuals experiencing food insecurity versus **8%** of White individuals.⁴⁵



In 2019, 24.7% of adults with a mental illness reported an unmet need for treatment. **One out of five (20.1%)** adults with a mental illness reported they were not able to get the treatment they needed.⁵¹



38% of Americans have had to wait longer than 1 week for mental health services.⁵²



Only 67% of U.S. families report always being able to afford to eat nutritious meals.⁴⁷



76% of Americans believe mental health is just as important as physical health.⁵³



48% of Americans said they felt “down, depressed, or hopeless” for several days in the previous week.⁴⁸

(Continued)

⁴⁴ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2021). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2020 National Survey on Drug Use and Health* (HHS Publication No. PEP21-07-01-003, NSDUH Series H-56). Rockville, MD: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/>

⁴⁵ Feeding America. (2021, March). *The impact of coronavirus on food insecurity in 2020 & 2021*. https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/National%20Projections%20Brief_3.9.2021_0.pdf

⁴⁶ Coleman-Jensen, A., Rabbitt, M. P., Gregory, C. A., & Singh, A. (2020). *Statistical supplement to Household Food Security in the United States in 2019* (Administrative Publication AP-084; Economic Research Service). Washington, DC: United States Department of Agriculture.

⁴⁷ Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2021, September). Definitions of food security. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/definitions-of-food-security/>

⁴⁸ USA Facts. (2020, September 22). *48% of Americans are feeling down, depressed, or hopeless during the COVID-19 pandemic*. USA Facts. <https://usafacts.org/articles/45-americans-are-feeling-down-depressed-or-hopeless-during-covid-19-pandemic/>

⁴⁹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021). Data and statistics on children’s mental health. <https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/data.html>

⁵⁰ Panchal, N., Kamal, R., Cox, C., Garfield, R., & Chidambaram, P.. (2021). *Mental health and substance use considerations among children during the COVID-19 pandemic*. San Francisco, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation. <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/mental-health-and-substance-use-considerations-among-children-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

⁵¹ Reinert, M., Fritze, D., & Nguyen, T. (2021, October). *2022 state of mental health in America*. Alexandria, VA: Mental Health America. <https://mhanational.org/sites/default/files/2022%20State%20of%20Mental%20Health%20in%20America.pdf>

⁵² National Council for Mental Wellbeing. (2018, October 10). *New Study Reveals Lack of Access as Root Cause for Mental Health Crisis in America*. <https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/press-releases/new-study-reveals-lack-of-access-as-root-cause-for-mental-health-crisis-in-america/>

⁵³ National Council for Mental Wellbeing. (2018, October 10). *New Study Reveals Lack of Access as Root Cause for Mental Health Crisis in America*. <https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/press-releases/new-study-reveals-lack-of-access-as-root-cause-for-mental-health-crisis-in-america/>



COVID-19 hospitalization disproportionately impacted racial and ethnic minority groups, at the rate of **3.5x** AI/AN, **2.8x** Black, and **2.8x** Hispanic versus **1x** White individuals.⁵⁴



About **80%** of households nationwide have a broadband subscription, compared to approximately **74%** for all rural counties, and just **62%** for rural counties, where at least one in 10 households don't have a car.⁵⁶



60% of COVID-19 hospitalizations were associated with obesity, hypertension, and diabetes co-morbidities; **30%** of hospitalizations were associated with obesity alone.⁵⁵

⁵⁴Tai, D. B. G., Sia, I. G., Doubeni, C. A., & Wieland, M. L. (2021). Disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States: a 2021 update. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities* 2021; 1–6. doi: 10.1007/s40615-021-01170-w

⁵⁵O'Hearn, M., Liu, J., Cudhea, F., Micha, R., & Mozaffarian, D. (2021). Coronavirus disease 2019 hospitalizations attributable to cardiometabolic conditions in the United States: A comparative risk assessment analysis. *Journal of the American Heart Association*, 10(5):e019259. doi: 10.1161/JAHA.120.019259. Epub 2021 Feb 25. PMID: 33629868.

⁵⁶Bellis, R. (2020, May 15). *Transportation For America: More than one million households without a car in rural America need better transit*. <https://t4america.org/2020/05/15/more-than-one-million-households-without-a-car-in-rural-america-need-better-transit/>



Recommendation A

Increase cross-agency coordination of complementary federal resources to support community-led prevention, reduction, and elimination of individual and collective victimization and trauma for groups placed at increased risk of victimization and exposure to trauma.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Experiences of violence have a profound impact on lifelong health, opportunity, and well-being. Individuals exposed to violence are often at higher risk of developing physical and mental health conditions, of experiencing other forms of violence and trauma, and of resultant educational, job, and financial challenges.⁵⁷ These significant consequences jeopardize the health and well-being of families and communities and cost society hundreds of billions of dollars in medical care and lost productivity.^{58, 59} The good news is that decades of research have proven that violence is preventable. The field has validated the importance of community co-leadership and identified evidence-based policies, programs, and practices that reduce violence and its health and social consequences.^{60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65}

Certain populations that have been historically marginalized or disadvantaged have experienced collective trauma, or the cumulative emotional and psychological wounding passed from one generation to the next. This trauma must be addressed in culturally responsive ways to achieve equity. However, much of this trauma is not captured or supported by the models of federally supported intervention and reimbursable care covered by health insurance. In addition, the need for trauma recovery services will only continue to grow in the coming years as our nation recovers from the current wave of collective trauma from the COVID-19 syndemic and other adjacent social traumas. Expanding and supporting community-led programs to address trauma will respond to longstanding and emerging needs and help achieve equitable resilience.



This Links to

- » **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
- » **Meaningful Work & Wealth**
- » **Lifelong Learning**

Starting Points

- » **Prioritize braiding trauma recovery and resilience resources with complementary federal resources** that support similar populations.
- » **Encourage state health departments to convene multisectoral partnerships**, to engage in strategic planning and implementation of a long-term recovery and resilience plan, and provide technical assistance based on community co-leadership; engage businesses in planning and community implementation to create evidence-based and promising healing-centered work environments and support business leadership within the community.
- » **Strategically integrate Technical Packages for Violence Prevention and Violence Prevention in Practice resources** developed by CDC into adjacent systems and federal programs to ensure access to and uptake of best-practice guidance on operationalizing approaches to prevent or reduce violence.

(Continued)



- » **Maximize uptake and integration of resources from ED's National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments**, which provides information and technical assistance to states, school districts, individual schools, institutions of higher learning, and communities focused on improving school climate and conditions for learning; make these resources available for use by other adjacent systems and partner networks that support children and families within communities (e.g., health systems, social service benefits systems, housing systems).

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- ED
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ACL
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/IHS
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/SAMHSA
- HUD
- NEA
- SBA

⁵⁷ Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Spitz, A., Edwards, V., Koss, M. P., & Marks, J. S. (1998, May 1). Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 14(4), 245–258. [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0749-3797\(98\)00017-8](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/S0749-3797(98)00017-8)

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*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.



Recommendation B

Leverage cross-agency federal support (e.g., policies, waivers, funds) to permit the use of funds for and increase the availability of qualified and/or credentialed peer support professionals integrated with prevention, treatment, and recovery services.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Credentialed peer support professionals have demonstrated effectiveness in improving behavioral health outcomes; reducing emergency department utilization, hospitalizations, and criminal justice involvement; and benefitting overall health.^{66, 67, 68} Credentialed peer support is a growing sector of the public health, healthcare, and behavioral health workforce and is used to provide services and supports in a variety of medical and social service settings. Peer support professionals effectively engage people, treatment programs, and supportive services in promoting a whole-health approach that addresses the social determinants of health including employment, housing, social support, and essential needs for individuals. These professionals provide technical insight in concert with lived experience, which establishes them as supportive and trustworthy to individuals within the same community or population. Credentialed peer support roles provide opportunities for individuals to exercise and/or expand their professional skills to support fellow community members in a time of need. Increased access to this type of support may improve uptake of, commitment to, and use of prevention, harm reduction, treatment, or recovery services to completion, contributing to greater well-being and resilience.



This Links to

- » **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
- » **Meaningful Work & Wealth**
- » **Lifelong Learning**

Starting Points

- » **Charge a sub-group of the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to identify peer models supported across federal programs** and increase opportunities for collaborative use and maximum uptake of credentialed peer support models at the state and local levels; ensure consistent allowance across programs and regional offices.
- » **Partner with state behavioral health authorities to expand peer workforce initiatives** to include behavioral health coordination and peer specialist organizations in recovery and resilience-focused initiatives and resource provision.
 - » Incentivize and provide technical assistance to disseminate evidence-based practice models and examples of [Peer Workforce Development Toolkits](#) to state mental health systems, community health organizations, and organizations supporting people in recovery from addiction to support recruitment and retention of peer workers.
 - » Provide technical assistance to state and local organizations, such as through SAMHSA's [Peer Recovery Center of Excellence](#), to incorporate training for preparedness, response, and recovery leaders on the value of credentialed peer support providers and how to effectively integrate them into their response workforce.
 - » Develop and provide technical assistance for accelerated education and training programs that are coupled with on-the-ground application and service provision.

(Continued)



- » **Explore financing approaches** to expand peer-based preparedness, response, and recovery efforts by specifically including credentialed peer supports in [Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training Program](#) funding and other disaster relief programs.
- » **Use as a model the Behavioral Health Aide Program**, which is designed to promote behavioral health and wellness in Alaska Native individuals, families, and communities through culturally relevant training and education for village-based counselors.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DHS*
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ACL
- HHS/ASPE
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/NIH*
- HHSA/SAMHSA
- NEH

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*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.



Recommendation C

Allow use of federal funds to increase utilization and integration of culturally responsive, competent, whole-person creative and arts-based individual- and household-level interventions, prioritizing groups that have been economically and socially marginalized and under-resourced communities.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Scientific evidence has corroborated the experiences of traumatized populations (e.g., military personnel and veterans, emergency healthcare workers, youth and adults who are or were formerly incarcerated) who have relied on arts programs and therapies to cope with and process pain and stress, mental health conditions, substance use disorders, and other health problems. Best practices and promising interventions can inform development of broader cross-system interventions using the arts for preventive and therapeutic services in clinical and non-clinical settings.



This Links to

- » **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
- » **Lifelong Learning**

Starting Points

- » **Identify cross-agency opportunities to maximize existing federal flexibilities** that increase available funding for evidence-based creative arts therapies and arts-in-health programs, convening service organizations that represent these sectors and professional and specialist societies in preventive and mental health to align community-based perspectives with potential flexibility opportunities.
- » **Maximize Medicaid and Medicare coverage to support evidence-based creative arts therapies** for both mental and physical healthcare across a range of healthcare and community-based supportive art environments.
- » **Conduct systematic evidence reviews** on the use of creative arts therapies and arts-based interventions in preventing specific diseases and disorders, including conditions correlated with mental health, physical pain, stress and depression, and substance use.
- » **Initiate an interagency pilot grantmaking program** focused on best-practice cross-sector therapies and interventions for populations at high risk for a specific disease or disorder.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- HHS/CMS
- HHS/NIH*
- IMLS

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.



Recommendation D

Invest in the development of collaborative networks extending from education settings (e.g., Head Start, child care, and schools) to respond to social, emotional, and physical needs of children and their families.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Schools and early childhood education providers provide quality and safe learning environments that extend into the community by collaborating with other community service providers to ensure the well-being, safety, and health of children and their families. Collaborative networks share a vision and collective responsibility for children across schools, healthcare, social welfare, criminal justice, and other community environments. Leveraging federal funding to allow development of community-driven evidence-based prevention services networks aligned to a whole-family approach maximizes impact and increases child, family, and community resilience.



This Links to

- » **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
- » **Lifelong Learning**

Starting Points

- » **Identify and leverage opportunities for cross-agency resources**, including blended funding and technical assistance, to maximize the development of community-driven evidence-based prevention services networks that support children and families in accessing services that meet self-defined needs and build collaborative contributions to strengthening multi-generational resilience.
- » **Invest in creating and building pipelines** of trained early childhood education and care professionals.
- » **Identify and leverage opportunities for funding flexibilities** across jurisdictions inclusive of schools.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- ED
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/SAMHSA
- NEA



Recommendation E

Expand use of federal funds to collaborate with artists, creative arts therapists, arts and cultural organizations, museums, and libraries as a core dimension of designing and implementing community-based programs building community resilience.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Artists, creative arts therapists, cultural organizations, museums, and libraries are important sources of community-based programming, and are consistent resources that provide support for processing and moving through community trauma. Arts and cultural institutions also can support personal identification of and healing from trauma through the experience of arts programming, and thus can help individuals to pursue support services. Federal incentives can encourage local and state leaders to integrate arts programs, museums, and libraries in their community-based programs as an in-house service and develop sustained partnerships with community arts resources and networks.



This Links to

» **Belonging & Civic Muscle**

Starting Points

- » **Charge a sub-group of the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to identify cross-agency opportunities** to integrate and institutionalize evidence-based arts-based therapies into allowable programmatic service delivery.
- » **Facilitate partnerships between federal systems that enable greater flexibility and coordinated access** to blended programmatic resources between arts and cultural organizations and other community networks that support communities with limited access to arts and cultural resources.
- » **Support funding through state and local governments** to allow incorporation of evidence-based arts, culture, and evidence-based and promising healing-centered programs into community-led response and recovery efforts after natural and other disasters.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DHS/FEMA
- ED
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/SAMHSA
- IMLS
- NEA
- NEH
- USDA

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.

Recommendation F

Incentivize the use of federal funds to catalyze the development of responsible urban agriculture, community and school gardens, and creation and expansion of local farmers' markets.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Urban agriculture provides many benefits to a community, including closer neighborhood ties, reduced crime, education and job training opportunities, and healthy food access for residents in areas where grocery stores or food outlets with high-quality affordable foods may be sparse.^{69, 70} Urban farmers and gardeners work among diverse populations to expand access to nutritious foods, foster community engagement, provide jobs, educate communities about farming, and expand green spaces. These resources are critical as population growth and sprawl affect how people access food and the availability of nutritious food and clean water. Unpredictable factors such as climate change and infectious disease crises can further exacerbate issues of supply and demand. The COVID-19 pandemic drove food shortages and increased food prices, reinforcing the need for resilient local food systems, such as those provided through urban and community gardens.

Health, social, environmental, and economic benefits have been linked to the presence and role of urban farms and gardens.³⁸ Urban community gardens are associated with increased access to healthy food, opportunities for exercise, stronger social cohesion in neighborhoods, and higher property values.^{71, 72, 73} Thus, the presence of these gardens increases equity and well-being for communities. Urban farms and gardens offer essential ecosystem services like moderating temperatures, reducing storm water runoff, and supporting local animal habitats. Federal agencies can support city planners' essential need to determine the options available when planning for urban agricultural and gardening spaces that increase community resilience across social, economic, environmental, and basic food needs.



This Links to

- » **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
- » **Thriving Natural World**
- » **Meaningful Work & Wealth**
- » **Lifelong Learning**

Starting Points

- » **Increase awareness among the public of farmers' markets** that are authorized to accept SNAP benefits, using resource materials from USDA specifying their names and locations and providing them to regional federal staff and community-based organizations.
- » **Develop and expand community and school gardens** in eligible rural communities by leveraging USDA Rural Development programs and services and developing strong, consistent interagency collaboration to maximize uptake and placement of these gardens within adjacent systems.
- » **Maximize funds available and require cross-system partnerships** within a community for projects that develop, coordinate, and expand direct producer-to-consumer markets to help increase access to and availability of locally and regionally produced agricultural products that are available through USDA's [Farmers Market Promotion Program](#).

(Continued)



- » **Support development of interagency partnerships** between USDA, SBA, and HHS that incentivize the use of joint funding and coordinated local efforts to support new models and local business connections that leverage local food and ensure high-quality healthy, affordable food options are available in local grocery stores and food outlets.
- » **Leverage data available from multiple agencies and respective systems** to identify communities without local food resources and assess ways to tailor approaches to align greatest need with benefits.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DHS/FEMA
- DOI*
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ACL
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/OASH
- SBA
- USDA

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⁷⁰ McCauley, D. (2021, January 25). *Urban Agriculture Combats Food Insecurity, Builds Community*. Eos Science News by AGU. <https://eos.org/articles/urban-agriculture-combats-food-insecurity-builds-community>

⁷¹ Voicu I & Been V. The Effect of Community Gardens on Neighboring Property Values. *Real Estate Economics* 2008; 36(2):241-283

⁷² Jennings V & Bamkole O. The Relationship between Social Cohesion and Urban Green Space: An Avenue for Health Promotion. *Int J Environ Res Public Health* 2019; 16(3):452

⁷³ Lampert T, Costa J, Sousa J, et al., Evidence on the contribution of community gardens to promote physical and mental health and well-being of non-institutionalized individuals: A systematic review. *PLoS One* 2021; 16(8): e0255621

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.



Recommendation G

Facilitate cross-agency collaboration within authority (i.e., funding, incentives, policy requirements, and technical assistance) to strengthen relationships between local and regional food systems with local provider networks providing eligible individuals and households with accessible, affordable, and nutritious food that fairly compensates producers.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Addressing inequities within the food system environment mitigates their negative impacts on nutritional and health outcomes. Despite increased food production, a lack of healthy, affordable food persists in communities with low incomes and for people from racial and ethnic minority groups. Varying disparities in healthy, affordable food access persist between rural and urban localities as well. The existing inequities in food systems restrict access to healthy diets for under-resourced individuals and households, leading to poor nutrition outcomes and malnutrition disproportionately affecting these groups. Inequitable distribution of healthy food across socioeconomic and racial lines often leads to food deserts and food swamps: areas with limited access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food. Inequitable processes affect each component of the food system, resulting in unequal outcomes ranging from poor availability and unaffordability to an overabundance of food of low nutritional quality and limited access to healthy foods. Inequities within food environments can substantially affect health and well-being for populations, given the crucial role food environments play in determining nutrition outcomes. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly strained the complex and fragile food supply chain, exacerbating existing inequities to food access, and demonstrating the critical need to strengthen and reinvest in local food systems to increase resilience and to offer fresh, nutritious, affordable food options to the whole community.



This Links to

- » [Thriving Natural World](#)
- » [Meaningful Work & Wealth](#)

Starting Points

- » **Expand programs that provide local, farm-grown food through schools** to children within schools to also support food access for their households.
- » **Scale USDA urban agriculture programs** and partner with other federal agencies to expand inclusion of federal resources and networks engaged in the food system from production to consumption (e.g., USDA, SBA, ED, HUD, HRSA, ACF).
- » **Expand cross-agency resources available to local partner networks** supporting food access for under-resourced populations and at greater risk of poor nutrition outcomes by maintaining programmatic and funding flexibilities implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, including online purchasing from local food system producers and farmers markets; leverage of the Agriculture Marketing Service [Farmers Market Promotion Program](#); and leverage of the National Institute for Food and Agriculture [Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program](#) to increase incentives for access to farmers markets.

(Continued)



- » **Leverage and expand use of research and pilots on “game-changing innovations”** and their implications for food systems, including those in 1) food production and processing; 2) alternative food production; 3) food distribution; 4) food marketing and food value chains; 5) food data and analytics; and 6) food access and affordability, including [Good Food Purchasing](#), VeggieRx, and last-mile food delivery approaches (i.e., delivery of food from stores/restaurants to the recipient).
- » **Expand uptake and scale USDA Farm-to-School Programs**, within current authority, to include and support a range of vegetables and meat products.
- » **Assess cross-agency partnerships** to support increased connection between local food production systems and hospital consumption systems.
- » **Increase cross-agency resource blending to build state, local, tribal, and territorial partner capacity** to adopt and successfully implement food systems innovations and advancements through implementation support from national cross-sector partners, including the National Association of County and City Health Officials, National Association of County Officials, National Conference of State Legislatures, National Congress of American Indians, and other groups with national representation.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DHS/FEMA
- ED
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/CMS
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/IHS
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/OASH
- HUD
- SBA
- USDA

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.



Recommendation H

Maximize cross-agency actions to align programs resulting in optimization of eligible households' ability to consistently access adequate affordability nutritious food in dignified and technology-enabled ways.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Access to foods that support healthy eating patterns contributes to an individual's health throughout life and is a key social determinant that can lower risk of chronic disease. Holistic and intersectional approaches are necessary to solve food insecurity and must address multiple aspects of the food system, especially within under-resourced communities and that have been marginalized. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, an estimated one in four households (i.e., 35 million individuals, 10.5% of U.S. households) experienced food insecurity in 2019.⁷⁴ The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the food insecurity, with 45 million people food insecure in 2020, and increased the nutritional needs of households eligible for food assistance support. It also drew a sharp line between diet-related diseases and increased risk for hospitalization, greater ventilation support needs, and impaired mobility.^{75, 76, 77, 78} Accessing healthy food remains a central challenge for many families, especially those living in neighborhoods with low incomes; people from racial and ethnic minority groups; and rural communities. Nearly half of the roughly 18 million people who live in food deserts have low incomes, and 2.3 million of these individuals live in rural communities with low incomes that are more than 10 miles from the nearest supermarket.^{79, 80, 81} The effects of food insecurity on children and adults spill into their everyday lives, including reduced focus and productivity at school and work, respectively, and negatively impact their overall health. Short- and long-term health outcomes demonstrate that poor nutrition and an unhealthy diet are risk factors for obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, and cancer.^{82, 83, 84} Chronic health problems add to household medical expenses, with an estimated additional cost of \$130.5 billion among adults who experience hunger annually. The relationship between adequate affordable food access and nutritional quality are intrinsically tied to people's need for jobs that provide a living wage, access to transportation, high-quality education, and affordable healthcare.



This Links to

» **Belonging & Civic Muscle**

Starting Points

- » **Develop cross-agency partnerships to maximize eligibility** and direct certification of eligible individuals and households to maximize access and use of SNAP, such as auto-enrolling all Medicaid-eligible children into free school breakfast and lunch programs.
- » **Require adjacent systems, including housing, healthcare, and social service benefits to assess food insecurity** for individuals and households served and strengthen cross-agency blended partnerships (including ACF, CMS, HRSA, ACL, HUD, SSA*) to align food security and nutrition programs access.
- » **Create an interagency partnership, potentially as a sub-group of the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup, to assess and develop a combined application** for eligible households, creating a state option for dual enrollment and cross-eligibility of populations eligible to participate in respective resources.

(Continued)



- » **Increase cross-agency information sharing and awareness** of shared populations and opportunities to expand integration of services and program flexibilities to maximize enrollment.
- » **Expand uptake, within authority, and integration of core and effective food access programs**, including the [Senior Nutrition Program](#) (ACL), [Commodity Supplemental Food Program](#) (USDA/FNS), and [Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program](#) (USDA/FNS), and federally funded emergency food providers (e.g., food banks).
- » **Build on existing recurring state and local funding** to address nutrition, physical activity, obesity, and policy, systems, and environmental health (CDC).
- » **Extend flexibilities** to support the use of technology to access food (e.g., online ordering and pick-up).
- » **Increase uptake of free meals** to all children in eligible communities during school breaks, leveraging existing programs as models, including increasing the awareness, proactive community planning throughout the year (leveraging tools such as the [Capacity Builder Tool](#)), and uptake of key programs including [Community Eligibility Provision](#) and [Summer Food Service Program](#) (USDA/FNS).
- » **Cultivate public-private partnerships to increase innovations** in expanding affordable nutritious food-focused economic development co-led with and defined by communities.
- » **Integrate human-centered design and community co-leadership** into programmatic design of food access and nutrition programs, including USDA WIC and SNAP, to support dignified program requirements and interactions that support maximum uptake and sustain use by eligible households.
- » **Create interagency partnerships** that include cross-sector collaboration to educate communities and raise awareness about food security and nutrition access programs to increase knowledge of the systems-driven need for these programs and their impact to increase both enrollment by eligible households and community empathy.
- » **Incentivize interagency (e.g., SBA, FRB[#], ACF, USDA) and cross-sector partnerships** to build a strong, equitably available infrastructure and ability to process online electronic benefits transfer (EBT) transactions to increase the number of vendors entering the market and expand online purchasing ability for all states.
- » **Encourage cross-agency collaboration to develop innovative models** that engage multiple local systems to increase the food security of eligible households; create communities of practice to expand knowledge sharing across communities about approaches that demonstrate positive outcomes for food security, nutritional intake, and economic benefit. Identify opportunities for alignment to avoid benefits cliffs and increase access to food security and nutrition programs, leveraging existing tools such as the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta's [Career Ladder Identifier and Financial Forecaster \(CLIFF\)](#), which is designed to provide information about how benefits change with income gains.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DHS/FEMA
- FRB[#]
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ACL
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/CMS
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/NIH*
- HUD
- SBA
- USDA



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- ⁷⁴ Coleman-Jensen, A., Rabbitt, M. P., Gregory, C. A., & Anita Singh, A. (2020, September). *Household food security in the United States in 2019*. Washington, DC: US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/99282/err-275.pdf?v=6414.9>
- ⁷⁵ Feeding America. (2021, March). *The impact of coronavirus on food insecurity in 2020 & 2021*. https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/National%20Projections%20Brief_3.9.2021_0.pdf
- ⁷⁶ Feeding America. (2021, March). *The impact of the coronavirus on local food Insecurity*. https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/Local%20Projections%20Brief_3.31.2021.pdf
- ⁷⁷ Parekh, N., Ali, S. H., O'Connor, J., Tozan, Y., Jones, A. M., Capasso, A., Foreman, J., & DiClemente, R. J. (2021). Food insecurity among households with children during the COVID-19 pandemic: results from a study among social media users across the United States. *Nutrition Journal*, 20(1), 73. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12937-021-00732-2>
- ⁷⁸ Lacko, A. M., & Henchy, G. (2021, September). *Hunger, poverty, and health disparities during COVID-19 and the federal nutrition programs' role in an equitable recovery*. Washington, DC: Food Research & Action Center. <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/COVIDResearchReport-2021.pdf>
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- ⁸⁰ Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2020, February 13). *Food deserts in the United States*. <https://www.aecf.org/blog/exploring-americas-food-deserts>
- ⁸¹ The Food Trust. (n.d.). *The grocery gap*. <http://thefoodtrust.org/administrative/hffi-impacts/the-grocery-gap>
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- [#]ELTRR Interagency Workgroup members represent the Atlanta and Richmond Federal Reserve Banks (i.e., not the Federal Reserve System or Board of Governors); the Federal Reserve Banks are not government agencies and were founded by Congress to serve as the nation's central bank
- ^{*}Agency was not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.



Recommendation I

Incentivize purchase of food with high nutritional quality in federal food and assistance programs.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Ensuring eligible families have access to a healthy diet has immediate benefits and supports long-term well-being by preventing disease, improving children's ability to focus in the classroom, and reducing medical costs. Eligible families that participate in programs such as SNAP have been shown to experience better health and well-being and reduced poverty and food insecurity; over the long term, SNAP participation leads to improved health and economic outcomes, especially for individuals who receive SNAP as children.⁸⁵ SNAP provides approximately \$70 billion annually to support food purchases by households with low incomes, supporting approximately 1 in 7 Americans. The money families spend on groceries through food support programs helps grow the food economy, creating jobs. Expanding uptake and consistent use of these programs among eligible families is important to people with lower incomes, who often consume fewer fruits and vegetables and more sugar-sweetened beverages compared to people with higher incomes. Poor diet quality is believed to be an important contributor to the high prevalence of obesity and diet-related chronic diseases observed among this population. Increasing access to high-quality, nutritious foods for under-resourced individuals, families, and communities can improve equity and resilience by increasing overall well-being and mitigating the detrimental effects of poor nutrition.⁸⁶



This doesn't link to other Vital Conditions.

Starting Points

- » **Maximize state and local organization's use of resources** provided by the [SNAP-Ed \(SNAP Education\) program](#), which teaches people how to make their SNAP dollars stretch, how to shop for and cook healthy meals, and how to stay physically active; and extend placement, blended funding, and implementation across a range of adjacent systems and settings (e.g., family prevention centers, healthcare settings, benefits access, education settings) that support eligible households.
- » **Identify and expand opportunities for integrating cooking education** outreach to engage and support communities accessing a full complement of healthy foods available and supported through federal and local food programs.
- » **Leverage grants for community food projects that help promote the self-sufficiency of communities** with low incomes, such as USDA's [Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program](#), to create interagency partnerships that extend potential blended resources and implementation environments in alignment with the needs and values of communities.

(Continued)



» **Incentivize funding opportunities that support implementation and evaluation of projects that increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables** by consumers with lower incomes, including USDA's [Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program](#), to assess the role food purchasing behavior plays to improve diet quality and well-being among eligible families.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DHS/FEMA
- ED
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ACL
- HHS/CMS
- HHS/HRSA
- USDA

⁸⁵ Carlson, S., Rosenbaum, D., Keith-Jennings, B., & Nchako, C. (2016, September 29). *SNAP works for America's children*. Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-works-for-americas-children>

⁸⁶ Carlson, S., & Keith-Jennings, B. (2018, January 17). *SNAP is linked with improved nutritional outcomes and lower healthcare costs*. Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-is-linked-with-improved-nutritional-outcomes-and-lower-health-care>



Recommendation J

Allow the use of federal funds to support community-wide drinking water testing and remediation to protect and improve water quality.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Access to safe sources of clean drinking water can result in better health and more productive lives. The presence of contaminants such as lead, chemicals, and bacteria can lead to health problems, including diarrheal illnesses, reproductive problems, and neurological disorders. Investment in infrastructure that protects water quality supports human health, trust in public infrastructure, and community resilience. Regular investments in and availability of services that provide routine water testing and transparent and timely communication of findings is critical to build community trust and prevent negative health impacts. Equally, shared responsibility and accountability between systems must lead to consistent action on results to complete remediation and restore use. Allowing federal funds to be used for accessible testing and remediation by local community members builds trust and increases local control over water quality testing and knowledge of water systems, and produces opportunities for local employment and development of expertise.



This Links to

» **Thriving Natural World D., E.**

Starting Points

- » **Allow the use of federal funds to support communities and municipalities to assess water quality** and develop community-driven plans to address deficiencies identified.
- » **Mobilize public-private partnerships** to support community-led approaches to protect and improve water quality.
- » **Create an independent monitoring system** responsible for ensuring action is taken to address drinking water found to be contaminated.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DHS/FEMA
- DOI/USGS*
- EPA
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/NIH*
- HUD
- USDA

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.

Recommendation K

Extend flexibilities for federally funded resources to expand availability and affordability of broadband services and affordable hardware for communities with limited access to quality broadband internet services, prioritizing groups that have been economically and socially marginalized and rural communities.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Digital access and literacy are necessary tools to navigate and participate in many aspects of life, including acquiring essential goods and services and engaging in workforce, learning, and civic opportunities. Despite its importance, broadband is still far from universally available. Millions of households do not have access to high-speed wireline or wireless services, and many more lack the digital skills or income to use online services.⁸⁷ These gaps persist across geographies and demographics, in every state (regardless of density levels), from small towns to urban neighborhoods, and among populations of all races, educational attainments, and income levels. Every household and community must be supported to have equitable access to broadband and the skills necessary for use. The nature of connection, curriculum, and commerce today—heavily reliant on digital tools—demands that internet be available at all times, whether at home, at work, or on the go. As a result, broadband has become essential infrastructure. In rural communities, broadband also catalyzes prosperity growth by enabling efficient, modern communications between rural households and businesses and markets and customers around the world. Internet access expands horizons for learning and enrichment by connecting individuals, organizations, and schools with interactive curriculums, civic activities, cultures, and other people with diverse lived experiences. Broadband applications are so far-reaching that these physical networks directly and indirectly affect a wide range of conditions that impact health and life outcomes. For example, expanding broadband services promotes access to telehealth and other teleservices (e.g., distance learning, information, e-commerce), beneficial for rural communities, people with mobility challenges, people experiencing poverty across the urban-rural continuum, and groups that have been economically and socially marginalized. Thus, broadband infrastructure, affordable subscription prices, universal access to connected devices, and a community equipped with digital skills are now vital characteristics of a healthy neighborhood, city, state, or country.



This Links to

- » **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
- » **Thriving Natural World**

(Continued)

Starting Points

- » **Expand the uptake and use of technical assistance and communities of practice** for state and local partner networks to support equitable access to broadband services, promoting their availability and affordability for communities with limited access to quality internet.
- » **Create cross-agency partnerships** and bring together cross-agency resources to develop sustained, affordable internet and broadband access and support for all children and families eligible for federal income-determined resources.
- » **Assess broadband digital inequities** limiting alternative financial service delivery to identify and incentivize policy and funding to promote digital equity, literacy, and affordability.

(Continued)



- » Humane Housing
- » Meaningful Work & Wealth
- » Lifelong Learning
- » Reliable Transportation

- » **Conduct a landscape analysis of federal programs and resources across agencies** to identify existing broadband access and expansion programs that can be maximized for joint use and tailored to communities and populations that face the greatest access needs; include USDA/Rural Development's [Distance Learning & Telemedicine Program](#).

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DHS/FEMA
- ED
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/AHRQ*
- HHS/CMS
- HHS/HRSA
- HUD
- IMLS
- SBA
- USDA
- USDOT

⁸⁷ Tomer, A., Fishbane, L., Siefer, A., & Callahan, B. (2020, February). *Digital prosperity: How broadband can deliver health and equity to all communities*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/20200227_BrookingsMetro_Digital-Prosperity-Report-final.pdf

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.



Recommendation L

Increase access for Tribes, territories, and freely associated states (FAS) to federal programming and grant funding opportunities focused on the elimination of healthcare provider shortages.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Increasing Tribes', territories', and FAS' equitable access to federal data, economic, and health security programs will begin to reduce long-standing systemic social and health inequities related to healthcare provider access. Individuals identifying as members of these communities may experience greater hardship in establishing and sustaining access to foundational healthcare services as a result of having fewer resources and being excluded from opportunities to apply for and receive benefits from federal programs (e.g., funding and technical assistance, staffing) that facilitate the development of core healthcare resources essential to community and individual well-being.



This Links to

» **Belonging & Civic Muscle**

Starting Points

- » **Expand federal data collection programs** to include Tribes, territories, and FAS in population, provider, and vital record surveys.
 - » Explore agency flexibilities or authority to disaggregate Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander data from the broader "Asian" category.
- » **Increase the number of competitive and non-competitive federal grant programs** whose eligibility includes Tribes, territories, and FAS, ensuring economic parity in critical health and economic safety net programs for Tribes, territories, and FAS.
- » **Minimize barriers to funding by providing federal application writing assistance** specific to Tribes, territories, and FAS through the cross-agency centralized Technical Assistance Center (see Cross-Cutting Recommendation H.).
- » **Expand the HRSA National Health Service Corps program** and the HRSA [Teaching Health Center](#) relocation and housing stipends to remote posts.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DHS/FEMA
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/IHS
- HHS/SAMHSA



Recommendation M

Enhance policies and programs that increase availability and integration of patient- and family-centered primary care and behavioral health services.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Dependable access to primary care and behavioral health across the lifespan is critical for overall health and well-being. There is uniform agreement across physical health and behavioral health stakeholders that access to care and “whole person” care can be improved by addressing both aspects of health and well-being through one equitably responsive primary care system. This system must extend to include community-based networks of services and expertise, as a part of the care environment, instead of shifting responsibility for whole-person needs to the trusted healthcare system alone. Integrating these services also reduces stigma and discrimination related to seeking behavioral health and substance use disorder support and increases the ability to expand and reinforce whole-person service and greater coordination of care. In particular, increasing access to behavioral health services for children and their family units in this manner can identify and provide care for needs and disorders early, preventing or mitigating negative lifelong effects. A systemic redesign is in process, with policies, infrastructure, and investments fully integrated in a convergent primary care system focused on whole-person health. The majority of individuals with mental health or substance use disorder diagnoses (~60%) now receive behavioral health treatment services through the primary physical healthcare system. In addition, more than 93% of HRSA’s health centers provide behavioral health treatment services.⁸⁸ While enhancements in the past decade have significantly improved quality of care, created better patient experiences, and reduced system costs, there is an insufficient behavioral health treatment system to care for everyone needing or seeking services. Barriers to access and available services remain, and disproportionately affect groups with higher risk of disease and under-resourced communities. Building on the progress to date to continue expanding integrated primary behavioral healthcare services can amplify the positive effects and advance equitable access and well-being.



This Links to

» **Belonging & Civic Muscle**

Starting Points

- » **Expand funding to support existing whole-person models** that prioritize integration of behavioral health services within primary care settings (e.g., collaborative care for depression).
 - » Use as a model the [Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Program](#) to support linking of primary care providers to behavioral health providers with specialized expertise for consultation.
- » **Expand uptake of existing effective models** that integrate pediatric behavioral health and leverage technology to expand patient access and sustained benefit from supports.
 - » Use as a model HRSA’s [Pediatric Mental Health Care Access Program](#) to promote behavioral health integration into pediatric primary care by supporting pediatric mental healthcare telehealth access programs.

(Continued)



- » **Expand integration and availability of behavioral health resources within FQHCs**, using telehealth to treat substance use disorders and provide access to two-generational behavioral care supporting pediatric and maternal populations; screening and treating maternal depression and related behavioral disorders; and improving children’s and adolescents’ access to behavioral health services through evidence-based models of school-based health services. Support initiatives expanding the paraprofessional workforce (e.g., community health workers) to increase efficiency and efficacy of primary care and behavioral health services for populations with higher risk of disease.
- » **Link primary care providers to mentors and trainings** on treating substance use disorders to increase providers’ confidence and competence since, for example, increasing the number of primary care providers that prescribe buprenorphine for opioid use disorder can significantly increase patients’ access to effective treatment.
- » **Identify cross-agency opportunities to maximize authority** to permit same-day billing for medical and substance use and mental health services in primary care settings (HRSA, CMS).
- » **Expand dynamic communication and engagement processes** designed to prioritize individuals with limited health literacy, to reach groups with higher risk of behavioral health needs in a way that enables them to best inform their health decisions (e.g., using trusted community partners including community health workers, lay health advisors, and peer health advocates).
- » **Require (i.e., through funding flexibilities or technical assistance) the use of patient-centered technologies and communication tools** to align information and decision-making needs, particularly for groups with higher risk of disease and for under-resourced communities.
 - » Collaborate with groups with higher risk of disease, including people with limited health literacy, to create relevant materials that are culturally and linguistically appropriate and provide information people can understand and use effectively with the skills they have, leveraging the [National Culture and Linguistically Appropriate Services \(CLAS\) standards](#).
 - » Ensure all consumer health communications (e.g., benefits information, patient rights and responsibilities, medical instructions) incorporate health literacy and plain language principles and connect to associated resources.
 - » Incentivize healthcare providers to participate in training focused on dynamic and family-centered approaches to support health literacy, plain language, and culturally and linguistically appropriate services, leveraging the [National CLAS standards](#).

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DHS/FEMA
- DOJ*
- ED
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/AHRQ*
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CMS
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/SAMHSA

⁸⁸ Health Resources & Services Administration. (2020, February). *HRSA behavioral health: Integrating behavioral health with primary medical care*. <https://www.hrsa.gov/behavioral-health>

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.



Recommendation N

Expand the use of federal funding for trained in-home care and support services for older adults and for children, youth, and adults with disabilities within the community.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

A growing number of individuals require in-home care services due to aging, chronic disease, or disability. Those experiencing the effects of long COVID-19 only add to this number. More effective systems of in-home care and support services reduce use of emergency and hospital care for older adults and for children, youth, and adults with disabilities. They also increase quality of life and well-being for people with disabilities and older adults, and their relatives or friends who serve as caregivers, and decrease the need for relatives or friends to forgo employment to be able to provide caregiving. Thus, increasing access to trained in-home care and support services can increase community resilience by improving access to workforce engagement and financial stability or income, while maintaining quality of life for individuals in need of continual care. In many cases, the job opportunities created both by trained in-home care openings and by alleviating family or friends from the need to provide unpaid caregiving will increase employment for women and people from racial and ethnic minority groups, who comprise a large portion of paid and unpaid caregiving roles.^{89,90}



This Links to

» **Meaningful Work & Wealth E.**

Starting Points

- » **Expand resources available to support families in navigating the administrative hurdles** involved in long-term services and support coverage with consistent pathways and requirements across and within federal agency programs.
- » **Develop shared cross-agency policy and communication materials** that allow individuals to hire caregivers who meet their cultural and linguistic needs, while also supporting the growth of resources and knowledge for in-home caregivers about providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services, leveraging the [National CLAS Standards](#).
- » **Allow the local development of standard forms and documentation** for home healthcare, including electronic ordering, to facilitate timely and accurate orders for home care providers, coordination of care, and communication among providers.
- » **Incorporate evidence-based telehealth tools**, such as videoconferencing and remote home monitoring, in home healthcare.
- » **Increase availability of the trained home healthcare workforce** by improving home health training, increasing incentives for skilled nursing staff to provide home healthcare, and expanding support for paying trained family members or friends for caregiving services that prevent them from obtaining an alternate paid job.

(Continued)



Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DHS/FEMA
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CMS
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/SAMHSA
- HUD
- USDA

⁸⁹ Family Caregiver Alliance. (2016). *Caregiver statistics: Demographics*. <https://www.caregiver.org/resource/caregiver-statistics-demographics/>

⁹⁰ Musumeci, M., Ammula, M., & Rudowitz, R. (2021, October 8). *Voices of paid and family caregivers for Medicaid enrollees receiving HCBS*. San Francisco, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation. <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/issue-brief/voices-of-paid-and-family-caregivers-for-medicaid-enrollees-receiving-hcbs/>

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.



Recommendation O

Expand family-centered and multi-generational approaches across federal agency programs and resources (e.g., policy, funding, programs, technical assistance, and research) to foster the healthy development and wellness of children, youth, and families as a whole.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Human-centered and multi-generational approaches are effective ways to support individual child, youth, and adult wellness, as well as the well-being of the whole family. While many multi-disciplinary family-centered approaches are currently associated with wraparound family services, challenges exist in systems built on individual-based provision of services, diagnoses, and reimbursement rates. Exploring innovative opportunities to develop healthcare service delivery and reimbursement units that support parent-child dyad and/or the whole family for intervention, could provide structural changes that increases access to family-based supports. Further embedding family-centered approaches through training multiple professional types and incorporating such family unit-based billing helps move current systems toward enhancing culturally responsive and person-centered choices that may increase program participation and, thus, overall program impact on well-being for individuals, families, and communities.



This Links to

- » **Meaningful Work & Wealth**
- » **Lifelong Learning**

Starting Points

- » **Integrate components of [Two-Generation Approaches](#)** into all federally supported programs to provide the essential experiences, supports, and resources necessary for families to survive and thrive. Utilize ASPE's [Federal Resources on Two-Generation Approaches for Human Services](#) for information and resources about developing and implementing two-generation approaches for state and local governments and non-governmental organizations.
- » **Support federally funded workforce programs to adopt two-generational principles** to support parents and children while they work to increase skills and economic opportunities.
- » **Support state and local partners** to maximize regulations and funding, within authority, to support services that support reimbursement for parent-child dyads as a family unit, including for evidence-based family-based prevention interventions in order to maximize access to and integration of supportive services as whole-family resources
- » **Utilize SAMHSA's [Resources for Families Coping with Mental and Substance Use Disorders as a model](#)** for family-centered approaches to care and wellness services.
- » **Utilize resources from the [National Research Center for Parents with Disabilities](#)**, which conducts research and provides training and technical assistance to improve the lives of parents with disabilities and their families.

(Continued)



- » **Use as a model HRSA's [Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program](#)**, which supports pregnant people and parents with young children who live in communities that face greater risks and barriers to achieving positive maternal and child health outcomes, and the [Healthy Start](#) initiative, which aims to improve outcomes before, during and after pregnancy, and reduce racial/ethnic differences in rates of infant death and adverse perinatal outcomes.
- » **Increase resources available to systems and programs** to support parents and families in developing emergency plans in the event their children have a behavioral health emergency.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DHS/FEMA
- ED
- EPA
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/CMS
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/SAMHSA
- USDA

*Agency was not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.



Recommendation P

Increase federal cross-agency coordination to integrate community-based behavioral health services within broader healthcare, public health, and human service systems.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Behavioral health is an essential component of overall health and must be treated on the same level as physical health, with adequate resources made available to meet community and individual needs and with systems to support reimbursement. Placing behavioral health on equal footing with physical health also increases positive perception of behavioral health needs and care-seeking services among communities and individuals, supporting proactive service access and empathetic community networks. While mental health parity—the equal treatment of mental health conditions and substance use disorders, relative to physical conditions, by insurance plans for access and coverage—is law, state and health insurance plan coverage varies. Federal agency partnership to ensure that behavioral health resources are available, even with limited overall insurance coverage plans, is critical for the preventive and proactive use of essential behavioral health resources. Partnerships to integrate behavioral healthcare within primary care and other benefits support settings can significantly reduce barriers to care and increase long-term well-being and resilience.



This Links to

- » **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
- » **Meaningful Work & Wealth**

Starting Points

- » **Increase awareness of the importance of mental health and substance use treatment parity** within Medicare, Medicaid, the insurance marketplace, and other health coverage mechanisms (SAMHSA, CMS, DOL,* HRSA, OASH).
- » **Expand telehealth services across agency programs** and flexibilities and include expansion of audio-only telehealth (SAMHSA, CMS, HRSA).
- » **Support the implementation of geographic information systems** and similar tools to enable practitioners and community members to better pinpoint behavioral health needs and disparities within their local community service areas.
- » **Expand care coordination and collaborative care** within Medicare, Medicaid, and other health and human service programs (SAMHSA, CMS, HRSA, ACF).
- » **Maximize** opportunities to support increasing the pipeline for behavioral health workforce across the country, especially in communities with the greatest limitations to access and workforce shortages, including incentivizing career entry, professional ladders, and compensation within authority.
- » **Partner with existing research and practice oversight workgroups** to identify innovative and promising practices to effectively support information sharing and replication in communities with aligned needs.
 - » Example: The Federal Disaster Behavioral Health Group, lead by ASPR, convenes representatives across federal agencies who have programming, responsibilities, or interest in workforce resilience, well-being, and behavioral health to share information and resources and to identify, establish, and promulgate best practices.

(Continued)



Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DHS/FEMA
- DOL*
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CMS
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/OASH
- HHS/SAMHSA

*Agency was not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.

Recommendation Q

Increase access to physical activity that is safe and convenient, through expansion of and funding for places such as parks and town squares, walking and biking paths, active and public transportation infrastructure, and supportive programming (e.g., safe routes to schools and parks, school physical education, physical activity groups and classes, programming in dance and creative movement).

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Access to safe and convenient opportunities to walk, bike, move, and engage in other forms of physical activity is crucial for health and well-being, in addition to providing ways to get to work, shop, visit family and friends, and travel to other places people need to go. Physical activity helps improve disease outcomes and prevent disease and premature death. It also helps lessen anxiety, improves mental health and perceptions of quality of life, reduces blood pressure, allows for positive cultural expression, encourages social connectedness, and improves overall fitness of the nation (including military readiness). Thus, increasing access to safe, convenient physical activity can improve well-being, strengthen multiple vital conditions in the community, and increase resilience.



This Links to

- » **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
- » **Thriving Natural World**
- » **Humane Housing**
- » **Lifelong Learning**
- » **Reliable Transportation**

Starting Points

- » **Leverage USDOT and other agency funding** for pedestrian and bicycle improvements, where eligible, and programming (e.g., safe routes to schools and parks).
- » **Raise awareness of CDC's Strategies that Work** as resources for state and local organizations to increase physical activity in communities.
- » **Ensure federal funding prioritizes the safety of roadway users at higher risk of injury** (e.g., people biking, walking, or taking transit) in communities by reducing speed limits according to the needs of a community, requiring a "safe systems" approach when constructing and maintaining roadways, and prioritizing safety interventions in under-resourced communities (e.g., increasing the safety of bus stops on four-lane roads, increasing sidewalks, bike infrastructure, and safe, convenient, and pedestrian-orientated roadway crossings).
- » **Leverage federal funding to states and localities to increase liability** and penalties for striking roadway users at higher risk of injury (e.g., people biking, walking, or taking transit) with a motorized vehicle.
- » **Incentivize development of diverse housing types and mixed land use** with connections to active and public transportation infrastructure through federal funding mechanisms and guidance to ensure everyday destinations are near where people live.
- » **Increase equitable access to safe and well-maintained green space**, parks, and indoor and outdoor recreation spaces, particularly access to neighborhood parks near affordable housing.

(Continued)



- » **Assess education policy for flexibilities and opportunities** to increase access to school-based physical activity, including enhancing requirements for school physical education (see [CDC's Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program](#)).
- » **Expand cross-agency funding** to support free and low-cost access to youth sports through community development and crime prevention programs.
- » **Encourage community physical activity campaigns** through federal programs (e.g., promoting [Active People, Healthy NationSM](#); [Move Your Way](#)).
- » **Expand physical activity groups and classes and community challenges** through programs that support rural communities, older adults, community development, and crime prevention programs.
- » **Explore allowance of reimbursement of healthcare providers** for referring individuals to physical activity and coaching.
- » **Enhance specialty consultant services (e.g., fitness, nutrition)** in federally funded primary care settings.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DOJ*
- ED
- DOI/NPS
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/CMS
- HHS/HRSA
- HUD
- USDA
- USDOT

*Agency was not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.

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

Sub-Categories

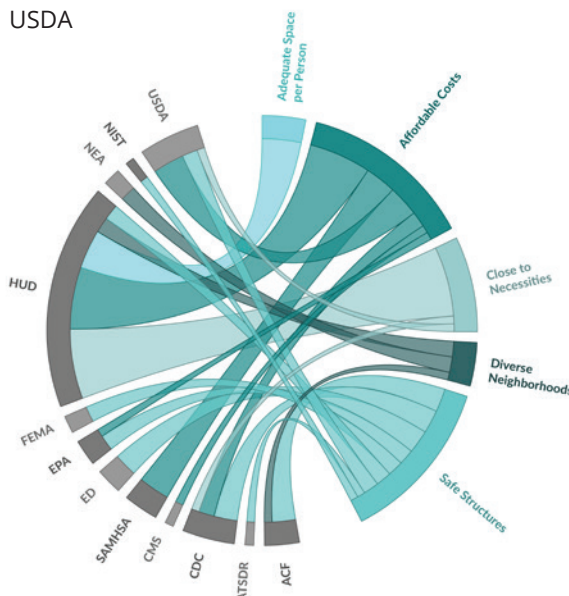
- Affordable Costs
- Close to Necessities
- Safe Structures
- Adequate Space per Person*
- Diverse Neighborhoods*

Introduction

Individual well-being reflects the broader community system in which someone lives, including their housing quality and placement. Stable, safe, disaster-resilient housing in diverse, vibrant communities fosters full, productive lives for individuals and families. Further, affordable places to live must have access to food and other basic needs, transit, economic opportunity, and other necessary resources that enable healthy living. The quality of housing—free of health hazards (e.g., lead, mold, radon) and in good repair—supports the physical, mental, and economic health of community and individuals. Housing developed and reinforced with climate change and energy efficiency in mind supports housing stability and builds resilience.

Figure 10. Existing Agency Assets Mapped to Humane Housing Sub-Categories

- ACF
- ATSDR
- CDC
- CMS
- SAMHSA
- ED
- EPA
- FEMA
- HUD
- NEA
- NIST
- USDA



Humane housing initiatives must respond appropriately to social, historical, and spatial contexts; develop or enhance housing programs based on equity principles; and invest in strategies that address structural racism and remove barriers to homeownership. Creating opportunities to discuss housing status and quality through many

system interactions—including in the context of health screenings, benefits program application, and employment settings—can help proactively identify and address housing needs that correlate with the stability of other vital conditions for an individual or family. Employing human-centered design and evidence-based and promising healing-centered, consumer-centric approaches across federal housing assistance programs will improve overall well-being for the individual or family.

*Currently no federal recommendations.

Statistics



20.4 million renters paid more than 30% of their incomes for housing in 2019.⁹¹



The cost to the public of an individual experiencing chronic homelessness is more than \$35,000 per year. These costs can be reduced by almost 50% if resources are instead invested in less costly prevention services including supportive and/or transitional housing.⁹³



Federal rental assistance provides safe and affordable accommodation for **more than 10 million** Americans in households with low incomes; however, these programs only reach one out of every four eligible households.⁹²



<1% of housing is both affordable and accessible to people living with disabilities.⁹⁴



Nearly 8 million renter households with very low income pay more than half of their income on rent, live in severely inadequate conditions, or both.⁹³



40% of people experiencing homelessness are Black—a disproportionate amount, as Black persons comprise **13%** of the total U.S. population.⁹⁵



The supply of entry-level housing for purchase is at a 5-decade low, and data indicates that new single-family homes are bigger and more expensive than ever before.⁹³



An estimated **10.9%** of renter households were not at all confident in their ability to pay their rent on time, and **5.97%**, or 2.67 million, renter households feared eviction was imminent in the next 2 months.⁹⁶



There is a dire national shortage of affordable rental housing for households with very low incomes (<50% of the area median income [AMI]), with only 59 units available per every 100 households.⁹³



In January 2020, 30% of people experiencing homelessness were living in families with children.⁹⁷

⁹¹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2021, February 24). *Week 24 Household Pulse Survey: February 3–February 15*. Household Pulse Survey. <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2021/demo/hhp/hhp24.html>

⁹² U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research. (2020). *Worst case housing needs: 2019 Report to Congress*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. <https://www.huduser.gov/Portal/sites/default/files/pdf/worst-case-housing-needs-2020.pdf>

⁹³ National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2017, February 17). *Ending chronic homelessness saves taxpayers money*. Washington, DC: National Alliance to End Homelessness. <http://endhomelessness.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Cost-Savings-from-PSH.pdf>

⁹⁴ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research. (2015, March 15). *Accessibility of America's housing stock: Analysis of the 2011 American Housing Survey (AHS)*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/accessibility-america-housingStock.pdf>

⁹⁵ The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Planning and Development. (2020, January). *The 2019 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress, Part 1: Point-in-time estimates of homelessness*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/2019-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

⁹⁶ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2021, December). *Housing market indicators monthly update December 2021*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/sites/default/files/pdf/Housing-Market-Indicators-Report-December-2021.pdf>

⁹⁷ National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2021). *State of Homelessness: 2021 Edition*. <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness-2021/>



Recommendation A

Increase access to mortgage assistance, down payment support, and post-purchase supports, and expand affordable market mechanisms, including the utilization of community land trusts and collaboration with development institutions (e.g., Community Development Financial Institutions [CDFIs], local public and private investment funds) to create and sustain homeownership among populations that historically have been marginalized.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Increasing equitable access to homeownership requires the removal of systemic barriers to increase access to stable housing and the development of generational wealth for households with low and moderate incomes. Homeownership accounts for one-sixth, roughly \$15 trillion, of all household wealth in America. Despite the federal government significantly subsidizing homeownership (\$77 billion per year from 2015 to 2019 for the mortgage interest deduction alone), many Americans find this opportunity out of reach and remain unable to build wealth through homeownership to safeguard their future. Racial disparities in homeownership and family wealth between Black and White households have persisted and are higher today than before the passage of the Fair Housing Act in 1968. Challenges on the supply-side reinforce inequities, with a shortage of homes affordable to buyers with low and middle incomes and few mortgage vehicles that permit smaller contributions. On the demand side, many households lack resources for a down payment. New housing supply in less proximate areas also requires additional cost-bearing resources, including personal transportation and potential loss of access to social capital resource networks, which may further limit choices for families with low and middle incomes.



This doesn't link to other Vital Conditions.

Starting Points

- » **Expand public and private sector partnerships** to support financial empowerment and asset building, especially developing assets that increase community wealth, focusing on opportunities for partnerships through agencies such as SBA, FRB[#], ACF, USDA, HUD.
- » **Expand awareness of and access to training and technical assistance for lenders, sellers, and agents** regarding Federal Housing Administration (FHA) loans and other federal finance mechanisms through SBA, FRB[#].
- » **Partner with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau* (CFPB) to incentivize lenders to offer FHA loans** by removing associated barriers.
- » **Develop a cross-agency effort among agencies serving groups with low and middle incomes to develop human-centered guidance** and training for down payment assistance programs.
- » **Invest in innovative and evidence-based housing counseling strategies** that are tailored to individual homebuyer needs and learning preferences.
- » **Restructure the way HUD subsidizes homebuying and loans** and expand existing homebuying and loan assistance programs.

(Continued)



- » **Charge a cross-agency action group to identify strategies to revise credit scoring** and treatment of debt, including (note this group may be established as a sub-group under the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup):
- » Revise FHA criteria to adjust risk tolerance of the FHA threshold for referring to manual underwriting and develop inclusive FHA credit criteria.
 - » Pilot alternative credit scoring systems that prioritize equity.
 - » Revise treatment of student loan debt to have less impact/weight in underwriting.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- CFPB*
- FRB#
- HHS/ACF
- HUD
- SBA
- USDA

#ELTRR Interagency Workgroup members represent the Atlanta and Richmond Federal Reserve Banks (i.e., not the Federal Reserve System or Board of Governors); the Federal Reserve Banks are not government agencies and were founded by Congress to serve as the nation's central bank.

*Agency was not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.



Recommendation B

Identify ways to better align federal rental assistance programs with adjacent federal benefits programs that increase economic mobility (e.g., Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF], SNAP, child care subsidy, income) to preserve housing stability for people at risk for eviction or experiencing homelessness.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Increasing and maintaining rental assistance to households with low incomes is crucial toward ensuring every American family has the opportunity to live in a safe, affordable place within their community. Cross-agency partnership and system-level resource coordination are required to preserve housing stability and reduce evictions, particularly for people at risk of losing housing and for people experiencing homelessness. Federal rental assistance provides safe and affordable accommodation for more than 10 million Americans in households with low incomes. However, these programs only reach one out of every four eligible households. Further, nearly 8 million renter households with very low incomes pay more than half of their income on rent, live in severely inadequate conditions, or both. Affordable housing and rental assistance program eligibility requirements can conflict with other benefit programs requirements in the broader social safety net spectrum, which are developed and managed separately and often conflict unintentionally. This dynamic can result in a cliff effect that may cause individuals to decline higher wages or experience greater instability due to a sudden loss of housing support caused by a wage increase. Far too many Americans are at risk of eviction, a fact drastically exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects, including job loss, absence of adequate savings, and competing financial costs.



This links to

» **Meaningful Work & Wealth**

Starting Points

- » **Assess cross-program misalignment in financial supports, policy limitations, and service models** (e.g., through ACF, USDA, HUD) to identify opportunities for alignment to avoid benefits cliffs and increase access to rental assistance support programs.
- » **Expand coordination across all federal rental assistance programs** (e.g., Department of Veterans Affairs [VA],* USDA, HUD) and related supportive benefits programs (e.g., the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program [LIHEAP], Windfall Elimination Provision) to maximize the use of available resources, prioritizing communities and populations that are experiencing persistent poverty and high rates of evictions and homelessness.
- » **Identify existing exemplar initiatives** that provide proactive interventions to reduce housing instability and that align benefits programs to create a complement of blended federal funding.
- » **Create a cross-agency collaborative under the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup** to increase modes of landlord engagement and expand local public-private partnership networks to create proactive and preventive approaches that support tenants and landlords.

(Continued)



» **Leverage available housing assistance data and pair with other adjacent federal data** to support use in developing a coordinated service delivery system at the federal, state, and local levels.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- HHS/ACF
- HHS/SAMHSA
- USDA
- HHS/HRSA
- HUD
- VA*

*Agency was not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.



Recommendation C

Incentivize greater braided coordination and joint application of federal resources for community planning, zoning, regulation, public-private partnership, and investment decisions that increase production and preservation of accessible and safe, disaster-resilient affordable housing with transit access.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

The federal government must increase the production and preservation of affordable housing of all types to ensure that each American has an opportunity to find a quality place to call home and avoid eviction, homelessness, and housing insecurity. Bringing targeted federal resources together to enhance multi-faceted planning and facilitation is anticipated to stimulate greater short- and long-term development of affordable, high-quality housing stock with adaptive development and diverse household composition. Data supports the clear need for a significant investment in new approaches; with only 59 units available per every 100 households, there is a dire national shortage of affordable rental housing for households with very low incomes (<50% AMI). The situation is similar for aspiring homeowners: supply of entry-level housing is at a 5-decade low, and data indicates that new single-family homes are bigger and more expensive than ever before.



This links to

- » **Reliable Transportation**

Starting Points

- » **Identify existing and new policy allowances and funding** to facilitate increased access to Community Land Trust loans and shared equity housing programs.
- » **Incentivize, through available funding and policy flexibilities, development of innovative models that increase production and preservation of more flexible affordable housing options**, including small efficiency/micro-housing units, shared housing, and accessory dwelling units integrated within the community to ensure equitable access to transit and daily living needs for both rural and urban communities.
- » **Incentivize local and state governments and provide technical assistance to increase production of inclusionary zoning units**, using the planning system to require private developers to incorporate affordable or social housing and foster social inclusion as a part of market-driven developments to advance equitable, fair housing affirmatively.
- » **Establish and expand public-private partnerships to increase affordable housing supply** with access to transit and near workforce housing, small business development, and amenities.
 - » For example, support public-private partnerships that:
 - » **Incentivize** increased production of workforce housing to enable individuals with moderate incomes who support their communities (e.g., teachers, first responders, and healthcare workers) but who fall above affordable housing income allowances to live within the communities they professionally enrich and support.

(Continued)



- » **Encourage** the construction of accessible and universally designed⁹⁸ housing units.
- » Codify and share best practices by identifying innovative funding and partnership models from a range of communities that leverage the HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME), CDBG, and other federal resources for creating affordable housing and providing information through expanded cross-agency dissemination to state and local government, community, and business partners. [HOME](#) is the largest federal block grant to state and local governments designed exclusively to create affordable housing for low-income families (through HUD). The [CDBG program](#) supports a broader menu of activities, including housing, public facilities, public services, and economic development.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ATSDR
- HUD
- HHS/ACL
- HHS/HRSA
- USDA

⁹⁸ Universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design; see The Universal Design Project. (2021). *What is Universal Design?* <https://universaldesign.org/definition>



Recommendation D

Increase adoption of best practices and innovative solutions associated with federal programs that improve housing stability for people and families at risk of experiencing homelessness.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Homelessness prevention requires multi-sector approaches across housing, health, education, human, and social services. Communities, individuals, and families benefit from systems integration, collaborative planning, and input from those experiencing housing instability or homelessness. Effective approaches to prevent homelessness exist and continue to improve through applied innovation, preventive braided funding and services, and adopting a whole-person, warm-referral approach to services.^{99,100} Communities continue to benefit when their members learn from each other to adapt efficiencies of system design and resource delivery that help individuals, youth, and families maintain housing. The federal government can facilitate more efficient and dynamic learning and connection between communities and resources to expand best practices and target resources based on the contextual need and patterns of a community to end cycles of homelessness.



This doesn't link to other Vital Conditions.

Starting Points

- » **Expand adoption of best practices associated with federal programs** (e.g., affordable housing, vouchers for older adult programs), such as:
 - » Increase and institutionalize systems coordination (e.g., housing, health, human service, workforce, criminal justice), working together across federal, state, and local to build connections and create efficiencies in knowledge, program and system operations, and funding.
 - » Identify housing stability status as part of health and behavioral health service intake to allow for referral to integrated follow-up supports and care.
- » **Leverage regional federal offices and staff connections to share existing effective systems integration approaches** with and between communities.
 - » Identify, evaluate, and promote effective eviction prevention programs that provide support and assist people in staying in their homes.
 - » Assess where interconnected efforts can foster alignment across multiple service environments and leverage resource increases for the greatest benefit.
- » **Review institutional and systems discharge planning and allocation of housing resources** to improve access to stable housing transitions from locations such as hospitals, inpatient/residential treatment, nursing homes, criminal justice, child welfare placements, and housing needs for reunification.
- » **Incorporate evidence-based and promising healing-centered practices across all service sector resources and processes** (e.g., housing, onsite support services, pre-tenancy coordination).

(Continued)



- » **Incentivize communities to have a systemic response in place that prevents homelessness** whenever possible or ensures that, if homelessness can't be prevented, it is a rare, brief, and one-time experience.
- » **Identify mechanisms to maintain flexibilities that support a ready-state for innovative solutions** implemented to address needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, including converting hotels and motels into temporary non-congregate shelters and streamlining the approval process for permanent supportive housing.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ACL
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/CMS
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/SAMHSA
- HUD
- NEA
- USDA

⁹⁹ Center for Evidence-based Solutions to Homelessness. Homelessness Prevention A Review of the Literature. January 2019. http://www.evidenceonhomelessness.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Homelessness_Prevention_Literature_Synthesis.pdf

¹⁰⁰ United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. The Evidence Behind Approaches that drive an End to Homelessness. September 2019. https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Evidence-Behind-Approaches-That-End-Homelessness-Brief-2019.pdf



Recommendation E

Expand uptake and integration of cross-agency resources that facilitate choice in household utility relief to convert to green energy use (e.g., solar power), reducing household utility costs and supporting environmental sustainability.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Investing in additional resources or subsidies related to green housing utilities lowers household costs and helps build resilience by increasing the ability to withstand future periods of extreme weather and major climate-related events, particularly among residents with low incomes. Financial support to minimize exposure to extreme heat and cold helps maintain health and supports individuals and families to retain household income for other needs, including saving resources for unexpected costs and building financial stability. Installing green and energy-efficient units reduces utility costs and overall community energy consumption, providing near-term benefits to current residents and long-term benefits for the broader community and environment. Access to stable and consistently affordable energy-efficient utilities supports broader climate sustainability goals, creates excess energy that may be returned to the community, and may reduce both household and community energy costs.



This links to

» **Thriving Natural World**

Starting Points

- » **Increase awareness and coordination of the full complement of housing resource benefits** among state, local, and community partner networks to increase proactive use of utility relief resources (i.e., LIHEAP, the Weatherization Assistance Program [WAP]).
- » **Engage in listening sessions with communities to identify barriers and opportunities** for access to and use of utility relief resources and assess how to maximize access to sustainable, environmentally conscious energy resources.
- » **Incentivize maximized adoption of sustainable utility relief through weatherization programming** (i.e., LIHEAP, WAP) and expansion of innovative pilot projects and programs at federal, state, and local levels that make sustainable solar energy resources accessible to households with lower incomes.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DHS/FEMA
- DOE*
- EPA
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/OCHE*
- HUD
- USDA

*Agency was not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members



Recommendation F

Conduct a systematic review of federal agency, department-wide, and community-based housing resources that address instability and homelessness to identify service gaps and opportunities for expanding or improving existing programs.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Quality housing and resources to maintain housing are key components of being able to live a healthy, secure life. The cost to the public of an individual experiencing chronic homelessness is more than \$35,000 per year. These costs can be reduced by almost 50% if resources are instead invested in homelessness prevention programs, critical supportive services, and access to permanent housing, including supportive housing. The primary root cause of homelessness is housing market factors, which drive increased cost burden and disproportionately impact households with limited resources who are unable to take on additional costs. Additionally, underlying and deeply rooted housing, labor market, and social inequities also play a role, as evidenced by data demonstrating that some populations, including LGBTQ+ and people from racial and ethnic minority groups, disproportionately experience homelessness. The housing support system currently focuses on symptoms of these root causes by resolving or preventing homelessness on an individual level rather than addressing underlying drivers. Housing programs that are sensitive to and plan for the unique needs and vulnerabilities of different populations are often coordinated at the local level or led by community-based organizations, and many are unable to meet the scale of need. Identifying service gaps and opportunities to expand and improve programming that supports these needs flexibility within populations at-risk for or experiencing homelessness is critical to building equitable, sustainable resilience for all Americans.



This doesn't link to other Vital Conditions

Starting Points

- » **Conduct a systematic review, oriented by the *Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework***, in the upcoming U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness¹⁰¹ (USICH[^], an existing body) strategic plan to guide strategies and actions prioritized by the Plan.
- » **Identify gaps in local resources** and ways to support Communities of Care to achieve improved outcomes.
 - » Research and implement or refine programming to address the needs of people experiencing homelessness.
 - » Identify models to expand and incentivize blended service delivery models that support access to wraparound services that address identified root causes and risk factors.
 - » Identify and expand population-specific models that effectively resolve or prevent homelessness; maximize uptake and consistent funding of these programs.

(Continued)



Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- HHS/ACF
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/SAMHSA
- HUD
- USDA
- USICH[^]

¹⁰¹ <https://www.usich.gov>

*Agency was not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.

[^]USICH, or the USICH member agencies who are not currently participating in the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup.

Recommendation G

Coordinate affordable housing development with proximity to comprehensive services for economic participation, socialization, physical activity, and federal and local support services such as food, behavioral health, healthcare, and child care

Contributions to Greater Thriving

The ability to obtain and maintain housing stability depends on multiple vital conditions, including linkage to meaningful and sustainable forms of income, personal and multigenerational family well-being supports, and a sense of connection and belonging. For many people and families, attaining housing near community assets is critical to facilitate access to and engagement in valued services, educational and economic opportunities, and social connections. Increasing affordable housing close to or integrated with comprehensive services improves well-being and thriving for individuals and the community itself and thereby builds collective resilience.



This Links to

- » **Belonging and Civic Muscle G., H.**
- » **Basic Needs for Health & Safety**
- » **Meaningful Work & Wealth**
- » **Lifelong Learning**
- » **Reliable Transportation C.**

Starting Points

- » **Incentivize the use of policy flexibilities and funding with local strategies** to maximize access to a full complement of benefits (e.g., through Head Start, WIC, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, SFSP, SNAP) among households receiving emergency housing assistance.
- » **Expand existing coordination between HUD and NEA to institutionalize the incorporation of design and art** into all new developments, with a priority to engage design and art from within the local community.
- » **Partner with regional offices across federal agencies** with the objective of supporting state and local partner networks to increase coordinated planning and implementation of services that leverage a whole-person approach for identification, access, and service use placement proximate to affordable housing and transit access, including services in the following contexts: behavioral health primary care/clinical services (e.g., treatment, recovery support services), linkage to coordinated primary care access for wellness and health, and case management (e.g., accessing mainstream benefits, pre-tenancy coordination to locate housing or lease-up).
- » **Assess innovative and best practice approaches to integrate community and individual-level evidence-based and promising healing-centered service** lenses to planning, development, and management of affordable housing to provide technical assistance and incentivize integration of informed approaches (note this action may be housed as a sub-group of the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup or sub-committee of the USICH).

(Continued)



Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CMS
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/SAMHSA
- HUD
- NEA
- USDA
- USDOT



Recommendation H

Assess and revise minimum housing standards for federally funded development to reflect the risk of future disruptions and crises by geography.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Strengthening substandard housing improves structural resilience to future hazards and disruptions. After an emergency, federal government resources can help communities rebuild damaged structures to higher quality standards to reduce the need for future investment in repairs from repeat events driven by climate change. Maintaining existing housing to a higher quality standard will help preserve housing inventory as natural events intensify and will boost the quality of housing available. This investment will also positively contribute to the mental and physical health of residents as poor housing quality is strongly associated with depression, asthma, and cardiovascular disease.



This Links to

- » [Thriving Natural World](#)
- » [Basic Needs for Health & Safety](#)

Starting Points

- » **Assess minimum standards for existing federally funded rural development and revise** to reflect the risk of future disruptions and crises by geography; include the development of a humane housing definition within the standards and integrate into requirements for funding and operational standards to be met.
 - » Employ existing rural development standards to expand value-add approaches to non-rural housing environments.
- » **Revise policies and disaster aid guidelines to incentivize the development and rebuilding of safe and resilient housing** with higher quality standards in the context of climate change and extreme environments. Leverage the FEMA flood insurance program claim requirements, strengthen standards for the remediation or mitigation required after incidents, and examine opportunities related to the reinstated [Federal Flood Management Standard](#).
- » **Build on existing funding opportunities to increase standards** for housing development and repair, such as:
 - » [Housing Preservation Grants](#) and [Single Family Housing Repair Loans and Grants](#) that provide funding for repair or rehabilitation of housing owned or occupied by people with low or very-low incomes living in rural communities (USDA).
 - » [The Indian Community Development Block Grant](#), which provides resources to develop viable AI/AN communities, including decent housing and a suitable living environment, primarily for persons with low and moderate income (HUD).
 - » The [Choice Neighborhoods](#) program that supports locally driven strategies that target neighborhoods that are struggling with distressed public or HUD-assisted housing through a comprehensive approach to neighborhood transformation.

(Continued)



- » **Leverage the FEMA flood insurance program claim requirements and strengthen standards** for the remediation or mitigation required after an incident before a new policy is issued.
- » **Expand availability of health and safety home visits** and interventions as a cost-effective way to identify unsafe, substandard housing conditions that may be eligible for federal repair or rehabilitation programs (e.g., addressing asthma through home-based strategies).

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DOC/NIST
- DHS/FEMA
- EPA
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/IHS
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/OCCHE*
- HUD
- USDA

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.



Recommendation I

Identify and implement innovative approaches to expanding public awareness of and informed engagement in early-stage planning conversations related to housing development and environmental hazards.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Equitable representation in required community planning processes is not achieved by participation alone. Effective and meaningful engagement in community planning requires the ability to be informed on the issues and potential risks at hand and to trust in the information sources. For example, awareness of surrounding environmental conditions such as environmental exposures and proximity to hazardous waste sites, urban industrial sites, and highway development is critical for informed and transparent planning that places community equity at the center. However, evidence indicates that greater access to information and self-driven participation is not a guaranteed path to increase equitable public engagement, as it does not prevent advantaged groups from disproportionately influencing public forums and decisions with significant impact on community well-being.^{102,103,104} Thus, it is important to advance the mechanisms used to facilitate equitable engagement themselves, employing innovation in means of participation, garnering attention, and supporting effective movement from awareness to action. Active and effective engagement can allow community members to influence decisions to prevent future negative health impacts from environmental exposures and other harmful conditions.



This Links to

- » **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
- » **Thriving Natural World G.**

Starting Points

- » **Identify and integrate innovations and partnership** resources that effectively facilitate greater equitable community engagement and safe environments for participation into existing materials and approaches for community engagement, including:
 - » Existing training materials related to community health considerations for land reuse (e.g., ATSDR's [Land Reuse and Redevelopment: Creating Healthy Communities](#), EPA Lead Program).
 - » Existing community engagement guides across agencies (e.g., ATSDR, USDA, ACF) and tools related to best practices for increasing equitable access to information (Example: [ATSDR Principles of Community Engagement](#)).
- » **Leverage USDA's robust technical assistance system** at the county level (working closely with the food/agriculture community) to increase awareness of and provide access to resources from other federal agencies regarding the usage and contamination history of land and property (e.g., ATSDR, EPA).
- » **Increase awareness** of the ability for community members and local organizations to petition or request a formal [Public Health Assessment](#) (ATSDR) for concerning sites.

(Continued)



» **Require planning processes** to clearly indicate, with advance outreach and dialogue and beyond posting information, when development is proposed on a brownfield or land reuse site. Promote awareness of guidance and resources available to communities and public health practitioners from the [ATSDR Land Reuse Health Program](#) to understand and evaluate potential impacts around redevelopment.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- EPA
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/NIH*
- HUD
- USDA

¹⁰² Gavarkavich D, Gaines A, Williams L, et al., Chartering the Civic Landscape. The Interested Bystander, In Charlotte Context. 2018. https://kf-site-production.s3.amazonaws.com/media_elements/files/000/000/260/original/CivicLandscape_Charlotte.pdf

¹⁰³ John R. Parkins, Thomas Beckley, Louise Comeau, Richard C. Stedman, Curtis L. Rollins & Anna Kessler (2017) Can Distrust Enhance Public Engagement? Insights From a National Survey on Energy Issues in Canada, *Society & Natural Resources*, 30:8, 934-948, DOI: 10.1080/08941920.2017.1283076

¹⁰⁴ Iroz-Elardo N, Erickson H, Howell A, et al., Community Engagement in a Pandemic. 2021. <https://capla.arizona.edu/sites/default/files/Community%20Engagement%20in%20a%20Pandemic%20-%202021.pd>

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.

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

Sub-Categories

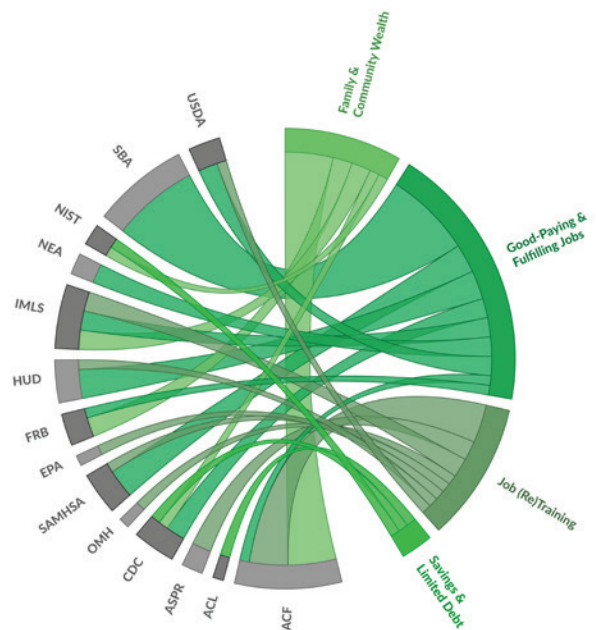
- Family & Community Wealth
- Good-Paying & Fulfilling Jobs
- Job (Re)Training
- Savings & Limited Debt

Introduction

Healthy, secure lives are cultivated from fulfilling jobs and careers that pay a living wage and facilitate economic mobility for individuals, their children, and other dependents. Financial security is critical for the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities, and enables people to participate in all aspects of life more fully. As such, increasing access to banking and financial resources, especially for people with lower incomes and people from racial and ethnic minority groups, helps convert the value of work into savings that support resilience and help build generational wealth. Removing systemic racism from paths to small business ownership, access to capital, and other knowledge supports will contribute to equitable opportunity for careers and wealth that enable thriving.

Figure 11. Existing Agency Assets Mapped to Meaningful Work & Wealth Sub-Categories

- ACF
- ACL
- ASPR
- CDC
- OMH
- SAMHSA
- EPA
- FRB
- HUD
- IMLS
- NEA
- NIST
- SBA
- USDA



Statistics



27.6 million people in the United States were employed in non-living-wage occupations in 2018, constituting roughly 17% of the civilian labor force.¹⁰⁵



In the United States, **43 million** people lack the basic literacy and numeracy skills needed for work.¹⁰⁸



The United States had a **33.4%** Labor Force Participation Rate for people with disabilities in February 2021, compared to the general population rate of 76%.¹⁰⁶



Among students enrolled in college, one in four is parenting; while student parents often use earnings from work to pay for their education, they **disproportionately** rely on student loan debt.¹⁰⁹



41% of Americans say they would quit their job or start a business if they had the tools and resources to do so.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Cantor, G., & Sims, L., Jr. (2020). *The unequal impact of the COVID-19 crisis on household's financial stability* (Prosperity Now Scorecard). Washington, DC: Prosperity Now. https://prosperitynow.org/sites/default/files/PDFs/Scorecard%202020/Unequal_Impact_of_COVID-19.pdf

¹⁰⁶ U.S. Department of Labor. (n.d.). *Disability employment statistics*. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/research-evaluation/statistics>

¹⁰⁷ America's Small Business Development Center, & The Center for Generational Kinetics. (2017, May). *Generational views of entrepreneurship and small business*. Burke, VA: America's Small Business Development Center. <https://americassbdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/White-Paper-GenStudy-6-1-2017.pdf>

¹⁰⁸ ProLiteracy. (n.d.). *U.S. Adult Literacy Facts*. https://www.proliteracy.org/Portals/0/pdf/PL_AdultLitFacts_US_flyer.pdf

¹⁰⁹ The Institute for Women's Policy Research. (2012, May 30). *Single student parents have higher student debt burden, especially at for-profit colleges*. Washington, DC: Author. <https://iwpr.org/media/press-releases/single-student-parents-have-higher-student-debt-burden-especially-at-for-profit-colleges/>

Recommendation A

Address major drivers of the benefits cliff effect, within and across programs, to create greater state flexibilities using regulation changes, programmatic waivers, cross-agency and adjacent system policy alignment, and other tools.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

A complex collection of support benefits is often available to one individual or family unit, each with their own eligibility requirements and financial thresholds. While this network of supports serves a critical role as a safety net for people experiencing situations that put them in need, currently there are no strong supports for identifying and understanding eligibility across all benefits available and, perhaps more importantly for resilience, no tools to support smooth transition out of use of support benefits services. In addition, conflicting requirements across benefits services often unintentionally penalize pursuit of higher-paying career-oriented opportunities where a modest increase in income may disqualify an individual or family from a larger financial support necessary to maintain family stability, such as SNAP, school nutrition assistance, TANF, child care assistance, or housing assistance.¹¹⁰ These “benefits cliffs” differentially affect people from racial and ethnic minority groups.¹¹¹ Enabling increased flexibilities that allow states to redesign and/or modernize their benefits systems to implement whole-person best practices will help promote efficient and concurrent use of benefit programs in a way that promotes economic mobility and, where possible, successful graduation and transition to self-sufficiency. Aligning economic and workforce development systems can enable benefits recipients to identify and obtain career-oriented employment that allows them to avoid benefits cliffs and progressively transition out of support. Agencies can also assess the variety of benefits cliff situations that arise and develop regulatory and policy strategies to minimize negative impacts and soften the transition from benefits to self-sufficiency. By coordinating and collectively orienting benefits services in this way, federal government can help build economic resilience for communities and individuals, reduce disruptions, and contribute to well-being and wealth generation, as well as benefit gross domestic product.



This Links to

- » **Belonging and Civic Muscle**
- » **Basic Needs for Health & Safety**
- » **Humane Housing**
- » **Lifelong Learning**

Strong Connection to Meaningful Work & Wealth I., J.

Starting Points

- » **Establish common interagency priorities to align benefits programs** to help recipients achieve common outcomes for equity, performance, and well-being, leveraging the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup.
- » **Assess cross-agency regulatory requirements, policies, and other drivers** to identify flexibilities and opportunities for states to overhaul their systems to strengthen supports to family units. Example aspects to explore:
 - » Define benefits eligibility thresholds across systems and services (e.g., child care, food, Medicaid, housing) to align with financial self-sufficiency to avoid or reduce the benefits cliff effect.
 - » Identify opportunities for states to shift allowances across services based on need.
 - » Explore possible resources for healthcare coverage for employed individuals and families whose income is not low enough to qualify for Medicaid and Marketplace coverage is unaffordable.
 - » Address the benefits cliff implications of raising the minimum wage when cost of living is also rising.

(Continued)



- » Address staffing and resource challenges at the state level to support coordination of benefits services and reduce benefits cliffs.
- » **Partner with states to support and incentivize alignment of benefits eligibility thresholds** with economic development and workforce development for livable wage jobs that match local needs to help individuals transition off benefits support in a meaningful way.
- » Example: Leverage job tax credit programs to increase career-oriented job access through remote workforce options where available, to help mitigate transportation and child care costs in the event of losing related support benefits due to small increases in earnings.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- FRB[#]
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/CMS
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/SAMHSA
- HUD
- USDA

¹¹⁰ National Conference of State Legislatures. (2019, August 20). *Addressing benefits cliffs*. <https://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/addressing-benefits-cliffs.aspx>

¹¹¹ Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. (2020, September). *The racial income gap and benefits cliffs*. Atlanta, GA: Author. <https://www.atlantafed.org/community-development/publications/partners-update/2020/05/200918-the-racial-income-gap-and-benefits-cliffs.aspx>

[#]ELTRR Interagency Workgroup members represent the Atlanta and Richmond Federal Reserve Banks (i.e., not the Federal Reserve System or Board of Governors); the Federal Reserve Banks are not government agencies and were founded by Congress to serve as the nation's central bank

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.



Recommendation B

Increase access to equitable, high quality, and safe child care to support families to balance family and work responsibilities, prioritizing federal resources to invest in child care businesses and workforce professionalization.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Dependable, high-quality child care creates opportunities for parents to earn income for their families and engage in fulfilling careers. It also supports parents by providing time to seek employment, attend school or educational classes, and maintain their health and well-being. Lack of safe and affordable child care options is often the impetus for one member of a household to leave the workforce. Increasing access can provide more choice for families, help balance family and work responsibilities, and support individuals who have taken on a lead caregiver role at home to enter or re-enter the workforce when desired.¹¹²

Currently, the importance of dependable, high-quality child care is not reflected in its supply, its quality, or the supports provided for it. Quality is inconsistent and inequitably accessible, and inadequately measured to transparently provide information to parents. The economic health of the child care sector is also a major concern. Often, child care business owners possess expertise in education and early childhood development but can benefit from opportunities to strengthen skills in business development and operations. Pathways for upward mobility and career progression are needed, as many employees do not have access to the financial means or tools to advance in education or job position. The federal government can help families, children, and child care owners—many of whom are women and belong to racial and ethnic minority groups—alike by investing collaborative resources and flexibilities to make child care a high-quality service and a highly valued profession.



This Links to

- » **Belonging and Civic Muscle**
- » **Basic Needs for Health & Safety**
- » **Lifelong Learning D.**

Starting Points

- » **Create cross-agency partnerships among agencies that interface with aspects of child care** (e.g., ACF, SBA, CDC, HUD, USDA, DOC,* DOL*) to align resources and proactive network engagement to incentivize state and local investments in high-quality child care that is equitably distributed, focusing investment in child care deserts, and that includes developmentally appropriate curriculum, small class sizes, and culturally and linguistically responsive environments inclusive of children with disabilities.
- » **Conduct an interagency assessment to identify child care deserts and opportunities to stimulate development** and investment in local communities to increase the presence of and access to high-quality child care available to households receiving housing assistance.
- » **Identify cross-agency opportunities to support the economic health of the child care sector**, including creating a living wage career path for employment in child care and early childhood education.

(Continued)



- » **Engage in community development strategies** with government, banking, business, and community-based organizations to incentivize establishment of child care providers in identified child care deserts with increased business grants and resources; identifying opportunities to incentivize businesses to offer on-site child care services with flexible hours.
- » **Support flexible funding to allow states to make child care affordable**—so families pay only a portion of their income, based on a sliding scale—by increasing family income eligibility and/or provider voucher levels.
- » **Expand available consumer education resources, e.g., those developed by ACF, and extend to include a range of cross-agency collaborations**, across parenting and non-parenting adult networks, to increase awareness of resources and how to make informed decisions to support choice and high-quality child care.
- » **Increase consumer education among parents before child care is needed to support choice** through whole-person approaches to intake for federal programs and services and by leveraging encounters in prenatal, labor and delivery, and pediatric care settings as opportunities to share information about high-quality child care options.
- » **Identify cross-agency resources and local partnerships to reduce barriers to employment** that result from high-burden cross-state required background checks for all child care workers.
- » **Assess and identify opportunities to increase access** to high-quality child care during non-standard hours.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DOC*
- DOL*
- ED
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ASPR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/HRSA
- HUD
- SBA
- USDA

¹¹²Vogtman, J. (2017, December). *Undervalued: a brief history of women's care work and child care policy in the United States*. Washington, DC: National Women's Law Center. https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/final_nwlc_Undervalued2017.pdf

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Recommendation C

Increase opportunities for people from racial and ethnic minority groups to create and grow small businesses, entrepreneurship skills, and wealth.

Contributions to Greater Thriving^{113,114}

Opportunities to increase generational wealth and address generational poverty provide the financial stability needed to build resilient communities and populations. As climate change creates more disruptions, communities that have historically been underrepresented often face the greatest instability in times of emergency. Addressing systemic racism to increase opportunities for small business ownership and entrepreneurship will help create equitable pathways to wealth generation that increase resilience. Programs to support this end exist; however, delivery is inconsistent in both urban and rural settings. The federal government can help equip intermediary state and local organizations to effectively navigate and use these programs with people in their communities.



This Links to

- » **Belonging and Civic Muscle**
- » **Lifelong Learning**

Starting Points

- » **Align the various programs across federal departments and agencies**, focusing on DOC,* DOD,* SBA, EPA, HUD, and the General Services Administration (GSA),* that provide technical assistance related to small businesses and entrepreneurship to communities that have historically been marginalized, specifically focusing on (a) ensuring alignment and consistency in framing, information provided, and maximization of all available resources in complementary manners and (b) leveraging respective agency networks in an additive and complete manner to clearly share all information and resources.
 - » Leverage flexibilities and create incentives within federal programs (e.g., USDA disaster recovery programs) to empower community development, entrepreneurship, and business incubation and ownership in communities with fewer social and economic resources using collaborative vehicles (e.g., cost sharing, embedded training and support, reduction of overhead).
 - » Re-vision TANF, SNAP Employment and Training, EPA workforce programs, DOL* workforce programs, and other workforce programs to focus on client-centered approaches and remove barriers and support access to living-wage careers through small business ownership and entrepreneurship.
 - » Existing resources:
 - » [Rural Business Development Grants](#) (USDA)—Different loan programs, farm development loans, and access to capital that include entrepreneurship and other business trainings.
 - » [Community Economic Development Program](#) (ACF), which provides federal grant program funding to Community Development Corporations that address the economic needs of individuals and families with low income through the creation of sustainable business development and employment opportunities.
 - » [CDFI loan fund](#) (Department of the Treasury [USDT]*).
 - » [USDT's* CDFI Rapid Response Program \(CDFI RRP\)](#) will provide necessary capital for CDFIs to respond to economic challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in communities with limited access to resources.

(Continued)



- » **Increase adaptive communication and partnership with state, local, and hyper-local networks** (e.g., faith-based networks, school systems, large employers, and unions) connected to and trusted by communities not currently benefiting from resources for existing and new small businesses.
- » **Conduct a cross-agency assessment to determine approaches to improve procurement and contracting administration** to align and meet set-aside goals to reach and support resource provision to small businesses owned by people from racial and ethnic minority groups.
- » **Develop social systems for peer-to-peer learning** about small business ownership.
- » **Increase access to credit, business development loans, and equity investment** to start small businesses, including:
 - » Raising awareness of and helping connect entrepreneurs to [social impact investors](#) who focus investments on opportunities that strengthen the vital conditions.
 - » Increasing awareness of and expand existing economic investment “incubation programs” used nationwide that provide mentorship on business models and low- or zero-rent facilities to entrepreneurs to reduce overhead and capital investment when starting a new business, while providing a pathway to graduate to start paying rent.
- » **Incentivize public-private partnerships** to advance and leverage resources to create and grow small businesses and entrepreneurial skills training.
- » **Identify opportunities for data sharing on small business resource application and access** with state and local officials and provide analytic support that allows state and local partners to take targeted actions, leveraging the data to drive awareness raising and uptake.
- » **Identify federal agencies that have relationships with sectors of small business owners** (e.g., child care, healthcare, behavioral health, environmental remediation) and establish partnerships to better connect with and align policy and business support resources, leveraging SBA data and analytic support to drive access to financial resources for small business.
- » **Leverage existing executive orders and related task forces and initiatives focused on data modernization and equity to advance shared measurement frameworks** that prioritize sector and community outcomes for well-being and thriving and that incentivize outcome measures within ongoing and future funding opportunities.
 - » Advance shared measurement frameworks to demonstrate how federal programs have increased program utilization at the constituent and state levels in areas with generational poverty and systemic racism.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- | | | |
|--------|--------------|---------|
| • DOC* | • HHS/ACF | • NEA |
| • DOD* | • HHS/HRSA | • SBA |
| • EPA | • HHS/SAMHSA | • USDA |
| • FRB# | • HUD | • USDT* |
| • GSA* | | |

¹¹³ Prosperity Now. (n.d.). *Racial wealth divide initiative & projects*. <https://prosperitynow.org/racial-wealth-divide-initiative/>

¹¹⁴ Federal Reserve Banks. (n.d.). *Fed small business*. <https://www.fedsmallbusiness.org/>

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Recommendation D

Incentivize states and employers to adopt multi-generational family leave policies (e.g., earned paid sick leave).

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Leveraging paid leave to more readily allow employees to care for multiple generations—from grandchildren to grandparents—increases flexibility and job stability for employees caring for family members other than their children. With a large generation reaching older age, more working adults will likely find themselves needing to care for their parents or grandparents in coming years. Often, this burden will fall on women and people who live in multigenerational households, including people from racial and ethnic minority groups. In addition, working grandparents may need to balance work and caring for grandchildren and have limited ability to use paid leave to do so. Disruptions to work from caring for relatives other than children may interfere with the ability for a family to build generational wealth and create increasing barriers over time. This type of disruption, already common, is occurring at increased rates with COVID-19 driving school and work closures and causing long-term debilitating effects, bouts of severe illness, and death of children's primary and secondary caregivers. The federal government can serve as a model and provide resources including example supportive policies, services, and incentives to employers to help effect this change. While the federal workforce is, as of 2020, providing this support, state and local government, business, and non-profit organization employees rely on voluntary employer policies, which vary considerably. This is a particularly salient concern for women, who are often the primary caretakers for children and aging parents and also comprise nearly half of the nation's workforce, impacting short-term financial resources and lifelong earning potential.^{115, 116, 117}



This Links to

- » **Belonging and Civic Muscle**
- » **Basic Needs for Health & Safety M.**

Starting Points

- » **Raise awareness of existing federal employment, contractor, and funding recipient policy language** and service provisions and encourage state, local, and employer adoption of expanded paid sick leave.
- » **Build on federal employee leave provisions** of the Federal Employee Paid Leave Act to expand and increase use of paid leave for caring for family members ranging from grandchildren to grandparents.
- » **Encourage expansion of local and state initiatives to increase access to paid leave**, including identifying and sharing exemplars and leading models across the country.

(Continued)



Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DOL*
- FRB#
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ACL
- HHS/CMS
- HHS/HRSA
- SBA

¹¹⁵ Glynn, S. J. (2019, May 10). *Breadwinning mothers continue to be the U.S. norm*. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2019/05/10/469739/breadwinning-mothers-continue-u-s-norm/>

¹¹⁶ AARP & National Alliance for Caregiving. (2020, May). *Caregiving in the U.S. 2020*. Washington, DC: AARP. <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2020/05/full-report-caregiving-in-the-united-states.doi.10.26419-2Fppi.00103.001.pdf>

¹¹⁷ National Partnership for Women & Families. (2018, November). *The female face of family caregiving*. Washington, DC: Author. <https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/female-face-family-caregiving.pdf>

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Recommendation E

Identify means to allow reimbursement with federal funds for in-home dependent care provided by non-medically certified caregivers, including family members.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

When a family member requires full-time at-home medical care or assistance with activities of daily living, working adults often sacrifice their career and income to provide this care—often due to the cost of hiring care being prohibitive or not being covered by public or private insurance. This situation arises for caring for all types of dependents, including children, parents, grandparents, siblings, and even non-relatives. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated already significant care responsibility for families who need to be available to provide care full time due to closure of prior caregiving resources, illness including COVID-19 and long COVID, and economic hardship that has required families to step in and assume unpaid caregiving roles. This need can (and often is) fulfilled by non-medically certified caregivers who know the person in need of care. Our country's insufficient long-term care infrastructure often relies on this form of caregiving to ensure the daily care needs and to manage quality of life for many individuals who are aging and who are experiencing medical conditions or disabilities. Despite requiring full-time attention and support, this care is not paid. This burden is more likely to be carried by women and people who live in multigenerational households, including people from racial and ethnic minority groups.¹¹⁸
¹¹⁹ Offering supportive policies and services to individuals and families faced with this situation will increase resilience by helping these individuals to alleviate financial stress and burdens and build generational wealth.



This Links to

- » **Belonging and Civic Muscle**
- » **Basic Needs for Health & Safety N.**

Starting Points

- » **Assess existing flexibilities to identify policies that can provide federal resources or support services to pay in-home non-medically certified caregivers** who are unable to seek or hold employment due to their caregiving duties, including people providing this care for someone they know (relative or non-relative) who is dependent on this care to maintain their health (CMS/HRSA/SAMHSA).
- » **Identify cross-agency opportunities to expand existing programs or leverage existing policies as models** to be applied to additional populations and integrate with access to complementary benefits.
 Examples:
 - » The [Medicaid Self-Directed Care](#) program lets qualified people manage their own health services. It also lets them hire family members as caregivers in some states.
 - » The [Veteran-Directed Home and Community Based Services](#) program offers veterans a flexible budget. This allows them to choose goods and services they find most useful, including hiring a family member or neighbor as a personal care aide.
- » **Raise awareness of existing policies and programs that can provide reimbursement** among individuals who seek or participate in other federal programs or services.

(Continued)

Subcategory: Family & Community Wealth

- » Identify individuals who provide or receive this type of caregiving through whole-person approaches to intake for federal programs and services and intake to healthcare (e.g., at FQHCs).
- » **Incentivize employer benefits and other programs**, such as long-term care insurance, to offer supportive policies that allow the employee to hire in-home care for dependents provided by non-medically certified caregivers, including other family members.
- » **Incentivize long-term care insurance policies to permit people experiencing disabilities** to identify and select someone they know to provide trusted and paid caregiving that addresses their needs.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DOL*
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ACL
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CMS
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/SAMHSA
- SBA

¹¹⁸ Burns, T., Huang, J., Krivkovich, A., Rambachan, I., Trkulja, T., & Yee, L. (2021, September 27). *Women in the workplace*. <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/women-in-the-workplace>

¹¹⁹ Family Caregiver Alliance. (2016). Caregiver statistics: Demographics. <https://www.caregiver.org/resource/caregiver-statistics-demographics/>

*Agency was not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.



Recommendation F

Improve coordination of federal employment and training programs to connect job seekers, including those who are unemployed or under-employed, to career-path, good-paying jobs such as those in science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM).

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Helping people meet their employment goals involves connecting them to career opportunities in high-quality job fields and meeting child care, health, and other basic needs to support their continued employment and ability to thrive. Coordination allows for easier connection between services offered to meet these other needs and services that support job seekers in finding career path-oriented, well-paying jobs. Training programs and education in STEAM topics foster desirable skills needed in the 21st Century workforce¹⁰⁸ in areas with career-oriented employment opportunities. Enhancing and increasing these skills in a diverse group will help build resilience by creating a steady supply of individuals who can fulfill the demand for these skill sets.



This Links to

- » **Belonging and Civic Muscle**
- » **Lifelong Learning**

Starting Points

- » **Conduct a landscape analysis of federal programs across agencies** to identify career-oriented readiness and job training programs, cross-service models that connect job seekers to educational and training programs, and opportunities for enhanced coordination. Examples of existing programs:
 - » [Rural Business Development Grants](#) and the [Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program](#) can help ensure the rural workforce can compete in jobs in the STEAM fields—particularly as jobs in other local industries are reduced.
 - » Cross-agency educational initiatives with elements in post-secondary settings and for adults in the community that are collaboratively supported, including the following:
 - » CTE Initiative
 - » Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
 - » STEAM

(Participating agencies include ED, DOE, DOL,* FEMA, HHS, Corporation for National and Community Service [CNCS*])*
 - » Career-oriented training programs, in healthcare and other markets, offered by DOL*, USDA, ACF, and NIH.*
- » **Leverage regional federal offices and staff to bring together existing networks** of federal, state, tribal and local partners who work to connect individuals to jobs and enhance coordination toward career-oriented and STEAM trainings, employment opportunities, and opportunities for career advancement.
- » **Incentivize states to improve their data collection and analysis** so all partners can easily learn which jobs are in demand in their local or regional area, to be able to connect job seekers to those opportunities.

(Continued)



- » **Incorporate or expand existing training programs related to entrepreneurship and small business ownership**, with particular focus on STEAM industries.
- » **Provide technical assistance to help states leverage federal career and technical education funds** to support job training in STEAM through the [Perkins V Act](#).

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- CNCS*
- DHS/FEMA
- DOE*
- DOL*
- ED
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/NIH*
- HUD
- IMLS
- NEA
- NEH
- USDA

¹²⁰ Arts Education Partnership. (2021). *STEAM*. <https://www.aep-arts.org/?s=STEAM>

*Agency was not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.



Recommendation G

Integrate and universally implement standardized language for funding announcements to facilitate cross-agency collaboration requiring that supported full-time jobs provide a living wage aligned with the local market cost of living and prioritize the development of career pathways within high-demand, low-wage professions (not including summer, teen, and internship/paid learning programs).

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Paying a living wage supports inclusive communities that offer everyone who lives in them the opportunity to thrive. For workers, a living wage provides income to cover living expenses, reduce financial stress, and support improved health, increased opportunity for healthy child growth and development, reduced barriers to social inclusion, and an overall improvement in the quality of life. Living wages can increase worker morale, improve productivity, increase employee loyalty, and decrease costs associated with absent staff, training, and recruitment.¹²¹ Economic research shows that higher wages also support businesses by aiding in job creation and small business growth.¹²²

^{123, 124} Communities receive the combined benefit of resident health, engagement, and increased consumer buying power that benefits the local economy.



This Links to

- » **Belonging and Civic Muscle**
- » **Lifelong Learning**

Starting Points

- » **Assess funding opportunity announcement, grant, and contract language** to maximize agency authority related to requiring any organization, provider, or business engaged in service provision to the federal government to provide a living wage for employees within their locale of residence.
- » **Encourage expansion of local and state initiatives to increase access to living wages**, aligned to local cost-of-living levels, for all professions and jobs.
- » **Identify high-demand, low-wage professions and assess cross-agency** opportunities to collaborate with state workforce and economic development partners to support and incentivize the development of career progression pathways for these jobs.
- » **Partner with state and regional organizations to increase system integration** between jobs supported by federal programs (e.g., TANF, SNAP Employment & Training, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act [WIOA]), prioritizing employment and training activities on career pathways that will lead to a living wage.

(Continued)



Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DOL*
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ACL
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/CMS
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/OASH
- USDA

¹²¹ Holzer, H. J. (2008, December 10). *Living Wage Laws: How Much Do (Can) They Matter?* Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/living-wage-laws-how-much-do-can-they-matter/>

¹²² Chapman, J., & Thompson, J. (2006, February 15). *The economic impact of local living wages*. Washington, DC: The Economic Policy Institute. <https://www.epi.org/publication/bp170/>

¹²³ Willingham, C. Z. (2021, February 25). *Small Businesses get a boost from a \$15 minimum wage*. Washington, DC: The Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2021/02/25/496355/small-businesses-get-boost-15-minimum-wage/>

¹²⁴ Parrott, J. (2019, October 31). *The impact of increased minimum wages on local governments*. New York, NY: The Century Foundation. <https://tcf.org/content/report/impact-increased-minimum-wages-local-governments/?agreed=1&session=1>

*Agency was not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.



Recommendation H

Support student parents in completing post-secondary education by identifying and increasing coordinated use of existing benefits programs.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Children's educational success is [closely aligned](#) with their parents' ability to read;¹²⁵ in the United States, [43 million](#) people lack the basic literacy and numeracy skills needed for work.¹²⁶ Among students enrolled in college, one in four is parenting. While they often use earnings from work to pay for their education, student parents [disproportionately](#) rely on student loan debt.¹²⁷ Financial and social support programs provide these parents with another resource to meet a diverse set of needs so they can effectively engage, and succeed, in educational programs that enable them to pursue career-oriented, good-paying jobs to sustain their families. Although these programs exist, they are often inaccessible or underutilized due to lack of awareness and eligibility issues, as well as a high degree of variation in access by geographic region. Federal action can improve coordination of existing programs to help match needs with resources and increase access for eligible individuals. This improvement will promote efficient use of existing resources to build generational wealth and improve resilience for individuals and their children.



This Links to

- » [Basic Needs for Health & Safety M.](#)
- » [Lifelong Learning F.](#)

Starting Points

- » **Assess and strengthen coordination of existing support services for parent students**, e.g., child care and early childhood education, housing, healthcare, food assistance, transportation.
 - » Identify agencies' services offered and current investments in programs.
 - » Discover how the public and grantees currently navigate these programs, and identify opportunities for better coordination.
 - » Consider providing a central access point for student parents to learn about the collection of supports available.
- » **Forge partnerships among federal human services agencies, state college systems, and state offices of higher education** to increase awareness of existing support services for student parents through these settings.
- » **Build partnerships with philanthropic organizations** to identify and scale best practices happening at the institutional, local, or state levels.
- » **Improve data systems for existing support programs and increase access to information** for benefit provider agencies, higher education systems, policymakers, and the public to inform effectiveness of community-based programs and raise awareness about students in adult and post-secondary education and the needs they may have.

(Continued)



Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- ED
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/CMS
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/NIH*
- USDA

¹²⁵ National Literacy Directory. (n.d.). *Facts*. <https://www.nld.org/page/facts>

¹²⁶ ProLiteracy. (n.d.). *U.S. adult literacy facts*. https://www.proliteracy.org/Portals/0/pdf/PL_AdultLitFacts_US_flyer.pdf

¹²⁷ The Institute for Women's Policy Research. (2012, May 30). *Single student parents have higher student debt burden, especially at for-profit colleges*. Washington, DC: Author. <https://iwpr.org/media/press-releases/single-student-parents-have-higher-student-debt-burden-especially-at-for-profit-colleges/>

*Agency was not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.



Recommendation I

Advance federally funded or supported job training programs by increasing priority for career-oriented programs with integrated barrier reduction support services within and across agencies.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Job retraining programs offered by agencies are most effective when tailored to local hiring needs and circumstances across sectors, including employment opportunities provided by grants and contracts such as for infrastructure development (e.g., housing construction, public transportation, energy efficiency, environmental remediation). Through technical assistance and other means, the federal government should support state and local implementation in barrier-reduction workforce development programs (e.g., SNAP Employment & Training, TANF, WIOA) to align with emerging industry as well as economic and infrastructure development, and explore promising approaches such as mentoring, pre-apprenticeship, and apprenticeship programs. This focused support on grantee workforce development needs will help build resilience at the individual, community, and state levels by matching skills and needs with employment opportunities. In addition to benefiting the grantee, this effort will also help increase financial stability for individuals and families by providing training that creates pathways for career-oriented, fulfilling jobs.



This Links to

- » **Humane Housing**
- » **Lifelong Learning**

Starting Points

- » **Strengthen and standardize cross-program flexibilities** in existing barrier reduction support programs to allow states to tailor federally funded programs to meet local development and workforce needs.
- » **Adapt existing USDA self-help housing programs**, with input from beneficiaries, to focus on career readiness rather than job readiness.
 - » Example: For rural development, the [Mutual Self-Help Housing Technical Assistance Grant](#) allows for funds given to qualified organizations to help them carry out self-help housing construction projects in which recipients supervise groups of individuals with low incomes as they help construct their own homes. This program helps individuals build skills that can help them seek employment while also obtaining housing.
- » **Incorporate career readiness into HUD self-help housing programs** focused on accessing more affordable homeownership, and strengthen related supports to help prepare housing assistance recipients to qualify for and to find good-paying jobs.

(Continued)



Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/CMS
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/SAMHSA
- HUD
- USDA

*Agency was not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member

Recommendation J

Incentivize state economic development organizations to help communities connect and prioritize career-oriented training with high-demand and living-wage local employment opportunities, prioritizing under-resourced communities and that historically have been marginalized.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Better positioning workers to pivot their own professional development and match the needs and job openings within their community helps build community and individual resilience. To support these efforts, federal agencies can work together and with states to incentivize participation in locally tailored training programs (in-person and online options) that promote best practices for employers and job seekers to enhance alignment of skills to jobs. Currently, essential economic development is often disconnected from workforce development programs. However, community-based programs exist that exemplify opportunities to effectively align these needs. Developing a systems approach to align economic and workforce development can help support communities and businesses in proactively adapting to shifting employment trends (e.g., due to technology and innovation). This dependable support—focused on career readiness and growth, rather than being focused on job placement alone—allows individuals to access local opportunities and promotes long-term, well-paid employment, which helps build resilience, well-being, and thriving.

America's rural workforce, which provides a vital foundation for the nation's economy, is one group that can benefit from these program enhancements. Rural America supplies the nation's food and energy resources, and the fiber necessary for goods and manufacturing. Supporting rural employers and job seekers is important to equitably rebuild rural America's workforce and increase the resilience of individuals, communities, and the nation. Existing supports with potential to scale include workforce development planning; infrastructure and equipment financing; industry and employer engagement, entrepreneurship, and local business development; and education, training, and apprenticeship.



This Links to

- » **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
- » **Thriving Natural World**
- » **Lifelong Learning**

Starting Points

- » **Increase cross-agency resource coordination with state and local partnerships** to stimulate increasing qualified applicant pools for high-demand jobs that support federally funded services and align with community-determined needs (e.g., case workers, youth residential care workers, environment-related jobs).
- » **Standardize a practice of partnering with employers as part of all federally funded job training program development** to prioritize training that helps develop skill sets, such as computer-based training, that maximize flexibility and adaptive capacity for jobs in demand by local employers and community priorities.
- » **Conduct an assessment to identify potential mechanisms (e.g., through DOL,* DOC/Economic Development Administration [EDA]*) to facilitate continual coordination**, including goal setting and sharing of best practices, between economic development organizations and community development organizations at regional, state, and local levels.

(Continued)



Example cross-agency elements to consider:

- » Identify opportunities to coordinate funding across agencies, and to coordinate federal-level funding with technical assistance opportunities at the regional, state, and local levels (e.g., through HUD, DOC/NIST, Manufacturing Extension Partnership, USDA).
- » Leverage HUD [Community Development Block Grant](#) funds, which can be used to support such programs and provide technical assistance.
- » Leverage the [USDA Resource Guide for Rural Workforce Development](#) as a model support for community leaders and other local entities that helps start and grow businesses, create jobs, train talent, and give individuals the educational and financial tools to succeed in fulfilling jobs.
- » Leverage the community-based [SNAP to Skills](#) project (USDA/FNS) that offers states technical assistance, tools, and resources to build more effective and job-driven SNAP Employment and Training programs—federally funded, state-administered programs that provide SNAP participants with skills and education to find a good-paying job that leads to self-sufficiency.
- » **Incentivize collaboration through Centers of Excellence** focused on economic development, community values and priorities, and job opportunities at the community level.
 - » Incentivize employers to hire individuals participating in or who have graduated from federally funded community-based training programs (e.g., SNAP to Skills).
 - » Incentivize training programs to be tailored to jobs available in the same community (e.g., the Bridge Academy in Fresno, CA).
- » **Partner with economic development boards** to create cross-agency federal support for systematic approaches to align employer needs with job training program offerings and help match trainees and job seekers to job openings in the same community.
- » **Incentivize local college and university resources and career centers to provide technical expertise** to individuals experiencing unemployment or under-employment in the larger community, leveraging connections with alumni.
- » **Increase access to federal research and national-level findings**, and related technical assistance and expertise, to support local efforts (e.g., DOC/NIST [Manufacturing Extension Partnership](#) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [NOAA*] [Sea Grant](#)).
- » **Offer stipends or other means to address gaps that prevent participation in training** such as transportation, training fees, equipment, or child care, to reduce barriers that keep potential job training applicants out of programs.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DOC/EDA*
- DOC/NIST
- DOC/NOAA*
- DOL*
- EPA
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/NIH*
- HUD
- USDA

*Agency was not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.



Recommendation K

Revise financial literacy programs to include a curriculum that develops wealth-building skills, incentivizes applied and experiential learning, and connects to financial system access and use, prioritizing under-resourced communities.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

While financial literacy education programs exist, they often do not focus on building wealth and do not provide connections to real-world tools or opportunities to practice and apply skills in meaningful ways. The federal government can increase equitable uptake and use of financial literacy skills as a pathway to increase financial stability and resilience for communities. Programs can promote development and application of financial literacy skills by incentivizing the transition from knowledge to action across ages and developmental stages. Clearly coordinating across agencies to deliver financial literacy programs through formal and informal education channels can help federal programs instill savings and investment practices and behaviors from early age through adulthood and strategically reach new markets to increase equitable access and build resilience.



This Links to

» **Lifelong Learning**

Starting Points

- » **Assess and strengthen coordination of federal financial literacy program delivery** (e.g., programs promulgated through the Internal Revenue Service [IRS*]) to reach audiences across ages and learning stages, and populations that have been historically underserved by financial literacy programs.
- » **Leverage direct services programs offered through USDA, ACF, HRSA, and other agencies** to increase awareness of federal financial education and capability resources among individuals and families with lower incomes, communities, and small businesses (e.g., make information regarding existing financial literacy programs available at USDA service centers and field offices).
- » **Engage existing relationships with financial institutions (e.g., through SBA loan programs and FRB#) to implement financial literacy and skill development programs** at the community level for all ages and for populations that have been historically underserved by financial institutions.
- » **Incentivize employers to offer access to financial services and coaching** for employees through economic development initiatives with incentives to address financial service and credit deserts, or other means.

(Continued)



Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- ED
- FRB[#]
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ACL
- HHS/HRSA
- HUD
- IRS*
- SBA
- USDA

[#]ELTRR Interagency Workgroup members represent the Atlanta and Richmond Federal Reserve Banks (i.e., not the Federal Reserve System or Board of Governors); the Federal Reserve Banks are not government agencies and were founded by Congress to serve as the nation's central bank

*Agency was not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.



Recommendation L

Increase access to banking and financial resources (e.g., loans, debt relief) across federally funded programs for people with lower incomes and people from racial and ethnic minority groups.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Access to safe and sound financial services and credit creates opportunities for families, communities, small businesses, and farms to participate in financial and credit systems, providing stability, resilience, and opportunities to build generational wealth. These systems offer affordable financial transactions and opportunities to build savings for emergencies and investment, to establish or maintain credit, and to build wealth through access to capital for home or business ownership. Households and small businesses without emergency savings or reserves and who are reliant upon “money orders, check cashing, international remittances, payday loans, refund anticipation loans, rent-to-own services, pawn shop loans, or auto title loans,”¹²⁸ face threats of potential economic instability, particularly during hazards and disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic or natural disasters.



This Links to

» **Belonging & Civic Muscle**

Starting Points

- » **Analyze and drive strategies for federal action and policy advancement from COVID-19-related programs** (e.g., loans, grants, financial assistance) that address disparities in access at the state and ZIP code levels, including engaging local partner networks to understand the contextual barriers, perceptions, and opportunities to increase access to business resources.
- » Assess concentrations of populations that currently do not have access to or use banking resources (at all or optimally) to encourage financial services outreach campaigns, such as mobile financial counseling and services; example source: [2019 Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Survey How America Banks; Household Use of Banking and Financial Services](#).
- » **Assess financial banking and credit deserts** to support plans to encourage establishing alternative safe and sound access to financial services; example source: [Standard & Poor's Global Market Intelligence US banks close 148 branches, open 44 in February](#).
- » **Assess the economic well-being of families** and their potential financial risks to promote best practices to stabilize families ([Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System Survey of Household Economics and Decision-making](#)).
- » **Assess concentrations of diminished community credit health** to inform the need for flexible, responsive, and non-punitive banking and credit products and reputable credit repair services ([Federal Reserve Bank of New York Community Credit: A New Perspective on America's Communities](#)).

(Continued)



- » **Identify and increase awareness of resources** including (but not limited to) traditional banks, credit unions, CDFIs, minority depository institutions, and financial technology service delivery models that serve individuals with low and moderate incomes and small businesses.
- » **Encourage local, state, and regional government to support digital equity and access** and to increase engagement of financial institutions in community services and leadership, lending, and investing (example source: [Broadband Financing by Banks in Rural Areas and Indian Country](#)).
- » **Solicit input from communities and non-governmental organizations to inform interagency regulation** and encouragement of financial institutions to provide equitable access to financial services for individuals with low and moderate incomes and communities through the Community Reinvestment Act.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DOC*
- DOL*
- FRB#
- HUD
- IRS*
- SBA
- USDA
- USDT*

¹²⁸Abello, O. P. (2021, June 22). California has a plan to restore trust in banking. *Next City*. California Has a Plan to Restore Trust in Banking ([nextcity.org](#))

#ELTRR Interagency Workgroup members represent the Atlanta and Richmond Federal Reserve Banks (i.e., not the Federal Reserve System or Board of Governors); the Federal Reserve Banks are not government agencies and were founded by Congress to serve as the nation's central bank.

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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

Sub-Categories

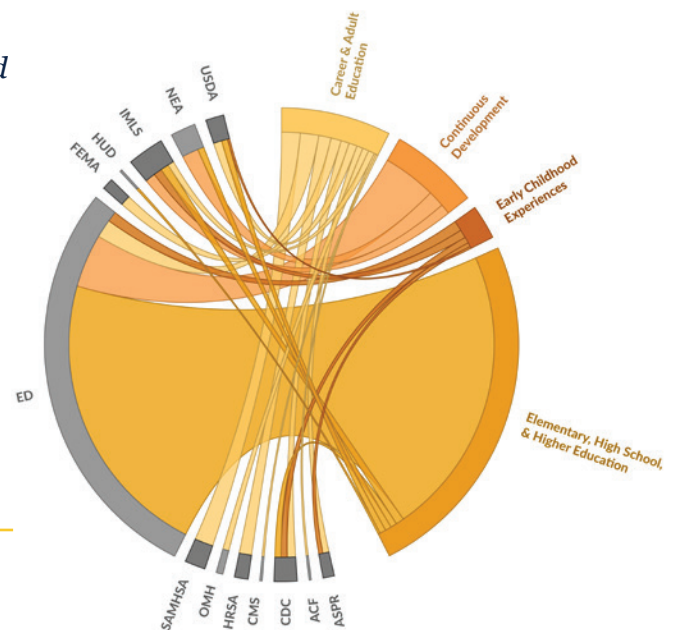
- Career & Adult Education
- Continuous Development
- Early Childhood Experiences
- Elementary, High School, & Higher Education

Introduction

Dynamic learning opportunities increase literacy, knowledge, skills, and insight that set foundations for an individual's ability to thrive across the lifespan. Higher levels of educational attainment are linked to higher incomes, increased opportunities, better health, and longer lifespans.^{129,130,131} It is critical to raise awareness of the value of age- and stage-appropriate learning, beginning with early childhood programs and continuing through post-secondary and adult education, to promote programs for all ages and encourage engagement in experiential learning. Further, learning opportunities must be offered in ways that ensure equitable access and that foster the entire community's perception of representative enrichment as valuable. Providing opportunities in and outside of schools for enriching multi-generational experiences will build skills, foster personal growth, and increase social connections that strengthen community and individual resilience.

Figure 12. Existing Agency Assets Mapped to Lifelong Learning Sub-Categories

- ASPR
- ACF
- CDC
- CMS
- HRSA
- OMH
- SAMHSA
- ED
- FEMA
- HUD
- IMLS
- NEA
- USDA



¹²⁹ Roy, B., Kiefe, C. I., Jacobs, D. R., Goff, D. C., Lloyd-Jones, D., Shikany, J. M., ... & Lewis, C. E. (2020). Education, race/ethnicity, and causes of premature mortality among middle-aged adults in 4 US Urban communities: Results From CARDIA, 1985–2017. *American Journal of Public Health, 110*(4), 530–536. <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2019.305506>

¹³⁰ Luy, M., Zannella, M., Wegner-Siegmundt, C., Minagawa, Y., Lutz, W., & Caselli, G. (2019). The impact of increasing education levels on rising life expectancy: a decomposition analysis for Italy, Denmark, and the USA. *Genus, 75*(1), 11. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41118-019-0055-0>

¹³¹ Sasson, I., & Hayward, M. D. (2019). Association between educational attainment and causes of death among White and Black US Adults, 2010–2017. *JAMA, 322*(8), 756–763. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2019.11330>

Statistics



Every **\$1 invested** in quality early childhood programs can **yield returns between \$4 and \$16**.¹³²



37% of high school students persistently feel sad or hopeless.¹³³



Youth who feel more connected at home and at school are **less likely** to experience health risk behaviors related to behavioral health, violence, sexual health, and substance use in adulthood.^{134, 135}



Older adults who volunteer frequently **live longer and report less disability**.¹³⁶



Participation in the arts during early childhood has **benefits** for **social-emotional development**.¹³⁷



In middle-income neighborhoods the ratio of books per child is **13 to 1**; in low-income neighborhoods, the ratio is **1 age-appropriate book for every 300 children**.¹³⁸



13 million children are enrolled in districts where the children's materials circulation is less than 10 per student, including 3.4 million students in poverty and 6.6 million students of color.¹³⁹



Out of the **\$170 billion** that employers invest in formal training each year, **58%** of funding is channeled toward workers who have already earned bachelor's degrees and work in higher-paying professional and managerial positions.¹⁴⁰



The federal government invests **\$139 billion** in postsecondary education, the majority of which is for financial aid for those who are enrolled in undergraduate degree programs.¹⁴¹

¹³² The Heckman Equation. (n.d.). *ABC/CARE: Elements of quality early childhood programs that produce quality outcomes*. https://heckmanequation.org/www/assets/2018/06/F_Heckman_ABC_CARE_Quality_110117.pdf

¹³³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, October 8). *Adolescent connectedness*. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/youth-connectedness-important-protective-factor-for-health-well-being.htm>

¹³⁴ Steiner, R. J., Sheremenko, G., Lesesne, C., Dittus, P. J., Sieving, R. E., & Ethier, K. A. (2019). Adolescent connectedness and adult health outcomes. *Pediatrics*, 144(1), e20183766. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2018-3766>

¹³⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, October 8). *Adolescent connectedness*. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/youth-connectedness-important-protective-factor-for-health-well-being.htm>

¹³⁶ Harris, A. H. S., & Thoresen, C. E. (2005). Volunteering is associated with delayed mortality in older people: Analysis of the Longitudinal Study of Aging. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 10(6), 739–752. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105305057310>

¹³⁷ Menzer, M. (2015). *The arts in early childhood: Social and emotional benefits of arts participation. A Literature Review and Gap-Analysis (2000–2015)*. Washington, DC: NEA Office of Research & Analysis. <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/arts-in-early-childhood-dec2015-rev.pdf>

¹³⁸ Dickinson, D. K., & Neuman, S. B. (Eds.). (2007). *Handbook of early literacy research* (Vol. 2). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

¹³⁹ United States Department of Education. (n.d.). *Access to reading materials: Circulation of children's library materials, by school district*. <https://www2.ed.gov/datastory/bookaccess/index.html>.

¹⁴⁰ Carnevale, A. P., Strohl, J., & Gulish A. (2015). *College is just the beginning: Employer's role in the \$1.1 trillion postsecondary education and training system*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy, Center on Education and the Workforce. <https://1gyhoq479ufd3yna29x7ubjn-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Trillion-Dollar-Training-System-pdf>

¹⁴¹ Opportunity America/AEI/Brookings Working Class Study Group. (2018). *Work, skills, community: Restoring opportunity for the working class*. Washington, DC: Opportunity America, the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, and the Brookings Institution. http://opportunityamericaonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/WCG-final_web.pdf.

Recommendation A

Increase investments in person- and family-centered transitional skills programs and curricula for people currently in or transitioning from long-term care facilities, state psychiatric systems, or jail or prison.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

People who live in long-term care facilities, state psychiatric systems, or jail and prison settings for a prolonged time need specialized supports to safely and successfully reintegrate into communities. In turn, communities need learning opportunities to understand and be sensitive to the range of unique challenges people face during these transitions and to be aware of interpersonal tools to effectively support individuals in their communities through community-based resources. Community assets that provide inclusive and responsive lifelong learning for these populations include, but are not limited to, transitional housing, employment, vocational training, benefits enrollment, and specialized parenting or other family-centered supports for people reuniting with their families. Generally, building supportive connections to community while honoring the unique needs of these populations aligns with the Olmstead decision,¹⁴² which affirms that people have the right to live independently and receive services in the community. These supportive connections and services help members of these populations learn skills and knowledge that support their transition to stable, self-sufficient, and fulfilling lives and roles in the community. Beyond the community systems that provide direct services to these individuals, there are critical opportunities to raise awareness about their experiences, assets, and needs in the broader community. This increased awareness can foster a supportive, inclusive environment and create opportunities to share lived experiences, skills, and valuable knowledge with fellow community members—all of which help these individuals and their communities to build resilience and thrive.



This Links to

- » **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
- » **Basic Needs for Health & Safety**
- » **Meaningful Work & Wealth**

Starting Points

- » **Integrate strengths-based whole-person approaches into all federally funded resources** that prepare individuals to safely transition back to communities, including innovative and best practice mentoring programs, two-generational (2Gen) or whole-family approaches, peer support, and integrated or warm-referral path programs that all ensure individuals have a strong support system at each phase of community re-integration.
- » Engage federal agencies with resources that support populations with special transitional learning needs to **incentivize strengthening whole-person, evidence-based and promising healing-centered, and sensitive delivery systems** as key, consistent elements across agency services in this space, leveraging cross-agency technical assistance, guidance, funding, and partnership cultivation.
- » **Prepare communities to support people who are reintegrating by**
 - » 1) streamlining linkage to medical and other supports related to the vital conditions before a person leaves a facility,
 - » 2) providing and incentivizing training for employers, families, and social network systems to support people as they transition, and
 - » 3) raising awareness and promoting education opportunities led by individuals from these populations with lived experience to the broader community.

(Continued)



Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DOL*
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ACL
- HHS/ASPE
- HHS/CMS
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/SAMHSA
- HUD
- NEA
- NEH
- SBA

¹⁴²U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2018). *Serving people with disabilities in the most integrated setting: Community living and Olmstead*. <https://www.hhs.gov/civil-rights/for-individuals/special-topics/community-living-and-olmstead/index.html>

*Agency was not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.

Recommendation B

Allow the use of cross-agency federal funds to increase access to enrichment experiences in and outside of schools for under-resourced communities and that historically have been marginalized.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Increasing and expanding enrichment experiences in and outside of schools allows individuals to thrive following disasters and traumatic events, as well as through economic shifts, career changes, and life transitions. Under-resourced communities are often forced to make hard decisions about how to expend available funds, which may result in inadequate allocations for enrichment experiences. Outside of school settings, children and youth living within these communities may be confined to their neighborhoods, or within the walls of their homes due to violence or a lack of transportation or monetary resources, and thus may be unable to equitably access enrichment experiences. Children and youth in communities with depressed economies also have fewer learning resources available in their homes—on average, no more than two age-appropriate books per household. Exposure to new people, places, and life experiences helps develop personal character while encouraging a valuing of and delight in learning and exploration and enables individuals to visualize connections between learning opportunities and future success. Investing in the expansion and use of whole-family approaches aligns with the values of many communities while also providing opportunities for shared enrichment, family cohesion, and for adult family members to create additional culturally enriching experiences for children and youth.



This Links to

- » **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
- » **Basic Needs for Health & Safety**
- » **Meaningful Work & Wealth**
- » **Reliable Transportation**

Starting Points

- » **Identify existing cross-agency funding and partnership opportunities**, through engaging the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup, to integrate complementary enrichment resources that allow for community-driven individual and whole-family approaches.
- » **Leverage existing programs to provide opportunities for personal growth and development**, such as the NEA Arts & Human Development Task Force, which encourages more and better research on how the arts can help people reach their full potential at all stages of life.
- » **Identify interagency resources, including funding, and develop joint partnerships** at the federal level (e.g., HHS, HUD, ED, IMLS, DOI/National Park Service [NPS*]) so state and local communities can more seamlessly create ongoing partnerships with museums, libraries, botanical gardens, national parks, and other federally supported arts, culture, and science resources to cultivate citizen-driven enrichment experiences, prioritizing under-resourced communities.
- » **Leverage community colleges as a community setting for learning and experiences** (e.g., arts performances) available to the broader community that may also add value by creating on-ramps to additional education opportunities. Use as a model, NIH recognized and funded [Community College Consortium for Health and Safety Training](#) program.

(Continued)



- » **Maximize the use of the USDA [Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program](#)**, which provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas, and expand federal and local partnerships for program provision within the facilities.
- » **Expand resources and collaborations by partnering with ED's [Rural and Low-Income School \(RLIS\) grant program](#)** to integrate opportunities for provisions of culturally enriching resources that may benefit community members across the lifespan to rural, under-resourced community school districts.
- » **Leverage public-private partnerships to expand mentoring programs** for individuals across ages and developmental stages, including programs that use technology to increase modes of connection.
 - » Example mentoring programs to consider as models or to assess for opportunities to incorporate use of technology: Creative Youth Development program (NEA); [4-H and Positive Youth Development Programs](#) (USDA).

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DOI/NPS*
- ED
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ACL
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/NIH*
- HUD
- IMLS
- NEA
- NEH
- USDA

*Agency was not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members.

Recommendation C

Incentivize the use of public-private partnerships to maximize and sustain the integration of arts, culture, and humanities in lifelong learning programs and research studies.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Engagement in arts-driven learning supports academic achievement, social-emotional development, cognitive function, diverse awareness and delight, and other positive outcomes in children, youth, and adults.^{143, 144, 145, 146} Opportunities to expand arts, culture, and humanities in expected and unexpected settings, sectors, and interactions creates more vibrant and engaging communities, and the effectiveness of such opportunities has been well-founded by research.^{147, 148} By increasing public-private partnerships' use of existing resources developed to cultivate well-being, federal government can advance the routine use of arts, culture, and humanities concepts and experiences in continuous learning principles and models across community spaces.



This Links to

- » **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
- » **Basic Needs for Health & Safety**

Starting Points

- » **Collaborate with state arts agencies to strengthen sustained partnerships** among local and state social service agencies and arts organizations and teaching artists who provide arts programs and spaces to people of all ages.
- » **Engage public and private philanthropists to support lifelong learning programs** in the arts, including [Grantmakers in the Arts](#), [Grantmakers for Education](#), and [Grantmakers in Aging](#).
- » Leverage research from the NEA [Office of Research and Analysis](#) and [Research Labs](#) to **provide expertise and technical assistance to federal agencies and their partner networks**, leveraging arts-driven research to advance service delivery systems and approaches across the vital conditions through arts and creative engagement.
- » **Cultivate and expand public-private partnerships**, leveraging resources to advance sustained integration of dynamic arts and humanities initiatives within communities.
 - » Leverage resources of the [Arts Education Partnership](#), a federally funded network of more than 100 organizations dedicated to advancing arts education.
 - » Leverage resources of the NEA [Sound Health Network](#), established to promote research and public awareness about the impact of music on health and well-being.
 - » Leverage ED's [Arts in Education National Program](#), which supports national-level, high-quality arts education projects and services for children and youth with special emphasis on serving students from families with low incomes and students living with disabilities.
 - » Use NEA's work on [validating arts and livability indicators](#), intended to help communities better understand and communicate the value of shaping the physical and social character of places around arts and cultural activities, as a resource.

(Continued)



Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- ED
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ACL
- HHS/ATSDR
- HHS/HRSA
- IMLS
- NEA
- NEH

¹⁴³ Cucoş, C. (2014). The role of arts in adult education. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 142, 300–305. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.07.692>

¹⁴⁴ Kerka, S. (2003). *Adult Learning in and through the arts*. <https://www.ericdigests.org/2003-2/adult.html>

¹⁴⁵ Swapp, N. (2016, October 4). *Creativity and academics: The power of an arts education*. <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/creativity-academics-power-of-arts-education-neil-swapp>

¹⁴⁶ Hanna, G., Patterson, M., Rollins, J., & Sherman, A. (2011, November). *The arts & human development: Framing a national research agenda for the arts, lifelong learning, and individual well-being*. <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/TheArtsAndHumanDev.pdf>

¹⁴⁷ Morley, E., & Winkler, M. K. (2014, April). *The Validating Arts & Livability Indicators (VALI) study: Results and Recommendations*. Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts. <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/VALI-Report.pdf>

¹⁴⁸ National Endowment for the Arts. (n.d.). *Creative placemaking*. <https://www.arts.gov/impact/creative-placemaking>



Recommendation D

Expand the use of federal funds to increase equitable access to high-quality child care and universal early childhood education programs.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

High-quality and equitable child care and education lay a strong foundation for children to take full advantage of education and training opportunities later in life. The evidence is clear: for children in their early years, quality care *is* education. This is especially important for children from families with lower incomes, who too often start school without prior access to high-quality educational opportunities. A study by Nobel Laureate James Heckman found that every dollar invested in a high-quality, birth-to-5 years old program for children from families experiencing the most economic disadvantage resulted in \$7.30 in benefits as children grew up healthier, were more likely to graduate high school and college, and earned more income as adults.¹⁴⁹



This Links to

- » **Basic Needs for Health & Safety**
- » **Meaningful Work & Wealth B.**

Starting Points

- » **Develop interagency collaborations (e.g., SBA, ED, IMLS, HHS) that stimulate and facilitate local partnerships and ease of access** between licensed child care provider networks and dynamic learning resources for in-person and virtual resources, including museums, libraries, botanical gardens, national parks, and other enrichment settings that expand learning and cultural resources available to children while in child care settings.
- » **Expand and make easily available models, tool kits, and resources** for communities and child care provider networks to adopt and internalize multi-generational engagement and learning approaches to support adult engagement in the continuum of learning opportunities at home, in child care settings, and within community spaces.
- » **Support flexible funding to allow states to make child care affordable**—so families pay only a portion of their income, based on a sliding scale—by increasing family income eligibility and/or provider voucher levels.
- » **Expand available consumer education resources, e.g., those developed by ACF, and extend to include a range of cross-agency collaborations**, across parenting and non-parenting adult networks, to increase awareness of child care resources and referral agencies and how to make informed decisions to support choice and high-quality child care.
- » **Increase consumer education among parents before child care is needed to support choice** through whole-person approaches to intake for federal programs and services and by leveraging encounters in prenatal, labor and delivery, and pediatric care settings as opportunities to share information about high-quality child care options.

(Continued)



- » **Leverage cross-agency partnership networks and grant requirements to ensure families are provided with culturally appropriate information and support tools** that make clear the range of inclusive and accessible options available to choose from to support the needs of their child (e.g., child care centers, family child care providers, Early Head Start, faith-based providers) during intake for and ongoing relationships with other federal services and programs and during prenatal and pediatric interactions (e.g., at FQHCs).
- » **Create cross-agency partnerships among agencies that interface with aspects of child care** (e.g., ACF, SBA, DOC,* DOL,* CDC, HUD, USDA) to align resources and foster proactive network engagement to incentivize state and local investments in high-quality child care that is equitably distributed, targeting investment in child care deserts, and includes developmentally appropriate curriculum, small class sizes, and culturally and linguistically responsive environments inclusive of children with disabilities.
- » **Develop a cross-agency aligned approach (e.g., with ACF, SBA, DOC,* HUD, USDA) to sustain investment** in the child care business sector and workforce (e.g., childhood care providers, childhood care educators).
- » **Provide funding and technical assistance** to ensure child care workers receive job-embedded coaching and professional development, along with additional training opportunities funded by human infrastructure policy (e.g., the American Jobs Plan and American Families Plan).
- » **Assess and identify opportunities to increase access** to high-quality child care during non-standard hours.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DOC*
- DOL*
- ED
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/HRSA
- HUD
- IMLS
- NEA
- SBA
- USDA

¹⁴⁹ García, J. L., Heckman, J. J., Leaf, D. E., & Prados, M. J. (2016, December). *The Life-cycle benefits of an influential early childhood program*. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research. https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w22993/w22993.pdf

*Agencies were not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as additional members



Recommendation E

Increase incentives for schools to adopt and integrate whole-system social, emotional, and behavioral approaches and to meet recommended staffing ratios of students to trained school nurses and behavioral health professionals.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Responding to and supporting the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students contributes to a positive school climate, increased safety and preparedness, and well-being and resilience for students and staff. Investing in the whole student through this approach has secondary benefits of also supporting student families. However, many communities and their schools do not have the ability to integrate system-wide social, emotional, and behavioral support approaches due to gaps in available staff skilled to implement and support whole-child needs, such as trained school nurses and behavioral health professionals. Strengthening these skills and expertise and expanding the number of qualified professionals able to deliver these critical services can help students, their families, and the broader community increase social connections and resilience. Communities can amplify the benefit of integrating school-based social, emotional, and behavioral evidence-based practices by building and strengthening adjacent community-based systems and services through professional training in and application of evidence-based and promising healing-centered approaches.



This Links to

» [Basic Needs for Health & Safety](#)

Starting Points

- » Focus cross-agency resources **to incentivize career pathways, training opportunities, and staffing allocations** to increase equitable student-to-trained health professional ratios in schools. Leverage research from NIH's National Institute on Drug Abuse to guide the implementation and adaptation of prevention programs (such as life skills training) to strengthen protective factors and mitigate risk factors for substance use and risky behaviors among children and adolescents.
- » **Provide resources enabling communities to understand funding mechanisms and braiding** to maximize federal, state, and local funding aligned with complementary initiatives for effectiveness and sustainability of social, emotional, and behavioral trainings and approaches, with specific focus on increasing the number of trained nurses and behavioral health professionals in school settings.
- » **Provide guiding resources to increase whole-community awareness** of social, emotional, and behavioral needs, innovative and best practice approaches, and funding available to increase equitable uptake.
 - » Example: [ED's Supporting Child and Student Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Mental Health Needs](#)
- » **Incentivize adoption of evidence-based social, emotional, and behavioral system approaches**, including evidence-based and promising healing-centered approaches, through funding and best-in-class recognition of efforts across sectors and agencies.

(Continued)



- » Example system-wide approaches include Delaware's [Social, Emotional and Behavioral Well-Being plan](#) which supports districts and schools across the state in responding to and supporting the social, emotional and behavioral needs of students.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- ED
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/ASPE*
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/CMS
- HHS/HRSA
- HHS/NIH*
- HHS/SAMHSA

*Agency was not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.



Recommendation F

Support collaboration with community college systems as on-ramps to career development by expanding inclusion of barrier reduction and wraparound supports that increase enrollment and timely completion of programs.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Increasing completion of community college credentials can significantly increase pathways to higher-income, career-oriented jobs and contribute to a skilled and educated workforce. The jobs of the future will require more education and training—and a broader set of “human” skills and digital competencies—than jobs of the past. Community colleges provide viable pathways to good-paying jobs as an alternate to attending more expensive colleges and may better align to the life needs and situations of many adult students. The absence of any higher education or skilled training credential is linked to dramatically reduced earning potential: adults with only a high school education are 50% more likely to live in poverty than those with some college education or a 2-year degree.¹⁵⁰ Community colleges are connected to their local community employment needs and context, and play a pivotal role in providing a pathway to upward economic mobility as they reach a large population of students with lower incomes¹⁵¹ and students from racial and ethnic minority groups.¹⁵² For these reasons, community colleges are well-positioned to provide and expand barrier reduction and wraparound support programs, such as professional development programs that incorporate applied learning and align with credential requirements, to further help students and community members increase resilience and achieve thriving.



This Links to

- » **Meaningful Work & Wealth**

Starting Points

- » **Create focused interagency partnerships (e.g., ED, DOL,* HHS) to provide funding, technical assistance, and other resources** to states and community college systems to expand cross-system collaboration and integration and availability of barrier reduction and career pathway model programs (which require the use of supportive services).
 - » Lead interagency listening sessions with state and local partners to identify and understand priorities and challenges to promote equity and address students' needs.
 - » Evaluate benefit programs for policies that “penalize” students for being enrolled in education programs (i.e., policies that incentivize “work-first”) and provide guidance and technical assistance to states on best practices that support the dual goals of educational attainment and family stability.
- » **Enable agencies that fund workforce development programs to require wraparound services and incentivize funded projects** to work with networks of local community partners to identify effective barrier reduction and navigation resources.
- » **Pilot interagency collaboration around funding and other resources** to co-locate human service staff on community college campuses or employ train-the-trainer models on issues related to benefit access, case management, and improving access to basic healthcare and mental healthcare.

(Continued)



- » **Provide resources that enable broader networks of community partners to community college systems** to increase positive perception and acceptance of benefits on campus, including Medicaid acceptance at school health facilities, helping colleges accept EBT, and providing supports to access flexible high-quality child care.
- » **Increase student access to legal services and personal asset building** as core wraparound supports that support long-term stability and on-ramps to economic mobility.
- » **Use existing funding mechanisms through cross-agency collaboration** (e.g., HUD, ED, HHS) to maximize use of existing housing and new and planned community development projects that prioritize housing support for community college students with a range of household composition needs to improve access to stable, quality housing.
- » **Expand public transportation options to campuses and between campuses**, developed in collaboration with community co-leadership.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DOL*
- ED
- FRB#
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/HRSA
- HUD
- NEH
- SBA
- USDA
- USDOT

¹⁵⁰ Belfield, C., & Bailey, T. (2017, March). *The labor market returns to sub-baccalaureate college: A review*. New York, NY: Center for Analysis of Postsecondary Education and Employment. <https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/labor-market-returns-sub-baccalaureate-college-review.pdf>

¹⁵¹ Forty-four percent of students with household incomes <\$25,000 per year attend community colleges as their first college after high school.

¹⁵² 56% of Native American, 52% of Hispanic, 43% of African American, and 40% of Asian/Pacific Islander students attending college do so in community colleges.

*Agency was not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.

#ELTRR Interagency Workgroup members represent the Atlanta and Richmond Federal Reserve Banks (i.e., not the Federal Reserve System or Board of Governors); the Federal Reserve Banks are not government agencies and were founded by Congress to serve as the nation's central bank.



Reliable, safe, and accessible transportation

Active transport; close to work, school, food, leisure; efficient energy use; few environmental hazards; safe transport

Sub-Categories

- Active Transport
- Close to Necessities
- Efficient Energy Use
- Safe Transport
- *Few Environmental Hazards**

Introduction

All people need high-quality transportation to reach resources and services, but transportation is not equally available across communities and populations. Accessible, reliable, and safe transportation connects people to healthcare, work, learning, social activities, and civic engagement opportunities. Inaccessible public transit strands residents who rely on rides for mobility, including older adults and people with disabilities, and limits their ability to engage in essential activities. In addition, a lack of transit options, particularly at off-peak hours, means that people who work irregular schedules often have no safe or affordable way to get between work and home. Transportation infrastructure that aligns with access to key services and is designed to support the needs of those most limited in access to mobility is crucial to enable connections, independence, and access for all.

Economic growth since the end of the Great Recession has been highly uneven, with many regions facing persistent economic challenges, and thus, continuous transit system challenges. Even within areas of greater overall prosperity, pockets of persistent hardship remain. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated regional differences and increased the urgency to use sustained, robust infrastructure resources to create inclusive community prosperity through environmentally friendly transportation. However, spurring local economic growth has faltered due to rules that make it hard to hire locally for transit, and because state-level entities receive and determine how to allocate federal funds for local transportation resources, such centralized decisions have continued to reinforce the separation of many urban and rural communities, who remain underserved by transit services.

Communities have diverse transportation needs based on their location, related resources, and values. Supporting community-led objectives and goals is the most effective way to realize equitable access and well-being. Providing communities the opportunity to bring together dynamic resources to realize their self-driven

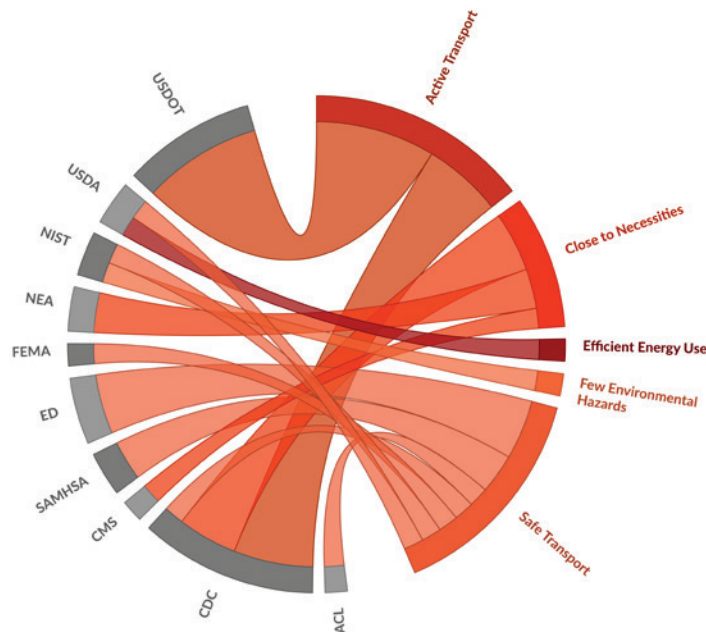
*Currently no federal recommendations.



transportation goals may also address economic, health, and human service needs and challenges. Transportation diversity continues to expand exponentially, leveraging technology, innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit to advance goals to improve access, health, and environmental sustainability. At the same time, affordable and equitable access to new, dynamic transportation modes and transit systems can expand connections beyond community boundaries and increase community engagement and vibrancy. Developing and maintaining trust in the reliability, safety, and value of transportation options is a critical component to community access, diversity of choice, and use. Local partnerships and networks can help advance shared quantitative and qualitative measurement to assess the impacts of transit on quality of life, opportunity, and well-being.

Figure 13. Existing Agency Assets Mapped to Reliable Transportation Sub-Categories

- ACL
- CDC
- CMS
- SAMHSA
- ED
- FEMA
- NEA
- NIST
- USDA
- USDOT



Statistics



25.5 million Americans live with disabilities that make traveling outside the home difficult, and people with travel-limiting disabilities are less likely to have jobs.¹⁵³



Americans spend an average \$9,000 per year on transportation, more than food (\$7,200) and nearly as much as healthcare (\$10,300).¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Bureau of Transportation Statistics. (2021, January 12). *Travel patterns of American adults with disabilities*. <https://www.bts.gov/travel-patterns-with-disabilities>

¹⁵⁴ Puentes, R., & Roberto, E. (2008, March 14). *Commuting to opportunity: The working poor and commuting in the United States*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/0314_transportation_puentes.pdf



The working poor spend a much higher portion of their income on commuting. The cost burden of commuting for the working poor is 6.1 percent compared with 3.8 percent for other workers. The working poor who drive to work spend the most: 8.4 percent.¹⁵⁵



Pedestrian fatality rates differ substantially by race and ethnicity. According to research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, from 2001 to 2010, pedestrian fatality rates for Black and Hispanic men were more than twice the rate for White men.¹⁵⁷



In 2018, accidents involving motor vehicles killed 36,560 people. The risk is especially high for pedestrians and cyclists. In the past 10 years, pedestrian and cyclist fatalities have increased by 50%; over this same period, all other motor vehicle fatalities have increased by less than 1%.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Puentes, R., & Roberto, E. (2008, March 14). *Commuting to opportunity: The working poor and commuting in the United States*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/commuting-to-opportunity-the-working-poor-and-commuting-in-the-united-states/>

¹⁵⁶ Retting, R. (2019). Pedestrian traffic fatalities by state: 2019 preliminary data. Washington, DC: Governors Highway Safety Association. <https://www.ghsa.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/GHSA-Pedestrian-Spotlight-FINAL-rev2.pdf>

¹⁵⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2013). Motor vehicle traffic-related pedestrian deaths—United States, 2001–2010. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 62(15), 277–282. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6215a1.htm>

Recommendation A

Require collaborative cross-agency community well-being needs assessments to increase integration of active transportation investments (e.g., greenways, paths, lanes for walking, biking) with community-defined priorities for civic engagement and well-being.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Addressing disparities in well-being requires aligning policies and activities across multiple interconnected systems, including the transit options that connect communities and services. Investing in active transportation modes, location of routes and paths, and related communication with the community can positively impact several health and well-being outcomes with cross-agency implications. For example, development of safe, accessible paths can help encourage walking and biking as primary transit modes, which increases physical activity and reduces vehicle congestion and emissions. Therefore, active transportation planning can strengthen multiple vital conditions by bringing together complementary federal resources and equitably engaging communities to inform needs-based, cross-sector decision-making. Interagency efforts must help improve systems and remove barriers to address inequities in access to comprehensive active transportation options. Agencies can align the use of existing resources and policies to streamline and amplify active transportation that improves multiple vital conditions.



This Links to

- » **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
- » **Thriving Natural World**
- » **Basic Needs for Health & Safety Q.**

Starting Points

- » **Lead a cross-agency assessment** to identify existing and opportune federal partnerships and resource contributions to support a holistic approach to active transportation, leveraging USDOT's [Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility](#) (CCAM), which coordinates the efforts of federal agencies that fund transportation services for populations that are underserved by transit systems.
 - » Include a review of policies to identify opportunities to streamline application and oversight functions to support joint resource use that advances active transportation and related benefits.
 - » Leverage existing CCAM [guides](#) and support resources to identify pathways for braiding and blending funding to create a model specific to active transit opportunities, and disseminate that resource through a range of collaborative networks.
- » **Use existing authority to the full extent possible and incentivize cross-agency partnerships** to blend funding that advances community needs through active transportation funding as the core resource, including:
 - » The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which proposes a USDOT Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program.
 - » The Federal Transit Administration's formula funding programs such as Urbanized Area, Rural Area, and Bus Facility Grant programs to lead the way on active transport infrastructure investment.

(Continued)



- » **Expand interagency partnerships** with agencies (e.g., CNCS*) that have networks to support local active transportation initiatives in a way that also increases civic belonging and social connection in communities.
- » **Establish shared measurement methods and indicators** to assess the impact of active transportation, leveraging state, local, and public-private partnerships to develop a common vision and identify existing metrics.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- CNCS*
- EPA
- HHS/ACF
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/HRSA
- USDA
- USDOT
- USDOT/FTA

*Agency was not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.

Recommendation B

Incentivize local partnerships with community-based service delivery organizations to co-locate high-value services and resources at new and existing transportation centers, prioritizing support for groups that have been economically and socially marginalized.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Communities need safe, accessible, reliable transportation services that take people where they want to go—e.g., work, hospitals and other medical facilities, food and retail stores, recreational areas, civic and learning institutions—within a reasonable amount of time and expense. In many cases, the variety of services people need for health and well-being remain inaccessible to groups that have been economically and socially marginalized due to limits in income, proximity, and time. Communities can increase well-being and equitable access for these populations by co-locating community-based services and resources at transportation centers that people already frequent. Individuals can thus conveniently access many services along a routine route they already use for one purpose (e.g., to get to work), saving time and money. Infrastructure planning should include equitable public participation and co-leadership across phases of design, implementation, and monitoring to address community-led needs and priorities in the other services provided near or at transportation centers. Actively listening to groups who have been economically and historically marginalized will maximize positive impact of planning and co-location decisions. Engagement with community partners that consider equity, economic, and environmental impacts will help align transportation investments with community needs and support equitable opportunity to access and enjoy a range of community resources that satisfy basic needs and strengthen resilience.



This Links to

- » **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
- » **Basic Needs for Health & Safety**
- » **Meaningful Work & Wealth**
- » **Lifelong Learning**

Starting Points

- » **Expand collaboration and joint technical assistance**, through cross-agency opportunities, to maximize current resources and partner network engagement at the state and local levels to support shared goals in community-based service delivery at transit centers.
 - » Use the USDOT and HUD Partnership for COVID-19 Recovery—an educational campaign about how the agencies can jointly support access to transportation, educational support services, food, medical appointments, and other essential services—as a model for state and local planning and implementation.
 - » Utilize the IJJA-proposed Healthy Streets program within USDOT to convene interagency working groups and better integrate land use and transportation planning.
- » **Assess cross-agency measurement frameworks and indicators** to determine opportunities to expand measurement of transit system benefits and well-being outcomes at the community and individual levels.

(Continued)



Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- HHS/ACF
- HHS/SAMHSA
- USDA
- HHS/HRSA
- HUD
- USDOT

Recommendation C

Increase cross-agency alignment and integration of infrastructure planning and design that leverages new and existing transportation centers as integrated hubs for core federally funded services (e.g., food, behavioral health, healthcare, workforce enrollment).

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Many federal agencies offer services to communities and individuals through community-based locations; however, these services often exist in disparate locations. As a result, accessing multiple federally funded services requires separate time-intensive activities, which poses challenges for qualifying individuals and families who often have limited financial, time, and other resources to pursue and access services. Bringing together multi-faceted federal resources in one coordinated environment (in-person and/or virtually) supports a whole-person or whole-family approach to service provision and increases opportunities for eligible individuals to access services that contribute to well-being and thriving. Transportation hubs—locations regularly accessed and valued by communities—can support integrated access that increases efficiency in time, navigation, and sustained use of resources. Federal agencies can collaborate with regional, state, and local networks to incentivize planning and design that co-locates services within transportation hubs to create impactful one-stop access for individuals and families who have often been economically or socially marginalized. Co-location of coordinated federally funded services in accessible environments will also increase awareness of potential eligibility and the value of these federal services in the broader community.



This Links to

- » **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
- » **Basic Needs for Health & Safety**
- » **Meaningful Work & Wealth**
- » **Lifelong Learning**

Starting Points

- » **Conduct a cross-agency mapping of federal services** located within communities to identify services that would benefit from co-location within high-value transportation hubs, and engage state and community partners in dialogue sessions to determine the best approach to maximize equitable access.
 - » Leverage research that considers dimensions of equitable transit experience—such as the Transportation Research Board Transit Cooperative Research Program findings on bus stops and improving the pedestrian environment for all riders—to improve equity in transit systems.
- » **Develop shared cross-agency language for funding and technical assistance** to incentivize state and local community partners to integrate whole-person service delivery placement within high-value transportation hubs, leveraging existing assessment requirements (e.g., USDOT Community Human Services Needs Assessment) to co-design services with communities.
 - » Use disaster response support one-stop service centers as a model for how steady-state services can be permanently set up in co-locations at transit hubs and support federal barrier reduction with blended funding.
- » **Develop cross-agency technical assistance materials that prioritize community assets and equity** and guide integrated cross-agency planning and implementation at the community level.

(Continued)



- » Leverage existing materials and effective models to facilitate community learning exchange, including:
 - » Community-based examples, such as in Paris, Texas, where Paris Metro partnered with Paris Regional Medical Center to house a regional transit service and establish a fixed route service including access to locations like medical facilities, grocery stores, colleges, work sites, and transit connections.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- HHS/ACF
- HHS/HRSA
- USDOT
- HHS/ACL
- USDA

Recommendation D

Expand access to environmentally and energy-friendly modes of transportation in urban and rural communities that are underserved by these transportation modes.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Transportation systems have the power to shape development, influence property values, and determine a neighborhood's character and quality of life. In communities that have been underserved through transit, other assets are negatively impacted and suffer reduced value. Thus, expanding dynamic transportation options to reach these communities increases access to transit and other services, real property values, community-perceived value, and opportunity for social connection among residents. Investments in environmentally and energy-friendly transit also have important implications for the environment—including air and water quality, climate change mitigation, and preservation of open space. Many communities that are underserved by transportation systems, both in urban and rural settings, have fewer investments in environmentally friendly options, which impacts people's ability to choose healthier options. Transit options, driven by how communities are developed and where investments are made, affect how convenient and appealing public transportation, biking, and walking are to community members. The disruption of transit needs and use driven by COVID-19 presents an opportunity to reengineer transit and implement structural changes that improve environmental impacts, such as emission levels and air quality, while also increasing access and choice for communities that are underserved by transit. The federal government can support states and communities in harnessing this opportunity to increase resilience.



This Links to

» **Thriving
Natural World**

Starting Points

- » Charge an interagency group (e.g., USDOT, EPA, DOE,* USDA, SBA, CDC) to **identify existing resources, initiatives, and funding that can be collaboratively leveraged to support investment** in new modes of transit access and connection between efforts that advance environmentally friendly transportation modes (note that this body could be formed as a sub-group of the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup, or a sub-committee of the CCAM or the IJA proposed Electric Vehicle Working Group).
- » **Require that federal transportation-related funding and resources** be planned with and accessible to regional and local officials with expertise in the local transportation needs and culture to inform decisions that increase connection and equity for communities that are underserved by transit systems.
- » **Identify public-private partnerships** that support research and increased options for innovative and affordable investments in environmentally friendly transportation options.
 - » Support dissemination of findings to state and local partners through dynamic, shared communication channels that align with actionable opportunities.
- » **Incentivize the use of technical assistance, peer exchange, and funding** by state and local partners to create programs that increase access to free or low-cost active green transportation.

(Continued)



Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- DOE*
- EPA
- HHS/CDC
- HHS/HRSA
- SBA
- USDA
- USDOT

*Agency was not consulted in Plan development; they were identified by the ELTRR Interagency Workgroup to potentially engage in implementation as an additional member.

Recommendation E

Maximize cross-agency coordination of funding and flexibilities to facilitate the widespread availability of reliable public transportation that is affordable, frequent, and convenient within and between communities to ensure access to resource across vital conditions, prioritizing geographic communities with less access to safe and convenient transportation.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Reliable and affordable transportation options increase opportunities for individuals and families to access necessary services and to participate in and contribute to building vibrant communities. A wide range of federal agency missions, initiatives, and programs may be more effectively achieved through collaborative investments in transportation innovations and systems that connect individuals to services and opportunities within and between communities, supporting the exchange of ideas, experiences, and assets. Communities that are more dispersed or remote face greater barriers to providing accessible and affordable public transportation, to innovations that extend transportation system options, and to convenient pick-up and drop-off environments. As a result, individuals in these communities often have less access to safe and convenient transit. Innovative solutions that may help support a complement of transportation modes (e.g., transportation partnerships with driver options, electronic timed arrival applications and signs) require significant investment and enabling infrastructure, including broadband access. Supporting communities to maximize the use of cross-agency funding and resource opportunities can help establish infrastructure, programs, and services to enable the transportation connections that contribute to well-being and thriving.



This Links to

- » **Belonging & Civic Muscle**
- » **Basic Needs for Health & Safety**
- » **Meaningful Work & Wealth**
- » **Lifelong Learning**

Starting Points

- » **Integrate cross-agency transportation-related assessments and planning into a single process** that maximizes cross-agency engagement and coordinated resource use in communities for the shared goal of increasing equitable, flexible transportation access and use, providing a single point of engagement for communities receiving transportation-related support from multiple federal agencies.
 - » Use as a resource the USDOT [United We Ride Framework for Action](#): Building the Fully Coordinated Human Service Transportation System, a planning and action tool that helps states and communities understand their current situation, define their priorities, and move towards specific actions.
 - » Use as a resource the [Evaluating Public Transit Benefits and Costs Best Practices Guidebook](#), which describes how to create a comprehensive framework for evaluating the full impacts (benefits and costs) of a particular transit service or improvement.
- » **Increase support for and national adoption of best practice models** created by state and local government to support accessible low or no-cost transportation for under-resourced communities or that have been historically marginalized (using federal and local dollars to blend and support lower transit costs).
 - » Consider models such as the New York City, NY income-based [Fair Fares](#) Program and the Kansas City, MO universal [Zero Fare Transit](#).

(Continued)



» **Expand cross-agency collaborations that leverage and integrate complementary funding, technical assistance, and guidance** with the USDOT [Community Rides Grant Programs](#), which support projects that develop or strengthen transportation partnerships and innovative options that improve access in rural and tribal communities, including expanding the USDA rural transportation partnership to include other federal partners.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- HHS/ACF
- HHS/HRSA
- USDA
- HHS/ACL
- SBA
- USDOT

Recommendation F

Incentivize the prioritization of mobility needs of populations that have been economically, socially, or geographically marginalized and/or are underserved by transit and transportation systems in local, metropolitan, state, and regional transportation improvement plans.

Contributions to Greater Thriving

Developing reliable transportation requires involving the community and the people who the service or infrastructure will impact in the planning and decision-making process. Public transportation systems have the greatest value when they are designed to effectively support the needs of populations that have the greatest limitations to access, yet also benefit the most from accessible and affordable public transit. Across the United States, populations with the greatest need and limitations are predominantly older adults, people with disabilities, and individuals with low incomes. These groups often live in locations with less access to transportation hubs, little to no infrastructure to assist with physical access to Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant transportation entry points, and other safety concerns related to accessing transit. Prioritizing innovation, technology use, and public-private partnerships has great potential to increase access to affordable, dynamic, and environmentally friendly transportation solutions that are designed to meet the needs of those most limited in transit options. These infrastructure improvements can help expand the availability of dignified and safe transportation access, increasing self-sufficiency and well-being of populations that have been economically, socially, or geographically marginalized.



This Links to

» **Belonging & Civic Muscle**

Starting Points

- » **Integrate cross-agency transportation-related assessments and planning into a single combined process** that maximizes cross-agency engagement and coordinated resource use for the shared goal of increasing equitable, flexible transportation access. Use the following USDOT resources:
 - » [National Aging and Disability Transportation Center](#), which promotes the availability and accessibility of transportation options that serve the needs of people with disabilities, older adults, and caregivers.
 - » [National Center for Mobility Management](#), which works to help communities adopt transportation strategies and mobility options that empower people to live independently and advance health, economic vitality, and self-sufficiency—and thus, resilience.
 - » [National Rural Transit Assistance Program](#), which addresses the training and technical assistance needs of rural and tribal transit programs.
 - » [National Center for Applied Transit Technology](#), which develops learning and planning resources for rural, small-urban, and tribal transportation providers and communities.
- » **Incentivize cross-agency public-private partnerships** that support local communities to co-design safe, accessible transportation options to create dynamic and cost-effective solutions for groups with the greatest transit limitations, informed by input from members of those groups.

(Continued)



» Use the [technical assistance available from the Build America Bureau](#) to help communities that have been historically marginalized or disadvantaged to participate in aligning community accessible transit needs, currently valued assets, and resources from across federal agencies that are necessary to build successful, sustainable whole-community models.

Potential Contributors

Federal departments and agencies with missions and resources aligned to provide leadership and/or support to implement this recommendation include:

- HHS/ACF
- HHS/HRSA
- USDA
- HHS/ACL
- SBA
- USDOT

Looking Ahead to Greater Long-Term Resilience



Looking Ahead to Greater Long-Term Resilience

The vision of the Plan is to significantly advance how the federal government focuses its efforts and engages with communities to drive toward a shared goal of equitable long-term resilience.

Implementing the Plan will create the coordinated, sustained action necessary to remove systemic barriers to well-being and fundamentally transform how the federal government understands the needs of communities and individuals, especially those historically left behind, and leverage its full capacity to benefit those communities. By adopting the Plan and associated recommended actions, federal departments and agencies can work together to realize a future with *all people and places thriving, no exceptions*

All people and places

THRIVING

no exceptions.

Appendix



Appendix

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Limitations

The following limitations to Plan development efforts were noted:

- Limited external partner engagement
- Gaps in agency representation


Strategies to address identified limitations are included in [Section V, Structural Elements Necessary for Sustained Change](#), as essential actions for successfully implementing the Plan. The limitations resulted from the need to act during the COVID-19 pandemic and develop the Plan with available resources and partners. Engaging additional federal agencies and external partners in the next phase aligns with the Plan structure and approach.

Framework Considerations

Given the unprecedented nature and prolonged duration of the emergency response and multi-faceted recovery needs in the nation from COVID-19, several frameworks were reviewed before deciding how to structure long-term resilience planning efforts. The Workgroup intentionally chose not to assume that existing frameworks could identify all avenues to pursue to build equitable resilience and greater well-being. The *Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework* was selected as the foundation and guide for this body of work. The Vital Conditions Framework provides the strongest and most comprehensive treatment to address the elements of all other frameworks considered. While other frameworks provide statements of need and describe systemic barriers, the Vital Conditions Framework provides an asset-driven road map for action to address the underlying community and individual needs. The transformative changes necessary to disrupt and correct underlying systemic failures—which continue to exacerbate disease, perpetuate instability, and increase the need for urgent services—demand the comprehensive, asset-based, community-centric framework realized by the Vital Conditions Framework.

The Vital Conditions Framework serves as an actionable umbrella that aligns and connects other frameworks. It directly catalyzes a whole-person and whole-system approach to bringing resources together to strengthen vital conditions instead of focusing on discrete and non-directional aspects of need. In contrast to other frameworks, the Vital Conditions Framework provides a clear future-state goal and describes what each vital condition must pursue to realize well-being and a state of thriving for all people and places.

Table 2. Alignment of Frameworks Reviewed by the Workgroup during Plan Development

Recovery Core Capabilities	Urgent Services	Social Determinants of Health	Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being
Operational Coordination			{Realized Through Implementation of Recommendations That Address the Vital Conditions}
Planning		{Implied Community Engagement}	{Implied Community Engagement}
Public Information and Warning			 {Implied Belonging & Civic Muscle}
Economic Recovery	Unemployment {and Food Assistance}	Economic Stability	 Meaningful Work & Wealth
Health and Social Services	Acute Care Addiction Treatment Unemployment and Food Assistance	Health Care System Education Food Community and Social Context	 Belonging & Civic Muscle  Basic Needs for Health & Safety  Lifelong Learning
Housing	Homeless Services	Neighborhood and Physical Environment	 Humane Housing
Infrastructure Systems		Neighborhood and Physical Environment	 Basic Needs for Health & Safety  Reliable Transportation
Natural and Cultural Resources	Environmental Cleanup	Neighborhood and Physical Environment	 Belonging & Civic Muscle  Thriving Natural World
	Crime Response	Community and Social Context	 Belonging & Civic Muscle  Basic Needs for Health & Safety

Alignment to Executive Orders and Other Priorities

The Plan is structured as a long-term plan (10 years and beyond) that would be integrated into the natural course of operations and align the way federal departments and agencies function to leverage resources across government to address the vital conditions. During Plan development, several executive orders and presidential memoranda were released that align with the shared vision for greater equitable well-being and the recommendations developed for the Plan. Bringing together these efforts may amplify impact. The Plan also aligns with other priority federal initiatives and activities applying the Vital Conditions Framework to help strengthen community well-being and thriving. A listing of these executive orders and presidential memoranda and a sample of activities is provided below. The Workgroup has engaged with several of the efforts listed that align to work identified in the Plan.

Executive Orders (EOs) and Presidential Memoranda

[Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations](#)

EO 12898 | February 16, 1994

[Catalyzing America's Clean Energy Economy Through Federal Sustainability](#)

EO 14057 | December 8, 2021

[Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government](#)

EO 13571 | December 13, 2021

[Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#)

EO 13985 | January 20, 2021

[Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation](#)

EO 13988 | January 20, 2021

[Ensuring an Equitable Pandemic Response and Recovery](#)

EO 13995 | January 21, 2021

[Supporting the Reopening and Continuing Operation of Schools and Early Childhood Education Providers](#)

EO 14000 | January 21, 2021

[Economic Relief Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

EO 14002 | January 22, 2021

[Redressing Our Nation's and the Federal Government's History of Discriminatory Housing Practices and Policies](#)

Memorandum | January 26, 2021

[Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad](#)

EO 14008 | January 27, 2021

[Strengthening Medicaid and Affordable Care Act](#)

EO 14009 | January 28, 2021

[Restoring Faith in Our Legal Immigration Systems and Strengthening Integration and Inclusion Efforts for New Americans](#)

EO 14012 | February 2, 2021

[Promoting Access to Voting](#)

EO 14019 | March 7, 2021

[Establishment of the White House Gender Policy Council](#)

EO 14020 | March 8, 2021

[Guaranteeing an Educational Environment Free From Discrimination on the Basis of Sex, Including Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity](#)

EO 14021 | March 8, 2021

Other Federal Priorities Toward Well-Being

- **Healthy People 2030**

"Create social, physical, and economic environments that promote attaining the full potential for health and well-being for all."
– from *Healthy People 2030 Overarching Goals* [[LINK](#)]

- **Office for Climate Change and Health Equity**

Justice40 Initiative

Regional Plan for Engagement and Action

- **Health Equity Task Force**

- **Regional Health Equity Councils**

- **Indian Health Service**

Plan for Long-Term Recovery and Resilience

- **Administration for Children and Families**

Active State Engagement/Model Exemplars of Partnership Connection

- **Department of Homeland Security**
Resilient American Communities Initiative
- **U.S. Department of Education**
Grant Programs and Technical Assistance
Centers Supporting Long-Term Recovery
COVID-19 Resources for Schools, Students, and
Families [[LINK](#)]
- **U.S. Department of Transportation**
Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility
(CCAM) [[LINK](#)]
- **U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness**
[[LINK](#)]
- **White House Environmental Justice
Interagency Council and the Environmental
Justice & Natural Disasters Committee**
Addressing Environmental Justice Concerns in
Disaster Preparedness, Response, Recovery, and
Mitigation [[LINK](#)]

Foundational Terms

The following terms are defined as they are used in the Plan. Where a formal definition is referenced, a citation is included as a footnote. Concepts are listed alphabetically.

Behavioral health

Behavioral health means the promotion of mental health, resilience, and well-being; the treatment of mental and substance use disorders; and the support of those who experience and/or are in recovery from these conditions, along with their families and communities.¹⁵⁸

Benefits cliff

“Benefits cliff” refers to the sudden and often unexpected decrease in public benefits that can occur with a small increase in earnings. When income increases, families sometimes lose some or all economic supports. These can include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), school nutrition programs, healthcare, child care assistance, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and housing. Often, wage increases result in a net loss of income or only a small overall increase. When lost benefits outpace a wage increase, many families “park” or fall off the cliff’s edge, stalling progression in their jobs and careers.¹⁵⁹

Blending (of funds)

Blending refers to mixing together funds from multiple sources to support a common goal or idea such that each individual funding source loses its program-specific identify.¹⁶⁰

Braiding (of funds)

“Braiding” describes multiple independent funding streams coming together to fund a single project.¹⁶¹

Community

A community is a group of people with diverse characteristics who share a common defined geographic location.

¹⁵⁸ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (n.d.). *Behavioral Health Integration*. <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/samhsa-behavioral-health-integration.pdf>

¹⁵⁹ National Conference of State Legislatures. (2019, August 20). *Addressing benefits cliffs*. <https://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/addressing-benefits-cliffs.aspx>

¹⁶⁰ Butler, S., Higashi, T., & Cabello, M. (2020, April). *Budgeting to promote social objectives - a primer on braiding and blending*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution. <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/BraidingAndBlending20200403.pdf>

¹⁶¹ Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility. (2020, June). *Federal fund braiding guide*. <https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/2021-04/ccam-federal-fund-braiding-guide-june-2020.pdf>

Community resilience

Community resilience is the ability of individuals and households to prepare for anticipated hazards, adapt to changing conditions, and withstand and recover rapidly from disruptions.¹⁶² When disasters occur, recovery depends on the community's ability to withstand the effects of the event.¹⁶³

Cross-cutting recommendation

A cross-cutting recommendation is an action that works to strengthen all vital conditions and transcends the vital conditions, such as incentivizing a community-based, community-driven orientation to infrastructure design and planning.

Equity/Equitable

Equity is the attainment of thriving for all people. Achieving equity, or equitable outcomes, requires valuing everyone equally with focused and ongoing societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities, historical and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of disparities.¹⁶⁴ Measuring progress toward equity requires disaggregation of data to assess the differing impact of societal efforts across demographics.

Hazard

A hazard is something that is potentially dangerous or harmful, often the root cause of an unwanted outcome.¹⁶⁵ Crises and disasters are the results of a hazard's impact and the vulnerabilities of communities and populations to the hazard. A goal of the Plan is to mitigate crisis by elevating resilience in communities nationwide.

Health

Health encompasses many aspects, including physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being. The World Health Organization also notes that health is "not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."¹⁶⁶

Health disparity

A particular type of health difference that is closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage. Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles to health based on their racial or ethnic group; religion; socioeconomic status; gender; age; behavioral health; cognitive, sensory, or physical disability; sexual orientation or gender identity; geographic location; or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion.¹⁶⁷

Population

A group or number of people sharing similar characteristics, identity, or sense of belonging who may or may not share a geographic location.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶² Adapted from *Community Resilience* by the National Institute of Standards and Technology. <https://www.nist.gov/community-resilience>

¹⁶³ U.S. Census Bureau. (2021, October 8). *Community resilience estimates*. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/community-resilience-estimates.html>

¹⁶⁴ Adapted from *Healthy People 2030* by Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, Office of the Secretary, & U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2021). <https://odphp.health.gov/healthypeople>

¹⁶⁵ Federal Emergency Management Agency. (n.d.). *Glossary*. <https://training.fema.gov/programs/emischool/el361/toolkit/glossary.htm>

¹⁶⁶ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health. (2013, April). *National standards for culturally and linguistically appropriate services in health and health care: A blueprint for advancing and sustaining CLAS policy and practice*. Washington, DC: Author. <https://thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/assets/pdfs/EnhancedCLASStandardsBlueprint.pdf>

¹⁶⁷ Adapted from *Healthy People 2030* by Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, Office of the Secretary, & U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2021). <https://odphp.health.gov/healthypeople>

¹⁶⁸ Adapted from Maraccini, A. M., Galiatsatos, P., Harper, M., & Slonim, A. D. (2017). Creating clarity: Distinguishing between community and population health. *The American Journal of Accountable Care*, 5(2). <https://www.ajmc.com/view/creating-clarity-distinguishing-between-community-and-population-health>

Multi-solver solution

An action in one vital condition that positively impacts multiple vital conditions. It can also refer to a broad change that impacts some, but not all, vital conditions, such as expanding access to broadband to enable teleservices. The interplay in cause and effect across vital conditions reflects their interconnected nature.

Social determinants of health

Social determinants of health are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.¹⁶⁹

Springboard

A springboard is a guiding framework that organizes the things people and places need in order to thrive.¹⁷⁰

Syndemic

A syndemic is a synergistic epidemic characterized by biological and social interactions between conditions and states, interactions that increase a person's susceptibility to harm or worsen their health outcomes.¹⁷¹

Thriving

A state of being that is strong, consistent, and progressing; distinguished from the struggling or suffering of people or places as measured with the Cantril scale.¹⁷²

Underserved

Underserved describes populations or communities that experience disparities in the access and utilization of programs and services.¹⁷³

Vital conditions

Vital conditions are the properties of places and institutions that we all depend on to reach our full potential, organized into seven categories. Our freedom to thrive depends on having a consistent set of vital conditions, such as clean air, fair pay, humane housing, early education, routine healthcare, and other pragmatic necessities. Vital conditions persist over generations.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁹ Adapted from Maraccini, A. M., Galiatsatos, P., Harper, M., & Slonim, A. D. (2017). Creating clarity: Distinguishing between community and population health. *The American Journal of Accountable Care*, 5(2). <https://www.ajmc.com/view/creating-clarity-distinguishing-between-community-and-population-health>

¹⁷⁰ Well Being Trust. (2021). *Thriving together: A springboard for equitable recovery and resilience in communities across America - Explore the springboard*. <https://thriving.us/explore-the-springboard/>

¹⁷¹ Horton, R. (2020). Offline: COVID-19 is not a pandemic. *The Lancet*, 396(10255), 874. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)32000-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)32000-6)

¹⁷² Gallup, Inc. (2021). *Understanding how Gallup uses the Cantril Scale: Development of the "thriving, struggling, suffering" categories*. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/122453/understanding-gallup-uses-cantril-scale.aspx>

¹⁷³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021, August 24). *Health equity guiding principles for inclusive communication*. https://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/Health_Equity.html

¹⁷⁴ Well Being Trust. (2020) *Thriving together: A springboard for equitable recovery and resilience in communities across America -Why Thriving Together?* <https://thriving.us/why-thriving/>

Well-being

Well-being is the presence of positive emotions and moods, the absence of negative emotions, satisfaction with life, fulfillment, and positive functioning. Types can include, but are not limited to, physical, economic, social, and emotional well-being. The term can also refer to entire communities, in addition to individuals.¹⁷⁵

Wraparound services

Wraparound is a way or process of working with children and youth with serious mental health challenges and their families, during which community-based services and supports “wrap around” a child or youth and their family in their home, school, and community in an effort to help meet their needs.¹⁷⁶ (“Wraparound” is used for a point of service or case management approach, rather than describing a system-level approach.)¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018, October 21). *Well-being Concepts*. <https://www.cdc.gov/hrqol/wellbeing.htm>

¹⁷⁶ Association for Children’s Mental Health. (n.d.). *What to Expect If Your Family Is Involved in Wraparound*. <http://www.acmh-mi.org/get-information/childrens-mental-health-101/expect-accessing-mental-health-services-using-public-mental-health-services/at-a-wraparound-meeting/#:-:text=Wraparound%20is%20a%20way%20or,to%20help%20meet%20their%20needs>

¹⁷⁷ Adapted from SAMHSA *Intensive Care Coordination for Children and Youth with Complex Mental and Substance Use Disorders: State and Community Profiles* by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2019). <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/samhsa-state-community-profiles-05222019-redact.pdf>

Acronyms

Table 3. *Acronyms*

Abbreviation	Full Form
ACF	Administration for Children and Families (HHS)
ACL	Administration for Community Living (HHS)
AI/AN	American Indian/Alaska Native
AMI	Area Median Income
ASFR	Office of the Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources (HHS)
ASPR	Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (HHS)
ATSDR	Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (HHS)
CCAM	Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (USDOT/FTA)
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant Programs
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (HHS)
CDFI	Community Development Financial Institutions (USDT)
CEAL	Community Engagement Alliance (NIH)
CFPB	Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
CLAS	Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services
CMS	Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (HHS)
CNCS	Corporation for National and Community Service
COMP	COVID-19 Operational Management Plan
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CTE	Career and Technical Education
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOC	Department of Commerce
DOD	Department of Defense
DOE	Department of Energy
DOI	Department of the Interior

Abbreviation	Full Form
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOL	Department of Labor
ED	Department of Education
EBT	Electronic Benefits Transfer
EDA	Economic Development Administration (DOC)
ELTRR	Equitable Long-Term Recovery and Resilience
EO	Executive Order
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FAS	Freely Associated States
FAST Act	Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency (DHS)
FHA	Federal Housing Administration
FQHC	Federally Qualified Health Center
FNS	Food and Nutrition Service (USDA)
FRB	Federal Reserve Bank
FTA	Federal Transit Administration (USDOT)
GSA	General Services Administration
HHS	Department of Health and Human Services
HOME	HOME Investment Partnerships Program
HRSA	Health Resources and Services Administration (HHS)
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
IHS	Indian Health Service (HHS)
IJA	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
IMLS	Institute of Museum and Library Services
IRS	Internal Revenue Service (USDT)

Abbreviation	Full Form
K-12	Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer or Questioning (“+” signifies inclusion of all sexual orientations and gender identities)
LIHEAP	Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NEA	National Endowment for the Arts
NEH	National Endowment for the Humanities
NIH	National Institutes of Health (HHS)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NIST	National Institute of Standards and Technology (DOC)
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (DOC)
NOFO	Notice of Funding Opportunity
NPS	National Park Service (DOI)
OASH	Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (HHS)
OCHE	Office of Climate Change and Health Equity (HHS)
ODPHP	Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (HHS)
OHS	Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Coordination (USDA)
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OMH	Office of Minority Health (HHS)
OST	Office of the Secretary (USDOT)
Plan	The Federal Plan for Equitable Long-Term Recovery and Resilience
QSMO	Quality Service Management Office
RAC	Resilient American Communities
RD	Rural Development (USDA)
SAMHSA	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (HHS)
SBA	Small Business Administration

Abbreviation	Full Form
SEC	Securities and Exchange Commission
SFSP	Summer Food Service Program
SI	Smithsonian Institute
SLTT	State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial (government agencies)
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SSDI	Social Security Disability Insurance
STEAM	Science, technology, engineering, arts, and math
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
USDA	Department of Agriculture
USDOT	Department of Transportation
USDT	Department of the Treasury
USICH	U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness
VA	Department of Veterans Affairs
WAP	Weatherization Assistance Program
WIC	Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children
WIN	Well-Being in the Nation
WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Additional Recommendations

The Workgroup developed the following recommendations and included them in the April 2021 Mid-Course Update briefing. Although the Workgroup removed these recommendations in the refinement process, they are retained here for transparency and future reference.

Cross-Cutting

Flexibilities—Remove barriers to supporting well-being by leveraging existing flexibilities within federal programs and aligning across adjacent federal programs for amplified value.

- » Encourage application of the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) [Federal Fund Braiding Guide](#) (DOT) recommendations to allow recipients to use funds from one federal program to meet the match requirements of another.
- » Expand federal agency authority (e.g., CMS, SAMHSA) to increase reimbursement and policy support (e.g., telehealth waivers regulations).
- » Identify and adjust programs with community and infrastructure planning requirements to require and provide support to engage underrepresented populations.

Belonging & Civic Muscle

Civic Agency

- » Designate peer support specialists and peer-led organizations as essential workers (as codified in law by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency) for community preparedness initiatives, including disaster response and recovery services, to enhance or foster coordination in local response and recovery plan.
- » Refocus attention toward Executive Order 128981 that directs federal agencies to promote nondiscrimination in federal programs that affect human health and the environment and provide people from racial and ethnic minority groups and under-resourced communities access to public information and public participation.

Thriving Natural World

Accessible Natural Spaces

- » Require the inclusion of artists and cultural assets within efforts to improve natural park sites, campaigns/messages about the environment, and efforts to enhance green spaces for public use.

Healthy, Sustainable Ecosystems

- » Increase and coordinate federal resources, activities, policies, and programs related to sustainability efforts.
- » Expand support of conservation education by setting national curriculum standards.

Basic Needs for Health & Safety

Physical and Mental Health

- » Support human health through the improvement of the health and safety of all indoor and outdoor environments (e.g., lead hazard control, energy efficiency, effective solid waste management strategies, broadband access) throughout the community—including homes, schools, yards, parks, and playgrounds—especially in communities experiencing disadvantage and that have been neglected historically.

Meaningful Work & Wealth

Good-Paying & Fulfilling Jobs

- » Increase employment and savings opportunities for people with disabilities through telework, flexible work schedules, and other workplace flexibilities, tax incentives for employers, and expanded opportunities through federal SSDI/Medicaid benefits related to disability.
- » Allow federal funds to be used to develop and support makerspaces and arts incubators that can foster entrepreneurship, innovation in the emergent workforce, and wealth-building for business owners and employees supported through startup and small businesses.

Lifelong Learning

Continuous Development

- » Increase partnerships between educational entities and the private sector to explore financial models that make lifelong learning affordable and accessible; fill identified gaps in communities' resources and facilitate aspirations for advancement.
- » Support engagement of youth, older adults, and people with disabilities in community organizations and activities (e.g., arts and cultural, environment, racial justice), as well as learning opportunities, to build belonging and civic engagement and leverage insights and experience in service of community needs.

Reliable Transportation

Efficient Energy Use

- » Assess how COVID-19 relief bills support the implementation of electric and clean energy transportation and equitable access to it to reduce air pollutants and associated respiratory diseases.

Safe Transport

- » Assess the USDOT FAST Act, COVID-19 relief bills, and current financing structure to support public transportation in rural and urban areas, and provide more technical assistance and executive leadership through expanded impact investing.

