

The Value of Health in All Policies

Purpose

[Health in All Policies](#) (HiAP) is a collaborative approach that articulates and integrates health considerations into policymaking across sectors, and at all levels, to improve the health and equity of all communities and people. When using a HiAP approach, governmental entities take into account health and health equity in all decisions to improve health outcomes, reduce disparities, and achieve optimal health for all by establishing a multidisciplinary framework that facilitates cross-sector collaboration to advance population health.

When implementing a HiAP approach to aid with program and policy decisions, health agencies can adopt evidence-based [strategies](#), such as developing and structuring cross-sector relationships, incorporating health data into decision-making, enhancing workforce capacity, coordinating funding and investments, synchronizing communications, implementing accountability structures, and integrating research, evaluation, and data systems.

Key Elements of HiAP

ASTHO has [identified](#)¹ the key elements of HiAP as:

- Defining mutually beneficial goals.
- Identifying an opportunity for policy change.
- Participating in cross-sector collaboration.
- Engaging stakeholders.
- Promoting health and equity.
- Addressing the social determinants of health.²

HiAP is an enterprise-wide approach and everyone has a role to play. However, public health has a unique function as subject-matter experts take steps to better understand the social determinants of health, which are the key drivers of health outcomes and health inequities. HiAP can be applied to one-time collaborations, as well as more comprehensive approaches that aim to change structures and processes. However, the latter is often more effective for policy and procedural change. Ultimately, HiAP strives to embed and institutionalize considerations of health, equity, and programmatic sustainability into decision-making processes across sectors.

Representing the Value of HiAP

When thinking about the value provided by taking a HiAP approach, it is important to remember what the end goal is. What makes a HiAP approach useful and why should a state or territorial health agency

¹ ASTHO adapted our key elements from *Rudolph, L., Caplan, J., Ben-Moshe, K., & Dillon, L. (2013). Health in All Policies: A Guide for State and Local Governments. Washington, DC and Oakland, CA: American Public Health Association and Public Health Institute.* Available at: [Health in All Policies-A Guide for State and Local Governments.pdf \(phi.org\)](#)

² Note: Addresses social determinant of health is a new key element added after releasing ASTHO's original HiAP framework.

(STHA) or partner employ this approach? HiAP can be evaluated by using an evaluation tool, such as [this one](#) from the National Association of County and City Health Officials, to provide health agencies and their partners with sample metrics as they build an evidence base for a HiAP practice. Through the use of process evaluation and outcome evaluation metrics (e.g., number of health-related grant applications submitted in collaboration with community partners, percentage of internal contracts with consultants incorporating health and equity criteria), users can better understand if they are meeting their end goals, as well as the added value of taking a HiAP approach.



Figure 1. Health in All Policies. Medallions represent the value of HiAP. Bridge supports represent the key elements of HiAP.

The key elements of HiAP serve as pillars that enhance the approach’s overall community impact (Figure 1). Using a HiAP approach helps move communities towards a healthier future. With input from state and territorial health agency (S/THA) staff and partners, ASTHO has identified the following value areas that emerge from taking a HiAP approach:

- Health and Well-Being
- Social and Racial Justice
- Equity
- Relationship-Building
- Efficiency of Funds
- Accountability
- Resilience and Sustainability

This report describes each HiAP value in detail, provides real-world example of the value in action, and offers sample outcome evaluation metrics for measuring success. While each HiAP key element is separate, synergy between these areas will lead to greater impact.



Health And Well-Being

- Achieving optimal health and wellbeing is a public health agency's foundational goal.
- While state and local health departments provide services—and access to (these) services—to help their communities achieve this goal, they cannot accomplish this alone.
- There are many social and environmental determinants of health that influence public health well-being. Therefore, the impacts of policies made across all governmental sectors need to be considered in decision-making.
- **Sample Outcome Evaluation Metrics:** Improved quality of life score for communities. Expanded number of institutions that understand health and equity principles and facilitate healthy practices. Community stakeholders and institutional representatives have a better understanding of quantitative cross-sector health data.

Value in Action: In **New York state**, the Health Across All Policies initiative aims to improve community health and wellness. It recognizes that a community's greatest health challenges are complex and often connected to social issues that extend beyond healthcare and traditional public health activities. The agency's goal is to become the healthiest state in the country for people of all ages. The initiative specifically targets the aging population, and acknowledges the social and economic benefits associated with a large older population. It also prioritizes health and civic participation, which can catalyze social and institutional change.



Social and Racial Justice

- HiAP can be used to guide individual and organizational change.
- Structural racism and related disinvestment in communities of color has [contributed](#) to social inequity that influence health, including education, housing, transportation, and economic development and opportunity.
- By working across state sectors and with local governmental and community partners, a HiAP approach can be used to collectively elevate racial equity values, collaborate on strategy, model leadership for racial equity, and support transformational governance.
- **Sample Outcome Evaluation Metrics:** Expanded partners that identify social and/or racial justice in their strategic plans. Expanded number of agencies with diversity, equity, inclusion and/or accessibility initiatives. Increased number of partners with funding opportunities addressing racial inequities; and set goals for working with communities facing historic marginalization.

Value in Action: In 2018, in response to the HiAP Task Force’s commitment to advancing equity in government practices, the Public Health Institute’s State of Equity teamed up with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity and the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) to launch the [Capitol Collaborative on Race & Equity](#) (CCORE). Rooted in the HiAP approach, CCORE utilizes cross-agency exchange and practice-based training to guide state government employees in identifying priority policies and developing action plans to advance racial equity. CCORE also partners with the HiAP Task Force and its new Racial Equity Roundtable, as well as the SGC’s deputy-cabinet-level Racial Equity Working Group.



Equity

- When collaborative approaches like HiAP do not have an explicit focus on health equity, they cannot produce optimal health for all.
- S/THAs and local health departments across the country have targeted resources, supported stakeholder engagement opportunities to learn about priority challenges, and adopted strategies for improving equity in the communities they serve.
- Health agencies play a critical role in addressing structural inequities by introducing and supporting organizational changes and external policies that advance the public health mission of assuring the conditions for everyone to achieve the best health possible.
- **Sample Outcome Evaluation Metrics:** Increased number of institutions that understand health and equity principles and facilitate healthy practices. Increased number of funding decisions made utilizing a health equity prioritization matrix. Increased number of partners’ budgets containing health and equity considerations.

Value in Action: In **Minnesota**, [Regional Health Equity Networks](#) bring together people from across sectors, communities, and geographies to eliminate disparities and advance health equity in the state. The networks work to connect, strengthen, and amplify health equity efforts and community issues using a regional and relational approach. They provide a community of support for local public health, tribal public health, and community organizations to address long-standing health equity issues. Through this structure of regional networks along with dedicated capacity building staff and grant funds, the state is strengthening statewide public health system capacity to address health, racial, and social inequities.



Relationship-Building

- Starting with basic information exchange, relationship-building can help build trust among partners and provide a direct line of communication when an issue or need arises.
- Through a HiAP approach, S/THAs staff can utilize opportunities to understand the values of their partners and learn [common terminology](#).
- By working together, beginning with informal meetings and progressing all the way to sharing data and engaging in formal agreements, agencies can use a HiAP approach to policy and program change to advance health and equity.
- **Sample Outcome Evaluation Metrics:** Increased number of health agency staff associated with an external coalition or committee. Increased number of participants reporting strengthened partnerships with external partners. Increased number of external meetings attended by health agency staff.

Value in Action: The **Colorado** Department of Public Health and Environment has used its relationship with housing service providers to address a number of public health issues, including individuals experiencing homelessness. The department started presenting jointly with partners in the Division of Housing and Colorado Coalition for the Homeless to tackle pressing issues, and talking to housing providers at conferences about how housing programs impact public health. In early 2020, Colorado formed a [homelessness task force](#), composed of state and local partners, with a goal of determining the needs and gaps within the state, and filling those holes with local, state, or federal resources. These relationships became pivotal during the COVID-19 pandemic, when housing and concerns for those experiencing homelessness were front-and-center equity challenges.



Efficiency of Funds

- By working together with a HiAP approach, partners can streamline their resources and services to leverage available assets to maximize impact.
- Collaborative efforts help to identify funds coming from one agency that may be duplicative, as well as pinpoint additional gaps in services.
- Through a HiAP framework, governmental programs can join forces to identify overlapping ways they are providing resources to communities.
- Cross-agency collaboration, including between state and local agencies, can foster quality improvement in service delivery and grants management.
- **Sample Outcome Evaluation Metrics:** Increased number of aligned state initiatives and service delivery. Increased community partners' budgets earmarked for health-related goals.

Value in Action: Through its HiAP work, the Office of Policy and Practice Alignment at the **Wisconsin** Department of Health encourages the use of evidence-based practices to promote health equity. They not only build partnerships, but provide leadership and support through the development and recommendations of the state's Health Improvement Plan. Through its regional offices, the state assures consistent and accountable public health services in local government; promotes continuous quality improvement for the state and local public health agencies; builds coalitions and new partnerships; and leads systematic state and community level planning to improve the health of all jurisdictions. By working with a HiAP lens, Wisconsin is helping to ensure that its offices and services are working together to implement evidence-based strategies and maintain efficiency of funds. The state health agency also works with other state partners that have more flexibility in their funds and participates in public-private partnerships to help advance health and equity in the state.



Accountability

- Through cross-sector collaboration, HiAP encourages governments to reduce duplication and coordinate efforts, thereby improving government efficiency and accountability. This action not only relates to streamlining funds for efficiency, but also holding the groups responsible for their original mission of working together.
- By setting goals and performance measures, cross-sector groups, like those utilizing a HiAP framework, can evaluate how they are meeting their intended objectives.
- **Sample Outcome Evaluation Metrics:** Increased number of state partnerships through collaborative work. Increased number of community partners familiar with previously-conducted health and equity assessments. Increased number of assessments related to HiAP partnership metrics.

Value in Action: The **Tennessee** Livability Collaborative (TLC) is a working group of 21 Tennessee state agencies, departments, and commissions that have a shared mission of improving the prosperity, quality of life, and health of Tennesseans through state department collaboration around policy, funding, and programming. The TLC was launched in 2015 as a voluntary effort where member agencies could learn about one another's work, identify opportunities for collaboration, and develop new policies and initiatives to support the development of livable communities across the state. In an effort to hold itself accountable for its mission, the TLC launched an [evaluation](#) in 2018-2019, roughly three years after its first convening, to determine whether the group was achieving its goals, to better understand its value to its members, and to inform the future direction of the group.



Resilience and Sustainability

- Through partnerships, programs have a better chance of staying active. Structuring groups with leadership from multiple organizations increases/fosters program resilience and programmatic sustainability.
- When S/THAs embark on implementing a HiAP approach with other state and local partners, they are better situated to adapt to economic and political changes and bounce back from other stressors.
- HIAP can help a network of partners make lasting systems change to improve public health.
- **Sample Outcome Evaluation Metrics:** Increased shared capacity among state partners to improve health outcomes. Increased amount of external community partners' budget earmarked for health-related goals. Increased number of funding streams supporting HiAP work.

Value in Action: In California, the [HiAP Task Force](#) is staffed through a partnership between the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC), the California Department of Public Health, and the Public Health Institute, a nonprofit. In 2020 and 2021, SGC partnered with the UC Berkeley Othring & Belonging Institute to host a [statewide, multi-phase external engagement initiative](#) to inform opportunities to more effectively address structural barriers to advancing health and racial equity identified by external partners. This process, along with robust inter-agency engagement, helped refocus the attention of the Taskforce to identifying strategies to address structural barriers to health and racial equity that cut across policy areas and sectors, such as State contracting and procurement, grantmaking, technical assistance and capacity building, data and information systems, community partnerships, and more.

Conclusion

While a HiAP approach serves as a means to improve public health and equity, it also offers an opportunity to improve relationships across groups and agencies in multiple sectors and levels of government, understand common goals with partners, define mutually beneficial goals, and foster policy and programmatic change. The key elements of the HiAP approach elevate the value that the approach affords its users and their constituents. Recognizing HiAP's value can be an important part of [evaluating](#) its application by S/THAs and their partners. By outlining HiAP's value, this report seeks to cultivate a better understanding of what S/THAs hope to achieve as they implement this framework across state and local governmental agencies.