

Wild, Wonderful & Healthy West Virginia



Acknowledgements

AUTHORS BUILD HEALTHY PLACES NETWORK

Colleen Flynn
Jen Lewis-Walden
Mandy Uribe, Intern
Ruth Thomas-Squance

AUTHORS WILD, WONDERFUL & HEALTHY WEST VIRGINIA

Allison Toler
Elaine Darling
Sharon Lansdale

DESIGN

Bark Design, barkdesignchicago.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Karen Davis, [Rural Health Information Hub](#) provided their time and insights to develop this tool.

Authors and advisors that developed Build Healthy Places Network and Shift Health Accelerators' [Healthy Neighborhood Investments: A Policy Scan & Strategy Map](#). Policy examples and content was used from this Policy Scan & Strategy Map for the *Wild, Wonderful and Healthy West Virginia Policy Scan*.

SUPPORTED BY CLAUDE WORTHINGTON BENEDUM FOUNDATION

[Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation](#) has served West Virginia and Southwestern Pennsylvania since it was established in 1944 by Michael and Sarah Benedum. Grants are made to support specific initiatives in the areas of Education, Economic Development, Health and Human Services, and Community Development.

PROJECT LEADS

[Wild, Wonderful & Healthy West Virginia](#) helps accelerate multi-sector partnerships and create community conditions that support improved health and economic vitality. WWHWV is a program of

[The Center for Rural Health Development](#), a nonprofit organization located in Hurricane, West Virginia with the mission to improve the health of West Virginians and strengthen West Virginia's health care delivery system.

[Build Healthy Places Network](#) is a national center that transforms the way organizations work together across the healthcare, public health, community development, and finance sectors to advance health and racial equity. Build Healthy Places Network is a program of the [Public Health Institute](#) in Oakland, CA.

Contents

- 4** Introduction
- 9** Potential Policies
 - 1. BELONGING AND CIVIC MUSCLE
 - 2. THRIVING AND NATURAL WORLD
 - 3. BASIC NEEDS FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY
 - 4. HUMANE HOUSING
 - 5. MEANINGFUL WORK AND WEALTH
 - 6. LIFELONG LEARNING
 - 7. RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION
- 20** Policy Processes for Multisector Community Health Improvement Efforts
- 23** Conclusion
- 24** Appendix



INTRODUCTION

Wild, Wonderful & Healthy West Virginia (WWHWV) helps accelerate multi-sector partnerships and create community conditions that support improved health and economic vitality.

West Virginia is grappling with health, social and economic challenges like many other rural places across the United States. To improve West Virginia's health outcomes, we must break down silos that separate improving health from the work of education, business, transportation, economic development, government and other historically "non-health" sectors. Health care organizations and public health must join with schools, faith-based organizations, businesses, economic development groups, and other community partners to make the "healthy choice the easy choice" in communities throughout West Virginia. Each sector must recognize their unique contributions to community well-being and align their resources accordingly working as a cohesive whole.

This actionable guide is intended to support the efforts of WWHWV communities as they work through multisector collaboratives to advance community health and economic opportunity. The scan includes a set of policy examples that have been successfully adopted in other jurisdictions to advance the [Seven Vital Conditions for Community Health and Well-Being](#) launched by ReThink Health, Well Being Trust, and the CDC Foundation in 2020.

WWHWV is a program of [The Center for Rural Health Development \(The Center\)](#), a nonprofit organization located in Hurricane, West Virginia with the mission to improve the health of West Virginians and strengthen West Virginia's health care delivery system. Support for this project came from the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation. The Center partnered with [Build Healthy Places Network \(BHPN\)](#) to develop this scan. BHPN is a national center that transforms the way organizations work together across the healthcare, public health, community development, and finance sectors to advance health and racial equity.

*...make the
"healthy choice
the easy choice"
in communities
throughout
West Virginia*



Framing the opportunity for local policy change

Health happens in communities. Research shows that socioeconomic factors and conditions are often more impactful on health outcomes than one's genetic code. The impact of place—where we work, live, play, and pray—has direct **impacts on health** and has implications for **intergenerational mobility** and well-being. However, opportunities to live to one's full potential are not equally distributed, resulting in social and health inequities, often at the expense of those most marginalized in our society. Public policy plays a particularly powerful role in shaping how communities look and operate, as well as the community's health that is created in those places. In this sense, policy offers an opportunity to reshape how health happens, through zoning laws, city planning, local investments, along many other policy levers. Local policy is a path forward to impact well-being outcomes at the community level.

Navigating the policy landscape involves a range of strategies, engaging diverse leaders, and understanding key barriers and opportunities to promote sustainable change. Furthermore, the policy process requires institutional stakeholders to understand and assess historical power dynamics and engage in authentic community engagement, in order to center the perspectives of communities most impacted by inequities. These are the very voices that are needed to inform policy that will benefit everyone. Multisector coalitions are uniquely positioned to advance policy change within this landscape of strategies and stakeholders. Effective efforts are able to center the priorities of community

residents, leverage the assets of distinct stakeholders toward a common vision, and then align strategies toward that common goal. Multisector partnerships bring together the strengths of community leaders, local government, nonprofit organizations, local business, and other institutional partners to build trust, relationships, and a collective approach to policy change. In rural spaces in particular, **rural multisector health efforts can effectively build upon unique assets** such as deep stakeholder interconnectedness, commitment to collective problem-solving, leveraging investments for impact, and allowing community knowledge to drive solutions.

KEY IMPACT AREAS OF MULTISECTOR COALITIONS

- Community, sector and institutional assets and expertise leveraged for common good
- Collective vision that can create a shared “why” and “to what end”
- Data across sectors paints a holistic picture of need and opportunity
- Shared dialogue promotes collaboration and coordination
- Short term wins can be sustained through investment and policy change

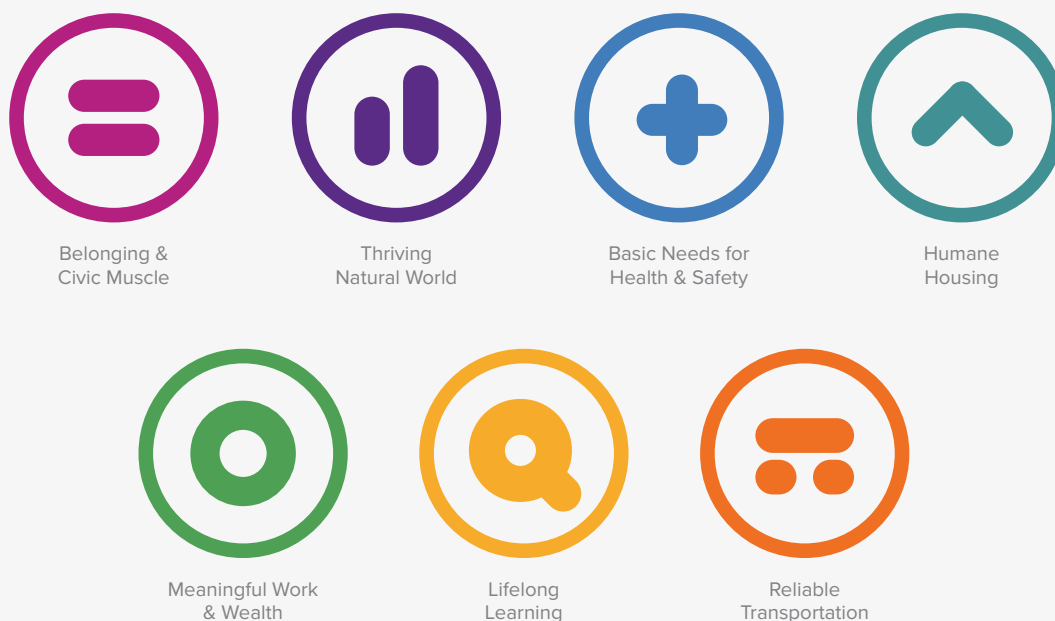


FIGURE 1. SEVEN VITAL CONDITIONS FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

This scan leans on two complementary frameworks: The **7 Vital Conditions for Community Health and Well-Being** and the **Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership**. These two frameworks help support an equitable, holistic policy process. In addition to stakeholder engagement, multisector coalitions can approach local policy change aimed at creating resilient communities through a multidimensional lens – weaving together the various factors that influence our health. The framework used by WWHWV, the **Vital Conditions for Community Health and Well-Being**, can help design policy that addresses the vital conditions essential for everyone to reach their full potential.

The vital conditions invite us to envision a holistic and community-based approach to health. The framework helps reshape notions of investing in needs today, to

ask what the community conditions for well-being are that will prevent the need for urgent services and allow communities to thrive. The framework builds on efforts to shift investments into the **social determinants of health**, moving toward investments that have a measurable community wide impact. The vital conditions are built upon a foundation of belonging and civic muscle and include a thriving natural world, basic needs for health and safety, humane housing, meaningful work and wealth, lifelong learning, and reliable transportation.

The 7 Vital Conditions also guide a community toward achieving health equity. **Health equity is the state in which everyone has a fair and just opportunity to attain their highest level of health.** Achieving this requires focused and ongoing societal efforts to address historical and contemporary injustices; overcome economic,

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH: The conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, including the health system. Specific social determinants of health include economic and housing stability, employment status, educational attainment, access to health care, access to healthy foods, exposure to crime and violence, and environmental conditions¹.

social, and other obstacles to health and healthcare; and eliminate preventable health disparities^{2,3}. Achieving health equity requires ongoing societal efforts to address avoidable inequities, historical and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of health and health care disparities. [See appendix](#) for the 7 Vital Conditions’ graphics that WWHWV created for social media.

Utilizing the **Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership**, policy change is a vehicle to deepen engagement with stakeholders and residents locally. Engagement can be applied across the policy process – from determining priorities, to assessing the viability of policy design, to organizing to advocate and adopt policy, to implementing and evaluating the success

of policy. **Community engagement, particularly focused on those that have been historically locked out of informing how their communities look and operate, is the cornerstone of a resilient community policy process.**

The Spectrum framework can be used as both a diagnostic tool to analyze where WWHWV efforts are situated on a continuum of engagement, as well as a tool for goal setting, to further expand opportunities for community-driven planning.

FIGURE 2. SPECTRUM OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO OWNERSHIP



Methods for researching policy examples

A series of meetings with the WWHWV team helped shape a framework for the policy scan rooted in a shared vision of community health and economic prosperity for all. From these meetings, criteria were established to guide the direction of the policy scan. From this process, the top policy levers to include in the scan were local-level public policy, funding and finance to invest in the 7 Vital Conditions, and opportunities for community engagement.

After the criteria were developed, the policy scan research began. The first place for research was gathering aligned policies from BHPN's [Healthy](#)

[Neighborhood Investments Policy Scan and Strategy Map](#), which outlines a trauma-informed and healing approach to crafting a holistic policy agenda. Other existing policy scans and online research of local policies that advanced the 7 Vital Conditions were reviewed for inclusion in the scan. Key terms included: *rural, community engagement, transportation access, affordable housing, environment, physical activity, healthy foods, community health, safety, workforce development, career pathways, and quality education*. One resource that was tremendously helpful was the [Rural Health Information Hub](#).



The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership framework can be used as both a diagnostic tool to analyze where WWHWV efforts are situated on a continuum of engagement.



POTENTIAL POLICIES

Examples of policies are presented for each of the seven vital conditions, with a focus on local and rural areas.

The following subsections each begin with a summary of how policy influences the vital condition, and a table lists potential examples of policy actions primarily at the local level. We begin with belonging and civic muscle, the policy area identified time and time again as critically advancing community health and economic prosperity.



1. BELONGING AND CIVIC MUSCLE



2. THRIVING AND NATURAL WORLD



3. BASIC NEEDS FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY



4. HUMANE HOUSING



5. MEANINGFUL WORK AND WEALTH



6. LIFELONG LEARNING



7. RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION

1. BELONGING AND CIVIC MUSCLE

Decision-making must include the voices of those most impacted by decisions. People who feel valued and cared for are more likely to participate in policy decision-making and civic life, and people who participate feel connected and tend to live longer, happier lives. Belonging and civic muscle is the foundation of community members' power to implement a vision of the future that is healthy and equitable. Policies for belonging and civic muscle set expectations, define equitable processes, and establish a foundation for a vision of a healthy community. Ultimately, civic muscle is created through collective leadership, engaging civic culture, purposeful collaboration, and learning together. Each of these elements might look different for communities, but they can be measured, prioritized, and encouraged.

1. BELONGING AND CIVIC MUSCLE

POLICY NAME	JURISDICTION	KEY POINTS	REFERENCES
Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board – Community Engagement Policy	Minneapolis, MO	The policy outlines requirements for community engagement relative to projects, programs and initiatives for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, including projects approved and budgeted through third-party agreement.	https://www.minneapolis-parks.org/park-care-improvements/park-projects/community_engagement/
PlanRC	Rancho Cucamonga, CA	Rancho Cucamonga in Southern California has recognized how a health equity lens can shape land use decisions by setting aside space for affordable housing, improving walkability, and planning for parks and natural areas. A city's general plan sets a vision that guides infrastructure investments, zoning, and other policies. Incorporating racial and health equity lenses and goals into umbrella policies like these can make it easier to incorporate them into other policies too.	https://www.cityofrc.us/planrc
Project Vision	Rutland, VT	To reduce opioid use and increase quality of life in Rutland, Vermont. Project VISION works to reduce opioid use through community engagement. Since 2012, Project VISION has collected and disposed of 550 pounds of unused medications, reduced thefts by over 32%, and had a 50% improvement on a neighborhood quality of life survey.	https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/project-examples/917
Community Action Partnership	Solano County, CA	Six cities and Solano County, California, created the Community Action Partnership (CAP) Solano Joint Powers Authority to improve intergovernmental and interagency coordination. CAP Solano provides community services to residents to reduce poverty and homelessness, with a particular focus on homelessness and safety net services. CAP Solano also administers funding for these community services, which include housing, health, youth, and employment services. CAP Solano serves as the lead agency for the Homeless Management Information System to collect and maintain data about the homeless populations and services, to better inform policy and strategies.	http://www.capsolanojpa.org/who-we-are.html
The New Rural Project	7 counties in rural NC	Dedicated to not just registering individuals to vote, but to informing and promoting civic engagement for marginalized communities.	https://www.newruralproject.org/
Dollars and Sense	Thurston County, WA	The Board of County Commissioners in Thurston County WA gathered input on budget priorities from community members via a 5-minute survey that gave community members an opportunity to share their priorities by telling them how they would spend \$500 in the county budget. The results are used to set budget priorities.	https://www.thurstoncountywa.gov/tchome/Pages/opengov-dollars-and-sense.aspx
Participatory Budgeting	Vallejo City, CA	In 2012, the Vallejo City Council established the first city-wide participatory budgeting process in the United States, where residents directly engaged with their local government to develop and recommend projects as part of the annual budget. Over the past six cycles, the City of Vallejo has allocated over \$9.3 million to fund a total of 56 projects, while engaging over 20,000 residents of Vallejo.	https://www.myvallejo.com/participatory-budgeting-2-01
Orlando's iLead resources for resident leaders	Orlando, FL	The City of Orlando Communications and Neighborhood Relations Department created iLead131 to provide resources, tools, and training for community leaders to shape local public policy. The city provides small grants to leaders to participate in a 6-week leadership training program and online guides in topics such as neighborhood engagement, communications, and engaging next-generation leaders, among others.	http://www.cityoforlando.net/ocnr/ilead/

2. THRIVING AND NATURAL WORLD

People care deeply about clean water, clean air, and natural places to play. The natural environment has been demonstrated to significantly affect health. Time in nature can create calm and improve mental health. People expect the air they breathe and the water they drink to be clean and healthy. Low-income families have less access to high-quality, nearby parks and green spaces. And climate change is affecting people's exposure to extreme heat, wildfire smoke, and floods. Access to a clean, healthy environment is a human right, not a commodity, and essential to climate and environmental justice.

2. THRIVING AND NATURAL WORLD

POLICY NAME	JURISDICTION	KEY POINTS	REFERENCES
City of Hancock Master Plan	City of Hancock, MI	Master Plan is one of the first in Michigan to be developed with sustainability and resiliency at the forefront and while many of the expected challenges of the future are daunting, This Plan helps to ensure that the City of Hancock's best years are still ahead and holds the potential for bringing new levels of ingenuity and vibrancy to the city.	https://www.minneapolisarks.org/park-care-improvements/park-projects/community_engagement/
Resolution for Providing Complete Streets	Belmont, WV	Created a resolution to enable the streets of Belmont to provide safe routes for walking, biking, and public transportation. Complete Streets create healthier communities. Health benefits include reduced traffic and fewer traffic collisions, more active living and exercise opportunities, and better air quality for surrounding communities. Complete Streets also increase economic opportunity by improving access to local institutions and businesses through alternate modes of transportation.	https://www.cityofrc.us/plancr
Granville Greenways Master Plan	Granville, NC	In order to encourage physical activity and to combat poor health outcomes among residents, local stakeholders developed a plan to invest in the development of greenways, which they define as "corridors of open green space linking parks, recreational areas, residential neighborhoods, employment, schools, and shopping districts".	https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/project-examples/917
Project Learning Grants	San Francisco, CA	The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (PUC) provides water, power, and sewer for the city of San Francisco. The commission's community benefit program invests so that infrastructure provides a range of community benefits. Project Learning Grants go to community organizations to build skills and provide opportunity for youth to explore careers in infrastructure.	http://www.capsolanojpa.org/who-we-are.html
Area-Wide Plan for Brownfields	Northeast Junction City, Kansas	The municipality of Junction City partnered with the Flint Hills Regional Council, an association of local governments in Kansas, to access an EPA brownfield assessment grant. With the grant money, the City and Regional Council designed three alternative concepts for the redevelopment of sites where a closed gas station and former lumber yard were located. The City sought public feedback on residents' preferred alternative concept, as well as their preferred streetscapes, greenspaces and architectural character, to incorporate into the Area-Wide Plan.	https://www.newruralproject.org/



3. BASIC NEEDS FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

The 7 Vital Conditions framework defines basic needs for health and safety. Physical and mental well-being starts with access to fresh air and water, nutritious food, physical activity and the security of a safe home. People also need a life free from violence and injury. Lack of basic needs leads to higher levels of domestic violence, toxic stress, mental health problems and other poor health outcomes. Community support systems have risen to meet some needs, but new ideas and better public policies are essential for communities to move forward and prosper.

3. BASIC NEEDS FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

POLICY NAME	JURISDICTION	KEY POINTS	REFERENCES
Healthy Kids' Meals Bill – 2020 (CB-071)	Prince George's County, MD	The Prince George's County Healthy Kids' Meals Bill is the first of its kind to include healthier comprehensive options for both food and drinks. It makes water, milk and 100% fruit or vegetable juice default beverage options for all kids' meals served at Prince George's County restaurants. It also ensures that food options in kids' meals limit calories, sugar, salt and fat. Families will be able to order other beverage items upon request. The bill will improve health for county children by making the healthy option the easy choice.	https://sugarfreekidsmd.org/our-agenda/
Community Food Rescue	Montgomery County, Maryland	Community Food Rescue is the coordinated food recovery network of Montgomery County, Maryland. This program enhances the good work of businesses, individuals, and organizations that already recover and redistribute perfectly good food to people experiencing hunger.	https://www.communityfoodrescue.org/
Nurse-Family Partnership	South Carolina	Providing comprehensive support for first-time mothers and infants, Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) is an evidence-based program that connects low-income, first-time mothers and their children with trained nurses who visit regularly to provide care and resources for a healthy pregnancy and a healthy start for the children. The nurses provide a consistent and comprehensive range of services for the mothers' and babies' overall wellbeing. States such as South Carolina have applied for a waiver to bill NFP services to Medicaid, increasing participation in the program	https://www.nursefamilypartnership.org/public-policy-and-advocacy/sc-pfs/
Win With Wellness	Rural northwest Illinois	To reduce risk of obesity and chronic disease in rural northwest Illinois. Win With Wellness (WWW) collaborates with community organizations and worksites to improve physical activity and eating behaviors and reduce weight among adults using a multi-component approach.	https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/project-examples/946
The Coffee Break	Southeastern Colorado	Men in the agriculture industry face high suicide rates due to factors including long hours, geographic isolation, lack of social opportunities, and stigma surrounding mental health care. The Coffee Break Project, a program led by the Southeast Health Group in southeastern Colorado, encourages mental health check-ins for farmers and ranchers through a public awareness campaign and casual coffee gatherings that utilize COMET, an intervention model developed specifically for rural communities.	https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/project-examples/1100



POLICY NAME	JURISDICTION	KEY POINTS	REFERENCES
Prevention Efforts Advance Community Equity	East San Jose, CA	The East San Jose PEACE (Prevention Efforts Advance Community Equity) Partnership is a group of residents and organizations working to build a healthy, peaceful, and empowered community by preventing and addressing violence and trauma. This community struggles with higher rates of hospitalizations due to assaults and firearms and higher incidents of violent crimes, such as domestic violence. Experiencing violence and trauma, especially multiple kinds of violence over a long period of time, results in poor health and life outcomes, ranging from heart disease, increased risk for eating disorders, substance abuse, depression, and anxiety.	https://publichealth.sccgov.org/collaboratives/east-san-jose-peace-partnership
School Wellness Plan and Policy	Lewis County, WV	Lewis County Board of Education established a Wellness Plan and Policy that included: 1) nutrition education becoming an integral part of the school's curriculum; 2) stressing the importance of physical education and providing physical activities; and 3) supporting a food service program that provides a variety of healthy food choices and meals.	https://dhhr.wv.gov/hpcd/Health%20Policy%20Library/Lewis%20County%20Schools%20Wellness%20Policy%205.55.pdf
Community Benefit monies to help transform communities	Bithlo, Florida	United Global Outreach, a nonprofit, partnered with Florida Hospital as part of their "Bithlo Transformation Project." Since it began in 2009, the transformation effort has brought a bus service, primary care, eye and dental care, mental health counseling, and a new private school to Bithlo, with other major infrastructure projects like roads, water systems, and housing.	https://www.huduser.gov/portal/casestudies/study-02162017.html
AIM Do-It-Yourself Guide	Denver, CO	A guide created by the University of Denver's Center for Rural School Health and Education for the purpose of supporting rural schools to apply the CDC's Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model. The guide covers how to assess student health and a school's existing health practices, identify health problems, solutions, and obstacles, develop a Comprehensive Health and Wellness Plan, and act upon it.	https://morgridge.du.edu/sites/default/files/2021-07/AIM%20DIY.pdf



4. HUMANE HOUSING

Having access to a safe, stable, quality place to live is essential to health and often is the biggest part of a family's budget. Housing choices have been shaped by redlining and other discriminatory policies since at least the 1930s. People should not have to choose between paying rent or buying food or medicine. Housing policies can help preserve and rehabilitate quality, affordable housing, promote construction of new units, and help ensure housing can help build wealth and community ownership. This section provides examples of creative partnerships investing in affordable housing, supporting housing, and other housing funds and solutions to improve community health

4. HUMANE HOUSING

POLICY NAME	JURISDICTION	KEY POINTS	REFERENCES
County Fund for Housing (CFH)	Sonoma County, CA	Provides loans and grants to qualified developers, public entities, groups, and individuals to undertake activities which create, maintain, or expand the County's affordable housing stock. Funding sources are the County General Fund, County Reinvestment and Revitalization Funds, Developer In-Lieu Fees, Transient Occupancy Tax, CFH loan processing fees, interest, and loan repayments.	https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/development-services/community-development-commission/divisions/housing-and-neighborhood-investment/funding-opportunities/county-fund-for-housing
Pierce County Code Sec. 18A.65.040(A)	Pierce County, WI	Offers expedited permit processing for all projects with low-income, affordable units covered by Chapter 18A.65, which provides for other financial and regulatory incentives. Also includes waivers for building fees, traffic impact fees, school impact fees, and park impact fees in exchange for low-income housing units.	https:// Pierce County codes/PCC/18A.65.040
Healthy Families	Columbus, OH	Composed of Nationwide Children's Hospital, faith-based organizations, community development organizations, workforce development programs, youth-serving nonprofits and local public schools, to create positive health outcomes in the community. Initially formed to revitalize 31 square blocks of dilapidated houses and buildings. Some results include: more than 370 homes rehabbed, development of a center providing 58 units of apartments and on-site career development training, decreased vacancy rates fell from 25% to 6%, and owner-occupied home sale volumes increased by 50%, early childhood programs have driven kindergarten readiness scores from 32% to 96% for participants, and graduation rates increased from 64% in 2013 to 79% in 2017.	https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/about-us/population-health-and-wellness/healthy-neighborhoods-healthy-families/neighbors
Affordable Housing Bond Investment Plan	Durham, NC	Voters in Durham passed a \$95 million housing bond referendum in 2019 to fund the city's Housing Plan, including creation and preservation of affordable housing. The city planned to leverage another \$65 million in existing federal and local funds for "complementary" programs to address eviction diversion and homelessness. Larger affordable housing developers began taking interest in developing in the city as a result.	https://localhousingsolutions.org/housing-policy-case-studies/durham-nc-95-million-bond-for-affordable-housing/
Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) Program	Montgomery County, MD	Offers affordably priced townhomes and condominiums to first-time home-buyers with a moderate household income. Priority is given to people who live and/or work in Montgomery County. Requires participation in online classes.	https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DHCA/housing/singlefamily/mpdu/index.html



POLICY NAME	JURISDICTION	KEY POINTS	REFERENCES
First Time Home Buyer Program	Sonoma County, CA	A program by the County and employee union (SEIU) to provide up to \$50,000, fully amortized secondary mortgage financing at below-market rates to assist eligible represented employees to purchase a home. County employees who work in SEIU-represented job classifications have two pennies (\$.02) per hour of their compensation paid into a Housing Assistance Fund. The County provides a dollar for dollar match for all employee deposits into the Fund.	https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/development-services/community-development-commission/divisions/housing-and-neighborhood-investment/homebuyer-assistance-for-county-employees
Next Generation Housing Committee	Washington County, WI	Coalition of local governments and key stakeholders that aims to identify and break down barriers to home ownership in Washington County. Allocated funds for three pilot developments and ARPA money to purchase owner-occupied homes.	https://www.washcowisconsin.gov/cms/One.aspx?portalId=16228038&pageId=18048779
Community Land Trust with support from hospitals	Boise, Idaho	Community land trusts (CLTs) have emerged as an effective strategy to provide affordable housing while increasing community ownership. CLTs are community based nonprofit organizations that acquire ownership of land and facilitate the sale of the home situated on the land to exclude the land price, making the home much more affordable. The sale of the home is in the form of a lease, with resale conditions that preserve long-term affordability. CLTs give communities a way to control local assets, which facilitates community cohesion and participation as well as prevent displacement. Boise, Idaho, Saint Alphonsus Regional Medical Center is investing in community-owned land trusts as housing needs skyrocket.	https://medium.com/bhpn-crosswalk/community-owned-land-trusts-catch-hospitals-eye-9bb155aed9bf
Self-Help Housing Program	City of Coachella	In Coachella City self-help housing programs, groups of families or individuals, typically between 6 and 12, form an informal partnership to help build one another's houses under the guidance of a nonprofit housing development organization. With a construction supervisor on site, these building groups perform at least 65% of the construction work required to build their homes, a contribution known as "sweat equity." In most cases, the nonprofit housing organization also provides construction and homeownership training, and assists those families to qualify for their mortgage. Self-help not only allows a larger segment of workers earning very low wages to afford homeownership, but also enables residents to develop valuable skills in the construction trades.	https://www.cvhc.org/home-ownership/

5. MEANINGFUL WORK AND WEALTH

Work is a means to obtain income, but when it is productive and meaningful, it also lifts the spirit and provides a sense of common purpose. In many ways, work can be an extension of lifelong learning and growth. Labor needs to be valued. When labor is tied to stagnated wages, reduced benefits, and fewer job protections, insecurity increases for families and across the economy as a whole. Unless household incomes grow, the United States will never shrink the health inequities associated with income disparities. With basic income security, families and communities can grow the wealth that gives the next generation a head start.

5. MEANINGFUL WORK AND WEALTH

POLICY NAME	JURISDICTION	KEY POINTS	REFERENCES
Equity in Contracting Program	Tacoma, WA	Numerous municipalities also have established contracting policies that support small minority and women-owned businesses, such as Tacoma's Equity in Contracting Program. This program offers access to contracting and procurement opportunities, as well as guidance and technical assistance, to historically underutilized businesses interested in providing supplies, services and public works support to the City of Tacoma.	https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_departments/community_and_economic_development/equity_in_contracting
Greenlight	Wilson, NC	Digital inclusion aims to provide access to information and communication technologies (i.e., broadband internet service, internet-enabled devices, digital training, and technical support) for all individuals and communities. This is crucial, as digital access is an essential component for social and economic health today. Wilson NC implemented a community-owned, fiber-to-the-home network to provide comprehensive broadband connection to Wilson residents.	https://www.greenlightnc.com/
Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration	Stockton, CA	The Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration (SEED) is the nation's first mayor-led guaranteed income demonstration. Launched in February 2019 by former Mayor Michael D. Tubbs, SEED gave 125 randomly selected residents \$500/month for 24 months. The cash was completely unconditional, with no strings attached and no work requirements. Aiming to test a simple yet innovative solution to poverty and inequality, SEED's preliminary findings show how just \$500 a month can provide the dignity and agency that everyone deserves. The guaranteed income recipients leveraged the \$500 to find full-time employment. Recipients of the program also became healthier, showed less depression and anxiety and had enhanced wellbeing.	https://www.stocktondemonstration.org/
HCS EDConnect	Hamilton County, TN	No-cost, high-speed home internet from EPB is now available to Hamilton County students and their families. Any student receiving free or reduced-cost lunch, attending any school where every student receives free or reduced-cost lunch or whose family participates in SNAP or other economic assistance programs is eligible. Within the first year of the program, one-third of Hamilton County students benefit from the internet access program.	https://www.edconnect.org/
HopkinsLocal	Baltimore, MD	As an anchor institution, Johns Hopkins launched the Hopkins Local program in 2015 to support economic growth, employment, and investment in Baltimore. The program included broader access in hiring for formerly incarcerated people, support for professional development, and tuition benefits for local hires.	https://hopkinslocal.jhu.edu/

6. LIFELONG LEARNING

Education drives social mobility- from birth into career pathways and a lifetime of learning and growing. Education does not just exist within school walls. Investment in children and learning requires a community-wide and intergenerational focus, which will require redefining education to include a range of flexible options, schools, and learning supports. Supporting lifelong learning creates leadership pathways and opportunities to cultivate choice and prosperity.

6. LIFELONG LEARNING

POLICY NAME	JURISDICTION	KEY POINTS	REFERENCES
Swift County Daycare Grant Program	Swift County, MN	Swift County Board of Commissioners has been offering a child care grant since 2017 to help existing providers and new providers with expenses. Family providers can apply for up to \$150 per child enrolled, while centers can apply for up to \$12,500.	https://www.swiftcounty.com/index.asp?SEC=3792955D-ACB9-4D68-BD0D-1635EA832151&DE=80B234D9-8D09-419E-966E-06DD2E6A5DE4
College Kids Children's Savings Account program	St. Louis, MO	The City of St. Louis Treasurer's Office launched the College Kids Children's Savings Account program. Every kindergarten student in a St. Louis Public and charter school receives a savings account from the Treasurer's Office with a \$50 deposit. Families can watch the account grow through efforts and incentives such as matched savings, attendance bonuses, and parent participation in financial education courses. Research shows that children with college savings of \$1 to \$499 are three times more likely to enroll in college and four times more likely to graduate from college than children without college savings accounts. The money for College Kids comes from residual parking revenue and charitable donations.	https://stlofe.org/college-kids/
Schoharie County ACEs Team	Schoharie County, NY	Agencies in Schoharie County, New York were seeing a widespread trend of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in children and families they served. The Schoharie ACEs Team was formed as a way to educate rural communities about ACEs, the brain science behind it, and ways to build resiliency. The ACEs Team has put on 4 half-day educational conferences, 2 virtual conferences, and 10 trainings for various groups across the region, trained 3 school districts on trauma-informed care, and provided resources for families exposed to trauma.	https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/project-examples/1020
Sacramento State University's Rapid Rehousing Program	Sacramento, CA	Sacramento State University's Rapid Rehousing Program, which places homeless students in affordable housing and provides rental assistance with case management services.	https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/crisis-assistance-resource-education-support/student-emergency-services.html



7. RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION

Moving freely allows people, regardless of ability, to get to where they work, live, shop, study, play, and worship. Doing that easily in affordable ways that encourage physical activity and do not cause stress is important for health. Households with an annual income of less than \$25,000 are almost nine times as likely not to have a car than households with incomes greater than \$25,000⁴. It is also essential that transportation not cause harm by increasing pollution, severing communities, or increasing displacement.

7. RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION

POLICY NAME	JURISDICTION	KEY POINTS	REFERENCES
Tri-Valley Opportunity Council Rural Transportation	Northwest Minnesota; county	In 2002, Tri-Valley Opportunity Council assumed responsibility for coordinating a public transportation system (Tri-Valley Heartland Express) and volunteer driver system (Rural Transportation Collaborative) to serve a sparsely populated, very rural 8-county area covering northwest Minnesota.	https://www.tvoc.org/services/transportation/
Travel Washington Intercity Bus	Washington	Public transportation in rural areas is limited by long travel times and distances, low frequency of services, limited routes, and lack of funding to address challenges. For rural residents who are disabled, low-income, or carless, these limitations of public transportation are particularly difficult to navigate. Recognizing the need to address this issue, the Travel Washington Intercity Bus program was created to provide bus services that connect rural communities to urban centers and larger transportation hubs. This reliable and accessible method of public transportation fills a significant gap for rural communities.	https://wsdot.wa.gov/business-wsdot/grants/public-transportation-grants/grant-programs-and-awards/travel-washington-intercity-bus
Middle Tennessee Transportation Plan	Middle Tennessee; regional	Mayors and transportation officials from across Middle Tennessee adopted an update to the region's transportation plan. The RTP allocates more than \$10.5 billion in anticipated federal grants and matching funds to improve transportation throughout a seven-county planning area that includes Nashville and the surrounding counties of Maury, Robertson, Sumner, Rutherford, Williamson, and Wilson. Since October 2019, Middle Tennessee area mayors have been engaged in an effort to involve the public and regional partners in this important major update. The Plan is Middle Tennessee's gateway to federal transportation funding. It is updated every five years in accordance with federal laws and regulations. The Plan establishes goals and objectives for the region and identifies federal funding priorities for investments to improve the region's network of roadways, transit services, and walking and bicycling facilities out to the year 2045.	https://gnrc.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=217
LinkTransit	Burlington, NC	This growing area had only an on-demand shuttle service operated by Alamance County Transit Authority and no fixed-route transit service. As the area grew, increasing transportation options to provide better access to jobs and opportunity became critical. To address that gap, LinkTransit began serving Burlington and other nearby communities. The service includes five color-coded routes connecting in the center of Burlington and extending to neighboring communities. Businesses quickly started advertising "on the green route" or "on the purple route," and the new bus service became a major factor in the decision of a 5,000 employee company to open a call center in Burlington. Burlington residents who couldn't afford a car spoke with the local media shortly after the service launched about how important the new transit service was for reaching their jobs reliably.	https://www.linktransit.org/ https://www.thirdway.org/memo/rural-communities-need-better-transportation-policy



POLICY NAME	JURISDICTION	KEY POINTS	REFERENCES
HealthTran	Counties in Missouri	HealthTran is a volunteer driver program administered by Missouri Rural Health Association to address rural transportation limitations and barriers, with a primary focus on health and social determinants of health that affect rural Missourians and their communities. Main focus is on scheduling rides to and from their health and wellness visits.	https://mrhassociation.org/healthtran/
Food Access Transportation	Duluth, MN	A dedicated bus line to take residents of Lincoln Park, a perennial food desert, to the nearest full-service grocery store. The weekly “Grocery Express” is outfitted with special bins and racks to handle purchases, and mitigates the problem of lugging grocery bags on a crowded city bus that didn’t stop directly in front of the store. A bus service that brings residents to the grocery stores makes six trips every weekday.	https://www.lisc.org/our-stories/story/an-express-bus-to-good-nutrition/ https://www.duluthnewtribune.com/news/grocery-express-routes-redesigned
New Bus Route to connect healthcare access and workers	Cities of Claremont and Lebanon, NH	In 2019, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center made a significant contribution to support a long-desired bus route connecting the cities of Claremont and Lebanon in New Hampshire. Dartmouth-Hitchcock, New Hampshire’s only academic medical center, was one of the first partners in the collaborative effort with Southwestern Community Services, a community action agency. Dartmouth-Hitchcock helped fund the new commuter bus route and positioned the community action agency partner to obtain necessary state funding. Dartmouth-Hitchcock had to fill the missing link between where people live and where the hospital hoped they will come to work.	https://buildhealthyplaces.org/downloads/Build-Healthy-Places-Network-Rural-Playbook.pdf (page 25)
Open Plains Transit	Valentine, Nebraska	Open Plains Transit is an intercity bus service that offers transportation to residents of the Nebraska Panhandle region. The service was recently expanded to provide rural public transit for all residents of the city of Valentine. The service operates Monday through Friday.	https://www.optne.com/
Complete Streets	Southern Georgia	The Southern Georgia Regional Commission produced a guide for rural communities to implement “complete streets,” or roadways that are equally safe and accessible to vehicular motorists, transit riders, bicyclists, and pedestrians.	https://www.sgrc.us/documents/bicycle/4fe40511bac13ad56d70bbde55e0e6fb.pdf
Mountain Rides Transportation Authority	Blaine County, Idaho	In addition to the traditional year-round, fixed bus routes connecting rural communities in Blaine County, the Transportation Authority also offers seasonal winter routes, paratransit services, and vanpools for ridesharing, to meet the dynamic needs of its constituents.	https://www.mountainrides.org/



POLICY PROCESSES

Policy Processes for Multisector Community Health Improvement Efforts

The policymaking process is essential to creating healthy places. Coalitions spearheading policy change can design processes to be intentional, gathering diverse voices and defining the ultimate impact that policy aims to achieve. This section outlines a policy process for multisector collaborations focused on advancing community health improvement efforts. These recommendations build on successful local policy change in jurisdictions across the country and aim to support multisector coalitions' assess needs, opportunities and roles relative to the policy design process. The intended audience includes stakeholders that may be new to public policy, with a curiosity and interest to build capacity that leverages the different sector roles to propel forward equitable and sustainable local policy solutions.

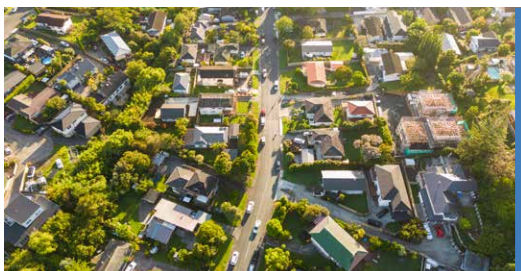
TO CO-CREATE AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY PROCESS AT ALL STAGES

- **Deepen belonging and civic muscle.** Civic engagement is critical to understanding the priorities, vision, and needs of diverse community stakeholders. Coalitions can commit to strengthening community engagement to further sustain improvements over time.
- **Put the voice and views of community members at the center and especially engage those with lived experiences.** Using the [Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership](#) tool will help assess current efforts, establish a vision and identify benchmarks toward deepening community engagement in the policy process.
- **Create leadership pathways for diverse community leaders.** Building capacity to shape policy decisions can sustain community agency for future policy work and is particularly critical to engage those most impacted by inequitable policies.
- **Support community capacities for mobilizing the policy process.** Local leaders can be engaged to co-create policy processes to make inclusive decisions and take effective action.
- **Build the muscle for an inclusive policy process.** Coalitions can test approaches for collaboration in policy change, come together to look at local data, hear from residents about their unique needs, and co-create and support policy that will impact community health.

*Equitable,
innovative,
healing, policies
are being
tested across
the United States.*

STEPS TO LEVERAGE THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

- **Create shared goals and vision.** A shared vision describes what success would look like, and for whom. It serves as a guide for the policy change effort and allows diverse stakeholders to see how their work or priorities fit with possible policy changes.
- **Craft a commitment to equity.** Equitable policy needs to be an intentional design decision. Embedding an equity lens in the needs assessment, community engagement processes, policy design, and implementation will yield more equitable outcomes. Understand the data and disaggregate to assess for inequities that can help focus on specific outcomes.
- **Design cross-sector, multidimensional policy agendas.** Coalitions are uniquely positioned to take advantage of interdisciplinary expertise and cross-sector approaches. Each sector leader brings a unique perspective to the policy process. Creating the conditions for health necessitates a holistic view of communities, as well as a range of policy approaches that can benefit from organizations and institutions aligned toward a common vision of health.
- **Leverage sector influence.** Each sector leader brings a unique and important voice. Understanding the value of a particular policy to each sector will give the policy more momentum. Simultaneously, it is critically important to understand power dynamics that shape inequities disproportionately affecting certain places and people, and the role policy can play to dismantle systemic inequities. Applying a [power analysis](#), engaging in power mapping, and understanding how power can be used to shape good policy, and dismantle bad policy, is a part of how sector leaders can be influential in the policy process.



The policymaking process is as essential to creating healthy places as the specific policies themselves.

TO SCAN FOR POLICIES TO EMBED EQUITY AND NEW INNOVATIONS

- **Assess levers to use for community change.** The [Vital Conditions](#) framework can help to explore a holistic approach to public policy that aims to create thriving communities. This framework also helps us think about what levers we can use for community change to improve our environments and overall well-being.
- **Continually scan for new policies.** Equitable, innovative, healing, policies are being tested across the United States. Coalitions are uniquely positioned to define key criteria to continually assess for new policies and learnings that can inform local work.
- **Build partnerships.** Similarly, multisector coalitions can serve as conveners and influencers to build collaboration for effective policy change and sector influence. Additionally, coalitions can look to engage in networks that provide tools and resources to propel innovative local solutions.
- **Consider pursuing equity policies.** The field of public policy to ensure equitable processes and policy outcomes is continuing to emerge. Explicitly focusing on “[umbrella equity policies](#),” meaning policies or plans that encourage applying an equity lens across government agencies, would not only benefit housing investments, but policy focused on other aspects of community health and well-being, including economic security, good jobs, high quality education and childcare, access to healthcare, and others.
- **Support policies that create community-ownership models.** Policy can open up pathways for historically marginalized residents to control community assets. It can include collective ownership of land and buildings through land trusts and co-operatives, and entrepreneurial and cooperative ownership of the businesses and housing projects that might occupy them.



ASSESS THE POTENTIAL IMPACT AND MITIGATE FOR UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

- **Define what success looks like and for whom.** Being explicit about the focus of a public policy will help design that policy for the intended aim. For example, asking who the audience is for the policy, what impact do you intend to have with the policy, and who else needs to be involved will ensure specificity in the policy design.
- **Understand what the potential unintended consequences are of a policy.** It is critical to spend some time exploring potential harms and impacts that a policy might have that are not the intended aim. Ask, can those be mitigated through design decisions to ensure the most positive and specific outcomes? Who else might provide insight that is important to understand the potential impacts and how can we involve them in the design of policy?

TEST AND CONTINUALLY ADAPT POLICY FOR SUSTAINED IMPACT

- **Map out roles and accountability for equitable policy.** To maximize collective impact, multisector stakeholders can assess their diverse roles in supporting the policy process, adoption and implementation, and leverage their unique sector positionality. Additionally, make commitments of accountability to the policy. Ask, who is the policy accountable to? Can the coalition be accountable to success? How can residents be engaged to ensure an ongoing community voice in policy? Establishing accountability commitments will further efforts of transparency, trust, and engagement.

- **Establish a learning agenda.** Creating learning questions will allow for continuous improvement and adaptation. Policy design might need updates over time to ensure maximum impact. Additionally, opening space for learning will create opportunities to deepen engagement with key stakeholders and explore new ways of achieving health in partnership with other sector leaders and community residents.

TOOLS AND RESOURCES TO ADVANCE POLICYMAKING

Finally, existing field tools and resources can help your local coalition deepen commitments to equitable local public policy. These include the [Healthy Neighborhood Investments and Strategy Map](#), a compendium of federal, state, and local policies being tested nationwide and organized using the Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being framework; the [Blueprint for Changemakers](#), a guide for local policy change that aims at health equity, including policy examples focused on structural discrimination, wealth, opportunity, power, and governance; and the [Healthy Planning Guide](#), a resource to support collaboration across Public Health Departments and Planning Departments for healthy communities. Another resource to check out is the County Health and Rankings Roadmaps' [What Works? Strategies to Improve Rural Health](#). This report outlines key steps toward building healthy communities along with some specific policies and programs that can improve health in rural areas. The policy examples in this scan can be assessed with an eye toward what your local coalition wants to achieve, from the outset, to ensure an intentional process design achieves the aims of the group.

Conclusion

WWHWV stakeholders are ideally positioned to further local policy around the 7 Vital Conditions. Aligning policy design, adoption, implementation, and ongoing evaluation stands to strengthen local policies over time. Ultimately, creating lasting policy changes will require creating sustainable approaches, inclusive policies, and investments into the vital conditions that create health and well-being within our communities.

Sources:

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/healthequity/index.html>

² <https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health>

³ <https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2017/05/what-is-health-equity-.html>

⁴ https://nationalequityatlas.org/indicators/Car_access

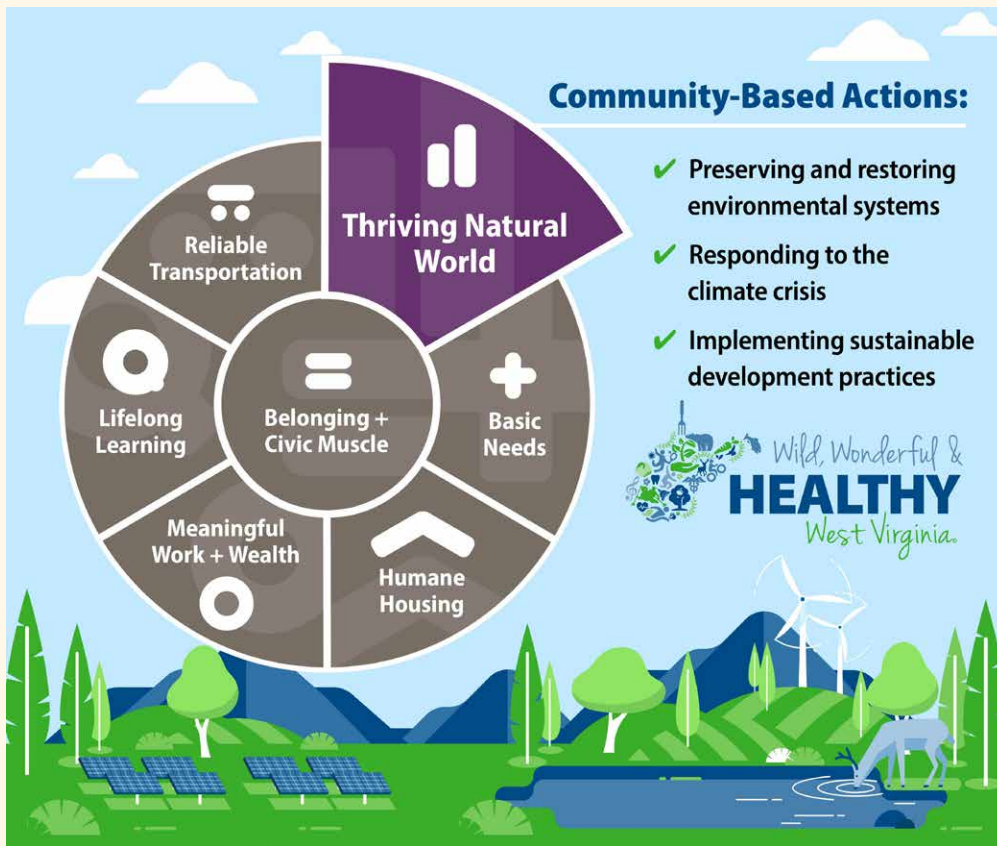
Appendix:

WWHWV's Seven Vital Conditions Social Media Graphics

1. BELONGING AND CIVIC MUSCLE



2. THRIVING AND NATURAL WORLD



3. BASIC NEEDS FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY



4. HUMANE HOUSING



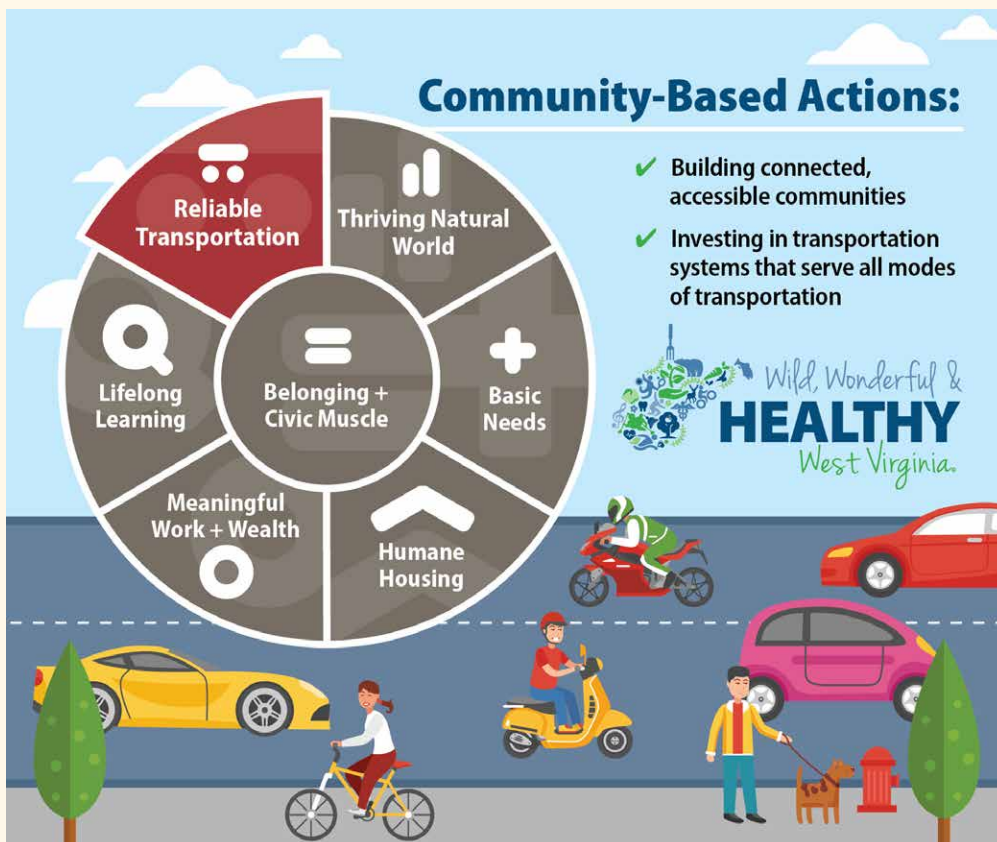
5. MEANINGFUL WORK AND WEALTH



6. LIFELONG LEARNING



7. RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION





**Build Healthy
Places Network**

buildhealthyplaces.org