

# Benefits of Incorporating Health in All Policies (HiAP) Into Local Public Health



The HiAP framework ensures that decisions made by all sectors of the government have a positive or neutral impact on the environment and health of the people that live, work, and play there.



## **Why HiAP is Important for Local Health Officials**

Problems like air pollution are so endemic and cross so many sectors that no single agency in government has jurisdiction to address *all* of its sources. So, problems like these require an approach like HiAP because it entails a coordinated “whole of government” response.

As public health addresses current and emerging trends, it is critical to engage sectors that traditionally operate outside of the public health system. Recent challenges such as COVID-19 and climate change highlight how interconnected various sectors such as transportation, land use, and housing are, and yet they often operate in silos. Collaboration amongst these sectors is key to addressing the health impacts of complex public health challenges — particularly for communities most impacted by health inequities and environmental injustices. **Local health departments are uniquely positioned to be a champion for HiAP and to be a resource to other sectors seeking assistance with assessing policies for their health impacts.**

## **Jurisdictions Incorporating HiAP Report Many Benefits**

- > Increased dialogue with elected officials, grassroots leaders, and advocacy organizations to proactively identify and give voice to policies that promote health equity.
- > Folding overarching goals, activities, process measures, and outcome evaluation metrics of HiAP into existing assessment work thus ensuring minimal lift.
- > Improving upon policies that have historically resulted in unequal access to healthy food options with safe spaces for physical activity and unfair placement of polluting facilities, especially in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color.

### **What Local Health Officials Think About HiAP**

“Top-down, bottom-up, middle-out— they all work. All roads can lead to HiAP. [It] doesn’t matter where you start as long as it’s the appropriate approach for your community’s context.”

“The health outcomes and disparities that you see are really a manifestation of racial inequities in our policies that are historic and ingrained, but alive and well. [HiAP is] a good way to talk about differential conditions and start the conversation without scaring people about race.”