

HOUSING AND HEALTH

Housing Determines Health

United Nationsⁱ declare that the human right to adequate housing is more than just four walls and a roof. It is the right of every woman, man, youth and child to gain and sustain a safe and secure home and community in which to live in peace and dignity. Whether one has accessible, affordable, safe, healthyⁱⁱ and stable housing affects one's ability to attain full health potential. Those with fair and equitable access to attainable and stable housing experience less stress and better mental well-being. Conversely, homeless individuals and families are constantly exposed to high health and safety risksⁱⁱⁱ.

Housing location has a direct link to access to opportunities. Locating affordable and attainable housing near living wage jobs, schools, parks and other amenities can reduce cost burdens for every household, improve our economy, enrich social life, support health, and improve quality of life. Healthy and adequate housing meets basic human needs and minimizes threats to health and safety, such as allergens and other hazards. Resilient housing located away from potential hazards can lessen the stresses of the changing climate, increase household and community resiliency, and prevent negative health impacts.

The Logic Model

Input/Impact Area	Strategies/Policies	Intermediate Outcomes	Ultimate Outcomes
Accessibility and Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure job-housing balance in compact centers to minimize commuting. • Promote access to housing in walkable, complete neighborhoods with employment and other opportunities. • Create mixed-use, compact developments in growth areas served by transit. • Co-locate housing within walking distance of transit, services and amenities. • Plan for housing growth linked with public investments including high-capacity transit. • Locate affordable housing in opportunity-rich neighborhoods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced housing + transportation cost burden. • Increased family retention of wealth and disposable income for nutritious food, health care and recreation. • Improved economy and local businesses. • Reduced physical inactivity and emotional stress caused by commuting. • Reduced burden to emergency rooms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced health disparities. • Improved emotional and mental health. • Reduced obesity and improve physical health. • Increased social, environmental and physical capitals. • Improved population health and quality of life. • Improved neighborhood safety and sense of community.

Input/Impact Area	Strategies/Policies	Intermediate Outcomes	Ultimate Outcomes
Affordability and Attainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure job-housing match so that housing units produced in mixed-use compact areas are affordable to workers nearby. • Integrate affordable housing in all neighborhoods, particularly complete, compact and opportunity-rich neighborhoods, allowing walking access to amenities, transit and services. • Remove barriers or relax land-use regulations, such as maximum density, minimum lot size, parking requirements and cumbersome development standards, to encourage more production of affordable housing, including infill and accessory dwelling units. • Establish “minimum density requirements” to ensure land is developed in accordance with the densities envisioned in the comprehensive plan. • Relax or undo single family zoning to allow missing-middle housing, such as duplex, triplex, etc. • Use form-based codes to encourage and regulate missing-middle housing. • Provide a continuum of diverse housing choices, from rental to ownership and from tiny homes to single detached dwellings, so that people of diverse incomes, needs and life cycles can attain housing within their own means. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved distribution of affordable housing throughout the city. • Increased range of densities, housing types and prices within communities. • Reduced housing cost burden. • Increased disposable income for nutritious food, health care and recreation. • Reduced emotional stresses. • Decreased homelessness. • Increased aging-in-place opportunities by accommodating a broader range of household needs. • Increased school attendance. • Decreased mobility of students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved emotional and mental health. • Increased social connectedness. • Increased academic achievement. • Reduced health disparities. • Increased social, financial and physical capitals. • Increased community diversity and inclusiveness. • Improved population health and quality of life. • Improved neighborhood integration and sense of community and belonging.

Input/Impact Area	Strategies/Policies	Intermediate Outcomes	Ultimate Outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand options for affordable housing construction types, such as tiny homes, micro housing and manufactured housing. • Utilize Inclusionary Zoning to require affordable housing in market-rate developments calibrated to market conditions. • Avoid introducing Inclusionary Zoning in distressed communities. • Change zoning to promote high-density housing in and near centers and corridors. • Reduce unpredictable or streamline lengthy approval process to reduce costs of housing development. • Create dedicated sources of funding to encourage affordable housing. • Enhance incentives for affordable housing in market-rate development. • Use public-owned land to provide affordable housing. • Explore community land trusts and development corporations to develop and maintain affordable housing. • Take steps to ensure existing affordable housing remains available, such as buying back subsidized properties, etc. • Explore financing tools to support the supply and demand of affordable housing, such as tax increment financing, property tax 		

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	abatement, investment tax credit, and revolving loan fund, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage homeownership. 		
Adequacy and Habitability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure affordable units have adequate space; physical accessibility; adequate security; security of tenure; structural stability and durability; adequate lighting, heating and ventilation; and adequate basic infrastructure. • Apply National Healthy Housing Standard^{iv} to building and other codes to prevent housing-related diseases and injuries through routine maintenance. • Ensure that building standards and practices provide for safe and healthy homes for all. • Encourage resource-efficient, carbon-neutral and high-performance housing by introducing green building standards, incentives and technical support. • Maintain and preserve quality affordable dwellings, such as developing a rental housing safety program or adopt a rental inspection ordinance^v. • Work with the local health department to provide healthy home environment assessment to needed low-income residents. • Offer housing rehabilitation loan and grant to help repair, improve, or modernize dwellings, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved housing conditions. • Increased preservation of low-cost housing. • Reduced exposure to allergens, neurotoxins and other hazards. • Reduced health issues associated with poor quality housing, such as asthma or lead poisoning among children. • Reduced levels of psychological distress and helplessness. • Reduced high blood pressure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved physical and mental health. • Reduced health disparities. • Increased neighborhood/community stability. • Increased employment and education stability. • Increased economic opportunity. • Increased opportunity for civic engagement. • Increase local construction and industrial jobs. • Increased home market values. • Increased social and physical capitals.

Input/Impact Area	Strategies/Policies	Intermediate Outcomes	Ultimate Outcomes
	<p>and remove health or safety hazards from those dwellings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the local health department to encourage smoke-free housing^{vi}. 		
Stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamline processes for households to access rental assistance. • Provide funding to stabilize rent. • Provide funding to help low income households meet home energy needs. • Assist households facing housing crises, such as debt advice for tenants with unpaid rents and legal support in eviction proceedings. • Ensure residents have adequate notice for rent increases. • Promote tenants' rights. • Work with landlords to increase participation in rental assistance programs. • Promote homeownership such as creating a home investment partnership program, etc. • Create tax relief to stabilize homeowners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced lease terminations. • Reduced involuntary displacements. • Increased residential stability over time. • Increased personal wealth through homeownership. • Reduced poverty. • Reduced homelessness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved physical and mental health. • Reduced health disparities. • Increased education attainment. • Improved sense of community and neighborhood/place. • Decreased burden on state systems. • Increased social and physical capitals.
Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and assess patterns of inequitable access to housing, and consider changes to land use and housing growth strategies to correct them. • Seek to understand and prevent increased risk of involuntary displacement when up-zoning or subarea planning takes place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased access to opportunities for the underserved populations. • Reduced involuntary displacement of underserved populations and small local businesses. • Reduced homelessness. • Reduced poverty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved social, economic and environmental root causes of health. • Improved community diversity and inclusiveness. • Improved health equity and reduced health disparities.

Input/Impact Area	Strategies/Policies	Intermediate Outcomes	Ultimate Outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take community actions to prevent involuntary displacement of both the vulnerable populations and small local businesses. • Develop a fair housing policy^{vii}. • Seek options to promote accessibility for people of diverse physical abilities. • Consider Housing First^{viii} policy to provide rapid access to permanent housing and support for chronically homeless individuals. • Locate affordable housing in opportunity-rich neighborhoods. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved overall population health and well-being. • Improved independence and quality of life.

Research Evidence

Housing and Health in General

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ENDNOTES

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ⁱⁱ Healthy housing is dry, clean, pest-free, well-ventilated, safe, contaminant-free, and thermally controlled.

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