COVID-19 Health Equity and Rural Health Toolkit

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Hartworth Consulting, LLC
Authored by: Megan Hartwig, Ben Woodworth &
Deborah Thompson

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This toolkit provides resources for organizations interested in developing programs addressing health equity and rural health. The topics included in the toolkit were determined by a needs assessment completed with grantees of the Iowa Initiative to Address COVID-19 Health Disparities project with the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. Grantees participated in monthly learning sessions on each topic presented in the toolkit, and resources were shared after the presentations. Resources from the presentations and additional information are included in this document. This toolkit is not meant to be an all-inclusive guide to health equity and rural health but rather a starting point for organizations interested in these topics. The development of this toolkit was supported through a contract with the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services through CDC Grant #1NH75OT000068-01-00.

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Health Equity

What is Health Equity

Health Equity is broadly defined as reducing and eliminating disparities in health outcomes and their determinants that adversely impact excluded or marginalized groups. According to the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), "Health equity is realized when each individual has a fair opportunity to achieve their full health potential." More specifically, health equity means that no one is prevented from living healthy lives or accessing health care because of systemic injustice or social, economic, or political barriers. When differences in access, treatment, or outcomes are present for individuals or populations, these are referred to as health disparities.

Who is Impacted the Most by Disparities in Health Equity

Groups facing economic, social, and environmental disadvantages are more likely to experience health disparities. These groups include individuals who are racial or ethnic minorities, individuals who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, and members of the LGBTQ+ communities. The COVID-19 pandemic and its impact \demonstrated the need to promote health equity and ensure access to medical care for all Americans.

Achieving Health Equity

The issues at the root of health disparities must be addressed to improve health equity among impacted groups. The Social Determinants of health are conditions that have been identified that can negatively impact an individual's health and well-being. These include the following:

- Economic Stability
- Neighborhood and Physical Environment
- Education
- Food
- Community, Safety, and Social Context
- Health Care System

These areas can directly impact an individual's Mortality, Life Expectancy, Morbidity, Functional Limitations, Health Status, and Health Care Expenditures.

Health Equity Resources

1. **The Omni Institute Health Equity Toolkit for Rural and Remote Communities.** The purpose of the toolkit is to support public health departments in rural and remote communities to take action to improve health equity through internal organizational development. Based on various resources, experiences, and expertise, the toolkit's content is designed to lay a strong foundation for understanding health equity and creating an impactful change through concrete action steps. The toolkit engages participants at a personal and organizational level through analytical evaluation, relational reflection, and emotional connection, eliciting the profound shift in fundamental perspectives and organizational culture that is the core of health equity work. This toolkit focuses primarily on the internal structure and culture of an organization, which lay the foundation for direct community-wide efforts.
    https://www.omni.org/health-equity-toolkit

2. **The National Council for Mental Well-Being – Addressing Health Equity and Racial Justice within Integrated Care Settings.** This 6-module toolkit allows users to build upon their existing knowledge related to health equity, health inequity, health disparities and social determinants, health literacy, and cultural literacy.
    https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/resources/integrated-health-coe-toolkit-purpose-of-this-toolkit/#

Social Determinants of Health Resources

1. **Rural Health Information Hub – Social Determinants of Health in Rural Communities Toolkit**. This toolkit compiles evidence-based and promising models and resources to support organizations implementing programs to address social determinants of health in rural communities across the United States. This toolkit has multiple modules and specifically addresses program models, funding, implementation, and program evaluation.
    https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/sdoh

2. **Protocol for Responding to and Assessing Patients' Assets, Risks, Experiences (PRAPARE) Tool.** Nationally standardized and stakeholder-driven, the Protocol for Responding to & Assessing Patients' Assets, Risks & Experiences (PRAPARE) is designed to equip healthcare and their community partners to better understand and act on individuals' social drivers of health (SDOH). PRAPARE, when paired with the Implementation and Action Toolkit, empowers users to leverage data to improve health equity at the individual, community, and systems levels.
    https://prapare.org/

COVID-19

In 2020, the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, commonly called COVID-19, spread across communities. In the United States alone, over one million people have died[1]. COVID-19 causes respiratory symptoms that can be like a cold or the flu; however, COVID-19 can be more serious than a cold or the flu, even causing death. The resources in this section address COVID-19, including information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, data dashboards, reports, and toolkits.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Resources

The CDC is "the nation's leading science-based, data-driven service organization that protects the public's health."[2] The CDC has information and resources about health and safety topics affecting public health. During the COVID-19 public health emergency, the CDC was the lead agency for distributing information about safety precautions related to the pandemic. If you are looking for reliable data about COVID-19, the CDC is a trusted source of information. The following resources are published on the CDC website.

1. **CDC COVID-19.** This page has general information on COVID-19, including symptoms, what to do if exposed, and travel information.
   https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/

2. **CDC COVID-19 Vaccine Information.** This page includes current information about COVID-19 vaccination.
   https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html

3. **CDC COVID-19 Data Tracker.** Maps, charts, and data about COVID-19 provided by the CDC.
   https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#datatracker-home

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[1] https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/about-covid-19.html
[2] https://www.cdc.gov/about/index.html

Other COVID-19 Information & Resources

The following resources are from various organizations and sources and cover topics including data, public policy, vaccine information from the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, and a guide for rural response to Coronavirus. These resources may be helpful when developing policies and procedures for your organization related to COVID-19.

1. **Iowa Department of Health and Human Services Novel Coronavirus-COVID-19 Vaccine Information.** The Iowa Department of Health and Human Services is the lead agency for public health in Iowa. This page provides resources on COVID-19 vaccine information for the public, healthcare providers, and Iowa's vaccination strategy.
   https://hhs.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus/Vaccine

2. **MultiState COVID-19 State Policy Dashboard.** MultiState is a full-service local government relations company.[3] MultiState's State Policy Dashboard includes links to each state's information on COVID-19 State of Emergency Declarations, Travel Restrictions, Mass Gathering Restrictions, Elective Medical Procedures, Mask Mandates, and Vaccine Mandates.
   https://www.multistate.us/research/covid/public

3. **National Council on Nonprofits Public Policy Resources on COVID-19.** The National Council of Nonprofits provides nonprofits with the tools, research, and resources needed to operate more effectively, efficiently, and ethically.[4] This site offers an overview of topics on COVID-19 that impact nonprofits and other small businesses, including links to information on the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Securities (CARES) Act, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021-COVID Relief Bill, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), information on state's actions around COViD-

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[3] https://www.multistate.us
[4] https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/about-us

19, and additional resources on unemployment insurance, and other topics. https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/trends-and-policy-issues/public-policy-resources-covid-19

4. **United States Department of Health and Human Services – Services and Supports for Longer-Term Impacts of COVID-19 Report.** The mission of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is "to enhance the health and well-being of all Americans, by providing for effective health and human services and by fostering sound, sustained advances in the sciences underlying medicine, public health, and social services[5]. " This report provides webpage information and telephone numbers that are relevant for individuals experiencing Long COVID ad associated conditions, healthcare personnel who work with and treat individuals experiencing Long COVID, individuals experiencing longer-term impacts of COVID-19, including mental health and substance abuse challenges, and individuals dealing with the loss of family members or loved ones to COVID-19. This resource may be helpful when developing programming related to working with individuals experiencing Long COVID. https://www.covid.gov/assets/files/Services-and-Supports-for-Longer-Term-Impacts-of-COVID-19-08012022.pdf

5. **Rural Health Information Hub Rural Response to COVID-19.** RHIhub's page includes a library of sources and documents related to COVID-19 from a rural perspective. Resources on this page may also benefit programs in urban areas. Topics include rural COVID-19 resources, rural COVID-19 trends, and long COVID. https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/covid-19

6. **Georgia Health Policy Center – COVID-19 Resources**
   This is a collection of resources related to COVID-19 and behavioral health, health care financing, long-term services and supports, maternal and child health, rural health, and health equity. https://ghpc.gsu.edu/ghpc-covid/

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[5] https://www.hhs.gov/about/index.html

Rural Community Engagement

The following resources are related to engaging with rural communities on health and equity issues. The first resource, the Rural Health Information Hub, has hundreds of documents and links beyond the ones represented below. Each of these resources can help organizations understand rural communities and learn how to become good partners with these communities.

Rural Health Information Hub

Ruralhealthinfo.org
If you're looking for information, opportunities, and resources on rural health, this is a great resource. The Rural Health Information Hub (RHIhub) is funded by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy to be a national clearinghouse on rural health issues.

1. **Overview.** This 3-minute video provides an overview of RHIhub services: https://youtu.be/nKH0y1h9IYI

2. **Podcasts!** For those who would rather listen to information, stories, and discussions, the *Exploring Rural Health* podcast offers weekly episodes about rural health. Heath equity in rural America is addressed in both the January and February 2023 episodes. https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/podcast

3. **Toolkits.** RHIhub offers several toolkits to help you with your initiatives – including one for sustainability to keep your initiative going when a grant ends. Why reinvent the wheel? Learn from others and their experiences. https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/success

4. **State Guides**. Iowa has its own information page on this site that discusses some key pieces of information about rural areas in the state. It's a great place to start your rural health research! https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/states/iowa#overview

5. **Rural Community Engagement Resource Guide.** This guide describes the importance of community engagement in developing and implementing strategies to improve health, increase value, and drive equitable care delivery. This resource outlines a variety of toolkits, strategies, and resources to help initiate, improve, and inspire community engagement strategies that support value-based care.
https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/resources/20855

Other Rural Community Engagement Resources

The following resources address rural issues and provide insights into how to engage rural communities.

1. **Health Services and Resources Administration Guide for Rural Health Care Collaboration and Coordination.** This guide discusses how rural providers can work together to identify the health needs in their communities, create partnerships to address those needs and develop a "community-minded" approach to health care.
https://www.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/hrsa/rural-health/resources/hrsa-rural-collaboration-guide.pdf

2. **Iowa Health and Human Services State Office of Rural Health.** The State Office of Rural Health is a point of contact for rural healthcare workforce issues, rural healthcare providers, and organizations that have questions about rural health in Iowa. The State Office of Rural Health can provide letters of support for HRSA Rural Health Network Development grants as well as provide technical assistance for data needs related to these applications. The State Office of Rural Health also publishes resources related to rural health.
https://hhs.iowa.gov/policy-and-workforce-services/rural-health-primary-care

3. **Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.** The Iowa State Extension and Outreach has a presence in each county in Iowa. ISU Extension "builds a strong Iowa by connecting Iowans to the resources in the State." Extension offices are often aware of projects within their counties related to health and may be able to connect you to other like programs.
https://www.extension.iastate.edu

4. **FEMA Guide to Supporting Engagement and Resiliency in Rural Communities.** This publication provides information about rural America and discusses current concerns in rural America. Understanding these concerns may help you identify ways your organization can partner with rural communities to address public health and health equity.
https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_rural-guide_jan-2021.pdf

5. **Iowa Rural Health Association.** The Iowa Rural Health Association advocates and provides learning opportunities about issues that impact rural Iowa. The Iowa Rural Health Association is a great organization to join to connect to rural Iowa communities.
https://iaruralhealth.org

6. **Rural Policy Research Institute.** The Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI) is a national policy research organization located at the University of Iowa. RUPRI publishes reports about issues that impact rural communities. You can find reports and podcasts that help to build awareness of rural issues at this site.
https://rupri.org

7. **Health Resources & Services Administration Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP)**
FORHP administers grant programs designed to build healthcare capacity at both the local and state levels. Information on FORHP's programs can be found at the link below.
https://www.hrsa.gov/rural-health

8. **The Community Tool Box.** The Community Tool Box is a free online resource for those working to build healthier communities and bring about social change. It offers thousands of pages of tips and tools for taking action in communities[6]. The Community Tool Box provides a framework for working with communities of any size, including rural ones.
https://ctb.ku.edu/en

9. **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Rural Health**
The CDC offers information on health topics that impact rural Americans and resources to address these topics. Understanding these topics may help you to develop interventions that are successful in rural communities.
https://www.cdc.gov/ruralhealth/

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[6] **https://ctb.ku.edu/en/about-the-tool-box**

Public Health Data

Data helps organizations develop and guide their programming. The data sources below focus on public health data which can help to determine populations and interventions organizations can work with and implement to impact public health.

Iowa Public Health Tracking Portal

The Iowa Public Health Tracking Portal serves as a centralized source for public health data so that public users may improve public health decision-making, perform thorough community health needs assessments and health improvement plans, increase funding opportunities, and spend less time searching for data and more time using data for valuable activities. Data featured on the site include illness and disease, environmental health hazards, and population and demographic data. It is intended to be a site that anyone can use – whether or not you are a trained epidemiologist!

Something to note is that as the Iowa Department of Public Health and the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services merge into one department, this website may change. If that occurs, we recommend a Google search for the "Iowa Public Health Tracking Portal."

1. **County Level Health Data.** There are several options to click on under the tab "Health," including but not limited to asthma, cancer, COPD, diabetes, general health status, heart attacks, and immunization rates. These links will have county-level data based on what is available for Iowa.
   https://tracking.idph.iowa.gov/Health

2. **How-to Videos.** How-to videos make navigating the interactive site easier. You can learn how to query data, download data sets, and more.
   https://tracking.idph.iowa.gov/Help/Training/Videos

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CDC.gov

The CDC is "the nation's leading science-based, data-driven service organization that protects the public's health."[7] The CDC has information and resources about health and safety topics affecting public health. During the COVID-19 public health emergency, the CDC was the lead agency for distributing information about safety precautions related to the pandemic. If you are looking for reliable data about COVID-19, the CDC is a trusted source of information. The following data resources are published on the CDC website.

1. **CDC Data and Statistics.** The data and statistics page includes several data tools on various topics, including COVID-19, deaths and mortality, alcohol use, cancer, diabetes, state and territorial data, and an interactive database system. Information on several other health conditions is also available. https://www.cdc.gov/datastatistics/index.html

2. **Places: Local Data for Better Health.** PLACES is a collaboration between the CDC, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the CDC Foundation. PLACES provides health data for small areas across the country. This data allows community members all over the county, regardless of population size and rurality, to better understand the burden and geographic distribution of health measures in their areas and assist them in planning or advocating for public health interventions. PLACES provides an interactive map that allows you to search for your zip code, county, or even census tract. It will pull up information like the estimated prevalence of high blood pressure among adults over the age of 18. The site's interactive map will take you to locations as small as a census tract which is basically neighborhood level. The visual display using darker and lighter colors allows for easy comparisons and an understanding of where resources should be targeted first. https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/22c7182a162d45788dd52a2362f8ed65

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[7] https://www.cdc.gov/about/index.html

How-to videos make navigating the interactive site easier:
https://www.cdc.gov/places/help/index.html

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

RWJF.org

RWJF's mission is to improve the health and well-being of everyone in America. In partnership with others, they are working to develop a Culture of Health rooted in equity that provides every individual with a fair and just opportunity to thrive, no matter who they are, where they live, or how much money they have.

1. **County Health Rankings & Roadmaps.** There are a couple of interactive tools that RWJF has created to help people localize the information they need. One is called the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps tool. The page allows you to search by county or zip code to find information about the health of your county. Each county in Iowa has been ranked from healthiest to least healthy. For example, Polk County is ranked #45 in health outcomes compared to the other 98 counties in Iowa. Each county has a profile of health-related variables, creating a rich treasure trove of local information you may need for your advocacy and program sustainability efforts.
https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/

2. **Life Expectancy: Could where you live influence how long you live?** This is another interactive tool provided by RWJF that helps to localize information. This tool allows you to make comparisons for life expectancy. According to the site, people living just a few blocks apart may have vastly different opportunities to live a long life partly because of their neighborhood. For example, some areas of Des Moines have a life expectancy that is ten years less compared to people in Ankeny, which is a suburb of Des Moines. Data provides a compelling way to make your case!
https://prod.rwjf.org/en/insights/our-research/interactives/whereyouliveaffectshowlongyoulive.html

Rural Health Information Hub

The Rural Health Information Hub (RHIhub) is funded by the Federal Office of Rural Health Policy to be a national clearinghouse on rural health issues. RHIhub is a rich resource for data related to health and rural communities and populations. They have an extensive collection of links to data sources related to public health in rural areas as well as resources that can also be used in urban areas.

1. **Rural Health Information Hub Rural Data Explorer.** Select from a wide range of data on health disparities, health workforce, demographics, and more. Compare metropolitan counties and nonmetro counties and compares states to national data points.
   https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/data-explorer

2. **Rural Health Information Hub Data Sources & Tools Relevant to Rural Health.** This is a table of links to different data sources and tools relevant to rural health and beyond.
   https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/statistics-and-data/data-sources-and-tools

Other Public Health Data Sources

1. **United States Health Resources Services Administration Data Warehouse.** The Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) "provides equitable health care to the nation's highest need communities." HRSA programs support people with low incomes, people with HIV, pregnant people, children, parents, rural communities, transplant patients, and the health workforce. HRSA collects data about these programs and makes them available to the public through the HRSA Data Warehouse. HRSA data can be helpful when applying for grants through HRSA and other organizations.
   https://data.hrsa.gov
2. **United States Census Bureau.** The U.S. Census Bureau tracks data about the population. The Census Bureau's mission is "to serve as the nation's leading

provider of quality data about its people and economy."[8] Data from the Census Bureau is a valuable tool when writing grants and understanding where populations of different people live and how the local economy impacts them. https://data.census.gov or https://www.census.gov/data.html

3. **United States Bureau of Labor Statistics.** The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is an agency of the United States Department of Labor. It is the principal fact-finding agency in the broad field of labor economics and statistics and serves as part of the U.S. Federal Statistical System. BLS collects, calculates, analyzes, and publishes data essential to the public, employers, researchers, and government organizations.[9] Like census data, labor statistics can be a helpful resource when writing grants.
   https://www.bls.gov

4. **United States Department of Agriculture County Level Data Sets.** The county-level data sets include socioeconomic indicators, including poverty rates, population change, unemployment rates, and education levels. These data sets can be helpful when responding to funding opportunities where data helps to make your case for why your program should be funded.
   https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/county-level-data-sets/

5. **Kaiser Family Foundation.** The Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) is an independent source for health policy research, polling, and journalism.[10] KFF is a nonpartisan source of health information on various topics, including COVID-19, disparities, mental health & substance use, and other issues. Data from KFF can be helpful when determining where interventions may be needed with different populations.
   https://www.kff.org/statedata/

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[8] https://www.census.gov/about.html
[9] https://www.bls.gov/bls/about-bls.htm
[10] https://www.kff.org/about-us/

Project/Program Marketing and Social Media Engagement

Marketing and social media are good ways to educate the public about an organization's programs and mission. The following links provide general information on social media and some tools to use when developing content. The table below gives a broad overview of the current capabilities of different social media platforms.

Platform	Text	Graphics	Video	Stories	Direct Messaging	Sharing	Linking
Facebook	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Instagram		☑	☑	☑	☑		
WhatsApp				☑	☑		
Snapchat			☑	☑			
TikTok			☑				☑
Twitter	☑	☑	☑		☑	☑	☑

Social Media Resources

1. **SelfMade Health Network – Leveraging Social Media to Maximize Reach: Health Equity.** This toolkit educates organizations on using social media to best reach their targeted audiences with a focus on health equity. https://selfmadehealth.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/SelfMade-Health-Network-Social-Media-Toolkit-Final-Version.pdf

2. **Pew Research Center Social Media Fact Sheet.** The Pew Research Center has compiled information on who uses social media, which social media platforms are most commonly used, and who uses each platform. This information can be helpful when determining which social media platform to use to reach your target audience.
   https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/fact-sheet/social-media/

3. **National Organization for Rare Disorders Social Media Toolkit for Nonprofit Organizations.** This toolkit provides tips for nonprofits to successfully use social media to connect to their community.
   https://learn.rarediseases.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Social-Media-Toolkit-for-Nonprofit-Organizations.pdf

4. **3rdEdge – 16 Social Media Content Ideas for Nonprofits.** This is a list of social media content ideas for nonprofits; additionally, the resource briefly discusses strategies around social media use.
   https://www.3rdedge.com/insights/16-social-media-content-ideas-for-nonprofits

5. *Whole Whale – 37 Social Media Ideas for Nonprofits.* Whole Whale is a company that provides free resources on using data and technology to increase social impact. The list of 37 social media ideas is just one of the many resources in their library. This site is an excellent resource for nonprofits.
   https://www.wholewhale.com/about/ - The library of Resources can be accessed at the bottom of the page.
   https://www.wholewhale.com/tips/social-media-ideas-nonprofits/ - Social media ideas.

6. **CDC Public Health Image Library.** The CDC has put together a library of images that are free to use in the public domain. If you are looking for images to describe health or that show people doing a variety of activities, this is a great resource for free images related to health.
   https://phil.cdc.gov

Website Inclusivity and Accessibility

Ensuring your website is inclusive and accessible is an important way to ensure everyone can benefit from your organization's expertise.

1. **Whole Whale Website Inclusivity Tool.** This tool allows you to check a webpage for language that could be considered offensive and provides alternative language options to use in its place.
   https://www.wholewhale.com/inclusivity-about/?_gl=1*wwrlo9*_ga*MTEzNzA4MjY4OS4xNjg0OTYyMzAy*_ga_62PC6WPHMT*MTY4NDk2MjMwMS4xLjEuMTY4NDk2MjQ0Mi42MC4wLjA

2. **University of Rochester - Ensuring Accessibility.** The University of Rochester has put together a guide around accessibility related to social media. While this site references the university's values, it also provides tips and resources to address accessibility.
   https://www.rochester.edu/communications/resources/social-media-guide/ensuring-accessibility/

Local Public Health & Advocacy

What is public health?

When we think about the word "health," we typically associate it with medical matters, so the definition of public health can seem a little confusing. Unlike the practice of medicine in clinical settings—like a doctor's office or hospital—public health is not a one-on-one discipline, nor do those in the field practice medicine.

Instead, public health focuses on improving and protecting community health and well-being, with an emphasis on prevention among large groups of people. Those with public health degrees keep communities healthy through child wellness, disease prevention, education, disaster relief, clean water, access to healthcare, and much more.

Why is public health important?

Most of us rarely think about these roles until a crisis, such as a devastating hurricane, captures our attention. But public health officials—many of whom may hold public health degrees—work on a daily basis to keep people healthy and safe, locally and around the world, by preventing disease and injury.

Public health initiatives such as vaccinations, family planning, motor vehicle safety laws, and clean air and water policies have increased life expectancy in the U.S. by nearly 30 years. There aren't many sectors of the economy that can claim this type of success!

National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)

NACCHO.org

The mission of NACCHO is to improve the health of communities by strengthening and advocating for local health departments. NACCHO is the only organization dedicated to serving every local health department in the nation. It serves 3000 local health departments.

1. **Local Public Health Contact Information.** NACCHO has created an interactive map to help you search for local health departments in Iowa and nationwide. Find contact information for local health departments using their map or search functions. https://www.naccho.org/membership/lhd-directory

2. **Policy Statements.** NACCHO has written policy statements and communications to Congress and the federal executive branch agencies (including the White House) on a multitude of issues. Policy statements inspire ideas, help with research and promote advocacy on health issues. https://www.naccho.org/advocacy/activities

3. **Healthy Equity Course.** This course provides an online learning environment to explore the root causes of inequity in the distribution of disease, illness, and death. While its audience is primarily the local public health workforce, anyone can sign up. This may also be good for those who see themselves as community health workers. http://www.rootsofhealthinequity.org/about-project.php

Association of State and Territorial Health Officers (ASTHO)

ASTHO.org

ASTHO is committed to supporting the work of state and territorial public health officials and furthering the development and excellence of public health policy nationwide.

1. **Policy Statements.** ASTHO works closely with state health officials to shape laws, regulations, and administrative actions that impact health. While their policy statements are intended to be used by public health officers, they are also helpful for research, inspiration, and advocacy for anyone working to improve community health. https://www.astho.org/advocacy/policy-statements/

American Public Health Association (APHA)

APHA.org

APHA champions the health of all people and all communities. They advocate for public health issues and policies backed by science. They are one of the oldest public health organizations dating back 150 years, and boast a broad-based member community.

1. **Distilled Research and Policy Statements.** The website provides a wealth of information and resources about many different public health topics. The APHA Policy Statement Database is a great place to look for literature reviews and recommended actions on a broad range of public health topics.
https://apha.org/Topics-and-Issues
https://apha.org/Policies-and-Advocacy/Public-Health-Policy-Statements

2. **Publications and Periodicals.** APHA's publishing arm provides access to peer-reviewed articles, books, and journals. https://apha.org/Publications

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

RWJF.org

RWJF's mission is to improve the health and well-being of everyone in America. In partnership with others, they are working to develop a Culture of Health rooted in equity that provides every individual with a fair and just opportunity to thrive, no matter who they are, where they live, or how much money they have.

1. **Advocacy & Policy Briefs.** Much like the other public health sites discussed in this toolkit, RWJF has its own policy and advocacy issue briefs library. You can search this library by topic, which makes it a little less overwhelming.
https://www.rwjf.org/en/insights/advocacy-and-policy.html?o=2&us=1

Iowa Department of Health and Human Services

The Iowa Department of Public Health merged with the Iowa Department of Human Services in 2022, becoming the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services. The website provides public health information related to Iowa, along with information on health services available to Iowans. You can search for the contact information for county or local public health agencies by searching for the county name and public health in the search bar or by visiting this link:
 https://hhs.iowa.gov/location-by-county
https://hhs.iowa.gov/home

Iowa Public Health Association

The Iowa Public Health Association (IPHA) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit membership organization of public health professionals and allies. IPHA educates the public and influences policymakers on critical public health matters. Engaging in education sessions offered by IPHA can be an excellent way to learn about public health issues.
https://iowapha.org

Mental Health

The onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic brought to the forefront concerns about mental health and substance abuse; those concerns continue to remain elevated. Many across the country describe the situation as a mental health crisis. Continued environmental stressors coupled with challenges in accessing mental health care, particularly in rural communities, have caused concern for practitioners and policymakers alike.

Iowa Mental Health Resources

1. **Your Life Iowa**. Your Life Iowa is funded by the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services under the Division of Behavioral Health. This website offers helpful links and contact information for programs that may assist individuals experiencing mental health and substance abuse difficulties. https://yourlifeiowa.org

2. **Iowa Concern**. Iowa Concern is a program of the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. The program began in 1985 as a toll-free number serving the agricultural community. Today, Iowa Concern serves both urban and rural Iowans and beyond[11]. Iowa Concern services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at no charge. Iowa Concern can be accessed by calling toll-free at 1-800-447-1985, via live chat on the website, or through email. Interpretation services are available via phone. Topics addressed include legal, finance, stress, and crisis/disaster, among others. Iowa Concern has access to an attorney for legal education, stress counselors, and information and referral services. https://www.extension.iastate.edu/iowaconcern/

3. **Iowa Mental Health and Disability Service Regions**. Iowa's community-based, person-centered mental health and disability services system provides locally delivered services that are regionally managed within statewide standards. Local

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[11] **https://www.extension.iastate.edu/iowaconcern/about**

access to mental health and disability services for adults and children with severe emotional disturbances is provided by established mental health and disability services regions to Iowa residents regardless of their residence location.
https://www.iowamhdsregions.org

4. **Project Recovery.** The State of Iowa has received federal funding from FEMA to offer free virtual counseling and assistance to those affected, in any way, by COVID-19. Project Recovery Iowa provides counseling, virtual activities, referrals, and help finding resources to any Iowan seeking assistance or a listening ear. Iowans of all ages may join groups online to find support and learn creative strategies for coping with the effects of the pandemic.
https://covidrecoveryiowa.azurewebsites.net

Other Mental Health Resources

1. **Kaiser Family Foundation – The Implications of COVID-19 for Mental Health and Substance Use.** The following brief gives a robust outline of the issues being experienced by Americans post-pandemic. It also offers several key data points that can be helpful when engaging in outreach and program planning.
https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/the-implications-of-covid-19-for-mental-health-and-substance-use/

2. **The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).** SAMHSA is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation[12]. The SAMHSA website provides resources related to substance misuse and behavioral/mental health, including reports and tools to use in practice.
https://www.samhsa.gov

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[12] **https://www.samhsa.gov/about-us**

3. **Make it Okay**. "Make It OK" is a campaign to reduce the stigma of mental illnesses. The organizations listed here have pledged their commitment to change the hearts and minds about the misperceptions of mental illnesses by encouraging open conversations and education on the topic. https://makeitok.org

Community Health Worker

Community Health Worker (CHW) is an umbrella term to describe public health or social service workers who are close to and serve members of the community. They may work for pay or as volunteers for an agency, organization, or healthcare facility. CHWs share similarities with the community members they work with, such as ethnicity, language, culture, socioeconomic status, values, and life experiences. CHWs are trusted and responsive members of the communities they serve[13].

Iowa Chronic Care Consortium

Iowaccc.com
The Iowa Chronic Care Consortium (ICCC) is an independent, not-for-profit population health consulting organization[14]. The ICCC has developed a Community Health Worker curriculum available in Iowa. In addition to the Community Health Worker program, ICCC focuses on health coach and population health programs.

1. **ICCC CORE – Community Health Worker Training Program.** The Iowa Chronic Care Consortium has developed a training program for Community Health Workers. Information about the program can be found at the website below, along with resources and activities in Iowa.
   https://communityhealthworker.org

2. **ICCC – Community Health Worker Training Overview.** This resource addresses the role of a community health worker and provides an overview of the ICCC community health worker training program.
   https://iowaccc.com/chw-training-overview/

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[13] https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/community-health-workers/1/introduction
[14] https://iowaccc.com

Rural Health Information Hub - Community Health Worker

Ruralhealthinfo.org

The Rural Health Information Hub has a topic guide on community health workers in rural settings and a community health worker toolkit. These resources can help organizations learn more about community health workers and how to implement programs in rural communities. The content could also be applied to programs working in urban areas.

1. **Community Health Workers in Rural Settings.** This topic guide addresses frequently asked questions about community health worker programs, including certification, funding, and training.
   https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/community-health-workers

2. **Community Health Workers Toolkit**. The toolkit is a compilation of promising practices and resources to support rural communities and organizations interested in developing a community health worker program. The toolkit is divided into modules addressing program models, implementation, evaluation, and funding, among other topics.
   https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/community-health-workers

3. **Implementation of Community Health Worker Programs.** This module is from the Community Health Worker Toolkit above and offers strategies for implementing community health worker programs in rural communities. As mentioned above, many of the strategies also relate to urban communities and organizations.
   https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/community-health-workers/4/implementation

Other Community Health Worker Resources

1. **Community Health Worker Core Consensus Project (C3 Project).** The C3 Project's primary aims are to expand cohesion in the field and to contribute to the visibility and greater understanding of the full potential of Community Health Workers (CHWs) to improve health, community development, and access to systems of care. The C3 Project website addresses the roles and competencies of community health workers. Some of their resources may be helpful when developing community health worker programs in organizations.
https://www.c3project.org

2. **City College of San Francisco - Foundations for CHWS Textbook & Training Guide.** This links to the CHW textbook and a training guide. The textbook can be purchased through this site, or you can see the second link below for a free online version of the training guide. The training guide includes activities and assessments which may be helpful for organizations implementing a CHW program.
https://www.ccsf.edu/academics/schools/allied-health-physical-education-social-services/health-education-department/foundations-chws-textbook-training-guide
Direct link to training guide:
https://sites.google.com/view/chw-training-guide/?pli=1

Funding Diversification

What is Funding Diversification?

Fiscal diversification is an area for consideration for organizations interested in impacting health equity. Diversification is a concept that can be utilized to help stabilize funding for programs by utilizing a variety of funding sources rather than relying on a specific donor or funding stream. Diversification is undertaken to help organizations continually function toward meeting their vision and mission.

Why It's Important

Organizations that depend on one source of income are vulnerable if that source disappears. This lack of diversity in funding may jeopardize the ability of a program to function. Funds may become unavailable for a range of reasons, including shifting priorities within the funding entity, economic decline, and a change in policies.

Sustainable programs have a long-term financial plan that includes diversified funding sources. Some examples of ways organizations have diversified funding include:
1. Expanding their donor base
2. Development of online donation campaigns
3. Foundational Support
4. Grant Funding
5. Fee for Service/Program income
6. Partnerships with organizations who have a vested interest in the population or issue they are addressing.

Blending these types of funding will allow a program to become more fiscally stable and sustainable. Below are resources that may be helpful in identifying alternative funding sources in Iowa. It is important to remember that large businesses such as Target and Walmart, as well as local businesses, may offer support to organizations addressing community health.

Iowa Funding Resources

1. **Iowa Grants**. The Iowa Grants page is a system to search and apply for funding opportunities with Iowa governmental agencies. Search for opportunities by clicking on the "View Current Funding Opportunities" button.
https://www.iowagrants.gov/index.do

2. **State of Iowa Bid Opportunities**. The bid opportunities page allows organizations to bid on projects and services with Iowa governmental agencies. These opportunities are different than grants.
https://bidopportunities.iowa.gov

3. **Iowa Community Foundations**. Each of Iowa's 99 counties has at least one community foundation that funds various projects through grants and other means. This site lets you search for foundations by county to learn more about the opportunities and initiatives of each of the foundations represented.
https://iowacommunityfoundations.org

4. **Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines**. We recognize that many programs addressing social determinants of health and health equity are located in the Des Moines area metro. The Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines is a good resource for nonprofits. They offer some grant programs and training for nonprofit boards and staff.
https://www.desmoinesfoundation.org

5. **United Ways of Iowa**. The United Way is involved in local communities across Iowa and funds community programs that address health. Local United Way programs can be accessed through this page.
https://www.uwiowa.org

6. **Prairie Meadows Community Betterment Grant Program**. The Prairie Meadows Community Betterment Grant funds small to medium-sized projects that improve the lives of those in their communities.
https://www.prairiemeadows.com/about-us/grant-programs

7. **Telligen Community Initiative**. The Telligen Community Initiative provides funding to programs and projects that focus on the social determinants of health and health equity as well as healthcare workforce development. These grants are available to organizations across Iowa.
https://telligenci.org

8. **Wellmark Foundation**. The Wellmark Foundation provides grants for projects that address community health.
https://www.wellmark.com/foundation/grants

Rural Funding & Opportunities

1. **RHIhub – Rural Funding and Opportunities**. The RHIhub publishes a list of funding programs that address rural health. Organizations can search for funding opportunities by funding type, sponsor, topic, and state.
https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/funding

2. **RHIhub – Economic Impact Analysis Tool**. This tool shows how your program's spending on staff, supplies, equipment, and other expenses benefits your state. Being able to articulate your value to funders can help to support grant and funding applications.
https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/econtool

3. **Health Resources & Services Administration Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) Grants**. FORHP coordinates activities related to rural health care within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. FORHP administers grant programs designed to build healthcare capacity at both the local and state levels with a focus on rural health.
https://www.hrsa.gov/rural-health/grants

Program Sustainability

Sustainability, when described as systems change, is a program or service that continues due to its perceived value and ability to draw support and resources (people, time, and money). In both the nonprofit and public health sectors, it is common for grant funds to be available that are intended to be "start-up" funds with the idea that recipients will identify methods for sustainability so that the established programs or services are expanded in the post-grant period.

Sustainability may refer to the following outcomes achieved by a program:
- On-going impacts of collaboration
- Improved service models
- Increase capacity in local systems
- New policies to sustain impact
- Changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors

Common Characteristics of sustainable programs include:
- Strategic Vision
- Collaboration
- Leadership
- Communication
- Evaluation Components
- Capacity
- Efficiency and Effectiveness
- Relevance
- Resource Diversification

Several existing resources are available to help organizations or programs start their evaluation of the sustainability of their programs. These tools offer users concrete steps to ensure their efforts become sustainable.

Sustainability Resources

1. **RHIhub – Sustainability Planning Tool.** By thinking beyond the day-to-day activities and services to plan for sustainability early in the grant cycle, communities can better position their programs for long-term sustainability and leverage the investment of federal grant dollars to maintain successful programs that improve the health of rural Americans. The tools provided here are intended to help you consider the sustainability of programs that address community needs and to engage your partners and stakeholders in this planning process.
   https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/sustainability

2. **Georgia Health Policy Center – A Guide to Funding Navigation**. The Georgia Health Policy Center's guide contains trainings, tools, and a dashboard designed to help organizations align resources and strategies to build resilient and equitable communities.
   https://fundingnavigatorguide.org

3. **University of North Dakota Center for Rural Health – Sustainability**. This site offers information on grant writing and program sustainability.
   https://ruralhealth.und.edu/grant-writing/sustainability