**Leveraging Vital Conditions in Funding Proposals**

**Boilerplate Language for HCD Partners**

**v.9.7.2022**

Foundations for Our Approach: The Vital Conditions for Well-Being Framework

[*Our proposal’s or organization’s*] goals and objectives are aligned with a research-based framework of powerful levers to improve health equity, called the “Seven Vital Conditions for Community Change and Well-Being.”[[1]](#endnote-1) Communities around the country and in Delaware are using this framework to structure strategic, long-term, resident-engaged approaches to their efforts.[[2]](#endnote-2) We use this overarching framework to focus on making change with our residents over time, to select effective methods, and to stay true to our mission and vision for our community.

Vital conditions offer another way of describing social determinants of health that span beyond health. Vital conditions are “properties of places and institutions that we all need all the time to reach our full potential, like food, humane housing, access to meaningful work and wealth and a sense of belonging.”[[3]](#endnote-3) The vital conditions framework figures prominently in the Office of the Surgeon General’s 2021 peer-reviewed report on how to create *Community Health and Economic Prosperity;[[4]](#endnote-4)* is featured by other federal and national entities such as the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion[[5]](#endnote-5) andthe National Civic League;[[6]](#endnote-6) and is referenced by experts as part of the future of the public’s health.[[7]](#endnote-7) A significant body of literature[[8]](#endnote-8) synthesizes and demonstrates how effective changes can be made within and across vital conditions, listed in Table 1.[[9]](#endnote-9)

Table 1

Seven Vital Conditions

Description automatically generated with medium confidence

All of the vital conditions map to the levers cited by the 2017 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine[[10]](#endnote-10) as areas where systems change should focus, which include education, employment, transportation, social environment, public safety, physical environment, housing, wealth, and health systems. A 2021 Rand Health Care Review[[11]](#endnote-11) for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found in its synthesis that interventions promoting social determinants of health (vital conditions) resulted in positive health outcomes across multiple categories. A 2020 Milbank Review article[[12]](#endnote-12) points to “Belonging and Civic Muscle” as among the most powerful levers for successful intervention across diverse jurisdictions, making our proposal’s methods of engaging our communities essential to its success. We feel confident that this framework gives our proposal a strong basis for building well-being and equity in our community.

Organizationally Supported through a Vital Conditions-Promoting Network

Research shows that collaborating with others and receiving technical assistance improves system and organizational capacities.[[13]](#endnote-13) As a member of the Healthy Communities Delaware community network,[[14]](#endnote-14)we contribute and exchange equity-creating strategies and practice knowledge with other community organizations throughout Delaware that are also embarking on changing the vital conditions in their neighborhoods. We also access technical assistance, training, and Communities of Practice through Healthy Communities Delaware that add to our organization’s connections and ability to implement long-term work towards community equity. Across the HCD network, partners are succeeding in expanding affordable housing units, increasing community safety with neighborhood revitalization initiatives, building resident leadership, and building family stability with resource navigation.[[15]](#endnote-15)

Vital Conditions Data Informs our Approach

Jurisdictions around the country are using the vital conditions framework to not only structure what to work on, but also how to measure outcomes over time.[[16]](#endnote-16) Through a data portal offered by Healthy Communities Delaware and generated by the Institute for People, Place, and Possibility, we are able to access our community’s data organized by each of the vital condition categories,[[17]](#endnote-17) and use it to identify community assets and opportunities for improvement, develop strategic community improvement plans, and track progress towards our goals.

Evidence for Selected Proposal Strategies

***\*Note to partners: As you develop your proposal to advance work on vital conditions, keep in mind that including evidence-based strategies will often give you a competitive advantage with funders.***

***Healthy Communities Delaware is compiling links, organized by vital conditions, that we hope will make it easier to locate and reference tested strategies and tools to include in your proposal.\****

***\*Endnotes will need to adhere to whatever style is prescribed in your funding application guidance.\****

1. ReThink Health. (2017). Negotiating a well-being portfolio. Retrieved from https://www.rethinkhealth.org/wpcontent/uploads/2017/07/Well-Being-Map.pdf, and Well Being In the Nation Network. (n.d.). Vital conditions. Retrieved from https://winnetwork.org/vital-conditions. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Palm Beach County, FL, Fox Cities, WI, and communities in Delaware are structuring changemaking initiatives around the vital conditions. <https://www.bewellpbc.org/blog/impact-reports/2021-impact-report/>;<https://www.imaginefoxcities.com/>; <https://healthycommunitiesde.org/> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Well-Being in the Nation (WIN) Network. (n.d.) . <https://winnetwork.org/vital-conditions#:~:text=Vital%20conditions%20are%20properties%20of,and%20a%20sense%20of%20belonging>. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2021). Community health and economic prosperity: Engaging businesses as stewards and stakeholders—A report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office of the Associate Director for Policy and Strategy. <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/chep-sgr-full-report.pdf>. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Reed, P. (2022). Equity and Enhanced Individual and Community Resilience Are Integral to a Meaningful Recovery. Health and Well-Being Matter, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. <https://health.gov/news/202201/equity-and-enhanced-individual-and-community-resilience-are-integral-meaningful-recovery> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Norris, T. (2019). Reclaiming Well-Being in America: the vital conditions that make people and places healthier and more resilient. National Civic Review. Fall; 108(3). <https://www.nationalcivicleague.org/ncr-article/reclaiming-well-being-in-america-the-vital-conditions-that-make-people-and-places-healthier-and-more-resilient/> [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Deloitte Center for Health Solutions and Deloitte Center for Government Insights. (2021) The future of the public's health: Reimagining the health ecosystem: Programs, policies, and systems for strengthening public health. <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/health-care/the-future-of-public-health.html>. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. (2018) What Works? Social and Economic Opportunities to Improve Health for All. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/reports/what-works-social-and-economic-opportunities-to-improve-health-for-all>; <https://www.thecommunityguide.org/>; <https://www.cdc.gov/policy/hst/hi5/index.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Thriving US. (n.d.). Seven Vital Conditions graphic. <https://thriving.us/share-thriving-together/> [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). Communities in Action: Pathways to Health Equity. The National Academies Press: Washington, DC. Available at: <https://www.nap.edu/read/24624/chapter/1> (evidence section p. 191) [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. RAND Healthcare. (2021). Building the Evidence Base for Social Determinants of Health Interventions. Prepared for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) at the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. <https://aspe.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/e400d2ae6a6790287c5176e36fe47040/PR-A1010-1_final.pdf>. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Milstein B, Homer J. (2020), Which Priorities for Health and Well-Being Stand Out After Accounting for Tangled Threats and Costs? Simulating Potential Intervention Portfolios in Large Urban Counties. Milbank Quarterly. 2020 Jun;98(2):372-398. doi: 10.1111/1468-0009.12448. Epub 2020 Feb 6. PMID: 32027060; PMCID: PMC7296431. <https://www.milbank.org/quarterly/articles/which-priorities-for-health-and-well%E2%80%90being-stand-out-after-accounting-for-tangled-threats-and-costs-simulating-potential-intervention-portfolios-in-large-urban-counties/> [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Scott, V.C., Jillani, Z., Malpert, A. *et al.* (2022). A scoping review of the evaluation and effectiveness of technical assistance. *Implement Sci Commun* **3**, 70. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s43058-022-00314-1> [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Healthy Communities Delaware. (n.d.). <https://healthycommunitiesde.org/network> [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Healthy Communities Delaware. (n.d.). <https://healthycommunitiesde.org/community-impact-1> [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Institute for People, Place, & Possibility. (n.d.). <https://www.i-p3.org/post/a-new-method-for-measuring-thriving-struggling-or-suffering> [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Healthy Communities Delaware. (n.d.). <https://healthycommunitiesde.org/vital-conditions-data> [↑](#endnote-ref-17)