



**Why Place Matters:  
Challenges & Opportunities in  
Creating Healthy Communities**

Place Matters: Working Together to Create  
Healthy Communities Conference


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**PolicyLink is a national  
research and action institute  
advancing economic and  
social equity by  
Lifting Up What Works. ®**

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**The Center for Health and Place**



*Where you live affects how you live.*

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**PolicyLink  
Center for Health and Place**


- Research
- Capacity Building/ TA
- Convening
- Communications
- Advocacy/Action
- Thought Leadership

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**Civil Rights Movement in 1960s**



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**“Modern racism is embedded in the  
normal routines of our private lives  
and our public institutions” - The  
Aspen Institute Roundtable on  
Community Change**

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**Defining Health:  
Overall state of physical,  
economic, social and  
spiritual well-being**

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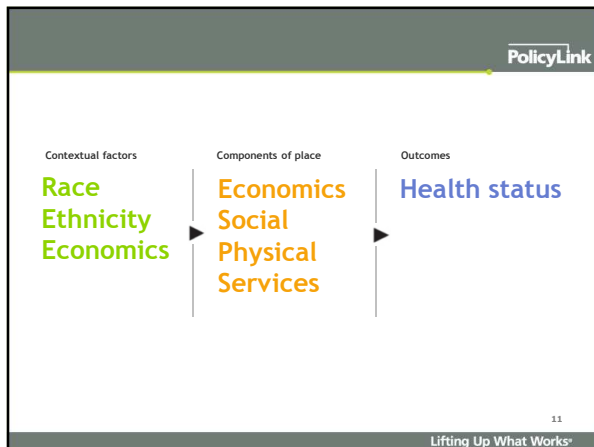
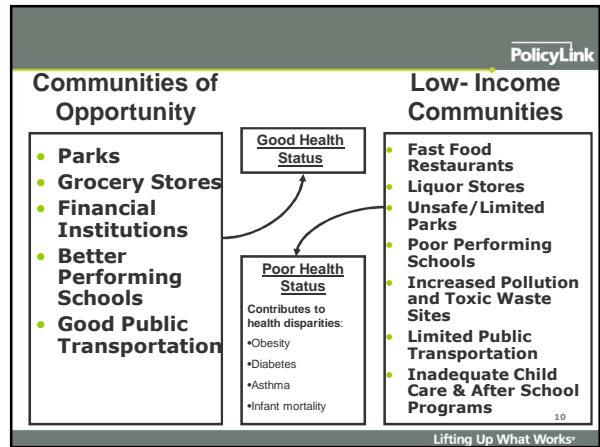
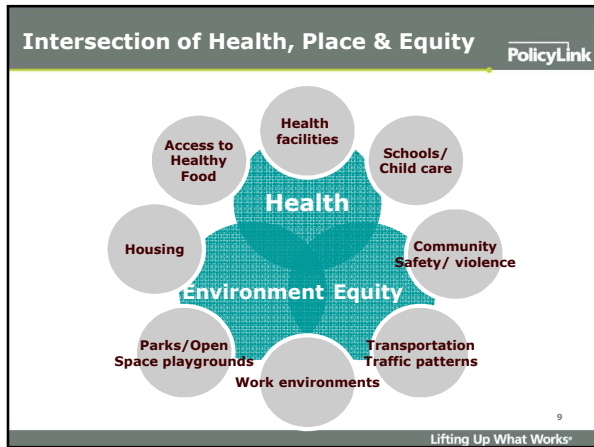
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Environments have critical influences on behaviors that directly and indirectly affect health.

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**“In a real sense, all life is interrelated. The agony of the poor impoverishes the rich; the betterment of the poor enriches the rich. We are inevitably our brother’s keepers because we are our brother’s brother. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly.” –**

**Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**  
*Where Do We Go From Here*

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## Health Disparities

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- **Nearly a fifth of all African-American children and nearly a quarter of Mexican American children is obese, compared to one in ten white children.**
- **Children from low-income families are twice as likely to be overweight as those from higher-income families.**

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## Why Should We Care: Health Implications

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**Poor diet and inadequate activity have become the second leading actual cause of death in the US**

- **Obesity and diabetes rates have skyrocketed**
  - In CA 56% of adults are either obese or overweight
  - 34% of US adults are obese
  - 16.3% of children and adolescents aged 2–19 years are obese
  - Obesity costs to families, government and healthcare industry in CA is more than \$6 billion per year

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**Absence of grocery stores is symptomatic of broader retail patterns that undermine health**

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## Healthy Food Access & Equity

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- **Lack of access to healthy, affordable food is a social justice issue.**
- **Poor communities and communities of color suffer more severe health burdens as a result of lacking access to healthy food:**
  - **Increased obesity**
  - **Chronic illnesses and diseases – diet related**

### Fact

- **Research shows that when healthier options are available, residents make better choices.**

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## The Grocery Gap (by PolicyLink and The Food Trust)

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### Findings

- **Accessing healthy food is a challenge for many Americans—particularly those living in low-income neighborhoods, communities of color, and rural areas.**
- **Better access corresponds with healthier eating and lower risk for obesity and other diet-related chronic diseases.**
- **New and improved healthy food retail in underserved communities creates jobs and helps to revitalize low-income communities.**

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## The Grocery Gap (by PolicyLink and The Food Trust)

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### Findings

- **In rural Mississippi, adults living in “food desert” counties lacking large supermarkets are 23 percent less likely to consume the recommended fruits and vegetables than those in counties that have supermarkets, controlling for age, sex, race, and education.**

For more information see

[www.policylink.org/publications/thegrocerygap](http://www.policylink.org/publications/thegrocerygap).

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# Food Deserts: Promising Solutions

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## Promoting Equity through Healthy Food Access: Pennsylvania's Fresh Food Financing Initiative

- **Outcomes:**
  - 83 new or renovated stores
  - 5,000 jobs
  - 400,000 residents served
  - Commercial revitalization
  - Increased tax revenues
  - 4 - 7% increase in nearby home values
  - Improved food access
- **Replication underway in:**
  - Illinois Fresh Food Fund
  - Louisiana Healthy Food Retail Financing Program
  - New York Healthy Food, Healthy Communities Initiative
  - CA FFI
  - New Jersey Food Access Initiative




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## HFFI Triple Bottom Line

Developing  
Quality Food  
Markets in  
Underserved  
Communities


\*Promotes a healthy diet which can contribute to reduced rates of diabetes & obesity

\*Creates jobs with career paths  
\*Lowers the cost of food


\*Revitalizes neighborhoods  
\*Leverages private capital  
\*Increases local taxes



Health



Income



Economic Stimulus

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## Statewide Innovation: Healthy Food Financing Initiative

- Based on Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing initiative – public/private partnerships.
- \$540,000 increase in local tax revenue from a single store in Philadelphia.
- State contributed \$30 million – leveraged \$190 million additionally.
- President Obama proposed replication of this model in 2011 budget for a National Fresh Food Financing Initiative.
  - Support needed to push this forward.

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## Promoting Equity through local action: Food Access

- Improve neighborhood corner stores.
- Increase farmer markets.
- Link farmers to consumers.
  - Urban agriculture
  - Community supported agriculture
  - Community gardens
- Stronger nutrition standards in schools.
- Increase number of grocery stores.




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## Transportation as Health Equity - Then



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## Transportation as Health Equity - Now PolicyLink

- **Transportation policy and investment have historically favored middle-class, affluent neighborhoods at the expense of disadvantaged communities, resulting in skewed patterns of regional growth development.**

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## Transportation as Health Equity - Now PolicyLink

### FACT

- Many Americans still lack fair access to transportation in the United States .
- 10.3% of households have no vehicle.
- For African Americans the rate is 23.8%.
- For Latinos – 17.2%.
- Low to moderate households spend 42% of total income on transportation.
- Middle income households spend less than 22% of annual income on transportation.

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## Transportation Inequities PolicyLink

### Promising Solution

- **Transportation For America Equity Caucus**

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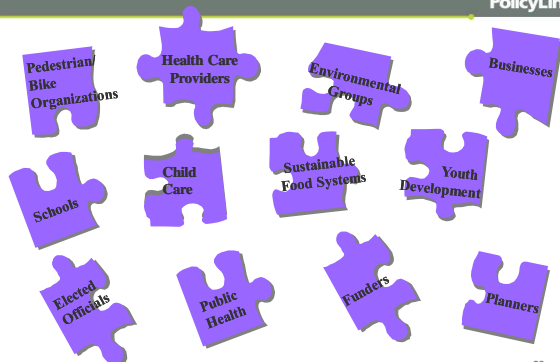
## What Public Health Departments are doing: PolicyLink

- **Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative - BARHII**
- **Seattle King County – Equity & Social Justice Initiative**
- **NAACHO: Health Equity & Social Justice**
- **Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW)**

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## Importance of Multifield Partnerships PolicyLink



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## Common Themes in identifying solutions PolicyLink

- **Multiple needs and low resources**
- **Strong collaboration with schools, foundations, researchers, community**
- **Long term commitment and investments**
- **Strategies focused on community revitalization, healthy food, jobs**
- **Evidence based with evaluation component**

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