

Strategic Plan 2018–2020

The California Endowment
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
Kaiser Permanente
The Kresge Foundation
Nemours
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

The Path Forward: Unlocking Opportunity, Inspiring Change

Note from the Funders

This year marks the 10-year anniversary of the Convergence Partnership. In that time, we have seen great strides in addressing the underlying causes of health disparities. And yet, we also see that racial and economic inequities continue to widen, contributing to high rates of preventable illnesses and injuries, lowered quality of life, and increased costs that severely threaten our progress toward a more equitable, inclusive, and prosperous nation.

Now in an environment of increasing divisiveness and growing concern, we are clear this is the time to recommit and reinforce our commitment to health equity and remain firm in our vision of Healthy People, Healthy Places. Regardless of race, religion, socioeconomic status, or geography, everyone deserves to live in a community that supports their health and allows them to thrive. As more children, families, and communities face greater uncertainty about their future health and well-being, we commit to collaborating with our philanthropic partners to rise and meet these challenges and champion new opportunities that create real change for all, particularly those most vulnerable.

Through this plan, we commit to a new strategic framework that will:

Persist and stay the course toward Healthy People, Healthy Places despite clear challenges;
Defend health equity gains for children, families, and communities;
Advance policies, practices, and narratives that expand opportunity to all; and
Innovate and support approaches in creating transformative, community-driven solutions.

Where there is challenge, we see opportunity. When others say it is impossible, we hear possibility. In this spirit, we will continue to identify common ground and seek opportunities to inform policies and practices that advance health equity and benefits for low-income communities and communities of color. We will continue to draw inspiration from the great work already taking place in states and communities across the country and stand ready to work collectively in building a nation where every community fosters health, prosperity, and well-being for all.

In solidarity,

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Convergence Philosophy

Over the past decade, the Convergence Partnership has successfully crossed boundaries and broken through silos, working with individual institutions and multiple sectors to tackle a broad range of complex and interdependent issues facing the nation. Formed at a time during an alarming increase in child obesity rates, the Partnership developed its roots by championing policies and practices to promote healthy eating and active living and address associated health inequities. The Convergence Partnership has seeded innovation, supported partnerships for local, state, and federal policy change, and developed a national network of philanthropic leaders advancing health and equity.

The Partnership believes that every community should be a community of opportunity—a place offering family-supporting wages; quality affordable housing options; availability of healthy foods; active transportation options; affordable early childhood education and childcare; high-performing schools; and safe places to be active and socialize. The Partnership has seen that when efforts are targeted to expand opportunity to communities of color and low-income communities, everyone benefits. Thus, health equity will remain a core value of the Partnership, focusing attention on the underlying policies, systems, and structures that shape community conditions, as well as promoting the engagement, power, and leadership of community residents in decisions that affect them, their children, families, and communities.

Why Convergence Now?

The Convergence Partnership recognizes that propelling communities toward full opportunity, optimal health, economic progress, and environmental sustainability necessitates actions that disrupt the systems that give rise to inequality. The loss of social and economic power increasingly experienced by communities of color, poor working-class Americans, and urban neighborhoods and rural communities must be actively confronted. Communities that have been steadily stripped of the infrastructure and spaces that promote strong social networks and cohesion must be supported to reclaim their capacity for mobilization and civic engagement. And as America becomes a nation in which a majority of people will be of color, the present-day realities of race and racism must be addressed. Left unattended, these persistent racial, social, and economic inequities will continue to contribute to the rise of preventable illnesses and injuries, lowered quality of life, and increased health-care costs that severely threaten the prosperity of the nation.

This moment calls for renewed action rooted in catalyzing and amplifying efforts that ensure Healthy People, Healthy Places, and the Partnership stands ready to meet that moment. The Partnership will work to increase investments toward grassroots organizing and advocacy at a time when community power and leadership is imperative in effectively responding to immediate needs, and set the path toward long-term change. The Partnership will use its platform to amplify inclusive, aspirational narratives that call for a better world for our children, families, and communities and give voice to those who have been historically suppressed or dismissed, countering the negative narratives that are perpetuating deeply entrenched assumptions about low-income people and people of color and heightening social divisiveness. Lastly, at a time when the number of independent networks—funder, nonprofit, grassroots—continues to grow, the Partnership will continue cultivating relationships with funder networks and groups to better coordinate and leverage disparate actions toward greater collective impact.

Places across the country are facing a constellation of economic, political, demographic, and environmental challenges that will determine how well children, families, and communities live. Strengthening a “field of fields”—connections among practitioners and funders across different issue areas—remains important if the Partnership is to spur actions that have multiple benefits and effectively advance health equity. The Partnership’s work and deepened relationships with local funders over the past decade has demonstrated that investing in place results in significant changes in policy and practice. In the face of uncertainty and gridlock at the federal level, it becomes even more important to support state and local actions to continue to advance and innovate policies and practices that stay the course toward Healthy People, Healthy Places while defending health equity gains made to protect and improve the lives of children, families, and communities. Over the next three years, the Partnership will continue to invest strategically in promising place-based efforts across the country representing diverse geographies and constituencies—from communities of color and poor working-class Americans to urban neighborhoods and rural communities—places to bring solutions to scale at the regional, state, and national levels by leveraging existing partnerships, policy opportunities, and local leadership and momentum.

Theory of Change

Our Vision: *Healthy People, Healthy Places.* We envision a nation in which every community fosters health, prosperity, and well-being for all.

Our Mission: To catalyze investments and action to transform the systems affecting outcomes for children, families, and communities. We do this by promoting:

- **Health equity** as the means to ensure that everyone has a just and fair opportunity to attain the highest level of health and wellness;
- **Policies and practices** that create systems and conditions to sustain healthy people and healthy places; and
- **Connections** among people across multiple fields and sectors that catalyze and accelerate the work.

Drivers of Health Inequity:

We view the historical legacy and present-day impacts of inequity on children, families, and communities as a central challenge to achieving Healthy People, Healthy Places. The Partnership believes the primary drivers of health inequities are:

- Unequal distribution of resources and services that promote healthy community conditions for children, families, and communities.
- Entrenched cultural narratives that undermine inclusion, belonging, and the dignity of all people.
- Disparate access to economic and wealth-building opportunities for low-income people and people of color.
- Structural barriers and biases that hinder community organizing and power building for collective action.

Our Work:

To address and respond to these drivers, we will focus on the following interconnected strategies over the next three years:



Achieving health equity is at the center of everything we do—it is the lens by which people are engaged, decisions are made, resources are distributed, and outcomes are determined and achieved.

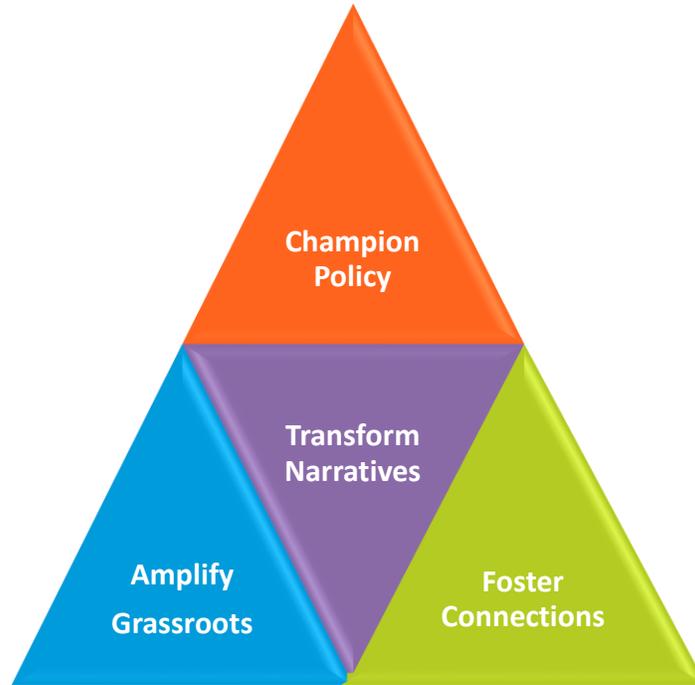
We believe that these strategies will then lead to the following changes in communities:

- ★ **Improved policies and systems** that promote equitable distribution of resources and services and enhance multisector connections.
- ★ **Increased community power and leadership** that elevates the voice and wisdom of those most impacted to drive policy change toward health equity and inclusion.
- ★ **Greater institutional will and capacity** toward challenging widely accepted notions on how change happens by shaping and promulgating positive narratives and constructions, on the role of communities, and on what constitutes “health.”

Our Goal: *Healthy People, Healthy Places*

2018-2020 Convergence Partnership Strategic Plan

Over the next three years, the Convergence Partnership will continue to expand and further reinforce the development of a “field of fields” with authentic connections across different **issue areas** that span the local, state, and national levels—through the following interconnected **strategies**:



Organizing the work around these four interrelated strategies allows the Partnership to seed coordination and alignment across diverse fields and sectors, surface win-win solutions that bring multiple benefits, and put forth a new and cohesive narrative that is inclusive of everyone and affirms health equity as a unifying path forward. The Partnership is not approaching these strategies separately, but rather sees the power in maximizing their intersection. Guided by the overarching vision of Healthy People, Healthy Places, the Partnership will maintain its focus on the following core **issue areas** in specific places and at the national level: resilient equitable development with a focus on transportation and housing; food systems; and prevention and health systems.

Strategic Areas

Champion Policy

The Partnership commits to crafting a policy platform that exposes and bridges the intersection of its core issues—transportation, food, housing, and prevention and health systems—and seeds transformational change in the underlying policies, systems, and environments that shape individual and family health and well-being. This strategy will pave the way for more deliberate cross-fertilization and joint strategy development between local priorities and federal policy actions. Deliberate attention will be given to efforts that connect issues and diverse community constituencies and partners to opportunities to work together in advancing policies and practices for Healthy People, Healthy Places.



Amplify Grassroots

The Partnership will work alongside the Convergence Network and its partners to identify meaningful opportunities to support and connect grassroots movements, advance campaigns grounded in lived experience, and place community leaders in positions of power and leadership, bringing Convergence values and frame to both the health and non-health spaces they occupy. The Partnership will draw from current mobilization in communities to continue to use its bully pulpit to strategically elevate learning about efforts that create sustainable change.



Transform Narratives

The Partnership will work with its Convergence Network, advocacy partners, and grassroots leaders to harness the power of narrative by crafting, gathering, and disseminating stories that highlight innovative models, impacts, and lessons learned from strategies for Healthy People, Healthy Places. The aim is to surface valuable connections and win-win solutions that benefit multiple constituencies at once—from historically disenfranchised communities of color to rural and working-class Americans—emphasizing the idea that when efforts are targeted to expand opportunity to those left behind, everyone benefits. In so doing, the Partnership will affirm health equity as a unifying path forward for greater health, prosperity, and opportunity across political and geographic lines, and will strengthen the capacity of our partners to engage in impactful storytelling.



Foster Connections

The Partnership is committed to collaborating with its local, regional, and national philanthropic partners in seeding coordination and alignment across a diverse field of stakeholders. The Partnership will seek ways to engage with these networks in broader movements for equity, promote additional collaboration across sectors and fields, and accelerate policy and practice change to create healthy people and healthy places. Creating convergence and synergy among networks reaching from the local to the federal level brings the possibility of sparking engagement, greater action, and broader structural transformation.

2018-2020 Convergence Strategic Framework

2020 Results	How We Plan to Achieve Them	Our Activities & Investments 2018-2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✱ Result 1: Policy development and implementation at federal, state, and local level that promote Convergence vision and priorities. ✱ Result 2: Increased capacity and engagement of grassroots advocates in policy decision making. ✱ Result 3: Shifts in narratives and public discourse toward health equity, inclusion and opportunity. ✱ Result 4: Greater collaboration across multi-sector, multi-field partners advancing a policy platform for Healthy People, Healthy Places. ✱ Result 5: Changes in philanthropic practice that promote health equity. 	<p>Champion Policy: Champion a comprehensive policy platform that catalyzes local, state and national action and enhances synergy between federal activities and local needs and priorities.</p> <p>Amplify Grassroots: Increase investments in grassroots organizing and advocacy that authentically engages and empowers community residents in policy and practice change processes and holds decision-makers accountable to redressing systemic health inequities.</p> <p>Transform Narratives: Develop and elevate transformative, bold, and inclusive narratives that speak to the aspirations and values that unite all people; reflect full and accurate representations of diverse populations; inspire innovation; and drive change in pursuit of health equity and opportunity for all.</p> <p>Foster Connections: Foster and leverage connections with funder networks and initiatives to spur learning and collaboration across sectors and fields, support innovative strategies for community change and enhance philanthropic practices and leadership to achieve greater and more expansive impacts toward health equity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund philanthropic and grassroots organizations across six targeted places to advance catalytic policy and systems change initiatives that promote multi-sector connections and health equity toward the vision of Healthy People, Healthy Places. • Assemble and fund a cohort of technical assistance organizations to provide strategy guidance to funded places and the national Partnership to advance and leverage policy, narrative change, and grassroots organizing opportunities. • Invest in grassroots and policy organizations to facilitate and surface connections across issue areas, promote local-federal learning, and foster collective action toward health equity. • Engage with federal agencies (e.g. HUD, USDA, HHS, DOT) to inform federal policy activities and provide recommendations on targeted programs and regulations related to core Convergence issues. • Support the Climate and Health Investment Partnership (CHIP) in advancing its agenda to augment philanthropic investments and accelerate overall progress toward a low carbon, healthy and equitable future economy. • Develop and gather stories that resonate with different constituencies and support local storytellers in building a compelling health equity narrative for policy and culture change. • Cultivate relationships with four existing national funder collaboratives— The BUILD Health Challenge; The Strong, Prosperous, And Resilient Communities Challenge (SPARCC); Funders for Housing and Opportunity (FHO); and Living Cities—to engage in peer learning, connection and collaboration that advances respective and overlapping areas of work. • Participate in the Healthcare Anchor Network’s policy workgroup to advance strategies in creating equitable, engaged, connected and economically strong communities. • Engage and connect members of the Convergence Partnership Network to share key updates on upcoming federal actions and opportunities and foster peer connections and learning. • Host the third Convergence Leadership Institute to build the capacity of the Convergence Network to increase support for and engagement of grassroots, constituency-led organizing and crafting narratives and stories that effectively articulate the conditions that impact health equity, spur new ideas for change, and promote the spread and scale of innovative models. • Convene a set of “circles of practice” by issue or interest area among funded places and other Network members to support and leverage the power of relationship and capacity building and continue to foster support for advancing Convergence priorities.