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The Convergence Partnership envisions a nation in which every community fosters health, prosperity, and well-being for all, by promoting:

- *Equity as the means to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate and prosper;*
- *Policies and practices that create conditions that sustain healthy people and healthy places; and*
- *Connections among people across multiple fields and sectors that catalyze and accelerate the work.*

If you know of efforts that focus on reducing inequities, encourage cross-sector partnerships, and stimulate action for policy change, [contact us](#) and we may feature it in the newsletter!

Federal Updates

U.S. Surgeon General Identifies Health Equity as a Civil Rights Issue

Last week, the new U.S. Surgeon General, Vice Admiral Vivek H. Murthy, was officially installed and set the tone for his administration by stating that “health equity is a civil rights issue.” During his remarks, he acknowledged that while the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has expanded coverage for millions of Americans — we as a nation are still facing rising rates of diabetes, cancer, and other preventable diseases. He added, “Today in America, who you are, where you come from and whom you love plays too big a role in determining your health. Being poor — which affects one in five children — is too great a factor in determining who is healthy and who is not,” and asserted that these harsh realities can have long-term impacts on the education system, the U.S. workforce, and the nation’s economy.

[Read the full transcript.](#)

The USDA Awards \$31 Million in Grants to Help SNAP Participants Afford Healthy Foods

In early April, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the first round of Food Insecurity and Nutrition Incentives (FINI) grants. The FINI program — a joint effort between the USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture and USDA’s Food and Nutrition Services — was established through the 2014 Farm Bill to support efforts that provide fruit and vegetable incentives to participants in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), with the goal of increasing healthy purchases. Additionally, the program aims to bring together stakeholders from the food system to expand access to healthy food in low-income communities across the country. The USDA is funding 16 pilot projects, seven multiyear community-based projects, and eight multiyear, large-scale projects.

The FINI program was established, in part, through the advocacy of Fair Food Network with support from the Convergence Partnership as part of the Food and Agriculture Policy Collaborative. In addition to the Fair Food Network, Convergence grantees and partners including the AARP Foundation in Washington, DC; the Bluegrass Community Foundation in Lexington, Kentucky; and The Food Trust in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania received FINI grants.

[Read the full list of grantees and get more information.](#)

President Obama Signs a Bill Changing Medicare Payment Formula

Last week, President Obama signed new legislation to change the way Medicare pays physicians. This new bipartisan \$210 billion plan, approved overwhelmingly by the Senate, repeals the old Medicare payment formula, called the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR), and replaces it with a new one. It moves Medicare gradually toward a payment system based on quality and value of care rather than volume of services, and puts a permanent end to the need for “doc fixes” and will eliminate the need for prior,

short-term, stop-gap steps that pulled resources from the Prevention Fund and Public Health Fund, thereby reducing critical dollars for advancing equity and community health.

The new payment formula also funds the Children's Health Insurance Program and community health centers for two more years. It will be paid for by having high-income seniors cover more of their Medicare costs and by requiring basic co-payments in Medigap plans.

[Read about the bill.](#)

In the News

Foundation Center Launches Enhanced Foundations Map Platform

In March, the Foundation Center announced the launch of Foundation Maps Professional 2.0. The Foundation Map, originally launched in October 2014, is a data visualization platform that shows who is funding what around the world, and how and where grant dollars are targeted. The platform offers a variety of interactive maps, charts, and other visualization tools that can showcase how philanthropic dollars are benefiting communities across the world, illustrate the broader ecosystems of particular philanthropic networks, and how organizations are or are not connected to their areas of interest.

This interactive mapping tool is intended to be a resource for funders, nonprofits, and community-based organizations to help them gain insight into the philanthropic landscape, discover potential new partners with similar interests, provide data that can help them tell their stories, and inform strategic decision making.

[Find out more or sign up for a 24-hour free trial.](#)

Funding Opportunities

US DOT Announces Seventh Round of TIGER Grants

In early April, U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary Anthony Foxx announced the availability of \$500 million in Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) funding for 2015. This competitive grant program will fund capital investments aimed at improving access to reliable, safe, affordable transportation for disconnected communities across the nation. TIGER grants will be awarded to projects that support economic development, create access to quality jobs and services, and promote community revitalization.

The deadline for pre-applications is May 4, 2015. The deadline for final applications is June 5, 2015.

[Read the grant announcement and get more information.](#)

Farmers' Market and Local Food Promotion Program (FMLFPP)

The FMLFPP is a competitive grant program aimed at expanding local and regional food systems by funding direct-to-consumer marketing strategies. Awards will help grantees strengthen the connections between farmers and consumers to help grow economic opportunities for small to mid-sized family farmers and improve healthy food access in rural communities.

The FMLFPP program is divided into two subgroups: one for direct marketing grants to assist in the development, improvement, and expansion of domestic direct-to-consumer outlets like farmers' markets and community supported agriculture (CSAs); and one to assist in the development, improvement, or expansion of local and regional food business enterprises.

The application deadline is Thursday, May 14, 2015. [Learn about the program and get application requirements.](#)

Events

2015 National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) Annual Conference

The National Network of Public Health Institutes
May 12-14, 2015
New Orleans, LA

The National Network of Public Health Institutes announced its 14th annual conference, *Building Healthy Communities in Our Connected World: A Vision for 2020*. The conference will explore the role of public health in creating strategies and developing innovative approaches to advance community health priorities. Conference topics will include: community readiness for climate change, health in all policies, creating conditions for healthy schools, and bridging the gap between the public health and health-care sectors. [Learn more about this conference or register.](#)

Equity Summit 2015: All In for Inclusion, Justice, and Prosperity

PolicyLink
October 27-29, 2015
Los Angeles, CA

Equity Summit 2015 will ground inclusion, justice, and prosperity in the urgent issues of today and connect them to the creativity and bold vision of the equity movement. Advocates from across the nation will be part of

Resources

[Preserving, Protecting, and Expanding Affordable Housing](#), ChangeLab Solutions

All over the U.S. there is a growing interest in urban living. While population growth in these areas has attracted more private investment — it is creating competition for a limited supply of housing. This brief explores how population growth in urban areas can undermine equitable access to neighborhoods offering health and quality-of-life benefits — such as access to healthy food, walkability, and access to good jobs — and what policymakers and advocates can do to ensure that people of all incomes, races, and ethnicities can continue to thrive in these growing cities and communities.

[Adaptation in Action: Grantee Success Stories from CDC's Climate and Health Program](#), APHA

Healthy environments are vital to building healthy communities. In 2014,

interactive panels, tours, and in-depth, skills-building sessions that showcase how local leaders can impact policy change. Equity Summit 2015 will forge powerful partnerships for building an equitable and prosperous nation. [Learn more and take advantage of early bird registration rates.](#)

the third National Climate Assessment identified climate change as not only a threat to the physical environment, but a threat to human health and well-being. This report provides a snapshot of what the CDC's Climate Ready States and Cities initiative grantees are doing to equip communities with resources to successfully adapt to environmental changes and extreme weather events.

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