Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Environmental Health and Practice
Division of Environmental Health Science and Practice

Health Equity Guide

The Division of Environmental Health Science and Practice (DEHSP) established the Vital Conditions Mission Coordination Team (VC MCT) in October 2021. VC MCT developed a health equity strategic plan to outline the activities DEHSP will carry out in support of CDC's CORE Health Equity Science and Intervention Strategy. DEHSP selected the Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework to drive this plan. This infographic provides an overview using accessible language for the DEHSP Vital Conditions Health Equity Plan.

DEHSP addresses health equity in the following ways

- Investigates how the built environment impacts health equity
- Tracks and analyzes how policies influence systemic and social factors
- Directs interventions toward communities with higher exposure to environmental health inequities
- Integrates social determinants of health (SDOH) indicators in surveillance, interventions, and research activities
- Increases engagement among Indigenous communities and populations at greater risk
- Increases collaboration with non-traditional partners (e.g., transportation)
- Expands the evidence base on reducing health disparities and environmental injustices
- Develops guidance for respiratory health equity

What is the Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being Framework?

- A model that prioritizes Health in All Policies (HiAP)
- Domains include 7 community-identified social determinants of health
- An approach aligned with Healthy People 2030 and CDC Social Determinants of Health Framework

Health Equity is defined as...

The attainment of the highest level of health for all people. Achieving health equity requires valuing everyone equally with focused and ongoing societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities, historical and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of health and health care disparities.

- Healthy People 2023

When all members of society enjoy a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy and resilient as possible.
-VC MCT

Environmental Justice is defined as...

The advancement of health equity and elimination of environmental health disparities through the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people in environmental health policies, research, and programs, and ensuring equal access to a healthy environment.

- CDC NCEH/ATSDR
Office of Priority Projects,
Innovation, and Environmental Justice

An important pathway towards health equity that supports fair access, active involvement, and protection for all individuals to thrive in a safe natural world.
-VC MCT

Just treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of income, race, color, national origin, Tribal affiliation, or disability, in agency decision-making and other Federal activities that affect human health and the environment so that people.

- Executive Order 14096 Revitalizing Our Nation's Commitment for Environmental Justice for All

Diversity is defined as…

The practice of including the many communities, identities, races, ethnicities, backgrounds, abilities, cultures, and beliefs of a society, including underserved communities.

– U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Strategic Plan 2022

The persistent examination for the cause of missing or low representation and the active commitment to improve how we engage and support all groups and individuals.
-VC MCT

Equity is defined as…

Consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment.

– U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Strategic Plan 2022

An active commitment to work towards every individual gaining access to sufficient power, resources, freedom, and safety to thrive.
-VC MCT

Inclusion is defined as…

The recognition, appreciation, and use of the talents and skills of employees of all backgrounds.

– U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Strategic Plan 2022

A practice of openness and support that improves and advances policies, settings, and programs to allow all individuals to contribute and maximize their potential.
-VC MCT

Accessibility is defined as…

The design, construction, development, and maintenance of facilities, information and communication technology, programs, and services so that all people, including people with disabilities, can fully and independently use them.

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Strategic Plan 2022

An active commitment to create and restructure settings, policies, and resources so all variations of ableness can thrive.
-VC MCT

Belonging is defined as….

Belonging is the feeling of being an accepted member of a group, or of connectedness given one's interpersonal relationships.

– Office of the U.S. Surgeon General

DEHSP Health Equity Framework

Health Equity

Enviromental Justice

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility and Belonging

Optimal environmental health for all communities

Health equity, environmental justice, and DEIAB efforts make up the focal points of the DEHSP three-pronged approach. This is a transformative shift from monitoring disparities to investigating the indicators of a thriving community. This will foster resilient and thriving communities. Each prong represents a unique facet of DEHSP's mission to achieve optimal environmental health for all communities.

Key Takeaways

1. The Vital Conditions Strategic Plan is informed by the recommendations of NCEH/ATSDR Office of Priority Projects, Innovation, and Environmental Justice.

2. DEHSP is shifting from tracking the markers of health inequities to addressing the drivers of the disparities.

3. The Vital Conditions Framework supports DEHSP's alignment with other federal approaches that support long-term recovery and resilience.

4. Multisector partners are vital in addressing surveillance gaps and highlighting the importance of traditional, community-relevant, and Indigenous knowledge.

5. DEHSP is prioritizing the implementation of effective environmental health interventions in communities with the highest risks to reduce burden and support environmental justice.

6. DEHSP is committed to investigating how the built environment (e.g., buildings, transportation) and place (e.g., rural, or urban areas) can affect achievement of environmental health equity.

Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2023). National Center for Environmental Health Division of Environmental Health Science and Practice Vital Conditions Strategic Plan, Atlanta, Georgia
https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/index.html#contactUs

American Medical Association (AMA) Racism is a threat to public health.

CDC Social Determinants of Health https://www.cdc.gov/about/priorities/why-is-addressing-sdoh-important.html

Environmental Justice
Environmental Justice | Office of Priority Projects, Innovation, and Environmental Justice (OPPIEJ) | NCEH/ATSDR (cdc.gov)

Executive Order 14096
Executive Order on White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity through Historically Black Colleges and Universities | The White House

CDC Health Equity Communication
Health Equity Guiding Principles for Inclusive Communication

Healthy People 2030
https://health.gov/healthypeople

Health in All Policies (HiAP)
https://www.cdc.gov/policy/hiap/index.html

HHS Vital Conditions Framework
Framework | health.gov

Examples of CORE Goals
Illustrative Examples of CORE Goals | Health Equity | CDCVital Conditions Framework

We can thrive together
Thriving Together Springboard – All people and places thriving. No exceptions.

The U.S. Surgeon General's Framework for Workplace Mental Health & Well-Being
https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/priorities/workplace-well-being/index.html