



Alignment for Health Equity and Development

An Initiative by the
Public Health Institute and
The Reinvestment Fund



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Overview

We are at a unique moment in U.S. history where there is both an imperative and new opportunities to link and leverage innovations in public health, health care, and community development. Advances in geographic information systems (GIS) technology and increased availability of public data bring attention and focus to geographic concentrations of health inequities and help make the case for intersectoral collaboration. The Affordable Care Act's expansion of coverage to low- and moderate-income families and movement towards global budgeting require the health care sector to shift their focus to strategies that keep populations healthy. Similarly, the community development sector is increasingly viewing the impact potential of its investments beyond the economic and social to what is needed to make communities healthy.

Meetings held in regional Federal Reserve offices over the last three years highlight the health benefits of targeted investments by financial institutions and the community development sector, and have stimulated dialogue to explore the alignment of these investments with health improvement strategies in communities across the country. In considering options, local communities face obstacles such as competitive dynamics among hospitals and community-based organizations, risk aversion among prospective investors, mistrust among community residents, obstacles to integration among public sector agencies, and a lack of targeted resources to support intersectoral engagement.

Targeted technical assistance is needed to develop, validate, and scale strategies that align investments and interventions across sectors in neighborhoods where health and social disparities are concentrated. With generous funding from The Kresge Foundation, the Public Health Institute (PHI), in partnership with The Reinvestment Fund (TRF) has launched a 5-year national initiative to provide support to selected local communities. The **Alignment for Health Equity and Development (AHEAD)** initiative aims to:

1. **Align the resources** of health and community development stakeholders into **balanced portfolios of investment** in comprehensive health improvement strategies with a shared measurement system;
2. **Focus** resources in neighborhoods where both **health and social inequities are concentrated**; and
3. Build a **field of practice** that provides the **tools, evidence, and models** to support replication across the country.



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Pilot Communities

Over the next 18 months, AHEAD will work with five pilot communities including Portland, OR, Boston, MA, Atlanta, GA, Dallas, TX, and Detroit, MI. Communities are selected based on evidence of progress in the following areas:


- Engagement of diverse stakeholders to assess, share emerging findings, explore opportunities for collaboration, and solicit input
- Commitment to data/information sharing and the development of common measures, both among competing organizations within the same sector, and institutions across sectors
- Financial / community development sector interest in complex and innovative investment strategies.
- Hospital and health system support for efforts to align interventions and investments among health care competitors and with other sector stakeholders.

Activities


PHI and TRF will provide targeted technical assistance to support the collection and analysis of data and information on opportunities for convergence among the spectrum of stakeholders in each pilot community. Specific activities will include:

- Support local stakeholder analyses of opportunities for alignment and focus of health sector (e.g., hospitals, public health, United Way, Community Action Agencies, community health centers) programs and activities and community development investments by financial institutions and business stakeholders. Particular attention will be given to linking with and building on existing local innovations and initiatives.
- Provide analytic support and input for the local selection of one or more specific communities to be the focus for a convergence strategy.
- Support the formation of a Convergence Working Group that includes key sector and local community stakeholders.
- Develop model strategies and options for shared metrics based upon data and input from the Convergence Working Group for review and revision.
- Provide financial and analytical support and participate in two local convenings (an initial site visit and a final convening) to confirm agreement on a convergence strategy.
- Provide consultation for the local selection of a community level infrastructure (i.e., “backbone entity”) to facilitate intersectoral alignment and monitor progress towards agreed upon goals and objectives.



 **AHEAD's
five pilot
communities
are:**

*Portland, OR,
Boston, MA,
Atlanta, GA,
Dallas, TX, and
Detroit, MI.*



Invest in AHEAD

PHI and TRF are providing \$60,000 of in-kind technical assistance to each of the five pilot sites. In addition, each site will receive \$20,000 in direct seed funding for local staffing and additional financial support for two community convenings.

AHEAD is seeking matching funds from local institutions for core staffing and operating support to lead and manage the local analysis, communications, and planning process. Grant funds will also serve as equity to help attract debt investments. PHI and TRF are also seeking investments to support additional analyses that inform the local and regional convergence planning process.

TRF is also launching a capital fund for each community to incentivize investments in community development projects by financial institutions and other stakeholders. The type of investment can include charitable gifts, low cost loans and Program Related Investments.

Expand the Pool of AHEAD Sites

In addition to the five pilot sites, PHI and TRF teams will engage other sites across the country with demonstrated interest in intersectoral collaboration. We will establish a learning collaborative to share early lessons and support local capacity building through a series of webinars and direct communications.

A key collaborative partner in the AHEAD initiative is the National Network of Public Health Institutes. In four of the five pilot sites (GA, MA, OR, TX) NNPHI member institutes are serving as regional intermediaries to support local planning processes. We are also collaborating with the Carsey Institute Center on Social Innovation and Finance to secure support for a series of regional team-based retreats to build common knowledge and strategies for intersectoral collaboration.

The core objective is to secure commitments to a defined convergence strategy in 8-10 sites that will participate in a 3-4 year implementation process. PHI and TRF will build a funders consortium during the pilot phase to ensure support for the implementation phase. We look forward to working with communities where health inequities are concentrated to build a sustainable infrastructure that optimally leverages available resources and directly addresses the social determinants of health.



*AHEAD is
seeking investors
for both grant
and debt capital.*



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