

Healthy Places Index[®] Ethical Use Guidelines

Our Perspective

As architects of the California Healthy Places Index[®], we envision a future where community health is a shared priority, and every Californian has the opportunity to thrive. In this pursuit, we recognize the profound impact that data and related tools can have on shaping policies and resource allocation. The HPI is more than just data; it's a compass guiding us toward a healthier, more equitable California.

Why Ethical Use Matters

The ethical use of the HPI is a commitment to fostering positive change in a responsible and inclusive manner. These guidelines are born from our conviction that data, when harnessed ethically, can be a force for good. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that the HPI serves as a catalyst for equitable health improvements, inspiring actions that uplift communities rather than perpetuate disparities.

Ethical Use Guidelines

- **PROMOTE EQUITY:** Use HPI to advance equity and improve community conditions that affect health.
- **CHOOSE SMALL GEOGRAPHIES:** Use data at the neighborhood (census tract) level wherever possible. Larger geographies, like ZIP codes and counties, can hide important differences in community conditions.
- **ENSURE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** Prioritize community involvement in the interpretation and application of HPI data, respecting local knowledge and perspectives to ensure that interventions align with the unique needs of each community.
- **INVEST IN COMMUNITIES:** Direct resources towards communities identified as priorities by the HPI, fostering positive change and sustainable development.
- **ACT ON ROOT CAUSES:** Promote equity by addressing upstream social drivers of health through evidence-based policy, systems, and environmental change, such as those recommended in [HPI Policy Action Guides](#).
- **ESTABLISH TRANSPARENT DECISION-MAKING:** Communicate openly about how HPI data informs decision-making processes, promoting transparency and accountability in the allocation of resources and implementation of policies.
- **AVOID STIGMATIZATION:** Leverage HPI's positive frame and asset-based language to empower communities, recognizing that the index is a tool for positive change rather than a basis for negative assumptions or harmful stereotypes.
- **MODEL HIGH STANDARDS:** Whenever possible, use [best data practices](#) to explore community conditions and to create health equity metrics for health outcomes in public health and health care settings.
- **CONSIDER UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES:** Even well-intentioned applications of the HPI may have negative unintended consequences. Evaluate potential consequences that run counter to equity and consider community-informed strategies to minimize these consequences.

By embracing these guidelines, we strengthen the HPI's potential to drive positive, lasting impacts on community health and well-being. **Together, let's chart a course toward a healthier, more equitable California for all.**

Questions? We are happy to provide support and guidance in ethical use of the HPI. [Contact us today](#) to learn more.