

WASHINGTON APA'S GAME CHANGING INITIATIVE
HEALTH AND PLANNING WORKING GROUP

Learn More: Link Health and Planning

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Challenges to Linking Health and Planning

Chronic diseases are the most significant health epidemic of our time and societal costs are on the rise. But the news is not all bad. By now you've probably seen the headlines linking environment to longevity – your zip code can predict your health! This link puts planners on the front lines of the fight against chronic disease, if we expand the focus of our work and partnerships to include community health.

Some communities are already planning to improve health – examples in Pierce, Skagit, Yakima, Kittitas, Spokane, King, and Clark counties spring to mind. The Washington State Department of Health is providing resources, technical assistance, and training. At the federal level, a variety of agencies and foundations are providing resources to build capacity and develop and strengthen planning and health department partnerships. However, many communities are not yet incorporating health into planning for a number of reasons, including a lack of resources and leadership, uncertainty around the process, and skepticism regarding local benefits.

Actions to Address Health and Urban Planning

The Health and Planning Working Group believes planners could benefit from resources to start a conversation with decision-makers, build support, and jump start a planning effort. To this end, the Working Group is developing the following:

1. A [policy framework](#) to help planners and APA Washington: 1) justify Health Planning work as a best planning practice; 2) advocate for resources to infuse health into planning; 3) provide starter policies to be considered for inclusion at the county or city level; and 4) support legislative action and funding.
2. A user-friendly [resource guide](#) to make it easier for planners to incorporate health considerations. It will link to useful tools, include key messages, and provide great examples around the following questions:
 - a) Why should my community incorporate health into planning?
 - b) How should I begin? What data should I gather and I can I track progress?
 - c) How should I complete a baseline assessment in my community?
 - d) How/why should I encourage physical activity in my community?
 - e) How can I improve access to healthy food?
 - f) How should I incorporate health into my comprehensive plan update?
 - g) How can I provide fair access to opportunity?
 - h) How can I incorporate health into my implementation tools?