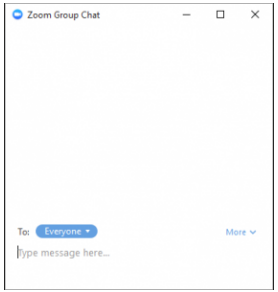
Exploring the Intersection of Civic, Social, and Community Health

May 29, 2024

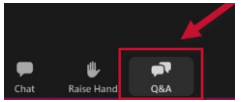
HEALTHY PLACES BY DESIGN

Logistics



- **Chat box:** Add **comments, reactions,** and **related resources** to share with “Everyone”

- **Q&A Box:** Enter **questions** for presenters and hosts



- English **Closed Captions** are available

- The webinar **recording, slides, and resource guide** will be shared

Our Socially Connected Communities Network

To build and support a movement to advance action that results in more socially connected and equitable communities

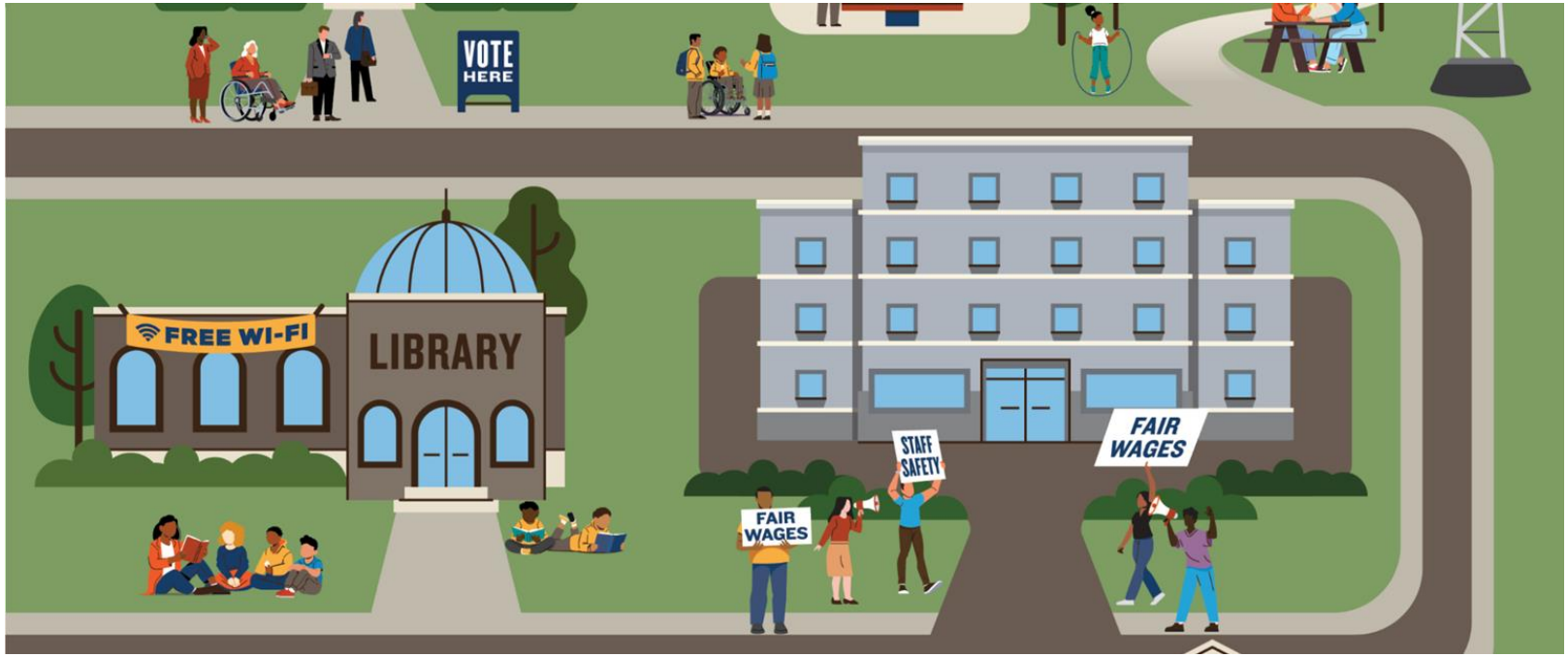
Webinars:	to learn, gain new knowledge
Discussion Groups:	to deepen learning and explore strategies/ approaches
Resource Guides:	for easy and anytime access to helpful information on key topics
Peer Connections:	for networking and sharing on focused topics

Civic Health and Socially Connected Communities

Anita Chandra
Vice President and Director
RAND Social and Economic Well-Being

Michael Stevenson
Co-Director
County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

What **forces** shape community **conditions**?



Civic health is the opportunity people have to participate in their community.

Civic infrastructure fuels **participation.**

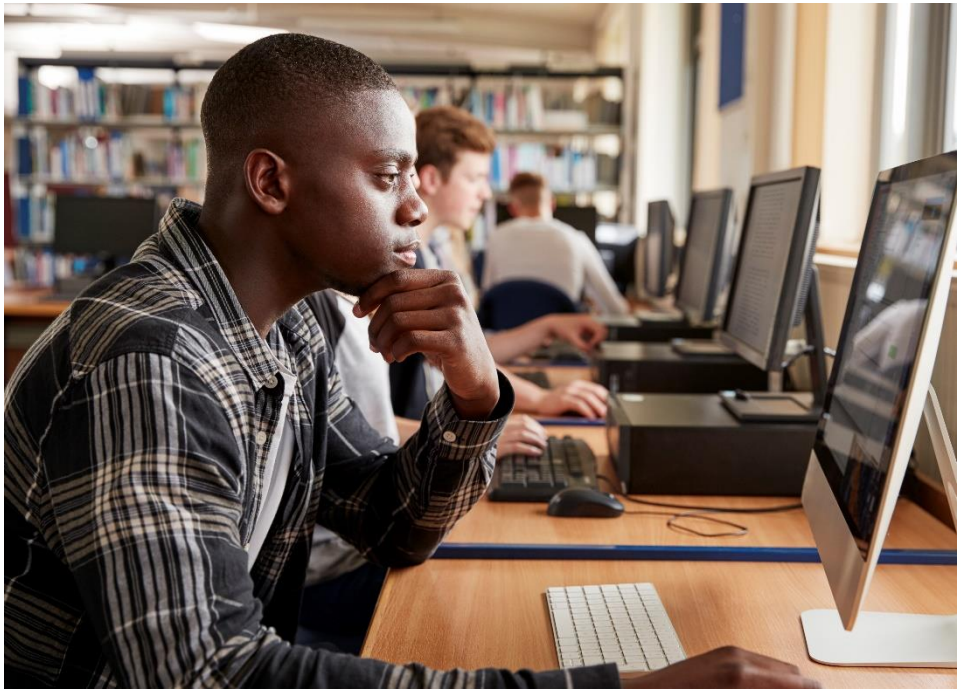
2024 NATIONAL FINDINGS REPORT

Creating Thriving Communities Through Civic Participation

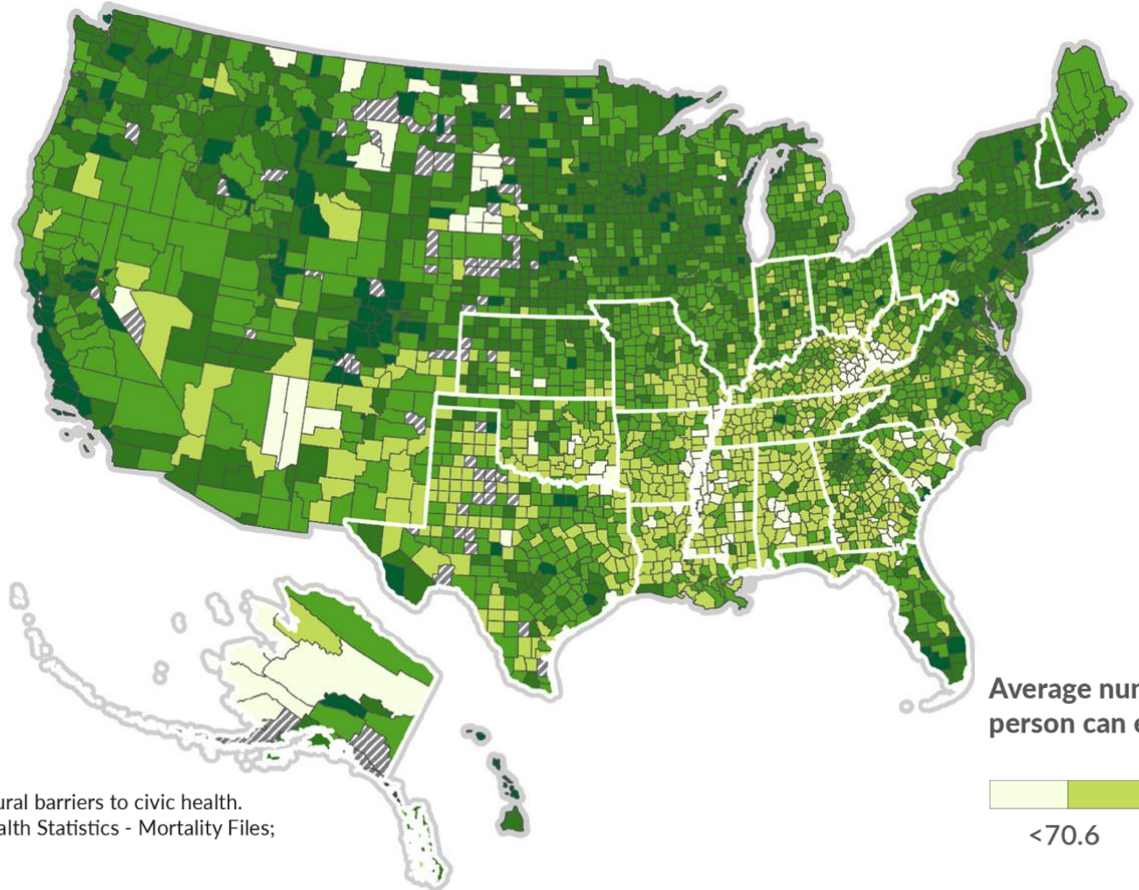
CIVIC HEALTH OPPORTUNITIES ARE NOT EQUAL

- The healthiest counties have well-resourced civic infrastructure, including access to local news, broadband and public libraries, compared to counties among the least healthy.
- Counties with well-resourced civic infrastructure also offer more social and economic opportunity for good health and have higher rates of participation, such as voter turnout or union membership.

Many laws and policies that underlie who has access to civic infrastructure have historical roots and are still contested today.



Life Expectancy Among States with More Structural Barriers to Civic Health



Average number of years from birth a person can expect to live (2019-2021)

<70.6 >80.9 Missing

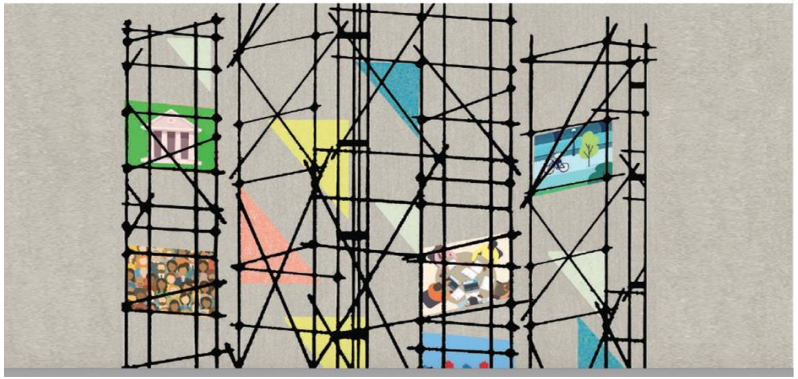
Highlighted states have more structural barriers to civic health.
Data source: National Center for Health Statistics - Mortality Files; 2020 Cost of Voting Index.

RAND'S WORK IN WELLBEING

RAND

COUNTERING TRUTH DECAY
A RAND Initiative to Restore the Role of Facts and Analysis in Public Life

DEFINING AND MEASURING CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE



Social and Economic Well-Being

Building Safe, Healthy, and Thriving Communities

RAND SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING helps decisionmakers find practical solutions to society's biggest and most complex policy challenges: fostering healthy and resilient populations and environments, strengthening the fairness and effectiveness of the civil and criminal justice systems, and ensuring that individuals and communities can address inequities and prosper.

WHAT'S THE CONNECTION?

Increases in physical and mental health and well-being are related to increases in civic engagement, such as voting or participation in volunteer activities

Some studies show that poor health in early life relate to lower civic engagement in later life

Social connection matters. Since poor health can be associated with social isolation, that social isolation can make civic participation difficult

THE RELATIONSHIP CAN VARY BY POPULATION AND HEALTH ISSUE

The relationship between voting and *health condition* has varied in studies.

- Example study: Those with cancer more likely to vote, those with heart conditions less likely to vote. Is this related to organizing around diagnoses, stigma related to certain conditions, or else?
- Example study: Challenges in access to health care related to challenges in access to voting.
- Example study: Depressive symptoms associated with less voting.

The relationship between voting and *health behavior* also showing some linkage.

- Example study: Those who smoke or drink less likely to vote.

The relationship between voting and *community health* also indicates some connection.

- Example study: Communities with higher inequality in voter turnout related to higher percentage of people in community rating health as only fair or poor.

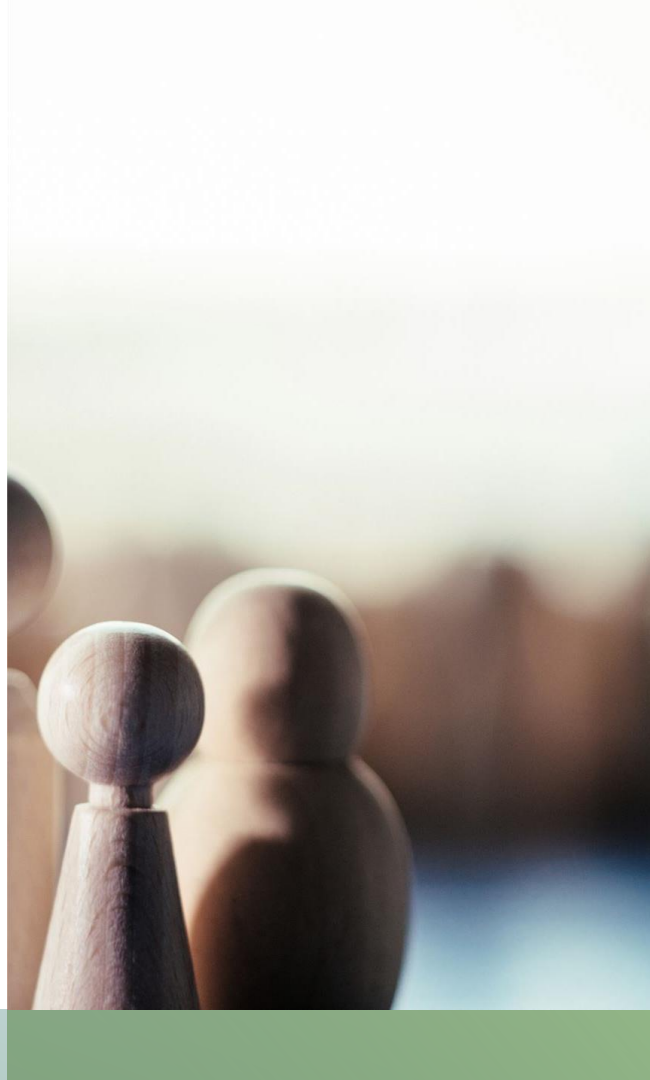
BEYOND VOTING…

Self-rated health positively associated with high trust in institutions, sense of belonging, and civic engagement.

In some studies, volunteering associated with lower health risks (e.g., lower blood glucose levels).

Some positive associations between environmental volunteering and self-rated health.

Fewer studies so far have examined the relationship between civic engagement and broader well-being.



CIVIC PARTICIPATION TRENDS

RAND has conducted a National Survey of Health Attitudes (NSHA), and related health mindset surveys during COVID, since 2015 (7 surveys in total so far).

Here is a snapshot of recent findings from the 2023 NSHA:

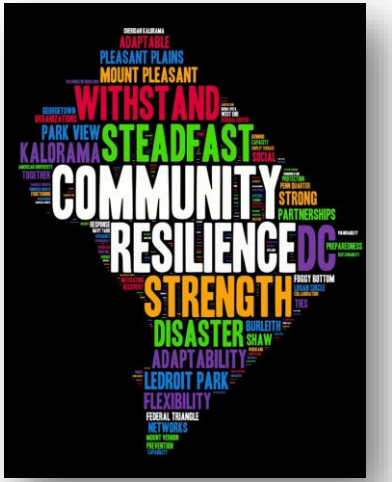
- More formal engagement
  - 18% reported volunteering with an organization working to improve the health and wellbeing of those in their community
  - 16% attended a civic meeting to address a community issue
    - Example differences by race/ethnicity: 20% Black/African American, 16% white, 15% Hispanic/Latino, 26% American Indian/Alaska Native, 15% Asian; 8% NHPI; 27% MENA
- Supporting others
  - 43% reported participating in a community-wide event
  - 46% reported helping a neighbor who was struggling

BUT PEOPLE SEE BARRIERS TO ENGAGEMENT

Just a snapshot of findings

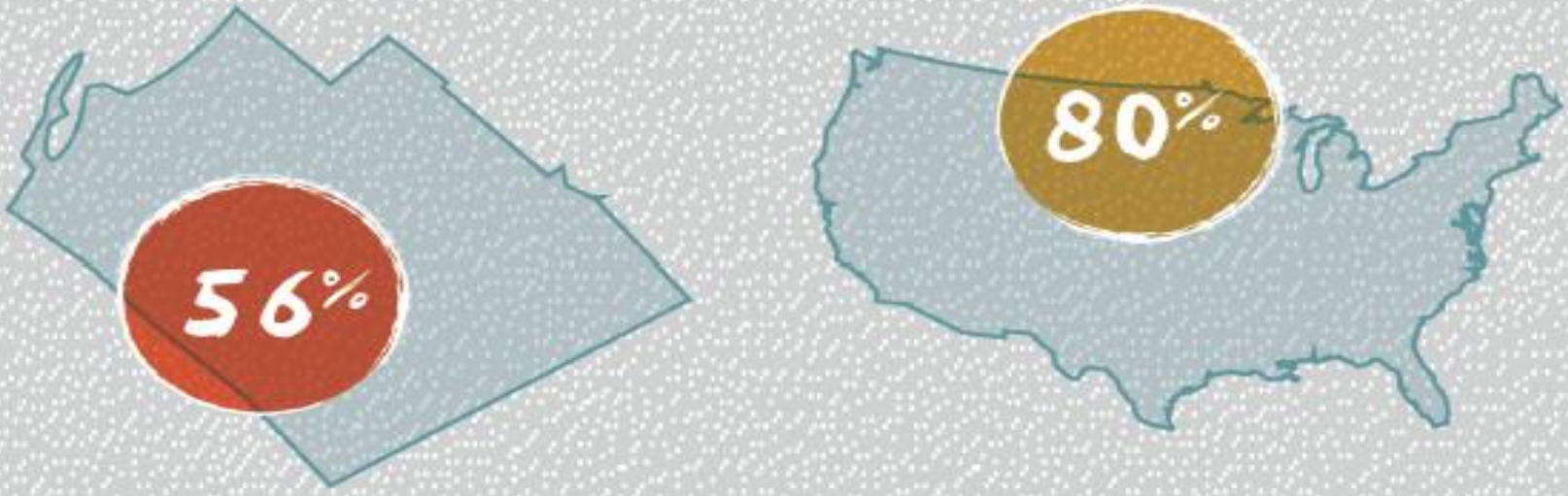
- 46% see somewhat or mostly major barrier the issue of people not knowing where to start
- 45% do not think their involvement will make a difference in health and wellbeing in the community
- 36% feel they have offered suggestions in the past but has not gone anywhere

WE KNOW THAT STRENGTHENING CONNECTION AMONG INSTITUTIONS AND PEOPLE BUILDS COMMUNITY DISASTER RESILIENCE



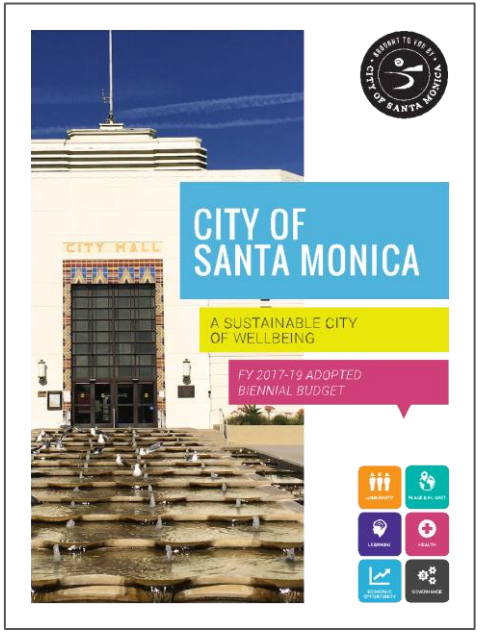
BROUGHT TO YOU BY
CITY OF SANTA MONICA
THE WELLBEING PROJECT
WORKING TOGETHER to
DEFINE, MEASURE,
and actively IMPROVE
Wellbeing
IN SANTA MONICA

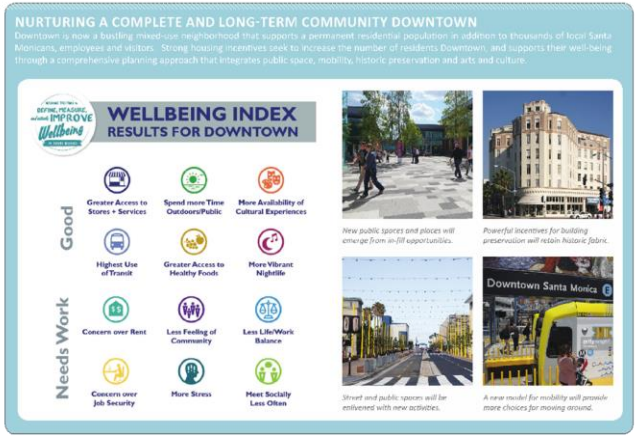
NEIGHBORHOOD RELATIONSHIPS

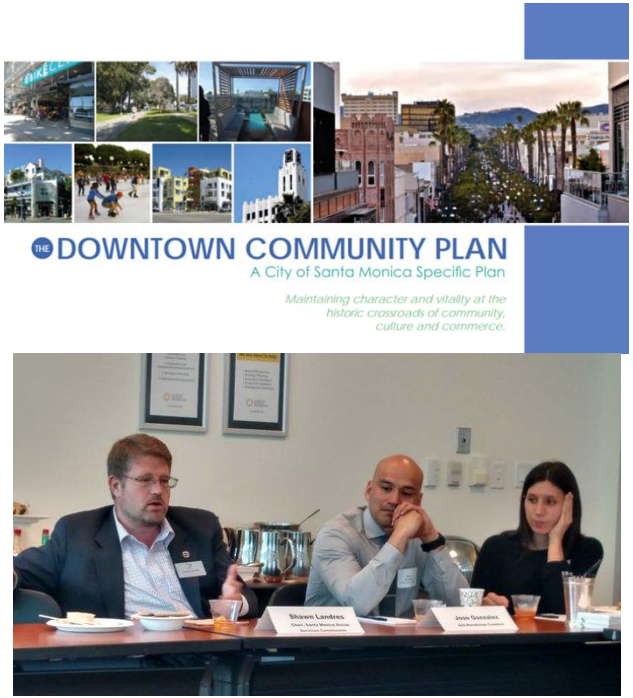


56% of Santa Monica residents feel they can count on their neighbors compared to 80% in a US/national survey.

BUILDING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH WELLBEING MEASUREMENT AND ACTION





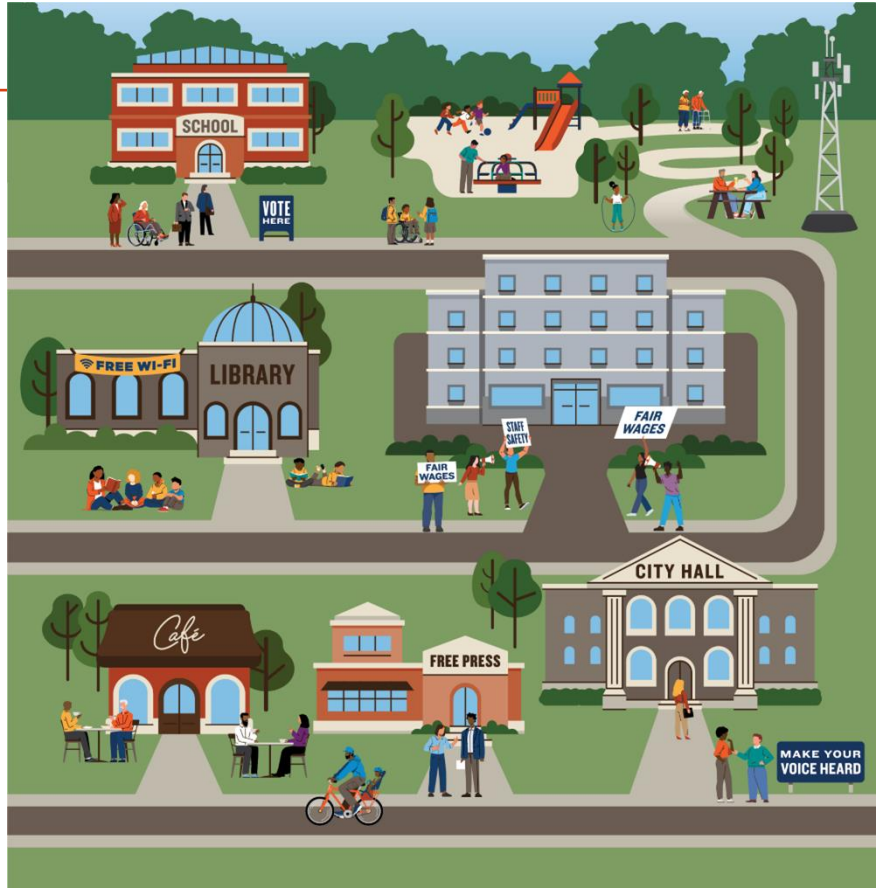


What Works for Health

countyhealthrankings.org/whatworks

TAKING ACTION

- Public libraries
- Public deliberations
- Participatory budgeting
- Voter registration initiatives
- Voter turnout initiatives
- Youth civics education



County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

PUBLIC LIBRARIES FOR COMMUNITY BUILDING

Public libraries can be safe spaces for people to gather for activities, programs, classes and more.

Public libraries are recommended by experts to increase community involvement and social capital.

✓ Expert Opinion

✓ Potential to Decrease Disparities

PUBLIC DELIBERATIONS

Public deliberations are facilitated and informed conversations between community members.

Public deliberations can lead to reduced polarization and stronger issue knowledge for those who participate.

Some Evidence

Potential to Decrease Disparities

County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

CIVIC HEALTH CURATED LIST

Q&A

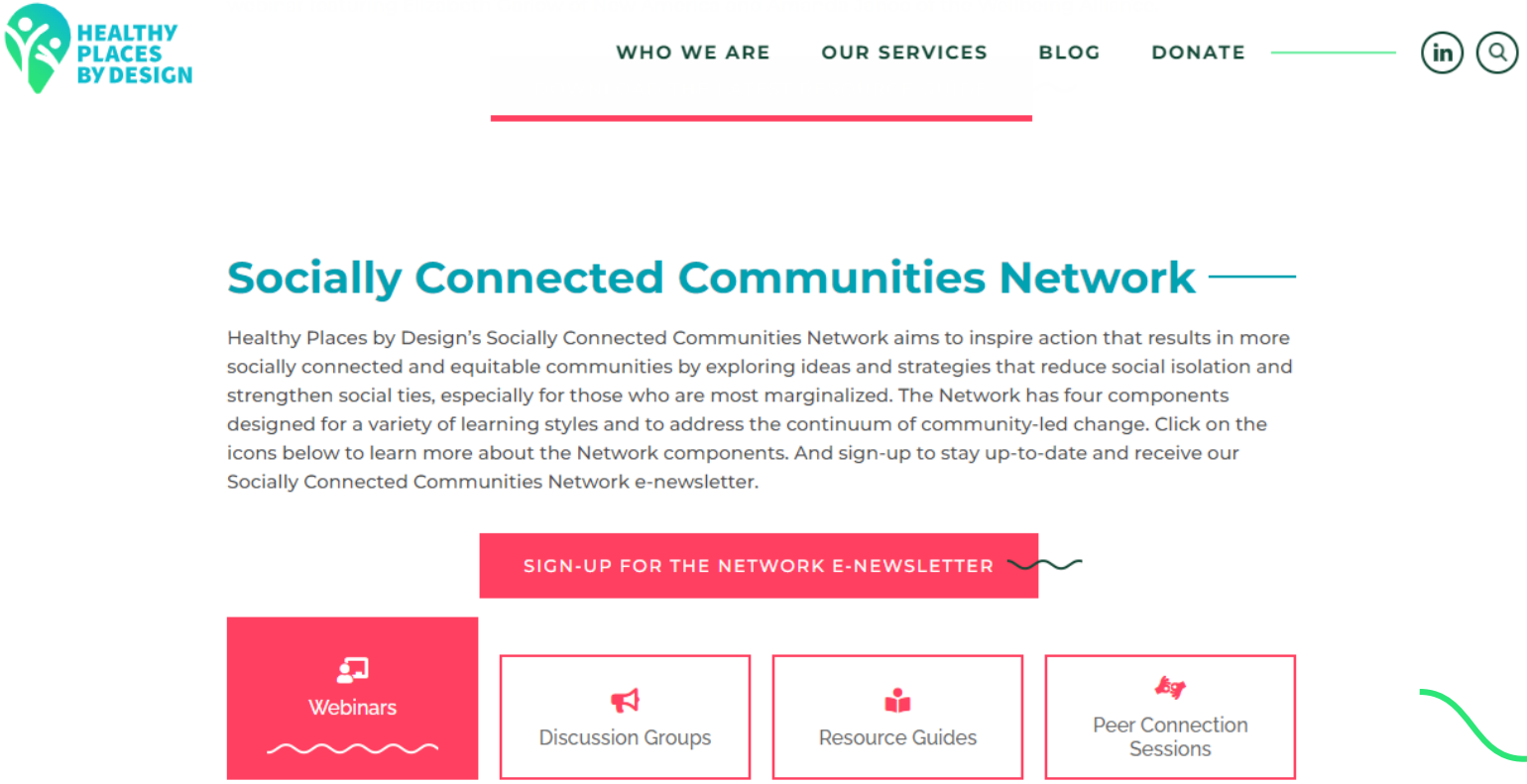
Erin McDonald
Lead, People and Places Thriving: The Federal Plan for Long-Term Resilience
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office of the Assistant Secretary

Register Now!

Building Resilient and Socially Connected Communities

July 24, 2024
Webinar: 3-4 pm ET
Discussion Group: 4-5 pm ET

Stay up-to-date and Engage with Us!



Let us know!

Poll Question:
I gained new learnings or insights by attending this webinar

Chat:
What issues or topics related to socially connected communities do you want to learn more about?

Discussion Group

- **When:** After we close this webinar
- **What/Why:** Engage with others to deepen learning and brainstorm about ways to apply ideas
- **How:** Zoom meeting - click on the link in the chat box to join

HEALTHY PLACES BY DESIGN

Thank you!

Connect with us on LinkedIn

https://www.linkedin.com/company/healthy-places-by-design

Sign up for our newsletter

https://bit.ly/HPbDNewsletterSignUp

Subscribe to our YouTube channel

https://www.youtube.com/@HealthyPlacesbyDesign