

Promote Healthy Communities

Joint Call to Action



PARTNERING TO IMPLEMENT THE JOINT CALL TO ACTION

The organizations involved in this Joint Call to Action represent many, but not all, of the individual practitioners who contribute to creating healthy communities. We encourage our members to partner with members of other organizations to facilitate the creation of healthier environments and to make health a primary consideration in land use, design, and development practice.

For members of the American Institute of Architects, American Planning Association, American Public Health Association, American Society of Civil Engineers, American Society of Landscape Architects, National Recreation and Park Association, U.S. Green Building Council, and Urban Land Institute.

THE IMPERATIVE FOR HEALTHIER PLACES

Where we live, work, and play has a major role in shaping our health. Rates of chronic diseases attributable to the design of the built environment—including obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and asthma—are on the rise. The built environment also has direct and indirect impacts on mental health, including depression and anxiety. This is true for everyone, but is felt even more among vulnerable populations, who are less likely to have access to nutritious, affordable food and opportunities for physical activity and are more likely to be exposed to environmental pollutants and circumstances that increase stress.

Addressing growing health challenges and inequities requires new partnerships and collaboration between built environment and public health practitioners, and a health-focused approach to landscapes, buildings, and infrastructure. As signatory organizations to this Joint Call to Action, we encourage our combined 450,000 individual members to embrace collaboration across professions to promote healthier, more equitable communities. When professionals in the fields of the built environment and public health work together, we multiply our potential to improve health.

We, the signatory organizations, challenge our members—comprising architects, urban planners, landscape architects, developers, engineers, and professionals from public health, parks, and green building—to do the following:



**The American
Institute
of Architects**



BUILD RELATIONSHIPS: CREATE AND FOSTER PARTNERSHIPS THAT ADVANCE HEALTH

- Establish integrated project development teams that include partners from the Joint Call to Action signatory organizations to focus on health.
- Engage with community members, form coalitions, and collaborate with organizations to understand health challenges and devise strategies to address them.
- Engage with government officials at the local, regional, state, and federal levels to encourage policy makers to prioritize community health and reduction of chronic disease through investments in the built environment.
- Seek opportunities to build relationships through events and continuing education sessions hosted by the signatory organizations and other professional organizations.

ESTABLISH HEALTH GOALS: BUILD AN UNDERSTANDING OF HEALTH DATA AND ESTABLISH MEASURABLE HEALTH OBJECTIVES FOR PLANS AND PROJECTS

- Use health evidence and community input to understand public health challenges and opportunities.
- Anticipate the short- and long-term impacts of decisions regarding the built environment on the health of residents, visitors, and the community at large by establishing improved health as a primary project or plan goal.
- Establish metrics for health and well-being concurrently with other project goals and measure health impacts and outcomes after projects are completed.
- Devise strategies to improve health during the entire life cycle of project planning, design, construction, operations and maintenance, and programming through cross-disciplinary project teams.

IMPLEMENT STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE HEALTH: ADVANCE POLICIES, PROGRAMS, AND SYSTEMS THAT PROMOTE COMMUNITY HEALTH, WELL-BEING, AND EQUITY

- Advocate for and adopt voluntary codes, policies, and guidelines that promote physical and mental health for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes.
- Implement planning and development solutions that improve opportunities for physical activity, access to healthy food, healthy indoor and outdoor environments, and social connectedness.
- Establish internal organizational policies that promote health within workforces, including worksite safety and workplace wellness programs.
- Work with your national organization to integrate health into certification programs and industry standards for the design and operation of buildings and communities.

SHARE EXPERTISE: COMMUNICATE THE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTH

- Share stories about successful health-promotion efforts and emphasize health as part of project marketing campaigns.
- Articulate opportunities to improve health and social equity as it relates to your profession when engaging with colleagues, clients, and the public.
- Participate in and collaborate on public awareness and education campaigns to promote healthy communities, including campaigns related to sustainability and community resilience.
- Join local advisory boards and nonprofit organizations to support efforts to build or establish health-promoting civic investments, including those in parks, schools, and libraries.