

Community Health Assessments and Community Health Improvement Plans for Accreditation Preparation Demonstration Project

Resources for Social Determinants of Health Indicators

When thinking about the social determinants of health, there are several perspectives you may take as you pursue data collection for the assessment component of your improvement process.

First, you want to consider differences among population groups for any piece of data that you collect. Therefore, as possible, it is wise to disaggregate all assessment data indicators by race, age, gender, socio-economic status, education level, and geography within the community. The ability to do this from a quantitative perspective will be limited by numerous factors including population size and the way data are collected and reported to you. When quantitative data are not available in a disaggregated fashion, you may want to seriously consider surveys, focus groups, or key informant interviews to glean community perspective about how particular health indicators may disproportionately affect certain groups and geographic areas within your community.

Second, data about social determinants are an important component of your community health assessment as core data that informs your health priorities. Sometimes this type of data are considered “demographic” data and are treated like background or descriptive data about the community; however, since we know that social and economic factors have the largest relative contribution to health outcomes, it is important to look at these data as community indicators and as actionable areas for your community health improvement plan.

The following nine domains (with examples of indicators) can assist you in considering those social determinants of health for your CHA. Just as noted above, you may want to disaggregate these data and/or map them using GIS software to see patterns within specific population groups or areas of your community. In addition to this list, the [Data Set Directory of Social Determinants of Health at the Local Level](#), published by CDC is an excellent resource for thinking about further data collection in your community.

1. Economic security and financial resources

Component	Indicator(s)	Data Source
Income	Median household income	U.S. Census
Wealth/assets	Median value-owner occupied homes, land-building assessed value, sales prices, average # of vehicles, average \$ mortgage	U.S. Census, Local tax assessor, Local office on housing or office on planning and zoning
Poverty	% households below poverty, % children <18 in poverty, birth to teenage mothers	U.S. Census, Vital Statistics
Public assistance	Rate per household, # of families in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), # of individuals receiving food stamps	Local department of social services or human services

Community Health Assessments and Community Health Improvement Plans for Accreditation Preparation Demonstration Project

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Access to capital	Approval rates for home purchase mortgages, # of home purchase mortgage applications, average rate mortgage approvals	Home Mortgage Disclosure Act
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2. Livelihood security and employment opportunity

Component	Indicator(s)	Data Source
Employment	Unemployment rate	Bureau of Labor Statistics
Food Security	% of households who reported they ran out of food in the last month and did not have money to purchase more; % of children who are eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program under the Free Lunch program; # of residents using the local food bank on a monthly basis	Health Indicators Warehouse, local surveys, local department of human or social Services, USDA Food Environment Atlas

3. School readiness and educational attainment

Component	Indicator(s)	Data Source
School readiness	% of children who attend licensed preschool programs; % of households with children ages 2-5 years where children are read to or told stories every day by a family member	Local surveys; local school districts or state departments of education
Educational achievement	% of 3 rd graders reading or doing math at grade level; Proficiency levels in specific subjects at different grade levels; ACT/SAT score performance; truancy/absenteeism rates; % of adults who are illiterate	State department of education; local school districts; National Assessment of Adult Literacy
Educational attainment	% of graduating seniors who enter post K-12 education; High school graduation rates; % of adults ages 25-44 with some post-secondary education	American Community Survey, National Center for Education Statistics; Local school districts or state department of education
Community Investment	Average spending per pupil in K-12 system	State department of education

**Community Health Assessments and Community Health Improvement
Plans for Accreditation Preparation Demonstration Project
Resources for Social Determinants of Health Indicators**

4. Environmental quality

Component	Indicator(s)	Data Source
Air Quality	# of “Air Quality Action” days per year; Air pollution-particulate matter days; Air pollution-ozone days; Radon levels in homes; Exposure to second hand smoke	County Health Rankings, local or state environmental data and surveys
Water Quality	Drinking water quality; natural watersheds, dams, and bridges	Local water utilities, Report Card on America’s Infrastructure
Built Environment	Access to healthy food outlets, Access to recreational facilities	County Health Rankings, USDA Food Atlas, local department of parks and recreation

5. Availability and utilization of quality medical care

Component	Indicator(s)	Data Source
Access to care	% of uninsured adults or children; rate of primary care providers; Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA) designation	County Health Rankings (Dartmouth Atlas); Commonwealth Fund State Scorecard on Child Health System Performance; Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)
Quality of care	Preventable hospital stays; Diabetic screening, Mammography screening	County Health Rankings (Dartmouth Atlas); local Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS) measures from health plans

6. Adequate, affordable, and safe housing

Component	Indicator(s)	Data Source
Affordability	% of households (renters & homeowners) who pay paid 30% or more of their total income on housing; % of median household income needed to afford two-bedroom rental; Estimated % of households unable to afford two bedroom, fair market rent;	American Community Survey, H & T affordability index; local surveys, local office on housing

Community Health Assessments and Community Health Improvement Plans for Accreditation Preparation Demonstration Project

Resources for Social Determinants of Health Indicators

	Combined costs of housing and transportation; # of home foreclosures per month	
Availability	Rental vacancy rate; annual number of homeless individuals and families	U.S. Census; Annual Point-in-time count of homeless; local office on housing; local surveys

7. Community safety and security

Component	Indicator(s)	Data Source
Community Violence	Crime data, such as aggravated assaults, robbery rate, substantiated sexual assaults, homicides per 100,000; Violent crime rates	Uniform Crime Reporting, Local police departments
Interpersonal Violence	# of child abuse and neglect reports and substantiations; # of domestic violence arrests; # of elder abuse reports and substantiations; out of home placements of children	Local or state departments of social services or human services; local police departments; Kids Count Data Center
Family & Social Connectedness	% of people who report inadequate social support; single parent households	Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (also County Health Rankings); American Community Survey
Community Perception	% of individuals who report feeling safe in their community	Local survey

8. Civic involvement

Component	Indicator(s)	Data Source
Voting	% of registered voters who voted in last general election	County or City Clerk; local board of elections
Volunteerism	Annual number of volunteer hours by residents	Survey or local volunteer center

9. Transportation

Component	Indicator(s)	Data Source
Commuting	Means of travel to work; median travel time to work	US Census

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Here are more sources of data that can further inform your thinking about social determinants of health. Those that are marked with a * also have local data available.

Local Health Department Report:

- [Alameda County Health and Social Inequity Report](#)
- [King County Equity and Social Justice](#)

Websites on which there are additional health inequity indicators/resources:

- [*American Community Survey](#)
- [Healthy People 2020](#)
- [*Community Health Status Indicators Project](#)
- [NACCHO's Health Equity and Social Justice Toolkit](#)
- [*County Health Rankings:](#)

Social and Economic Factors: The links below include a description and indicators for social and economic factors. Data from your county can also be accessed via these links.

[Employment](#)

[Community Safety](#)

[Income](#)

[Education](#)

[Family and Social Support](#)

Physical Environment Factors: The links below include a description and indicators for physical environment factors. Data from your county can also be accessed via these links.

[Environmental Quality](#)

[Built Environment](#)

- [CADH Health Equity Index¹](#)
- [*Kids Count Data Center](#)
- [*Housing & Transportation Affordability Index](#)
- [Report Card on America's Infrastructure](#) (State data)
- [*Economic Policy Institute: Hardship in America](#)
- [Data Set Directory of Social Determinants of Health at the Local Level](#)

¹Salsbury, B., O'Keefe, E., & Kertanis, J. (2010). Measuring Social Determinants of Health Inequities: The CADH Health Equity Index. In Hofrichter, R. and Bhatia, R. (Eds). Tackling Health Inequities through Public Health Practice. The Oxford University Press : New York, pp. 442-457.