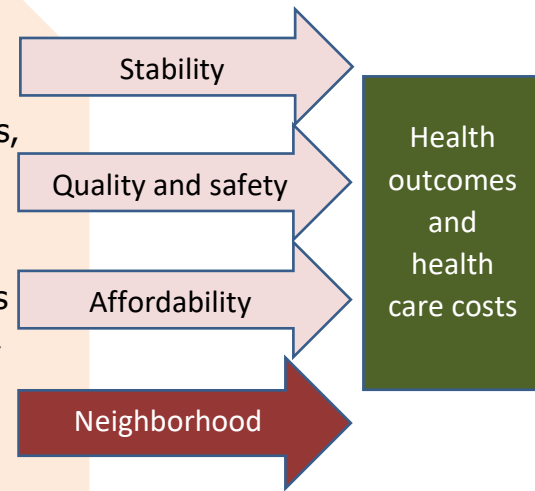


# Housing as a Social Determinant of Health: Neighborhood

## How is Housing Related to Health?

This resource guide focuses on how housing neighborhood is related to health. Neighborhood includes the physical surroundings, availability of resources, and social characteristics of an area. Research has found that access to resources such as public transportation, grocery stores, and safe exercise spaces are correlated with better health outcomes. On the other hand, factors such as living in proximity to high-volume roads, less green space, and crime could worsen health outcomes.

Review more at: [HEART Learning Community - Housing](#) and [Housing And Health | Health Affairs](#)



## Redlining

Redlining is a term that describes the discriminatory practices of denying minority populations access to equal loan and housing opportunities. Starting in the 1930s, redlining was used to shape the real estate industry and social landscape of many major American cities. Black and immigrant populations were restricted to living in low-quality neighborhoods, whereas White affluent populations were allowed to live in better neighborhoods. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Fair Housing Act, passed in 1968, made it against the law to discriminate in housing opportunities based on race. However, the patterns and effects of this racial segregation in many cities, including Milwaukee, can still be seen today and has effects on health.

- There are significant connections between greater redlining and worsening population health, including increased prevalence of poor mental health and lower life expectancy at birth.
- The same connection is significant for redlining and pre-existing conditions such as for heightened risk of morbidity in COVID-19 patients with asthma, COPD, diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, kidney disease, obesity, and stroke.

[Learn more](#) about redlining in Wisconsin.

## Housing reparations programs

What can be done to address the harms of segregation? Reparations programs acknowledge and address harms caused by human rights violations such as slavery, segregation, or systemic denial of fair housing, education, and employment opportunities. [County Health Rankings provides examples](#) from across the country on reparation efforts which include public apologies for historical discriminatory acts, investments in historically marginalized communities, and implementing new programs to dismantle housing discrimination.



## Case study: San Mateo County Policy to address social determinants of health

Housing and neighborhood conditions can intersect with many other social determinants affecting neighborhood conditions: food systems, built environment, transportation, etc.

[Read](#) how San Mateo County shifted from a focus on healthy eating and physical activity to a policy-oriented project that addresses housing, education, economic, and neighborhood conditions, with a focus on community engagement and health equity. Check out their [success stories](#) as well.

### Healthy neighborhoods resources

ChangeLab Solutions has provided a [toolkit](#) for neighborhood health planning, including helping communities reach their policy goals for better safety, access to food and physical activity spaces, transportation, social connectedness, and more. This resource includes material on planning, land use, transportation, and housing.

### Gentrification

Gentrification is the profit-driven racial and class reconfiguration of urban, working-class, and communities of color that have suffered from a history of disinvestment and abandonment, which is a public health issue. [This report](#) discusses why local health departments should include prevention of displacement (people losing their places to live) in their community development plans. It also walks through the strategies and action Alameda County Public Health Department took to address gentrification in its neighborhoods.



## State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP)

The SHIP priorities include healthy housing. It contains strategies with sample activities related to improving accessibility of housing such as:

- Increase development of service-enriched housing (for example, through social impact bonds).
- Incentivize a universal design plus visitability standard for affordable housing accessibility.
- Fund programming to make homes safe and accessible for older adults and people with disabilities to remain in their homes.

The SHIP also contains strategies and sample activities for social connectedness such as:

- Improve support services and civic infrastructure to enable community engagement for all.
- Create and expand safe and accessible community spaces. For example, libraries, recreation centers, shared gardens.
- Design safe and accessible inter- and intra-community transportation. For example, public transportation, and complete streets.
- Incentivize and provide supports for community event engagement. For example, child care, gift cards, and food.

Find more at [Wisconsin State Health Plan](#).

## Case study: Alameda County Neighborhood Accessibility

Alameda County Public Health Department took a multifaceted approach to increasing neighborhood accessibility through the following strategies:

- Documented the impacts of gentrification and displacement on health to help build political will among elected officials
- Provided policy analysis and research on gentrification's health effects to its partners

Review this [case study](#) to learn more.



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of HEALTH SERVICES

Division of Public Health  
[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov)  
P-03572C (02/2024)