

LOCAL FINANCING INNOVATIONS INLAND EMPIRE - CALIFORNIA

Sites have a track record of innovation in their communities that predates their involvement with Bridging for Health: Improving Community Health Through Innovations in Financing, sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. This series allows site leaders to reflect on innovations aimed at financing improvements in population health already underway in their communities. This reflection of ongoing work can serve to possibly reinvigorate existing efforts (e.g., expand scope or partners) or inspire others interested in spreading such innovations to other communities.

In asking communities to think about their existing innovative work at creating health system change, the Georgia Health Policy Center facilitators established the following criteria to select relevant efforts. Innovations highlighted in this series address upstream drivers of health, do not solely rely upon grants, involve multisector partners, and maintain a long-term focus, rather than fixing an immediate community need.

BUILD Ontario

The Healthy Ontario Initiative was selected for one of seven national BUILD Health Challenge implementation grants to support innovative partnerships between hospitals, public health, and communities for improved health outcomes in low-income neighborhoods.

Efforts focused on reducing rates of overweight and obesity through a four-pronged approach that included community-based health screening, place-based delivery through a “health hub” model (two city parks with community centers, two family health centers, a community garden, and three places of worship), community health worker-led clinical case management, and an innovative data platform and dynamic dashboard.



Core partners of the multisector collaborative included the City of Ontario, San Antonio Regional Hospital, San Bernardino County Department of Public Health, El Sol, Ontario-Montclair School District, Huerta del Valle Community Garden, and the community-based organization Partners for Better Health.

While initial funding was provided by a BUILD Health Challenge grant, funds were blended and braided with other funding sources and in-kind resources. Grant dollars were matched 1-to-1 by the hospital partner through leveraging of community benefit funds. Additional resources funded and expanded community health worker training and case management support; the use of a dedicated registered dietician, registered nurse, and lab staff; as well as use of community centers and clinic spaces for screening events. Partners also contributed equal funding to build an innovative data platform and dashboard.

At the end of two years, overweight and obesity rates in the HEAL Zone community improved by more than 20%. The BUILD Ontario collaborative continues to think sustainably, despite not receiving BUILD 2.0 funding. The initiative was able to expand funding from the city and hospital, the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health, the Lewis-San Antonio Healthy Communities Institute, and another grant-based opportunity DASH (Data Across All Sectors) to expand data-focused infrastructure as a means toward achieving health equity.

Healthy Kids

Approximately 700 undocumented children per year received Medi-Cal-like (Medicaid-like) managed care services. Riverside County's then public health officer, Dr. Gary Feldman, proposed and received approval from the County Board of Supervisors to initiate the program in 2002. The Healthy Kids program was administered by the Inland Empire Health Plan and mirrored the state's Medicaid benefits and provider network.

Healthy Kids blended and braided a unique combination of funding sources, including the tobacco litigation settlement, general county funds, and geographically restricted funds from the Riverside Community Health Foundation and local First5 children and families commissions. Local First5 commissions resulted from Proposition 10, a California ballot measure that enabled revenues from the tax on cigarettes to fund local child development programs. Families were more likely to acquire Medi-Cal for their documented children when their undocumented children received a similar benefit. So, local funding indirectly brought more state and federal funding for health care to the region. While successful, the program is no longer needed, as California began to offer Medi-Cal to undocumented children in 2016.



Tobacco Retail Permitting Ordinance

Riverside County had one of the highest rates of illegal tobacco sales to minors in California, estimated at 44% of merchants. To reduce this health hazard, the county passed an ordinance requiring all tobacco retailers in the unincorporated areas to have a license that costs \$428 per year (roughly a penny per pack). A retailer caught selling to minors has the license revoked, which, on average, could cost the retailer \$25,000 per month in lost tobacco sales. Passage of the ordinance was spearheaded by the Community Health Agency, which at the time included the Department of Public Health and the Department of Environmental Health.



The Public Health Tobacco Control Branch and Environmental Health Department administer and enforce the program with no net cost to the county, as enforcement activities and overhead are covered by revenues received from license fees. To date, four cities have adopted a similar ordinance. Preliminary results show that tobacco sales to minors have dropped by roughly 50%.

Mountain View Estates Mobile Home Park

During the peak season, up to 7,000 migrant farm workers live in the Inland Empire. These migrant farm workers face dangerous and unsafe living conditions, including health risks from poorly maintained mobile home parks lacking proper sewage, inconsistent electricity, and untreated water supplies from agricultural runoff. A public-private partnership aimed to build safe, affordable housing units for the farmworkers and their impoverished families. The Mountain View Estates Mobile Home Park is the first of many planned developments.



The Mountain View Estates Mobile Home Park in Thermal, Calif., currently houses 173 families, with plans to expand to accommodate another 225 homes. It has many health-fostering amenities such as a laundry room, a computer lab, a public multipurpose room, 24-hour security, a soccer field, a basketball court, a volleyball court, and a water feature for the kids to play in.

The mobile home park was possible through a public-private collaboration. Funding came from both private investors and dollars leveraged by the local housing authority. The park is built on land owned by a private date farmer, who maintains active date palm trees as landscape. Desert Empire Homes was the contracted builder for the site. Future plans include expanding low-income housing options through similar housing development, as well as incorporating a market with fresh produce into future housing projects.