

Fwd: Concerns Regarding The Institute For Public Strategies

1 message

Izabella Hovhanisian <izabella.hovhanisian@lacity.org>
To: City Clerk Council and Public Services <clerk.cps@lacity.org>

Thu, Jun 3, 2021 at 7:38 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Ryan Thompson** <rt@nhdvs.net>

Date: Wed, Jun 2, 2021 at 7:59 PM

Subject: Concerns Regarding The Institute For Public Strategies

To: <info@publicstrategies.org>, <rhcsd@aol.com>, <policypanel@publicstrategies.org>, <mgustafson@publicstrategies.org>, <cnickerson@publicstrategies.org>, <snelson@publicstrategies.org>

I'm a resident of the Brentwood neighborhood of Los Angeles who, like many, are very concerned about land use frauds at our neighboring West Los Angeles VA Soldiers Home that are causing Veteran homelessness. The problem even persists amid Federal Court Orders, Federal Eviction Notices, Department of Justice Criminal Convictions, Community residents vocal concerns, extensive press coverage and Public Laws; all against and / or in conflict with the ongoing land mis-use Racket at West Los Angeles VA Soldiers Home. In my substantial opinion, a primary factor of the lack of white-collar criminal law enforcement and misinformation facilitating the Racket relates to propaganda, false representation and criminalizing behaviors by the Brentwood Community Council's Board, which is a special interest corporation representing non-compliant land mis-users at the West Los Angeles VA Soldiers Home and illicit interests in redeveloping said Home.

I found information about your institute and UCLA's connections to it while researching methods of Public influence some special interests engage, to feign the standing to drive and implement public policy changes by undemocratic means... Often in ways harming, misinforming and / or misappropriating funds of the Public. For example, a special interest group masquerading as a Los Angeles Neighborhood Council to misinform the Public about Public Laws and Federal Court Orders regarding homeless people (disabled Veterans), while influencing local Public Officials to amend Codes in ways conflicting with such laws and misrepresenting that third-party land mis-use causing Veteran homelessness, would purportedly reduce it. A broader case in point may be Los Angeles residents \$1,200,000.000.00 funding of Homeless Housing Bonds that produced nearly no occupiable homeless housing units in over five years; amid much of the money being spent and land being privatized.

After reviewing many of your publications, including those by your Westside Impact Project and UCLA Impact Project Subsidiaries, including as related to their interactions with the Brentwood Community Council; I'm confused about the actual intents, focuses, expenses and ownership behind the Gobar Institute of Public Strategies and its subsidiaries. It seems the entities message to the Public is contained within a wrapper of compassion and concerns limited to alcoholism prevention, yet in terms of practice appear to promote the criminalization of homeless people, present minorities within hazardous frameworks and lobbying, on an unregistered basis, to: privatize land, fund large healthcare business interests and eliminate vulnerable populations from wealthy neighborhoods. Generally speaking, I find it uncanny that the Institute focuses on minorities potentially doing bad things; while ignoring the massive and primarily unprosecuted; white-collar fraud, waste and abuse often causing vulnerable populations to play the roles your institute may fraternizingly seek to prosecute. For instance, purporting that Mexicans liking lemons with their Tecate is criminally indicative - while having nothing to say about non-hispanic white persons comprising over 38% of all opioid overdose deaths in the United States... Or really having anything to say at all about any white people committing any crimes.

Given the Institute's rhetoric on affordable housing, ending racism and other noble causes to act upon; I'm stating those are causes I do support with my actions, on a near daily basis... It's just when those causes are borrowed to privatize our government at the expense of those they must help; or when they're cited much in the way Charles Murray used to in books like "Losing Ground" and "The Bell Curve" - to claim social welfare programs aren't equitable because they don't serve all classes, or could never be effective because they can't not disenfranchise those just beyond their applicable thresholds.

Amid my concerns I am interested in having a Zoom meeting with you to learn about what programs your institute may be involved with in my community, if any; hear its position on them with an open mind and discuss their implications. If potentially contrasting opinions of the Institute's operations isn't enough to beg your attention to this matter, I'm hoping the millions of Public dollars funding it will.

Some of your publications, which I annotated, are attached to help express / substantiate my concerns.

Sincerely,

Ryan Thompson

Brentwood L.A. Resident
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<https://www.nhdvs.net>

 **UCLA-IPS_Notes_v02.pdf**
3427K

City Council Meeting: August 12, 2014**Agenda Item: 3-F**

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Jacqueline A. Seabrooks, Chief of Police
Subject: Strategic Prevention Framework – State Incentive Grant

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-

Recommended Action

Staff recommends that the City Council:

1. Authorize the City Manager to accept a grant awarded in the amount of \$48,000 from the Strategic Prevention Framework – State Incentive Grant program for Santa Monica's participation as a project community in the Westside Impact Project, and to execute all necessary documents, including grant renewals.
2. Authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute a professional services agreement with the Institute for Public Strategies (IPS) to implement and manage the Westside Impact Project, which targets underage and binge drinking in youth and young adults.
3. Authorize budget changes as outlined in the Financial Impacts and Budget Actions section of this report.

Executive Summary

The City of Santa Monica Police Department has been awarded a grant of \$48,000 under the Strategic Prevention Framework – State Incentive Grant Program which is a federal grant administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Funds are allocated to the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs who then allocate a portion of the state funds to the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health, Substance Abuse Prevention and Control to fund the Westside Impact Project. No local match is required.

The Westside Impact Project is being led by the Institute for Public Strategies (IPS), a non-profit organization based in Los Angeles County. The Westside Impact Project allows for funds to be used in Santa Monica on costs associated with operations targeting underage and binge drinking in youth and young adults. Funds must be spent by March 31, 2015.

Discussion

In September 2010, The California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs (ADP) was awarded a Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant (SPF SIG) from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP). The SPF SIG is intended to build prevention capacity and infrastructure at the state and local levels; prevent the onset and reduce the progress of substance abuse including childhood and underage drinking; and reduce substance abuse and substance abuse related problems in communities.

California's SPF SIG strategic plan was created by ADP, the Governor's Interagency Coordinating Council for the Prevention of Alcohol and Other Drug Problems (GPAC) SPF SIG Workgroup, and the State Epidemiological Workgroup (SEW). The priority of California's SPF SIG is to reduce underage and excessive drinking among youth and young adults ages 12 to 25 years old. As required by the SPF SIG, project communities were selected based on a data-driven needs assessment process that compared county and state level indicators of substance abuse, its prevalence and its consequences. ... Yet somehow the projects focus on wealthy neighborhoods with the lowest use / abuse rates and most planned redevelopments near homeless people?

Based on this strategic plan, state funds were allocated to the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health, Substance Abuse Prevention and Control to fund the Westside Impact Project. County grantees are funded to support the implementation of the SPF at the community level. Community projects are expected to follow a structured process to confirm the targeted problems identified by the State Epidemiological Workgroup (SEW), adopt a logic model, and develop objectives and strategies consistent with each community's tailored version of the logic model. A primary objective in this step is to identify and recruit community partners who are able to successfully implement and sustain the focused actions of the program. The County of Los Angeles identified the Institute for Public Strategies (IPS) to fill that role of community partner who will implement and manage the Westside Impact Project. IPS was awarded \$95,000 in total grant funds and has allocated \$48,000 in funding to SMPD for enforcement operations. Santa Monica was identified as one of the project communities to receive grant funding based on criteria including demographic characteristics, alcohol problem indicators, and ability to effectively implement the components of the program.

The Santa Monica program would be implemented by the Santa Monica Police Department's Criminal Investigation Divisions (CID) -Vice Unit. CID would use the \$48,000 in grant awards to conduct 20 operations targeting underage drinking and excessive drinking among youth and young adults ages 12 to 25 years old. CID's aim is to provide education and enforcement to reduce the illegal purchasing, distribution and consumption of alcoholic beverages by minors. The operations would be completed by March 31, 2015.

Consultant Selection

The Institute for Public Strategies (IPS) was selected by the County of Los Angeles as the local implementation subrecipient with responsibility for managing and implementing the Westside Impact Project in December 2011. IPS was awarded the funding as the result of a competitive

selection process. The County of Los Angeles renewed their contract with IPS in May 2014 to extend through June 30, 2016.

Financial Impacts & Budget Actions

Award of a \$48,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, SAMHSA SPF-SIG Program, requires the following FY 2014-15 budget changes to reflect receipt of the Strategic Prevention Framework – State Incentive Grant Program (SPF – SIG) funds:

- 1. Establish revenue budget at account 20304.406101 in the amount of \$48,000
- 2. Appropriate the following operating expenditures to reflect receipt of the SPF – SIG funds: \$48,000 at account 20304.569101

Prepared by: Nicole Dibling-Moore, Senior Administrative Analyst

Approved:

Forwarded to Council:

Jacqueline A. Seabrooks
Chief of Police

Rod Gould
City Manager

Single-Serve Alcoholic Beverages

Alcohol that is packaged for immediate consumption can lead to public drinking, crime and violence

What are Single-Serves?

Alcoholic beverages that are packaged for consumption by a single individual at a given time are known as “single-serves.” These products may contain beer, distilled spirits or alcoholic energy drinks, which, in addition to alcohol, usually contain caffeine as well as other stimulants.¹ However, the most common single-serve items are bottles and cans of beer, ranging in size from 16 to 40 ounces. Such items often have higher alcohol content than regular beer, making them more potent.

Problematic Packaging

Single-serve alcoholic beverages are considered problematic for a number of reasons. First is that excessive amounts of alcohol are being packaged for consumption by a single individual. This is especially true of the high alcohol content beer known as malt liquor. With 6 percent alcohol content being standard, a 40 ounce bottle of this kind of product is equivalent to five shots of whiskey. Since it sells for as little \$1.39 a bottle, it is the cheapest way for someone to get drunk.² This makes it a favorite among the homeless and other serial inebriates, including those receiving public assistance, according to research.³

Secondly, single-serve products are routinely offered for sale cold and ready to be consumed. This frequently



24 ounce cans of beer are the most common type of single-serve alcoholic beverages being sold in San Bernardino, but 32 and 40 ounce bottles are also found in many supermarkets and convenience stores.

leads to public intoxication and a wide range of associated problems including driving under the influence, public urination, litter, and other disruptive behavior. According to research, such problems are reported on a regular basis by residents living in the proximity of retailers that sell single-serves. In addition, there are also reports of crimes of violence, including gang-related activities, resulting in personal injury and/or property damage.^{4, 5, 6}

Underage Drinking

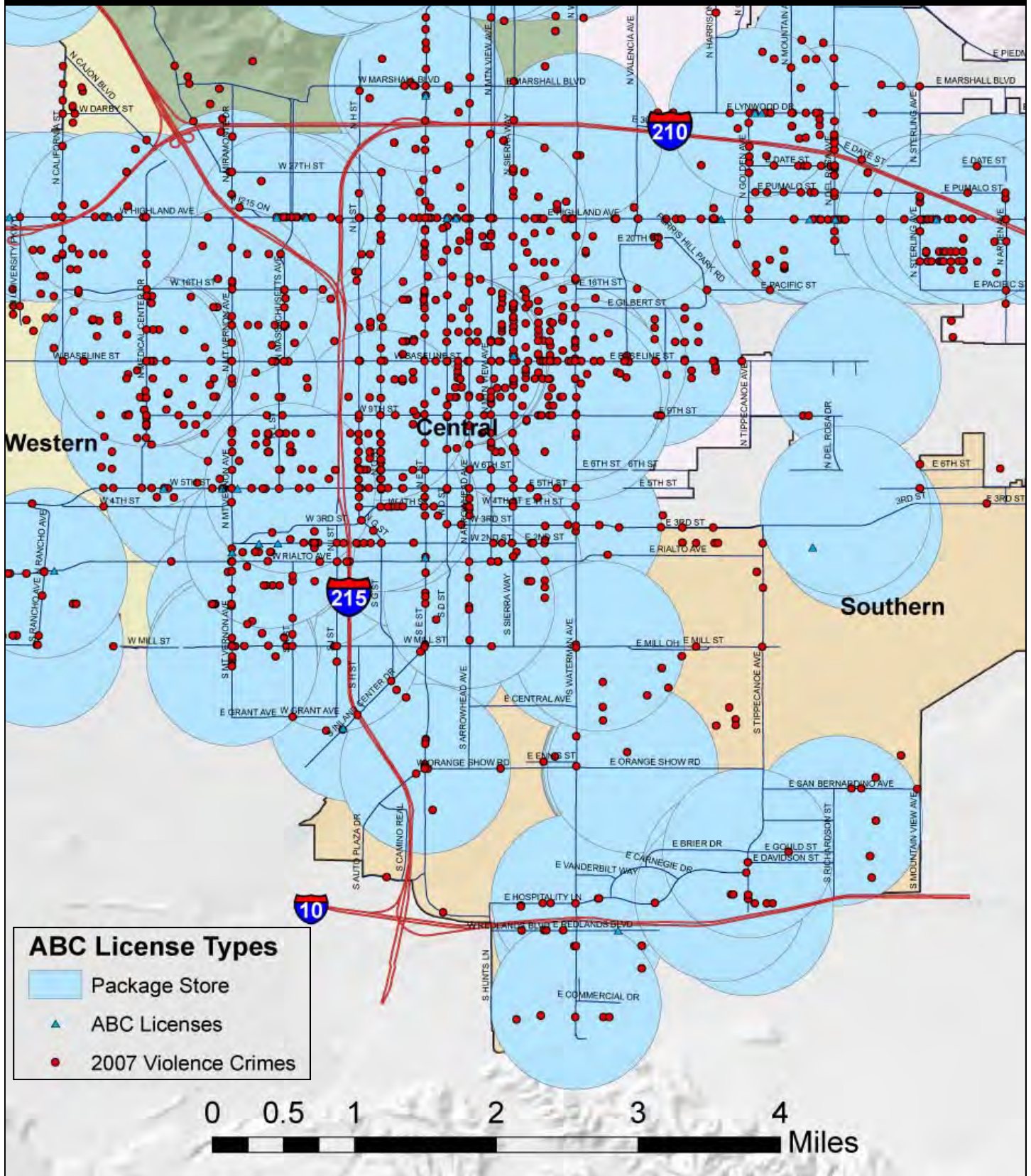
Last but not least, it should be noted that the single-serve cans and bottles of beer are very popular with youth including minorities, to whom these products are specifically marketed. This includes several advertising campaigns featuring African American music video stars promoting malt liquor in 40-ounce containers. In addition, since these products are typically priced low, they are more affordable for young people who have less disposable income.^{7, 8} As a consequence, these products may tend to increase problems related to underage drinking. These are known to include poor academic performance, high-risk sexual practices and an increased likelihood of drinking problems developing later in life.⁹

A 40 ounce bottle of malt liquor is equal to five shots of whiskey.



Since Hispanic customers prefer lemon with some types of beer, one San Bernardino store offers fresh lemons so that the product can be consumed immediately after purchase. (Sign reads: don't forget the lemons)

City of San Bernardino: Part-1 Violent Crime in Proximity of ABC Licensed Package Stores



GIS mapping of the Central portion of the City of San Bernardino shows how often violent crimes (red dots) occur within a one-half mile radius (indicated by the blue circles) from ABC licensed alcoholic retailers (blue triangles). Data collected by San Bernardino Police Department in 2007. Note: Part-1 crimes are a category of crimes that are generally considered more serious.

NOTE: Err... So I see stores everywhere, many without crimes; and crime clusters without stores... So where was that dastardly Hispanic lemon sign again?

Future Directions

Although sales of single-serve are widespread in San Bernardino, it is actually illegal for some of the city's retailers to be selling products packaged in this way. This is because of restrictions placed on these businesses by the city at the time their alcohol license was issued. Known as a Conditional Use Permit, such regulations are intended to ensure the public's health and safety, and all retailers are required to comply with the restrictions imposed by them. However, as demonstrated by the survey cited previously, at least some of the city's retailers have been failing to meet this obligation.

In response to this problem, the Office of the City Attorney launched an enforcement campaign in May, 2009 to bring local alcohol retailers into compliance with all regulations. This campaign has been successful with cited businesses removing the banned products from their shelves. However, enforcement alone can not solve the problem, as many retailers are exempt from the ban, having been in business before it went into effect. Therefore, public officials feel that additional regulations are needed



After being cited for violating the restriction against selling single serve alcoholic beverages, a local convenience store removed the items from their shelves and posted a sign indicating they were no longer allowed to sell such items.

to deal with problem businesses. These may include a stronger conditional use permitting process for any new businesses and what is known as a "Deemed Approved" ordinance for those already in existence. In addition, there is another initiative currently under way to encourage voluntary removal of single-serve products from the shelves by retailers who are not currently required to do so by the law. Coordinated by the Office of the Mayor through the Operation Phoenix program, such action is expected to reduce crime and improve the local business climate.

References

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This Issue Briefing was developed by the Coalition for a Drug-Free San Bernardino with technical assistance from the Institute for Public Strategies: www.publicstrategies.org
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Playing Chess Not Checkers

How to Win at Community Organizing

www.publicstrategies.org



INSTITUTE FOR
PUBLIC
STRATEGIES

The most effective way
to create change is by
organizing people ...

... inspire residents
to use **THEIR** voice

Today's
Presenters...

Sir Duplechan

Community Organizer

IPS, San Bernardino County

Jennifer Neri

Community Organizer

Global IPS, San Bernardino County

A public
health agency
specializing in
upstream
prevention.

IPS...

But First:

Poll Question

Why we're here...

To share strategies for building and gaining trust with communities.

Knowing the
community
you serve

Keeping your
eyes on the
prize

Giving
power not
taking
power



Knowing the
Community
You Serve

Collecting Data

QUANTITATIVE DATA

- Counted
- Measured
- Expressed using numbers

V S

QUALITATIVE DATA

- Descriptive
- Conceptual
- Categorized based on traits and characteristics

There are many ways to collect QUANTITATIVE data

Census Data

Surveys

Reports

Good sources of quantitative data:

- *City Health Dashboard* (www.cityhealthdashboard.com)
- *Sheriffs/ Police Department website*
- *Neighborhood Scout Report* (www.neighborhoodscout.com)

There are many
ways to collect
QUALITATIVE
data

Community
Forums

Door
Knocking

Environmental
Scans

The most effective = 1:1s

Data Tools for You

1:1 Template
Site Characteristics Tool
Audience Tool

Keeping Your
Eyes on the
Prize

Recruitment

Who do you start with?

Your coalition should be a mix of community members, residents, business owners, community partners and anyone who feels a connection to your cause.



Government/ Local,
State, Federal Reps.



Districts/
Superintendents



Community
Resources



Business Owners



Religious institutions/
Clergy



Schools/ Principals

12 must know Stakeholders



Police/ Captains



Other Activists/
Community leaders



Health Care
facilities



Workforce
Development



Banks/ Community
Liaisons



Local Media/
Reporters, Editors,
Influencers

Have 1:1s with Key Stakeholders

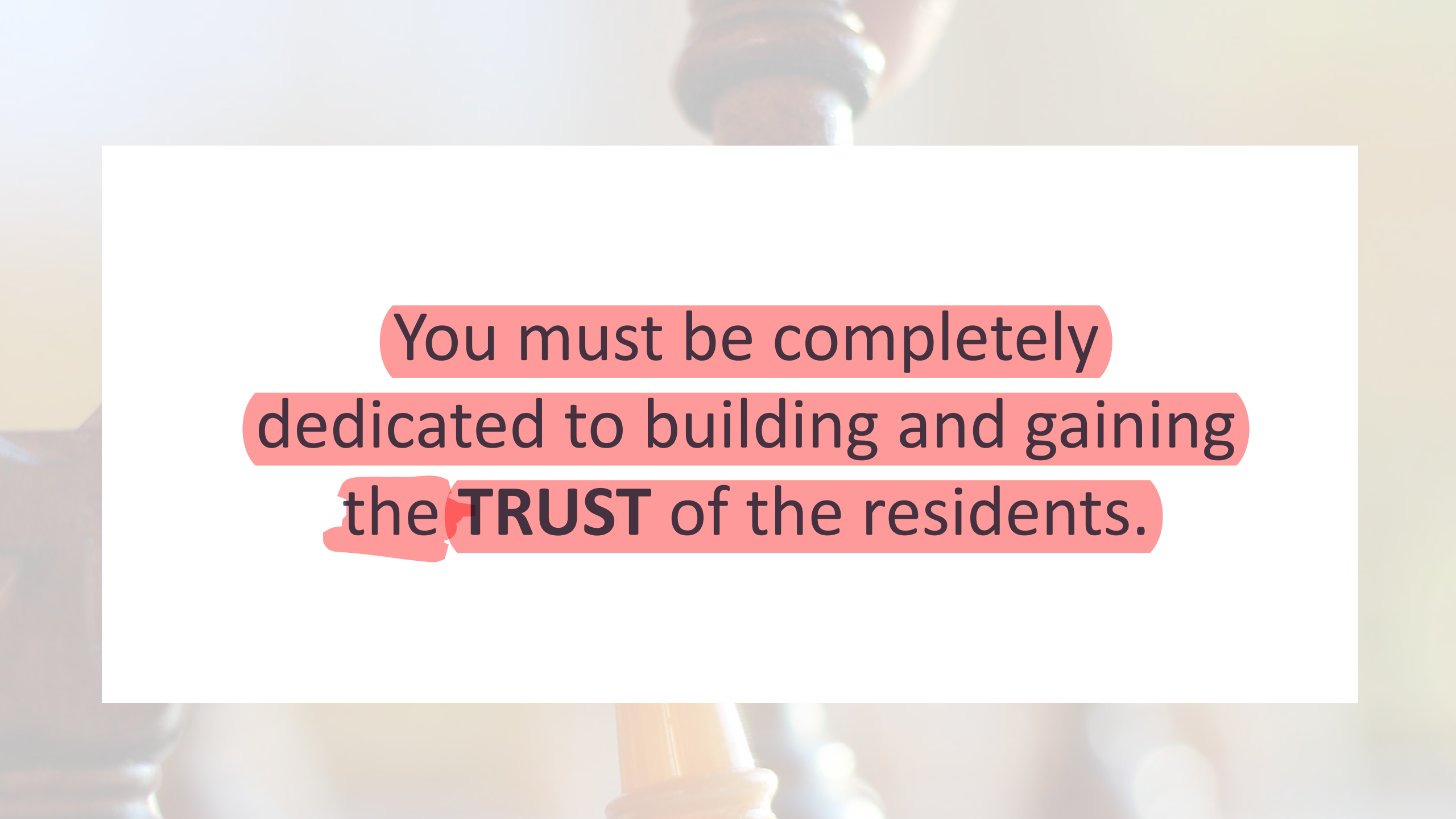
- *Set up 1:1's in public meeting spaces*
- *Ask who else you should talk to?*
(Warm hand-offs give you credibility)

1:1 Tool

Name:
Referred by:
Organizer:

Problems:
Assets:
Vision:

Interest: Low/Med/High
Referral:
Next Steps:



You must be completely
dedicated to building and gaining
the **TRUST** of the residents.

Meet residents where they are

*Volunteer at local food banks, visit local churches,
schools, playgrounds, and small businesses*

BONUS Tip

Use the Good Old-Fashioned Telephone

Make sure you call and check on **your Coalition members** regularly. The quarantine has tested everyone's mental fitness.



Partners = Power

Who are they and why do we need them?

- *Professional organizations or individuals with interest in the community you serve*
- *Provide resources and connect you to networks*



Tip: Give a little **take a little**

Support your partners' endeavors as you want them to support yours.


Audiences

Who will benefit from the data that you are collecting.

TOPIC	QUESTIONS OF INTEREST	Residents	Partner Orgs.	City/ County	Schools/ District	Water District	Chamber of Commerce
Health	What is the responsiveness of Code Enforcement?	X		X			
Crime	How do people feel about crime?	X					
Crime	How many calls do the police get per year?						
Health	Is the water safe to drink?	X	X	X	X	X	X
Demographics	How many people live in N. Adelanto?		X	X	X		X
Demographics	What is the racial demographics of N. Adelanto		X	X	X		X
Economics	What are your sources of income?		X	X	X		X
Economics	How much money do you make?		X	X	X		X
Economics	What is your debt to income ratio?		X	X	X		X
Economics	How many people go down the hill to work?		X	X	X		X
Economics	How many people are homeless	X	X	X	X		X
Economics	How many homeowners live in N. Adelanto	X	X	X	X	X	X
Health	How many people have substance abuse problems?	X	X	X	X		X
Health	How many people have Mental illness?	X	X	X	X		X
Health	What is the average ACE scores		X	X	X		X
Crime	Do people feel safe in their neighborhoods	X	X	X	X		X
Crime	How does the community feel about the Sheriff's?	X		X			

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NOTE: ACE = Adverse Childhood Experiences



Keeping Your
Eyes on the
Prize

Determining Goals

Determining Goals

There are many useful tools that you can use with your coalition to determine your goals.

Bubble
Diagram

Summary
of Problem
Analysis

Midwest
Academy
Strategy
Chart

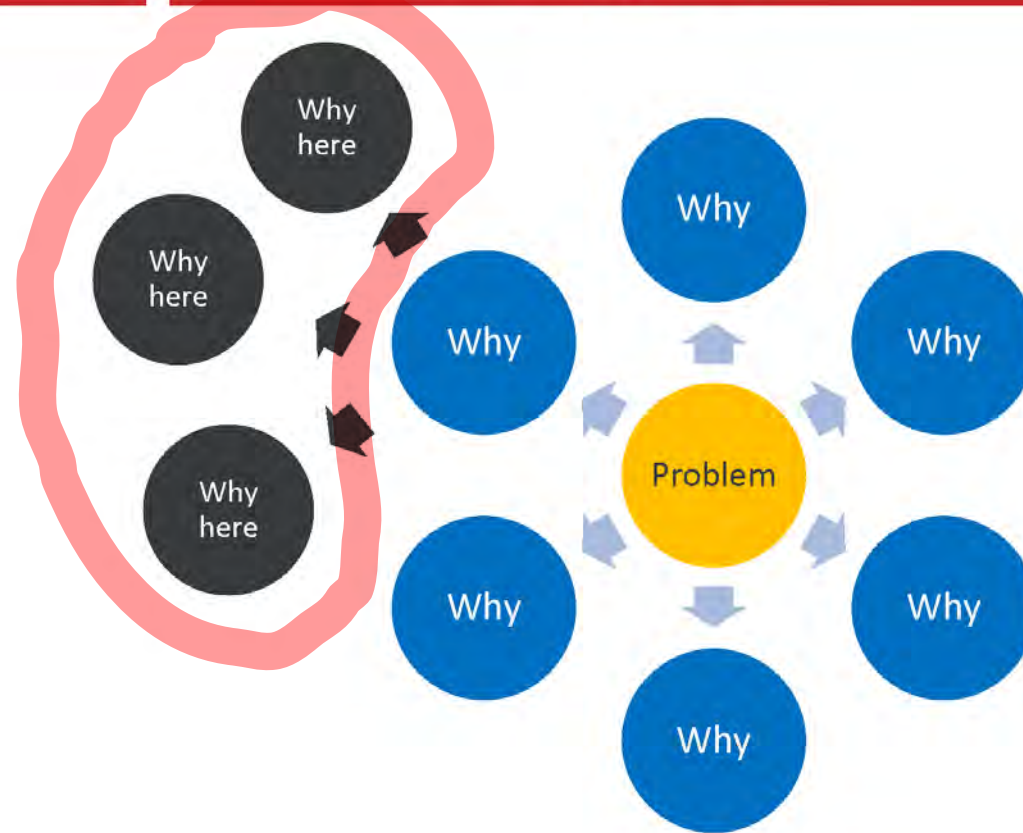
Bubble Diagram

Why is this a problem?

Why here?

3

Step 3 Problem Analysis:
“Bubble Diagram”



SUMMARY OF PROBLEM ANALYSIS: DATA SUMMARY SHEET

Summary of Problem Analysis

Do you have sufficient data to support your claim?

Selected Problem Ex: Adult diabetes

Definition of community La Brea Public Housing units

1. For the selected problem above, fill in all the Contributing Factors and related Local Conditions from your bubble diagram and add the data source that validated the Local Conditions.

Contributing Factor	Related Local Conditions	Data that validate local condition
Lack of exercise	People feel unsafe walking in neighborhood	Focus groups from hospital community needs assessment
	There are no exercise classes that are free and in Spanish	Listing of local exercise options (conducted by CBI staff)
	Adults often are working long hours	City economic development information
Poor eating habits	Closest restaurants are all fast food	Mapping of restaurants (done by residents) within 1 mile
	Traditional Latino eating habits	Focus groups from hospital community needs assessment
		Population data: 80% of residents use Spanish as first language at home
	Cost of fresh food too high for low income families	Food stamp data: 50% of residents are on food stamps

Midwest Academy

Strategy Chart

After choosing your issue, fill in this chart as a guide to developing strategy.

Midwest Academy Strategy Chart

After choosing your issue, fill in this chart as a guide to developing strategy. Be specific. List all the possibilities.

Goals	Organizational Considerations	Constituents, Allies, and Opponents	Targets	Tactics
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> List the long-term objectives of your campaign. State the intermediate goals for this issue campaign. What constitutes victory? <p><i>How will the campaign</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Win concrete improvement in people's lives? Give people a sense of their own power? Alter the relations of power? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What short-term or partial victories can you win as steps toward your long-term goal? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> List the resources that your organization brings to the campaign. Include money, number of staff, facilities, reputation, canvass, etc. What is the budget, including in-kind contributions, for this campaign? List the specific ways in which you want your organization to be strengthened by this campaign. Fill in numbers for each: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand leadership group Increase experience of existing leadership Build membership base Expand into new constituencies Raise more money List internal problems that have to be considered if the campaign is to succeed. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Who cares about this issue enough to join in or help the organization? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whose problem is it? What do they gain if they win? What risks are they taking? What power do they have over the target? Into what groups are they organized? Who are your opponents? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What will your victory cost them? What will they do/spend to oppose you? How strong are they? How are they organized? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Primary Targets A target is always a person. It is never an institution or elected body. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who has the power to give you what you want? What power do you have over them? Secondary Targets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who has power over the people with the power to give you what you want? What power do you have over them? 	<p>For each target, list the tactics that each constituent group can best use to make its power felt.</p> <p>Tactics must be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In context. Flexible and creative. Directed at a specific target. Make sense to the membership. Be backed up by a specific form of power. <p>Tactics include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media events Actions for information and demands Public hearings Strikes Voter registration and voter education Lawsuits Accountability sessions Elections Negotiations

Review Your Goals Often

Reviewing your goals at every meeting helps with new members and keeps the group focused.



Giving Power
Not Taking
Power

**Mobilizing
to create change**

Mobilizing to Create Change

- Capacity building
- Create sustainability through empowerment
- Getting into action
- Stay focused on the goals

Poll

Let's hear
from you

Final Thoughts

- Know the community you serve
- Keep your eyes on the prize
- Give power don't take power
- Operating during a pandemic takes creativity



Thank
You!

Sir Duplechan

Community Organizer

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Jennifer Neri

Community Organizer

Global IPS, San Bernardino County

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Survey

(Thank you!)



IPS Training and TA:

info@publicstrategies.org



[@VibrantHealthySafeCommunities](https://www.facebook.com/VibrantHealthySafeCommunities)



Environmental Scan Form

IPS Toolkit: Data & Research



Date: _____ **Day of Week:** _____ **Start Time:** _____ am/pm **End Time:** _____ am/pm

Describe boundaries (where scan was conducted):

Name(s) of person(s) completing this form:

Please complete one Environmental Scan Form for each business/establishment you observe and indicate/check (✓) whether you observed any of the following conditions/items. Add description/notes that might be helpful.

Name of Business Observed: _____

Street Address of Business Observed: _____

If no address, describe location: _____

Condition/Item Observed	✓	Description/Notes
Blacked out windows or doors		
Blight (excessive signage, building needs painting or other improvements, inoperable vehicles, etc.)		
Broken windows		
Condoms/wrappers		
Drinking in public		
Drug dealing/use		
Drug paraphernalia		
Empty beer, wine, or liquor bottles		
Empty bullet shells, weapons		
Excessive or unattractive signage		
Graffiti		

IPS's Toolkit consists of a suite of tools to assist advocates, community groups, prevention practitioners, and policymakers in achieving community transformation. IPS's tools are for practical application in the field, supporting all functions necessary for creating community-level change: Research and Data, Media Advocacy, Community Organizing, Policy & Systems Change, and Sustainability.

Inadequate lighting		
Inadequate parking		
Loitering		
No loitering or trespassing signs present on property		
Overflowing garbage cans		
Panhandling		
Pay phone outside		
Real estate or for rent sign (document name and number on sign)		
Security cameras on property		
Trash/litter		
Used clothing bins		
Vacant building		
Vacant lot		
Visually appealing business		
Vomit or human waste		
Weeds or patches of dirt		

Observations at businesses that sell alcohol	✓	Description/Notes
More than 33% of windows covered with signs		
Selling airplane bottles of alcohol		
Selling alcohol that is appealing to youth (i.e. candy flavored vodka)		
Selling large single cans of beer		

Additional Comments:



Transform Communities Using Geospatial Solutions

August 5, 2020 / by Meredith Gibson

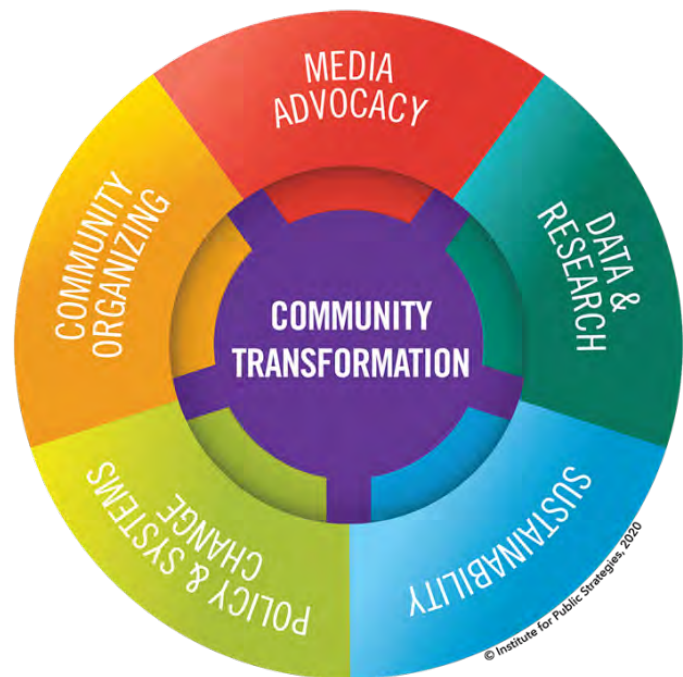
As seen on **GovLoop** [<https://www.govloop.com/community/blog/transform-communities-using-geospatial-solutions/>].

Since 1992, the Institute for Public Strategies (IPS) advances the health and safety of communities throughout the country and Mexico. The agency looks at policies and systems that play a role in alcohol and other drug (AOD) abuse, and factors that lead to crime and blight in neighborhoods. They work with communities to bring fresh produce and awareness of nutrition to underserved neighborhoods. They help facilitate self-sufficient, fully engaged community members into becoming champions for their neighborhoods by giving them tools to work with policymakers effectively and strategically.

To do this, IPS created the A.C.T. Model – Approach to Community Transformation. This multiprong approach guides the agency’s efforts in working with policymakers, enforcement agencies, civic leaders, businesses, faith

communities and residents to help realize the type of communities we want to live in.

[<https://publicstrategies.org/wp->



content/uploads/2020/08/Act_Model-1.png

Geographic information systems (GIS) plays a large part in the success of its efforts. IPS uses this technology in all five components of the A.C.T. Model.

Data and Research

IPS' work is evidence-informed: They rely on scientific knowledge, using a fair degree of flexibility to allow for unique conditions, to make sound decisions. The plethora of data out there is limitless. Accessing, using and interpreting the data has its challenges. GIS allows IPS to harness that data and look for trends and patterns to make sound decisions.

For its work in addressing health disparities among the Latino population in San Diego's South Bay [<https://www.govloop.com/community/blog/how-gis-exposed-racial-and-socioeconomic-disparities-in-san-diegos-south-bay/>], IPS collected data from many different sources: health, crime, socioeconomic, education and

environmental. The team then compiled the data into a geodatabase and mapped it on top of census tracts or ZIP codes to visually represent conditions in the South Bay. This decision-making tool enables the project team to identify communities most in need of intervention.

Media Advocacy

Getting IPS' messaging into the news is key to impacting policy and systems change. Media advocacy is purposeful and strategic and not designed to only inform the public of policy impacts. Television and print news rely heavily on compelling videos, photographs and infographics, such as interactive maps, to help tell the story that the audience can relate to and empathize with.

For instance, in 2019, several college campuses around the country dealt with the tragic consequences of binge and underage drinking, particularly in fraternities. This included IPS' own San Diego community. To put a face to each of the victims and to tell their stories, IPS created a [map \[https://arcg.is/PeHm5\]](https://arcg.is/PeHm5) that pinpointed where each tragedy took place with pictures and text. The map was submitted with a news release to local media outlets to engage viewers in understanding the problem and advocating for policies at either the university administration level or the national fraternity organization level to protect college students.

Policy Buy-In and Development

Gaining support for a policy can be complicated. It requires awareness and buy-in of all stakeholders. GIS provides tools such as maps, data dashboards and story maps to help communicate policy goals in an easy-to-understand manner to stakeholders, such as decision-makers, community members, enforcement agencies and news media.

The Binge and Underage Drinking Initiative (BUDI) at IPS works on preventing harm from alcohol, especially among teens and young adults. To gain support from the harm prevention community for BUDI's policy advocacy work, IPS created a

[story map \[https://arcg.is/myezP\]](https://arcg.is/myezP) to highlight the issue of alcohol problems in San Diego County and presented it at the Alcohol Policy Panel of San Diego County's quarterly meeting. The story map combines pictures, graphs, maps and text to provide a multidimensional narrative of alcohol harm prevention efforts.

Sustainability

For a policy to succeed, it requires community awareness and regular and consistent enforcement. Compliance checks ensure that businesses, for example, are following municipality- or state-mandated regulations that keep neighborhoods free from harm. This helps keep businesses accountable and builds trust among community members.

GIS allows IPS to collect its own data to make sure policies are upheld. For example, it created an app that assesses a bar or restaurant's compliance with the state alcohol regulatory agency's rules on responsible beverage sales and service.

In the past, observers recorded their assessment on paper. **By digitizing the assessment so that it is accessible on a mobile device, the user can discretely record their observations** and immediately build upon the underlying database. The database is then used to track the policy's enforcement over time. It also informs the AOD prevention community if a bar has done a commendable job at preventing over-service of alcohol, or if intervention is necessary to advise bar owners and managers of lapses in responsible business practices. The process is now more efficient and less cumbersome for data recorders.

Community Organizing

Communities that rally around an issue will find success when they fully understand the underlying reasons for the problems they encounter. **Maps help community groups grasp how a geographic location is related to disease, crime and other threats to health and safety.**

Team members in IPS' Pomona office are food security and nutrition champions in

their city. Green space and urban gardens are found to promote nutrition and physical and mental health. But what happens when children and teens do not have access to them?

To answer this question, IPS first [mapped \[https://ips-sandiego.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=805856f9e7424b69aa5d3bd3577e0ce1\]](https://ips-sandiego.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=805856f9e7424b69aa5d3bd3577e0ce1) out the locations of healthy food sources (farmer's markets, urban gardens, fresh food markets, etc.) and fast food restaurants. The locations' proximity to a local middle school was symbolized through different colored lines – blue for healthy and nutritious sources, red for unhealthy fast food. The resulting map showed that the red lines were shorter than the blue lines, meaning more fast food restaurants were closer to the middle school than healthy food sources. This demonstrated that students were at an increased risk of dietary problems and resulting diseases, because healthy foods were not as accessible as non-healthy options. Visualizing the data this way prompted support for establishing more urban gardens near the school and nutrition education at the school.

Because GIS is both an art and a science, IPS continues to promote healthy and safe communities by leveraging the technology's creative and analytical tools, making this dynamic system appealing to anyone who has a stake in envisioning a brighter future for their communities.

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and national levels.



5 Questions that Incorporate Racial Equity into Public Policy – Part 2

July 30, 2020 / by Meredith Gibson

As seen on **GovLoop** [<https://www.govloop.com/community/blog/5-questions-that-incorporate-racial-equity-into-public-policy-part-2/>].

Policymakers must consider racial equity implications during the enforcement phase as well as the development phase

[<https://www.govloop.com/community/blog/5-questions-that-incorporate-racial-equity-into-public-policy-part-1/>]. of a policy. This requires an understanding of how different populations will specifically be affected when it is enforced. For instance, will its enforcement result in further harm to Black, Latinx/Hispanic, Native American, Asian and Pacific Islander people or other minority groups?

Many policies are directed toward populations that may not have equal access to social determinants of health [<https://www.govloop.com/addressing-the-social-determinants-of-health/>]. These are the conditions that define a person's quality of life, from the type of physical environment they live in to the education they receive and the socioeconomic factors that contribute to their overall health.

Minority groups especially may find themselves unjustly penalized because they do not have the same opportunities for a higher quality life.

For instance, this has important significance for minority groups since more non-white people are homeless per capita than white people. Laws that prohibit loitering or sleeping in a public space may not have much impact on some. But if policies do not address the underlying issues such as the housing crisis, unemployment, mental health and substance abuse that may lead to homelessness in the first place, we miss out on an opportunity to intervene in improving the well-being of those living on the streets.

In the case of homelessness, enforcing a no-loitering policy should also come with a remedy for mitigating the reason someone is unsheltered.

When considering racial equity in the enforcement of a policy, it helps for decision-makers to consider the following questions:

1) Are resources in place to equitably enforce the policy?

Funding for staff and infrastructure must be equitably accessible to all populations. Here, it is necessary to distinguish between “equality” and “equity.” *Equality* is when everybody receives the same amount of resources. *Equity* is when everybody receives the resources specific to their circumstances to achieve the same opportunity.

In this situation, staffing and infrastructure must be determined based on the individual community’s needs that the policy serves, recognizing that each community has different levels of resources.

2) Are sanctions or punishments levied equitably (not equally!) across populations?

If an individual who is low-income, for instance, is given the choice between paying a fine or going to jail, their decision may come down to putting food on the table for their family or missing work while detained. It is easier for higher-income

individuals to pay the fine, whereas lower-income individuals may wrestle with the two options, neither of which promote mental well-being. How will the policy further undermine the well-being of vulnerable populations?

3) Is the community aware of the policy and how it will be enforced?

Community awareness of a policy ensures that there is a clear understanding of its objectives and impacts. It establishes expectations and the accountability of enforcers for equitable enforcement. It also helps achieve buy-in and support from the community.

4) Who will be harmed if the policy is not enforced equitably?

Failure to enforce regulations equitably across all populations means that some communities will remain disadvantaged.

For example, environmental laws put a cap on the amount of pollutants that can be released into the air. However, often due to a lack of enforcement of these laws, people who live close to factories and industrial areas experience higher rates of respiratory problems and other negative health outcomes. Not



show that enforcement is ineffective?

Data is key in determining if enforcement is working or if it produces inequitable conditions. Policies may include evaluation metrics that trigger a shift or halt to implementation and enforcement.

Rather than scrapping an ineffective policy altogether, small tweaks may produce a much more desirable (and economically efficient) outcome based on changing conditions. Metrics should take into account population-specific outcomes.

Equitable enforcement of policies results in healthier communities. When policies are equitably enforced, minority groups are given the same opportunities as white people to achieve optimal health, creating more fairness in the distribution of resources.

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5 Questions That Incorporate Racial Equity Into Public Policy – Part I

July 15, 2020 / by Meredith Gibson

As seen on [GovLoop](https://www.govloop.com/community/blog/5-) [<https://www.govloop.com/community/blog/5->

questions-that-incorporate-racial-equity-into-public-policy-part-i/.

When developing public policies, racial equity should be considered from the very beginning.

‘Equity’ is a state where everyone can achieve optimal health, well-being and happiness, where no one is denied this ability due to race or socioeconomic status. By contrast, ‘inequity’ is an avoidable consequence of public policies that favor one group over another.

This month, Americans celebrated our independence. We were reminded of our right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The majority of the population has enjoyed these rights since the beginning of our country. For others, however, especially communities of colors, these rights have not been easily attainable, if at all. Centuries of policies were created and enforced with implicit or explicit biases that prevented them from living the kind of lives they desired.

Now as our nation is reckoning with systemic racial inequities, whether it is from disparate health outcomes due to COVID-19 or the call for police reform due to racially charged events, agencies from all sectors are taking a practical and closer look at policies that create a more equitable society. Racial equity tools are guides that evaluate policies with the goal of benefiting everyone, not just a select few.

Considerations into racial equity can be incorporated into both the *development* and *enforcement* phases of a policy. Here are questions that agency staff can use to guide a principled approach to public policy *development*.

1) Does a policy that ensures racial equity exist? Does an existing one need to be revised to incorporate a fair chance for everyone to achieve the same benefit?

For example, Black people are more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than white people, despite equal rates of use. Black people are less likely to have charges dropped than white people. Once prosecuted, they are also more likely to

go to jail.

Arrest records can have a substantial impact on a person's ability to achieve quality of life, such as eligibility for financial aid, employment or public housing. This can lead to further health deteriorations for Black people.

2) Are all stakeholders identified who should be part of the decision-making process?

A good policy analysis looks at an issue from multiple angles. Will it have the buy-in of community members, enforcement agencies, business owners, property managers, faith leaders, school officials, urban planners and all other parties that the policy will impact?

For instance, liquor licenses are a hot topic in communities, often pitting the economic needs of businesses against the health and safety of residents and other business owners. Overconcentration of alcohol outlets and other types of 'high risk' businesses are often found in minority communities, where often, there are those who may not feel they have the political clout to weigh in on decisions or do not have the knowledge on how to do so. Municipalities that include a public comment period can hear from a variety of voices either in support of or against a proposed business license.

3) What parts of society will be impacted by the policy, from populations served (and underserved) to the required infrastructure to implement and enforce the policy? Who will and will not have access to the benefits of the policy?

Policies often have unintended consequences, and decision-makers should take strides to consider as many as possible and have a plan for mitigation. This is also the reason for involving the perspective of a wide range of stakeholders.

4) What inherent biases can undermine a policy?

Bias can lead to blind enforcement of policies that unjustly penalize minorities.

Racial profiling, or bias-based policing, is one case. The War on Drugs is another example of a policy that disproportionately targeted African Americans, resulting in soaring arrest rates. These two policies also have the unfortunate consequence of **undermining law enforcement efforts to create partnerships with the communities they are assigned to protect.**

5) What does the data say about the proposed policy?

Policies should always be evidence-informed. Decision-makers should consider the community conditions and demographics by looking at data, such as the American FactFinder and U.S. Census Bureau.

Moreover, there needs to be transparency and accountability in how decision-makers arrive at policy decisions to give the community confidence that good decisions are being made.

Though centuries of systemic racism institutionalized bias into many policies at national, state and local levels, it is not too late to reverse the trend of one race benefiting while another suffers. This can happen through strategic and in-depth analyses of proposed policies, as well as the buy-in of all stakeholders.

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Positive Childhood Experiences Can Combat Traumatic Effects of COVID-19

July 14, 2020 / by Brenda Simmons

The debate over whether to allow students to return to school is ever present.

However, not much has been said about how children are coping with the traumatic effects of this pandemic and what we, as a society, are doing to help them deal with it. **NOTE: unless of course, we're talking about private schools**

According to the World Health Organization, COVID-19 is causing trauma in ways in which we are not fully aware. Increased levels of anxiety, depression, and alcohol and drug misuse are a common theme across the country. Families who live in lower income neighborhoods have been hit the hardest and are especially feeling fear, stress, and uncertainty about their future. This type of trauma is causing toxic stress in adults nationwide and in our local communities and it is being transferred to our children every day.

Children today are essentially feeling the toxic stress of a different type of war and a new adversary that perhaps is even more detrimental than the virus itself. Since governors across the country forced schools to shut down and issued stay-at-home orders, children were confined to their homes. While it seems they would be safer, for many children, especially those living in poverty, this could not be further from the truth.

During times of crisis, stress levels in families tend to rise, making children more

susceptible to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) such as child abuse and domestic violence.

What specifically are ACEs? According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), ACEs are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood before the age of 18. Among these are experiences of violence, abuse, or neglect. ACEs can cause other problems and disruptions in life such as learning disabilities and alcohol and drug misuse, which can bring chronic disease or serious health complications later in life, including early death.

The CDC reports that ACEs are common. About 61% of adults surveyed across 25 states reported that they had experienced at least one type of ACEs, and nearly 1 in 6 reported they had experienced four or more ACEs. Although it is too early to know the exact numbers, it is safe to say that these numbers will only go up because of the pandemic.

One of the most profound findings of the research on ACEs is that preventing them has the potential to save millions of lives. For example, up to 1.9 million cases of heart disease and 21 million cases of depression could have potentially been avoided by preventing ACEs, according to the CDC.

Although it is disheartening to hear about the number of ACEs reported each year, especially with the potential for increased numbers during COVID-19, the good news is that ACEs can be prevented or countered. More experts are beginning to agree that countering those adverse childhood experiences with positive ones, known as protective factors, is proving to be effective.

In other words, perhaps there is no stronger cure for an adverse childhood experience than a positive childhood experience provided by a caretaker or caring, nurturing adult. More than ever, families, schools, faith-based groups, and community-based organizations need to be aware of this trauma-informed approach. Community advocates need to ensure policies are passed that have impact at community and societal levels, as well as individual and relationship

levels.

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CEO/President, IPS

Brenda Simmons began her career at IPS in 2003 as a community organizer in San Diego County. She was promoted multiple times before she was elevated to CEO/President in April 2019. She has a broad range of experience working in very conservative rural and frontier communities in Montana, ultra-progressive communities including Los Angeles and West Hollywood, and everything in between. Brenda has been involved in projects ranging in focus from substance abuse prevention to community revitalization to child-sex trafficking. As CEO, Brenda oversees more than a dozen IPS projects in Southern California.



Controlling a Media Interview

July 7, 2020 / by Meredith Gibson

As seen on [GovLoop \[https://www.govloop.com/community/blog/controlling-a-media-interview/\]](https://www.govloop.com/community/blog/controlling-a-media-interview/).

A number of things can happen that will cause a media interview to backfire, but there are ways to avoid having it become a complete disaster.

Any type of public speaking is perhaps one of the most intimidating things that a person can do. As a matter of fact, the Wall Street Journal reports that more Americans are scared of public speaking than they are of dying. And it's no wonder why: any mishap or gaffe can live on in infamy on social media.

When going into a media interview, it helps speakers to have a "hope for the best, expect the worst" mentality. Reporters can intentionally or unintentionally try to trip up an interviewee. After all, it is their job to get to the bottom of a story. Therefore, preparation is key to making sure that everything you say is fair game for the news reporter to include in their broadcast or article.

Here are a few tricky scenarios that reporters may use and solutions on how a spokesperson can handle them.

Scenario 1: They ask questions that stump you.

The reporter asks a question in which you generally do not know the answer. This one easily catches spokespeople off guard and can easily lead to an uncomfortable silence as you scramble through your thoughts on how to best answer it.

Solution: Only tell the reporter what you know, not what you don't know. If you are not the right person to answer a given question, it's okay to say so. Offer to connect the reporter with someone who does know the answer.

Scenario 2: They ask you to speculate.

Among tricky questions reporters ask, predicting the future is a popular one. In trying to answer, you may inadvertently escalate a situation unnecessarily, provide incorrect information and be proven wrong.

Solution: As you prepare for your interview, write out two or three key messages, or sound bites [<https://www.govloop.com/community/blog/use-sound-bites-and-bridging-in-media-interviews/>], that you want the audience to walk away with. When you are asked this type of tricky question, you have a "transitional" or

“bridging” [<https://www.govloop.com/community/blog/use-sound-bites-and-bridging-in-media-interviews/>].statement prepared that will then lead the audience to your key message. For example, you may say, “That’s a good question and I won’t have a good answer to that until I receive further information (the ‘bridge’), but the most important thing that the public needs to remember right now is *insert key message here.*”

Scenario 3: They ask for your opinion.

Conflicts between personal opinion and agency policy can occur. But you have to be careful: Organizations have distanced themselves, often with dire consequences, from numerous public figures and celebrities due to statements that run counter to their values and brand. So you have to remind yourself of who is being asked the question: you as Jane Citizen or Joe Public, or you as the representative of your agency?

Solution: To navigate this question, address the request, create a [bridge](https://www.govloop.com/community/blog/use-sound-bites-and-bridging-in-media-interviews/) [<https://www.govloop.com/community/blog/use-sound-bites-and-bridging-in-media-interviews/>].(have one ready!) and stay vigilant that you don’t say anything that contradicts your organization’s views.

Scenario 4: They ask questions out of left field.

Sometimes a question is asked that, although related to the topic at hand, is irrelevant to the final message that you hope to deliver. It’s the curveball of media interviews.

Solution: You can try to anticipate these questions by putting yourself in the reporter’s shoes and have an answer ready. Or, you can create a [bridge](https://www.govloop.com/community/blog/use-sound-bites-and-bridging-in-media-interviews/) [<https://www.govloop.com/community/blog/use-sound-bites-and-bridging-in-media-interviews/>].and lead the audience to your two to three key messages that you already have prepared.

To summarize, remember these four points:

- Pause before answering a question. **Feel comfortable with silence.** Take the time to collect your thoughts. Pauses can always be edited out in post-production if the interview is recorded and not live.
- **Don't acknowledge points that you might contradict.**
- It's okay to say you don't know the answer to a question. But do offer to get back to them if they'd like.
- Decline or refer questions to someone more knowledgeable if you have to.

Media interviews do not have to be as daunting as you think. A bit of preparation and practice can be the difference between one that succeeds and one that becomes a social media sensation for all the wrong reasons.

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Businesses and Public Health: Allies, Not Adversaries

July 7, 2020 / by Eric Collins

The storyline has been consistent throughout the pandemic: economic and public health interests are fundamentally at odds. The reality is quite different. Business and public health have always been intrinsically connected, with shared mutual interests.

One such interest is having a healthy workforce. Employees that maintain good health are more cooperative and productive. They improve companies' public personas. Alternatively, if employees are unhealthy, they are more likely to call in sick, costing U.S. businesses \$225 billion annually [<https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/why-business-should-invest-in-community-health>]. This has long been a real concern in the U.S., where many workers experience preventable health problems.

Consider the following statistics [<https://nam.edu/roi-health-well-business-investment-healthier-communities/>]: about 17% of adults smoke, costing businesses an annual average of more than \$5000 per employee in smoking breaks and health costs. About 70% of Americans over 20 years old are overweight or obese, costing businesses well over \$4000 per year in additional health care costs. And 25% of Americans 18 years and older had at least one heavy drinking day in the last year, costing businesses an estimated \$179 billion annually in lost workplace productivity.

These numbers reveal a significant opportunity. By developing an intentional and strategic focus on health factors for employees, such as stress, excess alcohol consumption, and smoking, businesses could be reducing their expenses and increasing their profits.

A business-health collaboration is not unusual for successful companies. In 2016, Target chose to look outward. As a centerpiece of its Corporate Social Responsibility strategy, the company invested \$40 million in 50 nonprofit organizations across the U.S. to increase the physical activity and healthy eating habits of children and their families [<https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/why-business-should-invest-in-community-health>]. This type of investment hinges on the premise that healthier American communities are fundamental to the future of all profitable companies.

Such business-health collaborative efforts can happen on a smaller scale. The University of Washington, together with the American Cancer Society and eight employers in the Pacific Northwest, launched a promotional program that encouraged employees to utilize the preventative aspects of their health insurance, such as cancer screening and flu vaccines. The program increased targeted preventive behaviors among employees from 38 to 61 percent [https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2009/apr/pdf/08_0213.pdf].

There are also a growing number of businesses that directly support health and well-being through their products or services. Tech companies excel at this. They create applications that more effectively support exercise, nutritional products and services, and healthy homes and neighborhoods. These social-entrepreneurial businesses could be natural partners for public health organizations, as they are already focusing on improving peoples' health.

More and more so, business leaders are seeing the importance of health and wellbeing in everything from driving up profits to attracting and retaining talent. Conversely, healthy communities lead to stronger workforces and economies. In other words, business and public health are natural allies. Even a pandemic doesn't change that.

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Vice President of Programs, IPS

Eric Collins has thrived working in the communications, nonprofit and government sectors for three decades. He rejoined IPS in 2020 as the Vice President of Programs. In earlier roles with the organization, he directed the activities of the Alcohol Policy Panel of San Diego County and served as a project manager on county and federal grants focused on public health and safety, community revitalization, and substance abuse prevention.



The Role of GIS in Public Health

June 24, 2020 / by Meredith Gibson

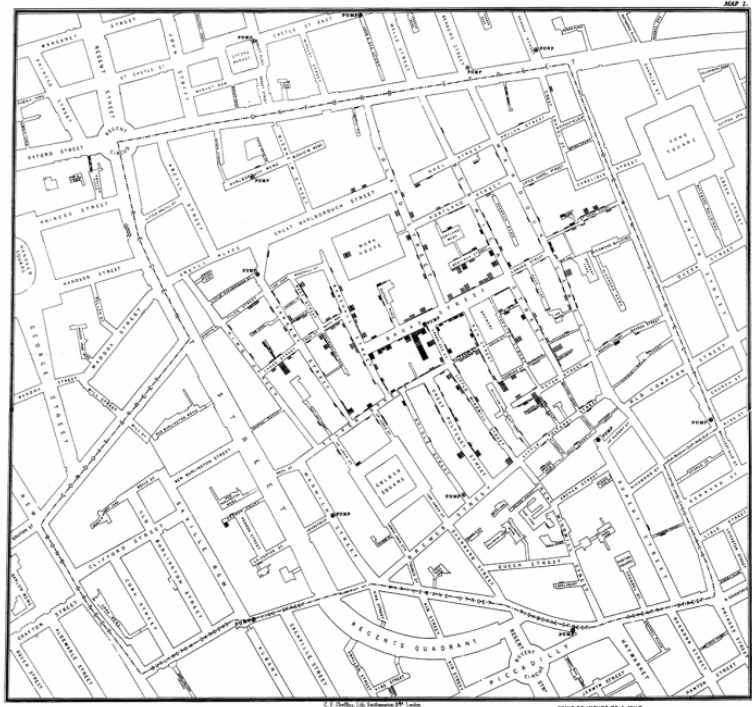
As seen on GovLoop [<https://www.govloop.com/community/blog/the-role-of-gis-in-public-health/>].

Geographic information systems (GIS) answer the question of where: where diseases are prevalent; where vulnerable populations live; and where resources are most needed to improve health conditions. GIS consists of the data, technology and people who answer these questions. And it has never been more relevant than it is today.

In the past year alone, health professionals have used it to address the COVID-19 pandemic, opioid epidemic, vaping-related respiratory illness and other diseases and injuries. GIS is helping public, private and non-profit organizations make effective and efficient decisions, from collecting data to analyzing it to presenting

it in a user-friendly manner.

[<https://publicstrategies.org/wp->



[content/uploads/2020/06/Cholera-Map.jpg](https://publicstrategies.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Cholera-Map.jpg)]

History of Mapping and Public Health

In the nineteenth century, John Snow was the first to use mapping in epidemiological research. In 1854, London suffered from an outbreak of cholera, and Snow mapped the locations of those stricken by the disease. By looking at where cholera victims lived, he observed a spatial pattern and identified the water source suspected of being responsible for the outbreak. This event marked the founding of epidemiology – the study of patterns, causes and distribution of diseases and health-related events.

This image is of John Snow's map of cholera cases in London 1854.

Uses in Public Health

GIS benefits public health by:

- **Collecting information.** The prevention of disease is paramount in developing healthy individuals and communities. But first, we need to understand what

conditions exist that compromise health and safety. Policymakers cannot make evidence-informed decisions without qualitative or quantitative data to back it up. To collect the data, for example, an app can be created in which users report signs of blight in their neighborhood, which municipal agencies can use to prioritize cleanup crews.

- **Analyzing spatial patterns.** Instances of disease can be mapped and analyzed to reveal patterns in its distribution, as evident in John Snow’s cholera map. But this just scratches the surface of GIS’ analytical capabilities. For example, you could use a proximity analysis to identify “food deserts” — an area that has limited access to affordable and nutritious food — in relation to schools or youth-centered establishments to help school districts create policies that make accessible nutrition a priority for students.
- **Allocating resources.** You wouldn’t want to build a hospital in an area where there are several others. Nor would you want to deprive a rural community of access to much needed health care. GIS enables planners to figure out the best location for health care services based on the population served.
- **Presenting data in an easy-to-understand way.** Most humans are visual beings, and looking at a map or data dashboard compared to reading rows of numbers is a good way to help users understand the distribution of health issues. For instance, it is easier to tell where there are cancer clusters in a region by a heat map than by looking at a spreadsheet.

GIS Tools

No matter which GIS software you use, four basic tools can help any public health professional in their role as a disease-fighting superhero:

1. **Maps** — the most basic of GIS tools. It can contain geopolitical layers such as census tracts, zip codes, city council districts or health agency sub-regions. It can include layers of demographic data, such as the number of households that live below the area’s median income. And it can also include health data, such as the percentage of the population with a substance use disorder.

2. **Story maps.** As the name implies, they narrate a story in a compelling way with maps, photographs, text, videos and charts.
3. **Crowdsourcing apps.** These apps are a great way to collect data in the field by being accessible on a mobile device. The methodology in collecting the data is a good way to encourage people to be active and engaged stakeholders in their community.
4. **Data dashboards.** These provide key insights on data. You can combine maps, charts, gauges, lists and text on a single computer screen to present data.

Even with all these tools, the most valuable asset in GIS is the public health professional – the one with the innovation and creativity to collect data, map it, analyze it and present it.

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Equitable Housing: A Place-Based Solution to Racism

June 22, 2020 / by IPS Editorial Board

Since the beginning of 2020, we have become acutely aware of how systemic racism has impacted people of color in America. With far greater percentages of Blacks and Latinx succumbing to COVID-19, the disparities in health and health care among these populations have been laid bare. And with elevated rates of infant mortality, heart disease, and other chronic illnesses among communities of color, some health experts and lawmakers call racism a public health emergency [[https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/jun/12/racism-public-health-black-brown-coronavirus?](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/jun/12/racism-public-health-black-brown-coronavirus?CMP=share_btn_fb&fbclid=IwAR0kaik4THVAgeAiU1GDzEm_4pNDReL10hreV2UhgJr)

https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/jun/12/racism-public-health-black-brown-coronavirus?CMP=share_btn_fb&fbclid=IwAR0kaik4THVAgeAiU1GDzEm_4pNDReL10hreV2UhgJr

This extends to housing. People of color have been forced to live in concentrated poverty areas far more often than their White counterparts. According to a study by the Brookings Institute [<https://www.brookings.edu/research/u-s-concentrated-poverty-in-the-wake-of-the-great-recession/>], poor Blacks were almost five times as likely as poor Whites to live in an extremely poor neighborhood. Poor Latinx were three times as likely.

With fewer social services and limited access to health care, lower-performing schools [<https://asr.sagepub.com/content/76/5/713>], and fewer job-seeking networks [<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/tsq.12091/abstract>], most residents of poor neighborhoods get trapped in a cycle of chronic poverty that is often perpetuated through generations.

Aggravated by these conditions, higher rates of crime [<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs00148-015-0579-3>] are also common to such neighborhoods. Police working in extremely poor neighborhoods

often live in a completely different area and have little connection with the people they serve. They also have little understanding of implicit bias and the historical racist practices that their agency still upholds. Therefore, in responding to a bad situation, police officers seek only to suppress and return conditions to “normal.” But in a community struggling for the basic necessities of life, America’s normal for people of color is unacceptable.

We need to remember that the frustration and hopelessness expressed by communities of color are not just about police brutality or even chronic poverty. Their origin lies in the systemic racism that has continued to keep Black and other people of color separate – physically and otherwise – from the rest of society and excluded from its benefits.

More than anything else, it was a series of public policies, conceived in an era known as “separate but equal,” that allowed racism to become institutionalized throughout American neighborhoods. It began early in the 20th century when Black Americans migrated from the rural south to cities in the north. Desperate to maintain the status quo, policymakers created zoning codes that specified where Blacks could not live

[https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/11/opinion/sunday/coronavirus-us-cities-inequality.html?smid=fb-share&fbclid=IwAR3_rkLr1wy9rdmHlgMM0r9yzc3yoino1j7mChsGNhrdv-i_a7Pscfwn5U], aggressively funneling them away from white neighborhoods.

Later came the process of redlining, introduced by the Federal Housing Administration in 1934. The agency was created to advance homeownership through loan guarantees, but it explicitly refused to back loans to Black people or even other people who lived near Black people

[<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/05/the-racist-housing-policy-that-made-your-neighborhood/371439/>]. Although the Fair Housing Act of 1968 was passed to stop redlining, this behavior still continued through restrictive covenants, discriminatory steering by real estate agents, and restricted access to private capital. All of this has circumvented any investment where Black

people and other communities of color live, making their homes and communities a product of racism.

When a specific group of people has been separated by geographical boundaries, as Black people have now for hundreds of years, racial stereotypes grow, eventually becoming entrenched in the culture. Today, Black stereotypes are commonly linked to violence and criminality. We are witness to such beliefs almost daily through movies and cop shows.

However, through social media, we also witness people calling for equity in America. This includes equal access to quality health care and social services, good education, a right to fair representation in law enforcement, and especially a place where home is just as safe for a Black family as it might be for others.

It's time to rewrite the rules to support affordable housing **being built in wealthy neighborhoods**. A 2015 Supreme Court ruling made this possible by affirming that the Fair Housing Act could be used to actively promote racial integration. Ensuring that people of color have access to better health care, education, and job opportunities is perhaps the one thing that could make America whole again.

NOTE: Yet somehow, billions in public funds for housing produce almost none and residents are influenced to criminalize homeless in wealthy neighborhoods instead of pseudo-intelligent, white-collar frauds behind it.

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How GIS Exposed Racial and Socioeconomic Disparities in San Diego's South Bay

June 18, 2020 / by Meredith Gibson

As seen on **GovLoop**. [<https://www.govloop.com/community/blog/how-gis-exposed-racial-and-socioeconomic-disparities-in-san-diegos-south-bay/>]

Geographic information systems (GIS) is playing an important role in helping San Diegans address health inequities along the U.S.-Mexico border.

An Upstream Approach to Substance Use Prevention

The Partnerships 4 Success [<https://www.sdp4s.org/>] (P4S) project uses geospatial technology to map conditions in San Diego's South Bay. This area is known for its diversity and Latino cultural heritage. However, it is also known for its binge and underage drinking along the U.S.-Mexico border as well as methamphetamine use and cross-border juvenile drug smuggling.

The project aims to advance opportunities and policies that create a healthy and vibrant South Bay by reducing substance use. The team does this by addressing the factors that lead to the region's harmful conditions, specifically among the Latino population.

P4S takes a community-level approach to substance use prevention, because the neighborhood where a person lives often determines if they experience positive or negative health outcomes. It influences their quality of life and even their life expectancy.

Communities of color historically experience greater health disparities than their white counterparts due to factors such as a lack of access to transportation, health care, quality education, housing security and economic opportunity. These communities also may experience more crime, violence, **blight** and exposure to high-risk businesses such as bars and liquor stores.

Moreover, all these factors are heavily influenced by racism, discrimination and social injustice. They can create what is referred to as **community trauma**. It is not surprising then that all this toxic stress can lead to a high risk of substance abuse.

Using GIS to Guide Policy Decisions

By using ArcGIS Pro, the P4S team identified the census tracts in the South Bay most in need of intervention by creating a trivariate choropleth map. In laymen's terms, this is a map that depicts three different data layers in an easy-to-interpret map. The map shows the Hardship Index, Child Opportunity Index **and the percentage of the Latino population.**

The **Hardship Index** is a composite of six scores:

1. Unemployment rate
2. Dependency (% of the population older than 65 or younger than 18)
3. **Low education attainment** (% of those over the age of 25 with less than a high school education)
4. **Per capita income**
5. Housing overcrowding (more than 1 occupant/room)
6. Poverty level (less than 100% of federal poverty)

The greater the hardship, the darker the color of the census tract on the map.

The **Child Opportunity Index** is an index that captures neighborhood conditions that matter for children's healthy development in terms of education, health and environment, and social and economic opportunity. The lower the childhood opportunity, the darker the color of the census tract.

The Hardship Index and Child Opportunity Index were combined into one color scheme. The third data set is the Latino population. The larger the point symbol, the higher the Latino population.

With this GIS map, the P4S team identified two distinct areas in the South Bay where there was low childhood opportunity, high hardship and a significant Latino population where intervention would be most valuable.

Supporting Positive Outcomes

A core group of experts in public health, social services, education, faith organizations, mental health and government will lead the project and work with these communities to advocate for improved community conditions.

By giving the South Bay the chance for greater health opportunities, the project hopes to build a community where everyone has an equal chance at the type of life they want to live.

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Abolishing Racist Policing Starts With a Deep Look Into our Collective Soul

June 2, 2020 / by IPS Editorial Board

Until the tragic killing of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer, few seriously questioned the brutal hand of racism as orchestrated through increasingly militarized local police forces, our legal system, our penal code, banking, employment, and other institutions. The ensuing mass protests across the U.S. have now **forced us** to see in a new light some of the real consequences of racism.

While these institutions continue to systematically deny Black and Brown people their freedom, safety, health, livelihoods and lives, this poignant moment has afforded us both the opportunity and obligation to look deeply into our collective soul and reconcile the hard truth of what we have passively allowed or actively pursued.

The cause of our current crisis is rooted in a police culture that supports armed responses to problems that are – in most cases – not violent at all. Their culture of

racism is a product of a broader racist community environment and related policies and practices. For example, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act, and the “Three Strikes” law have contributed to incarceration rates for Blacks that are five times that of Whites [<https://www.naacp.org/criminal-justice-fact-sheet/>]. This is how we ended up with a Black prison population of more than 2.3 million, 34% of the overall 6.8 million prison population.

Similarly, social determinants of health impacting Black Americans are also a devastating social fallout of racism. **Contrasted with Whites**, more Black Americans experience substandard employment, housing, education, income and access to health services. They are also more frequently subject to occupational hazards [<https://publichealthreviews.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40985-016-0025-4>], toxic chemical exposure, food deserts, violence in their neighborhoods, and easy access to alcohol and drugs.

These practices have been widely institutionalized over centuries. To combat them, we need to start examining policing policies and practices on the local and state level.

Most decisions that impact police, policing, incarceration, and related issues are made at the state and local levels. States can and should mandate policies and practices such as banning racial profiling, limiting use of force, collecting information on police violence, and mandating independent investigation and prosecution of officers who use deadly force.

On the local level, cities need to question and rethink the role of police and policing. The City of Minneapolis unanimously passed a resolution to dismantle the police department and replace it with a community-led public safety response model. Other cities are enforcing dramatic reductions – cutting tens of millions or hundreds of millions of dollars – in police budgets **and channeling funds to restorative programs to address some underlying inequities that lead to crime and violence.**

These efforts are a start, but they need to be combined with other effective efforts to remove racism from police departments. We need state and local officials to replace “broken windows policing” with “community policing.” This means removing quotas for stops and arrests and instead involve community members in decision-making, prevention approaches, and the pursuit of fair treatment for all community members. This also means identifying and investigating hate crimes and implementing deflection and diversion programs. Local and state officials need to collect and publish data on race, ethnicity, age, and gender of those stopped, searched, and arrested by police officers.

As prevention professionals know from work with other issues, expecting individuals to change through education while the culture remains the same is an exercise in futility. It is no surprise that body cameras, police officers of color, and cultural sensitivity training have proven ineffective at changing racist behaviors among police departments. Such reforms relied far too heavily on our police forces to be the front-line interveners on matters that have little to no need for traditional police involvement – such as mitigating problems with homeless people, child disciplinary problems in schools, and verbal domestic disputes.

Only a small percentage of police calls for service are responding to violent situations. Yet, tragically, police involvement in such cases has too frequently led to violent and even deadly confrontation. While there is still a need for armed protection in many cases, most of what police are called to address is more appropriate for mental health professionals, social workers, and public health or medical professionals. State and local policies need to make room for these professionals to become our first responders.

We now have a window of opportunity for significant, structural change that can start to undo some of the institutionalized racist practices advanced by our current policing approaches. If we can get our state and local officials to respond appropriately, we could positively impact the next generations of Americans and transform our country dramatically for the better.

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