Lessons from NLC's Learning Collaborative on Health Disparities

NATIONAL LEAGUE of CITIES

July 21, 2015

The National League of Cities

- The National League of Cities (NLC) is dedicated to helping city leaders build better communities.

- We serve as a resource to and an advocate for the more than 19,000 cities, villages and towns, and we work in partnership with the 49 state municipal leagues.

Learning Collaborative on Health Disparities

- <u>Funding</u>: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

- <u>Purpose:</u> Develop and frame emerging city-level models to address social determinants of health and reduce critical childhood obesity-related health disparities while generating important new insights for the field.

- <u>Engagement:</u> Cities
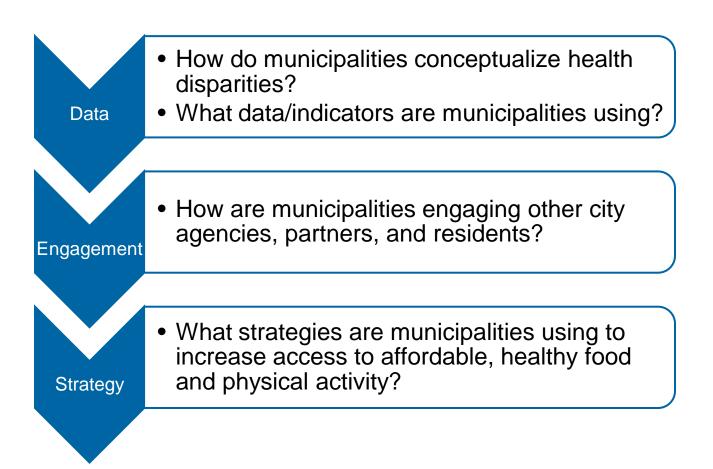
- <u>Guidance:</u> Advisory Panel

Learning Collaborative Pilot Cities

Cleveland, OH

Lincoln, NE

Kansas City, KS

Virginia Beach, VA

Oklahoma City, OK

Savannah, GA

Baton Rouge, LA

Discovery and Learning Goals for the Collaborative

Data
- How do municipalities conceptualize health disparities?
- What data/indicators are municipalities using?

Engagement
- How are municipalities engaging other city agencies, partners, and residents?

Strategy
- What strategies are municipalities using to increase access to affordable, healthy food and physical activity?

Key Challenges

- Cities are at varying levels of readiness when it comes to discussing issues of race, disparities, and equity. Culture, political context, and capacity significantly impact readiness.

- The root causes of health disparities are complex and cut across different program areas and city agencies making it difficult for some stakeholders to conceptualize how to approach the problem, including how to structure their efforts, what data and indicators to collect, and which stakeholders to bring to the table.

- The connections between health and other city priorities such as employment, transportation, housing, education, etc. is not always explicit to all stakeholders.

Opportunities for the Field

- Cities are interested in tools, resources, and guidance for:
    - Engaging in conversations about race, equity and disparities
    - Better understanding the connections between health and other city priorities
    - Facilitating effective and sustainable partnerships
    - Engaging residents in a meaningful way and learning how to use community engagement throughout the entire policy making and implementation process
    - Collecting, analyzing and disseminating data.
    - Evaluating the health and equity impacts for polices and initiatives.

Examples of Next Steps from Learning Collaborative Cities

- City of Baton Rouge:

  - Create a data toolkit to increase the number of city agencies that are aware of data and health information available through HBR and use these resources in their planning and decision making.

- City of Savannah:

  - Compile resident feedback from listening sessions and disseminate findings to increase awareness about the importance of prioritizing infrastructure (i.e. sidewalks, bike lanes, etc.) surrounding Title I schools in the implementation of the City's complete street ordinance and related design guidelines.

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