



Strategic Plan Summary 2020-2028



A Vision of More Equitable Health in Western and Central New York

Since our founding in 2002, the Health Foundation for Western & Central New York has focused on improving the health of people in the 16 counties of New York State we serve, with a focus on children ages zero to five and older adults. This work has always recognized the impact that poverty can have on health outcomes. However, until 2020, we had not taken an explicit stance on the role that race and socioeconomic status can play in a person's health.

In March 2020, our board and staff completed a rigorous year-long strategic planning process. We agreed that systemic racism and socioeconomic inequity are indisputable drivers of health disparities. As a result, the board committed to a new organizational vision of racial and socioeconomic health equity, as well as a detailed strategic plan to pursue that vision.


Our Vision

A healthy central and western New York where racial and socioeconomic equity are prioritized so all people can reach their full potential and achieve equitable health outcomes.

In the time that has passed since the strategic plan was adopted, the Health Foundation has undertaken several system-wide and department-focused initiatives to ensure our grantmaking and organizational decisions are supporting our efforts in advancing health equity.

In 2025, the board voted to extend the strategic plan's timeline through 2028. Later the same year, they voted to update some of the strategic plan's strategies to reflect what we had learned in the previous five years. The following pages provide details on this approach.

Equity Advancement Pathways



After our strategic plan was adopted, we convened a DEI advancement workgroup to discuss ways in which the Health Foundation can center equity in its work.

The outcome was a roadmap of eight specific pathways to advance a more equitable and inclusive environment for addressing health disparities:

- Develop our credibility as trusted listeners
- Deepen our reach in community by working with trusted messengers
- Build a more diverse board and encourage others to do the same
- Help BIPOC-led organizations develop skills for working with philanthropy
- Help other organizations develop outreach and partnership skills to better serve diverse populations
- Intentionally invite BIPOC-led organizations to the table for both funding opportunities and partnerships
- Revisit our business practices, especially around grantmaking
- Foster an ecosystem where more equitable partnerships among organizations become the norm

As an organization and team, we have integrated these improvements throughout our work and interactions with grantees. Our operational advances include making applying, reporting, and evaluating programs more streamlined and less arduous for small grassroots nonprofits.

In addition, we've deepened our advocacy efforts to influence systemic changes in policy and regulation that will strengthen the nonprofit sector and community health.

Universal Strategies

Four pillars that inform every aspect of our strategic plan



Long-Term Goal 1

Individual wellbeing is promoted and addressed for both children and older adults

Midterm Goals

Communities are equipped to deliver trauma-informed practices and invested in preventing trauma

Children have access to high-quality, social-emotional learning support

Social isolation and related behavioral health issues among older adults and caregivers are addressed

Strategies

Develop and support programming to integrate trauma-informed practices into older adult serving organizations.

Work to incorporate trauma informed practice into Foundation programs and support organizations to adopt trauma informed best practices and interventions.

Support firearm safety and gun violence prevention efforts that focus on pregnant and parenting people, children and older adults.

Work with PEDALS Hubs in western and central NY to taper back funding support and assist them as they transition to other funding sources.

Increase focus on health and environmental factors that impact children's social emotional development, including exposure to lead, and work with other early childhood funders to address.

Support interventions that promote cognitive health and early detection of cognitive decline.

Explore effective interventions that address mental health concerns in older adults and caregivers, particularly depression and anxiety.

Research and encourage community level practices that are supportive of those with cognitive needs caused by dementia and/or dementia-related conditions.

Long-Term Goal 2

Community-based organizations and health systems are collaborative and sustainable

Midterm Goals

CBOs are financially sustainable, strong, and working collaboratively with health and other systems.

Communities and health systems are working to become age-friendly

Strategies

Build individual leadership capacity for cross sector collaboration through Fellows program.

Build capacity of CBOs and FQHCs to meet changing needs of patients, the community, and within their organizations.

Support existing and new network collaboratives by providing capacity building and convening support to share best practices.

Strengthen existing Age-Friendly health systems through expansion and partnerships.

Continue to promote Age-Friendly communities by supporting local level action and partnerships.

Support implementation of the New York State Master Plan for Aging.

Long-Term Goal 3

Marginalized communities are served by trusted, unbiased, high quality care

Midterm Goals

Marginalized communities access trusted connections to care and equitable insurance

All mothers are served by trusted, unbiased, high-quality infant and maternal health care

Older adults receive high-quality, trusted care from valued and supported family caregivers

Strategies

Support community efforts to increase access to affordable care and advocate for policies that aim to make our health care systems more equitable and accessible.

Address interpersonal, cultural, policy, and systemic barriers to equitable care, and support organizations to address practice barriers and promote culturally responsive equitable care.

Support efforts to improve patient and community engagement with health care providers by leveraging trusted connectors including community health workers, doulas, and peers.

Support community-based and health care organizations that provide bridges to effective care for pregnant and birthing people and invest in quality improvement efforts.

Support efforts to assess needs and connect families to an effective infant and early childhood care system.

Support NYS Prevention Agenda goals to expand evidence-based interventions that reduce disparities in rates of maternal and infant mortality and morbidity.

Continue to expand access to family caregiver supports offered by CBOs through Exhale: A Family Caregiver Initiative.

Build capacity for family caregiver support among health care providers.

Build capacity for providing family caregiver support offered by others in the community, starting with faith leaders and potential partnerships with employers.