

# Program Sustainability

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Program sustainability has traditionally been viewed narrowly as the act of decreasing dependence on one source of funding and shifting financial support for program implementation to a new funding stream. In reality, program and organizational sustainability is a much more complex and dynamic process.

Program sustainability actually means different things depending on the developmental stage of your program. Newer programs may want to concentrate on sustaining their activities or infrastructure once initial funding ends. Experienced programs may want to enlarge their target population, transfer their best practices to other programs, build new relationships with other agencies, or promote broader policy initiatives. However, in either case—new or experienced—programs should work to better ensure sustainability by creating more efficient mechanisms for funding, such as the repurposing of existing resources through improved alignment, and coordination of complementary activities and resources.

Planning for sustainability needs to begin long before the program faces the end of its initial funding cycle. For example, newer programs must focus on the need to collect data to demonstrate program effectiveness. Concerns about sustainability are important, however, because unsustained programs can result in a loss of investment. Discontinued programs are likely to disillusion stakeholders and result in barriers to community engagement for future initiatives.<sup>1</sup> Program sustainability must be a fundamental component of the initial and ongoing program plans.

Achieving program sustainability requires time

### Key Messages

- Include a Sustainability Plan for the program in the initial work plan.
- Sustainability can be supported by data that demonstrate program efficiencies and effectiveness; community advocacy; funding diversification; collaborative partnerships that can maximize resources; the capture of generated savings; and the attraction of new investments.
- Healthy homes programs can be sustained by integrating and coordinating them with other health and housing programs and services such as code enforcement, weatherization, energy efficiency, and lead poisoning prevention.
- Policy-level change is key to institutionalizing programs for long-term sustainability
- Not achieving sustainability may result in failure to achieve the “mission critical” goals in reducing the number of homes with residential health and safety hazards, thereby reducing the adverse health effects attributable to poor housing conditions.

and commitment. Ultimately, sustainability involves learning from experience (ongoing evaluation), making decisions about which elements of the program to sustain, selecting the right strategies, and using the right tools to build support for your program. The experience of prior healthy homes programs suggest that there are at least five general strategies that have been used to promote program growth and sustainability:

- Evaluation and continual quality improvement;
- Building and strengthening organizational capacity;
- Expanding partnerships;
- Identifying new funding streams and diversifying sources of funding; and
- Building a case for systems or policy change.

This chapter will illustrate how different programs have used these strategies and tools to build a climate of ongoing support for their activities.

## Deciding What to Sustain

The first step in planning for sustainability is to assess whether continuation of a service, program or organization is warranted. If you want to assure that the program continues when grant funding ends, political leadership changes, or you experience turnover in human resources, you need to plan for it to become a permanent part of your organization or community. To do this you must institutionalize your initiative by purposely planning for its sustainability.<sup>2</sup>

## Tools for Sustainability

The next step is to determine what resources are available to build a climate of support for your program. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Asthma Forum has produced a document titled A Systems-Based Approach for Creating and Sustaining Effective Community-Based Asthma Programs—Snapshot of High-Performing Asthma Management Programs ([https://www.epaasthmaforum.com/Documents/Resources2008/Forum\\_Snapshot.pdf](https://www.epaasthmaforum.com/Documents/Resources2008/Forum_Snapshot.pdf)).<sup>3</sup> This document highlights key factors to consider, and provides examples of how programs have sustained their systems of high quality asthma care in their communities.

Common tools include:

- **Strategic planning by program leadership.** Programs or organizations with leadership that has assessed program strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, and threats are in better position to survive challenges to funding and expand program scope.
- **Open communication.** Information flow within a program, among partners, and with the community as a whole is essential. Programs that are flexible and communicate regularly with their stakeholders are in a better position to identify new opportunities for funding or new arenas in which to apply best practices.
- **Persuasive program data.** Qualitative and quantitative data must be presented in a way that interested parties can understand and embrace promotes support.
- **Active support by community advocates.** Advocacy organizations, especially those having contacts with the media and political stakeholders, can often make the case for program needs and impact in ways that program officials cannot.
- **Engagement of elected and appointed officials.** Program champions in the wider political arena are important to promoting funding and organizational infrastructure, as well as critical to creating broader policy

### Figure 7.1 To Sustain or Not to Sustain?

- Does the community need your healthy homes program and/or services?
- Do your evaluation results demonstrate that you are making a difference?
- Does the community value the program and its services?
- Do you need to sustain the entire program?
- What parts of the program are the most effective and needed?
- Can you coordinate funding from multiple sources to sustain your program?

Emily Gantz McKay of Mosaica—The Center for Non-profit Development and Pluralism. Nonprofit Organization Sustainability. November 2006. <http://www.mosaica.org/Home.aspx>

change.

- **Media involvement.** While programs may want to control their message by limiting media contact, the reality is that an invisible program is not a viable program. Judicious, sustained, and positive media engagement is optimal.

How these tools and approaches support program sustainability is demonstrated in the following examples from the field:

## Funding Strategies

Policymakers and practitioners recommend that healthy homes programs secure support from multiple funding streams. Diversified funding is a cornerstone to achieving sustainability. This can include grant funding from government programs and private sources (e.g., foundations) and tax levy funding. Support can also be achieved by leveraging resources through partnerships, such as sharing costs for services with other agencies, assessing fees for services, and mainstreaming healthy homes activities with existing initiatives.

**Governmental grants.** Federal grants often provide seed money for healthy homes programs, but they also require programs to demonstrate their ability to sustain activities via matching or leveraged funding from public or private sources. Appendix 7.1 provides an overview of federal funding for healthy homes and related categorical programs. The Delta Institute's publication *Creative Funding Strategies for Remediation of Lead and Other Healthy Housing Hazards: A Guide for Increasing Private-Sector Financing* is targeted both to lenders—explaining how they can benefit from financing healthy homes programs—and government and non-governmental organizations, delineating

### Figure 7.2 Examples from the Field: Leveraging Public and Private Sector Funding in Philadelphia

Philadelphia Healthy Homes for Child Care leveraged HUD Healthy Homes grant funding with contributions from the YMCA to furnish relocation units, and \$150,000 from the Nonprofit Finance Fund to cover additional safety-related repairs to 28 homes that house family child care programs.

how they can provide incentives and reform existing subsidy programs. <http://delta-institute.org/sites/default/files/1-DeltaREDI-CreativeFundingStrategiesForRemediationOfLead.pdf>.<sup>4</sup>

**Private sector foundation funding.** In an era of limited funding, many local government agencies have received funding from philanthropic organizations to advance healthy housing goals. Pursuing foundation funding is one way to leverage local funding and diversify your funding streams. It should not be assumed that private foundations prohibit grants to local government agencies. Agencies may be able to apply individually or in partnership with local or national nonprofit organizations. The Foundation Center (<http://foundationcenter.org/>) maintains a searchable listing of foundations and training resources, as well as newsletters, webinars, and other tools that can help with the identification and development of foundation proposals. Additional sources of philanthropic support can come from family and community foundations, local grant-making cooperatives (e.g., "Giving Circles"), and through other local civic organizations. Other

### Figure 7.3 Example from the Field: Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) and the Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation, the nation's largest Foundation focused on children, recognized the nexus between its core mission of helping build better futures for disadvantaged children and the successful work being done by the Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning in Baltimore's most distressed neighborhoods. The case for investment from Casey's educational outcomes portfolio began around the dramatic results the Coalition was achieving in reducing lead poisoning and creating critical policies and legislation to further advance this work. Casey's investment was sustained through the Coalition's performance in achieving outcomes, building capacity, and translating lessons learned into effective public policy. Most recently, the Foundation provided critical support for the Coalition's development of the national Green and Healthy Homes Initiative. In turn, the Coalition has been able to leverage Casey's support as match funding to attract federal, state and local grants and additional investment from many other national, regional and community foundations.

potential funding sources include corporate foundations or corporate charitable investment committees. In addition, regional, state and local funder affinity groups offer helpful fundraising resources including grant-writing workshops and regular announcements of proposal deadlines.

Here are some simple tips on planning for foundation funding:

1. **Identify your needs.** Develop a clear understanding of what you can accomplish with funding. Donors want to fund areas of programs that will have the most impact in fulfilling your mission. It is important to have estimated costs and be able to show how the request fits your strategic plan.
2. **Analyze your audience.** A case statement reflects and addresses the funder's giving priorities, geographic focus and other guidelines. As such, case statements need to be fine-tuned for each foundation.
3. **Compile story components.** Story components can include your program's history, leadership, data related to need and impact, areas of excellence and innovation, summary of your strategic plan, and basic budget information.
4. **Write it.** State the problem, describe your solution(s), explain why you are the best program or organization with the best people to implement it, and demonstrate why the need is urgent. Simply stated, be clear about what you are requesting funding for and why the foundation needs to support your efforts.

#### Figure 7.4 Example from the Field: Children's Mercy Hospital's Environmental Health Program Negotiates Costs through Hospital Services

The Environmental Health Program of Children's Mercy Hospital charged fees for home assessments of asthma environmental triggers. The program tried to obtain Medicaid and health insurance reimbursement for the services, but was not successful. However, because the program was offered through a hospital, it could negotiate fees in the interest of supporting the hospital's mission to provide services regardless of the ability to pay.

5. **Shape it.** Remember that your case statement will change over time and should be tailored for each foundation in relationship to its funding goals.<sup>5</sup>

#### Recovering Program Costs through Reimbursement.

Some services essential to healthy homes programs, such as inspection and case management, are eligible for reimbursement. Costs of environmental investigations and case management home visits to the homes of children with elevated blood lead levels have been reimbursed by Medicaid since the last decade. Since each state must document and negotiate rates of reimbursement, however, rates vary widely. Hospitals and health insurance programs are also beginning to reimburse for home visiting programs or case management for asthma control based on the impact of these services in reducing medical costs.

**Dedicated Revenue Sources.** Dedicated sources of funding and incentives to comply with housing standards can fulfill an important role in sustaining healthy homes efforts. Some municipalities have secured funding for lead hazard control from dedicated taxes on paint and gas and dedicated fees from annual inspectional and certification requirements. In Maine, the Lead Poisoning Prevention Fund was established and is funded by a 25 cents-per-gallon fee on all paint sold in the state. The fund is used for education, outreach, and training to identify and reduce lead paint hazards. Other approaches are highlighted in Figure 7.5.

## Strategies to Improve Organizational Capacity

One way to build sustainability is to strengthen organizational capacity. Community Wealth Ventures, Inc. (<http://www.communitywealth.com>) pinpoints the characteristics important to organizational capacity. (See Figure 7.6.)

In some cases, sustainability occurs when services or interventions become routine within an organization, such as when a pilot or demonstration project becomes part of an agency's or a department's standard services.<sup>6</sup> Pilot and demonstration projects should be encouraged so that programs continually strive for greater effectiveness and cost efficiency. However, these innovations need to be evaluated to determine if the activity or intervention is effective and identify which elements need to be improved.

### Figure 7.5 Examples from the Field: Rental Property Fees, Dedicated Uses of Sales Tax Revenues, or Liability Protection in New Jersey and Maryland

In 1996, the State of Maryland adopted critical legislation to sustain lead safe housing. The “Reduction of Lead Risk in Housing” law requires owners of rental properties built before 1950 to register their units with the State’s Department of the Environment, distribute specific educational materials, meet specific lead paint risk reduction standards, and pass a lead dust clearance test prior to sale or lease of older rental units. Owners in compliance with this law are eligible for limited liability protection. Owners of rental units built between 1950 through 1978 may voluntarily opt-in to receive these protections. The net result of these laws has been a 98% reduction in lead poisoning cases from 1993 to 2010. <http://mde.maryland.gov/Land/Documents/LeadFactSheets/LeadfsOwnersRightsResponsibilities.pdf>.

In 2004, New Jersey adopted the Lead Hazard Control Assistance Act that expanded funding available to landlords and property owners to support lead hazard control activities. A \$20 fee was added to all properties covered under the State’s Hotel and Multiple Dwelling Law, with the revenues forming the basis for Lead Hazard Control Assistance Fund administered by the Department of Community Affairs. In addition, a percentage of the State’s sales tax collected on the sale of paint (up to \$7,000,000 or 50 cents per container) was allocated to the Fund. Finally, all multi-unit buildings with three or more units inspected by the Department of Community Affairs as a part of its five year inspection cycle for the Hotel and Multiple Dwelling Law are required to be assessed for lead hazards. <http://www.njcitizenaction.org/lead.html>.

Experimentation implies that not every program or intervention is worth continuing. Thus, sustainability is based on efficacy.<sup>7</sup>

An important aspect of organizational capacity is to ensure there is a staffing succession or continuity plan to address turnover at the staff and management level. This can be achieved through cross training, mentoring and prioritizing workforce development issues. Programs can also be sustained by mainstreaming healthy homes practices into other programs such as those addressing lead poisoning

### Figure 7.6 Characteristics of Sustainable Organizations

- **Strong Leadership:** Solid and visionary leadership exists at all levels of the organization or program (management, staff and community).
- **Community Engagement:** Awareness and buy-in from the community are present. The organization and its partnerships are perceived as credible.
- **Relevance:** The program or organization meets the community’s needs.
- **Adaptability & Agility:** The program or organization has the ability to anticipate and respond productively to the changing external environment.
- **Efficiency and Effectiveness:** The program or organization has demonstrated its ability to make an impact and achieve positive outcomes in a cost-effective way.
- **Robust Infrastructure:** There are established internal practices (business model) that are effective in guiding the organization’s or program’s work.
- **Financial Health:** The program or organization has a strategic funding plan that includes diversified funding sources, multi-year funding and internal revenue generation.

prevention, housing rehabilitation, energy efficiency, and property maintenance.

**Creating Healthy Housing by Expanding Lead Programs.** It is common for healthy homes programs to refer homes or families to local childhood lead poisoning prevention or lead hazard control programs, or include the identification and remediation of lead-based paint hazards as part of their services. The reverse is true: lead programs themselves can also transition into more comprehensive healthy homes programs by expanding the scope of their assessment and interventions. While program activities supported by specific funding sources must be accounted for, healthy homes interventions related to moisture control, pest management, and home safety can be integrated into lead poisoning prevention program services. Transitioning a lead program into a broad healthy homes program requires:



- Pilot testing of new program service systems and supporting documentation;
- Additional staff training;
- Expanded assessment/inspection protocols;
- Revised case management procedures and family education modules; and

### Figure 7.7 Example from the Field: Transitioning Lead Programs in Baltimore into a Public-Private Partnership for Healthy and Sustainable Homes.

Recognizing the benefits of strong cross sector collaboration, the City of Baltimore has transitioned its program from a stand-alone lead poisoning prevention program in the health department to a public-private partnership on Healthy Homes. The City began to implement a health-based housing intervention standard for it weatherization, energy efficiency, home repair and home rehabilitation programs and to align those programs with its lead and asthma intervention work. Recognizing the cost effectiveness and program efficiencies of implementing a comprehensive strategy of aligning and coordinating these programs, the City created the Green, Healthy and Sustainable Housing program in the Department of Housing and Community Development. This program works closely to align its resources with that of key Healthy Homes programs at the Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning (through its Green and Healthy Homes Initiative) Civic Works, Rebuilding Together and the Job Opportunities Task Force, as well as local philanthropic partners in order to deliver more sustainable healthy homes that reduce asthma morbidity, lead poisoning, and trip and fall injuries.

Key benefits of this transition included:

1. The development of a Learning Network for shared data and best practices;
2. Cross training of all home visiting programs (code enforcement, visiting nurses, foster care, fire safety, non-profit programs) in the use of a comprehensive assessment for home based environmental health and safety hazards;
3. Realignment of programs under one departmental entity to create a more efficient and comprehensive housing intervention program; and
4. Establishment of an effective post-remediation maintenance program.

- Additional contractors or contractor training to conduct healthy homes interventions.

**Creating Healthier Housing through Building Codes.** Housing codes, when enforced, provide the strongest and most direct legal tool for preventing and remediating indoor health hazards. Historically, housing codes were developed to address public health concerns of overcrowding, sanitation, and fresh air and water. As these measures were successful in controlling the spread of disease, the public health community became less involved over time in the health and safety of housing. The resulting separation of public health from housing and building codes has resulted in a fragmented approach to remediating housing-based health hazards. For lead and healthy homes programs, housing and building codes offer an opportunity to use an existing infrastructure—laws, staff, inspection and enforcement systems—to improve the health and safety of high risk homes.<sup>8</sup> Appendix 7.2 highlights and compares healthy homes regulations at the local, state and national level.

**Integrating Energy Efficiency and Healthy Housing.** Energy efficiency efforts can improve the health and safety of the living environment by reducing contaminants, improving ventilation, reducing moisture and condensation, increasing safety, and improving thermal comfort.<sup>9</sup> The U.S. Department of Energy's weatherization assistance programs are natural partners for healthy homes initiatives, but careful planning is needed to address their priorities and cost constraints, which may differ from those of health or other housing program partners (see: <http://www.nchh.org/Policy/National-Safe-and-Healthy-Housing-Coalition/Policy-Summit.aspx>). It is important for energy retrofit or upgrade programs to consider incorporating the following health and safety activities and interventions:

- Installation of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms;
- Repair of interior and exterior water leaks and elimination of standing water;
- Assurance of adequate ventilation for vented combustion appliances;
- Elimination of un-vented combustion appliances;



### Figure 7.8 Example from the Field: Using Housing Codes and Partnerships in Boston

The Boston Department of Inspectional Services, Housing Inspection Division, has trained all of their city-funded inspectors to conduct healthy homes assessments and enforce housing code violations in the homes of children with asthma. The ability to use existing human resources and routine inspection and enforcement systems (e.g., State Sanitary Code for Housing) was the result of meaningful community partnerships, an internal champion within the Department of Inspection Services, collaborative planning and piloting, media coverage, and political buy-in. This system capitalized and integrated core functions of two city agencies—the Boston Public Health Commission who is responsible for program management, outreach to health care institutions, communication efforts and program evaluation, and the Boston Inspectional Services Department, that is responsible for inspections in response to referrals received from clinicians, health care providers and insurers, issuing correction orders, conducting reinspections and enforcing compliance through housing court if needed. The result of this collaboration: the Breathe Easy at Home program.

- Exhausting kitchen and bath fans and clothes dryers to the outside;
- Using lead-safe practices in older homes and lead dust cleaning and clearance testing upon completion;
- Installing a working air conditioner in at least one room of hot climate homes;
- Conduct radon testing following intervention; and,
- Sealing all leaks in ductwork.<sup>10</sup>

**Linking Property Maintenance and Healthy Housing.** Property owners, managers, and residents can promote healthy housing through routine property maintenance. Enterprise Community Partners (ECP) recently released a comprehensive set of educational cards and training modules to empower residents to maintain their green building. (See [http://www.greencommunitiesonline.org/tools/toolkits/resident\\_training.asp](http://www.greencommunitiesonline.org/tools/toolkits/resident_training.asp).) Property managers and resident coordinators can customize the Resident Education Cards to provide

### Figure 7.9 Example from the Field: Integrating Healthy Housing and Energy Efficiency in Bellingham, Washington

The Opportunity Council of Bellingham Washington's Healthy Homes grant focused on:

- Reducing asthma triggers for low-income children;
- Leveraging existing technical expertise of the weatherization program with Healthy Homes funding; and
- Integrating services within a community action agency.

By using the capacity of its weatherization and community outreach services, the program recorded an average cost of \$5,620 per unit for a package of services that included a home assessment, resident education, pollution mitigation, ventilation, floor coverings, supplies and evaluation activities. Based on the effort's success, the Opportunity Council partnered with policy professionals to develop a Weatherization Plus Health curriculum and protocol for use by other programs interested in replicating this model. See: [http://www.afhh.org/dah/dah\\_wx\\_docs/WXPlusHealthDescription.pdf](http://www.afhh.org/dah/dah_wx_docs/WXPlusHealthDescription.pdf).

green tips and information specific to their development. The Resident "Training in a Box" contains educational modules for trainers that cover a variety of green and healthy living practices. Additionally, ECP continues to offer a Sustainability Training Grant to support project teams to develop and deliver customized educational materials and trainings for residents.

Similarly, Greater Boston's Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC) is in the process of finalizing a document that can be used by community development corporations, owners, and managers of affordable housing. The policies represent a sample of green and healthy practices that LISC found to be practical in two Boston community development corporations and their management companies, as well as ways to resolve questions about responsibility for implementing the policies. This document will be published on the Boston LISC website in 2011 (<http://www.bostonlisc.org/>).

## Expanding Partnerships

Significant evidence documents that coalitions and partnerships are an effective means of leveraging resources and wielding influence in the pursuit of improved community health. Based on these findings, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation established the Allies Against Asthma initiative (Allies) in 2000 by funding seven community-based coalitions nationwide to develop, implement, and sustain comprehensive asthma management programs aimed at effecting long-term community change (<http://www.asthma.umich.edu>). Similarly, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) program is committed to creating self-sustaining, community-based partnerships that continue to improve the local environment after EPA funding ends. The CARE program has produced a Sustainability Checklist that can be found at [http://www.epa.gov/care/library/CARE\\_Sustainability\\_Checklist.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/care/library/CARE_Sustainability_Checklist.pdf).

Success for a coalition or partnership means, in part, establishing the kind of relationships that lead to mutual benefits, and produces results beyond the level that organizations or individuals could realize on their own.<sup>11</sup> Partnerships support sustainability through:

- Comprehensive and coordinated efforts;
- Joint funding and larger grants;
- Decreased competition for funding;
- Reduced duplication of effort;
- Efficient fundraising efforts; and
- Increased access to and credibility with elected officials and policy makers.<sup>12</sup>

## System-level Sustainability—Public Policy

Some programs are institutionalized at a higher level through legislation requiring standardized services. Public policy is an important component of organizational sustainability as it affirms and institutionalizes specific activities by mandating them as a part of a government agency's core mission. In the case of healthy homes, public policies generally cover housing or building codes, ordinances, or rules on inspection and remediation of housing-based health hazards. Some experts argue that programs must be supported at the policy level for true sustainability to be realized.<sup>13</sup>

**Creating Healthy Housing through Public Policy.** State and local building codes that address health and safety issues are often the only mechanisms to address high-risk housing.<sup>14</sup> Codes, however, do not guarantee safe and healthy housing. Because of limited resources, many local code enforcement agencies rely on complaints to trigger an inspection and tenants may be reluctant to file a complaint due to fear of retaliation. As a result, mandated systematic inspections are recommended for rental housing located in areas considered to be high risk.<sup>15</sup>

### Figure 7.10 Examples from the Field: Expanding Partnerships in Baltimore and South Central Los Angeles

Los Angeles' Esperanza Community Housing Corp. collaborated with St. John's Well Child and Family Center and Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE) to develop a coordinated approach to referrals, home visiting programs and tenant education. Physicians at St. John's seven centers completed a "Medical Evidence Form" that noted any environmentally-driven conditions in children seen at clinical visits (including elevated blood lead levels, vermin bites, etc.) The completed form triggered a visit from an Esperanza promotoras de salud who provided client education on the risks of lead poisoning and other environmental health threats. Promotoras also conducted lead dust sampling, assessed mold and moisture, monitored cockroach infestation and provided cleaning kits and IPM supplies. The community health worker's report to the physician after the visit then resulted in letters from the physician to the landlord about the relationship between housing conditions observed and the child's health condition. In order to limit the threat of evictions, the physicians sent these letters only in cases where there was a positive relationship between the tenant and the rental property owner. SAJE conducted workshops in the community on tenants' rights and worked with the city attorney to ensure owner compliance. Esperanza and SAJE were founding members of the Healthy Homes Collaborative that is an association of community-based organizations committed to eliminating environmental threats in homes. The Healthy Homes Collaborative also provides leadership for negotiating with the City of Los Angeles for stronger code enforcement. The Collaborative sponsored the first South Los Angeles Conference on Health and Human Rights in 2009, attended by 700 individuals.

Healthy homes programs can create or take advantage of existing public policies at the local, state, and federal levels that require the inspection and remediation of housing hazards to advance health outcomes. (See Figure 7.11)

**Marketing Healthy Housing in Public and Private Housing.** Smoke-free housing policies illustrate the use of the marketplace to drive demand for healthy homes principles.

**Building National Coalitions to Support Policy Change.** Building momentum for long-term policy change can require coordinated activity among multiple partners. Funders such as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, California Endowment, Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of Minnesota, and others convene policy forums on healthy housing-related issues to promote discussion of policy initiatives.

#### Figure 7.11 Examples from the Field: Coordinated Policy Initiatives in Oregon and Maryland

The City of Portland provided leadership for a city-appointed task force that developed recommendations for code enforcement related to its healthy homes efforts.

The City of Gresham established a systematic inspection program that mandated inspection of rental housing units selected through a sampling process. The program includes a complaint-driven component. Violations found in one unit of multi-family housing triggers inspections of adjacent housing units.

Multnomah County, Oregon passed a resolution and ordinance related to improving rental housing conditions in the unincorporated areas of the county. This legislative infrastructure provides renters with a mechanism to improve substandard housing.

The State of Oregon worked to make health and housing a priority through improved property maintenance regulations, and passed legislation supporting managed care reimbursement for services for chronic respiratory disease.

A City of Baltimore ordinance requires all owner-occupied and rental units with gas appliances to have carbon monoxide monitors on all floors. Enforcement began March 2010.

**Incorporating Healthy Housing as a Principle of Sustainability.** Many communities have begun to establish commissions to link land use, transportation, and other public service planning to resource conservation and sustainable development. An often overlooked issue in sustainability discussions is how public health can be affected by issues such as urban sprawl, absence of sidewalks, walkable communities, and the location of jobs in areas with limited access to public transportation. Incorporation of healthy housing principles into sustainable growth discussions represents an important way to raise awareness of and strengthen healthy homes efforts. HUD's Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities can serve as a resource for the creation of sustainable communities. [http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program\\_offices/sustainable\\_housing\\_communities](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/sustainable_housing_communities).

#### Figure 7.12. Federal, State, Local, and Private Examples of Smoke-Free Housing Initiatives

In 2009, HUD issued PIH-2009-21 (HA) that encouraged public housing authorities to implement smoke free policies in public housing (see: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/publications/notices/09/pih2009-21.pdf>). The federal Americans with Disabilities Act also provides for smoke-free workplaces and public accommodations for individuals with substantial physical impairments that limit major life activities, including breathing.

California's Smokefree Workplace Act prohibits exposure to smoke in common areas of multifamily properties. New York City has similar prohibitions. Registries of NYC smoke-free properties are available at <http://www.smokefreehousingny.rentlinx.com/Map.aspx>. Registries in Michigan are available at <http://www.mismokefreeapartment.org/listing.html>. Maine has at least 13 smoke- or tobacco-free public housing authorities. MaineHousing also awards a one point incentive for smoke-free to developers of affordable housing who apply for Low Income Tax credits (see <http://www.smokefreeforme.org>).

For a private sector perspective, Enterprise Community Partners provides extra points in allocation of Low Income Tax Credits, via their Green Communities criteria that include smoke-free housing. <http://www.greencommunitiesonline.org/tools/criteria/index.asp>

## Final Notes on Sustainability<sup>16</sup>

**Planning.** Continuation of programs doesn't happen by itself. Sustainability should be planned for with intention and, ideally, incorporated into the initial program plan.

**Funding Diversification.** Programs usually begin with one funding source and diversify over time to enlarge their program or add service components. Sustainable organizations are not dependent on any single funding source but obtain resources from a variety of avenues. Funding usually includes both multi- and single-year grants and contracts that overlap.

**Program Qualities.** Sustainable programs are characterized by their effectiveness, ability to demonstrate positive results, inspired and committed leadership, strong financial and program management policies and procedures, and an established constituency of individuals and organizations that value their services.

**Community Support for Programs.** Community support can only be authentically harnessed if residents and community-based organizations are treated as full partners. Programs should not postpone reaching out to community groups to a time when community support is needed. Partnerships with the community should be fostered from the beginning; they are central to program planning and design. Constituent support is a key component of advocacy for programs and services, and can be influential in securing political will.

**Supporting Non-profit Organizations.** If a public health or housing program wants to nurture community involvement in program planning, outreach, service delivery, evaluation and/or advocacy, it should have a reasonable expectation of what nonprofit organizations can do with and without funding. It is important to support the work of community-based organizations that are also challenged by sustainability issues.

**External Environment.** Paying attention to the economic, political, and social issues prepares

### Figure 7.13 Example from the Field: National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition

The National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition is a broad coalition of organizations working to improve housing conditions nationwide, especially for low-income families, through education and outreach to key national stakeholders and federal public decision-makers. The Coalition is guided by a 15-member Steering Committee representing green building design, public health, health care financing, low-income housing development, realtors, building inspectors, and children's health and safety organizations. Priorities include national partnership building, federal legislation and federal regulations and administrative policies. See <http://www.nchh.org/Policy/National-Safe-and-Healthy-Housing-Coalition.aspx>.

programs for emerging challenges. Programs and organizations need to be adaptable to changing conditions—ready to meet possible threats as well as capitalize on opportunities as they arise.

**Achieving Sustainability.** Attaining and maintaining sustainability is an ongoing process that begins with an active commitment to delivering effective programs and sound management.

### Figure 7.14 Example from the Field: Incorporating Healthy Housing as a Principle of Sustainability in Baltimore

Baltimore's 2009 Sustainability Plan has been incorporated into the city's comprehensive master plan. The Sustainability Plan highlights seven priority areas: (1) cleanliness, (2) pollution prevention, (3) resource conservation, (4) "greening" of the city's physical space and food supply, (5) transportation, (6) environmental awareness, and (7) promoting a green economy. Each focus area has multiple goals, each with a set of strategies for sustainability, timelines for implementation, and recommendations that agencies should take in promoting specific priority areas. The priority areas and strategies were developed over a two-year process through multiple meetings with governmental and private sector leaders and broad-based community engagement of over 1000 members of the public.

Healthy homes strategies incorporated into the plan include:

- Improving enforcement of the current sanitation code;
- Improving the energy efficiency of existing homes and buildings;
- Mandating efficiency upgrades to homes at the point of sale;
- Using green cleaning products in schools, government offices, and businesses;
- Improving the health of indoor environments;
- Exploring the feasibility of making all Baltimore multi-family dwellings smoke-free;
- Increasing and coordinating all healthy housing efforts;
- Ensuring coordination among weatherization, lead remediation, and healthy homes activities;
- Adopting a policy and plan for elimination of pesticide use and other toxic chemicals; and
- Creating green jobs and preparing city residents for these jobs.

See [http://www.baltimoresustainability.org/uploads/files/Sustainability\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.baltimoresustainability.org/uploads/files/Sustainability_Plan.pdf)



## Chapter 7 References\*

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\*Websites were verified during the drafting of this document but may have changed.



## Notes

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