

The contents of this guidebook are meant to provide communities a place to start to improve their overall health. The authors encourage you to seek partners to help you in your efforts. Start with your local health department.

The unique feature of the Clio Healthy Community Initiative is the comprehensive nature of the Healthy Community Wheel. By addressing all factors that impact the health of a community; community residents can find something of interest to them.

Our top ten suggestions for translating our experience in your community:

1. **Find champions** - Identify an individual and at least one organization to champion the cause. They should be committed to this process and lead these efforts with passion and enthusiasm. Once you have identified your champions, recruit the right people. Use their knowledge, skills, and expertise to move your efforts forward. Encourage community participation.
2. **Make the case for change, use data as your foundation** - Use data to demonstrate the need for change, use it as your “baseline” and as the indication that your efforts are working. Share this information with the entire community. Continue to collect data and review it often.
3. **Develop partnerships** - Don't be afraid to ask for help. Identify organizations with similar goals that can move your efforts forward.
4. **Communicate** - Share your activities, engage community members and leaders, and make sure your messages are understood.
5. **Be transparent** - Make sure everyone knows what you are doing, identify decision making processes, and accurately report your organization's finances.
6. **Remember your audience** - Be respectful. Keep everyone informed. Share information. Understanding your audience is critical for your communication plan and to develop effective programming.
7. **Expand your thinking, be a learning organization** - Learn from every experience and use that information to improve your work. Provide training opportunities to community members.
8. **Do it all, use a comprehensive approach in your efforts** - Remember to address all five levels of influence in the socioecological model of health.
9. **Focus on policy and environmental change** - These activities have the potential to simultaneously improve the health of all community individuals. They can have the greatest positive impact on community health. A healthy environment also makes the community more attractive to potential investors.
10. **Celebrate your successes** - Celebrations help energize coalition members and the community.

Community health improvement takes time. There are, however, occasions when leadership, a readiness to cooperate, financial resources and knowledge and expertise combine with political “will” and community vision to provide the catalyst for change. The authors hope the experiences of the Clio Healthy Community Initiative and Genesee County Health Department partnership will inspire similar partnerships to improve health. We wish you and your community good health!