

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Opportunities for Philanthropy to Support the NC State Health Improvement Plan¹

March 2024

In 2020, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) published the [North Carolina State Health Improvement Plan](#) (NC SHIP),² the state's first comprehensive plan for improving health outcomes in North Carolina residents. In partnership with the North Carolina Institute of Medicine (NCIOM), NCDHHS also published [Healthy North Carolina 2030: A Path Toward Health](#) (HNC 2030),³ which explains the impact in North Carolina of 21 health indicators that are predictive of sub-optimal health outcomes and health disparities.⁴ (See Figure 1.)

Together, these reports present a multi-layered strategic implementation and accountability plan for North Carolina to improve health and health outcomes in North Carolina. *HNC 2030* describes how the indicator impacts health, disparities across populations, how targets for improving measures on these indicators were determined, and potential levers for change. The *NC SHIP*, updated in October 2023,⁵ operationalizes a 10-year implementation plan for addressing these indicators using a results-based accountability framework.⁶

Figure 1. NC SHIP health indicators

Social and Economic Factors	Physical Environment Factors	Health Behaviors	Clinical Care Factors	Health Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty • Unemployment • Short-Term Suspensions • Incarceration • Adverse Childhood Experiences • Third Grade Reading Proficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Exercise Opportunities • Limited Access to Healthy Foods • Severe Housing Problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drug Overdose Deaths • Tobacco Use • Excessive Drinking • Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Consumption • HIV Diagnosis • Teen Births 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uninsured • Primary Care Clinicians • Early Prenatal Care • Suicide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infant Mortality • Life Expectancy

² Within NCDHHS, the NC Division of Public Health led development of the report with assistance from the North Carolina Institute of Medicine. Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation, The Duke Endowment, and The Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust funded the development of the *NC SHIP*.

³ The report is the result of the North Carolina Institute of Medicine (NCIOM)'s Healthy North Carolina 2030 Task Force convened in January 2019 with funding from the Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation, The Duke Endowment, and The Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust.

⁴ The indicators derive from the [County Health Rankings population health model](#) developed by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The twenty-one population indicators represent four categories of factors that affect health, plus two health outcomes.

⁵ The update was developed by NCDHHS in collaboration with the NC SHIP Community Council.

⁶ The *NC SHIP* also includes updates on population level data on the indicators, links to action plans for addressing the indicators, and priorities that inform action planning.

This document describes the ways that NCDHHS is leading *NC SHIP* implementation and opportunities for philanthropy to support the state's work.

NCDHHS: NC State Health Improvement Plan Convener

Within NCDHHS, the Division of Public Health (DPH) leads the *NC SHIP*'s development and convenes partners toward its implementation. The *NC SHIP*'s adoption of a public health framework reflects NCDHHS' emphasis on cross-sector collaboration driving collective action with community leaders (e.g., local health departments, community-based organizations) and development of partnerships needed to implement the *NC SHIP* framework. The *NC SHIP* also identifies state and community partners that are supporting action plan implementation related to each indicator or may be engaged to do so.

DPH convenes the NC SHIP Community Council, an advisory committee comprising 18 work groups across the 21 health indicators. The work groups include representatives from NCDHHS and state and community partner organizations representatives in equal numbers and reflect diverse stakeholder perspectives and affiliations. The Community Council provides collective action on the *NC SHIP*'s implementation and guidance on its development.

DPH also supports local health departments and their partners by providing training and technical assistance on the results-based accountability framework and tools that drive decision-making and monitoring of *NC SHIP* implementation at the local level. In addition, DPH coordinates NCDHHS' collaboration with external partners (e.g., North Carolina Institutes of Medicine) and internal engagement of agency divisions on *NC SHIP* implementation.

Opportunities for philanthropic support

Philanthropy has played a significant role in developing and implementing the *NC SHIP*. Philanthropic funding supported:

- The Healthy North Carolina 2030 Task Force convened by the North Carolina Institute of Medicine (NCIOM) in 2019, whose work informed the development of *HNC 2030*.
- Development and implementation of the online platform, the [Clear Impact Scorecard](#), that allows communities statewide to track their own and collective progress on addressing the 21 health indicators that are the focus of the *NC SHIP*.

NCDHHS appreciates the philanthropic support that helped put North Carolina on the path to improved health yet also recognizes the further impact philanthropy can have to advance the *NC SHIP* and progress toward improved health outcomes for all North Carolina communities and residents. The *NC SHIP* reflects recognition of the need for multi-sector collaboration to address drivers of health, including factors traditionally outside the sphere of public health (e.g., education, employment, and housing). As highly recognizable community partners and leaders, philanthropy is uniquely positioned to elevate community health needs and champion efforts to address them across different stakeholder groups and audiences.

NCDHHS invites philanthropy to consider several opportunities for the sector to support ongoing and continuous community-led and driven implementation in 2024 and beyond.

1. Provide statements of alignment. Share foundations' missions, interests, and/or priorities, what they fund, and where they fund related to *HNC 2030* and the *NC SHIP*. Several philanthropies have

released public statements of their commitment to aligning their grantmaking goals with *NC SHIP* and their progress in realizing their commitment.⁷ NCDHHS values these commitment statements as a reflection of philanthropic engagement on implementing the *NC SHIP* and as a helpful guide for community partners seeking philanthropic partnership. In addition, philanthropies could require grantees to report goals and progress in the [Clear Impact Scorecard](#), which presents aggregated data on statewide progress on the 21 health indicators that the *NC SHIP* addresses.

2. Support creation of an Investment Map. Collaborate with NCDHHS to develop a map showing investments from academia, business, community-based organizations, faith-based communities, health care systems, philanthropy, and public health around *HNC 2030*. This could include a public facing dashboard for programs, policies, and practices that work and are aligned with *HNC 2030*.

3. Support community education and visibility. Collaborate with NCDHHS to inform grantees and/or partners about the collective impact around *HNC 2030* and the *NC SHIP* to encourage alignment and participation. This could mean putting *NC SHIP* on agendas and inviting guest speakers to meetings from state and/or local government or encouraging partners to directly participate in workgroups.

4. Directly support the Community Council. Provide funding for the infrastructure to support *NC SHIP* coordination. This could include hosting work groups and providing resources for the community to meet in person.

5. Engage regularly with NCDHHS on *NC SHIP* implementation. NCDHHS welcomes the opportunity to hold regular meetings between the agency and the philanthropic sector to share ideas and collaborate on opportunities for philanthropy to support *NC SHIP* implementation at the community level.

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⁷ See e.g., the [NC SHIP report](#), p. 6 for statements from The Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust and The Duke Endowment.