



Public Health Health Equity

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Healthy Communities Initiative Quarterly Meeting Summary

September 17, 2025

10 AM – 11:30 AM

HCI Support

Letters of Support

- Ken Johnston, Public Health Division Chief and Compliance Officer, presented on the County's process for issuing Letters of Support.
 - Requests are often needed for federal, state, or private funding applications.
 - Criteria include: organization must be established and reputable, have a past or present relationship with SBCDPH, align with County mission and values, and avoid conflicts of interest.
 - Requests must include a draft letter, description of the project's scope and purpose, how it aligns with County priorities, and be submitted at least two weeks before the deadline.
 - Letters cannot commit County resources such as staff time, funding, data provision, or facilities.
 - Examples of "good" letters and problematic requests were shared to illustrate best practices.
 - Requests related to the Healthy Communities Initiative may be sent to:
 - Bernadette Beltran, bernadette.beltran@dph.sbcounty.gov and
 - Kimberly Smith, kimberly.smith@dph.sbcounty.gov

Commented [DS1]: where do we want them to send letters?

Commented [SK2R1]: I added Bernadette and myself for requests related to HCI.

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Data Requests

- Stacey Davis, Health Equity Program Manager, added that many funding applications require local data.
 - SBCDPH is currently developing a Population Health Data Platform to make health data more accessible for cities and partners.
 - In the meantime, the department can provide city-level health profiles and support with smaller data requests.

Population Health Framework Recap

- The County is implementing a Population Health Framework that divides San Bernardino County into Community Health Planning Regions.
- Each region would convene local health coalitions of cross-sector stakeholders, including local government, to identify and address regional health priorities.
- This hyperlocal approach ensures community-driven planning while still rolling up into countywide efforts like Community Vital Signs.
- Feedback and revisions were reviewed:
 - Suggestion 1: Add Grand Terrace and Colton into Region 3, raising population to 453,000.
 - Suggestion 2: Move Rialto from Region 3 into Region 7, raising that region's population to 433,000.
- Stakeholders were encouraged to continue providing feedback on boundaries and coalition development.

Commented [DS3]: do we want to include a snip of the map, or are we attaching the slides as a pdf?

Commented [SK4R3]: The slides will be sent as a PDF

PSE Presentations

- **California Department of Public Health – Sarah Risher**
 - Presented *A Health in All Policies Approach to Heat Resilience*.
 - Extreme heat is the deadliest weather hazard in the U.S., causing about 1,200 deaths annually, and San Bernardino County is projected to see 135+ days above 90°F by mid-century.
 - Health impacts include cardiovascular and respiratory illness, kidney disease, adverse birth outcomes, worsened mental health, and increased risk of violence.

- Vulnerable populations include infants, children, older adults, pregnant individuals, outdoor workers, and people with chronic conditions.
- Built environment solutions include cool roofs and pavements, shaded corridors, tree canopy expansion, weatherization, renewable energy adoption, and resilient public transportation.
- She shared upcoming funding opportunities in 2026: Extreme Heat & Community Resilience Grant Fund and Strategic Growth Council's Community Resilience Center program.
- Resources:
 - [Extreme heat: The economic and social consequences for the US](#)
 - [Extreme Heat and Community Resilience Program - Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation](#)
 - [Community Resilience Centers - Strategic Growth Council](#)
- **Smart Surfaces Coalition – Anna LaCombe & Iona Isachsen**
 - Presented *Cooling Cities through Smart Surfaces*.
 - Smart Surfaces strategies include reflective roofs/pavement, permeable pavement, solar panels, green roofs, and expanded tree canopy.
 - Benefits include reducing urban heat, managing stormwater runoff, improving air and water quality, lowering energy costs, and promoting equity.
 - Tools developed to support cities:
 - Decision Support Tool for surface mapping and identifying hotspots.
 - Benefit-Cost Analysis Tool (B-CAT) to quantify cooling, energy savings, and financial benefits.
 - Policy Tracker with over 2,000 examples and model ordinance language.
 - Case Study: Atlanta adopted a Cool Roof Ordinance with unanimous support, projected to lower citywide peak temperatures by 2.4°F and reduce hottest neighborhood temps by up to 6.3°F.
 - San Bernardino County was invited to join the next cohort alongside LA and Riverside Counties to access these tools and peer-learning opportunities.

- Resources:
 - [Smart Surfaces Coalition – Cities for Smart Surfaces](#)
 - [Join the Smart Surfaces Coalition's Networks - Form by Asana](#)
 - [Policies - Smart Surfaces Policy Tracker](#)
- **UCCE Master Gardeners & Farm Bureau – Margaret O'Neill**
 - Presented on how community gardens support health and climate resilience.
 - Community gardens generate fresh produce, serve as neighborhood green spaces, and strengthen social connection.
 - Example: Jardin de la Salud in San Bernardino, which has become a hub for community gathering and food distribution.
 - Data shows that every \$1 invested in community gardens yields about \$6 in produce and that people living near gardens increase fruit/vegetable consumption by 37%.
 - Gardens also improve mental health, provide outdoor activity opportunities, and reduce neighborhood blight.
 - Cities were encouraged to support community gardens as resilience hubs, using them for education, engagement, and climate-health solutions.
 - Resources:
 - [Become a Master Gardeners volunteer](#)
 - [San Bernardino County Farm Bureau](#)
 - [UCCE Master Gardeners of San Bernardino County](#)

Closing & Next Steps

- The next HCI Quarterly Meeting will be held on Thursday, December 11, 2025, from 10:00 – 11:30 am, with the theme *Working with Local Organizations*.