



# FOUR PRINCIPLES FOR A RESILIENT, EQUITABLE RECOVERY

Billions in federal relief and recovery funds—including the American Rescue Plan Act, CARES Act, and fiscal year 2021 budget—present unprecedented opportunities for cities, counties, and states. To maximize the benefits of these investments and lay the foundation for an equitable response to future crises, leaders can consider four principles.

## Principle 1: Aligning sectors and efforts is critical to advance health and equity.

Social and economic factors like housing, food, family, and trauma have a major effect on health. Addressing these complex, community-level barriers to good health requires fundamentally different ways of working across the health care, public health, and social services sectors. An approach that deploys the siloed federal relief and recovery investments in a more holistic way can address disparities and advance equity for generations to come. [The Framework for Aligning Sectors](#) offers a useful approach.

### What can this look like?

- Existing and new community collaborations helped [Milwaukee](#) respond rapidly to health risks posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly for its most vulnerable residents. Philanthropic leaders aligned resources for a coordinated response, existing partnerships expanded to address the needs to children and families, and a new coalition manufactured and distributed over 3.5 million masks to high-risk individuals, among many other cross-sector efforts.
- An innovative program in [Maricopa County, Arizona](#), creates strong linkages between the health care and social services sectors to address food insecurity, housing, transportation, and other social needs that affect health outcomes. Working with cross-sector partners, 2MATCH (To Match and Align Through Community Hubs) identifies strategies to address these areas (such as a shared screening and referral platform) and provide necessary support for residents.
- The [Ohio](#) Department of Health's Creating Healthy Communities program prevents and reduces chronic disease (e.g., diabetes, heart disease) statewide through cross-sector collaboration. Nearly two dozen counties convened coalitions of community-based organizations, local health systems, and county governments to improve access to healthy food and physical activity in high-risk populations.



## Principle 2: A coordinated strategy guides the work and investments.

The fast pace and sheer magnitude of federal investments requires careful and thoughtful planning. While the funds will flow in silos it is important to have strategies at the state and local levels that demonstrate how, when braided together, these funds can be used to implement a comprehensive vision for more resilient states and communities. The most effective strategies will be goal-oriented and community driven.

### What can this look like?

- A proposed recovery task force could oversee the strategic coordination and distribution of the federal funds in [Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania](#) with an emphasis on reducing racial inequities. The task force was introduced by two city councilmembers with input and support from the mayor's office.
- [Harris County, Texas](#)' governing body developed an Equity Framework with clear goals, strategies, and approaches for deploying nearly \$1 billion in federal funds to tackle the priorities of health, jobs, and housing. Working groups will leverage an equity assessment tool to guide project selection, design, implementation, and evaluation, with community member engagement throughout.
- [North Carolina](#) state officials are developing a coordinated statewide framework to strategically approach American Rescue Plan Act funds. A broad set of goals guide all spending, with investments that are fast, equitable, effective, and sustainable at the center.



### **Principle 3: Seek intermediary organizations to coordinate and assist.**

Cities, counties, and states can partner with existing on-the-ground organizations (including local foundations, public health institutes, community coalitions and collaboratives, and community development financial institutions ) to plan and carry out the work. These types of organizations have deep expertise and experience convening cross-sector partners and community members for planning purposes and serving as fiscal intermediaries who can manage and “braid” the different funding streams in cohesive, coordinated ways.

#### **What can this look like?**

- The Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers in [New Jersey](#) is one of four Regional Health Hubs identified by the state to lead cross-sector planning, coordination, and implementation across local and state governmental agencies and community-based organizations. This model helps ensure that limited state resources are spent effectively and efficiently.
- By partnering with the California Community Foundation, the [Los Angeles County](#) government leveraged CARES Act funding to meet the needs of the region’s most vulnerable residents during the pandemic. The Community Health Worker Outreach initiative mobilized nearly 1,000 health outreach workers, promotoras, and community advocates to amplify accurate and up-to-date COVID-19 information countywide.
- The state of [Rhode Island](#) is leveraging a community foundation to lead strategic planning efforts. The Rhode Island Foundation will recommend to the governor and general assembly how to direct nearly \$1 billion in discretionary American Rescue Plan Act funding. The foundation will leverage its expertise and experience to launch a virtual public engagement process and build a cross-sector steering committee to ensure funding is distributed equitably and inclusively.

## Principle 4: Community leadership drives lasting change.

Amplifying the voice of community members is imperative at each step in the planning and implementation process to ensure changes are truly driven for and by residents. Community participation and leadership helps ensure the vision reflects the true needs and goals of the community, particularly residents most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the resulting economic struggles, and the ongoing impact of systemic racism. Intermediary organizations often have strong relationships with community members.

### What can this look like?

- The [City of Atlanta](#) government and the Latino Community Fund Georgia are partnering to conduct a survey of the effects of COVID-19 on Black, Latinx, and immigrant communities. The survey will be offered in multiple languages and its findings will be used to develop equitable recovery strategies that address ways the pandemic has affected those in communities of color in terms of their well-being, access to economic resources, and sense of belonging.
- A coalition of community groups is gathering public input on how local city and county leaders in [Hutchinson and Reno County, Kansas](#) can equitably and efficiently spend American Rescue Plan Act investments. Nearly 60 public engagement meetings will inform recommendations for the city and county commission in time to include the priorities in upcoming budget discussions.
- Dozens of business and nonprofit leaders, economic experts, and policymakers comprise [Maine's](#) Economic Recovery Committee (ERC), which provides strategies for reigniting the state's economy post-pandemic. The ERC's recommendations include involving community members and stakeholders in planning efforts (such as broadband internet expansion) and engaging Community Development Financial Institutions, which have a record of serving historically disadvantaged communities.

Aligning in Crisis is a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation-supported program that identifies existing cross-sector policy and implementation opportunities that can speed recovery from the triple crises of the COVID-19 pandemic, the resulting economic struggle, and the ongoing impact of systemic racism. To learn more, visit [AlignForHealth.org/Crisis](https://AlignForHealth.org/Crisis)

Support for this program was provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Foundation.