The Healthy Places Index (HPI) has proven to be a robust, effective tool for local health departments, health care, and other sectors and community groups to prioritize resources during the COVID-19 pandemic. This fact sheet focuses on HPI uses beyond the State of California agency uses. For more information on State uses, see our companion fact sheet here.

**LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT USES OF HPI**

Many local health jurisdictions have utilized the Healthy Places Index (HPI) as a helpful and pivotal tool for supporting their work to advance equity throughout the COVID-19 response. Many departments have used the metric to support their ongoing work to prioritize communities most impacted by inequities in resource and investment allocations.

*HPI raised the visibility of inequities to elected officials and [helped direct resources] to community-based organizations in the most impacted communities.*  
—Local Health Department Interviewee

**Orange County** has used the HPI to inform its Targeted Equity Investments. Among strategies designed to support residents of HPI census tracts with the least healthy living conditions, the County contracted with community-based organizations to expand multilingual and culturally appropriate COVID-19 testing, tracing, health education.

**Riverside County**, layering data from the HPI and other data sets, created their own vaccine index to identify and prioritize vaccine allocation in order to target communities that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Utilizing data from the County’s vaccine metric, Riverside County mobilized a vaccine task force, partnering with community and faith-based organizations to vaccinate migrant farmworkers who have been among the hardest impacted communities throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Santa Barbara County** has identified the HPI as a key indicator for identifying places for pop-up COVID-19 testing sites to address health inequities during the pandemic that have impacted neighborhoods where residents having lack access to healthcare and other resources.

**Los Angeles County** has used the HPI to help inform the County’s plan to vaccinate communities hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. The County has used the HPI to identify the most socially vulnerable census tracts with high concentrations of people over the age of 65 who are especially endangered by COVID-19. This data informed the County’s COVID-19 vaccination strategy. Using HPI data the County identified where to reach out to community groups, add additional vaccination sites, understand mobile vaccination needs, and tailor informal and education strategies.

**Alameda County** has used the HPI in their vaccination plan to support siting of clinical preventive services (vaccination) and insights on how local health departments use the HPI in conjunction with their community partners to identify specific community needs. The County has also used the HPI to identify five priority neighborhoods in its Targeted Equity Investments, designed to reduce inequities in COVID-19 transmission and promote an equitable recovery.
Our COVID-19 data team has created various maps, including case and test positivity rates by zip code, overlap of HPI Quartile 1 with our highly impacted zip codes, flu POD sites in relationship to high priority areas, as well as food distribution sites and testing sites. Additionally, as a City Readiness County, we have identified 40 POD sites thus far, which can be overlaid with disease trend maps to focus on hot spots and high-risk communities.

Marin County prioritized access to increase the accessibility of vaccines for vulnerable groups disproportionately burdened by the pandemic. The County partnered with the Ritter Center to focus COVID-19 vaccine outreach to people who have been historically and systemically underserved. In addition, there was focused outreach through the Vaccine Interest Form to provide priority notification of available appointments to HPI tracts with the least healthy conditions and communities of color.

Contra Costa County created an internal, interactive map with HPI, heat maps of vaccinations, and location of vaccination sites to aid prioritization and allocation decisions.

SUPPORTING EQUITABLE HEALTH CARE WITH THE HPI

Kaiser Permanente’s Community Health team and partners in Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity (EID) implemented inclusion of HPI percentiles in KP’s panel management system across the southern CA region. As a result, estimated HPI percentiles now pop up alongside clinical data for most members when KP doctors are reviewing their panels.

John Muir Health, a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), used HPI’s hyper-local granular data to prioritize the locations and rollout of their Mobile Health Clinic for vaccine distribution. They have specifically directed their outreach to communities in the lowest HPI quartile – which are primarily communities of color – with the least healthy community conditions. They have been able to vaccinate many high-risk and hard-to-reach populations by using HPI maps to focus on specific areas within their network area.

The Loma Linda University School of Pharmacy has received a $20,000 National Association of Chain Drug Stores Foundation grant to mobilize vaccine teams to deliver vaccines to communities of color in Southern California. Using the funding, LLUSP plans to improve vaccine access and vaccination rates in communities identified in the lowest quartiles of the HPI.

Sutter Health, a non-for-profit healthcare system caring for three million patients, has employed data from the HPI as part of its increased commitment to achieving health equity to monitor equitable vaccine uptake. The data has helped determine vaccination levels to overcome COVID’s disproportionate impacts on hardest-hit groups based on race/ethnicity, age, and socioeconomic status.

SUPPORTING SAFE EDUCATION

First 5 California state commissioners recently approved an emergency supply investment to counties to assist childcare providers and other local partners. They are allocating resources based on HPI quartiles and burden of disease related to COVID-19.

The San Diego County Office of Education is using HPI as part of its COVID-19 School Reopening Guidance, including a Data Dashboard. The County is embedding equity into educational considerations, including monitoring and identifying the needs of its students placed at highest risk.

The University of Southern California is using HPI as part of its COVID-19 testing policy and strategies for students, faculty and workers. The University has aimed to expand access for those most impacted by COVID-19 through its vaccination sites aimed at assisting communities in need.
San Diego County’s Department of Parks & Recreation has announced $1.8 million in federal funding for youth sports and camps, including covering registration fees to support children and families who have experienced financial hardships during COVID-19. Two-thirds of the funding ($1.2M) will be allocated using HPI, focusing on the lowest quartile. The program will provide the $1.2 million to cover up to $100 per participant to organizations and camps serving youth in the lower two quartiles of the Healthy Places Index.

**HOUSING SUPPORTS**

The City and County of San Francisco’s Feeding Unit used HPI as part of a mapping project to analyze their response to COVID-19 as part of its larger effort to minimize hunger plan to protect the most disproportionately impacted residents from hunger.

The County of Monterey has developed the VIDA Project to use innovative approaches of outreach and education focused on the lowest quartile of the HPI. Vida Project health outreach workers have helped families through delivering food and connecting farmworkers struggling with food insecurity to food assistance resources.

**FOOD ASSISTANCE**

The County of San Diego’s COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) is using HPI as part of its prioritization criteria. The County allocated $100M for this program in March 2021.

First priority is given to those who have a household income at or below 50% of the area median income, and those who have one or more household members who have been unemployed for at least 90 days. Secondary prioritization criteria include applicants who live in areas that fall within the bottom two quartiles of HPI.

The County of San Bernardino used data from the HPI to focus the efforts of its Emergency Rental Assistance Program to focus on individuals/households that have been the hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The County of Sonoma prioritized residents living in the two lowest HPI quartiles in its COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program to support people living in areas with less access to healthy opportunities.

When partnered with authentic community engagement and partnership, the HPI is an essential tool for addressing race and place-based inequities that disproportionately impact communities of color and people of lower socioeconomic statuses throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

The information described in this fact sheet demonstrates that HPI has proven to be an effective tool in advancing an equitable and just COVID-19 recovery by various sectors across California. To see how the State has put HPI into action, see our companion fact sheet here. To see the hundreds of ways HPI has been put into action, including the allocation of more than one billion dollars in investments directed to communities most in need, check out our HPI Into Action Snapshot.

For more information, please visit our websites:


Questions? Please contact info@thepublichealthalliance.org