Health Equity Statements and Goals Resource

Defining health equity mission statement and goals

A mission statement is a concise explanation of an organization's purpose that describes the organization's reason for existence and the people it serves.[1] A mission statement focused on health equity, whether as part of an organization's overall mission or a separate statement, is important for defining how an organization envisions its role in advancing health equity. For adult immunization programs (AIPs), mission statements can help describe their efforts to infuse health equity in their program operations.

In addition to their health equity mission statements, AIPs may also have goals to track progress toward advancing health equity in their communities. These goals provide actionable and measurable steps for AIPs to achieve either their mission or specific actions and initiatives for their program.

Objective

Recognizing that mission statements and goals can help AIPs operationalize health equity in their daily work, the purpose of this resource is to illustrate mission statement/goal examples from peer organizations similarly focused on advancing health equity. AIPs may reference this resource when considering their own unique approach to health equity to spark ideas, determine differences in approaches, or reflect on a potential starting point for engaging in this work. Although programs will vary in terms of what they focus on in their mission statements and goals based on their distinct populations, geographic area, and available resources, this resource aims to help AIPs have a better understanding of the types of health equity work conducted in the public health field. This resource should be used as a complement to CDC's Success Framework for Adult Immunization Partner Networks, which is a resource for jurisdictions to build robust partnership networks, by demonstrating how organizations focused on health equity are working on similar topics to those highlighted in the framework.

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[1] Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. "Strategic Planning Guide: Guidance and Resources to Assist State and Territorial Health Agencies in Developing a Strategic Plan." Available at https://www.astho.org/globalassets/pdf/accreditation/strategic-guidance-planning-guidance-and-resources-for-sthos.pdf. Accessed August 14, 2023.

Methodology

We conducted a review of publicly available materials from a sample of organizations engaged in health equity-centered work, such as strategy documents, reports, and organizational websites. Within these materials, we searched for mission statements and goals with a health equity focus. This review included a sample of the following organizations, selected for their focus on health equity and applicability to AIPs' work:

- **Partnering for Vaccine Equity (P4VE) Partner Network** – A national partner network, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), comprised of more than 500 national, state, and local entities such as minority medical associations, non-profit organizations, and federally qualified health centers (FQHC), among other partner types. United in supporting and informing vaccine confidence and uptake activities at the community level for disproportionately affected racial and ethnic communities.

- **Immunize.org national partners** – Organizations and professional societies partnering with immunize.org, a national nonprofit organization focused on immunization advocacy and education. Focused on immunization, so their missions and goals could closely align with those of AIM members.

- **Health equity partners** provided in the "Partnerships for Advancing Health Equity in Immunization Programs" section of this toolkit – A group of health equity partners representing different types of organizations such as community-based organizations and community coalitions. Focused on improving health and access to care among specific populations.

- **AIM jurisdictions** – 64 jurisdictions engaged with AIM on adult immunization. Health equity-focused mission statements and goals from select programs could directly align with peer jurisdictions' organizational focus.

Based on our findings, we summarized the main themes and illustrative examples for each theme for health equity focused (1) mission statements and (2) goals. These themes and examples are presented in this resource.

Mission statement themes and examples

Based on our review of publicly available mission statements, we identified three key themes and provide an example of each.

Reducing health disparities. This theme focuses on reducing health disparities by addressing underserved communities' barriers to achieving health equity, such as through practicing cultural humility and providing financially accessible care.

Examples:

"To improve the health of all residents by working to eliminate differences in disease, disability, and death rates among ethnic, racial and other population groups that are known to have adverse health status or outcomes. Such population groups may be based on race, ethnicity, age, gender, socioeconomic position, immigrant status, sexual minority status, language, disability, homelessness, mental health, or geographic area of residence." (Connecticut Department of Public Health)[2]

"[We are] committed to providing access to quality cost effective health care to the Hispanic community, the uninsured, and the underinsured, and not to the exclusion of other cultures and races." (Alivio Medical Center)[3]

Building and strengthening partnerships. Health equity-focused mission statements often signal a commitment to initiating and developing multisector and community-based partnerships to reduce health disparities in a specific underserved population and improve health care systems.

Examples:

"To reduce health disparities among disadvantaged and underserved minority populations through the establishment of community-based partnerships that utilize the health equity framework as the foundation for the development of culturally appropriate solutions." (Institute for the Advancement of Minority Health)[4]

"[To] build partnerships to mobilize community power and transform systems to advance health equity and environmental justice." (Colorado Department of Health & Environment)[5]

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2   Connecticut Department of Public Health. "Office of Health Equity." https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Workforce--Profes-sional-Development/Office-of-Health-Equity/Office-of-Health-Equity#:~:text=The%20responsibility%20of%20the%20Office,adverse%20health%20status%20or%20outcomes. Accessed August 14, 2023.

3   Alivio Medical Center. "About: Mission, Vision, Values." Available at https://www.aliviomedicalcenter.org/. Accessed August 14, 2023.

4   Institute for the Advancement of Minority Health. "About: A Community Approach to Healthcare." Available at https://www.minority-institute.org/about. Accessed August 14, 2023.

5   Colorado Department of Health & Environment. "Office of Health Equity." Available at https://cdphe.colorado.gov/about-office-health-equity. Accessed August 14, 2023.

Addressing systemic barriers. This theme includes methods to address systemic barriers to achieving health equity, including oppressive policies, a lack of equitable access to health care services, and systemic racism.

> **Examples:**
>
> "[We are] dedicated to improving the health of racial and ethnic minority populations through the development of health policies and programs that will help eliminate health disparities." (Office of Minority Health)[6]
>
> "To strengthen, amplify and sustain [our] work to eliminate health inequities— improving health outcomes and closing disparities gaps—which are rooted in historical and contemporary injustices and discrimination." (American Medical Association)[7]

Resources for developing mission statements

The following resources provide useful information AIPs may consider when developing or refining their health equity–focused mission statements.

- **Iowa Department of Health and Human Services:** CHNA&HIP Guide: Develop Vision and Mission Statements

  Provides guidance on how to develop a mission statement, including two possible approaches to brainstorming with participants.

- **NACCHO:** Developing a Local Health Department Strategic Plan: A How-To Guide

  Module III provides guidance for local health departments on developing a mission statement, including identifying organizational mandates, determining the type and level of stakeholder engagement, and developing organizational value statements.

- **ASTHO:** Strategic Planning Guide

  Defines mission statements and processes for developing them as one element of an organization's strategic planning process.

- **The Compass:** How to Develop a Mission Statement

  Provides direction and illustrates steps for organizations to effectively develop a mission statement.

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[6] Office of Minority Health. "Our Mission." https://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/. Accessed August 14, 2023.

[7] American Medical Association. "AMA's Center for Health Equity mission and guiding principles." Available at https://www.ama-assn.org/about/ama-center-health-equity/ama-s-center-health-equity-mission-and-guiding-principles. Accessed August 14, 2023.

Health equity goal themes and examples

Our search of health equity goals revealed five main themes, each provided with an illustrative example.

Address barriers to health equity among specific subpopulations by practicing cultural humility. Health equity–focused goals often showcase a need for increasing access to quality care for underserved groups, including improving language access, tailoring immunization efforts for groups with lower rates of immunization, and offering culturally competent care.

> **Example:**
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> "Create access to integrated, culturally competent, and trauma-informed medical, dental, and emotional wellness services. Provide the highest quality, evidence-based care for our patients, focused on healing, wellness, and the social determinants of health. Improve maternal and child health, particularly for families of color." (Community of Hope)[8]

Increase organizational capacity internally and among partners or community members. The reviewed health equity goals highlighted internal efforts to strengthen capacity, such as improving hiring processes and staff retention to ensure the workforce is diverse and reflects the community, developing internal policies and resources to center health equity in daily work, and offering trainings and other professional development opportunities to staff to increase awareness of health equity principles. Capacity goals focused on those outside the organization included providing partners with resources (including data), training, and technical assistance to advance health equity. In addition, organizations sought to educate the public about health disparities to increase awareness and show commitment to invest in improvements.

> **Example:**
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> "Annually, KDPH will provide training opportunities and resources to staff and key partners to enhance learning/knowledge of health/racial equity principles and practice." (Kentucky Department of Public Health)[9]

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8   Community of Hope. "Strategic Plan 2020 – 2024." Available at https://www.communityofhopedc.org/sites/default/files/Strategic%20Plan%20Web.pdf. Accessed August 14, 2023.

9   Kentucky Department of Public Health. "Strategic Plan 2021." Available at https://www.chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/Documents/StrategicPlan20212025.pdf. Accessed August 14, 2023

Advocate for operational and systemic changes in legislative and organizational policies. The reviewed health equity goals also highlighted efforts to advocate for public policies that promote health equity, such as policies that focus on reducing health disparities and addressing social determinants of health. Changes to organizational policies focused on establishing a core team to evaluate equity issues and develop and implement an action plan for leadership to bring about racial equity within organizational policies, procedures, programs, and hiring practices.

> **Examples:**
>
> "Advocate for sustainable policies and funding that address health disparities and advances health equity initiatives; Support state and territorial health agency capacity to implement evidence-based, sustainable policies and strategies that address the root causes of disparities and advance health and racial equity." (ASTHO)[10]
>
> "By February 2023, KDPH will establish a Core Team as part of CHFS Community of Practice to evaluate equity issues and develop and implement an action plan for leadership to operationalize racial equity within DPH policies, procedures, programs, and hiring practices." (Kentucky Department of Public Health)[9]

Build relationships with partners and fund organizations to carry out health equity initiatives. The reviewed goals indicated an emphasis on engaging partners (local, state, national) to carry out health equity initiatives, incorporating a health equity requirement in grants and vendor contracts, focusing on engaging groups representing voices and interests of underserved communities, and applying community-based participatory research methods and other engagement strategies.

> **Examples:**
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> "By December 2022, 75% of all grants, vendor contracts, and program partnerships will incorporate a health equity requirement or component in alignment with IDPH's health equity framework." (Illinois Department of Public Health)[11]
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> "Build relationships with communities and across sectors to address root causes of health disparities. Use equity in decision-making and partner with all sectors of government to embed health and equity considerations into their decision-making process." (Colorado Department of Health & Environment)[12]

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[10] Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. "Strategic Plan 2022 – 2024." Available at https://www.astho.org/globalassets/pdf/astho-strategic-plan.pdf. Accessed August 14, 2023.

[11] Illinois Department of Public Health. "Strategic Plan: 2020 – 2025." Available at https://dph.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/idph/files/idph-strategic-plan.pdf. Accessed August 14, 2023.

[12] Colorado Department of Health & Environment. "Office of Health Equity." Available at https://cdphe.colorado.gov/about-office-health-equity. Accessed August 14, 2023.

Use data to determine and address the impact of health disparities on specific populations. The health equity goals highlighted a focus on strengthening health equity data collection, analysis, and dissemination. To do this, organizations sought to assess and quantify the magnitude of health disparities, focus on improving data collection for underserved groups, use data to establish priorities based on the greatest needs, and measure the effect of health equity initiatives over time. Organizations also worked to communicate existing gaps in data to partners and the public.
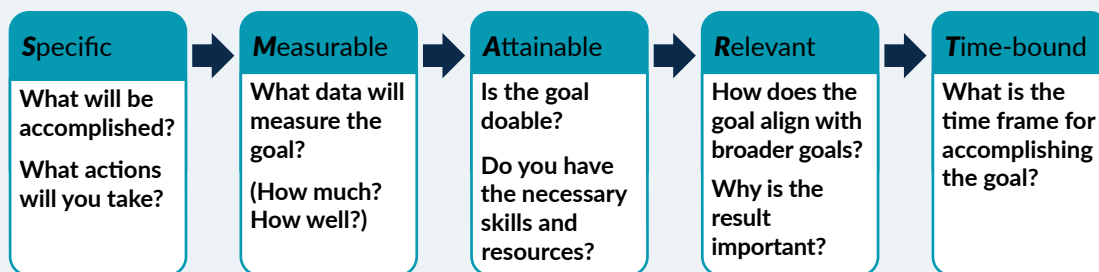
> **Example:**
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> "Use data effectively to plan, monitor, and measure the equity impact of ADPH policies and programs, with a specific focus on the social determinants of health. This goal will be achieved in collaboration with the new Office of Informatics and Data and Analytics." (Alabama Department of Public Health)[13]

Resources for creating SMART goals

AIPs may consider the SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) method to develop specific and measurable health equity goals that they can achieve within a certain time frame. The SMART method can help AIPs focus on activities in service of their health equity goals and help them track their progress. Figure 1 lists questions for AIPs to consider for each element of the SMART method to translate their health equity objectives into SMART goals.

Figure 1. Defining SMART goals

Specific	**M**easurable	**A**ttainable	**R**elevant	**T**ime-bound
What will be accomplished?	What data will measure the goal?	Is the goal doable?	How does the goal align with broader goals?	What is the time frame for accomplishing the goal?
What actions will you take?	(How much? How well?)	Do you have the necessary skills and resources?	Why is the result important?	

Source: University of California[14]

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13 Alabama Department of Public Health. "Office of Health Equity and Minority Health Strategic Plan, 2021 – 2024." Accessed August 14, 2023.

14 University of California. "SMART Goals: How to Guide." Available at https://www.ucop.edu/local-human-resources/_files/performance-appraisal/How%20to%20write%20SMART%20Goals%20v2.pdf. Accessed August 14, 2023.

Resources for developing SMART goals

The following resources provide more information on how to develop SMART goals. AIPs may consider these resources when brainstorming or updating their own health equity–focused goals.
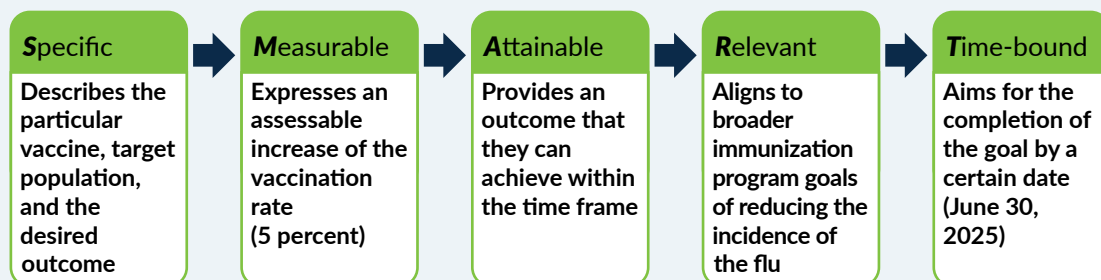
- **CDC: Develop SMART Objectives**

  Features guidance for creating SMART objectives using the development of a Community of Practice as an example.

- **Minnesota Department of Health: Objectives and goals: Writing meaningful goals and SMART objectives**

  Complements an on-demand webinar to help organizations write meaningful goals and SMART objectives that enable staff and community members to more fully work together to promote community health and equity.

- **New Mexico Department of Health: SMART Objectives**

  Describes SMART and meaningful objectives and provides guidance and examples of how to write them as a means to measure a program's success.

- **State of Oklahoma: SMART Objectives: Creating Your Grant Workplan**

  Presents a workplan that organizations can use to create SMART objectives by listing examples of each category.

- **County Health Rankings: How to Create SMART Goals Using a Tree Diagram**

  Offers a tool for organizations to create measurable goals with specific targets using a tree diagram.

Sample SMART health equity goal

The following is an example of a SMART health equity goal focused on adults ages 65 and older who are considered a disproportionately affected adult population:

By June 30, 2025, increase the influenza vaccination rate for adults 65 years of age and older by 5 percent. (Georgia Department of Public Health)[15]

Figure 2. Sample AIP SMART goal

Specific	**M**easurable	**A**ttainable	**R**elevant	**T**ime-bound
Describes the particular vaccine, target population, and the desired outcome	Expresses an assessable increase of the vaccination rate (5 percent)	Provides an outcome that they can achieve within the time frame	Aligns to broader immunization program goals of reducing the incidence of the flu	Aims for the completion of the goal by a certain date (June 30, 2025)

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[15] Georgia Department of Public Health. "Strategic Plan: FY 2022 Update." Available at https://dph.georgia.gov/document/document/2022-2025-strategic-plan-update-fy2022/download. Accessed August 14 2023.

Developed by Mathematica in partnership with AIM