

Building Bridges: Cultivating Meaningful Cross-Sectoral and Community Partnerships to Improve Health

Building Partnerships for Action: The Alliance and the Campaign for the Public's Health

Angie McGowan



About APHA

Our Mission

Build public health capacity and promote effective policy and practice

Our Vision

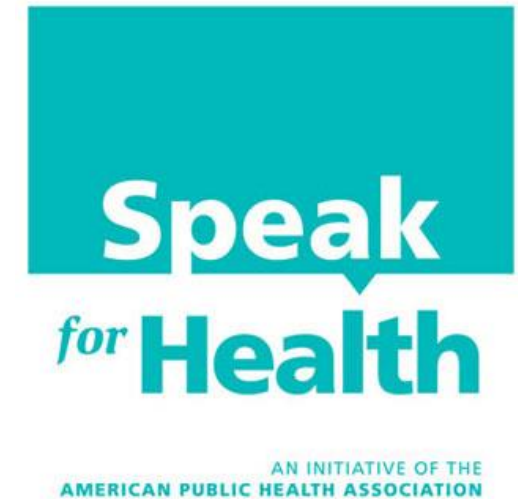
Optimal, equitable health and well-being for all

- 50,000+ individual and organizational (agency) members & affiliates in all states, DC, and the territories, 40 countries and all disciplines
- 58 membership groups with a broad range of public health interests



APHA Advocacy and Policy Efforts

- Government Affairs – Federal Policy
 - #SpeakforHealth – take action to defend evidence-based policies and protect the systems that keep people healthy
 - Action Alerts
 - APHA policy briefs & database
 - State fact sheets
 - Testimony, comments and briefs
 - Coalitions – CDC and HRSA
- Center for Public Health Policy
- Affiliates – 52 State and Regional Public Health Associations
 - Public health authority & advocacy project
 - Healthy States Collaborative

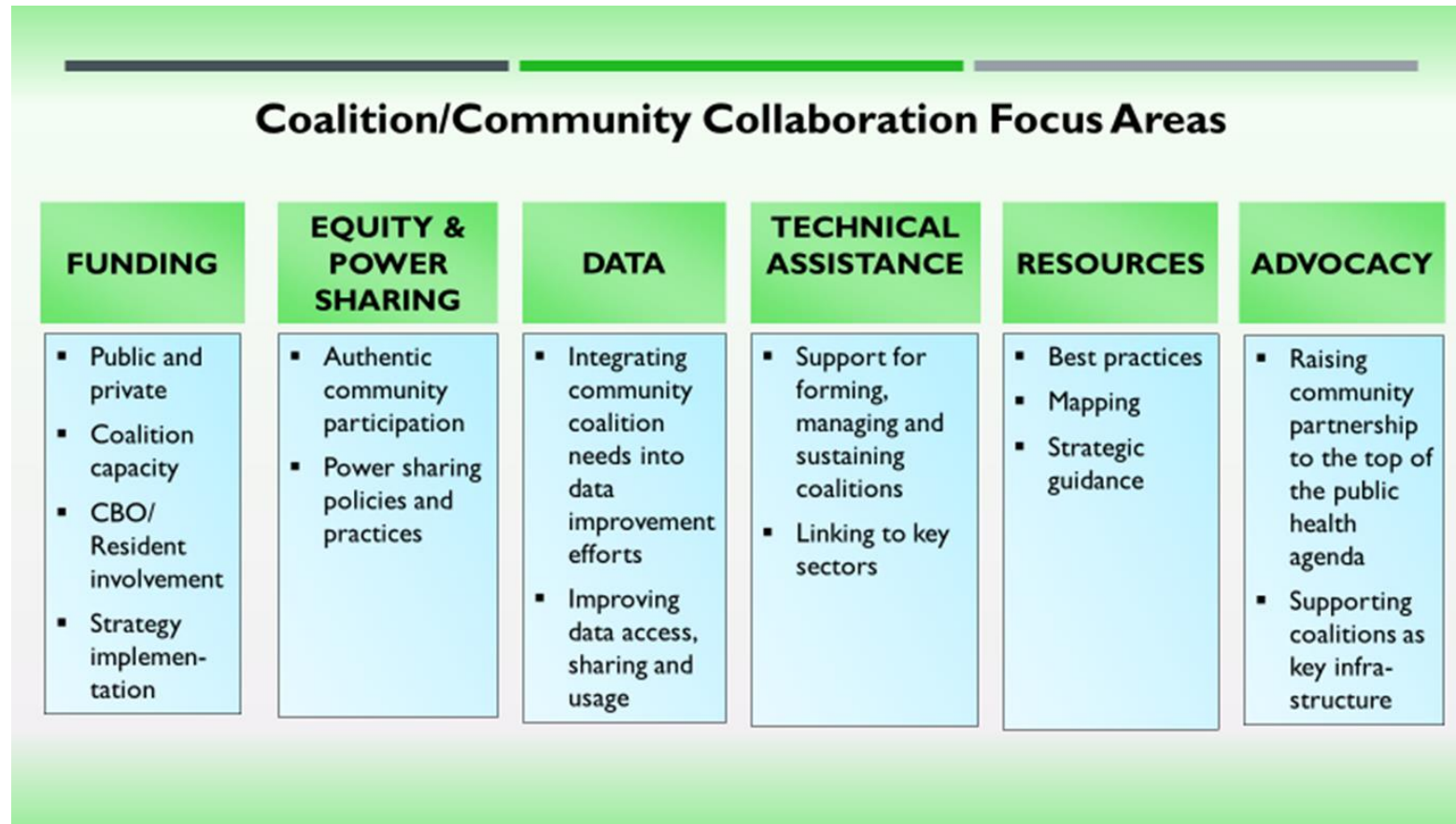


Alliance for the Public's Health

- Focus: building and leading a national movement to advance public health, prevent disease and promote well-being
- Collaborative, multi-sectoral initiative
- Launched during the pandemic
- Focused on building a robust, resilient and equitable public health system
- 80+ organizations engaged
- Vision: *Ensuring everyone has what they need to be healthy and thrive*



Lessons from Community Coalitions and Collaboration



The Campaign for the Public's Health



APHA's Current Approach

- Make them follow the law
 - Force transparency
 - Inform the public of the impact of their actions
 - Resist anticipatory obedience
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- Don't accept redefining DEI (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion)
- Maintain our core values and act on them
- Have no fear – They only have the power they are given!

Recent Litigation

Case	Details	Status
Nat'l Council of Nonprofits v. OMB	The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) ordered a sudden pause on all federal funding programs, which disrupted billions of dollars in assistance to nonprofits and public services.	A federal court blocked OMB's order, saying it likely violated the law because OMB did not consider the severe harm this funding freeze caused. Ultimately, the court criticized the OMB for implementing the funding freeze with less than twenty-four hours' notice and for failing to take a measured approach to address wasteful spending
APHA v. NIH	APHA is the lead plaintiff in a case against NIH, claiming it violated federal rules by making policy changes without following required public input processes. The lawsuit argues that the changes harm marginalized communities and violate constitutional rights, including free speech and equal protection.	The court ruled that the challenged directives and resulting grant terminations issued by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) were arbitrary and capricious, thereby violating the Administrative Procedure Act. Specifically, the court declared these directives to be final agency actions that were unlawful under the statute. The court entered a partial final judgment under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 54(b), finding no just reason to delay entry of judgment on this claim

Litigation – Continued

Case	Details	Status
AFGE v Trump	Suing Donald Trump, United States federal executive departments, and Trump's second cabinet. More than 30 plaintiffs including labor unions, non-profit organizations, and local governments sought to prevent the Trump administration from instituting mass layoffs and closing programs.	Upheld in district court and currently before SCOTUS waiting a response to the governments request for a stay
AAP v RFK Jr	Suing HHS and Secretary Kennedy for acting arbitrarily and capriciously when he unilaterally changed Covid-19 vaccine recommendations for children and pregnant people. The lawsuit asks the court to declare unlawful and set aside the Secretarial Directive on Pediatric Covid-19 Vaccines for Children Less Than 18 Years of Age and Pregnant Women. We are also asking the court to order the Secretary to reinstate those immunizations to the CDC schedules.	Case filed on 7/7/25

Campaign Initial Priorities (July-December 2025)

Overarching Campaign Coordinator

- Leadership, Strategy, Fundraising
- APHA/Alliance Staff & Support
- Advocacy - National, State, Local & Grassroots
- Communications Capacity
 - Crisis Communications
 - Story Collecting & Disseminating
 - Marketing & Advertising
- Legal and Litigation Strategy & Support
- Partnership & Grassroots Engagement
- Research & Analysis
 - Data
 - Economics/ROI
 - Polling & focus groups





Timeline – Next 6 Months

Ongoing


- Legal and litigation strategy & support
- Story collection and dissemination
- Strategic planning & fundraising
- Research & analysis (data collection and management; economics/ROI; polling & focus groups)
- Work with cross-sectoral campaigns

July - September 2025

Campaign launch meeting

 In progress  Jul 31

Hire Campaign Director

 In progress

Identify Campaign & Action Center leadership

Hire crisis communication firm

Identify initial focus areas for advocacy

+

October - December 2025

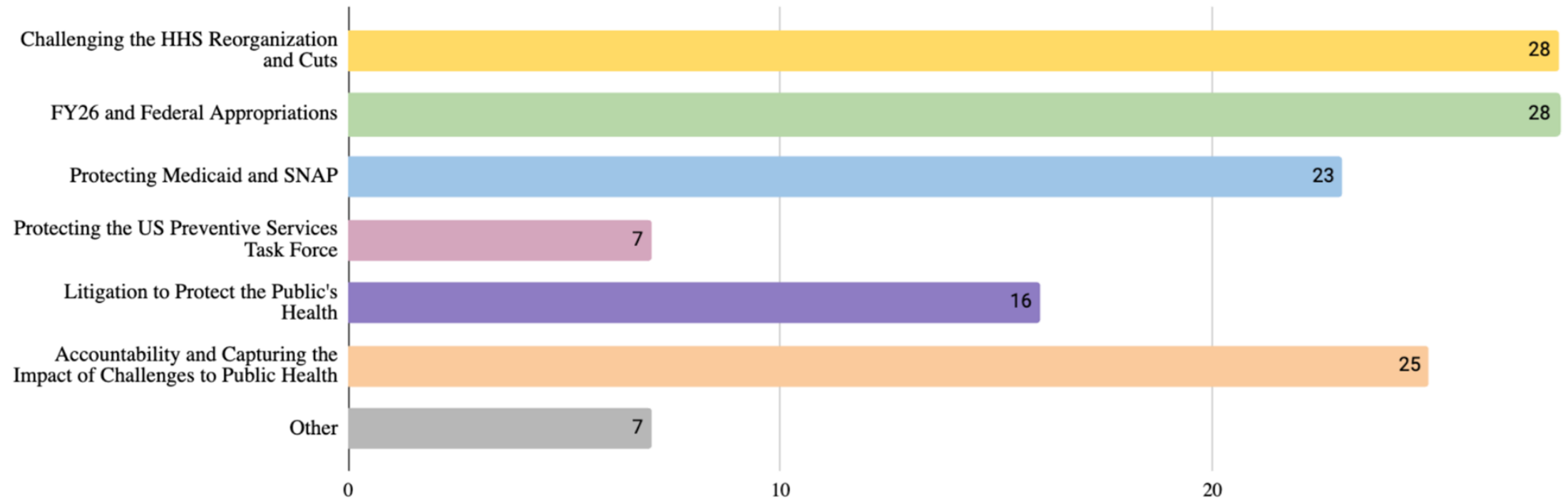
Begin developing rapid response and crisis communications capacity

Build partnership & grassroots networks

Develop advocacy strategy for national, state, local and grassroots levels

+

What should be our initial priorities?



Attendees Polling Results – July 31, 2025

Please Join Us!

For more information about the Alliance and Campaign, please see the QR code or email at:

Alliance@apha.org

For questions, please feel free to contact Angie McGowan:

Angela.McGowan@apha.org



Building Bridges

APHA- Who We Are

- Mission: Build public health capacity and promote effective policy and practice
- Vision: Optimal, equitable health and well-being for all
- Our work is grounded in equity, inclusion and belonging.
 - Health equity: “Health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care.”
RWJF Definition
 - Racial Equity: Racial equity is what would exist if our society no longer assigned advantages and disadvantages, through society’s institutions, policies, practices and cultural beliefs, based on a person’s skin color. Racial equity looks at the root causes of inequities, not just the manifestation of the inequities itself, and focuses on the restructuring of institutional policies and practices and cultural beliefs.

About the project:

- Aims to build on existing work to strengthen partnerships between governmental public health, nonprofit, cross-sectoral and community-based organizations to promote health and well-being and advance health equity
- Supports health department staff in creating and maintaining robust and meaningful engagement with their partners and communities through research, technical assistance and development of resources.
- Funded through the CDC five-year cooperative agreement: *Strengthening Public Health Systems and Services through National Partnerships to Improve and Protect the Nation's Health*

This work is supported by funding from CDC but the views presented today are my own and do not represent CDC.

APHA Framing for the Building Bridges Project

- “Strengthen, support, and mobilize communities and partnerships” is one of the essential public health services.
- Committed to grounding this work in the current realities and circumstances of cross-sectoral and community-based partnerships and to learn directly from them, about the key characteristics of success and opportunities to provide support, resources and assistance.



APHA Team: Tia Williams, Kate Robb, Rya Griffis, Angie McGowan, Michelle Loosli, Ursula Oguejiofor, Yeatoe McIntosh and Kristi Sprowl

Key Activities

- Landscape Scan
- Partner Roundtable
- Listening sessions
- Advisory Group



Photo courtesy EZ Event Photography

Characteristics of Successful Partnerships

Relationship and Trust Building



Equity and Power Dynamics

Clear Structure and Accountability



Resource Sharing and Funding

Effective Communication and Flexibility



Listening Sessions- Common Themes

- **Motivation and Outcomes:** Result of precipitating event or health department recognition of working with CBOs or cross-sectoral partners to advance health equity. Outcomes include changes in practice, procedure and public policies.
- **Community Engagement:** Emphasis on building power and importance of a shared vision and shared power with community members
- **Building and Maintaining Trust:** Trust is built over time and rooted in reciprocity, cultural competence, and accessibility.
- **Tools and Resources:** Financial support, peer learning, training for data utilization and power building

Resource library

- Informed by over 80 people across 72 organizations through listening sessions and a partner roundtable
- Designed to help public health professionals improve their partnerships with community-based organizations and cross-sector partners.
- Features a searchable library, with dozens of resources, AI-powered tools, and more to help you strengthen partnerships to improve the public's health.



The Bridge and Build Library features dozens of resources to help you strengthen partnerships with community-based organizations and cross-sector partners. It includes case studies, guides, webinars, and AI tools to support effective partner engagement. Explore below.

ACCESS BUILD & BRIDGE LIBRARY

LEARN ABOUT COLLABORATION

AI-Powered

EXPLORE STRATEGIES

AI-Powered

<https://phern.communitycommons.org/partner-portals/building-bridges/>

Example “policy” resources



Building Community Power To Dismantle Policy-Based Structural Inequity In Population Health

This resource advocates for shifting population health strategies from technocratic, individual-focused models to a democratic approach rooted in building community power to dismantle **policy**-driven structural inequities. It highlights how structural...

READ MORE →



Healing Through Policy: Creating Pathways to Racial Justice

This issue brief is full of curated policies and practices that can be implemented at the local level to promote racial

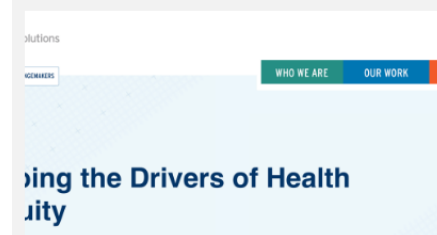
<https://phern.communitycommons.org/partner-portals/building-bridges/>



Shifting and Sharing Power: Public Health's Charge in Building Community Power

...highlights successful collaborations that have led to equitable **policy** changes. The article also discusses how these partnerships have been instrumental in driving COVID-19 responses, **policy advocacy**, and long-term equity-focused strategies....

READ MORE →



Undoing the Drivers of Health Inequity

...and **policy** strategies to transform policies and systems. Examples of how communities nationwide have used equitable **polycymaking** to confront the drivers of health inequity and create systems change are provided....

Next steps

- Will continue to add resources to the Resource Library.
 - If you would like to contact us for more information or have a resource to recommend, please email us at alliance@apha.org.
- Year 2 will continue building capacity among state and local governmental health department professionals
 - Will host a 10-month learning community
 - Will develop a partnership toolkit with resources for facilitating and maintaining partnerships

Building Bridges:

Community Lawyering in the Environmental Justice Movement

Maslyn Locke, Senior Staff Attorney



Environmental Justice & Environmental Racism

Environmental Justice: the principle that all people and communities have a right to equal protection and equal enforcement of environmental laws and regulations.

Environmental Racism: the intentional siting of polluting and waste facilities in communities, primarily communities of color and lower income, working communities, leading to a disproportionate exposure to fumes, toxic dust, ash, soot, and other pollutants and, as a result, face increased risks of health problems.

Traditional Lawyering	Community Lawyering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A legal problem exists and a group or individual calls on a lawyer to do something about it. The lawyer explores various possibilities, decides on a course of action together with the client and proceeds. The legal strategy either wins, in which case the story is successful, or loses, in which case it is considered a failure • Sets up an adversarial dynamic between parties • Lawyer determines the terms of engagement, the relevant facts and narrative, defines the problem and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages alternative systems of relational power or power sharing aimed at ultimate reconciliation or compromise, founded on a recognition of common interests between parties • The solution to a community-identified problem must be determined by those directly affected • The lawyer recognizes the importance of power dynamics, appears as a supporting player rather than the main character, seeking to help organizations build

So, what is Movement Lawyering?

A specialized community lawyering model – community lawyering in context

- Webster: “alternative model of public interest advocacy focused on building the power of non-elite constituencies through integrated legal and political strategies”
- DukeEngage: The practice of representing “vulnerable” populations in an effort to support contemporary social movements and promote politically progressive policy in its wake
- Carle & Cummings: “the use of integrated advocacy strategies, inside and outside of formal law making spaces, by lawyers who are accountable to mobilized social movement groups to build the power of those groups to produce or oppose social change goals that they

Case Study: the Health, Environment and Equity Impacts Rule

Rules that consider the disproportionate burden of pollution borne by low income communities and communities of color – require an understanding of how the exposure to combined stressors impacts the health and welfare of communities

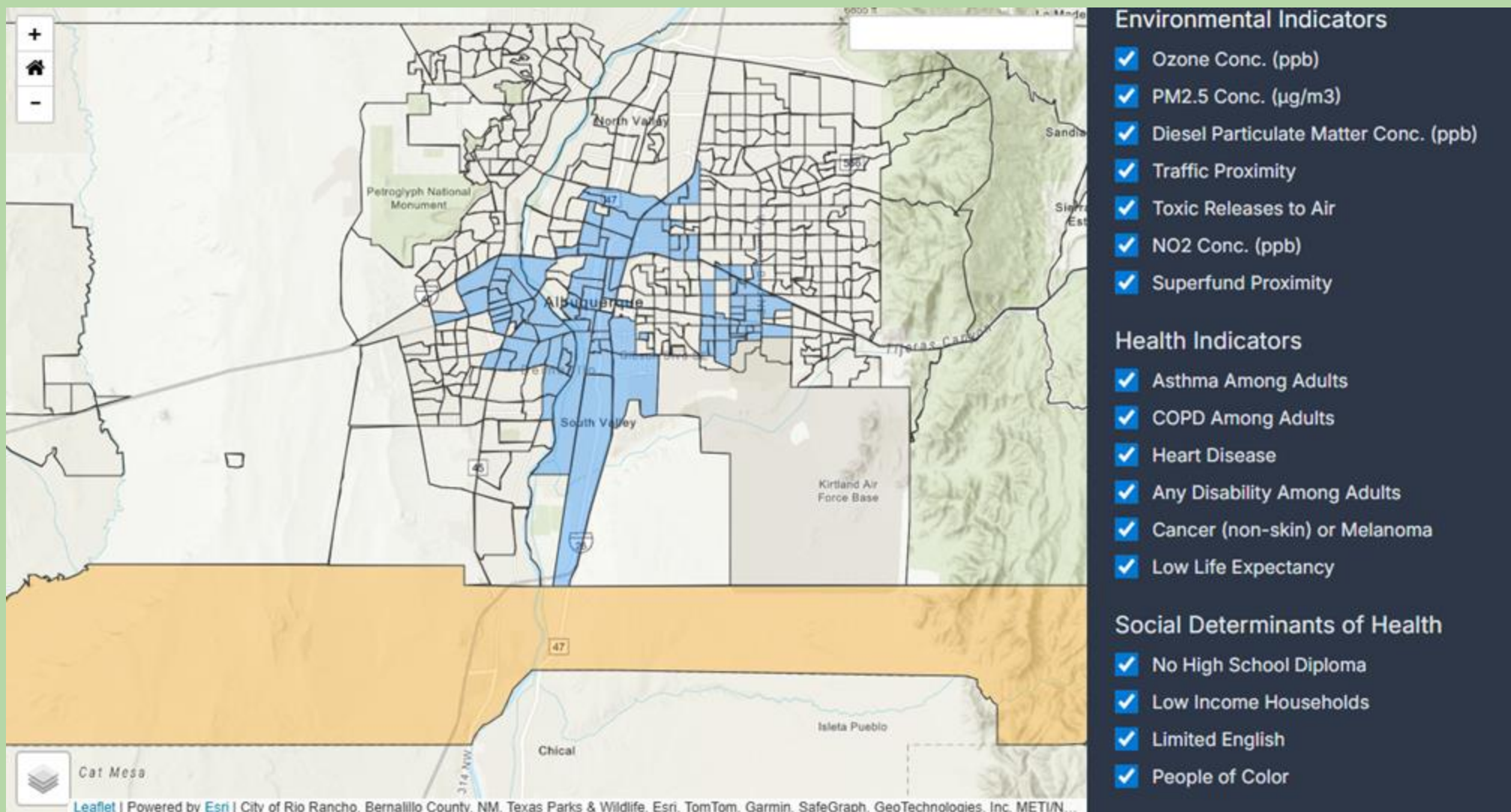
The rules take into consideration the fact that all people are not impacted by pollution in the same way due to other factors such as access to healthcare, income, race, etc.

These exist in Colorado, California, New Jersey, and New York - and EPA has issued guidance on legal tools to advance environmental justice, including a cumulative impacts addendum

ENVIRONMENTAL INJUSTICE IS CUMULATIVE



Overburdened Areas in Albuquerque and Bernalillo County, NM



Please take this survey
to evaluate
conference sessions.



Contact Information:

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Center for Public Health Policy

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THANK YOU