

CI Notebook

by Laura Choi, Editor

On its surface, health may appear to be an individualized product of genetics, personal lifestyle choices, and proper medical care. But it's becoming increasingly clear that the broader social, economic, and physical context in which we live has a profound impact on health outcomes, particularly among low- and moderate-income populations. While community developers have long understood the importance of promoting affordable housing, employment opportunities, and financial security for community well-being, the field is just beginning to understand how these "traditional" community development activities relate to health outcomes such as life expectancy, infant mortality, and rates of chronic disease.

Earlier this year, the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation co-hosted the Healthy Communities Conference in Washington DC to explore how the health and community development sectors can collaborate to promote better health outcomes for low-income people and communities by addressing issues concerning the social determinants of health (visit www.frbsf.org/cdinvestments/conferences/hc/ for more information). This issue of *Community Investments* follows up on the ideas introduced at the conference and examines the rich opportunities for cross sectoral partnerships between the community development and health fields.

The issue begins with an examination of the relationship between health and communities, uncovering the striking health disparities that exist across populations of different socioeconomic and demographic backgrounds. The articles also delve deeper into specific examples of community-based approaches to improving health outcomes, such as the unique Equity and Social Justice Initiative introduced by Public Health—Seattle & King County and the Fresh Food Financing Initiative in Philadelphia. In addition, the issue examines the role of community-based organizations in promoting health.

Our "Eye on Community Development" section brings you the latest information on banking conditions in the 12th District and key themes from a national series of meetings on the financing needs of small businesses. We're also pleased to introduce "Community Perspectives," a new feature that provides an opportunity for community members to share the experiences and lessons learned from their own community development initiatives.

We hope this issue of *Community Investments* encourages you to think in new ways about the links that exist between your own community development work and the health of the communities that you serve. Your feedback and comments are always welcomed, and we hope you have a wonderful new year!



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This publication is produced by the Community Development Department of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco. The magazine serves as a forum to discuss issues relevant to community development in the Federal Reserve's 12th District, and to highlight innovative programs and ideas that have the potential to improve the communities in which we work.