10.2 Conduct Health Impact Assessments

5 Points | 10 Points | 15 Points

Action Updates

This action was last updated in 2024. The previous version of this action is available for comparison. Edits are highlighted in yellow.

Objective

Integrate public health and equity considerations when developing and implementing projects, initiatives, and policies in sectors where the connection to health may not be immediately obvious.

A **Health Impact Assessment** (HIA) is a process that uses data, analysis and stakeholder input to determine the potential health impacts of a proposed policy, plan, program or project. A HIA also provides recommendations on monitoring and managing those effects. Please note that health impact assessments are different than community health needs assessments (CHNA). HIAs are designed to bring health evidence to inform a specific decision. CHNAs are designed to develop strategies to address a community's identified health issues.

What to Do

The more you do, the more points you earn.

1. Have your elected officials and/or staff members and/or members of a relevant commission participate in a training on performing health impact assessments. The training must have taken place in the last three years. **(5 points)**

   Submit: The names and contact information of the individuals who attended the training, as well as the name of the training, the date it occurred and the organization that provided the training.

2. Conduct a health impact assessment (HIA) on a proposed project, initiative or policy in your community, facilitating opportunities for meaningful community engagement and public input at each step in the process. HIAs consider a broad view of health, including the social determinants. To complete the HIA, perform the following steps, which were adapted from the Health Impact Project's description of the HIA Process. **(10 points)**

   Note: A community health needs assessment is not the same as a health impact assessment and is not eligible to receive credit under this Action.

   All elements must be completed to receive credit.

   a. *Screening*. Through a partnership of your Sustainability Team and your municipality's public health department or regional health district, identify specific proposed projects, programs or policy decisions that an HIA could address. Consider feasibility in terms of available resources (like funding, time, data, and stakeholder interest), the importance of potential health outcomes, and the likelihood that the HIA may provide new and important information on previously unrecognized health issues. An HIA should always be conducted prospectively.

   b. *Scoping*. With stakeholders, create specific objectives for the HIA, including a determination of the health effects to be addressed and populations to be impacted.

c. ***Assessing.*** Describe the baseline health of affected communities and the potential impacts of the decision. In the baseline health analysis, discuss the social determinants of health, like community walkability and food access. Explain how health risks and benefits fall among different subgroups, stratified by race and ethnicity, income, age and chronic illness status, among other possible groupings. You may obtain this information from your municipal health department's or district's community health needs assessment, if any.

d. ***Recommending.*** Develop practical solutions for implementation within the political, economic or technical limitations of the project or policy you're assessing. These may include minimizing or mitigating potentially adverse health consequences or maximizing positive health impacts.

e. ***Reporting.*** To facilitate the adoption of your HIA's recommendations, strategically disseminate the findings to decision-makers, affected communities, and other stakeholders.

f. ***Monitoring and Evaluating.*** Monitor the changes in health or health risk factors and evaluate the efficacy of the HIA process and the measures your community implements.

Submit: A copy of the health impact assessment, a completed worksheet, evidence that the health impact assessment was strategically disseminated (either via email, in-person meeting(s), other channels, or some combination thereof), and a hyperlink to the health impact assessment on your municipality's website. If your Health Impact Assessment was completed more than three years ago, also include a brief description of how it is still relevant and used by your municipality.

Engaging Partners

Sustainable CT encourages regional collaboration and other forms of partnership. For every action, please complete the "Partners" box in your submission, indicating the name(s) of any municipalities and/or organizations you partnered with (if any) and a brief description of your municipality's role. If you collaborate with other municipalities, each community will receive points. For additional information, please see the "Partners Guidance Document".

Potential Municipal and Community Collaborators

Staff from your local health and planning departments may collaborate with other municipal departments and community collaborators relevant to each specific project undertaken.

Funding

If available, below are potential funding sources specific to this Action. For a complete listing of potential funding opportunities to assist with implementing Sustainable CT Actions, please visit the Sustainable CT Grants Portal, which is searchable by Action. Please also visit the Support for Your Town page for opportunities for technical assistance and other supports.

- Urban Act Grant Program
- Sustainable CT Community Match Fund
- State Funding Readiness Project

- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation provides grant opportunities for communities seeking to promote and conduct health impact assessments.

Resources

Toolkits, Calculators, Guidance Documents

- National Center for Healthy Housing, "Health Impact Assessments"
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Health Impact Assessment Resources
- Promoting Equity through the Practice of Health Impact Assessment
- The Value of Health Impact Assessment to Community Partners
- Health Impact Assessments Study: A Report by the CT Academy of Science and Engineering for the CT General Assembly

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Climate and Health Strategic Framework

Organizations and Relevant Programs

- Health Impact Society
- Health Impact Project

Benefits

In addition to promoting health and well-being, the HIA process promotes equity across residential sectors, facilitates community building, and builds cross-disciplinary collaborations among your municipal staff.

CT Success Stories

- Vernon - May 2025 Certification