



ANCHORS IN RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

*The collective power of community
leaders and institutions can create
equitable and local economies
that work for everyone.*



HEALTH CARE'S NEW ROLE

Health care institutions do more than just care for the sick and injured. **They support public health through community benefits, provide health and wellness education, and are significant economic and social contributors to their communities.** Health care institutions provide strength, equity, adaptability, and preparedness in the face of all types of disasters. Whether it is a pandemic or an extreme weather event, hospitals are often the first place people turn to, making them anchors for a community's response in times of trauma and in preventing future disasters.

Armed with a unique understanding of the strengths and vulnerabilities in their communities, health care institutions can work in partnership with community organizations and other anchor institutions like schools, universities, public health departments, and municipal governments to build systems that will keep people and their environments safe and healthy by providing clean energy systems that prevent pollution and disease creating equitable and environmentally sound regional food systems, implementing sustainable transportation to create safer roads and air quality, and building a resilient social safety net for all members of a community.

Health Care Without Harm and its allies are working to create systems change across the United States. We are building new models of community resilience through the health sector to address the root causes of deep community problems by shifting the components and structures that have led to systemic environmental, health, and social inequities. The health sector is uniquely powerful. Doctors and nurses are our most trusted voices in society. Health care makes up 20% of our national economy. When health institutions take these assets and join with other businesses and community stakeholders to support new economic and social models, they are ensuring that true health, equity, and climate resilience are embedded in their communities for generations to come.



The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the vulnerabilities of our communities and our anchor institutions to major disruptions.

Every sector of the economy has been shuttered, severely strained, or outright failed with dire outcomes for the entire country, and especially for low-income communities of color. Families are isolated with limited mobility and limited health and food access; many are still jobless even as businesses reopen. The recovery will not be easy, but more importantly, the recovery cannot return to business as usual. Our communities and local institutions must be designed to new standards of resilience and equity. This requires a cultural shift in what we value, how we live, and how we relate to each other.

A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT MODEL FOR HEALTH CARE ANCHORS IN RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

East Oakland and Richmond are two communities facing daunting economic inequality and multiple health issues related to long-standing disinvestment.

The poverty in East Oakland and Richmond is more than double their county averages. In Oakland, a city with the seventh most severe wealth gap in the nation, White residents earn almost twice as much as Black residents and about three times what Latinx residents make. In Richmond, Black residents earn roughly one-third less than their White neighbors. These inequities are reflected in health disparities, including disproportionately higher rates of chronic diseases (diabetes, obesity, and asthma) among people of color and significant differences in life expectancy. According to the Alameda County Public Health Department, people of color living in the flatlands of East Oakland live an average of 10-15 years less than Whites living just 1.3 miles away in the Oakland Hills.

The concept for Anchors in Resilient Communities (ARC), was born in 2013, and is a multi-sector collaborative model developed in the East Bay in Northern California by Health Care Without Harm and Emerald Cities Collaborative (ECC). The ARC model operates on the belief that the **collective power of community leaders and institutions** can design equitable and local economies that work for everyone. Leadership combined with economic clout, if harnessed effectively, is a powerful mechanism for contributing to community health, wealth, and climate resilience.

The ARC model applied on the ground, starts by identifying the ecosystem of stakeholders in a particular community, and brings them together to leverage the assets and existing capacities of both large anchor institutions (typically nonprofit organizations tethered to their communities like medical centers, universities, and local government entities) and community-based partners. The goal is to create a whole community approach that is an equitable representation of both community and anchor institution partners. They work together to design effective solutions to help solve systemic and interrelated problems that plague communities for decades ranging from generational poverty to health and environmental emergencies to climate disruption and to racial and health disparities.

The partners in the ARC model share a common commitment to expand community wealth and improve community health outcomes by utilizing the powerful procurement practices and financial investment capacities of wealthy institutions in order to strengthen the resiliency of communities of color and low- and moderate-income residents, by addressing the social and environmental determinants of health that make them more vulnerable. The first implementation of the ARC model, called the Regional Food System Initiative and focused on the communities of East Oakland and Richmond California, seized the opportunity to address food insecurity and access, while stimulating local economic opportunity at the same time.



ARC IN ACTION

A NEW REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM INITIATIVE IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA THAT TACKLES FOOD, EQUITY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

The goal of the **ARC Regional Food System Initiative in Northern California** is to operationalize partnerships among food producers, processors, and community-owned businesses to meet the growing institutional demand in the region; build community wealth in underserved communities through good-paying jobs and business opportunities in the food sector; and increase the availability of fresh food in communities suffering from high rates of food insecurity and diet-related disease.

In April 2020, the building acquisition and construction financing was completed for a new \$20 million food production center located in Union City, California. This facility will be the Bay Area home of FoodService Partners (www.fsp98.com), an industry leader in providing sustainable and ethically produced, locally and regionally sourced food for the health care, education, and retail sectors. This is a critical milestone in the project's trajectory, but we can't stop here.

The project's long-term goals go above and beyond this stage of the ARC Regional Food System Initiative. There needs to be full implementation and actualization of the food production center; evaluation of the impact; strategy and support for the ARC project to tackle other community issues, and dissemination of the learnings to inspire replication in other communities across America.

Ultimately, the ARC Regional Food System Initiative aims to build long-lasting, equitable, and strong climate-resilient food systems and food economies. It is uniquely designed to demonstrate how creative community partnerships can meet specific community food and economic needs across a dynamic region by fostering the growth of connected local food economies.

America is facing a very challenging food and economic reality.

One in which Americans and the large sectors that serve them are vulnerable to food insecurity, food supply chain disruptions, and a reliance on unsustainable food systems which make it harder to feed the nation in the face of economic, health, and environmental crises. Underpinning all of these food system problems is racial inequity, which is not natural or inevitable. It is the result of systemic decisions that have been made over time and that have benefitted certain groups over others. Generations of disinvestment and harmful policies have drained many communities of color of basic resources and disconnected them from opportunities to live up to their potential. The East Bay is one such community facing all of these challenges and more and is in need of a new solution to a decades old problem that hasn't been solved.

What
at a
local
e can
health
Focus
ning p
chor in
equity
orative
research
governance
project creation

Findings
st important sectors to target:
Food + Building Systems
Partnership Opportunity
in food services
Moving

CASE STUDY: Anchors for Resilient Communities

Food Production Center
Aggregation Cooperative
Anchor orgs
Hydroponics Cooperative
Make visible the cost of unhealthy

WHAT COULD A LOCAL FOOD ECOSYSTEM LOOK LIKE?

GOAL: TO BUILD HEALTH

changes the accounting equation: we look at

Need to build into the budget the resources to develop capacity of entrepreneurs (particularly of color) to be able
Who are entrepreneurs + farmers locally who

total cost of providing health = not the cost of the food services in isolation
put into the language

being large enough to matter but not too big so we can be flexible
find way to measure true costs of food

What does the project offer to health outside hospital?
Opportunity to prescribe good food as patients leave & go home.

Problems with vague definitions investment
Game Changers: ability to aggregate demand and supply

It lays a critical foundation by investing in the communities most negatively impacted in the region by the current food system's health and economic inequities. Moving forward, the ARC project will evolve to meet new community needs for decades to come while reinvigorating local food production as well as processing and distribution networks. It will also simultaneously reduce the greenhouse gas emissions associated with conventional food production and transportation. This project is a whole system approach to an often compartmentalized problem.

Looking ahead, the ARC Regional Food System Initiative defines success as being when health and wealth are equitably shared, and when the systems that support daily life in the East Bay community – especially food, water, and energy production and delivery – are robust enough to withstand the uncertainty of climate change and serve as a model for communities across the country.

When cross-sector, multi-stakeholder initiatives such as this ARC project become standard practice, we can begin to unwind generations of inequity and disinvestment and fortify our communities with the health and wealth necessary to be prepared for economic and climate-related challenges.



Health Care Without Harm: seeks to transform health care worldwide so the sector reduces its environmental footprint and becomes a leader in the global movement for environmental health and justice. The Healthy Food in Health Care program harnesses the purchasing power and expertise of the health care sector to redefine hospital food, activate its potential to heal people and communities, and adopt practices and policies to support a healthy, sustainable food system.



Emerald Cities Collaborative: is a national nonprofit network of organizations working together to advance a sustainable environment while creating high-road -- sustainable, just and inclusive -- economies with opportunities for all. ECC develops energy, green infrastructure and other sustainable development projects that not only contribute to the resilience of our metropolitan regions but also ensure an equity stake for low-income communities of color in the green economy. This includes developing the economic infrastructure for family-supporting wages and career paths for residents of such communities, as well as contracting opportunities for women, minority and other disadvantaged businesses.

<https://www.anchorsinresilientcommunities.org/>