











Suggested Activities for Each Stage of Readiness



Institutional Commitment

Stage of Readiness	Description	Suggested Activities
 Identifying & Researching (15–25)	HD identifies the need to strengthen institutional commitment to SDOH and begins to research programmatic, legal, and policy strategies to build internal capacity and a culture that promotes health equity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research health equity principles and identify the root causes behind health inequities in the community ▪ Investigate policy and legal tools the HD can use to address SDOH ▪ Review legal authority to work on SDOH ▪ Identify grant and sustainable funding opportunities that focus on addressing SDOH, especially using policy and legal tools ▪ Identify diverse partners and leaders that can invest in strengthening institutional commitment
 Empowering & Engaging (26–35)	HD engages key partners, leadership, and community members to raise awareness about the resources, capacity, and financial investment needed to build stronger institutional commitment to health equity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hold internal trainings on health equity, structural discrimination, cultural humility, and SDOH for all levels of staff ▪ Engage consultants to help guide internal discussions about equity, SDOH, and policy work ▪ Engage staff throughout the department in discussions about the importance of a Health in All Policies approach to law and policy in order to address health equity and SDOH ▪ Establish relationships with trusted community organizations ▪ Establish relationships with legal counsel (e.g., city/county attorneys)
 Formulating & Developing (36–45)	HD incorporates research findings and engagement with partners when developing a strategic plan to strengthen institutional commitment to health equity initiatives and policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engage staff in developing updated mission, vision, and value statements that integrate health equity and SDOH ▪ Establish goals and metrics related to health equity and SDOH within each program ▪ Establish a policy agenda that focuses on developing goals and metrics related to policy and community engagement within each program ▪ Create a communications checklist for all written and oral communications that ensures focus on health equity and SDOH ▪ Update all staff job descriptions to ensure that staff are required to be competent in health equity and SDOH ▪ Establish a strategic plan that includes legal and policy efforts to address health equity and SDOH
 Implementing & Disseminating (46–55)	HD educates staff, leadership, and partners on new internal policies, strategies, and resource allocations geared toward strengthening institutional commitment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Disseminate a policy/advocacy agenda that focuses on health equity, SDOH, and addressing the root causes of health inequities ▪ Provide education and training to staff on all new equity-focused policies, programs, and initiatives ▪ Disseminate informative materials on policy work and other health equity efforts to community members ▪ Publish position statements detailing the research on specific SDOH and health outcomes affecting the community ▪ Advertise job postings to a diverse group of community members ▪ Offer a grant program to fund work in the community that uses legal and policy tools to address health inequities and SDOH



Stage of Readiness	Description	Suggested Activities
 Evaluating & Reflecting (56–65)	HD gathers feedback from the Implementing & Disseminating phase to reflect on successes, challenges, and barriers to strengthening institutional commitment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create a mentoring and coaching program for staff to continually develop their skills in health equity, SDOH, and the policy process ■ Incorporate community feedback on HD work to address health equity and SDOH ■ Gather feedback from staff and leadership on efforts related to addressing health inequities and SDOH
 Sustaining & Adapting (66–75)	HD implements feedback in its strategic plan or new initiatives and allows space to continually adapt institutional commitment based on changing social, political, and economic landscapes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Incorporate community and staff feedback into a strategic plan that promotes legal and policy efforts to address health equity and SDOH ■ Implement sustainable measures to ensure that program goals and work reflect principles of health equity and the importance of law and policy ■ Create a program to coordinate policy work across the HD ■ Require a certain number of continuing education hours related to health equity, SDOH, and policy work annually ■ Develop a participatory budgeting process ■ Have sustainable and diverse funding for all work to address health inequities and SDOH ■ Receive regular and consistent feedback from community members through a structured process

Staff Competence in SDOH

Stage of Readiness	Description	Suggested Activities
 Identifying & Researching (15–25)	HD has identified the need to improve its internal staff's knowledge base related to SDOH, law, and policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assess leadership's and staff's understanding of SDOH ■ Research the history and impact of structural discrimination on community members ■ Identify resources and materials to improve leadership's and staff's knowledge of SDOH, law, and policy ■ Research laws and policies that affect SDOH
 Empowering & Engaging (26–35)	HD engages community members, leadership, and internal staff to assess existing understanding of SDOH, law, and policy in order to identify gaps in knowledge, find ways to improve knowledge, and increase representation of diverse perspectives in its knowledge base.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Engage leadership in conversations that uplift understanding related to SDOH ■ Discuss with staff the history of structural discrimination and the importance of law and policy ■ Incorporate discussions of SDOH and structural discrimination into internal meetings and discussions ■ Host informal community town halls and meetings to inform the HD's understanding of SDOH ■ Contract with a community-led organization to assist in creating a formal plan to integrate SDOH work and instill cultural competency/humility ■ Engage cross-sector departments to collaboratively improve the knowledge base that underpins SDOH materials ■ Engage community members and leaders in sharing their lived experiences, to help your HD gain a better understanding of SDOH that affect your community ■ Retain legal consultants to build staff members' and leadership's understanding of legal principles and processes that affect health
 Formulating & Developing (36–45)	HD formulates a strategic plan to incorporate new knowledge into existing materials and build understanding of SDOH, law, and policy among leadership and staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop internal staff trainings on SDOH, law, and policy ■ Incorporate knowledge learned from community members and additional research into training materials ■ Incorporate discussions of structural discrimination into internal discussions ■ Develop a strategic plan to update and review content related to SDOH in documents, materials, etc. ■ Create shared definitions for <i>health equity</i> and <i>social determinants of health</i> for consistent use within the HD, with administration, and with other agencies ■ Formulate a method of soliciting feedback on HD content from community-led groups and incorporating that feedback into the HD's SDOH plan ■ Develop a SDOH, law, and policy curriculum as part of new staff onboarding ■ Formulate a database of resources, updated information, and definitions related to SDOH ■ Formulate a policy resource on policy, law, and government structure ■ Consult with cross-sector partners to ensure proper understanding of content-specific areas of SDOH
 Implementing & Disseminating (46–55)	HD leadership and staff implement new strategies and methods to improve the HD's knowledge base on SDOH, law, and policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Host internal trainings on existing and new content related to SDOH for all new and existing staff ■ Incorporate new knowledge on SDOH, law, and policy into strategic plans and frameworks ■ Disseminate information on the policy process and on pending policies/legislation that affect SDOH to community members and partners ■ Disseminate resources and materials to improve the knowledge base on SDOH, law, and policy to staff, partners, and community members

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 Evaluating & Reflecting (56–65)	HD continually audits the department for gaps in understanding and areas for knowledge improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lend the HD's expertise to development of future policies and legislation addressing SDOH ▪ Audit internal and external department work products for gaps in understanding or inconsistencies related to SDOH ▪ Gather staff and community feedback on updated content related to SDOH, law, and policy ▪ Ensure that updated content in staff materials accurately reflects community demographics ▪ Host leadership and staff meetings to reflect on new shared understanding of SDOH, law, and policy
 Sustaining & Adapting (66–75)	HD develops systems to continue educating their leadership and staff and pursues partnerships with key decision makers and other departments to build interagency understanding of SDOH, law, and policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Share content and knowledge on SDOH among broad partnerships across departments ▪ Continually audit trainings and other materials for up-to-date understanding of SDOH and periodically enlist outside experts/consultants to assist with this task ▪ Identify new ways to solicit and incorporate community feedback on the HD's understanding of SDOH or its materials dealing with SDOH ▪ Adapt trainings on SDOH in light of the constantly changing social and political environment






Partnerships & Engagement


Stage of Readiness	Description	Suggested Activities
 Identifying & Researching (15–25)	HD recognizes the need to expand partnerships and community engagement and identify potential partnerships that could assist in addressing SDOH through law and policy solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Research laws and policies that have affected health equity and SDOH in the community ■ Identify local groups that represent communities most affected by health inequities ■ Identify groups in the community that can collaborate to address SDOH ■ Identify internal government partners that address – or could potentially address – SDOH ■ Research strategies for effective community engagement and collaboration ■ Research models of decision making that focus on equity and inclusion of diverse perspectives
 Empowering & Engaging (26–35)	HD engages and builds diverse partnerships among leadership, community members, nonprofit organizations, other government sectors, and mission-aligned organizations geared toward using law and policy to address SDOH.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Regularly attend community meetings of groups most affected by health inequities ■ Set up consistent and regular meetings with trusted community leaders ■ Establish cross-departmental relationships within the government to discuss health equity and SDOH work and opportunities for collaboration, especially on policy and legal work ■ Establish relationships with partners in various sectors
 Formulating & Developing (36–45)	HD formulates a partnership and engagement plan to develop collaborative efforts to address SDOH through law and policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Establish a steering committee for community coalitions/partnerships to address SDOH ■ Develop shared goals and actions to address SDOH and health equity through law and policy tools ■ Develop a decision-making model in which the community is an equal partner in all collaborations ■ Develop a set of decision-making criteria for the HD that gives significant weight to health equity, SDOH, and community input
 Implementing & Disseminating (46–55)	HD implements and reports on collaborative efforts, ensuring that all staff involved are adequately trained and are able to continually share feedback.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Regularly provide training opportunities for partners to learn about the policymaking process, health equity, and SDOH ■ Establish and implement an internal Health in All Policies approach ■ Launch a community coalition that focuses on specific SDOH ■ Publish and speak on the effects of law and policies on SDOH and communities
 Evaluating & Reflecting (56–65)	HD hosts consistent meetings with partners to obtain feedback on existing partnerships, share data, discuss barriers or challenges, and adapt to any changes in shared resources or capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participate in or disseminate partners' surveys, to further collaborative efforts ■ Implement agreements to share data among relevant partners that are working in collaboration ■ Track the effects of collaborative efforts on SDOH ■ Evaluate the implementation and effects of policy and legal work, and update policies and laws as needed
 Sustaining & Adapting (66–75)	HD discusses strategies for strengthening existing partnerships, as well as new opportunities for partnerships and collaborations to meet the evolving needs of its community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Have sustainable and diverse funding to compensate community members for their time and expertise ■ Have sustainable and diverse funding to support community coalitions/partnerships' legal and policy work on SDOH ■ Develop collaborative model policies for communities to address SDOH ■ Develop methodology to identify, engage, and collaborate with new partners as community challenges arise, demographics shift, and the sociopolitical environment changes

Data for Action

Stage of Readiness	Description	Suggested Activities
 Identifying & Researching (15–25)	HD recognizes the importance of data in addressing SDOH and begins to research and identify the resources necessary to support strong data infrastructure related to SDOH data, law, and policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify needed areas in which to build out data infrastructure and legal/policy data ■ Research and identify key SDOH data categories that can provide valuable information to communities ■ Identify diverse partners to engage who might collect valuable data on SDOH
 Empowering & Engaging (26–35)	HD begins to engage key partners to advocate for changes to data infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Emphasize to key partners and leadership the importance of legal data and legal epidemiology concepts in addressing systems-level change and health inequities ■ Engage leaders to advocate for prioritizing the modernization of data infrastructure capacity and resources ■ Build cross-sector partnerships to facilitate the exchange of ideas, priorities, and resources related to SDOH and legal data
 Formulating & Developing (36–45)	HD begins to develop a strategic framework for building out SDOH and/or legal data infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop a data framework or work plan that aims to work across diverse quantitative and qualitative datasets ■ Receive input from community members on the data collection process, data analysis, and overall decisions related to data ■ Involve diverse sectors in collecting necessary legal data to evaluate laws and policies that affect health ■ Formulate a plan for legal evaluation and mapping to study existing health inequities
 Implementing & Disseminating (46–55)	HD implements and disseminates new data activities to improve data collection and analysis, to ensure equitable data strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Train staff, community members, and partners on data methodology and database before implementation ■ Ensure that data sharing, internally and externally, aligns with local and state privacy policies ■ Consider innovative methods of collaboration with internal and external partners to improve data shareability in a timely and efficient manner
 Evaluating & Reflecting (56–65)	HD performs data analysis and evaluation, reflecting on how to interpret and share data findings to more accurately portray the effects of laws and policies that directly influence SDOH.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Disaggregate data by key demographic variables to accurately capture specific community health outcomes and structural barriers ■ Contextualize data findings by including historical, social, economic, and social factors ■ Share data findings with community members, partners, and leadership
 Sustaining & Adapting (66–75)	HD shifts to thinking about how to sustain and further develop new data infrastructure activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Incorporate SDOH data benchmarks into strategic planning for public health initiatives and programs ■ Explore different funding strategies to sustain and modernize data infrastructure ■ Allocate funding and resources to recruit, hire, and train data specialists (e.g., legal epidemiologists, data specialists, statisticians, health economists)

Framing & Communication

Stage of Readiness	Description	Suggested Activities
 Identifying & Researching (15–25)	HD has begun to identify and research resources on best framing and communication practices in relation to SDOH.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify existing messaging on SDOH within the HD and from other departments ■ Research best practices in framing and communication about SDOH ■ Research best practices on framing and messaging of policy and law concepts to partners and the community
 Empowering & Engaging (26–35)	HD engages leadership, partners, and community members to gain a better understanding of how to tailor and frame messaging for different partner audiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Engage an outside consultant to conduct internal training on asset-based framing, especially in relation to communities served by the HD ■ Audit existing HD communications for messaging that emphasizes communities' challenges before identifying and uplifting the community's assets and aspirations ■ Review internal and external messaging on the effect of law and policy on health outcomes ■ Engage a consultant or a community-led group to assist in crafting strategic communication materials ■ Host informal community gatherings and listening sessions to get feedback on the HD's proposed messaging on SDOH. To the extent possible, compensate and credit community groups for any contributions to the HD's strategic communications plan. ■ Build a foundation for SDOH messaging by incorporating discussions of asset-based framing in internal meetings
 Formulating & Developing (36–45)	HD formulates an internal and external strategic communication plan to promote legal/policy tools and frame health equity principles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop a strategic SDOH communications plan for staff and leaders ■ Formulate a collaborative communications strategy for cross-sector and community partners ■ Develop a strategy to foster a culture of feedback in which staff are encouraged to reflect on the HD's past messaging and suggest ways to incorporate more effective framing of disparities in health outcomes ■ Incorporate community feedback into a strategic communication plan that addresses framing, language, and cultural humility in relation to SDOH ■ Formulate a messaging strategy for policymakers that eliminates outdated or harmful messaging about affected communities
 Implementing & Disseminating (46–55)	HD begins to disseminate its strategic communication plan to staff, leadership, and partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Disseminate your HD's strategic communications plan through a series of internal and/or cross-departmental trainings, discussions, and events, to encourage discourse on messaging for SDOH ■ Educate and train staff on new communication strategies related to SDOH, law, and policy ■ Hire professionals to translate publicly disseminated documents into languages spoken in the communities served by the HD ■ Provide closed captioning for any new audiovisual material, and revise or re-record past materials to include closed captioning ■ Promote new framing strategies among lawmaking bodies and policymakers
 Evaluating & Reflecting (56–65)	HD collects feedback from staff, community, and partners after implementing its strategic communications plan. Additionally, HD develops strategies to incorporate feedback into any revisions to the plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Solicit feedback from partners on your HD's strategic SDOH communications plan ■ Gather feedback from community partners related to messaging on SDOH, law, and policy ■ Foster relationships with policymakers that thrive on two-way feedback on messaging related to SDOH ■ Create a system to measure the efficacy of the HD's messaging on SDOH ■ Adjust and rework the strategic communications plan to incorporate community feedback

Stage of Readiness	Description	Suggested Activities
 Sustaining & Adapting (66–75)	<p>HD develops systems to continually train leadership and staff on framing SDOH and to solicit and integrate community feedback into its communications. Additionally, all materials are routinely reviewed and, if necessary, revised in accordance with the strategic SDOH communications plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regularly update training materials and both internal and external communications related to SDOH to reflect the latest best practices and understanding of SDOH ▪ Periodically review SDOH-related communications for harmful or counterproductive messaging, and have a system in place for continued revision ▪ Continually review and revise your HD’s strategic SDOH communications plan ▪ Host informational briefings with lawmaking bodies, and invite health equity communications experts to speak on the importance of accurate and effective framing of SDOH ▪ Empower leadership and staff to correct policymakers who use outdated, harmful, or incorrect framing related to health equity ▪ Adapt communication materials based on evolving community demographics, community assets, challenges, and socio-political environments