



2016-2019

Environmental Health Watch Strategic Plan

Introduction

A recent New York Times article¹ spotlighted that an “estimated 7.7 percent of the nation’s black children younger than 6 had blood lead levels above five micrograms per deciliter. But in the Glenville neighborhood nearly 27 percent of children tested in 2014 – 286 children in all – exceeded that standard.”

The article followed a series of investigative stories by The Plain Dealer. Both publications relied on Environmental Health Watch (EHW) for insight into the health hazards afflicting Cleveland residents. For decades, EHW has been quietly working behind the scenes to address health hazards in the urban environment through education, advocacy, and direct services.

When the city of Cleveland lost its eligibility to apply for federal healthy homes funds, EHW successfully secured this funding and helped manage the program in partnership with the city. Working to identify and eradicate health hazards is central to EHW’s mission and pioneering work, which has been recognized and replicated nationally.

While urban areas with aging infrastructures like the Flint, Michigan have captured national attention, children in Cleveland have been suffering for decades. With the national spotlight on Cleveland, EHW is well positioned to expand its proven model and engage more diverse audiences to eradicate health hazards and create healthy homes and sustainable communities. Through support from the George Gund Foundation and the St. Luke’s Foundation, EHW embarked on a strategic planning process to create a roadmap to achieve and execute the following vision and mission.

Our Vision

A future where all children, families, and individuals are living in healthy homes and sustainable communities

Our Mission

To create healthy homes and sustainable communities by identifying and removing hazards, engaging people, and advancing equitable environmental solutions.

Our Values

Collaboration

We believe that the enormity of our vision is impossible to accomplish alone and rely on our partners we work with to achieve results.

Community

We believe in building community by educating and inspiring people to be advocates and protect themselves and each other from environmental threats.

Expertise

We believe in advancing evidence-based solutions through all systems to ensure the replicability and expansion of our mission into all communities

Integrity

We believe in being honest, transparent, professional, and non-discriminatory in our work.

Justice

We believe that promoting health equity and environmental justice permeates everything we do.

Leadership

We believe in being bold and dynamic as we actively pursue innovative solutions that change lives.

Sustainability

We believe in promoting regenerative environments and communities by supporting continuous enhancement of health, justice, and prosperity, while maintaining respect for the natural, social, cultural, and historic value of place.

Process Overview

EHW engaged Strategy Design Partners (SDP) to guide its strategic planning process, working through a Mission to Message process that focused on the organization's mission, audiences, goals, strategies, and more.

The EHW board and staff participated in numerous meetings, including weekend and evening sessions, that involved reviewing extensive research, examining current realities, and establishing the organization's strategic priorities.

A steering committee was formed to guide the process that included nine Board members. Initially, a smaller group was envisioned to lead the process, but because of the excitement and commitment from its members the full board participated in the entire process.

SDP gathered the following research to inform the plan:

- Reviewing the current code of regulations, past and current budgets, grant applications, and past strategic planning documents
- Engaging 120 people through one-on-one interviews with funders, community partners, both locally and nationally, city and county public officials, and community members and an online survey.

SDP then facilitated three full board sessions to analyze this research, review the past and current state of the organization, including program philosophy and business model, and develop the vision, mission, values, goals, and strategies.

Goals



Goal One:

The EHW Healthy Homes Model is adopted and recognized as the standard for home health inspections in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County



Goal Two:

A convener and leader in engaging and inspiring people to advance sustainable solutions in their communities



Goal Three:

A stable structure, sound business model, and recognized brand that support daily operations and secure the long-term financial health of the organization

Goal One

The EHW Healthy Homes Model is adopted and recognized as the standard for home health inspections in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County

Strategies:

- A** Package and promote the EHW Healthy Homes Model
- B** Identify target neighborhoods in Cleveland to implement the Healthy Homes Model
- C** Advocate for local and state policy solutions that legislate and deploy the necessary resources and tools for implementing the EHW Healthy Homes Model
- D** Convene a community-wide task force that creates, adopts, and drives an action plan to remove home health hazards throughout Cleveland and Cuyahoga county

Tactics:

- | A | B | C | D |
|---|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Refine and formalize the EHW Healthy Homes Model• Create a audit tool for consistent application• Establish the EHW Healthy Homes Certificate as the city's and county's only accepted designation for a healthy home• Develop a training guide and program to provide train the trainers on the EHW healthy homes model• Finalize, trademark, brand, and promote the EHW Healthy Homes Model | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inventory housing in each target area and prioritize inspection schedule (refer to Thriving Communities Institute, city, and other data)• Determine key partners (hospitals, foundations, etc.) to support targeted neighborhood efforts• Educate individuals and families on identifying home health risks and how to make do it yourself interventions• Remediate environmental hazards in identified homes• Determine evaluation metrics to measure success | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leverage existing relationships with partners and develop new strategic partners to raise awareness• Launch campaigns to increase awareness on the need and urgency for treating home health hazards• Educate local, state, and federal policy makers and centers of influence on the social determinates and outcomes of unhealthy housing and the current crisis in Cleveland• Expand the model to other appropriate jurisdictions | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creation and implementation of a lead safe rental registration program• Monitor the enforcement of the Healthy Homes certification• Creation and implementation of a lead safe rental registration program• Advocate for the resources and structure to support pro-active inspections |



Goal Two

A convener and leader in engaging and inspiring people to advance sustainable solutions in their communities



Strategies:

- A** Create an environmental justice resident network that will identify evolving priorities and needs emerging at the grassroots level in order to target strategic organizational programming and develop and refine a policy agenda
- B** Identify, evaluate and implement equitable solutions based on community priorities in order to address hazards in the natural, social and built environment that may adversely impact human health

Tactics:

A

- Educate and inspire local residents to get involved in learning and applying sustainable solutions
- Target and prioritize high impact neighborhoods
- Provide meaningful opportunities for residents to gather and learn to advocate for themselves
- Identify policy needs and the convener or local, state, and national policy makers to support an equitable and just sustainability policy and key to the implementation
- Hold conferences, planning meetings, and other forums to educate and organize people

B

- Pursue opportunities to further local and national knowledge and research on environmental health hazards and strategies.
- Align program, funding applications and policy initiatives with identified and emerging priorities.



Goal Three

A stable structure, sound business model, and recognized brand that support operations and secures long-term financial health



Strategies:

- A** Enhance the overall governance structure and align to strategic plan
- B** Update and align staffing structure to support strategic plan
- C** Develop a three-year business model that aligns revenues and expenses to the strategic plan
- D** Develop a relevant and visible brand accessible and demanded by audiences throughout Northeast Ohio and beyond

Tactics:

- | | | | |
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| A <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update and finalize code of regulations, duties and expectations, and conflict of interest documents• Activate committees and approve committee charters• Formalize board and committee meeting schedule• Conduct annual board evaluations• Perform annual evaluation of the executive director• Establish framework and process for determining qualities and traits of new board members• Actively recruit needed board members and establish on boarding process | B <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify gaps or challenges in current structure and capacity needed to execute the strategic plan• Update current position descriptions• Explore opportunities to build staff capacity• Obtain additional certifications/ accreditations• Explore the feasibility of partnering with local colleges universities to support in program evaluations | C <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate the current budget and determine the ideal budget required to execute the strategic plan• Secure funding sources to support key short-term strategic priorities• Create a fund development plan and program that pinpoints sources to support current and future operations• Evaluate opportunities to scale the model to targeted communities and surrounding suburbs• Monetize training program and market to key audiences | D <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update and unify EHW's brand with concise, consistent, and compelling messaging• Infuse messaging through website, print collateral, newsletters, social media, and other communication vehicles• Launch a new website that serves as the central platform to which all communications are directed• Create a social media plan and calendar• Build and manage a database for record keeping and communication that allows for audience segmentation• Leverage proactive social media, newsletters, e-blasts, and neighborhood meetings as platforms for increasing awareness and developing relationships with key audiences |
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