Good health is possible when people are surrounded by communities that support their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.

Maintaining good health is easier when people are surrounded by good choices. To encourage healthy choices, Kaiser Permanente supports innovative efforts to bring nutritious foods and safe physical activity to local schools, workplaces and neighborhoods.

Our Community Health Initiatives support access to healthy, affordable food and activity-promoting environments. Recognizing that healthy choices need to be supported by healthy neighborhoods, schools and workplaces, our work also addresses community economic vitality, environmental sustainability, neighborhood safety and social and emotional wellness.

We work with community-based organizations and residents to translate their vision for healthy communities into visible, concrete changes — and ultimately healthier neighborhoods.

Kaiser Permanente’s work with Community Health Initiatives is integral to our overall Community Benefit commitment — to be proactive about keeping people healthy by sharing our expertise, time and passion, in addition to our grant dollars.

Healthy Eating Active Living Collaboratives

Healthier lives begin with community environments that support access to healthy food and safe, physical activity. To support these environments, we are the principal sponsor or co-funder of more than 50 community health initiatives in California, Colorado, Georgia, the Pacific Northwest and the Washington, D.C. area. These initiatives are a major element of our Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) program — a multifaceted strategy to address the obesity epidemic and other health issues that can result from poor nutrition and lack of exercise.

Many organizations benefit from HEAL grants to make healthy food and physical activity available in “food desert” neighborhoods and underserved communities. Grantees include public health departments, community-based organizations and coalitions, advocacy organizations that drive state and local policy agendas and school districts implementing school wellness plans, among others.

Making Schools Healthier

Through our Thriving Schools initiative, we work to improve the health of students, staff and teachers in K-12 schools through efforts focused on healthy eating, active living, school employee wellness and positive school climate.

Creating Healthy Work Environments

To help companies in our communities encourage their employees to be healthier, we bring health promotion programs into the workplace, such as healthy meeting tools and physical activity programs, as well as environmental improvements, such as healthier cafeteria food and signage that encourages employees to be more active. We also support our own employees’ health by implementing similar changes in our offices, hospitals and medical facilities.
Healthy Eating in Hard Times

In the face of economic challenges, many low-income families find themselves relying heavily on food assistance programs. Kaiser Permanente provides grants to food banks, food pantries and soup kitchens to improve the nutritional quality of the food they distribute to clients. We also partner with organizations working to improve access to food stamps and other federal nutrition programs so that eligible families are able to stretch their food budgets to incorporate more fresh, healthy foods.

Guiding Local Governments

Through our support of the Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Cities Campaign, we work with community partners and municipal leaders to harness the power of local governments and policymakers to factor health considerations into decisions about land use, transportation and food access.

The Convergence Partnership

The changes we want to see in our communities are so broad and deep that no one organization could achieve them alone. In 2006, Kaiser Permanente co-founded the Convergence Partnership with the aim of strengthening and accelerating collaborative efforts among practitioners, policymakers, funders and advocates from different fields. The Partnership provides financial assistance, thought leadership and coordination needed to support community partners in creating environments that encourage healthy eating and active living.

Leveraging Organizational Assets

We seek to leverage the unique assets of our organization to help accelerate the important policy work taking place in our communities. Passionate physicians within the organization regularly work to ensure that health impacts are considered when public policy decisions about transportation, land use and education are being made. We also share health educational materials, research findings, media resources and other information with communities to support their initiatives.

Building the Field

A rigorous evaluation is a central part of our Community Health Initiatives efforts and helps build the evidence base for what works so that we can share it with others. Our evaluation team has designed an ongoing, evaluation methodology and approach, which we call “Dose” that has become fundamental to our work. Experience has taught us that strategies for improving health among populations can be designed and implemented in ways that maximize their reach and strength – their dose – and thereby the likelihood of seeing health improvements at the population level.

If you would like to learn more about our commitment to our communities and our charitable activities, visit kp.org/communitybenefit.