

A Blueprint for Strong Families and Communities

Public Policy Platform



Alliance

*for Strong Families
and Communities*

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The Alliance for Strong Families and Communities believes that our country thrives when everyone is able to reach their full potential. Our strategic action network of hundreds of social sector organizations across the nation works with millions of people each day to help them build, maintain, and restore their physical, emotional, social, and economic well-being. The knowledgeable staff and leaders from our field of community-based organizations are committed to achieving a healthy and equitable society. Our network holds itself accountable to ensuring people have equal access and opportunity to the tools and resources needed to thrive over the course of a lifetime.

Our Foundation and Distinction

All people need to be supported by families; strong families fuel vibrant communities and economies. As the needs of families and communities today are varied and interconnected, it is important to acknowledge that building well-being requires approaches that are diverse and cross-cutting. There are no singular or simple solutions.

To guide our policy focus and collective advocacy efforts, the Alliance network undertook a series of conversations to identify the foundational and structural building blocks that all families and communities need to foster well-being over the lifespan. We reviewed trend-line data in the areas of health, education, economic security, poverty, safety, and security. Through the process, two main issues emerged:

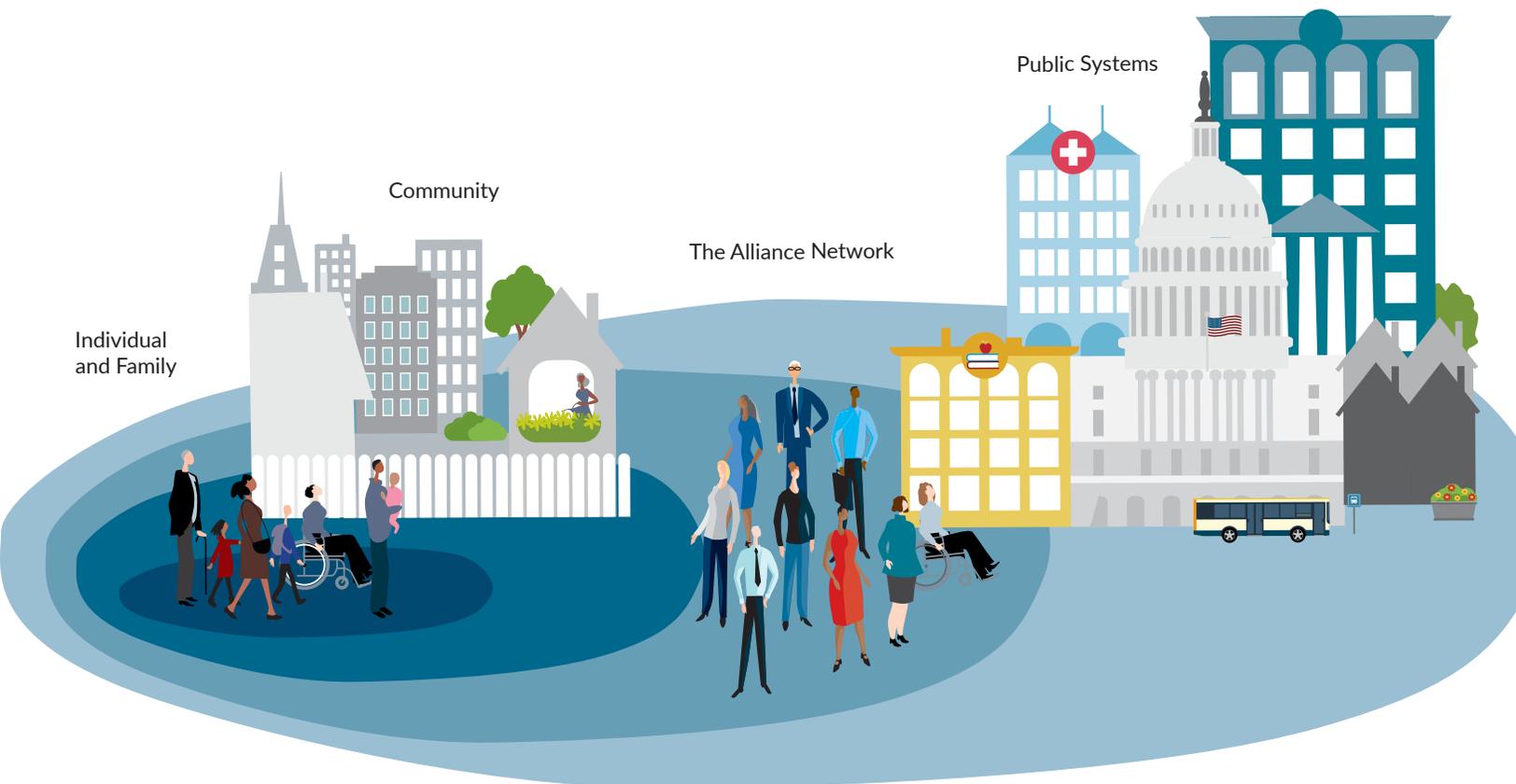
- The prevalence of disparities, largely driven by race and socio-economic status
- Whether communities are able to provide equal opportunity and access to the resources and supports that all families need to thrive

As members of the health and human service sector, we work at the nexus of people, community, and systems. This gives us a unique vantage point to articulate the public policies that ensure people, families, and communities thrive. As members of the communities where we do our work, we interact daily with the individuals and families we serve, giving us an up-close understanding of the challenges they face, insight into their potential, and the intersecting policies and systems that can either accelerate or thwart their progress. These on-the-ground insights, combined with our knowledge of research-based approaches to building well-being, equip us to serve as effective partners with policymakers to build the well-being of our nation across generations.

Many of the families and communities we serve face hurdles that impede their well-being. Persistent intergenerational disparities and life's storms that can affect any of us, like extended illness, job loss, breakdown in the family unit, violence, and natural disaster, can be insurmountable.

We know every family and community is more likely to achieve their full potential when they have a strong foundation that enables them to thrive, no matter their current situation, socio-economic status, or geographic location. The following represents the building blocks that are essential for creating and sustaining the well-being of families and communities:

- Employment that provides sustainable income, economic mobility, and comprehensive workforce supports
- Affordable, preventive, fully integrated health care, regardless of income
- Healthy, livable homes in safe, secure neighborhoods
- Safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments, including quality care options across the lifespan
- Educational success that begins with nurturing and supportive families and continues with early childhood development through post-secondary advancement



Our Commitment to Families and Communities

The Alliance for Strong Families and Communities seeks to promote transformational change to align and connect public policies that reflect a unified set of core values.

Engage All Voices

We recognize and respect the important role of all voices and viewpoints in the pursuit of policy change, with the paramount voice being the individuals and families who need and access social services and the social sector professionals who provide them. We see ourselves as a critical partner to families, communities, systems, policymakers, and the nation for building, supporting, and maintaining well-being.

Secure Access and Opportunity

We emphasize the need to advance programs and transparent approaches that will lead to equitable outcomes for all populations with a view to reducing the racial and economic disparities that undermine well-being and put our society at risk of missing out on people's full and vital contributions to our communities, our economy, and our civic life.

Bolster Prevention and Early Intervention

We advocate for the integration of strong prevention and early response strategies into all systems to proactively build family and community strengths that are the solid foundation and sturdy structures for well-being, thereby reducing risk and the need for more complex and costly fixes down the road.

Accelerate Neuroscience Research

We maintain that policies should be results-driven and reflect an understanding of the most recent research on brain development and growth across the lifespan.

Place Individuals, Families, and Communities at the Center

We know that positive outcomes can be achieved when public systems and policymakers understand that individuals, families, and communities are interconnected, multi-generational, and possess their own strengths, hopes, and dreams.

Propel System Interdependency

We believe that when public systems—like health and human services, education, housing, child care, workforce development, transportation—work together, individuals, families, and communities achieve improved outcomes. We support policy changes that modernize public systems through design or re-design, drive cross-system functioning and financing, and remove systemic and structural barriers that contribute to family and community instability.

