



ChangeLabSolutions

2025–2030

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Contents

2 Letter from the CEO

4 About ChangeLab Solutions

Mission

Vision

Guiding Principles

Values

6 Why Our Work Is Critical

How We Support Communities

7 The Foundational Blueprint: Addressing Structural Drivers of Inequity

Setting the Foundation

Putting the Frameworks Into
Practice

9 Our Roles & Partners

The Public Health Ecosystem

Our Roles

Who We Work With

10 Theory of Action

11 Strategic Approaches in Action

12 Our Goals

Letter from the CEO



CHANGELAB SOLUTIONS

is a national leader in public health law and policy, advancing equitable, community-centered solutions to improve health and well-being. Founded on the belief that law and policy are among the most powerful tools for systems change, we bring

together a multidisciplinary staff with broad expertise in law, policy, and public health in pursuit of health, equity, and justice.

Since our founding, we have worked at the intersection of public health, law, and policy, recognizing that the decisions shaping our communities also shape our health. Public health systems, leaders, and institutions influence our well-being in countless ways, from responding to emergencies and preventing chronic disease to addressing the social, economic, and environmental conditions that affect health outcomes. Because law and policy play a central role in these efforts, strong partnerships across diverse sectors are essential to creating healthy, thriving communities.

At the same time, we need to acknowledge that the fields of law and public health have contributed to discrimination, exclusion, and other harmful practices that have created and perpetuated inequities. Addressing these structural drivers of inequity requires confronting this history and transforming the systems that sustain it. **ChangeLab Solutions is committed to helping dismantle inequitable laws, policies, and practices and replace them with equitable, community-driven solutions that promote health and opportunity for all.**

Through it all,
ChangeLab Solutions
remains focused on
supporting communities
and public-sector leaders
with innovative, legally
sound, and equity-
centered strategies that
advance community-
driven policy change.

The past five years have underscored both the urgency and complexity of this work. The COVID-19 pandemic, growing political polarization, funding constraints, and declining trust in public institutions exposed and deepened long-standing inequities while placing new pressures on public health systems and governance.

Against this backdrop, this **2025–2030 Strategic Framework** sets the direction for our long-term commitment to addressing the power imbalances and structural inequities that produce poor health. It introduces our **Theory of Action**, which describes the roles ChangeLab plays in the public health ecosystem and the approaches we take to achieve both short- and long-term outcomes that transform systems and structures to advance health equity.

Going forward, we are deepening our focus on community-led policymaking and strengthening how laws and policies are implemented through collaborative partnerships and effective governance practices. We will continue to develop equitable legal and policy strategies, translate complex ideas into practical tools and trainings, and support communities in turning policy goals into meaningful action. At its core, this Framework is designed to help our audiences understand who ChangeLab Solutions is, what we do, how we do it, and why it matters.

In solidarity,



Sarah de Guia
CEO, ChangeLab Solutions

The *2025–2030 Strategic Framework* was developed by ChangeLab Solutions.

ChangeLab Solutions is a nonprofit organization that provides legal information on matters relating to public health. The legal information in this document does not constitute legal advice or legal representation. For legal advice, readers should consult a lawyer in their state.

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About ChangeLab Solutions

CHANGELAB SOLUTIONS

is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization that uses law and policy as tools to advance health equity. We partner with communities across the country to improve health and opportunity by changing harmful laws, policies, and systems. Our interdisciplinary team works with community organizations, governments, and local institutions to design and implement equitable and practical policy solutions to complex health challenges.

Mission

Building healthier communities for all through equitable laws & policies

Steadfast In Our Mission

Since our early work in tobacco control in the 1990s, ChangeLab Solutions has helped shape healthier environments across the country. Our model policies, legal and policy expertise, and practical guidance have contributed to lasting policy shifts, from reducing tobacco use and sugary drink consumption to strengthening school wellness programs, housing protections, and other policies that support community health. Throughout our history, we have made policy change more accessible by translating complex legal language into clear, actionable guidance for those working to improve community health through policy change. Learn about [our history](#).

Vision

We envision healthy, equitable communities where every person is economically secure and can attain their full health potential, because:

- Laws and policies are equity-focused, inclusive, and just;
- Systems and institutions, including government, facilitate meaningful participation and work to eliminate unjust disparities; and
- Investments prioritize people and places most affected by injustices and inequities.

Guiding Principles

We approach our work with the following understanding:

- Legal and policy changes are effective levers for health equity.
- Communities must be at the center of policy design and implementation.
- Capacity building leads to sustained advocacy and policy implementation.
- Systems change requires cross-sector collaboration.

Values



Justice



Learning



Collaboration



Community



Integrity

Why Our Work Is Critical



At ChangeLab Solutions, we believe that the most powerful risk factors in health are laws and policies that have perpetuated the legacy of racism, discrimination, and segregation throughout our nation's history. Using the tools of law and policy, we can undo health inequities.

Health inequities are not accidental. They result from policy choices that have historically reinforced discrimination, concentrated disadvantage, and created unequal access to opportunity. These structural drivers of inequity – including racism, poverty, and imbalances in power – are embedded in laws, policies, and governance systems. Grounded in these realities, **three core beliefs** define our theory of change and underpin our work to advance health equity.

Law is power. We understand how law works and how it can be used to redistribute power so that communities disproportionately affected by inequities have choice, opportunity, and agency in their health. When communities and advocates have the tools to navigate legal and policy systems, they are better positioned to influence decisions, advance equitable solutions, and hold institutions accountable.

Equitable policymaking improves health outcomes. We work to increase adoption and implementation of laws, policies, and practices that advance health equity. This means supporting partners not only in designing equitable policies, but also in adopting, defending, and implementing them, even in complex and rapidly changing political environments.

Systems change is possible. When communities and their partners understand what is legally possible and how to navigate power dynamics within systems, they can pursue and sustain lasting change. By expanding access to legal and policy knowledge, we help turn community priorities into durable, equity-centered policy outcomes.

How We Support Communities

ChangeLab Solutions is a trusted partner in advancing health equity through law and policy. We support changemakers to engage in policy change by turning ideas into action through expert guidance, practical tools, and strategies rooted in equity. We are known for making complex legal and policy issues easy to understand, increasing the capacity for policy change among local and state government staff and community leaders.

Our Impact

We partner with leaders and organizations across the nonprofit, government, education, and health care sectors in all 50 states and Washington, DC. Through this work, we help build capacity, advance policy goals, and implement equitable solutions that improve health and well-being.

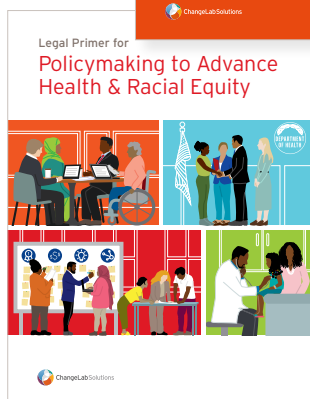
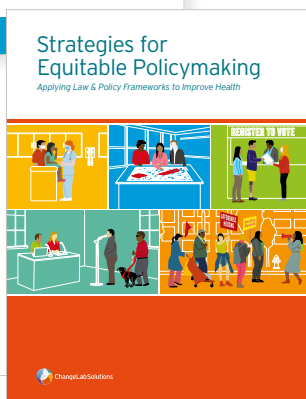
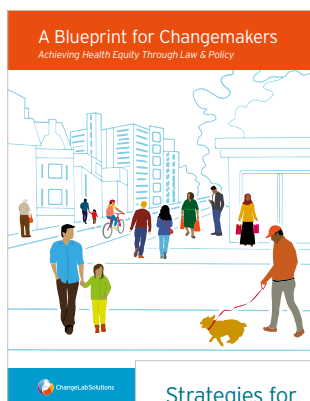
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The Foundational Blueprint: Addressing Structural Drivers of Inequity

Achieving health equity requires more than improving health outcomes; it requires addressing the structural conditions that shape opportunity, access, and well-being. Recognizing that new approaches were needed to intentionally close health gaps and advance equitable outcomes, in 2019 we released *A Blueprint for Changemakers*, a foundational resource that established a framework for addressing the structural drivers of health inequities through law and policy.

From planning and investment decisions to regulatory and enforcement practices, these and other governance structures determine how power is distributed and exercised in decision-making that shapes access to healthy food, safe housing, quality education, and essential transportation – and, ultimately, health and well-being. Participation, partnerships, and community empowerment are elements of governance structures that promote health equity.



Setting the Foundation

Since the *Blueprint's* publication, we have expanded and deepened its policy frameworks to further guide changemakers as they navigate today's complex governance and polical landscapes.

- A Blueprint for Changemakers: Achieving Health Equity Through Law & Policy (2019)
- Strategies for Equitable Policymaking: Applying Law & Policy Frameworks to Improve Health (2023)
- Legal Primer for Policymaking to Advance Health & Racial Equity (2026)

Putting the Frameworks Into Practice

We continue to expand our approach to addressing structural drivers of health and racial equity through the development of practical policy tools, strategies, and guidance across three interconnected areas.

Supporting Good Governance for Health Equity

These resources offer frameworks and guiding questions to support government staff and decision-makers in their governance strategies:

- Long-Range Planning for Health, Equity & Prosperity: A primer for local governments (2019)
- Equitable Enforcement to Achieve Health Equity: An introductory guide for policymakers & practitioners (2020)
- Public Health Legal Authority for Good: A Roadmap for Practitioners and Policy Partners (2025)

“One lesson I’ve learned is that folks don’t understand how much time policy change takes. ChangeLab’s trainings can help you accelerate your work to reach your policy goals. Their approach is positive and solutions-orientated – it helps bridge the gap.”

*Ifeoma C. Udoh, PhD,
Black Women’s Health
Imperative (BWHI)*

“Through the work of our rental housing initiative, ChangeLab provided critical guidance, resources, and coaching to help us develop the capacity to understand the problem, identify solutions, and develop a roadmap to address the challenge.”

*Ellen Noguera Hill,
Planning and Urban
Development Department,
in Monroe, Louisiana*

Advancing Law & Policy Strategies to Address Structural Drivers

These tools help demystify complex legal terms and doctrines to support policy change. Additionally, they are evidence-based, and include instructive policy menus and ideas to support community-led action.

- Assessing & Addressing Preemption: A toolkit for local policy campaigns (2020)
- Legal & Policy Strategies for Health Care & Food System Partners: Creating just & resilient food systems through cross-sector partnerships (2021)
- Justice on the Menu: Legal & policy strategies to address structural discrimination in the US food system (2024)
- Advancing Racial Equity in Rural Communities: Legal & Policy Strategies to Support Opportunity, Health & Justice (2023)

Elevating Community-Centered Approaches

This collection supports strategies for intentional community engagement and relationship building for a more community-centered policy process.

- The Planner’s Playbook: A Community-Centered Approach to Improving Health & Equity (2020)
- Community Health Workbook (2023)
- Supporting Equitable Community Engagement: A resource for state health departments (2024)

This selection is just a portion of the resources ChangeLab Solutions has to offer. Learn more about all of [our work areas](#).



“ChangeLab’s track record of partnership with local governments is unmatched. They are respected as a trustworthy, authoritative source of information and evidence, as well as a font of creative ideas for using the law to promote public health goals.”

*Michelle Mello,
Stanford Law School*

The Public Health Ecosystem

Reducing health inequities cannot be achieved within a single field; it requires collaboration across a diverse ecosystem. Lasting policy change grows out of interdisciplinary collaboration and aligns the efforts of many sectors in order to ensure that they are broadly supported and implemented. Local governments specifically play a central role in creating and testing strategies to promote health equity. We work to strengthen the public health ecosystem by fostering partnerships, centering community leadership, and ensuring our tools and resources are accessible to all.

Our Roles

We make law and policy accessible, equipping changemakers with the knowledge, tools, and capacity to advance equitable systems and practices to support healthy communities. To that end, ChangeLab describes our role in the ecosystem as:



Capacity Builder: We shape the public health field by equipping changemakers with knowledge, skills, and approaches to advance health equity through law and policy.



Change Strategist: We are a strategic partner to guide changemakers in developing, adopting, and implementing state and local laws and policies to support equitable systems and institutions.



Connector: We serve as a resource hub, bridge builder, and translator between changemakers across sectors to drive systems-level change.

Who We Work With

We collaborate nationwide at the local, state, and national levels. Our partners span sectors and disciplines, including:

- Community-based organizations
- Public health and policy organizations and associations
- Government leaders and staff
- Power building and advocacy organizations
- Foundations and philanthropic organizations
- Legal and civil rights organizations
- Health care and hospital systems
- Universities, researchers, and other academic institutions

We also partner with cross-sector collaborators such as civil rights, democracy, and issue-based organizations to deepen our impact and expand our collective reach. Learn more about our [funders and partners](#).

Theory of Action

Grounded in our core beliefs, ChangeLab Solutions' Theory of Action describes the roles we play and the approaches we take to achieve both short- and long-term outcomes that transform systems and structures to advance health equity.



Core Beliefs

Law is Power

Equitable policymaking improves health outcomes

Systems change is possible



Our Roles



Capacity Builder



Change Strategist



Connector



Strategic Approaches



Law and policy research and strategy



Capacity building for equitable law, policy, and governance



Collaboration and peer learning



Resource development and amplification of lessons



Five-Year Goals



Identifying innovative law and policy solutions



Supporting changemakers with policy adoption and implementation



Promoting decision-making and good governance practices



Strengthening systems that invest in communities



Visionary Outcomes

Transform systems and structures to advance health equity

Equitable policymaking processes

Inclusive governance practices

Strategic Approaches in Action



“ChangeLab’s focus is on policy development and implementation where success requires a constant feedback loop of learning. ChangeLab can help you understand all the policy levers, all the little pieces, and how they work together.”

*Sinsi Hernández-Cancio,
National Partnership for
Women & Families*

“ChangeLab Solutions provided our team with valuable tools for improving our partnerships and practices, and strategies for engaging our target population and addressing disparities, improving health equity.”

*Kevin Dick,
Northern Nevada
Public Health*

Throughout 2025-2030, ChangeLab Solutions **will focus on these four interconnected strategic approaches**. Recent examples illustrate how this work takes shape in practice.



Law and policy research and strategy

- Develop FAQs, briefings, and legal analysis to help practitioners navigate the impact of federal actions on public health practice
- Publish a blog series on Democracy & Governance
- Launch our Legal Primer for Policymaking to Advance Health & Racial Equity



Capacity building for equitable law, policy, and governance

- Offer trainings that build fundamental legal and policy knowledge and skill
- Develop a roadmap for practitioners and policy partners, Public Health Legal Authority for Good: Examples & Evidence
- Create a suite of practical policy resources for local health departments



Collaboration and peer learning

- Collaborate with the BUILD Health Challenge to advance community-led policy change
- Convene public health practitioners and government attorneys with Public Health Alliance to support relationship building to meet community health goals
- Work alongside Douglas County Health Department in Nebraska to address local health priorities



Resource development and amplification of lessons

- Explore community trust and access to information through our guide, Confronting Misinformation: Opportunities for law & policy innovation
- Hosting free webinars on a range of policy topics for both legal and non-legal audiences



"ChangeLab Solutions supports government and community leaders nationwide. Our strategic activities have been shaped by community partners, funders, and government leaders who are committed to supporting and protecting our democracy, improving health, and leading with equity. I am deeply proud of our staff, board, partners, and funders. ChangeLab is intentionally meeting this moment to support policy change for healthier, more equitable communities."

*Sarah de Guia,
CEO, ChangeLab Solutions*

Our long-term goal is to transform systems and structures so that they advance health equity.

Achieving health equity requires policymaking processes that center community voice, strengthen democratic participation, and ensure accountability in public decision-making. These efforts depend on governance practices that are transparent, inclusive, and responsive to the needs and priorities of communities.



To help achieve health equity, we are focused on accelerating the adoption, implementation, and sustainability of equitable laws, policies, and practices that improve health and well-being.



Over the next five years, we will focus on:



Identifying **innovative law & policy solutions** to support health equity and civil rights



Supporting changemakers with **adoption and implementation of equitable policy solutions** at the local and state levels



Promoting decision-making and **good governance practices** that center community voice and promote shared power



Strengthening **systems that invest in communities** by promoting policies that direct resources to repair harm, improve health and support opportunity.