



SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY
Social Policy Institute
School of Social Work



2020/2021 Annual Report

Mission

To bridge academia with government, business, and the community to increase individual, family and community well-being

Vision

Across the lifespan everyone is safe, educated, healthy, and well; with a sense of belonging, purpose, and opportunity to achieve their aspirations

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Dear Partners and Friends,

The Social Policy Institute's core mission is to bridge academia with government, business and the community to increase individual, family and community well-being. We engage, innovate and collaborate with public, private and community stakeholders to expand inclusion, equity and opportunity. With our partners we strive to create comprehensive family and community centered solutions to policy, program and practice issues.

This past Spring the Social Policy Institute passed a significant milestone—**5 years** of program operations! Since its inception in 2016, highlights include:

- Developed and implemented statewide and local **integrated learning systems** for:
 - In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) social workers, partners and stakeholders
 - Prevention and Wellness cross-sector partners through Strategies 2.0
 - Faith-based leaders and behavioral health professionals (Stepping Higher Training Academy)
- Published **Toolkits** to provide the evidence base, lift the voice of lived experience, and guide:
 - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Evaluation for Administrators and Practitioners
 - Role of Child Abuse Prevention Councils as key catalysts, conveners, and coordinators of prevention activities
- **Innovated Behavioral Health** by partnering with Transition-Aged Youth (TAY) and other stakeholders in using human centered design thinking to reduce stigma and increase access to care
- Supported three local **Age-Friendly Communities** (Chula Vista, La Mesa, City of San Diego)
- Led SDSU to become an **Age-Friendly University**, and home to the new Center for Excellence in Aging & Longevity (CEAL)
- Co-designed the **Breaking Barriers Series of Master Classes** that guide counties in system of care implementation
- Developed and implemented local **Networks of Care for statewide ACEs Aware** Initiative

This past year has been a year unlike any other; we acknowledge the losses, pain and suffering and commit ourselves to working to overcome the challenges ahead. The significant work of helping to build child, family and community wellness systems continues with the renewed commitment of our core staff, Associates, and graduate student partners—and you.

In partnership,



Steve Hornberger, Co-Director



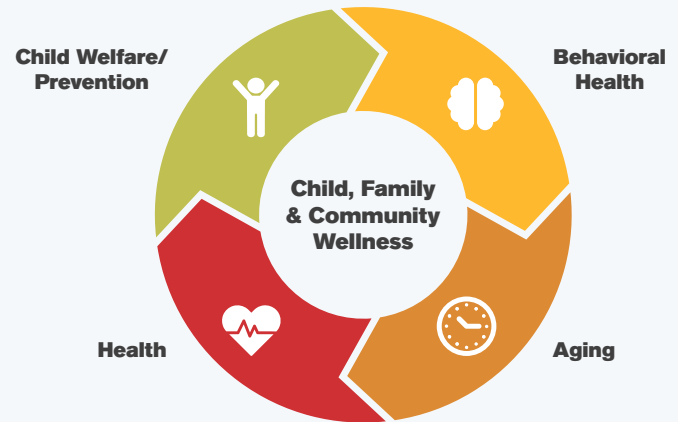
Lori Scott Clarke, Co-Director

In Pursuit of Wellness

In alignment with its vision and core mission, SPI works with and engages cross-sector partners from four primary domains: **Child Welfare/Wellness Systems; Aging & Longevity Across the Lifespan; Health; and Behavioral Health.**

Four Areas of Focus

Regardless of its primary area of focus, all SPI projects are aimed at helping to build child, family, and community wellness. With the trend in health and human services towards alignment and integration, areas of focus are often overlapping and interlocking. In the pages that follow, we provide a description of each area of focus, and offer examples of how we work with partners within the respective area to contribute to vibrant Wellness Systems.



SPI Core Competencies

The Social Policy Institute is led by two co-Directors: Steve Hornberger, elected as an NASW Pioneer for his innovative work; and Lori Clarke, who has a 25+ year track record of innovation and adaptive solutions work with human services partners. Our core staff bring expertise in child abuse prevention, early childhood systems, learning and experience design and development, and research and evaluation. As a university partner, we attract the best and brightest graduate students to get involved and inform the work. Finally, our Associates are subject matter experts in their respective fields and partner with SPI on a project-by-project basis.

SPI's team approach consistently delivers quality and impact through the following:

- Strategic Planning, Consultation and Facilitation
- Wellness/Recovery/Community-Building
- Integrated Learning Systems & Professional Development
- Research and Evaluation
- Consulting and Technical Assistance

The following pages showcase many, but not all of the projects we have been working with over the past year. They are offered as highlights to show the intersection of areas of focus with the Institute's capabilities.

Our core staff bring expertise in child abuse prevention, early childhood systems, learning and experience design and development, and research and evaluation.

SPI Focus:



Aging

Healthy aging across the lifespan is critical for vibrant communities.

By 2030 there will be twice as many over 65 years old in San Diego (since 2000) and they will be 30% more diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and lower socio-economic status. These demographic changes and resulting increase of existing health inequities will significantly impact older adults and their families, and the overall cultural, social, and economic conditions in the San Diego region. SPI is focused on helping municipalities, organizations and universities prepare for the rapid aging of the population.

Center for Excellence in Aging & Longevity

As part of SDSU's College of Health and Human Services, the Center for Excellence in Aging & Longevity (CEAL) spearheads efforts to meet the current and emerging challenges of healthy aging across the lifespan through collaboration with government, including the California Department of Aging, San Diego County Aging & Independence Services; with local organizations such as 2-1-1 San Diego, AARP, OASIS, Glenner Center; with The San Diego Foundation and Del Mar Healthcare Foundation; and with academic partners from the University of California San Diego (UCSD) Department of Medicine and graduate and undergraduate students from both SDSU and UCSD.

AgeWell: San Diego's Age-Friendly Communities Initiative

SPI has been providing technical assistance to the City of San Diego on the Age-Friendly San Diego initiative. The goal is to gain community input, and recommend actions to create a more age-inclusive community for individuals to both grow up and grow old in. SPI's team has been collaborating with the City's Parks and Recreation Department, Housing and Transportation staff, and the Mayor's Office. The resulting Action Plan, based on the following steps, will be presented to the San Diego City Council in the Fall 2021.

Areas of Focus Include

Workforce Partnerships: Develop and implement training and opportunities for AND by older adults, their family caregivers, and aging sector/industry.

Research and Policy: Develop and provide individual, family, and community pathways and processes to improve quality of life and equitable opportunities for older adults.

Longevity: Identify and develop approaches to find meaning and purpose for the extended lifespan post-retirement.

Age-Friendly University (AFU):

Establish and coordinate inter-departmental collaboration as an AFU to facilitate learning for a lifetime, inclusive of diverse students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community stakeholders.

How did we learn about older San Diegans?



Policy Scan

- Existing City Plans' impact on domains of livability
- Engage & build on what is working



Community Survey

- 596 respondents
- Parks & Recreation
- Programing Interests



AFC Survey

- 2129 Respondents
- Online & Paper
- 5 Languages
- Identify community priorities



Listening Sessions

- 223 Participants
- 8 In-person sessions
- Diverse neighborhoods
- What is already working?
- What else is needed?



Covid-19 Community Survey

- 419 Respondents
- Virtual Programming
- Food Security
- Access to Technology



Action Planning Sessions

- 147 Participants
- 9 Virtual Sessions
- Visions, Goals, and Actions

SPI Focus:



Child Welfare/Prevention

Focusing on hope and wellness in children, families and communities.

The Social Policy Institute assists organizations to align their work in the service of building a countywide child, family, and community wellness system. We do that by engaging, educating, and mobilizing high performance partnerships. Part of SPI's role is to help organizations to focus on the balance of results, process and relationships that will move them beyond information and awareness to action. Recent examples include:

Ventura County Essentials for Childhood Collaborative Framework

Longstanding partners in Ventura County who recognize that no one agency, organization or system has the mandate, reach, or resources to affect child and family wellness alone came together for a one-day retreat (just before the COVID shutdown). Through a structured process facilitated by SPI, partners made a commitment to align and integrate public systems and community



partners, and to do so as informed by parent and resident voice. The Child and Family Wellness System that results from their efforts will reflect a comprehensive continuum of prevention and promotion across public systems and the community. Persons with lived experience are co-designing and co-leading the process through a racial equity imperative.

Partners made a commitment to align and integrate public systems and community partners, and to do so as informed by parent and resident voice.

CAPC Best Practice Guidelines

California's Child Abuse Prevention Councils (CAPCs) are a vital partner in building Child, Family and Community Wellness Systems. They are a key catalyst, convener, and coordinator of countywide activities to reduce child maltreatment by building protective factors, infusing hope, and increasing wellness. SPI conducted a landscape scan of California's CAPCs to gather examples of these roles in action, as well as best practices.

Published in June 2020, the Best Practice Guidelines for California's Child Abuse Prevention Councils lays out the study results, requirements per the California Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC), foundational capacity, and working tools to help make prevention the new norm. *Printed copies are available by contacting the Social Policy Institute, or may be accessed electronically [here](#).*



CATALYST



CONVENER



COORDINATOR

SPI Focus:



Behavioral Health

Fostering the ability to participate in productive activities.

As a university partner, SPI is deeply involved in the design and development of Integrated Learning Systems, particularly in the area of behavioral health. We bring a deep bench of expertise in adult learning systems (nationally certified trainers; prior statewide training systems). Training curricula reflect state of the art evidence-based practice in support of health and human services policy, best practice, and system interface. The focus on statewide professional development and capacity building includes the following recent projects:

Stepping Higher Faith-Based and Behavioral Health Academy

Stepping Higher, Inc. is a grassroots, community-based organization that received funding from the County of San Diego, Behavioral Health Services to reduce stigma and increase access to care for primarily African American and Latinx populations. The Training Academy brings faith-based (FB)



leaders and behavioral health (BH) professionals together to create a shared understanding of equitable, culturally appropriate approaches to engagement, while highlighting the role of spirituality in wellness. In its

first year, five full Academies were conducted (15 hours of instruction/facilitation); 128 attendees (63 BH and 65 FB) received a certificate of completion; 13 trainers were trained; and 26 of the graduates became Champions. The Champions facilitated 25 community education meetings to increase knowledge of behavioral health and faith-based community services, reaching 414 community members.

Training curricula reflect state of the art evidence-based practice in support of health and human services policy, best practice, and system interface.

TAY Helping TAY: Creating New Ideas to Innovate Behavioral Health

The Fresno County Department of Behavioral Health Services (BHS) in partnership with its richly diverse community, is dedicated to providing quality, culturally responsive behavioral health services to promote wellness, recovery, and resiliency for children, youth, individuals and families in the community. With Transition Aged Youth (TAY) in mind, BHS invited the Social Policy Institute to bring Human-Centered Design to the county. BeHealth.Today, is based on Human-Centered Design, also known as Design Thinking.

Developed by SDSU Social Policy Institute and The Idea Guy™, BeHealth.Today™ provided the opportunity for participants to generate new approaches in the design and delivery of behavioral health services and supports. The project created meaningful community engagement of Transition Age Youth 16 – 25 years old and was implemented “by TAY for TAY” to develop Innovation projects to improve opportunities for well-being in Fresno County.





In large part due to medical advances and disease management, the concept of health now encompasses more than traditional definitions imply. The level of health that each of us can attain is individually defined. Every person is exposed to a variety of social determinants over the life course. Ultimately, it is how a person manages – and adapts to – these circumstances that defines our health status. SPI considers healthy adaptation in all of our work. All projects incorporate health; some are squarely focused on it.

ACEs Aware Statewide Initiative

Championed by the Surgeon General's Office and the Department of Health Care Services, the statewide ACEs Aware initiative was launched in 2019 in California with the ambitious goal to reduce ACEs by half in one generation.

During the 2020-2021 FY, SPI was selected as a partner to help raise awareness of ACEs in San Diego County and create sustainable Regional Networks of Care. SPI partnered with the Academy of Pediatrics Chapter 3 (AAP-CA3) to bring pediatric providers, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders together to form regional networks, laying a foundation for mutual understanding and trust, and to build effective working relationships. The resulting Networks of Care have been integrated into **Partners in Prevention**, a coalition that strives to cultivate a connected community that nurtures healthy families.



In addition, the SPI team increased ACEs awareness through strategic communications, in close collaboration with our partners at the **YMCA** of San Diego and the **AAP-CA3**. The team focused on trauma-informed family engagement, providing targeted and practical materials and tools for providers to help build protective factors that can buffer the effects of toxic stress resulting from traumatic experiences.



The ACEs Aware Campaign launched in California exemplifies a prevention model. The developing regional Networks of Care in San Diego, led by the Social Policy Institute and the AAP-CA3, focus on family-centric opportunities and healing-centered resources for families during the well-child visits at the Pediatrician's office. It is profoundly uplifting to participate in San Diego's ACEs Aware network convenings with the Pediatricians and service providers engaging, real-time, on behalf of families' needs. You can feel the threads of intentional connectivity evolving with the bridging of trauma-informed services providers and agencies engaging with the pediatricians. A paradigm shift, healing-centered collective impact is gaining traction throughout California.

– Dana Brown
Organizational Liaison,
PACEs Connection

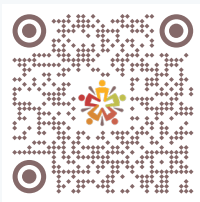
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