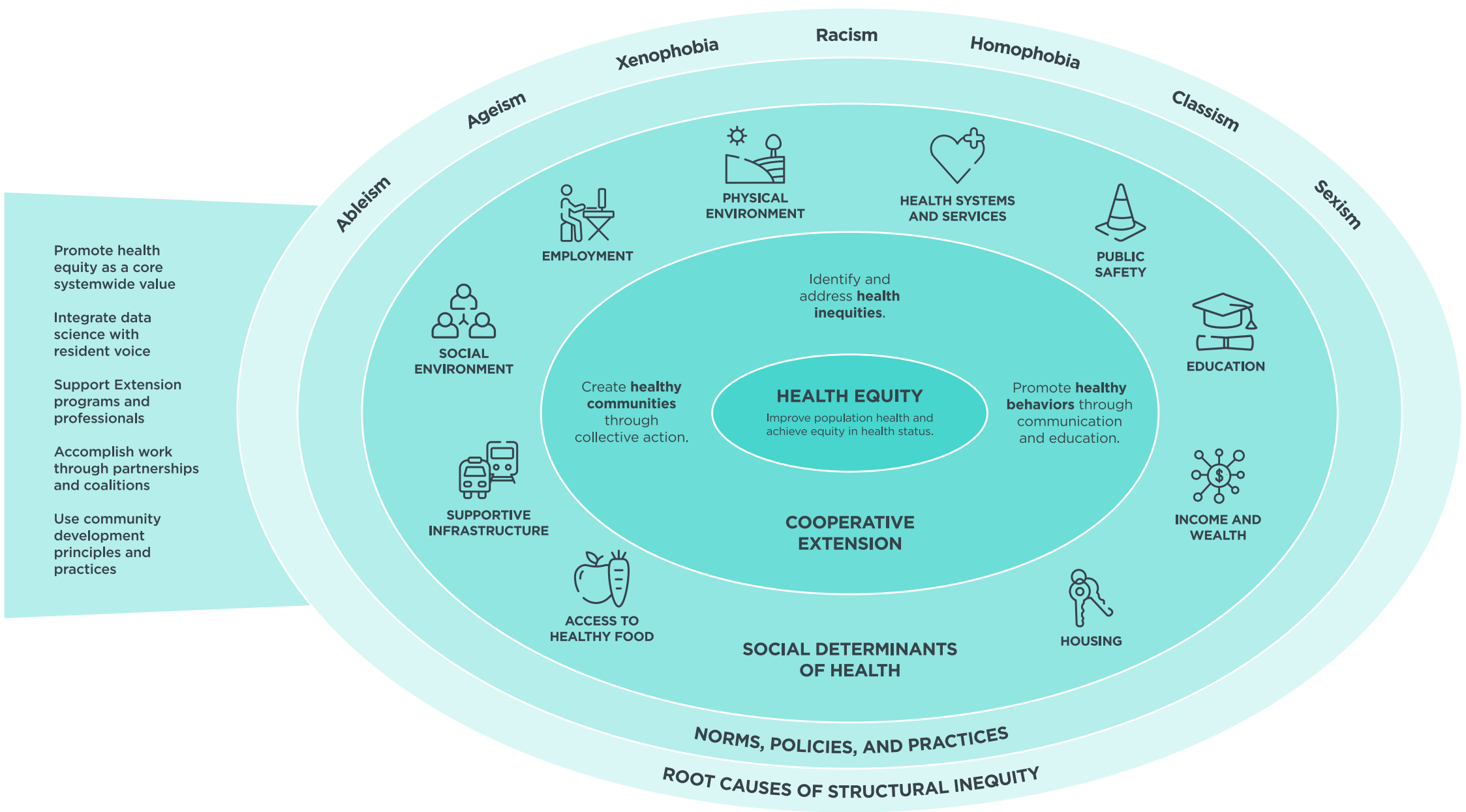# Cooperative Extension's National Framework for Health Equity and Well-Being

A Road Map for Systems Change in Cooperative Extension

The Cooperative Extension System

- The Cooperative Extension System is a network comprised of the Extension "services" of the nation's land grant universities.

- Systemwide efforts are governed a representative body called the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP).

- ECOP established a Health Innovation Task Force in 2020 to update Cooperative Extension's National Framework for Health and Wellness originally developed in 2014.

- ECOP approved the updated version of the framework in July 2021 to serve as a roadmap for advancing the Cooperative Extension System's work in the area of health for the next 5-7 years.

Promote health equity as a core systemwide value

Integrate data science with resident voice

Support Extension programs and professionals

Accomplish work through partnerships and coalitions

Use community development principles and practices

Ableism

Ageism

Xenophobia

Racism

Homophobia

Classism

Sexism

EMPLOYMENT

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

HEALTH SYSTEMS AND SERVICES

PUBLIC SAFETY

EDUCATION

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Identify and address **health inequities**.

Create **healthy communities** through collective action.

HEALTH EQUITY
Improve population health and achieve equity in health status.

Promote **healthy behaviors** through communication and education.

INCOME AND WEALTH

SUPPORTIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

HOUSING

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

NORMS, POLICIES, AND PRACTICES

ROOT CAUSES OF STRUCTURAL INEQUITY

How are you defining health equity?

"…means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible". RWJF

"…a state in which everyone has the opportunity to attain their full health potential and no one is disadvantaged in achieving this potential because of social or any other socially defined circumstances." CDC

"…the absence of avoidable, unfair, or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined **socially, economically, demographically or geographically** or by other means of stratification." WHO

What are some of challenges in the health landscape that are impacting individual and collective well being?

- More than 750,000 people have died from drug overdoses in the U.S. since 1999
- During the summer of 2020, 41% of adults in the U.S. reported having an adverse mental or behavioral health condition.
- 200 million people worldwide have been infected by the COVID-19 virus.
- Climate change will be one the most significant threats to human health in the 21st century and its negative impacts will "disproportionately affect the very young, the very old, people who are ill, those impoverished or homeless, and populations that depend on the natural environment for survival." (CDC)
- According to Feeding America, as many as 54 million people across the country may be food insecure (2020).
- 30 million people still lack health insurance.

What are some of the health inequities that are remediable and part of Extension's focus with the updated Extension Framework?
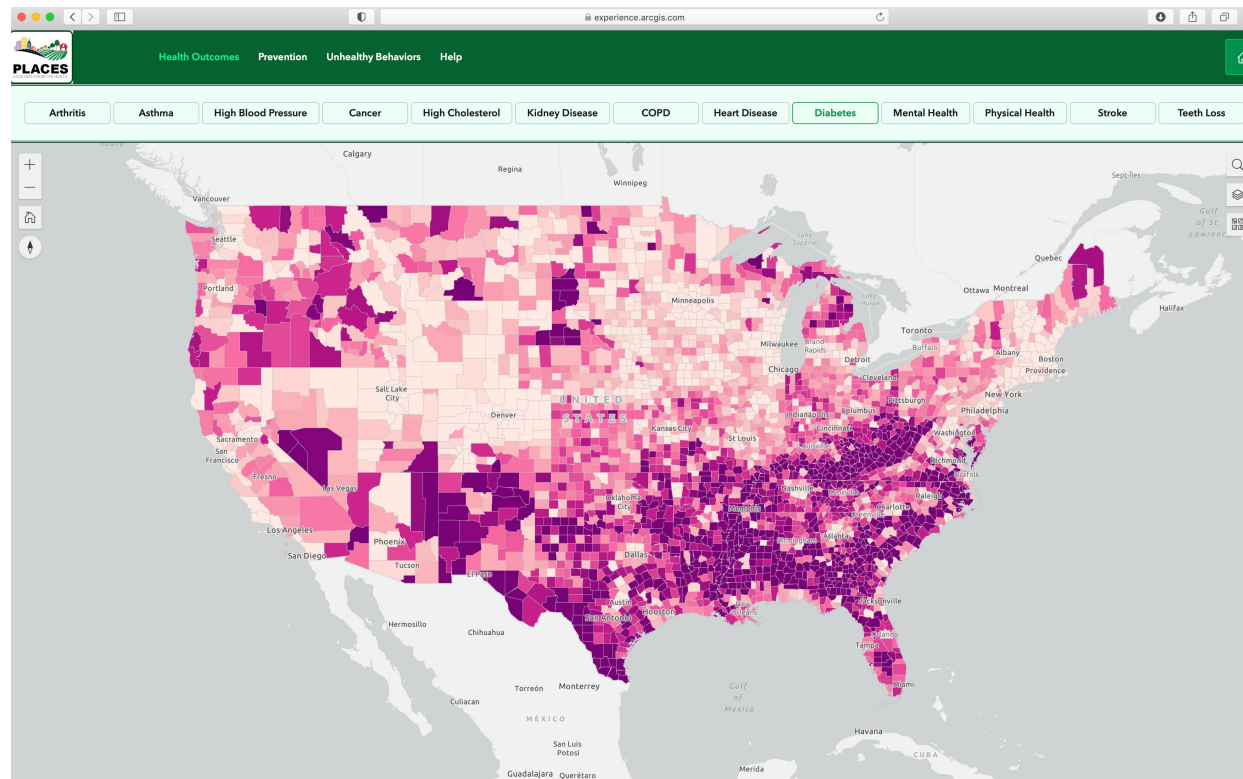
CDC's **Places: Local Data for Public Health** allows local Extension faculty and staff to access data down to the **census tract** level and **visualize disparities.**
https://www.cdc.gov/places/

How does Extension plan to reach audiences regarding health equity issues?

- Health outcomes are influenced by **individual behaviors** as well as the **context** in which an individual lives, works, learns, and plays.

- Extension has historically focused on promoting **behavior** change by helping individuals gain knowledge, attitudes, skills, and aspirations requisite for the change to occur.

- We we now know that we must also work to change the **context** in which people live by addressing what are commonly referred to as the **social determinants of health.**

How does community-based intervention influence social determinants of health?

- Involves universities moving out of an expert model to one based on authentic community engagement.

- As a community-engaged partner, Cooperative Extension can still support collective action by serving as a convener, facilitator, backbone, connector, or manager of a community health coalition.

- The coalition should involve both organizations and residents with lived experience, including young people.

What are the five high level recommendations?

- **Advance health equity as a core system value** to ensure that all people have a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as they can be.
- **Utilize community assessment processes** that integrate data science and resident voice to identify and address health inequities with greater precision.
- **Invest in the success and visibility** of Extension's health-related professionals, programs, and initiatives.
- **Establish partnerships** with academic units, universities, government agencies, corporations, nonprofit organizations, and foundations that share a commitment to reducing or eliminating health inequities.
- **Utilize a community development approach** to advance the work of coalitions focused on influencing the social determinants of health.