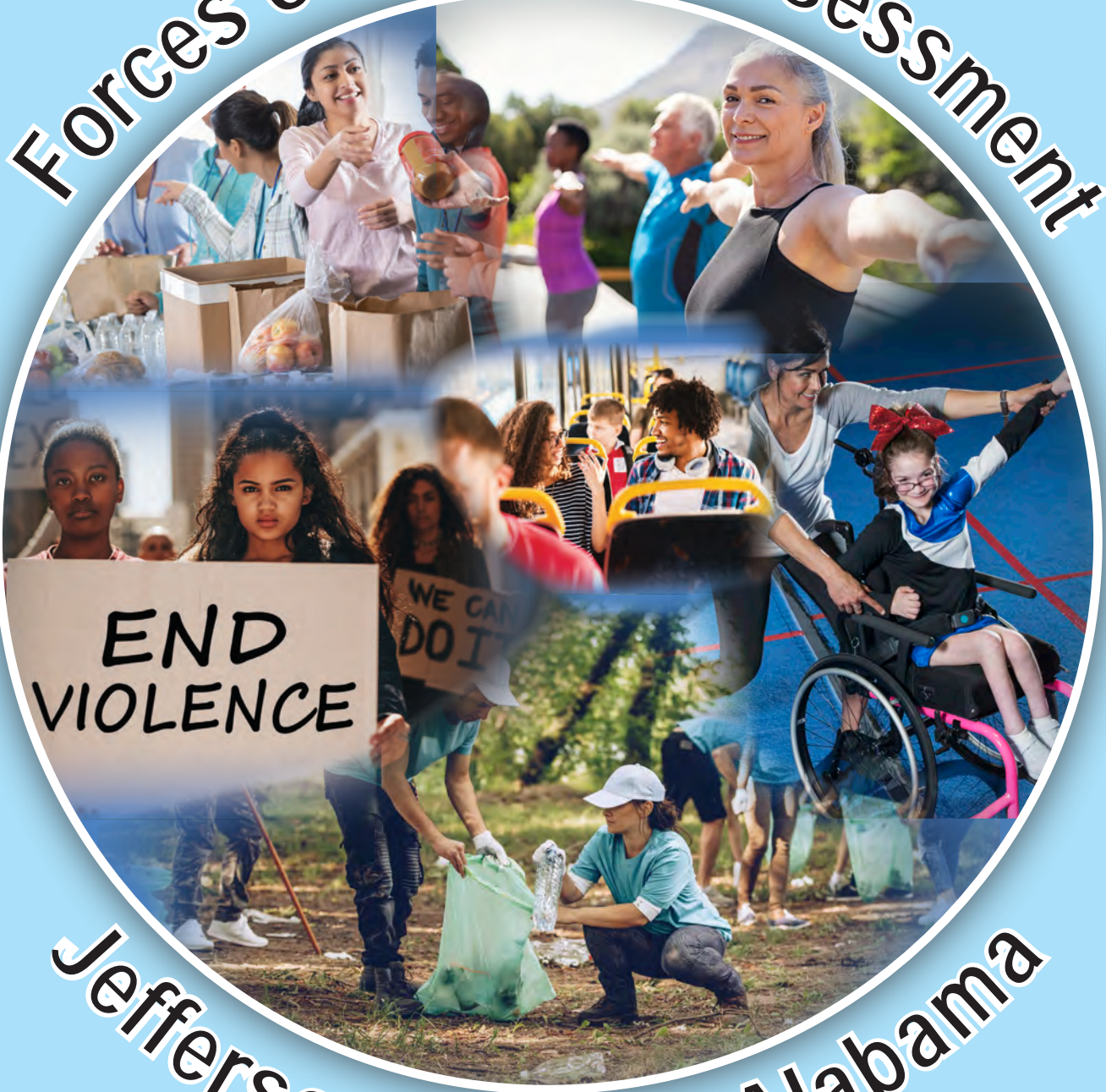


# Forces of Change Assessment



# Jefferson County, Alabama

October 2019



## Forces of Change Assessment

### Overview of the Forces of Change Assessment

The Forces of Change Assessment (FOCA) identifies trends, factors and events that are occurring or expected to occur over the following five years which impact or influence the health and quality of life of people who live, learn, work, play or worship in Jefferson County or that impact the county's local public health system. The following questions were asked during the FOCA:

- *What is occurring or might occur that affects the health of the community or its local public health system?*
- *What specific threats or opportunities are generated by these occurrences?*



Jefferson County's local public health stakeholders participated in a series of brainstorming sessions to identify:

**Trends:** Patterns over time, such as migration in and out of a community or growing disillusionment with government;

**Factors:** Discrete elements such as a community's large ethnic population, an urban setting or its proximity to a major waterway, and

**Events:** One-time occurrences such as a hospital closure, natural disaster or the passage of new legislation.

Categories of trends, factors and events impacting population health and the local public health system included:

- Social
- Economic
- Political
- Technological
- Environmental
- Scientific
- Legal
- Ethical.



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### *Methodology*

To conduct the FOCA, a sub-committee of stakeholders from the local public health system were identified. The sub-committee guided the selection of structure and participants for conducting the assessment. Six FOCA sessions were conducted at various locations within Jefferson County, Alabama using a formal brainstorming methodology. FOCA participants represented the diversity of Jefferson County's population and included community members, clergy, mental health and health care professionals, educators and representatives from governmental, non-profit and other agencies serving Jefferson County residents. Several of the FOCA sessions targeted specific key informants or select Jefferson County sub-populations. Among these sessions, were those conducted with clergy, health care professionals, and homeless persons? The remaining FOCA sessions included a variety of local community stakeholders, including community members. The dates and locations for the six FOCA sessions were:

- October 17, 2018 (St. Vincent's Foundation, Forge Office)
- October 26, 2018 (St. Vincent's Health System, Bruno Center)
- November 1, 2018 (Birmingham Central Public Library)
- November 2, 2018 (Greater Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church)
- November 7, 2018 (Western Health Center)
- December 7, 2018 (Children's Aid Society).

Forces of change identified during these assessment sessions were categorized by participants as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities for improvement and/or threats (SWOT). It should be noted that a force of change could be concurrently identified as a strength and weakness or opportunity and threat.

Participant's responses were coded for content and categorized in themes using qualitative analysis content coding to assist in the identification and prioritization of potential strategic issues from the FOCA and the other MAPP assessments for Jefferson County, Alabama.

### *Results*

The following section outlines the top five reoccurring forces of change identified through the FOCA data assessment process and summarizes the concerns arising from each.

**Transportation:** Much of Jefferson County is suffering from an inadequate and inefficient public transit system. FOCA feedback suggested many believe the current public transportation system is unreliable. The existing transportation system was noted to frequently fail to provide on-time stops, to be constricted by limited hours of operation, and to include bus routes that do not adequately service and provide access to key city and county destinations such as grocery stores, shopping malls, job sites, churches and local events.



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**Mental Health:** There is a lack of equitable access to mental health care, and available education regarding available community-based mental health services and how to access these services is limited. These issues are viewed as barriers to achieving and maintaining good mental health, especially for vulnerable populations, including, youth, the formerly incarcerated and the homeless.

**Drug/Opioid Crisis:** There is a high prevalence of opioid and other drug dependency in Jefferson County which has resulted in increasing rates of drug overdoses, deaths and dependency. These problems were assessed by FOCA participants as exacerbated for teenagers and the homeless sub-population. Drug abuse was often believed to be associated with poor mental health and increased rates of crime in Jefferson County, Alabama.

**Access to Services:** FOCA participants indicated a lack of access to quality health care, health care providers and affordable medications for the uninsured, low-income, elderly and disabled sub-populations. Accordingly, these sub-populations were deemed to be at a disadvantage for receiving services such as mental health care, substance abuse treatment and sub-specialty medical care.

**Environmental Concerns:** FOCA participants noted poor indoor and outdoor air quality, neighborhood flooding, failure to preserve the ecosystem and its wildlife, and poor community sanitation as environmental concerns. These concerns were also indicated as potentially related to health issues.

In addition to these leading concerns, additional concerns identified through the FOCA as impacting the community included:

- Lack of trust in governmental and political leadership;
- Increased rates of crime and violence;
- Lack of affordable, accessible and safe housing for the homeless and those living in poverty;
- Presence of blight, including a growing number of overgrown properties, dilapidated houses and buildings, leading to unsafe neighborhood conditions;
- Limited access to healthy and affordable foods for some sub-populations, including the elderly, disabled and those with low incomes;
- Changes in neighborhood demographics resulting from migration in and out of communities;
- Need for improvements to Infrastructure such as repair and maintenance of interstates, streets, sidewalks, bridges and some buildings. It was also noted that some existing infrastructure is not designed to accommodate individuals with disabilities;
- Biases based on age, sex, race, ethnicity, country of origin, lawful status within the United States and ability limit access to services and opportunities for quality of life for many, and
- A lack of job opportunities and job skill training for youth, senior citizens and ex-offenders.





## Forces of Change Assessment

Tables 1 through 5 display the threats and opportunities created from the top five concerns emerging from the Forces of Change Assessment.

### Threats and Opportunities

Table 1:

Transportation: Lack of an Adequate Transit System	
Threat	Opportunities Created
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The existing public transportation system limits access to jobs, housing, education, health-related and social services and affordable, healthy food for non-drivers and those without personal transportation</li><li>• Inadequate funding of the Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority (BJCTA) is reducing the effectiveness of public transit</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increasing BJCTA's hours of operation and adding bus routes/stops serving more areas outside of Birmingham to improve accessibility to jobs, housing, education, health-related and social services and affordable, healthy food</li><li>• Development of a more diverse system for public transportation beyond bus transportation to strengthen access to needed services within the county</li></ul>



## Forces of Change Assessment

Table 2:

<b>Mental Health: Lack of Equitable Access to Mental Health Care</b>	
<b>Threat</b>	<b>Opportunities Created</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceived risk of service reduction for county residents if the University Health Care Plan is implemented</li> <li>• Misdiagnosis and improper medication prescribing lead to poorer mental health, self-medicating and increased risky behaviors</li> <li>• Multiple organizations compete for limited funding for the provision of mental health services</li> <li>• Increased crime related to poor mental health and substance abuse for young adults transitioning or aging out of the Department of Human Resources' care</li> <li>• Lack of equitable geographic distribution of mental health services within the county</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and implementation of integrated physical and mental health services for disadvantaged and vulnerable populations, regardless of the ability to pay for such services</li> <li>• Provision of mental health care navigators and advocates</li> <li>• Opportunity to increase the number of mental health professionals and programs for training health care providers in mental health-related care</li> <li>• Increased collaboration with churches and religious organizations in identifying and linking individuals impacted by mental health issues to treatment and support</li> <li>• Employment strategies for the recruitment and retention of mental healthcare providers in rural areas</li> <li>• Universal screening of students at all stages of the educational pipeline to identify the need of counseling or mental health treatment services</li> <li>• Increased dialogue at the local, regional and national levels to improve mental health and support services for newly emancipated youth from the Department of Human Resources' care</li> <li>• Non-medication based treatment options for abuse and dependency</li> <li>• Telemedicine</li> </ul>



## Forces of Change Assessment

Table 3:

Drug/Opioid Crisis:	
Threat	Opportunities Created
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in overdose deaths and substance abuse dependency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative treatment and drug diversion programs for drug abusers rather than incarceration</li> <li>Ongoing education for health care providers on opioid prescription management</li> <li>Non-medication based treatment options for individuals with substance abuse and dependency</li> </ul>

Table 4:

Access to Services: Lack of Access to Quality Healthcare and Providers	
Threat	Opportunities Created
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of access to quality health care services and providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development and implementation of integrated physical and mental health services for disadvantaged and vulnerable populations, regardless of the ability to pay for such services</li> <li>Provision of healthcare navigators and advocates</li> <li>Creation of employment strategies for the recruitment and retention of physicians, allied health professionals, nurse practitioners and community health workers to serve rural areas</li> <li>Telemedicine</li> </ul>

## Forces of Change Assessment

Table 5:

<b>Environmental Concerns: Pollution and Environmental Degradation</b>	
<b>Threat</b>	<b>Opportunities Created</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Air and water pollution harm the natural environment and may negatively impact health</li> <li>The county's water system may become compromised and unsafe, creating a public health crisis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased funding for storm water management</li> <li>Comprehensive smoke-free protections, including limitations on vaping and the sale of vaping products</li> <li>Increased penalties for violation of regulations related to illegal dumping, illegal burning, and air and water pollution</li> <li>Stronger laws, regulations and enforcement designed to protect the environment by city and county municipalities</li> </ul>

### Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats by Session

Following participant identification of forces of change, a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis was conducted.







## Forces of Change Assessment

**Table 6:**

<b>SWOT Analysis Results from Session 1: October 17, 2018 (St. Vincent's Foundation, Forge Office)</b>				
<b>Force (Trends/Events/Factors)</b>	<b>Threat Posed</b>	<b>Opportunities Created</b>	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weakness</b>
Opioid Crisis	Threatened family safety and security; Increased rate of suicide; More children placed in foster care  Increased prevalence of Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome and its long-term impacts	Utilization of alternative pain treatments and non-narcotic pain treatment; Enhanced opioid prescriber education and accountability	No	Yes
Unreliable and Inaccessible Transportation	Limited access to employment, healthy food, health care and social services, as well as limitations in performing civic duties	Creation and/or expansion of transportation options such as Uber Health, Kid One Transport, and Uber services for the disabled	No	Yes
Health Care Coverage	Individuals without health insurance or with inadequate health insurance have limited access to health services medications, and medical supplies  Alabama's decision not to participate in Medicaid expansion limits health care access	Increase number and geographic distribution of Federally Qualified Health Care Centers (FQHCs) that can provide care for vulnerable populations and offer supportive services such as transportation and language services; Expand Medicaid	No	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 1 (Continued)

Force (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Equitable Access to Mental Health Care	<p>Unmet mental health needs may lead to issues including poor academic performance, crime and substance abuse</p> <p>Suicide rates in Jefferson County have increased</p> <p>Mental health needs remain undiagnosed and treated secondary to lack of universal screening</p> <p>Lack of integration of behavioral and physical health care</p> <p>Limited mental health care access, especially in rural areas of the county coupled with an inadequate public transit system create delays in care access</p> <p>Incorrect diagnosis in mental health delays effective treatment</p>	<p>Early detection, referral and treatment of mental/behavioral issues</p> <p>Increased access to “text to talk” applications and mental health programs</p> <p>Provision of mental health services in rural areas</p> <p>Expanded training for primary care providers on diagnosis and treatment of mental health diagnoses</p> <p>Expanded mental health screening in schools</p> <p>Increased understanding of the impacts of poor mental health and of referral and treatment options</p>	No	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 1 (Continued)

Force (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Gentrification	Lower-cost housing and retail space is limited, especially in downtown Birmingham, creating displacement of families and business closures	<p>Blight in downtown Birmingham is reduced by new development</p> <p>New businesses moving into downtown Birmingham are creating more vibrancy and economic opportunities</p>	Yes	Yes
Medicaid Expansion and Medicare Coverage Gap	<p>Lack of Medicaid expansion in Alabama limits access to care</p> <p>The "doughnut hole" in Medicare coverage results in a coverage gap</p>	<p>Continue to advocate for Medicaid expansion</p> <p>Implement solutions to close the "doughnut hole"</p>	Yes	Yes
University Healthcare Authority and Rural Hospital Closures	The proposed transition of Cooper Green Mercy Health Services to a university health care model and closure of rural area hospitals may or has reduced access to care and eliminated jobs	<p>UAB is a capable health care system and is expected to create long-term sustainability for the services previously provided through Cooper Green Mercy Health Services</p> <p>Telemedicine services bridging access gaps</p>	No	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 1 (Continued)

Force (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Education	Lack of equitable educational opportunities and systems create life-long disparities related to financial and social stability	Improved quality of life though equitable access to educational resources	Yes	Yes
Music	Song lyrics may influence youth to commit violent acts, misuse drugs and alcohol, or complete suicide	Promote healthy self-image and behaviors through music	Yes	Yes
Lack of Resources for Adolescents	Lack of resources for adolescents can lead to isolation, poor decision-making and behaviors	Positive engagement of adolescents in schools and communities, improved academic performance and positive behaviors through advocacy for program and service funding	No	Yes
Obesity	Short and long-term impacts on physical and mental health	Implement policy, system and environmental changes to reduce overweight and obesity, including improving healthy food access and physical activity	No	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 1 (Continued)

Force (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Need for Telemedicine Expansion	Telemedicine may lead to misdiagnosis and medical errors	Telemedicine can expand care access for those in rural areas where there are provider shortages or in situations where transportation limits access to traditional care  The technology needed for telemedicine is not consistently available	Yes	Yes
Community Food Banks and Pantries	Food banks and pantries, while essential in addressing hunger, have experienced issues with sustainability and geographic placement may be a barrier for those in most need	Mobile food bank markets and food pantries in schools, religious organizations and health care facilities improve food access  Increased coordination and collaboration among emergency food providers to maximize resources	Yes	Yes
Homelessness	Homeless individuals experience greater barriers to personal stability, health care and social services	In reducing homelessness, self-sufficiency increases, and individuals are enabled to reach his or her human potential	No	Yes





## Forces of Change Assessment

**Table 7:**

<b>SWOT Analysis Results from Session 2: October 26, 2018 (St. Vincent's Bruno Conference Center)</b>				
<b>Force (Trends/Events/Factors)</b>	<b>Threat Posed</b>	<b>Opportunities Created</b>	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weakness</b>
Growing International Population	Lack of resources and programs for meeting the unique needs of the international sub-population	A more diverse community with equitable access to opportunities	Yes	Yes
Positive Male Mentorship	Young boys and young men often lack strong, positive role models and leadership	Increased self-esteem and problem solving through decreased isolation among young boys and young men	No	Yes
Gentrification/Birmingham's Population Shift	Gentrification creates personal and business displacement and disproportionately impacts those with lower incomes	Increased property values and investment in some areas	No	Yes
Isolation	Isolation can lead to unhealthy coping mechanisms and poor health outcomes including substance abuse and suicide completion	No opportunities Identified	No	YES
Access to Healthy Food for Youth	Many children do not have access to healthy foods outside of school hours	Improved health and learning; continued expansion of community-based meal programs		Yes
Suicide	As youth suicide is sensationalized, those at risk for self-harm are negatively impacted	Positive reinforcement on the preventability of suicide and management of mental illness	Yes	No



## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 2 (Continued)

Force (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Mental Health Stigma	Mental health stigma is a barrier for the recognition, referral to care and treatment of those with poor mental health, and even when mental health is an identified concern, many laypersons do not have the knowledge to promote mental health assessment and referral to care	Create parity between mental and physical health to reduce the barrier of stigma  Promote Mental Health First Aid training broadly within the community	No	Yes
Issues Experienced by Children in the Foster Care System	Foster children often struggle with self-esteem, family integration and transitioning to life outside of the foster care system	Increase mentorship programs for children in and transitioning out of the foster care system	No	Yes
Elder Abuse (exploitation, physical, mental and emotional maltreatment)	Desertion of elders, poor living standards and lack of care reduce quality of life and may lead to preventable illness and death	Eliminating elder abuse improves quality of life and the potential impact of seniors on the community	No	Yes
Youth Homelessness	Homelessness reduces safety and quality of life	In decreasing youth homeless through addressing the root causes of homelessness, human capital is maximized	No	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 2 (Continued)

Force (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Increase in Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)	STIs caused morbidity and may lead to infertility  Stigma related to STIs is a barrier to diagnosis and treatment	Reducing the STI rate reduces morbidity and infertility  Stigma can be reduced through community outreach and education	No	Yes
Birmingham's Entertainment District	The growth of Birmingham's Entertainment District has increased traffic in the area leading to increased safety concerns	Increased opportunities for entertainment have increased the city's vibrancy and increased tax revenue	Yes	No
Reactionary Governmental Leadership	The perceived reactionary mindset of governmental leaders restricts proactive decision making and leads to a crisis mentality	In government using a proactive approach, systemic issues and root causes can be addressed before a crisis occurs	Yes	Yes
Perceived Shift in Cultural/Societal Perspective	The perceived cultural perspective of self-centricity and disregard for others has resulted in fear, anger and avoidance of conflict resolution	Increase conflict resolution training in multiple settings	No	Yes
Opioid Crisis	Loss of human potential secondary to opioid-addicted persons and overdose deaths  Children placed in foster care or raised by non-parents due to addiction	Implementation of evidence-based drug use prevention programming and expanded access to addiction treatment services	No	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 2 (Continued)

Force (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Lack of Child/Youth Mentoring	Lack of effective mentoring of children and youth can result in poor decision making and lessened academic performance	Positive youth mentorship programming within the community and religious organizations	No	Yes
Prescription Drug Coverage	Many people cannot afford to purchase medications or pay premiums for insurance offering affordable medication coverage	Communicate options for affordable prescription coverage, including patient assistance programs	No	Yes
Exploitation of the Poor	Local and state ordinances and laws enable exploitation of the poor through predatory lending and excessive fast food establishments in impoverished communities	Establish restrictions on predatory lending agencies and fast food establishments in impoverished communities	No	Yes
Lack of Unity among Religious Organizations	Lack of coordination by religious organizations in addressing community needs wastes limited resources	Increased coordination among religious organizations to address community needs efficiently and effectively	No	Yes
Failing Education Systems	Failing education systems are not consistently preparing youth for success	Create parity in school resources among the various school systems	No	Yes
Lack of Medicaid Expansion	Lack of Medicaid expansion in Alabama limits access to care	Advocate for Medicaid expansion for uninsured adults	No	Yes



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### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 2 (Continued)

Force (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Transportation	The public transit system limits access to jobs and assets in the community	Develop a more diverse transit system	No	Yes
Transportation Funding	Current funding for the Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit System (BJCTA) does not allow adequate routes and cycle times to meet the needs of all residents	Restructure BJCTA funding through the various municipalities		
Police Profiling	Perceived profiling by the police based on community demographics is believed to decrease trust in law enforcement	Increase community trust in law enforcement through training on recognizing and overcoming biases and creating positive engagement with community members	No	Yes





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**Table 8:**

<b>SWOT Analysis Results from Session 3: November 1, 2018 (Birmingham Central Public Library)</b>				
<b>Force (Trends/Events/Factors)</b>	<b>Threat Posed</b>	<b>Opportunities Created</b>	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weakness</b>
Aging of the Population	With increasing number of senior residents, additional services are need to keep seniors in healthy and active	Support seniors with workforce development training, affordable housing and walkable communities	Yes	Yes
Litter and Illegal Dumping	Littering and illegal dumping on roadsides and in communities negatively impacts the health and safety of residents and degrades the environment	Expand trash pick-up in unincorporated areas of the county	No	Yes
Road Construction	Increased response time for first responders, road rage and accidents  Traffic detours related to major roadway construction degrades smaller road conditions	Improving road infrastructure will support job growth and is expected to ease traffic congestion	Yes	Yes
Limited Job Availability (paying a living wage and supportive benefits)	Lack of full-time jobs providing a living wage and supportive benefits reduces quality of life for some residents	Increase workforce development programs, including trade and technical job training	No	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 3 (Continued)

Force (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Lack of Property Maintenance	Poor property maintenance reduces property values and can create safety concerns	<p>Increase enforcement of municipal and neighborhood property maintenance ordinances</p> <p>Expand legal opportunities for purchase of abandoned lots</p>	No	Yes
Limited Job Availability (paying a living wage and supportive benefits)	Lack of full-time jobs providing a living wage and supportive benefits reduces quality of life for some residents	Increase workforce development programs, including trade and technical job training	No	Yes
Crime	Increase in crime rates decreases perception of safety and opportunity	Reducing crime through providing more equitable opportunities for all residents can improve safety and reduce fear and isolation, making communities more sustainable and vibrant	No	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 3 (Continued)

Force (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Water Quality and Flooding	Poor quality of rivers and streams and lack of consistent storm water management create health and safety hazards and flooding	Improved river and stream quality through water protection education, litter and dumping ordinance enforcement and increasing municipalities participating in the Storm Water Management Authority (SWMA)	No	Yes
Poor Political Process Engagement	Low voter turnout for local, state and national elections limits the government's ability to respond to its constituency	Increase voter registration and participation in elections by addressing the barriers to these actions	No	Yes
Competition for Limited Resources	Competition among the various municipalities in Jefferson County for residents, businesses and resources results in inequitable distribution of assets	Coordination and collaboration among municipalities can result in more equitable access to assets for more residents	No	Yes
2021 World Games	The influx of visitors related to the 2021 World Games will increase the need for additional security and safety measures	The 2021 World Games present short- and long-term economic opportunities  Creates a time deadline for needed infrastructure improvements	Yes	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 3 (Continued)

Force (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Climate Change	Changes in the climate provide health challenges for vulnerable populations and a need for strong plans to prevent and mitigate the impacts of natural disasters is changing	Community engagement in the county's emergency preparedness programs to reduce harm created by climate changes	No	Yes
Amazon Distribution Center	Not all residents have the educational requirements to compete for Amazon Distribution Center jobs	Employment providing a livable wage, supportive benefits and encouraging higher education	Yes	Yes
Closure or Lay-offs at Walter Coke, Citco and US Steel	Lay-offs and plant closures decrease financial stability and can increase blight	Reduction in air pollution created by some industries  Opportunity to recruit and attract industries with less environmental impact	Yes	Yes
Industrial and Transportation Sourced Air Pollution	Pollutants associated with industry and transportation can negatively impact health	Continued compliance with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards for air quality and application of technology to reduce source pollutants below allowable levels  Vegetation to mitigate microclimates	No	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 3 (Continued)

Force (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Vaping	The increase of vaping within the population is increasing the number of people affected by nicotine exposure, and the health impacts of primary and secondary exposure to vaping is only emerging	Advance existing smoke-free ordinances to include vaping and the sale of vape products  Scientifically determine the impact of exposure to vaping products	No	Yes
Marketing of Addictive Substances	The increasingly effective marketing of addictive substances to both youth and adults is promoting use and addiction to these substances	Decrease initiation of addictive substances through robust education and increasing restrictions on manufacturing, distributing and selling products containing addictive substances	No	Yes
Food Deserts	Food deserts persist in areas of Jefferson County limiting access to healthy foods	Expand farmer's markets and mobile markets in communities with limited access to healthy foods	No	Yes





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Table 9:

<b>SWOT Analysis Results Session 4: November 2, 2018 (Greater Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church)</b>				
<b>Force (Trends/Events/Factors)</b>	<b>Threat Posed</b>	<b>Opportunities Created</b>	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Weakness</b>
Mental Health Funding	Limited funding for mental health services remains a barrier to care access	Advocate for public and private funding for mental health care	No	Yes
Technology	Increasingly, the transition to use of technology for activities such as applying for jobs and electronic payments makes these activities challenging for people who are not technology savvy	Continue and expand community-based technology training	No	Yes
Education	Educational curricula in public schools do not prepare students for life skills such as budgeting and parenting creating downstream issues	Imbed life skills training in public education	No	Yes
Alabama Lottery	While an Alabama lottery could increase state revenue, some believe it supports a form of addiction and may lead to poor money management	Funds generated from an Alabama lottery could be used to improve the education system and improve infrastructure	Yes	Yes
Health Care Insurance Selection	Lack of suitable access to case managers and decision support for selection of health insurance has resulted in inadequate coverage	Standardize access to case management for review and selection of health insurance	Yes	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 4 (Continued)

Force (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Child Abuse (physical, mental, emotional, exploration)	The abuse of children can result in poorer mental and physical health, as well as limit the child's self-actualization	Implement screening and intervention for children at risk for child abuse	No	Yes
Transportation	The current public transportation system does not offer the routes and schedules needed by some seniors to effectively access employment, health care and community-based assets	Collaboration between community groups and the Birmingham-Jefferson Transit Authority to optimize transportation access for seniors	No	Yes
Lack of Affordable Housing	Lower stock of affordable housing in areas with access to public transportation and handicap accessibility reduce quality of life	Align public transportation, including paratransit services, with areas offering more affordable housing options	No	Yes
Increase in Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)	Increased rates of STIs are negatively impacting the health of the county	Offer comprehensive STI prevention services and education  Expand access to STI testing and treatment	Yes	No
Lack of Services for the Homeless Population	Homeless persons experience challenges with transportation, health care, education and other supportive services that increase quality of life	Coordinate funding and services for the homeless to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of available resources	No	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 4 (Continued)

Force (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Lack of Awareness of Activities and Services to Support Seniors	Seniors may not be accessing available services and activities due to inadequate communication of these opportunities	Increase awareness by seniors of available services and activities using a variety of communication channels	No	Yes
Increasing rate of Alzheimer's Disease	The increase in the number of Jefferson County residents living with Alzheimer's Disease creates increasing need for supportive care and services	Plan health and social services for the increasing percentage of Jefferson County residents impacted by Alzheimer's Disease	No	Yes
Construction	Construction projects, especially in Birmingham's downtown and the UAB campus have disrupted traffic flow	Construction, overall, is seen as improving the vitality of the area	Yes	Yes
Gentrification/Population Shift	Gentrification creates personal and business displacement and disproportionately impacts those with lower incomes	Increased property values and investment in some areas	No	Yes
Lack of Service Access in Rural Areas	Many health and social services are centralized in Birmingham, and combined with limited transportation options, become a barrier to care access for some residents of rural areas in Jefferson County	Encourage equitable geographic distribution of services  Utilize telehealth and technology-supported service access	No	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 4 (Continued)

Force (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Lack of Transitional Care and Services for Children with Disabilities	Lack of transitional care and services for physically challenged young adults results in service interruption and lower quality of life	Increase funding and programming for transitional care for young adults with disabilities	No	Yes

Table 10:

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 5: November 7, 2018 (Western Health Center)

Force (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Safe and Affordable Housing Deficit (including residential and transitional)	<p>Limited safe and affordable residential housing may lead to trade-offs between basic necessities resulting in negative health outcomes</p> <p>Lack of long-term transitional housing may contribute to homelessness, violence, and exacerbated mental health conditions</p>	<p>Advocacy for increased funding of housing assistance programs</p> <p>Identify subsidized residential and transitional housing for individuals that are in need of support</p>	No	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 5 (Continued)

Force (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Limited Access to Mental Health Services	Limited access to mental health services remains a barrier to care for low-income and vulnerable populations	Increased mental health providers and resources based on community trends and diagnoses  Telemedicine to bridge the gap in mental health care access	No	Yes
Inadequate Customer Service from Public Servants	Government employees are perceived as negative, and discourteous; which may discourage those in need of government assistance from receiving services that directly impact health and quality of life	Advocate for all public servants to receive training that reinforces positive language, active listening and effective communication skills	No	Yes
Social Isolation among the Senior Sub-population	Social services and resources for the elderly population are limited or based on strict requirements which may lead to social isolation  Limited resources may hinder access to health care services and poor quality of life among the elderly population	Coordinate with social services and community organizations to decrease social isolation  Provide a comprehensive care plan that addresses the long-term care needs of the entire elderly population	No	Yes





## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 5 (Continued)

Force (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Barriers to Sharing Health Data	Many organizations have health data that can be useful in improving health outcomes; however, access is limited due to policies that protect confidentiality and privacy concerns	Collaborate to develop formal agreements that define the scope of use for all datasets	No	Yes
Lack of commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion	Lack of equal opportunities	Reduce injustices and provide equal opportunities for well-being and success	No	Yes
Homelessness of young adults following release from Department of Human Resources' care	Loss of human potential	Successful transition of youth from Department of Human Resources care into stable housing, employment and needed health care, including mental health services	No	Yes
Transportation	The public transit system limits access to jobs and assets in the community	Develop a more diverse transit system	No	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 5 (Continued)

Forces (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Lack of Healthcare Expansion	Alabama's decision not to participate in Medicaid expansion limits health care access for a significant number of adults which can lead to negative health implications	Increase number and improve geographic distribution of Federally Qualified Health Care Centers (FQHCs) that can provide care for vulnerable populations and offer supportive services such as transportation and language services  Expand Medicaid	No	Yes
Air Pollution Exposure (reduced EPA oversight nationally)	Long-Term Air Pollution exposure can lead to serious and sometimes permanent health implications which can also negatively impact quality of life	Continued compliance with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards for air quality and application of technology to reduce source pollutants below allowable levels  Vegetation to mitigate microclimates	No	Yes
Economic Insecurity (limited job opportunities)	Lack of full-time jobs providing a living wage and supportive benefits reduces quality of life for some and may lead to increased crime and substance abuse within Jefferson County	Increase workforce development programs, including trade and technical job training  Expand the job market in Jefferson County	No	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 5 (Continued)

Forces (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Aging Population	Middle-Aged adults are transitioning into caregiving for elderly parents due to increasing cognitive, behavioral and health problems in the elderly population	<p>Increase awareness to caregivers of available services and activities using a variety of communication channels</p> <p>Collaborate with social services, government and other community organizations to establish long-term care plans</p>	Yes	Yes
Education	Lack of equitable educational opportunities and funding create life-long disparities related to financial and social stability	<p>Improved quality of life through equitable access to financial and educational resources</p> <p>Reduce class sizes and advocate for training that prepare educators to work with culturally diverse students</p>	No	Yes
Income Inequality	Health outcomes for communities are inversely proportionate to the rate of income inequality in the community	Policies to increase equality and ensure access of public goods to all (e.g. library and public school funding, funding for public health services, etc.)	No	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 5 (Continued)

Forces (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Urban Sprawl	Increased motor vehicles on roadways directly impact air pollution and physical activity leading to a number of adverse health outcomes	Advocate for more walkable communities with complete roadways and direct routes to destinations such as grocery stores, pharmacies, libraries, schools and affordable housing	No	Yes
Lack of Mental Health Care	Untreated mental illness can lead to worsening mental health status, increased suicide rates, poor quality of life and other health implications	Evidence-based mental health training in schools and communities  Interventions that promote help-seeking behaviors	No	Yes
Healthcare Access (Limited Health Clinics)	Disparities in affordable healthcare access can contribute to poor physical, mental and social health, decreased life expectancy, and poor quality of life	Identify barriers to care including transportation, health insurance status, financial challenges, etc.  Educate the population on income-based health care and support services	No	Yes
Gentrification	Gentrification creates displacement and disproportionately impacts those with lower incomes which can lead to shorter lives, limited access to affordable healthy housing and poorer mental health outcomes	Increased property values and investment in some areas  Advocate for policies that protect established community residents	No	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

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### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 5 (Continued)

Forces (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Increasing Prevalence of Hypertension	Increased prevalence of hypertension can lead to heart disease, decreased quality of life and shorter life expectancy	Establish community education programs that advocate for healthy lifestyle modifications	No	Yes
Lack of Trust in Law Enforcement	Community lack of trust in law enforcement can contribute to increased crime and reduced public safety	<p>Creation of a platform for open communication and dialogue between community leaders, residents and law enforcement</p> <p>Improve community trust with law enforcement through training on recognizing and overcoming biases</p> <p>Create platforms for positive dialogue between law enforcement and residents</p>	No	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 5 (Continued)

Forces (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Healthy Food Access	Grocery stores that provide healthy food access are limited in urban, rural and low-income communities; which can contribute to increased obesity rates and negative health outcomes	Expand farmer's markets and mobile markets in communities with limited access to healthy foods	No	Yes
Expanded opportunity for disease prevention through more recently approved vaccines	The cost of vaccination prevents some individuals from receiving vaccinations and increases the prevalence of vaccine-preventable disease	Increase community-wide vaccination rates and prevent or reduce the severity of vaccine-preventable disease	Yes	No
Dollar Store Expansion in Rural Communities	Increased number of dollar stores in rural communities limit access to whole foods which may lead to food insecurity and decreased revenue for grocery stores	Expand access to Farmer's markets, mobile markets and grocery stores in areas with limited healthy food accessibility	Yes	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

**Table 11:**

SWOT Analysis Results from Session 6: December 6, 2018 (Children's Aid Society)				
Forces (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Increase in Mental Health Conditions	Mental Health Stigma and inadequate insurance coverage is a barrier to treatment which can lead to increased rates of suicide, depression, substance use disorders and violent crime	Increase knowledge of the impacts of poor mental health, promote help-seeking behaviors and advocate for resources and training such as Mental Health First Aide	No	Yes
Polarization	Polarization continues to increase creating a climate of violence, mistrust and gentrification which negatively impacts physical and mental health	Address key challenges by establishing dialogue and collaboration among community members	No	Yes
Maternal Substance Use Disorders and Overdose	Increase in drug overdose/death during pregnancy leading to negative maternal and neonatal outcomes, cognitive and behavioral challenges in children, and poor quality of life	Promote and advocate for interventions that aim to decrease maternal risk factors during pregnancy	No	Yes
Limited Access to Treatment for Substance Use Disorders	Limited access to treatment and recovery leads to alcohol and substance use disorders; which can impact overall health, life expectancy and quality of life	Integrate primary care, mental health and substance use prevention and intervention programs	No	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 6 (Continued)

Forces (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Political Fragmentation	Political Fragmentation can impact the efficiency of planning sustainable health interventions and contribute to health inequities	Advocate for aligned policy and planning.  Strengthen partnerships and collaborations with community members and organizations	No	Yes
Inadequate transportation system	Limited funding to improve transit system which can impact health care access, food accessibility and other community assets	A diverse transit system supports employment, healthcare access and accessible social activities	No	Yes
Homelessness	Homeless individuals experience greater barriers to personal stability, health care and social services which can lead to poor quality of life and disease transmission	Advocate for more funding for programs	No	Yes
Migrant Health Care Access	Migrants have limited access to language and healthcare services which leads to long-term health consequences	Advocate for preventative health care services for all refugees and migrants	No	Yes
Violent Crime	Increased violent crime rates decrease the perception of safety and limit opportunities for those living in communities experiencing violent crime	Provision of equitable opportunities to improve safety and reduce fear and isolation, making communities more sustainable and vibrant	No	Yes





## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 6 (Continued)

Forces (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Lack of Culturally-competent Services and Acceptance for the LGBTQIA sub-population	Lack of culturally-competent services and acceptance in the LGBTQIA sub-population negatively impacts mental and physical health leading to poor quality of life and negative health outcomes	Advocate for culturally-competent care and services for all individuals	No	Yes
Youth Access to Tobacco Products	Increased access to tobacco among youth leads to nicotine addiction and increased rates of tobacco-related disease	<p>Tobacco retailer education on youth tobacco access laws and penalties</p> <p>Decreased tobacco advertising and promotion</p> <p>Enhancement of smoke-free ordinances and policies promoting a tobacco free lifestyle</p>	No	Yes
Decreased Vaccination Rates	Decreased vaccination rates place unvaccinated and immunocompromised individuals at greater risk for preventable disease	Increase vaccination rates through reducing barriers to vaccination through community education and resources	No	Yes
Limited Healthcare Access for Seniors	Limited healthcare access can lead to negative health outcomes and decreased life-expectancy in the elderly population	Increase awareness of supportive services such as case management and health navigation in the community	No	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 6 (Continued)

Forces (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Health Inequalities Attributed to Classism and Racism	Health Inequalities contribute to disparities among families due to unhealthy lifestyle choices based largely on class and race; which is often a result of limited economic and social resources	Identification and reduction of barriers that prevent healthy behaviors and advocate for resources that close the racial wealth gap	No	Yes
Environmental Injustice	Environmental Injustices negatively impact the ecosystem, healthy food access, transportation, air and water pollution and unsafe homes and increase the incidence and prevalence of physical and mental illness	Engage individuals of different ethnic, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds in decision-making  Advocate for clean and healthy environments in all neighborhoods, regardless of socioeconomic background	No	Yes
Poor Air Quality	Long-Term exposure to poor air quality can lead to serious health implications such as respiratory illness, heart disease, stroke, etc.	Continued compliance with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards for air quality and application of technology to reduce source pollutants below allowable levels	No	Yes
Limited Knowledge of Community-Based Health Resources	Limited knowledge of health resources and social services contributes to decreased healthcare access and continuity of care	Educate patients and providers of relevant health care and social services  Advocate for patient navigation services	No	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

### SWOT Analysis Results from Session 6 (Continued)

Forces (Trends/Events/Factors)	Threat Posed	Opportunities Created	Strength	Weakness
Decrease Support for Non-profit Organizations	Increase taxes to support non-profit organization lead to limited access of healthcare and social services that can improve health outcomes and quality of life	Education of non-profit organizations of grant opportunities and other agency funding to provide public services	No	Yes
Increased HIV Infection Rates among Youth and Adolescents	Increased disease burden and risk of HIV transmission	Prevention of future HIV cases through Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and education on HIV prevention and treatment		
Profiling by Law Enforcement	Implicit and explicit biases against marginalized populations led to decrease community trust in law enforcement and unnecessary arrests	Revised policies and practices to decrease trauma  Training for law enforcement on overcoming biases and creating positive engagement with the community	No	Yes
Decreased Access to Safe Sex Education in Schools	Limited knowledge of safe sex practices leads to increased risks for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)	Implement comprehensive sex education in health education curriculums	No	Decreased Access to Safe Sex Education in Schools
Limited Resources for Vulnerable Youth	Lack of resources and support for vulnerable youth populations to lead positive and productive lives	Advocate for additional funding and youth empowerment programs that support education and increase youth engagement	No	Yes



## Forces of Change Assessment

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### Forces of Change Assessment Conclusion:

The Forces of Change Assessment (FOCA) engaged community members and members of the local public health system in the identification of forces of change that may directly or indirectly impact Jefferson County, Alabama residents' health and the effectiveness of its local public health system.

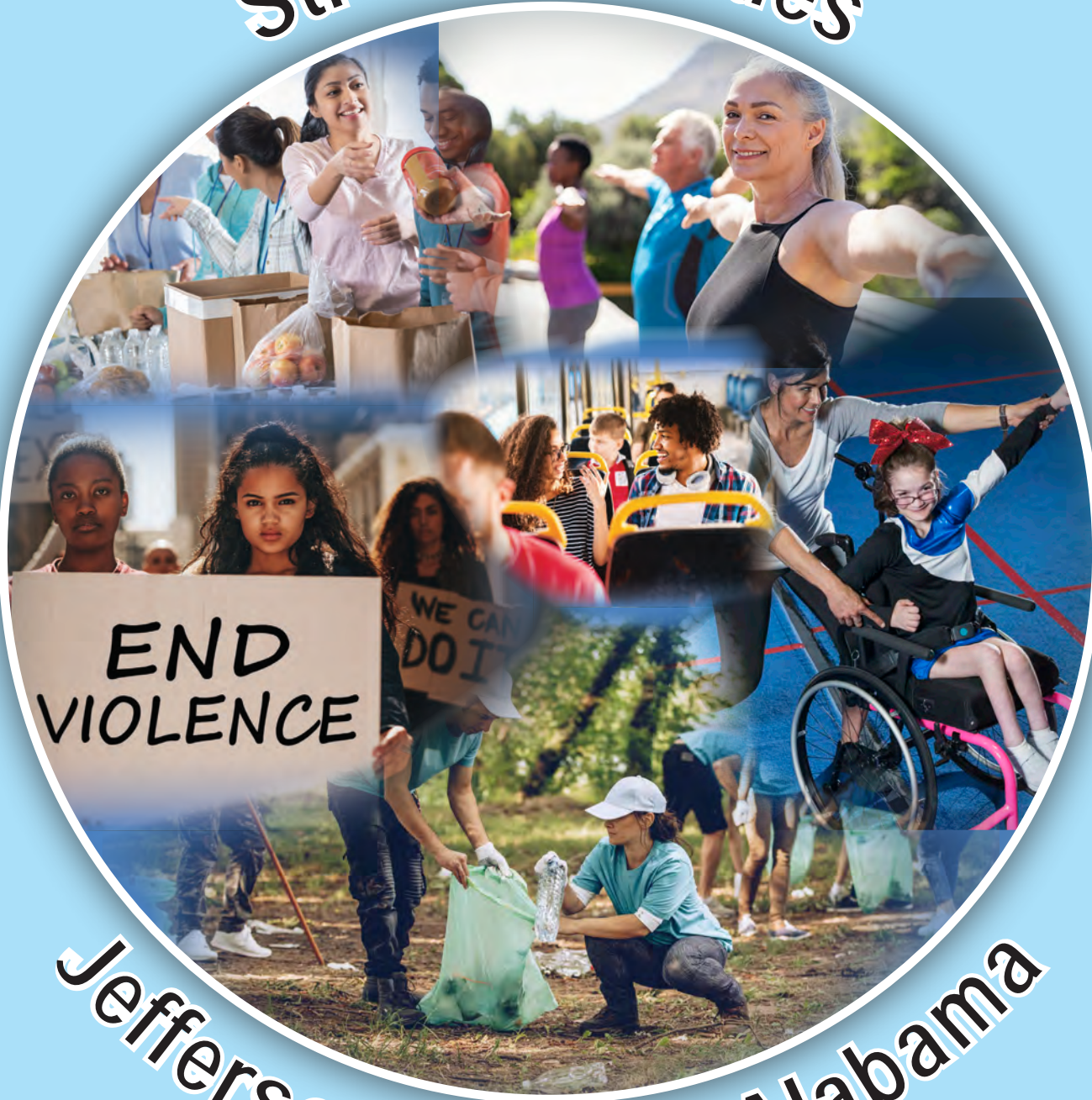
### Appendix 1: Forces of Change Assessment Sub-committee Members

- David Hooks, UAB School of Public Health
- Brett Isom, Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham
- Brandon Johnson, City of Birmingham Office of P.E.A.C.E. and Policy
- Sonja Lewis, Force of Change Assessment Coordinator, Jefferson County Department of Health
- Bryn Manzella, Jefferson County Department of Health
- Leslie Plaia, Recovery Resource Center
- Susan Sellers, St. Vincent's Foundation, Forge Office

### Appendix 2: Forces of Change Assessment Participant Affiliations

- Birmingham Central Public Library
- Brother Let's Talk
- Children's Aid Society
- Children's Policy Council
- Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham
- Fire House Shelter
- Fresh Water Land Trust
- Healthcare Round Table
- Greater Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church
- JBS Mental Health Authority
- Jefferson County Department of Health
- Jefferson County Department of Roads and Transportation
- Mental Health Roundtable
- Roebuck Neighborhood Association
- St. Vincent's Health System Foundation, Forge Office
- St. Vincent's Health System

# Strategic Issues



# Jefferson County, Alabama

ASSESSMENT, VISIONING, AND PLANNING

**COMMUNITY  
MATTERS**

FOR A HEALTHY JEFFERSON COUNTY





## Strategic Issue Selection

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Following the completion of Phase III of the Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) process, the Community Matters Core Team reviewed the data arising from each of the individual assessments presented in this document to identify a preliminary list of 102 potential strategic issues from which to develop a community-wide strategic health plan. With the assistance of the UAB School of Public Health's Applied Evaluation and Assessment Center, the initial potential strategic issues list was reduced to 47 items through calculating frequency with which an issue was identified in the various focus groups, community conversations and open-ended survey results.

Using this list of 47 potential strategic issues, the Community Matters Community Health Assessment Key Issue Prioritization survey was created using Survey Monkey® and distributed to focus group and community conversation participants, members of the Community Matters Listserv, representatives of the local public health system and the general public. Recipients of the survey also received the executive summaries from each of the four assessments provided within this document. Recipients were asked to review the executive summaries and to consider the importance of each issue in the survey, availability of resources to address the issue, and the community's will to actively engage in resolving each issue in creating the prioritization.

From the results of the Community Matters Community Health Assessment Key Issues Prioritization survey, the Community Matters Core Team further reduced the list to 16 potential strategic issues for consideration and further prioritization by the Community Matters Strategic Issue final review group. This group was comprised of multi-sector community leaders and representatives, including members of the Health Action Partnership of Jefferson County Leadership Team. The Community Matters Strategic Issue final review group received the voting tool with the 16 potential strategic issues and the executive summaries from the four assessments prior to the September 11, 2019 final selection meeting. Participants were informed that between three and five strategic issues are recommended for community health strategic plans in a five-year implementation cycle. Following discussion of the data supporting the potential strategic issues and the availability of resources and will to address each issue, each participant was given 100 points to assign among the 16 items on the voting tool. The number of points provided the ranking of the strategic issues by each individual participant. Participants assigned points which were then combined through the multi-voting process to reveal the top five strategic issues for improving health in Jefferson County, Alabama. The selection of the final strategic issues for the community health strategic plan, the *Jefferson County Community Health Improvement Plan 2020 – 2024*, represents the completion of Phase IV of the MAPP process.

The final strategic issues provide the infrastructure for developing Phase V of the MAPP process: Formulate Goals and Strategies. These goals and strategies, along with the strategic issues will comprise Jefferson County's community health improvement plan, the *Jefferson County Community Health Improvement Plan 2020 – 2024*, beginning in 2020. The five strategic issues that will be addressed in the *Jefferson County Community Health Improvement Plan 2020 – 2024* are presented in the following table:



**Final Strategic Issues for 2020-2024 Jefferson County  
Community Health Improvement Plan by Rank:**

Rank	Strategic Issue
1	Control Gun Violence and Improve Community Safety
2	Provide a Timely, Safe, Equitable and Well-Maintained Public Transportation System
3	Improve Mental Health Care Access and Utilization
4	Decrease Obesity
5	Advance Health Equity Through Equitable Policies and Access to Resources and Services



## Acknowledgments

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The Jefferson County Department of Health and its Division of Quality Improvement and Decision Support wish to thank the over 1,800 Jefferson County residents and members of the Jefferson County local public health system for the deep and meaningful contributions to the development of this *Community Health Assessment for Jefferson County, Alabama*. Whether the contribution was through the selection of the vision statement for Community Matters, planning, coordinating and implementing the four assessments, analyzing the massive quantity of qualitative data gathered during the data collection process, or prioritizing the potential strategic issues generated from the analysis of data, these contributions were essential in creating this document.

Gratitude is especially expressed to Anne Brisendine DrPH, CHES, Lisle Hites, MS, MEd, PhD and Julie Preskitt, MSOT, MPH, PhD from the UAB School of Public Health's Applied Evaluation and Assessment Center for assistance with qualitative analysis.





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