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## **Building Foundations for Equitable Recovery and Resilient Communities**

### ***APHSA Special Statement – January 21, 2021***

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Yesterday, our country witnessed the inauguration of the 46<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, following a tumultuous two weeks that included an insurrection that threatened the very foundation of our democracy. Democracy held, and with the peaceful transition of power now complete, the attention of our nation must return to addressing the profound challenges before us amidst a pervasive public health crisis, its deep economic repercussions, and ongoing racial injustice.

While it will take time, we can begin to restore trust in our public institutions, heal our divisions, and build common ground. As youth poet laureate Amanda Gorman powerfully shared with the nation during her inaugural poem yesterday, “We are not broken, we are simply unfinished.”

Health and human services leaders are already at work—laying the tracks necessary for all communities to thrive. Human services sit at the [Cornerstone for Building Resilient Communities and a Revitalized Economy](#)—they are the essential building blocks for economic mobility and well-being for all of us. Notably, to [achieve an equitable recovery](#) will require that we redesign our systems to intentionally counteract long-standing structural barriers and advance race equity. We are heartened to see the Biden-Harris administration’s commitment to not just calling out confronting racial injustice as a national imperative, but to begin the hard work of examining how federal policies and practices can be harnessed to dismantle structural inequities and create a more just nation for all.

For our part, the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), is proud to share recommendations designed to meet the most pressing needs of families and communities while making a down payment for a brighter future. Through our initial transition blueprint, [Cornerstone for Building Resilient Communities and a Revitalized Economy and its subsequent policy brief, Laying the Tracks](#), we set forth the building blocks required to lay a strong foundation essential to weathering the current crises and promoting an equitable rebuilding process. Over the coming months, we will be digging deeper into the critical components that are needed to accomplish this through additional policy briefs—[stay up to date here](#).

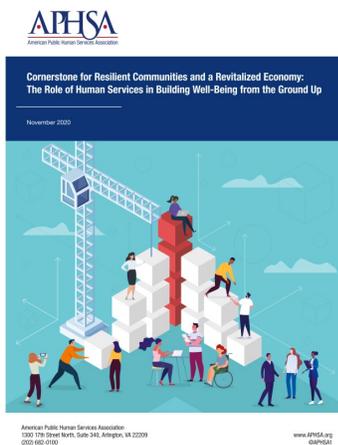
*American Public Human Services Association advances the well-being of all people by influencing modern approaches to sound policy, building the capacity of public agencies to enable healthy families and communities, and connecting leaders to accelerate learning and generate practical solutions together.*

**INFLUENCE. BUILD. CONNECT.**

And as we move forward, we’d also like to share our most recent report funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, [COVID Response Project: Lessons Learned from State Adaptions and Federal Flexibilities](#), which documents the real-time impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on state human services agencies and captures state perspectives on lessons learned to guide future federal policymaking and support state implementation.

All of our recommendations are drawn from the [on-the-ground expertise of our members](#)—state and local health and human services leaders responsible for overseeing and aligning services that build resilience and bolster family well-being through access to food, health care, employment, child care, and other key building blocks.

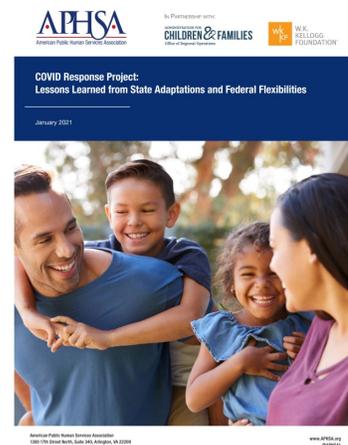
Our sleeves are rolled up and we look forward to working with federal agencies, the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress, and the Biden-Harris Administration to move America through the pandemic and ultimately modernize national policies through guidance, regulations, and legislation. We are committed to bring key federal leaders, researchers, and other stakeholders into conversations with our connected network to catalyze work across health and human services and adjacent sectors and systems, facilitate information sharing—input and feedback—and generate community-led solutions.



**[Read and/or download Cornerstone for Resilient Communities and a Revitalized Economy: The Role of Human Services in Building Well-Being from the Ground Up](#)**



**[Read and/or download Laying the Tracks for an Equitable Recovery and Long Term Repair \(a Cornerstone policy brief\)](#)**



**[Read and/or download COVID Response Project: Lessons Learned from State Adaptions and Federal Flexibilities](#)**