

INTRODUCTION: A CALL TO ACTION

The Urban Initiative for Reproductive Health (Urban Initiative) is pleased to present you with the National Urban Reproductive Health Agenda (Agenda), a roadmap for local leaders to take action and create change in their communities. The goal of the Agenda is to inform and motivate local elected leaders, public health officials, and advocates by offering a common vision and concrete strategies for improving the reproductive, sexual, and maternal health of urban communities.

BACKGROUND ON THE URBAN INITIATIVE FOR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Launched at a groundbreaking summit in 2008, the Urban Initiative is a multi-year national initiative to create and promote real policy solutions to address reproductive health problems currently facing cities across the nation. The Urban Initiative was developed as a strategy for addressing the unmet reproductive health challenges of urban residents while seizing on the untapped opportunities among local leaders to effect positive change. Through regional summits, grantmaking, and online coordination, the Urban Initiative is creating partnerships between mayors and city councilmembers, county executives, public health officials, and advocates to advance policies and programs that address disparities, increase access to comprehensive reproductive, sexual and maternal health information and services, reduce unintended pregnancies, and lead to healthier birth outcomes.

In 2009, the Urban Initiative established the National Urban Reproductive Health Agenda Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee), comprised of national, state, and local experts on a broad range of reproductive health and justice issues, to collectively synthesize and articulate the critical values, issues, and recommendations for advancing reproductive health and justice on a local level. The Advisory Committee provided invaluable guidance and feedback on the creation of the Agenda.

WHAT IS THE AGENDA?

- **A VISION.** In order to craft solutions that are guided by our values, leaders need a collective vision for change. The Agenda begins with a statement of Values and Principles that provide the framework for advancing policies and programs at the local level.
- **A RESOURCE.** In order to create and advance solutions, leaders need specific information about the problems that exist and why. The Advisory Committee identified twelve interrelated Focus Areas covering a range of issues that are specific to urban areas or disproportionately prevalent in urban communities. Each Focus Area includes a short brief that provides an overview of the issue along with supporting research and analysis. Together these briefs define the most pressing reproductive health challenges and why they must be addressed in urban communities specifically.
- **A CALL TO ACTION.** In order to strategically address urban challenges, leaders need specific recommendations to support and act upon. The Agenda offers concrete local recommendations that can and should be implemented to address the issues identified in the Focus Area briefs. The recommendations have been culled from urban areas across the country and represent a synthesis of best practices and promising strategies. To demonstrate their real-life applicability, the Agenda includes examples of how these models are working in real cities, big and small. By sharing what we know has worked and what we believe is possible, we can effect real change.

Recognizing that policy and budgetary decisions made at the state and federal level have an immense impact on the lives of urban residents and often shape the potential of advocacy work at the local level, the Agenda concludes with a set of recommendations for state and federal governments that help address urban reproductive, sexual, and maternal health issues.

www.UrbanInitiative.org

The Agenda is available on the Urban Initiative website at www.UrbanInitiative.org. This website serves as an on-line Clearinghouse, containing additional detailed information about model policies and programs from cities around the country. All of the models highlighted in this Agenda are included in the Clearinghouse. In addition, each Focus Area can be linked to promising models online in order to facilitate implementation of Agenda recommendations in your community. The website also offers the opportunity to share resources and network with others working in urban areas. Please visit us today!



The Urban Initiative for Reproductive Health is a program of the National Institute for Reproductive Health (National Institute).

The National Institute is an innovation institute for state and local organizations working on reproductive health issues. We offer strategic guidance, hands-on support and funding to help state and local leaders remove barriers to health care, win public battles and change public policies. Together, we are helping women in communities across the country gain access to the full range of quality reproductive health care options, the freedom to exercise their reproductive rights and the opportunity to have healthy pregnancies.

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