

**FRESNO STATE** | Central Valley Health Policy Institute

## Health Policy Leadership Program

### **Equity in the Balance: Health Policy Leadership in an Age of Affordability**

*October 9, 2026 – May 14, 2027*

#### **PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

Since 2005, the Health Policy Leadership Program (HPLP) at Fresno State's Central Valley Health Policy Institute has offered professional growth and development opportunities to emerging local and regional leaders. Participants of HPLP explore key issues in health policy as they connect with other emerging leaders. The vision of HPLP is to build capacity through a network of multi-sector professionals who gain valuable knowledge and leadership skills in health equity. HPLP participants can expect to engage in meaningful peer-to-peer discussions pertinent to the health of the San Joaquin Valley region.

Health policy today is being reshaped by a single, powerful question: what can we afford? Shifting federal and state priorities, changes to Medi-Cal and safety-net financing, and rising costs across healthcare, public health, and behavioral health are forcing difficult decisions at every level. Yet affordability and equity are not competing goals. Communities cannot achieve one without the other. This moment calls for leaders who can hold both in balance: stewarding limited resources wisely while keeping health equity at the center of every decision.

#### **HEALTH POLICY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM (HPLP)**

The San Joaquin Valley faces these financing pressures with deep roots and real constraints. Our region experiences persistent health disparities, provider shortages, and heavy reliance on public coverage, making changes in federal and state health financing felt here first and most acutely. At the same time, the Valley's history of community-driven problem-solving offers a foundation for leadership that turns resource realities into strategic advantage.

The **HPLP 2026-2027: Equity in the Balance: Health Policy Leadership in an Age of Affordability Cohort** will provide knowledge-grounding and skill-developing opportunities for emerging public and nonprofit leaders. Participants will build fluency in public health foundations, the science of epidemiology and data, and the financing of healthcare and public health. Participants will learn skills to lead their organizations and communities through policy transitions without losing sight of health equity.

#### **APPLIED SKILLS PROJECT**

HPLP participants will work in groups to develop, implement, and report on projects that address specific equity and affordability challenges for their organizations and communities. Past projects have explored priority issues such as engaging uninsured people in preventive care, engaging residents in addressing environmental concerns, building resident and neighborhood capacity for partnerships for system and policy change, and enhancing organizational capacity to address health inequalities.

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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**Program Cost: \$1,000**

**DEADLINE TO APPLY: SEPTEMBER 14, 2026**

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Health Policy Leadership Program consists of 10 hybrid virtual/in-person sessions across 8 months. Five in-person sessions (6 hours each, lunch provided) offer intensive skill-building and networking, while five virtual sessions (5 hours each, via Zoom) provide flexibility for working professionals. Each session, starting October 9, 2026, will combine lecture materials and small group conversations about health equity, public health foundations, and health financing, and how a health equity lens is a useful tool for planning institutional and policy solutions in a resource-constrained era. It is recommended, but not necessary, that two or more people from an organization or network participate in HPLP to create impactful projects.

If you would like to join the HPLP Equity in the Balance cohort, please apply via the online application (**Application Link:** <https://bit.ly/4d63NHI>) and submit a letter of support from your supervisor authorizing the required time commitment. We welcome participants from all career paths, including public health departments, healthcare systems, behavioral health, social services, economic and community development agencies, educational institutions, and the full range of community-based and grassroots organizations who want to have an impact on this important issue.

### In this program, you will develop skills and knowledge to:

- Understand health equity, the social determinants of health, and how they intersect with public health
- Master core public health foundations and apply them to contemporary challenges in the Central Valley
- Navigate the evolving federal and state financing landscape, including Medi-Cal transformation and safety-net policy changes, while maintaining focus on community health priorities
- Use publicly available data and research methods to identify and communicate barriers to health equity
- Conduct and interpret organizational assessment and strategic planning techniques suited to resource-constrained environments
- Communicate and frame public health finance issues effectively with leaders, policymakers, and peers
- Lead through difficult times with skills in conflict resolution, community engagement, and effective communication
- Develop and present a data-driven applied project addressing an equity and affordability challenge in your community

## MEETING DATES

|                    |                    |                            |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| October 9, 2026*   | December 18, 2026  | March 19, 2027             |
| October 30, 2026   | January 22, 2027   | April 9, 2027*             |
| November 13, 2026* | February 19, 2027* | April 30, 2027             |
|                    |                    | May 14, 2027 (Graduation)* |

*\* Meetings marked with an asterisk will meet in person.*

### Virtual Sessions

- 5 sessions
- 5 hours + break (9:30 AM – 2:30 PM)
- Via Zoom

### In-Person Sessions

- 5 sessions
- 6 hours (9:30 AM – 3:30 PM)
- Lunch provided

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