

Community Collaborative Meeting

Next meeting - topics include Health Equity Zones and Nutrition & Food Security

November 13 | 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm PT

[Zoom Meeting Link](#)

October 9, 2024

In-person meeting held in conjunction with the Washington State Public Health Association Conference.

We are working to find balance in the benefits and costs associated with translation. If you would like any of this content in another language, please email Community.Collaborative@doh.wa.gov and we will work with you to translate into the language(s) needed.

Estamos trabajando para encontrar un equilibrio entre los beneficios y costos asociados con la traducción. Si desea compartir esto o parte de nuestros materiales con una audiencia en otro idioma, por favor envíe un correo electrónico a Community.Collaborative@doh.wa.gov y trabajaremos con juntos con usted para traducir al idioma o idiomas necesarios.

Meeting Recap

Welcome

Melissa West, Manager of the Community Collaborative for the Washington State Department of Health (DOH), welcomed everyone into the space. Participants were asked to share their name, pronouns, organizations (if relevant) and one thing they were looking forward to gaining during the WSPHA conference.

Opening Remarks

Melissa shared a few opening comments about the Community Collaborative, which she defined as an open space for community partners and DOH to share information and decision-making so that DOH practices, programs and policies reduce health inequities and improve health outcomes for Black, Indigenous, communities of color and all those facing harm due to systemic racism and



Melissa West (DOH) with Community Collaborative Thought Partners Maria Remington, Cara Elzie and Kathleen Wilcox, and Omid Bagheri Garakani (DOH)

oppression. DOH is working with Thought Partners to create a structure that best represents the health needs of communities across the state. Melissa shared that prior to DOH she has worked in the private sector, with CBOs and nonprofit organizations, as well as foundations. She offered the following observations after nine months in her role at DOH:

- Meeting community needs is a long-term effort that will be measured in part by structural changes such as:
 - o Policies and practices – how are we centering community in work across DOH both in legal regulations and ongoing activities?
 - o Funding – how much are we investing in Community Based Organizations? And how flexible is the funding that DOH does invest? Melissa also noted that in 2024 budget period funding to CBOs was about 5.6% of the budget, or \$135M.
- It will be important to increase the connections between community partners and DOH. There are differing definitions of community across DOH, many staff are not regularly working with Community-Based Organizations who reach those furthest from the health system. We need to challenge power structures that have defined and shaped the way we work with community partners.
- Some previous feedback that has been shared about the Community Collaborative:
 - o Representation matters, including geographical representation;
 - o In-person meeting opportunities are important for building relationships and trust;
 - o We need to do a better job aligning across local/state and state/state agency interactions.
- In the short term we will continue to issue a newsletter and conduct monthly virtual meetings in which we will share funding opportunities, connect partners with other partners, and share resources that can support the communities you serve. We will be gathering additional input about priority areas during Collaborative meetings and [also encourage people to fill out our survey](#).
- We also offer compensation for our Thought Partners and [workgroups](#) to help address the health concerns of specific communities.

Discussion

Several participants shared their input including:

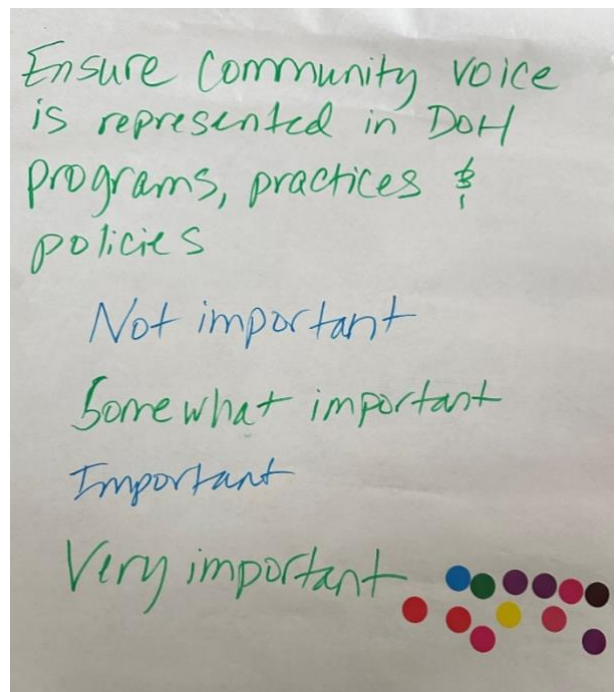
- There's a lot of data missing that makes it difficult to adequately discern community health needs for specific populations.
- Gathering and sharing data would be an important role for the Community Collaborative (yet how should we do this in a way that is not extractive?)
- Priority needs should be assessed – how does the Community Collaborative connect to the State Health Assessment and State Health Improvement Plan?
- ACHs have been provided lots of funding, it would be helpful to know how they better fit in the ecosystem;

- Pathways and connections with local health offices should be prioritized;
- Flexible funding is critical; we need to find a way to prioritize funding that helps build relationships and collective community power;
- Knowing what we're offering partners builds trust, so it's important to share if something is potentially harmful to community partners, or does not otherwise support their sustainability and growth;
- We want DOH staff to be present, but presence can be a negative if there's no follow through.

Community Collaborative Input

We asked community participants to use stickies to vote on which of the Community Collaborative meeting goals are most important to them. Here are the tallies in order of highest importance:

- **Ensure community voice is represented in DOH practices, programs and policies** (12 very important)
- **Learn about resources and funding to support the community(ies) I serve** (11 very important)
- **Raise public health concerns facing the community/ies I represent or serve** (3 important, 7 very important)
- **Build connections with other DOH community partners** (3 important, 7 very important)
- **Build an understanding of what DOH does and how it operates** (7 important, 4 very important)
- **Learn about the policy-making process and how it impacts my community** (1 somewhat important, 5 important, 5 very important)



A poster from the meeting exercise regarding goals for the Community Collaborative

Summary

WSPHA has tried to increase representation of community organizations at this year's conference and a number of sessions were led by CBOs during the event. DOH staff feel that it's important to continue to lift community voices in these venues and would like to continue offering scholarships and travel support but we need your help! Please email community.collaborative@doh.wa.gov to let us know how funding support to participate in conferences like WSPHA helps you support the communities you serve!