



December 10, 2025 Community Collaborative Meeting

Agenda

- 3:32 Welcome from Cara Elzie, Community Collaborative Thought Partner and Youth Advisory Council
- 3:35 Naghmana Sherazi and Carolyn Cole -- Governor's Immigration Subcabinet
- 4:15 Chelsea Henry and Najma Abdi -- State Health Improvement Plan priorities for community input.
- 4:30 Bella Mendez -- Workforce Pathways Internship Opportunity,
- 4:50 West Coast Health Alliance, Recommendations & Qs for Collaborative

Meeting slides are available on WA Portal: <https://waportal.org/partners/community-collaborative/meeting-notes-and-slides>

Meeting Recap

Welcome

Cara Elzie, our Thought Partner Facilitator, opened the December Community Collaborative by welcoming everyone into the space as “Heat Above” by Greta Van Fleet played while participants joined. She invited attendees to share in the chat a book, podcast, or film that had recently inspired them. Some of the recommended books include:

- *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies*, by Resmaa Menakem
- *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion*, by Gregory Boyle
- *Biting the Hand: Growing Up Asian in Black and White America*, by Julia Lee
- *The Souls of Black Folk*, by W.E.B. Du Bois
- *The Hummingbird*, by Sandro Veronesi
- *Change the Story*, by Kristine Pidkamney
- *A Fever in the Heartland: The Ku Klux Klan's Plot to Take Over America, and the Woman Who Stopped Them*, by Timothy Egan
- *The Emperor of Gladness*, by Ocean Vuong
- *Under the Skin: The Hidden Toll of Racism on American Lives and on the Health of Our Nation*, by Linda Villarosa



- *The Rediscovery of America: Native Peoples and the Unmaking of U.S. History*, by Ned Blackhawk

Cara also grounded the group with a land and labor acknowledgement that focused on the role of displacement in the creation of our country—from those who were displaced by those searching for a better life, to those who were brought here as slaves, to those seeking refuge from displacement and turmoil in their home countries. “No matter what your connection to America is,” she noted, “the displacement of someone has played a role in that story. We take this opportunity to honor those who were forced to come to this country or to move to a different part of this country against their will, and now we also honor those who are being forced to leave this country against their will.”

Governor’s Immigration Subcabinet

Naghmana Sherazi and Carolyn Cole, from the Office of Equity, provided an overview of the purpose, objectives, and structure of the Immigration Subcabinet, along with progress made since its inception on September 25th and how the community can get involved.

Actions include:

- Take the needs assessment survey
- Contact subcabinet@equity.wa.gov to be added to one of the subcommittees
- [Sign up for the sub-cabinet support newsletter](#)

Key points from the presentation are as follows:

- The Immigration Subcabinet was created through a Governor’s Executive Order to coordinate statewide responses to immigration-related issues impacting Washingtonians. Staff will submit quarterly reports to the Governor outlining practices, findings, and recommended changes to state policies and coordination.
- The Subcabinet is required to meet regularly with community members and advocacy groups to incorporate lived experience, feedback, and recommendations directly into state work.
- During October and November, staff convened five statewide listening sessions and conducted multilingual surveys that generated over 150 responses. What we’ve heard to date is summarized below.



Listening Sessions and Survey – What We Heard

Top 10 Overall Emerging Themes
Data protection and privacy
Fear of ICE
Language accessibility
Stop or limit ICE
People are fearful and afraid
Strengthen accountability for the Keep Washington Working Act
Ban or regulate Flock cameras and all surveillance
Community outreach and engagement
Fear for safety
More listening sessions and action with accountability



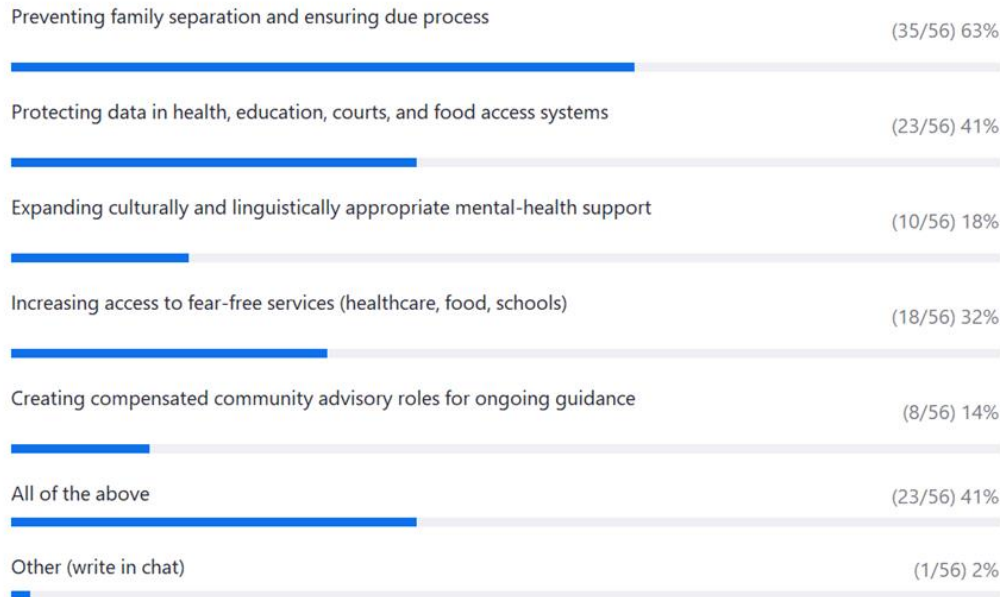
- Surveys remain open and are offered in 10+ languages, including English, Spanish, Farsi, Ukrainian, Russian, Arabic, Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese Simplified, and Chinese Traditional. Additional translations are available upon request. Access the surveys [here](#).
- **Opportunities to Engage:** The presenters invited anyone interested in participating in the community subcommittees on:
 - Immigrants and Refugees.
 - The disability community.
 - LGBTQ+ community.

Send an email to subcabinet@equity.wa.gov, and they will put you in touch with the appropriate subcommittee sponsor.



Poll Question: “Which feels most urgent for the state to address to help families feel safe and supported?”

56/56 (100%) answered



Community Questions & Comments:

“Are there ways to make better connections with community members to be able to provide assistance during times of emergency?” -- Carolyn noted that the Emergency Services Division, which is part of the subcabinet, will be helping to support the agency standards committee around protecting immigrants and refugees during emergency situations. In addition, the communications subcommittee is looking to bolster the infrastructure and processes created during COVID to ensure rapid response and information dissemination.

“Do you have to have an account to access Smartsheet? I can’t access it and don’t want to share it if others can’t either.” -- A Smartsheet account is *not* required to complete the survey, although you may need a Microsoft or Google account depending on device settings for assistance. Participants experiencing access issues should email subcabinet@equity.wa.gov

“Some people use public computers, or have limited storage, or cannot use Google or Smartsheet. What options are available?” -- Contact the subcommittee at subcabinet@equity.wa.gov to request a document-format version of the survey via email. Community members may also give feedback to Carolyn by phone if that is more accessible; she can be reached at (360) 870-2365).



Resources Shared:

Executive Order 25-09 – Reaffirming Washington’s Commitment to Protecting the Rights and Interests of Immigrant Communities, which established the Immigration Subcabinet.

Subcabinet Contact & Updates: Email subcabinet@equity.wa.gov for questions, survey submissions, or language/access requests. Sign up for the **Subcabinet Support Newsletter** by [subscribing](#) to **Office of Equity** email updates.

Immigration Subcabinet Community Feedback Surveys, available in multiple languages.

***Public Records Notice:** Survey submissions may become public under Washington State law. Only provide information you are comfortable sharing publicly.*

Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network (WAISN)

Website: <https://waisn.org/>

State Health Improvement Plan Priorities

Chelsea Henry, State Health Improvement Plan Manager, led a discussion of current efforts to update the State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP), which is undertaken every five years. This time, the state has taken an anti-colonial, anti-racist approach to planning. Skilled facilitators and experts from the University of Washington have been working with the state to integrate political and social determinants of health, and to make sure that the process elevates the voices, values, and experiences of politically and racially marginalized communities.

The Comprehensive Collective Action Policy Plan (image below) identifies end goals and key partners involved in the effort. She noted that, unlike previous years, where the SHIP is often program focused, the current effort focuses on upstream approaches, identifying root causes and identifying policy solutions to create systems change and improve health outcomes. The state wants the policy recommendations to be owned and championed across the collaboration partnerships. While the Department of Health will have a role to play in implementing the SHIP, partners throughout the public health system will be asked to continue to work collaboratively to achieve our shared goals.



A Comprehensive Collective Action Policy Plan



The end goal:

- Elevate and strengthen current work
- Innovate together on new approaches
- Collectively drive towards policy solutions and system changes

Policies are owned and championed across partnerships



The two key priorities of the SHIP are:

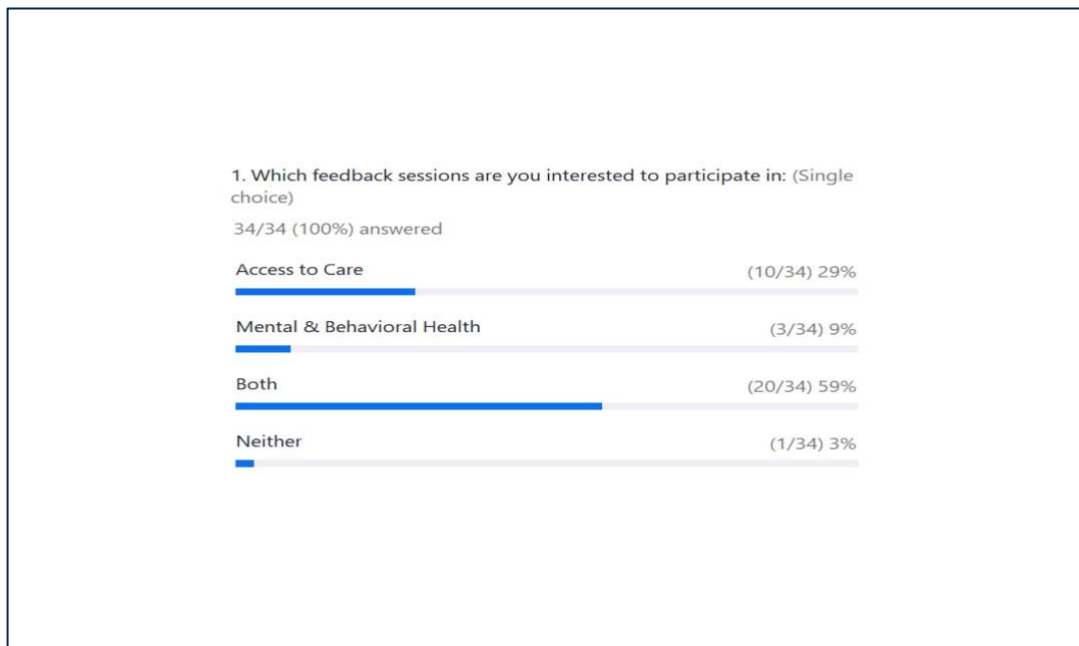
- 1) Access to Care
- 2) Mental and Behavioral Health

Chelsea also noted the strong link between priority areas, with data and community feedback showing that access to care and mental/behavioral health issues are tightly connected and should be addressed jointly.

Phase 2 of SHIP planning is currently being developed. It will include convening statewide policy planning sessions, small subject matter expert workgroups, and engagement events from February–April 2026. These sessions will help to focus on specific needs areas within each priority and identify areas specific policy solutions to pursue in the SHIP to improve health across different priority populations.



Chelsea asked the group to indicate which feedback sessions they are interested in. Results were as follows:



There was strong interest among participants in both priority areas. SHIP staff confirmed they will coordinate with partners and share upcoming session details once logistics are finalized.

Najma Abdi, Community Collaborative Pathways Professional, shared more detail on the themes the state has heard to date in both priority areas.

- **Access to Care:** Community feedback emphasized that many determinants affecting health occur outside clinical settings, including safety concerns, unstable housing, food insecurity, transportation challenges, and lack of rural services. Populations such as immigrants, LGBTQ+ communities, individuals with disabilities, uninsured individuals, and non-English speakers reported the system is not designed for them – they face unique inequities and other barriers when they try to access care. Rural partners talked about how they need care models to meet them where they live. Chronic disease was also raised as an issue.

Across all groups, there was a clear call for coordinated, trauma-informed, and culturally responsive approaches within the health care system. In the end, people want care that is, responsive, respectful, and aligned with their own experiences.

- **Mental & Behavioral Health:** Themes in this area included a lack of coordination among state agencies, including the ACs. This results in both duplication of effort and service gaps, leaving individuals without clear pathways and exacerbating inequities. Behavioral health



information, services, and treatment options aren't readily available in different languages, or don't include cultural frameworks or communication styles. Leading to issues of increased stigma. Youth mental health has also emerged as a critical concern, with a clear need to strengthen prevention-focused strategies within school systems, including expanded counseling supports and peer-based networks. Many partners emphasized the importance of proactive, ongoing, and community-informed approaches, rather than relying solely on crisis-driven responses.

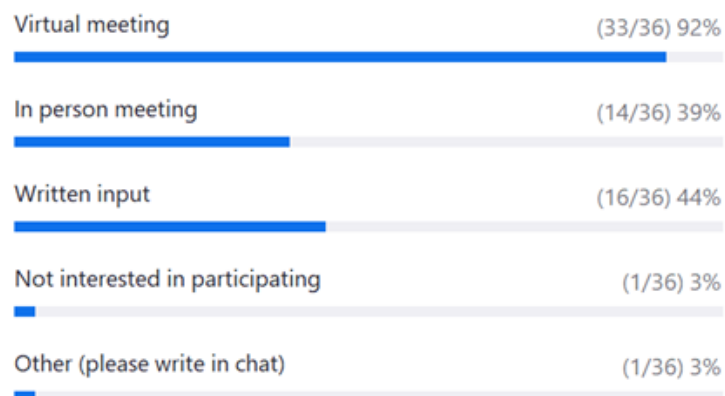
Chelsea resumed the SHIP planning discussion and outlined Phases 3 and 4.

- **Phase 3 – Implementation:** DOH and cross-sector partners will operationalize recommended policy changes, including respective roles and responsibilities, across the public health system.
- **Phase 4 – Ongoing Evaluation:** Developing a statewide evaluation framework to measure SHIP progress across multiple agencies and partners.

Poll results regarding preferred way to participate were as follows:

1. What is your preferred way to participate in SHIP feedback sessions?
(Multiple choice)

36/36 (100%) answered



Chelsea then shared with the group an [Retro Board](#) that was created to gather community input on the following questions. Here is a snapshot of those responses:

THE COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE



Who else should we reach out to include in work sessions? (please note which priority area if relevant) <small>(for example: community based organizations, local health, healthcare partners, insurers, etc)</small>	Within the priority of ACCESS TO CARE, what issues/focus areas are most important to address?	Within the priority of MENTAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, what issues/focus areas are most important to address?	Which aspect of the link BETWEEN Access to Care AND Mental & Behavioral Health is most urgent to address?	How can we ensure Community is involved in convenings?
+	+	+	+	+
Community based organizations 👍 1 🗳️ 0	Rural 👍 0 🗳️ 0	mental and behavioral health services in rural areas, especially for pregnant and postpartum people and families 👍 0 🗳️ 0	Access 👍 0 🗳️ 0	Build relationships with organizations 👍 0 🗳️ 0
Community care hubs 👍 0 🗳️ 0	Increase funding for Apple Health Expansion for undocumented folks 👍 2 🗳️ 0	Access to mental health services 👍 0 🗳️ 0	peer-led social support programs 👍 0 🗳️ 0	By removing barriers to participation, offering multiple ways to engage (in-person, virtual, language-accessible), and incorporating feedback loops so improvements reflect community priorities. 👍 0 🗳️ 0
Local public health 👍 0 🗳️ 0	Stabilizing support for community health workers as part of primary care and community based services in WA 👍 0 🗳️ 0	Youth & adolescent mental health 👍 0 🗳️ 0	using digital tools to reduce access barriers for mental and behavioral health, support telehealth approaches 👍 0 🗳️ 0	Meet with community in spaces they already gather. Don't make them come to you. 👍 2 🗳️ 0
Healthcare partners 👍 0 🗳️ 0	Training providers on how to, and reminding them of the mandate, to use appropriate interpreters (ex: family children are not interpreters). 👍 1 🗳️ 0	Provider availability 👍 0 🗳️ 0	Having access to interpretation and having providers trained to use them 👍 0 🗳️ 0	
Accountable Communities of Health and LHJs in tandem with their CBO partners. 👍 0 🗳️ 0	Transportation 👍 0 🗳️ 1	Follow-up from providers when a patient's first language is not English 👍 0 🗳️ 0		
Organizations dedicated to immigrants and refugees 👍 1 🗳️ 0	Gender affirming care access 👍 0 🗳️ 0	Integrate substance use and mental health treatment by expanding harm-reduction, SUD treatment, and co-occurring disorder services. 👍 0 🗳️ 0		
federally qualified health centers 👍 0 🗳️ 0	Expand telehealth services, with language access prioritized 👍 0 🗳️ 0			
tribes 👍 1 🗳️ 0	Understanding insurance & changes 👍 0 🗳️ 0			
Cost of Med/Nurse/PA school is a barrier to kids going into med... making the gap in services BIGGER. 👍 0 🗳️ 0	Need for sliding scale model for patients when paying 👍 0 🗳️ 0			
Community Centers or community groups including ethnic religious organizations 👍 0 🗳️ 0	Scheduling families in back to back appointments versus over several days. Ex: A single mother of 4 children should be able to come in once or twice for herself and all kids, not having to come four separate times. 👍 0 🗳️ 0			

She invited participants to provide input; the board will remain open for several days.

In closing, Chelsea states that updates on the SHIP planning process will be shared through the Community Collaborative. SHIP may also host a feedback session during a regular meeting to broaden participation.

Contact Information:

SHIP@doh.wa.gov

chelsea.henry@doh.wa.gov

Workforce Pathways Internships

Bella Mendez, Outreach and Engagement Lead for the Community Workforce Pathways Program, provided the group with information about the program and its summer internship program.

The Workforce Pathways Program supports individuals interested in public health—regardless of prior experience—by providing paid opportunities that build skills, confidence, and exposure to



real public health projects. A central goal is to create a future public health workforce that reflects the communities DOH serves.

The paid summer internship program is open to students in a wide range of academic fields, not only public health. Previous interns have come from majors such as public health, social work, law, nutrition, communications, and others. Participants join a cohort, allowing them to learn both from DOH professionals and from each other. Interns complete meaningful projects aligned with their academic background and personal interests.

Eligibility requirements include the following:

- Must be 18+
- Enrolled in a Washington-based academic institution (associate, undergraduate, or graduate level).
- International students with a student visa may apply.
- Requires a cover letter, resume, three references, and unofficial transcripts (a frequently overlooked requirement).

Timeline for 2026 Summer Cohort:

- **Information sessions:** currently underway.
- **Applications open:** mid-February 2026.
- **Interviews:** March–April 2026.
- **Selection notifications:** early May 2026.
- **Internship period:** June–August 2026.

Bella highlighted the positive contributions of previous participants, noting that interns have strengthened team capacity and brought valuable lived and academic perspectives. Applications will open in early February and will be posted on the “careers.wa.gov” website. To learn more, [visit the website](#) or [register to join one of the information sessions](#), which will be held as follows:

- **4-5 p.m. Thursday, December 18.**
- **12-1 p.m. Tuesday, December 30.**
- **4-5 p.m. Monday, January 12.**
- **10-11 a.m. Saturday, January 24.**

Resources Shared:

[Workforce Pathways Program](#)



[Pathways Paid Summer Internships | Washington State Department of Health](#)

West Coast Health Alliance Recommendations

Melissa West shared some announcements from the West Coast Health Alliance (WCHA).

- **Hepatitis B Vaccine Clarification & Public Health Messaging.** WCHA put out a press release affirming continued support for administering the Hep B vaccination to newborns.
- The WA Department of Health has also announced that:
 - Washington State **will not see changes** to existing vaccine access.
 - Individuals with insurance should continue to have Hep B vaccination covered.
 - The state's **Adult and Child Vaccine Programs** remain available for those who are uninsured or underinsured.
 - DOH immunization specialists were unable to attend this meeting but will continue monitoring updates.
- If you need immunization-related support or information for a community event, please reach out to your [Local Health Jurisdiction](#) or contact us at OI@doh.wa.gov.

Resources Shared:

Press statement from the [West Coast Health Alliance](#).

Announcements and Close

The next Community Collaborative meeting will be held on **January 14th**.

Closing Quote

"Without community, there is no liberation..."- Audre Lorde