COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
TOOLKIT

HEAR
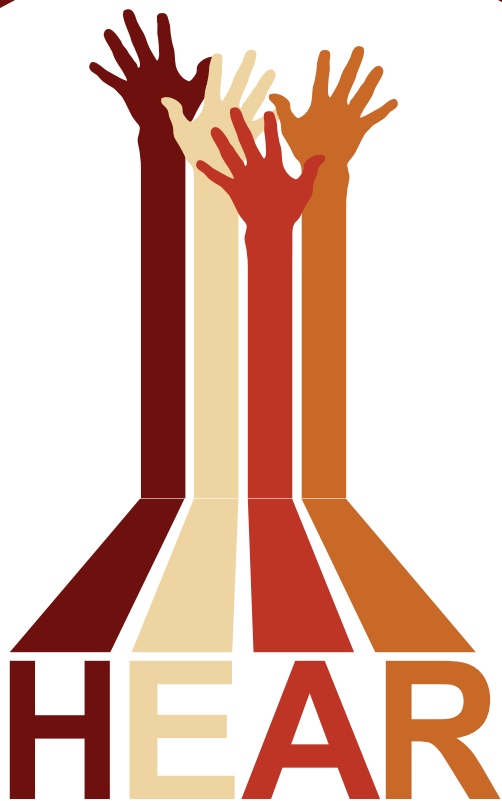
HEALTH EQUITY ALLIANCE OF ROCK COUNTY

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OUR MISSION

HEAR is committed to health equity, through community collaboration, to ensure that Rock County reaches its full health potential.

OUR VISION

Rock County is a healthier place to live, work, learn, play and grow.

OUR VALUES

• Community • Health & Well-being
• Equity • Collaboration

INTRODUCTION

This toolkit provides guidance for coalitions and collaborations looking to engage the community in the decision making process. It focuses on a variety of methods that can be used for inclusive engagement. These methods can be tailored to the particular issue, level of participation needing to be achieved, and can work to engage a range of stakeholders.

Research indicates that shared ownership of community health, through broad and diverse community engagement, has been shown to improve the health of communities. The Health Equity Alliance of Rock County (HEAR) is a multisector collaboration, which includes local residents and organizational representatives from Rock County that are working to improve the health of Rock County. The methods referenced in this toolkit were used by HEAR to gather broad and diverse community engagement. The information obtained through these efforts was used to inform the 2017-2020 Rock County Community Health Assessment & Improvement Plan.

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PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is the backbone for community change. Community engagement works best when it involves participation from all sectors of the community. Engaging with the community is a cumulative process of relationship building which leads to trust and strengthens over time.

Through active community engagement and trust, communities can come together to work on a common vision, which in turn makes a community stronger.
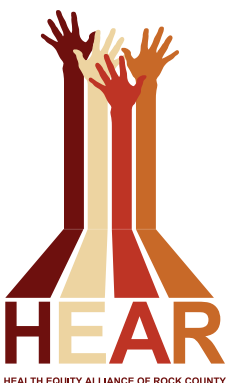
Community engagement seeks to involve all levels and members of the community to achieve long term, sustainable outcomes.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MATTERS

Members of a community are engaged when they play a role in decision-making. Proving a voice for all creates a culture of empowerment and connections. Including all members of a community when conducting a Community Health Assessment is critical for future success in community change.

When plannning for Community Engagement, consider the following questions:

- What level of participation needs to be achieved?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- How will we engage the stakeholders?
- Is there anyone that is missing (i.e. vulnerable populations)?
- How will we communicate with the community?
- How will we be sure all populations are fully engaged in the decision making process?
- What are the resources needed to be effective?
- Are there any limitations?

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STRUCTURES & SYSTEMS[1]
COMMUNITY[2]
INSTITUTIONS & ORGANIZATIONS[3]
INTERPERSONAL[4]
INDIVIDUAL[5]

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & DATA COLLECTION

Using multiple methods for data collection ensures active community engagement from diverse sectors of the community. Common data collection methods using community engagement include: Community Opinion Survey, One-to-One Conversations, and Community Conversations.

Community Opinion Survey Community surveys can be an extensive study of the needs of a large community or a brief study examining a specific issue. Common methods for community surveying include: face-to-face, telephone, online, and mailed questionnaires. Surveys should be available in multiple languages (e.g. English, Spanish, etc.).

One-to-One (Key Informant Interviews) One-to-One Conversations are purposeful conversations with individuals to learn about their concerns, self-interest, and resources. One-to-One conversations are important because they help create relationships and relationships are the building blocks for communities to organize and mobilize.

Community Conversations (Focus Groups) Community Conversations engage members of a community to discuss issues that affect all elements of health in the community. They generate knowledge that can then be used to inform decision-making.

[1] Federal, state and local regulations, laws, the built environment (e.g., public works, infrastructure, etc.)

[2] Relationships and communications between organizations and institutions

[3] Schools, health care administration, businesses, faith-based organizations, institutions

[4] Individual relationships, support groups, social networks, cultural context

[5] Individual attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors

Social Ecological Model Source: CDC.gov

MODEL FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In this toolkit the Social Ecological Model is used as a framework to help achieve the highest level of community engagement. In order to effectively address community issues it is important to actively engage those experiencing the problems. This framework ensures the integration of the community voice in assessment and intervention planning.

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COMMUNITY OPINION SURVEY

A community opinion survey is critical for collecting community-wide data. It allows organizations to collect quantitative data which allows generalization and an overview of communities' strengths and weaknesses.

The survey should be conducted using platforms that are suited for a variety of audiences. The use of multiple platforms helps to ensure active community engagement from diverse sectors of the community.

Platforms include:

• Online surveys

• Paper-based surveys

• Surveys available in multiple languages

EXAMPLE: DESIGNING A MAILED COMMUNITY OPINION SURVEY

1. Select start and end date for Community Opinion Survey (4 months before survey)
2. Compile survey timeline (4 months before survey)
3. Compile questions to be used in the Community Opinion Survey (2-3 months before scheduled mailing date)
4. Contact printing company (2 months before mailing)
5. Determine sample size needed
6. Design sample to be surveyed, with outside assistance, to reduce the magnitude of error and allow results to be more accurately generalized to larger populations
   a. (Registered voters list can be purchased at https://gabapps.wi.gov/BADGERVoters/default.aspx)
7. Print and fold surveys for mailing (6 weeks before mailing)
8. Send address file to print outgoing & return envelopes to printing
   a. Allow 2-3 weeks
   b. Make sure envelopes say "Or current resident" so there are no bad addresses mailed back (Note: Seasonal migration may affect response rate (i.e. snow birds, etc.)

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ONE-TO-ONE CONVERSATIONS

One-to-One Conversations are purposeful conversations with individuals to learn about their concerns, self-interest, and resources. This method comes from Tom Wolff's book *The Power of Collaborative Solutions*.

One-to-One Conversations help to build positive relationships within the community, which can:

- Create a strong base of support
- Help build POWER
- Increase understanding of issues
- Engage people using their strengths and their interests
- Build trust, which helps to sustain long-term change

EXAMPLE:

ONE-TO-ONE CONVERSATIONS

1. Introduction (Phone Call or Email): Hi _____ (person's name), My name is _____ (your name) and I am reaching out to introduce myself. I am a member of the _____ (community group) and I'm reaching out to a few key partners. I am hoping to set up a time to learn a little bit more about you.

2. One-to-One Conversation: Thanks for taking the time to meet with me today. I have a few questions I'd like to ask to learn more about you and your role. Is that okay? Questions to ask:
   - In your time living here how have you seen the community change?
   - As a resident, what are your concerns about the health of the community?
   - Why are you concerned with _____ (problem(s) identified)?
   - Why is _____ (problem(s) identified) important to you?
   - What do you think are some assets in the community?

3. Closing: I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. I really appreciate you taking the time out of your day to discuss your concerns. We will be doing more outreach with residents over the next few weeks to learn more about ways we can improve the community.

4. Post 1:1 Meeting
   - Compile a summary or notes following the One-to-One Conversation
   - Complete One-to-One Conversation tracking to ensure One-to-Ones are not duplicated
   - Send follow-up email if needed

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COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Community Conversations are a tool that can be used to capture community input. This method for community engagement comes from Paul Born's book Community Conversations. Community Conversations focus on engaging members of a community to discuss what helps and hinders community growth.

Similar to focus groups, Community Conversations are often guided discussions with a small group of individuals from similar backgrounds. They generate knowledge that can then be used to inform decision-making. Community Conversations help to mobilize ideas, improve skills, and build on passion of the community.

What makes a successful Community Conversation?

- A fairly specific set of 3-5 questions needing community input
- Participants understand the purpose of the Community Conversation
- Non-threatening atmosphere that encourages open discussion
- Conversations conducted are consistent and cohesive in manner
- Moderator is skilled and objective
- Childcare, transportation, and incentives (refreshments, vouchers) are offered when necessary

EXAMPLE: COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS FACILITATOR GUIDE

1. Have participants introduce themselves.
2. Facilitator will spend a predetermined amount of time on each question. Out of respect for the time commitment of the group, we will need to stick to this agenda. If the conversations are going over time participants are welcome to leave at the scheduled end time. Below are the questions we would like to ask:
   - What do you see as the top three health challenges for people in your community? And why?
   - What are the barriers to good health in your community?
   - What do you think are some of the changes related to health and healthcare that could be made in your community?
   - What do you like most about living in your community?
3. Thank them for taking time out of their schedules to participate in the Community Conversations and share appreciation for their suggestions.
4. If they would like to join your efforts, provide them with contact information and follow-up.

Note: Do not look to groups to finalize difficult decisions for the planning group and do not assume the groups represent a random sampling of the population

References: Born, Paul. (2012). Community Conversations; Wolffe, Tom. (2010). *The Power of Collaborative Solutions.*

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**If you have questions about community engagement,
please email hearcoordinator@co.rock.wi.us.**

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