

Equitable Evaluation Through Community-led Design

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Building **sustainable community health**, together



Voices for Health Justice Project

- Project provides funding for 25 programs across 24 states focused on building the power of health care consumer advocates, with a focus on grassroots organizing, racial justice and anti-racism
- The Institute for Community Health was hired to evaluate the program. Our evaluation draws from utilization-focused and equitable evaluation approaches and emphasizes participation and real-time learning

Evaluation Planning Period

- Between April and July 2021, ICH facilitated a participatory process with program partners and grantees to co-develop an evaluation plan for the Voices program
- One of our primary goals was to identify ways to work with program participants to design and implement our evaluation

Evaluation Planning Period

- We formed an Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) composed of individuals from across the 25 programs
- EAC members discussed progress and findings, reflected strategically on next steps, and identified necessary modifications to program and evaluation activities

Evaluation Advisory Committee

- ICH shared a “job ad” with all grantees and subgrantees with information about the EAC, the time commitment and compensation
 - Received a lot of interest, and the committee ultimately had 19 participants during the planning period
- EAC members were asked to participate in 1 of 2 design sessions to help develop the logic model and evaluation plan, and attend monthly meetings

Working with the EAC

- EAC formed a strong working group, building relationships with ICH and with each other
- Challenged assumptions about participatory data collection
 - EAC members were happy to leave evaluation activities to ICH

Working with the EAC

- Our evaluation is stronger for incorporating grantee perspectives from the beginning
- The EAC helped us understand how to conceptualize the program and community power
- Guided us to include things they felt were really important to understand

Lesson Learned: Committee Functioning

- Building relationships is key
- It is important not to provide too much information too early
 - This created confusion about how the process would work
- Meetings should be somewhat unbounded, so everyone can contribute to shaping plans, but it is important to have some structure and sense of expectations

Lesson Learned: Empowering Participants

- Be authentic about the goal to build a genuine partnership that recognizes all input as valid
- Avoid projecting assumptions onto people
 - Let people share what's important to them and how they feel about the process
- People are most comfortable speaking about their areas of expertise
 - Use a structure that allows people to speak to things they feel expert in