



Power-building Partnerships for Health Evaluation Summary

Power-building Partnerships for Health (PPH) is a project to cultivate powerful partnerships between local health departments (LHD) and community power building organizations (CPBO). Four LHD-CPBO sites participated in the project in 2021-2022:

- Sacramento Homeless Union and Sacramento County Health Department
- Khmer Girls in Action and City of Long Beach Department of Health & Human Services
- 9-to-5 Colorado and Tri-County Health Department
- St. Louis Homes for All and City of St. Louis Health Department

High level findings from the evaluation by project outcome

Project outcome 1: **LHDs and CPBOs develop new deep and trusting relationships with strong lines of communication between the partners**

- Relationship and trust development looked different across sites, dependent on challenging past or new experiences between partners
- None or limited in-person connection time hindered relationship development and participants recommend in-person gatherings in the future
- Communication improved generally and relationships deepened for some sites. Some organizations remained cautious and felt they needed more time to build trust

Project outcome 2: **Each LHD takes at least 3 strategic actions that support a housing campaign being led by the CPBO (and) Each CPBO takes at least 3 strategic actions to use a health equity frame as part of their campaign**

- Participants saw PPH as an opportunity to deepen local CPBO-LHD relationships and they saw one another as strategic allies
- Strategic actions varied greatly by site, ranging from 1-2 concrete plans to multiple potential ideas. Some sites are unsure about what the future holds for their partnership
- While strategic actions varied greatly, participants appreciate the project for allowing them to see the *possibilities* of partnership

Project outcome 3: **All partners develop a shared understanding of a health equity framework, housing justice principles, transformative organizing, and community power-building strategies**

- PPH participants valued PPH for facilitating connection and learning about their partner
- Participants valued co-learning and developing a shared language of housing justice principles but didn't necessarily develop a *shared understanding* together *with* their partner organization

Project outcome 4: **Each partnership increases community power and influence**

- All strategic actions or ideas aimed to engage community in various ways
- Participants believed that strategic actions aim to increase community influence but not necessarily build community power

There is variation from site to site in terms of success on outcomes and many outcomes are dependent upon one another. Covid response, staff capacity, transitions and turnovers, personal illness and loss, and a primarily online space for building connection hindered success in achieving outcomes *as they're written*. PPH provided sites with a launching pad to work toward outcomes, and some sites will need more time and ongoing support to achieve the outcomes.



Project participants shared appreciation for and ideas of what PPH project staff *did well and could keep doing*:

- Strong values and alignment, being realistic of barriers of both organization types
- The project was really organized and tight, and well coordinated overall
- The content and delivery of content was great including hearing from past participants and speakers, sessions on power analysis and trojan mice, overall framework by RTTC
- Communication practices including jamboards and breakout rooms, calendar invites, intentional/dedicated site meetings (including co-developing agendas), balancing reminders and flexibility
- Strong facilitation by PPH staff to keep the group on task, relaying notes from discussions and noting next steps

Participants suggested the follow ideas around *what to improve or consider for future PPH cohorts*:

- Extend the time length of PPH, and offer an option that is partly or entirely in person
- Have a retreat to bring everyone together again (in person ideally), as a learning space on where folks are at and what they're hoping for
- Assess organizations (especially LHDs) at the beginning through an initial survey or assessment about how plugged into housing they are, have them hold an internal meeting to talk about their power and privilege, and partnership readiness
- Address capacity and strategy to engage in PPH proactively, for example when LHD participants aren't able to attend meetings consistently and also to engage people from other departments or parts of the County to build capacity together
- Focus on trust-building exercises in the beginning along with relationship building and time for gathering over meals to build trust and commitment to the project
- Spend more time working on next steps and planning around action areas during site meetings and less on getting set in the space

Some limitations of the evaluation process

- The point of intervention for evaluating outcomes is unclear - is it the participant, the organization or the site/partnership?
- Survey response rate decreased over time from baseline to midpoint to endpoint, and two CPBOs weren't represented in the focus group sessions at endpoint
- The same people didn't take the surveys over time so change over time is hard to know
- Some organizations or sites had less representation in survey completion than others
- There was wide internal variation from staff from the same organization
- Respondents might interpret outcome indicators differently - for example how they define a strategic action
- Respondents may respond differently depending on evaluation method - for example between surveys, focus groups, and live feedback sessions with PPH staff and site partners