



Authors

Selma Aly, Asamia Diaby, and Julian Drix, MPH

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Contact

Julian Drix, Bridging Partnerships & Strategies Program Director

Human Impact Partners

BridgingInfo@humanimpact.org

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Introduction

Social justice movements and public health belong together. The *Five Dimensions of Inside-Outside Strategy* is a comprehensive toolkit designed to help public health and social movements build durable and powerful partnerships capable of advancing and winning transformative change for health, equity, and justice.

At HIP, we work to build bridges between public health and movements for social change, because we know that both fields share the ultimate aim of reshaping structures, systems, and material conditions to truly support collective health. From our experience in this work, we also know it can be extremely challenging to align the very different worlds of community power-building organizations (CPBOs),¹ which are social movement formations, and public health departments, which are part of governmental structures.

These differences necessitate intentional, strategic collaboration to foster mutual understanding, build trust, and align around shared goals. This toolkit offers an inside-outside strategy framework and practical blueprint to lay the foundations for that work.



Who This Guide Is For

The Five Dimensions of Inside-Outside Strategy guide focuses on intentional collaborations between health departments, on the inside, and community power-building organizations (CPBOs), on the outside. It is intended for those who work in either of these fields and aims to align their efforts strategically. This resource is for individuals and organizations who are already committed to advancing health equity and social justice. It is not a beginner-level guide; it is designed for those who are:

- Grounded in accountable relationships with their communities,
- Equipped with a foundational understanding of structural racism and intersecting forms of oppression, and
- Familiar with concepts of power, privilege, and systemic inequities.

For individuals or teams who need additional background, the toolkit includes recommended resources for further learning.

We use the following definition of community power-building organizations (CPBOs): "Organizations that may be identified by geography (local, state, regional, national), demography (e.g. youth, workers, multi-racial) or issue(s) (e.g. workers rights, environmental justice, multi-issue) who conduct a range of activities including base-building. Other terms sometimes used to describe CPBOs include but are not limited to: grassroots organizing groups, social movement groups, movement-building organizations, community-based organizations, community organizing groups, base building groups." Source: Leading Locally: A Community-Power Building Approach to Structural Change.

On the Inside

This toolkit is geared toward individuals working on the "inside" within governmental public health agencies and other government agencies, including:

- Local public health departments (city or county)
- State, federal, tribal, or territorial public health agencies

It may also be adapted for use in other governmental entities focused on improving community well-being, such as human services, housing, arts and culture, civil rights, or environmental agencies. This toolkit is not intended for agencies that are directly responsible for policing, detention, imprisonment, or other forms of state violence. As an abolitionist organization, we at HIP believe that working to maintain and expand carceral systems is directly antithetical to the aims and objectives of health equity and racial justice work.

We recognize the complexities of government systems, including how carceral practices may be embedded within public health agencies. This toolkit is specifically designed for individuals and teams inside government who are committed to reckoning with and transforming harmful institutions and intersecting systems of oppression.

On the Outside

This toolkit is also intended for individuals and organizations working on the "outside" of government agencies, in social justice movements, including:

- Issue-based movements including but not limited to: racial justice, gender and reproductive justice, disability justice, housing justice, economic justice, and climate justice
- Community power-building organizations (CPBOs) and coalitions engaged in base-building and community organizing

The toolkit can be adapted for coalitions or collective formations, provided there is a defined group actively working together. While the toolkit focuses on fostering relationships with governmental agencies, it recognizes that not all CPBOs choose to partner with these entities. There may be justified concerns about co-optation, past negative experiences, or a lack of alignment with strategic priorities. CPBOs may find the Five Dimensions framework and sections of the toolkit valuable for internal organizational development even if they do not currently engage with any government agencies.

The Five Dimensions

The framework is built around five critical dimensions that both public health and CPBOs can use to advance an inside-outside strategy together. These dimensions are essential for fostering partnerships that can drive policy change and improve material conditions for health equity and racial justice.

- 1. **Nourish Relationships:** Foster trust and build networks across individual, interpersonal, and organizational levels
- 2. **Deepen Leadership:** Leverage and shift power by cultivating both individual and collective leadership
- 3. **Build Capacity:** Develop resilient organizational support structures to sustain power-building and health equity work
- 4. **Navigate Political Landscapes:** Assess external influences and power dynamics to identify allies, opponents, opportunities, and threats
- 5. **Hone Analysis:** Build shared understanding of root causes and align around strategies and goals for transformative change

CPBOs can apply this framework to strengthen their base-building, organizing, and coalition efforts, while public health departments can align the framework with their <u>foundational capabilities</u> and <u>essential public health services</u>.

In this toolkit, each dimension includes a detailed description with details on power, how the dimension applies to those working both "inside" and "outside" government institutions, and individual self-reflection questions for readers to deepen their understanding.

The Five Dimensions helps partnerships:

- Develop a shared language and mutual understanding of each other, and of their partnership
- Identify strengths and areas for growth
- Set goals and milestones for organizational and partnership development
- Deepen inside-outside strategy and roles with a nuanced understanding of power
- Coordinate strategic actions to leverage power across <u>arenas of decision-making</u>

Background

Why Now?

We are living through a time of both crisis and possibility. Our communities, our rights, our planet, and the conditions we need to be healthy and thrive are under attack. At the same time, peoples' movements for justice and equity are building powerful bases and visioning liberated, health-affirming futures. To navigate this moment, we need clear strategies and a strong ecosystem capable of forging a path forward together.

The work ahead is vast: defending communities, fighting for authentic democracy, building local power, making government an agent of care, and supporting community organizing that fosters connection and grows our collective strength to create a better future. Aligning public health with social justice movements has never been more urgent to achieve democracy, safety, and justice.

The early history of public health in the US is a story of social justice movements converging to build power and create transformative changes. This convergence led to large-scale reforms in critical areas like water quality, sanitation, housing, and occupational safety that drastically improved material living conditions and extended life expectancy. Over time, however, the <u>medicalization and professionalization of public health</u> distanced it from its activist roots. As Ed Yong observes in "<u>How Public Health Took Part in Its Own Downfall</u>,"

Public health began to self-identify as a field of objective, outside observers of society instead of agents of social change.... Assuming that its science could speak for itself, the field pulled away from allies such as labor unions, housing reformers, and social-welfare organizations.

This shift left public health without the political base and social justice movement ties that gave it power. The consequences of this are deeply felt today, and were brutally exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic in particular. Our public health system is chronically underfunded and understaffed. Attacks on the public sector have expanded to target public health laws and leaders, and public health workforce burnout and turnover are widespread. While many health departments have equity champions or initiatives, they often lack the accountable relationships with community organizing groups that are essential in fighting for the changes needed to address health inequities. And long

histories of paternalism, neglect, and racism, as reflected in the <u>Tuskegee syphilis study</u>, have led to justified distrust of government — including public health agencies.

At the same time, many social movements' hard-fought wins are being undercut and dismantled, including reproductive rights, affirmative action, environmental protections, and labor laws. In this political moment, we are living through intersecting crises that threaten our health, our lives, and our futures.



The Need for Governing Power

We hold a vision of a society that centers health, healing, and belonging — a world where all people have the power to shape the systems, policies, and cultures that impact their lives. The gap between this vision and our current reality of deep injustice, born of violent colonial systems, is immense. Bridging this gap requires radical transformation across environmental, economic, social, and political landscapes. It demands dismantling harmful systems, repairing harm, and building accountable, community-led structures of co-governance to ensure health and well-being for all.

True transformation requires winning what the Grassroots Power Project calls "governing power" — the ability of movements to not only influence policy but to restructure governance itself to serve the people:

Over the years, as organizers, we have seen the vast space between the campaigns that we wage every day and the larger dreams that our people dream... we have learned through hard experience that we can't win all of what our people need by securing small changes within this oppressive system as it is structured. The only way that we change this system is if we, as a movement, can take control and win what we call 'governing power.'

Government is a terrain of constant struggle. Those with dominant power (e.g., large corporations, lobbying firms) either capture governmental authority for their own benefit or dismantle it when it poses a threat to their wealth and control. Under the current paradigm — where neoliberalism sets the stage for neo-fascist authoritarianism — governance largely maintains an unjust and inequitable status quo. Yet, within government institutions, there are also people and teams who share a vision of justice and equity. These individuals hold access to information, resources, and <u>decision-making arenas</u> that can be leveraged in collaboration with social movements.

To achieve the world we want, social justice movements must engage on this terrain of struggle, and form strategic and principled alignments within government to drive toward a radically different future. Governmental public health is a ripe terrain for this struggle, because of our shared histories and the social justice motivations of many in the public health workforce.



Reclaiming Public Health's Legacy

Embracing the rich legacy of public health as a tool for social justice offers an opportunity to reshape our future. By realigning the field with its activist roots, we can harness the power of collective action to build healthier, more equitable communities. This potential lies not in a return to the past but in forging new alliances and strategies for communities to take control of their lives and health.

With the right focus, commitment, and partnerships, public health can evolve into a dynamic force more capable of addressing today's crises, while laying the foundations for an abundant, just, and thriving future for all. The challenges are immense, but so too are our capabilities and the possibilities before us. Together, we can turn the tide and usher in a new era of public health that truly serves the people.

Inside-Outside Strategy

"An inside/outside campaign is a way to win policy victories when you don't have enough power to govern."

- Practical Radicals, Deepak Bhargava & Stephanie Luce

We define **inside-outside strategy** as an emergent set of practices designed to build alignment and mutual accountability between individuals working "inside" government institutions, and CPBOs working "outside" government in social justice movement spaces. Inside-outside strategy relies on each party leveraging its relative power, voice, and resources to achieve a common aim. The ultimate goal of inside-outside strategy is to build policies, systems, and practices that directly improve the material conditions of people's lives. (See appendix for a list of existing materials on inside-outside strategy.)

Inside-outside strategy isn't characterized by a single approach; rather, it is a dynamic set of tactics that must be adapted to the specific context of each partnership, and to the broader social and political conditions that they operate within. In favorable conditions, inside-outside strategy can drive progressive policy victories that push the boundaries of what is considered possible. In more adverse conditions, (e.g., when equity-oriented institutions are under attack), it serves as a critical tool for defending communities, protecting rights, and safeguarding past wins.

Success in any context requires trusting relationships and genuine collaboration, with partners working in close coordination to navigate the politics, power dynamics, and complexities of their respective roles and spheres of influence.



Roles in Inside-Outside Strategy

By sharing information, clarifying risks, and understanding each other's strengths and limitations, inside and outside actors can work together to define roles and actions that are complementary and advance shared goals.

- On the Inside: Government officials in public health departments and other agencies
 must be strategic in leveraging their power. This includes building internal support for
 CPBOs, understanding when to publicly advocate, and when to work quietly behind the
 scenes.
- On the Outside: CPBOs mobilize their bases, building collective power to protect communities and apply pressure through campaigns.



The Case for Inside-Outside Strategy

Inside-outside strategy is a powerful approach for driving transformative change, defending existing gains, and democratizing public institutions. Yet while the approach has long been used by organizers, advocates, and governmental employees, much of the existing literature about it lacks actionable guidance. Available resources tend to focus on what inside-outside strategy *is*, with limited guidance on how to actually *implement* it effectively.

This guide offers both a conceptual framework and practical blueprint for individuals and organizations committed to building equity and justice via cross-sector partnerships. We focus on the inside role within public agencies as important sites for developing <u>co-governance</u>. Many of the existing materials about inside-outside strategy are about policy-making with elected officials, which are the electoral and legislative <u>arenas of decision-making</u>. Because we work with health departments, our context for inside-outside strategy is primarily the administrative arena of executive branch agencies at the local, state, and federal level.

In this arena, public sector workers and appointed officials carry out the essential day-to-day work of government. They operate under a unique set of rules and conditions as government employees that is different from the role of elected officials and their staff. Because of this, a different set of skills and tools are needed for both those on the inside and the outside of these agencies. Developing an inside-outside strategy is a process of delineating separate but aligned roles with a shared and nuanced understanding of the political landscape and the jurisdiction / purview of government agencies in a local context.

It is imperative for our collective movements to sharpen our understanding of inside-outside strategy and to have readily available language and resources to help guide this crucial work, particularly at this political juncture.



HIP's Approach to Government

Building collective power requires transforming government. HIP believes government must play a pivotal role in redressing harm and advancing equity. This requires restructuring government institutions to be inclusive, transparent, responsive, and accountable to the communities they serve. At the same time, government holds responsibility for many of the oppressive policies and structures that create and perpetuate harm.

To address this tension, we advocate for rebuilding government policies and operations around principles of equity, justice, and power-sharing. Government must stand firmly in its proper role: defending the health and well-being of all, rather than succumbing to political and corporate pressures that concentrate wealth and power in the hands of the few.

As a public health organization, we work with many health departments on health equity and racial justice leadership within the public sector. We recognize that people are distinct from the institutions they work within. Critiquing institutions is not a critique of individuals working tirelessly on the inside, often doing difficult and invisible labor. We value and respect all those working to uphold equity and justice, both within government institutions and outside of them.

We also acknowledge that the inside role, while critical, can be challenging to hold due to institutional pressures and constraints. In an article for <u>Counterpunch</u>, Richard Moser makes clear that this position is not and cannot be that of a sell-out, careerist, or token:

The inside role is incredibly difficult to play and one of the most damning limitations on insideoutside strategy... [It] requires risk and courage to be in or near the centers of power but remain loyal, not to the machine, but to the political project of transformative social change. The insider with 'eyes on the prize' works to funnel resources to the outside, legitimizes the mass movement's work and articulates its vision. The effective insider does not try to control or limit protest but welcomes unruly activism as the best possible bargaining chip.

This work requires an integration of both the head and heart; a grounding in our shared humanity and values. To support this effort, we emphasize the importance of creating intentional "containers" — spaces that allow individuals to bring their full selves and lean into generative conflict as part of the process — both within institutions and in the spaces shared between community and government.



A Note on Conflict and Power

Health inequities are not incidental — they are the result of systemic power imbalances and oppressive structures that intentionally create and sustain the status quo, often prioritizing profit over collective health. Addressing inequities thus requires confronting the structural conflicts embedded within systems. This work demands a mindset shift: those seeking transformative change must become comfortable with conflict. True power shifts rarely occur without resistance from those invested in maintaining existing power structures.

For individuals working inside governmental agencies, engaging in such conflict can be particularly challenging. Institutional rules, hierarchical norms, and political pressures often discourage confrontation and innovation. In contrast, community organizers and elected officials often operate in environments where political confrontation is an expected and integral part of the work.

Conflicts may arise not only externally with power holders, but also internally within organizations and coalitions aligned on broader goals. While disruptive, these tensions can also be generative. As Paulo Freire aptly noted, "Conflict can serve as the midwife of consciousness." It is often through conflict that individuals and groups achieve greater clarity and alignment around their mission and collaborative approaches.

Generative conflict requires skillful facilitation and intentional spaces for honest dialogue. Resources like <u>Turning Towards Each Other: A Conflict Workbook or the Creative Interventions Toolkit</u> can provide helpful tools for navigating these tensions. Additionally, this toolkit offers guidance on identifying and clarifying both internal and external conflicts, and transforming them into constructive opportunities to strengthen inside-outside strategy.

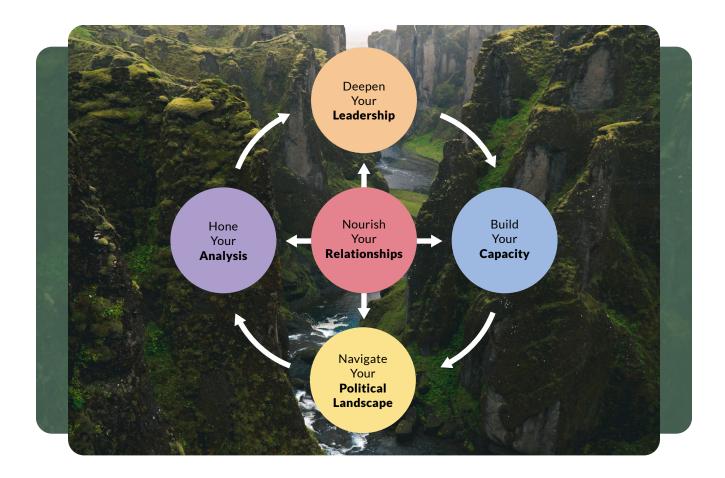


When Inside-Outside Strategy May Not Be Appropriate

Building a multi-sector, multi-racial movement is more urgent than ever, and inside-outside strategy is just one of the many tools needed right now to do that. Inside-outside strategy is not always the best or only approach. Some organizations may choose not to engage with government, instead focusing on building community alternatives outside of harmful systems. Given the legacies of racist policies and repression, distrust of government is often justified.

There is immense value in work done entirely outside government: for example, creating networks of solidarity, providing safety from violence, organizing mutual aid, and resisting harmful structures like <u>cop cities</u> and carceral systems. This guide is offered as one of many strategies for change, acknowledging the diverse paths needed to achieve justice.

The Five Dimensions



The Five Dimensions outline the skills and strategic practices needed to build effective, durable, and, powerful inside-outside collaborations between public health and social movements:

- 1. **Nourish Your Relationships** at the individual, interpersonal, and organizational levels to grow powerful and supportive networks
- 2. **Deepen Your Leadership** to take strategic risks to leverage and shift power
- 3. **Build Your Capacity** through internal organizational support structures for resilient and sustainable power-building and health equity work
- 4. **Navigate Your Political Landscape** of external influences, politics and power players to collectively identify allies and opponents and describe threats and opportunities
- 5. **Hone Your Analysis** by clarifying a shared understanding of the root causes of inequities, and getting aligned around a shared vision of what strategy and goals to pursue



How the Dimensions Work Together

While each dimension can be explored individually, they are all interconnected and work synergistically, evolving over time as partnerships adapt to shifting circumstances. The process of applying these dimensions is **layered and circular** — we present the five dimensions sequentially so that each one builds upon the previous in an iterative way, but it is critical to note that the dimensions remain both cyclical and mutually dependent:

Starting with Relationships

Relationships are the foundation of inside-outside strategy. It requires emotional intelligence and trust to navigate the power dynamics, risks, and conflicts inherent in this work. Building relationships focuses on the "who" involved — those inside and outside government forming the partnership.

Adding Leadership

After establishing the who, the Leadership dimension asks participants to consider the organizational positions they hold and their ability to leverage and shift power through their roles and work together.

Expanding to Capacity

Capacity expands wider to ask participants "what" resources their organizations have to work with and "how" to collaboratively make change together.

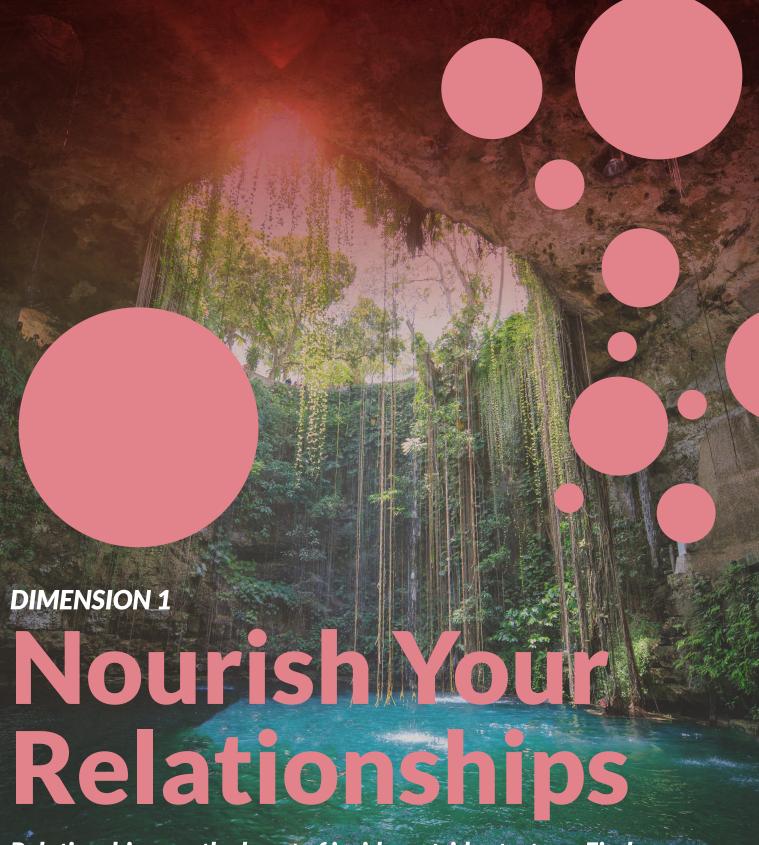
Navigating the Political Landscape

This dimension broadens the scope to "where" the work is situated, analyzing external factors and community dynamics that influence the partnership's efforts.

Clarifying Analysis

Analysis ties it all together by addressing the "why" by aligning participants' understanding of root causes and shared goals, and the "how" of taking strategic actions that drive meaningful change.

In the following sections we describe each of the five dimensions and how they can be applied organizationally to both the inside (health departments and government agencies) and the outside (CPBOs and coalitions). Each dimension includes personal reflection questions for individuals to consider for themselves and in the context of their work and organizations.



Relationships are the heart of inside-outside strategy. Find your people to grow powerful and supportive networks of individual, interpersonal, and organizational relationships.



Key Questions

- Who is involved on the inside and the outside?
- How well do they know and trust each other?
- Are there any tensions or conflicts that need to be worked through?



Description of the Relationships Dimension

We center relationships because they are the foundation upon which all structural change work, including inside-outside strategy, is built. We are all part of fractal networks and constellations of overlapping relationships. Genuine, quality relationships of trust are built over time and include boundaries, consent, and reciprocity.

At the individual level, there's your relationship with your intersecting identities, with the families and communities you are part of, with the legacies you carry and the land you live on. Within organizations, you have a relationship to the roles that you hold, and interpersonal connections with colleagues and partners that are also shaped by organizational rules, structures, and expectations. Your position within an organization influences the relationships you form and the actions you can take.

Partnerships between organizations are composed of interpersonal relationships between individuals, the roles they hold within organizations, and shared agreements – both formal and informal – that define the nature and boundaries of the partnership. Like individuals, organizations exist within a network of overlapping relationships.



Power in the Relationships Dimension

The systems of oppression that we seek to dismantle and the liberatory systems we seek to build are more than abstract concepts – they are constituted by our myriad relationships and interactions, at a micro and macro level.

As Cyndi Suarez writes in <u>The Power Manual</u>, "Power is, first of all, relational. It operates in relationships of inequality where we seek advantage." Racism, sexism, classism, ableism – indeed, all systems of oppression – are built into internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and structural relationships of "power-over" or *supremacist power*, which reflects domination and control of people and things.

In contrast, "power-with" or *liberatory power* is the ability to create what we want collectively. It is built through healthy and trusting relationships of mutuality. Suarez highlights these contrasting power relationships:

People committed to liberation often focus on the domination aspects of power, on understanding the ways some people are made powerless by others. Though there is much to understand about this type of power and how it works, focusing on it often limits the attention to ways one does assert power – a critical aspect of liberatory power.

Inside-outside strategy requires strong and trusting relationships across the deep differences in power between government and community groups, which can be complicated by the internal relationship dynamics on both the inside and the outside. Nourishing healthy relationships with self-reflection about power dynamics is an essential skill and ongoing practice for effective collaboration.



Applying the Relationships Dimension to the Inside:

- **Earning Trust and Sharing Ownership:** Effective relationship building involves developing trust and strengthening partnerships over time by acknowledging past harms, navigating challenges together, and <u>shifting power</u> from community engagement to ownership.
- Navigating Community and Government Relationships: Health departments work with a variety of community partners ranging from CPBOs to service providers and large healthcare organizations. They are also part of a broader governmental structure in their jurisdiction and work with other levels (federal, state, local) and branches (legislative, judicial) of government. Health equity requires prioritizing and being accountable to communities experiencing inequity at all of these levels.
- Encouraging Healthy Relationships: As a workplace environment, agencies can create the
 conditions for supportive dynamics between staff members, and encourage staff in prioritizing
 building strong relationships with community partners. Unhealthy workplace environments are
 marked by distrustful, controlling, and punitive top-down relationships.



Applying the Relationships Dimension to the Outside:

- Centering Relationships for Community Power: As Ella Baker asked, "Who are your people?" Organizers build relationships with a strategic purpose: to connect with their base, uncover individual interests and unite them towards a collective vision and power-building goal. Doing so effectively means being empathetic to and aware of your base members' personalities, families, cultures, and ways of being.
- Navigating a Broader Ecosystem: Organizers operate within a complex ecosystem that includes relationships across communities and positions of influence, including elected or appointed officials, community leaders, local and regional coalitions, translocal networks and national alliances, and projects that cross the boundaries of sectors. Effective organizing to build community power establishes mutually accountable relationships with decision-makers that are responsive to and respective of the broader ecosystem.
- Encouraging Generative Conflict Resolution: Relationship dynamics in community and movement spaces can be complicated, and interpersonal conflict occurs within and between organizations.
 CPBOs can support and participate in processes for generative conflict resolution and healthy accountability, and may have more experience and flexibility in this realm than their "inside" partners.



Deepen Your Leadership

Leadership can take many forms. This dimension includes leadership positions and bottom-up collective leadership. Identify the power you have access to and take strategic risks to leverage and shift power.



Key Questions

- What positions are you in to leverage power?
- Do you have support from people in positions of power?
- What inside or outside organizing is needed to shift and build power?



Description of the Leadership Dimension

Leadership shows up in various ways within ourselves and across our organizations. For the purpose of this framework, the Leadership dimension has a dual focus on individuals who are in *senior leadership* positions, and on how leadership is distributed and shared throughout an organization.

Official leadership positions play an important role in inside-outside strategy. People in these roles have a higher level of positional power, responsibilities, and access, and will often hold organizational relationships with leaders of other agencies and organizations. In some cases, inside-outside strategy is carried through direct working relationships between a leader of a health department and a leader of a CPBO. In these cases, leadership is about how they work together, share information, coordinate roles, take strategic risks, and back each other up publicly or privately, depending on the political landscape.

The other aspect of this dimension is how leadership is distributed, and how power is shared within and across organizations and their members. This includes how and if authority and decision-making get shared, and whether staff or members feel empowered to build up their own leadership to take risks or speak on behalf of the organization.

In both hierarchical and more horizontal organizational structures, leadership roles exist at different levels. The central question of this dimension is **whether organizational leaders are supportive of the partnership and trust the staff engaged in inside-outside strategy work**. If they are, what protection and support is needed to deepen and sustain the work? If they are not, what organizing and strategies are needed to get buy-in or find other ways to advance the work without leadership support?



Power in the Leadership Dimension

In government, leaders have both direct and indirect influence on the <u>first face of power</u> — the power to organize people and resources to influence policies and regulations set by that agency. This power is conditional, however, as accountability to other power structures is built into roles based on who appoints, approves, and oversees health department leadership. Health department leaders, who work in the <u>administrative arena</u>, are directly impacted by decisions in the electoral, legislative, and judicial arenas.

In contrast to hierarchical government leadership roles, movement organizations can be more horizontal. Organizational leaders build and often represent the collective power of the organization's base, and might represent the organization in various coalition spaces at the local, regional, and national levels.

Other forms of power and leadership within governmental and CPBOs and coalitions can exist within unions, teams or projects, and personal relationships. Regardless of the role or type of leadership, power shows up in the approach to leadership and how leaders work to either build their colleagues and partners up, or wield power over them.



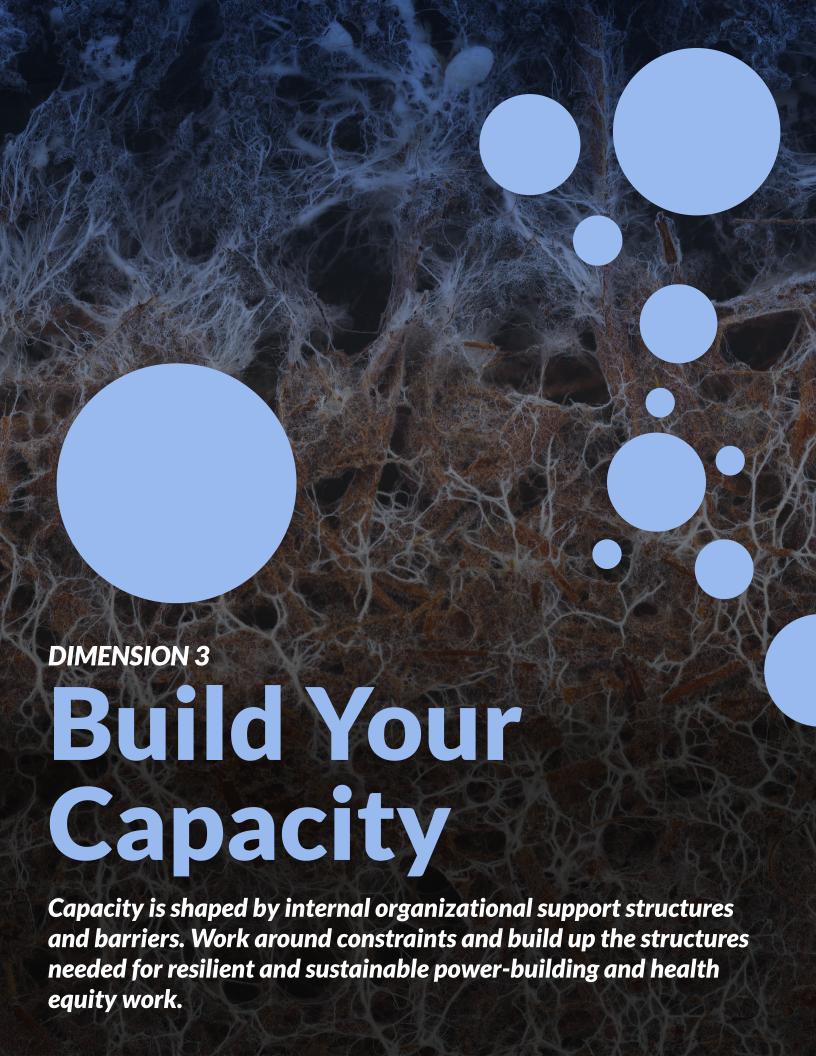
Applying the *Leadership* Dimension to the Inside:

- Community Accountability: Accountability to community is essential, though it can sometimes conflict with accountability to a hierarchical chain of command. Navigating this requires a strong moral compass to make principled decisions and take the right actions when risks are high. It also requires acknowledging and working to address the historical legacies of harm that have resulted in fraught relationships between community and government.
- Leverage Positional Power: Understanding your place in the hierarchy enables "inside" organizing.
 Identify who is supportive of the partnership with the CPBO and what positional power they hold.
 Use the power that you individually and collectively can access to provide tangible support to CPBOs, taking strategic risks when necessary.
- Organize Leadership Support: Leadership should delegate authority, provide support, and offer
 cover and protection internally to empower staff engaged in health equity work to work with
 CPBOs. At the same time, staff who aren't in leadership positions should work together to build
 organizational support for CPBOs, get leadership support, or strategize how to get around the
 barriers of unsupportive leadership.



Applying the Leadership Dimension to the Outside:

- Leadership Development as a Collective Goal: Leadership should be a shared responsibility in movements, fostering a "leaderful" approach where no single person holds all authority. Unfortunately, CPBOs are not exempt from abuses of power by those within leadership positions or across their membership. However, when done right, organizers are trained to develop, support, and amplify the leadership of the collective continuously within their work.
- Accountability to the Community: CPBOs must remain accountable to their base, and leadership should reflect the most impacted members of their community. This accountability helps avoid top-down leadership models that can lead to internal conflicts and power struggles among leadership, staff, members, and boards. It requires a clear understanding of power and privilege, and a commitment to working against extractive hierarchies and tokenization.
- Collaboration with Government Agencies: For CPBOs, the Leadership dimension refers to whether organizational leaders have: personal or working relationships with the government; an ability to navigate complex political and personal power dynamics in the community; and a willingness and ability to take risks in working with government agencies while refusing to compromise the deep grassroots values organizers hold.





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- What strengths in capacity can be used to advance your work?
- What gaps need to be filled?
- What barriers are preventing progress?
- Can you break down those barriers or get around them?

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Description of the Capacity Dimension

Capacity is essential but often overlooked. It encompasses the systems, resources, and infrastructure needed to sustain and grow impactful work. Gaps in these essential organizational structures — such as staffing, funding, leadership development, or technology — can easily derail what you are trying to accomplish. Without adequate capacity, or when capacity isn't equitably shared across a team or partnership, even small disruptions can have outsized consequences. The departure of one critical person or loss of a single funding source can lead to projects and organizations falling apart. This fragility can disproportionality affect efforts rooted in equity and justice, where resources are often already stretched thin.

Some organizational structures can be barriers that get in the way of the work. Building capacity includes learning to navigate and resist the constraints imposed by oppressive systems that shape our lives and work. The *Capacity* dimension calls on us to confront these limitations head-on, find innovative ways to work around them, and ultimately dismantle and reimagine the systems and structures that fail to serve us and our communities.

Capacity can be grown over time with intentionality, care, and resourcing. This involves working within the limits of currently available resources and intentionally instilling practices, processes, and policies that help build capacity for the longer term. By prioritizing capacity-building as an ongoing, collective effort, organizations can ensure that their work endures, adapts, and thrives in the face of challenges.



Power in the Capacity Dimension

"Power properly understood is nothing but the ability to achieve purpose. It is the strength required to bring about social, political, and economic change."

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr in Where Do We Go From Here?

Capacity goes hand in hand with power. It can be understood as the collective ability to build, harness, leverage, or wield power in the process of creating change. Capacity is needed for each of the <u>Three Faces of Power</u>: organizing people and resources to influence decisions; building infrastructure to influence what's on the agenda; and changing narratives and worldviews to shape what is possible.

The institutional barriers that get in the way of equity-oriented work were also created through the use of power. Institutional norms and structures can seem unchangeable, but as Cyndi Suarez reminds us in the Power Manual, "Power is not about the rule of law, institutions, society or the state. These are simply the dead forms, or artifacts, that result from past power-laden interactions, or confrontations." Suarez reframes power as dynamic, living and relational — not something fixed or tied exclusively to formal structures. Institutions that were built through power-laden confrontations of the past can be changed as we organize and build power. While we build capacity and create support structures for the world we want to live in, we need to struggle with, work around, and break down the dominant structures that do not support us. Big picture and longer term, capacity isn't just about single organizations or partnerships — it's about building the collective capacity needed to achieve governing power.



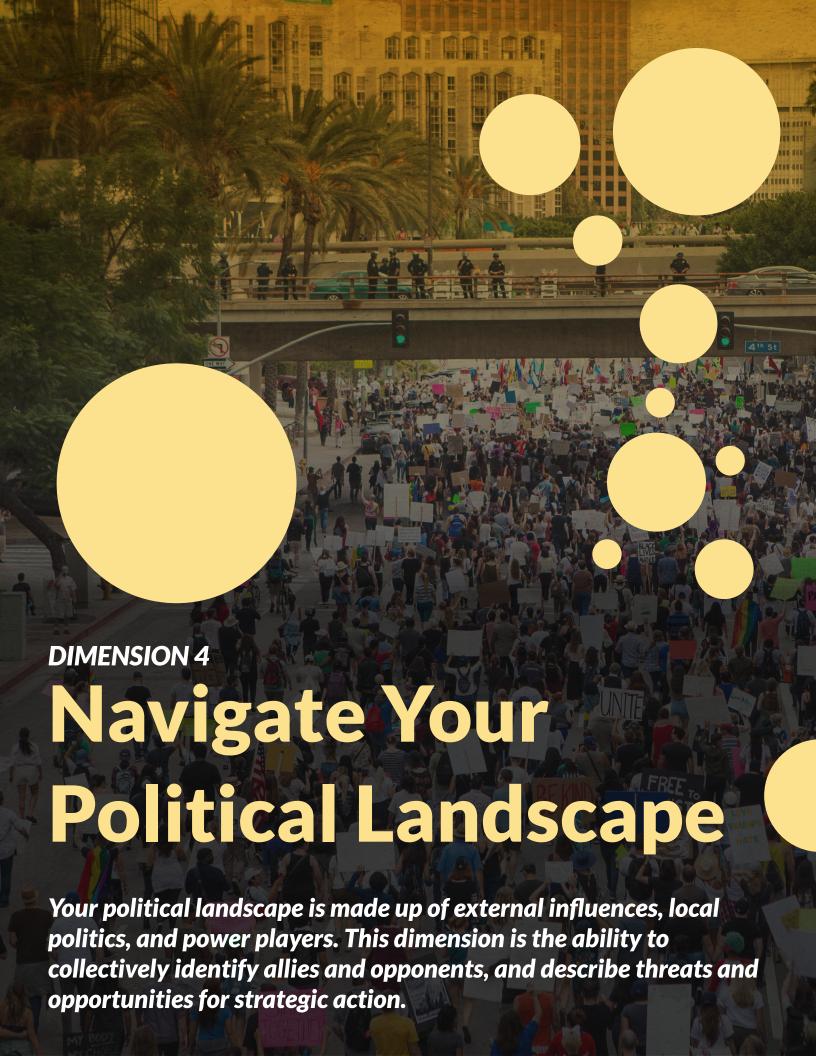
Applying the *Capacity* **Dimension to the Inside:**

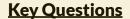
• Ability to Leverage Governmental Power: This dimension reflects the agency's ability to enact and enforce regulations that challenge corporate power, redistribute resources to align with community priorities, and influence narratives around social determinants of health. With the jurisdiction and legal authority to set policies, promulgate regulations, enforce mandates, and convene stakeholders across community and government sectors, the agency can drive policy changes and legislative priorities.

- Equity-Focused Infrastructure: Health departments' capacity for equity work involves
 foundational infrastructure such as staffing, policies, procedures, and skill development across
 workforces, community collaboration, staffing structure, procurement, funding, data, and decisionmaking. Capacity includes having dedicated staff or teams authorized to focus on health equity
 initiatives and collaborate with CPBOs, with institutional support backing their work.
- Challenges of Governmental Bureaucracy: Equity-oriented agencies and teams often face significant bureaucratic barriers, including external limits on resource distribution, restrictions on advocacy for transformative policies, and inflexible processes that hinder responses to emerging community needs. Top-down rules can constrain individuals or teams, reinforcing pressure to "stay in your lane" and operate strictly within narrow job descriptions that may not align with the broader, community-focused work required. Additionally, limited or overly specific categorical funding often fails to address real community priorities, restricting the agency's impact on meaningful change.

Applying the Capacity Dimension to the Outside:

- Community Power Through Base-Building: CPBOs are rooted in relationships with their base, building power and capacity by mobilizing community members, cultivating leadership, and organizing around transformative campaigns. Capacity building involves creating sustainable systems to institutionalize these base-building efforts and to avoid burnout.
- Movement Infrastructure and Institution Building: Effective social movements require infrastructure, such as buildings and physical space, resources, data systems, training programs, and alliances, to enable CPBOs and coalitions to wield community power on larger scales. This infrastructure supports long-term capacity and cohesion across local, regional, and national networks. With limited resources and funding, many CPBOs have to think creatively about how to actualize institution building. While difficult, institution building contributes to longevity and provides a foundation for the work to continue beyond a current moment.
- Challenges of the Non-Profit Industrial Complex (NPIC): While movement infrastructure is
 vital, sometimes structures within the NPIC can mirror oppressive systems and hinder movement
 growth. For CPBOs, the Capacity dimension also involves balancing organizational resources,
 communication tools, financial stability, and practices of self and community care that supports
 sustainable, authentic community engagement.







- What are the opportunities and threats in your political landscape?
- Who are your allies and opponents?
- Is the political landscape different, or the same, viewed from the inside versus the outside?

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Description of the Political Landscape Dimension

We live in a country marked by deep divisions along partisan, urban/rural, and state lines. But structural racism, capitalism, patriarchy, ableism, genocidal imperialism, and other systems of oppression aren't constrained to a single political party, region, or group of people.

People organizing within social movements for collective liberation and authentic multiracial democracy from the bottom up know that building community power is necessary everywhere. The political landscape is affected by which party is in control, but in any scenario there is a mix of threats and opportunities with movement-building work.

The *Political Landscape* dimension is about identifying, analyzing, navigating, and shifting the particular dynamics in your local or regional setting. This includes reading and assessing the landscape, sharing information, and actions that may include lobbying, advocacy, direct action, and other tactics. It requires knowing the rules of what is and isn't "allowed" for different people and organizations — and the consequences of bending or breaking rules. It requires nuanced understanding of the particular context and power players to determine when and how to balance building connections and coalitions, and when and how to engage in oppositional conflict to block or reduce harm.

Trust and good communication are essential for this navigation. Since government agencies are subject to public disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), a key skill for inside-outside strategy is knowing what gets shared publicly, and by whom, and what communications need to be kept inperson, over phone, or offline. The *Political Landscape* dimension is deeply connected to relationships — as you navigate a landscape shaped by conflicting power dynamics, the underlying question is, **"Who and what are you accountable to?"**



Power in the Political Landscape Dimension

Power is embedded in everything political, but it is not always visible. The *Political Landscape* dimension is fundamentally about understanding and navigating that power – who holds it, how it operates, and where opportunities exist to advance change. Power is not static; it moves and shifts based on relationships, political conditions, and organizing efforts. This dimension equips both insiders and

outsiders with the tools to assess the ever-changing landscape, identify leverage points, and develop strategies that respond to both threats and opportunities.

As partners on the inside and outside navigate the political landscape together, it can help to name the different arenas that each side operates within, and coordinate different roles for each side. Power in the political landscape includes all <u>six arenas of decision-making</u>: electoral, legislative, administrative, judicial/constitutional, worldview, and economic. Community organizers are often situated to be able to focus on electoral and legislative arenas, while those on the inside are situated within administrative agencies. From this position, they together have to navigate a political landscape that is shaped by the power of elected officials that appoint agency leaders, legislative bodies that make laws and issue legislative mandates, and judicial systems that can strike down or uphold agency actions. Coordination between the inside and outside is essential to developing a robust strategy to navigate this landscape.

A core part of this dimension is <u>power mapping</u>, which helps determine where power resides, who influences key decision-makers, and which actors may be allies, opponents, or persuadable. This analysis is crucial for choosing strategic targets, understanding pressure points, and determining whether to engage in confrontation, negotiation, or alliance-building to move an issue forward.

The *Political Landscape* dimension also focuses on recognizing threats that seek to maintain the status quo, undermine equity efforts, or actively roll back progress. These threats can come from political opposition, well-resourced industry threats, structural barriers within governmental agencies, or even internal resistance from those hesitant to challenge existing power structures. Anticipating and planning for these obstacles allows inside-outside partnerships to proactively mitigate risks and strengthen their approach.

At the same time, this dimension is about identifying openings – moments when political conditions, leadership shifts, or movement momentum create unique opportunities for change. These openings can emerge from elections, crises, shifts in public opinion, legal decisions, or policy windows that make certain demands more viable. By continuously assessing the political landscape, movements and agencies can align their strategies with the realities of power and position themselves to seize critical moments for advancing health equity and racial justice.

Applying the Po

Applying the *Political Landscape* **Dimension to the Inside:**

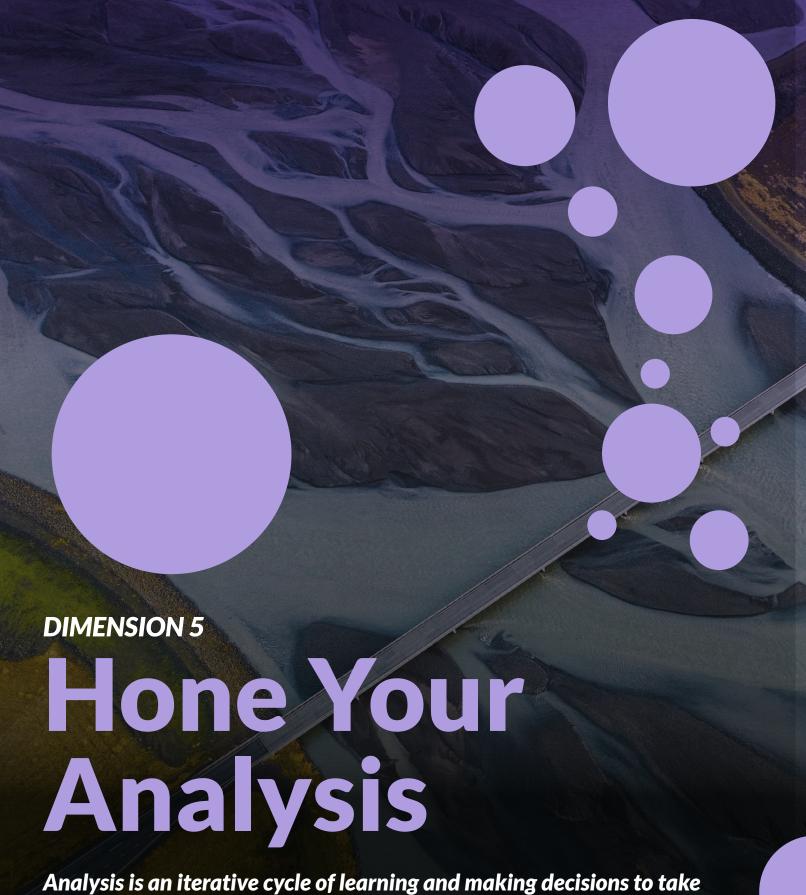
Navigating Relationships in the Political Ecosystem: Government officials in executive branch administrative agencies can engage uniquely with local political figures, including elected officials in both the executive and legislative branches. But as public agencies in the administrative arena, they are expected to remain "apolitical" and implement laws and policies established by executive and legislative branches of government. As they navigate this ecosystem, they need to assess political risk and opportunities for health equity and carefully engage other actors to support community-driven policy priorities, whether visibly or behind the scenes.

- Roles and Responsibilities in Political Engagement: Leadership roles (e.g. Director, Health Officer, policy and communication staff) typically handle direct political interactions and strategic decision-making on behalf of the agency. These engagements often involve confidential discussions limited to a few individuals, focusing on sensitive political dynamics that affect public health initiatives. This direct access can be leveraged to advance health equity aims and campaigns.
- Guidelines and Creativity in Political Advocacy: Staff in non-leadership positions face agency rules and norms around political engagement, such as restrictions on representing the agency or speaking to officials and media without permission. While government staff are often advised to avoid "being political," public health work is inherently political. Staff will often need to think creatively about ways to exert political influence within these boundaries, such as through policies that address public health crises like racism or COVID-19.

Applying the Politic

Applying the *Political Landscape* Dimension to the Outside:

- Identifying Allies and Opponents: Navigating the political landscape is familiar ground for many seasoned organizers, and is the basis for most campaign planning and organizing. Organizers often identify the opposition, the allies, and who has the power to meet their demands. These questions serve as a reminder for organizers to constantly be aware of who are the folks most aligned with their campaigns and who may need to be moved or "organized against." It is likely that individuals identified as the opposition in an organizing context may be an ally for a governmental agency. This is a common dilemma that partnerships should be prepared to work through.
- Power-Mapping as a Constant Practice: Power mapping is a tool CPBOs utilize to help gauge their own political power in relation to key actors within the political sphere to build campaigns that are designed to win. As the political landscape shifts, CPBOs should regularly adjust their power maps so they can accurately assess the implications these changes have on their work and the movement at large.
- Transforming the Status Quo: CPBOs are often guided by a north star a vision of the world where systems are radically transformed to center collective well-being. This vision can translate into policy campaigns that push the boundaries of government as it currently functions. While organizing campaigns are designed to actively engage and challenge the current political landscape, we also recognize how governmental bureaucracy can create roadblocks to achieving this vision. When in partnership with government, organizers need to push their government allies to also challenge the status quo within their departments in service of a more transformative vision.



Analysis is an iterative cycle of learning and making decisions to take action. This dimension involves clarifying the "why" through shared understanding of the root causes of inequities, and getting aligned around a shared vision of what strategy and goals to pursue.

Key Questions



- Do you have a shared understanding of the root causes?
- Do you have a shared understanding of past or ongoing harms?
- Is there alignment around a shared vision of what actions should be taken, and by whom?



Description of the Analysis Dimension

In the cycle of applying the Five Dimensions, *Analysis* is the final step while also being the precondition for collaboration. Everyone comes into a shared effort with an individual or organizational analysis, but coming to a genuinely shared analysis requires time and effort. It is an iterative process of learning and growing; one that is circular rather than linear. The process of creating a shared analysis generates a deeper collective understanding of the world and your role(s) in shaping it.

Analysis as a collective process involves integrating the information gathered from the other four dimensions, developing a shared understanding of root causes, and getting aligned on a shared vision. Analysis leads to decisions about goals, strategies and actions, how to take the next steps, and what you anticipate learning as a result.

Drawing from theory, life experiences, and personal (un)learnings, our analyses serve as filters through which we make sense of the world we live in. Our analysis of our world helps us understand our broader context: how we came to be where we are, the roots of inequities we face today, where we are going, and why.

Analysis is about the worldview and narratives we hold about the past, present, and the future. It informs our theory of change, the goals we work towards, and the strategies we pursue. Alignment around analysis is important for collaborative work around shared goals – especially for inside-outside strategy, which often requires different tactics for those on the inside or the outside of a power structure.

Analysis is an ongoing process, and the *Five Dimensions* cycle repeats itself. Because of its circular nature, it becomes the first step of the next cycle when applying inside-outside strategy.



Power in the Analysis Dimension

Honing your analysis requires understanding how power operates as a root cause of inequity, and how <u>community power is needed</u> to advance health equity and racial justice. Power is not just about decision-making authority or resources; it also operates through culture, narratives, and institutions that shape our lived experience.

To dismantle structural inequities, we must recognize how dominant power structures maintain oppression, and how shifting power into the hands of communities most impacted by injustice is a necessary pathway towards transformation. Analysis is shaped within the Worldview Arena, a space <u>Grassroots Power Project describes</u> as "where different ideological and political forces deploy narratives to shape popular values, beliefs, and what we come to understand as common sense."

Narrative power – the third of the Three Faces of Power – shapes common sense, makes meaning on the terrain of ideology and worldview, and changes ideas of what is possible. Analysis forms the foundation of <u>building narrative power</u>. It requires power to dismantle dominant narratives that maintain the unjust status quo and uplift life-affirming transformative narratives.

Power is also at play when analyzing how the political landscape and governmental structures inform strategies and tactics – how organizations identify the powers they can leverage to <u>build or break power for health justice</u>. Creating shared analysis is crucial for groups to determine what actions to take.

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Applying the Analysis Dimension to the Inside:

- Building a Shared Understanding of Health Equity: The Analysis dimension for government
 agencies involves developing and reinforcing a collective understanding of the root causes of health
 inequities and social determinants of health through ongoing training, professional development
 and spaces for (un)learning.
- Framing Health Equity in Local Contexts: This dimension also considers how government agencies
 frame and communicate their health equity analysis, grounding it in local histories, policies, and
 community experiences, while recognizing the strategic importance of partnering with community
 organizers.
- Balancing Analysis with Action: While developing a strong analysis is important, government agencies are encouraged to avoid "analysis paralysis". Effective health equity work requires understanding the strategic value of intentional partnerships with community organizers, and honing analysis through the process of taking real action, reflecting, adjusting, and iterating in collaboration with CPBO partners.



Applying the Analysis Dimension to the Outside:

- **Vision and Theory of Change:** The *Analysis* dimension for CPBOs includes developing a clear vision and theory of change alongside members of their organization and base, with perspectives on government as a strategic arena for engagement and a nuanced understanding of local government structures. It also requires developing a clear analysis of power, rooted in unpacking the systemic injustices they wish to address.
- Strategic Partnerships with Government: CPBOs consider the value of working with government agencies as part of their broader political strategy, assessing how such partnerships can advance their community organizing goals and campaigns. While there are CPBOs that are opposed to partnerships with government, there are many who view these partnerships as a crucial endeavor that can add resources and capacity towards short-term and long-term campaigns.
- Political Education for Base Building: Political education is central to CPBOs' efforts in base building and leadership development, and supports members' understanding of organizing and campaign development processes. Political education can be crucial for CPBOs to help demystify how government works and to empower organizers when working within this arena.

Crafting Inside-Outside Strategy & Tactics

Inside-outside strategy is not a rigid formula – it is a creative and dynamic process of learning through action, trying different tactics for different scenarios, and seeing what works and what to adjust. Successful inside-outside work requires continuous reflection, adaptation, and collaboration to navigate the shifting complexities of power, relationships, and strategy.

The following sections highlight tools and resources you can use while crafting your inside-outside strategy and tactics. It includes details about the Five Dimensions Toolkit (a companion resource guide) along with additional supplemental resources from HIP and partners that can be useful for inside-outside strategy development.



Five Dimensions Toolkit Resources

The <u>Five Dimensions Toolkit</u> is a companion resource with a set of tools and instructions to guide you through putting the Five Dimensions into practice via assessments, reflection, and action planning. They are a starting point for deepening your approach and strengthening collaboration. Each tool is described here with a summary of what it is and how it can be used. The tools and instructions can be found in full in the <u>Five Dimensions Toolkit</u>.

Screening Grid

The **Screening Grid** is a quick-start tool to begin applying the *Five Dimensions* to your specific context. Use it to identify your starting point and determine which tools and resources will be most relevant to your needs.

Self-Reflection Questions

The **Self-Reflection Questions** include a set of prompts for each of the Five Dimensions, which can be used as journal prompts or for open-ended thinking. This tool can be used by all, including those who aren't currently part of inside-outside partnerships but want to consider how they can engage in this work.

Strategy Snapshot Worksheets

The **Strategy Snapshot Worksheets** help partnerships and campaigns to develop strategies using the Five Dimensions. Each dimension has its own worksheet with prompts and exercises to help you reflect on your experiences, identify challenges and opportunities, and create actionable steps to advance your work.

Conflict Identification Tool

Conflict is common in equity and justice work – how we engage with it determines whether it is destructive or transformative. Proactively working through conflict involves identifying what the conflict is and getting to the root causes of why it's occurring. The **Conflict Identification Tool** uses the Five Dimensions to identify common sources of conflict that can occur with inside-outside strategy work.

Assessment Tools User Guide

The **Assessment Tools User Guide** helps partnerships conduct a thorough analysis of their work, assess strengths and challenges, and develop strategies for deeper alignment and impact. This is the most in-depth and comprehensive tool for applying the *Five Dimensions*. The assessment process uses a set of tools and multiple steps including reflection, multiple discussions, and action-planning, to support long-term collaboration between government agencies and community power-building organizations. Expect to engage in detailed discussions, analyze your work together and identify concrete opportunities for growth.

The User Guide goes through the five step process of using two sets of assessment tools:

Health Departments: Individual and Combined Assessments
Community Power-Building Organizations: Individual and Combined Assessments



Container Building resource

Creating intentional spaces – or **containers** – for equity work makes the difficult task of addressing racism and oppression in our institutions, relationships, and communities more manageable. These containers provide structure and shared agreements that hold space for conflict, emotions, accountability, and progress. With intention, we can build containers that support collective learning, collaboration and liberation. To learn more, read the <u>Building Containers for Health Equity Work</u> resource.

Power resources

Power imbalances and structural oppression – including racism, patriarchy, capitalism, and others – are the root causes of health inequities. HIP produced two sets of resources to support health departments and CPBOs to critically examine power – who holds it, how it operates, and how it can be leveraged and redistributed to create more just and healthy communities.

Set 1: Collaboration and Power Sharing Between Government Agencies and Community Power-Building Organizations

Set 2: Activities to Deepen Your Power-Building Analysis

Health Equity Guide

The **Health Equity Guide** is a practical resource designed to help health departments and public health practitioners take bold action to address the root causes of health inequities. Grounded in real-world examples, the guide highlights strategies that move beyond traditional approaches – shifting power, transforming policies, and challenging structural oppression to create lasting change. To learn more, visit <u>healthequityguide.org</u>.

Public Health 101 for Organizers

Public health has a powerful role to play in advancing social justice – but to harness its full potential, organizers need a clear understanding of how governmental public health works and how to engage with it effectively. **Public Health 101 for Organizers** is designed to bridge the gap between community organizing and public health systems. By demystifying public health structures and highlighting strategies for engagement, this resource equips organizers with the knowledge to build stronger partnerships, leverage public health data and resources, and push for policies that promote health equity and racial justice.

To learn more, see <u>Public Health 101 for Organizers</u>.



Government / Community partnership and collaboration resources

Tool/Link	Inside and/or Outside	Description
Facilitating Power: Spectrum of Community Engagement to Empowerment	Inside and Outside	Provides a framework for understanding different levels of community engagement, from informing to co-governance, with tools to support deeper partnership and power-sharing.
Partners for Dignity and Rights: <u>Co-Governing Towards</u> <u>Multiracial Democracy</u>	Inside and Outside	Outlines principles and case studies of co-governance, where government and community partners share power to advance racial and economic justice.
CDC Foundation: Strengthening Partnerships between Public Health and Community-Based Organizations	Inside	Examines lessons learned from health department and community-based organization partnership interviews, highlighting best practices, challenges, and recommendations.
Georgia State University: The Assessment for Advancing Community Transformation Promotional Toolkit	Inside	Designed to support individuals and organizations in assessing their health transformation work and identify gaps present.
CA Department of Public Health: Organizational Assessment for Equity Infrastructure	Inside	A tool for health departments and large nonprofits to assess and improve their internal equity infrastructure, including policies, practices, and culture.

Strategy resources

Tool/Link	Inside and/or Outside	Description
Scope LA	Outside	Provides training and capacity building around helping organizations and advocates analyze power dynamics, identify key players, and develop strategies to shift power in policy and system change efforts.
Midwest Academy	Outside	Provides training and frameworks for strategic organizing, including power analysis, campaign planning, and advocacy tactics.
Grassroots Power Project: Governing Power Toolkit	Outside	Offers tools and guidance to build long-term governing power, shifting from advocacy to decision-making authority in public systems.
Beautiful Trouble: A Toolbox for Liberation	Outside	Beautiful Trouble is "an interconnected web of ideas and creative best practices that puts the power in your hands" with a set of stories, theories, principles, tactics and methodologies.

Conclusion

The challenges of bridging the distinct worlds of public health and social justice movements are significant, but they are not insurmountable. The *Five Dimensions* offers a powerful framework to guide intentional collaborations between public health departments and CPBOs. By focusing on nourishing relationships, deepening leadership, building capacity, navigating political landscapes, and honing analysis, we hope this guide helps practitioners on both the inside and outside align their efforts and drive transformative change.

This work has been in progress since 2022, emerging from HIP's work with *Power-Building Partnerships* for *Health (PPH)* and continuing to evolve. It has been piloted with inside-outside practitioners from both government agencies and social movements along with strategic thought partners. As we know, this work is emergent and ever evolving. We anticipate that as individuals and organizations apply the Five Dimensions to their work and develop their own inside-outside strategy and tactics, insights and ideas will emerge. We appreciate feedback and suggestions and will be developing and refining additional materials in the years to come.

If you are interested in learning more, sharing feedback, or piloting these tools, we invite you to connect with us at BridgingInfo@humanimpact.org.

Ultimately, this resource is an invitation to step into the hard but essential work of co-governance and collective action. By fostering mutual trust, understanding, and strategic alignment, public health agencies and social justice movements can work together to address root causes, dismantle systemic oppression, and build a future where health equity and racial justice are not just aspirations, but realities. We hope this resource serves as a foundational tool for bold, collaborative action to guide those ready to meet the challenge of advancing health, equity, and justice in their communities.

Appendix

The Five Dimensions guide draws from a set of frameworks, ideas, and materials that HIP frequently uses in our work, some of which are compiled in this curated list of <u>Key Power Readings & Resources</u>. In this appendix, we summarize a few of the most essential frameworks and definitions that we drew from to develop the Five Dimensions.



We build off the findings of <u>Lead Local</u>, a collaborative research project that brought together power-building leaders in the fields of community organizing, advocacy, and research to answer the question, "How does community power catalyze, create and sustain conditions for healthy communities?" We adopt and use the definitions from the <u>glossary</u> of their seminal report <u>Leading Locally</u>: A <u>Community Power Building Approach to Structural Change</u> including these key terms:

- Community power is the ability of communities most impacted by structural inequity to develop, sustain, and grow an organized base of people who act together through democratic structures to set agendas, shift public discourse, influence who makes decisions and cultivate ongoing relationships of mutual accountability with decision-makers that change systems and advance health equity.
- Community Power Building Organizations (CPBOs) are organizations that may be identified by geography (local, state, regional, national), demography (e.g. youth, workers, multi-racial) or issue(s) (e.g. workers rights, environmental justice, multi-issue) who conduct a range of activities including base-building. Other terms sometimes used to describe CBPOs include but are not limited to: grassroots organizing groups, social movement groups, movement-building organizations, community-based organizations, community organizing groups, base building groups.

Three Faces of Power

Our framework for understanding power draws heavily from the <u>Three Faces of Power</u> framework that was adopted by the Grassroots Power Project for the work of community organizers.



Image credit: Grassroots Power Project

HIP promotes and uses the Three Faces of Power framework to support the field of public health to understand and use power, such as through <u>Narratives for Health</u> (a partnership with County Health Rankings & Roadmaps) <u>adaptation of the Three Faces of Power</u>.

The three faces are summarized as:

- 1. Visible Power: Organizing people and resources to influence decisions
- 2. Hidden Power: Building infrastructure to influence what's on the agenda
- 3. Invisible Power: Changing narratives and worldviews to shape what is possible

Governing Power

In considering the role and importance of governmental public health, we are also inspired by Grassroots Power Project's 2023 report <u>Governing Power</u> as an articulation of the long-term goal of social movements shifting the power structure of governance itself:

We don't want to be limited to the terrain of governance as it is today, because our ambitions are greater than wielding power within the system as it is. We also want to shift the power structure of governance to better serve our communities. Shifting the power structure of governance means ensuring that the people who are closest to the problem have the power to put the solutions on the table themselves. Embedding popular democracy into government is foundational to the concept of governing power. This task — of moving decision-making power closer to as many of our people as possible — requires elected and appointed leaders to not only see themselves as the agents of change, but to also work to structurally shift power into the hands of the communities they serve.

<u>GPP's definition of governing power</u> uses the concept of <u>Arenas of Decision-Making</u> adapted from <u>Changing States: A Framework for Progressive Governance</u> by the USC Equity Research Institute (ERI). These arenas are important context to understand where partnerships between health departments and community power-building organizations are situated.

- Electoral Arena, where voters have a direct say in who is elected to public office or where voters directly approve or reject laws by referendum
- **Legislative Arena**, where elected leaders convene to create or change laws
- Administrative Arena, where the directives of the electoral and legislative arenas are transformed into actionable rules and where the process of implementation is shaped
- Judicial and Constitutional Arena, where laws and rules are interpreted and applied
- Arena of Worldview, where different ideological and political forces deploy narratives to shape popular values, beliefs, and what we come to understand as "common sense"
- Arena of the Economy, where our wages, work conditions, and consumer choices are decided

Community organizing typically focuses on the electoral, legislative, or economic arenas. Government agencies (including health departments) that are involved in policy and decision implementation are a part of the administrative arena. We view this arena as a generally underleveraged target of community organizing, and potentially fruitful terrain on which to organize. Inside-outside strategy seeks to bridge the gaps and build power across intersecting arenas of decision-making, with a particular focus on the administrative arena.



Existing Materials on Inside-Outside Strategy

There are a limited number of written materials that explicitly name and describe inside-outside strategy. We draw on several of these resources in this toolkit:

Co-Governance Models

Partners for Dignity & Rights' report <u>Co-Governing Toward Multiracial Democracy</u> identifies the need for pursuing inside/outside strategies. Co-governance emphasizes the synergy between governments' legal powers and resources and community organizations' political independence, organizing capacity, and community trust. Combining these forces enables a shared strategy, where insiders focus on securing incremental policy shifts and leveraging state power, while outsiders drive movement pressure, keeping efforts rooted in the demands of the community.

Power-Building Ecosystem Framework

The USC Equity Research Institute's <u>Power-Building Ecosystem Framework</u> identifies inside-outside as one of the fifteen strategies that organizations in the power-building ecosystem can use. It emphasizes coordinating support from organizations on the "outside" with teams of like-minded lawmakers on the "inside" in order to achieve shared goals.

Beautiful Trouble's Principle: "Develop an Inside-Outside Strategy"

The Beautiful Trouble Toolbox guide covers a variety of tactics, methodologies, theories and stories of people-powered victories. This principle underscores the importance of collaboration between insiders leveraging incremental policy changes and outsiders driving movement pressure. It stresses that tension between these roles is intrinsic but necessary for maximizing impact. Insiders may view disruption as a threat to progress, while outsiders might see compromise as a dilution of their cause. Naming and talking through these differences helps with navigating issues as they arise. Beautiful Trouble identifies coordination, communication, and trust as foundational to effective partnerships. Coordination ensures alignment, communication keeps efforts informed, and trust solidifies the relationship between insiders and outsiders.

