

## Community Engagement

**About Technical Assistance Briefs.** The MCH Evidence Center provides ongoing technical assistance (TA) to Title V agencies related to the emerging evidence base, strategies, and measures related to many topics interconnected with National Performance Measures and other critical topics in MCH. *Technical Assistance Briefs* are an outcome of these TA sessions that are designed to act as *conversation starters* in thinking about programs that can be developed to address issues that affect women, infants, children, adolescents, youth, families, and communities. These briefs are not meant to be comprehensive; full analyses of the NPM topic areas are provided in [Evidence Analysis Reports](#).

The Center makes these customized briefs available during TA and on the program website to identify evidence-based/informed strategies, promising practices, examples of ESMs from the field and peer-reviewed resources. Please [contact us](#) if you would like us to develop a similar report for topics that you are working on.

**Initial Query for this Brief.** Identify measures and best practices around Community Engagement.

### What is community engagement?

Community engagement is the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the wellbeing of those people.<sup>1</sup> It is a powerful vehicle for bringing about environmental and behavioral changes that will improve the health of the community and its members. Community engagement involves partnerships and coalitions that can help mobilize resources, influence systems change as well as serve as a catalyst for changing policies, programs, or practices<sup>1</sup> and is grounded in the principles of community organization: fairness, justice, empowerment, participation, and self-determination.<sup>2-5</sup>

### Community Engagement uses a Systems Perspective

Successfully addressing a community's complex problems requires integration, collaboration, and coordination of resources from all parts.<sup>6</sup> A community can also be defined by describing the social and political networks that link individuals, community organizations, and leaders that works at a systems level to improve the health and wellbeing of people, communities, etc.

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<sup>1</sup>[https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/communityengagement/pdf/PCE\\_Report\\_508\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/communityengagement/pdf/PCE_Report_508_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Alinsky 1962

<sup>3</sup> Chávez et al. 2007

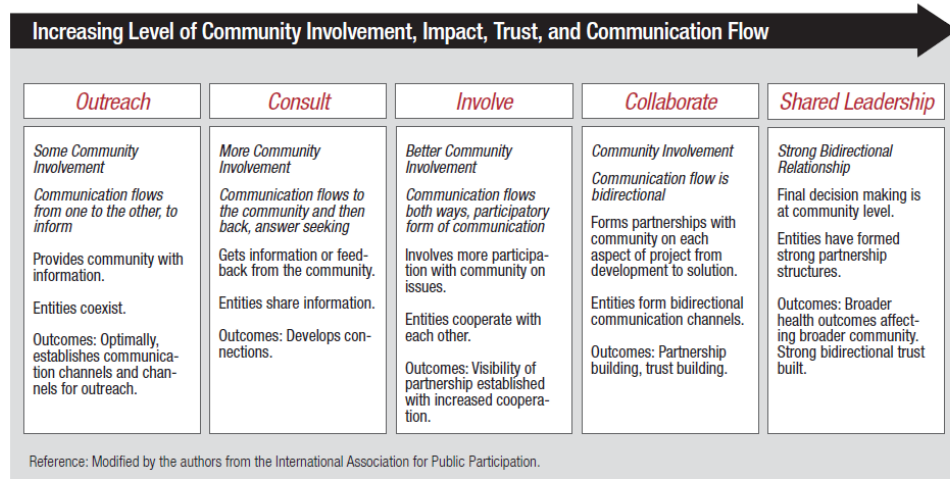
<sup>4</sup> Freire 1970

<sup>5</sup> Wallerstein et al. 2006

<sup>6</sup> Thompson et al. 1990

## What does Community Engagement Look Like?

Community engagement can take many forms. It can include many partners such as: organized groups, agencies, institutions, or individuals collaborating together. Collaborators may be engaged in health promotion, research, or policy making. Not all community involvement is community engagement.



Community involvement is on a continuum. Agencies and organizations should identify how they would like involvement with community members and stakeholders; while also knowing this can change overtime.

## What are the Benefits of Community Engagement?

Involving community members and stakeholders in community engagement has a number of benefits. Community members get to participate in agenda setting; designing and delivering of the information and the format of work. Community engagement brings together collaborative efforts, including how implementation and change occur. Engagement with cross-collaborative partners from academia, community members, other stakeholders, policy developers, public and private health care organizations, educational institutions, economic development and community-based and faith-based organization benefit by working together from bottom up and the top down to improve the health and wellbeing of communities.

## Culture, Communication, and Community Engagement

Our culture shapes our identities and fosters notions of community. Culture helps to shape how individuals and groups relate to each other, how meaning is created, and how power is defined.<sup>7-9</sup> Culture helps define ideas and parameters around partnership, trust, and negotiation. Culture helps to determine the process of community engagement.<sup>7-9</sup>

Successful communication that includes members of the community is critical. Inviting members of the community who have lived experience or an insiders' view surrounding the issues(s) or topic(s) is important. Some potential members may include: neighborhood members, community-based

<sup>7</sup> Blumenthal et al, 2004

<sup>8</sup> Dévieux et al, 2005

<sup>9</sup> Silka et al, 2008

<sup>7</sup> Blumenthal et al, 2004

<sup>8</sup> Dévieux et al, 2005

<sup>9</sup> Silka et al, 2008

and faith-based organizations, public and private health care organizations and agencies, schools and educational institutions, policy makers, members of the business community, etc. The topic of interest and nature of the work should help define who should be invited to the table.

Community engagement is the opportunity to bring together and build relationships between and among communities, researchers, and research institutions. Community engagement is more than just sitting at the table. Meaningful community participation includes being part of the conversation, generating ideas, contributing to decision making, and sharing responsibility. It requires active participation of community members to address projects that are meaningful to them and their surrounding community. Community engagement can create long-term, successful and sustainable change where people listen to each other, learn from one another, and empower one another through mutual respect and co-learning.<sup>10-12</sup>

### Building Capacity Increases Empowerment

Equitable, effective, and sustainable community engagement efforts require all community members and other stakeholders to be ready for collaboration and leadership. It is important to support our community members and other stakeholders by building their capacity so we can shift power and effectively address the issues at hand. Because capacity building is deeply rooted in the social, political, and economic environment, it cannot be conducted without an understanding of the specific environment in which it will take place.<sup>13</sup>

“Empowerment takes place at three levels: the individual, the organization or group, and the community. Empowerment at one level can influence empowerment at the other levels; it is multidimensional.”<sup>14-17</sup> Community-level empowerment ‘challenges professional relationships to communities, emphasizing partnership and collaboration rather than a top-down approach’.<sup>18</sup>



### Who should participate in discussion about your implementation work?<sup>19</sup>

Understanding who is on your Implementation Team can help you identify what strengths and gaps you have in terms of experience and context expertise about the intended beneficiaries, issues, and communities you serve. If the majority of your team is in the outer circle, you need to address equity in your team and your need for stakeholder engagement is more acute.

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<sup>10</sup> Henry, 2011

<sup>11</sup> Miller et al, 2005

<sup>12</sup> Minkler et al, 2009

<sup>13</sup> Eng et al, 1994

<sup>14</sup> Fawcett et al, 1995

<sup>15</sup> Hur, 2006

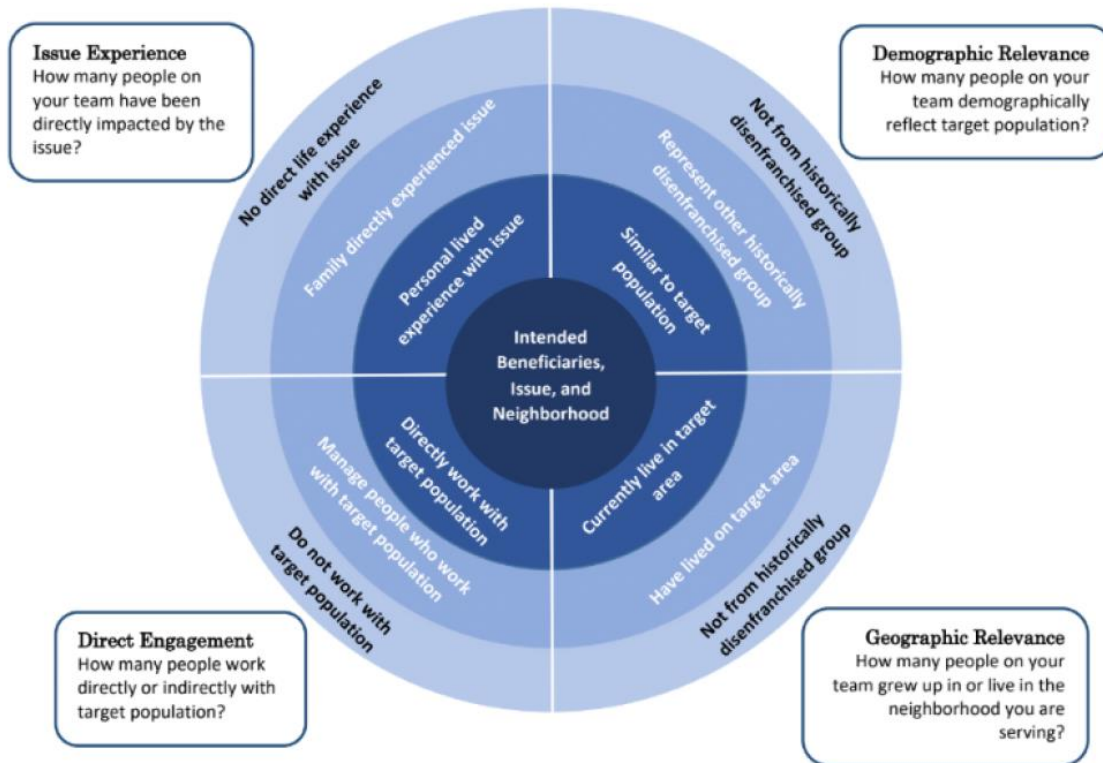
<sup>16</sup> Maton, 2008

<sup>17</sup> Rich et al, 1995

<sup>18</sup> Wallerstein, 2002, p74

<sup>19</sup> This guidance was adapted from the Community Engagement Toolkit created by Leading Inside Out and the Collective Impact Forum.

<https://www.collectiveimpactforum.org/sites/default/files/Community%20Engagement%20Toolkit.pdf>



Before you begin, consider:

- Why is stakeholder engagement important to your initiative? How will it contribute to your results?
- Do you feel you have the right mix of actors involved to understand the population, issue, and community?
- What gaps exist on your team? What steps could you take to correct for that?

For more information or a copy of this document, visit the [National Implementation Research Network](#)

## Training Resources to Learn More about Community Engagement

For more information visit: [MCH Navigator](#)

### [Achieving True Partnership: Integrating Family Engagement in Systems of Care](#)

- This webinar identifies practical strategies to facilitate partnerships between systems of care, focusing specifically on collaboration between Title V programs, state American Academy of Pediatrics Chapters, and family leadership organizations. Faculty presented lessons learned from a state-wide medical home implementation project with family leadership. View the training [HERE](#).

### [A New Approach to Assessing Family Engagement in Health Care Settings](#)

- Health care providers, payers, and systems serving children, youth and families increasingly focus on family engagement as a strategy to improve health care delivery, enhance consumer and provider satisfaction, and reduce costs. Assessing how well an organization or agency is engaging families is a

critical step in achieving these goals. A recent issue brief from Family Voices, A Framework for Assessing Family Engagement in Systems Change, proposes four domains of family engagement – (1) representation, (2) transparency, (3) impact and (4) commitment. This training will explore this framework, share models of success and discuss common barriers to incorporating meaningful family engagement in systems-level initiatives. It is recommended that attendees read the issue brief prior to the event. View the training [HERE](#).

### [Coalition Building Basics](#)

- This webinar provides an overview of steps necessary to create a successful coalition; shares best practices for working collectively; and provide three community examples that have incorporated best practices and met with successful results. View the training [HERE](#).

### [Community Engagement in Public Health Interventions for Disadvantaged Groups: What's the Evidence?](#)

- This webinar examines the effectiveness of community engagement in public health interventions for disadvantaged groups. It examines the use of public health interventions with a community engagement component, particularly for its use in reducing health inequities among disadvantaged populations. Findings of the review suggest community engagement in public health interventions has an effect on several health outcomes, including health behaviors and self-efficacy. View the training [HERE](#).

### [Community Partnerships and Perspectives \(Basic Level\)](#)

- The following Community Partnerships and Perspectives” series focuses on concepts and skills necessary for working with communities to improve public health. Participants learn about the differing perspectives of the definition of “community,” and methods available to analyze community dynamics. Course exercises and a workbook are available.
  - [Basic Level](#) This course serves an introduction to community partnerships and perspectives
    - [Module 1](#)
    - [Module 2](#)
  - [Intermediate Level](#) This course emphasizes community partnership as a major educational approach to addressing health problems. It focuses on elements of community partnering including diversity and other challenges, and identifies the necessary responsibilities public health practitioners have in stakeholder recruitment and agenda setting. Components of successful leadership in collaborations and the role of creating shared community visions are also discussed. The presentation concludes by explaining the action planning process, including needs assessment strategies.
    - [Module 1](#)
    - [Module 2](#)
  - [Advanced Level](#) This course explores methods for identifying, analyzing, and targeting community health problems and their causes. Presenters focus on the components for measuring progress, such as developing logic models in order to evaluate community interventions. Communication strategies—including the use of media—conclude the series.
    - [Module 1](#)
    - [Module 2](#)

### [Developing Family-Driven Practices: The National Family Support Network's Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening & Support](#)

- System of care communities are challenged with developing and implementing a family-driven array of services and supports. The National Family Support Network offers the Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening & Support, a framework with the vision is implementation will help ensure that families are supported and

strengthened through quality practice. It was designed to be used by all stakeholders—public departments, foundations, community-based organizations, and parents—across different kinds of Family Strengthening and Family Support programs as a tool for planning, providing, and assessing quality practice. This Learning Community provides an overview of the National Family Support Network, its Standards of Quality, and how family leaders and family-run organizations can use the Standards to bring communities together for implementation of quality family support practices. View the training [HERE](#).

### [Engaging Diverse Families in Leadership for Systems Change](#)

- Family organizations, professionals, and state and local agencies are increasingly seeking to engage diverse families in leadership to improve systems. This webinar provides tools and strategies to: assess and improve agency and staff readiness; identify, recruit, prepare, engage and support diverse family leaders in meaningful leadership roles; recognize family leader contributions; become an organization more focused on and capable of supporting diverse leadership. The webinar was hosted by the National Center for Family Professional Partnerships (NCFPP) and presented by Diana Autin of the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN). View the training [HERE](#).

### [Family and Professional Partnerships](#)

- Family-professional partnerships emphasize respect for patient values in individual care decisions as well as the role of patients and families as advisors and essential partners in improving care practices. One approach identified in the literature which supports the family-centered care concept is the Patient and Family Centered Care Methodology and Practice model (PFCC M/P).<sup>20</sup> This model identifies *six areas of action* and has been shown to effectively translate family-centered care “from ideal to real.” View each of the *six areas of action* below and corresponding learning opportunities for:
  - Understand background/concept
  - Determine barriers
  - Collect data
  - Foster shadowing
  - Reflect on case studies
  - Address gaps

## Evidence-Based Strategy Measures

**ESM: Program Integration.** These ESMs have been chosen by other states. You can review the ESMs to see if any resonate with your goals. Evidence Center staff are available to talk through how you could modify select ESMs to serve your needs.

State	ESMs
AS	<b>ESM 6.3: Percent of families who participated in community outreach activities hosted by MCH to promote developmental screenings.</b>
AZ	<b>ESM 1.8: Number of individuals trained to become community-based doulas</b>
AK	<b>ESM 9.1: Number of school personnel, partners, and community members participating in Youth Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) trainings</b>
FSM	<b>ESM 1.1: Percent of women, ages 18 through 44, attending community outreach events on preventive medical visits in the past year</b>

<sup>20</sup> DiGirola, A. M., Greenhouse, P. K. (2016). *Creating Value with the Patient and Family-Centered Care Methodology and Practice: What Trainees Need to Know, Why, and Strategies for Medical Education*. American Medical Association Journal of Ethics. Volume 18, Number 1: 33-39

<b>GA</b>	<b>ESM 12.2:</b> Number of stakeholders, state agencies, and community partners that collaborate with the Department to improve health care transition for youth/young adults with or without special health care needs.
<b>GA</b>	<b>ESM 6.3:</b> Number of new community partners who implement developmental screening and make referrals to their local public health district
<b>IA</b>	<b>ESM 5.1:</b> Number of community education opportunities Title V agencies provide education about safe sleep environments each year
<b>KY</b>	<b>ESM 7.1.1:</b> Number of community members receiving training or technical assistance about preventable child injuries or death and promoting injury prevention activities including child maltreatment, child passenger, gun, water, fire, pedestrian, ATV, or more.
<b>MS</b>	<b>ESM 1.1:</b> Number of community group and activities program attends and partners with
<b>OK</b>	<b>ESM 9.1:</b> The number of trainings provided to school and community staff on bullying prevention
<b>PW</b>	<b>ESM 1.1:</b> Percent of women who receive preventive medical services through community outreach activities
<b>PA</b>	<b>ESM 11.1</b> Number of community-based provider partnerships established by the Sickle Cell Community-Based programs
<b>PA</b>	<b>ESM 4.4:</b> Award 15 mini-grants to community partners to provide breastfeeding support.
<b>UT</b>	<b>ESM 1.2:</b> Number of community partners and organizations engaged in coalition to create a well-woman visit strategic plan for the state of Utah.
<b>WV</b>	<b>ESM 9.1:</b> Number of positive youth development (PYD) focused trainings provided to youth, parents, professionals and community members

### Evidence-Based Strategies – What Works for Health

The following programs have been identified as effective models related to community engagement:

<b>Title</b>	<b>Link</b>	<b>Category</b>
<b>Community Gardens</b>	<a href="https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health/strategies/community-gardens">https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health/strategies/community-gardens</a>	Some Evidence
<b>Summer Youth Employment Programs</b>	<a href="https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health/strategies/summer-youth-employment-programs">https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health/strategies/summer-youth-employment-programs</a>	Some Evidence
<b>Community Schools</b>	<a href="https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health/strategies/community-schools">https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health/strategies/community-schools</a>	Some Evidence
<b>Community Centers</b>	<a href="https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health/strategies/community-centers">https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health/strategies/community-centers</a>	Expert Opinion
<b>Intergenerational Communities</b>	<a href="https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health/strategies/intergenerational-communities">countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health/strategies/intergenerational-communities</a>	Expert Opinion

## Evidence-Based Strategies – Innovation Hub

The following programs have been identified as effective models related to behavioral health

Title	Link	Category
<b>Community Engagement Assessment Tool: Supporting Family, Youth and Community Engagement in all MCH/CYSHCN Programs</b>	<a href="https://amchp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Community-Engagement-Tool_Practice-Handout-Emerging-2.pdf">https://amchp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Community-Engagement-Tool_Practice-Handout-Emerging-2.pdf</a>	Emerging
<b>Innovative Approaches: Community Systems Building Grants for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN)</b>	<a href="https://amchp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/NC-IA-Implementation-Handout_Final-1.pdf">https://amchp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/NC-IA-Implementation-Handout_Final-1.pdf</a>	Best

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Access other resources at <https://www.mchevidence.org>

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