

Building Healthy Communities The Hub: Playing A Central Role

A Proven Tool to Make the BHC Vision a Reality

Building Healthy Communities (BHC) is a bold vision for community members to achieve 10 positive results at our 14 sites. A key lesson from other community change plans is that it is important to create a central Hub. This is a group of individuals who come together to share decision-making and guide the effort at each site throughout the BHC initiative.

The Hub is expected to be inclusive -- open to a diversity of race/ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, language, and immigrant or economic status. It is also expected to help individuals to exercise their own power, build relationships, and help to create a big-picture view of the place's future. Different traditions, ideas, beliefs, needs and expectations, will be seen as ways to understand individual communities and improve them. The Hub will work to make sure that the stakeholders - those with the biggest interest in the community plan's success - are committed to the vision and actions developed.

We believe this approach to community change is the right one because it is based on studies by respected scholars, as well results from the BHC Planning Phase Evaluation and the recent BHC Governance Assessment.

How the Hub Works

At each site, the Hub will serve as the "central table." It will bring together local stakeholders, helping them to coordinate their BHC activities and answer to each other. The goal will be to develop a vision and plan for a healthy community that is as complete as possible. To achieve this, the Hub will develop structures and principles that consider each site's unique factors and history. This will include principles related to Hub membership and leadership, and promoting residents' understanding of and commitment to their local plan, taking into consideration the language and cultural traditions of each community.

Each Hub will be led by a Steering Committee, chosen based on the principles set by the Hub, and responsible for making the decisions for each site. Once a year, the Steering Committee will be expected to review the "logic model," or community plan for change, created by the site. In developing the site's plan, the Hub will use available information and research on what has worked in other, similar communities. A steward or convener will oversee local Hub functions, but will not be the leader or decision maker for the site.

To involve youth in the BHC effort, the Hub will consider using the arts and culture. It also will consider offering opportunities for youth to participate in activities that help residents to be more active citizens in their communities.

The Hub will be responsible for creating a program to turn small BHC gains into wider community involvement and readiness for larger change.

Hub Participants

Reflecting the characteristics (such as age, ethnicity, and income levels) of residents in the BHC site, participants will be expected to learn along with and from other BHC sites, sharing knowledge and strategies. The Hub will ensure that all communications are culturally appropriate and in languages the community understands. Interpreters will be provided when needed. The California Endowment (TCE) will provide the means for participants to network and meet at BHC sites. Participants will include:

- **Residents** - both those with and without ties to community organizations.
- **Systems Leaders** - At a minimum, public health department and educational leaders, but also other representatives of health, safety, housing, and planning agencies in the community.
- **BHC Grantees** - their participation will be built into each work plan.
- **Non-Grantee Organizations** - those with a stake in the BHC work are encouraged to participate.
- **TCE Program Officers** - they will not organize the Hub, but will support relationships so that the Hub functions smoothly.

All participants, except TCE, will be asked to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which spells out the agreement to work together on BHC activities and at meetings. Though not legally binding, all parties will be expected to usually honor their promises to each other in the document.

Keeping the Hub Going

For the Hub to function well, the Steward/Convener/Fiscal agent needs to perform the role of overseeing changes in each site's community plan, and making sure that there is teamwork among grantees and non-grantees.

The convener will employ a senior staff member who focuses on supporting the Hub's work. This person will have a number of skills that are needed to move efforts forward, and to work with research information, differing groups, and the particular conditions in each community.

TCE will fund the Hub throughout the initiative. Funding will come from local grantmaking budgets that are set aside to advance the community plan. The Hub, in turn, will fund child care, translation/interpretation, travel vouchers, and food/beverages for community meetings.

How the Hub does NOT work

The Hub does not make decisions about TCE's funding of the site. The Hub does not have authority over the individual grantee organizations in the site. Instead, the Hub functions as a group of equals who work together and answer to each other in creating the community plan.

While the Hub is the central table for discussing and coming up with a plan, it is not the only table. It is expected that other individuals and groups will also have a voice in helping to shape the plan.

The Hub is also not the only way or the primary way in which TCE connects to the site. The TCE program officer will work with the Hub, the grantee organizations, and other site partners on a regular basis.

The Hub does not represent TCE, but serves as a very important leader and partner for TCE to achieve the local, regional, and state work of the Building Healthy Communities Program.