Community Listening Summary—Wenatchee, WA

The various systems within communities—such as public health, housing, education, and health care—directly influence the health and well-being of community members. One system cannot address the holistic needs and concerns of community members, so systems must work with each other and with community members to collectively align their actions with the needs and priorities of the communities they serve. Shared measurement is one way to do this. Shared measurement uses a common set of measurable goals that reflect shared priorities across systems and with community members.

Ultimately, shared measurement must benefit people and communities, especially those who have experienced health and social inequities. Partnering with community members is essential to ensure that improvement efforts reflect what matters to communities. The American Institutes for Research and Community-Campus Partnerships for Health partnered with La Comunidad para el Avance Familiar Educativa (The Community for the Advancement of Family Education), a local community-based organization, to listen to eight community members in the Wenatchee, WA, area. This listening session was conducted in Spanish in August 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic and a time of national attention on racial equity and justice. This document summarizes what these community members had experienced with systems and services and what is most important to them when systems and services work together toward a common goal. All quotes are translated from Spanish to English.

> ### Community Partner Profile: The Community for the Advancement of Family Education (CAFÉ)
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> La Comunidad para el Avance Familiar Educativa (The Community for the Advancement of Family Education or CAFÉ) is a nonprofit organization located in north-central Washington State that advances family and community growth through education. CAFÉ serves a culturally diverse community by providing opportunities in leadership, civic and social engagement, literacy development, and academic advancement. CAFÉ's alliances with regional partners create a unified community that seeks to empower all of its members.
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> To learn more about CAFÉ, visit https://www.wenatcheecafe.org/.

What do community members want to see improved?

Community members sought improvements in education, housing, health, and public health systems. Specifically, community members wanted more supports for people experiencing language barriers, universal early childhood education, affordable housing options (for rent and purchase), improved pre- and post-natal services, and coordinated care for those with special needs.

> We know education is not just for children but also for their parents. To help them with the language, since some of them still need to finish elementary or high school. We know that educated people can have a voice. That gives them the assurance they need to express their opinion. When they don't know how the community works, their rights and what they can or cannot do, they are at a disadvantage.

Community members also expressed concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic, it's impact on their community, and the difficulties looking past such a difficult time.

> We already know what the virus is, how it spreads, how it affects us. We learn a little more about the virus each day, and now children are affected. . . . Right now, I don't look ahead much further than this COVID year, and we don't know what will happen with the virus or when it will leave. They say it will be here until 2022.

Lastly, community members noted the importance of focusing on long-term and sustainable solutions. They noted a general fixation on solving short-term issues without necessarily thinking about the long-term impacts on community members.

> I think that sometimes we make decisions without considering the best interests of everyone in the long term. Some solutions work only for the moment. When we have a concern, people often fix problems quickly, only thinking about the short term. But sometimes, even if it takes longer, it's better to wait a bit and make a long-term plan—something that will last. Sometimes we don't analyze things enough to think of the longer term, and that's something that our community should consider, especially those with less education. Because it's important to make long-term plans, especially when we're thinking about the next 5 years, even though it can be hard and seems far away. We often are only thinking about next week. We need to program ourselves to think long term, our people, especially those with low income or few resources or low education. If [we] don't overcome these barriers, we're only going to find small solutions and think short term. And that's not necessarily a bad thing, but it would be more productive if we think about the long term, even if takes a little more effort and more education.

How can community members have an equal role in improvement initiatives?

Community members mentioned that having an equal role meant doing their part by working in solidarity to improve the community for everyone's benefit. For instance, they could help to vote, disseminate

information about community resources to those in need, translate information for those with limited English proficiency, and volunteer with community-based organizations.

> What we can do is communicate better. If I see a situation where someone is being taken advantage of because they can't articulate what they want, I can help them translate. Our people should have the trust necessary to get ahead and feel supported. I have had times when I see that someone is not speaking up or is being mistreated. I approach them and ask if I can help. So that's also a way of supporting our people and our community.

How can communities hold systems and leaders accountable?

Community members said that opportunities to use their collective voice to describe their experiences and complain about services was important for holding systems accountable. For example, they could make their voices heard through system complaint departments or surveys.

> But it's still important because it shows that Latinos have a voice. Many times we stay silent and accept our circumstances the way they are. And we don't make [systems] give a response to our demands. And I know that it's hard, but at the same time, the more they see that we are concerned, that we're speaking, that we show that certain things aren't working, there will come a point when something has to happen, no? Many times, there's not enough participation when there are community meetings when our community representatives speak. We don't go; we don't share our voice. We stay silent. So maybe they think everything is fine and there's no need for change. If we raise our voice, complain, participate in the neighborhood associations. We need a collective voice to show that we are interested. I know it's hard, and we count on community leaders like [community member] and others. But we also have to support them. They have to see that there are numbers. That there are people who are interested in seeing change. Not only for these few people, but for the whole community.

How do you know improvements work for everyone?

When asked how they would know that improvements in their community were benefiting everyone, community members stated that everyone would have access to services and resources without discrimination or stigma.

> That everyone is treated the same—Whites, Mexicans. That no race is discriminated against . . . that there's no discrimination [or] racism no matter the race. That services are for all, not just for some races. Most Whites don't suffer in these situations because they have the resources that are not for people of other races. As people, we all have the same rights. But we are often not taken into consideration.

Community-Identified Priorities

- Create opportunities for community members to describe their experiences (e.g., through customer service or complaint departments and surveys)

- Provide additional language supports for people with limited English proficiency

- Create a centralized place for information about community resources and events

Contributors

The Community for the Advancement of Family Education (CAFÉ) & Wenatchee, WA, community members

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CONTACT

Tamika Cowans
Task Lead
tcowans@air.org

Project Inbox
RWJF-CSM@air.org

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www.air.org

1400 Crystal Drive, 10th Floor | Arlington, VA 22202 | 202.403.6000