

Cross-sector Innovation Initiative Profile: Case Western Reserve University (OH)

Project Title and Tagline

The Health Improvement Partnership: Cuyahoga's Quest to Achieve Equity – *Applying community-based system dynamics to tackle structural racism in greater Cleveland.*

Project Summary

This project will employ participatory group model building (GMB) using community-based system dynamics (CBSD) to create a detailed understanding of structural racism impacts in Cuyahoga County. The resulting system dynamics models will identify actionable and transportable strategies and lever points for advancing equity. Five group model building sessions grounded in equity and CBSD with cross-sector community partners will be co-led by a sector representative and a community resident. Each sector lead will recruit diverse stakeholder engagement for GMB sessions. CBSD that engage communities and multisector collaborations through participatory modeling enable participants to see and formulate interventions and strategies to address systemic issues, such as structural racism. Participants will create maps of structural racism impact across multiple sector perspectives to identify lever points for action on short, intermediate and long-term timeframes. Subsequently, a community summit will engage all participants to identify pragmatic opportunities for short, intermediate and long-term action, and a concrete timeline to fund and operationalize multi-level initiatives to eliminate structural racism.

Community Description

This work will occur in Cuyahoga County, one of the largest of Ohio's 88 counties. Cuyahoga County is situated on the northern border of Ohio along Lake Erie and includes the City of Cleveland and 58 suburban communities. The total population from 2017 estimates is 1.25 million with 59% of residents identifying as white, 29% as black, 6% as Hispanic and 6% as other. Children younger than 18 comprise 21% of the population with those 65 and older making up 18%.

Cuyahoga County was redlined in the 1930s leading to contemporary inequities in health for our community. Eliminating structural racism was first identified as a key priority for Cuyahoga County in the 2015 community health improvement plan and has again been identified as a continuing priority in the collaborative 2019 assessment. This work has been coordinated through an equity-grounded, collective impact health improvement consortium known as the Health Improvement Partnership-Cuyahoga, which is now poised to work on eliminating structural racism to systems alignment through a community-based system dynamics approach that employs GMB and community engagement to affect complex systems change. A comprehensive, long-term, systems approach is necessary to meaningfully address structural racism and achieve equity at the community level.

Expected Impact on Systems Alignment, Population Health, and Health Equity

Through community engagement and multiple cross-sector GBM sessions, this project will result in creation of a systems model to eliminate structural racism within Cuyahoga County. The expected impact is then development of a coordinated community-based system dynamics approach to identify key areas for impact at short, intermediate and long-term time horizons. These discrete action steps within the complex system that has created structural racism will then be the workplan that will ultimately align the systems within each sector and across sectors to ultimately achieve equity and improved population health for all within our community.

Key Partners

- A Vision of Change
- Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine, Center for Community Health Integration
- The Center for Health Affairs
- Cleveland Department of Public Health
- Cuyahoga County Board of Health
- PolicyBridge
- United Way of Greater Cleveland

Grantees are working toward population health and health equity priorities, as well as addressing one or more pillars of alignment (as indicated by a checkmark below).

Population Health and Health Equity Focus

- Structural racism

Systems Alignment Areas

- ✓ Share a vision and a set of priority outcomes
- Create a shared data and measurement system
- Establish appropriate financing with incentives and accountability
- ✓ Strong governance with leadership and defined relationships driven by the voice and participation of community members

Cross-sector Innovation Initiative Overview

With funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Center for Sharing Public Health Services and the Public Health National Center for Innovations are co-leading the Cross-sector Innovation Initiative, a joint effort that aims to understand and support innovative multi-sector partnerships between public health, healthcare, and social services that ultimately transform practice towards working in alignment to improve population health, wellbeing, and equity for all.