

The CDO Quarterly provides insight into community-based partnerships associated with the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) Community-Driven Outreach (CDO) program. Each issue features inspiring and educational stories of effective community-rooted outreach work aimed at achieving health equity in Washington state. The CDO program centers communities who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and provides increased access to COVID-19 information, resources and vaccines.

Quick look: Health Commons Project directs CDO program funding to youth-led outreach

Students from the African Diaspora (and other priority populations) in King County are promoting COVID-19 prevention among their peers as Youth Ambassadors. Health Commons Project is a CDO program contractor that helps local communities set up, scale, and sustain neighborhood health systems. With program funding, the organization engaged local nonprofits to run COVID-19 Youth Ambassador programs.

The young changemakers create and share public health content with friends, family, and followers. Some key features are shaping the project's success.

Youth Ambassadors:

- Put information about COVID-19 in their own authentic words

- Choose the platforms, such as TikTok, that matter most to people they know
- Are paid for their work, recognizing the value of their outreach
- Get training and coaching during the design, development and launch of their messaging

Genuinely empowering youth outreach can have impacts well beyond the ambassadors' present-day activities. The project is one step toward building the trusted public health workforce of the future.

The youth ambassador project is expected to grow this year, led by subcontractors partnering with Health Commons Project: Pacific Northwest Black Business Coalition and Mission Africa.

Across hundreds of miles in central Washington, grassroots organizations bring COVID-19 resources directly to doorsteps

Unidos Nueva Alianza Foundation (UNA) is partnering with the Yakima Valley Community Foundation (YVCF) for health equity outreach in the CDO program. Unidos Nueva Alianza is a grassroots organization working to connect Hispanic and Latino communities across a wide geographic area to health resources to address COVID-19 and other vital needs, while building relationships and trust for future engagement.

As a contractor in the CDO program, YVCF funds a network of community-based organizations (CBOs) serving the region's Latino, Latina, and Hispanic populations. One of their funded CBOs is Unidos Nueva Alianza (UNA), led by Executive Director Marichuy Alvizar, which serves Grant, Adams, Chelan, Douglas, Okanogan, Kittitas, Yakima, Franklin and Benton counties.

The organization was first established in 2019, amid a rise in anti-immigrant rhetoric and immigration enforcement actions. Unidos Nueva Alianza earned a reputation of trust through its early work accompanying people to court appointments and connecting them to legal aid. After its founding, UNA added additional programs, including a food pantry, diaper bank, notary services, utility assistance, phone distribution, and more.

Helping with these immediate needs strengthened UNA's relationship with the community and its credibility on the emerging COVID-19 crisis. At the onset of COVID-19, UNA recognized that these communities were being left out by most public health services and communications.

The variety of programs they offered already put UNA in close contact with people from different generations and lines of work across nine counties. They responded to the crisis by expanding their program offerings to reach many communities, especially agricultural workers, and conducting outreach to spread valuable safety information about the virus.

Through their existing and expanded infrastructure UNA began organizing outreach events across hundreds of miles to provide marginalized communities with information around COVID-19 and assistance in accessing health services.

Staff at UNA include individuals who speak English and Spanish. UNA partners with community members to translate materials into Mixteco to aid outreach activities. "Talking in person is really important, because not everyone uses social media or reads newspapers," says Arturo Mayo, UNA's operations director. "We have a lot of one-on-one conversations." In addition to hosting clinics and community events, their outreach teams go door-to-door to talk to families about COVID-19.

When they produce and share fact sheets and other materials, the team sticks with clear and conversational phrases. "Really official language, even when it's technically accurate, is off-putting for our community," says Alvizar, the executive director.

UNA has held successful resource fairs and mobile clinics, and they plan more under the CDO program. "Our events are really positive and welcoming, with a family atmosphere," describes Cristina Laureano, UNA's community development director.

In addition to ongoing health education, UNA is

gathering feedback on community experiences with the health care system, levels of trust in government information, and preferred media sources. The team is circulating a survey to the community asking about these topics and more. It shows the community their opinion matters, and the results will guide new outreach tactics and messages.

Alex Gonzalez, outreach and marketing coordinator for YVCF, described the spirit behind the program that YVCF has built with partners like UNA. "It starts with listening and the overall response has been great," Gonzalez said. "No one is trying to just 'check the boxes.' Everyone is trying to get feedback, understand the needs, and deliver for the community."



Community-based organizations from Central Washington in the CDO program convened in April to collaborate with the Yakima Valley Community Foundation and each other, planning outreach for health equity and COVID-19 prevention.

Featured Resources

Across the nation: Looking at community-based communications in other states

Similar to the structure of the CDO program, Public Agenda, a civic engagement nonprofit, recently [published lessons learned](#) in a multi-state program engaging underrepresented and marginalized populations in shaping health policy.

Browse the report to learn from the experiences of organizations in Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, Nevada, New Mexico, and Pennsylvania.

Like the CDO program, Public Agenda funded a network of community partners, technical assistance, and support for building outreach infrastructures and capacity.

Here were some key observations from their multi-state program:

- Staff and volunteers at community organizations sometimes felt they were not expert enough in health issues to be trusted messengers. Program coaches helped reframe the workers' many relevant capabilities and supported them with training opportunities.
- Organizations were stressed trying to build engagement capacity while providing regular direct services. It helped to offer partners tools with immediate relevance in addition to resources for future engagement.
- Organizations collaborated with each other to build upon relationships with the public and increase impact. Participants said developing partnerships was time consuming but worthwhile.

The [full report](#) is online and a [toolkit](#) from the program is coming soon.



A yearlong campaign will encourage renewing Washington Apple Health coverage. Renewal processes are restarting after an emergency hiatus in the pandemic.

Health equity landscape: Apple Health renewals

The trusted relationships, cultural expertise, and communication infrastructure that grew in response to COVID-19 can serve additional community health goals over time. Over the next year, community organizations will be vital in helping Apple Health (Washington Medicaid) members keep their insurance, another important aspect of health equity. Renewing eligibility for Apple Health is required again after a hiatus on rechecks during the pandemic, and people risk losing coverage if they do not respond to state notices. Renewing can be complicated, with trusted messengers and navigators helping people clear barriers to coverage.

CDO program partners can stay aware of the Apple Health renewal process to find opportunities for collaboration, learn about new tactics, or better understand the health care issues audiences are confronting alongside COVID-19 recovery.

Find out more:

The state's [online hub of information](#) on renewals

[Apple Health ambassador program](#)

[Communications toolkit on renewals](#)

Asian American mental health toolkit

The [Asian American Health Initiative](#) (AAHI) has put together a mental health toolkit that is free and available to use [here](#). AAHI is a health-focused agency for pan-Asian communities based out of Maryland.

The toolkit offers a variety of mental health resources as well as a pre-developed presentation explaining what mental health is and what services are available. For more information and resources, check out the rest of AAHI's [free mental health resources](#).

Navigating the end of the Public Health Emergency declaration

On May 11, 2023, the federal government's COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) declaration expired.

As a result, several programs connected to the PHE such as COVID-19 testing and vaccinations were affected. With these changes in mind, here is a list of resources to stay up to date on:

- Staying Informed: Understanding Local Impacts of the Public Health Emergency Ending [webinar recording](#)
- National [Resource Center](#) for Refugees, Immigrants, and Migrants

- [Fact Sheet](#): COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Transition Roadmap
- Unwinding the public health emergency for Apple Health (Medicaid) [fact sheet](#)
- Washington Apple Health [Guide to Unwinding](#) from the PHE detailed handbook
- Public Health Communications Collaborative (PHCC) [Answers to Tough Questions](#)

Did you know?

Our [Contractor Toolkit](#) offers a variety of tools and resources for CDO contractors and subcontractors.

The CDO Contractor Toolkit, hosted on SharePoint, is another resource that contains DOH branding materials, meeting recordings, program documents and quick links intended to support contractors as they navigate the program.

Currently, the following resources are available in the toolkit:

- Past meeting recordings and materials
- DOH logos and branding guidance
- List of CDO Contractors and associated contact information
- Quick links to CDO program-specific resources
- Technical assistance resource information

Quick Links



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