



Voices for Health Justice Evaluation Plan

July 2021



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PREPARED FOR:

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

PREPARED BY:

Institute for Community Health

350 Main Street

Malden, MA 02148

www.icommunityhealth.org

TEAM:

Ranjani K. Paradise, PhD

Carolyn Fisher, PhD

Sofia Ladner, MPH

Amanda Robinson, PhD

Pallavi Goel, BA

Julia Curbera, MCP

Wendy Ji, MPH

ICH is a nonprofit consulting organization that provides participatory evaluation, applied research, assessment, planning, and technical assistance. ICH helps community-based organizations, health advocacy organizations, foundations, and healthcare institutions improve their services and maximize program impact.



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BACKGROUND

Voices for Health Justice (Voices) is a program funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), that provides grants and other support to organizations committed to health justice, racial justice, and anti-racism work to increase access to health care, make health care more affordable, and increase the ability of the health care system to treat all people with dignity. RWJF is supporting Community Catalyst, Community Change, and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (together called the “Hub”) to fund 25 grantees across 24 states, each of which has between two and six subgrantees. The grantee funding began in December 2020 and runs through March 2023. Representatives from the three Hub organizations make up a Steering Committee that provides overall program oversight, and these three organizations are also the core technical assistance (TA) providers for the grantees and subgrantees. State grantees and subgrantees also receive TA support from additional TA providers, including Altarum, McCabe Message Partners, and the National Health Law Program.

Through this national funding and TA infrastructure, the Voices for Health Justice program aims to support projects that focus on the needs of low-income communities, communities of color (Black, Indigenous, Hispanic, Latino/a/e/X, Arab/Arab American, Southeast Asian, Asian, Asian Pacific Islander, Native Hawaiian, Desi and/or immigrant communities) and other groups facing disproportionate health inequities. As stated in the Letter Of Interest background:

*“The initiative is committed to funding projects whose work is rooted in **building the power of these communities** to improve **access and affordability and treatment by the health care system** through ongoing participation, visibility and leadership from affected individuals.”*

In this evaluation plan, we will use the following terminology to refer to the various organizations involved in the Voices for Health Justice program:

The Hub: Community Catalyst, Community Change, and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

Steering Committee: A committee composed of representatives from each of the organizations that make up the Hub

Grantees: Each of 25 organizations that are the direct state-level awardees of Voices funds

Subgrantees: Each of the organizations that have subcontracted with grantees. Each grantee has between two and six subgrantees.

State project: Each group of grantee and subgrantees working on a project together. There are 25 state projects in 24 states.

Voices Advisory Committee (VAC): A committee composed of representatives from grantee and subgrantee organizations that advises the Steering Committee

Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC): A committee composed of representatives from grantee and subgrantee organizations that advises the evaluators

In addition to the funding and TA provided to state grantees and subgrantees, Voices also includes a “rapid response” funding component. Given the dynamic nature of politics and health policy change, the rapid response grants are made by the Steering Committee to advocacy partners to support strategic and timely work that advances Voices’s overarching goals of increasing access to health care, making health care more affordable, and increasing the ability of the healthcare system to treat all people with dignity. Rapid response grants are intended to respond to a discrete policy, organizing, or campaign opportunity. Grants can be awarded to organizations that are funded to work on Voices state projects, organizations in Voices states that are not currently funded by the program, or organizations in states that are not currently involved in Voices.

Finally, the Voices Steering Committee implements the National Wave, a communications strategy that aims to elevate health equity and advocacy priorities that emerge from the Voices state projects into both state and national-level media outlets.

OVERALL EVALUATION APPROACH AND OBJECTIVES

The Institute for Community Health (ICH) was contracted by RWJF starting in April 2021 to serve as the external evaluator for the Voices program. ICH is a nonprofit consulting organization whose mission is to improve community health through participatory evaluation, applied research, assessment, planning, and technical assistance. One of our core organizational values is the belief that incorporating diverse perspectives is essential to harnessing a community’s strengths and promoting social justice. Across projects, we strive to ensure that our work represents, includes the voices of, and creates value for all communities impacted by programs and interventions. For Voices, our evaluation design and process is built upon the following foundational approaches:

Equitable evaluation: We are inspired and informed by the [Equitable Evaluation Initiative](#), which challenges us to reimagine the purpose and practice of evaluation as a field that advances equity, embraces complexity, and expands notions of validity, objectivity, and rigor. For us, this includes, but is not limited to, bringing cultural humility in our role as evaluators, recognizing and valuing the expertise that grantees and other stakeholders have and ensuring that they have a voice into the evaluation design and methods; being

intentional about what we ask from participants and compensating them appropriately for their time; understanding the context in which programs are operating and how this affects activities and outcomes; and exploring impacts on different populations to the extent possible.

Participatory and utilization-focused evaluation: We take a participatory, utilization-focused approach to ensure that both the process and the plan are relevant, worthwhile and useful for all parties. This involves incorporating multiple perspectives at all stages of the evaluation to understand what stakeholders and communities want to learn from the evaluation, and remaining flexible and responsive as the program evolves.

Realist evaluation: Throughout the evaluation inquiry, we will apply a realist evaluation¹ lens which places a central focus on context and incorporates complexity by asking not just “What outcomes were achieved?” but “How, for whom, and under what circumstances was the program successful in achieving outcomes?” By framing our data collection and analysis in this way, we aim to build a nuanced understanding about what kinds of structures and supports work best in different settings to advance the goal of building community power for health and racial justice.

Our principal objectives for the evaluation are to:

- Provide useful, timely, and actionable evaluation data to the Hub, grantees and subgrantees, Steering and Advisory Committees, RWJF, and TA partners regarding their ongoing work
- Understand the implementation and outcomes of both the individual state projects and the Voices program as a whole, to identify what works well for developing the power ecosystem for health justice
- Develop recommendations for RWJF, other funders, and the power-building field as a whole about what kinds of structures and supports best advance community power-building for health justice in different contexts
- Practice and further develop the principles of equitable evaluation by pushing the boundaries of established practice and sharing power with grantees and other stakeholders

¹ Pawson, R., Tilley, N. (1997). An introduction to scientific realist evaluation. In E. Chelmsky & W. R. Shadish (Eds.), *Evaluation for the 21st century: A handbook* (pp. 405–418). Sage Publications, Inc. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1997-97429-008>; Lemire et al (2020). What Is This Thing Called a Mechanism? Findings From a Review of Realist Evaluations, *New Directions for Evaluation* 167, Fall 2020.

METHODS FOR DEVELOPING THIS EVALUATION PLAN

To develop this evaluation plan over the planning period of April-July 2021, ICH used a participatory evaluation planning process guided by the principles of equitable evaluation. The process aimed to elevate the priorities and perspectives of grantees and subgrantees, while fully incorporating the expertise and experience of other stakeholders, including the Hub and Steering Committee and RWJF. The evaluation planning process included the following activities:

Reflection sessions with representatives of the Voices Steering Committee were held monthly during the planning period. These sessions were opportunities for evaluators and Steering Committee members to discuss progress and findings and to reflect strategically on next steps. To reduce participant burden, we invited only subsets of the Steering Committee to each session, such that evaluators participated in these sessions monthly, but Steering Committee members participated in only one or two over the planning period.

Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC): We convened a group of representatives from grantee and subgrantee organizations to serve as an Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC). An initial open invitation to the full set of grantees and subgrantees resulted in a larger-than-expected group of approximately 19 members. We think of the EAC as being similar to a board of directors for the evaluation, holding the evaluation team accountable to our equitable evaluation values. Members' organizations received additional funding (calculated based on a rate of \$250/hour) as compensation for the time involved in participating, and members also received capacity-building on equitable evaluation approaches. EAC members contributed to the evaluation design by participating in discussions about the Voices theory of change and evaluation strategy, adding validity to our understanding through a member-checking process, and providing input into decisions about high-level evaluation strategy.

Specifically, during the four-month planning period EAC members participated in four highly productive EAC meetings and two design sessions paired with asynchronous data collection opportunities - one session focused on developing the Voices theory of change model and the other focused on identifying evaluation questions (described further below). Some members also provided input through one-on-one meetings with us and by completing surveys. We have greatly benefited from our consultations with the EAC during the evaluation planning process, and as we move forward we will continue to explore ways to deepen the EAC's authority and more equally share decision-making power.

Virtual design processes: The need to convene virtually called for creativity from evaluators. To co-develop the Voices theory of change model, we began with an online, asynchronous discussion. Participants were invited to submit responses to a set of four questions, which

were presented in a shared document so that participants could see and react to the responses provided by other participants. During the first asynchronous discussion, participants shared their visions for their projects and provided raw material which we used to construct an initial theory of change model. Next, we convened members of the Steering Committee and the EAC in a virtual design session, at which we presented the first draft of the model and invited participants to reflect on the draft and provide edits and feedback. Following this session, we made additional revisions and sought further feedback from the Steering Committee, RWJF, and the EAC. After incorporating this feedback, we “froze” the logic model into a working draft that was used to guide the next phase of the evaluation planning process (see Attachment: Theory of change model). Periodically throughout the life of the program, we plan to guide the EAC and Steering Committee in “unfreezing” and updating the logic model based on new learnings and the evolution of the program.

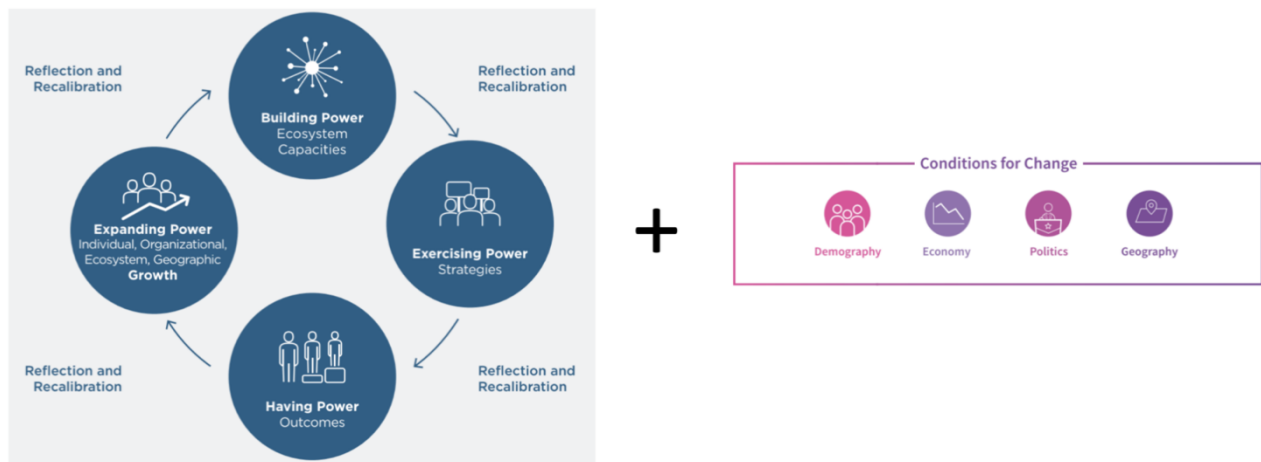
A second virtual design process focused on developing evaluation questions. Here, we again began with an asynchronous online discussion, this time focused on identifying priority process and outcome measures from the theory of change model. Based on this discussion, we developed a set of evaluation domains and questions which were elaborated on and refined in a virtual design session with the EAC and Steering Committee members. We also proposed and solicited feedback on a set of data collection methods that aligned with priorities identified by the Steering Committee, RWJF, and EAC members. High among these priorities were minimizing participant burden, particularly for grantees and subgrantees; flexibility; an emphasis on qualitative methods; and accounting for differences in circumstances between different state projects in analyzing and interpreting data. Next, we wrote a draft outline of the evaluation plan and gathered additional feedback from RWJF and the Steering Committee. This document incorporates that feedback and elaborates on the various components of the plan.

Landscape scan: Our evaluation planning process was further informed by conducting a landscape scan to understand scholar and practitioner perspectives on conceptualizations of and strategies for evaluating community power. This landscape scan included a literature review as well as expert interviews with nine individuals who had significant experience working in areas of relevance to Voices. This included prominent scholars, evaluators, and practitioners who had worked with grassroots community organizations and power-building programs. For details on the methods and findings of the landscape scan, see Attachment: Landscape scan white paper.

POWER-BUILDING FRAMEWORK AND THE VOICES THEORY OF CHANGE

Overarching conceptual framework for understanding power-building

Through the landscape scan, we reviewed a number of conceptual frameworks for understanding community power, and selected the Barsoum power-building framework² to guide our understanding of power-building for Voices. We modified this framework by adding the “Conditions for Change” element of Pastor et al.’s Changing States Framework³. This places a more direct emphasis on contextual factors which we see as critical to incorporate into our understanding of power-building approaches and outcomes. This modified framework provides a general and flexible structure for organizing our thinking about community power-building as it applies to Voices.



Modified power-building framework: Barsoum framework (left) with the addition of Conditions for Change from the Changing States Framework (right)

The Barsoum framework is a cycle with four stages that occurs with a specific advocacy or change effort. The first stage is Building Power, which includes building of capacities, infrastructure, and relationships. Next is Exercising Power, which includes strategies for applying built power towards specific arenas or targets, such as implementing an advocacy strategy directed at a particular policy goal or a communications strategy. This is followed by

² Barsoum, G., & Farrow, F. (2020). An Ecosystem To Build Power And Advance Health And Racial Equity. The California Endowment.

³ Pastor, M., Ito, J., & Wander, M. (2016). Changing States: A Framework for Progressive Governance. Los Angeles, CA: USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity.

https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/242/docs/PERE_Changing_States_Framework_Final_WebPDF.pdf

Having Power, which includes the outcomes of applying power, such as policy changes, community health outcomes, or changes in narrative. The fourth stage is Expanding Power, which includes feedback loops of how wins, losses, and other outcomes affect built power - for example, policy wins can improve an organization's visibility and perceived legitimacy, thus attracting more people to the base and further building power. Between each stage is Reflection and Recalibration, in which organizations or participants learn from the previous stage and modify their approaches and strategies as they move forward. Importantly, this framework understands power as dynamic - not something that is built permanently, but rather something that fluctuates through gains and losses over time.

For the purposes of the Voices evaluation, we added Conditions for Change from Pastor et al., which we see as the context within which a change effort is embedded, which can influence all stages of Barsoum's power-building cycle. Conditions for Change includes demographic, geographic, political, and economic conditions, which are also dynamic and together can open or close windows of opportunity relevant to specific change efforts.

Voices theory of change

Through our work with the EAC and Steering Committee, we co-developed a Voices theory of change based primarily on stakeholder understanding of the program and its potential outcomes. We reviewed this theory of change against our findings from the landscape scan and ensured that the final version had strong alignment between the stakeholder-led conceptualization of community power and the concepts that were highlighted in the literature and in expert interviews. We see the Voices theory of change as a specific roadmap for how the modified Barsoum power-building framework is expected to play out for this program, taking into account Voices's unique structure and focus on health justice.

A brief summary of the theory of change is provided below, with numbers in parentheses referencing specific outcomes on the theory of change model (for more depth and details please refer to Attachment: Theory of change model). It is important to recognize that the theory of change depicts an idealized vision for the program, laying out the sequence of outcomes that stakeholders hope will occur if the program is successful. In addition, the theory of change is meant to represent the Voices program as a whole; each individual state project is expected to have some, but not all, elements of this theory of change reflected in their state-specific work. Our evaluation aims to examine the theory of change and understand the structures and contexts that best support positive outcomes across the range of Voices state projects. The expectation is not that the program will be uniformly successful in all areas, but rather that there will be variation across projects, organizations, and settings that we can learn from to develop recommendations on how best to support

power-building for health justice in the future. We intend the theory of change diagram to be a living document that will be updated to reflect our learnings as the evaluation progresses.

The Voices theory of change includes two levels of program activities - overall program activities that are provided by the Hub, TA partners, and ICH to all grantees and subgrantees; and state project activities, which are conducted by grantees and subgrantees for their specific projects. All activities and outcomes may be affected by internal and external contextual factors, such as political, societal, funding, and leadership conditions. The theory articulates outcomes around capacity-building and collaboration (#1, detailed in 1a-1k), which the program structure and TA model is intended to support. These initial outcomes lead to strengthening of organizations and the power-building ecosystem (#2-3). All of this contributes to improving the effectiveness of grantees' and subgrantees' state project work (#5,) increased community power (#17), and other impacts beyond the Voices program (#4). While each state project has its own unique focus and set of strategies, there are common themes in the types of outcomes the grantees and subgrantees hope to achieve in their communities. These include short- and intermediate-term outcomes around community engagement, base-building, and leadership development (#6-10) as well as communications and visibility (#13-15). These lead to more effective advocacy that is informed and directed by communities (#11-12) as well as channeling of public attention and political will towards issues affecting communities (#16); these outcomes in turn lead to policy, budget, and administrative changes that support marginalized communities and advance racial justice (#18-20). Outcomes #6-16 all contribute to increasing community power, and as described in the Barsoum framework, policy, budget, and administrative wins can create feedback loops that further build power (conversely, losses can diminish community power). Finally, if outcomes occur as depicted in the theory of change, the program will ultimately contribute to improvements in health care access, affordability, and dignity (#21-23), resulting in improved community health and more equitable health outcomes (#24).

DOMAINS OF INQUIRY

The overall goal for this evaluation is to learn how best to support community power-building; through examining this program we aim to understand the circumstances and structures that facilitate success in order to inform how future programs should look. To ensure that our evaluation takes a multifaceted and comprehensive view of power-building, we propose six main domains of evaluation questions for Voices. These domains arose out of our collaborative theory of change development process, our literature review, our interviews with experts in the field, and our selected framework for understanding power-building. The domains were then refined in an iterative process with the Evaluation Advisory

Committee (EAC) and members of the Steering Committee, as described above. We present core evaluation questions within each domain below.

Each domain contains a brief description of the domain, reference to corresponding parts of the theory of change model, and questions corresponding to both process and outcomes. For brevity, we do not specify the full Realist Evaluation framing (“how, for whom, under what circumstances”) in each of our questions, but this lens will be applied throughout to embed complexity into our inquiry. Across all domains, our focus is not on judging outcomes against a predetermined definition of success, but rather on learning how best to support power-building efforts and ecosystems moving forward. In addition, we recognize that there is variation across projects in terms of planned activities, focus areas, and goals, and that not all domains of inquiry will be relevant to all state projects. The domains are meant to encompass the full set of 25 projects as a whole, and our data collection, analysis, and interpretation will take into account each state project’s unique circumstances and characteristics.

Across all domains, our focus is not on judging outcomes against a predetermined definition of success, but rather on learning how best to support power-building efforts and ecosystems moving forward.

1. Deep and broad community engagement (Theory of change model boxes 6-10)

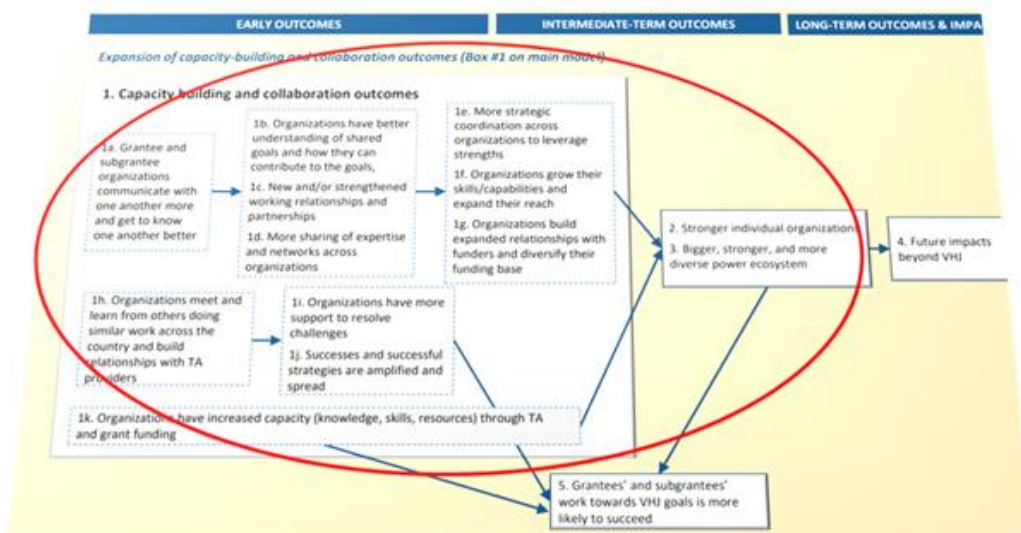
This domain encompasses grassroots organizing, base-building, and leadership development. We will focus on assessing depth and breadth of community engagement, including but not limited to collecting the numbers of community members engaged at each level of the [pyramid of engagement](#). In the words of an EAC member, we will be looking for indications of



“grassroots, not grasstops” organizing. Overall, we will be trying to understand what structures and circumstances promote both deeper and broader community engagement.

Core questions: *What engagement and organizing strategies do grantees use? Who is engaged, to what level, and how representative are they of the communities of color of focus? What are the pathways to leadership and what does community leadership look like across projects? How can funders like RWJF best support community engagement and leadership development in different contexts?*

2. Power ecosystems (Theory of change model boxes 1-3)

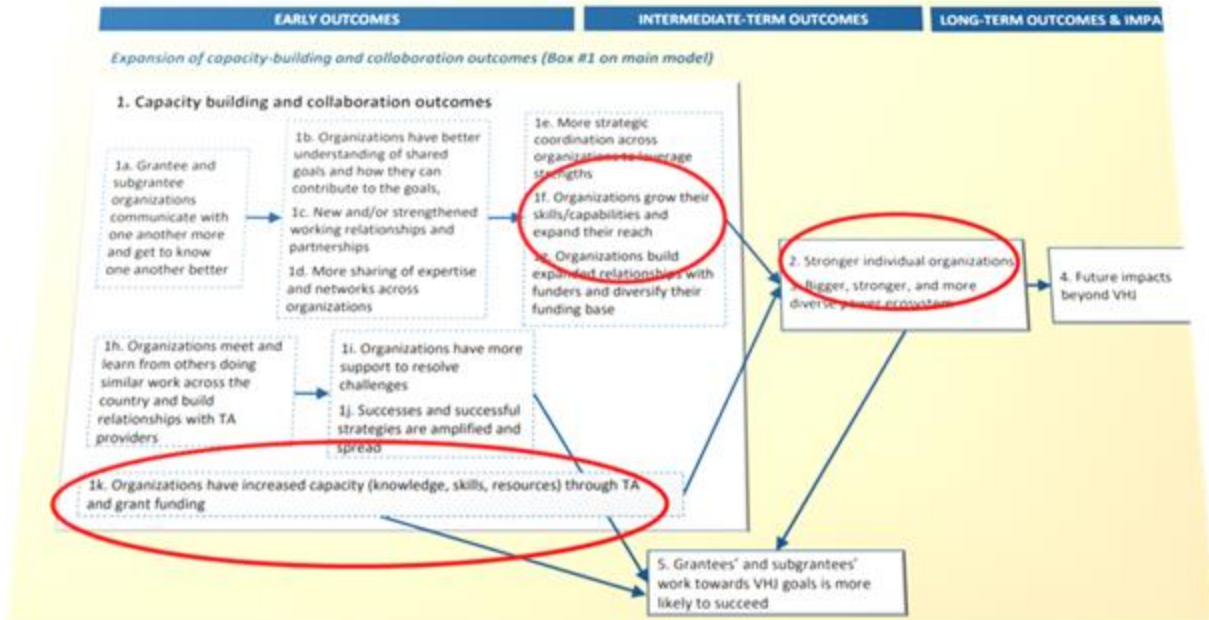


This aspect of the evaluation is based on Gigi Barsoum and Frank Farrow’s work, which understands power ecosystems as composed of organizations, relationships and more formal infrastructures that are centered around grassroots organizing groups⁴. Here, we will specifically explore the Voices project networks in each state, which can be conceptualized as local ecosystems.

Core questions: *What are the characteristics and capacities of the power ecosystems in the different states and how do the ecosystems evolve over time? How can funders like RWJF best support development of power ecosystem relationships and connections in different contexts?*

⁴ Barsoum, G., & Farrow, F. (2020). An Ecosystem To Build Power And Advance Health And Racial Equity. The California Endowment.

3. Sustained capacity growth (Theory of change model boxes 1, especially 1f and 1k, and 2)

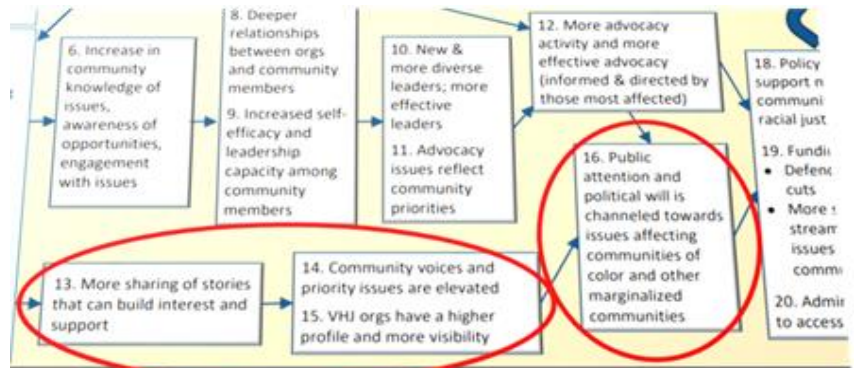


This domain looks at the degree to which capacity is built in both individual organizations and in Voices state project networks overall. We aim to understand capacities that are built during the life of the grant and the extent to which they are sustained moving forward. There is substantial conceptual overlap here with the ecosystem domain above.

Core questions: What TA, capacity-building, and partnership-building support is provided to grantees and how are these decisions made? How well do RWJF, the national Voices infrastructure, and the collaborative grant design support the growth and strengthening of organizations and power ecosystems? How can funders like RWJF best support capacity-building for organizations and power ecosystems in different contexts?

4. Narrative change (Theory of change model boxes 13-16)

This domain encompasses aspects of the state project work that are focused on communications and narrative change as well as the national wave strategy.



Core questions: What communications and narrative change strategies do grantees use? How much visibility do community voices and priority issues have in the grantee states? How can funders like RWJF best support attainment of communications and narrative change goals in different contexts?

National wave questions: How was the national wave strategy conceptualized and implemented, and how successful was it at increasing state and national media coverage of identified topics and stories?

5. Policy, budget, and administrative outcomes (Theory of change model boxes 11-12, 18-20)

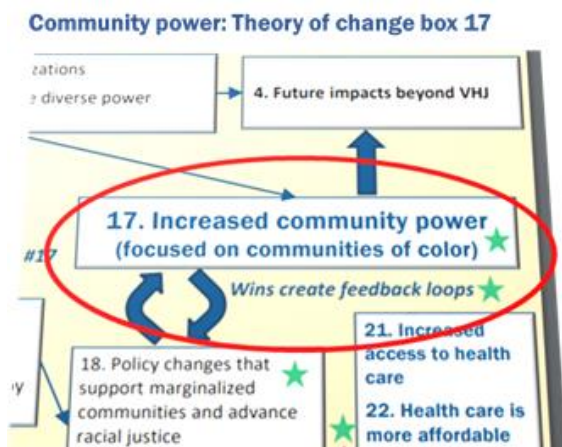


This domain encompasses the policy, budget, and administrative goals of the state projects as well as the rapid response grants.

Core questions: What policy advocacy and other campaign strategies do grantees use? In what areas and under what conditions are there policy, budget, and/or administrative wins or losses? How do wins and losses affect local organizations and the power ecosystem? How can funders like RWJF best support attainment of policy, budget, and administrative goals in different contexts?

Rapid response grant questions: How were the Rapid response grantees selected? Who was awarded and what were their focus areas and goals? How successful were grantees in achieving policy wins or accomplishing other goals?

6. Community power (Theory of change model box 17)



According to the information we gathered from the literature, expert interviews, EAC members, and the Steering Committee, the five preceding domains all include aspects of the larger concept of community power; thus, the evaluation as a whole is centered on this concept. In addition, we will ask:

Core questions: *To what extent are grassroots organizations and communities of color involved in or leading advocacy and decision-making processes? How can funders like RWJF best support shifting top-down processes towards community-led models in different contexts?*

Cross-cutting focus on structural racism

By building power among communities of color, Voices aims to create change that combats structural racism, and this is intrinsically embedded into the outcomes in the theory of change model. Thus, across all domains of inquiry, our evaluation will have a cross-cutting focus on structural racism. We pose the following cross-cutting question, which will guide our analysis and interpretation of all evaluation data:

Cross-cutting question: *In what ways has the power built through Voices disrupted racist systems and structures?*

Specific points of inquiry

We recognize that each of these domains is complex and that they overlap with one another. As part of our participatory process, we will elaborate on these questions in more specific detail as we reach each stage of the data collection process to ensure that our inquiry remains responsive as the program evolves and progresses. In the table below, we have included initial ideas about specific points that may be addressed within each domain; however, these points are not final and will be refined and/or modified in a participatory manner as we proceed with the evaluation.

Core question(s)	Specific points that we may address in our inquiry (to be refined in a participatory manner throughout the evaluation)	Data sources and methods (see below for details)
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Domain 1. Deep and broad community engagement

<p>What engagement and organizing strategies do grantees use? Who is engaged, to what level, and how representative are they of the communities of color of focus? What are the pathways to leadership and what does community leadership look like across projects? How can funders like RWJF best support community engagement and leadership development in different contexts?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More/less successful strategies for promoting deep and broad engagement and leadership • Variance according to context • Alignment between the pool of leaders and the communities of focus • Prioritization of depth vs. breadth of engagement • Sustainability of engagement strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review • Interviews • Case studies
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Domain 2. Power ecosystem

<p>What are the characteristics and capacities of the power ecosystems in the different states and how do the ecosystems evolve over time? How can funders like RWJF best support development of power ecosystem relationships and connections in different contexts?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacities gained by participating in networks • Centering of grassroots organizing groups in the ecosystems • Aspects of the funding, national infrastructure, and grant design that are most/least effective to build/strengthen connections between organizations • Sustainability and evolution of ecosystems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection sessions • Social network analysis • Interviews • Case studies
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Domain 3. Sustained capacity growth

<p>What TA, capacity-building, and partnership-building support is provided to grantees and how are these decisions made? How well do RWJF, the national Voices infrastructure, and the collaborative grant design support the growth and strengthening of organizations and power ecosystems? How can funders like RWJF best support capacity-building for organizations and power ecosystems in different contexts?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most/least effective TA and support strategies • Extent to which national TA partners follow the lead of local communities • Sustainability of capacity growth • Aspects of the funding structure, national infrastructure, and grant design that are most/least effective to build/strengthen capacities at the organizational and ecosystem level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection sessions • Document review • Social network analysis • Interviews • Case studies
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Core question(s)	Specific points that we may address in our inquiry (to be refined in a participatory manner throughout the evaluation)	Data sources and methods (see below for details)
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Domain 4. Narrative change

<p>What communications and narrative change strategies do grantees use? How much visibility do community voices and priority issues have in the grantee states? How can funders like RWJF best support attainment of communications and narrative change goals in different contexts?</p> <p><i>National wave:</i> How was the national wave strategy conceptualized and implemented, and how successful was it at increasing state and national media coverage of identified topics and stories?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media coverage (local and national) of local stories, especially in case study states • Specific language or narratives identified by projects as objectives of change and how this is reflected in media, including social media (for case study projects) • Evolution of the national wave strategy over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection sessions • Document review • Interviews • Case studies
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Domain 5. Policy, budget, and administrative outcomes

<p>What policy advocacy and other campaign strategies do grantees use? In what areas and under what conditions are there policy, budget, and/or administrative wins or losses? How do wins and losses affect local organizations and the power ecosystem? How can funders like RWJF best support attainment of policy, budget, and administrative goals in different contexts?</p> <p><i>Rapid response grants:</i> How were the Rapid Response grantees selected? Who was awarded and what were their focus areas and goals? How successful were grantees in achieving policy wins or accomplishing other goals?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Influence of external context • Alignment of wins and losses with community priorities • Impact of wins and losses on racist systems and structures • Conditions that facilitate wins and conditions that make change challenging • Characteristics of awarded organizations, including states they work in and issue areas of focus • Alignment between rapid response grantees' goals and broader goals of the Voices program as a whole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review • Interviews • Case studies
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Core question(s)	Specific points that we may address in our inquiry (to be refined in a participatory manner throughout the evaluation)	Data sources and methods (see below for details)
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Domain 6. Community power

Note that the five preceding domains include aspects of the larger concept of community power, and this domain build upon this

<p>To what extent are grassroots organizations and communities of color involved in or leading advocacy and decision-making processes? How can funders like RWJF best support shifting top-down processes towards community-led models in different contexts?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which community members feel that they have ownership / agency in the decision-making process (for case study projects) • Alignment between community members' and Voices organizations' conceptualizations of community power (for case study projects) • Funder perspectives on how to support community power-building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Social network analysis • Case studies • Funder interviews
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Cross-cutting focus on structural racism

<p>In what ways has the power built through Voices disrupted racist systems and structures?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which power was built specifically among communities of color • Across all domains, ways in which outcomes reflect the priorities of communities of color 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All data sources
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DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS METHODS

Participatory structure for the evaluation period

Over the planning period, ICH has developed a strong group of grantee and subgrantee representatives who have been actively advising the evaluation planning as part of the Evaluation Advisory Committee. We will continue to consult with a subset of 10 members from this group at approximately quarterly intervals throughout the remainder of the grant period. EAC members will also be invited to provide written input on data collection tools and products between meetings, and individual members may be asked to assist in piloting tools as needed. Through this participatory structure, the EAC will have the opportunity to help shape the evaluation by refining or adapting our areas of inquiry, guiding our development of data collection instruments, and participating in the interpretation of findings.

Engagement with and data collection from the national grantees

Reflection sessions with the Steering Committee: ICH will moderate reflection sessions with the Steering Committee (representatives from Community Catalyst, Community Change, and the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities) at approximately quarterly intervals over the remainder of the grant period. These sessions will use focus group methodology, with two main objectives: 1) to provide an opportunity for reflection and evaluative thinking that can guide the ongoing program implementation, and 2) to gain insight into the national program structure and Steering Committee perspectives on the evaluation questions. Notes from these reflection sessions will be analyzed and integrated with other data sources during reporting.

Review and analysis of rapid response grant strategy: ICH will review secondary data provided by the Steering Committee related to the rapid response grants, such as grant project descriptions, reports, budgets, and documentation about the selection process. In addition, we will dedicate some time in reflection sessions with the Steering Committee to learning more about the decision-making process for awarding these grants. We will compile and analyze the data roughly three times over the remaining grant period to answer the questions articulated above and/or other questions of interest to the Steering Committee that may arise as they proceed with this work. We will share back our findings throughout this process, so that the Steering Committee can use the information to inform future rapid response grantmaking.

Review and analysis of National Wave strategy (preliminary plan): To begin evaluating the National Wave strategy, ICH will review media tracking data collected by Community Catalyst, as well as other documentation about how the strategy is being implemented. In addition, some portion of reflection sessions with Steering Committee members will focus on understanding progress of the National Wave strategy and associated lessons learned and insights. This preliminary plan to evaluate the National Wave strategy will be refined in partnership with members of the Steering Committee as the strategy takes shape. As this is an evolving area of work, we will prioritize flexibility and will work together with the Steering Committee to further integrate the National Wave strategy into the theory of change model and revise or adapt the evaluation questions and approaches over time as needed.

Evaluation activities that will occur with all state grantees and subgrantees

ICH will conduct two “light touch” primary data collection activities with all state projects over the course of the grant (interviews and social network analysis), in addition to analyzing secondary data and engaging in “deeper dive” activities with a selected subset of state projects (see case study section below). Through this design, we seek to intentionally strike a balance of gathering meaningful data without overburdening grantees and subgrantees.

Group interviews: We will conduct semi-structured qualitative group interviews with each state project team at three time points - approximately Sept 2021, July 2022, and February 2023. We will request that one representative from each grantee or subgrantee organization participate in the group interviews for each project. In certain exceptional cases we may split these interviews into two groups for a single project. In summary, the interview component of the evaluation will include 1-2 interviews with each Voices project team at three time points (we estimate approximately 30 interviews at each timepoint for 90 total interviews). The interview guides and analytical frameworks will be developed in partnership with the EAC and the Steering Committee and will be responsive to the ways in which projects evolve over time and emerging areas of inquiry.

Social network analysis: We will conduct longitudinal social network analysis (SNA)⁵ with Voices project teams to understand the evolution of the networks that are the foundation of the power ecosystems for each state project. The SNA will allow us to look at questions such as which organizations are most central to the networks, how often organizations communicate with one another, which organizational connections/relationships are strongest, and how the networks change over time, including after the end of the grant period. Data for the SNA will be collected through a survey administered to representatives from each grantee and subgrantee organization at three timepoints: approximately October 2021, March 2023 (end of grant period), and March 2024 (one year post-grant). To address concerns about our ability to achieve an acceptable response rate after the end of the grant, we will provide a gift card incentive in exchange for completion of the final survey and will also consult with the EAC about additional ways to encourage responses. The initial survey in October 2021 will include a subset of items in retrospective pre/post format, where participants will be asked to answer items or questions reflecting on how things were *before* their work with the Voices program began (retrospective baseline) compared to *now*, the point at which they complete the survey.

The SNA tool will be developed in consultation with the EAC and Steering Committee, as well as informed by available scales and instruments in the published literature (such as the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory⁶). A common challenge with SNA is that data

⁵ Fredericks, K. (2013). Using Social Network Analysis in Evaluation. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Evaluation Series. <https://www.rwif.org/en/library/research/2013/12/using-social-network-analysis-in-evaluation.html>; Durland, M.M., Fredericks, K. (2006). An introduction to social network analysis. New Directions for Evaluation. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/ev.157>

⁶ Mattessich, P. (2018). Collaboration Factors Inventory, 3rd Edition. Amherst H. Wilder Foundation. <https://www.wilder.org/wilder-research/research-library/collaboration-factors-inventory-3rd-edition>

collection can be extensive and burdensome. To mitigate this, we aim to create a parsimonious tool that will provide meaningful information about the structure and strength of the Voices ecosystems without relying on an excessive number of items. In addition, to set boundaries on the survey participant pool, ICH will be sampling the pre-defined networks that are funded to participate in Voices rather than conducting open snowball sampling. The SNA tool will ask participants to list additional partners that they work with but we will not be asking those partners to fill out the survey.

Review and analysis of secondary data and documents: We will review and summarize data collected by the TA providers for each project as well as oral and written reports submitted by state grantees. These data sources will provide consistent information across all state projects and will not require any time investment from grantees or subgrantees beyond what they are already doing with their TA providers. For the remaining reports over the grant period, we plan to work in collaboration with the Hub to develop reporting forms and questions that meet the needs of both the TA providers and the evaluation. The following categories of secondary data will be provided to ICH by the evaluation coordinator at Community Catalyst:

- 1) TA and support activity tracking: this will help us understand the different types and levels of TA and support provided to each state project.
- 2) Documentation of strategies used by grantees: this information will help us understand the types of activities and strategies that grantees and subgrantees report using for community outreach and engagement, leadership development, communications, advocacy, and policy work.
- 3) Community engagement data: this will include numbers of community members engaged at different levels from outreach to leadership, and will help us understand breadth and depth of engagement.
- 4) Policy tracking: this will help us understand policy and administrative wins across projects.
- 5) Media tracking: this will consist of data around earned local and national media hits and will help us understand the outcomes of communications strategies.

Finally, we will also compile a set of secondary data points to be able to understand the contexts in which the set of state projects are occurring. We are still finalizing which set of contextual factors will be most meaningful to include; some potential data points we are considering include parties in power at the state or local level, population size, demographics, economic conditions, geographic distribution of the population of focus, and epidemiology data such as COVID-19 case rates and vaccination patterns.

Evaluation activities that will occur with a subset of state projects

In-depth case studies: In addition to the light touch data collection described above which will occur for all 25 projects, we will conduct in-depth case studies⁷ with approximately eight selected state projects, to enable a more detailed exploration of their experience with Voices, activities and strategies implemented, successes, and challenges. This is an approach used by prominent researchers and evaluators working in the power-building field, such as Gigi Barsoum and Edwin Lindo⁸. We will select the case study state projects with the goal of including a diverse and contrasting set of experiences, contexts, and characteristics. We anticipate that one dimension of the selection will be based on network relationship history and/or early relationship strength, which will be measured through the first Social Network Analysis survey (described above). The selection criteria will be finalized in discussion with Steering Committee members and the EAC.

Case studies will allow us to build deeper relationships and trust that will facilitate a richer understanding of the dynamics within the projects and their journeys with Voices. Specifically, case studies will allow us to more deeply explore narrative change as well as community perspectives on power, such as the extent to which community members feel ownership or agency in the decision-making process. The eight projects participating in case studies will receive an additional \$2500 stipend to compensate them for the added data collection time.

The specific data collection approaches will be determined according to the particulars of each case, but methods are likely to include some of the following: in-depth interviews with individual team members and/or community leaders; site visits/observations of coalition meetings, community advisory board meetings, community events, etc.; focus groups with community members or leaders; short surveys specific to the project of focus; analysis of responses to reflective writing prompts; media and/or social media tracking and analysis; review and analysis of written materials, such as written testimonies submitted on behalf of community members, written policy reports or other types of reports, policies passed related to the project, and notes from past coalition meetings, community advisory board meetings, and community events; and review of project activity timelines. In addition, we will conduct

⁷ US General Accounting Office (GAO) (1990) "Case Study Evaluations", Transfer Paper 10.1.9.

⁸ Pastor, M., Ito, J., & Wander, M. (2016). *Changing States: A Framework for Progressive Governance*. Los Angeles, CA: USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity.
https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/242/docs/PERE_Changing_States_Framework_Final_WebPDF.pdf;
Barsoum, G. (2019) *Prosecutorial Campaigns, A strategy to Mobilize and Engage Communities of Color*. Barsoum Policy Consulting.

Bellwether interviews⁹ for some or all case study projects, a method by which we can explore how influential people, such as policymakers, journalists, or local funders, perceive issues of interest. We do not expect to use all of these data collection methods with any single case, but will select those that are the best fit for each project.

Evaluation TA: In response to interest already expressed, ICH will be available to provide some limited evaluation-related TA to individual projects or individual grantee or subgrantee organizations. The format and focus of this TA will be determined by the specific needs and interests of the recipients, and the number of TA hours ICH can offer will be determined based on time remaining after accounting for other evaluation activities.

Interview with funders

In addition to the activities outlined above that focus specifically on the national grantees and state projects, we will conduct a small set of interviews with funders to get their perspectives on Voices and understand how they see their role in the power ecosystem now and in the future. These interviews will help us understand how to shape the findings of the Voices evaluation into recommendations that are specifically targeted at funders, who are a key audience for this work. We expect to do roughly five funder interviews (exact number will be determined in consultation with RWJF, taking into account budget constraints).

Reporting and dissemination

Our reporting will begin with an early report that will be delivered in September 2021 covering information about Voices over the first eight months of the grant (December 2020–July 2021). This report will include data from the following sources gathered by the Hub: a survey on the Letter of Interest process; the baseline needs assessment; grantees’ oral reports to TA providers; TA tracking; policy and media tracking; and the summary report about the first national wave. Additionally, we will include data collected by ICH during the planning period including notes from three reflection sessions with members of the Steering Committee; notes from four meetings with the EAC; one survey administered to the EAC; one meeting with the VAC; two background meetings held with RWJF project officers; and an initial survey distributed to all grantees and subgrantees.

Following this initial report, ICH will provide three comprehensive written reports on the following schedule: July 2022, July 2023, and at the end of the evaluation funding period in July 2024. The timing of the first two reports can be adjusted if needed. These reports will include presentations and executive summaries suitable for distribution to a general audience, with the intention of making the evaluation findings available and accessible to

⁹ <https://archive.globalfrp.org/evaluation/the-evaluation-exchange/issue-archive/advocacy-and-policy-change/evaluating-an-issue-s-position-on-the-policy-agenda-the-bellwether-methodology>

grantees and subgrantees in addition to representatives from RWJF and Hub organizations who desire to engage the material at different levels. In addition to these formal reports, ICH will provide updates on ongoing learnings during meetings throughout the evaluation period in order to facilitate real-time learning for program development and improvement.

For all reports, we will analyze and interpret our data with a realist evaluation lens, seeking to bring multiple data sources together to answer how, for whom, and under what circumstances the program was successful. From there, we will extract recommendations for funders and for the field on how best to support community power-building for health justice in different contexts. In our final year of work, we will also work with RWJF to identify venues in which to present and disseminate the learnings and recommendations that arise from this evaluation.

Preliminary timeline for primary data collection activities and reporting

Note that the timeline below is preliminary and may be adjusted in pace work appropriately around other activities grantees/subgrantees and Steering Committee members are engaged in. Expected time commitments for participants are provided in parentheses for each primary data collection activity.

Timeframe	Activity
September 2021	Report on first eight months of Voices Interviews with state project teams (1 hour)
October 2021	First SNA survey administered (25-30 minutes) Reflection session with Steering Committee (1 hour)
November 2021	Identify case study projects and begin engagement
November 2021 - March 2023	Case study data collection with eight state projects (TBD, no more than 10 hours total)
February 2022	Reflection session with Steering Committee (1 hour)
May 2022	Reflection session with Steering Committee (1 hour)
July 2022	Interviews with state project teams (1 hour) First comprehensive evaluation report
August 2022	Reflection session with Steering Committee (1 hour)
November 2022	Reflection session with Steering Committee (1 hour)
February 2023	Interviews with state project teams (1 hour)
March 2023 (end of grant funding)	Second SNA survey administered (20 minutes) Final reflection session with Steering Committee (1 hour)
July 2023	Second comprehensive report
March 2024	Final SNA survey administered (20 minutes)
July 2024	Final comprehensive report

Total expected time commitment for participation in data collection

Steering Committee members: 6 hours

Grantees and subgrantees who are not part of case study project teams: 4-4.5 hours

Case study project teams: up to 14.5 hours (with additional \$2500 stipend)