Voices for Health Justice

Initial Report

October 2021

Voices for Health Justice Initial Report: Program Activities and Early Learnings December 2020 – July 2021

October 2021

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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.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

The Institute for Community Health (ICH) was contracted by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to evaluate Voices for Health Justice (Voices) with an equitable evaluation focus. Voices is a program funded by RWJF that provides grants and other support to organizations committed to health justice, with a particular emphasis on barriers to health justice caused by structural racism. The program's three areas of focus are increasing access to health care, health care affordability, and the ability of the healthcare 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 "Steering Committee") to fund 25 grantees across 24 states, most of which have between one and seven sub-grantees.[1] The funding to the grantees began in December 2020 and runs through March 2023 (total funding period of 2 years and 4 months). Members of the Steering Committee organizations provide overall program oversight, and are the main technical assistance (TA) providers for grantees and sub-grantees. Altarum and McCabe Message Partners also provide TA to state and local grantees. See figure 1 for a diagram of the VHJ structure.
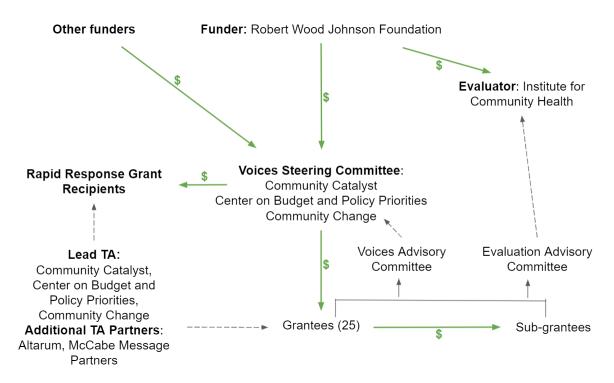

Figure 1: Voices for Health Justice Structure

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[1] Unless otherwise specified, for the purposes of this report, we will refer to state or local lead organizations as "grantees", their subs as "sub-grantees", and the three Steering Committee organizations (Community Catalyst, Center on Budget and Policy priorities, and Community Change) as "the Steering Committee". This may be different from RWJF usage, which tends to refer to the Steering Committee as "grantees" and the state teams as "sub-grantees".

ICH's evaluation contract began in April 2021, and we facilitated an intensive participatory evaluation planning process from April-July 2021. During this period, we conducted a landscape scan to gain a comprehensive sense of the state of the field of community power building and advocacy evaluation. We also worked with the Steering Committee, grantee and sub-grantee representatives, and RWJF to develop a logic model and evaluation plan to guide the implementation of the Voices evaluation for the duration of the grant period (see our final products).

This initial report aims to deliver early learnings from the Voices program related to the program structure; grantee and sub-grantee characteristics; grantee and sub-grantee experiences and feedback; early project activities and outcomes; and early policy wins and achievements. We draw preliminary recommendations for ongoing program implementation based on these findings, and detail next steps for implementing the Voices evaluation.

METHODS

Between April-September 2021, ICH gathered information to report on the first 9 months of the Voices program, including the pre-funding planning phase (September 2020-July 2021). This report is based on both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data includes notes, correspondence, and materials generated in our meetings, correspondence, and conversations with RWJF, the Steering Committee, and grantee and sub-grantee organization representatives during the intensive evaluation planning period. In addition, ICH implemented a survey for grantees and sub-grantees in June 2021 (the **Evaluation Survey**) with open- and closed-ended questions about their experiences building relationships with other Voices organizations, grassroots organizing, TA, and successes and challenges encountered in their project to date. The survey was distributed by the Voices evaluation manager to representatives from all 93 state and local grantees and sub-grantees via email, and yielded 62 responses from 58 organizations for a 62.3% response rate.

For secondary data, ICH reviewed relevant project documents provided by the Steering Committee; data collected by the Steering Committee and TA providers through a survey on the Letter of Interest (LOI) process and the Year 1 interim report; and relevant meeting notes from meetings held during the evaluation planning period. Specific secondary materials reviewed were:

- **Letter of Intent (LOI) application materials**
- Grantee project **applications**
- Grantee **Capacity Assessments** conducted within the first few months of VHJ projects
- **TA data** collected by TA providers from December 2020-May 2021
- Criteria and **applications for funding increases** made to individual grantees
- **Rapid Response grant materials**: grant criteria, state project proposals, and final report documents
- List of **state policy wins** published on the Voices web page
- **LOI Process Survey**, distributed by the Steering Committee and Voices TA providers to funded organizations about the process of LOI submission in September of 2020
- Results of the Year 1 **Interim Oral Reports** conducted with grantees and sub-grantees during regular TA check-ins before July 31, 2021

PROJECT STRUCTURE AND STEERING COMMITTEE SELECTION

RWJF incorporated several innovative elements into the design of the Voices project in an effort to create a more equitable and empowering grant-making strategy; specific goals were to directly combat structural racism by reducing the burden of the application process, and fostering a process that would foster collaboration rather than competition among organizations doing similar or compatible work. These design elements were incorporated both at the national level with the selection of the Steering Committee organizations and at the state level with the selection of the grantee and sub-grantee organizations.

Project grant rule: To begin, RWJF structured their support for Voices using project grant rule regulations, a newer process for the foundation. In summary, project grant rule means that RWJF understands that they are not the only funder supporting grantees' work and stipulates that their funding cannot exceed the non-lobbying portion of the grantees' budgets. This ensures that RWJF's grants are not earmarked for lobbying for the purposes of regulations. In practical terms, it allows grantees more flexibility in the use of funds from RWJF and other funders for some lobbying activities. As part of this grant structure, RWJF has no involvement in directing exactly how funds are used, and grantees have more power to allocate funding as they see fit.

Selection of steering committee: When initiating the selection of organizations to fill the role of the Steering Committee, RWJF program officers already felt familiar with the limited universe of organizations that could do this work. Rather than soliciting written proposals, they contacted four total organizations, provided three scenarios, and invited them to prepare presentations about the lens and philosophy they would use to approach the scenarios. Each of the four organizations were paid five thousand dollars to prepare these presentations.

As a result of these presentations, RWJF arrived at another innovative design feature: rather than a typical grant structure involving a lead grantee and sub-contracts, they decided that three organizations had complementary strengths and approaches. These three organizations, Community Catalyst, Community Change, and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, were selected to jointly lead the initiative as the Steering Committee. Community Catalyst contributes a well-established and structured TA model and infrastructure and a strong national network of relationships with organizations doing advocacy and organizing. Community Change brings a strong focus on grassroots base building and a complementary national network of organizations. Added to this, CBPP contributes their strong policy and advocacy focus. Community Catalyst is the lead, administers all the grants and manages the Steering Committee; however, the three organizations pool relationships and make decisions jointly. Part of the intent was to reduce power dynamics and leverage the complementary strengths of each of these organizations. Although CBPP had a history of working with both Community Catalyst and Community Change in the past, this is the first time the three organizations worked together as a group, and a significant accomplishment of the Steering Committee in the first year was building relationships and procedures for working together.

Evaluation coordinator: A third innovative design feature is related to the program evaluation structure: in acknowledgement of the significant work that evaluation demands from program partners, RWJF decided to fund an evaluation coordinator at Community Catalyst to assist with

evaluation design, communication and data sharing between ICH and the Steering Committee, grantees, and sub-grantees. RWJF also provided stipends to all grantees to participate in learning and evaluation activities.

Distribution of funding to grantees*:* The Steering Committee made grants to 25 state projects across the U.S., through a process that is described in detail below. Further, Voices has a reserve of supplemental funding that grantees and sub-grantees can apply for in addition to their original project awards. These supplemental funds are intended to support 1) new, unanticipated challenges in the advocacy landscape to which funding can help organizations respond (e.g., change in political environment); 2) new, unanticipated opportunities for advocacy and policy goals over the next 1-2 years; 3) challenges arising in projects where money is "spread too thin" across grantee organizations; or 4) added costs of bringing an additional partner into the project. The Steering Committee conducts a periodic review to identify projects that fit these criteria, and then grantees/sub-grantees are asked to submit requests for these funds and outline how they will be used. The first round of applications for additional funding was reviewed in April 2021, and additional funding was distributed to seven states: Maryland, Rhode Island, Maine, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, and Oregon. Additional rounds will be completed at least quarterly to ensure that programs have the support needed, but also that Voices project funds are used in a timely fashion.

Rapid response grants*:* The Voices Steering Committee also has a reserve of Rapid Response funds to support strategic and timely work that advances Voices goals of increasing health care access, making health care more affordable and increasing the ability of the health care system to treat all people with dignity. Rapid response grants are intended to support organizations to respond to a specific, short term (spanning 2-6 months) policy, organizing, or campaign goal. Current Voices grantees and sub-grantees are eligible for the Rapid Response funds, as are organizations that are not part of the core group of 25 Voices projects. The Steering Committee selects potential grant recipients based on their knowledge of policy opportunities across the country and through their ongoing conversations with states. Potential grant recipients are invited to put together a proposal outlining the use of Rapid Response funds, and the Steering Committee makes the decision. Rapid Response grants can support activities like public events (such as public education/events to cultivate awareness of an issue), digital base-building/organizing, media work (such as ads, social media), constituent calls, opinion polling, and activities that boost contributions to public comment periods. To date, four rapid response grants have been made in three states (two in Texas, one in West Virginia, and one in Tennessee). The details and outcomes of these Rapid Response grants are described later in the report.

National Wave*:* The National Wave is 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 with the objective of increasing national momentum in these areas, following the "wins lead to wins" approach in organizing. In April of 2021, several grantee organizations, with support of the Steering Committee, participated in an initial National Wave (a "mini-wave") campaign related to COVID-19 vaccine equity.[2]

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[2] During the time period in which this report was being prepared, the Steering Committee organizations created some innovations and refinements in the National Wave strategy -- these innovations are outside the scope of this report, but will be addressed in future evaluation reporting.

PRE-FUNDING PLANNING & APPLICATION PROCESS

As described above, RWJF conducted an innovative project design and selection process with Steering Committee organizations. Due to the grant rule funding structure, RWJF was not directly involved in subsequent decision-making related to program design, although the guidance they issued was understood by Steering Committee organizations to be direction rather than suggestion.

As part of RWJF's efforts to combat structural racism and center community voice in the grantmaking process, the foundation intended the Voices application process to bring together organizations with complementary strengths: small or under-resourced BIPOC-led organizations would be supported to apply and paired with more-resourced organizations. In part, the intent was to reduce competition between organizations doing similar work for a limited pot of money. In addition, rather than organizations needing to demonstrate their capacities to the foundation, the reviewers would instead assess organizations' strengths and supplement them as needed.

The selection process occurred on two levels – the first was the process of selecting the Steering Committee organizations by RWJF, which is described above. The second is in the creation and selection of the state-level grantee teams by the Steering Committee, described in the text below. This report focuses mainly on the state-level grantee selection process due to the availability of source materials.[3] RWJF was involved in the selection of the Steering Committee organizations, but was not involved in the selection of the state-level grantees – this part of the process was managed entirely by the Steering Committee.

Assessment of state grantee and sub-grantee organizations: Before issuing an RFP for the Voices for Health Justice program funding, the Voices Steering Committee developed an assessment process to narrow down the list of organizations that would be invited to respond to the RFP. They assessed more organizations than they could fund during this initial phase. The Steering Committee identified 46 states plus DC and Puerto Rico for assessment, based on prior contacts Steering Committee organizations had with organizations in these states. North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Delaware, although they were discussed in depth, were not formally assessed because the Steering Committee did not have recommendations for appropriate organizations in those states. State environment assessments were done to see which states would be a good fit for the grant, asking questions about the status of the state's Medicaid expansion and relevant coalitions that already exist, as well as the state's political and policy landscape. The Steering Committee also assessed the potential partner relationships within each state, classifying known organizations in the state by what type of organization and population focus it had, as well as strengths in certain areas

Letter of Intent: Following these assessments, the Voices Steering Committee invited groups of organizations from these 48 states/territories to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) for the Voices grant. This process was intentionally designed to minimize burden by having interested groups submit a short LOI as a first step rather than investing time into a full proposal without knowing if they were likely to be funded. The LOI materials included the full LOI description, a compiled list of FAQs, background on the LOI, an application checklist, and a list of policy ideas for applicants to consider.

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[3] This does not exclude the possibility of doing future analysis around the original design process and selection of the Steering Committee organizations.

In addition, the Steering Committee conducted a very well-attended webinar for all interested applicants prior to the LOI due date. Interested applicants were asked to submit the following information in no more than four double-spaced pages: a summary paragraph of their proposed project, participating organizations (identifying the lead grantee), policy opportunities and goals, grassroots organizing information, a racial justice analysis of the project, and a statement about the impact of the November 2020 presidential election (and the outcomes of other state and local elections, if relevant) on the proposed project. The invitation was sent jointly to all identified organizations in each state, and included an invitation to add additional organizations if desired. The decision to send the invitation jointly, rather than sending individual emails to each organization, was significant in shaping the dynamics of the coalitions ultimately formed. From the perspective of individual organizations, the group of organizations invited to participate felt pre-selected, and any organization that was not going to participate would have to be actively excluded from the process. Not all the invited organizations ended up submitting an LOI – the Steering Committee ultimately received 45 LOIs from 39 states.

Selection of state grantee teams: The Steering Committee reviewed LOI submissions against various criteria. First, potential grantees were given the strong message that in order to make the LOI more competitive, at least one of the partners needed to be an organization of color[4] and one of the partners needed to be a grassroots organizing organization. The policy focus needed to fall into at least one of the three buckets (increase access to care, make healthcare more affordable, or increase the ability of the health system to treat people with dignity). Then, reviewers scored the LOIs on various factors, each from 0-10. Each LOI was reviewed and scored by four reviewers who were all members of the Steering Committee. The lowest possible score from one reviewer was 0, the highest possible score from one reviewer was 60, and the maximum possible score was 240. The factors were:

  I.   Strength of partnership with an organization of color,
  II.   Strength of partnership with a grassroots organizing organization,
  III. Strength of focus on community power building activities,
  IV.   Project goals are realistic and match the proposed timeline,
  V.   The amount of funding is adequate for each partner and their scope of work, and
  VI.   Strength of focus on health justice, racial justice, and/or anti-racism.

After reviewers scored the LOIs, they discussed the different scores and considered multiple factors. It's important to note that the Steering Committee used both quantitative (the scores) and qualitative review metrics, and both played into final decisions. For example, reviewers were also asked to describe if and how the state team was a strong candidate to receive funding and general strengths and weaknesses of their LOIs. Each reviewer was asked to select whether they recommended the

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[4] The following text is from the LOI materials: "The CSA [original name of Voices for Health Justice] project defines an organization of color (OOC) as follows: 1a. Constituents are comprised mainly of the following identities: Black, Indigenous, Hispanic, Latino/a/e/X, Arab/Arab American, Southeast Asian, Asian, Asian Pacific Islander, Native Hawaiian, Desi and/or immigrant communities, and/or any other identities of color not listed. OR 1b. The organization is primarily focused on improving the lives of the communities listed above and their families, and this is reflected in the organization's mission, goals, and program activities AND 2a. A majority (75%) of staff members identify as members of the above listed communities OR 2b. A majority (75%) of Leadership (board members and executive director) identify as members of the above listed communities.

project to move on to the next round, the full proposal stage. Twenty-five projects were selected to move to the full proposal stage.

Full project proposals for selected state grantee teams: For projects that were selected to move to the next stage, Voices Steering Committee members worked closely with lead applicant organizations (and, in most cases, proposed sub-grantees) to put together the full proposal for each project. This "co-design" model was beneficial for building relationships from the beginning of the Voices program; creating more transparency between prospective grantees and the Steering Committee; and opening an opportunity to engage in collaborative project design, which ultimately strengthened many project proposals. For the proposal narrative, state project teams were asked to submit the following information in ten pages: a summary paragraph of the project, policy opportunities and goals, participating organizations, a power analysis describing factors in their favor and those operating against them, proposed major activities for the project, and project goals (both quantitative and qualitative).

Grantee feedback on LOI process: The Steering Committee sent out a survey to all organizations that had submitted an LOI and were asked to submit a proposal before they began the proposal co-design phase. A total of 38 responses were received from 20 out of the 24 states that submitted an LOI. Respondents were asked questions about their experience with the point person assigned to their project, the informational webinar, and the LOI invitation to apply as well as other application materials. Please note that only successful applicants were surveyed.

Point person: 30/38 (79%) of respondents reported that a point person reached out to them, and 18/38 (47%) reached out to their point person for assistance during the LOI process. When asked how useful it was having a point person to reach out to, the average was 4.47 out of 5, with 5 being "extremely useful". When asked how responsive the point person was to their requests for assistance, the average was 4.52 out of 5, with 5 being "extremely responsive". When asked how useful the guidance was that they received from their point person, the average was 4.41 out of 5, with 5 being "extremely useful".

Informational webinar: 29/38 (76%) of respondents attended or listened to a recording of the informational webinar held in July 2020. When asked how useful the informational webinar was, the average was 4.39 out of 5, with 5 being "extremely useful". 25/29 (86%) stated that all of their questions were answered during the webinar, 28/29 (97%) agreed that the webinar helped explain the LOI materials, 26/29 (90%) agreed that the webinar clearly articulated the goals of the project, 26/29 (90%) agreed that the webinar clearly articulated the LOI process, and 22/29 (76%) agreed that they felt prepared to complete the LOI following the webinar.

Invitation and materials: When asked how clear the application materials were, the average was 4.27 out of 5, with 5 being "extremely clear". Some specific comments specific to the application materials included that the template could have been clearer, there was not enough space in the LOI to describe their project, and that the timeline to apply was very short. Yet, some did comment that they liked how descriptive the LOI materials were.

Relationships with other organizations: In written comments, many respondents commented that the need to build relationships with other organizations before finalizing the application put them into an uncomfortable situation; there was not enough time for strong relationships to be built. A few commented that they felt that too many groups were invited to participate given the amount of

funding available.

36/38 (95%) of respondents reported that they were not the only organization from their state invited to apply for this grant. When asked how difficult it was for them to communicate with other invited organizations, the average was 1.77 out of 5, with 1 being "not difficult at all" (yet, 11 responded with a 3 or higher). When asked how difficult it was to collaborate with other invited organizations, the average was 1.88 out of 5, with 1 being "not difficult at all" (again, 11 responded with a 3 or higher).

Additional feedback was given about factors that made it easier or harder to communicate and collaborate with other organizations while putting together the application. Those that had existing relationships with organizations in their state had an easier time collaborating. Many had issues finding the time to collaborate, especially if they did not have pre-existing relationships. Another point raised was that some organizations were confused about which type of organization should be the lead.

When asked what kind of supports they need to be successful in the full proposal co-design process, respondents stated that they would like the Steering Committee to serve as a sounding board and to help them with reviewing application materials, gathering the appropriate financial and organizational materials, facilitating challenging group dynamics, contextualizing the materials in terms of the overall goals of the program, and setting up meetings and bringing everyone to the table. This information was shared with the Steering Committee and it was taken into consideration when making plans and checking in on the co-design process.

BROAD OVERVIEW OF THE STATE-LEVEL GRANTEES

Twenty-five state-level projects across 24 states (including Washington, DC), comprising a total of 93 organizations, are funded through Voices for Health Justice. This does not include the Rapid Response funds distributed to other organizations. While each project focuses on specific issues within their communities and states, many work on similar overall policy goals as well as similar target populations. Additionally, all the projects have an explicit anti-racist component. Policy objectives across the 25 projects, with many working on more than one policy target, include expanding Medicaid, reducing barriers to Medicaid access and enrollment, expanding access to affordable health care, and other objectives such as improving prenatal and maternal health and expanding the reach of community health workers and other community-based providers. State projects are also focusing on different populations and communities, such as immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, Black and African Americans, geographic-specific communities, older adults, LGBTQ communities, and families with children.

Voices states according to political leaning: In selecting Voices grantees, the Steering Committee was intentional about including projects from a wide variety of contexts, including the political leaning of states. Using Five-Thirty-Eight's Partisan Lean Index,[5] ICH performed an analysis of the

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[5] Source: https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/how-red-or-blue-is-your-state-your-congressional-district/ This index is calculated using the following: "50 percent the state or district's lean relative to the nation in the 2020 presidential election, 25 percent its relative lean in the 2016 presidential election and 25 percent a custom

political leanings of the states from which Voices state teams were selected, we found that although there is a broad distribution of Voices projects among blue and red states, Voices states are slightly more politically liberal than U.S. states overall. This finding is consistent with a speculation that blue states are more likely to have stronger advocacy infrastructure for health systems transformation.
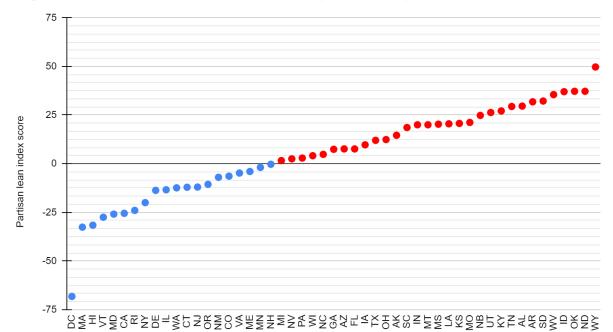
Figure 2. Partisan Lean of all U.S. states (median 7.4)

state-legislative lean based on the statewide popular vote in the last four state House elections... or a state's lower-chamber equivalent".
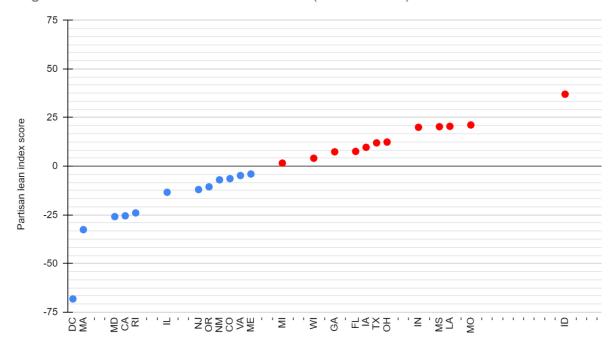
Figure 3. Partisan lean of Voices States (median -1.2)

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Overview of TA Given/Received: As part of the program, grantees and sub-grantees receive individual project TA from a small team of people from the Steering Committee organizations and the TA providers. Each team had a Community Catalyst staff member, and all states had TA support that matched their project, including a designated policy person and a designated person to support power-building and organizing. Additionally, the Steering Committee aimed to have common threads between TA providers working on similar topics on the teams. Small group TA was added in response to grantee responses to capacity assessments, and is available for states working on similar issues, and cohort-wide TA available for all projects.

TA providers indicate on a tracker the area of focus of the TA meeting. Available categories are based on Community Catalyst's system of advocacy: campaign development and execution, grassroots organizing, policy analysis and advocacy; communications, coalition and stakeholder alliance, resource development, organizational development, and other.[6]

The majority of grantees began meeting regularly with their TA providers for their individual projects in December 2020 or January 2021 and met regularly over the first six months of the program, with 18 programs having between 5 and 7 meetings, 5 programs meeting 3 to 4 times, and 2 programs meeting 1 to 2 times. TA providers also met 1-2 times each with two of the Rapid Response grantees.

A review of meeting notes revealed some themes related to the topics of TA meetings. Early meetings were focused on introductions and discussions about capacity and early strategic planning. Some of these meetings were opportunities for grantees and sub-grantees to discuss goals and priorities with each other, as well as with the TA provider. In conversations with TA providers, grantees offered updates, asked questions, and discussed strategic approaches. TA providers often followed up on these questions, providing data, sharing training information, or helping grantees make contacts with appropriate resources.

In the tracker, TA providers included information about topics of conversation in the meetings and grantee requests and TA follow-up on those requests. An analysis of that information revealed two main themes related to grantee requests. Grantees often asked for broader contextual research data about their policy areas or populations of focus to help them better understand issues locally or on the national or federal level. Grantees also asked to be connected with other grantees or organizations in other states working on similar issues or facing similar obstacles so that they could share best practices and strategies.

TA providers categorized each meeting according to which capacity area the call was addressing, with categories based on Community Catalyst's six capacities for effective advocacy. This information is summarized in the following table (note that many meetings covered more than one capacity area).

Table 1: Topics of individual project TA meetings in quarter 1 and quarter 2

Number of TA meetings by topic	
Quarter 1 (Dec 20 - Feb 21)	**Quarter 2 (Mar 21 - May 21)**
Campaign - 30 Grassroots Organizing - 27 Policy Analysis and Advocacy - 25 Communications - 23 Coalition and Stakeholder Alliance - 17 Other - 9 Resource Development - 6 Organizational Development - 3	Policy Analysis and Advocacy - 52 Communications - 41 Grassroots Organizing - 36 Campaign - 30 Coalition and Stakeholder Alliance - 29 Resource Development - 8 Organizational Development - 5 Other – 1

In addition to the individual TA provided to each state team, there are a number of opportunities for group learning and peer-to-peer support. The Steering Committee provides webinars on topics of common interest, there are opportunities for peer-to-peer engagement on federal topics via listservs, and TA providers make connections between projects when applicable. Several cohorts of projects working on common topics were formed after the period covered by this report. Other types of connections and networking are formed as opportunities arise – for example, all Voices projects that were not also part of the Together for Medicaid project are now looped into that work.

Grantee feedback on TA: Grantees and sub-grantees were asked to provide feedback on their experiences with TA in a survey that ICH disseminated in June 2021. In the survey, respondents rated their experience on a 1-5 scale, where 1 indicated they felt negatively, and 5 indicated they felt

positively towards their TA experiences. Close to half (28/61) of grantees and sub-grantees that responded reported feeling positively about the TA and supports that they had received so far from the Voices TA team, while 25% (15/61) rated their experience as a "4", and 30% (18/61) felt neutral ("3") about these supports. In open-ended comments about TA (n=34), close to half of those who rated their feelings towards TA as positive elaborated that they feel well supported by TA providers, and that they appreciated the efforts undertaken to understand their projects' needs. A number of grantees and sub-grantees also appreciated that their TA providers helped to fill gaps in their project work and added capacity to their teams by contributing their skills and policy expertise. Grantees and sub-grantees also mentioned that the lobbying workshops, webinars, and informational assistance they received were particularly helpful.

Some feedback from grantees about TA can be categorized as "more personalized TA would be useful". Some grantees expressed that, while they were glad TA was readily available, it was most helpful when they (project teams) reached out with specific needs, and that it was more challenging to use TA in "areas where we are figuring things out." One respondent also mentioned that TA often felt like too much information, and that they would prefer TA that was more tailored to their local context. Other suggestions that grantees and sub-grantees shared included receiving more coaching on proposed strategies, more funding for members of the advisory committees, and more support with national media outreach.[7]

In addition to the survey administered by ICH, grantees were also asked to report on TA during their oral interim reports, which were done with their TA providers. Grantees were asked to reflect on the TA, webinars, and learning community calls they received and share what they felt was helpful and what was less useful. Overall, the grantees reported that they liked the TA calls, particularly when they were used for strategic planning discussions and when TA providers shared information and resources with grantees, such as information about federal actions and how they might impact specific states. Grantees also really appreciated TA providers putting them in contact with people or organizations in other states that they could learn from or discuss strategy with. Grantees also appreciated the webinars and trainings that were offered, particularly the social media training and the lobbying training with Allen Mattison.

Responses to this question were almost entirely praise for TA, but a few issues or requests were raised. A few grantees asked that the TA staff be aware of their capacity issues. For example, one requested that they receive fewer emails and have all the emails come from the same contact person. Another expressed an interest in fewer TA calls, allowing grantees to ask for them when needed. There was significant interest from a number of grantees to connect with other grantees or organizations in other states working on similar issues to share strategies and build connections. Some grantees who received support from TA providers to build those connections were interested in continued support in this area. In the months following this data collection, the Steering Committee made changes to address some of this feedback. Other requests for changes were more challenging -- in particular, the request for fewer TA calls was felt to conflict with the need to base TA in a strong relationship with the grantee.

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[7] Adjustments have been made to the TA plan to address some of this feedback, including the formation of small group TA and individual outreach to better tailor TA offerings to conditions on the ground. These adjustments, however, were made in the second half of the first year of the program and fall outside the scope of the current report.

OUTCOMES, FIRST 6-8 MONTHS

Although it is early in the grant timeline, state-level teams have nevertheless reported some process and outcome measures in the categories of base building, partnership development and coalition building, and policy/budget/administrative change efforts. Our most significant two data sources for these measures were the interim oral reports, made as groups to the TA partners; and the Evaluation survey. These two methodologies have different strengths, with the survey providing more anonymity to discuss challenges and the oral reports allowing for a more collaborative presentation, thus these two data sources emphasize different aspects of the realities of partnership and coalition work.

Base building and community engagement

Most significant accomplishments*:* In the Year 1 interim oral reports*,* when asked to describe the most impactful accomplishments of their Voices projects thus far, many grantees highlighted accomplishments related to their community outreach, organizing, and leadership development work. These included activities in the following categories: **1) Listening:** Grantees undertook listening processes such as focus groups, "Healing Justice Circles", surveys, and individual story sharing to hear from community members about their experiences, needs, and interests. One group shared a specific example of how they organized a campaign on a new issue area (bus transportation) in direct response to listening to community members. Through this work, they were able to engage people and also get them involved in health campaigns. **2) Sharing information and resources**: Several grantees described their efforts to share information and raise awareness about how health care systems and policies affect people and how community members can get involved in advocacy efforts. This included information-sharing through individual conversations, digital media, webinars, trainings, and events. Grantees shared information and resources on Medicaid expansion, health care affordability, immigrant health and rights, the public charge rule, mutual aid networks, the COVID-19 vaccine, parenting justice, and racial justice in health, among other topics. **3) Base-building:** Grantees described their successes in attracting community members to join their networks. This was closely linked to the listening and information/resource-sharing efforts described above - through these activities, grantees were able to start conversations with new people and grow their contact lists of people interested in learning more or getting involved. **4) Leadership development:** Some grantees are working with cohorts of community members to provide them with the skills and tools to take leadership roles in designing and implementing advocacy campaigns. Leadership development accomplishments that grantees described included designing and/or providing trainings, organizing community leader panels for a state task force, creating leader affinity groups, building leaders' capacity to create advocacy goals, and supporting leaders to provide testimony on legislation.

Number of people reached: In their Year 1 interim oral reports, grantees and sub-grantees were asked to provide quantitative data about how many people they reached through one-on-one contacts, emails or newsletters, and social media. There was significant variation among grantees. Programs had different numbers of involved organizations, or emphasized different approaches to engaging community members, and a few programs had not yet started this kind of grassroots organizing. In reporting, there was also variation in how programs quantified their actions, with differences in categorizing text messages or social media engagement. Data on number of people reached through various mechanisms are summarized in the table below. Note that we do not have

data on the demographics of the people reached from the Year 1 interim report.

One-on-one contact

Table 2: Data on number of people reached, contacted via different mechanisms, and added to databases for each program

One-on-one contact	
Number of people reached	*Number of state project teams whose responses fell into the range (%) (n=21)*
60-170 individuals	8 (36%)
350-800 individuals	4 (16%)
1,000-3,500 individuals	7 (28%)
~68,000 individuals	1 (4%)
~340,000 individuals	1 (4%)
People contacted through emails or newsletters	
Number of people reached	*Number of state project teams whose responses fell into the range (%) (n=19)*
100-3,500 individuals	9 (36%)
7,000-25,000 individuals	8 (32%)
~50,000 individuals	2 (8%)
People reached through social media	
Number of People Reached	*Number of State project teams whose responses fell into the range (%) (n=19)*
100-1,100	5 (20%)
3,000-7,000	3 (12%)
10,000-70,000	7 (28%)
100,000-500,000	4 (16%)
People added to programs' databases	

Number of People Added	Number of State project teams whose responses fell into the range (%) (n=21)
15-250	9 (36%)
450-750	5 (20%)
1,250-2,500	5 (20%)
4,000-5,100	2 (8%)

Four programs had no information to report on one-on-one contacts at this point. Six organizations had no information to report on emails or newsletter contacts at this point. Six organizations had no information to report on social media contacts at this point. Four organizations had no information to report on individuals added to their database.

Self-assessment of organizing efforts: In the ICH-administered June 2020 Evaluation Survey, grantees and sub-grantees were asked to rate their perceptions of how grassroots organizing was going, as compared to their expectations for this point in the grant period, using a 1 to 5 scale where 1 was "Worse than expected" and 5 was "Better than expected." 8/62 (13%) rated grassroots organizing as going better than expected ("5"); 29/62 (47%) rated "4"; 23/62 (37%) rated "3"; and 2/62 (3%) rated "2".

Table 3: Self-assessment of grassroots organizing rating

Rating of grassroots organizing	Number of organizations (N=62)
Better than expected (5)	8 (13%)
4	29 (47%)
3	23 (37%)
2	2 (3%)
Worse than expected (1)	0

Leadership development

In the Year 1 interim oral report, grantees were also asked to share information about how they are approaching leadership development. A number of themes arose from grantees' responses. While only a few programs identified leadership development as their main focus at this point in the grant, a large number emphasized the importance of base building and coalition building. Events and other base building activities provided an important opportunity to build relationships with community members they identified as being potential leaders.

One common way grantees engaged with potential leaders was to connect with them at community events and support them to move up the ladder of engagement with the organization. Grantees

described leadership engagement in many different ways, defining leaders as those who had received leadership or advocacy training, those who were highly engaged in the organization, and/or those who participated in leadership teams. Leadership training also encompassed a range of activity types, with common activities being storytelling between organizers and leaders, testifying and sharing stories with legislatures, and engaging with the media to get community members' stories told.

Grantees were asked to provide an indication of how many leaders they had engaged. Thirteen grantees shared specific numbers related to leadership development, with five grantees indicating they had 8 to 20 new leaders, and eight identifying 30 to 75 new leaders. Three grantees identified engaging 350 to 1,100 new leaders through events or social media.

Successes and challenges in grassroots organizing

Grantees commented on successes and challenges in their grassroots organizing in an open-ended format in the Evaluation Survey. Several grantees and sub-grantee respondents commented that they had successfully engaged and built relationships with their target community groups - including BIPOC communities, immigrant communities, and people impacted by their project's issue areas. Some also shared growth and progress in leadership development in their organizing efforts, noting that community leaders were actively participating in and leading advocacy campaigns, and sharing and collecting stories about their experiences.

Others described shifting to virtual platforms during the pandemic, and one organization discussed success in building the capacity of community leaders to lead organizing efforts in new online spaces. However, the most frequently mentioned challenge in grassroots organizing was the inability to meet in person due to the pandemic. This impacted the ability of some grantees and sub-grantees to form relationships with communities in their grassroots organizing efforts and impacted how some Voices organizations were able to collaborate with other project stakeholders.

The challenges associated with doing grassroots organizing during the COVID-19 pandemic was also a key theme raised in the Year 1 interim oral reports. Grantees shared that engaging people without in-person interactions is slower and less effective, with one report describing this as "organizing with one hand behind [our] back". Some noted technology barriers that limited access among the communities they were trying to engage and others highlighted that it was hard to find opportunities for authentic community engagement in virtual legislative and budget processes. While most grantees raised challenges associated with virtual organizing, two groups noted that virtual formats allowed them to increase access; one shared an example of how this enabled participation for undocumented leaders who could not travel due to internal border patrol check points, and the other gave an example of a community member who was able to participate while on break from her job, which would not have been possible for an in-person meeting.

In addition, some grantees highlighted that COVID-19 created immediate priorities that they needed to work on, which took focus away from organizing around the Voices goals. This was particularly the case for those groups organizing in communities of color that have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Similarly, one grantee specifically described how the community members they were seeking to engage were focused on getting their basic needs met and did not necessarily have space to engage in larger systems change efforts.

In the interim oral reports, some grantees shared additional challenges they encountered in their organizing work, especially as they sought to deepen engagement with new communities. One grantee noted that they were working on engaging leaders with limited English proficiency, which meant that they needed to structure their meetings with language accessibility as a top priority. Another noted that because they were intentionally seeking to have diverse representation in their leader cohort, the recruitment process took longer than expected. This grantee also noted that the immigrant community they are hoping to engage is scared, does not trust systems, and does not see potential for the political process to create change. This means that community organizing efforts must be done very intentionally and carefully to build trust. A third project highlighted that it takes deeper capacity building work to support community members to be able to talk about health care for campaigns.

Grassroots messaging: lessons from grantees

In the Year 1 interim verbal report, some grantees reflected on early lessons learned on messaging to their grassroots base. Several commented on the importance of breaking down complex policy topics into lay terms and making direct connections to how policies affect community members' lives. One added that messaging also needs to consider and incorporate the broader circumstances that impact communities, such as natural disasters, and to make the connections to health outcomes and how policies can make a difference. One grantee noted that in considering accessibility of written information to people with limited English proficiency, it is important to consider how well concepts translate across cultures, in addition to translating the words. Additional lessons included consistently offering community members opportunities to ask questions and emphasizing that health care access is relevant to all people and is not partisan.

One grantee commented that it is essential for messaging to come from trusted community members who have lived experience with the issues at hand, and two others offered their reflections on training community leaders to be spokespeople, noting that it is important to incorporate education on the policies or issues of focus to ensure that community members can accurately convey information and that some people may need training on how to craft effective messages.

Partnership development and coalition building

The Voices grants are structured to promote collaboration between multiple organizations in each funded state. For this reason, exploring the development of the power ecosystem via the Voices coalitions is a key focus of the evaluation. We explored early outcomes in this category using two data sources: the interim oral reports, which were reports made in TA meetings with representatives from all state team organizations invited to be present; and the Evaluation survey, a written online survey conducted with individual representatives of organizations. These two sources have different strengths, with the survey providing more anonymity to discuss challenges and the oral reports allowing for a more collaborative presentation, thus these two data sources emphasize different aspects of the realities of partnership and coalition work.

Relationships among state project organizations: In the interim oral report, many grantees highlighted partnership development as an important accomplishment. Some focused on the collaborations between the organizations funded through the Voices grant, describing deepening of relationships, having meaningful conversations among partners, and building a respectful working relationship. Some also highlighted ways in which the collaboration has added value by helping

partners expand their knowledge and perspectives about their communities, building collective capacity to take on new work, growing health policy capacity within organizing groups, and sharing of resources across organizations. Other grantees described building relationships with organizations and partners in the state outside of those funded through Voices, sometimes to develop a bigger coalition or to connect the Voices work with an existing coalition working on similar issues. Overall, the comments in the interim report in this category show that many grantees see value in doing this work in coalition and are actively seeking to develop partnerships.

When asked in the Evaluation Survey about how they felt about working relationships with other Voices organizations on their projects, slightly more than half (55%, 34/62) of responding grantees and sub-grantees responded that they felt positively about their working relationships with other Voices organizations on their project teams so far. In comments on working relationships (n=39), grantees elaborated on the positive elements of their relationships. A few mentioned that they had a pre-existing relationship (7/39) with the organizations on their teams, which had been deepened through further collaboration via Voices. Many others noted, however, that the grant has helped them develop relationships with new partner organizations (14/39), which were overall positive, collaborative, and helped to strengthen their work. One respondent also noted that positive collaboration on Voices had led their project team to collaborate on two additional grant applications.

A few respondents, while rating relationships as overall positive, mentioned that their team members were still getting to know each other and "finding their groove" in their working relationship (4/39). Some grantees/sub-grantees also commented on the importance of taking the time to build these relationships intentionally, and to build the trust needed for successful collaboration - particularly with grassroots communities. Finally, some grantees/sub-grantees noted challenges in working with other organizations (7/39), including a lack of funding, time, and/or team member capacity, that were barriers to building relationships. Some others also noted challenges in coordination between partners on project work, such as coordinating tasks with one another and being able to collectively meet deadlines.

In the Year 1 interim oral report, some grantees and sub-grantees highlighted challenges associated with their partnerships, some of which were similar to and some of which were different from the challenges noted in the Evaluation Survey. One grantee highlighted that scheduling and coordination challenges have impacted their project timeline, and a few shared challenges they encountered in creating cohesive collaborations. For one project, their policy context included many areas that partners wanted to address, which led to some divided attention and competing priorities about what to focus on as a group. Another noted that due to differences in organizational styles and methods they have adopted an approach of dividing the work among the organizations rather than working more cohesively together. A third project noted that they have found it challenging to move from working separately towards deeper collaborative approaches and would like to focus on this moving forward. Finally, one project encountered a significant challenge, resulting in the group deciding to move forward by working as two separate projects rather than one unified coalition.

Relationships with Voices organizations outside of state project teams: In the Evaluation Survey, grantees and sub-grantees had generally positive responses regarding the usefulness of relationships they have made with Voices organizations outside of their project coalitions. When asked to rate the usefulness of these relationships on a scale of 1-5, where 1 was "Not at all useful," and 5 was "Extremely useful," the largest share of respondents (29%, 18/62) rated their

relationships with a "4" on this scale. 23% (14/62) rated their relationships with other organizations outside their team as somewhat useful ("3") and 18% (11/62) found these relationships extremely useful ("5"). 24% (15/62) of respondents also selected "N/A" in response to this question on the mid-year survey, showing that they had likely not yet formed relationships with other organizations outside of their state team at the time of the survey.

Among grantees who left comments on these relationships (n=28), several noted that they appreciated learning from others' work and collaborating with other organizations outside of their state (5/28); and two noted that working with organizations from other states was helpful in working on or learning about federal issues. One respondent also mentioned that training sessions were helpful for grantees to share news and updates about topics of shared interest. At the same time, a few grantees and sub-grantees (3/28) mentioned that it was difficult to find connections between projects working on different issues; and that they were prioritizing local issues or the policy focus of their own projects for the time being. Finally, some grantees and sub-grantees discussed that they had not yet built relationships - or were still working on building relationships - with Voices organizations outside of their project teams (12/28). Others commented that they would like to connect with other organizations outside of their teams (7/28), and suggested more time and opportunities for this, such as hosting "sharing sessions" among Voices organizations, to facilitate these connections.

POLICY WINS/ACHIEVEMENTS

We collected information about grantee organizations' policy wins from the Voices website, Steering Committee reports, the TA tracker data, the ICH mid-year Evaluation Survey, and grantee responses in the Year 1 interim oral reports. The main grantee policy victories can be grouped into four categories: Medicaid victories, immigration victories, racial justice victories, and other victories.[8] Two Rapid Response grantees also had policy victories, both of which involved defeating legislative bills that would have damaged efforts to increase health equity.

Many of these policy victories represent long-term efforts by activists to expand health insurance coverage options and increase funding to address health inequity. These wins give us insight into the individual state contexts, and what kinds of policies are being advanced and need support from grassroots organizations. The large number of early victories also indicates that these grantee organizations are well-positioned to build on these victories over the course of the Voices grant period.

In the interim oral reports, most grantee teams (20/25) highlighted accomplishments related to their policy, budget, or administrative campaigns towards the Voices goals of increasing health care access, affordability, and dignity. Many described early wins, such as the passage of bills that expand Medicaid for immigrants or other focus populations and allocation of funding towards health equity. A few grantees described partial policy wins that supported their goals but did not include all the hoped-for provisions or successful defense against harmful proposals, such as Medicaid budget cuts or legislation that would reduce access to safety net programs. Of note, two grantees described

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[8] These categories were described in a Voices September 2021 Staff Meeting, and a September 2021 Voices for Health Justice Interim Report Updates for RWJF.

feedback loops by which early wins bolstered their ongoing work. For example, one organization shared that because of the project's involvement in the passage of a mental health services bill, community-based partners are now being invited to participate in discussions about the implementation details of the new policy - having a seat at the table for these discussions is a concrete example of community power being built. Another group described how recent policy wins provided opportunities for further outreach and organizing, allowing them to leverage their success to attract new people to the base. With the ongoing evaluation, we hope to further explore the ways in which early wins shift the context and lay the groundwork for grantees' work towards community power building and racial justice in health.

Table 4: Policy victories, by type and by state

Medicaid	
CA	Expanded post-partum Medicaid coverage
DC	Creation of doula pilot program and transportation
IL	New coverage for doulas and home visiting
IN	Prevented budget cuts
MO	The state Supreme Court directed the state to implement Medicaid Expansion
NJ	Eliminated waiting periods and premiums for Medicaid
NM	Passed a Medicaid debt bill to assist people to find coverage
OH	One year of postpartum Medicaid coverage adopted as part of the 2022-2023 budget
TX	Passed a bill to expand Medicaid postpartum coverage to 6 months
Immigration	
IL	Expanded coverage for undocumented people over 55
ME	Increased coverage for undocumented children and pregnant people
NJ	Coverage for undocumented children
VA	Reduction in Medicaid qualifying period
Racial Justice	
CA	Creation of a new race equity innovation fund
IL	Grants to hospitals to reduce structural racism
MD	Passage of HERC law, which funds organizations in communities that suffer disparate health outcomes
Other	
LA	Coverage for midwives and doulas in insurance plans
NM	Newly created paid sick leave and economic relief fund
OR	Investments in mental health

RI	Nursing home staffing limits to protect workers and patients
Rapid Response	
TX	Defeated transphobic healthcare bills
WV	Preserved state income tax that funds Medicaid

POLICY AND CONTEXTUAL CHALLENGES

Regarding policy wins, in the Year 1 interim oral reports, some grantees shared that policy change in itself may not be enough to improve access or other outcomes for marginalized people. For example, one grantee noted that in their state there have been policy wins that have expanded health care coverage but slow and confusing application processes have made it difficult for people to actually enroll. Language barriers and fear related to the public charge rule have compounded these challenges for many immigrant community members. Another grantee noted that in their state, one new bill will not take effect until after the next legislative session, while another has encountered a campaign to delay the implementation schedule. Related to this theme, another group highlighted that the state legislature was putting up roadblocks against a successful ballot measure in which constituents voted to expand Medicaid, and another described a funding win that helps move their goals forward but is not permanent. These challenges highlight the fact that the work grantees are engaged in is long-term and does not end with a policy win; rather, project coalitions must engage in continued advocacy to move implementation forward and to push back against resistance from opposing groups.

In addition, two grantees highlighted challenges related to the community-led model that Voices is designed to support. One noted that due to the timing of legislative opportunities in their state, some campaigns needed to happen before the community organizing and leadership development work had matured. They acknowledged this tension and noted that they expect the work to be more grassroots-led when future windows of opportunity open. Another project shared that they experienced challenges connecting policy changes to the issues identified by the community they were working with, but did not elaborate further on this point.

Finally, in the Year 1 interim reports, several grantees raised challenges related to the external context in the state that their project is embedded in. Challenges related to COVID-19 have been summarized in other sections, and this discussion focuses on contextual factors other than the pandemic. Two grantees highlighted events such as natural disasters or wildfires that have impacted communities and caused trauma, shifting priorities both for grantee organizations and for communities. One grantee shared that local and global events have diverted media attention away from their project. Some grantees discussed the political environment in their states as being hostile or resistant to their advocacy efforts, and some described challenges related to the local narrative around the communities and issues of focus, such as harmful rhetoric, misinformation, and racist/classist/paternalistic frameworks. In addition, some grantees described factors related to specific individuals in positions of power in their communities; for example, one noted that their governor is not responsive to community priorities and two states described turnover in key

leadership positions, resulting in the loss of leaders that supported their work and the need to put attention into building relationships with new leaders.

RAPID RESPONSE GRANT OUTCOMES

Texas: Rapid Response funding supported two organizations, Equality Texas and the Transgender Education Network of Texas, to work together to defeat six attempts to limit healthcare access for transgender and non-binary people during the most recent state legislative session. The organizations highlighted individual stories from families that would be harmed by these bills, as well as doctors and healthcare providers in their organizing, and organized bus tours and rallies at the Texas state house. This legislation was ultimately defeated.

West Virginia: West Virginians for Affordable Health Care, in collaboration with the West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy, West Virginia Citizen Action Group, and the West Virginia Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, aimed to defeat Governor Jim Justice's proposal to eliminate the state's personal income tax. If enacted, these cuts would shift the tax burden to lower income people in the state and cause cuts to state funded programs such as Medicaid, public health programs, parks and recreation, and public education. West Virginians for Affordable Health Care and their coalition partners launched a public education campaign about the tax's importance to health care access, affordability, and equity, and were able to garner opposition to the Personal Income Tax phase-out. The bill was ultimately defeated in the 2021 state legislative session. In their organizing, the West Virginia group also brought together a new network of community advocates, created a diverse coalition focused on the issue, and grew their base of health and social service providers, Black community leaders, and college student advocates.

Tennessee: Rapid Response funding was allocated to the Tennessee Justice Center and Tennessee Disability Coalition to increase awareness and gather feedback on proposed changes to the Tennessee Medicaid waiver program, which would have weakened access to and effectiveness of supports and services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The changes were challenged in court, and that lawsuit is currently paused pending CMS review of comments; the ultimate outcome will depend on the comment review and the litigation.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are drawn from grantee input through the data sources above -- the first set of recommendations apply most directly to future programs in the set-up phase rather than to the Voices project directly. As it is early in the evaluation period, these recommendations are preliminary, and we expect to refine and expand upon these in future reports.

Resources to prioritize relationship-building: A theme from multiple data sources is that strong relationships built among co-applicants during the LOI and co-design process were critical to the smooth operation of the application process. Especially given that numerous organizations without a prior relationship were encouraged to apply together, more time and funding were needed in order to appropriately prioritize the building of those relationships. Several comments were also made

suggesting that RWJF and/or the Steering Committee could potentially help by working to facilitate challenging relationship dynamics even in the proposal development phase.

More resources for state teams with more organizations: Some grantees and sub-grantees noted that although the grants in total were large, they were significantly smaller when subdivided among the different organizations participating in state teams; this issue was more pronounced for states that had more project partners. In order to reduce creating a perverse incentive for grantees to keep their project teams small in order to capture a larger share of available funds, increasing the degree to which funding is scaled based on the number of participating organizations could help to ensure more equitable distribution of funds.

Clearer guidance on partnership decisions: Several grantees expressed that they could have used clearer guidance on partnership decisions during the application process -- for example, more guidance about which types of organization should be the lead applicant, and better articulation of why each organization was invited to apply to help the organizations understand how different partners could contribute to a coalition.

Furthering the customization of TA: The final recommendation is specifically related to TA provision and is rooted in the perspectives of grantees. We recognize that the Voices TA is nuanced and designed with intention, that the Steering Committee has already made adaptations in the months after the data for this report were collected, and that it may not make sense to change some aspects of the TA format or structure. As such, we are not offering specific suggestions for TA modifications; rather, our recommendation is oriented around finding opportunities to have continued dialogue with grantees about what works best for them, and making refinements as appropriate for each project.

In addition to generally positive perspectives, grantees provided many suggestions about the individual TA and group calls, including some contradictory opinions (more contact versus less contact, for example). However, many comments could be reduced to a desire for more individually-tailored TA that is responsive to the specific circumstances of each project. TA providers have already tailored TA provision to the specific needs of each group; however, at this point in the grant there may be opportunities for additional adjustments. As the first year of the grant nears its end, it may be helpful for TA providers to have a check-in conversation with each grantee specifically about this; for example, to ask about factors such as capacity or contextual issues affecting grantees' work, grantees' preferences on TA call frequency and other communications, desire for connections to organizations outside of the state team, and emerging TA needs related to the current project stage, among other topics. A dedicated conversation about this could provide an opportunity for grantees to reflect more about the TA arrangement that would be most helpful for them now that they are familiar with the grant structure and TA partners, and may lead to ideas that were not previously considered or articulated.

EVALUATION NEXT STEPS

The evaluation team at the Institute for Community Health will continue evaluating the Voices for Health Justice program as the grant continues and into the year following the end of the grant in 2023. Through the participatory work during the formative period of the evaluation, a theory of change was developed to identify the main program activities and outcomes. From this theory of change six domains of inquiry were identified:

1. Deep and broad community engagement
2. Power ecosystems
3. Sustained capacity growth
4. Narrative change
5. Policy, budget, and administrative outcomes
6. Community power

ICH will continue to engage with the Steering Committee as the evaluation unfolds by facilitating quarterly reflection sessions with them, reviewing and analyzing of Rapid Response grants, and reviewing and analyzing of the National Wave strategy. ICH also plans on engaging the state and local grantees and sub-grantees through different activities, including state project team interviews at three time points, longitudinal social network analysis administered through a survey at three time points, and review and analysis of secondary data and documents. Secondary data and documents include, but are not limited to, TA and support activity tracking, documentation of strategies used by the grantees, community engagement data, policy tracking, and media tracking. In addition to the light-touch activities described above, ICH also plans on conducting in-depth case studies with eight selected state projects. Through the in-depth case studies, we hope to gain a richer understanding of the activities, strategies, contexts, challenges, and outcomes for the eight state projects. In addition to the in-depth case studies, ICH will also offer evaluation TA to any interested state projects or individual grantee and sub-grantee organizations.

To learn more about the domains of inquiry, methods and timeline of the evaluation, read our evaluation plan here.