

***The right people are at the table. Committed, knowledgeable, focused and rallying around a common need.***

***Still, developing and implementing an action plan doesn't just happen. One more crucial element must be in place.***

**WHAT'S NEEDED?** After years of research and hands-on experience launching 13 Accountable Communities for Health (ACH) coalitions, CACHI has found that a key ingredient for a successful ACH is a robust infrastructure supported by skilled staff that manage the collaborative's day-to-day operations, proactively steering collective action towards a more equitable community.

We call these entities the coalition's "Backbone" ... and for good reason.

Backbones are the glue that keep a collaborative together—managing personalities, schedules, priorities and timelines. They provide consistency, follow-through and, most importantly, sustainability. Backbones help move partners from an information sharing network to a structured and strategic collaboration that achieves more together than any single organization could do on its own.

Connected to the community, skilled in facilitation and properly resourced, Backbones manage a wide range of moving parts to ensure an ACH elevates its efforts, advances equity and promotes community health:

### **Elevating Community Voice**

- Inform, engage and activate community leaders and residents
- Recruit resident participation
- Ensure residents have a role in decision-making

### **Facilitating Action**

- Engage employers, sectors, systems and residents
- Convene stakeholders for cross-sector collaboration
- Provide technical assistance
- Facilitate data sharing and analysis
- Identify community-wide gaps and assets

### **Building Sustainability for Impact**

- Design and manage ongoing governance and infrastructure
- Ensure leadership is distributed
- Maintain communications between partners
- Facilitate fundraising and develop sustainable funding
- Monitor progress and conduct evaluation

### **Stewarding Systems Change**

- Catalyze innovative thinking
- Oversee alignment of stakeholder-defined strategies
- Adopt new collaborative practices among partners and community
- Manage power dynamics
- Advocate for policy changes and community needs

### **HOW DO BACKBONES ENSURE EQUITY?**

➡➡➡ Conduct targeted outreach to historically marginalized communities, compensating residents for their contributions

➡➡➡ Investigate structural causes of inequities by facilitating difficult conversations and collecting data from target communities

➡➡➡ Ensure funding is prioritized to serve historically marginalized communities and groups

➡➡➡ Conduct a power analysis, develop power sharing practices and intentionally increase—and monitor—community trust and participation

## **FUELING CHANGE & IMPROVING COMMUNITY HEALTH**

Ultimately, Backbones can be the vehicle that keeps the community working together effectively. This level of collaborative expertise requires thoughtful and committed funding, but the payoff for community health and equity is well worth the investment.

**Ensure your community has the infrastructure it needs. Invest in your local ACH Backbone.**