



Communities of Care

Communities of Care

To support Houston Metropolitan Statistical Area communities
in their efforts to:

inclusively and collaboratively

transform the environments

where people

live, learn, work, play and pray

to support

resiliency, mental health, equity and well-being

in everyday life for all members of their community with a specific focus on

children, youth and their families.

Five Core Principles

with a focus on children, youth and their families:

1. **Understand the Community Environment.** Gathering data to understand how the places we live, work, learn, play, and pray impact community health and well-being
2. **Imagine One Community.** Encouraging an inclusive and collaborative way of working and making decisions together that is fair and open to all voices
3. **Talk about and Act on Health Justice.** Dialogues about how non-medical drivers of mental health result in unfair differences in community well-being are being elevated and opportunities for change are being identified for action
4. **Provide Opportunities for Ongoing Learning.** Improving knowledge and skills to implement actions in the places where we live, work, learn, play, and pray that will improve community well-being
5. **Improve Community Well-Being.** Using data and lived experiences to inform actions that will improve community well-being

THRIVE



THRIVE Factors

People



Social networks
& trust



Participation &
willingness to act for
the common good



Norms &
culture

Equitable Opportunity



Education



Living wages &
local wealth

Place



What's sold
& how it's
promoted



Look, feel,
& safety



Housing



Parks &
open space



Air, water
& soil



Getting
around



Arts & cultural
expression

Communities of Care Timeline (2019-2025)

Impacts from
COVID-19

Sustainability

Community Assessment
Planning Phase

Implementation and
Sustainability Planning

Policy &
Advocacy

Youth &
Resident
Leadership

2019 - 2022

2022 - 2025

Community Engagement & Capacity Building

From Beginning to Beyond - Enhanced engagement of young people & residents in leadership.

Communities of Care Collaboratives:

Community of practice comprised of 10 collaboratives.

Asian Americans Attaining Awareness	The Future is Us: Galveston ACEs to Assets
Babies in Baytown	Healthy Outdoor Communities
My Connect Community	Hiram Clarke Community Resilience Project
Dream 77021	Project Rise and Shine
East End Communities Collaborative	Reaching Richmond

Collaborative Highlights

Connect Community

Community Priorities

Quality
education,
social networks
and trust



*"We're creating
change throughout
the people's
environment and
creating a
generational impact."*

- **Youth Leader**

Collaborative Strategies

Created a physical space for youth to
connect, be active, and find belonging

Supported youth leadership through
mentoring, social emotional learning, and
trusting relationships



Babies in Baytown (BiB)

Community Priorities

Early childhood
education, quality
resources for
educators and
parents



*"We're now being seen
as the hub. We're
starting to get families...
and parents who are
coming to us because
they heard it from
someone else."*

- **Collaborative
Coordinator**

Collaborative Strategies

Established Parent Leadership Group for
parents to engage with city council and
policymakers and advocate for quality
education

Supported early childhood education and
care centers to support low-income families



Project Rise and Shine

Community Priorities

Mental health stigma,
intergenerational
connection



"Through this project a couple of the youth formed nonprofit organizations, and they organized other youth... They talk to the school district and the local government and the churches, so they are doing advocacy."

- **Collaborative Coordinator**

Collaborative Strategies

Supported student-led initiatives that promoted youth mental health

Facilitated workshops for youth and parent connection and understanding



Healthy Outdoor Communities

Community Priorities

Parks and green space access, education enrichment



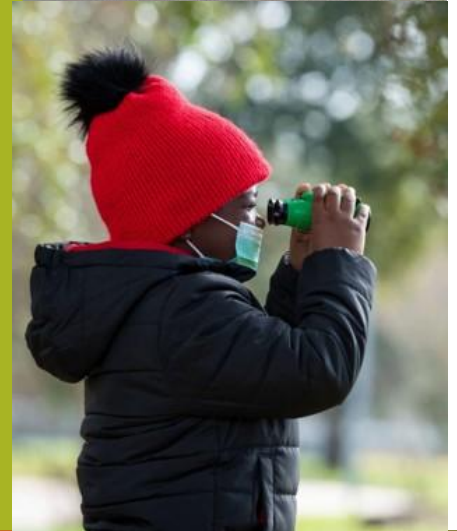
"When residents see community leaders volunteering and being active in the community, it encourages others to get involved and create changes."

- **Resident Leader**

Collaborative Strategies

Built and maintained safe community gardens, green spaces, and parks for youth and families

Promoted community gardens for education, community connection, and access to nutritious foods



Beyond Communities of Care...

Policy & Advocacy:
Capacity building with
residents and youth,
CBOs, elected officials to
advocate for change in
their communities



Young Minds Matter:
Uplifting best practices
and strategies for working
with youth and youth
leaders to improve
mental health



Coalition Building:
Aligning and partnering
with local foundations and
organizations



Hogg Foundation
for Mental Health



PREVENTION
INSTITUTE

Young Minds Matter 2025

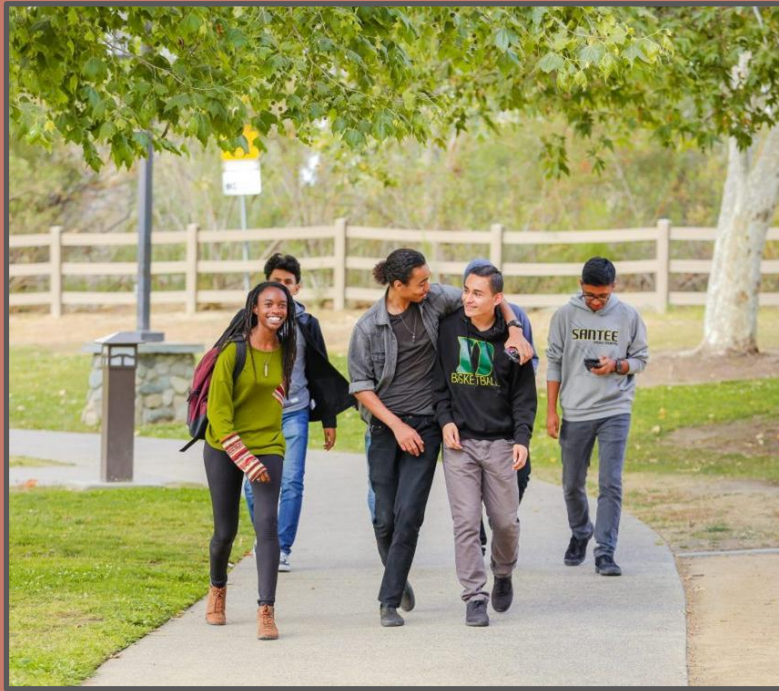


Policy Peer Exchange



At the beginning of 2024, we began the **CoC Policy Peer Exchange** to provide a bi-monthly space to learn about and strategize on making change at the policy level and to develop community leaders' confidence, abilities, and vision around shared advocacy goals.





Collective Vision

The vision that was built in these early meetings was for a space that was *“not only for keeping each other up to date”* but *“to create a CoC legislative agenda/priorities and get more people mobilized”*, *“plan a day where we can bring our community members to the Capitol”* and to *“learn about the upcoming state legislative session next year and how impacted individuals, families, and communities can take action together.”*

Problems → Issues

- Problem (general area of concern)
→ Issue (a specific solution to a problem)
- Getting specific is an organizing strategy that can turn anger/frustration into hope

Improving the Education System for Better Mental Health Outcomes

We're focused on:

- Access to appropriate mental health care in schools;
- Reducing exclusionary discipline and tech surveillance in schools; and
- Resisting curriculum censorship and book bans

The Future is US

Mission Statement: The Future is US exists to fight for Galveston youth through community voice, so future generations can meet their full potential.



Reaching Richmond Community Collaborative

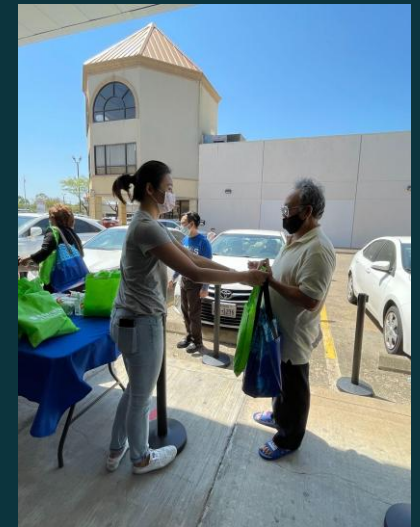
Mission Statement: Stronger together by supporting, teaching, and helping one another to experience a better quality of life.



Asian Americans Attaining Awareness

Mission Statement:

Asian Americans Attaining Awareness aims to strengthen efforts to transform environments where people live, work, bringing a population health approach to support resilience, mental health, and well-being to Asian and Asian-Americans in the Greater Houston Area.



East End Communities Collaborative

Mission Statement: East End Communities is a group of neighbors, partners, and friends working together to support **mental health** and **well-being** in Magnolia Park. Together, we take action and stand up for everyone in our community!



Accomplishments

2024:

- Policy priority narrowing process
- Capacity building & trainings
- Testifying at an interim hearing at the Capitol in Austin
- Meeting with advocacy orgs to explore partnerships for co-hosting an Advocacy Day, forming a partnership with SEAT

2025:

- Recruiting/training youth for Advocacy Day
- Tracked bills & took action around priority areas
- Co-hosted Advocacy Day with SEAT
- Hosted legislative wrap-up sessions in collaboratives' communities





Policy Peer Exchange team presenting at the APPM conference in Austin



TFIU-Galveston, PI, and Hogg Foundation team after training Galveston community members on 89th legislative session bills

The Impacts of the Communities of Care Initiative: Engagement & Evaluation

Stakeholder Interviews



Principle 1: Participants described the issue(s), priorities and/or goals for their Collaboratives when asked to identify the Collaborative's focus and how this issue impacted them. **Seven of the 13** participants mentioned the education system, educating groups (youth and parents) and sharing resources and information were their top priorities to tackle in their Collaboratives.

“I have a space...where I have the ability to ask myself tough questions, really push myself to be vulnerable, and that vulnerability like led to many other things, whether it's building more connections and strengthening my leadership as well as building connections with other young people and learning about their lives.” - Participant 5, Youth

Stakeholder Interviews



Principle 2: Participants planned events and programs, designed spaces for youth, and/or attended/facilitated workshops and training. Most, **11 out of 13** participants shared that they did feel included when decisions were being made in the Collaborative. They shared program and event ideas, outreach strategies, event logistics, and planning processes in meetings or gatherings.

“I think overall my voice has been included in all the conversations and decisions which is really nice to feel as a youth part of this collaborative. For example, if I have an idea that I want to propose I know that there's always a time that I can propose this to the adults that help with this collaborative.” - Participant 1, Youth

Stakeholder Interviews

Principle 3: Addressed discussions of health inequities; but they were minimal. Participants described the need to educate themselves and others about mental health issues in the community. What they did:

- shared information
- raised awareness and
- increased self-awareness of these issues through resources, fliers, and/or training and workshops.

Some participants also mentioned that through their involvement they were able to make infrastructure changes (ex: physical bridge for crossing, ISS policy)

Stakeholder Interviews

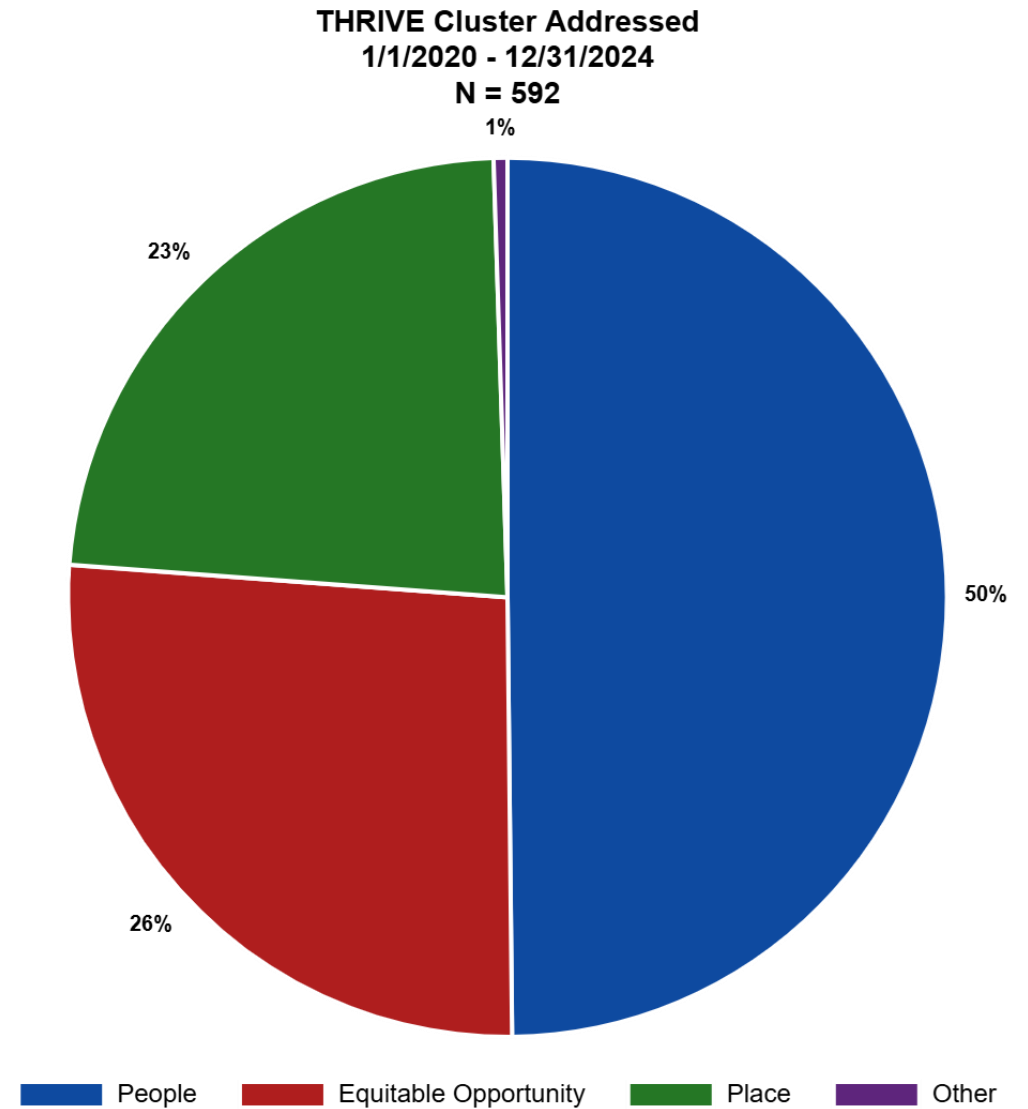
Principle 4: All Collaboratives provided opportunities for learning, from advocacy or legislation training and Mental First-Aid training to various workshops, guest speakers and internships.

Principle 5: Most stated they observed increased involvement by community members and youth on various issues, such as increased attendance at events each year or interest in additional trainings to the list of offerings.

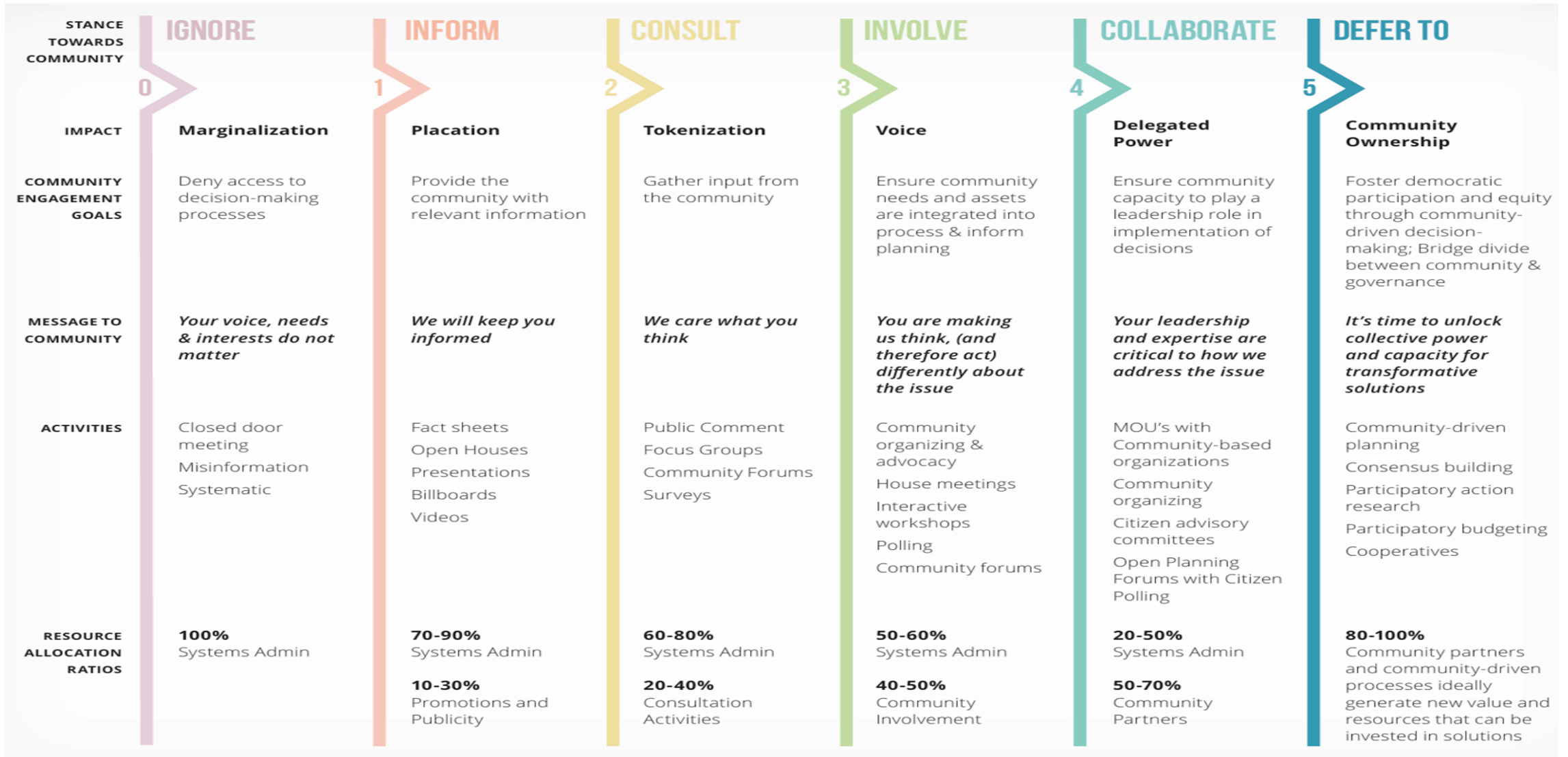
Collaboratives also provided more resources and knowledge for parents to support young children, and youth gained knowledge and leadership skills through their involvement.

Community Checkbox Evaluation System (CCES)

- The framework contains three areas: People, Place and Equitable Opportunity.
- All Collaboratives decided to use one or more THRIVE factors to guide their work.
- Most addressed THRIVE Cluster: “People” at 50%

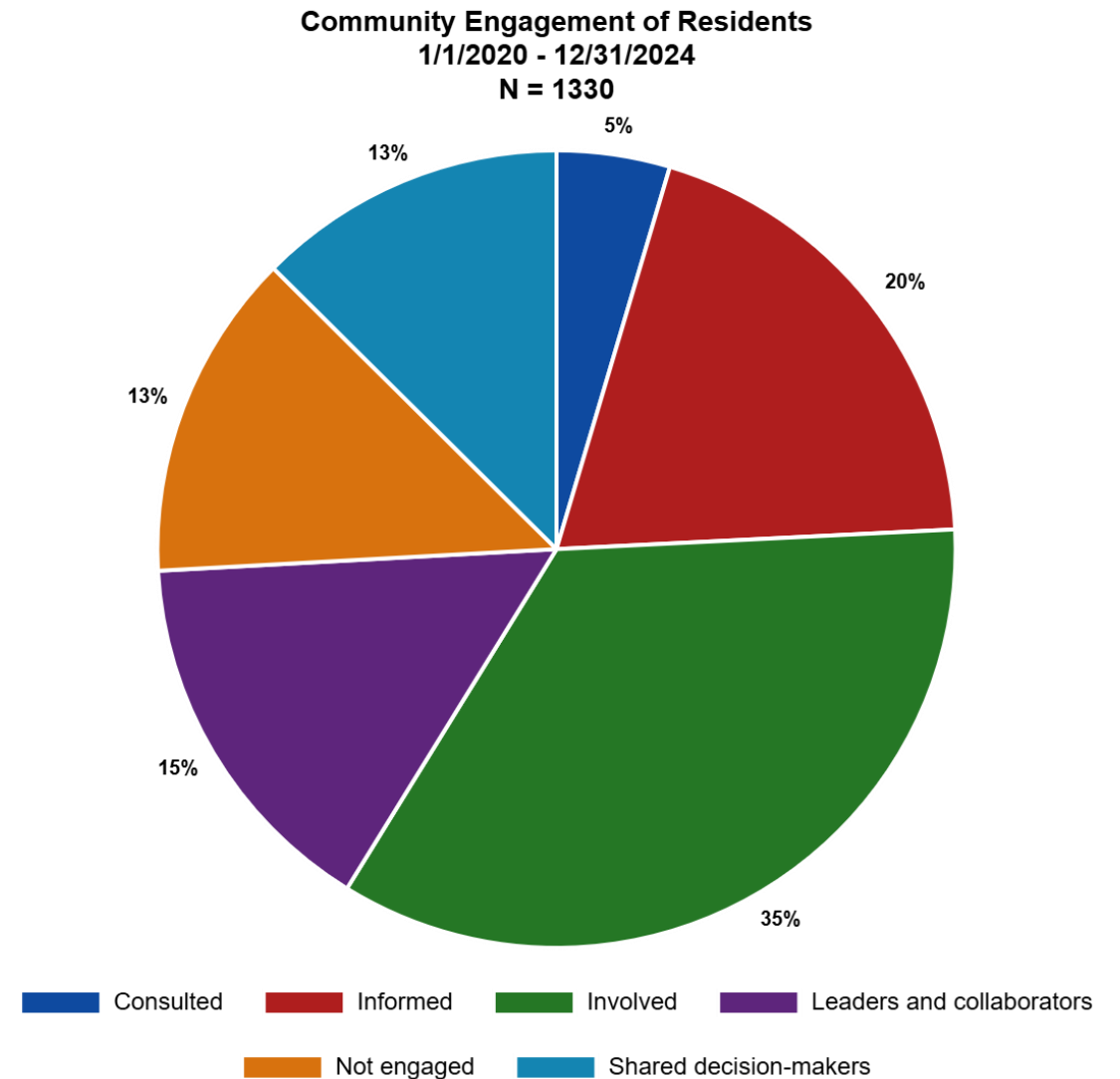


THE SPECTRUM OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO OWNERSHIP



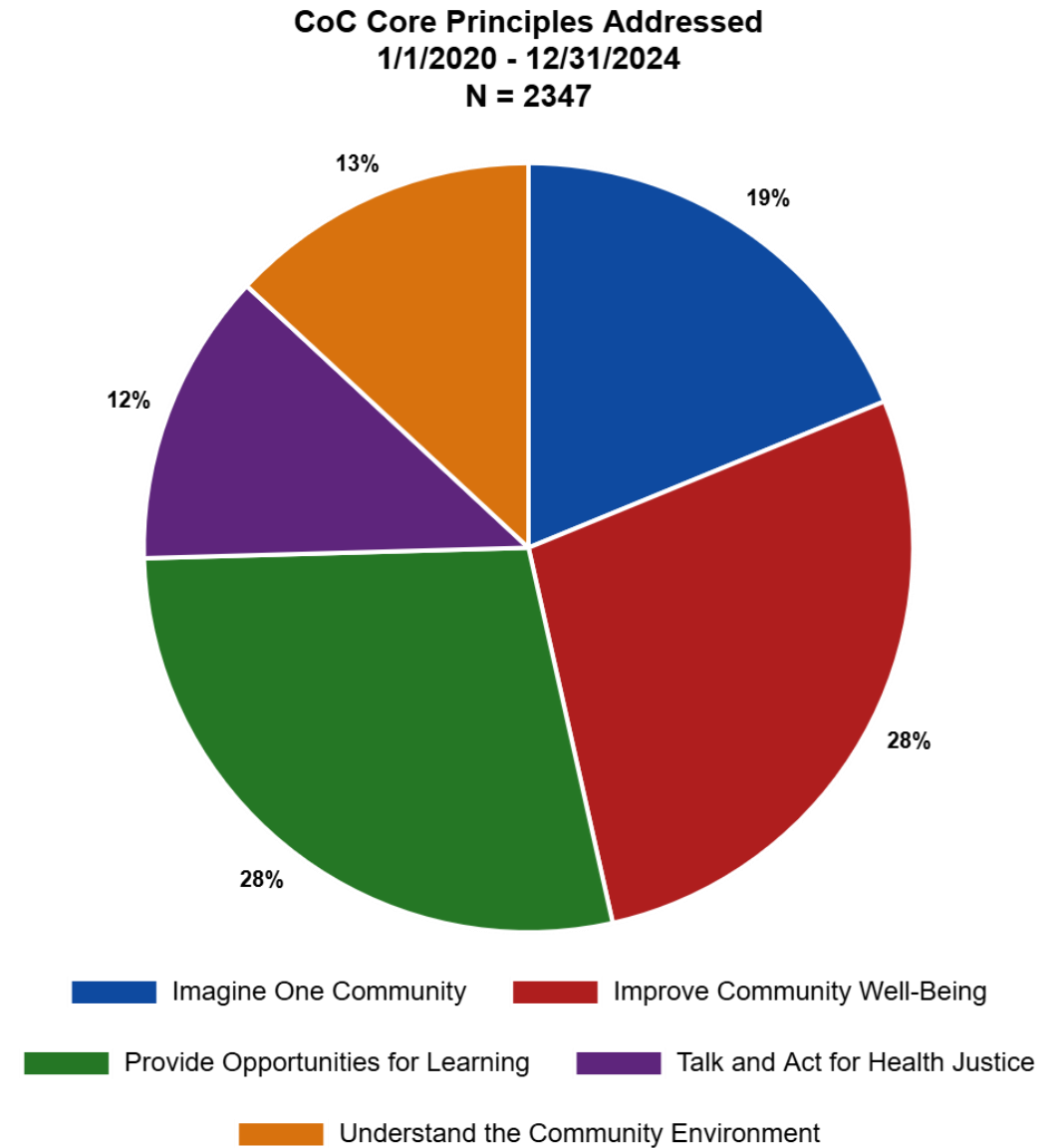
Community Checkbox Evaluation System (CCES)

- Based on the Spectrum of Engagement
- The highest level of engagement was “Involved,” at 35%
- Activities that involved community in the planning of events or activities; incorporate voices and ensure community needs are integrated in process.



Community Checkbox Evaluation System (CCES)

- The two highest entered Principles: “Provide Opportunity for Learning” and “Improve Community Well-Being,” at 28% each.
- Ex: Training sessions with youth and parents, events or activities that had learning components to it related to mental health or wellness.



Reflections & Learnings

Reflections: Initiative Strengths

- Diversity of partners (perspectives, backgrounds, expertise) with a common goal
- Reach across Greater Houston and beyond
- Momentum on shared policy/advocacy agenda
- Commitment to youth leadership



Reflections: Challenges

- COVID-19 pandemic and impacts on community engagement
- Staff and community transitions
- Collaborative structure and sustainable leadership
- Cultural and intergenerational differences



Reflections: Looking Ahead

- Built capacity for residents and youth to take on leadership roles
- Increased momentum towards destigmatizing mental health and building community connection
- Learning community formed with lasting relationship, shared goals, and plans for continued collaboration



Recommendations

For Forming a Learning Community

- Provide capacity building and training opportunities throughout the initiative
- Start with a clear structure, roles, and governance
- Foster a shared vision of mutual growth and learning
- Plan for sustainability and long-term impact from the start



Recommendations

For Funding and Coordinating Collaborative Efforts

- Practice trust-based philanthropy
- Focus on collaborative development and capacity building
- Embed opportunities for shared learning



Recommendations

For Mobilizing Youth

- Build relationships and partner with youth over time consistently
- Keep expectations consistent
- Partner with other adults and organizations that are willing to take risks
- Be creative, be real, and mind your adultism
- Meet young people where they are
- Provide access so it's easy for them to engage (transportation, compensation for their time, internet and phone access)
- Create spaces for joy and fun



