

# WASHTENAW HEALTH INITIATIVE

## Community Ambassador Recruitment and Orientation Plan

### 1. Lay the Groundwork

The Community Ambassador role of the WHI Steering Committee will be comprised of community members that have a passion for health equity and represent various lived experiences across Washtenaw County. This will include people who have various experiences with poverty, health disparities and inequities, or those who have had difficulties receiving adequate care or coverage resulting in negative health outcomes. These individuals will bring meaningful expertise to the table and will provide insight towards health equity issues that the WHI seeks to address.

#### **Roles and Expectations:**

- Community Ambassadors are expected to attend monthly Steering Committee meetings and are encouraged to join various Work Groups if interested.
- They are encouraged to participate freely in meetings sharing their experiences and work collaboratively towards solutions.

Community Ambassadors will join the Steering Committee for a six-month trial period. After six-months, the role will be assessed in the form of a check-in with the Steering Committee leadership and the Community Ambassador.

A full description of the position is attached in **Appendix A**

## 2. Recruit Members

Recruitment of this position will be based on a nomination system. WHI stakeholder members will nominate individuals who they think would be appropriate for this role. Once they are nominated, there will be no further application or interview process. Instead, nominees will be presented with the option of scheduling informational meetings with CHRT staff or other Steering Committee leader to ask questions to see if the role is a good fit for them. If there are numerous nominees, each nominator will provide a short written recommendation of their nominee to be reviewed by Steering Committee leadership. If the nomination system does not generate potential members, other recruitment tactics will be explored.

## 3. Support Meaningful Participation

The Steering Committee recognizes the value that voices from the community bring to the table. Therefore, committee members and leadership will work to create a supportive and inclusive environment that welcomes and encourages participation from the Community Ambassadors. This will be a process of relationship building and collaboration. Surrounding this work, it is important to understand the inherent power structures that occur within and outside of the WHI as well as recognize and address implicit biases.

Tactics to support meaningful participation:

- Be aware of power differentials at meetings
- Be aware of who speaks up and who does not
- Be aware of 'tokenizing' and how to avoid it.

Building relationships with community members from populations that the WHI wishes to serve will ultimately promote equity and improve service outcomes. More information on the importance of community engagement is found in **Appendix B**

## 4. Reduce Barriers to Participation

In order to gain meaningful participation from Community Ambassadors, the Steering Committee must work to reduce various barriers to participation.

### **Some of these barriers will be addressed by the following:**

- New Community Ambassadors will be given training materials to orient them to the WHI and its work. These materials include introductions to the organization, overviews of the work done by the WHI, and additional logistical information. These are attached to this document.
- Community Ambassadors will attend a one-time orientation meeting with a member of CHRT and WHI leadership.
- Members of CHRT will communicate with Community Ambassadors to identify individuals' barriers to participation and how to address them. This includes things like additional knowledge, transportation, childcare, or internet access. If appropriate, options for providing reimbursements for travel or childcare should be explored.
- During meetings, a member of the CHRT team will partner with an individual Community Ambassador to provide support and answer questions.
- Scheduling: The current time the committee meets may not be conducive to wider participation. Having flexibility in meeting times will increase potential for diverse participation.
- If meetings are in person, coffee or other refreshments should be provided

### **Further tactics to encourage participation:**

- Provide a 'cheat sheet' of commonly used jargon or acronyms (attached)
- Use a 'go around the circle' method for speaking
- Send out meeting agendas beforehand
- Hold a one-on-one debrief or check in session after a meeting

It should also be noted that the continuation of virtual meetings poses both benefits and challenges to participation. These should be communicated and addressed as needed.

## 5. Compensate Members for Their Expertise

It is best practice for individuals to be compensated for their time and expertise. This not only incentivizes participation, but communicates that their contributions are valued and respected. It is common practice for payment to range from \$25-\$100 per appearance.

For accessibility reasons, cash or gift card is preferred to check.

**Example from the community:** The Washtenaw County Health Department pays their Community Voices Team members a flat rate of \$25/hr.

# Appendix A

### Community Ambassador Member

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The Steering Committee would like to add new members who have a unique understanding of the Washtenaw County community based on their lived experience. The WHI recognizes the value of involving community voices and believes that they provide meaningful expertise. The WHI aims to add individuals who represent the service population of the broader WHI membership.

### Position Description Draft

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The purpose of this role is to influence and contribute to effective healthcare in our county. The WHI Steering Committee values lived experience and believes that when the voices of the community are heard, programming and outcomes are improved. The WHI seeks to add community representatives who have first-hand knowledge and experience with accessing care and utilizing community-based services. Those in this position will have the opportunity to act as advocates for their peers and community, work collaboratively with health and human service leaders, and share the knowledge gained through reflection on own experiences.

To become a Community Ambassador in the WHI Steering Committee, the individual must be a resident of Washtenaw County and have experience with things such as utilizing public benefits like SNAP or Medicaid.

#### Member Duties and Expectations

1. Attend monthly Steering Committee and quarterly Stakeholder Group meetings and provide perspective on the work of WHI and its members. Members can expect a time commitment of 2 to 4 hours per month, depending on interest in committee work.
2. Community Ambassador members serve on a voluntary basis.

#### Considerations

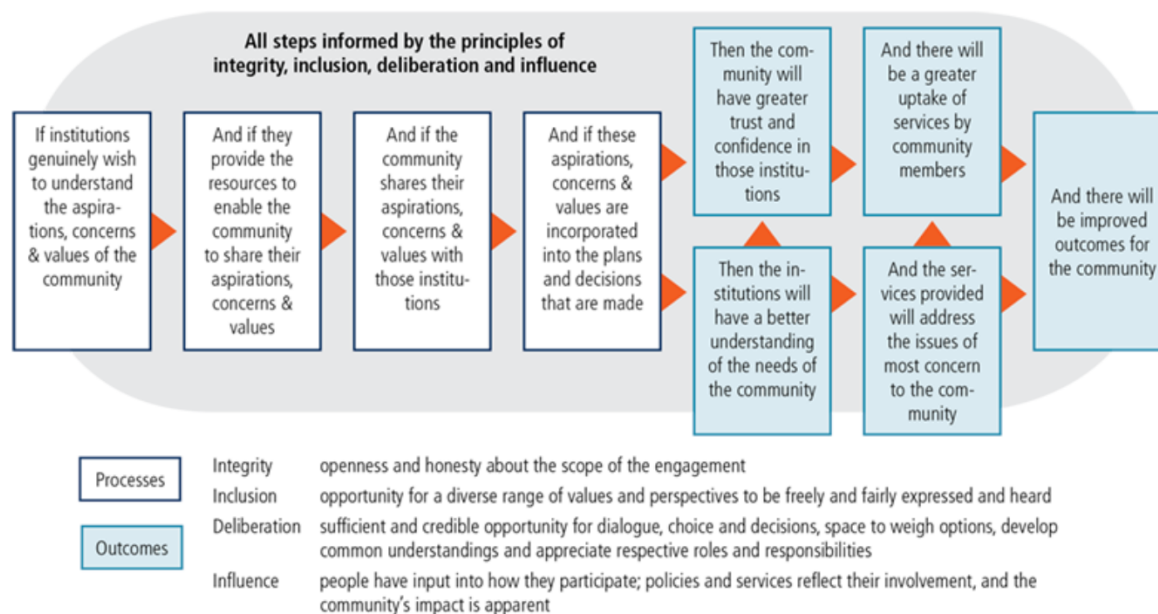
- Members should honestly voice their opinions about how the Steering Committee is accomplishing the mission.
- Members are willing to think outside of the box, are willing to build consensus, and contribute towards finding solutions.
- Members are not expected to share information beyond their comfort. No personal disclosure is required. Members can expect discretion, but confidentiality is not assured.

#### WHI Responsibilities to the Community Ambassadors

- The WHI will hold the role of community ambassador equal to all other at-large members, recognizing and respecting the expertise they bring.
- The WHI will provide orientation materials and schedule meetings with administrative staff to support members throughout their participation.
- WHI staff will be open and receptive to Community Ambassador needs and suggestions. Ambassadors should feel free to communicate with staff.

# Appendix B

**Importance of engaging community members:** Including community voices in conversations and decision making processes improves health equity and outcomes. The following chart outlines the logic behind engaging community voices in decision making settings.



## Diversity and Inclusion in Organizational Context Resources:

- **Combating Anti-Blackness and White Supremacy in Organizations**
- **Power and Privilege Resource List:** This document lists a number of anti-racism educational resources
- Worksheet: **White Dominant Culture and Something Different.** This worksheet lists various ways that white dominant culture appears in organizations and offers 'something different' to consider as an alternative.

Summary of **'Diversity is Inefficient'** by Ashindi Maxton

- Achieving diversity is a time consuming endeavor that can feel inefficient in the short term
- Accept this feeling and accept that achieving diversity might take longer
- Diversity means nothing without inclusion and engagement. Getting people in the room is not enough. How can we make sure all voices are able to speak and are listened to?
- Be aware of pervasive in-group preferences, especially those in positions of power. Be open to ideas that challenge commonly held group beliefs
- Intentionally increases the critical mass of diverse voices in the room. If one person has a significantly different background than the others, they are likely to feel marginalized. The more diversity, the more likely they will be willing to speak freely.

# Appendix B

## Engaging in Inclusive Leadership

This kind of leadership is a conglomeration of six behaviors: ensuring that team members speak up and are heard; making it safe to propose novel ideas; empowering team members to make decisions; taking advice and implementing feedback; giving actionable feedback, and sharing credit for team success.

## Definitions of DEI

**Diversity:** The state of being composed of a demographic mix of people, taking into account elements of difference across national origins, languages, ethnicities, races, skin colors, cultures, generations, religions, spiritualities, socio-economic backgrounds, gender identities and sexual orientations as well as different skills, abilities, customs, values, behavioral styles and beliefs.

**Equity:** The presence of justice and fairness within the procedures, processes and distribution of resources by institutions or systems. Facing equity issues requires an understanding of the underlying or root causes of inequalities and oppression within our society.

**Inclusion:** The full engagement of individuals sharing power at all levels of an organization. All members are valued, respected and supported. Inclusive organizations ensure equal and full participation in decision-making processes by considering all views. While a truly “inclusive” group is necessarily diverse, a “diverse” group may or may not be “inclusive.”

# Appendix B

## Tokenizing

### What is tokenizing?

Tokenizing is a form of covert racism or “the practice of doing something (such as hiring a person who belongs to a minority group) only to prevent criticism and give the appearance that people are being treated fairly (Merriam Webster).” It is a perfunctory or symbolic way of including people of marginalized identities in order to give the appearance of non-discrimination in a workplace or other environment. Including a token employee in an environment is usually intended to create the impression of social inclusiveness and diversity in order to deflect accusations of discrimination.

### Why is it harmful?

Engaging in tokenizing practices reaffirms the notion that people from minority groups are outsiders, that they don't actually belong in certain spaces.

### What can the WHI do to avoid this?

There are three components to preventing tokenism: diversity, equity, and inclusion. It is also realizing that these are three different things that should not function without the others. For example, tokenism is diversity without inclusion.

#### Sources:

Plan adapted from Center for Health Care Strategies 'Best Practices for Convening Consumer Advisory Boards', SPRC 'Lived Experience Toolkit', and Destination Home 'Best Practices for forming a lived experience advisory board'

- NEW: Solutions for Nonprofits [https://www.new.org/diversity/HPTN CAB Fact Sheet](https://www.new.org/diversity/HPTN_CAB_Fact_Sheet)  
<https://www.hptn.org/sites/default/files/2016-05/Community%20Advisory%20Board%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>
- CHIPTS Community Advisory Board Guidelines <http://chipts.ucla.edu/community-advisory-board-cab/#:~:text=CH IPTS%20will%20provide%20compensation%20for,per%20meeting%20attended%20in%20person.>
- Community Engaged Scholarship Institute, Compensating People with Lived Experience  
[https://atrium.lib.uoguelph.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10214/17653/Feige\\_Choubak\\_PeerEngagementProject\\_FactSheet\\_2019.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y](https://atrium.lib.uoguelph.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10214/17653/Feige_Choubak_PeerEngagementProject_FactSheet_2019.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y)
- Guidelines for the Community Advisory Board of The Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS at Yale University  
<http://cira.yale.edu/sites/default/files/CABguidelines.pdf>



The WHI is a voluntary, county-wide collaboration of individuals and organizations that focus on improving the health of low-income, uninsured, and under-insured populations.

The WHI is made up of committees and work groups that carry out projects to address health needs across the community. Some of these needs include access to care, behavioral health, social determinants of health, and senior services.

The WHI is supported by Michigan Medicine and the St Joseph Mercy Health System. It is hosted and supported by the Center for Health and Research Transformation (CHRT).

# WASHTENAW HEALTH INITIATIVE

## The Steering Committee

This committee is a group of community healthcare leaders that provides guidance to the WHI Work Groups. They meet once a month to discuss goals, share information, and support the work of other WHI committees.

There are different types of members within the Steering Committee:

**Organizational members** represent specific health organizations

**At Large members** represent different community interests

**Ex officio members** are non-voting members that come from WHI work groups

## The Stakeholder Committee

This committee represents a larger area of individuals and organizations across Washtenaw County. They meet a few times a year to discuss plans, goals, and challenges that face the community.

## Work Groups and Projects

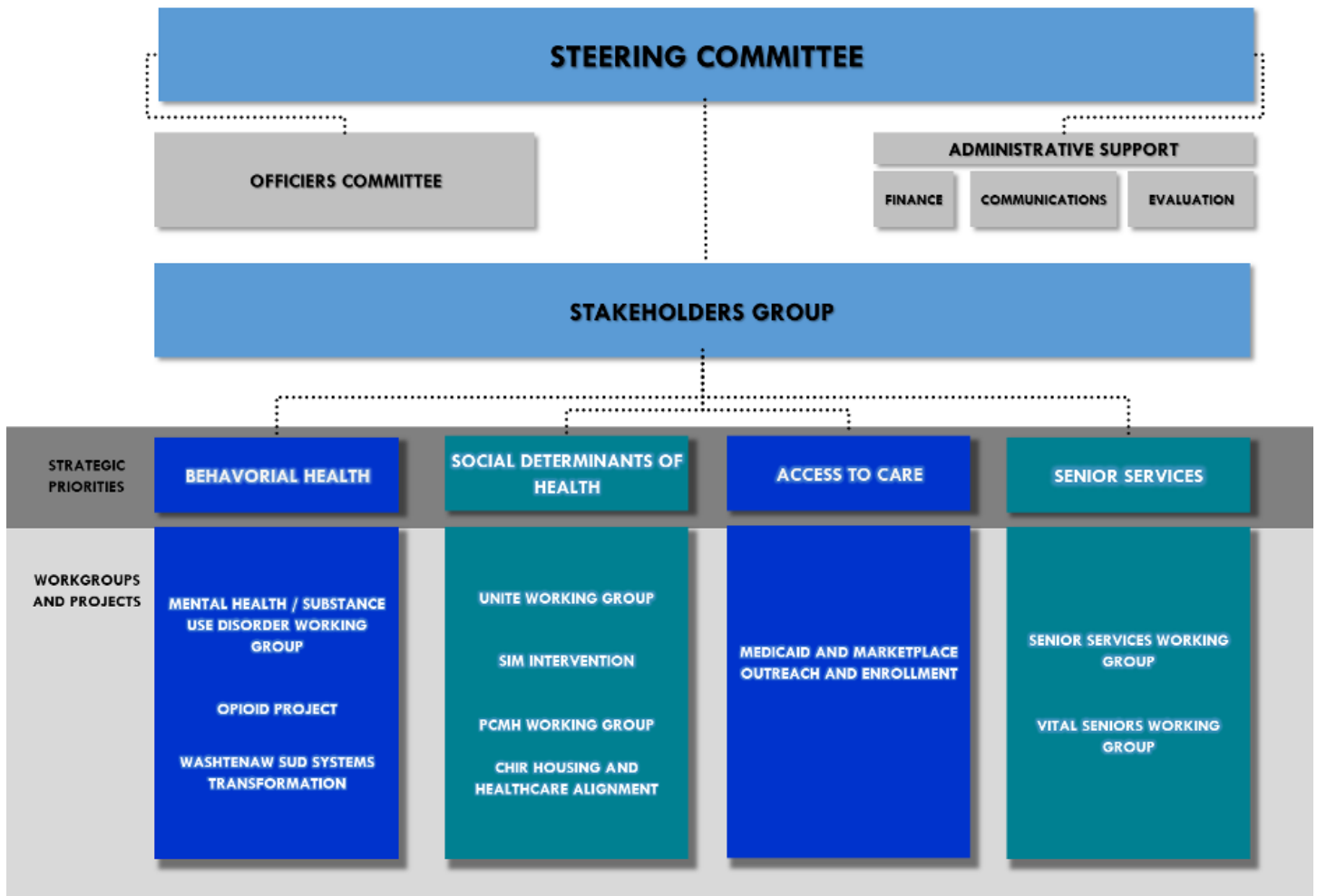
Work Groups are how the projects and goals of the WHI are carried out. These groups cover a number of topics that reflect WHI priorities and overall goals.

\*Many current projects of these committees include ways the WHI can help address hardships from COVID-19

# WASHTENAW HEALTH INITIATIVE

## Structure of the WHI

UPDATED: 2/4/2020



# WASHTENAW HEALTH INITIATIVE

## Community Ambassadors

Community Ambassadors will join the Steering Committee to give input on issues that face the community. They will work together with other committee members on how to tackle community health problems.

Community Ambassadors will attend monthly Steering Committee meetings and join in conversations and problem solving.

Community Ambassadors can feel free to speak openly and honestly, but do not have to share any information that they do not feel comfortable sharing.

A staff member from CHRT will be available to answer questions and give support during and in between meetings.

Community Ambassadors will receive a stipend for their time and effort.



# WASHTENAW HEALTH INITIATIVE

## Common Phrases

**CDC:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention- A federal government organization that studies and monitors national public health

**CMH:** Community Mental Health- Community-based mental health organizations

**Contact Tracing:** A method that healthcare and public health organizations use to contact people who might have come into contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19

**ED:** Emergency Department- like you would find in a hospital

**Health Care Provider:** health care professional; doctor, nurse, dentist, pharmacist, people who take care of you or provide health care

**Health Disparities:** Differences in health among groups of people

**MDHHS:** Michigan Department of Health and Human Services- Statewide government organization that provides a variety of health and social services to Michigan residents

**MHA:** Michigan Health and Hospital Association- An organization that represents the interests of hospitals in legislative and regulatory arenas

**MHSUD:** Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Work Group- group that addresses issues of mental health and substance use in the community

**MiCC:** My Community Care

**MOMOE:** Medicaid and Marketplace Outreach and Enrollment Work Group- group that assists with Medicaid and marketplace enrollment

**Public Health:** the public's health; the health of groups or many people

**RFP:** Request for Proposal- a business document that outlines a project and asks for organizations to submit proposals

**SAMHSA:** Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration- National organization that seeks to reduce substance abuse

**SIM:** State Integration Model- a model of coordinated health care

**SMART Goals:** Goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time bound

**Stakeholder:** a person or group with an interest or concern in something

**SUD:** Substance Use Disorder- the medical/official term for those struggling with substance use

**UNITE:** Hospital Community Health Assessments and Investments- group of non-profit hospital administrators that focus on how hospitals can address community health needs