Rapid-Cycle Research
Findings from the Center for Health Progress

Context
COVID-19 was broadly disruptive to organizations across sectors. This rapid-cycle research project sought to better understand the pandemic’s impact on how organizations engage marginalized community members. It assessed both organizational internal capacity, as well as outreach to community agencies and network partners at the Pueblo Triple Aim Corp. and the Center for Health Progress. While neither organization provides direct services, both organizations are highly collaborative and system-oriented in their efforts to facilitate improved health and social services for the unhoused population, immigrants, and mixed-documentation families.

Research Questions
• How did the pandemic affect the Pueblo Triple Aim Corp.’s internal capacity to gather and incorporate community input in their cross-sector alignment efforts?
• How did the pandemic affect marginalized community members’ ability to participate in the Center for Health Progress’ community-organizing efforts in Pueblo?

Key Findings
Established relationships and networks facilitate the ability to meet emergent needs. Already established networks enabled redirection of efforts within these two organizations to meet emergent pandemic-related needs with each organization’s target populations. This was true for both long-standing relationships with organizations and deep relationships with community.

The pandemic created a shared purpose across sectors. COVID-19 acted as an external unifying force that aligned cross-sector partners toward a clear shared purpose — to meet the significant pandemic-related needs of marginalized populations, whose challenges were exacerbated by the pandemic. This external pressure created an “all-hands-on-deck” mentality across the diverse stakeholders.

Centering grassroots leaders and sharing power aids action. Embedding outreach in a community power-building organizing model enabled immediate action and increased the base of independent, committed, and flexible power among participating community members. Community leaders, using organizing tactics, facilitated organizational efforts to reach marginalized populations, meet their needs, and, ultimately, get the COVID-19 vaccine into community.

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