



# CLOSING THE GAP: EMPOWERING RESIDENTS TO LEAD CHANGE

Explore the Northwest Community Health Innovation Region's (NWHIR) Community Empowerment Project — an initiative promoting resident-led solutions for equitable communities. Discover how this project centered equitable grantmaking, engaged cross-sector partners, and fostered shared learning for impactful, community-driven change. Learn practical insights for funding resident-led projects and closing the decision-making gap.



## LEARNING COMMUNITY

The NWHIR Learning Community is a network of cross-sector partners across Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Muskegon, and Westland counties with a common interest in amplifying resident voice and power, promoting health equity through systems, policies, and practices, and strengthening cross-sector communications for improved coordination and alignment. Through dialogue, exploration, and co-creation, the NWHIR Learning Community supports deep learning within individuals who can then cross-pollinate and amplify those learnings within their organization, agency, group, and/or community.



## PROJECT TIMELINE



## Building A Shared Understanding of the Problem

Participants of the NWHIR Learning Community have been engaged in a gap between traditional decision-making and resident participation. The process involved shared learning, relationship building, and co-creation to build a shared understanding of the problem.

The primary goal of the Community Empowerment Project was to empower residents by building awareness and capacity to lead change in their communities.

## Roles and Promotion

The Learning Community gave the responsibility of reviewing applications and other approving of funding applications to the Learning Community. Roles were defined for various participants including residents, staff, and community partners.

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## Process, Touchpoints, & Fund Disbursement

Applications were reviewed with a nine-month deadline and were processed on a rolling basis. The process included touchpoints for residents, staff, and community partners to ensure transparency and accountability.

Resident questions were answered for a set period to address the opportunity to lead from behind. The process was designed to be transparent and accessible to all residents.

## Recommendations

The NWHIR staff, Learning Community participants, review committee members, and grant recipients offer their insights into building resident-led community-based projects to drive on this case study for inspiration.

## Outcomes

Five residents were awarded CDF mini-grants ranging from \$150 to \$1,000 to advance their community-based projects. The process resulted in increased resident leadership and community engagement.

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## CASE STUDY VIGNETTES

1. **Support Resident-Led Projects**: A resident-led project in Benzie County, Michigan, focused on supporting local businesses and improving community infrastructure.

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### WHAT IS A CHIR?

Community Health Innovations Regions, or CHIRs, represent a unique, coordinated approach to improving conditions where people live, work, learn, and play. CHIRs bring a broad group of collaborators together to improve the wellbeing of the residents in their community.

### NORTHERN MICHIGAN CHIR

CHIR partners are organized by a neutral backbone organization that facilitates the development and implementation of key strategies, creating the necessary capacity to sustain progress on stated objectives.

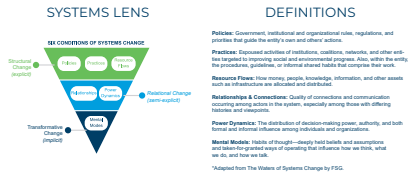
### OUR COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

The NWHIR staff, Learning Community participants, review committee members, and grant recipients offer their insights into building resident-led community-based projects to drive on this case study for inspiration.

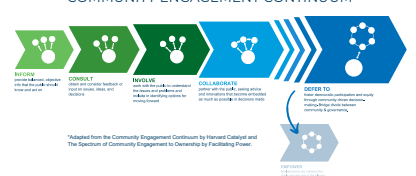
### BRAIDED FUNDING

BRADING A FUNDING COMMUNITY HEALTH ASSESSMENT CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS SYSTEMS CHANGE

## RELATIONSHIP BUILDING | SHARED LEARNING | CO-CREATION



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CONTINUUM



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