

Washington County

Coalition Boosts Collaboration and Impact

Challenge

With six times as many members actively involved today than there were just two years ago, and 19 new partners joining coalition efforts since 2019, the WCCHCC has experienced significant growth. This organizational growth created a welcome challenge for coalition leadership and members. Members recognized the need to strengthen the coalition systems through which they work to support a larger membership, effectively use limited resources, and maintain strong connections during difficult times. The COVID-19 pandemic added another level of difficulty to collaborative work, making it even more critical to examine how coalition members work together to accomplish the CHC mission.

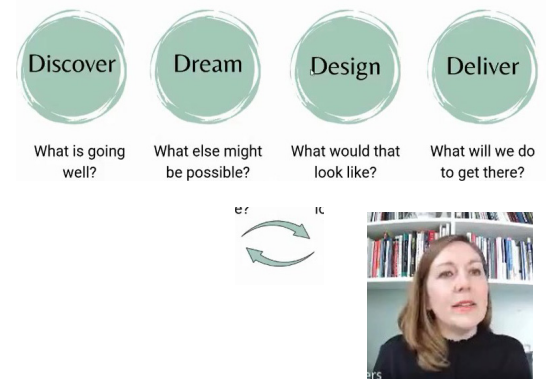
Approach

Maven Lane partnered with the coalition to facilitate an organization development process known as Appreciative Inquiry. Appreciative Inquiry focuses on recognizing, appreciating, and fully employing the strengths of individuals, organizations, and communities to accomplish even greater outcomes. At the start of 2021, more than 40 WCCHCC members participated in the launch of this process providing an outpouring of useful information to guide the work. Throughout the year, members used participation packets to prompt reflection ahead of meetings, collaborative brainstorming, discussions, and surveys to generate and capture ideas. In August, a strategic leadership team began to drive detailed work on a strategic plan to strengthen the coalition. These efforts helped the members visualize the future of the coalition and set that vision in motion.

Results

The Appreciative Inquiry process resulted in a strategic plan focused on implementing the coalition-strengthening ideas developed by members. A key part of that plan—the creation of working groups—has been implemented to empower members to more easily connect and collaborate with others who share similar passions. The four working groups (Healthy Eating, Active Living, Health Equity, and Communication) are aligned with CHC principles, interrelated, and designed to provide a system of connection and support to advance health outcomes in the community. The remaining elements of the strategic plan will be set in motion in 2022 to boost coalition development, community engagement, and health equity initiatives. A change process is not easy, especially during a pandemic that heightens challenges to already demanding work. However, members volunteered to join and lead the newly formed working groups.

Appreciative Inquiry



At A Glance

Through funding made available by Sisters Health Foundation, the Washington County Creating Healthy Communities Coalition (WCCHCC) partnered with Maven Lane, a local consulting agency, to embark on a year-long strength-based approach to identify and fully harness the positive core strengths of the coalition. The goals were to (1) more fully discover the talents and resources of coalition members and (2) develop strong communication and collaboration systems for the coalition to support effective long-term health advancement efforts. The Appreciative Inquiry process resulted in a strategic plan focused on implementing the coalition-strengthening ideas developed by members.



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