



POPULATION
HEALTH TRUST
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2022

COVID RECOVERY PLAN



A CALL
TO ACTION

VISION: Growing Healthy Communities





Our community's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is, and has been, foremost on the minds of members of the Population Health Trust throughout the entire pandemic. We were just underway with our 2020-21 Community Health Assessment (CHA) when COVID-19 hit and caused us to revise our entire methodology for the assessment. What we saw in the initial months of the pandemic drove us to focus intently on health equity and disparate health outcomes that were apparent in our community.

During the Community Health Assessment some of our community's strengths and weaknesses were identified:

- **The Hispanic/Latino community, along with other communities of color, have been disproportionately harmed by COVID-19.** Hispanics/Latinos are disproportionality represented in essential workforces and, consequently, overexposed to the virus. Their vulnerability was further exacerbated by inequitable structures and systems that existed prior to the pandemic.
- **There is an overwhelming need for behavioral health supports.** One of the most prominent issues mentioned in all phases of the assessment was the need for more behavioral health support, including expanded access to mental health and substance use disorder treatment, more training for medical workers, and community education.
- **Some communities face wide-scale disconnection from services and programs due to a variety of barriers.** Access to broadband internet, transportation, and child care were often mentioned.
- **Community members have foundational needs for housing, food, employment, and child care.** The pandemic intensified these needs, resulting in growing awareness and collective efforts to address the limited resources available to many Skagitonians.
- **Quick technology shifts helped to foster community resiliency in the areas of health care, education, and social support services.** However, the pandemic also highlighted disparities in technology access across Skagit County.

Building on the knowledge gained during the Community Health Assessment, for which input and feedback were solicited from community members like you, the Population Health Trust created overarching goals and strategies for the key areas impacting community health and wellness:



This COVID Recovery Plan is the follow-up to the 2020-21 Community Health Assessment. It is intended to bring the community together in focused efforts that will help us deal with the pressures the pandemic placed—and continues to place—on individuals, families, organizations, and systems within our County.

COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Traditional approaches to solving complex social, economic, health, and equity problems do not always provide the answers.

When the Population Health Trust started in 2015, we recognized that non-profits, medical providers, public health, and many other sectors were working in isolation to solve common challenges. So, we imagined what it would look like if key players (businesses, non-profits, medical systems, government, education, law enforcement, behavioral health, etc.) were working together toward the same goals and measuring the same outcomes.

We have become practitioners and proponents of collective impact. Each time we launch an effort to improve

community health, we start with a shared vision that evolves through collecting data, understanding the problem, designing a joint approach to solve the issue at hand, and measuring results. We agree upon actions that will serve the vision. We use mutually reinforcing activities with each partner contributing to the plan. Through consistent communication, we build trust and ensure that we are working towards our shared objectives.

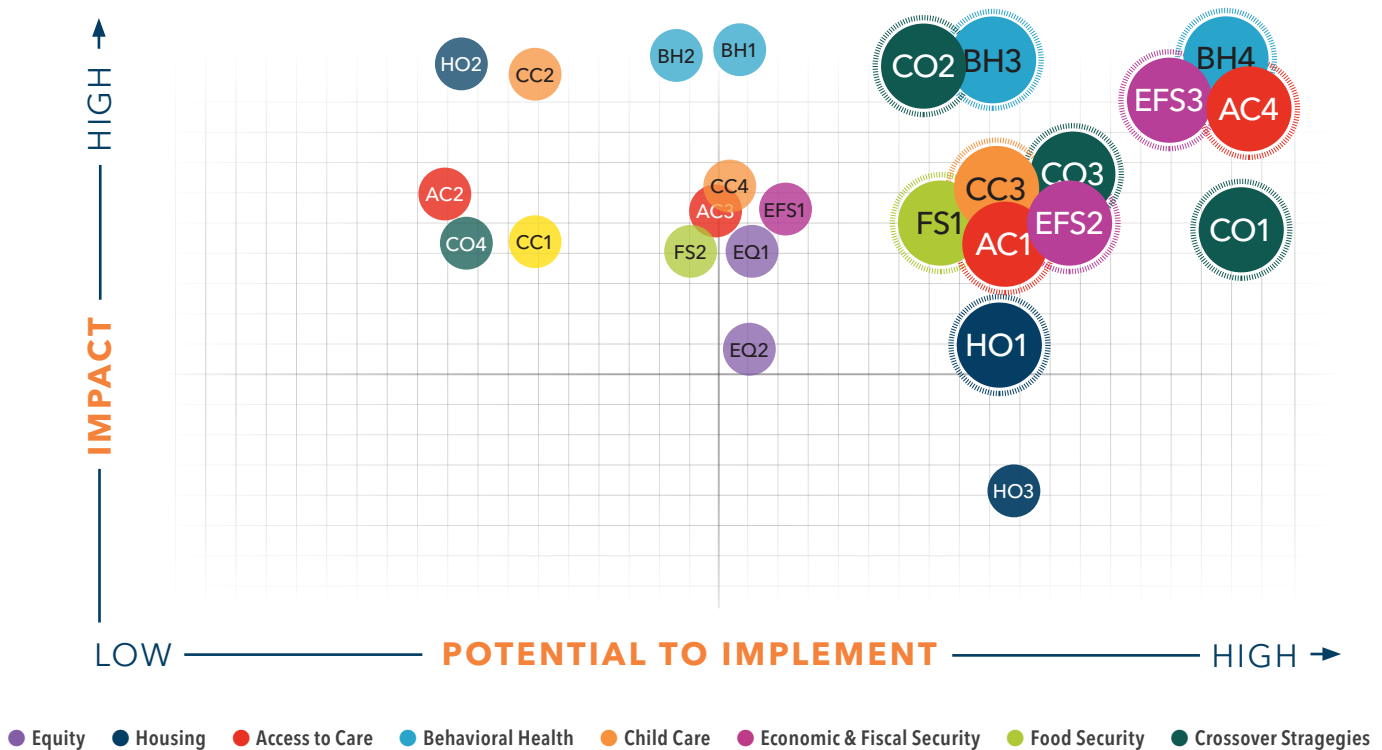
The scope of this COVID Recovery Plan, with seven goal areas, requires a collective impact approach more

than ever! The breadth and depth of what we want to achieve on behalf of community recovery is vast. We have developed a group of strategies called “crossover strategies.” These strategies arose as Trust members saw the linkages between our theme areas.

Learning about and caring for the diverse needs of patients in a clinic or behavioral health facility is not only an equity strategy but an access-to-care strategy. Developing a bilingual/bicultural workforce not only helps health care and behavioral health providers thrive but is a health equity, economic, and financial security strategy.

IMPLEMENTATION & IMPACT

The Trust assessed all strategies for impact and ease of implementation. Twelve strategies rose to the top. They are highlighted in the following pages as our top 12 Priority Strategies.



GOALS & STRATEGIES



CROSSOVER STRATEGIES (CO)

CO1 Identify appropriate equity training, including about the LGBTQ+ community and make available to all Skagit County health care providers, behavioral health providers and the community at large.

CO2 Train the community on impacts of trauma and behavioral health supports (i.e., mental health first aid), including clergy, teachers, barbers, hairdressers, community health workers, parents, trusted peers, and employers to support community conversations, reduce stigma and expand the reach of mental health services.

CO3 Create workforce pipelines for bilingual/bicultural behavioral health and medical staff (navigators, techs, RNs, clinical and non-licensed staff) based on successful models such as Skagit-Island Head Start and Maestros Para el Pueblo.


CO4 In multiple languages, promote the importance of broadband for the health of families and individuals, and provide support for accessing and using technology.


	GOALS	STRATEGIES
EQUITY (EQ) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Our community values and promotes health equity for those facing disparities based on race, education, gender identity, sexual orientation, job status, and disability – so that everyone in our community has a fair and just opportunity for healthy living. 2 Health care settings are welcoming and safe spaces for under-represented communities and communities of color. 3 Everyone in Skagit County has sufficient access to stable, affordable internet. 	<p>EQ1 Expand <i>promotores</i>, patient advocates and navigators in health care, behavioral health, and mobile clinic settings to ensure language and cultural understanding between patients and providers.</p> <p>EQ2 Evaluate and measure equity strategies through local and regional quantitative and qualitative data to ensure accountability of over-arching equity focus and to strategize future efforts.</p>


	GOALS	STRATEGIES
HOUSING (HO) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Everyone in Skagit County has the opportunity for stable, safe, and affordable housing. 2 County and local jurisdictions actively collaborate on policy and programming to create a complete housing continuum that meets the needs of residents at ALL income levels. 	<p>HO1 Advocate for cross-organizational and cross-jurisdictional efforts on housing affordability and availability, especially those that focus on housing as a population health issue.</p> <p>HO2 Increase diversity of options to address local housing needs such as drop-in emergency shelter, low-barrier year-round shelter, permanent supported housing, Community Resource Centers in schools, and affordable housing.</p> <p>HO3 Increase awareness of housing resources and supports to people of color, and other minority groups.</p>

	GOALS	STRATEGIES
ACCESS TO CARE (AC) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Skagit County residents have access to a wide range of medical and health-related services provided by people who speak their language and understand their culture. 2 Everyone in Skagit county can find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions. 3 Health care and related services are made available in remote regions and for individuals with minimal access to technology by providers who meet them where they are. 	<p>AC1 Health care providers identify opportunities to train and support multicultural/bilingual staff to better serve the needs of their patients.</p> <p>AC2 Health care providers, Public Health and other service providers collaborate on mobile clinics and other options to reach more difficult to access communities.</p> <p>AC3 Health education via social media and health care champions is provided in residents' languages and based on their needs.</p> <p>AC4 Develop safe and private community telehealth locations for individuals without access to technology.</p>

	GOALS	STRATEGIES
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (BH) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Everyone in Skagit County has access to integrated, community-based care, solidly anchored in the promotion of mental health and emotional resilience. 2 Behavioral health services and supports are accessible and culturally relevant, and address needs across the life span. 3 The community shares responsibility and is mobilized to support behavioral health and recovery. 	<p>BH1 Increase trauma-informed family-oriented programs and therapy for children and parents to prevent substance use and other behavioral health challenges.</p> <p>BH2 Expand in-school behavioral health supports such as on-site social workers, family navigators, and school-based prevention networks for youth.</p> <p>BH3 Expand embedded social workers and other behavioral health outreach in law enforcement through collaboration across jurisdictions to share resources, models, and planning for efficiency.</p> <p>BH4 Address backlog of potential behavioral health peers awaiting training for certification through the state Health Care Authority (HCA) through sponsorship of HCA training in Skagit County.</p>

 CHILDCARE (CC)	GOALS	STRATEGIES			
	<p>1 Each family in Skagit County can access high quality, affordable, and equitable childcare when and where they need it.</p> <p>2 All professionals who work with children and their families are highly skilled, compassionate, and reflect the demographic characteristics and needs of the community.</p>	<p>CC1 Create opportunities for Spanish and indigenous-speaking residents to open childcare businesses.</p>	<p>CC2 Improve retention of Skagit County childcare providers through supports such as mental health consultation and supporting the Help Me Grow Action Team to address the competing needs for better pay for childcare professionals and lower childcare costs.</p>	<p>CC3 Advocate for employer-based on-site childcare, including extended hours of care, and investigate alternative modes for the service and business sectors.</p>	<p>CC4 Provide support to recruit, retain and train childcare providers based on successful models such as the Skagit Valley College/ Skagit Island Head Start staff development program.</p>

 ECONOMIC & FISCAL SECURITY (EFS)	GOALS	STRATEGIES		
	<p>1 Meaningful job creation and financial stability - especially for non-English speaking residents, individuals experiencing I/DD, veterans, and the LGBTQ+ community - occurs through the collaborative efforts of economic development organizations, education, businesses, and government.</p> <p>2 Workforce development strategies, initiatives, and policies support population health by prioritizing adequate training and compensation for childcare providers, behavioral health professionals and multilingual health care navigators, and other providers.</p>	<p>EFS1 Focus employment development, financial literacy, technological support, and outreach to specific communities, including the LGBTQ+ and other populations underrepresented in the workplace.</p>	<p>EFS2 Promote cross-sector programs for apprenticeship and career-connected learning and develop new approaches to recruitment of Spanish and indigenous-speaking students, LGBTQ+ youth, and youth experiencing disabilities.</p>	<p>EFS3 Advocate for public funding to improve compensation for childcare providers, behavioral health professionals, and multilingual health care navigators by coordinating with state and federal advocacy organizations on common messages and strategies.</p>

 FOOD SECURITY (FS)	GOALS	STRATEGIES	
	<p>1 All Skagit County residents, especially those experiencing poverty or access challenges - children, seniors, indigenous populations, and those with disabilities - have access to enough nutritious food every day.</p> <p>2 Skagit County has a resilient local food economy that makes affordable, healthy, sustainable, and culturally appropriate food the norm for everyone.</p>	<p>FS1 Advocate for community-based programs that ensure culturally relevant and nutritious foods are available and affordable for all Skagit residents, especially for families with children and other vulnerable populations.</p>	<p>FS2 Support a thorough assets and gaps analysis to understand food security vulnerabilities and to create a collaborative vision for collective action and policy development.</p>



CALL TO ACTION

This plan belongs to our community, and serves as a call to action! As you read this COVID Recovery Plan, please look for ways that you as an individual, your organization, agency, or business can join us in these efforts. No action is too small! Simply find a topic you are curious or passionate about and see how you can contribute to a strategy.

NEED IDEAS?

- Ask the Trust to provide a presentation and/or discussion about this plan to your stakeholders or staff.
- Participate in community-wide equity learning opportunities.
- Ensure that all your agency's resource materials are multilingual.
- Collaborate with Trust partners to initiate and support complex strategies.
- Apply for grants using data from the CHA and insights from this COVID Recovery Plan to fund programs that will help achieve our identified strategies.
- Reach out to your legislators and advocate for community funding needs (including childcare, housing, and behavioral health services).



WE ARE
OPEN

WITH APPRECIATION

The members of the Population Health Trust have dedicated two years, in the most challenging of circumstances, to complete the Community Health Assessment and this COVID Recovery Plan. Their community spirit, leadership, and concern for creating better health and wellness has been a true gift to our community.

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