

Santa Ana

Building Healthy Communities

Case Study

Prepared by FSG
For The California Endowment

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Discovering better ways
to solve social problems

Preface

The Building Healthy Communities (BHC) Strategic Review is an independent examination of the BHC effort that has been commissioned by The California Endowment. The Strategic Review has been designed to provide The Endowment's leadership and Board with information that enables the foundation to better understand and reflect on the lessons learned from the implementation of BHC to date.

The following questions have guided the Strategic Review:

1. **Alignment of Site and Statewide Work:** To what extent and in what ways are Healthy Communities and Healthy California efforts aligned and working together to proactively address a specific issue, policy, or practice related to BHC goals?
2. **Power Building:** What factors are supporting and hindering power building among adult and youth residents to advance BHC goals of policy and systems change?
3. **Community Capacity:** To what extent and in what ways are the Hubs and other collaborative structures developing effective partnerships and increasing community capacity to influence policy and systems changes?
4. **Perceptions of Change:** What changes are being realized at a local and state level as a result of the BHC work?
5. **TCE Structures and Processes:** To what extent and in what ways are TCE structures and processes...
 - a. Affecting staff and senior leaders' abilities to effectively provide oversight, management, and support for TCE's activities, investments, and partnerships related to BHC?
 - b. Enabling TCE to adapt and respond to BHC communities' capacity needs?
 - c. Affecting alignment between Healthy Communities and Healthy California?

The California Endowment Strategic Review includes three in-depth case studies, two that focus on the experience of two BHC sites, South Sacramento and Santa Ana, and one that examines the foundation's Sons and Brothers work. These case studies examine why, how, and under what conditions the BHC work is being implemented. It does not seek to answer all five of the questions above. Rather, the BHC site case studies focus on understanding the power building and community capacity aspects of the BHC work to date.

This case study highlights the current strengths, challenges, and successes of Central Santa Ana BHC (SABHC). Data were gathered to inform this review in multiple ways and from multiple sources including 16 interviews with grantees, adult and youth residents, systems leaders, and BHC staff; four focus groups with participation from 26 adult and youth residents, and grantees; and a review of more than 30 documents related to the planning and implementation of the SABHC work.

In addition to informing the case study, data and insights gathered through these activities will be included in the overall Strategic Review report.

This case study seeks to illuminate lessons and insights for other communities embarking on complex, policy and systems change efforts to improve the health of communities statewide.

*“The biggest thing we have accomplished is the SUNSHINE ordinance. This makes city officials be more transparent. **We know who they are meeting with, who is going to be doing construction in the city. We want the government to be more accountable.** The city sometimes doesn’t want us to get involved, they want to keep us sleeping, but **now the community is empowered because of the ordinance. Now we can question some of their decisions, so they continue working for the community.**” – Santa Ana Resident*

An Urgent Need for Change

Santa Ana is a vibrant community located in the heart of Orange County. The sights and sounds will be familiar to those who have spent time across the border in Jalisco or Zacatecas, where many Santa Ana residents are from. At night, you’ll hear mariachi music blasting from stereos as people relax on their porches talking with neighbors after a long day’s work. This is a picture of family, loyalty, and hard work.

Yet for decades, these cultural assets that come with being a largely immigrant community have been juxtaposed with a persistent reality of poverty, violence, and disinterest. Per capita income in Santa Ana is less than half of the county average, and certain streets are notorious for being the front lines of gang disputes. The challenges facing the Santa Ana community are endemic to many immigrant communities, and compounded by residents’ inability to vote due to legal status. As a result, it has been difficult for Santa Ana residents, particularly immigrants, to have a voice before elected officials in the region.

Decreases in public spending in key institutions, such as public schools, fueled by a struggling national economy, as well as patterns of spending that do not adequately address the community’s needs have contributed to a continuous cycle of poverty that has been difficult to overcome. While there has been ongoing philanthropic investment to improve the social and economic realities in Santa Ana, many people in the community continue to struggle to find well-paying jobs so that they can live a healthy life. As a resident describes, *“It’s hard for us because we don’t make a lot of money and rents are very expensive. All your money goes to rent and other bills.”* Many organizations have worked relentlessly for decades to empower residents so that they can be a part of the democratic political process. Yet, many believe, there has not been a fundamental shift in power dynamics in the city.

The California Endowment, referred to locally as “EI Endowment,” recognized the opportunity to tackle the years of legislative neglect and trials that residents, mostly immigrants, concentrated in “Central Santa Ana” were experiencing. In 2008, EI Endowment chose Santa Ana as one of 14 communities to participate in its new Building Healthy Communities (BHC) strategy. Their goal is to improve health across California, in part, by creating long-lasting community change in 14 specific communities.

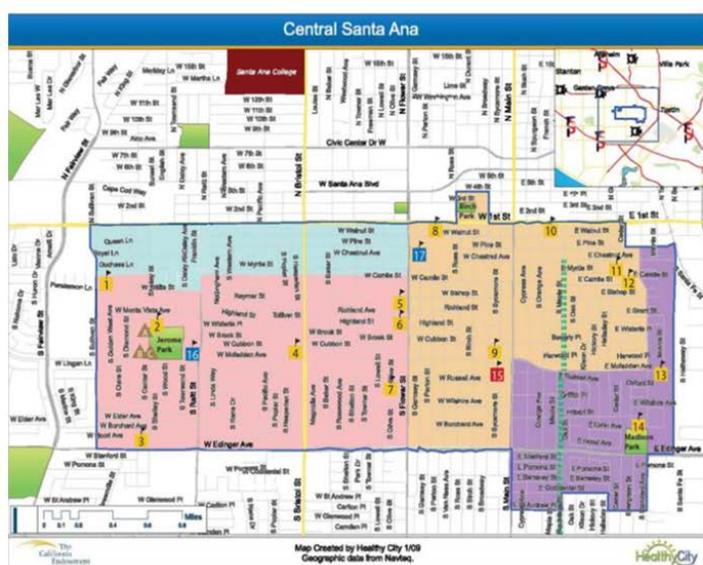
But the BHC strategy is different than most efforts that seek comprehensive community change. At its core, BHC has focused on empowering residents to become change agents themselves. Indeed, the issues being tackled are broad and include topics such as land use, school safety, and health access. The early focus of Santa Ana BHC on empowering adult and youth residents is yielding benefits, including early policy wins, which are expected to translate into widespread improvements in health of adult and youth residents in the future.

Laying the Groundwork for Santa Ana Building Healthy Communities

Before the implementation of BHC began, Santa Ana entered a year-long planning process (June 2009 – June 2010) along with the other communities selected to participate. The planning phase invited a wide range of individuals and organizations interested in the future of Santa Ana to participate, including school administrators, health agency officials, service providers, advocacy groups, organizers, adult and youth residents. Right from the start, it was clear that adult and youth residents had a seat at the table.

To get the process started, El Endowment chose the Orange County (OC) Human Relations Commission, a county-funded agency, to facilitate the planning process, which included developing a cross-sector governance structure and a 10-year strategic plan for the Santa Ana BHC (SABHC). The Santa Ana BHC covers a specific region within the city delimited and named by El Endowment called “Central Santa Ana” that spans several neighborhoods downtown, and is largely Hispanic and Spanish-speaking (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 - Santa Ana BHC: At a Glance



Population: SABHC intervention area has an estimated population of 91,513 residents

- 80% Latino; 50% foreign born
- Nearly 73% are Spanish-speaking
- Over 51% speak English less than “very well”

Socioeconomic Statistics

- Per capita income of \$16,891 which is substantially lower than the county (\$34,550)
- Poverty rate of 16.5%
- Only 11% of adult residents have a college degree, compared to 35% countywide

Source: Building Healthy Communities Central Santa Ana Community Health Plan (2010-2020)

In December 2009, a few months into the planning process, residents and some nonprofits started expressing dissatisfaction about the direction the effort was taking. As one SABHC grantee recalls, *“There were concerns around lack of broad engagement with residents in the [planning] process.”* At the same time, residents and nonprofits felt that the systems leaders were pushing for priorities that did not align with the community’s needs or interests. Residents wanted to see more community engagement and community leadership over the decision making process. Given the emerging tensions, the group leading the planning process decided to appoint a new organization, Latino Health Access (LHA), to direct the process. The tensions between systems leaders on one hand, and residents on the other, were already starting to emerge.

Despite the transition in local leadership of SABHC, the planning process continued to move forward. Several organizations including direct service providers, community organizing groups, youth development organizations, and governmental agencies engaged with the community to determine the priorities of SABHC. More than 600 adult and youth residents, nonprofit leaders, and community agencies actively engaged in meetings to determine the focus of the ten year plan for BHC in Santa Ana. After

multiple workgroup meetings and retreats, seven strategies were announced by SABHC at a town hall meeting in May 2010. This meeting gave community members the opportunity to suggest revisions to the strategies.

In June 2010, the multi-sector group of systems leaders, nonprofits, and residents voted to approve the SABHC strategic plan. Seven strategies were identified in the plan, five of which reflected EI Endowment’s list of “10 Outcomes” for Building Healthy Communities. The two other strategies were identified as cross-cutting issues unrelated to a specific outcome, but identified by community members participating in the planning process to be priorities for the community (Figure 2).

Figure 2 – Seven Priority Outcomes for Santa Ana BHC

	Outcomes Selected by SABHC	Strategies from SABHC’s Strategic Plan
BHC Outcomes	Health and family-focused human services shift resources toward prevention	Services & Systems Integration
	Residents live in communities with health-promoting land-use, transportation and community development	Health Promoting Land Use & Reform
	Children and their families are safe from violence in their homes and neighborhoods	Community Safety
	Communities support healthy youth development	Positive Youth Development & Employment Opportunities
	Community health improvements are linked to economic development	Economic Empowerment
	Cross-Cutting	Immigration Rights & Reform
	Cross-Cutting	Community Empowerment

Building Adult and Youth Resident Leadership Capacity

Developing strong community leaders among adult and youth residents has been a focus of the early years of BHC, and it has not been easy. Yet, there has been increasing evidence that adult and youth residents are getting involved in and contributing to the policy and systems work of SABHC grantees. As a SABHC grantee and resident explained,

“What’s really happening is civic engagement - a population that historically is not engaged civically – changed. We have community members engaged from all over. Youth are learning that government is responsible to them. That’s what’s really happening. Youth say, ‘That’s my city council. They have to answer to me.’ That mentally, is a paradigm shift.”

While there were a number of established organizations in Santa Ana that were focused on advocacy and organizing of residents at the start of BHC, many lacked the capacity and resources necessary to engage adult and youth residents effectively on a large scale. Since 2010, grantees have been receiving technical assistance to better equip and empower adult and youth residents to be leaders in their community and agents of change. This is happening in a number of ways:

- **Residents are ORGANIZED** - By connecting with efforts and organizations that are already rooted in the community such as the Santa Ana Collaborative for Responsible Development (SACReD) or the Madison Park Neighborhood Association, SABHC ensuring that the funds are addressing the priorities in the community. SABHC is providing resources that are energizing these efforts and organizations.
- **Residents are REACHED** – Through resources provided by a local coordinating body for SABHC called the “Hub,” people are more able and willing to participate in SABHC meetings (e.g., steering is committee meetings or specific issue-area work groups meetings). The Hub provides interpretation services, transportation, child care services. Many meetings are conducted in Spanish (with simultaneous interpretation) to ensure that mono-lingual Spanish speaking adult residents, those most likely to be marginalized, can effectively and authentically engage in the processes of the collaborative and participate in driving it.
- **Residents are INFORMED** – SABHC is supporting organizations, such as the Kennedy Commission, to create and disseminate information that equips advocates with data. This data helps to put issues on the agenda of government officials and that make advocates more effective at influencing policy.
- **Residents are TRAINED** – SABHC has identified organizations, such as the Orange County Labor Federation, that are already empowering people, and invested in reaching more residents. The trainings are providing residents with leadership skills and information, making them more efficient advocates for the issues they are passionate about.
- **Residents are MOBILIZED** – SABHC is supporting organizations such as Orange County Congregation Community Organization (OCCCO, the local Pico affiliate) that have a long history and experience helping residents take action.

Several SABHC activities, including training with specific organizing groups and at the local college, have been used to build the knowledge, skills, and capacity of adult and youth residents to be a more effective and influential voice in the political arena. As an adult resident participating in the Land Use Work Group described,

“We organized the trainings [about Land Use and City Planning] and got people from the community with experience doing city planning. Since the beginning of the training we were able to see how we can influence the Strategic Plan for the city, and we have been able to participate in different forums and workshops.”

The Kennedy Commission, a SABHC grantee, has been working tirelessly to foster resident engagement in land use issues in Santa Ana. In the last two years, the commission has organized workshops in different neighborhoods where residents can identify issues affecting them and learn how to solve them. As a result, residents are starting to participate in city walks and other community events where they can work in concert with decision makers and voice their opinions. One resident shared his experience:

“I was part of a tour with the city planner, to a place called the Wellness Corridor. We saw different empty lots and I told the city planner, ‘Why don’t you buy them and make affordable housing here?’ [...] This is one of the poorest parts of the city and we need to do this.”

Although residents are being engaged in new ways and brought into the BHC effort now, early in the process SABHC found it difficult to develop effective platforms, such as work groups, for grantees to collaborate and work together to collectively pursue specific goals and objectives. Nonprofits began working on their individual work plans designed for the foundation without a shared vision or common objectives. As one grantee stated,

“At the beginning, people felt very tied to their work plans. There were so many times we came together trying to create a shared strategic plan while also trying to integrate everyone’s work

plan into it - since we all had different outcomes we were accountable for. We worked hard to make that happen and go back to work on our own work plans.”

One strategy that has helped to enrich youth development efforts and increase youth participation has been shifting from focusing on engaging a specific number of youth in BHC activities, to creating a youth-led process that values quality leadership over reaching a certain quota. As one grantee observed, *“At the beginning, the work plan that delineated what we needed to do – engage 200 youth in the zones – made me feel like no matter what I did, it was about equal numbers per zone.”* To grantees, the numbers stated in work plans seemed arbitrary and unrealistic. As the work progressed, grantees and the local program manager, Virginia Mosqueda, decided that it was important to engage youth in a deeper and more meaningful way. To do this, SABHC grantees and youth worked together to identify issues that resonated most with the SABHC youth.

Kidworks, a SABHC grantee, has been a leader in fostering youth participation in BHC activities and organized campaigns. Youth started forming work groups that now meet every week to talk about issues related to the priority areas of SABHC. Other youth development organizations are also providing youth with opportunities at an annual Block Party for youth to educate their peers and share what they have learned. In addition to organizing youth-led events, SABHC youth are learning to engage with systems leaders with confidence. In the past two years, SABHC youth have actively participated in city council meetings. As one youth recalled after attending one of these meetings, *“Sometimes I would feel intimidated presenting [at a city council meeting], because, let’s say, a police man would be there. But when they nod and reply to what you say, you realize they are paying attention to you. They know you have something good to say.”* By participating in these activities youth are developing their leadership skills and representing the voice of their community.

Participation in youth activities is robust; 40 to 50 youth attend Friday night meetings at Kidworks every week, many more than expected. The Center OC, a nonprofit working on LGBT issues in Santa Ana, began an anti-bullying campaign and has expanded the number of LGBTQ youth groups so that participants have a safe place to meet after school. The Boys and Men of Color (BMOC) group in Santa Ana is leading a Summer Leadership Academy where youth are given an opportunity to learn about advocacy and policy change. Youth are identifying issues that are impacting them, learning about root causes of issues, and starting to understand how to solve them through policy and systems change initiatives and campaigns.

While youth participation in SABHC has been growing, keeping youth engaged in the SABHC Steering Committee and Coordinating Committee has been an ongoing challenge. Currently, only three of the initial fifteen youth members of the Steering Committee are still involved. Through an evaluation process, Steering Committee members identified the location of the meetings as a key component to youth participation, and have subsequently committed to hold meetings in locations that are most accessible to youth whenever possible. SABHC is continuing to reflect on how to keep youth engaged and participating in the Hub governance structure.

An unintended consequence of the passion and eagerness of youth to get involved in the policy campaign work related to SABHC is the toll that a busy schedule around BHC meetings and campaign events are starting to have on some students’ performance at school. While these examples may be few, balancing leadership activities and academic work is a common challenge for youth organizers. When youth are attending meetings and events related to SABHC campaigns every night of the week, they may not have enough time to complete their homework for school or prepare for exams. Some organizations involved in youth engagement are already taking measures to ensure that youth are not failing in school at the cost of their involvement in the SABHC work. Some grantees are in the position to provide tutoring and other support services to youth. Kidworks, for example, is supporting both youth leadership

development work through the BHC grant, and also has a department funded to do more direct services work with youth.

EI Endowment has communicated the importance of youth leadership development as part of the BHC effort overall. Still, some community-based organizations are concerned that the focus of BHC on youth leadership and organizing is leaving a gap. A grantee shared her concerns: *“If you want to have youth involved in the community, you need to keep their focus on their future and their goals.”* To date, the foundation has not provided guidance to local program managers or grantees on how to manage the tension between youth leadership development and the need for other types of direct services not funded through BHC – such as academic tutoring or counseling.

Creating Early Wins

During the first few years of BHC, there have been opportunities for residents to take action and influence policy. Some of the early policy wins focus on community improvements, including funding for a new park, creating a safe bike path, and opening up gym facilities after school hours. But these are big wins in the eyes of residents. They also are not the only signs of policy change in the city.

Residents and organizers involved in BHC are most proud of the passage of the Sunshine Ordinance, which creates a structure for accountability in the local government. The Santa Ana Collaborative for Responsible Development (SACReD) was well into its campaign to pass the Sunshine Ordinance when the SABHC implementation phase began. SABHC has supported SACReD, effectively linking the two collaborative efforts through a funding mechanism. With this ordinance, community members, advocacy groups, media representatives, and others will have greater access to the city calendar, budget information, and mandatory meetings with the community before submitting new construction projects for approval. It will bring new voices to the table before legislation gets made, so that the way in which decisions get made by elected officials starts to shift. Several residents have described this legislation as a game-changer and believe it paves the way for true systems change.

Given the track record of a lack of accountability in Santa Ana’s local government, this was an important milestone for Santa Ana BHC. SABHC grants supported leadership development of grantees and their beneficiaries, which was critical to building momentum for this policy change. A local elected official speaking about the relevance of the SABHC in the passage of the Sunshine Ordinance says,

“The Sunshine ordinance wouldn’t have happened before 2010. Residents didn’t have the information to act upon, and this is a testament to the work of the Hub. A lot of groups that were upset came together to the table, having actionable intelligence, and having information and moving forward with an organized front.”

The renewed excitement about the work and the policy wins have been fueled in part by the ability of SABHC participants to build resident power in the community. The results from their work during the first three years of implementation provide some initial shifts in power dynamics in Santa Ana by increasing transparency and accountability in city government.

A Hub Structure in Evolution

The creation of a local governing body for SABHC has been a challenging, but productive and necessary process. According to EI Endowment, each of the 14 BHC communities, including Santa Ana would create a Hub that would act as a place where stakeholders will come together to “coordinate their BHC

activities and answer to each other.”¹ In Santa Ana, there has always been a strong emphasis on creating a resident-driven Hub. The primary governance structure within the SABHC Hub is a cross-sector Steering Committee that includes 40 voting members; 15 youth and 15 adult residents from different neighborhoods in the BHC area, and 10 nonprofit and systems leaders. The overrepresentation of adult and youth resident seats on the Steering Committee compared to organizational representatives aims to change the power dynamics from the business as usual model of systems and organizational representatives debating and deciding upon the community’s needs. The Steering Committee structure aims to ensure that the initiative becomes and remains resident-driven. As Mosqueda explains,

“They wanted a majority resident Steering Committee because at the beginning of the planning process systems leaders wanted to drive the decisions. Residents and some nonprofits organized to ensure residents and youth had the final say in the Steering Committee.”

Leading up the creation of the SABHC strategic plan there was a lot of excitement and momentum among participating residents. El Endowment had given BHC communities little clarity around the role, purpose, and functioning of the Hub as implementation started, leaving these decisions largely up to the community. And, as implementation of BHC began, the host agency for the Hub, LHA, continued to be primarily responsible for overseeing the SABHC strategic plan. Yet, after a few months, residents began to raise questions again about the optimal governance structure for SABHC, particularly in order to fully live into the community’s desire to be a resident-driven effort.

The SABHC Steering Committee became one of the primary platforms for debate about the best structure for local governance of SABHC. In 2011, members of the Steering Committee were increasingly confused about the purpose of the group, and frustrated by monthly meetings that resulted in a lot of conversation, but little or no action. Some Steering Committee members, particularly youth, started to lose interest and stopped attending these meetings. Some organizations and residents were also concerned about having a grantee organization serve as the Hub host agency in LHA. Because the role of Hub host agency and grantee were blurred at times, some wondered whether LHA would have excessive influence over the implementation of SABHC. At the heart of these tensions was the desire to ensure that residents were the ones driving the implementation of SABHC.

In summer 2012, the need to start the grant renewal process for the Hub host agency was rapidly approaching. As a result, SABHC, with input from the Steering Committee, decided to hire a local external consultant to facilitate a reflective process to reassess the role of the Steering Committee, the host agency, work groups and grantees. What started out as an opportunity to assess the Hub host agency, became a full appraisal of SABHC to rethink the Hub structures and how it could function most effectively.

The Hub renewal process, which began as a three-month endeavor and has been going on for over a year, has provided an opportunity for the different members of the collaborative to step back and consider the necessary SABHC structures, decision-making processes, roles, and responsibilities. It has been an intensive process, with weekly subcommittee meetings and full Steering Committee meetings twice a month. This has required a full commitment from residents and organization representatives.

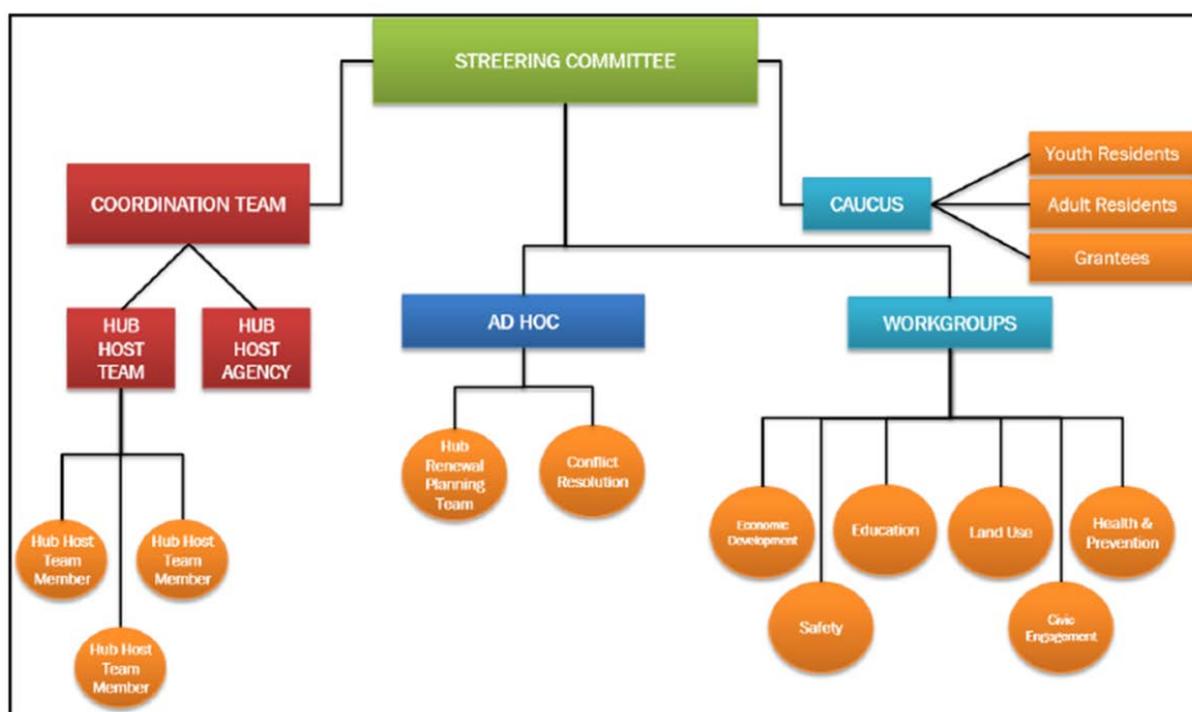
Through the Hub renewal process, the Steering Committee voted in early 2013 to opt for a fiscal agent model, excluding any organization from acting as the Hub host agency and SABHC grantee. As a result, in May 2013, the Steering Committee voted to have Charitable Ventures of Orange County to be the fiscal agent for the Hub. Now, there is a more clearly defined line between the work of BHC grantees and the SABHC. Several community members believe the time consuming and intensive Hub renewal

¹ Building Healthy Communities, The Hub: Playing a Central Role, The California Endowment webpage http://www.calendow.org/healthycommunities/pdfs/bhc_hub/BHC_The%20Hub%20Playing%20a%20Central%20Role.pdf

process has been a necessary growing pain built on the desire to create an infrastructure that empowers community members. As a result of this process, community ownership of the Hub structure (see Figure 3) appears to be increasing. For example, adult and youth residents have been trained, equipped, and empowered to facilitate meetings, a sign that the reins of the resident-driven initiative are truly in their hands.

This reflective, restructuring process, while important and even essential, has also come with a cost. For example, without clear leadership at the local level, EI Endowment's statewide partners and some community groups have had difficulty taking collective action. Individual grantees started creating their own campaigns, but these were largely independently designed and run. As a statewide partner working with SABHC put it, *"To run a campaign, you need to know your priorities. They [SABHC] weren't ready to choose their priorities because they were working on the governance structure."*

Figure 3: Santa Ana BHC Governance Organizational Structure



Early Strengths and Challenges

While the adult resident and youth resident leadership and organizing work is only a part of the SABHC work, it cuts across many of the issues (e.g., land use, health prevention, and safety) that grantees and others are trying to address. The development of SABHC over the past three years – its strengths, as well as challenges – provides information that local leaders and EI Endowment can use to better support the BHC work going forward.²

² Specific recommendations for EI Endowment based on the work in Santa Ana and other BHC communities will be included in the full Strategic Review report.

What's Going Well	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ SABHC grantees are creating a renewed interest in civic participation among traditionally marginalized adult and youth residents and youth in the Central Santa Ana community. ➤ El Endowment program manager's community organizing-oriented approach has increased the legitimacy of SABHC among residents and grantees. ➤ Being flexible and adapting the rules based on new data and what has been learned along the way, has helped move the work forward. ➤ The Hub renewal process is creating greater community ownership over SABHC ➤ Honoring and collaborating with movements and organizations that precede SABHC has led to quick wins. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The process of identifying the right Hub structure has created planning fatigue among some of the organizations and residents participating in SABHC. ➤ The Hub structure has become complex, and grantees and residents are confused by many different groups and their roles and responsibilities. ➤ It has been difficult bridging the interests of systems leaders with community organizers. ➤ SABHC is struggling to find a balance between engaging youth effectively in organizing efforts without distracting them from school and/or work.

What's Going Well

The following themes illustrate some of the most important strengths of the SABHC work:

- **SABHC grantees are creating a renewed interest in civic participation among traditionally marginalized adult and youth residents in the Central Santa Ana community.** While it's still early in the work of BHC, organizations participating in the collaborative are becoming more effective at empowering adult and youth residents and providing them with opportunities to raise their voice in public meetings (at the city and the Hub). The SABHC efforts have reached Spanish-speaking audiences and immigrants, who traditionally have been excluded from participation in community discussions. Also, youth civic participation is increasing; young people are attending and presenting at city council meetings and organized a recent mayoral debate. SABHC is supporting many organizations to train, inform, engage, and mobilize adult and youth residents.
- **El Endowment program manager's community organizing-oriented approach has increased the legitimacy of SABHC among residents and grantees.** Grantees appreciate the ways in which Mosqueda has engaged with the community. According to one grantee, *"She understands what community organizing means, and her coming on was important [...] She recognizes what has happened before SABHC [...] she asks for advice, which is nice."* Her approach and background as a community organizer has allowed her to develop a trusted relationship with residents and the organizations participating in the SABHC collaborative.
- **Being flexible and adapting the rules based on new data and what has been learned along the way, has helped move the work forward.** There have been instances where some of the guidelines set by El Endowment have not reflected the obstacles and challenges of doing the work on the ground, requiring flexibility. This likely was much more the case at the start of BHC, when program managers were still getting up to speed. In the case of Santa Ana, working strictly

in the official delimited zone did not resonate with grantees and residents. As one grantee and elected official explained, *“The zone serves a purpose, but what happens to the rest of the city? [...] You are focusing on a small population and you can make a difference there, but the problems go elsewhere.”* With that in mind, organizations in SABHC are prioritizing working in the zone, but are engaging with adult and youth residents from all across the city.

- The Hub renewal process is contributing to greater community ownership over SABHC.** The intensive Hub renewal process has been time consuming and challenging, yet also very powerful for residents. Through the Hub renewal process, and thanks to the residents’ energy, creativity and persistence, SABHC is creating a Hub structure that ensures greater community ownership and authentic engagement with adult and youth residents. As a community member explains *“The collaborative had growing pains, we are growing and learning. There will always be difficulties, but I think the process created a lot of leaders.”* The healthy debate that started with the renewal is helping residents to gain the skills to advocate for themselves, make changes in their community, and challenge power dynamics in Santa Ana.
- Honoring and collaborating with movements and organizations that precede SABHC has led to quick wins.** SABHC has partnered with networks and organizations that have been advocating for policy change long before the start of BHC. Partnering with coalitions, such as SACReD, or with pre-existing organizing groups increases SABHC’s legitimacy in the community and strengthens these efforts. As one community organizer observed, *“A lot of BHC funds went into SACReD. We were able to join our efforts and focus on the goal because of the BHC funds.”* In these early years of the BHC work, SABHC has achieved quick policy wins, in part, by connecting with campaigns already underway.

Challenges

The SABHC collaborative has also experienced some challenges as its work has evolved over the past three years:

- The process of identifying the right Hub structure has created planning fatigue among some of the organizations and residents participating in SABHC.** El Endowment left it up to each of the 14 BHC communities to determine the “right” Hub structure for BHC, providing little guidance to those working on the ground. In Santa Ana, as with many other BHC sites, the process of identifying the proper Hub structure (e.g., host agency, membership, responsibilities) has taken two years. During this time there have been many conflicts and transitions, which led people to question whether to stay engaged. One resident described feeling particularly worn out as the Hub renewal process was getting started and the steering committee had started to fracture saying, *“I was really close to quitting during the summer, the pressure was very unbearable. The atmosphere during committees was hard, everyone was walking on eggshells.”* Since then, the collaborative has been working tirelessly to clarify roles and responsibilities of the different groups within the Hub and ensure a smooth governance process for the collaborative.
- The Hub structure has become complex, and grantees and residents are confused by many different groups as well as their roles and responsibilities within the Hub.** In an effort to be inclusive, representative, and democratic, the SABHC structure has grown. As one resident explained, *“To be honest sometimes I’m confused with all the layers and number of groups.”* Without a clear understanding of the ways in which residents and grantees can work with SABHC, some residents and organizations will likely disengage. Clear internal communications with the members of the collaborative will be key to clarifying roles and responsibilities of the different entities within the SABHC Hub.

- **It has been difficult bridging the interests of systems leaders with community organizers.** Bringing together individuals representing a wide range of interests to the Hub table through Work Groups has surfaced conflicts between different types of organizations, particularly between community organizers and government officials. In order to rally residents effectively, some organizing groups perceive systems leaders to be opposition; as one community organizer described, *“You have the institution we were trying to change at the table. You can’t develop the plan to talk about the wolf, if the wolf is at the table.”* Similarly, systems leaders – many of which have jurisdictions that go well beyond the boundaries of the BHC area – express frustration that they are not considered partners that are also trying to act in the best interests of the community. El Endowment has communicated that the Hub should be a place for cross-sector collaboration. However, because the space encourages groups with different and sometimes competing agendas to come together it is understood that conflict inevitably will arise. El Endowment has largely assumed that the local program manager and Hub staff will manage these conflicts.
- **SABHC is struggling to find a balance between engaging youth effectively in organizing efforts without distracting them from school and/or work.** Many of the youth engaged in the Santa Ana work are very excited about participating in the work and some of them attend meetings several times a week. However, a subset of these young leaders is struggling to do well in school. As one grantee reflected, *“I have a lot of youth very involved with SABHC but their grades are suffering. We must provide some extra support for those who have stepped up in those organizations.”* While El Endowment has emphasized the importance of youth involvement in SABHC, the unintended consequences of the hyper-involvement of youth in organizing and advocacy activities have not been addressed. SABHC will need to find the right balance between engaging these youth in community organizing work and supporting their prospects of getting a job that will provide a good standard of living.

Looking Ahead

SABHC has experienced numerous necessary transitions over the past four years, including three different host agencies, three Hub Managers (the current position is still being filled temporarily), and two different foundation program managers. Currently, there is renewed excitement around the work among adult and youth residents, and grantees, but there are still important decisions on the horizon for SABHC. This includes choosing a new Hub Manager and Hub staff, as well as finalizing the role and decision making structures for the Hub. As the Hub renewal process indicates, the collaborative is well on its way to pursuing a transparent and inclusive process that will legitimize the new Hub structure in the eyes of residents and bring direction to the SABHC work.

While it is still early in the SABHC journey, adult and youth residents are starting to feel more empowered. They are more aware of and knowledgeable about their community and its struggles. They are also beginning to speak up in public forums – such as city council meetings – and private forums – such as Hub Steering Committee meetings. This is a critical part of the success of the initiative and what will stay behind after SABHC ends. As program manager Mosqueda puts it, *“Ultimately it’s about the human capital we leave behind, that’s what’s going to stay here after we’re gone – empowered residents and youth.”*

SABHC is in a unique position to continue to empower adult and youth residents so they can become change agents themselves. El Endowment plays a critical role in supporting SABHC’s engagement with adult and youth residents. Foundation leaders should consider how they can continue to support resident power building in Santa Ana and the rest of the BHC sites. Empowered residents will have the ability to

change the city's narrative and transform Santa Ana into a healthier community for everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, or status. One young leader offered the following vision:

"I want to see everyone in our community be experienced, educated, and aware that they can change things in our community. There will always be issues we have to fix and that's why I want people to feel empowered to speak up and know who and where to speak to."

As the SABHC work continues, there is a shared hope for even greater levels of civic participation by traditionally marginalized groups in Santa Ana. Through this work, problems can be reframed and better identified, effective solutions implemented, and changes sustained that will improve the health of the Santa Ana community well into the future.



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