

# COVID-19 Community Task Force



# MONTHLY MEETING REPORT

September Meeting

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Boulder County has engaged the Philanthropiece Foundation to form a [COVID-19 Community Task Force](#) consisting of 11 community members from diverse communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. In addition, 11 Cultural Brokers (Boulder County staff from various departments) will pair up with Task Force members. This partnership has formed The Community Engagement Team, housed at the Community Action Programs Division at the Community Services Department.

The Task Force will be meeting on a monthly basis until April 2021. The monthly reports will be released approximately two weeks after the Task Force meets. This first report contains the findings of our second meeting and is divided into three sections:

1. Task Force input
2. Cultural brokers commentaries
3. Community resources based on the community input

The first section contains a summary of recurrent community issues expressed for this meeting. Task Force members were given an assignment to reach out to their community to report on daily experiences during the COVID-19. The purpose of these reports were to gather data on accessibility barriers, gaps in services, opportunities, and other pertinent experiences. The input includes recurrent issues around the lack of equitable access to resources, inconsistent communications, physical and mental health concerns due to ableism, housing insecurities, abuses to undocumented residents and the economic impact to the diverse profiles of the Boulder County businesses community and workforce.

For this month, the second section talks about the Boulder County COVID-19 Cultural Brokers team and their collaboration with the COVID-19 Community Task Force members. This section will be expanded and updated in our next report. The third section contains a list of resources and potential projects to be considered based on the

Task Force's expressed needs.

Please note, as we move forward with the project the reports will contain more information, commentaries and resources based on specific community needs. We encourage partners to submit strategies and ideas for the FTS Community Engagement Team, the COVID-19 Community Task Force and the Cultural Brokers to review and provide input.

## SECTION 1

# COMMUNITY NEEDS

This section is dedicated to present a bullet point summary of the expressed community needs by the Task Force members.

**T**he recurrent community issues expressed in our last meeting include lack of equitable accessibility to resources, inconsistent communications, physical and mental health concerns due to ableism, housing insecurities, abuses to undocumented residents and the economic impact to the diverse profiles of the Boulder County businesses and workforce.

### **Recurrent Issues for this month:**

- Resource accessibility
  - Multiple resources are not properly advertised or institutions do not have the capacity to help new customers to help navigate the systems and procedures to access them. Elderly residents have felt left out. Residents in more isolated communities like the mountains need adjustments to the services delivered.
- Communications
  - There is a lack of consistent communication strategies. Information delivery needs improvement in areas of translation and interpretation, cultural competency and expanded access for diverse languages, and to also consider the needs of the deaf and hard of hearing. Local community organizations play an important role because of the trusted relationships they have with residents. These organizations provide direct contact with community members who aren't necessarily online or in direct contact with government resources.

- Physical & Mental Health
  - The total or partial shutdown of services has negatively affected several community members in areas of physical and mental health. Inconsistency in guidelines and procedure compliance cause health concerns and aversion to gatherings that lead to feelings of isolation. Digital gatherings are partial due to digital divide and they are also causing fatigue.
- Undocumented Residents Needs
  - Fear, lack of culturally relevant communications or staff to guide them prevent undocumented residents from reaching out and accessing services. Also, undocumented residents are still subject to landlord harassment and evictions even with the evictions ban in place.
- Economic Impact on Businesses and Workforce
  - Price gouging and lack of alternative sources of funding cause a significant strain to small and medium businesses in the area. The workforce is being affected by a decrease in income due to budget cuts. Worker rights violations and a lack of child-care, among other missing resources, present a higher risk for low income families with multiple jobs.
- Education
  - Internet disparities and/or lack of computers create technological barriers to online learning for some families. Childcare, especially for single parents, is also a major obstacle. Both teachers and parents have struggled with confusing information coming from schools and the district - everyone is looking for transparency on how decisions are made.

## **Highlighted Issues for this month:**

- Ableism - A recurrent issue across multiple areas including communications and health service. Communications need to include captions for the deaf and hard of hearing as well as those with developmental disabilities. Physical therapy that requires special equipment has been inaccessible to certain members of the community due to health centers being closed.
- Language Access - Timely translations and interpretations are needed to expand equitable access to resources. Covid-19 relief opportunities are lost by non-English speaking community members due to poor translations or the communications of a resource advertised too close to the application deadline.

## SECTION 2

# CULTURAL BROKERS COMMENTARIES

This section is dedicated to present Cultural Brokers commentaries based on the Task Force monthly input.

**C**ultural Brokers will be paired with the COVID-19 Community Task Force members this month. This section will be expanded and updated in our next report.

### **Who is on the Cultural Brokers Team?**

The Cultural Brokers team is composed of 11 Boulder County internal staff who are on the frontlines working with the diverse communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. The team reflects the Task Force composition and may work with or are part of the diverse communities represented by the Task Force.

### **Cultural Brokers Role**

Cultural Brokers will pair up with a Task Force member to build support on existing community relationships and provide commentaries on the Task Force's input and expressed needs related to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Cultural Brokers are not expected to do case management or develop policies, advocate, or engage in project development.

## SECTION 3

# COMMUNITY RESOURCES

This section is dedicated to present resources and potential community projects based on the input provided this month.

**A**s we move forward, the reports will contain more information, commentaries and resources based on specific community needs. We encourage partners to submit strategies and ideas for the FTS Community Engagement Team, the COVID-19 Community Task Force and the Cultural Brokers to review and provide input.

- Articles
  - Masks make communication difficult for Colorado's deaf and hearing-loss community - <https://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/contact7/masks-make-communication-difficult-for-colorados-deaf-and-hearing-loss-community>
  
- Resource - Face Mask & Language Access
  - <https://www.hsdco.org/accessible-deaf-friendly-face-mask/>
  - <https://oeo.wa.gov/en/language-access-interpretation-and-translation>
  
- Ideas - Improvements in Coordination Efforts
  - Two ideas were proposed in the area of resource and communications efforts. Several positions have been created in response to this need. Boulder County and other community partners need to keep synchronizing and improving efforts to provide a steady flow of information in terms of communications and input gathering.

# CONTACT INFORMATION

The Forward Together Safely Community Engagement Team is housed at the Community Action Programs (CAP) Division. We invite you to communicate with our team and submit resources, questions or strategies for the Task Force to review and provide commentary.

## Community Engagement Team

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