

# Community Strategies for Social & Emotional Wellbeing through Social Connection & Reduction of Social Isolation: Reimagining Behavioral Health

2024 CCO Oregon Conference  
October 2, 2024  
Salem Convention Center, OR



# Panelists



**Akiko Imamura  
Betcher**  
(she/her)

Community Health  
Consultant  
Kaiser Permanente  
[akiko.i.betcher@kp.org](mailto:akiko.i.betcher@kp.org)



**Amina Sheikh-Wali**  
(she/her)

Community Health  
Consultant  
Kaiser Permanente  
[amina.b.sheikh-  
wali@kp.org](mailto:amina.b.sheikh-wali@kp.org)



**Jacinta Galea'i**  
(she/her)

Executive Director  
Samoa Pacific  
Development Corporation  
[Jacinta@samoapdx.org](mailto:Jacinta@samoapdx.org)

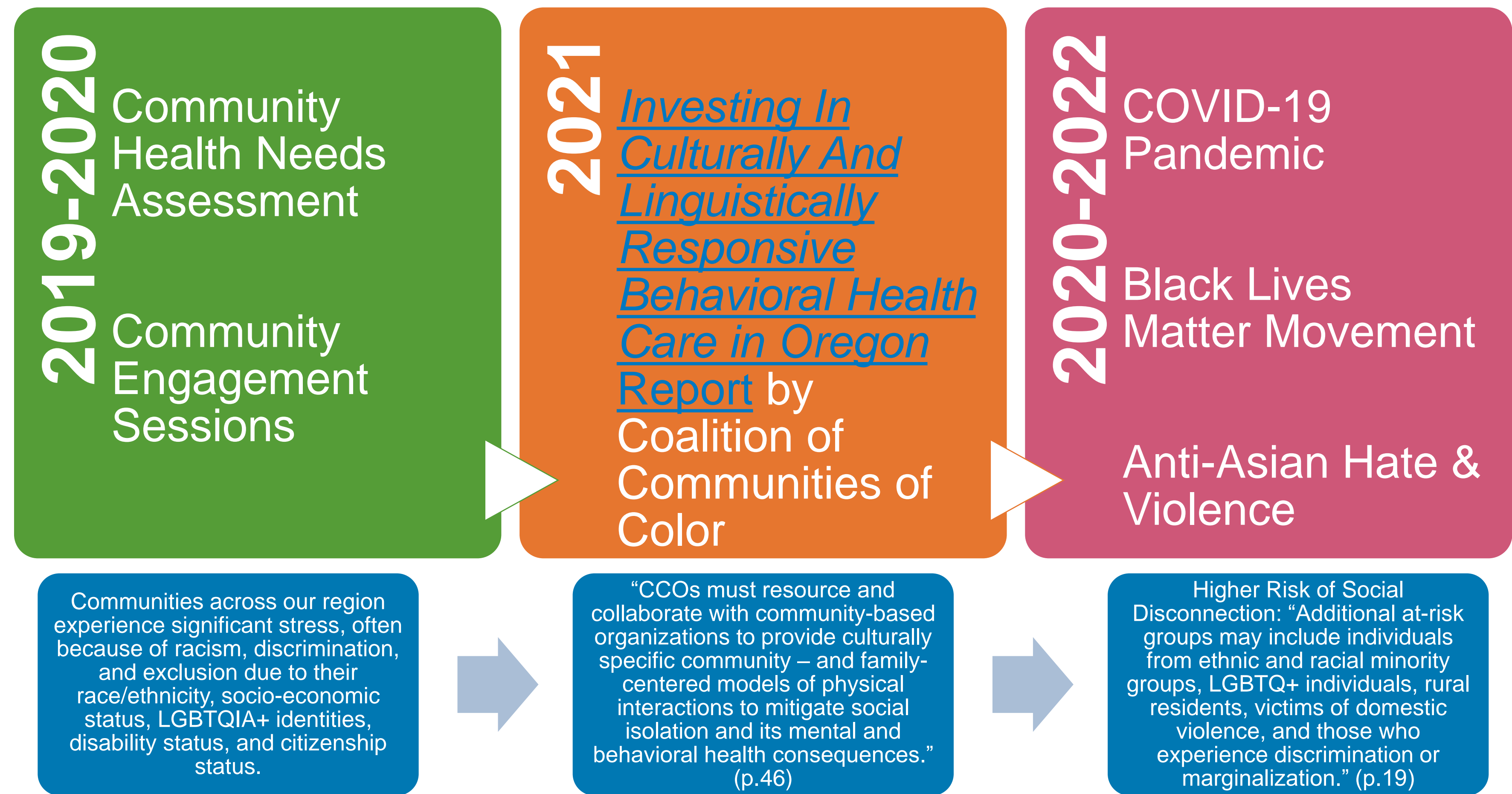


**Melissa Laurie**  
(she/her)

Research Associate  
ABCultural Drivers  
[melissa@abcculturaldriver  
s.com](mailto:melissa@abcculturaldrivers.com)

## **Creation of the Social & Emotional Wellbeing Grant Initiative**

# Creation of the Social & Emotional Wellbeing Grant Initiative



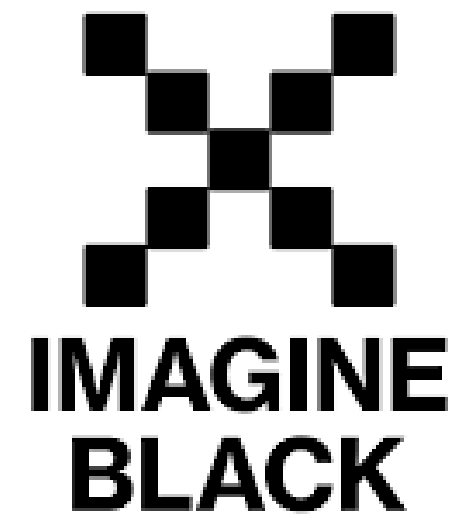
**Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation**  
<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf>

# Elements of the SEW Grant Initiative

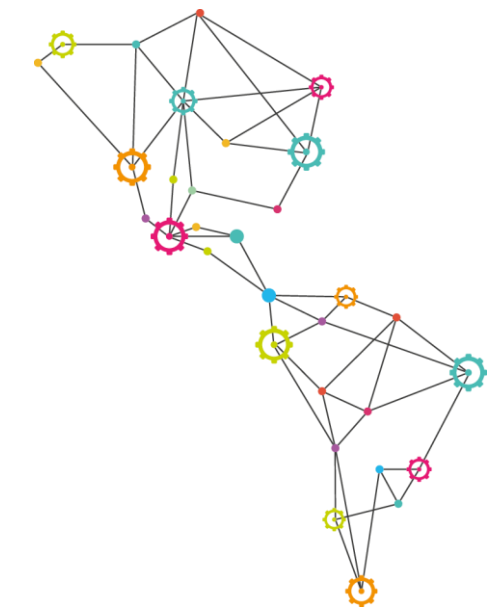
Duration	Funding	Grantees
30 months (January 2023-June 2025)	Total of \$3.3M (\$300,000 per grantee)	11 Nonprofit Community-based Organizations serving BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), Immigrant and Refugee, and LGBTQIA+ Communities
Convenings	Learning Opportunities	RFP (Invitation to Apply)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Q2 2023 Evaluation Discussions</li><li>-Q2 2024 Community Gathering</li><li>-Q2 2025 Results Sharing</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Evaluation Co-design &amp; Support</li><li>Peer Learning &amp; Sharing through Convenings</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Partnered with Coalition of Communities of Color to create RFP</li><li>-Kaiser Permanente received 76 applications-a record high for open application process</li></ul>



## Grantees



## Project Partners



## **Grantee Spotlight: Samoa Pacific Development Corp & Utopia PDX “The Pacific Island Banyan Tree Project”**

# Pacific Islanders

Pacific Islanders are indigenous to over 20,000 islands and 30 different nations across three ethnographic regions: Melanesia and Polynesia. Each PI Community has its own language, culture and history. The Pacific Islander community also includes a number of political statuses: COFA citizenship, undocumented, U.S. National and U.S. citizens. The unique racial equity issues, or lack of access to basic needs, often get erased or obscured by aggregate data categories like “Asian Pacific Islander” or “API.”

(Oregon Pacific Islander Coalition)



# The Banyan Tree Project

- Promotes intergenerational cultural connections to promote healing and address mental health and social well-being for Pacific Islander (PI) youth, young adults, and elders, with a special focus on Queer and Transgender Pacific Islanders (QTPIs)
- Serves to address several community health needs within the PI community in Portland, which include social connections for the elderly, safe and sacred spaces for QTPIs who may have experienced religious trauma that blocks their connection to the wider PI community, and cultural empowerment for PI youth

## Samoa Pacific Development Corporation (SPDC)

Serves Samoans and Pacific Islander communities in Oregon through education, economic resources and cultural empowerment

## United Territories of Pacific Islanders Alliance Portland Chapter (UTOPIA PDX)

A nonprofit run by and for the queer and trans Pacific Islanders in Oregon and SW Washington by providing sacred spaces to strengthen the minds and bodies of QTPIs through community organizing, political engagement and cultural stewardship

# The Creation of Vibrant Exchanges (The COVE) Utopia PDX

When living in diaspora, it becomes difficult to hang on and pass down cultural traditions, practices, and rituals. The COVE program restores and reimagines the integral roles of Queer and Trans Pacific Islanders (QTPIs) within our communities. It also responds to the pressing needs to bridge generational gaps within the QTPI community, ensuring the transfer of traditional art forms, wisdom and values to future generations. Our monthly workshops serve as a dynamic platform for learning and practicing traditional art forms, encompassing a diverse range of expressions including weaving, fabrics, and creating with nature.

# SPDC Projects

## **Pacific Islanders-Educators Partnership of Portland Metro**

- Create a sustainable support infrastructure for Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students and families by building a robust community partnership and establishing resource hubs by:
  - Forming a Pacific Islander Educators Coalition to share resources and best practices, enduring ongoing support and collaboration
  - Aligning with the Student Success Plan (SPP)\* strategy of building community partnerships to support student success

## **Annual Samoan Festival of the Portland - Vancouver Communities**

- Promote and celebrate culture
- Gather, heal and strengthen connections
- Build community and increase visibility

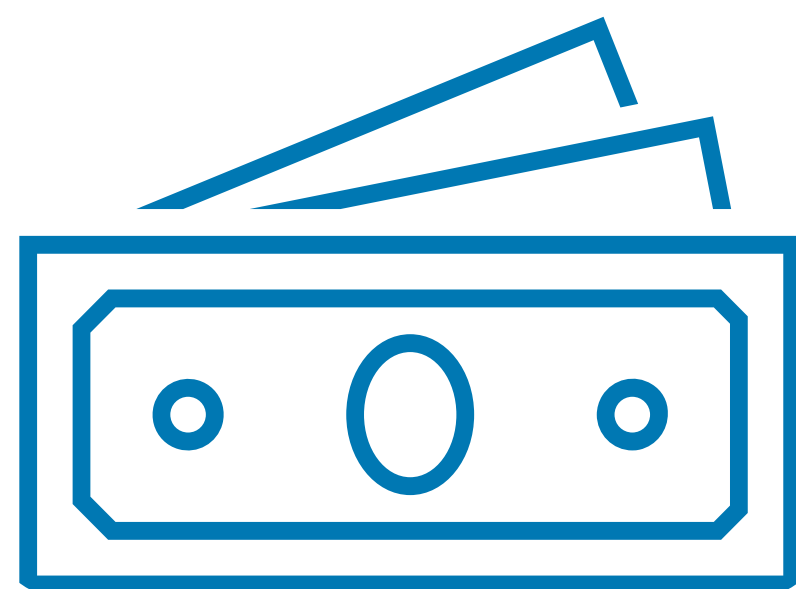
\*Student Success Plan (SPP) is a part of Oregon Dpt. Of Education's Pacific Island Student Success Act



# How are the grant projects helping the social and emotional wellbeing of the Pacific Islander Community?

- Pacific Islanders are the fastest growing demographic in Oregon. Our students are experiencing above average suspension/expulsion rates and decreasing attendance to staggering drop out rates. (Oregon Pacific Islander Coalition)
- Culturally responsive programs that honor students' cultural identities and provide targeted support are critical to ensuring our students succeed and that their families have a chance to thrive.

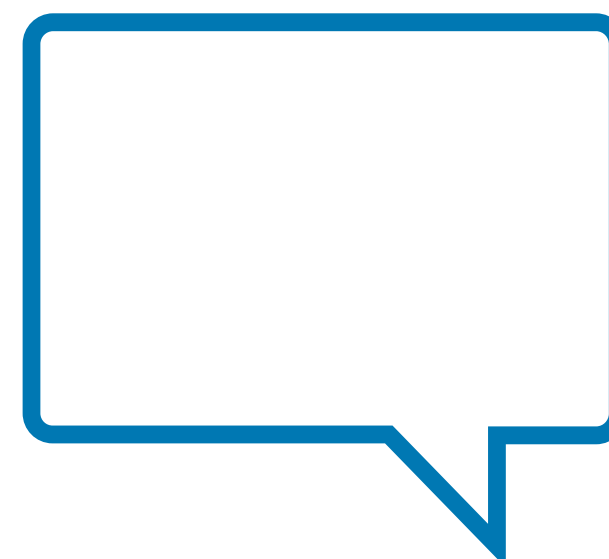
# Challenges



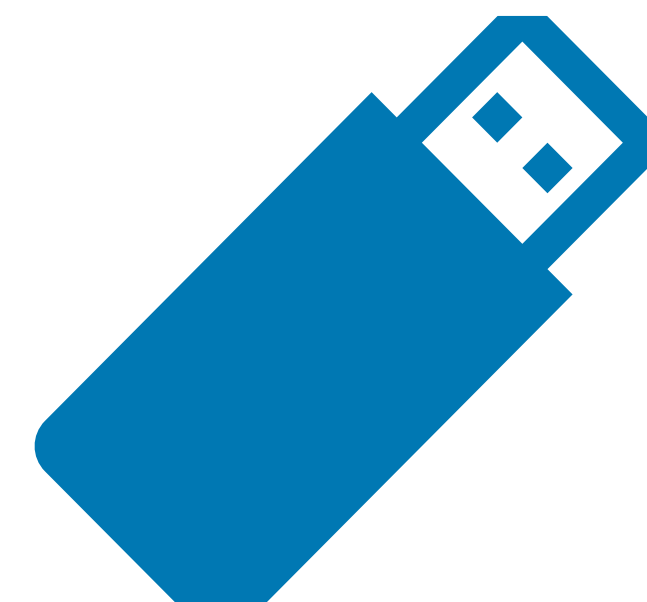
**Underinvestment**



**Little is known and  
invisibility**



**Pacific Islanders are  
not a monolith-diverse  
language and cultures**



**Data erasure or  
obscurity**

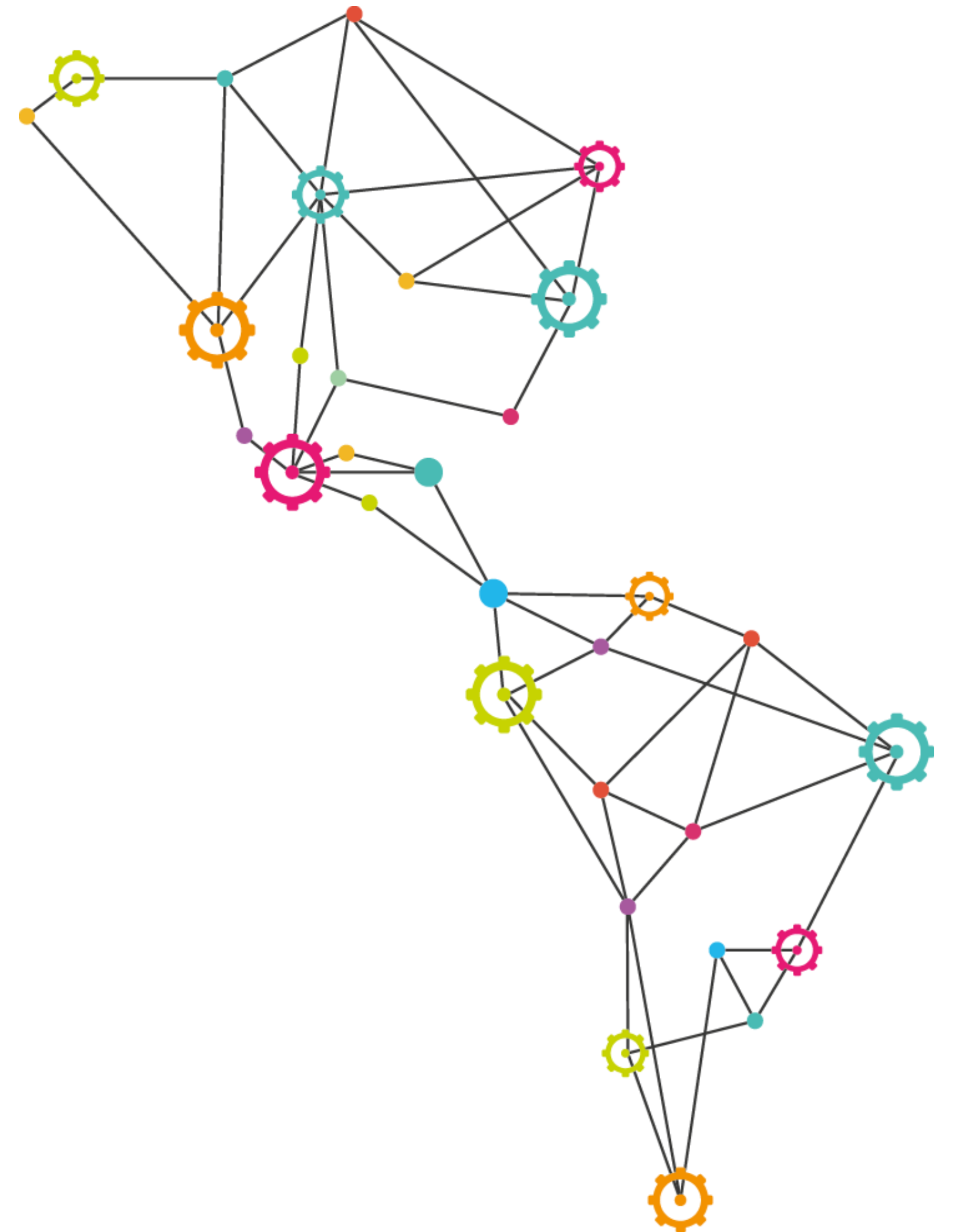
# Evaluation/Technical Assistance Design



# AB Cultural Drivers

AB Cultural Drivers is a Community Research, Engagement, and Evaluation consultancy firm based in Portland, OR, and Guadalajara, Mexico.

We use our specialized skills to serve historically marginalized communities, organizations, and those serving them, emphasizing community-building, engagement, and research practices that authentically respond to the diverse identities, cultures, languages, and multifaceted needs of communities.



# Topics

## **Community Strategies**

- . What does wellbeing look like for community partners?
- . What changes do partners want to see?
- . What are community strategies for social and emotional wellbeing?

## **Evaluation capacity-building & collaborative learning**

- . How is our community centered different than traditional evaluation?
- . What are we evaluating?
- . What have we learned so far?

Gratitude and Caveats



# Social and Emotional Wellbeing in Our Community

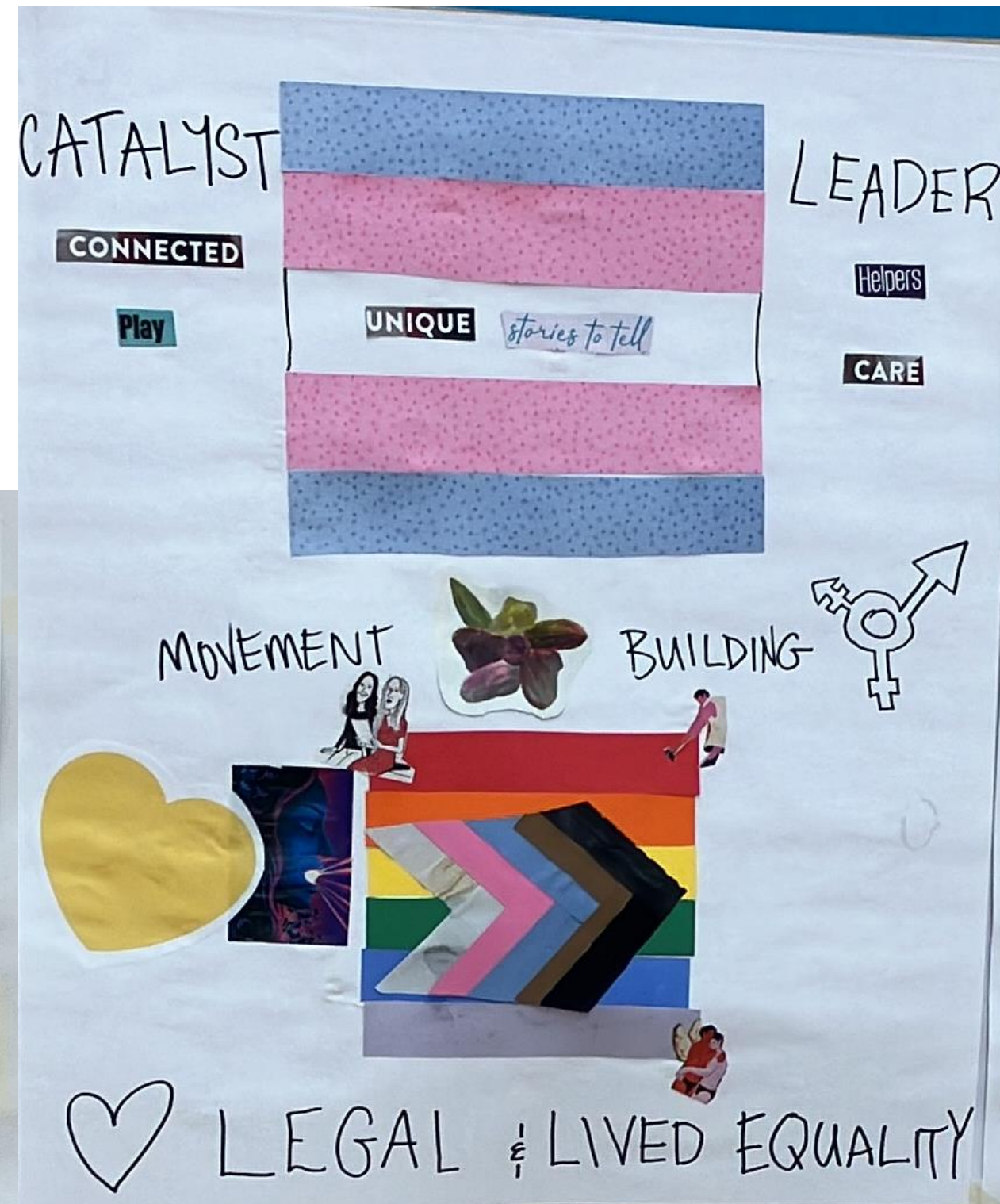




# Community Strategies for Social and Emotional Wellbeing



Credit: El Programa Hispano



Credit: Basic Rights Oregon

## Health beyond survival

*People come together in mourning, in conflict, and in shared healing  
and mutual aide*

*The container for the village, to nourish the village*

*Community elders gay icons respecting the past and bringing us into  
the future*

*The river is bringing knowledge from the pandemic with us*

*Respect for difference: We don't have all the same ideas but join together in difference*

*Spouse passed away, without family. This is a space to be themselves comfortable and happy*

*We are tired of resisting and not having enough.  
Strength in joy, joy in the outdoors*

*Not being afraid to take up space*



11 Funded Projects

30+ distinct  
programs

1,000+ events

30,000 attendees

## Programming will include:

- peer to peer mentoring
- nature and cultural immersion
- referrals basic/MH services
- skills building
- intergenerational activities
- leadership/advocacy training
- large community celebrations
- small workshop series
- online and IRL
- canoeing, backpacking
- meals together
- community gardening
- running clubs, yoga
- healing circles
- altar making
- community organizing

Activities focused on all domains of wellbeing: social, cultural, emotional, physical, intellectual, environmental, financial, spiritual, and occupational wellbeing

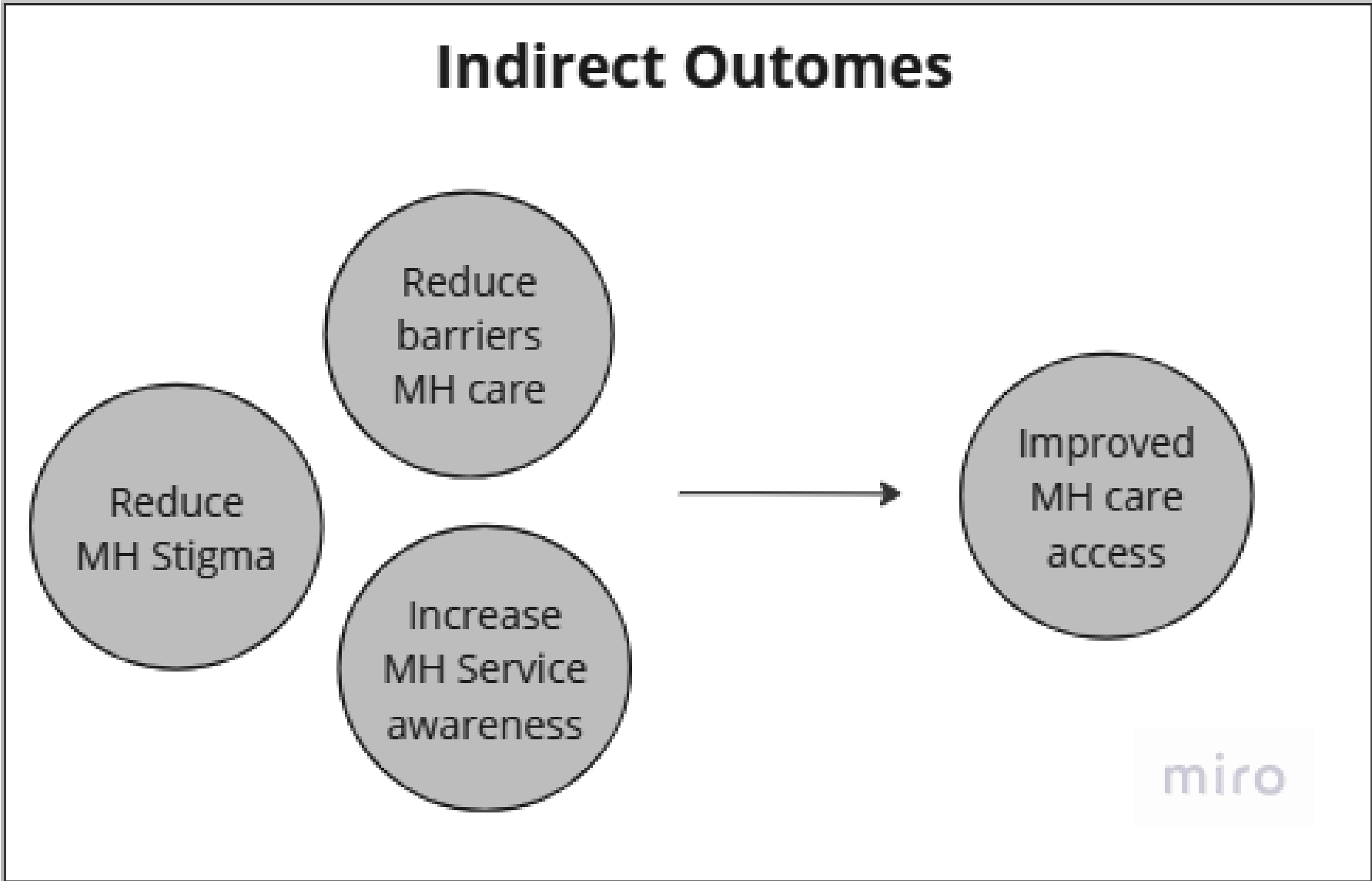
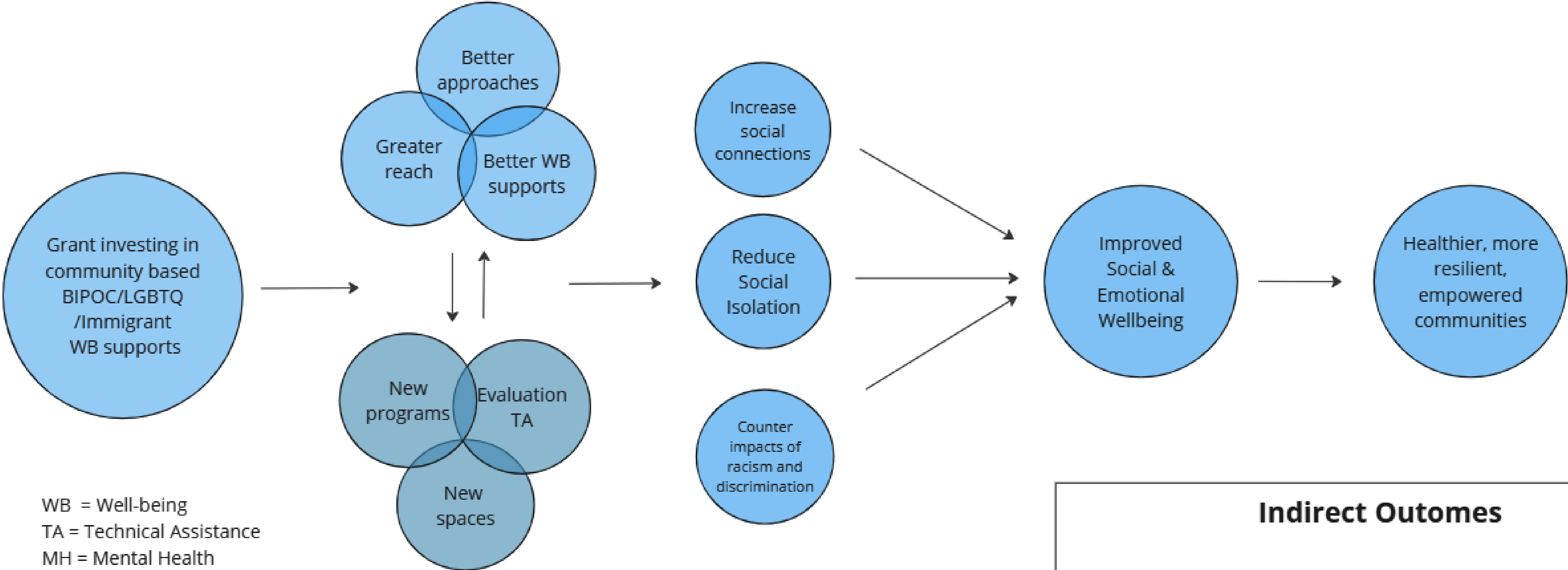
Traditional Evaluation	Culturally Responsive Evaluation
<b>EVALUATOR:</b> Formally trained evaluators are the experts.	<b>Grantees, community members know best</b> their issues and strengths.
<b>ROLE OF EVALUATOR:</b> Leader, judge, expert	<b>Facilitator, translator, convener</b>
<b>DESIGN &amp; PLANNING:</b> Evaluator presents design for funder approval.	<b>Prioritizing rapport and trust building</b> in an <b>inclusive planning</b> process that infuses <b>multiple world views</b> .
<b>DATA COLLECTION:</b> Conducted by evaluation professional	Facilitated by evaluator; <b>stakeholders trained</b> in some collection methods and implement them.
<b>ANALYSIS:</b> Results and their meaning are analyzed by evaluator	Results and their meaning are derived based on <b>culture and system analysis</b> .
<b>REPORTING:</b> Written report & briefing to funder	<b>Disseminated</b> to broader community.
<b>APPLICATION OF FINDINGS:</b> Findings used as monitoring, judging device.	Findings used to <b>build capacity of community and community organizations</b> .

Credit: Hanh Cao Yu [Foundation Resource Guide on Commissioning Multicultural Evaluation](#) 2005



# Evaluation capacity-building & collaborative learning

- . Emergent, iterative mixed methods analysis and design
- . Shared decision making and collective definitions
- . Simple set of adaptable tools on offer
- . Tailor and co-design when invited
- . Mutual meaning making and storytelling



# Adaptable Templates

## Data Collection Templates

- . Demographic Question Bank
- . Program Quality and Improvement Question Bank
- . Community Wellbeing Pre/Post Questionnaire

*Building capacity to track program numbers and demographics*

*for continuous quality improvement and documentation of program learning*

## Data Management Templates

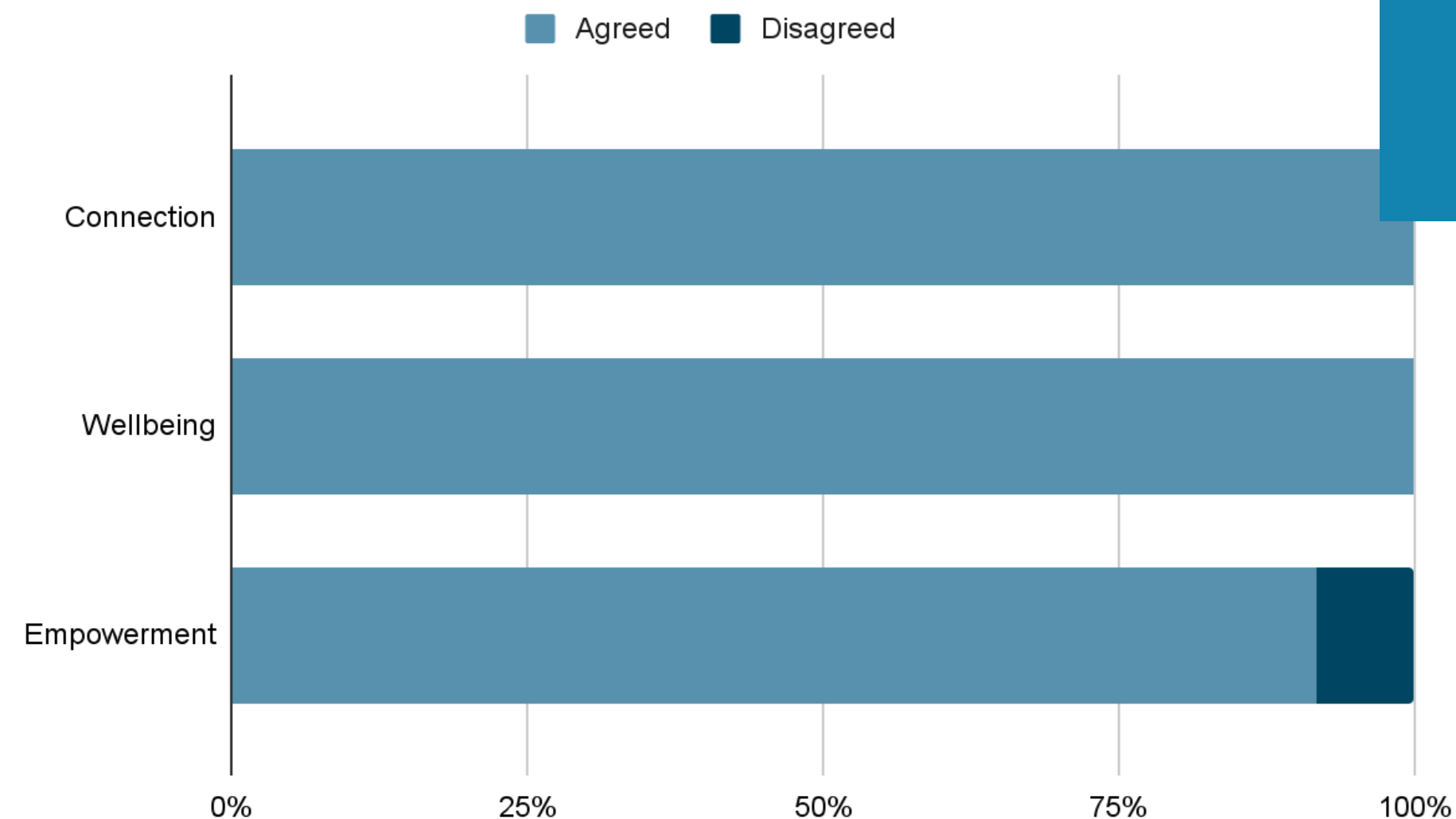
- . Basic format for organizing all project data
- . Developed database (select partners)

*Building infrastructure for data management and reporting that will extend beyond life of the grant*

# Early Learning: From Community Wellbeing Pre/Post Questionnaire

*Iterative meaning making process - this has just started with partners so this will change*

*Helped them relax and leave stress and family problems behind. They value the importance of learning to listen to and accept themselves, which strengthens their self-esteem, their self-love, their family ties and allows them to set goals with confidence.*



**Table 5. Qualitative Mental and Behavioral Health Support Needs (N = 259)**

Needs Identified for Self	Needs Identified for Children, Elders, and Community
Cultural group/community connection	Basic needs, financial support, food
Basic needs, financial support, food	Cultural group/community connection
Peer support groups and group therapy (e.g., Black mothers and teens affinity groups)	More access to low cost or no cost behavioral health programs, social services, health, and dental providers
Physical human contact and in-person social interaction	Referrals to more advocates and guides for navigating health systems, and more information/materials in various languages
Fun, creative, and stimulating activities, including art-based activities and access to nature	Affordable and culturally specific and community-centered rehabilitation options
Education, tutoring, and student support including culturally and linguistically specific reading resources	Physical human contact and in-person social interaction

*Participants overwhelmingly requested more fun social activities including cultural, art, recreational, community building, support and advocacy and physical activity. A smaller number of participants requested more traditional support groups (described below).*



## **Question & Comments: Culturally-Centered Approach to Social & Emotional Wellbeing**

## Questions & Comments

- What roles **CCOs (and your organizations)** play in improving emotional wellness of your members through community-centered approach?





## Special Thanks to:



**Rujuta Gaonkar, MPH**

Public Policy Advisor

Oregon Department of Human  
Services

Creator of the SEW Grant Initiative

**Andres Lopez, Ph.D.**

Research Director

Coalition of Communities of Color  
CCC BH Report and RFP co-writer

**Mira Mohsini, Ph.D.**

Senior Researcher

Coalition of Communities of Color  
CCC BH Report and RFP co-writer



# Grantee Projects (1 of 2)

Organization	Project Title	Location	Target Population	Website
<b>APANO</b>	Our Future and Our Strength is Connection	Portland and Beaverton	Asian (Chinese and Vietnamese) Community	<a href="https://www.apano.org/our-work/cultural-work">https://www.apano.org/our-work/cultural-work</a>
<b>Basic Rights Oregon</b>	Catalyst Transgender Leadership Development Program	Portland (State-wide)	Transgender Community	<a href="https://www.basicrights.org/leadership-programs">https://www.basicrights.org/leadership-programs</a>
<b>Black Oregon Land Trust</b>	Nature-Based Community Healing & Nourishment for Black Portland Mothers	Corbett and Portland	Black/African American/Native American Mothers	<a href="https://www.blackoregonlandtrust.org/">https://www.blackoregonlandtrust.org/</a>
<b>Center for African Immigrants and Refugees (CAIRO)</b>	African Community Health Check	Portland and Beaverton	African Immigrant and Refugee Community	<a href="https://cairopdx.org/">https://cairopdx.org/</a>
<b>Plaza de Nuestra Comunidad (f.k.a. Central Latino Americano) &amp; Raíces de Bienestar</b>	Community Building Events and Classes for Latinx and Immigrant Families	Eugene and Springfield	Latine Community	<a href="https://centrolatinoamericano.org/">https://centrolatinoamericano.org/</a>
<b>El Programa Hispano Catolico</b>	Holistic Social & Emotional Health Support for the Aging Latinx Communities	Multnomah & Clackamas Counties	Elderly Latinx Community	<a href="https://elprograma.org/">https://elprograma.org/</a> <a href="https://www.raicesdebienestar.org/">https://www.raicesdebienestar.org/</a>



# Grantee Projects (2 of 2)

Organization	Project Title	Location	Target Population	Website
<b>Friendly House (Elder Pride Service)</b>	Friendly House Services & Support for LGBTQ+ Older Adults	Portland	LGBTQIA+ Older Adults Community	<a href="https://fhpdx.org/for-adults-seniors/elder-pride-services/">https://fhpdx.org/for-adults-seniors/elder-pride-services/</a>
<b>Imagine Black Futures</b>	Ujima Community App Project	Portland (state-wide)	Black/African American Community	<a href="https://www.imagineblack.org/">https://www.imagineblack.org/</a>
<b>Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN)</b>	Circuitos de Sanación (Healing Circles)	Woodburn	Latina Community	<a href="https://pcun.org/">https://pcun.org/</a>
<b>Samoa Pacific Development Corp. &amp; Utopia PDX</b>	The Pacific Island Banyan Tree Project	Portland	Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders Community	<a href="https://www.samoapdx.org/">https://www.samoapdx.org/</a> <a href="https://www.utopiaportland.org/">https://www.utopiaportland.org/</a>
<b>Wild Diversity</b>	Belonging and Healing in the Outdoors	Portland (and Oregon wilderness)	BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ Communities	<a href="https://wilddiversity.com/">https://wilddiversity.com/</a>