

APPENDIX B

Forces of Change Assessment



PURPOSE

The Forces of Change Assessment (FOCA) identifies forces, trends, factors, events, or changes that affect the community served and the local public health system. The assessment focuses on answering the questions:

- What is occurring or might occur that affects the health of our community or the local public health system?
- What specific threats or opportunities are generated by these occurrences?

METHODOLOGY

CCDPH collaborated with the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) and the Partnership for Healthy Chicago to conduct the FOCA via two methodologies: an online survey and partnership discussion.

The online survey was developed by a committee of the Partnership for Healthy Chicago and conducted between December 13, 2018 and January 9, 2019. Organizations were asked to share widely with their networks to get a broad level of response.

In total, 122 individuals completed the survey, representing 86 different organizations. Of these 38 (31%) served suburban Cook County: 30 (24.6%) who serve both the city of Chicago and suburban Cook County and eight (6.6%) who serve just suburban Cook County. A wide cross-section of sectors was represented including not only public health, health care providers and systems, policy and advocacy, and research, but also housing, social services, community development, workforce development, education, behavioral health, environmental health, and more (see Figure 1).

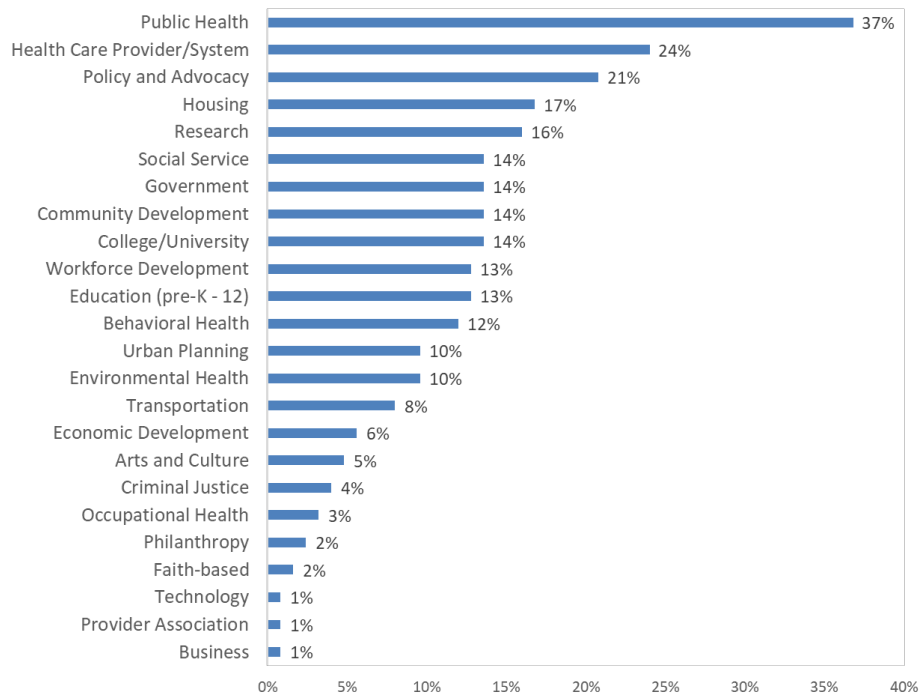


Figure 1: Sectors completing FOCA survey

Survey respondents mentioned 784 issues, which were grouped into 95 areas. The issues were further compiled into 15 categories. At a meeting in February 2019, partnership members then engaged in structured, facilitated breakout sessions to review each of these consolidated force areas, prioritize one or two key threats and on or two key opportunities, and present these priorities to the larger group. Participants were encouraged to consider systems change, policy, research, and community engagement.

FINDINGS

Based on the survey results and consolidation of findings, a total of fifteen forces were identified that affect the public health system and communities in suburban Cook County. These were as follows (in order of frequency of mentions, with percent of total mentions listed):

1. Political forces - local, state, federal (23%)
2. Economic trends (10%)
3. Built environment (10%)
4. Insurance & healthcare (8%)
5. Population shifts (8%)
6. Environment (7%)
7. Data, science, & technology (6%)
8. Criminal justice/community safety (5%)
9. Racism & discrimination (5%)
10. Mental health & substance use (5%)
11. Immigration (5%)
12. Contemporary life (4%)
13. Language & access to resources (3%)
14. Giving/partnerships (3%)
15. Education & workforce development (2%)

From discussion of these overarching forces, seven key threats and six key opportunities were identified.

Threats identified:

- Racism and prejudice against people of color and those from other countries
- Programs that are not based on the best information about what works
- Not including people of color and community members most affected in decision making
- Poor health for older adults, people with disabilities and LGBTQ
- Policies developed or enforced by the federal government that threaten the health and wellbeing of Suburban Cook County residents
- Lack of opportunities and good jobs needed to achieve and maintain a healthy life
- Lack of investment in specific communities and gentrification

Opportunities identified:

- Strengthen collaboration across government, organizations, and communities
- Advocate for fair policies
- Strengthen programs to address racism and health inequities
- Educate about the connection between how people live (ability to live in a safe home, attend a good school, get a good job) and their health
- Use data to show what works and replicate effective programs and policies
- Coordinate healthcare and social service interventions to better serve communities and individuals

The FOCA was conducted in 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and does not reflect its impacts. CCDPH partners have shared that COVID-19 has significantly exacerbated existing racial and ethnic, economic, and other inequities in the communities that we serve. Specific threats that have taken on greater salience include racism and prejudice, poor and inequitable health, lack of opportunities and good jobs, and federal policies that threaten the health and well-being of suburban Cook County residents. Simultaneously, partners have shared that COVID-19 has opened new opportunities to strengthen collaboration, coordinate health and social services, address racism and health inequities, educate about connections between how people live and their health, and use data to improve program effectiveness.