

# Communities Organizing to Promote Equity (COPE)

## Background

In partnership with KDHE, the University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC), Departments of Family Medicine and Population Health will help build Local Health Equity Action Teams (LHEATs) in 20 Kansas communities. These LHEATs, comprised of community leaders and a new cadre of community health workers (CHWs), will create opportunities to work together to promote health equity. KUMC activities will include supporting the development of LHEATs in each county (20 counties total) to engage diverse stakeholders in shared learning and action to reach communities facing the biggest barriers to health and wellness. Central to this effort is the role of CHWs who will build trust, support social needs, and advance efforts driven by the LHEATs.

## Approach

### 1) Local Health Equity Action Team (LHEAT) Development and Support

Each county will be supported in developing a LHEAT comprised of members that represent and/or serve the group(s) of Kansans being prioritized, as well as CHWs and other organizations engaging in health equity work.

### 2) Community Health Worker (CHW) Hiring and Training

Up to three CHWs will be hired in each county to implement local activities related to addressing health inequities and enhancing COVID-19 testing and vaccine delivery, adapted as appropriate for each community. The CHWs are the operating arm of the LHEATs as they facilitate priority activities while also building trust and rapport with community members.

### 3) Learning Collaboratives

KUMC will support a learning collaborative for the LHEATs. These Learning Collaborative meetings will provide a space to share successful strategies between the counties and regions, fostering innovation and advocacy among the community driven LHEATs, as well as provide an opportunity to problem solve challenges as a group.

In parallel, a CHW Learning Collaborative will facilitate the sharing of lessons learned and innovations to overcome common barriers, including capacity building activities and flexible planning to respond to key challenges as the epidemic evolves. Learning Collaboratives for LHEATs and CHWs will occur every two weeks.

### 4) Evaluation

Project evaluators will work closely with COPE staff, LHEAT members, residents, and community partners to gauge progress on key indicators that include:

- Extent to which LHEATs represent and include Kansans from under-resourced communities, and sustained engagement of LHEAT members
- Number of LHEAT activities in each county
- Proportion of LHEAT activities in low resource areas
- Numbers, demographics, and geographic location of people reached with services by CHWs
- Number of community organizations/partners supporting outreach efforts
- Description of implementation strategies that effectively reach prioritized groups
- Perceptions of LHEAT members, community members, and public health system partners about LHEAT contributions to building health equity

## COPE QUICK FACTS

### Goal:

Strengthening the role of communities in the public health response to barriers to the health and wellbeing of Kansans.

### Timeframe:

June 2021 - May 2023

### 20 Engaged Communities:

- West - Finney, Ford, Grant, Seward, Thomas/Sherman
- Central - Barton, Cowley, Harvey, Mitchell, Sedgwick
- Northeast - Brown/Jackson, Geary, Johnson, Shawnee, Wyandotte
- Southeast - Bourbon, Cherokee, Crawford, Labette, Montgomery

### Financial Support:

- Each LHEAT will have up to \$20,000 per year to implement community-based strategies.
- Up to 3 CHWs hired in each county will support these efforts and connect people with available services.

### Funding Partners:

- University of Kansas Medical Center
- Kansas Department of Health and Environment
- Centers for Disease



For more information contact Nadine Long at [nlong2@kumc.edu](mailto:nlong2@kumc.edu)

COPE Project Overview