



Guidelines for Formation of Convergence Working Groups

April 2015

The AHEAD Convergence Working Groups (CWGs) serve as local site community task forces for reviewing findings from analyses of health and community development opportunities; developing options in strategies to align these stakeholders' investments; creating metrics and monitoring methods to validate progress towards identified goals and objectives; and creating structures and establishing functions that will contribute to ongoing alignment sustainability.

1. Before recruiting CWG members, it is vital to have an understanding of **why the CWGs are being organized, the nature of their roles and responsibilities, and the activities and timelines** during the planning phase the CWGs will monitor and approve. This planning phase information is available in AHEAD's document, "Overview of AHEAD Planning Phase Process and Outcomes." The document also specifies the nature of AHEAD's national TA support, core intermediary (CI) tasks, and the outcomes necessary to meet the goals of AHEAD's phase one work. The following guidelines provide additional information about the creation, roles, and responsibilities of the CWGs.
2. CI teams should consider the **individual and interpersonal qualities** desired for potential members of the CWGs in the neighborhood selection process. Considerations include:
 - a. History, effectiveness, and credibility of work in healthcare, community development, community partnerships for health improvement, or as trusted representatives of neighborhoods in community change initiatives;
 - b. Understanding and enthusiasm for the purpose and goals of AHEAD;
 - c. Availability, given their current commitments and obligations to other work, to devote the time required to complete AHEAD planning in phase one;
 - d. Ability to bring organizational resources and/or networks of people that can offer relevant subject matter expertise, contribute staff time on particular tasks, or engage people trusted to represent and advocate for neighborhood residents; and

- e. Willingness to consider continuing serving on CWGs when they become more formal partnerships during AHEAD's implementation phase.
3. The CWGs will include **eight to twelve members representing five stakeholder groups**: **(a)** hospitals, other healthcare organizations, and public health agencies; **(b)** community development corporations, banks, and other investment and grantmaking organizations; **(c)** public officials and government agencies with responsibilities for community development and revitalization; **(d)** neighborhood residents who give legitimacy to priorities for alignment that are identified in AHEAD's assessment and planning process; and **(e)** diverse organizations with track records of effectively contributing to community health improvement. CWGs will select two of their members, one of whom will be from selected local site neighborhoods, to serve as their co-collaborative leaders throughout the planning phase.
4. CWGs will meet three times during the planning phase. Members will be **asked to engage others in their areas of expertise and work** on behalf of AHEAD's alignment planning in the form of temporary CWG sub-committees, members of which would not be formal members of the CWGs, assisting the examination of various topics, issues, or funding possibilities. CWG members also will be asked to have informal conversations with valuable resource people when appropriate.
5. The CWGs will be encouraged to structure their work in ways that can be directly moved into the more formal partnerships necessary in AHEAD's implementation phase. Consulting **assistance on how such partnerships can be organized by building directly on the work of planning work** of CWGS will be provided by AHEAD's national TA team. This consultation will include formulating a mission, goals, action plans, evaluation measures, and identifying collaborative leadership requirements. The partnerships will directly provide, or secure a community organization to provide, the "infrastructure" necessary to implement AHEAD's alignment action plans. In the terminology of "collective impact" initiatives, this is called a "backbone organization."
6. In addition to their deliberative role in the planning process, the CWGs have **key operational functions**, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - a. Determining AHEAD alignment priorities and identifying necessary resources to carry out action plans to achieve these priorities; and
 - b. Playing a central role in convening public meetings toward the conclusion of the planning phase to formalize institutional and organizational commitments and secure broader stakeholder approval of AHEAD's alignment action plans. The public meetings will include inviting additional ideas about how AHEAD can best contribute to the healthy development of neighborhoods in which it will work in the years following the planning phase. To the degree possible, these additional ideas will be integrated into the final action plans of CWGs for working collaboratively with AHEAD's neighborhood partners.