

COVID-19 Community Task Force



MONTHLY MEETING REPORT

November 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.

Monthly reports summarize the findings of our meetings. The findings are divided into three sections:

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

For the month of November the Task Force members were given an assignment to ask the neighbors and people they know about the present challenges and obstacles preventing them from accessing services during the holidays. The reflections touched on the following recurrent issues:

1. Lack of comprehension with regards to public health orders.
2. The negatives effects of COVID-19 on Mental Health.
3. The reduction on services and its effects on food safety, healthcare and public transportation.

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.

The community issues expressed in the November meeting touch on issues mainly related to the distress caused by a reduction of services and the negatives effects of isolation especially during the holidays and the traditions being observed during such season.

Recurrent Issues for this month:

- Public Health Messaging
 - There is not a clear understanding on Public Health Safety protocols. Regulations applicable to restaurants and gathering places are not applicable to schools and childcare facilities. Some parents do not feel safe sending children to school.
- Mental Health
 - Mental Health has been greatly impacted by isolation, and general symptoms of idea anxiety, depression and suicide ideations and thoughts.
 - The stigma of mental health is high among latinx communities, families and individuals are not used to addressing this issues and are less inclined to ask for professional support.
- Service reduction due to holidays
 - The choices in food banks are limited and affects dietary restrictions for some clients.
 - Access to doctors appointments have been difficult due to language access barriers.

Highlighted Issue for this month:

- LGBTQ Community Needs
 - The LGBTQ community is facing the pandemic with historic economic instability. The community faces challenges in areas of nutrition, housing, physical and mental health due to multiple levels of marginalization.
 - The needs previously mentioned are seen and higher levels among the immigrant LGBTQ population due to possible negatives effects in future residency applications.
 - Trans community members often lack family support and struggle with health insurance coverage and housing as they face higher levels of unhealthy/unsafe living situations.

SECTION 2

CULTURAL BROKERS COMMENTARIES

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

Cultural Brokers paired with the COVID-19 Community Task Force members explore and process topics on a weekly basis to expand on what is shared on the Community Meetings.

- Public Health Messaging
 - The general public has difficulty interpreting the Public Health orders and how to apply them with the multiple layers of National, State, and County levels.
 - There is confusion on how regulations are being put in place and what is the thought process on what to close and what should remain open and operating.
 - Culturally competent messaging needs to be catered towards diverse populations with a breakdown on regulations and how they apply to average Boulder County residents.
- Mental Health
 - The decrease on outdoor activities and the lack of public gatherings indoors are exacerbating feelings of isolation, depression, anxiety and suicide ideations or thoughts.
 - The issue of mental health still is a taboo among many latinx communities who are not inclined to talk about it. The lack of acknowledgement on this issue prevents wellness checks and other tools for emotional wellness.

- Service Reduction
 - Some residents have seen a decrease in the food choices they have. This reduction can sometimes represent negative impacts for individuals with severe dietary restrictions related to health rather than choice (diabetes, arthritis, blood pressure, etc)
- LGBTQ Community Needs
 - Financial Aid needs were most common for queer and trans individuals with areas of rent assistance and rent relief due to job loss or furloughed or high risk of losing job.
 - Salary reduction affected budgets for transportation. A high number of trans folks of color were seeking rent assistance.
 - Out Boulder might be able to provide accurate numbers.

SECTION 3

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

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

As 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
 - A Snapshot of How COVID-19 is Impacting the LGBTQ Community - <http://www.bu.edu/articles/2020/how-covid-19-is-impacting-the-lgbtq-community/>
- Resource (Local & National)
 - Out Boulder County (for local data on the COVID-19 Impacts for the LGBTQ Community) - <https://www.outboulder.org/>
 - Queer Asterisks Therapeutic Services - <https://queerasterisk.com/>
 - AAA Project Visibility - <https://www.bouldercounty.org/families/seniors/services/project-visibility/>
 - Funder for LGBTQ Issues - <https://lgbtfunders.org/covid-19-response/>

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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