

## Bay Area Health Funders Group: Building on our Strengths

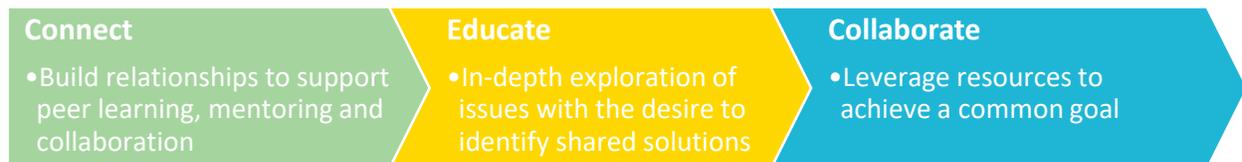
In 2017, Northern California Grantmakers (NCG) engaged with the membership of the Bay Area Health Funders Group (BAHFG) to refresh its purpose and structure to better support collaboration and the evolving needs of our members. Results of a member survey and a planning session with key stakeholders revealed members are interested in engaging with the network to build relationships inside and outside of meetings, stay on top of emerging issues, and support skill building and collective action when goals align.

The BAHFG's strengths are its regional lens and diverse members with a range of focus areas. However, this diversity makes it difficult to find a common issue for the group to collaborate on. While the members feel strongly that there are opportunities to partner and leverage their work, they did not have clear guidance on what issue they would like to advance together. Members requested a scan of the top health needs in our region to inform their learning and action opportunities. The 2016 community health needs assessments for the Bay Area indicate that the region's top health needs are:

1. Obesity, diabetes and healthy eating/active living
2. Behavioral health
3. Economic and housing security

## What's Next for BAHFG

NCG will build on the strengths of the BAHFG to create an environment that supports collaborative action among the members. Opportunities for relationship building and in depth learning will lay the groundwork for collaboration among members interested in leveraging their impact.



In person meetings and events will provide space for members to strengthen relationships, deepen their knowledge of key issues, and connect with partners to leverage their efforts. Interactive meetings will focus on the region's top health needs, emerging issues, successful projects and how to work in collaboration. Virtual policy updates will be offered on federal and state level changes and strategies will be developed to leverage policy in support of collaborative projects.

BAHFG will provide the structure for members to share information on projects or programs and connect with partners to develop collaborative efforts. These collaborations could range from forming a peer learning circle to sharing best practices to developing joint funding initiatives with aligned or pooled funding.

With this purpose and focus for the group, we can build the necessary relationships, skills and flexible structure to engage in successful collaborative efforts and truly leverage the potential of the BAHFG to improve the health and well-being of our communities.