![The College for Behavioral Health Leadership]

Equity-Grounded Leadership Fellow Program – 2022-23 Pilot Cohort Experiential Projects Overview

The Equity-Grounded Leadership (EGL) Fellow Program shifts the focus of cross-sector behavioral health leaders to intersectionality, equity, and anti-racism for behavioral health systems transformation. Co-produced by The College for Behavioral Heath Leadership and behavioral health leaders from across the country, the EGL Fellow Program was piloted from 2022 to 2023.

A required component of the EGL program is the creation and implementation of collaborative projects to improve equity in behavioral health systems and services in Fellows' organizations, communities, and/or regions. Fellows in the pilot cohort worked as teams or individually to design and implement these projects, with the support of project advisors and an evaluation team throughout the duration of the design and implementation process.

The following sections, organized by State, include a brief description of the types of projects that Fellows designed and implemented. Each description includes a high-level overview, preliminary outcomes, and intended long-term impacts.

California

A team of three county-level behavioral health leaders in California aimed to **create a welcoming work environment that is inclusive and diverse, and in which people want to work and stay**. The intent of the project was to work toward having a workforce that is representative of communities served. Preliminary outcomes included providing effective learning opportunities around DEI to department leadership in one county, as well as gaining traction more broadly with DEI work in the counties. Intended long-term impacts include a more stable, representative workforce, and more equitable health outcomes.

Colorado

A Vice President of a statewide initiative addressing behavioral health concerns of LGBTQ+ community in Colorado **implemented a sustainable DEI action strategy within their organization**. Preliminary outcomes included an updated employee handbook to include new policies such as individualized wellness plans, a 4.5-day workweek, and office closure for a week in the summer, as well as engagement with a consulting firm around DEI, including leadership conversations around the topic. The intended long-term impact is increased fluency around DEI and intersectionality, structures to support consistent

growth in anti-white supremacy culture, and enhancement of existing benefits to promote recruitment and retention.

Leaders from two behavioral health care organizations in Colorado worked together to **review available behavioral health utilization and outcome data using an equity lens to identify areas of improvement for access to compassionate, culturally responsive, equitable care**. Preliminary outcomes included creating a continuous quality improvement committee, increased dialogue about data and how it relates to decision making, and improved working relationships with internal data analysts. Intended long-term impacts include formulating areas of training for clinical and operational staff based on findings, as well as continuation of identification and measurement of meaningful outcomes (i.e., symptom improvement, recovery, quality of life, etc.).

A Program Director within a mental health hospital worked to **increase cultural awareness in the process of assessing patients who are adjudicated not guilty by reason of insanity**. Training around cultural awareness would be offered to members of the psychology department and progress to other members of treatment teams. Preliminary outcomes include the formulation of committee that focuses on this topic, as well as high level leadership support. The intended long-term impact is reduction in hospitalization length for these patients.

Ohio

A team of county-level behavioral health leaders in Ohio worked together to **ensure community members receive information and services, when, where, and how they need them for an equitable opportunity to thrive**. Preliminary outcomes included intentional engagement and outreach to underrepresented populations for engagement in existing coalitions and tasks force to revise strategies to address community needs, education for community leaders around behavioral health and available resources, and review of internal and external documents for language inclusivity. Intended long term impacts include measuring outcomes and incorporation of DEI efforts in all policies and practices.

An Executive Director of a nonprofit focused on peer services **planned and implemented an anti-stigma social media campaign focused on mental health recovery to increase awareness and representation of recovery in the media**. Preliminary outcomes included incorporation of the project into the agency strategic plan and a soft rollout of the campaign prior to the full launch during Mental Health Awareness Month. Intended long term impacts include increased public awareness of strength-based life management of individuals experiencing mental health conditions, promotion of wellness in a more inclusive manner, and using the project as a scalable model.

A leader of a statewide organization that represents the interests of Ohio's county Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health (ADAMH) Boards **created a toolkit to build on a pre-existing readiness toolkit related to health equity, diversity, and inclusion**. Preliminary outcomes included completing a final draft of the toolkit and incorporating feedback from stakeholders. The intended long-term impact is use of the toolkit by ADAMH and behavioral health organizations to address health equity.

An Executive Director within a county-level behavioral health board **developed a work plan to increase racial and ethnic diversity among all positions within the organization**. This project consisted of clearly defining and framing diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts to diversify hiring processes. Preliminary outcomes included staff-wide trainings, leadership specific trainings, retaining a consultant to review hiring procedures, and implementing new processes around hiring and recruitment. Intended long-term impacts include a culturally competent workforce, enhanced decision making, and more effective identification and intervention of health disparities within the community.

An Executive Director within a county-level behavioral health board worked to **restore and expand behavioral health navigation and community/school-based prevention services to the Latinx population**. Preliminary outcomes included retaining a manager of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. The intended long-term impact is support for Latinx led organizations to provide behavioral health services.

An Executive Director of a county-level behavioral health board focused on **ensuring underrepresented populations in the community have access to equitable behavioral health services**. Preliminary outcomes included participation of the organization's Board of Directors and developing/implementing a new funding initiative. The intended long-term impact is accessible behavioral health services to populations that previously did not have equitable access.

Pennsylvania

Leaders within a behavioral health care and intellectual disability services organization **developed organizational DEI guiding principles with an intent to transform workplace culture into a DEI practicing culture**. The team piloted with one department in the organization to address one of three DEI guiding principles – equity. Preliminary outcomes included the development of a vision statement, guiding principles, and a number of initiatives to support DEI throughout the organization and city. The team intends to repeat the cycle with other departments in the organization, as well as external stakeholders, to address the remaining two DEI principles – diversity and inclusion. The intended long-term impact is a more systematic, coherent approach to DEI within the workplace - where the organization centers DEI in its strategic framework and allows its DEI principles to guide and drive every aspect of the business plan to mitigate implicit bias at the systemic level.

Texas

Leaders within a Texas nonprofit that provides nonpartisan policy and program research **created and implemented a health equity framework** centered on racial justice, language justice, and cross-cultural issues. This framework is intended to guide internal policies and processes, as well as state and local level policy and practice. Preliminary outcomes included the creation of a final version of the framework, which was vetted with internal and external stakeholders, as well as creation of a plan and commitment from organizational leadership on how the framework would be utilized and rolled out across the organization.