

CFAR Office of Community Engagement Town Hall Highlights

April 27, 2022

On April 27, 2022, CFAR's Office of Community Engagement hosted its first Town Hall with our community partners. The purpose of the town hall was to report back to community partners on CFAR community engagement and activities over the past 5 years, to hear from community members about their impact and collaboration priorities, and to share and get feedback on future CFAR concepts for helping to end the HIV epidemic. Below are key points from the meeting as mentioned by our community partners.

Key Points:

Staffing issues, and what could be beneficial:

- There are issues with staff support with there being a lot of turnover and new people in positions, staff also have trouble knowing how many people were reached in their responses/efforts, and some staff do not know how to ask beneficial research questions.

Making HIV information accessible:

- It is necessary to find and implement ways to link HIV information and care along with other resources such as diabetes and COVID-19 information/care. This information also needs to be accessible and culturally/linguistically relevant.

How CFAR can better engage community in the future:

- CFAR should offer forums for people to get together within the city and engage in conversations about HIV as people.

Barriers in the community for people with HIV, community engagement failures/setbacks observed while working with partners/stakeholders, and action items and priorities:

- Community partners expressed being tired as engagement has not been engaging and action items have not been followed through. Common responses that need action include destigmatizing language surrounding HIV, utilizing communication and language to go beyond meeting people where they are at (such as empowering those with HIV to be able to speak about their status and equipping them with tools to educate others), shift to focusing on whole people health, recentering community to put the community first (community members feel like they are being spoken to, and not spoken with).

Mechanisms for accountability to community:

- To see that people are accountable community members look at: consistency, if a person/organization puts humanity first, transparency and volunteering information in all parts of the organization's process, being okay with receiving critiques and bringing ideas forward, and meaningful collaboration with community partners.

Thank you to all the community partners and CFAR faculty and staff who supported and participated in this important event.

For more information on the UW-Fred Hutch CFAR Office of Community Engagement, visit our webpage at:

<https://depts.washington.edu/cfar/discover-cfar/oce>