

Disrupting Business as Usual:

Building a Community-Led Movement to
Address Racial Disparities in Infant Mortality

2020 All In National Meeting

December 8, 2020

Presenters: Lora Gulley & Alecia Deal



Two Pandemics: COVID-19 & RACISM

Context: Climate of St. Louis, MO



Breakout Agenda



What is centering community voice and what difference does it make?



How FLOURISH works to lift community voice and shift the status quo?



Processes for
measuring our impact

Successes &
Challenges



The Power of 'community voice'

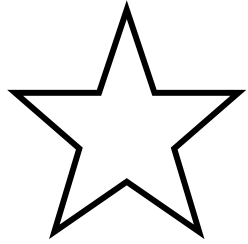


GenerateHealth

- Generate Health mobilizes and inspires the St. Louis region to advance racial equity in pregnancy outcomes, family well-being, and community health.



- Generate Health focuses on critical priorities by:
 - Illuminating root causes of racial disparities in infant mortality & maternal health
 - Advocating for the redirection of resources to eliminate racial disparities in infant mortality & maternal health
 - Catalyzing action within the ecosystem
 - Advancing regional accountability for equitable systems

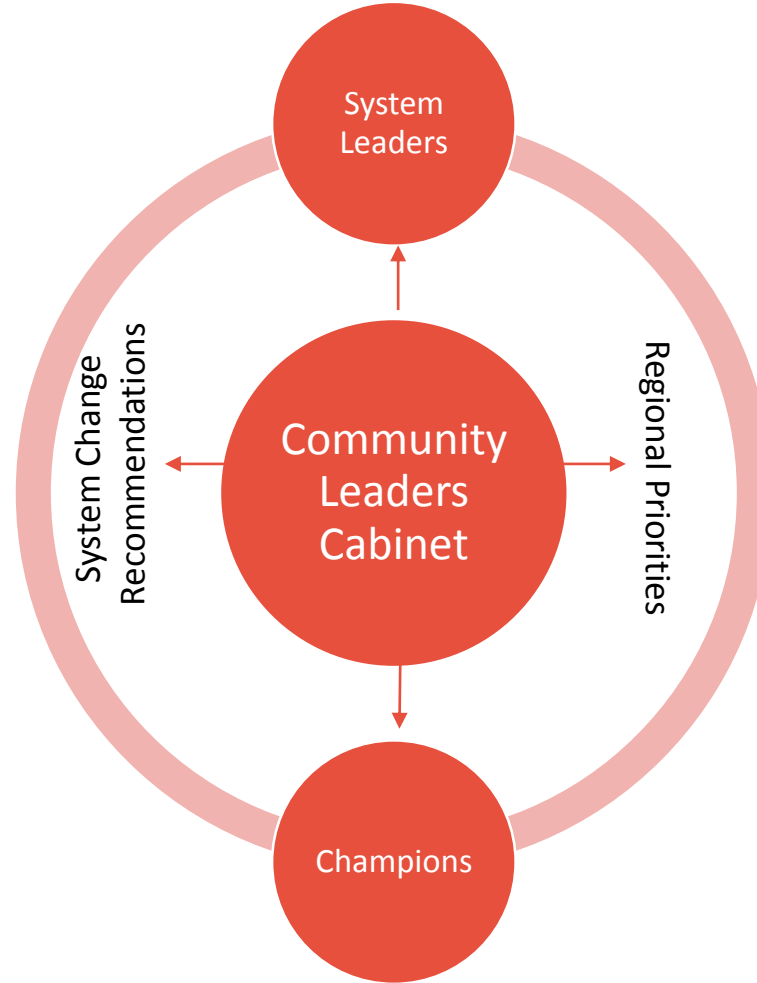


To eliminate racial disparities in infant mortality by 2033.

Main Funder- 10 Year Commitment



Missouri Foundation
for Health

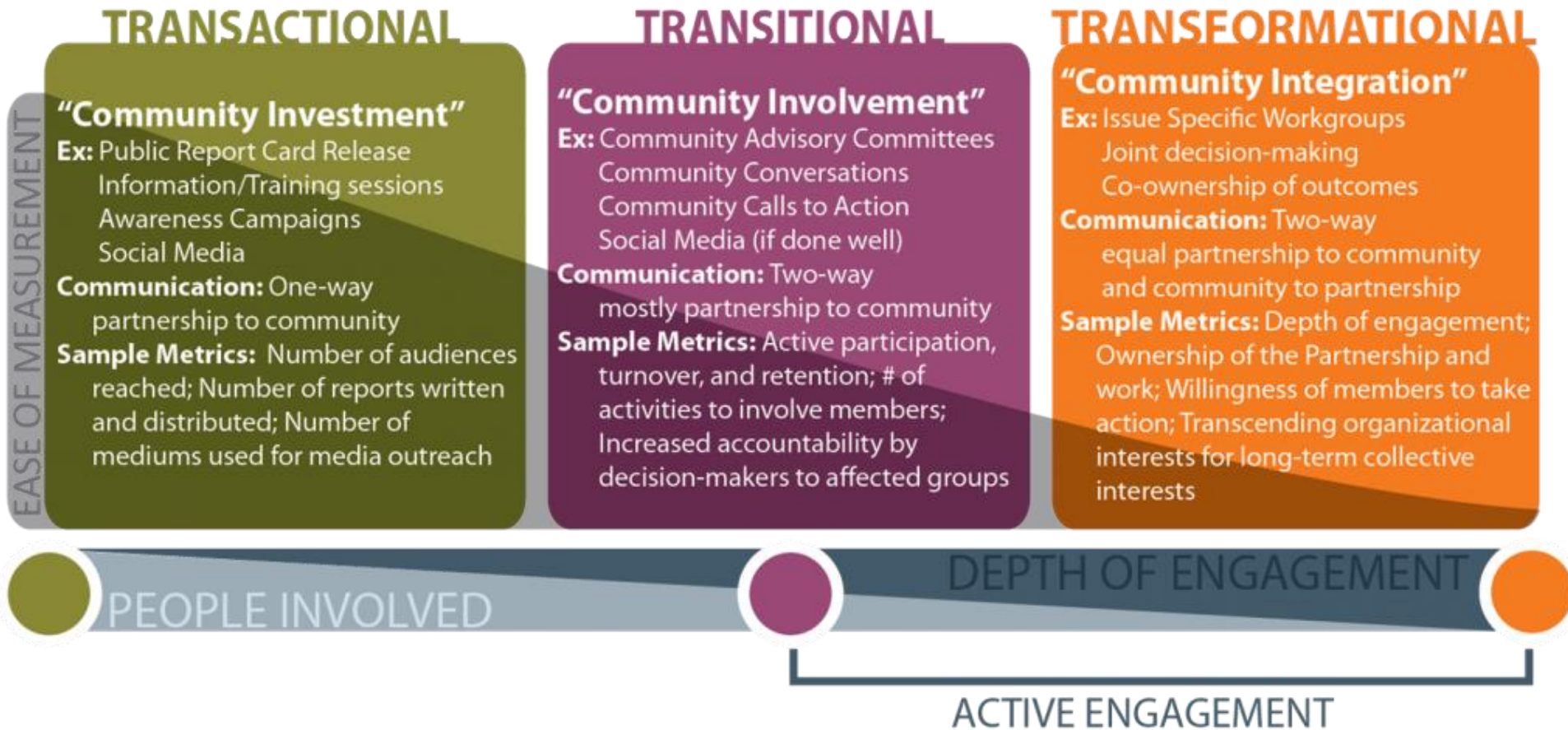


Decision makers with the ability to change policies and practices

Individuals with lived experience related to adverse birth outcomes and/or residents who live in high impact zip codes.

Service providers and others who work directly with community residents.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK



© Strive 2012
 Content adapted from Bowen et al, *When Suits Meet Roots*. 2010
 Sample Metrics adapted from Pastor et al, *TRANSACTIONS, TRANSFORMATIONS, TRANSLATIONS: Metrics That Matter for Building, Scaling, and Funding Social Movements*. 2011

FLOURISH Priorities

- **Coordinated Quality Care**
 - Perinatal Behavioral Health Initiative
 - Home Visitation Collaborative
 - Medicaid Expansion Implementation
 - Promoting the Standards of Holistic Care of and for Black Women (Black Mamas Matter Alliance)
- **Racial Equity Capacity Building**
- **Safe Sleep**
 - Portable Crib Network
 - Safe Sleep Summit
 - Safe Sleep Champions Training
 - Safe Sleep City
 - Safe Sleep Shared Measurement
- **Social Determinants of Health**
 - Housing
 - Transportation

Community Leaders Cabinet (CLC)

Community residents with lived experience related to adverse birth outcomes and/or live in high-impact zip codes.



Decision Making Power:

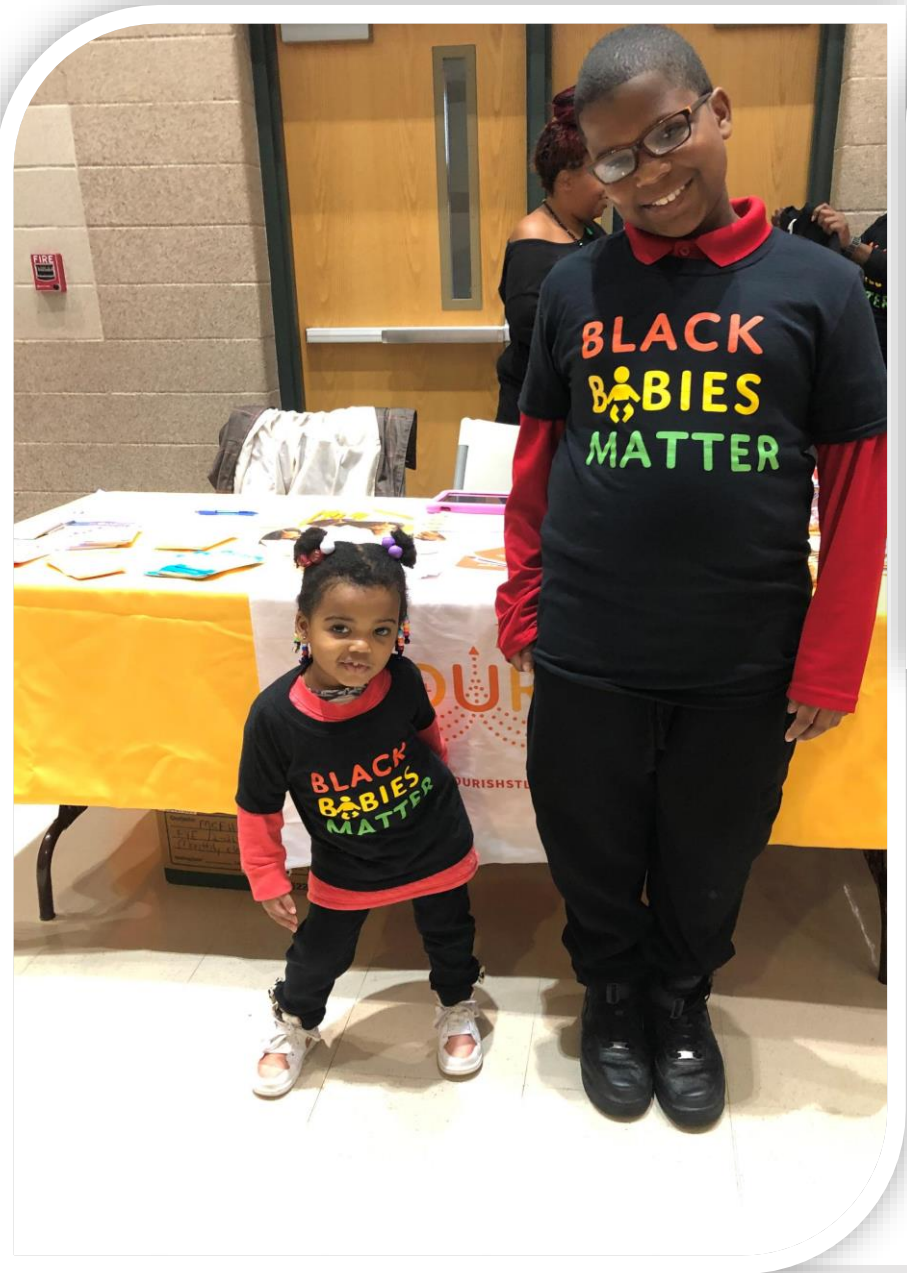
- Priority Areas & Strategies
- Investments
- Policy Platforms
- Opportunities for Partnership & Collaboration
- Opportunities for Change Projects



CLC Trainings

- Model: Community Organizing for Family Issues (COFI)
 - Uses parents' strengths and commitment to their children and to their neighborhoods to help make positive change in their own lives, their families and their communities
 - Peer to Peer Training Model
 - Ends with a Change Project – COVID-19 Care Packages for Pregnant and newly postpartum women
- Additional Trainings:
 - Racial Equity (Crossroads 2.5 day workshop)
 - Storytelling for Systems Change
 - Trauma Awareness
 - Importance of Evaluation for Change
 - Mental Health & Self-Care
 - Advocacy





Black Babies Matter

FLOURISH Community Change Project

Adapted from in-person community resource hubs to a COVID-19 friendly approach

- Identified Key Zip Codes: 63107, 63136
- Worked with partners to secure donations and resources for Black pregnant and parenting families
- Partnered with St. Louis Metro Market to supply families with fresh fruits and vegetables
- Collaborated with community-based organizations to identify families to receive the care packages
- **Distributed 100 essential care packages to families**



FLOURISH Black Babies Matter Merchandise

Can be purchased at:
<https://flourish-black-babies-matter.myshopify.com/>



Systems Leaders

Various Levels of Engagement:

- Home Visitation Collaborative Network
- Infant Health Action Team – Safe Sleep
- One on One Conversations
- Sector Specific Conversations



Examples of Trainings Offered:

- Culturally Congruent Care for Black Maternal Health
- Social Determinants of Health Tour
- Racial Equity
- Trauma Awareness
- Motivational Interviewing
- Mandated Reporting
- Safe Sleep Champions

Engaging with Systems leaders



Joint Learning Sessions

- Community Leaders + System Leaders
- Opportunity to get together to build relationships and trust
- Opportunity to provide input about how to improve or reshape systems
- Opportunity to problem solve and overcome challenges together

- Examples:
 - Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Engagement Sessions
 - Safe Sleep Summit
 - Home Visitation Connection Cafes



Sense of Achievement

Participated in a press conference in a state House Committee hearing on Medicaid Expansion



Community Review Committee

- 10-12 members on the committee
- Review committee is made up of individuals:
 - With lived experience related to adverse birth outcomes and/or live in high impact zip codes (60%)
 - Individuals with experience in grant review (40%)
- Each member is assigned grants to review
- Submit a review through the funder's online portal
- Meet as a group to discuss the grants and make final recommendations for funding

Community Led Investment

- **Aligned Activities** for priority areas supports projects advancing systems and policy change
- **Community Mobilization** and Innovation projects support community engagement to promote maternal and infant vitality
- **Capacity Building in Racial Equity** will support advancement in the region to begin to dismantle systems of oppression that have widened the infant mortality disparity gap
- **COVID-19 Response Fund** projects reduce the strain COVID-19 has placed on Black pregnant and parenting families

FLOURISH Grantees – Year 1

- **20** Community Mobilization & Innovation Grants
- **7** Aligned Activities Grants
- **55** COVID-19 Grants (Racial Equity Capacity Building Funds shifted to COVID-19 response funds)
 - Grantees had access to high-demand supplies through FLOURISH Partnerships
 - St. Louis Area Diaper Bank
 - St. Louis Period Supplies Alliance
 - PrepareSTL – Disposable & Cloth Masks



GOING VIRTUAL

- Adapted FLOURISH 'Agenda'
- Ongoing Check-ins, One-on-ones/Group support)
- Logistics
- Peer-led supports (GroupMe and connecting outside meetings)
- Surveyed core concerns and issues

IDENTIFIED...

- Increased stress levels
- Essential worker dilemmas/safety
- Challenges w basic needs (food, rent, cleaning supplies)
- Need for clearer COVID messaging

GENERATE HEALTH PRESENTS

NAVIGATING COVID-19 FOR MOMS & BABIES

Webinar

Wednesday, March 25

10:00am-11:15am

Register Here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/100583363548>



GenerateHealth

Generate Health's COVID-19 Webinar Series

Featured professionals and community voice in webinar series navigating COVID-19

HOT TOPICS

- Housing Equity
- Labor and Delivery
- Mental health and self care
- Coordinating basic needs and early childhood
- Reopening St. Louis
- Coordinating health and mental health services
- Understanding the importance of the Census
- From trauma to community healing
- Building momentum for Medicaid Expansion

Redirection of FLOURISH Funds

- With guidance of Community Leaders Cabinet, funds were redirected to support emerging needs of black pregnant and parenting families in-the-midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- COVID-19 Response Fund: \$300,000+

Census Outreach – Social Media Networking

Cabinet learned some areas
in St. Louis were uncounted
(same as priority zipcodes)

Took Action

Created personal videos
encouraging community
members to fill out the
Census - posted on social
media





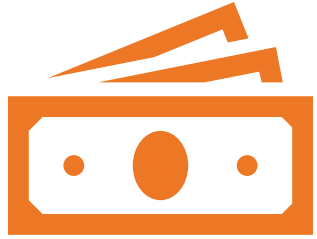
Healthy FLOURISH
Babies born during
COVID-19



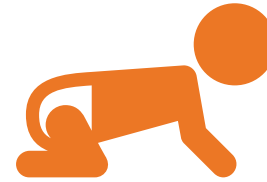
Valuing Community Voice

- ✓ Mitigate barriers to participation
- ✓ Identify intersectionality of other issues/Expand networks
- ✓ Leadership Opportunities
- ✓ Trust Community for Answers/Solutions

Supports



Stipend



Child Care

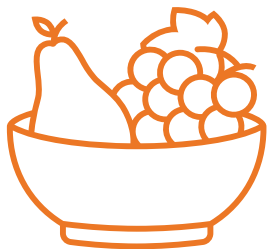


Transportation

Lyft or Gas Card



Convenient
Time



Meal

COVID-19 Adjustments- Virtual meeting with stipends provided electronically through Chime

Valuing Community Voice

No More Business as Usual...

- ✓ Listen
- ✓ Learn
- ✓ Apply





Alecia Deal

- Mom
- Activist
- Advocate
- Consultant

My Journey to Awakening

- Where I came from?
- Being challenged to identify and select which battles to combat with uncertainties
- Developed anti-conformity and acceptance of unique personality
- Mental and spiritual conditioning of "tough skin" and "emotionally strong"
- Increased awareness of strengths and weaknesses
- Discovered innate gifts and talents
- Cocooned into womanhood by life choices
- Hair split life or death decisions

My Evolution

- New woman emerged and passion ensued
- Battling with post-partum depression and childhood traumas
- Exposed to therapy and intervention
- Determination and commitment promise and resiliency
- Advocate and Activist
- Founder and Director
- Mentor and Facilitator
- Community organizer and campaign coordinator



Disrupting Business as Usual: Recommendations

Community Leader

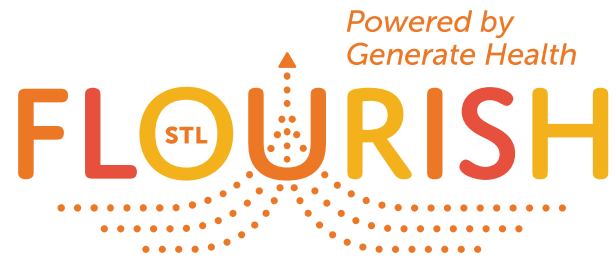
- Live experience and knowledge
- Empathic connection and understanding
- Organic advocate
- Emerged activist
- Oppressed teacher
- Solution focused

Corporate Aide

- Trained associate
- Sympathic listener
- Cultivated advocate
- Incensed activist
- Biased student
- Oppressive supporter
- Outcome driven

Question & Answer Time





Website URL: www.flourishstlouis.org

Email: info@flourishstlouis.org

Twitter: [@FlourishStLouis](https://twitter.com/FlourishStLouis)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/flourishstlouis/>

Lora Gulley, MSW | Generate Health | Director of Community Mobilization and Advocacy | lgulley@generatehealthstl.org