



INTERACT
FOR HEALTH

STRATEGY UPDATE

MARCH 5, 2026



Agenda

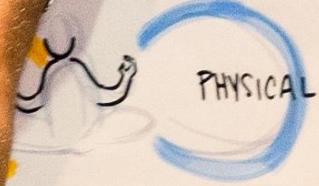
- Welcome
- 2025 Overview & Reflections
 - Values, Roles, Grantmaking Snapshot, Reflections, Office Hours
- 2026 Plans
 - Key Refinements, Strategic Priorities, Funding Opportunities, Upcoming Events
- Q & A



BELONGING & HELPING EACH OTHER CARRY THE LOAD



THE SPACE & ABILITY TO SELF ACTUALIZE

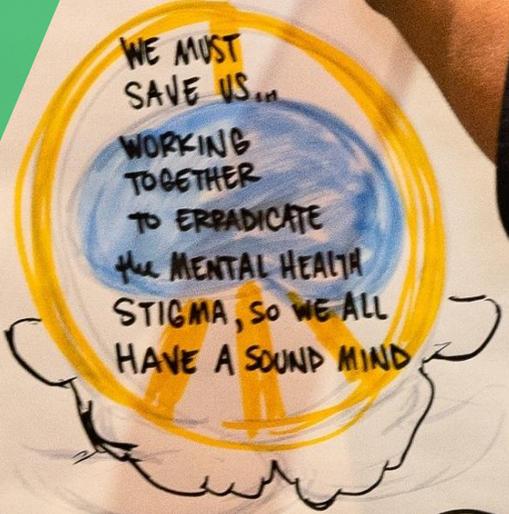


PHYSICAL

A COMMUNITY WHERE PEOPLE FEEL, SEEN, HEARD, LOVED & MATTER



A CULTURE OF SINCERE CHECKING-IN

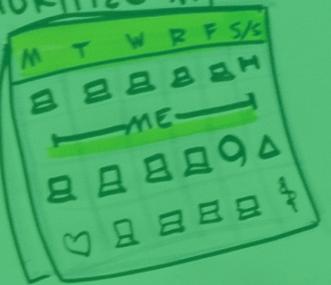


WE MUST SAVE US... WORKING TOGETHER TO ERRADICATE THE MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA, SO WE ALL HAVE A SOUND MIND



& BELIEVED

MAKING TIME TO PRIORITIZE MY HEALTH



HOW ARE YOU... REALLY?

OVERVIEW & 2025 HIGHLIGHTS



RECONNECTING

DOING SOMETHING



Our Why

Vision

People in our region are healthy and thriving, regardless of who they are or where they live.

Mission

To ensure people in our region have a just opportunity to live their healthiest lives.





Our Values



WE TACKLE ROOT CAUSES



WE AMPLIFY COMMUNITY POWER



WE SPEAK OPENLY



WE PARTNER WITH TRUST



WE ARE RELENTLESS PROBLEM SOLVERS



WE STRIVE FOR IMPACT



Our Priority Populations

It shouldn't matter where you live, how much money you make, or what your race or ethnicity is – everyone should have the ability to shape their communities and access the resources they need for good health. Interact for Health focuses on groups that are facing the greatest barriers to health and well-being.



Black communities



Hispanic communities



Children in families with low incomes



Rural communities



LGBTQ+ communities



Our Roles: How We Work



Flexible, catalytic funder



Trusted, non-partisan voice for change



Independent, regional convener



Amplifier of community voice



Go-to resource for data on health and health justice



2023-2027 Strategic Priorities

- 1. Community Power Building:** We support efforts that shift power dynamics to ensure that those most impacted by health inequities are leading and deciding.
- 2. Policy & Systems Change:** We support public policy changes that improve health equity and mental health, and we work to elevate community voices and change narratives to address the root causes of inequities.
- 3. Mental Health & Well-Being:** We aim to improve mental health and well-being by strengthening systems and supports for young people and removing systemic barriers in mental health overall.



2025 Grantmaking Snapshot

BY THE NUMBERS

95 Grants to **86** Grantee Partners

Avg. Amount: **\$72,622**

Avg. Duration: **15 months**

Small Organizations: **27**

Multi-Year Grants: **28**

FOCUS AREA SUMMARY

Community Power (\$744K)

13 grants; \$57K avg

Mental Health (\$2.4M)

23 grants; \$104K avg

Policy & Systems Change (\$2.3M)

21 grants; \$111K avg



2025 Request for Proposals (RFP) Overview

*RFP	# Grantees	Total Amount
Rural Changemaker	12	\$669,806
Cultivating Advocacy Partnerships	3	\$180,000
Local Policy	6	\$1,219,264
State Mental Health Advocacy Partnerships	5	\$703,000
Advocacy Capacity Building	6	\$240,000
Safe and Supportive Spaces	15	\$1,263,000
Youth Organizing	6	\$300,000
Rapid Response	34	\$950,000
Data for Equity Cohort 3 <i>Data for Equity Funder Collaborative with bi3 and HealthPath</i>	10	\$400,000

*This includes both invited and open RFPs.



2025 Capacity Building

Program	Impact
Capacity Building Trainings	500+ participants
Sustainability Consultant Support	28 grantee organizations
External Capacity Building <i>Bayer Center & Association of Fundraising Professionals</i>	70 participants
Policy Map licenses	175 users 75 organizations



Meeting the Moment

- Fast-tracked planned grant payments to many partners
- Converted project-based grants to general operating support to reduce restrictions
- Sponsored legal assistance for partners through ProBono Partnership of Ohio
- Released an additional \$1 million in funding for 33 partners for organizational capacity building and emergency mental health support for priority populations
- Provided \$72,000 for SNAP rapid response
- Contributed to the Better Together Fund led by Greater Cincinnati Foundation



From Feedback to Action

In 2025, over 40% of applicants shared feedback — and we are acting on what we heard.

What You Told Us

- Need for increased character counts and better text formatting
- Desire for more accessible submission options
- Clearer scoring rubrics and more chances to talk with staff before applying
- More clarity around fiscal sponsors
- Additional resources for navigating grants portal

What We're Changing

- Standardizing RFP webinars with resource walkthroughs, fiscal sponsor guidance, and scoring rubrics
- Making PDF/Word versions of application questions easier to find — on the open funding page and at the start of each application
- Expanding visibility of virtual and in-person office hours
- Elevating our applicant tutorial page



From Feedback to Action

What We're Holding Steady

Character limits remain in place to keep applications brief and respect applicants' time. We'll now explain these limits in our webinars to reduce confusion early in the process.

Accessibility & Ongoing Dialogue

If you need accommodations, contact your program manager or Kristine Niergarth at kniergarth@interactforhealth.org.

We welcome continued feedback at healthwatch@interactforhealth.org or directly with our staff.



2026 PLANS

VISION

People in our region are healthy and thriving, regardless of who they are or where they live.

MISSION

To ensure people in our region have a just opportunity to live their healthiest lives.

VALUES



We tackle root causes



We amplify community power



We speak openly



We partner with trust

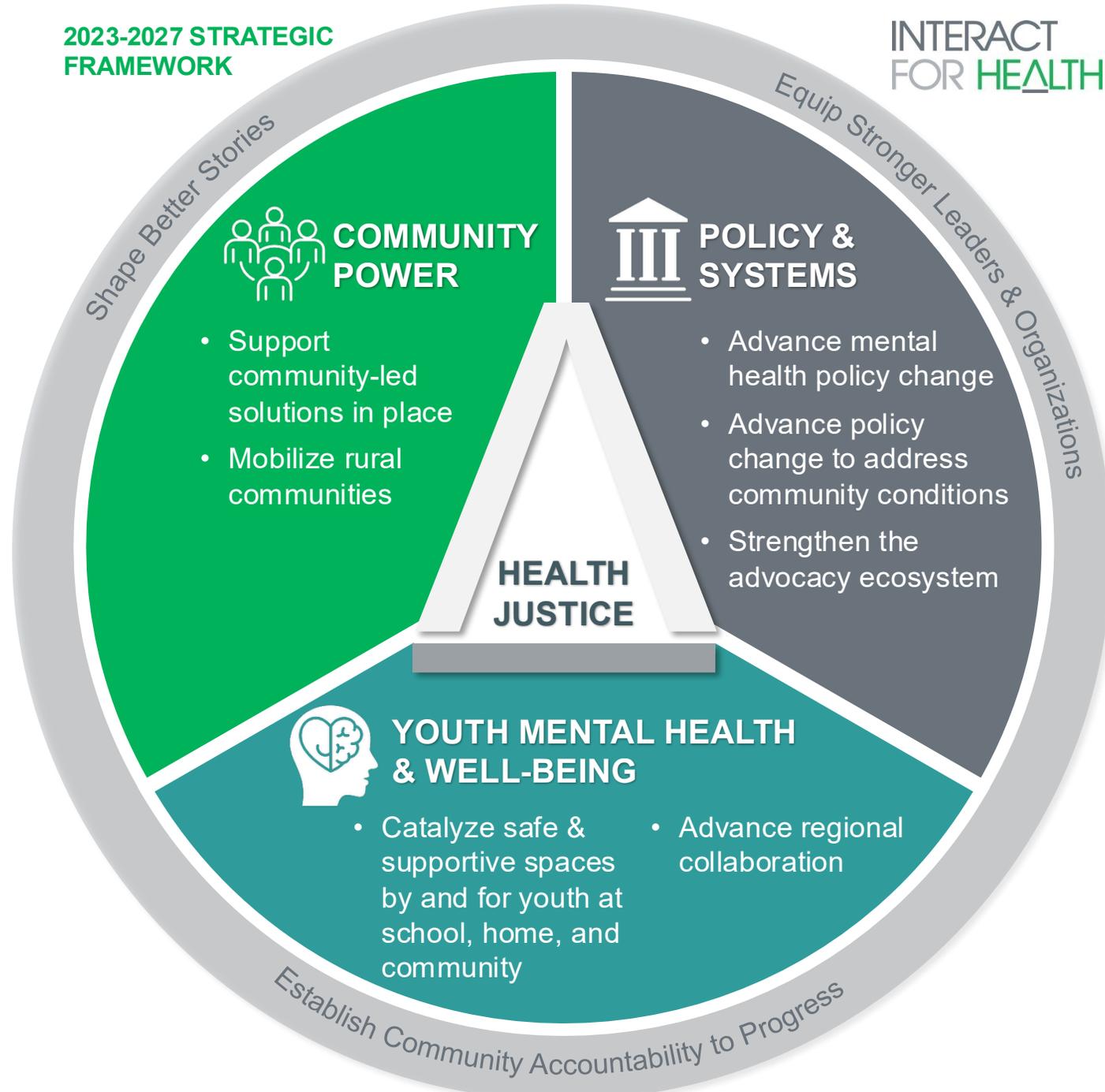


We are relentless problem solvers



We strive for impact

2023-2027 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



INTERACT FOR HEALTH

PRIORITY POPULATIONS

- Black communities
- Hispanic communities
- Low-income families
- Rural communities
- LGBTQ+ communities

HOW WE WORK

- Flexible, catalytic funder
- Trusted, nonpartisan voice
- Independent, regional convener
- Amplifier of community voice
- Go-to resource for data

GENERATIONAL IMPACT

Health justice is achieved when a person's health is no longer determined by who they are or where they live.

We strive for a system that produces overall improvement and reduced disparities in:

- ▲ Life expectancy, quality of life
- ▲ Mental health, well-being
- ▼ Racism, discrimination
- ▼ Deaths of despair and premature death



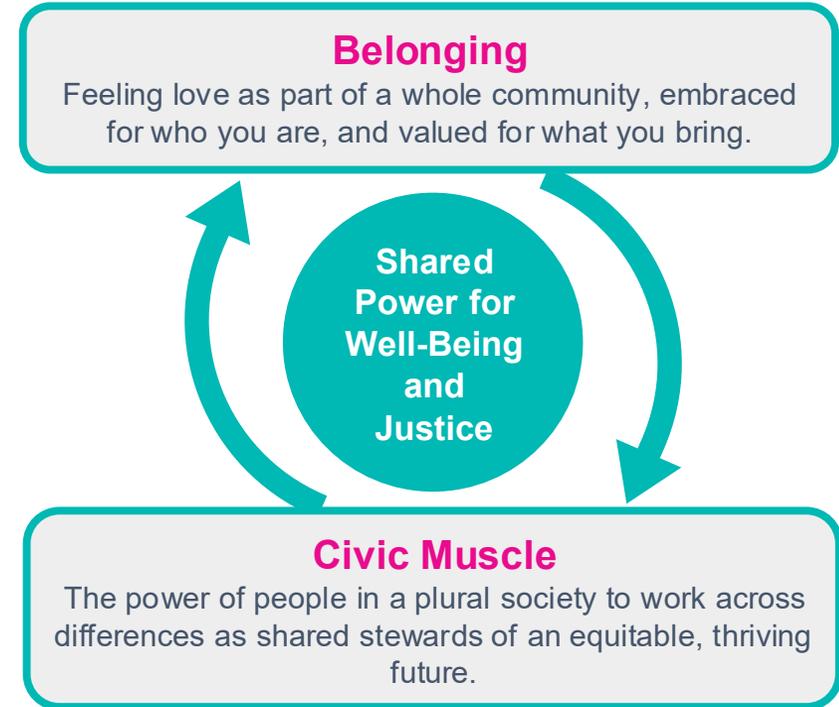
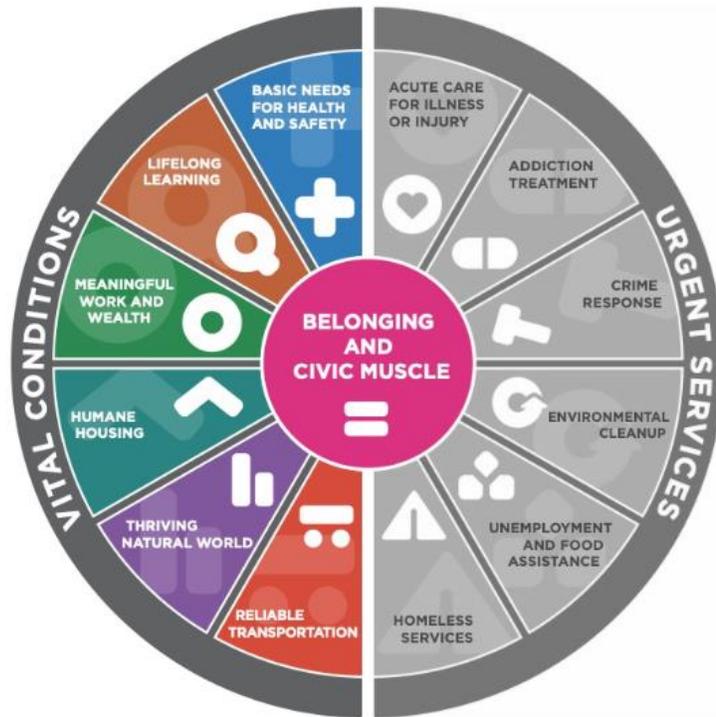
Factors that impact health and well-being



Vital Conditions vs Urgent Services -
The Rippel Foundation



Our Learning Journey



Belonging & Civic Muscle is at the center because it is both a vital condition and a practical capacity that is necessary for equitable success in every other kind of work.

Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being: <https://rippel.org/vital-conditions/>
Webinar: Belonging and Civic Muscle: <https://rippel.org/events/rethink-health-toolbox-webinar-cultivating-belonging-and-civic-muscle/>
Milstein, et.al. [Organizing Around Vital Conditions Moves The Social Determinants Agenda Into Wider Action](#). *Health Affairs Forefront*. Feb 2, 2023



2025 Mid-Strategy Learnings

In 2025, we conducted a mid-point review of our 2023-2027 strategic plan to reflect on data, progress, and learnings.

Key Learnings

- 1 Belonging and agency are unifying, foundational outcomes across our bodies of work.
- 2 Policy change is a critical lever when it's in service of broader systems change goals.
- 3 Our values deepen as we strengthen our approach to sharing power and use our voice with purpose.



2026 Plans



- Deepening our **learning** with partners and community around belonging and agency/civic muscle
- Continuing to support **community-led solutions in place** with our partners Working in Neighborhoods, Community Matters, The Heights Movement, and Middletown Connect
- Building new relationships and continuing to invest resources in our **rural communities** through our Rural Changemaker RFP, Rural Council, sponsorships and convenings
- Equipping more organizations to lead policy change through another **Advocacy Capacity Building** cohort



2026 Plans



- Continuing investment and support for **Hopeful Empowered Youth (HEY!)** as our region's shared, youth-led mental wellbeing strategy
- Continuing to invest in **aligned efforts that foster safe spaces** and **trusted adults** in community and schools
- Co-creating with the **Youth Organizing** cohort a strategy to support more youth-led change in our region
- Investing directly in youth via the **Contribution Project**



2026 Plans



- Offering **capacity building support** to grantees and the broader community to address pressing needs
- Collaborating with bi3 Fund and HealthPath as part of the **Data for Equity Funder Collaborative** to strengthen equitable data and evaluation capacity among grantees and partners
- Continuing to lean in to better understand how we can **support our partners** during the current political environment



2026 Funding Opportunities

- **Rural Changemaker RFP:**
 - Informational Webinar: Held on February 25, *recording is on our website*
 - Deadlines: April 14 and September 8
 - **Data for Equity RFP:** Fall 2026 (*Funder Collaborative with bi3 and HealthPath*)
 - **Advocacy Capacity Building RFP:** Fall 2026
 - **Event Sponsorships:** Deadlines – The application closes on the last day of each month. Applicants will be notified of their funding decision by the 15th of the following month.
- [Open RFPs are posted here](#)
- [Apply for event sponsorships here](#)



Rural Changemaker RPF Community Information Sessions



Rural Office Hours

- Indiana: [Amack's Well, Batesville, IN](#)
 - February 26, July 30
- Ohio: [Wholly Bean, New Richmond, OH](#)
 - March 12, August 13
- Kentucky: [Opa's Pizzeria, Williamstown, OH](#)
 - March 26, August 27

*In-person Rural Office Hours
1:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.*

Virtual Office Hours

- Hosted via Zoom.
[Register](#) for the Zoom link.
 - April 3, 1-3 p.m.



Upcoming Events



Events Page

- **Rural Community Connections**
 - Kentucky: March 19, 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. Mainstreet Gardens, Williamstown, KY. Register [here](#).
 - Indiana: June 25, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. Opal Haus, Lawrenceburg, IN.
 - Ohio: August 20, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. Little Miami Brewing Co., Milford, OH.
- **Capacity Building**
 - Tools & Resources for Seeking National Funding. Register [here](#).
 - AI for Nonprofits – Rural Trainings:
 - Kentucky: May 6, 1 – 3 p.m. The View, Grant County, KY.
 - Ohio: June 24, 1 – 3 p.m. Location T.B.D.
- **HEY! Convening & Showcase:** April 27, 5-8 p.m., Cincinnati Museum Center. Register [here](#).



Contact us to learn more



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Contact us to learn more



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Q & A