

A photograph of two people sitting on a grassy hill, looking out over a mountain range at sunset. The person on the left is wearing a blue jacket, and the person on the right is wearing a red jacket. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow over the landscape. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds. The mountains in the distance are silhouetted against the bright sky.

# The Intersection of Healthcare & Homelessness: CommonSpirit Health's Statewide Advisory Council




# Introductions

*Victor Palacio, Mercy House*

*Julie Silas, Homebase*

*Anira Giarrusso-Khlok, CommonSpirit Health*

CommonSpirit 

# Victor Palacio, REACHI Co-Chair

Victor is the Administrative Manager of Mercy House Living Centers based in Santa Ana, CA. Mercy House is a CBO that provides housing and support services to the homeless populations of various counties in Southern California and Arizona.

- Strategic Planning, Community Engagement, and Compliance with Mercy House (4 years)
- Founding Member & Co-Chair of REACHI (*Research Equity and Advisory Council to Address Housing Insecurity*)
- Formed 3 regional advisory councils, on a county level (*Kern, Ventura, & Riverside Counties*)
- Lived experience of homelessness (*ages 7 to 10*) in Phoenix, Arizona (*Maricopa County*)



# Julie Silas, Homebase

Julie works with Continuums of Care to implement, evaluate, and strengthen homelessness systems of care to enable communities to use existing resources effectively. She works with city, county, and nonprofit organizations across the country to adopt best practices; engage in strategic planning; conduct assessments; lead stakeholder outreach; and support engagement of people with lived expertise. She is an expert on cross-sector coordination between health and homeless systems of care and has presented and written about successful cross-system and cross-agency data sharing to improve coordination and collaboration.



# Anira Giarrusso-Khlok, CommonSpirit Health

Anira is a Community Health Project Manager at CommonSpirit Health. Her role is to develop and strengthen collaboration with local community partners and elevate effective program interventions that can be replicated to address structural issues exacerbating homelessness and health inequities. Anira received her MPH from San Diego State University and began her career serving PEH coordinating emergency shelter for her local continuum of care in 2012. Her areas of expertise includes cross-sector service coordination, community engagement, process improvement and project management.



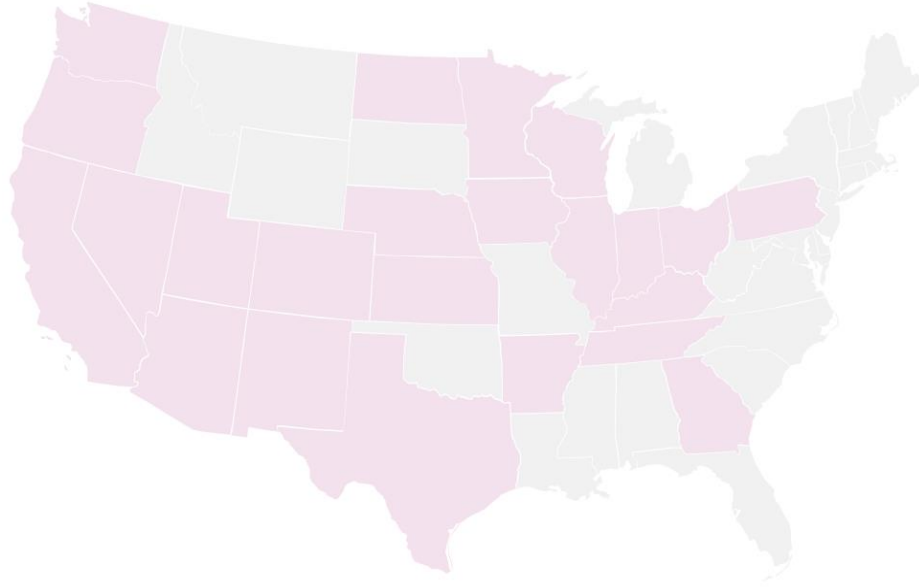
# Learning Objectives

1. Understand what is needed to meaningfully collaborate with a Lived Expertise Advisory Council
1. Identify two core ways health care systems can support a lived experience advisory council to overcome barriers and allow for meaningful engagement.
1. Recognize what shifts need to be made to ensure equitable supports, power-sharing, and value are placed in partners with lived expertise of homelessness.

# Background on the Statewide Advisory Council

CommonSpirit 

# CommonSpirit Health



CommonSpirit is one of the largest nonprofit health systems in the U.S., with more than 1,000 care sites in 24 states coast to coast, serving 20 million patients in big cities and small towns across America.

The Homeless Health Initiative (HHI) is focused on creating a system-wide strategy addressing the need to co-locate, coordinate and integrate health, behavioral health, safety and wellness services with housing and other social services.

# Research and Equity Advisory Council for Housing Insecurities (REACHI)

## Vision Statement

“To ensure the leadership and voices of those with lived-expertise are centered in Dignity Health’s community-driven initiatives. REACHI members will provide **guidance and collaboration** in our understanding of community needs, identify areas of prioritization for outreach and programming, and transform how we address housing insecurities and homelessness.”



# Intentional Development & Collaboration

1. Collaborating with partners that hold a shared vision for this work.
2. Acknowledgment of our organization's limitations.
3. Leveraging the foundational work and relationships that partner organizations have built.
4. Maintaining transparency
5. Seeking guidance from members and centering their values and interests in the work



# The Importance of Lived Expertise Consultants

## 1. Development Stage

- Consideration of a voice and advocate from the community
- Understands the nuances associated with recruitment and how to create an engaging space.

## 2. Maintenance Stage

- Sharing power with co-chairs to lead and transform the work
- Balancing capacity, support needs, & engagement of council members

# REACHI Co-Chair Role

- Overview
  - To co-create & facilitate a safe space of inclusion, authenticity, & diversity in our REACHI meetings.
  - Provide guidance on our advisory council's mission, content and direction.
- Responsibilities
  - Meeting agendas
  - Co-facilitation
  - Onboarding members
  - Policy creation



*Former REACHI Co-Chair, Suzette Shaw*

# Reflection

"We can no longer talk about equality and empowerment while enforcing inequities."

Suzette Shaw,  
Mental Health Peer Advocate, MHA  
California Black Women's Health Advocate  
REACHI Member

CommonSpirit 

# Contact Information

Victor Palacio, Mercy Housing  
[vpalacio@mercyhouse.net](mailto:vpalacio@mercyhouse.net)

Julie Silas, Homebase  
[julie@homebaseccc.org](mailto:julie@homebaseccc.org)

Anira Giarrusso-Khlok,  
CommonSpirit  
[anira.khlok@commonspirit.org](mailto:anira.khlok@commonspirit.org)

# Resources

[Homekey Client Engagement Toolkit](#)

[Toolkit for Communities:  
Considerations for Creating  
Lived Experience Circle on  
Homelessness](#)

**Thank You!**