

The context for evaluating California Convergence

California Convergence was formed in 2007 as a network of people and organizations working throughout California to improve community health — particularly by addressing policies and systems that could help reverse escalating rates of obesity, diabetes and preventable illness.

What will the evaluation address?

In 2009, an evaluation conducted by ICF Macro assessed California Convergence's first two years, focusing mostly on the infrastructure and processes put in place to achieve the organization's goals. The current evaluation will build on the previous one, but focus more on the outcomes that California Convergence has achieved after four years of operation. The current evaluation is being conducted by the Seattle-based Center for Community Health and Evaluation (CCHE) by a team familiar with community-level and state-wide obesity prevention initiatives across the state.

What is the focus of CCHE's evaluation?

The current evaluation will explore three main questions:

- How California Convergence has fostered greater collaboration and synergy around policy advocacy in the state.
- How California Convergence has built a sense of ownership and engagement in its work.
- The extent to which local, regional, and state-level policy impacts have been achieved, as well as other perceived benefits.

How does the current evaluation fit with other ongoing evaluation efforts?

At least two other evaluation efforts may overlap to some degree with this one: one looking at how to improve the working relationship of the Strategic Alliance and California Convergence (conducted by The Aspen Institute's Advocacy Planning and Evaluation

Program on behalf of The California Endowment) and two case stories that will explore different aspects of California Convergence's evolution in more detail. The stories are being prepared by CCHE team members who also are working on the outcome evaluation.

Because of these overlapping efforts, some people involved in California Convergence may be asked to participate in more than one interview, or to cover similar topics related to California Convergence from different perspectives. The evaluation teams are coordinating their efforts to minimize the burden to respondents and hope that all of these evaluation projects will yield a rich, useful understanding of California Convergence's evolution, accomplishments, partnerships, and plans for the future.

How will data for the evaluation be collected?

The CCHE evaluation team will review a variety of reports, meeting minutes, and other materials, but the main data source will be key informant interviews with individuals involved in different aspects of California Convergence.

What is the timeline for the evaluation?

Most of the document reviews and interviews will occur during the summer of 2011, with analysis conducted in the late summer/early fall and reports generated before the end of the year. The other evaluation activities are on a similar timeline, so some of the interviews may occur close together.

Questions?

Please contact Emily Bourcier, Senior Program Manager at CCHE, who is overseeing both the outcome evaluation and case stories about California Convergence. She can be reached at 206-287-2035 or bourcier.e@ghc.org.