

New Hampshire's Health Equity Field

2026 Field Assessment Report

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Executive summary

Background

In 2015, the Endowment for Health (the Endowment) asked the Behavioral Health Improvement Institute (BHII) to develop an assessment to inform the strategic allocation of resources in the Endowment's priority areas (i.e., "fields"). The resulting Field Assessment Tool (FASST)¹ estimates field development across eight domains and 39 items based on semi-structured interviews of key informants throughout the field. The FASST was first used to assess the conditions of New Hampshire (NH)'s Health Equity (HE) field in 2022.² It was readministered this year, the findings of which constitutes the focus of this report.

Methods

Twenty-six interviews were conducted between December 2025 and February 2026. We then scored each FASST item on a five-point scale while capturing qualitative themes. We aggregated these data by averaging the quantitative scores and coding the qualitative themes by item.

Findings

Domain scores span the preparation and action stages of development. No domain changed meaningfully since the prior administration. Shared purpose scored highest (2.8). Four domains scored lowest, all in the preparation stage: expanding power (2.1), adequate funding and support for policy (2.2), quality programs and services (2.2), and shared knowledge (2.2). The equity domain scored highest (2.5), moving into action with this administration.

Across the field, informants describe a shared commitment to equitable access to healthcare and to the field's founding values of truth and justice. Local relationships remain the field's primary connective tissue: trust and collaboration hold up well where organizations share a mission or community but are weaker across regions. Key informants named a wide range of leaders in the field, though their racial and ethnic diversity lag behind that of the broader workforce. No coordinating body, shared data source, or hub for best practices exists to connect the field's efforts.

Service delivery is strained by provider shortages, and healthcare entities' relationship with those they serve has been challenged in recent years by mergers. The policy environment is obstructive at both the state and federal level, and funding across the field is broadly unstable. Federal funding cuts and fear of explicitly naming equity as a focal point threaten the field's continued viability. Sudden needs, such as emergency support for families affected by ICE raids, arise with no funding mechanism to meet them. Where relationships are strong, organizations coordinate strategies and share resources, helping the field hold steady despite these pressures.

Recommendations

We recommend the Endowment fund a dedicated staff position at the NH Center for Justice and Equity to connect people, knowledge, and data across sectors. We further recommend the Endowment designate a portion of its Opportunity Grants program for emergency, unanticipated equity needs. Finally, we recommend the Endowment support a statewide data resource that describes the communities the field serves, including new immigrants to New Hampshire.

¹ Fauth, J., Phillips, M., & Nordstrom, A. (June, 2016). Field Assessment Tool (FASST) Manual. Unpublished report, commissioned by New Hampshire Endowment for Health.

² Tremblay, G. (July 2022). NH Health Equity Assessment. Unpublished Report, commissioned by New Hampshire Endowment for Health.

NH's Health Equity Field

Endowment for Health's field building activities

The Endowment for Health (the Endowment) is a statewide, private, nonprofit foundation dedicated to improving the health of New Hampshire (NH)'s people, especially those who are vulnerable and underserved. The Endowment engages in "field building" by providing resources to develop systems-change capacity within its priority areas ("fields"). Howard and Wu³ define a field as "a community of actors who engage in a common set of core practices with a common goal for their work." The Endowment's field building involves creating strong coalitions and networks, enhancing the NH knowledge base, growing leadership and advocacy capacity, developing shared measures and data-based decision making, and supporting other systems change capacities. It currently supports six fields: children's behavioral health, early childhood, health equity, healthy aging, health policy, and health care workforce ("Forward Fund").

New Hampshire's Health Equity field: 2001-2026

The Endowment identified Social/Cultural Barriers to Accessing Health as a theme grant area in 2001, which evolved into the Health Equity Targeted Initiative in 2014. In 2011, the Endowment funded the NH Health & Equity Partnership's⁴ publication of the [*Plan to Address Health Disparities and Promote Health Equity in New Hampshire*](#), which set statewide priorities to close health gaps for racial, ethnic, and linguistic minority communities. Since then, key outputs of the Endowment's equity-related work include the multi-year Race and Equity in NH Series, launched in 2017, and the establishment of the NH Center for Justice & Equity, founded in 2025. Other entities addressing the state's

equity concerns during this time included Welcoming New Hampshire, a coalition of organizations working to ensure the state is a place where immigrants and refugees can thrive, which launched in 2011. In 2015, a collective of leaders of color from across the state launched the Equity Leaders Fellowship (ELF) in response to a need for more leaders of color.⁵

State and federal government have also played a role in shaping the field in the past two decades. In 2013, the NH Department of Health & Human Services (NH DHHS) published the [*Health Equity Report Card*](#), a collection of publicly available data on social determinants of health disaggregated by race and ethnicity intended to highlight disparities among NH residents. In 2020, at the peak of the pandemic, the Governor's COVID-19 Equity Response Team released its [*Initial Report and Recommendations*](#) to address the disproportionate impact of the illness on the state's communities of color.

New federal and state leadership brought sweeping restrictions to the field beginning in 2025, including federal funding cuts and the prohibition of DEI work. This period also saw nationwide ICE raids in which perceived race and ethnicity functioned as a central factor in enforcement decisions.⁶ At the state level, an "anti-DEI" bill signed into law in June 2025 restricted diversity, equity, and inclusion-related programming and education within any educational institution receiving state funding.⁷

The timeline on the next page highlights recent milestone events in NH's HE field.

³ Howard, D. & Wu, P. (2009). Assessing California's multiple pathway field: Preparing youth for success in college and career. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED506581.pdf>

⁴ Known today as the NH Equity Collective

⁵ Safarzadeh, Y. (2026, February 9). Spotlight on rising changemakers: Jason Bonilla. New Hampshire Magazine. <https://www.nhmagazine.com/spotlight-on-rising-changemakers-jason-bonilla/>

⁶ Legal Defense Fund. (2026, May 26). ICE made 400,000 arrests in 14 months; Black, Latinx and immigrant neighborhoods bore the brunt. <https://www.naacpldf.org/press-release/ice-made-400000-arrests-in-14-months-black-latinx-and-immigrant-neighborhoods-bore-the-brunt/>

⁷ Dewitt, E. (2025, August 12). 'Vague, irrational, and incomprehensible': New Hampshire's DEI ban spurs lawsuit. New Hampshire Bulletin. <https://newhampshirebulletin.com/2025/08/12/new-hampshires-dei-ban-draws-lawsuit-from-aclu-schools-lgbtq-advocates/>

Milestone events in NH's Health Equity field

2001	Endowment for Health identifies Social/Cultural Barriers to Accessing Health as a theme grant area
2011	NH Health & Equity Partnership publishes the <i>Plan to Address Health Disparities and Promote Health Equity in NH</i> NH Alliance for Immigrants & Refugees establishes Welcoming NH initiative to help integrate new Americans into the state
2013	NH DHHS publishes the Health & Equity in NH Report Card
2014	Endowment for Health's Social/Cultural Barriers to Accessing Health theme grant area evolves into the Health Equity Targeted Initiative
2015	Equity Leaders Fellowship launched by and for leaders of color
2017	Launch of the Race & Equity in NH Series
2020	Governor's COVID-19 Equity Response Team delivers their <i>Initial Report & Recommendations</i>
2022	NH Center for Justice & Equity launches as a culmination of the Race & Equity in NH Series
2025	A series of US Executive Order dismantles federally funded DEI initiatives. NH law bans DEI programming within publicly funded schools. Large-scale ICE raids sweep the state and country.

FASST domains and items

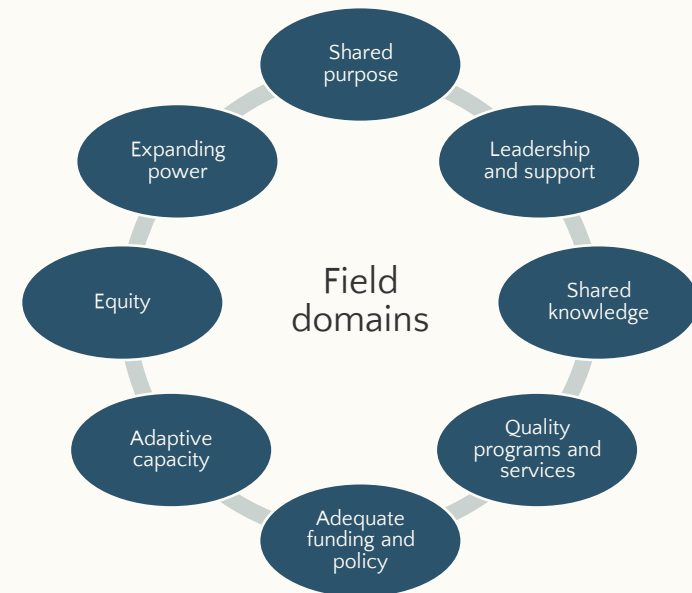
In 2015, the Endowment commissioned the Behavioral Health Improvement Institute (BHII) at Keene State College to develop a tool to assess the status and progress of its key investment fields and guide strategic decision making. After a review of scholarly and grey literature about field building, BHII worked closely with the Endowment to create the Field Assessment Tool (FASST). The original version of the FASST was composed of 26 items across six domains, five of which were already used for the Endowment's strategic planning:

1. Shared Purpose: the extent to which the field works collaboratively toward a common vision
2. Leadership and Community Support: the degree to which leaders actively support the field
3. Shared Knowledge: the degree to which the field uses and shares information and data to guide action
4. Quality Programs and Services: the extent to which programs and services are effective, comprehensive, and coordinated
5. Adequate Funding and Support for Policy: the degree to which the resource and policy environment supports the field's goals

Adaptive Capacity, the degree to which field members monitor and adapt to barriers and opportunities, was a pilot domain that was added to the tool after emerging from the literature.

The tool has evolved since its inception to include the Equity domain (the degree to which the field recognizes and addresses its sources of disparities) in 2017 and the Expanding Power domain (the degree to which people at the center of the field can shape decisions and drive change) in 2025. The current FASST estimates field development across 39 items grouped into the eight domains visualized in the graphic to the right.

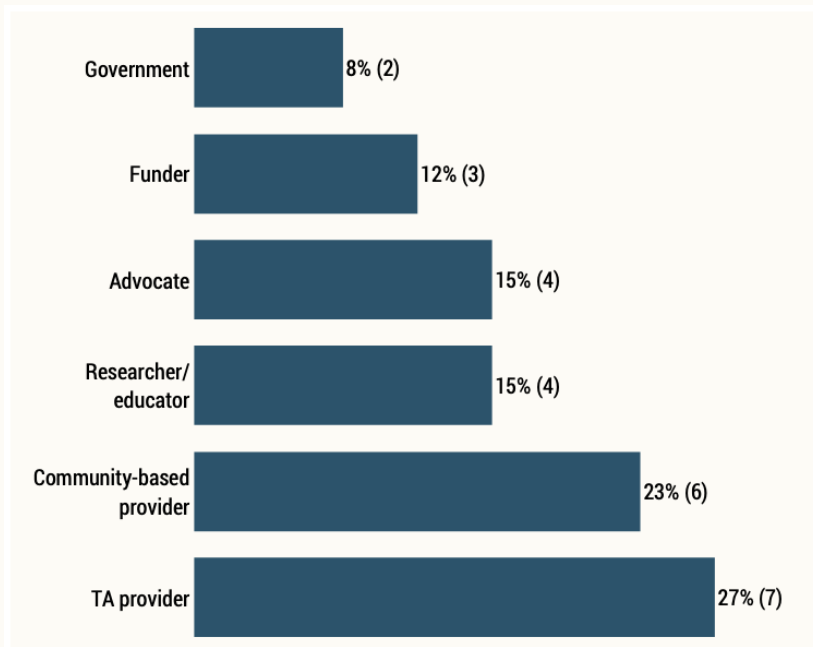
See the Appendix for more information about the domains, items, and their definitions.



FASST method

Key informant interviews

The Endowment partnered with BHII to identify 26 key informants for this year's assessment: seven technical assistance (TA) providers, six community-based providers, four advocates, four researchers/educators, three funders, and two government representatives (see chart below). Each informant participated in a one-hour, semi-structured Team interview with one of two BHII staff members between December 2025 and February 2026. All interviews were recorded.



To support conversational flow, the team grouped the FASST questions into cross-domain topics and developed a lead question for each. When an informant engaged with a topic, interviewers used its specific

questions as probes. When an informant had little to contribute, interviewers moved to the next topic. As a result, not every informant answered every question, and interviews concentrated on the areas each informant knew best. Analysis then mapped responses back to their FASST domains.

Quantitative scoring

FASST uses anchored rating scales to assess each item based on interview responses. The first seven interviews were scored by two raters to establish interrater reliability.

Qualitative themes

Alongside scoring, evaluators used thematic analysis to analyze the qualitative themes for each FASST item. These themes supplement the quantitative ratings, providing context and serving as the foundation for interpreting findings.

Understanding the findings

FASST scores are reported at the item level by averaging ratings across relevant informants. Domain scores reflect the average of item scores within that domain. To support interpretation, scores are categorized into three stages of field development: preparation (field properties are absent, fragmented, or undefined), action (field properties are emerging but not yet comprehensive or stable), or maintenance (field properties are mature, sustainable, and widely adopted).

When considering differences between scores, we regard a difference of one point or more to be “significant,” and anything between 0.5 and 1 point to be a trend.

These distinctions will be used throughout the report to add context to the raw numbers reported.

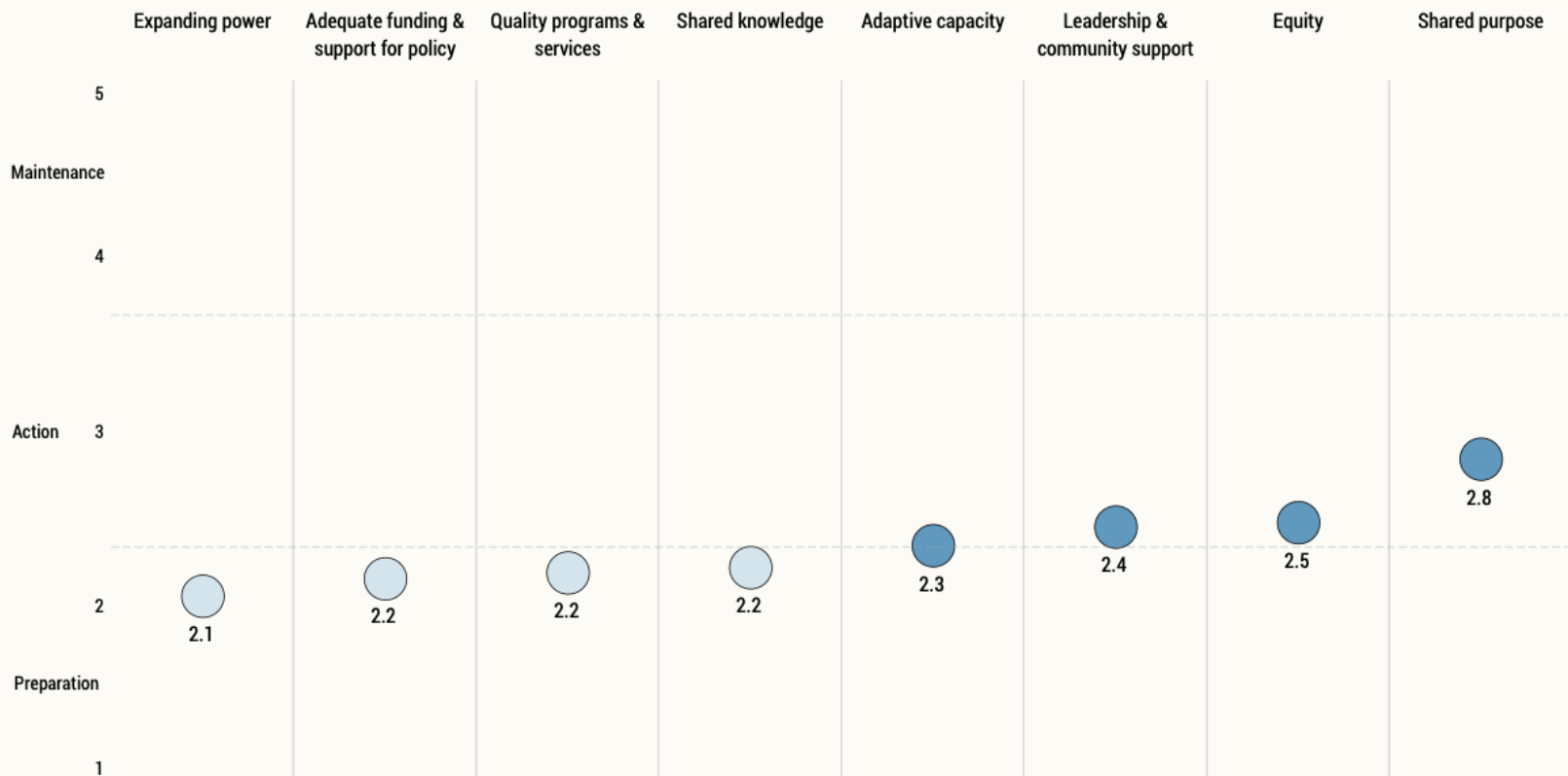
Overview of all domain scores

The chart below displays the average domain scores across all items. Overall, the health equity field spans the preparation and action stages of development, with most domains showing no significant difference from one another. The exception is shared purpose (2.8), which scored higher than the four lowest-scoring domains: expanding power, adequate funding and support for policy, quality programs and services, and shared knowledge. This indicates that field members are

relatively unified around a shared mission, even as they face separate constraints in funding, service delivery, knowledge infrastructure, and the inclusion of those most affected in the field's decisions and collective action.

The pages that follow explore each domain's trajectory and item-level scores in more detail, following the order depicted in the chart below.

2026 Health Equity scores by domain



Expanding power

Expanding power is the degree to which historically excluded individuals and communities can shape decisions, influence systems, and drive change. It consists of backbone structures, community advisory groups, community member engagement, elevating lived experience with data, funding for grassroots organizing, infrastructure for community input, and sharing best practices for advancing equity. This is the first time this domain was included in the administration of the health equity FASST. The average score (2.1) is in the preparation stage of development.

Sharing best practices for advancing equity is the degree to which field members exchange approaches to advancing equity. The score for this item (1.8) is in the preparation stage of development. The field has no established credentialing process or formal standards of practice. Professional development opportunities were expanding in the past two years, particularly training in culturally and linguistically competent care, but the current political leadership has reduced both its availability and promotion.

Community advisory groups are structured efforts to ensure programs and services are provided in a culturally responsive manner. The score for this item (1.8) is in the preparation stage of development. Few community advisory groups dedicated to cultural competence operate in the field. Existing examples include the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)'s health committee and Black Lives Matter's Black maternal health initiative. Consultants doing this work have become more common, though efforts to engage them vary.

Funding for grassroots organizing refers to financial support that enables residents to influence policies and decisions that affect their communities. The score for this item (1.8) is in the preparation stage of development. Grassroots organizing is largely funded by private foundations that operate with limited resources.

Infrastructure for community input reflects the processes for local service providers and policy makers to receive input from community members. The score for this item (1.8) is in the preparation stage of development. Input reaches providers and policymakers through isolated mechanisms, such as listening sessions as testimonials, rather than a connected system.

Elevating lived experience with data is the degree to which data are contextualized (e.g., using disaggregated or qualitative data) to elevate the perspectives of people with lived experience. The score for this item (2.3) is in the preparation stage of development. The field draws on both qualitative and quantitative data to surface the experiences of those at the center of its work. Organizations collect data to document conditions and guide decisions about strategy and resource allocation. Two exemplars for how data are being used include the Conservation Law Foundation, which maps residents' stories using ArcGIS to find trends and inform action, and the NH Center for Justice and Equity, which uses data to counter misinformation such as the assumption that NH is "a white state" with uniform health outcomes.

Community member engagement refers to the inclusion of local community members in decision-making, leadership, and advocacy efforts. The score for this item (2.4) is in the action stage of development. The NH Center for Justice and Equity is a prime example of community voice advancing the field's goals: it grew out of conversations fostered by the Endowment's Race & Equity in NH Series and now works to foster connections, change systems, and meet community needs. They have a newly formed Community Advisory Board which keeps those most affected at the center of its work. Such boards are a widely accepted practice for community member engagement, and they've become increasingly common at hospitals and medical centers across the state. In Nashua and Manchester, local governments and grassroots organizations draw on resident engagement to set priorities. Despite these advances, room remains to

move beyond centering voices toward including people in the decisions and next steps those voices inform.

Backbone structure is the degree to which people with lived experience are actively involved in the field's convening and coordination structures. The score for this item (2.5) is in the action stage of development. The field has no clear backbone organization, so inclusion is best examined organization by organization. Overall, structures that exist to engage people at the center of the field's work are well developed but inconsistently found across organizations.

Organizational exemplars for this work include the Conservation Law Foundation, Black Lives Matter, and the Granite State Organizing Project, which runs five chapters of residents who meet monthly to set an action plan and train on topics such as immigration and active bystander intervention.

Expanding power (n=26)

	n	This year's average score	Stage of development
Sharing best practices for advancing equity	8	1.8	Preparation
Community advisory groups	10	1.8	Preparation
Funding grassroots organizing	17	1.8	Preparation
Infrastructure for community input	12	1.8	Preparation
Elevating lived experience with data	16	2.3	Preparation
Community member engagement	18	2.4	Action
Backbone structures	15	2.5	Action
Domain-level average		2.1	Preparation

Adequate funding and support for policy

Adequate funding and support for policy reflects the degree to which the resource and policy environment supports the goals and aims of the field, including funding, policy advocacy, policy environment, policy knowledge, shared measurement, and technology. The domain score (2.2) is similar to its previous administration (2.4). It is in the preparation stage of development.

Policy environment is the degree to which the policy environment supports effective action in the field. The score for this item (1.8) is on par with last administration (1.5). It is in the preparation stage of development. The policy environment is largely obstructive, with federal policies actively blocking effective action. At the state level, informants described the New Hampshire legislature as large and convoluted; one felt it leans so far right that it no longer reflects the will of the population. Housing seems to be an area where advocates can still influence policy in a productive direction, as Housing Action NH recently demonstrated with their success supporting bills into law that expand housing availability.

Shared measurement is the systematic collection and use of common measures and data sharing platforms to monitor progress and inform decision making. The score for this item (1.8) has slightly increased since last administration (1.3). This shift indicates the emergence of shared measures within the field. The item is in the preparation stage of development. Data collection happens mainly at the organizational level, where it supports quality improvement, reporting, and advocacy. Shared measures across the field are far less established, though informants described a widespread desire for them to enable collective action. Several efforts point in that direction, likely contributing to the slight increase in score since the 2022 administration of the FASST, such as the NH Children's Health Foundation's publicly available dashboard depicting the factors that influence children's health within

the state. Some interest areas, such as environmental health, work from common measures.

Funding reflects the availability and security of the resources and funding necessary to support effective collective action in the field. The score for this item (2.0) has slightly decreased since the last administration (2.6). The item is in the preparation stage of development. Funding is broadly unstable, disrupting services and slowing the field's progress. The current federal administration ended equity-related funding in the early days of taking office and barred future equity grants, constraining service delivery. Some organizations have adapted by continuing the work but changing how they describe it. Private foundations continue to sustain the work, but their resources and therefore reach is limited.

Policy knowledge is the degree to which field actors have the knowledge necessary to inform and shape an enabling policy environment. The score for this item (2.1) has significantly decreased since last administration (3.1). It is in the preparation stage of development. Policy knowledge is concentrated in certain sectors, such as aging and early childhood, and among organizations including New Futures, the NH Fiscal Policy Institute, the NAACP, and MomsRising. Informants described a need for a system to build knowledge more broadly. Knowledge thins toward the community level, where the average resident does not know how to contact a representative or what bills are before the legislature.

Technology refers to the existence and utilization of needed technologies to support effective action in the field. The score for this item (2.4) is on par with the last administration (2.8). It is in the action stage of development. Telehealth, online meetings, and text communication with providers are increasingly embraced methods for expanding communication pathways, while advocacy groups concerned about surveillance rely on end-to-end encrypted messaging. Language banks and video translation are commonly used

to extend linguistically competent services. Looking forward, informants saw promise in AI for expanding health services such as screenings and for supporting community outreach efforts. Technology's adoption is constrained by users' access and comfort with technology. This gap is most acute for elderly residents, who are the most vulnerable to being left behind as technology advances.

Policy advocacy refers to the strength and sustainability of the field's advocacy infrastructure. The score for this item (2.8) has held stable since last administration (2.8). It is in the action stage of development. Effective advocacy at the state level rests on a set of organizations that

carry the work. The public's education is fueled by research organizations such as the NH Fiscal Policy Institute, while advocacy organizations such as New Futures, NAMI, and the Conservation Law Foundation identify bills requiring advocacy and mobilize the public through petitions and testimony. Advocacy operates at different scales: larger organizations such as hospitals and schools have the resources and staff to support the work at the state level, while grassroots organizations are more likely to engage in local politics, where they feel they can drive the most meaningful change.

Adequate funding & support for policy (n=26)

	n	This year's average score	Stage of development	2022 to 2026	Score change	Score change trend
Policy environment	18	1.8	Preparation		0.3	Stable
Shared measurement	19	1.8	Preparation		0.5	Slight increase
Funding	22	2.0	Preparation		-0.6	Slight decrease
Policy knowledge	15	2.1	Preparation		-1.0	Significant decrease
Technology	15	2.4	Action		-0.4	Stable
Policy advocacy	18	2.8	Action		0.0	Stable
Domain-level average		2.2	Preparation		-0.2	Stable

Quality programs and services

Quality programs and services reflect the extent to which supports are effective, comprehensive, and coordinated. It is characterized by comprehensiveness of services, implementation, linkages, and reach. Its average score (2.2) is stable since the last administration (2.0). It is in the preparation stage of development.

Reach reflects the percentage of potential beneficiaries reached by evidence-based and promising practices and policies. The score for this item (2.1) is on par with the last administration (1.7). It is in the preparation stage of development. Informants found reach difficult to estimate, noting that the field lacks the data to do so with confidence. One informant pointed to a positive sign: more state residents are enrolled in Medicaid than fall below the poverty line, suggesting reasonable access to healthcare coverage among the lowest income bracket. Access varies by geography, however. Residents of the North Country are less likely to be connected to services than those in the southern part of the state, and provider consolidation, such as Concord Hospital's acquisition of LRGHealthcare, has closed the distance between some residents and the localized care they once had nearby.

Implementation is the extent to which drivers of high-quality implementation of program and services are in place in the field, such as training, coaching, and evaluation/performance monitoring. The score for this item (2.1) is similar to the last administration (1.8). It is in the preparation stage of development. Few formal mechanisms exist to ensure high-quality implementation. Informants were unaware of communities of practice or established systems of support. The New Hampshire Perinatal Quality Collaborative, a statewide collection of experts in the field of maternal and child health dedicated to safe and equitable outcomes for all, is a notable exception. One informant noted that they have improved treatment for mothers with substance use disorder in recent years.

Comprehensiveness is the extent to which the array of programs and services in the field is sufficient to meet the needs of potential beneficiaries. The score for this item (2.3) is aligned with the last administration (2.4). It is in the preparation stage of development. Informants noted that the medical service array is too thin to meet demand, with hospital bed shortages driving long emergency room stays and specialists carrying long waitlists statewide. Residents who are patient and persistent eventually tend to receive the care they need, though not necessarily at the point where it would be most helpful. Recent budget cuts and limited state funding have further narrowed what's available, and culturally competent care remains especially scarce regardless of where a resident lives.

Linkages refer to formal mechanisms that help beneficiaries transition or progress successfully between related programs or systems. The score for this item (2.3) is consistent with the previous administration (2.1). It is in the preparation stage of development. Coverage is uneven: referral provision is lacking in the North Country, where transitions are difficult without support. While social service agencies most often provide these supports in the state's urban areas, they tend to be sector-specific, which means a single resident may work with multiple case workers to navigate their full range of needs. Throughout the state, residents often do not know what services to look for or where to find them. The 211 system is a useful resource, but only when residents know it exists and providers keep their listings up-to-date.

Quality programs & services (n=21)

	n	This year's average score	Stage of development	2022 to 2026	Score change	Score change
Reach	14	2.1	Preparation		0.4	Stable
Implementation	13	2.1	Preparation		0.3	Stable
Comprehensiveness	15	2.3	Preparation		-0.1	Stable
Linkages	6	2.3	Preparation		0.2	Stable
Domain-level average		2.2	Preparation		0.2	Stable

Shared knowledge

Shared knowledge is the degree to which the field uses and shares information, research, and data to guide action and shape professional standards. It includes applied knowledge, knowledge sharing, and professional standards. The domain score (2.2) is similar to the previous administration (2.1). It is in the preparation stage of development.

Professional standards reflects the presence and use of standards of practice in the field, such as practice guidelines, credentialing processes, and reporting standards and platforms. The score for this item (1.5) is on par with the previous administration (1.9). It is in the preparation stage of development. Informants named no established credentialing process or formal standards of practice in the field. Professional development has contracted in recent years, with less training available on equity-related content amid growing political constraints on permissible content. ELF remains active in this space.

Applied knowledge refers to the extent to which scholarly theory and research, and/or local, credible information is leveraged to support efforts in the field. The score for this item (2.4) is consistent with the previous administration (2.1). It is in the action stage of development. Practice more often draws on practitioners' experience and training,

gained through work or schooling, than on scholarly research. Informants described the field as siloed, without a shared source for best practices, and reported having little time to seek out strong models on their own. The behavioral health and substance use disorder sectors were named as an exception, which regularly use nationally recognized evidence-based models in their work.

Knowledge sharing is the extent to which the field has systems in place to exchange local insights, innovations, and effective practices. The score for this item (2.8) increased slightly from last administration (2.3). This shift indicates a trend away from fragmented and undefined knowledge sharing to a few established pathways. It is in the action stage of development. Sharing occurs within established groups but rarely moves between them. Some exchange is organized, taking place through convenings such as NH Healthy Aging meetings, the Race and Equity in NH Series, environmental justice roundtables, the early childhood partnerships, and Welcoming New Hampshire. Other sharing is informal and relational, carried through peer channels such as WhatsApp groups of providers within a community. Regardless of approach, exchange stays within networks rather than across them. No central hub exists for best practices or shared data.

Shared knowledge (n=18)

	n	This year's average score	Stage of development	2022 to 2026	Score change	Score change trend
Professional standards	8	1.5	Preparation		-0.4	Stable
Applied knowledge	10	2.4	Action		0.3	Stable
Knowledge sharing	12	2.8	Action		0.5	Slight increase
Domain-level average		2.2	Preparation		0.1	Stable

Adaptive capacity

Adaptive capacity is the degree to which field members monitor and adapt to barriers and seize new opportunities in an ever-shifting environment. It is characterized by adaptation, monitoring, and resource flexibility. Its average score (2.3) is on par with the previous administration (2.5). It is in the action stage of development.

Resource flexibility is the degree to which resources are reallocated, shared, and/or leveraged among higher- and lower-resourced actors to successfully cope with changing conditions. The score for this item (2.1) is aligned with the previous administration (2.3). It is in the preparation stage of development. A competitive funding environment and limited funds constrain resource-sharing. As with other items, no clear field-wide mechanism exists for seeking support. Instead, relationships drive what sharing occurs. North Country Healthcare, for example, shares resources and costs and, in the environmental justice and refugee sectors, larger organizations will donate resources or provide fiscal sponsorship to smaller ones.

Monitoring is the extent to which the field monitors and assesses external environments to identify necessary shifts in strategy. The score for this item (2.4) is similar to the previous administration (2.5). It is in the action stage of development. No overarching system exists for monitoring the external environment. Instead, individuals track developments on their own and share updates through listservs.

Interested actors convene periodically to exchange what they know. One informant named a refugee-focused staff member at DHHS as being well informed on funding shifts and conditions in refugees' countries of origin.

Adaptation reflects how quickly the field can alter its strategy in response to new information. The score for this item (2.5) is consistent with last administration (2.8). It is in the action stage of development. The field is nimble, drawing on relationships as one of its strongest safety nets, though it tends to adapt only when forced by crisis. For example, when US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids began in NH, Building Community in New Hampshire (a refugee- and immigrant-serving organization in Manchester) secured funding to provide legal services and create guardianship plans for the children of undocumented parents. Similarly, nonprofit leaders in the Nashua area responded to the 2025 funding cuts by coordinating their work and funding pursuits through regular meetings convened by the United Way of Greater Nashua. Larger institutions are seen as slower to respond, perhaps because reserves cushion them when funding tightens. Informants suspect the government is unable to adapt within the current political and policy environment.

Adaptive capacity (n=15)

	n	This year's average score	Stage of development	2022 to 2026	Score change	Score change trend
Resource flexibility	10	2.1	Preparation		-0.3	Stable
Monitoring	7	2.4	Action		-0.2	Stable
Adaptation	12	2.5	Action		-0.1	Stable
Domain-level average		2.3	Action		-0.2	Stable

Leadership and community support

Leadership and community support reflects the degree to which formal and informal leaders actively support the field and include representation from grassroots and racially and ethnically diverse actors. It includes aware, supportive, engaged communities; diverse, representative actors; engagement; and knowledgeable, ready, supportive leaders. The domain score (2.4) is the same as the last administration. It is in the action stage of development.

Diverse, representative actors is the degree to which the field includes a representative, knowledgeable, and culturally competent set of field members. The score for this item (1.9) is aligned with the previous administration (2.3). It is in the preparation stage of development. Informants reported little progress on this front, with one noting that more was being done two years ago than presently. The growing prevalence of community health worker and navigator roles across the healthcare and education fields was cited as a step in the right direction.

Engagement reflects the degree to which people at the center of the field are engaged at all levels of the field. The score for this item (2.3) is on par with last administration (2.1). It is in the preparation stage of development. Efforts to engage those at the center of the work vary by sector. State employees often have good intentions but are constrained by the political leaders around them while nonprofits, particularly advocacy and immigrant-serving organizations, tend to be especially skilled in this area. Reaching members of immigrant communities is particularly difficult given the national political climate, and some people with lived experience doubt that sharing their stories will lead to change.

Aware, supportive, engaged communities refers to receptive communities that are aware of field issues/needs and supportive of efforts. The score for this item (2.8) is consistent with the last administration (2.7). It is in the action stage of development.

Community support varies by issue, with equity issues related to the aging or low socioeconomic population, such as Medicare access and affordable housing, drawing broader backing than those related to race or ethnicity. One notable exception is emerging, however: communities are increasingly rallying around immigrant populations, drawing historically disengaged residents into advocacy and donation efforts. Beyond issue type, willingness to support also varies widely by geography. Manchester, Nashua, Concord, and Laconia stand out, mounting community-wide efforts to deliver equitable services and health education regardless of income or primary language.

Knowledgeable, ready, supportive leaders is the extent to which leaders are knowledgeable; actively support effective strategies, policies, and practices; and contribute to collective action. The score for this item (2.8) is aligned with the previous administration (2.9). It is in the action stage of development. State-level leadership is limited: DHHS retains some well-informed leaders, though others have recently departed. In contrast, leadership outside state government is diverse, spanning municipal public health departments (notably Nashua and Manchester), statewide nonprofits such as the NAACP, the Black Heritage Trail of NH, and New Futures, and respected individual leaders. Pipelines for developing new leadership also exist, including ELF and Centro Latino.

Leadership & community support (n=25)

	n	This year's average score	Stage of development	2022 to 2026	Score change	Score change trend
Diverse, representative actors	14	1.9	Preparation		-0.4	Stable
Engagement	14	2.3	Preparation		0.2	Stable
Aware, supportive community	19	2.8	Action		0.1	Stable
Knowledgeable, ready, support leaders	24	2.8	Action		-0.1	Stable
Domain-level average		2.4	Action		0.0	Stable

Equity

Equity reflects how well the field recognizes and addresses the root causes of disparities. It assesses the level of equity in the other domains by examining culturally and linguistically competent programs (quality of programs and services), equity lens (shared purpose), equity-related data (shared knowledge), inclusive participation (leadership and community support), and informed policymakers (adequate funding and support for policy). Its average score (2.5) is on par with the previous administration (2.3). It has reached the action stage of development in this administration.

Informed policymakers is the extent to which leaders and decision-makers understand the importance of cultural competence, social determinants of health, and health equity to the field. The score for this item (2.1) is similar to last administration (2.2). It is in the preparation stage of development. An equity perspective is uncommon in the legislature, including among left-leaning members, and advocates spend considerable time explaining and defending the need for equitable policies. State agencies have stopped communicating about equity under the new administration, with informants believing officials are keeping a low profile amid political hostility to the work. Local government is an exception, with Manchester and Nashua continuing to center equity in their work.

Culturally and linguistically competent programs is the degree to which culturally and linguistically appropriate programs are accessible to those at the center of the field. The score for this item (2.3) is the same as the previous administration. It is in the preparation stage of development. Progress has been slow since the last administration of the FASST, owing in part to practitioners' limited time for professional development. Some gains have emerged – providers increasingly work to match clients with practitioners who speak their preferred language, and translation services are more available than they were four years ago – though availability still varies by area of the state. Culturally

competent programming remains less common statewide. Organizations serving immigrant populations stand out as particularly strong in both areas.

Equity-related data refers to how data about underrepresented communities is used to inform and improve strategy and action. The score for this item (2.3) is a slight increase from the previous administration (1.7). It is in the preparation stage of development. Those who use equity-related data rely most on qualitative data, gathered through listening sessions and interviews to support advocacy and responsive services. The Conservation Law Foundation's Environmental Justice group, for example, trains community activists to surface and find trends among residents' concerns. Access to population-level data is limited. Informants were unable to identify a statewide source for understanding the landscape of the work, such as the number and types of new immigrants to New Hampshire.

Inclusive participation is the degree to which underrepresented communities are included in the field's decision-making. The score for this item (2.3) is aligned with the prior administration (2.0). It is in the preparation stage of development. Informants described pockets of inclusive practice. Community Action Boards operate in some healthcare settings, and organizations such as Black Lives Matter regularly solicit the stories and concerns of their constituents. Some decision-making spaces include more diverse voices, though mainly for low-stakes decisions. Participation still varies widely by region and sector. Nonprofit boards often do not yet reflect the communities they serve. Initiatives such as ELF aim to diversify these spaces. Historically exploited communities remain wary of participating, which makes building trusting relationships an essential first step.

Equity lens refers to the degree to which an equity perspective is infused throughout the field's vision, values, goals, and strategies. The score for this item (3.4) is similar to the last administration (3.2). It is in the action stage of development. Trusted community leaders lead

culturally competent work in Nashua, Manchester, and Concord, often backed by foundations and coalitions. Elsewhere, efforts are limited and disconnected. The field favors narrow interventions, like English classes for New Americans, over broader, community-driven

approaches that address root causes. This shift often overlooks community-defined needs like trauma-informed care and culturally aligned childcare.

Equity (n=26)

	n	This year's average score	Stage of development	2022 to 2026	Score change	Score change trend
Informed policy makers	16	2.1	Preparation		-0.1	Stable
CLC programs	17	2.3	Preparation		0.0	Stable
Equity-related data	16	2.3	Preparation		0.6	Slight increase
Inclusive participation	15	2.3	Preparation		0.3	Stable
Equity lens	19	3.4	Action		0.2	Stable
Domain-level average		2.5	Action		0.2	Stable

Shared purpose

Shared purpose is the extent to which the field unites around a common vision and works in a coordinated, collaborative, and results-driven manner. It is characterized by goal alignment, governance structure and process, network connectivity, shared values, and trust. Its average score (2.8) is aligned with the previous administration (2.6). It is in the action stage of development.

Governance structure & process is the degree to which there is a centralized leadership that helps to sustain communication, cooperation, and decision-making. The score for this item (1.5) is aligned with the previous administration (1.8). It is in the preparation stage of development. Informants consistently reported that the field has no overarching decision-making body, and opinions are divided on whether one is needed: some prefer a localized approach to decision-making, while others observe that communities are struggling through the same decisions in isolation. The Equity Taskforce, formed during COVID, once filled part of the statewide coordination role but has lost relevance for some informants. Despite the lack of a comprehensive governing body, effective sub-structures exist; New Futures and the NH Public Health Association, for example, lead the field's advocacy decision-making through planful and intentional processes.

Strategy alignment is the degree to which the field has an agreed upon portfolio of coordinated, complementary, and purposive strategies to achieve shared goals. The score for this item (2.8) is similar to the previous administration (2.9). It is in the action stage of development. Field strategies follow a two-pronged approach: building public awareness of equity concerns and strengthening the existing workforce. Organizations such as the NH Center for Justice and Equity and the NH Fiscal Policy Institute work to identify and raise public awareness of the root causes of inequities in the state through the publication and promotion of grey literature. NH Possible strives to reframe the field's public perception by positioning its work as advancing health, well-being, and an economy that works for all, rather

than focusing solely on those underserved by the current system. Workforce-focused strategies aim to increase the cultural and linguistic competence of services through expanded interpretation services in hospitals and community centers and through immigrant-serving organizations that supplement care with transportation, legal, and housing support. While strategies across the field are often similar, informants reported they are rarely coordinated, owing to differing organizational priorities and a preference for keeping collaborative efforts localized. One informant noted that the current political environment has forced strategies to shift toward sustaining funding.

Network connectivity is the extent to which a network of highly engaged and interactive actors leverage resources and capacities for the collective good. The score for this item (3.0) is on par with the previous administration (2.9). It is in the action stage of development. Throughout the field, relationships drive collaboration. Where personal ties and shared priorities are strong, organizations coordinate strategies and share resources. Cooperation among mission-aligned organizations has grown, particularly across affinity groups (e.g., Black Heritage Trail of NH, Black Lives Matter, Seacoast Outright) and in sectors such as environmental justice and business. Collaboration is less robust across regional boundaries, between differently-resourced organizations, and for those outside established circles. Healthcare mergers in the North Country and Laconia have eroded ties between local facilities and their communities. No field-wide coordinating structure exists, and competition for funding, staff burnout, and limited resources further constrain collaboration.

Trust is the extent to which actors perceive others within the field are reliable, support field goals/actions, and are open to discussion. The score for this item (3.1) has slightly increased since the previous administration (2.5). It is in the action stage of development. This item's shift in score indicates a trend away from statewide fragmented trust toward pockets of trust throughout the state. Its presence is

inconsistent and varies with proximity: it is high among individuals and organizations within one's inner circle (e.g., those with similar missions or in the same community), gives way to suspicion toward those outside the circle, and hardens, for some, into active distrust of government and those who work within the system. Some informants noted that trust is hindered by a perceived transactional culture in the field, masked by superficial politeness. Others noted that trust has shifted in recent years, with external political pressures fostering greater solidarity among field members.

Shared goals is the extent to which field actors agree on a set of clearly articulated, collaboratively defined, and regularly reviewed shared goals. The score for this item (3.2) is consistent with the previous administration (2.8). It is in the action stage of development. Informants broadly identified the field's goal as ensuring equitable access to healthcare so that all NH residents can live without the burden of illness, regardless of race, creed, nationality, immigration status, gender identity, or sexual orientation. A few expanded the goal further, naming

the identification and remediation of disparities as a central role of the field. Several informants noted that the HE field is less well defined than others in the state, limiting the strength of goal alignment.

Shared values is the extent to which a set of common, agreed-upon values guide the public face and private actions of field members. The score for this item (3.3) is aligned with the previous administration (3.0). It is in the action stage of development. The field is grounded in a commitment to truth: understanding the experiences of historically marginalized populations as they navigate the healthcare system and the social determinants of health, raising public awareness of those experiences, and countering misinformation. This commitment is closely tied to the value of justice (defined by informants as the right of all individuals to fair and equal treatment), and to what one informant described simply as "doing the right thing." While these values are widely shared, some informants observed that they often conflict with society's valuing of capitalism and its influence on political decision-making.

Shared purpose (n=26)

	n	This year's average score	Stage of development	2022 to 2026	Score change	Score change trend
Governance structure & process	17	1.5	Preparation		-0.3	Stable
Strategy alignment	25	2.8	Action		-0.1	Stable
Network connectivity	23	3.0	Action		0.1	Stable
Trust	22	3.1	Action		0.6	Slight increase
Outcome/goal consensus	25	3.2	Action		0.4	Stable
Shared values	18	3.3	Action		0.3	Stable
Domain-level average		2.8	Action		0.2	Stable

Lessons learned

Several cross-domain themes emerged, pointing to deep-rooted patterns across the field. First, the field operates on informal relationships rather than centralized infrastructure for governance, coordination, and information sharing. Informants suggested that such infrastructure, if it existed, would be most valuable for connecting people and coordinating knowledge and data. Second, trust is lower in larger organizations than in smaller ones, and lower at the regional level than at the local level. Third, the field is siloed by both sector and region, though this fragmentation is not seen as a hindrance where localized, relationship-based work is strong.

Another cross-cutting theme was the acuity with which the field is experiencing the current political climate. Several informants described pervasive fear extending well beyond funding concerns to the viability of equity-focused work as a whole. This fear is not tied to any single domain but likely shapes the functioning of all of them. That no domain's score declined during such turbulence is a testament to the resilience and adaptiveness of the field.

Despite these challenges, and in some ways because of them, informants noted important gains in the past four years. Federal and state pressure has increased communication and collaboration across the field. Youth involvement has grown as the field develops ways to include people without niche expertise, and the ICE raids have drawn new supporters whom organizations are learning to mobilize safely and effectively. Many informants noted the launch of the NH Center for Justice and Equity as a promising step toward the visibility and connectivity of the field.

Informants pointed to three promising directions for advancing equity over the next two to three years:

1. **Collaboration.** The most frequently named opportunity was expanded collaboration across several configurations:

communities convening for awareness and advocacy, partnerships between communities and their healthcare workers, and healthcare providers coordinating care systems for their most underserved populations. Several informants saw particular value in fostering collaboration across sectors.

2. **Data access.** Informants identified greater access to data as a lever for more informed decision-making.
3. **Advocacy.** Informants called for advocacy on two fronts: for more diverse funding, and for broader policy engagement that draws in voices beyond the field's major players.

In response to these cross-cutting themes and promising directions, we recommend the Endowment take the following action:

1. **Strengthen cross-sector collaboration.** We recommend the Endowment fund a dedicated staff position at the NH Center for Justice and Equity to coordinate the field's people, knowledge, and data. This role could convene communities, healthcare workers, and providers across sectors, broker partnerships, and serve as a central hub for sharing information. Its work should prioritize connections that reach the field's most underserved populations.
2. **Enhance flexible funding for equity-specific projects.** We recommend the Endowment designate a portion of its existing Opportunity Grants program specifically for emergency, unanticipated equity needs, such as urgent support for families affected by ICE raids.
3. **Invest in shared population-level data.** We recommend the Endowment support the development of a statewide data resource that describes the communities the field serves, including the number and characteristics of new immigrants to New Hampshire.

Appendix

Domains, items, and definitions

Domain	Item	Definition
Shared purpose	Shared goals	Agreement on a set of clearly articulated shared goals, with a process for collaborative, ongoing revision
	Shared values	Common values that guide the public face and private actions of field members
	Strategy alignment	A portfolio of coordinated, complementary, and purposive strategies to achieve shared goals
	Network connectivity	A network of highly engaged interactive actors who seek to leverage collective resources and capacities
	Trust	The extent to which actors feel that others in the field with whom they interact are reliable, support field goals/actions, and are open to discussion
	Governance structure & process	The level of intentional hierarchy and centralization of leadership, and formality of process, within the network that helps to facilitate and sustain communication, cooperation, and decision-making
Leadership & community support	Knowledgeable, ready, supportive leaders	Identifiable leaders/exemplary organizations that are knowledgeable, actively supportive, and ready for collective action
	Diverse, representative, knowledgeable actors	A representative, knowledgeable, and culturally competent set of field actors
	Engagement	The group(s) whose needs the field is intended to address are engaged at all levels of the field
	Aware, supportive & engaged communities	A receptive community atmosphere/context that supports effective field action; communities that are aware of field issues/needs and supportive of field efforts
Shared knowledge	Applied knowledge	The extent to which scholarly theory and research, and/or local, credible information is leveraged to support efforts in the field
	Knowledge sharing	Effective sharing of relevant knowledge among field actors and to external audiences
	Professional standards	Presence and use of standards of practice in the field, such as practice guidelines, credentialing processes, and reporting standards and platforms
Quality programs & services	Reach	The percentage of the relevant population of the field's potential beneficiaries who are reached by evidence-based and promising practices
	Implementation	The extent to which drivers of high-fidelity, high-quality implementation of program and services are in place in the field, such as training, coaching, and evaluation/performance monitoring
	Comprehensiveness	The extent to which the array of programs and services in the field is sufficient to meet the needs of potential beneficiaries

Domain	Item	Definition
	Linkages	Presence of linking mechanisms that allow beneficiaries to successfully transition from one related program to another
Adequate funding & support for policy	Shared measurement	Existence and utilization by field actors of shared measures and a common data sharing platform, to monitor progress and inform decision making
	Funding	The availability and security of the resources and funding to support effective collective action in the field
	Technology	Existence and utilization of needed technologies to support effective action in the field
	Policy environment	Presence of an enabling policy environment to support effective action in the field
	Policy knowledge	Field actors have the knowledge necessary to inform and shape an enabling policy environment
	Policy advocacy	Presence of a sustainable advocacy infrastructure to support effective action in the field
Adaptive capacity	Monitoring	Ability to monitor and assess external environments to identify needed shifts relevant to field strategies, tactics, and needs
	Adaptation	Ability to alter strategies and tactics in response to new information in a timely manner
	Flexibility of resources	Degree to which resources are reallocated, shared, leveraged among higher- and lower-resourced actors to successfully cope with changing conditions
Equity	Equity lens	An equity perspective, including recognizing root causes of disparities, is infused throughout the field's vision, values, goals, and strategies
	Equity related data	Disaggregated data about vulnerable populations in the field, and shared measures, that are available and used by field actors to understand ingrained and emergent issues facing communities of color and to guide strategy and action
	Informed policymakers	Leaders and decision-makers understand the importance of cultural competence, social determinants of health, and health equity to the field
	Inclusive participation	A growing quantity and variety of partnerships with representatives from vulnerable populations, in particular communities of color, are fostered / valued in the field
	Culturally and linguistically competent programs	Culturally and linguistically appropriate programs that are accessible to those at the center of the field
Expanding power	Backbone structures	The degree to which people with lived experience included in the field's structures that convene and coordinate field members
	Elevating lived experience with data	The degree to which contextualized data are used to elevate the perspectives of people with lived experience
	Sharing best practices for advancing equity	An infrastructure that supports field members as they learn and implement approaches to advancing equity
	Funding for grassroots organizing	Financial support that enables local residents to influence policies and decisions that affect their communities

Domain	Item	Definition
	Sharing best practices for advancing equity	An infrastructure that supports field members as they learn and implement approaches to advancing equity
Expanding power cont.	Community member engagement	The inclusion of local community members in decision-making, leadership, and advocacy efforts
	Infrastructure for community input	The processes for local providers and policy makers to receive input from community members
	Community advisory groups	Structured efforts to ensure programs and services reflect cultural competence