

- I. Overview: In one-page, please provide a description of the team’s proposed project to advance one or more community health and community mobilization intervention(s) and the impact it hopes to achieve. [See below](#)
- II. Project proposal Please use the outline below to develop your proposal in a separate Word document with a maximum page limit of 3 pages, single-spaced.

The proposed project is a: New project idea Expansion or adjustment of an existing project

The Issue:

- What inequity(ies) within the social determinants of health (SDoH) will the project address?

Louisiana’s maternal mortality rate of 58.1 deaths per 100,000 births is the highest in the United States. The rate is about four times higher for black mothers than for white mothers, an issue that boils down to implicit bias. 59% of black maternal deaths are preventable, compared to 9% of white maternal deaths. Louisiana's infant mortality rate is 8.1 deaths per 1,000 live births. The EMERGE project will address the impact of implicit bias and structural racism as key drivers in health disparities that affect the infant-maternal mortality rate among African American birthing persons. Engaging community partners is a crucial component in promoting health equity. EMERGE proposes using community based participatory research to address societal conditions and policies, preconceptions among healthcare professionals, and biased communication on patient care and birth outcomes. The project offers action-oriented strategies to promote equity and improve health outcomes in North Louisiana.

The Community:

- Please define the community/population to be served by this proposed project.
- How will this project engage, involve and inform them?
- How will they benefit from this project?

The community/population to be served by this proposed project is birthing women residing in North Louisiana. The identified parishes include Claiborne, Bossier, Webster, Caddo, Desoto, Sabine, Natchitoches, Red River, Bienville, Ouachita, Morehouse, Union, Caldwell, Franklin, Richland, Madison, Tensas, Jackson, Lincoln, East Carroll, and West Carroll parishes. In the project, we will explore the phenomenon of giving birth during a global pandemic. The motivation for this proposal was the inaugural Maternal Mortality Summit and the higher rate of infant mortality in Louisiana than in the rest of the United States. A mixed-method approach explores the question: how does structural racism contribute to adverse birth outcomes for black families?

Through engagement of vulnerable communities in searching for collaborative solutions to improve health disparities, community-based participatory research embodies concepts essential to the Racial and Health Learning Lab’s mission to improve population health and achieve equity. The community-based participatory research goal is to decrease health

disparities by recognizing the health care's social and ecological paradigms and partnering community members with investigators in all components of the research process.

The Strategy and Action:

- What strategies will the team use to implement the project?

Strategies

- A series of three virtual focus groups of Black women focused on perinatal experiences.
 - Focus group will also provide feedback on various training curricula designed to counteract bias.
 - Participants will provide feedback on best ways to raise awareness of their collective stories.
- Data analysis
- A call to action paper to the different maternal and child health boards in Louisiana (Nursing, Medical, EMT, Pharmaceutical).

Methods

- Participants provide feedback after the session is completed on general satisfaction within the experience.
- Attendance and participation in focus groups will show evidence of objective completion.
- Quarterly monitoring of the actual use of information in learning sessions is reported and measured.

- What concepts from the ADJUST training will be applied during this project?

The proposed project will directly address the source of implicit bias and structural racism, not just helping people to cope with the impact of structural racism. It will improve the ability of the healthcare providers to respond to the unique needs and differences of families of various racial and ethnic groups in ways that are culturally attuned to improve birth outcomes. Components from the ADJUST curriculum and focus group participants experiences will be utilized to develop recommendations to healthcare providers around engaging the world from another racial, ethnic, or cultural viewpoint.

- How will the proposed project activities be tailored to meet the unique social, cultural, and linguistic characteristics and needs of the community to be served?

Our focus groups will serve a dual purpose. First, our focus groups will allow us to gather information from the community on their perinatal experiences and improve those experiences. Second, we will take that information and evaluate existing training curricula to make recommendations on current healthcare provider training curricula that will be identified by the EMERGE project team.

- How might proposed funding be used to implement this project?

The proposed funding will be used to support IRB approval and review, focus group recruitment materials, compensation for focus group participants, and administrative support to the fiscal agent for purchasing, fund distribution, and reporting.

- What other resources does team have to leverage future resources to sustain, support, scale, or strengthen this project?

Cohort members dedicated to securing and maintain funding for this program. We anticipate applying for funding from other philanthropic organizations which focus on diversity, inclusion, and equity. We will utilize the strength of our fiscal intermediary to chair our outreach efforts. In addition, we seek to partner with such organizations as the National Birth Equity and Black Mamas Matter to sustain conversations and implement changes. We are hopeful with the Bureau of Family Health's Safe Births Initiative that other entities will render support. The goal of Safe Births is the implementation of practices that promote safe, equitable, and dignified birth for all birthing persons in Louisiana.

The Vision and Desired Outcome:

- What high-level impact does the proposed project aim to achieve?
- How will the team measure the project's success?

Overall, the program will gather qualitative data on the perinatal experiences of Black women, looking specifically at experiences of implicit and explicit bias. In addition, the project will gather qualitative feedback on various anti-racist training curricula from the focus group participants.

The team will create a report on best practices with a checklist of what can be put in place by providers. The team will measure the impact of the project's success by surveying entities who utilized the checklist about internal impact, while also tracking statewide measures of maternal mortality and morbidity.

The Budget Proposal:

- Please provide budget details for the proposed project using the template below.
 - ♣ The total project budget, maximum \$25,000, to be expended from January – June 2022.
 - ♣ Please indicate what organization is selected from the team to be the fiduciary agent to contract with LPHI. [Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies](#)

Executive Summary/One Pager

Elevating Minds, Embracing Racial & Gender Equity (EMERGE) - composed of cohort members participating in Louisiana Public Health Institute, Healthy Blue Racial and Health Learning Lab with support from Institute of Women & Ethnic Studies - is committed to advancing health equity by improving the quality of care provided to pregnant women, addressing maternal and infant mortality and morbidity.

The EMERGE project will provide North Louisiana with more culturally attuned providers and greater access to equity services. Project objectives include facilitating three focus groups and providing a call-to-action essay, which will be submitted to state licensing boards, to help inform decisions and support for more culturally attuned practice and training on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The call to action will include the implemented practice, the geographic location, and define the population. In addition, it will be an evaluation of whether the practices are working or not and the importance to overall public health.

EMERGE is committed to providing services throughout the 21-parish region of North Louisiana. **Twelve** of the twenty-one parishes are maternity deserts with no maternity services. We believe this project will bring awareness to the underserved and marginalized citizens of the area and improve minority health and reduce health disparities.

The total cost of implementation of our EMERGE proposal is \$25,000.