



# 2025 Indiana Health Equity Symposium

*Unwavering Spirit: Collective Action for Community Health*



Thursday, September 4, 2025

9 AM to 5 PM EDT

Martin University, Indianapolis, IN

*"Ginkgo trees are among the oldest living trees on Earth, with some individuals living for thousands of years. The ginkgo leaf is associated with longevity and the ability to withstand time and hardship."*

**IPHA**

**HEALTH** *by*  
**DESIGN**





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*Thank you for investing in a healthier future for Indiana.*

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# 2025 Indiana Health Equity Symposium

*Unwavering Spirit: Collective Action for Community Health*

## SCHEDULE

**8:00 AM | Registration, Breakfast, and Exhibitor Tables**

**9:00 AM | Welcome and Opening Remarks**

**9:20 to 10:20 AM | Keynote Speeches**

- **Dr. Michael Twyman**, *Chief Equity & Innovation Officer, Interim President, The Indianapolis Foundation*
- **Tamara Winfrey Harris**, *President, Women's Fund of Central Indiana*

**10:30 AM to 12:15 PM | Breakout Sessions -or- Who LEADS? Workshop**

**12:15 to 1:15 PM | Lunch and Activities**

- Ultimate Canine Therapy Dogs
- Exhibitor Tables

**1:20 to 2:20 PM | Presentation and Q&A**

- Eskenazi Health's Engagement Zones

**2:30 to 4:15 PM | Breakout Sessions -or- Build -A- Block Workshop**

**4:20 to 4:30 PM | Closing Remarks**





# WORKSHOPS





# Who LEADS? | A Framework for Collective Action

Who LEADS? is an interactive workshop that moves attendees through the key elements of engaging and building relationships with community members. This workshop is ideal for new and seasoned community-based professionals who seek to connect, convene, and collaborate with Indiana neighbors. The workshop focuses on collective impact and strategies that are essential to developing and sustaining resident-engaged initiatives. Participants will be prepared to initiate and facilitate conversations that move communities from dialogue to action.

Participants will engage in a facilitated dialogue and activities to gain a better understanding of the topics below. Participants will receive tools and worksheets to support their efforts after the workshop.

- Listen to Understand
- Explore Possibilities
- Analyze Assets
- Design a Plan
- Sustain Progress.



**Ashlee Weaver**  
*President*  
BellaRayne Solutions

## Build-a-Block Workshop: Healthy Neighborhoods Through the Eyes of Young People



**MacKenzie Isaac**  
*Curriculum Specialist,  
Doctoral Candidate in  
Population Health (Bioethics)*  
Nyla Nova STEMiversity,  
University of Oxford (UK)

In the face of sweeping and significant cuts to the local healthcare budget, many of the structures meant to advance child and adolescent health equity are being undermined at their very foundations. In response, it's critical that youth workers, youth-serving clinicians, and youth-serving organizations intentionally and consistently defer to youth voices in the formation of their core value systems, collective demands, and advocacy approaches. Guided by the spirit of co-design, this workshop aims to (1) spotlight the history, "best practice" methods, and key ethical considerations of co-designing community health interventions with Indy's young people; (2) critically reflect on the process of curating an "ideal neighborhood block" based on a collection of artworks made by local kids (primarily Black, Brown, and low-income) over the course of summer 2025; and (3) provide a creative, courageous space for even more local kids to participate in the Indiana Health Equity Symposium by building their own "ideal neighborhood block" using Legos and other crafts.



The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of stylized Ginkgo biloba leaves. The leaves are depicted with fine, parallel lines radiating from the central vein, creating a fan-like shape. They are arranged in a dense, overlapping manner, with some leaves pointing upwards and others downwards, creating a sense of movement and texture. The pattern is light green, matching the overall color scheme.

# **HOLISTIC HEALING BREAKOUT SESSIONS**





# HOLISTIC HEALING SCHEDULE



## **Beyond Bereavement: Nourishing Grief in the Workplace**

Nourished Grief, MitoKhon Advisors

*Katie Abbott, Founder*

**10:30 - 11:15 AM**

## **Helper's Café: Sustainable Helping and Collective Care**

Mezzo Solutions

*Patrick Ripberger, Co-Founder*

**11:30 AM - 12:15 PM**

## **Wellness During Layoffs: Both Side of The Ripple**

XLM Health Life Fitness

*Lynn Maxwell, Coach, Corporate Wellness Advisor*

**2:30 - 3:15 PM**

## **The Garden Within: Tending to the Wounds That Root Us**

Aspire Indiana Health

*Gina Forrest, Chief People and Public Health Officer*

**3:30 - 4:15 PM**



## Beyond Bereavement: Nourishing Grief in the Workplace



**Katie Abbott**

Founder

Nourished Grief, MitoKhon Advisors

Grief is not something to fix or rush through—it is something to nourish. In the aftermath of loss, folx who are grieving often return to workplaces that expect productivity over presence, silence over story, and resilience over rest. This interactive workshop invites participants to reimagine how grief can be honored and supported in ways that are holistic, human, and healing. Grounded in the understanding that grief affects every dimension of our well-being—emotional, spiritual, cultural, and relational—this session explores what it means to nourish grief in ourselves and others. Through storytelling, reflection, and creative expression, participants will explore how grief shows up in the workplace and how traditional, cultural, and community-rooted practices can guide more compassionate responses. We'll discuss real-world strategies to build grief-informed cultures, including inclusive language, culturally sensitive rituals, and trauma-informed policies that reflect justice and collective care. Participants will engage in hands-on activities and leave with tools they can apply to create more supportive environments for colleagues navigating loss. This workshop is especially suited for anyone committed to building workplaces where people don't have to hide their humanity. By nourishing grief—rather than minimizing it—we create space for deeper connection, healing, and wholeness at work.

## Helper's Café: Sustainable Helping and Collective Care

Helper's Café: Sustainable Helping and Collective Care is an interactive session designed for public health professionals, advocates, organizers, and changemakers. Using a World Café model, participants engage in guided peer dialogue to reflect on the joys, challenges, and solutions in equity and helping work. Through rounds of conversation - sharing moments of community strength, naming barriers to equity, and exchanging sustainable practices - attendees co-create wisdom rooted in lived experiences. The session is engaging and emphasizes low-barrier, peer-to-peer learning. Participants leave with renewed connection, insights from their peers, and an actionable idea to support their team or community.



**Patrick Ripberger**

Co-Founder

Mezzo Solutions



## Wellness During Layoffs: Both Sides of the Ripple



**Lynn Maxwell**

Coach, Corporate Wellness Advisor  
XLM Health Life Fitness

Layoffs leave two groups behind: those who remain and those who are displaced. Both face unique but equally heavy wellness challenges. In this interactive workshop, Coach Lynn Maxwell (XLM Health Life Fitness) explores the dual impact of layoffs on workplace culture and personal identity.

We'll examine:

- Survivor Syndrome – the guilt, anxiety, and disengagement that erode company morale.
- Life After Layoffs – how job loss impacts self-worth, stability, and health.
- Actionable Wellness Tools – immediate practices companies can deploy for teams, and practical steps individuals can take to rebuild their resilience.

## The Garden Within: Tending to the Wounds That Root Us

Like a garden, we each carry soil rich with experience—some nourished by love and growth, others wounded by trauma, neglect, or hardship. The Garden Within invites participants on a reflective journey to examine the emotional, cultural, and psychological "roots" that shape our well-being and relationships. Through interactive exercises, storytelling, and guided introspection, we'll identify the "weeds" that choke out joy, explore the "wilted roots" of unresolved pain, and embrace practices that foster healing, growth, and resilience. This session is ideal for those seeking personal transformation, community healing, or deeper self-awareness. Participants will leave with tools to cultivate their inner garden—pruning what no longer serves and planting seeds of sustainable wellness, purpose, and self-compassion.



**Gina Forrest**

Chief People and Public Health Officer  
Aspire Indiana Health

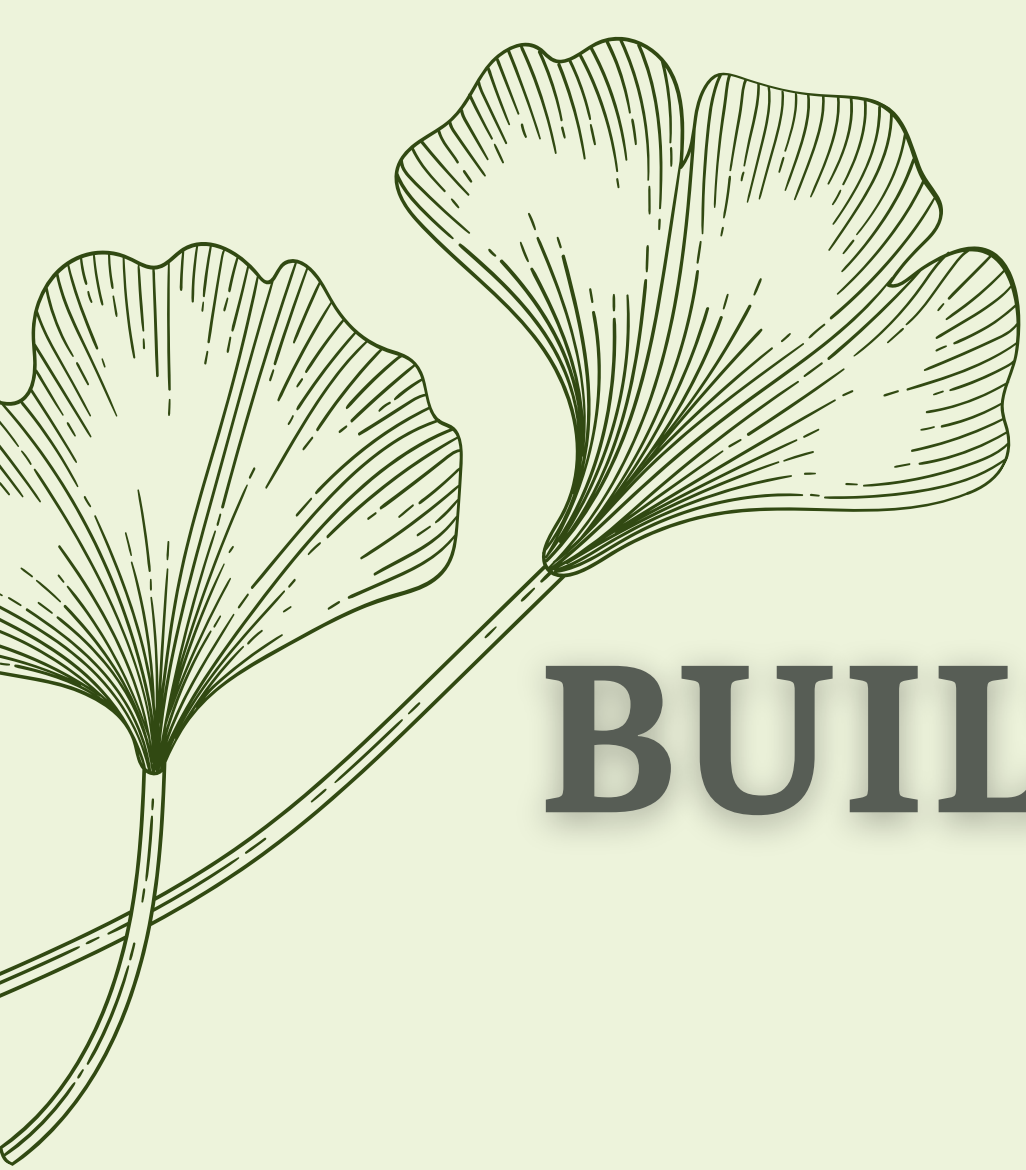




# **BUILT ENVIRONMENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS**







# BUILT ENVIRONMENT SCHEDULE



**10:30 - 11:15 AM**

**Factors Influencing Physical Activity Participation Among Racial Minorities in Marion County: Outcomes from a Mixed Methods Study**

*Rafael Alamilla, PhD Candidate, Indiana University Indianapolis,*

**11:30 AM - 12:15 PM**

**Exploring Health Outcomes through the Lens of  
Historic Housing Discrimination**

Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana  
*Erika Fotsch, Director of Education and Outreach*

**2:30 - 3:15 PM**

**Connecting through Green Space: Multi-Sector Strategies to  
Build Community Protections**

Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
Hands of Hope  
*Jeanelle Artherhults, Grant County DELTA Ahead Project Coordinator*  
*Stephanie Solomon, DELTA Coordinator*

**3:30 - 4:15 PM**

**How Built Environment Interventions Are Shaping Health on  
Indy's 38th Street Corridor**

United Northeast Community Development Corporation  
Indiana University School of Public Health  
*Gregory Garrett, Deputy Director*  
*Katherine Pope, Project Manager*



## Factors Influencing Physical Activity Participation Among Racial Minorities in Marion County: Outcomes from a Mixed Methods Study

Physical activity (PA) is essential for preventing chronic illnesses, yet many adults fail to meet PA guidelines. This is particularly true for underrepresented racial minority (URM) adults, who face inequities that limit participation. This interactive workshop will explore findings from a recently completed mixed-methods study examining PA behaviors, barriers, and facilitators among URM adults living in Marion County, IN. Framed within the socio-ecological model, the session will delve into personal, social, and environmental factors that shape PA engagement, including the role of social support, cost, time constraints, and access to safe, community spaces. Participants will engage with both quantitative and qualitative data, reflect on real-world implications, and bring discussions for how to reduce barriers and enhance facilitators to PA for community members. This workshop is ideal for researchers, practitioners, and community advocates working to advance physical activity initiatives in diverse populations.



**Rafael Alamilla**  
Ph.D. Candidate  
Indiana University Indianapolis

## Exploring Health Outcomes through the Lens of Historic Housing Discrimination



To understand today's disparities in health outcomes across racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic lines, we have to understand how we got here. A history of housing discrimination has led to segregated neighborhoods which directly relates to the negative health outcomes we see in specific zip codes and for specific groups of people in our community. Join this workshop to learn about the history of housing discrimination, how fair housing intersects with health equity, and the overlap with environmental justice.

**Erika Fotsch**  
Director of Education and Outreach  
Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana



## Connecting through Green Space: Multi-Sector Strategies to Build Community Protections

What does green space development have to do with violence prevention? At the Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV), we know that to prevent violence and enable community health, we must come together to confront the shared risks and build the protective factors that address multiple social problems. Join ICADV and our partner Hands of Hope to explore the public health benefits of green space and how to make it happen. In this session, participants will explore the creation of protective factors to improve wellbeing in Indiana. Then, they'll hear about the journey from conception to creation of a green space in rural Indiana. We'll share a successful multi-sectoral collaboration in Grant County including the local domestic violence program, Hands of Hope, community members, a neighborhood association, and city government.



**Jeanelle Artherhults**  
Grant County DELTA Ahead  
Project Coordinator  
Hands of Hope



**Stephanie Solomon**  
DELTA Coordinator  
Indiana Coalition Against  
Domestic Violence

## How Built Environment Interventions Are Shaping Health on Indy's 38th Street Corridor

What happens when multiple built environment changes and improvements take place in the same neighborhood? This session shares results from a multi-method study along the 38th Street Corridor in Indianapolis, a historically Black community impacted by long-standing disinvestment, that seeks to understand how these changes might impact health. In the past decade, this area has seen several interventions—a new manufacturing facility, grocery store, health clinic, and additions to the local park—all intended to improve health and quality of life. To understand their impact, I examined both qualitative (words) and quantitative (numbers) data. Electronic health record data from 2021-2024 helped track changes in BMI, physical activity, food insecurity, and stress in residents of the impacted area compared to other neighborhoods in Marion County. Interviews and focus groups with residents, guided by the Getting to Equity Framework, examined how involved residents felt and how well the changes addressed real needs. This breakout session will explore the results of the study. Highlights will include the importance engaging residents and what needs to happen to create lasting, equitable change. This session will explore how built environment interventions—when done with community, not just for community—can move the needle on health and equity.



**Gregory Garrett**  
Deputy Director  
United Northeast Community  
Development Corporation



**Katherine Pope**  
Project Manager  
Indiana University  
School of Public Health

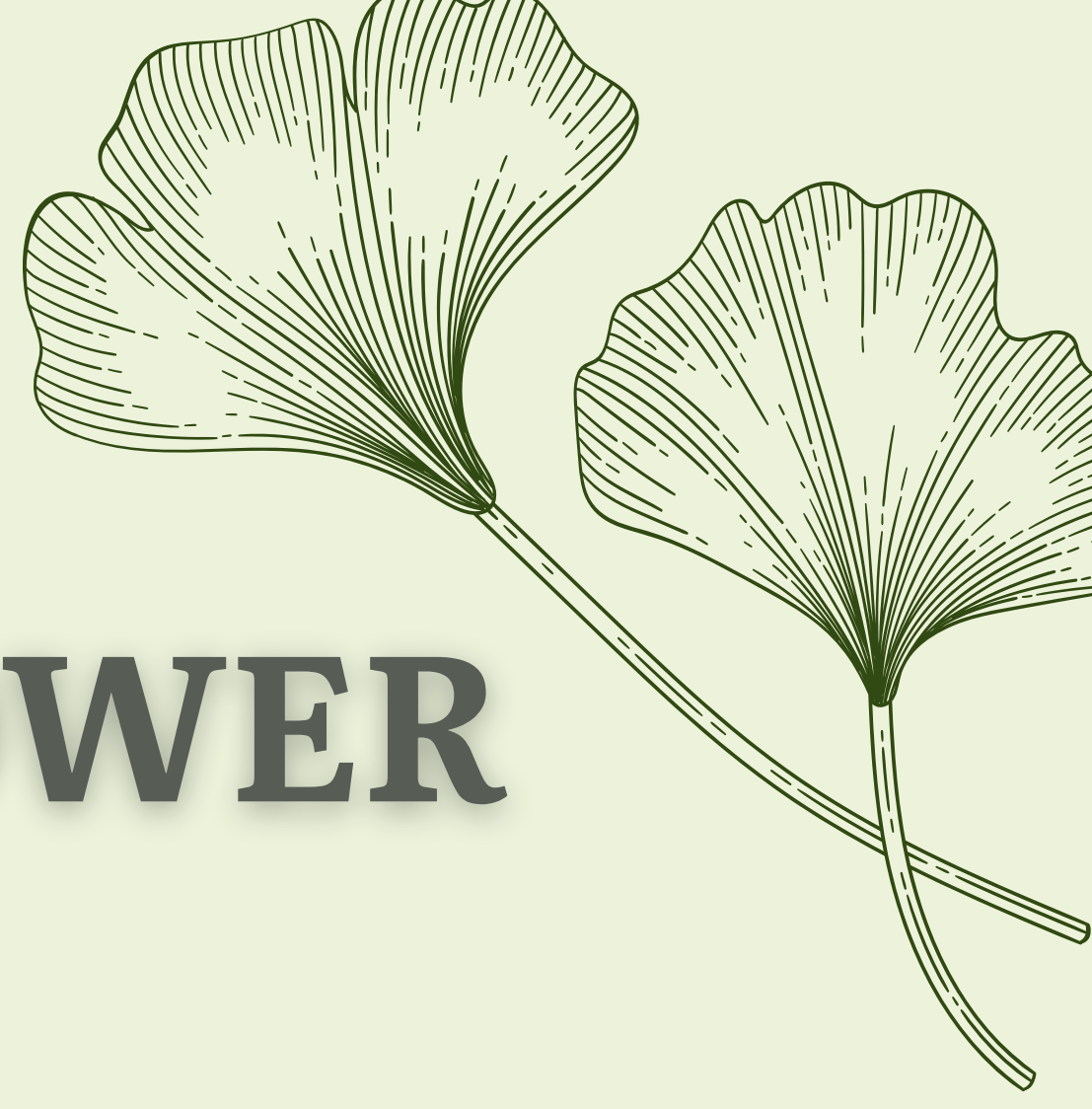




# **COMMUNITY POWER BREAKOUT SESSIONS**







# COMMUNITY POWER SCHEDULE



**10:30 - 11:15 AM**

**Reframing Aging for a New Generation: Purpose,  
Potential, and Community Impact**

Indy Encore

*Barb Richardson, Founding Director*

**11:30 AM - 12:15 PM**

**Pads, Power, and Possibility: Combating Period Poverty  
Through Grassroots Organizing in Indianapolis**

Project Period

*Angie Katinas, Director*

*Heydi Correa Encarnacion, Board President*

**2:30 - 3:15 PM**

**Research to Reductions in Plastics Through Community Alliances**

Plastic Reduction Alliance of Northwest Indiana

*Julie Peller, Professor of Chemistry, Valparaiso University*

*Emily Broniewicz, Student Leader, Plastic Reduction Alliance*

**3:30 - 4:15 PM**

**A Seat at Our Table: Power, Resistance, and Reimagining the  
Food System**

Cultivate Indy Inc Community Food Box Project

*Sierra Nuckols, Founder/Director*



## Reframing Aging for a New Generation: Purpose, Potential, and Community Impact



**Barb Richardson**  
Founding Director  
Indy Encore

In an era where many are not only living longer but also thriving, the demographic shift of a third of our population entering the 65+ stage presents both challenges and remarkable opportunities. In this session, we invite participants to explore three thought-provoking questions: What does it mean for our society to embrace a landscape where one in three individuals is over 65? (Societal Dynamics) How can we evolve our systems, policies, and cultural mindsets to support a vibrant 100-year life? (Systemic Adjustments) In what ways can each of us help cultivate a future where aging is celebrated as a time of contribution, purpose, and leadership? (Seizing Opportunities) Through guided discussions and interactive exercises, we will highlight the vital role of "active agers"—inspired, purpose-driven individuals over 50—who are not just contributing to their communities but transforming them. This dynamic session will illuminate the intersection of personal meaning, the longevity dividend, and civic engagement. Indy Encore is a pioneering community initiative that empowers those aged 50 and above to explore meaningful next chapters through purposeful work, volunteering, and entrepreneurship. Our mission is to elevate aging as a celebration of personal agency, champion cultural shifts toward purposeful longevity, and unleash the extraordinary strengths of older adults for the betterment of all.

## Pads, Power, and Possibility: Combating Period Poverty Through Grassroots Organizing in Indianapolis

Period poverty is a public health crisis that often goes unspoken—yet its impact on dignity, education, and well-being is profound. This workshop explores how Project Period, Indianapolis' only nonprofit solely focused on menstrual equity, mobilized grassroots power to challenge stigma and create systemic change. Through storytelling, interactive discussion, and practical tools, participants will learn how period poverty intersects with broader issues of health equity and access. The session will highlight the organization's journey from mutual aid to policy advocacy, offering a replicable framework for community-led solutions. Attendees will leave with a deeper understanding of menstrual equity, strategies for grassroots organizing, and tools to support or launch similar initiatives in their own communities.



**Angie Katinas**  
Director  
Project Period



**Heydi Correa Encarnacion**  
Board President  
Project Period



## Research to Reductions in Plastics Through Community Alliances

The unsustainable use of plastic products and the resultant, massive plastic waste conundrum is unambiguous thanks to research progress. Knowledge on micro and nanoplastics by the science and health communities has immensely increased, but the general public is mostly unresponsive to the detrimental health and environmental impacts. As the manufacture of plastics rapidly rises, people, organizations and businesses continue to accept plastic materials, often due to their low cost. Meanwhile, critical international and national efforts to address plastic pollution have failed. Indiana is one of many states that prohibits municipalities from outlawing single use plastic products. The Plastic Reduction Alliance (PRA) was founded after years of discussions by university faculty involved in NSF-funded microplastics research, county waste management officials and its citizen advisory committee, local officials, citizens and businesses to bridge the disconnect between science and societal practices on a local level. The PRA is working to initiate change through education, partnerships and community events. Awareness on plastics issues is provided through presentations and meetings, event tabling, the PRA website, media, interviews and more. Examples of successful partnerships include the Girls on the Run organization in NW Indiana, working toward zero waste race events, and Brown Faces Green Spaces, via organizing local cleanups. The PRA has been elevating awareness of plastics problems based on foundational science research, and is working to expand coalitions to impart local and state-wide changes that reduce plastic waste and create a healthier environment for everyone.



**Julie Peller**  
Professor of Chemistry  
Valparaiso University



**Emily Broniewicz**  
Student Leader  
Plastic Reduction Alliance  
Student Affiliation  
Valparaiso University

## A Seat at Our Table: Power, Resistance, and Reimagining the Food System



**Sierra Nuckols**  
Founder/Director  
Cultivate Indy Inc  
Community Food Box Project

This presentation explores the systemic roots of food apartheid and the urgent need to reclaim power within our food systems. Drawing from lived experience, grassroots organizing, and policy advocacy, Sierra Nuckols will share the work of Cultivate and the Community Food Box Project as models for community-led regeneration. Through land access, food policy education, and strategic collaboration with re-entry programs and Black and African immigrant farmers, this session will highlight pathways toward healing, justice, and food sovereignty. Attendees will leave with tangible tools and visionary strategies to build localized food systems that serve the people.





# **ACCESSIBILITY BREAKOUT SESSIONS**







# ACCESSIBILTY SCHEDULE

**Advancing Infant Health Through Financial Security: Connecting the Dots through Paid Leave and Child Tax Credits**

**10:30 - 11: 15 AM**

Indiana Community Action Poverty Institute

*Olivia Smith, Policy Analyst  
Ashley Philips, Community Needs Analyst*

**From the Ground Up: Building Community Power and Public Infrastructure for Food and Health Equity**

**11:30 AM - 12: 15 PM**

City of Indianapolis - Division of Community Nutrition and Food Policy

*Cheria Caldwell, Administrator  
Katherine Boyles, Food Policy and Program Coordinator*

**Indiana Digital Ambassadors: Improving Digital Competency and Engaging On-Line Resources**

**2:30 - 3: 15 PM**

Purdue Extension - Lake and Harrison County

*Lupe Valtierra, Community Development Lead Educator  
Tara Beckman, Health and Human Sciences and Community Development Educator*

**Elevating Mental Healthcare Access in Rural Indiana**

**3:30 - 4:15 PM**

Indiana University School of Social Work

*Kristin Funk, LCSW, LCAC, CSWM , Clinical Supervisor/Practicum Instructor  
Jenny Staats, Task Instructor, Because You Matter*



## Advancing Infant Health Through Financial Security: Connecting the Dots Between Paid Leave and Child Tax Credits

We often measure infant health by medical standards. Has a child had a checkup with their physician, are they being breastfeed, or practicing safe sleep. These health indicators are important; however, they overlook the social determinants of health, and more importantly how we access them. In this session we will look at what supports parents' ability to do these things. We will explore policies that support financial security as a key component for infant health. Paid parental leave and child tax credits are policies that have been implemented in other states to support healthy infants and family development. Participants will learn about data and strategies that have been enacted across the country. We will discuss past legislative actions and movement within our state to enact these policies. Participants will engage in an activity that explores how financial security contributes to infant health outcomes and be given a chance to share how they hope to see financial security for families within our state improve.



**Olivia Smith**  
Policy Analyst  
Indiana Community  
Action Poverty Institute



**Ashley Phillips**  
Community Needs  
Analyst  
Indiana Community  
Action Poverty Institute

## From the Ground Up: Building Community Power and Public Infrastructure for Food and Health Equity

This session will present findings and frameworks from the City of Indianapolis' 2025 Food Equity Plan, developed by the Division of Community Nutrition and Food Policy in collaboration with over 100 local partners. Grounded in a Community-Based Participatory Action Research process, the Plan redefines food equity as a structural issue tied to labor racialized exploitation, disinvestment, and public infrastructure development—rather than a matter of individual access or behavioral change. Through facilitated conversation and shared learning, this session will explore how food infrastructure functions as public infrastructure. Participants will learn how DCNFP is leveraging its position in local government to build community power through three main arenas: technical assistance, equitable public funding, and supporting policy change. The session will also introduce the Equity Matrix, a co-designed policy tool that embeds community-defined equity standards into public contracting and procurement processes—enabling the City to fund organizations whose labor practices, governance models, and service design reflect collective well-being and justice. Participants will discuss how similar approaches could be adopted in their communities to shift public dollars, planning, and decision-making toward community-owned solutions.



**Cheria Caldwell**  
Administrator  
City of Indianapolis,  
Division of Community  
Nutrition and Food Policy



**Katherine Boyles**  
Food Policy and  
Program Coordinator  
City of Indianapolis,  
Division of Community  
Nutrition and Food Policy



# Indiana Digital Ambassadors: Improving Digital Competency and Engaging On-Line Resources

The Indiana Digital Ambassador Volunteer program trains community members across the state of Indiana to serve as digital experts in their communities. Volunteers will learn about digital applications and adult learning concepts to serve as experts for their families and fellow community members. Community members of all ages can become an Indiana Digital Ambassador. Adult community members can use their current expertise to help their neighbors, create projects for civic groups, or gain skills to help their own online experience. High school students or student organizations can become volunteers for individual community service. Digital Ambassadors can help grow the digital competency of their community as they learn to safely access and communicate effectively online. Workshop participants will learn about Purdue Extension's Digital Skills Lessons program, taught by Extension Educators throughout Indiana, aimed at building essential skills to help Hoosiers advance their quality of life through the resources available on the Internet. Through this community-based program, Hoosiers will learn how to manage personal/home computer networks, Internet basics and safety, social media awareness, connecting to online government resources, and Zoom basics for hosts and participants. Workshop participants will also learn how to implement the Digital Ambassadors Volunteer program in their communities. The bottom line: Digital Ambassador Volunteers are at the forefront of creating a more connected Indiana by providing digital education and helping Hoosiers build trust and use internet connectivity to improve their quality of life.



**Lupe Valtierra**  
Community  
Development  
Lead Educator  
Purdue Extension -  
Lake County



**Tara Beckman**  
Health and Human  
Sciences and  
Community  
Development Educator  
Purdue Extension -  
Harrison County

## Elevating Mental Healthcare Access in Rural Indiana

Rural communities often face significant barriers to accessing mental health services, including stigma, provider shortages, and lack of internet infrastructure. Because You Matter was developed to address these gaps by leveraging community anchor institutions as accessible locations for telehealth. With clinical supervision, Master's level Social Work students conduct no-cost, confidential, low-impact telehealth interventions with residents in rural communities regarding stress, depression, anxiety, motivation for change, and accessing community resources. Students lead in-person workshops at libraries and community meetings regarding mental health, stigma and stereotypes, stress management, and digital literacy. Community partners host tele-suites that offer private access to BYM services through computer, internet, hardware, and platform use. Residents may also choose to access services from a device and location of their choosing. BYM users do not have to provide any personal health information to schedule sessions. Scheduling is done through patron-student practitioner contact via locally-based Text Now numbers. By providing space, internet connection, as well as devices if needed, BYM strives to support rural communities in overcoming as many barriers to mental health services as possible. In doing so, we have seen our clinic grow from 20 sessions a semester to over 100 - an incredible increase in access and equity.



**Jenny Staats**  
Task Instructor  
Because You Matter



**Kristin Funk**  
Clinical Supervisor,  
Practicum Instructor  
Indiana University School  
of Social Work