

Abortion Funding Network Pilot:

Lessons Learned about Expanding Abortion
Access Through Strategic Partnerships Using a
Matching Model



The Northwest Abortion Access Fund (NWAAF) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit and a member of the National Network of Abortion Funds (NNAF), a membership organization of over 70 funds across the United States. They provide abortion funds in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Alaska. Trained, compassionate volunteer advocates run their toll-free hotline. NWAAF help people pay for their abortion care by sending funding directly to the clinic. They also help people get to and from the clinic and make sure people traveling for care have a safe place to stay. Services include providing financial support for abortion care by funding clinics, helping with transportation to/from clinics or providing a safe space to stay, and a toll-free abortion hotline.

To expand access to safe and legal abortion care in the Oregon, the Northwest Abortion Access Fund (NWAAF)— was a recipient of the Reproductive Health Equity Funds (RHEF). These funds were allocated by the Oregon Legislature in 2022. RHEF was designed to address gaps in Oregon’s reproductive healthcare infrastructure and expand access to the most vulnerable populations. RHEF provided financial support to projects, programs, and organizations that aimed to expand reproductive health equity through four areas of focus: (1) provider workforce and other care investments, (2) direct support for people seeking abortion and other reproductive services, (3) community-based outreach and education, and (4) research.

With a mission to fund abortion and eliminate barriers to care, NWAAF used RHEF to launch a pilot project using a matching model to build a coordinated

support network with community-based organizations (CBO’s) in Oregon. The project aimed to offer NWAAF’s resources and experience to support existing organizations serving culturally specific communities by building shared leadership, readiness, and infrastructure around abortion access. This case study describes their matching model approach, results and impact, lessons learned, and recommendations for those seeking to use this approach in their reproductive and gender affirming-care efforts

The Matching Model Approach

As part of an effort to expand abortion access in historically marginalized communities, four CBOs representing Native American, Black, Pacific Islander, and Latinx populations were invited by Seeding Justice to form a cohort. Each organization brought deep knowledge of its community and

and partnered with NWAAF to co-create culturally relevant programming. As part of this approach, NWAAF connected with two larger organizations with hundreds of staff (Urban League of Portland and Latino Network) and two smaller ones with only four to five members (Papalaxsimisha and Micronesian Islander Community). They paired larger and smaller CBOs with each other to encourage collaboration, resource sharing, and mutual support. Rather than imposing one-size-fits-all solutions, NWAAF fostered open dialogue, provided operational tools, and supported each CBO in identifying its own staffing needs and approaches without telling them what to do. Through regular check-ins, peer exchanges, and cohort gatherings, the organizations shared learnings and tailored strategies to reflect the unique values and needs of the communities they served. This collaborative, capacity-building model enabled CBOs to engage their communities in ways that felt more responsive, inclusive, and rooted in trust, especially in communities that have historically faced stigma or exclusion around abortion care.

Through these partnerships, CBOs leveraged NWAAF’s data systems and protocols, incorporating tools like hotline navigation and community education. Together, NWAAF and the CBOs placed emphasis on

confidentiality and trust in their work, particularly regarding individuals who cannot openly seek abortion support in their familial, friend, or cultural circles. One CBO shared a comprehensive abortion navigation manual, which became a valuable resource for the entire cohort.

“We are going to be reaching out again to all of the grantees to do a little bit more interviewing to get support, specifically to get insight about the work that they've been doing so we can type up a well, a nice report for them to use and report up to legislature for additional support.”

Results & Impact

The matching model was designed not only to build capacity but also to foster sustainable, trust-based relationships among organizations working to expand abortion access in historically marginalized communities. Through this approach, CBOs gained access to operational infrastructure and peer mentorship, which strengthened their ability to support community members in safe and culturally responsive ways. In-person meetings helped build trust across organizations, and the collaborative environment reduced the isolation often felt by groups doing emotionally and politically complex work. For instance, the CBOs shared knowledge on how they communicate partnered with NWAAF to co-create culturally relevant programming.

with their respective communities about abortion access in a culturally responsive manner.

Despite these gains, the CBOs were at different stages of organizational readiness; while the two larger CBOs were able to begin offering services more quickly, the two smaller ones encountered early implementation challenges. For example, a smaller CBO was deeply affected by the sudden death of a prominent figure in their community, which disrupted its operations and capacity. In contrast, a larger CBO was laying the groundwork for a community warmline (a resource phone line) to assist Spanish speakers with abortion navigation. These differences highlighted the importance of flexibility and individualized support within the cohort. Overall, the model demonstrated that long-term impact requires not only resources, but space for organizations to grow at their own pace, respond to community realities, and support one another through the challenges of this work.

Lessons Learned & Growth Opportunities

This initiative revealed key insights into how reproductive justice efforts can be scaled and deepened through relationship-centered practices. Each CBO was at a different stage of

organizational readiness. This variation in capacities required differentiated support.

As CBOs expanded their programming, some required additional training and infrastructure, highlighting the need for flexible timelines and ongoing mentorship. For instance, one CBO withdrew from the partnership due to limited capacity and difficulty facilitating discussions about abortion in their community, yet NWAAF remained in contact with and continued to provide mentorship. Also, Seeding Justice worked with the CBO to adjust their project timelines in consideration of their capacity. Another challenge concerned staff transitions at NWAAF, which illuminated the importance of documentation and internal onboarding tools to maintain continuity. These insights are not setbacks but opportunities to refine a replicable, scalable model for other funder-CBO collaborations providing access to abortions in communities not traditionally reached by organizations like NWAAF.

The initiative also emphasized the value of regular communication and clarity around shared expectations. As a result, NWAAF held deeper planning conversations with its board and partners to build a stronger base for future programs.

"We're learning together, and we built a really strong relationship and trust..."

Recommendations

Based on this experience, several recommendations emerged for building future funder supported CBO collaborations to expand access to reproductive healthcare:

- Engage CBOs from the beginning to ensure programming reflects real needs and priorities.
- Build in flexible timelines that recognize the differing paces of organizational development.
- Ensure strong internal communication, orientation for new staff, and ongoing technical support.
- Incorporate dedicated staffing, legal protections, and fundraising strategies within MOUs to promote sustainability and fairness.
- Offer comprehensive onboarding to CBOs so they can integrate tools, systems, and protocols effectively.

Drawing from the case study, these recommendations underscore the need for additional scaffolding and refined support to each organization involved in providing abortion services and outreach.



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