

Walla Walla/Whatcom, Washington Full Proposal Narrative

Community Name: Washington State
Applicant Organization: Whatcom Family & Community Network
Application I.D.: 36818

Part I: Background

Community Description

Pilot Sites. The Whatcom Family & Community Network and the Walla Walla Community Network, representing Whatcom and Walla Walla counties in Washington State, are jointly applying to participate in the MARC learning project. The geographic community for the project will be Washington State. Walla Walla and Whatcom will be the incubator or pilot sites for the majority of the MARC-related activities. The pilot sites, situated in the northwestern and the southeastern parts of the state, have a 13-year history of incorporating the language, science, and local data of adverse childhood experiences and resilience into their work. The pilot sites will partner with the ACEs Public-Private Initiative (APPI), a state-level initiative, to reflect on what is learned from the MARC project activities in order to develop state-level actions and bring the MARC learning to the state community.

Walla Walla and Whatcom have a rich history as learning partners for over 14 years and both communities agreed that our learning relationship as dual pilots sites would bring significantly higher benefit to our state and to this project. Both communities formed Community Public Health and Safety Networks in 1994 and their staff, Teri Barila (Walla Walla) and Geof Morgan (Whatcom), have been colleagues since 1998 through state-convened events and meetings. Both Networks introduced ACEs to their communities in 2002 and exchanged strategies for how to use the information locally. In 2003, Teri contacted Geof and told him that Walla Walla was interested in initiating a community building strategy in neighborhoods impacted by high poverty and gang violence. She invited him to Walla Walla to talk about the community engagement and neighborhood building strategies that Whatcom had been doing since 1998. Since that time, Walla Walla and Whatcom have regularly provided technical assistance to one another, as well as other communities, incorporating new learning that the Family Policy Council facilitated for the statewide community network system into their local work. This co-learning has leveraged insights and information that has substantially benefitted the change work in both communities. Both communities have brought Dr. Felitti and Dr. Anda for presentations and then further used the work of Ungar, Boss, and Masten to shift local thinking toward a resilience/asset focus from a risk/deficit focus.

State Community. However, Whatcom and Walla Walla do not represent change in isolation. In Washington State, the proposed pilot sites represent a statewide movement of dissemination and use of the research on adverse childhood experiences and resilience. The research and practice movements have been ignited in multiple geographic communities. Communication across communities, initially through the Family Policy Council and now through APPI, has spread learning among geographically diverse communities and local and state collaborative efforts.

Whatcom and Walla Walla and other communities across the state have been using the BRFSS/ACE data since 2010 to understand the impact of ACEs on our local communities. The average ACE burden in the Washington State, with 28% of the population with three or more ACEs, is similar to the ACE Study, with some geographic areas of Whatcom reflecting a slightly higher average than Walla Walla. Although the overall ACE burden is slightly less in Walla Walla, both communities have focused their work on strategies that impact populations with the highest ACE burden, which is also a public health priority (CHIP, 2013). This focus attempts to mitigate the inequitable impact of the ACE burden on families, reduce further intergenerational transmission, and inform practice and policy that will improve the wellbeing of the whole community.

As pilot sites, Walla Walla and Whatcom also share an additional partnership in a five-site evaluation project with the state-level ACEs Public Private Initiative (APPI), contracted with Mathematica and Community Science. The pilot sites will collaborate with APPI during the MARC project to link the ongoing five-site learning to further insights implications for change at the state-level from this project. APPI will also link this project's learning to three other ACE-informed statewide initiatives, Essentials for Childhood (statewide collective impact initiative from the CDC), THRIVE (state early learning partnership), and Frontiers of Innovation (an initiative of the Harvard Center for the Developing Child). All three initiatives have representation on the APPI Leadership Team. The connection with these cross-initiative efforts will increase statewide alignment of any emerging policy implications from this project. Both at the state and pilot site levels, there is focused attention to using the ACEs/resilience framework to enhance early learning settings and support young parents.

Applicant Organization Description

It was mutually decided that the Whatcom Family & Community Network (WFCN) be the lead agency for our state project. WFCN is committed to linking the lessons learned at the incubator sites to statewide policy action through its partnership with the ACEs Public Private Initiative (APPI).

As a successful, private, 501(c)(3) nonprofit established in 1990, WFCN has the organizational and fiscal capacity to facilitate the partnerships involved and manage the finances and reporting necessary for the MARC program. As a small and nimble agency, WFCN has a history of local community engagement on multiple issues related to children and families and has long-term relationships with local and state leadership. WFCN acts as the local community network, the prevention coalition, and coordinates the local ACEs/Resilience Team. WFCN has been the lead agency for the statewide Community Network system on a number of collective grant applications and projects and initially helped form and facilitate the Stewardship Team that has continued to connect the community networks to one another after the state funding for the system and the Family Policy Council was eliminated in 2011.

The WFCN Governing Board of Directors (seven members) and its advisory partners (30 members) have all agreed on the value of this project both locally and statewide and WFCN is committed to the success of this project. The WFCN project director will be responsible for coordinating communication between MARC, Whatcom, Walla Walla, and APPI during the project as well as coordinating the collective evaluation plan, action plans, and site participation in the MARC cohort.

Community Network Description

The pilot sites for this project, the Walla Walla Community Network and the Whatcom Family & Community Network, both became part of the Washington State Community Public Health and Safety Network system in 1994 through authorization the WA State Family Policy Council (FPC). Both pilot sites, along with 51 other Community Networks, initiated local planning processes to prioritize and reduce social problems effecting children, youth and families. After the FPC introduced the state community network system to the effects of toxic stress on brain development by bringing in Dr. Martin Teicher in 2000 and the ACE Study by bringing in Dr. Felitti in 2002, Walla Walla and Whatcom started utilizing this information to inform practice and policy. Between 2002 and 2011, Laura Porter and Krista Goldstein-Cole of the FPC developed an innovative, trans-disciplinary research approach, in conjunction with the community capacity building work of the Networks, that linked the neurobiology of toxic stress, the ACE Study, and the emerging resilience research to generate a deeper understanding of the impact of early trauma and the solutions offered through building resilient communities. Walla Walla, Whatcom, and other Networks across the state brought that information to their communities as it emerged, initiating deeper and deeper community

conversations. These conversations and their impact, in turn, informed the evolving approach to its use in building local change movements.

In 2011, when the FPC was to be eliminated, state legislation authorized the formation of a public-private initiative to address ACEs. In 2012, this initiative evolved into the ACEs Public-Private Initiative (APPI), led by a leadership team of representatives of community, state, and philanthropic entities. Walla Walla and Whatcom stepped up and partnered on behalf of the community network system to provide communication with and representation for the community networks on the APPI leadership team.

Pilot Sites' Structure. While the Whatcom Family & Community Network is an incorporated, private, nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization and the Walla Walla Community Network is a quasi-governmental advisory board, both Networks have evolved and utilize similar organizational structures to support their broad community resilience work. Both Networks have a board or steering committee of 7-15 representative community leaders and volunteers that oversee the staff and governance of the local backbone organization. While WFCN has the additional legal infrastructure and responsibilities of a state and IRS nonprofit corporation, Walla Walla's board members oversee all efforts of the Network. Both pilot sites, additionally, engage with a number of advisory groups that they have been asked to convene around specific community issues. These advisory groups function similarly, providing guidance, planning, and monitoring for the activities related to their convening. Whatcom and Walla Walla both have advisory groups specifically focused on ACEs and resilience with 15-20 members representing parents, professionals, educators, businesses, and community groups. In Whatcom, the local advisory group is called the ACEs/Resilience Team. In Walla Walla it is called the Children's Resilience Initiative. These resilience advisory groups share and shape the common understanding and overall approach to shifting practice and policy, share resources for project ideas that emerge from the group, engage resident leadership in related projects, and discuss what process and outcome measures are useful in the work. Beyond shaping the local work, these teams also represent their communities in the five-site APPI evaluation project, with staff and a local team member meeting regularly with the APPI leadership to exchange what is being learned. Both community teams use a shared leadership model and the actions are guided by the groups' best collective thinking.

APPI Description & Structure. In 2012, APPI set its core purpose, as a group of private, public and community organizations in Washington State working together, to reduce children's exposure to trauma—or "adverse childhood experiences" (ACEs)—and the substantial social, emotional and physical tolls that may result. Their goals have been:

- Studying how communities can work across sectors to develop policies and practices to support children and families to prevent childhood trauma and reduce its effects.
- Translating research into practice by using the latest and best social science and business practices.
- Promoting sustainable practices by building on existing initiatives, partnering with communities and tracking cost savings for reinvestment.

To achieve these goals, APPI has been supporting an evaluation of five communities with ongoing community level efforts addressing multiple ACEs, including Whatcom and Walla Walla and facilitating learning and dialogue among APPI members, evaluation sites, and the broader community.

APPI is governed by a Leadership Team, with representation from:

- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Casey Family Programs
- Community Public Health and Safety Networks
- Empire Health Foundation
- Essentials for Childhood

- Foundation for Healthy Generations
- Frontiers of Innovation
- Thomas V. Giddens Jr. Foundation
- Thrive Washington
- Washington State Department of Early Learning
- Washington State Department of Health
- Washington State Department of Social and Health Services – Children’s Administration
- Washington State Department of Social and Health Services – Division of Behavioral Health & Recovery
- Washington State Early Learning Coalitions
- Washington State Governor’s Executive Policy Office
- Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Washington Strengthening Families Collective

Community Network’s Past Success. At the local level, both Walla Walla and Whatcom have used the ACEs framework to impact change. The introduction of the framework of ACEs and resilience has impacted the local processes of community engagement, health planning and policy, school policies related to discipline and teacher education, and have led numerous community conversations on how to incorporate trauma informed practices into multiple fields. These conversations have occurred in fields including child welfare, early childhood, education, substance abuse prevention, mental health, youth suicide prevention, vocational rehabilitation, juvenile justice, and various human services practices. In both of Whatcom and Walla Walla, the community has fundamentally changed its understanding of many key issues through incorporating this framework into expanded multi-sector conversations about practice and policy. Awareness has been raised to the county, the city, and at school district levels in the pilot communities resulting in county resolutions, city proclamations, new initiatives, and school policies changes that specifically call out ACEs, resilience, and trauma-informed practice.

In partnership with this locally piloted work that the proposed incubator sites represent, the state has included ACEs survey questions in the 2009-2011 BRFSS and hundreds of professionals and community members have been trained in presenting ACEs/Resilience research to promote community change. In 2011, the State Legislature passed legislation forming a public private partnership to address ACEs, which became the APPI in 2012. Multiple state agencies have added new ACEs/resilience positions in order to train and coordinate their staff in using this information and partner with other agencies. Resilience research and practices are being explored and tested throughout many sectors at both the local and state levels including training on the Compassionate Schools curriculum in over 50 school districts. In addition to APPI, two other state initiatives were created using the ACEs and resilience frameworks to guide their work, the Essentials for Childhood and the Frontiers of Innovation. Additionally, THRIVE, a state early learning initiative, adopted the ACE framework in 2013 as a core part of its focus. And in 2014, a state health promotion organization, Foundations for Healthy Generations, added a new division, the ACEs Learning Institute, and hired Laura Porter, the previous FPC Director and ACEs trainer, to direct its data analysis and training programs.

Other organized efforts. In Whatcom and Walla Walla, public health department advisory committees created local Community Health Improvement Plans specifically identifying the mitigation and reduction of ACEs as goals. Local early learning consortia and school collaborations have begun to train and develop trauma-informed practices and policies. State agencies, such as vocational rehabilitation and child welfare are exploring how this information can support and influence community practice after trainings offered by their local Networks. The Walla Walla and Whatcom Networks

provide local training, facilitation, and evaluation support to these efforts and have representatives on most of these initiatives' work groups.

The following kinds of specific strategies to build resilience in children have been implemented in one or both counties:

- Changing out of school suspension policies to keep students in school where staff can continue to engage them in learning activities, provide healthy caring adults to support them, and provide a safe structured environment for them to build social skills.
- Providing mentors, tutors, and afterschool programs for students that offer nurturing environments and adults to expand students' social supports and opportunities to develop their educational and creative skills.
- Providing leadership opportunities for youth in gang prevention, substance abuse prevention, and service learning activities that engage youth in planning and implementing community change efforts.
- Engaging marginalized parents in community and school activities, which has increased family cohesion and parent engagement.

The ACEs/resilience work in Whatcom at Shuksan Middle School and in Walla Walla at Lincoln High School are both aligned with the state's Compassionate Schools movement and the Lincoln High School work in Walla Walla is the focus of a new documentary film, *Paper Tigers*, produced by James Redford.

These local initiatives have further engaged community leaders, including local legislators, from both Whatcom and Walla Walla. A number of these community representatives regularly sit on state-level leadership groups in early learning, public health, and education, further tying local learning to the Essentials for Childhood, the Frontiers of Innovation, and the ACEs Public Private Initiative.

Part II: Mobilization & Action Plan

The main goal of this project is to identify the successful developmental stages and specific actions being taken at both the pilot sites and at the state level that have the highest potential to mitigate and reduce ACEs and help build resilient communities across the state. Our four primary objectives for this two-year project are to:

1. Expand local capacity to train and use ACE and resilience frameworks at both the local and state levels and measure its impact on changing practice and policy.
2. Expand our understanding of and work to create trauma-informed schools in Walla Walla and Whatcom with APPI and the state legislature to develop new policy directions for school practice and funding for districts impacted by a higher burden of ACEs in their communities.
3. Identify and learn from local, state, and national researchers and planners to design appropriate measures to better guide practice, specifically related to community capacity and movement building, the mitigation of ACEs, and increasing the community context for resilience. This work would include developing a common and sustainable evaluation approach based on lessons from local engagement efforts, the Family Policy Council's community capacity building model, the current APPI evaluation project, and the MARC project.
4. Identify ways to identify aligned community change actions to create resilience communities that are emerging across the state and initiate a statewide communities of practice related to resilience.

Strategies and Activities

Objective One – Training of Trainers. In the first year, Walla Walla and Whatcom will co-design an ACEs/Resilience Training of Trainers (ToT) based on the training curriculum initiated by the FPC in 2006 and adapted over time by the FPC and local communities. This ToT will be piloted in both communities and adapted as needed. Both pilot communities will develop an outreach plan to local leadership and multi-sector

stakeholder groups and offer this training annually for their staff and residents who will then be able to offer this training to their constituents. The training will focus on using the information to generate local conversations about how this relates to the efforts of the stakeholder group and how it might be useful to shift practice or policies. This development of local trainers will expand capacity for different sectors to facilitate their own change initiatives. Pilot site coordinators will work with those trained to identify opportunities for training and help them overcome any barriers to reaching their constituents.

In early July 2015, ACE Interface was contracted to offer a two-day Master Trainer workshop for 25 diverse state residents and professionals to train in the NEAR sciences (Neurobiology, Epigenetics, ACEs, and Resilience). The pilot site coordinators will work with the local cohort members trained by ACE Interface to align, collaborate, and expand local training efforts.

Further, once the ToT trainings have been implemented, the pilot site coordinators will work with APPI and other state partners to identify expansion of this model. Other local communities will be identified that would like to either host or get support to develop their own training of trainers on the ACEs/resilience research and framework. We expect this to double the number of individuals trained in each of our communities after two years and promote a model for training that focuses on expanding local capacity.

Measures for the training efforts will be developed during the training development stage of implementation and will include process and outcome measures. These measures will identify the number of trainers, numbers of those receiving training, the increase in awareness resulting from the training, and what shifts in practice and policy and community norms resulted from the increased awareness.

Objective Two – Expanding Compassionate School Practices. Walla Walla and Whatcom will work with the designers of the Compassionate Schools curriculum and local school leaders to develop an understanding of what a successful implementation strategy looks like at the local level to shift practices informed by the ACEs/resilience research. The strategy will be based on local successes in community and school engagement with this framework and focus not on new programs or services, but what core shifts in practice have the greatest impact for students and school staff. The intention is to identify low-cost engagement activities, and no or low-cost practice changes that schools can initiate to begin their journey to a fully compassionate school practice.

Walla Walla and Whatcom will initially hold separate local meetings to frame the project and then bring both community groups together to align and learn together. Once the cross-site team has identified a framework and key strategies, the teams will work with local school districts and community leaders to develop feasibility plans for implementation, noting any policy changes that might be required. At this point, the pilot site coordinators will report to the APPI leadership and state legislators to identify state-level actions that would support implementation of the local plans. It is anticipated that at least one policy or legislative funding recommendation will be developed to help address the inequity of the ACE burden in specific geographic areas, school districts, and demographic groups.

Objective Three – Development of Measures. Walla Walla and Whatcom will work with local and state research partners and APPI leadership to build upon the 3-year Mathematica/Community Science evaluation project of five sites in Washington State and incorporate what has been learned into the MARC evaluation. Activities will include: 1) identify pilot site and state indicators and evaluation tools that would be useful moving forward to measure both progress toward results and desired community resilience outcomes; 2) expand or initiate local and state discussions about new or revised measures that would provide the information communities need to make decisions about taking action to build resilient communities; 3) pilot promising new processes and tools to assess their usefulness for community initiatives to increase community resilience and mitigate the impacts of childhood trauma; and 4) recommend research strategies for local

communities and the state to align indicators that will track both community change in ACE/Resilience framework capacity and increased resilience outcomes, based on what is learned from the MARC project.

Objective Four – Identify Statewide Community Change Stories. There are many individual practices that work for children and adults to mitigate and heal from trauma, however, during this project, we will seek movement-building and community-change practices that ripple beyond the individual and impact communities at a broader level. The pilot site coordinators will work with APPI and other state leaders to help compile and collect a group of community-change stories and practices that are collectively helping to change the culture of communities and the state to be more truly trauma informed. These will include successful research or training information, successful processes of community engagement, or successful practices that integrate sectors and encourage new partnerships and alignment. By the end of year two, we will seek opportunities to gather this community of practice related to building resilient communities to share information, network with each other, and identify emerging policy change ideas to support local community work.

Theory of Change. We believe that community change begins with shifting and challenging our fundamental understanding of persistent and seemingly intractable community problems. Our theory of change is based on the model of community capacity building that begins with bringing communities together, sharing new information and creating facilitated opportunities for honest reflection and meaningful dialogue on core community issues, creating opportunities for new solutions and actions to emerge in partnership with those most impacted, and continuing to expand leadership to fully incorporate the diversity and depth of the community's wisdom and participatory democracy.

When communities skillfully facilitate these four core processes, innovative community solutions emerge that could not have been planned for or foreseen prior to this engagement and uncovering of capacity. Based on Dr. Michael Ungar's work on resilience among youth, our community-change model focuses on expanding practices that reinforce the community contexts in which resilience of all residents can emerge rather than focusing on efforts to build individual resilience characteristics. Examples of these practices include changing school suspension policies, offering mentoring and afterschool supports for higher-impacted youth, supporting parent engagement and education, and creating multiple opportunities where youth can feel safe to take risks, to fail, and to learn and grow stronger from those experiences.

It takes a trauma-informed village to nurture resilience. It is essential to create a *practice to research to policy* effort that focuses on multi-level strategies to transform the village. This theory aligns with the theory of change adopted by the FPC in 2008 and APPI in 2012, is affirmed by the local community capacity work in Walla Walla and Whatcom counties, and has been validated by 16 community development practitioners in the 2015 doctoral research of the project coordinator in Whatcom.

Potential Barriers and Challenges. We are an amazingly collaborative state, however, turf issues over who leads policy change and who leads this "movement" will certainly arise. We will use APPI's leadership at the state level and our local partners to assist with the relationship-building and navigating necessary to help this sustain as a collective, shared, and collaborative project. "As long as it doesn't matter who gets the credit..." will be a guiding principle of partnering.

Whatcom and Walla Walla both dream big and are responsive to many new ideas. The project leaders will need to work as a team and with MARC to stay focused on the key activities we have identified and support others to take on exciting new ideas that emerge, unless a shift is indicated by what we learn and there is agreement to revise the project plan.

Part III: Evaluation & Reflection Plan

The project self-evaluation plan will include a common process evaluation designed by the two pilot sites in consultation with MARC and the APPI leadership to measure:

1. The number and quality of training and awareness raising activities, both locally and at the state level, as well as increased awareness and changes on practice and policy resulting from training.
2. Number and impact of changes in school practices and policies toward a trauma-informed system, both locally and at the state level,
3. The number and quality of the conversations related to community measures, the number of aligned or created common measures at local sites and at the state level measuring community capacity and community resilience, and the impact of using any common measures on practice and policy.
4. The number of initiatives and key stories of change identified aligned with the framework for building resilient communities, reinforcing and sustaining collective impact, and any expanded networking that arises from this activity.
5. Improvements in adult and youth functioning related to project activities.

Each pilot site coordinator will collect process outcomes data (outputs) on all local activities. Outcome measures and processes will be established by pilot sites and APPI together and be regularly collected to note local and state shifts in thinking, practice, and policies from MARC activities. The WFCN site coordinator will be responsible for compiling the overall project information and results of any cross-site meetings for a project report.

Pilot sites staff, advisory teams, and APPI leadership will review community outcome data annually that is available to note any changes that might be attributed to this project or suggest modifications to project activities. This will include any state data available related to ACEs and resilience indicators.

There will be monthly self-evaluation processes at each pilot site with site advisory groups to continuously reflect on what is happening so that the goals and objectives can be adjusted as the project progresses and learning increases. The two site coordinators will regularly communicate the results of these meetings and share monthly with the APPI state leadership team what is being learned. The APPI Leadership Team will have quarterly in-depth evaluation opportunities at their meetings to reflect on project activities, their correlation to state level activities, and opportunities to impact practice and policy. Should any critical changes in strategies or activities be implied as the result of these reflective processes, the project leadership team of representatives from Whatcom, Walla Walla, and APPI will assess how these changes might be implemented and if any budget impact needs to be addressed.

Available Data Sources. We have state BRFSS data collected from 2009-2011 that we can use as a baseline for the pilot sites and state. Walla Walla and Whatcom have developed local measures and processes related to the reducing the stressful environments that exacerbate the impact of ACEs and increasing environments that nurture resilience. These measures will be discussed assessed for alignment at both the local and state levels. A new community capacity assessment tool is being developed by APPI and the local sites in consultation with Mathematica and Community Science to identify the developmental stages for practice and policy change. This tool will be shared with the project for potential cross-sector and state use.

We will continue our exploration as a local/state partnership to identify target measures that can help us answer key questions, such as:

- 1) What does increasing awareness look like, its correlation to systems change, and how do we measure it?

- 2) What collective impact or community capacity processes do we want to track to see if we are moving forward and sustaining increased capacity?
- 3) What resilience measures do we believe are useful in current tools, including the Healthy Youth Survey and BRFSS, and which could easily be added to already existing local program surveys?

Our project partners at the local and state level are committed to collaboratively identifying measures that matter to the community to assure we are truly making a difference.

Commitment to Participation in Evaluation Activities. Walla Walla, Whatcom, APPI leadership are fully committed to participating in MARC program cross-site evaluation activities. Walla Walla, Whatcom, and APPI, through our five-site evaluation project, have developed and implemented evaluation tools we are eager to share with the MARC cohort. We have also identified ways to utilize current statewide assessments to empower the work and have some state partners that have helped add questions to state survey tools. From this work, we can share what we have learned about impacting policy at that level. We are very excited about hearing what other communities have learned and tools they are using that we can bring back to better inform our state and local efforts.

Part IV: Peer-to-Peer Learning

Our community of Washington State and our two pilot communities will benefit significantly from this influx of support through MARC. It will support and enhance our local and state evaluation and practice efforts and also bring new ideas to the local-state partnerships that we have through APPI and other state initiatives related to building resilient communities. We will have the opportunity to learn from others across the country and revise and align practices and community-change strategies based on being part of this learning cohort.

Being part of a national cohort and leadership group will also increase the visibility and credibility of this work within the state and help us raise awareness for its value. Our project participation will also validate and support many local researchers, practitioners, and policy makers already working in this area. Our participation will help us leverage new relationships needed to make state-level changes to support local community building.

We believe that our pilot sites and state have a great deal to offer to the MARC project cohort, as well. We were early adopters of this research, the related movement building, and have thirteen years of experience with ACEs and resilience work. This experience has provided us with some hard learned lessons about what does and does not work in trying to shift community norms. We also personally have many connections and ongoing relationships with state leaders in this area that, although we know they are available to the project leadership, our relationships can help amplify their value through our ongoing work and connections with them on multiple projects. We have close working relationships with community-based researchers in this area as well as those involved with the APPI five-site evaluation project from Community Science and Mathematica. The site coordinators and APPI leadership also present regularly on our work, which offers future opportunities for dissemination of any project findings at state and national conferences and events.