



Data co-interpretation to elevate the voices of Iowa families of color

The Child and Family Policy Center (CFPC) conducts research, data analysis and policy advocacy on issues related to the health and well-being of Iowa children and their families. The Center's work touches on health, early childhood, education, child welfare, family support and economic success.

Iowa's communities of color face significant and persistent challenges in well-being that hinder their opportunities for success. Across virtually all indicators, children of color in Iowa fare worse than their white peers. We believe families of color living the day-to-day struggle are best positioned to know what they need and to build on existing strengths in their communities.

The Center is kicking off a data co-interpretation project in which we take the data to the community, and have them interpret the data—and in turn policy solutions—are generated by community members. We picked this approach because data itself is not inherently unbiased: it is collected and analyzed by individuals working within systems that come with their own points of view. A key idea of co-interpretation is that no one interprets the data for someone else.

Our goal is to better understand the needs and interest of Iowa's communities of color—and reflect them in all aspects of our work. That includes a policy agenda reflecting the lived experiences of all Iowa families.

The process

CFPC is seeking organizations working in communities of color to help us facilitate co-interpretation sessions. Partner groups will identify individuals interested in exploring issues of well-being in their community through data. CFPC will work with the organization to identify the data points of interest to community participants.

Participants will have the chance to:

- Say what the data says and why they think it is that way
- Reflect on what the data means to their families and community
- Identify policy implications that emerge from the data (including barriers and policy changes needed to address them)

CFPC will cover the cost of hosting the meeting, including child care and transportation, and provide a meal and stipend to participants.

Learn more: To explore contributing to this effort, contact Angelica Cardenas at acardenas@cfpciowa.org or (515) 280-9027 ext. 111.