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group

Case Studies - California Convergence

Situation

California Convergence is a network of community leaders building a movement for healthy food and safe physically active environments by developing knowledge, collaboration, and capacity to advance policy change. The network's effort seeks to address health equity by changing physical environments and reduce the rapidly growing rates of obesity related illnesses. Founded in 2007 California Convergence is guided by representatives from communities across the state, and connects over 600 change agents.

The 2008 Convergence Conference became one of the platforms to showcase and advance local work while also enhancing synergy within the healthy eating, active living movement. To assist with the Conference design, plan, and outcomes the California Convergence network hired Abinader Group to facilitate and coordinate the two-day event.

Actions

Abinader Group developed and carried out plans for moving programmatic activities toward the conference deliverables. We clarified with leadership the key aims and guiding principles for the conference. Abinader Group assessed the capacity and readiness of attendees to collaborate within the conference aims. We distilled the framework for integrating peer learning, leadership, and network development into the conference design. Abinader Group strategized with an internal staff team to create the framing for the conference branding, program materials, and website presence. The internal design team developed a complex online registration process as well as conference programs and materials. Once the framing was in place an Advisory Group made up of state funders and key community leaders ensured conference alignment, relevance, and emphasis paralleled the network's priorities. Abinader Group also oriented speakers, coached small group facilitators, and prepared local presenters. In addition we provided onsite set up and day of conference program management.

Results

As a result, the California Convergence conference reached 250 attendees from across the state. The network was able to identify and build consensus around four policy priorities. Conference attendees identified local, regional, and state strategies to increase health equity and promote healthy environments through policy changes. The conference provided opportunities for capacity and leadership skill building while also launching a peer learning network. The conference process illuminated key partners and stakeholders while also informing a set of statewide promising practices. For three additional years Abinader Group continued to focus, organize, and support California Convergence efforts.