# Openhouse Community Engagement Program: A community-based participatory evaluation

## THECLIENT

Openhouse: Housing, Services, and Community for LGBTQ Seniors San Francisco, California

## THE CHALLENGE

HMA Community Strategies (HMACS) worked with Openhouse, which enables San Francisco Bay Area LGBTQ seniors to overcome the unique challenges they face as they age by providing housing, direct services and community programs.

### HMACSprovided

of the California Reducing Disparities Project (CRDP). The Openhouse Community Engagement Program is a holistic and comprehensive prevention and early intervention program that aims to reduce and prevent social isolation and Ioneliness, as well as the symptoms related to depression, anxiety and long-standing trauma for LGBTQ older adults. The evaluation focused on three strategies, all interwoven as a program to allow for multiple points of entry, including emotional support programs and social engagement wraparound programming.

CDRP is a statewide policy initiative that was launched under the Office of Health Equity to identify solutions for historically unserved, underserved and inappropriately served communities. This cutting-edge, competitive statewide grant program seeks to recognize and elevate community mental health practices and identify strategies for systems change.<sup>1</sup> CRDP is designed to fund community-defined, evidence-based practices and pair them with rigorous evaluation to create an evidence base for their effectiveness.

## THE APPROACH

HMACS and Openhouse partnered to pursue the CRDP grant opportunity to reduce mental health disparities in minority communities and complete required program evaluation. HMACS advised Openhouse on the grant program, worked with Openhouse to develop a proposal strategy, wrote the required evaluation plans and eventually secured \$1.2 million in funding for the project. **Mdr** in 2019, in the third

human protections and handling all Institutional Review Board (IRB)-related tasks. This work will continue until 2021.

The Openhouse evaluation design and implementation has been guided by a community advisory group. HMACS and Openhouse periodically convene this advisory group, comprised of community members, in order to provide input into the evaluation design and questions, data collection methods and protocols, and to provide input into emerging findings, as they are available, to ensure validity. In year one, the advisory group participated in reviewing and editing instruments developed by the statewide evaluator and in the design of the local evaluation, including four survey instruments.

The Community Engagement Program evaluation includes both qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative data is analyzed using rigorous analytic methods, using Stata for inferential analysis and descriptive analyses such as participant demographic description, participation, and program monitoring and Excel for descriptive analyses. Analyses include an exploration of differences in outcomes by demographic, mental health at entry into the