# EVALUATION OF A COUNTY-INTEGRATED CONTACT TRACING SUPPORT PROJECT IN CALIFORNIA

Esmeralda Salas<sup>1</sup>, Stephanie Bultema<sup>1</sup>, Emily Christopher<sup>1</sup>, Sue Grinnell<sup>1</sup>, Peter Forberg<sup>1</sup>, Max Chavez<sup>1</sup>, Beverly Bruno<sup>1</sup>, Danielle Theberge<sup>2</sup>, Nicole Lordi<sup>2</sup>, Becky Garrow<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Population Health Innovation Lab, Public Health Institute; <sup>2</sup>Tracing Health, Public Health Institute; <sup>3</sup>Garrow Consulting, LLC

# BACKGROUND

Contact tracing (CT) and case investigation (CI) efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic required agile and effective support. The Public Health Institute (PHI) created Tracing Health, a program designed to support pandemic response efforts through integration and partnership with counties, clinics, funders, and other partners. Tracing Health aimed to build trust in communities hardest hit by COVID-19 through creating a passionate, well-trained workforce representative of the community.

The Tracing Health team hired the Population Health Innovation Lab (PHIL), a separate program of PHI, to conduct this evaluation.

#### Tracing Health's Goals

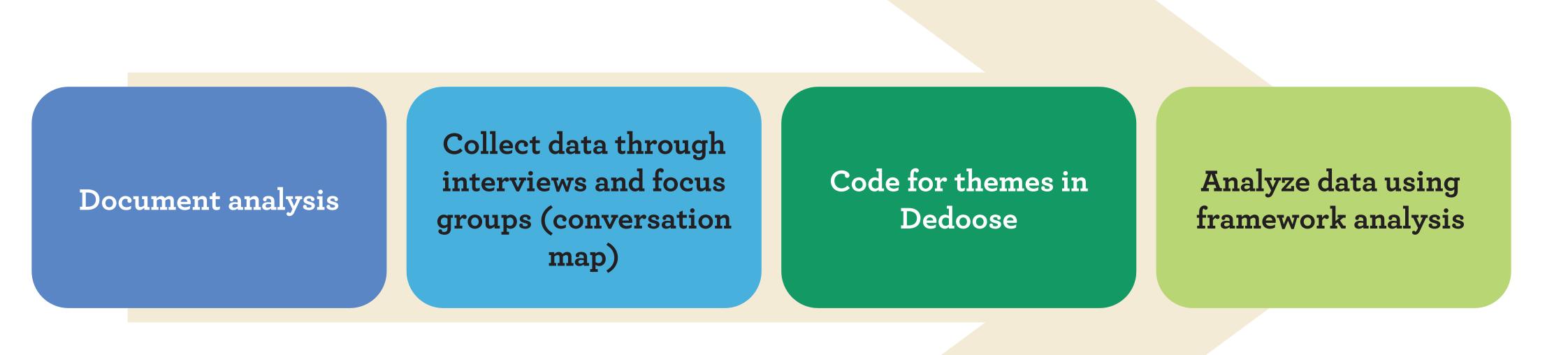
#### The program's goals were to

- 1. Maintain a remote CI/CT staff.
- 2. Recruit and hire diverse staff, representative of the languages spoken in areas hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3. Seamlessly onboard and train staff for successful program entry.

#### **Evaluation Purpose**

This evaluation sought to qualitatively assess the process and outcomes of Tracing Health's operations in one California county.

## METHODS

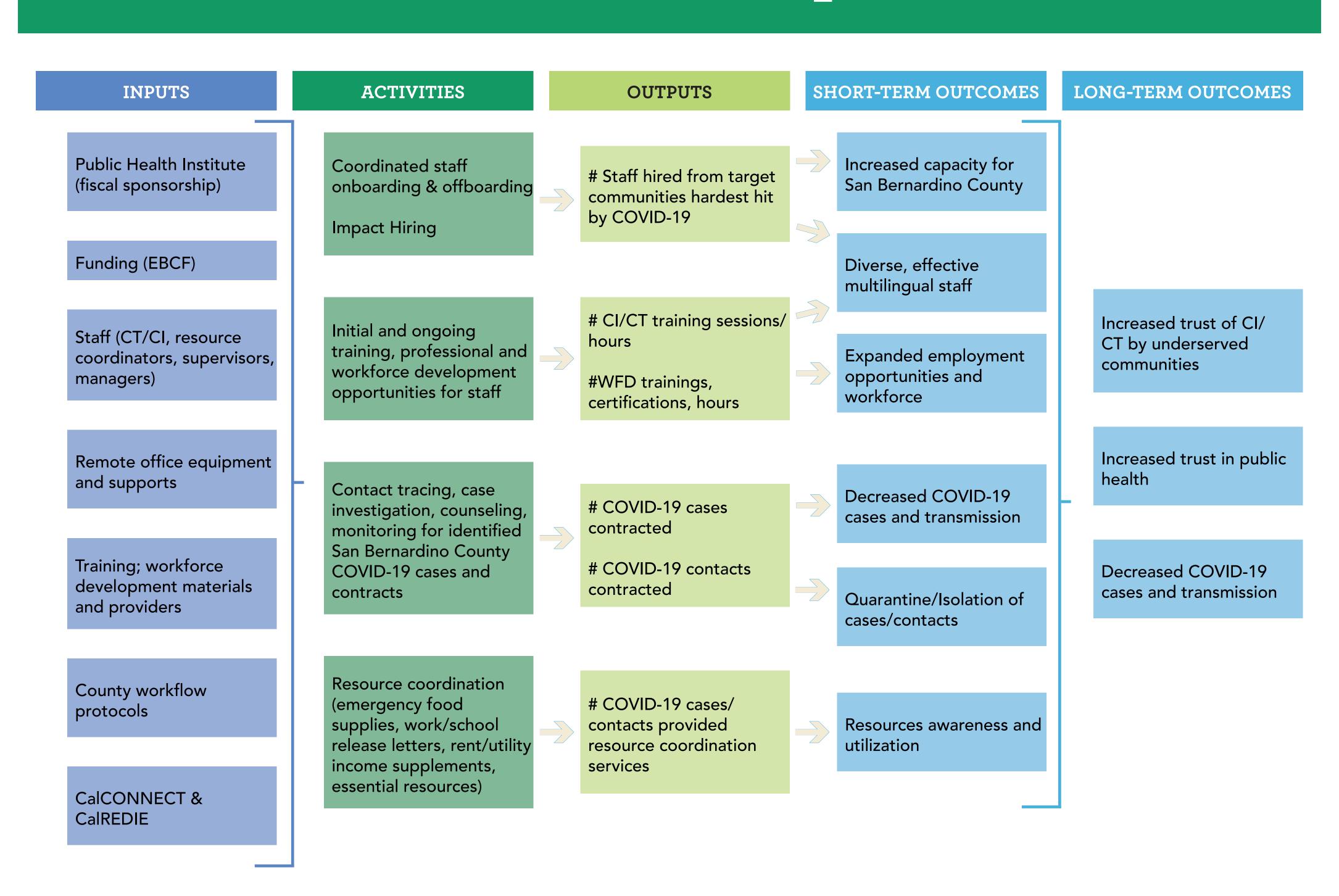


25 INTERVIEWS
(15 senior staff, 10 CI/CT staff)

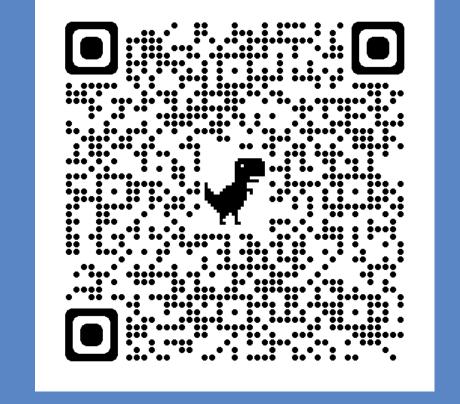
439
DOCUMENTS

1 FOCUS
GROUP
(mixed)

Tracing Health's work in San Bernardino County demonstrated how agile and effective support can be provided, even in the constantly evolving context of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Scan the QR code to download the full report.



#### RESULTS

# Successes in Project Design & Implementation

- Efficiency in Program Design and Implementation. PHI hired, trained, and deployed staff at a record pace which allowed Tracing Health to be responsive to the county's evolving needs. This was in part due to the dedicated training and recruitment teams, program management software, micro-team structure, and onboarding and training procedures.
- Response to County Needs. PHI's flexibility and responsiveness to the county's evolving needs during the height of the pandemic contributed to a successful partnership. In addition to Community Care Specialists, the Community Outreach Specialists and Epidemiologists proved to be particularly valuable additions to building county capacity.
- Impact Hiring and Staff Diversity. The diversity of Tracing Health staff, especially language diversity, served to build trust and help staff meet the needs of the community they served.

#### Challenges in Project Design & Implementation

- County Contracting and Workflows. The contracting and data sharing process was burdensome and time-consuming and would have benefited from a streamlined approach.
- Relationships and Shared Goals. Roles and responsibilities were not clear at the outset, which created the perception of misalignment among funder, county, and PHI priorities.
- Data Sharing Platform. Access to CalCONNECT, a CI/CT and data management platform, was inconsistent.

# CONCLUSION

This evaluation provides valuable learnings to ongoing and future cross-sector collaborative efforts and project implementation.

Questions? Contact our team at info@pophealthinnovationlab.org



