

# AMAKA CONSULTING AND EVALUATION SERVICES, LLC

ANNUAL REPORT  
2021

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A Public Health Consulting Firm



# PRESIDENT & FOUNDER



## *Ndidiamaka N. Amutah-Onukagha, PhD, MPH, CHES*

Dr. Amutah-Onukagha's commitment to health disparities and health equity research and evaluation began before she formally knew what the interdisciplinary field was called. As a Nigerian American woman, she is reminded daily of the inequities experienced by women of color. Thus, by virtue of her previous life experiences she believes she has always viewed inequity through the lens of a social epidemiologist interested in the social determinants of health. These life experiences have shaped her research and evaluation career and training to date, and have undoubtedly deepened her commitment to research and evaluation pertaining to the health of people from marginalized backgrounds. She is fueled by an interest in inequitable life trajectories and outcomes as minority groups of people experience them.

Dr. Amutah-Onukagha received her PhD in Public Health with a focus on Maternal and Child Health at the University of Maryland, College Park School of Public Health in 2010. She received her Masters in Public Health from The George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services in Maternal and Child Health in 2005. As an evaluator and project manager, and equipped with expertise in the areas of health disparities, maternal and child health, and HIV/AIDS, Dr. Amutah-Onukagha has conducted evaluation work for organizations such as the March of Dimes, the Partnership for Maternal and Child Health of Northern New Jersey, and the American Public Health Association (APHA). Currently, Dr. Amutah-Onukagha and the ACES team are providing research and evaluation expertise to Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts, which includes design and implementation oversight of a large-scale evaluation plan focused on stigma reduction in youth and communities of color across Massachusetts.

All of the research Dr. Amutah-Onukagha has conducted as an Associate Professor in the Department of Public Health and Community Medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine, and also as the President and Founder of Amaka Consulting and Evaluation Services (ACES), LLC, has been for the greater good of marginalized and vulnerable communities. She considers herself one of the few people that is truly comfortable in both the academy and in the community, and she finds ways to meaningfully intersect her work between both worlds. For example, she has worked for the past 15 years in the field of health disparities, examining from a research and community-based perspective why infants and women of color are more likely to die than their white counterparts. This work has taken her from the academy to communities such as Baltimore, MD, Newark, NJ, and Washington DC, where she has lived and worked in order to raise awareness about these pressing issues, change policy, and increase resources to people who need them the most.

Dr. Amutah-Onukagha has shown flexibility as an evaluator in the following ways: a) working with and for communities, as she understands that the needs of the community should drive the evaluation and provide results that are meaningful and sustainable to the local community, and b) working with stakeholders and funders, as she understands the way that data should be presented in order to have maximum impact- both internally for organizational use and externally to other policymakers and decision makers. Dr. Amutah-Onukagha applies an equity lens to all evaluation work, with a focus on dismantling and calling out isms such as racism, sexism, and ageism.

# OVERVIEW OF ACES

Herstory



Mission & Values

Focus Areas

Our Team



Impact



# HERSTORY



Amaka Consulting and Evaluation Services (ACES), LLC is a trusted consultancy firm with deep expertise in program planning and evaluation in public health. A minority and woman-owned firm, since 2016 ACES has provided invaluable technical expertise in areas such as health disparities, maternal and child health, program evaluation, grant writing, and mixed methods research. With over 30 years of combined experience, the composition of research associates within ACES reflects the diversity of technical skills and content knowledge to meet clients' needs across many domains. ACES evaluation work has been rooted in our commitment to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion.

As a minority and woman-owned firm, the majority of ACES staff are minority women, and can thus bring a cultural depth and sensitivity to our work in and for underserved communities. ACES prides itself on maintaining a team of evaluation experts with diverse expertise and backgrounds. We have team members that are men and women of color, immigrants, and from low-income backgrounds. ACES Research and Evaluation associates have provided their expertise to other evaluation work funded by the March of Dimes, Rutgers, the State University of NJ, the American Public Health Association, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Partnership for Maternal and Child Health of Northern NJ.



# STAFF INSIGHT

“

I sought employment with ACES, in order to be a part of a team that's leading the way in innovative strategies to improve the public health landscape in the US, particularly in the field of maternal and child health. I'm new to the ACES team, but so far I've really enjoyed getting to know everyone and the positive work culture.

**-Administrative Assistant**

”



# MISSION & VALUES

## OUR MISSION

To provide high-quality, evidence-based evaluation and consulting services with a keen focus on equity and social justice.

*ACES' work has been rooted in our commitment to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion, bringing a cultural depth and sensitivity to our work in and for underserved communities. ACES prides itself on living its values with a team of evaluation experts coming from diverse expertise and backgrounds.*

## OUR VALUES

Respectful and Clear Communication

Thoughtful Engagement

Collaborative Partnership

Innovative and Creative Output



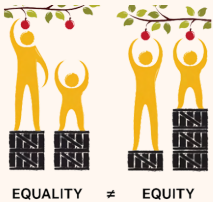
# FOCUS AREAS



Maternal & Child Health Research



Research & Evaluation



Health Equity



Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion



# FORMER & CURRENT CLIENTS

CITY OF NEWARK  
NEW JERSEY



**AIDS  
United**



Partnership for  
Maternal &  
Child Health  
OF NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

NASTAD



SISTERS of CHARITY  
FOUNDATION  
OF CLEVELAND



**Accompany**  
doula care

**Planned  
Parenthood**  
Care. No matter what.

Planned Parenthood  
League of Massachusetts

**CDC**

CENTERS FOR DISEASE™  
CONTROL AND PREVENTION

*Susan G.*  
**Komen** **Komen**

**march  
of dimes**

A FIGHTING CHANCE FOR EVERY BABY™

**POWER  
TO DECIDE**



**ACOG**

The American College of  
Obstetricians and Gynecologists





# OUR TEAM

Our consultants join us from varied backgrounds, bringing a wealth of expertise to solve your team's greatest challenges. We prioritize transparency, integrity, and professionalism.

20 Consultants



Advanced Degrees



Professional Certifications



Over 30 Years of Expertise



# OUR TEAM

Our consultants join us from varied backgrounds, bringing a wealth of expertise to solve your team's greatest challenges. We prioritize transparency, integrity, and professionalism.

**95%**

Our minority-woman-led consulting firm is committed to diversity and inclusion. 95% of our consultants are Black or Latinx.

**14%**

The diversity of our consultants extends beyond race. 14% of our consultants identify as LGBTQIA+.

**63%**

When it comes to diversity, our firm lives its values. 63% of our consultants are first-generation immigrants or college graduates.



# STAFF INSIGHT

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I wanted to be a part of a Black, women lead organization leading the charge on public health evaluation. ACES is contributing to eliminating all health disparities and achieving health equity. Knowing that my skillset is being used to drive policy and improving program needs for community members and organizations is what I enjoy.

Focus Areas

**-Research Associate**

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# IMPACT

Excellence in Evaluation



Prestigious Program Planning

DEI Focused Results

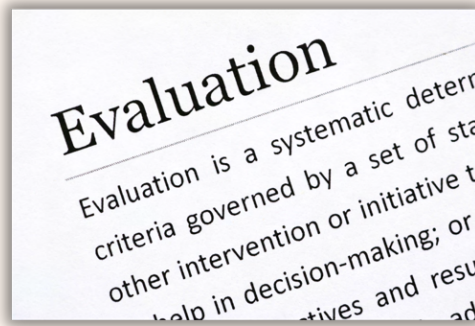
Community Champion



Cultural Responsiveness



# EXCELLENCE IN EVALUATION VIOLENCE PREVENTION



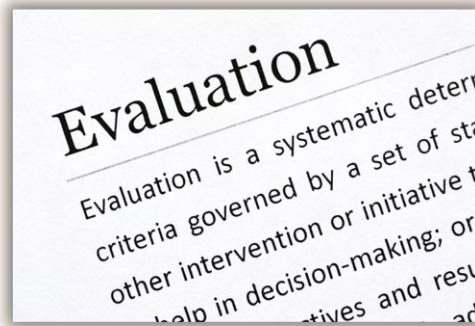
ACES associates have expertise in content areas such as public health, health behavior, health disparities, maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS, behavioral health, epidemiology, and public health education.

ACES is currently working with the **Sherwood Foundation**, the **Women's Fund of Omaha**, and the **Nebraska Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence** to conduct a situation analysis of an initiative called the Nebraska Survivor Support Network Evaluation Project (NE-SSNE). The NE-SSNE Project, will examine how the response systems for domestic violence, sexual violence and sex trafficking serves or fails to serve survivors from historically marginalized communities (i.e. those identifying as Black, Latinx, Indigenous, LGBTQIA+ and differently abled).

We believe that guiding the development of an evaluation or research request is important. We carefully and thoughtfully map out each step of the process to ensure that all the right questions are addressed and the overall aims of the evaluation are met. We also believe in a collaborative partnership between ACES and our clients. Building quality relationships and sustaining trust lies at the heart of our firm's values.



# EXCELLENCE IN EVALUATION MATERNAL HEALTH DISPARITIES



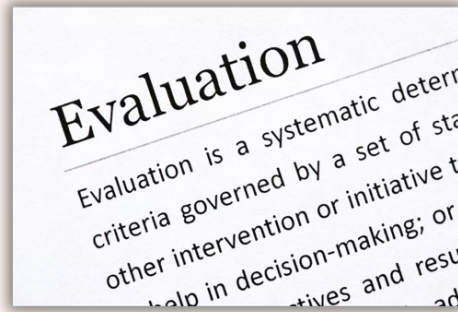
ACES assessed **March of Dime's** Healthy Babies are Worth the Wait program in reducing the disparity in preterm birth between African Americans and non-Hispanic whites.

Data for this three-year, mixed-methods evaluation was collected through county-level birth data, staff interviews, patient focus groups, and program outcomes. After conducting multiple interviews with administrators, front desk staff, nurses, and other providers, we devised a set of recommendations that the hospitals could use to improve their relationship with women of color and retain them in care.

With a focus on addressing pressing maternal and child health problems, such as infant and maternal mortality, the ACES team prides itself on providing valuable and timely evaluation results to improve the health of women and families. A large number of ACES research associates have formal training in maternal and child health.



# EXCELLENCE IN EVALUATION SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION



ACES recently completed an evaluation that highlighted the role of colleges and universities in preventing sexual assault. Specifically, we conducted an extensive cross-site evaluation to examine the barriers and facilitators to a successful campus sexual assault prevention program across selected states.

This **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** study commissioned us to provide them with evidence of the states that were thriving in their sexual assault and reproductive health programming, and also identify opportunities for improvement in states that were not as successful in reaching their stated mandates.

Here at ACES we support a woman's right to determine her reproductive health choices and were honored to partner with the CDC on their important initiative. Using mix methods research and capacity building we help to shift perspective and develop strategies to improve health outcomes.



# PRESTIGIOUS PROGRAM PLANNING



ACES research associates are skilled at presenting visually compelling stories through the use of mixed-methods data in a way that speaks to the needs of the client. Our commitment to evaluation excellence also extends to program implementation using strategic planning and analytic skills that focus on evidence-based practices through the utilization of tools such as GANTT timelines and charts.

In previous evaluation projects and in our work with clients, we pride ourselves on the ability to provide capacity-building assistance and technical support for data collection by allocating staff training to help monitor program progress and outcomes.





# CLIENT INSIGHT

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Choosing Amaka was the right choice for our small, non-profit community doula organization. We value choosing firms that understand the passion we have for maternal and child health and are owned, led, and operated by diverse staff members. We are very pleased with our relationship and the deliverables the firm provided.

Focus Areas

-Accompany Doula Care

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# DEI FOCUSED RESULTS



ACES has provided consulting services to several clients around diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

We have:

- Developed and facilitated anti-racism trainings for healthcare leaders.
- Coordinated DEI learning and development opportunities for hospitals, medical schools, and nonprofits.
- Partnered with other DEI consultants and organizations to deliver trainings and develop webinars on racism, equity, and inclusion
- Chaired and participated in research groups grounded in equity research and practice.
- The Diversity, Equity, and Anti-Racism Council chaired by Dr. Amutah-Onukagha oversees the diversity, equity, and anti-racism work of both the Department of Public Health & Community Medicine (PHCM) and the Public Health & Professional Degree Programs (PHPD). The goal of the council is to provide leadership in order to promote diversity, equity, and anti-racism work through development and oversight of the Diversity Plan of PHPD.



# COMMUNITY CHAMPION



ACES conducted an evaluation of the Cleveland Central Promise Neighborhood Ambassador Program for **Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland**.

Through our work with the SOCF, we have been able to work directly with Promise Ambassadors to lead the evaluation plan, provide feedback and input to improve the evaluation plan, share expertise in developing data collection materials, and develop the data analysis framework. The ACES team designed and implemented an evaluation focused on a collective impact initiative in the Cleveland central neighborhood. Through qualitative and quantitative methods, this evaluation sought to learn what has worked regarding growth of neighborhood leadership and social capital, how Ambassadors have been impacted, and what adjustments should be made.



# CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS



ACES utilizes a culturally responsive and equitable evaluation (CREE) framework. We think about CREE as “continuous improvement” - an ongoing multi-stakeholder assessment of the form and function of the evaluation. CREE creates more valid evaluations because we operationalize an exploration of difference and an applicability of equity practices in our work.

CREE is one of the most rigorous forms of evaluation because it requires:

- Genuine thought partnership and centering community voices, which take time, intentionality and sensitivity;
- At times, new or more refined methodologies to ensure inclusivity and relevance;
- And, through multiple levels of engagement and ongoing adjustments, the evaluation must be able to stand up against (or respond to) community perspectives and criticisms.

Data quality is redefined in CREE. Data quality is about more utility and relevance in addition to rigor.

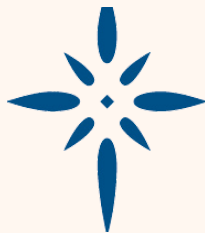


# 2021 PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



## Accompany doula care

Earlier in the year, the ACES team evaluated the maternal telehealth services that Accompany Doula Care has been providing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through focus groups and surveys the evaluation team was able to provide recommendations for future programmatic policies.



## SISTERS *of* CHARITY FOUNDATION OF CLEVELAND

ACES designed and implemented an evaluation focused on a collective impact initiative in the Cleveland central neighborhood. Through qualitative and quantitative methods, this evaluation sought to learn what has worked regarding growth of neighborhood leadership and social capital, how Ambassadors have been impacted, and what adjustments should be made.



ACES developed a learning module, to be delivered through Komen's online Learn Upon training system, that will train navigators on how to assist Black patients in navigating systemic racism and bias within the healthcare system.



# CLIENT INSIGHT

“

I had the pleasure of working with Amaka Consulting & Evaluation Services for almost two years. Over that time, I interacted with numerous members of the ACES team -- all of whom exhibited subject matter expertise, professionalism, and robust work ethic. ACES went above and beyond all expectations. All deliverables were completed with quality and finesse, and ACES helped us think outside of our preconceived boxes to ensure that our evaluation was as robust and innovative as possible. ACES brought valuable experience with working under federal grant requirements. I recommend their services with no hesitations!

-NASTAD

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# ACES IN THE NEWS

**SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 2020**



**SAY HER NAME:  
RACIAL PROFILING OF BLACK WOMEN  
DURING THE PANDEMIC**  
A Virtual Gathering of Leaders and Call to Action  
**Thursday, June 11, 2020 @ 6PM EST**  
[www.facebook.com/uconnhdi](http://www.facebook.com/uconnhdi)

**Host**  
**WIZDOM POWELL, PHD, MPH**  
Director  
Health Disparities Institute  
UConn Health  
President  
American Psychological Association  
Division 51

**AMANI M. ALLEN, PHD, MPH**  
Executive Dean  
Divisions of Community Health  
Sciences & Epidemiology  
University of California, Berkeley

**CHANDRA L. FORD, PHD**  
Associate Professor  
Community Health Sciences  
Founding Director  
Center for the Study of Racism,  
Social Justice & Health  
UCLA | Kaiser Permanente

**WHITNEY LASTER PIRTLE, PHD**  
Assistant Professor of Sociology  
Critical Race Studies  
Public Health  
University of California, Merced

**PAIGE FERNANDEZ**  
Policing Policy Advisor  
ACLU

**NDIDIAMAKA N. AMUTAH-ONUKAGHA, PHD, MPH**  
Associate Professor  
Dept of Public Health & Community Medicine  
Tufts University School of Medicine



#SayHerName  
#equityinCOVID



# FOR FIVE YEARS, WE HAVE ACED IT!



On August 16, 2021, our small, but mighty minority-woman-run firm celebrated five years of business. For five years, Amaka Consulting & Evaluation Services has provided public health consulting and strategic research services to businesses across the nation!

To celebrate this triumph, we were joined by our brilliant consultants, and clients, both past and current, to remember our wins and discuss our vision for what's ahead.

We are excited to see what the future holds.



# CONNECT WITH US



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