

## Host Organization



The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH)

## Introduction

Figure 1.



Health Equity  
Zones (HEZ)

To support RIDOH's goal of promoting health equity across Rhode Island, my internship focused on supporting health equity-related communications.

This was accomplished through:

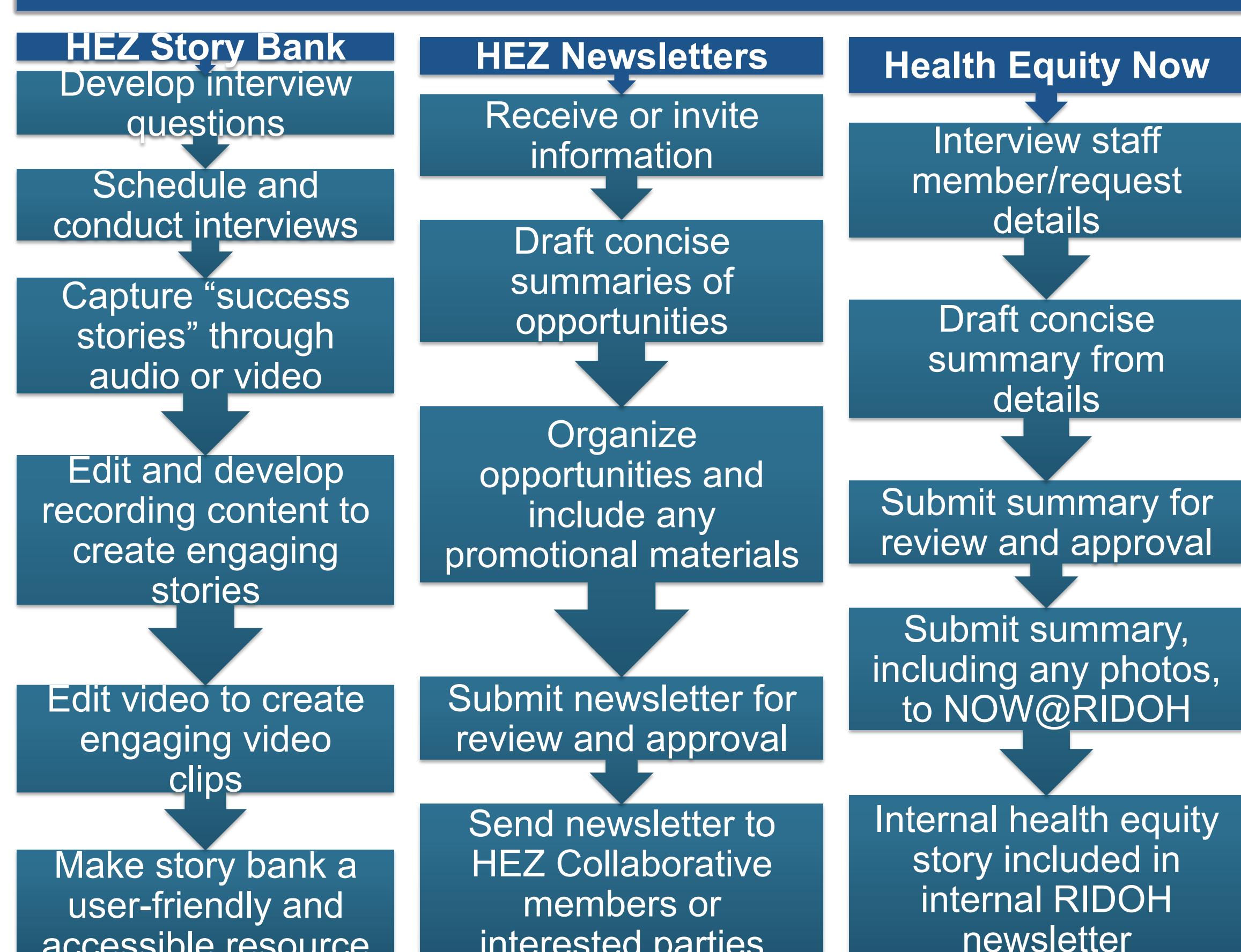
- Communications projects to support external efforts, including the Health Equity Zones (HEZ) Initiative, RIDOH's community-led, place-based model to address the determinants of health at the local level.
- Internal RIDOH communications to promote health equity among RIDOH staff.

## Objectives

Improve health equity in Rhode Island through:

- Developing and disseminating a monthly newsletter and other time sensitive communications to HEZ Collaborative members and other interested parties.
- Developing a bank of compelling "success stories" about the impact of HEZs in Rhode Island.
- Developing a "Health Equity Now" feature for the RIDOH employee newsletter, NOW@RIDOH, featuring stories about how programs across the Department are working to advance health equity.

## Methodology



## Key Findings

### HEZ Story Bank



Snapshot of video interview with Washington County HEZ Collaborative Member, Cindy Buxton

Interviewed HEZ Collaborative members representing seven out of the nine total RI HEZs, including:

- Bristol HEZ
- Central Providence HEZ
- Newport HEZ
- Pawtucket/Central Falls HEZ
- Washington County HEZ
- West Warwick HEZ
- Woonsocket HEZ

Shared stories relating to food and healthcare access, elderly engagement, and overdose prevention.

Interviews resulted in 27 written "success stories" and eight short videos which can be shared at events, via social media, and through other means.

### HEZ Newsletters

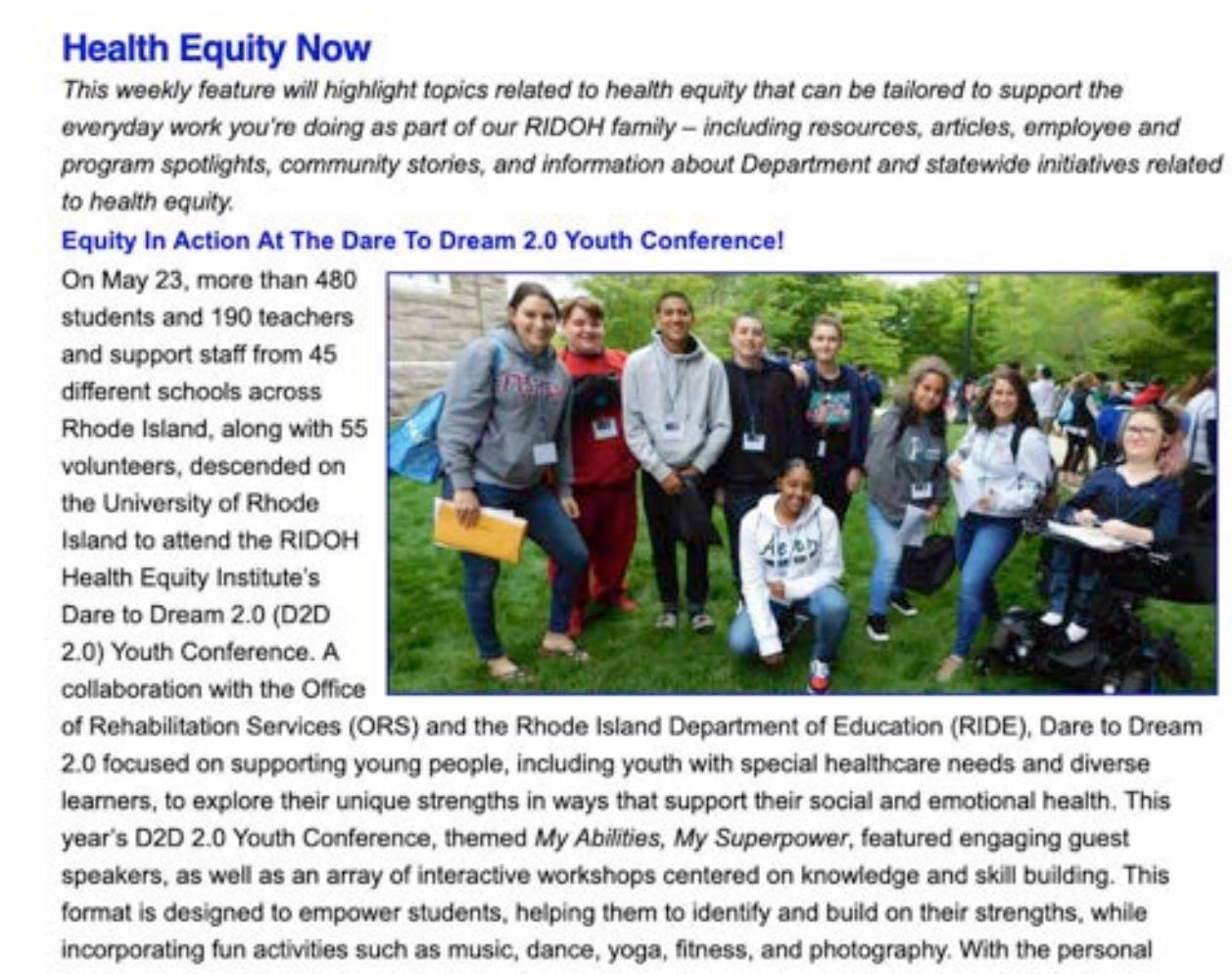
568 HEZ Collaborative members and other interested parties have been notified on a monthly and as-needed basis about important information including:

- Funding and networking opportunities
- Special events



May 2019 HEZ Update

## Health Equity Now



"Health Equity Now",  
NOW@RIDOH,  
June 10, 2019

"Health Equity Now" has become a regularly scheduled feature in NOW@RIDOH and is sent to all 516 RIDOH staff members.

Thus far, it has featured information about the recent RIDOH-sponsored Dare to Dream 2.0 Youth Conference and 2019 Rhode Island PrideFest.

## Discussion

### HEZ Story Bank

With the involvement of seven of the nine existing HEZs, HEZ Collaborative members and RIDOH staff have access to a story bank containing 35 new "success stories" that can be shared. This story bank increases the number of what was previously only a few stories that could be readily shared with target audiences.

### HEZ Newsletters

With the monthly HEZ Update and other newsletters containing important resources and other information, the 568 HEZ Collaborative members and other interested parties are notified about essential resources that they might not have been aware of previously.

### Health Equity Now

All 516 current RIDOH staff members received "Health Equity Now", providing readers with information about how RIDOH programs have worked to promote health equity. This work can be done through hosting health equity-related events, or completing projects that advance health equity in Rhode Island.

## Conclusion

With the HEZ story bank and HEZ Update newsletter, HEZ Collaborative members and RIDOH staff have access to and share valuable resources, that can help lead to:

- Growth of the initiative through an increased number of collaborating organizations, and support from funders or sponsor organizations.
- Increased interest from non-participating localities, leading to the creation of new HEZs

With "Health Equity Now" in the NOW@RIDOH weekly newsletter, RIDOH staff are more aware of how their own work and that of their colleagues has advanced health equity in Rhode Island. This knowledge can then spread throughout the Department, making health equity more tangible and relatable for all RIDOH staff.

## Acknowledgements

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