

Partnership for a Healthy Durham Quarterly meeting

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

12:00 – 1:00 pm, Zoom

Attendees: Jason Smith, Kelly Warnock, Kristen Patterson, Nasim Youssefi, Patience Mushipe-Mukelabai, Raina Goldstein Bunnag, Savannah Carrico, Sicily Johnson, Vicor Ayeni, Yvonne Reza, Bridget Nelson, Chelsea Hawkins, David Regan, Elim Lee, Gregor Levy, Heather Mountz, Irene Felsman, Jaemin Kim, Jaeson Smith, Karin Szymanski, Bria Miller, Marissa Mortiboy, Shelisa Howard-Martinez, Armenous Dobson III, Ashley Bass-Mitchell, Azmen Johnson, Brad Caison, Jaemin Kim, Javonna Rozario, Kimberly Alexander, Kina Edwards, Lakin Stevens, Lindsey Bickers Bock, Pam Purifoy, Uzuri Holder, Victor Ayeni, Deborah Dolan

Meeting Minutes

12:00 Welcome

Shelisa Howard-Martinez, Overall Partnership Co-Chair, Aging Well Durham
Kimberly Monroe, Overall Partnership Co-Chair, Duke Health

12:05 Why we Need Systems Level Change: The Roles of Justice and Charity

Marissa Mortiboy, Population Health Division Director, Durham County Department of Public Health

Presentation PPT:

- Level setting for the group as many have years of experience of this work. Marissa reviewed her diverse background in Durham and system work.
- What is a system? A set of connected parts. When we think about housing system – Native Americans were here and people came to take the land and claim it and then others were not able to own land or build. Redlining, and unequal access to housing as an example.
- Systems that impact communities – Media, transportation, criminal legal. Housing, health care, food, education etc. These systems work together and not alone
- Why do systems change matter? Why systems change and not just rely on charity? Charity is not always inequitable, not sustainable, keeps us separate, it is a band aide, asking for charity is hard on the individual, charity is not empowering.
- Charity (short term) versus Justice (long term)
 - Charity is individual or groups of need and Justice is population or society level.
IE: During COVID we switched to telehealth This helped rural, immunocompromised etc. IE: Civil Rights Movement
- These are both needed and can work together. A comprehensive approach.

Shelisa Howard-Martinez presentation

- Mutual Aid - Solidarity, long history in US and South, collaborative exchange. Examples of Community Bail funds, community farms. Disability community. Toolshares. Etc.
- Giver and receiver – reciprocal exchange of resources and service. Collective power and everyone contribute versus the charity model



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Marrisa presentation continues:

- Impacts of Systems Change – PANFA supported DINE program for advocacy for universal school meals, Falls risk prevention training for Meals on Wheels staff and volunteers.

Raina Goldstein Bunnag presentation –

- sharing story about systems change
- Universal School Meals – breakfast and lunch is free for everyone student in DPS. CEP community Eligibility Provision that is calculated by the average income of students. Partners realized that DPS was eligible for CEP as a district. Overall, the whole program is justice for everyone. Coalition of school meals champions and community members helped develop a plan to submit for approval
- If this changes in the future, the structure is now created and they ability to look into other options. This is another benefit of systems change.

Let America Be America Again by Langston Hughes read by Marissa

12:25 From Knowledge to Action in Breakout Rooms

Health and Housing Discussion lead by Brad Caison

Question - Someone has been incarcerated and is released, what systems or barriers does the individual meet with next steps?

- What barriers will someone encounter when trying to get housing?
 - How do they get an income, get an ID, how do you even get mail for the new ID, do they have access to their SSN, lack of transportation to get where they need to go to find or even apply for housing
- What charitable programs provide assistance/aid?
 - Urban Ministries or other rehousing aids that exist, Housing for New Hope, Jubilee. Group was not as aware of these opportunities. Issues with specific populations (like women only).
- What mutual Aid or community aid exists to support housing needs?
 - Community Banks helping with purchases of homes might be an example.
- What policy or system changes would help improve housing for returning individuals.
 - Reducing barriers to get needed documentation for housing, offering navigation for assistance, systems change to reduce incarceration, so these issues are not needed
- What harm reduction strategies can be implemented to assist individuals without housing



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- Change in the stigma of the unhoused in our society, safer for people to feel as though they can ask for help.
- Hygiene access for folks is so important. General grooming access so they feel they are able to go through the steps needed for housing, jobs etc.

- Which of these solutions could be implemented through the Partnership for a Healthy Durham?
 - If we had the right resources, they all could be.

Action Items: roundtable talks about what can be done to plan out steps for what we want to do to actually address some of the system barriers, who do we partner with to have this discussion and work on change.

Access to Healthcare and Health Insurance: Kelly Warnock

- Increase access to medical and dental care for Durham County residents
- There are a lot of systems and policies that affect health care. Main one is employment which is where many people get insurance.
- Legal Aid helps with some barriers in systems such as open enrollment, Durham County reentry services

Community Safety and Well-being: Shelisa Howard-Martinez

- Overlap with charity and mutual aid, talked about groups that exist now and need more follow-up but were not sure how active they are now.

Mental Health: Najla McClain

- Recap – Conversation validated that the system is confusing. Discussion about a need for prevention - Community Based programs can provide interventions prior to individuals going into the system. And also similar to the other groups.

Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Food Access: Edeia Lynch

- Relationship between food access and nutrition, SNAP has many limitations for people. Policy challenges, state not changing minimum wage, opportunities to peer support FIT Program. Healthy miles trails, food pantries and community fridges and gardens can help support people with food access.

12:50 Share-out

I. Announcements

If you are not part of a committee, please consider joining one of the following. Contact Bria Miller at briamiller@dconc.gov or visit www.healthydurham.org for more information.



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- **Access to Healthcare-**
- **Communications-** Improve internal and external communications and branding
- **Health and Housing-** Examine the relationship between housing and health
- **Mental Health-** Increase access to mental health services and public awareness of mental illness
- **Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Food Access-** Address risk factors such as food access and physical activity
- **Strategic Engagement for Action & Transformation-** Partners with health-priority committees to uncover and address the root causes of health challenges in Durham County.

Mission: The Partnership for a Healthy Durham is committed to collaboratively improving the health and well-being of its community, and those who live in it.

Vision: All people of Durham have the opportunity and ability to enjoy safety and good physical, mental and social health.



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WHY WE NEED SYSTEMS LEVEL CHANGE: THE ROLES OF JUSTICE AND CHARITY

Presented by:

Marissa Mortiboy, MPH
Durham County Department of
Public Health

Partnership for a Healthy Durham
Quarterly meeting
January 21, 2026

TODAY'S PRESENTER



- POPULATION HEALTH ADMINISTRATOR
- FORMER PARTNERSHIP FOR A HEALTHY DURHAM COORDINATOR
- SYSTEMS LEVEL EXPERIENCE

WHAT WE'LL COVER:

- 01 INTRODUCTION
- 02 WHAT IS A SYSTEM?
- 03 CHARITY VS. JUSTICE

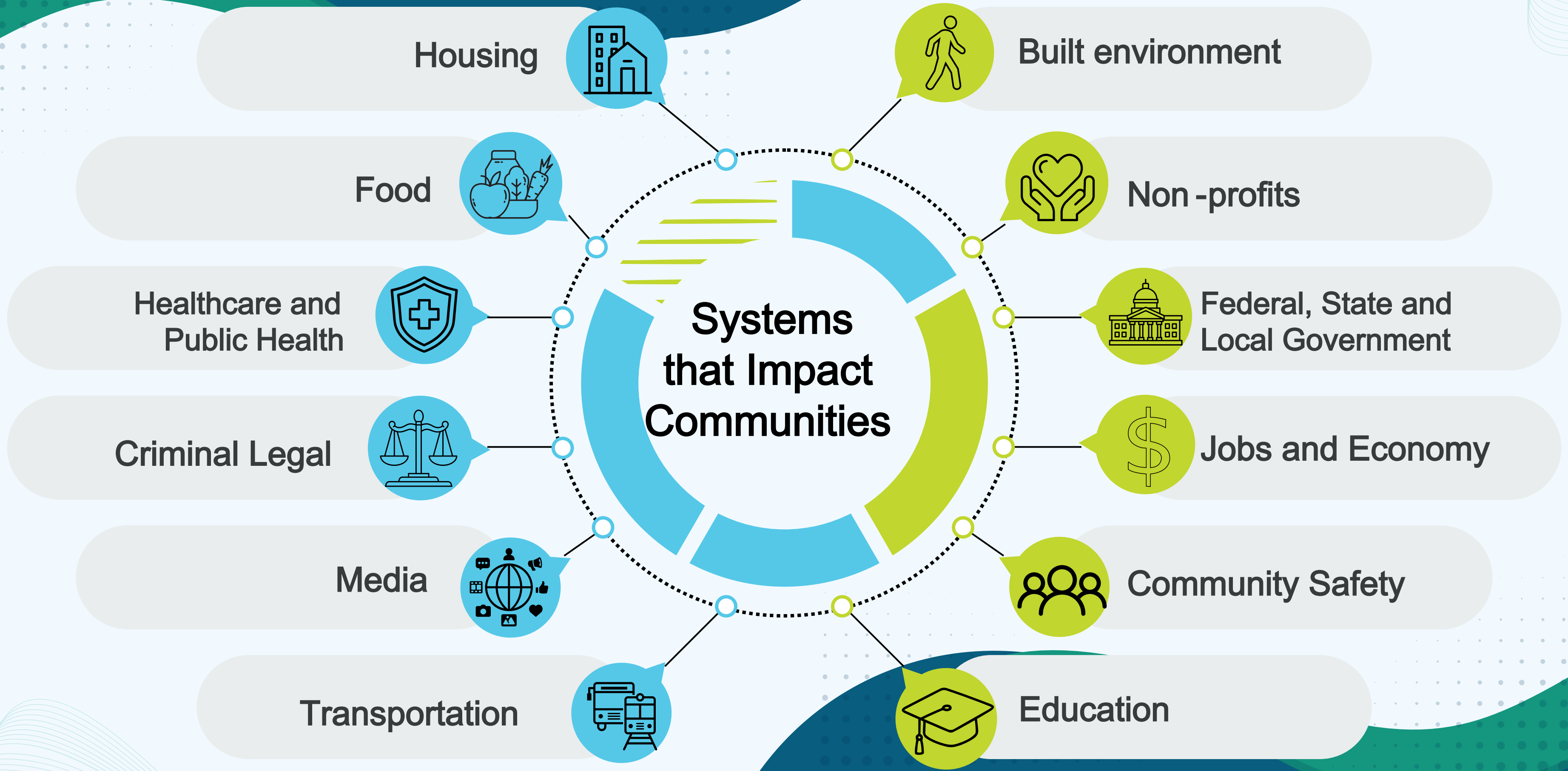
- 04 MUTUAL AID
- 05 STORY SHARING
- 06 CONVERSATION AND ACTION

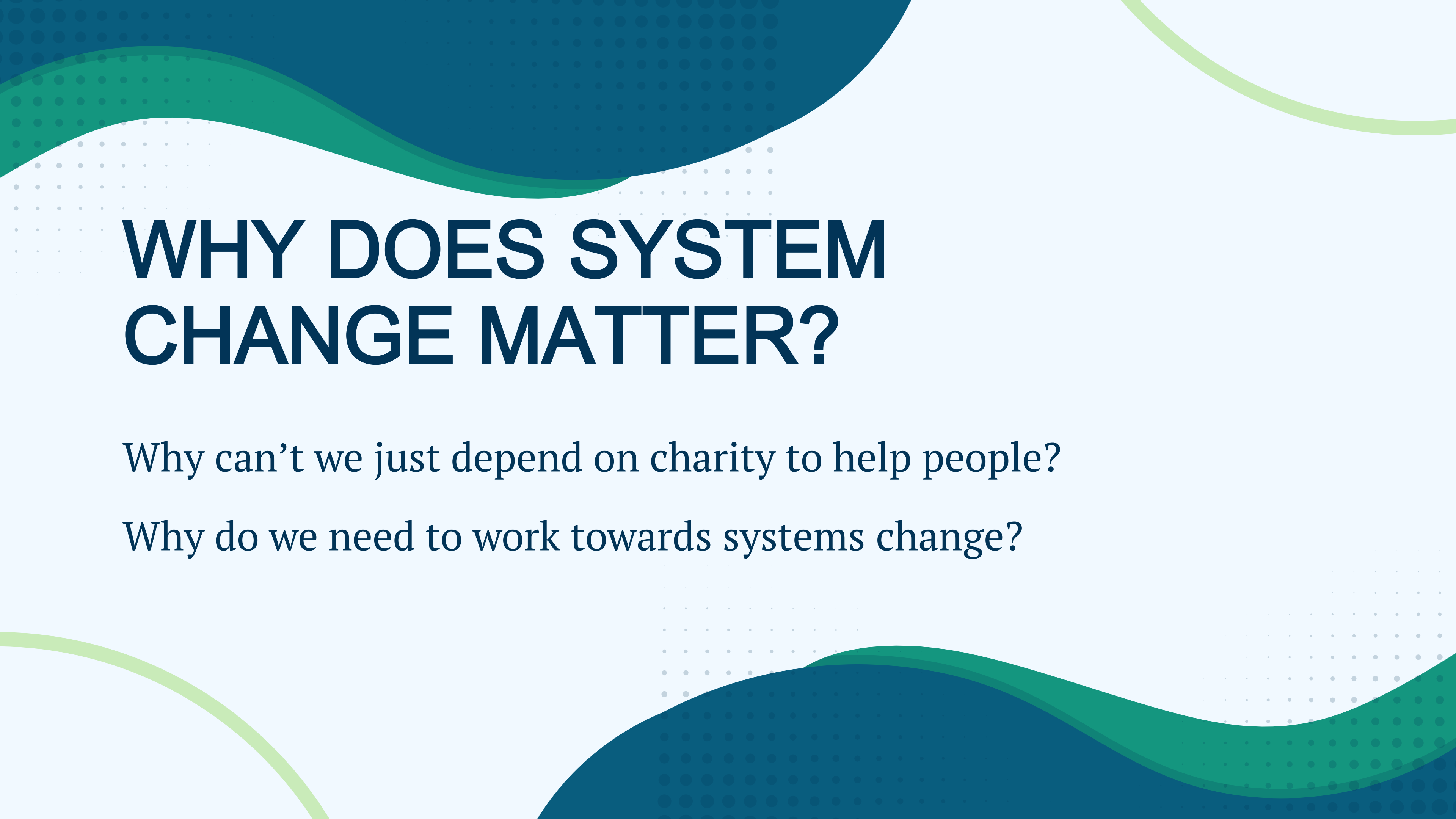
WHAT IS A SYSTEM?

1. A system is a set of connected parts.

1. Policies, institutions, and other structures comprise the systems governing our lives. These systems are designed to produce certain results, which are not always fair, just, or equitable.

1. <https://communityscience.com/capacity-building-and-learning-systems/its-all-about-community-systems-and-justice/>
2. <https://www.communitycommons.org/collections/An-Introduction-to-Systems-Change>





WHY DOES SYSTEM CHANGE MATTER?

Why can't we just depend on charity to help people?

Why do we need to work towards systems change?

CHARITY VS. JUSTICE

Charity	Justice
Individuals or groups in need	Population level/Society
Voluntary giving	Structural reform
Immediate Need	Systemic change
Short -term assistance	Long -term solutions
Doesn't challenge root causes	Addresses root causes
Personal impact	Societal transformation

MUTUAL AID

SHELISA HOWARD-MARTINEZ

FANNIE LOU HAMER

"Down where we are, food is used as a political weapon. But if you have a pig in your backyard, if you have some vegetables in your garden, you can feed yourself and your family and nobody can push you around."



- Voluntary and collaborative exchange of resources and services between community members
- Solidarity – unity or having shared interests is one of the motivating factors for community members to work together
- Mutual aid is not a new concept. The United States and American South has a long mutual aid history that is not promoted

CHARITY - MUTUAL AID

Charity	Mutual Aid
There is the giver and the receiver	Reciprocal exchange of resources & services
Individual privilege and individual disadvantage	Collective power – groups working for social change through mobilization and action
Conditional help based on the “worthiness” of the recipient	Everyone contributes and benefits by the group’s pooling of resources and services

IMPACT OF SYSTEMS CHANGE

“By redesigning our systems, we can create foundations for thriving, sustainable communities where everyone has what they need for their well-being.”

“Systems are not machines. They are made up of people. They are made up of us. We can either keep things the way they are, which isn’t working for many of us—or work for a better tomorrow. One policy, one investment, one decision at a time, we can create something new together.”

PARTNERSHIP FOR A HEALTHY DURHAM SYSTEMS CHANGE EXAMPLES

Physical Activity, Nutrition & Food Access committee
(PANFA's) role in supporting DINE with advocacy for universal
school meals

Collaborating with partners to install bollards to improve
safety of bikers and walkers in Durham

Facilitated falls risk prevention training for Meals on Wheels
staff and volunteers

SYSTEMS CHANGE STORY

RAINA GOLDSTEIN BUNNAG

What systems change looks like in practice

LET AMERICA BE AMERICA AGAIN

By Langston Hughes

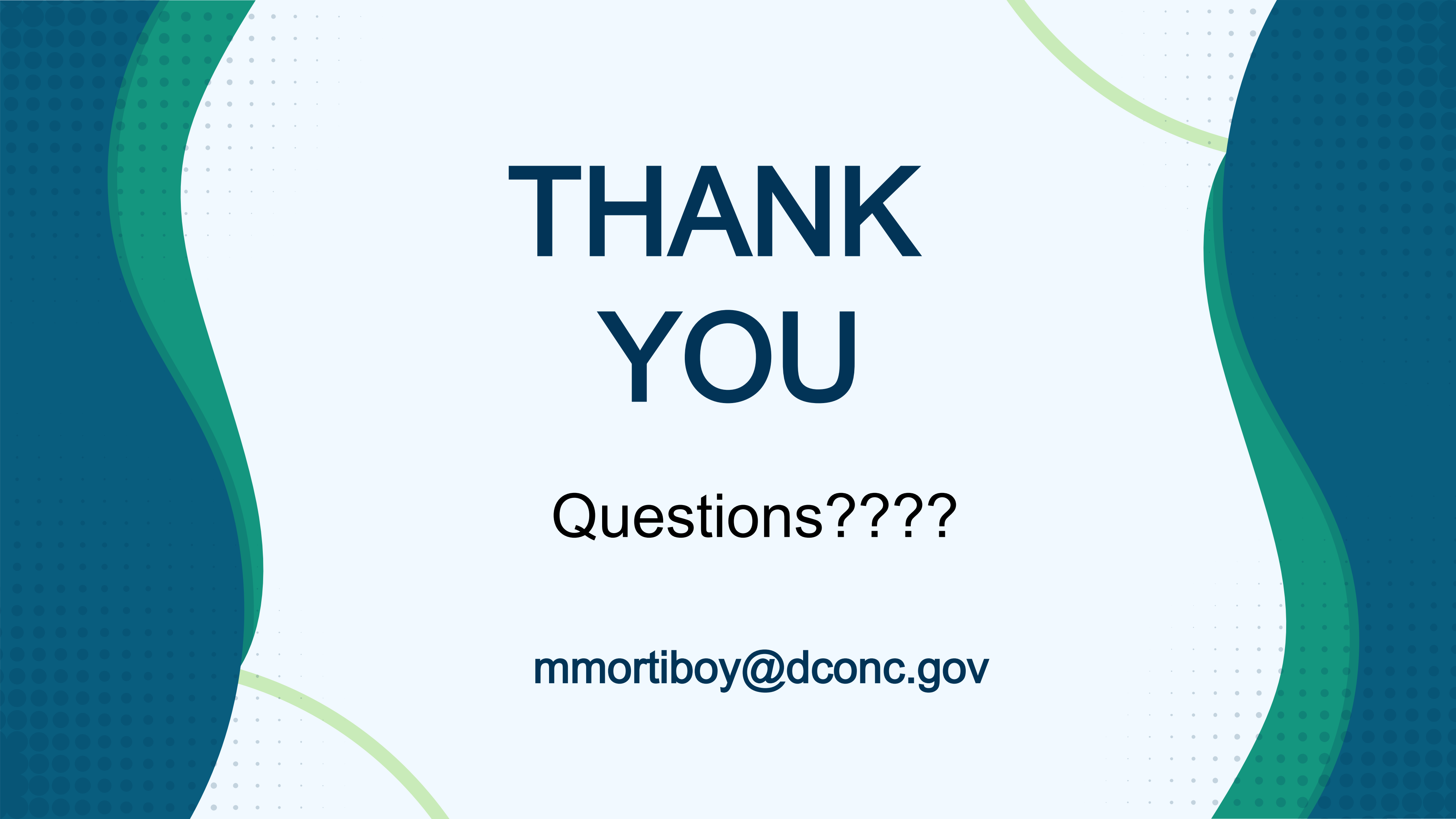
O, let America be America again—
The land that never has been yet—
And yet must be—the land where every man is free.
The land that's mine—the poor man's, Indian's, Negro's, ME—
Who made America,
Whose sweat and blood, whose faith and pain,
Whose hand at the foundry, whose plow in the rain,
Must bring back our mighty dream again.

SYSTEMS CHANGE RESOURCES

Thinking in Systems <https://www.cdc.gov/polaris/php/thinking-in-systems/index.html>

Introduction to Policy, Systems and Environmental Change
<https://www.communitycommons.org/collections/AnIntroduction-to-Policy-Systemsand-Environmental-PSEChange>

Guide to Resource Mapping and Assessing Community Needs
https://hhrctraining.org/system/files/paragraphs/downloadfile/file/2025-10/hhrc_resource_mapping_community_assessments_2025_508.pdf



THANK YOU

Questions????

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