

Homework ahead of the training

What you will do: You will watch the two *Inclusive, Equity-Centered Community Processes* videos and then reflect on the questions below. You will also review the MVP 2.0 Engagement Plan.

Why: These videos describe the fundamental values and principles of inclusive, equity-centered engagement. The questions below are intended to prepare you for the conversations we will have during our training.

Instructions:

After watching the videos, reflect on the following questions.

Feel free to use the handouts provided at the end of this document or the guidance documents for MVP 2.0 to support your reflections.

You can do this reflection on your own or with your Core Team ahead of the training.

1. Why is centering equity in engagement and outreach important? Are there other reasons that you think are important that were not presented in the videos?
2. What gets in the way of inclusive and equitable engagement in your community?
3. How would you describe the core foundations of equity-centered and inclusive community processes (from Video 1) to someone else who is curious but has not seen the video?
4. How would you describe the basic principles of equity-centered and inclusive community engagement (from Video 2) to someone else who is curious but has not seen the video?
5. What principles are in the Engagement Plan but were not described in the video that you think are important and why?
6. What questions do you have about these values or principles?

AGENDA

6:00 pm	Welcome Review purpose and agenda
6:10 pm	Q & A; Sample engagement scenarios
6:25 pm	Demonstrate sample engagement scenarios
6:45 pm	Activity: Practice drafting outreach and engagement plans
7:15 pm	Reflection on activity
7:25 pm	Next Steps Closing

Do you have a question you would prefer to share anonymously? You can do so at this link:

<https://freesuggestionbox.com/pub/flnhwlm>

Creating a co-learning environment

The following are agreements that we will hold ourselves accountable to so that we can create an environment where we can learn with and through each other.

Participate as peers: Everyone comes here with different backgrounds and experiences all of which are valued and valuable to our learning together.

Share the air: If you tend to be quiet, you are encouraged to speak. If you tend to be vocal, make sure to step back to let others speak, too.

Be curious: Listen with active curiosity to the ideas we discuss, to each other, and to yourself.

Take the ideas, leave the names: We aim to create a learning space that is free from shame, blame, and attack both in this training and afterwards. Keep “who says what” confidential unless given permission to share with others.

Expect non-closure: This training is just the beginning of your learning. You will continue to have questions and that is ok.

Practice compassion, grace AND take care of impacts: Do your best to give each other the benefit of the doubt and also take responsibility for hurt you may have inadvertently caused.

Aim to be present: Be in the room with us and help us cultivate the energy for learning. To the extent possible, keep your video on and close down any distractions you are able. Take care of your body and do what you need to do to stay present.

Main activity

What you will do: You will practice designing an engagement activity and outreach plan.

Why: This is a short practice to build the skills and ways of thinking needed to successfully expand your outreach and engagement to EJ neighborhoods and other priority populations. These skills will be essential in both your seed project and future MVP action grant projects.

Instructions:**Total time: 20-30 minutes**

You will design an engagement activity and outreach plan that answers either or both of the following questions for an EJ neighborhood or priority population in your town or city:

- What are the biggest community concerns related to where they live or the neighborhood they live in?
- What are the biggest community concerns related to housing (cost, availability, quality, stability, etc)?

Your outline should try to address the following questions:

1. Which EJ neighborhood or priority population will you focus on?
2. What is your goal with this engagement?
3. Who needs to be involved?
4. How will you do it?
 - a. Use the *Methods and Tools* section of the Engagement Plan for ideas on creative engagement activities.
5. What support will you need to make this happen?
6. Whose connections and expertise do you need to involve to make this happen?
7. What will you do to ensure that you are addressing the basic principles of equitable and inclusive community processes?
 - a. Use the handouts in this guide and the Engagement Plan for guidance.

Basic Components of Engagement Activities

Fundamentals

For in-person engagement:

- Food
- Childcare
- Transportation provided if not held in the neighborhood or gathering space of priority population

For all engagement:

- ADA accessibility (consider both physical and sensory challenges)
- Interpretation/ translation (non-English languages spoken in the community, ASL)

Scheduling

- Consider the day of week and time of day that works best for the community or people you are reaching out to
 - Be prepared to schedule meetings outside of business hours, including weekends
- Seasonal considerations include:
 - Agricultural cycles
 - School schedules
 - Working cycles of certain industries where historically excluded or socially vulnerable people predominate (for example: landscaping, property maintenance, and construction seasons)

Decision-making structures:

- The structure of decision-making that does not minimize historically excluded groups or overweight historically privileged groups

Funding:

- Stipends for participation in meetings where you are asking people for their perspectives, experiences, perceptions, and other forms of knowledge.

Foundations of Equity-Centered and Inclusive Community Processes

Those who will be disproportionately impacted by climate change have a right to be involved in the decision-making process related to building their resilience.



The contribution of EJ neighborhoods and other priority populations will influence the decisions made related to climate resilience planning.



The lived expertise of those experiencing social vulnerability is recognized and valued in the process of defining problems, issues, and solutions.



Outreach and engagement enthusiastically involves, collaborates with, and empowers EJ neighborhoods and other priority populations who will be affected by decisions made in this process.



The information needed to actively participate as collaborators in a decision-making process is provided to members of EJ neighborhoods and other priority populations in ways they can most readily absorb and understand it AND with enough time and support to make sense of it.



The needs, concerns, goals, and assets of EJ neighborhoods and other priority populations are integrated into the decisions made. How this is done is transparent and communicated specifically to participants in these processes and the community at large.



Engagement is relational and not transactional. The process aims to build and sustain relationships based on mutual respect and reciprocity.

Principles and Approaches for Equity Centered Engagement

Honor Local Knowledge and Leadership

INCLUSION BEFORE KEY DECISIONS ARE MADE

To center the people who will be most affected, they should be involved in and lead decisions made about how to define problems or issues and what solutions look like and accomplish for the community.

START WHERE PEOPLE ARE

Be open to new and different priorities. The priorities of EJ neighborhoods and other priority populations may be different than the priorities of municipal officials or people who do not live in those communities.

HONOR LIVED EXPERTISE AND ALREADY BUILT CAPACITY

Your engagement and decision-making processes should center identifying, protecting, and strengthening community assets. Assets to consider include spaces where people congregate, mutual aid activities, and formal and informal community leaders and organizations.

USE DATA AND TALK WITH PEOPLE

The U.S. Census and GEAR are important sources of information. However, because there is frequently little to no data on the most vulnerable members of our communities in most official data sources, you must prioritize actually going into communities and talking with people who live, work, or work with EJ neighborhoods and other priority populations.

Don't Forget:

Diversify inclusion throughout the process

Speak with as many people as possible

Make Inclusion and Accessibility a Priority

GO TO WHERE PEOPLE ARE AND WHERE THEY FEEL SAFE

Prioritize going to where that community congregates or lives and be mindful that lack of trust may mean that “outsiders” may not be welcomed in a community’s gathering space. To foster trust and create safe spaces, partner with trusted organizations or community leaders and follow their lead on creative engagement approaches.

RESPECT THE CULTURAL PRACTICES OF YOUR NEIGHBORS

Equity-centered practice require respecting and integrating the cultural practices and lived experiences of People of Color, immigrants, and other marginalized groups even when those practices are different from what you understand. Talk with community leaders about what will be needed to hear from all members of the community.

USE MULTIPLE ENGAGEMENT FORMATS AND MODES OF COMMUNICATION

Use multipronged strategies to meet the communication and cultural needs of different groups. Posting notices on the city or town's website is necessary but insufficient. In order to spread information widely, use both low-tech and high-tech communication and engagement strategies when disseminating information, inviting people to, and hosting engagement events.

Don't forget:*Follow the basic components for meetings**Tailor outreach, engagement, and inclusion to each specific community***Foster Long-Term Commitment****RECOGNIZE HISTORIC HARMS**

Everyone carries their history of experiences with government and other forms of authority into every interaction that they will have with government processes and agents. This includes experiences of exclusion, marginalization, disparate treatment, and trauma. It also includes the lower barriers to opportunity and advantages that White or wealthier people experience.

INTEGRATE JOY

Outreach and engagement should be designed to be welcoming, joyful, and fun. Aim to foster hope, nurture connection, and openness to possibility.

Don't forget:*Take the time needed to build transparent, mutually beneficial relationships**Think of engagement as ongoing opportunities for collaboration*