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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT TOOL

Created by:

Building the Field of Community Engagement partners

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We encourage you to share your feedback with us and tell us how you are using the tools and documents on our comment page at www.buildthefield.org.

The partners in the Building the Field of Community Engagement initiative intend these documents and tools to introduce practitioners, funders, evaluators and community members to community engagement, to give the field clarity in its language and principles. However, community engagement is not a field that can rely on written materials alone; it takes a community of experienced practitioners to support people new to the field in practicing community engagement effectively, meeting its challenges, and tapping the strengths within each unique context. We encourage you to seek out experienced practitioners to support you in implementing these tools, principles and concepts.

The partners in Building the Field of Community Engagement are available for consultation. Please contact us at www.buildthefield.org or email Janice Barbee at janicegwb@yahoo.com.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT TOOL

Q: WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP DO YOU HAVE WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS?

OUTREACH	UNSURE WHICH WE ARE DOING	DOING PRIMARILY OUTREACH	BEGINNING TO TALK ABOUT MOVING TO CE	WORKING TOWARD CE	DOING CE	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
• Relationships are primarily TRANSACTIONAL , for the purpose of completing a project.						• Relationships are FOUNDATIONAL , continually built between and among people and groups. Staff/institutions continually build the relationships they need to know their community.
• Relationships are often NOT INCLUSIVE of all racial or cultural groups in the community.						• Relationships reflect the DIVERSITY within the community.
• Relationships can be LIMITED to a few community members, often giving influence to those with the loudest voices.						• Relationships are built not just with current leaders, but also with people with an interest and/or POTENTIAL TO BE LEADERS .
• Relationships are SHORT-TERM , so staff have to rebuild them as other projects or issues come up.						• Relationships are transformational and LONG-TERM , so community leaders/members can engage in projects and issues as they come up.

Q: WHY ARE YOU ENGAGING PEOPLE?

OUTREACH	UNSURE WHICH WE ARE DOING	DOING PRIMARILY OUTREACH	BEGINNING TO TALK ABOUT MOVING TO CE	WORKING TOWARD CE	DOING CE	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
• To accomplish a project or a SPECIFIC GOAL defined by the organization.						• To create space for people to CONNECT, RAISE CONCERNS, BUILD POWER and ACT IN THEIR OWN INTERESTS .
• To SEEK BUY-IN OR APPROVAL of something the organization has already planned.						• To CREATE SPACE for the community's assets to be recognized and utilized.

Q: HOW ARE YOU GETTING PEOPLE INVOLVED? WHEN?

OUTREACH	UNSURE WHICH WE ARE DOING	DOING PRIMARILY OUTREACH	BEGINNING TO TALK ABOUT MOVING TO CE	WORKING TOWARD CE	DOING CE	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
• Primary activities with community include FLYERING, SURVEYS, FOCUS GROUPS, WORKSHOPS , etc.						• Primary activities with community include LISTENING SESSIONS, ONE-TO-ONE MEETINGS, CELEBRATIONS, LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, COMMUNITY-BUILDING PROJECTS , etc.
• Information is given or feedback is requested AFTER A PROJECT IS PLANNED .						• Planning is done WITH THE COMMUNITY from the beginning

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Q: HOW DO IDEAS GET GENERATED?						
OUTREACH	UNSURE WHICH WE ARE DOING	DOING PRIMARILY OUTREACH	BEGINNING TO TALK ABOUT MOVING TO CE	WORKING TOWARD CE	DOING CE	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STAFF/ INSTITUTIONS GENERATE IDEAS they think the community will support. 						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff/institutions SUPPORT COMMUNITY MEMBERS in generating their own ideas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff/institutions generate SOLUTIONS TO A PROBLEM they have defined. 						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff/institutions engage in CONTINUAL SELF-REFLECTION to respond to and incorporate people's ideas, feedback, talents, and challenges into the work.
Q: HOW DO YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES AND STRUCTURES SUPPORT ENGAGEMENT?						
OUTREACH	UNSURE WHICH WE ARE DOING	DOING PRIMARILY OUTREACH	BEGINNING TO TALK ABOUT MOVING TO CE	WORKING TOWARD CE	DOING CE	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organizational culture is primarily focused on OBTAINING SPECIFIC OUTCOMES. 						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organizational culture is focused on learning and it values EMERGENT AND LONG-TERM OUTCOMES.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board and staff may NOT REPRESENT the community. 						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board and staff REFLECT the community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization ADHERES TO WAYS OF OPERATING that reflect the DOMINANT CULTURE, such as using Robert's Rules for meetings, prioritizing staff to speak, etc. 						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization CREATES SPACE FOR DIFFERENT CULTURAL WAYS, such as offering cultural foods and social spaces/ times, giving elders a special role, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racism and power may not be discussed or may be DEALT WITH SUPERFICIALLY. 						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organizational culture supports discussions to UNDERSTAND AND DISMANTLE structural racism, to help heal historical trauma and to claim individual and community power.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization adheres to ORGANIZATION-DRIVEN policies and structures. 						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization demonstrates a willingness to revisit organizational policies and structures to RESPOND TO COMMUNITY NEEDS AND IDEAS.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT TOOL

THERE ARE MANY WAYS PRACTITIONERS AND ORGANIZATIONS CAN USE THIS TOOL:

- As an individual, to assess your strengths and areas for professional growth.
- With the staff in your organization to see where there is agreement, disagreement or tensions about your community engagement efforts.
- With board members to begin or deepen a conversation about community engagement within your organization.
- With new staff or board members to assess what skills they can contribute to your efforts to engage your community.
- To assess where an external partnership could improve community engagement by closing a gap posed by the limitations of your organization.
- To identify where staff or board members require new knowledge or training.
- To glean lessons learned after an event, project or initiative.
- With potential partners (government agencies, other nonprofits, community institutions, etc.) to assess whether your approaches are complementary.
- With community members, to assess how they see your work.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF OR DISCUSS AFTER COMPLETING YOUR ASSESSMENT:

- Why did you rank yourself or your organization as you did?
- Where do differences exist between your individual work and the overall work of the organization?
- What would you and/or your organization like to do differently?
- Do your responses align with your organization's mission? What changes could advance your mission?
- Where does the staff or board of the organization agree? Disagree? Where is there tension?
- Where does your organization need additional support?
- Where do you need to build the capacity of your organization?
- What are the opportunities for and challenges to doing community engagement?