Strategically Engaging from the Bottom Up

Intentionally Putting Your Community First when Planning

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What is Community Engagement?

It’s a two-way conversation. A dialogue.

Community engagement can take many forms, and covers a broad range of activities.

It is a planned process with the specific purpose of working with identified groups of people, whether connected by geographic location, special interest, or affiliation.
Why Engage When Planning
Why engage?

• Tell the community’s story
• Tell the library’s story
• Gain Input
• Creates ownership and buy-in
• Creates opportunities for partnerships
• State requirements
How to Engage
Passive Engagement

- Collecting Stories
- Have staff primed with an engagement question while they interact with the public
- Note boards
- Surveys/Form Responses
One-on-One Interviews

• Keep it short
• Ask personally
• Schedule ahead
Conversations

• Small Group Conversation
  • Focus Groups
  • The Harwood Institute’s Community Conversations
  • Conversation Café
  • Aspen Institute

• Large Group Conversation
  • World Café
  • Future Search
Virtual Engagement

• Passive engagement
  • Padlet
  • Jamboard
  • FlipGrid

• Small group conversations
  • Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet or Hangouts, RingCentral, BigBlueButton, WebEx
  • Make it accessible for people to participate via phone, computer, with or without video or audio
Some Methods of Engagement

• Aspen Institute’s Dialogue on Public Libraries
• World Café
• Conversation Café
• The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation
• Future Search

Who to Engage
Know Your Community

• Identify stakeholders
Strategically Inviting

• Brainstorm names
• Make sure you have a diverse representation
Successfully Engaging
Logistics

• Personal invitations
• Personal follow-up

• Have food
• Offer an incentive (prize) for participants
• Offer multiple time frames to participate
• Be up front with how long the conversations will be
Go out & engage!
Thank you!

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