

Resident Engagement in Municipal Processes

February 21, 2023



Health Resources in Action
Advancing Public Health and Medical Research

Agenda for today's webinar

Welcome & Introductions	Ben Wood and Cynthia Espinosa-Marrero (HRiA)
Overview of Community Engagement Best Practices	Ben Wood
Examples in Practice: Experts in the field	Lourdes Alvarez Gina Plata-Nino Casey Burns Moderator: Cynthia Espinosa-Marrero
Q&A from attendees	Lourdes Alvarez Gina Plata-Nino Casey Burns Moderator: Cynthia Espinosa-Marrero
Closing Remarks	Ben Wood

Public health institute based in
Boston, MA

Our Vision: A world where all people attain and experience optimal health and well-being.



Spectrum of Engagement

Levels of community involvement, impact, trust, and communication flow

Outreach	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Shared leadership
<p><i>Some community involvement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communication flows from one to the other to inform ● Provides community with information ● Entities coexist 	<p><i>More community involvement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communication flows to the community and back, answer seeking ● Gets information or feedback from the community ● Entities share information 	<p><i>Better community involvement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communication flows both ways, participatory form of communication ● Involves more participation with community on issues ● Entities cooperate with each other 	<p><i>Community involvement</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communication flow is bidirectional. ● Partners with community on each aspect of project ● Entities develop bidirectional communication channels. 	<p><i>Strong bidirectional relationship</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Final decision making is at community level ● Entities have formed strong partnership structures
<p>Outcomes: Establishes communication channels and improves understanding of needs.</p>	<p>Outcomes: Develops connections.</p>	<p>Outcomes: Visibility of partnership established with increased cooperation.</p>	<p>Outcomes: Partnership building, trust building.</p>	<p>Outcomes: Improved outcomes affecting community. Strong bidirectional trust built.</p>

(adapted from CDC 2011)



Community Engagement: Core Questions to Inform Approach

Municipalities should consider:

1. How are we promoting transparency in our community engagement efforts?
2. How are we creating and sustaining authentic and diverse engagement?
3. How are we strengthening our municipal capacity to correct power imbalances?



Best Practices in Action



Best Practices in Action: what have we observed?

- Cities creating interactive dashboards on their website (and keeping them up-to-date), therefore residents are aware of expenditures and other processes
- Cities holding meetings and documents in multiple languages (including as needed changing the default language of meetings from English to other languages)
- Cities working with community organizations to provide in-depth capacity building to applicants (moving from bidders-conferences to direct technical assistance)
- Cities striving to correct power imbalances by allocating funds for community-led decision making AND providing expert facilitation of meetings where people of different identities and experiences can work effectively together
- Cities allocating resources to enhance engagement for marginalized communities (stipends for participation, having meetings in the evening, provided childcare or transportation support and resources for language translation and interpretation)



Community Engagement Take-Aways

- Cities that have used creative and different practices employed through ARPA should see them as inspiration for community engaged processes related to other funding decisions and to build more sustainable resident engagement structures.
- Cities need to invest community engagement infrastructure (in staff, in relationship building and with money) to make community engagement authentic and sustainable.
- Cities need to push beyond routine outreach/informing/consulting to actual power sharing and leadership development.
- Cities should see the opportunities for engagement at any step in a process (idea/design/implementation, etc.).
- Cities need to engage in regular analysis of who is most impacted by municipal decisions in communities and focus on building relationship with them.



Resources

- HRiA ARPA POWER:
 - <https://hria.org/arpapower/>
- Boston Public Health Commission's Equitable Community Engagement Toolkit 2020-2023.
 - <https://www.boston.gov/government/cabinets/boston-public-health-commission/racial-justice-and-health-equity/bphc-community-engagement>
 - Section 1 of the toolkit presents the community engagement principles in action. It highlights the process and designing your own community engagement plan.
 - Section 2 of the toolkit includes additional resources and support to guide you through the community engagement process with guides and templates.



THANK YOU!

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