



# Community Engagement Plan Template

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- Highlighted areas indicate information needs to be filled in by Community Partners.
- Red text provides instructions, and should be deleted by Community Partner after content is added.

## Introduction

The purpose of this engagement plan is to identify strategies and tools to ensure a robust, equitable, substantive, and productive community engagement process to support [Name of Project]. Equitable planning processes feature outreach and engagement strategies that are representative of all community demographics, and particularly those that have been systematically excluded in prior planning processes. This plan documents strategies and tools [Community Partner] will utilize to conduct equitable, inclusive engagement that results in tangible outcomes. This plan is organized by the following sections:

- » Introduction
- » Commitments to Community
- » Engagement Objectives
- » Target Audiences
- » Messaging and Getting the Word Out
- » Engagement Activities
- » Addressing Barriers to Engagement
- » Engagement Schedule
- » Incorporating Feedback and Reporting Back
- » Performance Metrics
- » Team Member Roles
- » Outreach Partners

As the engagement process unfolds, this plan will be regularly refined and updated as [Community Partner] learns more about the needs and preferences of our community. There is no “one size fits all” approach to community engagement, and we recognize we must stay flexible and responsive to the community at all times.

## Commitments to the Community

These overarching principles will guide [Community Partner] efforts to promote climate justice in frontline communities through equitable processes that subvert decades of historical discrimination. Below are some options to get you started. Please add, revise, and adjust to align with your organization’s goals:

- » **Inclusion.** Maintain an inclusive lens to create safe spaces during engagement activities that enable all groups to feel heard and comfortable sharing. This includes carefully considering meeting time and location, addressing language barriers, using inclusive terminology and language, and facilitating meaningful conversation that makes space for concerns and suggestions.
- » **Transparency and Responsiveness.** Make the planning and engagement process transparent through effective communication with community members throughout the entire planning process. This includes communication about the overall project timeline and community engagement components, details of all parties involved and their role, decision-making processes, and how the community input is being incorporated. We will be responsive to any concerns or recommendations.
- » **Accountability.** Promote accountability throughout the planning process by acknowledging past injustices; regularly reporting back to the community on how their feedback is being incorporated; and continually evaluating the engagement process to identify areas for improvement.
- » **Broad Participation.** Ensure the planning process engages diverse segments of the population that accurately represent the demographic and economic composition of the community. Prioritize the inclusion of people from underserved backgrounds and those historically excluded from these processes.
- » **Honor Community Knowledge & Expertise.** Honor and acknowledge community members as holders of local knowledge and create opportunities in the planning process that allow them to share their wisdom, participate in organizing and leading meetings, and identify objectives and goals.
- » **Long-Term Commitment.** Create a foundation for long-term relationships to build an engaged, activated, and organized community. Promote long-term commitment through communication, accountability, and transparency.

## Engagement Objectives

Edit or add core engagement objectives below, for example:

1. Increase community awareness of nature-based solutions and the multiple, overlapping benefits they provide.
2. Achieve robust and representative participation throughout the process. This includes a strong focus on those who have been historically excluded and marginalized in previous community engagement efforts, such as people of color, immigrant communities, and low-income people.
3. Gain a better understanding of overlapping priorities and needs across the community to help community identification of nature based solutions.

4. Build trust and support with partners and community members that will be vital to the project.

## Target Audiences

Using your knowledge of the community and available data and mapping tools, identify some target audiences you'd like to ensure are included in your project planning process. For example:

1. Youth
2. Renters
3. Non-English Speakers
4. Low-income Residents
5. Non-white Residents

## Messaging and Getting the Word Out

Educational materials and meeting information will be distributed by [Community Partner] to share updates and promote participation in the process. Information about upcoming engagement activities will communicate the following:

- » **What** is the project?
- » **Why** is it happening?
- » **How** will it affect the community?
- » **Who** will it impact?
- » **How** to give input?

### OUTREACH MATERIALS

[Community Partner] seeks to develop outreach materials that are culturally sensitive, relevant to the target audiences, and welcoming to those who may distrust the government, have little or no experience interacting with local planning processes, or may have had negative experiences in the past. They should be jargon-free, visually compelling, and accessible in addition to being ADA-compliant. Outreach materials should be available in all relevant languages. Describe the types of outreach materials (examples provided below) that will be developed for this project, considering the target audiences identified in the section above.

#### Paper Survey

#### Online Survey

#### Postcards/Mailers

#### Posters/Outreach Boards

#### Informational Flyers

### OUTREACH CHANNELS

The outreach channels listed below can create multiple avenues to ensure [Community Partner] is reaching our target audiences. Using localized channels may increase receptivity from community

members who are already familiar with those sources. These channels should be used to inform community members about upcoming engagement opportunities, summarize engagement events, and update people about how their feedback is being used. **Define your outreach channels below and explain how they further your commitments to the community. Here are some examples:**

**Email Listserv.** Internal email lists can help you stay in touch with residents. You can also create a new list of people who are specifically involved in this project.

**Website.** Websites can provide a schedule for and information about engagement activities, online engagement opportunities, and an option to submit general comments and questions. It can be project specific or a page hosted on your organization's website.

**Social Media.** Social media accounts are great for sending out quick announcements on project updates and meeting information.

**On-the-Ground Outreach.** Posting flyers at specific locations like grocery stores, laundromats, etc. Door-to-door canvassing, tabling at community events. Frontline communities often lack access to internet or face other barriers accessing digital-only communications.

## Engagement Activities

This section describes engagement activities [Community Partner] will facilitate to meet engagement objectives. Each activity will be designed to promote the participation of residents from marginalized communities and target audiences identified in planning and decision-making processes. **Select the activities you think will be most relevant, explain why and how they will help you advance engagement objectives.**

### COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

Workshops are best used to offer educational content to larger audiences. They are an opportunity to receive short feedback from larger numbers of people and set a base level of understanding around a given topic. A workshop is often a good place to start engagement, it is an opportunity to hear common questions that will arise throughout the process.

### SURVEYS

Surveys can be a good way to fill in missing data gaps and begin engaging the community in preliminary discussions around a given topic. They are best used for gathering information from a large number of people. Beginning survey design with a small group of community members is a great way to make sure the questions being asked are applicable to the community and furthers their agenda. A community-led survey process and compensation for taking surveys are key aspects to avoiding engagement fatigue and making surveys less extractive.

### PARTICIPATORY MAPPING

If your organization has significant resources, developing project maps or internet-based tools can be a good way to help community members visualize a project area. With less resources, larger printed maps can also be a great option, it allows people to orient themselves and their lives in relation to a project—online tools may not be accessible to everyone.

**STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS**

One-on-one discussions with motivated residents, community leaders, or other CBO partners are also a great engagement strategy for early stages. Hearing from many more people will be necessary to verify the perspectives gained from these discussions.

**FOCUS GROUPS**

Focus groups will differ from workshops in their size and scope. A focus group should be a smaller discussion with substantial room for elaboration. Focus groups are a great way to dive more deeply into topics explored during a workshop.

**Addressing Barriers to Engagement**

[Community Partner] will continually assess engagement activities and events to understand barriers and constraints to participation. A list of common barriers in public events are identified below, along with approaches to address them. *For each of the barriers below, please provide information on how the design of your engagement activities will address the barrier. Add any other barriers that may be applicable to your community.*

**Participant Compensation.** Participants should always be compensated for providing their attention and expertise. Particularly when engaging residents who face multiple, compounding hardships, compensation is necessary to removing financial barriers to participation and diversifying your audience.

*Provide information on how participants will be compensated for each engagement activity.*

[INSERT TEXT]

**Language.** To meaningfully engage the community, it is important that all materials are made accessible to non-English speakers and languages used in the community. In addition to providing translated materials, accessibility also means offering definitions and explanations of complex terms and acronyms, and using language free of jargon.

*Provide information on the translation services that will be provided. Our experience has shown us that people feel more comfortable participating in single language workshops, they flow better and offer more equitable engagement.*

[INSERT TEXT]

**Venue location accessibility and transportation needs.** Locating workshops in underserved communities is the best practice for engagement, with proximity to public transit a plus. Screening to ensure facilities are compliant with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards can remove physical barriers to participation.

*Provide information on potential venues where engagement activities will take place.*

[INSERT TEXT]

**Technological and digital accessibility.** Digital tools pose the risk of excluding people with limited technological access, which could include low-income people, people of color, elderly people, and other

important community members. Another layer of inaccessibility is added for those who don't have a computer, mobile device, and/or Wi-Fi.

Provide information on how engagement will be structured to include those with technological or digital accessibility constraints.

[INSERT TEXT]

**Event timing.** Community members have diverse schedules, so it is important to plan event dates and times strategically in coordination with local CBO partners, being sensitive to the time constraints of community members.

Provide information on the preferred timing of engagement activities for target audiences.

[INSERT TEXT]

**Family-Oriented.** Families often do not have access to childcare, which makes it difficult for them to participate in events where children are not welcome. Providing food and beverages can help make the event more family friendly.

Provide information on how engagement activities will accommodate families.

[INSERT TEXT]

**Lack of trust in governmental institutions and processes.** Planning decisions have had intentional and unintentional negative impacts on communities, more often experienced by communities of color, low-income households, renters, and other marginalized communities. Families with mixed documentation status can be fearful of engaging with governmental institutions. In addition, community members often lack trust in the planning process. Building and rebuilding trust in planning and governance will take time, but meaningful engagement and tangible, material improvements to people's lives will slowly rebuild that trust. Having trusted community partners/ community based organizations lead engagement efforts can help rebuild trust in public planning processes.

Provide information on how engagement activities will acknowledge and respond to lack of community trust in government processes.

[INSERT TEXT]

### Clear Communication

Some community members do not engage in planning processes because they are either unaware of opportunities to engage, or do not see the value of participating. Planning processes and engagement materials should clearly articulate how to participate in the project, and how feedback collected will be used to inform project outcomes.

Provide information on how engagement materials and activities will demonstrate the value of participation, and how feedback collected will be used.

[INSERT TEXT]

## Engagement Schedule

The table below provides a general timeframe within which each key engagement activity is expected to occur. The details of each activity, such as date and location, can be determined as the timeframe for that activity approaches. The objective of the activity may include target audience to reach or the desired outcome of the engagement activity.

ACTIVITY	PROPOSED TIMEFRAME	TARGET AUDIENCE	OBJECTIVE OF ACTIVITY
Develop Outreach Materials			Prepare for community workshop
Survey Administration			Learn about preliminary interest levels from community
Community Workshop			Explain the work and hear community feedback and questions

## Incorporating Feedback and Reporting Back

Following each engagement activity, [Community Partner] will prepare a description of the event and document the feedback that was given. A brief summary report will detail the input received and how it was incorporated into the project and can be emailed back to participants or recapped at follow up meetings. A template of the summary report will be provided by the BayCAN Project Team.

## Performance Metrics

Performance metrics are key accountability tools to ensure that the engagement plan is effective in reaching the target audience. Gathering voluntary demographic information from participants to assess who is attending can help [Community Partner] track progress and adjust engagement strategies.

Please list the metrics you will choose to help track your progress. Examples include number of participants engaged, demographics of respondents, number of volunteer hours, etc. Asking people for their neighborhood, address, or cross streets to ensure you're reaching the target geographies of your audience. Additionally, asking participants to share how they heard about the event or activity can help the Project Team evaluate the effectiveness of different outreach channels and guide your overall outreach strategy.

- Metric #1:
- Metric #2:
- Metric #3:

## Project Partner Roles

Specific roles for project partners are outlined below.

TASK/RESPONSIBILITY	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
Community Workshops Preparation	Your Organization
Engagement Summary Report Template	BayCAN

## Outreach Partners

Other CBOs and outreach partners that may help coordinate outreach activities are listed below.

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION, GROUP, OR LEADER	CONTACT INFORMATION
CBO	