

Environmental Justice Community Engagement Plan



PROVISIONAL PLAN

This provisional draft plan has not been reviewed by the Environmental Justice Council

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July 1, 2022

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Preamble

The environmental justice law known as the Healthy Environment for All Act (HEAL), passed in 2021. Chapter 70A.02 RCW provides a roadmap for integrating environmental justice into state agencies. The law requires seven state agencies to create and adopt community engagement plans by July 1, 2022. For this and other parts of HEAL, agencies work closely with the Environmental Justice Council, which consists of members appointed by the Governor. HEAL states the Environmental Justice Council will provide guidance on community engagement plans as agencies create and update them. HEAL also requires each covered agency to consider the guidance developed by the Council. See the [Environmental Justice Council website](#) for more details on the role of the Council.

HEAL directed the Department of Health (DOH) to convene the first meeting of the Council by Jan. 1, 2022. However, the Council was not fully appointed and seated until March of 2022. Because of those delays, April 4, 2022 was the earliest practical date the Council could have convened. HEAL also created an Interagency Work Group to coordinate work among the seven designated HEAL agencies and others that decide to follow its guidelines. The Interagency Work Group began drafting community engagement plans in January 2022 while awaiting seating of the Environmental Justice Council.

Current drafts of each agency's community engagement plan have not yet been reviewed by the Environmental Justice Council.

Our draft community engagement plan incorporates many of the overarching themes of the framework, but is tailored to the specific obligations The Department of Commerce (Commerce) has. As an agency, we are committed to a strong partnership with the Environmental Justice Council as we integrate environmental justice into agency activities. We are mindful of our duty to the legislature and the people of Washington to adopt a community engagement plan by July 1, 2022.

In balancing these interests and obligations, our agency is adopting a provisional community engagement plan. The future implementation of this provisional plan is dependent on coordination with the Environmental Justice Council and will incorporate guidance from the Council, communities across Washington state, and will include Tribal Consultation.

Following adoption of the provisional community engagement plan, our agency and the other agencies named in HEAL will incorporate guidance from the Council. Our agency will collaborate with the other agencies implementing the HEAL Act and the EJ Council to hold Community listening and feedback sessions to co-author needed changes to the provisional community engagement plans. Agencies will also conduct Tribal Consultation. Our agency will regularly partner with the Council, community, and Tribes over the coming years to update our Community Engagement plan. The Community Engagement Plan is a living document that will evolve as our agency builds a relationship with the EJ Council and Washingtonians as environmental justice is implemented across state agencies.

Purpose and Process

Equitable community engagement can act to disrupt inequitable governing structures and systems by democratizing the decision-making processes. The foundation of meaningful community engagement must be an evaluation of who is negatively impacted and who benefits from any agency decisions claiming to benefit the public as a whole. Environmental injustices across the state have, after all, been created by decision-makers who have perpetually dismissed and allowed for the placement of pollution within low-income and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities.

The guidance that follows is grounded in the position that the government systems and processes that created harms cannot change without the direct involvement of the communities who have borne the weight of systemic disparities, and such involvement has been rarely supported by Washington state government. Advancing environmental justice in, for, and with these communities requires rebuilding trust and moving with patience as we repair those relationships

This agency-specific plan introduces Commerce staff to environmental justice principles and provides guidance on implementing an environmental justice lens for community engagement. This plan seeks to provide resources for staff to be inclusive and proactive when engaging Washington residents in program planning and delivery, especially overburdened communities and vulnerable populations who have been exposed to a high degree of pollution and environmental harm.

Additionally, this plan provides methods and tools for reporting key screening, assessment and engagement practices data that will help Commerce measure our engagement practices as we advance environmental justice and work to build trust with communities. We encourage any program or activity that may impact communities overburdened by environmental harm to use this as a guide.

As a covered agency under the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act, Commerce participates in an interagency advisory group with other covered state agencies including the Departments of Health, Ecology, Transportation, Agriculture, Natural Resources and the Puget Sound Partnership. The interagency advisory group worked together to develop a community engagement framework to serve as the foundation for this plan. This plan also applies best practices and learnings from a Commerce April 2022 Environmental Justice Community Listening Session, and recent values-aligned initiatives like the New Approaches Pilot and the 2021 Capital Programs Equity Review Proviso.

Commerce will be working closely with the other covered agencies, the Environmental Justice Council, and Environmental Justice Council (EJ council) staff to conduct coordinated listening sessions to learn from and incorporate feedback from the community. This plan is intended to be a living document that will evolve and improve to reflect community needs, impacts, and priorities.

Introduction to Environmental Justice

As a result of systemic racism and inequities in wealth distribution and political power, Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities and other vulnerable populations (e.g., low-income, elderly peoples, limited English proficiency) experience greater impacts of environmental harm and burdens, while enjoying fewer environmental benefits. Past and present choices made by local, state and federal governments have contributed to the current state of environmental injustice.

Areas with BIPOC and lower income residents are often neglected when decisions such as such as where and how much to invest in expanding access to green spaces and tree canopy cover are being made. Conversely, decisions about waste facilities and freeways have disproportionately concentrated them in BIPOC and lower-income communities, contributing to significant disparities in health outcomes and life expectancy.

In Washington state, the Governor convened an Environmental Justice (EJ) Taskforce (Taskforce) in 2019 to make recommendations about how to embed EJ into state government practices. The Taskforce released its Final Report in fall 2020. In 2021,

Environmental justice means the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, rules and policies.

Environmental justice includes addressing disproportionate environmental and health impacts in all laws, rules, and policies with environmental impacts by prioritizing vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, the equitable distribution of resources and benefits, and eliminating harm.

Community engagement is crucial because the governing structures of the United States were designed to elevate the rights and access to its resources of some people at the expense of the rights and access of others. – Environmental Justice Task Force

the legislature passed the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act (E2SSB 5141). The legislation implements many of the Taskforce's recommendations by requiring seven state agencies to comply with specific EJ obligations, including incorporating EJ principles into agency strategic plans, community engagement and budget mechanisms.

Public policies have deepened inequities, particularly in decisions about land use management, housing, transportation and energy policies. EJ seeks, in part, to address these inequities in the way government distributes environmental benefits and to remedy consequential environmental harms and burdens.

Such harms and burdens include lasting impacts like: the decimation of traditionally hunted animals, fish and seafood; locating reservations on lands made toxic from adjacent industrial activity; discriminatory housing finance practices and red-lining BIPOC communities; the destruction of BIPOC communities to accommodate interstate highways; and segregating affordable housing in areas of high pollution or toxins or noise like adjacent to railways. Even as citizens, residents and governments across the United States have advanced more equitable laws and practices, the legacies of settler colonialism, chattel slavery and structural oppressions persist.

Finally, meaningful participation in decision-making processes related to one's health and environment is critical to mitigating environmental harms and gaining environmental justice.

Restorative justice in this case requires an alternative framework for developing policy solutions and adopting EJ priorities. The [EJ Framework](#) developed by [Dr. Robert J Bullard](#), "the father of environmental justice," centers the ethical and political questions of "who gets what, why and how much." These questions help uncover the underlying assumptions that may contribute to and produce unequal outcomes. Some general characteristics of the framework include:

- Protecting the right of all individuals to be protected from environmental degradation¹.
- Implementing public health strategies that prioritize prevention and take action without requiring impacted communities to provide conclusive "proof".
- Shifting the burden of proof to polluters/dischargers whose actions do harm, discriminate against, or undermine equal protection for racial and ethnic minorities and other "protected" classes.
- Redressing the disproportionate risk burdens through targeted actions and resources.

The HEAL Act recognizes both environmental harm and the lack of inclusion of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities when decisions about environmental practices are made. Accordingly, the first mandate of the HEAL Act, codified in [RCW 70A.02.050](#), requires the creation and adoption of a community engagement plan that describes how Commerce will engage with overburdened communities and vulnerable populations as we evaluate new and existing activities and programs. This plan must also describe how Commerce plans to facilitate equitable participation and support meaningful and direct involvement of vulnerable populations and overburdened communities.

Commerce and Environmental Justice

Since the inception of the Governor's Environmental Justice Taskforce in 2019, Commerce has been involved with advancing the state government's initiatives aimed at addressing environmental injustices. Energy Division Assistant Director Michael Furze, Senior Energy Policy Specialist Sarah Vorpahl, and Community Engagement and Outreach Manager Julia Havens had an opportunity to participate in the taskforce.

As a public agency, Commerce acknowledges we have an important role to play in ensuring our practices, policies, and partnerships are restorative, just and equitable. Centering environmental justice at Commerce makes sense given our diverse book of business as we advance our mission is to strengthen communities in Washington. With a broad scope of over 100 programs and 600+ staff, Commerce has a unique opportunity to create transformative change that strengthens all Washington communities.

The HEAL Act team developed agency-specific EJ principles that build on the EJ principles developed by the Environmental Justice Task Force. These principles will guide the overarching work required by the HEAL Act at the structural, distributional and procedural levels. They are intended to be a living set of principles that are

¹ The precedents for this framework are the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Fair Housing Act of 1968 and as amended in 1988, Voting Rights Act of 1965, and Presidential Executive Order 12898 – Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations.

adapted as the agency progresses and evolves. Commerce will apply an intersectional lens to both understand the EJ impacts of agency practices and build partnerships with the overburdened and under-resourced communities we seek to serve.

- **Human-centered:** The lives, experiences, cultures, relationships, and histories of overburdened and Tribal communities are the foundation and pathway forward for achieving just and equitable environmental, health and community outcomes.
- **Tribal sovereignty:** Tribal Governments are sovereign peoples and nations. Commerce will respect and uphold treaties, consult with Tribal communities, and seek to build partnerships based on respect, understanding, and shared fates.
- **Acknowledge the past:** Commerce acknowledges overburdened and Tribal communities are disproportionately affected by pollution today; and this impact will only worsen if exploitative societal and institutional structures remain the same.
- **Interconnected:** Environmental justice is intersectional, intergenerational, and interwoven – it touches visible and invisible aspects of everyday life for many Washingtonians
- **Culture shift:** Environmental justice at Commerce must result in an equitable, just, and restorative workplace culture that is demonstrated throughout our policies, programs and partnerships. This is made possible by enabling, facilitating and protecting internal agency collaboration to optimize workload, share best practices and connect diverse agency activity.
- **Accountability:** Commerce will cultivate, grow, and maintain accountability measures to ensure the “how” of equity and environmental justice is executed, not just the “what”.
- **Mission aligned:** Commerce’s mission of “Strengthening Washington Communities” must both serve as EJ work and evolve to resonate with the communities in which Commerce serve.
- **Systemic awareness:** Results of EJ efforts must be meaningful, enduring, sustaining, and contribute to the transformation of systems, institutions, and lives by robust accountability and dedication to institutional change.
- **Community focused:** EJ outcomes must advance equitable, just, and restorative practices by partnering with, empowering and resourcing communities.

Environmental Justice Rooted in Community Engagement

The following guidance recognizes that systems of environmental neglect cannot change without the direct involvement of the communities who have borne the weight of systemic disparities. This guidance centers repairing relationships and building trust between government and those members of the public harmed by environmental injustice.

Additionally, in a future iteration of this plan we will provide a section focused specifically on repairing relations and building trust between Washington state government and Tribal Nation governments.

In recent years, Commerce has prioritized transforming how the agency interacts with, supports and learns from communities across the state. We acknowledge, however, that we have improvements to make. The foundation of meaningful community engagement must

When asked how often Commerce staff communicate with different types of stakeholder groups and partners, less than 25% said that they regularly communicate with Tribal nations or by-and-for nonprofits.

include an evaluation of agency decisions, to understand who is negatively impacted and who has benefitted from any agency decisions claiming to benefit the public as a whole.

A recent internal survey of Commerce programs and staff showed the majority of respondents use stakeholder engagement practices that focus on relationship building, prolonged collaboration, partnership and responsive listening to stakeholders (e.g. focus groups, listening sessions, program development, program evaluation, regular meetings, technical assistance/advisory groups and workgroups/taskforce). Respondents' preferred methods of communication skewed heavily towards methods that primarily reach stakeholders who are already familiar with our agency.

Commerce continues to learn how to better strengthen communities and we recognize the first step in that process is to meet people where they are, using methods and processes that encourage and support their engagement, particularly as it relates to remedying and preventing environmental harms.

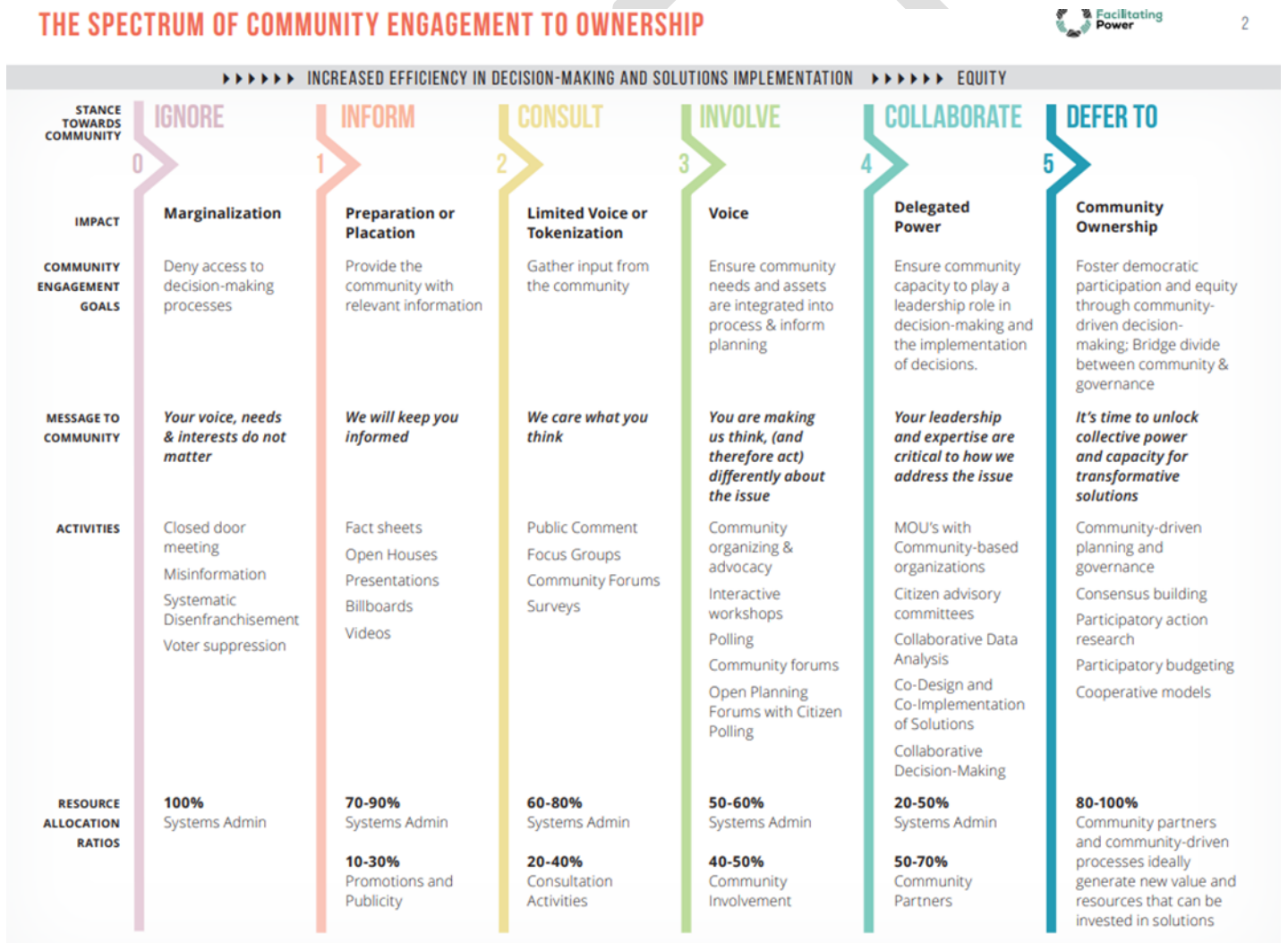
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Getting Started: Community Engagement

This section provides tools and best practices for increasing meaningful and inclusive community engagement by your program and the agency as a whole.

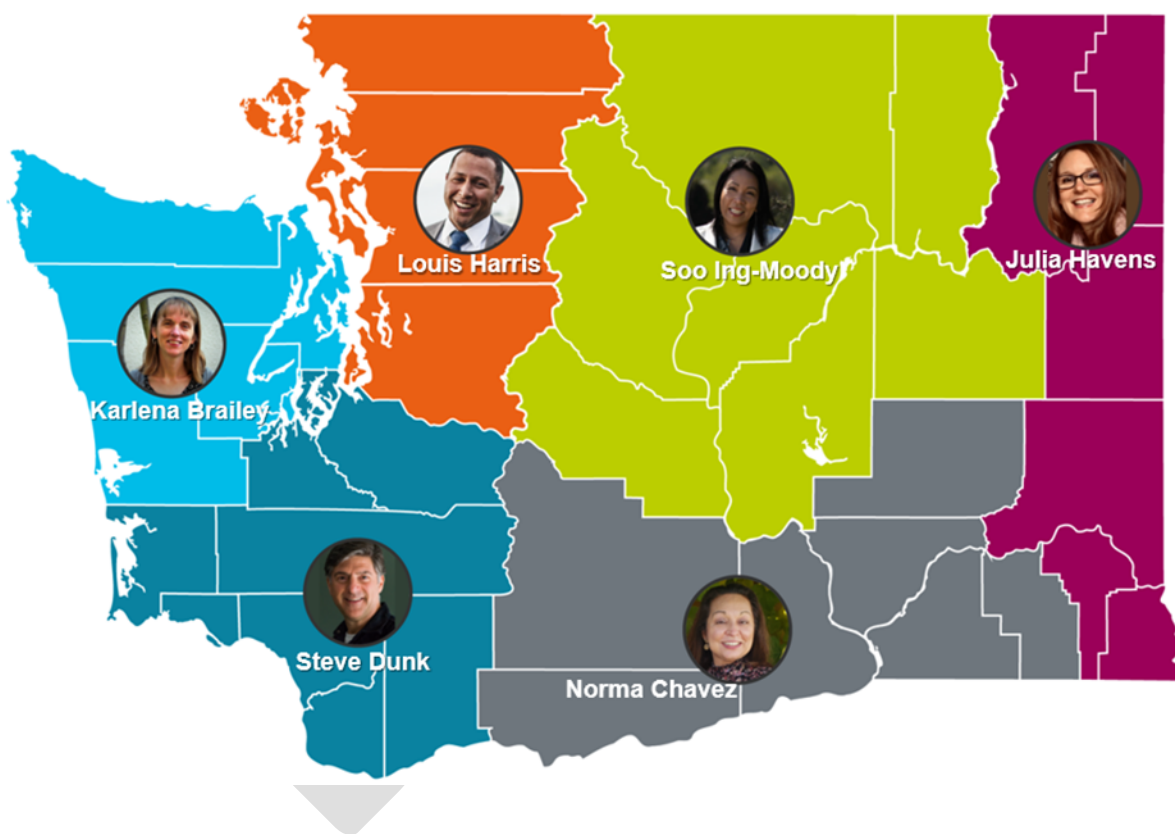
Successful community engagement is a long-term process that seeks to build relationships and trust in communities. It requires thoughtfulness, intentionality, transparency, internal collaboration and information sharing, and accountability that takes into account barriers to participation that may arise due to race, color, ethnicity, religion, income or education level. Additional resources can be found in Appendix 4.

There are several models for effective public participation. We are highlighting a tool “The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership,” developed by Rosa Gonzalez of [Facilitating Power](#). This model provides clear, specific, and concrete examples of how we can engage communities in developing solutions and decision making. The full model can be found here: [CE2O_SPECTRUM_2020.pdf \(d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net\)](#).



To be effective in our work with communities, Commerce has adopted a “No Wrong Door” approach to our response to community inquiries and needs. Whether community members contact Commerce staff directly via a GovDelivery registration, using the [online request for a technical assistance team](#), or when attending Commerce outreach events (virtually or in person), we commit to providing timely and relevant information and introduction to the appropriate Subject-Matter Experts.

We developed proactive engagement models to help the agency foster and sustain embedded relationships with Washington’s communities. The [Commerce Community Engagement Team](#) has dedicated staff who live across the state and regularly engage with groups, key leaders, elected officials, businesses, organizations and individual community members. The team’s priority is to support and advocate for Washington communities furthest from equity. In 2019 the Community Engagement Team was asked by Commerce to design and implement a pilot to test community engagement practices in small and underserved communities. That effort was called the “New Approaches Pilot”. Learnings from this pilot are integrated into the recommendations and process steps in this plan.



Part 1: Prepare to Engage with Community

A. Review the Key Principles of Community Engagement

Community engagement can be complex. To be effective, we need to recognize and respect the diversity and the unique assets of the communities we engage. It takes a long time to build strong relationships, and it takes even longer to repair damaged relationships. Approach all groups with humility and anticipate learning about the subtle nuances of each community.

Following these key principles can help you build trust-based relationships with community members, organizations leaders and partners.

○ **Research the community.** Before reaching out to community contacts, learn more about their work and efforts in the community. Be efficient with your asks of communities so as not to become extractive. And be respectful when coming to spaces where communities gather.

- What work/ services do they offer?
- What materials/education do they create?
- What events do they host?
- What are the organizations' assets?
- What support do they need?
- What is their community reach?
- Who are they already working with within Commerce? Check the Contract Management System.
- What is the history of their COM engagement? Is relationship repair needed?
- What government spaces are they already a part of (e.g. committee, task force etc.)?

It's important to understand the community's culture, norms, values, power and political structures, economic conditions, social networks, demographic trends and history. It is also important to pay attention to how community members themselves define community. This may be the block where people live, it may be where they worship, or it may be their circle of friends. If the community you are engaging is geographic, connect with the Commerce Community Engagement Specialist who works with the community². If the community you are engaging is defined by some other criteria (e.g., socioeconomic, race, ethnicity, gender, LGBTQIA+, victim of crime, etc.), reach out to Commerce SMEs to determine if there are pre-existing relationships between the agency and the community.

○ **Check your assumptions.** Before engaging with a community or potential partner, check your own biases, privileges and limitations.

- What assumptions or stereotypes do you hold about this community?
- How could your assumptions negatively impact your interactions or efforts?
- How do your cultural norms and values align with those of the community?

Are you the most effective person to be leading this engagement effort, or should you work with or through trusted community partners, or another Commerce staff member, like the Commerce Community Engagement Specialist for the region you are engaging in?

Federal & state laws that govern community engagement:

- 70A.02.050(2)
 - Federal Title VI of Civil Rights
 - Title II of ADA
 - EO 13166
 - EO 13175
 - State RCW 74.04.025, EO 05-03, EO 96-04
-

² 2022 Community Engagement Team Members are: Julia Havens (Eastern WA); Norma Chavez (South Central WA); Soo Ing-Moody (North Central WA); Stephen Dunk (Southwest WA); Louis Harris (Northwest WA); Karlana Brailey (Olympic Peninsula)

- **Recognize community strengths and assets.** Even communities that experience the greatest health and economic inequities have strengths, assets and resources that to acknowledge and center.
- **Be proactive.** Reach out to potential partners and community members as early as possible. Per Environmental Justice Principle #7: communities have the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making, including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation.
- **Be transparent.** Be honest and forthcoming about the purpose of your project and how you will use the input you receive. Set expectations to avoid over-promising. Only make promises you can keep and make sure to follow through on your commitments. Not following through can erode the trust you have worked hard to build. Provide resources and connections for where people can go for other types of support or accountability (i.e. - local or federal government, specific regulatory body, etc.)
- **Meet people where they are.** Be flexible in your approach. Go to the community—where members gather—and work to build relationships **and** trust. Look for opportunities to immerse yourself in the community you are trying to reach by attending community events and groups. Move at their speed of trust. You build trust by being present, following through and being honest and sincere about getting to know the community and their needs and assets. You may encounter community members as prospective applicants for programs that you manage, be transparent about your professional obligations and avoid immersive activities that can create the appearance of favoritism.
- **Value others' time.** Do not expect community members to volunteer their time or expertise. Show you value what they bring to your project through compensation, reimbursement and/or support for one of their priorities.
- **Allow community members to self-identify.** Cultural identities are dynamic. How people identify is a personal choice. The people we engage are both individuals and members of various groups. All communities and individuals have intersectional identities, which means they are members of more than one group, some of whom may have been historically marginalized or oppressed.
- **Prioritize unheard perspectives.** Give space and power to the perspectives of those whose voices are often least heard historically and in the present moment of your engagement. Listen with the intent to take action on the needs expressed by the community. Use various approaches to amplify the voice they are most comfortable with (written comment, small group sharing vs large group, 1-1 meetings later).
- **Avoid tokenism.** Individuals should never be expected to speak on behalf of, or represent, an entire community.
- **Ensure ongoing communication.** Collaboration requires continual opportunities for conversation and sharing. Use two-way communication methods partners, or community members are familiar with using. Connect regularly with the Commerce engagement specialists and other appropriate subject matter experts (SMEs) in the agency to share updates about and for the community.

B. Determine the purpose, goals and objectives of the engagement

Effective and respectful community engagement – particularly with vulnerable populations and communities overburdened by environmental harms – must have clear goals and objectives. Prepare some notes about the questions below and be prepared to share them with the community.

- Why are you engaging this particular community?
- What is your timeline between engagement activities and decision-making? Is this enough time to hear from multiple segments of the community and meaningfully involve them at multiple points of the decision-making process?
- How will you compensate community members for their time and for sharing their expertise?
- Throughout your project lifecycle, where will you engage communities? Where will your activities operate along the spectrum of community engagement? How could you move a step or two towards “Empower”?
- How will you communicate with community members about how your program or project will use their input?
- How will you communicate the progress and outcomes of your project?

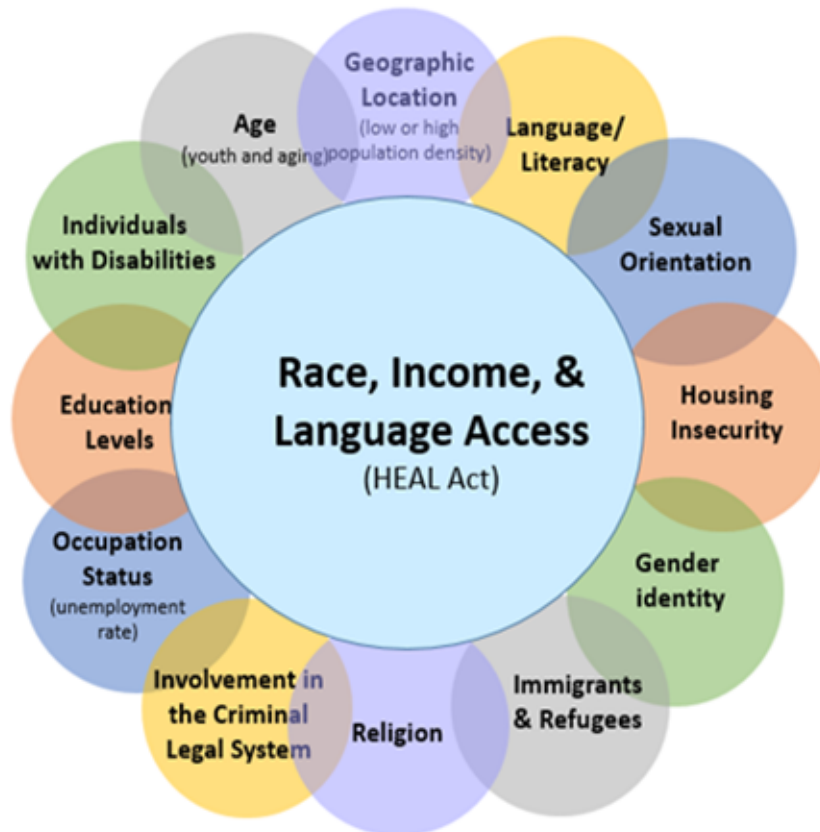
C. Identify Overburdened Communities and Vulnerable Populations

The [HEAL Act](#) defines “overburdened communities” and “vulnerable populations” (See: [Sec 2. Definitions](#) 0(11) and 14 (a),(b)(i-iv) or the definitions section in the appendix). Essentially, we can understand “overburdened communities” to be geographic areas where vulnerable populations face combined, multiple environmental harms and health impacts. “Vulnerable populations” are groups of people who may experience greater risk of environmental harm and health impacts, or reduced ability to cope with that risk. The [Environmental Health Disparities Map](#) helps visualize these communities and populations. Census tracts ranked as 9 and 10 on the map and all Tribal lands are overburdened communities.

External structural and systemic factors that often determine vulnerability include: experiences of marginalization or discrimination because of one’s race or income, as well as access to healthcare, education, transportation and other resources and services. “Vulnerability” differs from “sensitivity” to environmental harm and health impacts. Sensitivity to environmental harm and health impacts is determined by biological factors such as age or health condition. Vulnerability and sensitivity are closely linked, however, as many factors that determine vulnerability to environmental harm generally also influence one’s health and wellbeing.

Though racial and socioeconomic inequities are the most prevalent indicators of EJ risk, there are other population characteristics that provide a broader understanding of “vulnerable populations.” Looking at the intersections of social categories (Figure 2) can help us recognize and begin understanding the overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage” (Oxford Dictionary, Intersectionality). Developing a comprehensive overview of the community allows for a more in-depth introduction to the community before the in-person outreach.

Figure: Intersectional population characteristics and environmental justice



Though “overburdened communities” and “vulnerable populations” are the terms used and defined in the HEAL Act, consider the implications of labeling communities as “overburdened” or populations as “vulnerable” and how this labeling may influence community engagement and program or service delivery. Some communities see these terms as impositions that other or dehumanize them. Acknowledging the specific community assets and/or environmental justice concerns can help with this language.

Example of what NOT to say that could come across as dehumanizing, and could even be triggering:

“I am reaching out to you because you’re a member of an overburdened community/vulnerable population that is experiencing a wide range of EJ issues.”

Example of what to say that recognizes the work this community is doing and identifies a specific EJ concern affecting specific populations:

“I am reaching out to you because I know your community is working on multiple projects to address the air quality issues that are especially affecting children and people of color.”

D. Planning Worksheet: Identifying Overburdened Communities and Vulnerable Populations

There are multiple strategies for identifying the communities and vulnerable populations who may be impacted by your activities. It is important to engage them **before** taking agency actions which could adversely affect human health and the surrounding environment. This worksheet can help.

PROMPTS	RESOURCES & DATA TOOLS	FINDINGS
<p>Geography: Which areas of the state will your action (e.g., project, program, policy, etc.) touch?</p>	<p>Start by listing out any jurisdictions, regions, or specific sites that may be impacted by your action.</p> <p>Use your judgement about the geographical reach of the your action's impacts. Some actions will have impacts to their area or region (such as those significantly impact air or water pollution) while others may only affect the site(s) where they are located.</p>	
<p>Geography: Do the identified areas include census tracts with 9 or 10 EHD Map ranking?</p> <p>Are there additional Overburdened Communities you can identify using the EHD tool?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Washington Tracking Network (WTN) Environmental Health Disparities (EHD) Map – “Overburdened Communities” include census tracts with a 9 or 10 overall EHD map ranking. Follow these steps: 2. Within mapping tool, Click on “Environmental Health Disparities” 3. Find Rank 9 and 10 census tracts in your impacted areas, using the legend labeled “Rank” 4. Within the EHD map, you can also view census tract information on underlying data, such as environmental pollution, socioeconomic factors and sensitive populations. You can use these more granular data to identify additional Overburdened Communities. You should do this based on your specific program or service area – for example, if you are interested in air quality impacts from wildfire smoke, you would look at EHD rankings, then compare them with rankings for PM2.5 and overlay wildfire boundary information. It may be helpful to use additional data specific to your program to inform this step. 5. Click on “Environmental Exposures”, “Environmental Effects”, “Socioeconomic Factors”, “Sensitive Populations” to explore data 	
<p>Race: What is the percent people of color in your action's potential impact area(s)?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. EHD Map 7. Within mapping tool, click on affected census tract 8. Click on 'Race' in pop-up window (lower right) 9. Hover over pie chart segments to view percentages 	

PROMPTS	RESOURCES & DATA TOOLS	FINDINGS
<p>Race: Which specific racial groups are represented in your action's potential impact area(s)?</p>	<p>2020 American Community Survey (ACS) Demographic and Housing Estimates -- available at multiple levels, including state, county, census tract, etc.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Within ACS tool, click on "Geos", then "County", "Place", "Tract", etc. to select your action's potential impact area 2. Scroll past "Sex and Age" to view data on race and ethnicity 	
<p>Tribal Nations: Which Tribal Lands, Treaty Ceded Areas, and heritage sites/cultural resources are within your action's potential impact area(s)?</p> <p>How might Tribes or their lands, cultural resources and historical territories be impacted?</p>	<p>WA Government Office of Indian Affairs Map of Reservations and Ceded Land</p> <p>EHD Map Tribal Boundaries Layer -- available by clicking "Map Features" and selecting "Tribal Land Boundaries". It is easier to use than PDF map above, but does not include Ceded Land.</p> <p>Please note: These resources are incomplete on their own and are intended to serve as a reference point for further research. Staff should not incorporate Tribes directly into community engagement processes, but rather follow existing Commerce protocol on Tribal consultation government-to-government relations.</p>	
<p>Poverty: What is the percent of the population living in poverty in your action's potential impact area(s)?</p>	<p>EHD Map -- available at census tract level:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select "Environmental Health Disparities" 2. Select "Socioeconomic Factors" 3. Select "Population Living in Poverty <=185% of Federal Poverty Level" <p>If you need data at a county, place, or other level of geographic granularity: 2020 ACS Poverty Status tool</p>	
<p>Unemployment: What is the percent unemployed in the area(s)?</p>	<p>EHD Map -- available at census tract level:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select "Environmental Health Disparities" 2. Select "Socioeconomic Factors" 3. Select "Unemployed" <p>If you need data at a county, place, or other level of geographic granularity: 2020 ACS Selected Economic Characteristics tool</p>	

PROMPTS	RESOURCES & DATA TOOLS	FINDINGS
Health Disparities: Identify existing health disparities in your action's potential impact area(s)?	EHD Map – data available at census tract level <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select "Environmental Health Disparities" 2. Select "Sensitive Populations" – data on cardiovascular disease and low birth weight are included 3. Other WTN data on health disparities can be accessed by exploring "Health Disparities" and "Planning for Health" underlying data 	
Language Access: What is the percent of Limited English Proficient population living in the area impacted by your action's potential impact area(s)?	EHD Map – available at census tract level <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select "Socioeconomic Factors" 2. Select "ACS: Limited English (LEP)" 	
Language Access: Which languages are spoken in your action's potential impact area(s)?	Washington State MIL Language Mapping Tool – available at county, sub-county and census tract levels; includes information on widely spoken languages <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select "Layers List" in upper-right corner to view data at subdivision or census tract level 2. Select geographic area to view data 	
Overburdened Communities and Vulnerable Populations: Based on the above information, which communities do you plan to engage as part of your environmental justice community engagement?	Please consider all of the above information. At a minimum, areas with Rank 9 and 10 and Tribal Lands should be included (where they overlap with your action's potential impact area(s)).	
Environmental Justice Concerns: What EJ concerns may be relevant to geographic area(s) you plan to engage?	EHD Map – use this as a starting point; multiple layers for different EJ concerns available Please note: These data resources are incomplete on their own and should serve as a starting place for identifying EJ concerns. Additional research, including local EJ history and concerns, Civil Rights complaints, news/media articles, and local government and community organization websites, should continue to inform this section.	

PROMPTS	RESOURCES & DATA TOOLS	FINDINGS
<p>Environmental Justice Concerns: How do the identified concerns intersect/interact with some of the demographic information identified earlier in this worksheet?</p>	<p>EHD Map – use this as a starting point; multiple layers for different EJ concerns available</p> <p>Please note: These data resources are incomplete on their own and should serve as a starting place for identifying EJ concerns. Additional research, including local EJ history and concerns, Civil Rights complaints, news/media articles, and local government and community organization websites, should continue to inform this section.</p>	
<p>Financial Impact: What are the potential financial impacts to communities given your agency’s action (e.g., project, program, policy, etc.)?</p> <p>Consider the intersectional aspects and downstream effects of environmental harms. How might your agency’s action impact low-income households in both the short and long-term?</p>	<p>EPA EJ Screen and EHD Map have indicators for federal poverty guidelines that can help individuals map out a geographical area's income range.</p>	
<p>Additional Resources These additional tools may be helpful in identifying Overburdened Communities and Vulnerable Populations</p>	<p>Race and Ethnicity in the United States (US Census) –available at state and county level using this map tool, but less granular.</p> <p>WTN Data tool – helpful to sort EHD/WTN data at different levels of geographic granularity. There are also more data types available</p> <p>EPA EJSCREEN Tool – additional geospatial data on environmental justice considerations, including projected climate impacts, other forms of pollution and health disparities, etc.</p> <p>White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool – Useful information for planning related to federal programs that may use this tool.</p>	

E. Planning Worksheet: Identifying Overburdened Communities and Vulnerable Populations

Overburdened communities and vulnerable populations often encounter barriers that prevent them from engaging with government. Review the chart below to help you plan for potential barriers and strategies to mitigate them.

Common Barriers to Community Engagement

BARRIER	SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS
Language: Community members who prefer to communicate in a language other than English, or have unique vision or hearing needs, will need language assistance services to participate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the linguistic needs of your community by talking to community leaders and key informants and by reviewing language data. Translate all meeting materials and announcements into the top languages spoken within the area or identified community/ies. Let people know ahead of time that interpretation services will be available for the event or meeting. Arrange for free interpretation services, including sign language and real-time interpretation services. If a language other than English is predominant among the community members then the meeting should be run in that language and the English speakers are offered interpretation services.
Accessibility: Community members may require language interpretation, translated written materials and/or physical accommodations. See the appendix for more information about accessibility resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey community partners ahead of time to identify accessibility preferences and needs (include questions to assess access and functional needs). Explain available accessibility resources at the beginning of meetings.
Culture: You may need to accommodate certain cultural values to ensure all members are able to participate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be mindful of cultural and religious observances and events when choosing a meeting date and time. Ask community leaders or key informants about the most culturally appropriate way to engage community members and then adapt your approach.
Geographic Location: It may be difficult for rurally-isolated communities to attend in-person engagement activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet people where they are at (physically). Hold your event at a location the community regularly meets or gathers. If you are organizing multiple events or meetings, consider holding them in different locations. Choose a location accessible by public transportation and/or with free and ample parking. Offer travel reimbursement and lodging. Hold your meeting virtually (but ensure folks have access to the internet and the platform you're using).

BARRIER	SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS
<p>Costs of Participation & the Value of Shared Knowledge: Community members may not be able to participate in engagement activities due to the costs of transportation, dependent care and lost wages for time off of work. Even when they can afford those expenses, their knowledge and lived experience is valuable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and implement the agency process for equitable compensation methods. • Where permitted, provide multiple forms of payment options: gift cards, direct deposit, checks etc.
<p>Distrust of Government: Communities may not trust government because of past historical injustices. Or they may have had personal negative experiences interacting with state agencies or other governmental organizations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the time to teach yourself about the historical injustices or past experiences that are impacting the community you are trying to reach. • Recognize and own what has occurred in the past and recognize how it impacts you today. • What earned and unearned privileges do you have as result of historical injustices? • How may those privileges impact your ability to engage certain communities? • Commit to the time it will take to rebuild trust, and make sure to follow through on all promises and commitments you make to the community.
<p>Immigration Status: Some community members you meet may be undocumented, have Temporary Protective Status as refugees, hold Green Cards or have other immigration statuses. Acknowledge any fear or uncertainty these community members may feel, be sensitive and cognizant of the larger immigration dynamics at play in our country and work to create trust and safety.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask community partners for guidance on how to make their community members feel safe and included in your activity. • Do not collect personal information from attendees. • Consider co-facilitating the event or meeting with a trusted community leader or partner.
<p>Lead Time: Some of the logistical aspects of community engagement take time, particularly when working with communities which may have different cultural understandings of time and timelines. Plan accordingly and adapt your timeframe as needed to meet the needs of the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you will be hiring a vendor for your project, allow three months for the contracting process. • If your project qualifies as research, allow two months to seek approval from the Institutional Review Board. • If you can, collaborate with organizers of other community-focused events where people are already planning to gather.

BARRIER	SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS
<p>Competing Priorities: Do not expect community members to drop everything else in their lives to participate in a project for your agency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family: If you plan to engage parents or caregivers in person, consider needs for childcare or adult care and provide options for remote engagement. • Food: The sharing of food to bring people together is common across cultures. If possible, bring healthy and culturally appropriate snacks or meals when holding community meetings or focus groups. Consider using a restaurant frequented by community members as option to provide food. Make sure to ask community members about dietary restrictions and preferences ahead of time. • Work: Often, community members are not reimbursed for their time whereas partners who work for other agencies and organizations may be able to participate during work time. Look into options for providing incentives and travel reimbursement to decrease barriers for participation. Additionally, people who work fulltime may prefer evenings or weekends. • School: If engaging students or those within the academic community, consider the time of year and school schedules. It may be difficult to engage during school hours, the start of the school session, exam times, or school breaks. • Time: Give ample time for a participant to prioritize the meeting and give periodic reminders.
<p>Stigma: Stigma can prevent some communities from participating, especially within certain populations. Some people live stigmas associated with HIV/AIDS, LGBTQIA+, education levels, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be mindful of how stigma may impact those you're trying to reach. • Consult with a Commerce or community expert on stigma reduction strategies.
<p>Government Jargon & Process: Government has its own language and way of doing things that may create unintentional barriers for people outside our agency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use simple, clear language in all communications. Follow Plain Talk guidelines and avoid overusing acronyms. • Check your assumptions about what aspects of the way we do our work is common knowledge and take care to explain things clearly.
<p>Technological Barriers: Remote and online engagement can work well for some communities, but you may lose some community members due to technological barriers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose a platform your participants are familiar with. • Review information about the technological requirements ahead of time to make sure they are clear, straightforward and not overly burdensome. • Ensure technological support is available before and during the event.
<p>Intercommunity Dynamics: It may be inappropriate to bring all the members of one community together in a shared space because of inter-community relationships, power structures, or other norms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do your research ahead of time to learn about any potential intercommunity dynamics that may create barriers for some members to engage. • Talk with community leaders and other partners to get their perspective. • Consider what part of the community is disempowered within status-quo power structure. • Learn from other organizations and agency programs who have worked with the same community in the past.

Part 2: Prepare to Engage with Community

A. Select a Method of Engagement

There are many different methods to engage and collaborate with communities, each depending on the context and the community. Meeting with communities in-person is often best for establishing and building trusting relationships, especially if you are forming a new connection. However, technology has increased options for connecting with communities and partners and may help increase your reach for some types of engagement activities.

Some initial questions to answer:

- Which methods will best serve your intended community?
- What engagement methods does your intended community prefer (if known)?
- Will your engagement opportunities be culturally appropriate and accessible for your intended community?
- Do you need to consider using multiple channels and provide multiple opportunities for engagement?
- Will your selected engagement method(s) be accessible to your intended community?
- Are you prepared to ask open-ended, not leading, questions in a non-biased way to obtain community input?
- Do you need to obtain consent for your intended engagement (e.g., parental consent for youth engagement)?
- Do you need to reconsider your timeline in order to do this community engagement in a respectful manner (i.e., - don't rush or sacrifice community engagement)?

B. Spectrum of Community Engagement – Methods and Tools

STAGE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SPECTRUM	METHODS	TOOLS
INFORM <i>Purpose:</i> to provide information or address immediate needs/issues. <i>When to use:</i> when there is no alternative due to urgency, regulatory reasons or legal boundaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Town Halls○ Community meetings○ Media○ Social media○ Materials○ Web	<p>Technology options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facebook Live for town halls and community meetings• YouTube Live for town halls and community meetings• WhatsApp to encourage chat dialogue• Video conference (for remote participation) feedback and testimony• Online town hall using Twitter Town Hall (to increase geographic reach) <p>Tips: For town halls and community meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify your primary audience and vision for the

		<p>meeting or event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will get the highest turnout if you host the meeting in a place where the community naturally and regularly meets on their own or combine it with an existing meeting. • Set a clear agenda with a designated moderator and speakers. • If appropriate, engage local media to help publicize your event. Identify communications channels that will best reach your primary audience. • For external communications (media/social media/materials/web): • Begin by developing a communications plan. • Identify communications channels that will best reach your primary audience. • Ensure messages are tailored to your audience.
<p>CONSULT</p> <p><i>Purpose:</i> get and incorporate feedback.</p> <p><i>When to use:</i> to improve an existing service/program but options (of change) are limited.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focus groups ○ Interviews ○ Surveys ○ Stakeholder and/or partner input groups 	<p>Technology options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online focus group using Facebook Groups or GoToMeeting for focus groups. • Online focus group using Facebook Groups or GoToMeeting for focus groups. • Interviews via phone or in-person • Paper-based and mail surveys may be effective for surveys. • Online or electronic surveys to broaden reach by removing your own bias from the research structure and framing questions and answer options in culturally appropriate manners (Survey Monkey, Opinion or online polls are examples). • Video conference to allow remote attendance at stakeholder groups. <p>Tips for focus groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a trained facilitator and note-taker. • Carefully plan how you will organize and recruit for the focus groups. Bring individuals together with a common characteristic, and structure the conversation to ensure all participants are able to express their honest opinions. • Provide incentives to thank participants for their time. • Prepare your questions so you can benefit from group dialogue. Questions should be open and elicit group discussion. • Recording the focus group may be beneficial for note-taking and facilitation purposes, but should

be carefully considered because it may inhibit participation from some people.

Tips for interviews:

- Interviews let you explore a particular subject more in depth, and allow you to learn something you might not get from a survey. They can also be used to build and strengthen partnerships.
- Use as a starting point to help you plan other community engagement efforts. The insight and perspective you can gain from community leaders can help you plan more effective and culturally appropriate community meetings, focus groups and community mobilization efforts.
- Carefully plan your interview script and approach. If you choose to conduct key informant interviews, identify community leaders who know their community and the specific health topic or issue well.
- If you choose to conduct intercept interviews with community members, choose a location and time which will maximize your opportunities for connecting with members of your target population.

Tips for surveys:

- Surveys can be used to collect information about attitudes, beliefs, opinions, needs, assets, and behaviors of the community you wish to engage.
- They are a quick way of getting information from a larger number of people, and may be more convenient for the participant and lower cost.
- Surveys can gain informal community feedback about a specific project.

Tips for Tribal, stakeholder and/or partner input groups:

- Identify your primary, secondary, and key stakeholders, as well as Tribal or other partners who need to be involved in the decision.
- Primary stakeholders are those who will be directly affected by your project. Secondary stakeholders include those who are directly involved with the primary audience/population of your project, or whose lives may be affected indirectly.
- Key stakeholders are those who have the greatest influence including policymakers, the media and community leaders.
- Tribes are not stakeholders – the Washington state government shares a government-to-

		<p>government relationships with them. Tribes can be involved in input groups where appropriate, provided we do not refer to them as ‘stakeholders’. Staff should check government-to-government consultation protocols, policies and agreements before proceeding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan to engage stakeholder groups early in the pre-planning stages. This helps ensure transparency throughout your project. • Conduct a stakeholder analysis or stakeholder mapping to understand their concerns and interests.
<p>INVOLVE</p> <p><i>Purpose:</i> to ensure needs and interests are considered.</p> <p><i>When to use:</i> when community perspective and buy-in is necessary to be successful in project implementation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advisory groups ○ Steering committees ○ Community conversations ○ Audience & service focus groups 	<p>Technology options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audience and user testing can be done in-person, via phone or email, or through online platforms. • Video conference to increase participation in council, advisory or committee meetings. • GoToWebinar and other online platforms can facilitate virtual community conversations. <p>Tips:</p> <p>For advisory groups and steering committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory boards and steering committees are ideal for keeping your project connected to the big picture. Many groups meet on a quarterly basis to provide strategic direction, but some meet more frequently for more hands-on work. There may already be an existing group or committee you can engage with. • The effectiveness of these groups depends on the structure put in place at the beginning including choosing the right members, thoughtfully planning and facilitating meetings and setting clear expectations. • Advisory boards or councils can be created to bring voices to the table who are often not well represented in decision-making, for example: youth. • Plan a formal onboarding for your committee, council, or board members to ensure they have a similar foundation related to your project and equity overall. <p>For community conversations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a team to determine the goals for the conversation and host the event. Your team should include members of the community to

		<p>ensure their own goals, interests and issues are well represented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose an experienced facilitator who can create a trusting environment with the participants. Sometimes it is best to choose someone from within the community and sometimes it is more appropriate to choose someone who is neutral and outside of the community. • Create an inviting environment and structure the room for dialogue. Tables in a 'U' format or in circles are ideal for small group conversations. <p>For audience and user testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audience and user testing are ideal for helping you understand how your primary audience may respond to your messages, materials, or information. The goal is to understand their knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, barriers and cues to act. • Clearly define your primary audience and think about what you want them to know or do. • Health promotion, behavior change and communication theories can help you plan your testing. • For user testing, choose a technique that fits your session goals and plan ahead for any equipment needs. It may be easiest to hold the usability testing in the Commerce offices or in a remote location with laptops. • For both audience and user testing, make sure to pilot your questions and test ahead of time.
<p>COLLABORATE</p> <p><i>Purpose:</i> to partner and share decision-making.</p> <p><i>When to use:</i> when community members have a strong desire to participate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collective impact ○ Coalition building ○ Partnership building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology options: • Bring people together in a shared space for successful collective impact initiatives and coalition building. • Video conference to allow remote participation in collective impact initiatives and coalition building. • Ongoing collaboration with existing partners can assist with successful partnership building. <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For collective impact initiatives: • A 'Collective Impact' model brings organizations together to work toward a common goal through a structured framework. • The five core conditions of the collective impact framework are

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a common agenda • Use shared measurement • Build on mutually-reinforcing activities • Engage in continuous communications • Provide a backbone to move the work forward • For coalition building: • Coalitions can be used to influence public policy, promote behavior change in communities and build a healthy community. • Some of the drivers for building coalitions include: • To respond to negative events in the community (e.g. increased suicides). • New information becomes available (e.g. new research about a specific disease). • Circumstances or rules change (e.g. a new law). • New funding is available (e.g. a federal grant that requires a coalition). • There's a threat to the community (e.g. an important service might get cut). • Coalitions include a core group of stakeholders, community opinion leaders and policy makers. • For partnership building: • Partnerships can be formal collaborations just between two organizations, or can result in the formation of a committee, coalition, council or other group of partners with representatives from various organizations and therefore be more strategic in nature. • Partnerships can also be informal agreements or collaborations that are short-term and project specific. • Determine which partners and what type of partnership is appropriate for your specific project or problem you are trying to address.
<p>EMPOWER</p> <p><i>Purpose:</i> to support and follow a community's lead.</p> <p><i>When to use:</i> when community members want to own a project and you're committed in the long-term.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community immersion ○ Community mobilization 	<p>Technology options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use relevant social media platform for communities that may prefer that method. <p>Tips:</p> <p>For community immersion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support initiatives and projects which are important to the community, even if it is not a DOH priority. • Attend community events and gatherings with the intent of listening and learning. • For community mobilization: • Ensure you have strong leaders and provide them the support they need.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a formal structure, which may include a steering committee and sub-committees. Ensure the six essential functions of community mobilization efforts are covered: Providing overall strategic direction Facilitating dialogue between partners Managing data collection and analysis Planning communications Coordinating outreach Fundraising Develop guiding documents such as organizational charts, rules of operation or bylaws, policy statements and formal letters of agreement. Engage community partners who share priorities and interests. Consider partners who work in other health or social service organizations, business owners, policy makers, media representatives, faith leaders, and others who have significant influence in their community.
<p>CONSULT</p> <p>Purpose: get and incorporate feedback.</p> <p>When to use: to improve an existing service/program but options (of change) are limited.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus groups Interviews Surveys Stakeholder and/or partner input groups 	<p>Technology options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online focus group using Facebook Groups or GoToMeeting for focus groups. Interviews via phone or in-person Paper-based and mail surveys may be effective for surveys. Online or electronic surveys to broaden reach by removing your own bias from the research structure and framing questions and answer options in culturally appropriate manners (Survey Monkey, Opinion or online polls are examples). Video conference to allow remote attendance at stakeholder groups. <p>Tips for focus groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a trained facilitator and note-taker. Carefully plan how you will organize and recruit for the focus groups. Bring individuals together with a common characteristic, and structure the conversation to ensure all participants are able to express their honest opinions. Provide incentives to thank participants for their time. Prepare your questions so you can benefit from group dialogue. Questions should be open and elicit group discussion. Recording the focus group may be beneficial for

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Tips for surveys:

- Surveys can be used to collect information about attitudes, beliefs, opinions, needs, assets, and behaviors of the community you wish to engage.
- They are a quick way of getting information from a larger number of people, and may be more convenient for the participant and lower cost.
- Surveys can gain informal community feedback about a specific project.

Tips for Tribal, stakeholder and/or partner input groups:

- Identify your primary, secondary, and key stakeholders, as well as Tribal or other partners who need to be involved in the decision.
- Primary stakeholders are those who will be directly affected by your project. Secondary stakeholders include those who are directly involved with the primary audience/population of your project, or whose lives may be affected indirectly.
- Key stakeholders are those who have the greatest

		<p>influence including policymakers, the media and community leaders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tribes are not stakeholders – the Washington state government shares a government-to-government relationships with them. Tribes can be involved in input groups where appropriate, provided we do not refer to them as 'stakeholders'. Staff should check government-to-government consultation protocols, policies and agreements before proceeding. • Plan to engage stakeholder groups early in the pre-planning stages. This helps ensure transparency throughout your project. • Conduct a stakeholder analysis or stakeholder mapping to understand their concerns and interests.
<p>INVOLVE</p> <p><i>Purpose:</i> to ensure needs and interests are considered.</p> <p><i>When to use:</i> when community perspective and buy-in is necessary to be successful in project implementation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advisory groups ○ Steering committees ○ Community conversations ○ Audience & service focus groups 	<p>Technology options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audience and user testing can be done in-person, via phone or email, or through online platforms. • Video conference to increase participation in council, advisory or committee meetings. • GoToWebinar and other online platforms can facilitate virtual community conversations. <p>Tips:</p> <p>For advisory groups and steering committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory boards and steering committees are ideal for keeping your project connected to the big picture. Many groups meet on a quarterly basis to provide strategic direction, but some meet more frequently for more hands-on work. There may already be an existing group or committee you can engage with. • The effectiveness of these groups depends on the structure put in place at the beginning including choosing the right members, thoughtfully planning and facilitating meetings and setting clear expectations. • Advisory boards or councils can be created to bring voices to the table who are often not well represented in decision-making, for example: youth. • Plan a formal onboarding for your committee, council, or board members to ensure they have a similar foundation related to your project and equity overall.

For community conversations:

- Build a team to determine the goals for the conversation and host the event. Your team should include members of the community to ensure their own goals, interests and issues are well represented.
- Choose an experienced facilitator who can create a trusting environment with the participants. Sometimes it is best to choose someone from within the community and sometimes it is more appropriate to choose someone who is neutral and outside of the community.
- Create an inviting environment and structure the room for dialogue. Tables in a 'U' format or in circles are ideal for small group conversations.
- For audience and user testing:
- Audience and user testing are ideal for helping you understand how your primary audience may respond to your messages, materials, or information. The goal is to understand their knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, barriers and cues to act.
- Clearly define your primary audience and think about what you want them to know or do.
- Health promotion, behavior change and communication theories can help you plan your testing.
- For user testing, choose a technique that fits your session goals and plan ahead for any equipment needs. It may be easiest to hold the usability testing in the Commerce offices or in a remote location with laptops.
- For both audience and user testing, make sure to pilot your questions and test ahead of time.

C. Notify Key Internal Partners

For substantive community engagement, Commerce staff should notify the following internal partners, with sufficient advanced notice to provide meaningful feedback, review and support:

- The outreach specialist for your program and/or unit
- The Commerce Community Engagement Team
- The external Commerce communications team – this team will help you coordinate your communications with external partners like local press or other government agencies
- Translation and interpretation master contract vendors
- Other Commerce programs that have had substantial engagement contact with the communities you seek to engage

D. Engagement with Community-Based Partners

Working with a community partner, such as a community-based organization, informal group, or community-identified leader, can help with conducting community engagement that is accessible, inclusive, and respectful of the community's priorities and culture. Ideally, a community partner is an organization or individual who is part of the community you're hoping to engage with, or who works closely with members of that community. That partner can provide an invaluable perspective and a richer understanding of what types of engagement work well or don't work well with that community. Identifying and working with more than one community partner can offer more depth and breadth to the perspectives and understanding of best engagement practices, while avoiding tokenism or the assumption of a monolithic community.

When approaching a potential community partner and throughout interactions with them, the focus should be on fostering a relationship that extends beyond a specific community engagement opportunity and respects their expertise and time. Engagement must be viewed as a collaborative effort and partnership with communities to achieve the goals of health equity and EJ. It should be part of continuous efforts to build and maintain relationships, support, and investment in communities.

- When starting work with community-based partners clearly explain:
 - Who you are
 - What you're doing
 - Why you're reaching out to community
 - How you would like to partner with them
- Set expectations together for engagement
- Co-create an engagement plan and timeline
 - Address and develop solutions for any barriers to engagement you and your community partners have identified
 - Ensure outreach to community members is culturally and linguistically appropriate
 - Work with community partners to determine effective methods for:
 - Keeping the community informed/following up with community throughout the project life cycle
 - Sharing resources, notes from meetings, next steps and information
 - Mutual accountability (What does the community need from you? What do you need to move forward with your work?)
 - Plan to have multiple touch points for follow-up to stay accountable to community members you meet with, keep them informed and involved, and let them know how their time and input is being incorporated into decision-making processes and/or how you would like to include them directly in decision-making processes (refer to the section on accountability below)
 - Build authentic and equitable relationships.
 - Avoid engagement efforts that may be viewed as a check box or a one-time engagement effort. Engagement with communities should be part of continuous efforts to build and maintain relationships, support and investment in communities.
 - Understand and view engagement efforts as partnerships with communities to advance health equity and environmental justice goals.

Part 3: Reflections and Follow-up

A. Incorporate Community Feedback/Input

- Reevaluate, edit and update the project and program lifecycle plans as needed.
- At the end of a meeting, whether it is one-on-one or with a large group, revisit the purpose and objectives of the meeting. Ask community members if they felt the objectives were met. Offer multiple ways for feedback to be shared.
 - If interacting one-on-one, offer to listen to the feedback right after the meeting as well as offer to follow up in a day or two in case other thoughts/ideas come up.
 - If interacting with a larger group, the following options can be used singularly or in combination to gather feedback. Please note, this is not an exhaustive list and you may have others you've used.
 - Short surveys that can be completed immediately after a meeting
 - Going around a room and asking for verbal feedback (What went well? What can be improved?)
 - Using small group breakouts to ask for feedback
 - If in a virtual meeting space, using the chat function to submit feedback
 - Polls
 - If you're working with a community partner, defer to them on evaluation processes and meaningful questions to ask.
 - Be aware of power dynamics when asking for feedback. For example, your agency may be providing funding to particular community organizations that are present.
 - Just like the other elements of a meeting, you want to make sure that providing input and feedback is accessible to all present.
- Like other information community members share with us, feedback is a gift that should be treasured. This requires us to be thoughtful about how we use the information we learn, where the information is kept and who has access to it.
 - Share with community members how their feedback is incorporated into your decision-making process for each part of the project lifecycle. (This needs to be clear to community and shared with them to ensure accountability and transparency and to build trust.
 - Ask communities how they want to be kept informed about the project lifecycle and incorporate their suggestions into your process for report-backs to communities.

B. Create an Evaluation Plan

Create an evaluation plan with the community and/or partners based on how they intend to measure or define success. Below are several evaluation questions to consider before, during and after community engagement occurs.

C. Worksheet: Community Engagement Evaluation

When	Evaluation Questions	Answers
Before Community	How was the community involved in the development of this program or activity?	

When	Evaluation Questions	Answers
Engagement	Which community groups and/or partners would you like to be involved? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tribal nations • Arts organizations • Banks and other financial institutions • Health providers • Businesses, business associations • By-and-for nonprofits • Cities and Towns • Community-based organizations, Fraternal organizations • County governments • First responders • PK-12 schools • Post-secondary schools • Senior and elder care organizations • Special-purpose government • Youth organizations • Waste management organizations • Other 	
	Will the structure and process allow for all voices to be heard, especially those impacted by historically and contemporary injustices?	
	How do you plan to support your partners or community members? What training, information or resources will they need?	
	How do you plan to intentionally provide space for those impacted by injustices for their issues to be heard and addressed?	
	How does the community measure/define success?	
During Community Engagement	How well does the group work together?	
	Who has a voice and who doesn't?	
	How does the group make decisions?	
	How are conflicts or disagreements handled?	
	Who leads the engagement efforts, meetings, or events?	
	How are community members involved in developing the project?	
	If you did a stakeholder analysis, did your results have the desired effect? Were they helpful?	
	How did you ensure your community engagement effort was culturally and linguistically appropriate?	
	Did stakeholder involvement improve the work, effectiveness, or political and community support of the effort?	
After Community	Who came up with the project goals and plan?	

When	Evaluation Questions	Answers
Engagement	What could you have done better to identify and involve community partners and representatives?	
	What strategies did you use to ensure all voices were heard?	
	When partners who have been impacted by injustices or represent groups who are under-represented or historically marginalized brought forward issues, how were those addressed?	
	Did your partners feel supported? What could be improved?	
	How did you loop back to the community to thank them and let them know next steps and the impact of their involvement?	

D. Conduct Evaluation of Community Engagement & Reflect on How to Improve

- Use the evaluation plan you created under Part 2 of this framework/process guide
- Share community input/feedback and learnings from the evaluation with community partners and other appropriate partners and stakeholders and agency staff
- Create a plan to address barriers that arose and develop solutions to improve your engagement process

It is the responsibility of government agencies to identify and address potential barriers to engagement, including when working with community partners. Before starting community engagement and throughout the community engagement process, continually ask yourself:

- Which barriers did you identify when you were planning your engagement activity? How did you mitigate them?
- What access needs did you identify using the Accessibility Worksheet? How will you ensure these are met?
- What is your process for working with community to identify and mitigate barriers?
- What additional barriers did you encounter (that you did not anticipate) How can you mitigate them?

E. Maintain Community Relationships

- Keep the community informed and involved throughout project/program lifecycle
- Thank the community for their time and partnership
- Share process, final findings/feedback and specifically how community engagement/input impacted process itself, outcomes, decisions, made etc.

Tools and Resources

General Tools and Resources

- [Download the Atkinson Hyperlegible Font | Braille Institute](#)
- [Make your Word documents accessible to people with disabilities \(microsoft.com\)](#)
- [Making information accessible for all | European Blind Union \(euroblind.org\)](#)
- Government Alliance on Race and Equity. "Racial Equity Toolkit: An Opportunity to Operationalize Equity". https://www.racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/GARE-Racial_Equity_Toolkit.pdf

Commerce Specific Tools and Resources

- Agency Style Guide
- New Approaches Pilot Templates
- Capital Programs Equity Analysis Community Engagement Resources
- Facilitation Practitioners Community of Practice
- Commerce language access resources: [Language access: Guide for providing interpreted and translated information \(wa.lcl\)](#)
- Discussion and thinking guide for inclusive language [FullColor Cover template v3.0 \(wa.lcl\)](#)

Environmental Justice Resources

- [Report to the Washington state governor and legislature, Environmental Justice Task Force: Recommendations for Prioritizing EJ in Washington State Government](#)
- [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Environmental Justice hub](#)

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Definitions

- **Community:** a group of people who are brought together by something in common. This can include things like cultural background, shared experience and geographic location. One person can belong to many communities. (DOH Community Engagement Guide, p. 2)
- **Community engagement:** the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the wellbeing of those people. (CDC)
- **Community outreach:** involves providing information and/or professional services to a people who may not otherwise have knowledge of or access to those services Covered Agency: one of the seven named agencies required to implement the HEAL Act.
- **Environmental harm:** means the individual or cumulative environmental health impacts and risks to communities caused by historic, current, or projected: (a) Exposure to pollution, conventional or toxic pollutants, environmental hazards, or other contamination in the air, water, and land; (b) Adverse environmental effects, including exposure to contamination, hazardous substances, or pollution that increase the risk of adverse environmental health outcomes or create vulnerabilities to the impacts of climate change; (c) Loss or impairment of ecosystem functions or traditional food resources or loss of access to gather cultural resources or harvest traditional foods; or (d) Health and economic impacts from climate change.
- **Environmental justice:** the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, rules, and policies. Environmental justice includes addressing disproportionate environmental and health impacts in all laws, rules, and policies with environmental impacts by prioritizing vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, the equitable distribution of resources and benefits and eliminating harm.
- **Equitable distribution:** a fair and just, but not necessarily equal, allocation intended to mitigate disparities in benefits and burdens based on current conditions, including existing legacy and cumulative impacts that are informed by cumulative environmental health impact analysis.
- **Equitable participation:** a fair and just, but not necessarily equal, process that supports the participation of historically marginalized or excluded people
- **Equity:** (from EJTF) the act of developing, strengthening and supporting procedural and outcome fairness in systems, procedures, and resource distribution mechanisms to create equitable (not equal) opportunity for all people. Equity is distinct from equality which refers to everyone having the same treatment without accounting for differing needs or circumstances. Equity has a focus on eliminating barriers that have prevented the full participation of historically and currently oppressed groups.
- **Highly impacted communities:** a community designated by the DOH as highly impacted by fossil fuel pollution and climate change in Washington, or a community located in census tracts that are fully or partially on "Indian country" as defined in 18 U.S.C. Sec. 1151.
- **Language access:** is achieved when individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) can communicate effectively with program staff and participate in programs and activities. (HRSA)

- **Language justice:** there is no single or static definition of language justice. It is about building and sustaining multilingual spaces so that everyone's voice can be heard both as an individual and as part of a diversity of communities and cultures. Valuing language justice means recognizing the social and political dimensions of language and language access, while working to dismantle language barriers, equalize power dynamics, and build strong communities for social and racial justice. [from Language Justice Toolkit by Communities Creating Healthy Environments (CCHE)]
- **Meaningful and direct involvement:** (from EJTF) builds more sustainable agency programs and decisions, and it increases community understanding of agency decisions and transparency and trust in government actions.; a way of fostering trust, strengthening relationships, and honoring community knowledge that leads to more effective and equitable solutions.
- **Overburdened communities:** means a geographic area where vulnerable populations face combined, multiple environmental harms and health impacts, and includes, but is not limited to, highly impacted communities as defined in RCW 19.405.020.
- **Vulnerable populations:** population groups that are more likely to be at higher risk for poor health outcomes in response to environmental harms, due to: (i) Adverse socioeconomic factors, such as unemployment, high housing and transportation costs relative to income, limited access to nutritious food and adequate health care, linguistic isolation, and other factors that negatively affect health outcomes and increase vulnerability to the effects of environmental harms; and (ii) sensitivity factors, such as low birth weight and higher rates of hospitalization. "Vulnerable populations" includes, but is not limited to:
 - Racial or ethnic minorities;
 - Low-income populations;
 - Populations disproportionately impacted by environmental harms; and
 - Populations of workers experiencing environmental harms.

APPENDIX 2: The Principles of Environmental Justice

Delegates for the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit held on Oct. 24-27, 1991, in Washington, DC, drafted and adopted these 17 principles of Environmental Justice. Since then, the Principles have served as a defining document for the growing grassroots movement for environmental justice.

- 1) **Environmental Justice** affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction.
- 2) **Environmental Justice** demands that public policy be based on mutual respect and justice for all peoples, free from any form of discrimination or bias.
- 3) **Environmental Justice** mandates the right to ethical, balanced and responsible uses of land and renewable resources in the interest of a sustainable planet for humans and other living things.
- 4) **Environmental Justice** calls for universal protection from nuclear testing, extraction, production and disposal of toxic/hazardous wastes and poisons and nuclear testing that threaten the fundamental right to clean air, land, water and food.
- 5) **Environmental Justice** affirms the fundamental right to political, economic, cultural and environmental self-determination of all peoples.
- 6) **Environmental Justice** demands the cessation of the production of all toxins, hazardous wastes, and radioactive materials, and that all past and current producers be held strictly accountable to the people for detoxification and the containment at the point of production.
- 7) **Environmental Justice** demands the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making, including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation.
- 8) **Environmental Justice** affirms the right of all workers to a safe and healthy work environment without being forced to choose between an unsafe livelihood and unemployment. It also affirms the right of those who work at home to be free from environmental hazards.
- 9) **Environmental Justice** protects the right of victims of environmental injustice to receive full compensation and reparations for damages as well as quality health care.
- 10) **Environmental Justice** considers governmental acts of environmental injustice a violation of international law, the Universal Declaration On Human Rights and the United Nations Convention on Genocide.
- 11) **Environmental Justice** must recognize a special legal and natural relationship of Native Peoples to the U.S. government through treaties, agreements, compacts, and covenants affirming sovereignty and self-determination.
- 12) **Environmental Justice** affirms the need for urban and rural ecological policies to clean up and rebuild our cities and rural areas in balance with nature, honoring the cultural integrity of all our communities and provided fair access for all to the full range of resources.
- 13) **Environmental Justice** calls for the strict enforcement of principles of informed consent, and a halt to the testing of experimental reproductive and medical procedures and vaccinations on people of color.
- 14) **Environmental Justice** opposes the destructive operations of multi-national corporations.

- 15) **Environmental Justice** opposes military occupation, repression and exploitation of lands, peoples and cultures and other life forms.
- 16) **Environmental Justice** calls for the education of present and future generations which emphasizes social and environmental issues, based on our experience and an appreciation of our diverse cultural perspectives.
- 17) **Environmental Justice** requires that we, as individuals, make personal and consumer choices to consume as little of Mother Earth's resources and to produce as little waste as possible; and make the conscious decision to challenge and reprioritize our lifestyles to ensure the health of the natural world for present and future generations.

More information can be found online at: www.ejnet.org/ej/

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APPENDIX 3: Accommodations and Accessibility Checklist

- Survey community partners ahead of time to identify accessibility preferences and needs (include questions to assess access and functional needs)
- Explain accessibility accommodations at the beginning of meetings
- Examples:
 - Provide interpretation (in-language and/or ASL) during meetings:
 - Provide simultaneous or consecutive interpretation
 - if providing consecutive interpretation allot more time for the meeting to ensure adequate time
 - Translate all materials into the languages spoken by the community members you're meeting with
 - Provide ASL interpretation and closed-captioning
 - Accessible materials: Ensure all materials including PowerPoints are accessible (insert resources)
 - Avoid jargon and technical language people may not understand or be familiar with. Keep your communication clear, direct and concise.
 - Use Hyper-legible font for any written materials or slides and ensure that any materials you publish is legible
 - When creating PowerPoint slides
 - Minimize the amount of text on each slide.
 - The information you share should tell a coherent story.
 - Incorporate graphics/images.
 - Avoid combination of colors that blend together [dark black/dark blue/dark lettering on light background (preferably white)]
 - When sharing handouts, be thoughtful about the information included in them. For example, don't just distribute copies of the slides. Instead add context to the information presented in the slides.
 - Translating written materials:
 - Plain talk all materials before sending them out for translation. You may consider asking the translation team to do a review of the English document to ensure key points are translated simply and in a straightforward manner. When you get the translation back, it is always ideal to have it reviewed by another translator for errors.
 - It would be ideal to do a cultural review of all materials before translation. This can be completed by someone within the agency or a community partner. If it's the latter, ensure the community partner is compensated for their expertise.
 - Make space for support people – let people know they can have someone come with them to provide support including support animals
 - In-person: have accessibility checklist for events
 - Signage (plain talk, large text, use communication card (language access and helpful for people with hearing impairments) ensure accessible (size of signs etc. For visibility)

- Key pieces for making spaces accessible
 - Insert (checklist questions to ask ahead of time)
 - Plan to have members of team greet people as they arrive and assess access and functional needs
- ADA requirements/compliance (physical access i.e. structural access varies by building etc. Important to think about this)

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APPENDIX 4: Engagement and Facilitation Concepts by adrienne maree brown

Whether you're meeting with community members one-on-one or in a group, the following concepts from adrienne maree brown are important reminders for how we need to show up.

- **Begin by Listening.** This core principle from Allied Media Projects is also a best practice for facilitation. Ask questions, find out what people need, listen to what people say and don't say. Begin by listening to your own truths and feelings and listening to each other.
- **Transform Yourself to Transform the World.** This guidance, articulated by Grace Lee Boggs, is facilitation and mediation gold. How you are, how you show up, invites a quality of presence from participants. If you want to change what is possible in the room, change what you believe is possible. Change how present you are, increase your rigor, focus your energy. Invite participants to have the same power to transform themselves to transform what is possible in the room, in the group.
- **What We Practice Is What We Are.** What do we say we're practicing? What are we actually practicing? What do we want to be practicing? Practice is how we become what we long to be.
- **Name What Is, Make More Possible.** We must deal in reality. It is nearly impossible for people to build trust over time if they cannot name and face what is actually happening. If we don't fully understand where we have come from, what created us, and where we are, then we are building our future on quicksand. By building a shared analysis of what's real, you create more possibilities for things the group can actually do.
- **Release Perfection, Relinquish Judgment.** You are not necessarily right. And you are not better than any of these participants. They are living their lives and learning their lessons on behalf of the species, just like you. If you cannot support them without judgment and superiority, then you are not the right facilitator for them. "Perfection is a commitment to habitual self-doubt," teaches Prentis Hemphill. Create spaces that support participants to learn to trust themselves.
- **Create a Culture of Celebration – Pivot Towards Pleasure.** It seems simple – but people stay more engaged in a space where they are enjoying each other and feel celebrated and appreciated. Small, personal celebrations help fuel groups through the work, reminding them that they are humans together, regardless of the external pressures they face.
- **Invitation Goes Further Than Manipulation.** It can be tempting to use charm and pressure to bend a group to your will. Especially if you tell yourself that your will is just to help them achieve their goals. But if you manipulate them to completion, the results won't stick, because they didn't do the work to actually get to the conclusion themselves. Invite them, continuously, towards their own vision, into their own rigor. Invite them to participate in their own liberation.
- **Release Your Way to Feel The Way.** If you are overly convinced you know the right way, you will not be able to support the group to find the way of the collective. There are absolutely times when your perspective or opinion is the necessary ingredient for the collective to take the next step. With time you will learn the subtle art of when to speak up (rarely) and when to listen and support (mostly). Primarily, you listen and support and keep opening more room for the group.
- **Time Can Bend.** It's so powerful to play with time. Cultures with long memories, still connected to their oldest ways, know that time is nonlinear, circular and mysterious. When we are facilitating a space and we remember that time can bend, we focus not on time scarcity but on the people in the room, the presence and the work that must be done.