

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY (DRAFT)

Presented for Feedback: 9/16/19

OPERATING PRINCIPLE: Center Community

We recognize that we can only achieve equity if communities impacted by inequities are at the center of our work. We acknowledge that communities know best their assets, needs, and solutions. We recognize and share power and structure our meetings to foster meaningful engagement. Community engagement will be intentional and inclusive. We will create opportunities as a Task Force, individual members, and staff to listen, learn, and seek input to guide our work. We will incorporate stories of lived experience into our reports and recommendations.

Seven Generation Principle: We honor the Seven Generation Principle as standing in the present, while looking back three generations to the wisdom and experience of our ancestors, thinking about issues in the current context, and planning forward for three generations for the protection of our children and the generations to come.

GUIDING ETHICS

These ethics are the foundation of our strategy and work with communities. This code guides our actions and, if authentically implemented, inspires trust from communities. These ethics motivate us to keep improving ourselves and our approaches.

- Be nimble:
 - Be flexible and adapt messages and methods to the context and individual
 - Learn as we go—practice an open mindset and incorporate best practices along the way
- Be humble and responsive:
 - Listen to understand before trying to be understood
 - Engage respectfully, even when priorities *seem* to be outside of our scope
 - Understand we cannot control conversations and outcomes
- Do no harm:
 - Be conscious of adverse consequences and impacts
 - Be mindful of historical trauma
 - Be conscious not to replicate colonial models of extraction
 - Seek opportunities to leave something positive behind
- Lead with our hearts

Community Engagement Scale

These questions do not have a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer. Instead, Task Force members should discuss areas of strength, weakness, and opportunity based on their honest assessment of how well they engaged communities in processes of deliberation and decision-making. This scale is most effective when communities—those who were heavily involved in the process and those who were not—can also use the scale to identify areas of strength, weakness, and opportunity for the Task Force.

A score of 5 does not mean perfection. There is always room for improvement when engaging communities in authentic, impactful ways. Furthermore, communities evolve in their composition, needs, and aspirations so engagement must adapt to be responsive.

0: No community engagement/poor engagement

5: We did well in engaging communities, and communities would agree

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| | Did the idea begin in communities or through community engagement? |
| | Were communities involved in determining the scope? |
| | Did we involve community input early in the process? |
| | Were there multiple meaningful opportunities for community involvement and feedback? |
| | Did we practice our guiding ethics throughout the process? |
| | Did we focus efforts to engage hyper-marginalized communities? |
| | Does the outcome directly address communities’ concerns? |
| | Are decisions endorsed by communities most affected by the outcome? |
| | Were our processes transparent? |
| | Did we recognize and share power in decision-making? |
| | Did our interaction with communities build relationships of trust? |

STRATEGIES TO CENTER COMMUNITY

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| Principle | Strategy | Actions |
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| We recognize that we can only achieve equity if communities impacted by inequities are at the center of our work. | Identify and engage impacted communities that have been left out of decision-making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus efforts on communities historically impacted by institutional racism. • To inform this work, use the WA State Health Disparities Map, which shows health outcomes based on measures of educational attainment, socioeconomic status, proximity to hazards, etc. • These communities are harder to reach and may have a higher level of distrust of government. • Examples: Indigenous populations, Black communities, and immigrants |
| | Concentrate efforts in areas where significant and persistent inequities have been identified by those who work directly with communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build connections with grassroots organizations that serve impacted communities. • Examples: Communities of Color Coalition (C3) helped organize our community forum in the Everett area; Snohomish County Latino Coalition; Raiz (reproductive health advocacy organization for WA youth); the Coalition of Immigrants, Refugees, and Communities of Color (CIRCC) |
| | Include the voice of youth, so systems support the well-being and aspirations of all generations, including those of future generations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure events are family- and youth-friendly • Engage youth in their own neighborhoods |

| Principle | Strategy | Actions |
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| Continued: We recognize that we can only achieve equity if communities impacted by inequities are at the center of our work. | Adapt engagement principles and practices to AI/AN populations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect and support tribal sovereignty and self-determination • Consider how the scope of this work may be different • Anticipate a more complex working relationship (i.e. treaties, Gov-to-Gov relationship) • Engage elected and traditional leaders |
| | Invite communities to participate in all phases of this Task Force’s work; Encourage community engagement at every event and create more opportunity for involvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find creative ways to incorporate voices from disenfranchised communities • Hear directly from communities. What are the best ways to engage in two-way conversations? What are your priorities and aspirations? • Use soft-touch and hard-touch methods to do outreach |
| We acknowledge that communities know best their assets, needs, and solutions. | Find expertise in different places and at multiple levels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage existing networks, starting with recognized leaders of communities • Respect and value elders in the community; incorporate their wisdom • Practice cultural humility and an open mindset |
| | Do not assume to know what the community needs or wants—ask directly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure multiple channels for input and feedback • Help connect individuals/communities with organizations and resources to work on local solutions |
| We recognize and share power and structure our meetings to foster meaningful engagement. | Include community input in all phases of our work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask communities how we can engage in two-way conversations • Consider meeting times outside of regular business hours • Get community feedback on proposed dates and times Provide multiple channels for timely input and feedback (e.g. public comment, written comment, surveys, draft reviews, listening groups) |

| Principle | Strategy | Actions |
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| Continued: We recognize and share power and structure our meetings to foster meaningful engagement. | Create a safe and welcoming space to share stories | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate a standing agenda item to share thoughts and ground ourselves at each meeting • Actively promote an inclusive environment by providing tools and services that allow everyone to participate at their comfort level (e.g. interpretation services, accessibility, versatile delivery methods for information, family friendly community events) |
| | Strive to understand our own implicit bias and privilege | |
| Community engagement will be intentional and inclusive. | Use a mixed methodology to do outreach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft-touch: email, social media, phone calls <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tap into existing networks (e.g. Health Disparities Council, ethnic commissions, cultural organizations, grassroots orgs, community and state institutions) ○ Build our network through cold calls, warm calls, word of mouth • Hard-touch: face-to-face meetings and presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Connect with organizations/leaders whose work closely aligns with our vision ○ Prioritize communities throughout the state that are highly impacted by inequities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use this information to help us decide where we need to hold meetings and community events ○ Focus outreach in communities where we will hold meetings to encourage in-person participation |
| | Hold space for those who cannot be present | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct ethnographic interviews of affected communities • Ensure public comment opportunities are meaningful • Include a standing agenda item for a community engagement report |

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| We will create opportunities as a Task Force, individual members, and staff to listen, learn, and seek input to guide our work. | Prioritize what is important to communities, not what is convenient to achieve | |
| | Work to understand before being understood | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be conscious not to pass judgment on the significance of issues that are important to communities • Amplify community voice <i>and</i> pass the mic • Practice listening |
| We will incorporate stories of lived experience into our reports and recommendations. | Accurately depict the realities of affected communities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share communities' aspirations • Share communities' concerns in a way that is authentic and accurately reflects the impacts of inequities on their lives |