



**SUSTAINABLE
GROWTH**
COALITION

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES

*An interactive workbook on engagement
in the Upper Midwest*



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WORKBOOK INTRODUCTION



WHY YOU SHOULD USE THIS WORKBOOK

Every organization needs to perform community engagement on some level, whether it is to build out their workforce, obtain a social license to operate, improve relationships, or fulfill a regulatory requirement. Members of the Sustainable Growth Coalition know that strong, interactive, practical guides to community engagement are not commonly accessible to the business community, especially in the Upper Midwest. This workbook is the result of almost two years of input from businesses and communities on best practices for community engagement. The creation of this workbook started in 2023, prioritizing engagement with environmental justice communities.

At the time of publication, there had been a substantial shift away from discussing or focusing on environmental justice work. However, the deep need for this work has not gone away.

We want this workbook to be a practical guide to community engagement, which can be difficult to implement and practice. We want to emphasize that this workbook is not about being perfect. It is about getting better over time, especially when the work is difficult and frustrating, and using the best practices outlined in the workbook to guide you.

Community engagement is a key part of environmental justice. We have deliberately kept information about environmental justice in the workbook, as we know this is still part of many organizations' work, even if the terminology changes. If you are in a position where it is difficult to move forward with environmental justice work, we still encourage you to review the material and use what you can. This workbook is ultimately just one tool to help organizations improve their community engagement; use it in a way that is helpful to you.

WHY ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IS IMPORTANT

Engaging with environmental justice is crucial for every organization because of its ethical significance and practical benefits for long term stability. This practice is not only a moral imperative, but a strategic advantage.

Environmental justice helps:

- Foster innovation.
- Generate organizational resiliency.
- Create sustainable economic growth by:
 - » Avoiding regulatory economic burdens by being ahead of them.
 - » Being better in sync with compliance and reporting.
- Build a positive reputation by:
 - » Increasing customer base.
 - » Positively affecting top talent recruitment.
 - » Gaining ongoing acceptance and approval of operations by local stakeholders, known as the “social license to operate.”
- Manage risks through:
 - » Equity in sourcing.
 - » Operational, organizational, and supply chain transparency.
 - » Reduced operational risk through stakeholder engagement, which can reduce potential for litigation by understanding local concerns.

By promoting fairness and addressing the environmental impacts on all communities, businesses can contribute to a more just and sustainable world while securing their own future success. A key part of this environmental justice work is authentic and meaningful community

engagement. Without this engagement, the work is ineffective at best and harmful at worst. This workbook is meant to be a tool for organizations doing community engagement, especially for environmental justice, to better define who they’re engaging, how they’ll engage, and how they’ll meaningfully use the feedback they receive and stay in contact with the community.

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

This workbook starts with a grounding in environmental justice (EJ), and helps companies review internal policies that may already be aligned to environmental justice work. If your company has already done this work and you are focusing solely on community engagement, you may not need to use the first section. However, if you have never done an internal environmental justice assessment, doing so will allow you to show up in the community more authentically because you can speak to both what you have already done and what you plan to do.

For the community engagement portion of the workbook, which starts on page ten, the flowchart is key. Follow the flowchart, and whenever you cannot answer a question, go to the corresponding page and fill out the necessary worksheet. These worksheets, along with our community engagement best practices, will guide your community engagement strategy. More information about why this resource was created is available on page 26.

INTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE EVALUATION ACTIVITY: MAPPING ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES AND DEI STATEMENTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Many organizations have outlined values or diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) statements but may not consider how those remarks overlap with environmental justice. Referencing the environmental justice concepts below, review your organization's values, DEI statements, or other guiding language, and compare them to environmental justice concepts to see how your organization may be implementing environmental justice work.



Core environmental justice concepts

- A common definition of environmental justice, originally laid out by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2010, is the fair treatment of all people, regardless of income, race, color, national origin, Tribal affiliation, or disability in:
 - » Decision making processes.
 - » Organizational activities.
 - » Access to opportunities.
 - » Access to a healthy, sustainable, and resilient environment.
 - » Protection from disproportionate and adverse human health and environmental effects (including risks) and hazards.
 - » The development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.
- Meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of income, race, color, national origin, Tribal affiliation, or disability. As written in [Law Insider](#), this means:
 - » Potentially affected community residents have an appropriate opportunity to participate in decisions about a proposed activity that will affect their environment and/or health.
 - » The public's contribution can influence the decision.
 - » The concerns of all participants involved will be considered in the decision-making process.
 - » The decision makers seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.
- Ensuring that most impacted/most burdened communities do not continue to face disproportionate burden moving forward, and that their current environmental burdens are reduced.

Where do your core corporate values and DEI statements intersect with core environmental justice concepts?

Core corporate value or DEI statement

Environmental justice concept

INTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE EVALUATION ACTIVITY: MAPPING CORPORATE REPORTING TO ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE INFORMATION

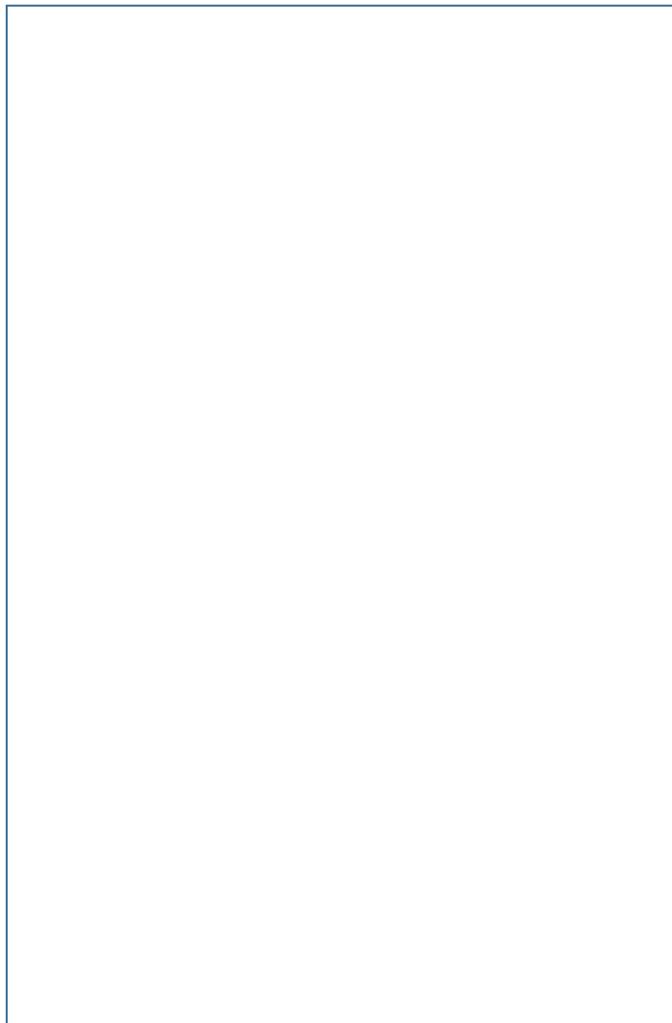
Corporate reporting mechanisms, such as disclosures through the [Global Reporting Initiative \(GRI\)](#), often have environmental reporting requirements that also relate to environmental justice. The tables below outline different GRI disclosures, their related indicators, and their importance to environmental justice.

Environmental Indicators	GRI Disclosure	Discussion
<p>Air</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Particulate matter 2.5 (PM2.5) • Ozone (O3) • Diesel particulate matter (PM) • Air toxics cancer risk • Air toxics respiratory hazard index • Toxic releases to air • Traffic proximity and volume 	<p>302 Energy</p> <p>303 Water & effluents</p> <p>305 Emissions</p> <p>306 Waste</p> <p>308 Supplier environmental assessment</p> <p>416 Customer health & safety</p>	<p>Companies report on a variety of environmental topics like energy usage and sources, water consumption and discharge, air emissions, waste generated (including hazardous waste and disposal methods), the impact of their products and services on their customers' health and safety, as well as information on the environmental impacts of their supply chain.</p> <p>By reporting this environmental data, companies can understand their environmental impact in the communities they operate in. They can also begin to understand the impacts of areas that support their operations, e.g. if they have a facility that draws power from a fossil-fuel heavy grid, the community around the power plants are more impacted by pollution than power plants using renewable energy.</p>
<p>Waste/Air/Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead paint exposure • Superfund proximity • Risk management plan (RMP) facility proximity • Hazardous waste proximity • Underground storage tanks (UST) and leaking (LUST) • Wastewater discharge 		
Social Indicators	GRI Disclosure	Discussion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People of color • Low income • Unemployment rate • Limited English proficiency • Less than high school education • Under age 5 • Over age 65 	<p>202 Market presence</p> <p>203 Indirect economic impacts</p> <p>204 Procurement practices</p> <p>401 Employment</p> <p>404 Training & education</p> <p>405 Diversity & equal opportunity</p> <p>413 Local communities</p> <p>414 Supplier social assessment</p>	<p>By reporting this environmental data, companies can understand their economic impacts on local communities, their employees' demographics, and opportunities for them.</p>

Which disclosures does your company use, if any? Consider which disclosures your company could consider if you don't already use them.



How does each disclosure interact with environmental justice?

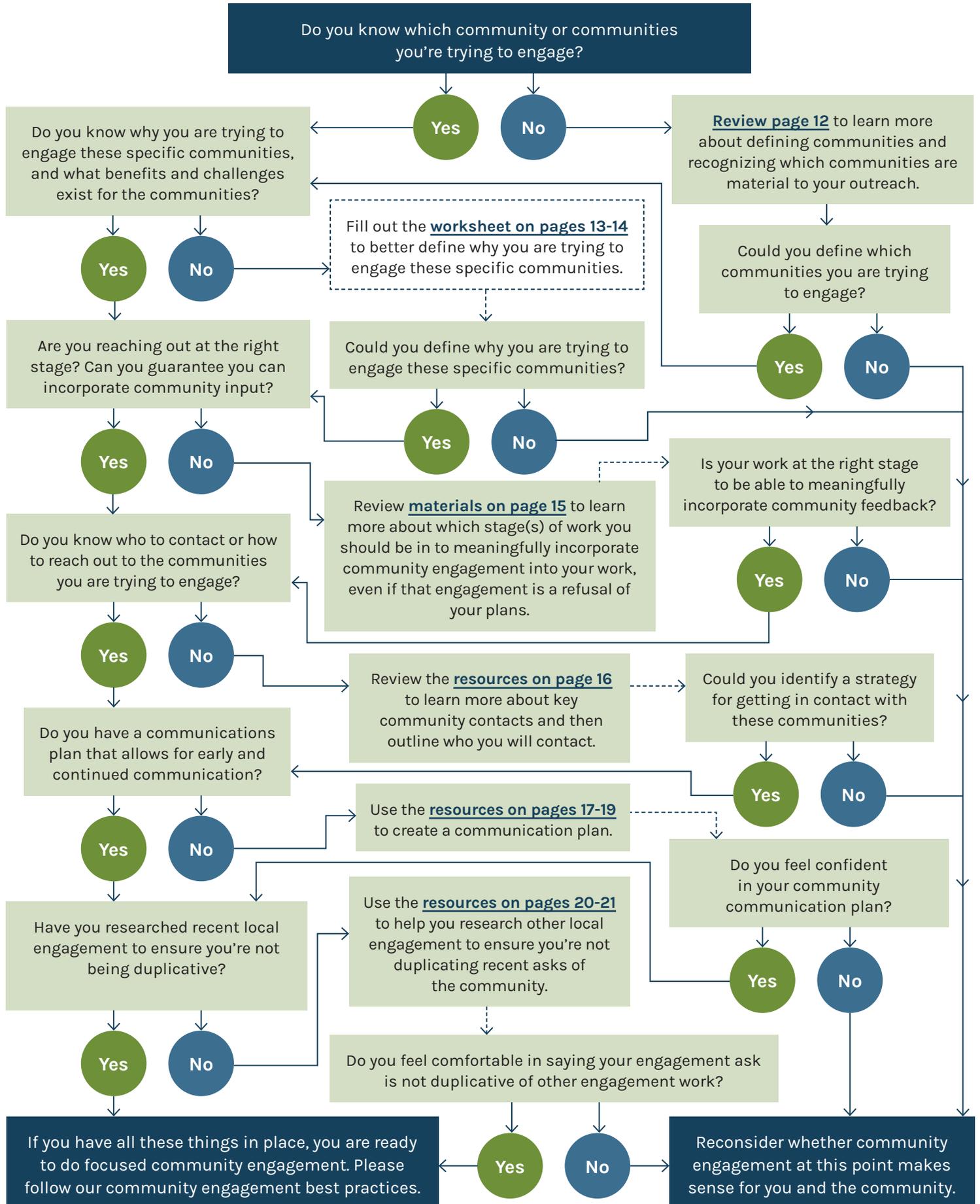


Note: Specific information reported for social indicators includes:

- The ratio of the company's standard entry level wage by gender compared to the local minimum wage.
- The proportion of spending on local suppliers, employee and governing body demographics, employee benefits, programs for upgrading employee skills, and indirect economic impacts the company may have on local communities (i.e., economic development in areas of high poverty, improving or deteriorating social or environmental conditions, and availability of products or services for those on low incomes).

The EPA's EJScreen tool utilized 13 environmental and seven socioeconomic indicators, and two indexes calculated using those indicators, to inform its analysis, which also informed this table's environmental justice analysis. Descriptions for each portion can be found in both of these tables, which were informed by the EPA's EJScreen. While EJScreen is no longer functional on the EPA website, a [back up of the tool](#) from early 2025 is available online.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FLOWCHART





FLOWCHART WORKSHEETS

DO YOU KNOW WHICH COMMUNITY YOU'RE TRYING TO ENGAGE?

Environmental justice (EJ) community definitions

Federal agencies, states, and other entities all have different definitions of what an environmental justice community is. When determining which definition to use, make sure you are complying with the definitions in your area. [This tool](#) from Environmental Justice State by State allows you to determine which states have environmental justice definitions.

Beyond complying with state and federal definitions, you will need to determine which environmental justice community definitions are most material to your company.

Determining which environmental justice communities are material to your organization

While you will need to do work directly in and with communities to best define which are material to your organization, there is work that you can do before meeting with communities. Beyond the statute definitions discussed above, which can be helpful to identify an environmental justice community, there are also a variety of online tools that can help visualize where environmental justice communities are in the United States relative to infrastructure.

[The Environmental Justice State by State tool](#) discusses which states have their own environmental justice maps. [California](#), [Connecticut](#), [Illinois](#), [Maryland](#), [Massachusetts](#), [Michigan](#), [Minnesota](#), [New Jersey](#), [New York](#), [Pennsylvania](#), and [Washington](#) have tools that specifically address environmental justice areas, as defined by their individual state definitions, while [Arizona](#), [Colorado](#), [New Mexico](#), and [North Carolina](#) have tools that users can use to overlay environmental and demographic data together to learn more about environmental justice areas. Some of these tools do not include data from Tribal nations that share the same geographies as the state boundaries.

For states or territories outside of this list, you can use the [Environmental Justice Index tool](#) from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. You can also use tools archived or replicated by [Public Environmental Data Partners](#). These tools were developed by Environmental Protection Agency, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Council on Environmental Quality under the Biden administration but were discontinued under the Trump administration. The Public Environmental Data Partners site lists which tools are currently available to use. Keep in mind that these tools are either archives or replicas and may not have the most up-to-date data.

Once you've done an initial scan and determined where there may be environmental justice communities that are material to your organization, you can use land use maps to further investigate these communities.

Mapping tools are not perfect. There can occasionally be discrepancies where communities look like they are environmental justice communities, but given different definitions of environmental justice, they may not be. Census data may indicate high unemployment and low annual wages, but this can be due to the residents being retired. Moreover, census data does not consider accumulated wealth and assets.

While reviewing mapping or conducting field surveys, look for land uses like gated communities, golf course communities, and other clues that provide context. It is worth committing to some in-community research as both the mapping tools listed here and land use maps only tell part of a story. Information on how to conduct this initial research is on [page 16](#).

DETERMINING YOUR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT GOALS AND WHAT BENEFITS OR CHALLENGES THE WORK MAY HAVE FOR THE COMMUNITY

This workbook is explicitly focused on community engagement that consults, involves, and collaborates with the community. If your engagement goal is just to provide information, the suggestions within the workbook may not be as useful for you.

1. State the purpose(s) of your community engagement for this specific community and instance.

- To get this community's input about a new product or project.
- To get this community's input about current organizational location or infrastructure.
- To get this community's input about potential new organizational locations or infrastructure.
- To get this community's input about your impact on the community, the environment, or community health.
- To get community input for a client's company.
- To enhance recruiting efforts and increase the diversity of potential applicant pools.
- To understand community needs that will help shape your community strategy and programs.
- To build a relationship as the basis for future collaboration.
- Other _____

2. What benefits will communities receive by participating in this engagement or by being involved in this work overall?

3. What sorts of challenges might the community face from what you are proposing?



4. What are your goals for this community engagement?

5. What are your talking points for discussing this work with your specific community?

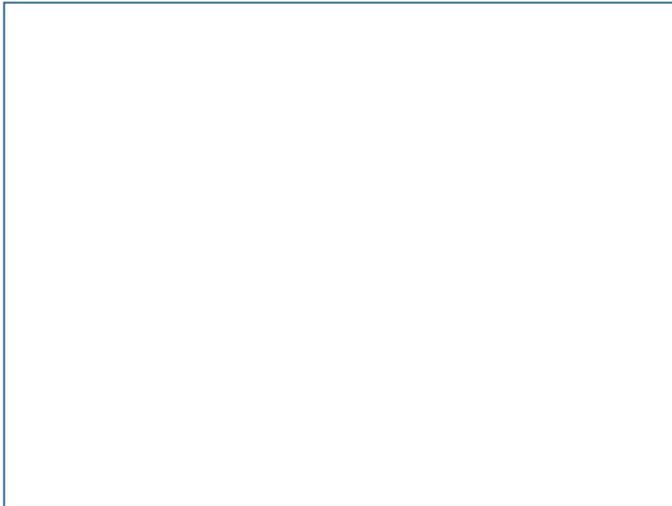
6. Who are the key contacts within the company that should be involved in this work?



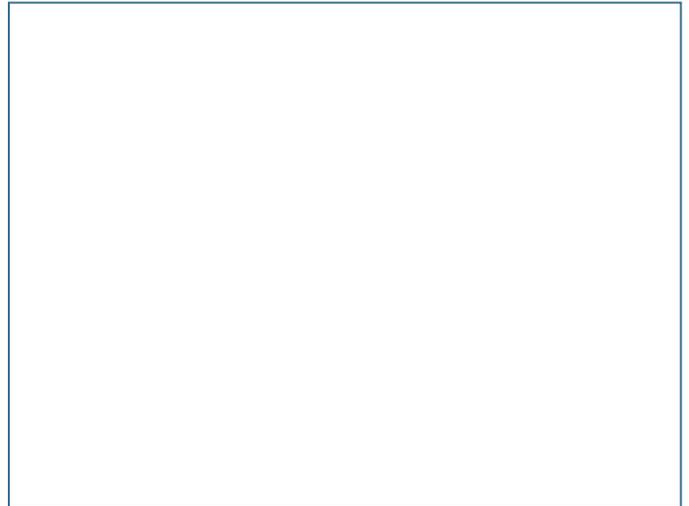
DETERMINING IF YOU ARE ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY AT THE RIGHT TIME

1. How would you change your plans if the community did not agree with them?

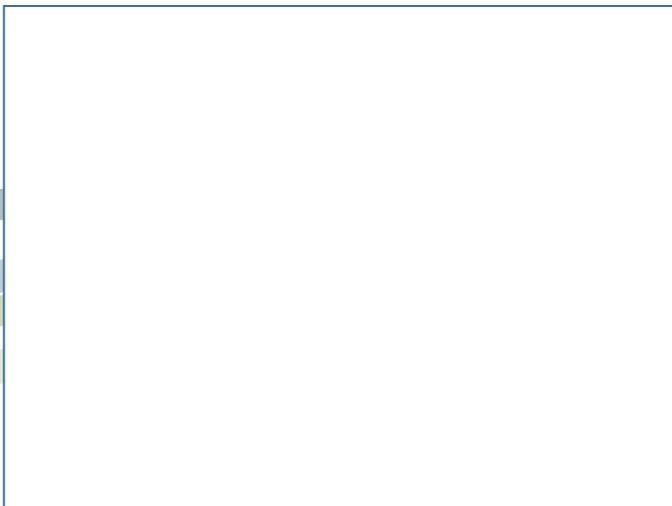
Allowing communities the right of refusal is a key piece of authentic and meaningful community engagement.



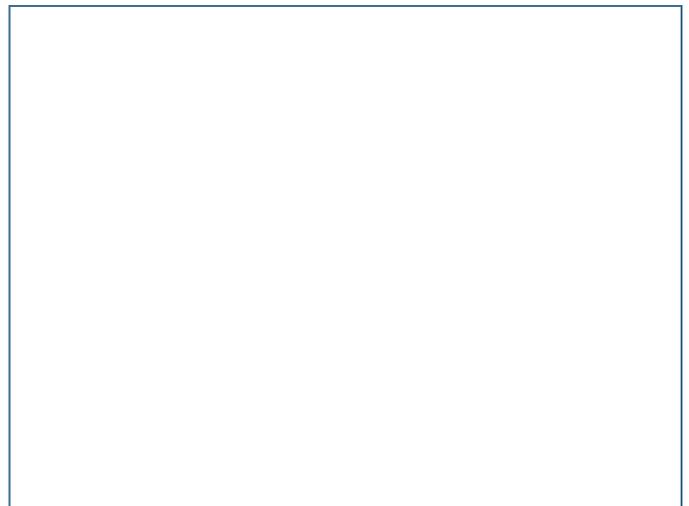
2. If the community does not refuse your proposal but has ideas that would substantially change your plans, how would you incorporate these ideas?



3. If you are too late in the community engagement process to make a change, how will you determine if community input is valuable enough to change the plan anyway? If you will not change your plan, do you feel comfortable moving forward without the community's approval?



4. Do you have enough of a plan that someone from the community could review it, understand it, and give comments that are meaningful? How will you share your plan?



RESOURCES ON REACHING OUT TO COMMUNITY IF YOU AREN'T SURE WHO FROM THE COMMUNITY YOU'RE TRYING TO ENGAGE

In-community research

Once you have completed your desktop research and verified you know why you're engaging the community, you should do some preliminary in-community research.

This research allows you to corroborate your desktop analysis to make sure your findings aren't being misinterpreted, and the data makes sense. It will also give you the opportunity to verify and triangulate material EJ communities and start relationships that should continue throughout your work. **During this process, always verify that the partners you're reaching out to aren't planning similar community outreach or haven't done similar projects in the past two years.** Offer to collaborate rather than duplicate efforts.

To start this research, you should determine which organizations have a good sense of community needs and priorities; this information helps ground truth your data and begin engagement. Below is a list of initial organizations for this work. **When doing initial outreach, always consider setting aside resources to work with the community and grassroots organizations they might suggest, ensuring that smaller organizations are getting the full benefit of your funding.**

Initial outreach resources:

- Community liaisons at state or regional agencies
- Local public health departments.
- Local planning departments.
 - » These can be good places to help validate your data and offer suggestions for who you should speak to in your target communities.
- Local firms that do engagement, including local grassroots organizations, individual consultants, nonprofits, and other community organizations.

- Local human rights commissions and larger local nonprofits.
 - » These organizations can help validate data.
 - » They may also have a list of grassroots organizations they work with to do outreach.

More in-depth outreach resources:

Grassroots organizations, neighborhood-based organizations, small nonprofits, mutual aid groups, and community-based organizations.

If possible, contract with these smaller organizations rather than larger engagement firms or nonprofits that would subcontract them. This means that all the funding will flow directly to the smaller organizations.

Using an outreach consultant

Some of the resources we recommend are consultants that can help with community engagement. Before hiring a consultant, it is important to understand which communities you're trying to engage and why you're trying to engage them at this point.

To reach out to my identified community, I plan to:

DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATIONS PLAN FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Answering these questions will assist in creating a structured communication plan that prioritizes transparency, inclusivity, accountability, and long-term community support.

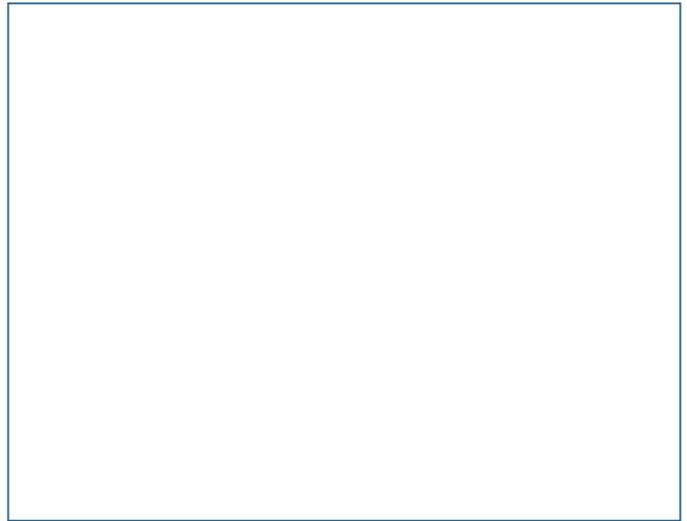
1. Goal and purpose clarity

What are the goals for engaging with the community, and how will you communicate your intentions to ensure transparency and build trust?



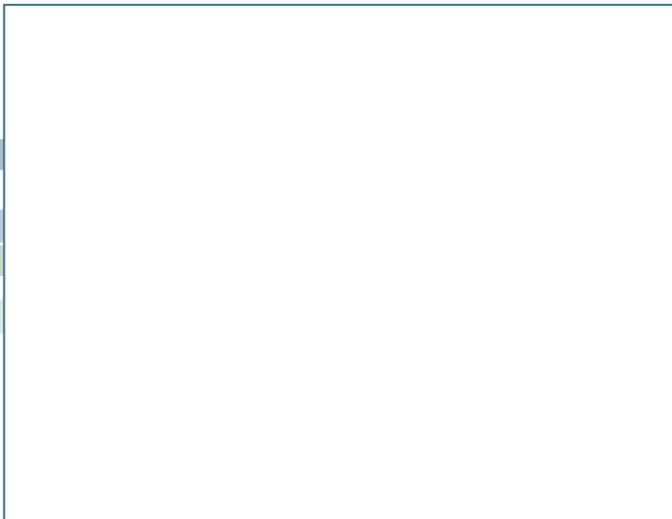
2. Commitment to the engagement process

What steps will you take to show the community that their input will genuinely impact decision-making? How will you demonstrate your commitment to actively engaging with the community?



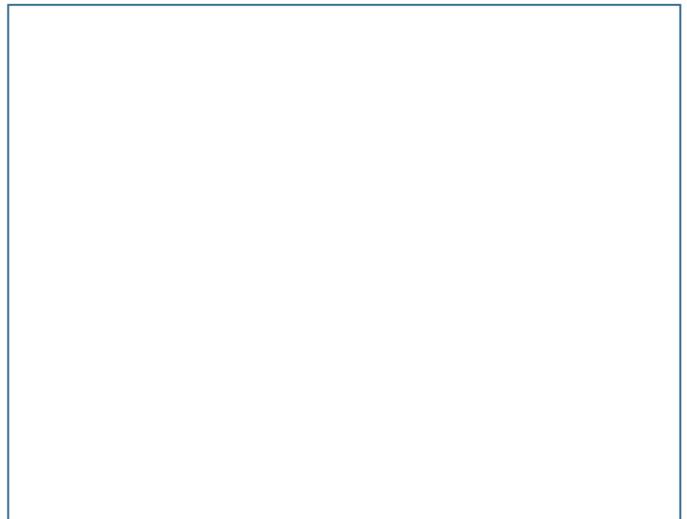
3. Transparency and process communication

How will you be transparent about your entire process, including data collection, decision-making, and project updates?



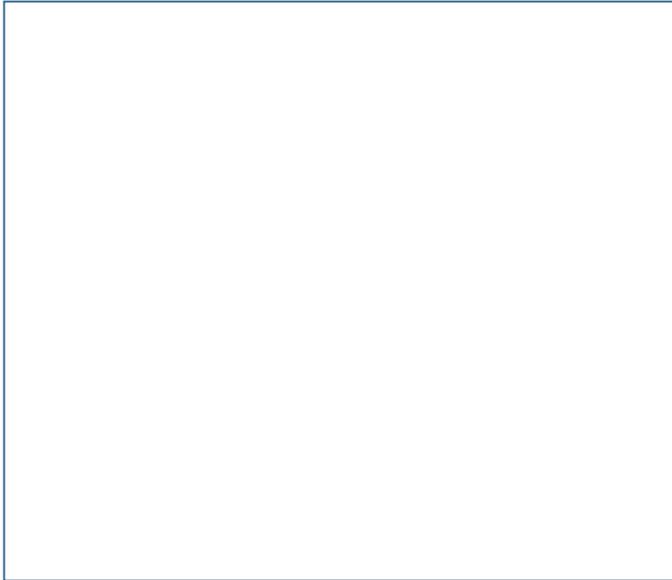
4. Engagement timing and frequency

How early in the project can you begin engaging with the community, and what plan can you implement to maintain regular and ongoing communication (e.g., quarterly updates)?



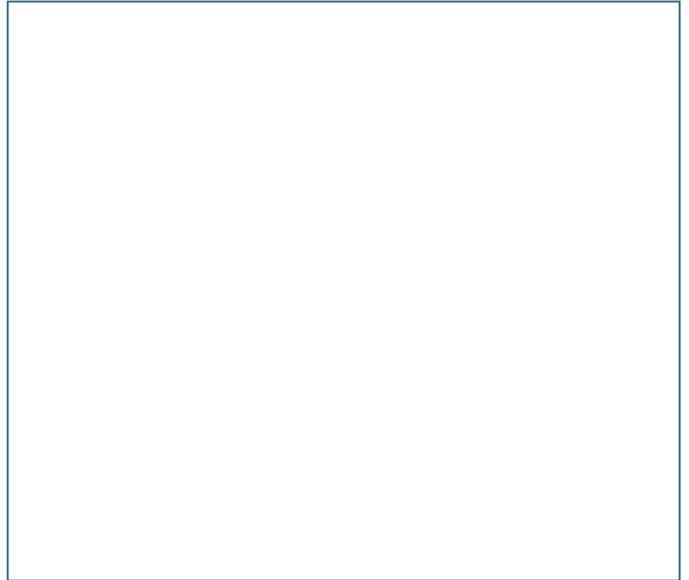
5. Accessible and inclusive feedback channels

What channels (surveys, forums, online platforms, etc.) will you offer to gather input, and how will you ensure these are accessible to all community members, including those with language and disability needs?



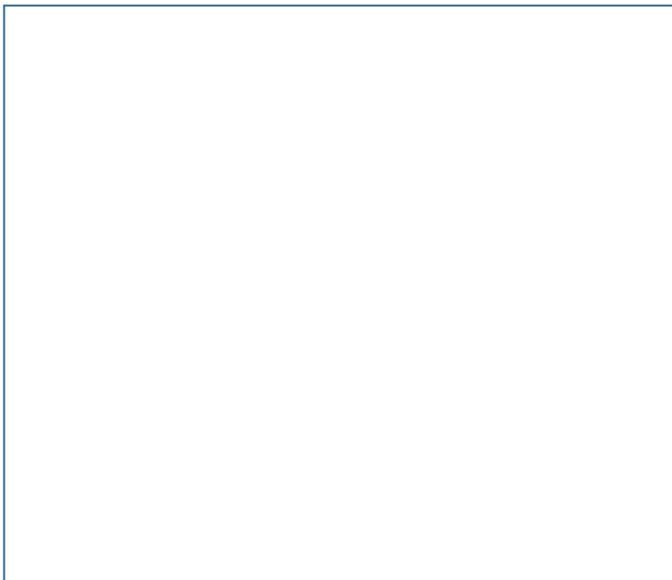
6. Demonstrating use of feedback

How will you outline and communicate the ways community feedback will be used in your decision-making, and what examples or case studies can you share to build credibility?



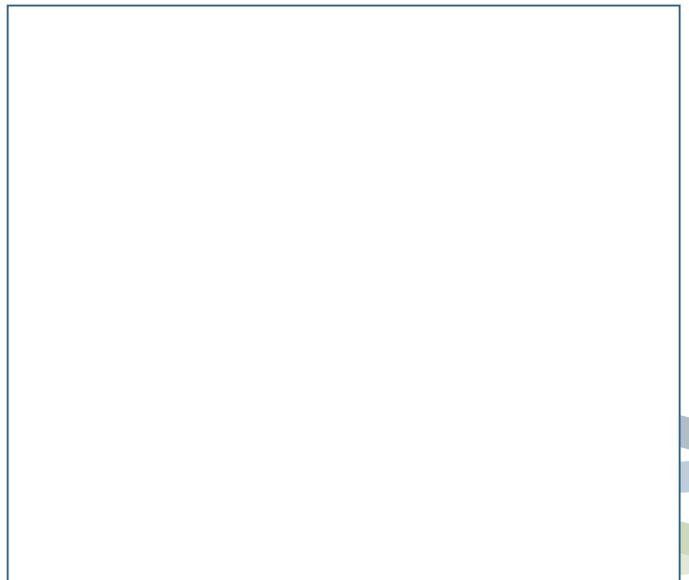
7. Accountability and follow-up

What mechanisms will you put in place to provide clear timelines and updates about regarding actions based on community feedback?



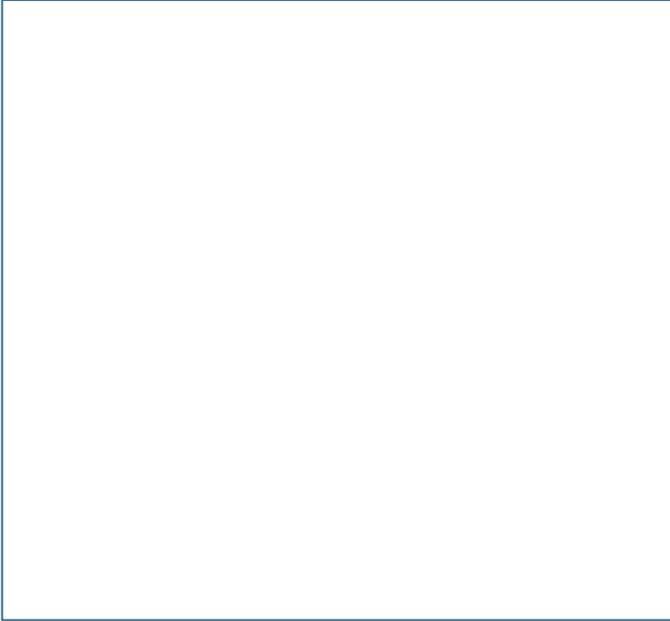
8. Community liaison appointment

Who will serve as the community liaison(s), and how will you ensure they are trusted, accessible, and consistently engaged with the community?



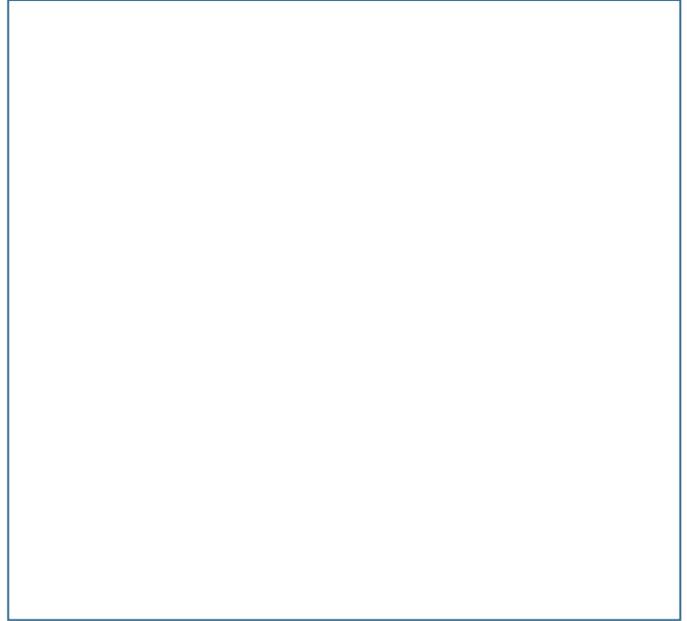
9. Data sharing and progress reporting

How will you transparently provide relevant data, report on how community input has influenced your decisions, and share any measurable environmental or health outcomes? How do you plan to share specific improvements or adjustments made because of community input?



10. Long-term commitment and partnerships

What long-term strategies can you implement to show your sustained commitment to environmental justice, and how can you build enduring partnerships with local leaders and organizations to maintain a strong community relationship?



BEST PRACTICES TO AVOID DUPLICATIVE OUTREACH EFFORTS

Outreach is a cornerstone of effective planning and project management, ensuring that diverse voices are heard and community needs are addressed. However, repeated or poorly coordinated outreach efforts can lead to duplicative or redundant efforts and “engagement fatigue,” where individuals and groups feel overwhelmed or disinterested due to redundant processes and a lack of results. The methods below foster meaningful collaboration, reduce redundancy, and help build trust and enthusiasm for projects and initiatives.

Coordinated engagement strategies

- Reduce duplication across projects and departments by integrating efforts and creating shared outreach events.
 - » Develop an inter-agency engagement calendar to identify overlapping initiatives.
 - » Conduct joint outreach sessions for related projects.
 - » Establish a single point of contact or engagement team to manage communications with stakeholders.

Comprehensive stakeholder mapping

- Develop a detailed inventory of stakeholders, their interests, their previous involvement in related projects, and related project outreach.
- Create a centralized database tracking stakeholders’ participation history.
 - » Make sure this history also tracks where previous outreach ended. Ideally, once stakeholder input is gathered, there should continue to be multiple points of contact around the decision-making process and what decisions were made.
 - » If stakeholders had been involved in prior outreach but were not informed of decisions or included in the decision-making process, they may be less motivated to participate in current or future outreach.

- » If you learn of a prior outreach process that did not complete the needed follow-up, see if you can finish that process. If not, ensure you are communicating your timeline and outreach points to the community, so they don’t feel like they are being used or not included.
 - Collaborate with other departments or agencies to share stakeholder lists.
 - Utilize GIS tools to visualize stakeholder regions and interests.

Leveraging existing community networks

- Partner with trusted local organizations to disseminate information and gather feedback to reduce the need for multiple direct engagements and building trust and credibility within communities.
 - » Collaborate with neighborhood associations, faith-based organizations, and advocacy groups.
 - » Provide these organizations with the tools to conduct outreach on your behalf.
 - » Recognize and support community leaders’ efforts to minimize over-reliance.

Employing digital engagement platforms (as appropriate)

- Use online tools to centralize and streamline outreach activities. Please note that this should not be the sole form of outreach, as every community has different internet access needs.
 - » Use online platforms for interactive mapping and multi-project input collection.
 - » Create a project hub where updates, surveys, and resources are consolidated.
 - » Apply data analytics to track participant input and identify areas of over-engagement.
 - » Use the online platform to communicate with participants once input is gathered. Show how that input is being used and how the community can be involved in decisions.

Strategic communication and messaging

- Ensure that communication about engagement opportunities is clear and purpose-driven, which demonstrates respect for stakeholders' time by articulating the need for their input, how their contributions will be used, how decisions and next steps will be communicated, and how they can be involved in the decision-making process.
 - » Clearly define the purpose and scope of each engagement effort.
 - » Share results from past engagements and share communication timeline that includes follow-up points to show impact and minimize repetitive questions.
 - » Use tailored communication channels to reach specific audiences without oversaturating others—this involves having a well-defined community you are trying to reach ([see pages 17-19](#)).

Phased engagement approaches

- Break down public participation into manageable phases with clear objectives, preventing stakeholders from being overwhelmed by too many simultaneous requests.
 - » Use milestone-based outreach tied to specific project phases.
 - » Share timelines upfront so stakeholders know when and how they'll be engaged and how follow up will happen after engagement.
 - » Limit the number of touchpoints for each phase while keeping communication open.

Monitoring and responding to feedback on engagement efforts

- Continuously gather input on the engagement process itself to identify and address signs of engagement fatigue early.
 - » Incorporate questions about engagement satisfaction in surveys or meetings.
 - » Adjust methods or schedules based on participants' preferences and suggestions.
 - » Regularly evaluate participation rates and sentiment to refine approaches.



BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Don't plan to do the engagement on your own.

- Since you've already identified who you're engaging, pay for trusted messengers within those communities to arrange, or help arrange, the engagement.

Engage people where they are.

- Meet the communities you want to engage when they aren't busy.
- Remove barriers to engagement that might exist.
 - » This includes lack of transportation, lack of childcare, and lack of food if you're meeting at traditional mealtimes. If you're meeting in-person, consider the accessibility of your space for the disability community and if you would be able to engage people virtually.
- Meet at venues relevant to the communities you're trying to engage.

Respect the expertise you are soliciting.

- You are doing community engagement for a reason, and typically that means you are looking for some sort of expertise from the community.
 - » Like any other time you solicit expertise, you should compensate those who are sharing their knowledge in a culturally relevant way; the trusted messengers you're working with should help with that.

Engagement work takes time. Plan to have long set-up timelines.

- Everyone has many demands on their time, so setting up an engagement and outreach strategy far in advance of when you need input is important to get high-quality engagement with a large number of stakeholders in attendance.

Make sure you're engaging at a point where the engagement can have impact.

- Do community engagement at a point where input can still be meaningfully incorporated and have impact on the work moving forward. Engaging when plans are already completed and community cannot have any impact on the work is not a good use of time for anyone involved and leads to a lack of trust.
 - » When setting out plan timelines, make sure to include community engagement points.

Be ready for community to ask for things that are different than what you were expecting, and think about how to build partnerships around that.

Clearly define why you're engaging, your goals for engagement, and the benefits the community will receive from engaging.

- Community members don't want to waste their time giving input that won't be used. Make sure you've clearly defined why you're engaging and what you want out of it before you start the work.
 - » Having clearly defined goals will allow you to better structure what your community engagement should be (e.g., one large open public meeting versus multiple focus groups) and how it will be incorporated into your overall work.
- Think about what benefits this engagement will have for the community participants. Pay a member of the community to discuss what you think the benefits will be and see if your perspectives align. If they don't, take time before the engagement process to make sure you truly understand how the community will benefit from it.

Share enough information before and during the engagement so you can get meaningful involvement. Recognize that some of what you learn may be unexpected.

- Getting meaningful engagement can take time and there may be things that come up that you were not expecting.
 - » Do the pre-work to think about how you'll react and what you'll do to address engagement that is unexpected.
 - » Make sure to communicate before or at the start of the engagement so the community can be informed and give better input.

When engaging, be transparent with the community about why you're doing this work.

- Since you have clearly defined why you want to engage the community, what your goals are for the engagement, and what you're going to do with the engagement, make sure to share that with the community.
- Being transparent about why you're doing this and how you plan to use what you learn helps to build trust and leads to better engagement.



Let the community know how you plan to use their input and have a plan for follow-up communication.

- Before engaging, make a plan for how the input will be used.
- During the engagement:
 - » Explain how you will use the community's input.
 - » Lay out the project timeline and discuss future touchpoints, i.e. when and how you'll communicate with the community about how their input was used, when you expect to reach outcomes, and when you plan to communicate those outcomes.
 - » Find out what communication methods are best for reaching this community.
- After the engagement, follow-up through the recommended communication methods.
 - » Let the community know how you used their input.
 - » Discuss any changes to the project timeline, especially if input influenced those changes.
 - » Inform the community about outcomes.

Avoid parachuting; work to build a strategy that prioritizes long-term engagement.

- By working with trusted messengers to build relationships with communities instead of just jumping in when you want input, you'll get better feedback, will likely be able to learn about issues sooner, and will be a better partner to your communities.

Explore deeper, longer-term relationships with specific communities in order to learn about smaller organizations doing more granular work.



MORE INFORMATION

Why we created this workbook

In 2023, the [Sustainable Growth Coalition](#) launched a project to create Environmental Justice Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for businesses. As the group dug into the work, we decided to first focus on community engagement and develop a tool that companies could use to begin or improve their efforts to connect with local communities affected by environmental injustices, integrate business practices that consider them, and measure the organization's impact. This goal came from member company feedback that environmental justice—and improved community engagement around it—was something they were interested in and wanted to do more of, but they did not always have a good starting point or next step.

We formed a smaller group to do this work, starting with a survey to gauge where the companies in our coalition stood in their journey. While we found members were engaging at varying levels, none reported being successful in an integrated environmental justice engagement effort. We then had conversations with local community organizers who were successful in engaging communities about environmental issues, including James Trice from the Public Policy Project, Carolina Ortiz from COPAL, and Sam Grant from Rainbow Research.

Following these discussions, the group came together to decide on the most useful tool for the project. We concluded an interactive workbook would be the best option for companies to initiate, develop, and implement a plan for engaging with environmental justice communities. SGC small group members worked with Environmental Initiative staff to develop an initial draft through most of 2024; however, during the development, we recognized we needed stronger community engagement in our own process. A panel of community organizers from various fields reviewed the workbook in the fall of 2024 and recommended significant changes. Once those were implemented, a second panel of community members from the Environmental Justice Coordinating Council did a final review of the workbook in early 2025.

We compensated and would like to thank all the community members who provided their feedback on this work, including Katherine Beechem, Cecilia Calvo, Roxanne Draughn, Mercedes Elder, Sam Grant, Kartumu King, Jayda Pounds, Terri Thao, Hillary Thomas, Jacqui Thomas, James Trice, Wendell Ward, and Pearl Warren.



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