



Community Engagement Guide

Office of Governor Kate Brown

Office of Equity & Racial Justice

Compiled By:

Shannon Singleton | Director of Equity & Racial Justice

Linda Roman | Racial Justice Council Policy Advisor

Daniel Altamirano Hernandez | Racial Justice Council Intern

Introduction

The Racial Justice Council Codification bill, HB 2167 (2021) was signed by the Governor and approved by the Oregon Legislature in 2021. The bill codifies the RJC, by including statute requirements for Governors and state agencies to engage with Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/x, Asian, Pacific Islander and Tribal communities as part of their budget and policy development process.

This engagement is essential to ensure implementing, developing, and integrating emerging and best practices that dismantle systemic and institutional racism.

To accomplish this, we must change how we listen to, engage with, respond to, and support Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/x, Asian, Pacific Islander and Tribal communities in Oregon and that equity and racial justice should be at the core of our decision-making models. Working side by side with community partners provides the process to be informed by community knowledge and improves the relevance of the effort.

This Community Engagement Guide is a resource to support Oregon state agencies by providing contextual information and effective practices for racial justice centered community engagement. This guide will aid in the facilitation of planning and implementing a community engagement strategy. Agencies will engage, solicit, and gather input from key community partners using various approaches, tools, and resources provided in this guide to inform agency request budgets and policies.

As supplemental information, each agency request budget shall include a Racial Equity Impact Statement (REIS), which must be developed in consultation with the Racial Justice Council and agency partners who are advancing racial justice and equity. The REIS must describe the impact of programs, policies, and budget modification on Oregonians who are Black, Indigenous, Latinx/a/o, Asian, Pacific Islander and Tribal communities.

Racial justice and equity require continuous effort to decentralize privilege and deconstruct white supremacy culture and norms at all levels of our governmental systems. We can start by making our agency budget development process transparent, centering the voices of those most impacted by our budget and policy decisions, and create space to develop authentic engagement for the public we serve. The REIS process is one step along the path to creating an Oregon where racial justice is actualized.

Definitions & Information *(Source: State of Oregon Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Action Plan 2021)*

Racial Equity: Insinuates closing the gaps so that race can no longer predict any person's success, which simultaneously improves outcomes for all. A core principle of the concept assumes that regardless of race, ethnicity, or the community in which they live, every individual can achieve their full potential in life.

Racial Justice: The ongoing process of practicing systematic fair treatment of people of all races that results in equitable opportunities and outcomes. Intentional supports and systems are incorporated to achieve and sustain racial equity, by proactively and preventively embedding anti-racism in all that we do and minimizing the negative, disproportionate outcomes experienced by communities of color. This includes transforming institutions and structures to create systems that provide the infrastructure for communities to thrive, through intentional integration of racial equity in every decision.

Equity/Equity Lens: Acknowledges that not all people, or all communities, are starting from the same place due to historic and current systems of oppression. Equity is the effort to provide different levels of supports based on an individuals or groups needs in order to achieve fairness in outcomes. Equity actionably empowers communities most impacted by systemic oppression and requires the redistribution of resources, power, and opportunity to those communities. Utilizing an equity lens consist of applying this perspective in every decision.

Inclusion: A state of belonging when persons of different backgrounds, experiences, and identities are valued, integrated, and welcomed equitably as decision-makers, collaborators, and colleagues. Ultimately, inclusion is the environment that organizations create to allow these differences to thrive.

Intersectionality: Coined by Professor Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989, this term describes the ways in which race, class, gender, and other aspects of our identity, "intersect" with one another, and inform the way in which individuals simultaneously experience oppression and privilege in their daily lives interpersonally and systemically.

Cultural Humility: Maintaining an interpersonal stance that is open to individuals and communities of varying cultures, in relation to aspect of the cultural identity most important to the person, by respecting the person as the cultural expert. Cultural humility can include a life-long commitment & mindset to self-critique about differences in culture and a commitment to be aware of and actively mitigate power imbalances between cultures.

Active listening: This proactive strategy demonstrates respect, trust, and empowerment. This requires individuals to listen to understand with empathy and sincerity, rather than listening to respond. This skill and method of listening is a continuous positive effort to engage fully in conversations. Use of reflection and affirmations are recommended over judgement and advice.

Historically and currently underserved and under-resourced populations: Because of systemic racism, racial disparities impact every part of our culture and economy, and the effects of our current struggles are more severe for communities of color and Tribal communities. Historically, there have been groups that have disproportionally experienced stigmatization, oppression, exclusion, and dismal. Racial equity considerations direct us to center those underserved and under-resourced groups in our plans and actions to promote and practice social justice and fairness. The following is a short but not exhaustive list of historically and currently underserved and under-resourced Oregonians, in no particular order:

Native Americans, members of Oregon’s nine federally recognized tribes, American Indians, Alaska Natives; Blacks, Africans, African Americans; Latinx/a/o, Hispanic; Asian, Pacific Islanders; Arab/Middle Eastern/North Africans; immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers; people without documentation, DACA, “Dreamers”; linguistically diverse; people with disabilities; LGBTQIA+; aging/older adults; economically disadvantaged; farmworkers, migrant workers.

Racial Justice & Equity x Community Engagement

Community engagement allows clear transparency and accountability to be incorporated into decision making processes; Intersected with racial justice and equity, this process should uplift and empower those most impacted in the community. It creates room in the process to advocate and address values, concerns, ideas and questions. As community space is created, attention is given to the voices that require elevation and the anti-racist practices needed to be adopted to further racial equity. This balanced approach leverages societal power dynamics and equitably values input, by allowing community members to influence and inform system practices through active participation. A community engagement process that centers racial justice and equity, additionally prioritizes Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/x, Asian, Pacific Islander and Tribal communities. Engagement at its core requires two-way participation, and involves sharing perspectives, and actively listening with the goal of generating mutual benefits. Community engagement gathers individuals to address shared concerns, propose solutions to shared problems, and as a result, bolster equitable and positive social change. *Meaningful* community engagement requires agencies to act with intentionality, humility, curiosity and respect. A meaningful community engagement process gives affected communities access to full information and the ability to influence the outcome.

As a priority, during the planning process, consideration should be given to how engagement looks like when you are engaging underserved and excluded communities. There must be intentionality to create a process that is equity centered and/or anti-racist. Some key factors that must be considered include power, transparency, resources, relationship building, and meeting people where they are.

As agencies begin to conceptualize plans for community engagement, there are some questions that should be answered to begin the work.

- What community engagement strategies and practices have been adopted in the past? What were their successes and challenges?
 - It is important to reflect on approaches utilized in the past to inform future efforts. What did you hear from community about how they wanted to engage? What was their feedback about your engagement process? By reflecting, agencies can describe and incorporate identified successful components – items the agency has done well or items that were well received by the community – into their established plan. Similarly, agencies can describe and modify challenging components, so that they are revised and affirmed in the overall approach.
- Who will be leading community engagement efforts at your agency?
 - Do the facilitators and conveners hold power within the organizational structure? How often will they be consulted with agency’s executive leadership? Will this be an individual, co-led, or team effort? Assessing agency capacity prior to engaging in the

process is instrumental to be set up for success. Confirming roles and responsibilities early will allow for a smoother and more efficient process.

- Are there any special agency considerations that should be kept in mind?
 - This applies only if there are factors that will impeded, conflict or perhaps intersect with your community engagement plan. Are you currently engaging in a public participatory process that could conflict or perhaps augment your efforts? Are there any staff transitions that should be addressed to make sure you have a full team? How will these practices be embedded broader within your agency? It is important to keep these considerations in mind as you develop you plan, because the community deserves to work with agencies at their fullest potential who commit to the work.
- What tools and skillsets are needed for your agency's success?
 - Is providing compensation useful to build capacity for participation? If our goal is to engage with historically and currently underserved and under-resourced communities, we must counteract societal challenges with equitable tools and resources. What other barriers can be addressed through the implementation of tools or strategies? What has prevented some communities from engaging in the past and how can it be addressed? Asking community leaders for their input is a method to gather this information.

Tips & Key Considerations

There are tips, key considerations, and strategies that can be applied to help determine the *best* plan for the agency.

Power | To talk about racial equity, we must talk about inherent power dynamics. An intentional shift in power dynamics for the purpose of making changes that support justice and equity should be implemented.

Transparency | Trust requires a clear understanding between parties that embeds accountability. Being responsive, timely and candid will supplement a meaningful relationship with community partners.

Empowerment | Communities and community partners should feel a sense of ownership in the process, that respects their input with dignity. This can be addressed through intentional inclusion of communities.

Longevity of engagement | Commitment and sustainability are factors that can be analyzed through the longevity of engagement. Implementing a meaningful engagement process requires attention to be given to the amount of time committed to the effort. Community partners should be given the appropriate time to provide their valuable feedback and there should be plans to continue these efforts consistently moving forward.

Relationship Rapport | The most effective form of involvement is personal interaction, based on an established and trusting relationship. This can lead to more effective communication.

Outreach | As a general practice, going into community to gather input rather than expecting the community to come to you is a good principle. Outreach to people in their common environments.

Engagement variety | Individuals engage to different levels depending on the platform and medium. Incorporating a mix of visual, print, auditory and interactive components will allow the public to better

comprehend and respond with meaningful engagement. (art, maps, videos, models, polls, activities, etc.) Meaningful involvement ensures impacted communities not only have the technical ability but also the resources to meaningfully participate.

Safety | All community engagement processes should be safe for all participants.

Accessibility | All community engagement processes should be accessible for all participants

Common ground | Achieving group consensus is challenging, and at times, not possible. The more complex a topic is, the higher the chance for conflict, indicating that a more interactive technique would be fitting.

Reliable Information | Participants need good, clear and comprehensive disclosure of all relevant information. This information should cover issues, ideas, and perspectives and be presented in easy-to-understand terminology, not agency jargon.

Flexible and Efficient | Keeping the process flexible to allow responsiveness to change, while balancing the efficiency of the process by utilizing relevant methods to reduce risk.

Appendix A contains a table for levels of community engagement. The further to the right of the spectrum indicates a higher level of influence the community has over these public decisions. Levels should be determined based on contextual information and clearly demonstrate how they equitably engage communities and inform a racial equity impact statement. Feedback will be gathered from the Racial Justice Council to help improve and ratify community engagement plans that center racial justice and equity.

Planning for Community Engagement

1. **Background information.** Include context and any learning from previous community projects that are relevant to the REIS and community being engaged.
2. **Clearly defined engagement purpose.** Explain the reason input/participation is necessary (what problem is the community helping to solve? What decision does the agency need to make?) This will determine the engagement methods you select and also help when evaluating your community engagement activities and provides measures of success. This process also involves defining the community partners affected,).
3. **Engagement principles** to guide how you're going to engage with the community. These can be based on the following values:
 - a. Core Values
 1. Address the legacies of racism
 2. People and relationships matter
 3. People of color play a central role
 - b. Value commitments
 1. Accountability and transparency
 2. Advancing racial equity
 3. Practicing humility
 - c. Project specific considerations:
 1. Share power
 2. Commit resources

3. Commit time
 4. Flexibility
 5. Upending status quo
 6. Openness to public criticism
4. **Engagement objectives:** An agency should be able to describe why they are engaging communities and provide rationale for the methods in which they are doing so. Define the objectives that the engagement process will achieve? In order to sustain a goal of racial justice and equity, these questions should be considered not only at the beginning of the process, but throughout the entirety of the effort. How are these efforts supporting the promotion of racial justice and equity? Objectives could relate to a range of potential outcomes, including:
- a. building community capacity to understand planning and development issues
 - b. building stronger relationships with community partners
 - c. seeking innovative solutions for planning and development challenges
 - d. making better decisions about planning and development.
5. **Analyze context, risks, challenges, and mitigation strategies.**
- a. What is the local, regional, state and national context that will affect the engagement process? This could involve exploring local demographic and economic characteristics, access to technology, level of understanding of the issues, response to previous engagement processes, etc.
 - b. Think through any potential risks, rate the likelihood and impact of each risk and consider ways to reduce any risks. This is beneficial for the project and the community.
6. **Partner analysis:** who are the community partners and groups that could be interested in this program/budget? How might they be affected? Include details of all community partners, internal and external, their level and nature of interest in the program/budget and level of engagement. Consider the contribution that community partners can make to the project. Also think about how to provide access to a diverse range of community members including those from BIPOC communities, those with a disability, youth, people from different cultures, and those who have little time to contribute such as busy parents. This will also help you select what methods you will use to engage with them and build relationships with them. Community partners' objectives should be included within the overall vision for the process. This process is mutually beneficial and community members should feel like their time is valued, by coming to agreement as to why this benefits them as well. Utilize other resources, studies, and gap analysis tools to identify if there are gaps or communities that are not already engaged in your agency's work. Some common examples of tools for analysis include:
- a. Community asset inventory/mapping: What resources exist in the community?
 - b. Disparate impact analysis: How will these actions impact the community directly & indirectly?
 - c. Demographic analysis: What data should be used?
7. **Level of engagement.** Please see the Appendix A for the spectrum of community engagement adapted from materials provided by The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2),

Oregon Department of Education, and Oregon Department of Transportation. It will aid agencies in constructing a community engagement plan. Agencies will need to specify approaches and tasks they plan to utilize, along with the assigned facilitator, intended goal outcomes and timeframes. Will you be promising to inform, consult, involve, collaborate or empower the community? This could also include identifying the phases of a project or process where the particular levels of engagement will apply.

8. **Negotiables and non-negotiables.** What can the community influence? What is in and out of scope for the project? Who holds which decision-making rights, and defining what is non-negotiable (i.e., what the community cannot influence) and what is negotiable (i.e., what the community can influence). This helps to manage the community's expectations about their involvement in the project.
9. **Key messages** to use when communicating with the community about the engagement process and the program/budget investment.
10. **Engagement phases:** Have you described the project phases and timeframes? This involves describing the phases of your project, and the associated timeframes, and Community engagement toolkit for planning how the engagement process supports these phases and complements the overall delivery of the project.
11. **Data collection and analysis:** Have you determined what data are required to support the decision? This process involves identifying how community input will be collected and in what format, and how it will be used to inform the decision. Measurement strategies can be developed alongside community to decide how racial justice and equity will be considered successful and achieved.
12. **Engagement methods.** Here's where the rubber hits the road in your community engagement plan. Identify how and when you will engage with each community partner. What are the tools you will use to achieve your engagement objectives? This will include communication methods to raise awareness or understanding about the program/budget investment, how feedback will be provided to the community about the engagement process, what has been heard, and how community feedback and input will be considered.
13. **Resources:** Determine what financial and human resources are needed, or are available, to deliver the defined engagement methods.
14. **Implementation plan:** Define a schedule for how and when the engagement will occur, which should be linked to the engagement phases of the project. It is important to keep in mind that outreach is a part of community engagement, and anti-racist and equitable practices should be used in communication efforts. Challenges such as language and technology accessibility are common examples that should be addressed. A roadmap should be available to share with individuals, to aid the implementation of a community engagement plan and provide transparency/accountability. Examples include a table, calendar, list that include planned activities and their intended objectives (how will success be measured?).
15. **Closing the loop.** Identify how you will report back to the community about the community engagement findings and how their input shaped the program/budget investment? This is

important for building trust with the community for future projects. In addition to an individual or team serving as a point of contact, a medium should be identified to provide constant communication through the process. Agencies can utilize emails, newsletters, summary reports, social media platforms, videos, and interactive web pages to inform their work.

16. **Evaluation.** Agencies must reflect on their efforts, incorporate their findings and report how they intersect with the investments, policies and practices. Community partners should also receive communication about how their input was utilized. What significant tools, techniques, or strategies can be used universally by the agency? What spaces exist that could benefit from this informative approach? What worked well and what learnings can you carry forward for your next community engagement project? Did you meet the engagement purpose and engagement objectives of your community engagement plan? How satisfied are the community partners and the community engagement project team with the engagement process, the quality of the input received, and how well the engagement program achieved your stated objectives.

Sources

The following materials were utilized in the construction of this guide; Frameworks, language, information, and definitions were informed by these sources.

“IAP2 Resources.” *International Association for Public Participation*,
<https://www.iap2.org/?page=resources>.

State of Oregon. Office of Governor Kate Brown. *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Action Plan 2021: A Roadmap to Racial Equity and Belonging*.

Oregon Department of Transportation. Strategic Business Services. *Public Engagement Guidebook*.

Oregon Department of Education. *Student Investment Account: Community Engagement Toolkit*.

State of Oregon. Environmental Justice Task Force. *Environmental Justice: Best Practices for Oregon’s Natural Resource Agencies*

How to write a community engagement plan. February 23, 2021
<https://articulous.com.au/how-to-write-a-community-engagement-plan/>

Community engagement toolkit for planning. State of Queensland. First published by the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, July 2017.
<https://dilgpprd.blob.core.windows.net/general/Communityengagementtoolkit.pdf>

REGIONAL SUPPORTIVE HOUSING IMPACT FUND REPORT, Equitable Evaluation Framework and Governance Recommendations. April 2021
[RSHIF Equitable Evaluation and Governance Report.pdf](#)

APPENDIX A

→ left to right = Increasing level of public impact

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
INTENT / UNINTENDED IMPACT	Keeping communities updated Underestimating community wisdom	Receiving community input Gatekeeping community engagement	Meaningfully engage community voice Not listening to community voice	Sharing power with communities Derailed due to lack of relational trust or imbalance of power dynamics	Communities lead and own the work Expectation of community to do all work or decision not respected
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions	To work directly with the public through the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	To place final decision making in the hands of the public
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	"We will keep all informed"	"We will keep all informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision"	"We will work with all to ensure that concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feed on how public input influenced the decision"	"We will look to all for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate advice and recommendations into the decision to the maximum extent possible"	"We will implement what is decided"
ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fact sheets - Open forums - Presentations - Reports - Videos - Social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Input sessions - Focus groups - Interviews - Surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interactive workshops - Community organizing - Advisory committees - Visioning sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MOU w/ CBOS - Collaborative community forums - Resource and funding allocation for community organizing - Leadership development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community led efforts - Participatory action and budgeting - Hiring community-consultants

Sources: The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), Oregon Department of Education, and Oregon Department of Transportation

Additional Resources

Oregon DEI Action Plan 2021: Racial Equity Toolkit (pp. 35–40)

Oregon DEI Action Plan 2021: Inclusive Language for Oregon’s Diverse Communities (p. 45)

Dismantling Racism: White Supremacy Culture.

([https://www.dismantlingracism.org/uploads/4/3/5/7/43579015/okun - white sup culture.pdf](https://www.dismantlingracism.org/uploads/4/3/5/7/43579015/okun_-_white_sup_culture.pdf))