

Draft *Blueprint for Equitable Engagement*



Introduction

The mission of the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department (NCR) is “Engaging Communities for a Better Minneapolis.” The Blueprint for Equitable Engagement is the roadmap to better achieve that mission between 2015 and 2020.

NCR supports stronger community engagement by and with the City of Minneapolis to ensure just and fair inclusion of those impacted by City decision-making. By seeking out and facilitating the participation of those potentially affected by or interested in a City decision following the Core Principles of Community Engagement, the City can better achieve its stated goal of eliminating disparities so all Minneapolis residents can participate and prosper.

Description

A multi-year strategy to ensure an innovative and equitable engagement system for the City of Minneapolis

Vision: Innovative, just and fair engagement that connects residents and government to achieve the One Minneapolis goal: Disparities are eliminated so all Minneapolis residents can participate and prosper.

Background: Equity will only result from community engagement that actively seeks participation based on just and fair inclusion of those impacted by decision-making. For the purposes of the Blueprint, we are using the following City definition of equity:

Equity: Fair and just opportunities and outcomes for all people.

Racial Equity: the development of policies, practices and strategic investments to reverse racial disparity trends, eliminate institutional racism, and ensure that outcomes and opportunities for all people are no longer predictable by race.

The city of Minneapolis is growing and becoming more diverse, requiring expanding and creative practices of inclusive participation and community engagement. To eliminate inequities, the City and community must work together to create a city that provides abundant opportunities for everyone.

Inclusive and equitable participation meets people where they are to ensure that all community voices are sought and valued and that decisions reflect the communities which they impact. The Blueprint for Equitable Engagement will promote and support inclusive participation in the City’s community engagement work:

1. Neighborhood organizations: The Neighborhood and Community Relations Department (NCR) will promote and support neighborhood organizations' outreach efforts for inclusion and to ensure that neighborhood board decision-making processes are fair and that use of resources is equitable and inclusive. The City will include the 70 neighborhood organizations as partners in addressing racial disparities in our community.
2. City's board and commissions: NCR and the Neighborhood & Community Engagement Commission (NCEC) will promote and support the work of City to meet its goal of having the advisory and planning boards and commissions reflect the diversity of the community.
3. City enterprise outreach and engagement. NCR and NCEC will promote and support the community engagement efforts of City departments and connect this work with the efforts stated above.

Framework:

PURPOSE:

The Blueprint for Equitable Engagement will guide NCR's work to:

1. Build capacity for all people to participate through a variety of engagement strategies.
2. Build and support the capacity of neighborhood organizations to effectively manage their operations and to fully engage residents.
3. Ensure broad inclusion in decision-making, program development and service delivery.
4. Recruit, support, develop, and appoint people of color and people with disabilities to neighborhood and City advisory boards to ensure accurate representation of the city's diverse communities.

RESULTS:

Expected outcomes for the Blueprint for Equitable Engagement include the following:

1. Greater understanding of issues, opportunities and impacts for decision-making.
2. Expanded capacity to address equity with community partnerships.
3. Increased community capacity.
4. Increased decision making capacity in neighborhood organizations and the City's boards and commissions to address equity.
5. Transparency.
6. Accountability.

Blueprint Objectives

OBJECTIVE 1: Neighborhoods 2020: Clarify Role and Expectations of Neighborhood Organizations with Measurable Performance Standards

The role of neighborhood organizations has not substantially changed for over 20 years. As the city has become more diverse and the issues and opportunities have changed, it is time to review the role of neighborhood organizations. In addition, in order to be effective, neighborhood organizations must have strong and positive relationships, recruit and develop new leadership, and preserve their integrity with the community, other agencies

and elected officials. The City will review its expectations, roles and supportive services for neighborhood organizations.

Activities:

1. Evaluate and clarify City expectations of neighborhoods:
 - Clarify purpose, role and value of neighborhood work.
 - Establish measurable operational standards.
 - Consolidate Neighborhood Revitalization Plan (NRP) and Community Participation Plan (CPP) program activities.
 - Expand Neighborhood Priority Plan usage.
 - Establish training requirements for CPP program.
 - Provide expanded training for neighborhood groups (both on-line and in-person) which may include:
 1. Financial oversight and management.
 2. Board roles and responsibilities.
 3. Achieving diversity and inclusion.
 4. Understanding equity.
 5. Non-profit's role with elections and voter engagement.
 6. Meeting preparation and facilitation.
 7. CPP eligibility.
 8. IAP2/Core principles of community engagement.
 9. Working in a cultural context.
 10. Language interpretation and translation.
 11. Americans with Disabilities Act.
 12. Strategic planning.
 13. Meeting the CPP standards and expectations.
 14. History of Minneapolis neighborhoods.
 - Support educational partnerships to expand training opportunities (educational institutions, CURA, etc.).
2. Update/develop supportive policy framework:
 - CPP Standards and Expectations.
 - Translation/Interpretation expectation.
 - Audit Policy.
 - Program Compliance Policy.
 - ADA Policy.
3. Encourage and incentivize equitable and creative community engagement and cultural outreach through financial and program funding.

OBJECTIVE 2: Expand Cultural Engagement Strategies with Defined Outcomes

Promote and support engagement strategies to reach and include impacted under-represented groups. Understand and value the roles of various community organizations or engagement systems and to identify gaps or opportunities for growth and innovation.

Activities:

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1. Expand successful cultural engagement strategies comprehensively across all racial and under-represented communities. Current engagement efforts with NCR (Latino, African American, American Indian, SE Asian, East African, Seniors and People with Disabilities) need to have consistent levels of success.
 2. Integrate existing NCR programs and staff to better align and support engagement work of neighborhood organizations, cultural communities and the City enterprise.
 3. Support a learning culture of community engagement that allows risk taking, challenging of assumptions, measurement and assessment.
 4. Recognize the value of cultural engagement at the same level as neighborhood organizations.

OBJECTIVE 3: Increase Capacity of Community Engagement with Community Partnerships

Community partnerships are vital. Strengthening and supporting partnerships with other organizations with a similar vision and values will provide new capacity, insight and creative opportunities to align resources for greater collective impact.

Activities:

1. Expand partnership with CURA to align resources and programming.
2. Expand partnerships with funders to align resources and programming such as McKnight, Minneapolis Foundation, etc.
3. Support and expand leadership development programs for communities of color with community partners:
 - Expand One Minneapolis Fund.
 - Support partnerships with leadership development programs for communities of color such as the Boards and Commissions Leadership Institute.
4. Seek out and support grant opportunities for new or existing initiatives.

OBJECTIVE 4: Ensure a Value and Principle-Based Community Engagement Approach for the City Enterprise

The City's community engagement work needs to support the goals and values adopted by the City Council and the Principles of Community Engagement.

Activities:

1. Provide training and support for the spectrum of engagement to the City Enterprise:
 - IAP2 Training/Core Principles of Community Engagement.
 - Cultural context training.
 - Interdepartmental community engagement liaison network (LEP, ADA and engagement support).
2. Examine board and commission operating practices from a cultural context and make recommendations that support sustaining greater diversity.
3. Increase accessibility of City meetings (time and location).
4. Support City Clerk's office with policy and ordinance changes that recruit, train and appoint people of color and people with disabilities to city advisory boards to ensure accurate representation of the city's diverse communities.
5. Evaluate current engagement practices of City departments and make recommendations on improvements.

OBJECTIVE 5: Evaluate and Celebrate Progress

There is a clear need to expand the community engagement evaluation techniques and ensure that information and data collected is used to both to communicate the impact of the work and to further support improvements.

Activities:

1. Establish and support an independent, peer-supported recognition system that celebrates best practices among neighborhood organizations.
2. Expand the reporting mechanisms for neighborhood work that effectively report on their community activities, engagement and outreach work.
3. Identify new measures for tracking community engagement activity.
4. Conduct periodic evaluations of the community engagement work utilizing external and independent program evaluators.
5. Incorporate recommendations from the neighborhood program evaluation (2015).