

External Innovation Advisory Workgroup – Evaluation

September 30, 2015

Attendees: Gary Marschke, Multnomah County Office of Citizen Involvement; Greg Greenway, City of Portland Public Involvement Advisory Committee; Doug Zenn, Zenn Associates & IAP2; Donita Sue Fry, NAYA & Coalition for Communities of Color; Jennifer Ball, Hansa Research; Mike Dahlstrom, Washington County; Melissa De Lyser, Washington County; Cynthia Alamillo; Peggy Morell, Metro; Becca Uherbelau, Metro; Heather Coston, Metro; Erin Pidot, Metro & Center for Public Service at Portland State University

Driving question: How can a public agency know if it has meaningfully and successfully engaged underrepresented communities in its decision-making?

Meeting goals:

- Introduce community-sourced evaluation
- Review and contribute to the list of measures that agencies/organizations can use to evaluate its progress
- Brainstorm ways that we can collect this type of information

Meeting notes:

I. Welcome and introductions

- Everyone introduced themselves
- Peggy provided overview of where we are in innovation process, vision and focus areas

II. Review agenda and goals for today

- Erin reviewed goals and agenda
- Gary – suggested that we be more inclusive in language to describe goals for meeting and project - add “Metro and others can use” around language describing list of community-sourced measures

III. Introduction to community-sourced evaluation and key terms

- We are talking about evaluating an agency’s ability to meaningfully and successfully engage underrepresented communities in decision-making
- Shift at Metro towards involving community in evaluation process – not just in innovation work, but other projects - Erin can provide more information if interested
- See slide 7 for ‘what is it?’ and ‘why is it important?’
- See slide 8 for key terms defined for purposes of our work together – measure, indicator, data collection strategy and guiding principle

IV. Review and contribute to measures for agencies to evaluate progress

- See meeting handout with table of community-sourced measures – drawn from several sources including feedback from Community Summit, collection of community advocate reflections on public engagement experiences, and previous innovation team meetings
- How do these measures feel? What’s missing? Would this kind of list be useful as a resource for you?

- Mike – can we get copies of summaries that you drew from to create this list?
 - o Erin will email documents to group
- Gary – first three bullets from agency-wide are really telling
- Donita – first bullet under decision-making – who are decision makers and staff? What pathways exist for community members to become decision makers? New measure should be included - decision-makers and staff reflect diversity of community
- Mike – another measure - we understood how input would be used at beginning and how actually used at the end
- Gary - Include something about number and breadth of engagement opportunities. Different ways to be involved than meetings
- Doug – replace meetings with activities
- Where resources come into play – if we needed to do more, can we do it with less?
- Jennifer – better understanding of resources and priorities within Metro would be helpful – so understand limitations/constraints
- Donita – list feels prescriptive – instead, should say ‘we trust that you know how to do it best’ and allow community to do engagement.
- Melissa – feels top-down
- Jennifer – not just our community was compensated, but our community was recognized
- Mike – we’ve used similar questions in long-term engagement to build relationships. Nothing about relationships included on list – established, enhanced, sustained relationships
- Cynthia – how can Metro handle conflict? Create space where people can talk about freely without judgment
- Cynthia – making sure community will know what will happen after process is over. And add some quantitative questions – ex. One new org joined us
- Greg – these all feel related to process, should include quality of outcomes.
 - o Does community feel they had influence over outcomes?
 - o Are we building more trust and relationships?
 - o Project delivery – are they going smoother? Better projects? Are they more innovative?
 - those kinds of agency-wide things aren’t captured
- Community capacity itself as an outcome
- Donita – building public service culture → bringing a restorative approach to work, recognizing some loss has happened through Metro’s projects
- Gary – need to demonstrate respect for the past
- Gary – “illusion of inclusion” – if sell people opportunity to influence, you have to be very clear about definition of that → come expecting impact - conflicting expectations
- Cynthia - Measures have to match purpose of project
- Jen – nothing about advocacy captured in measures
 - o I am walking away feeling that I can share info and willing to pull other people in
 - o I know how to continue to be engaged in this subject
 - o Would you be likely to encourage others to participate? To pull others in?
 - o Can I rally support for project?
 - o Am I likely to participate again?

- Mike – other measures: Worth my time, my input was heard and used, I can recommend to others
- Donita – measure of success is willingness/interest of community members to engage with Metro = capacity building – community members approaching organization/agency to get involved
- Gary – if we have an advocacy group with an agenda or perspective we see “enhanced access” as a successful measure

V. How can we collect this data?

- Doug – have you done Opt In survey on public engagement this year yet?
- Heather – not yet
- Mike – we (Washington County) collect this type of data. Project specific and CPO transition. Perfect time for discussion and Metro right agency to collect so we can get holistic region-wide perspective. We are willing to share.
- Mike - Efforts that could be of tremendous value – standardizing measures and share regionally
- Donita – 15 orgs from communities of color are getting training from NW Health Foundation and Kaiser on evaluation
 - o “decolonizing evaluation systems” – move towards relational rather than linear world view in how we collect data
 - o Storytelling
- Erin – what would it look like for an agency to collect stories as part of evaluation?
- Donita – video storytelling. Room set aside so people can come and talk about experience related to climate change, transportation, etc. – catalogue of stories.
- Donita – Community Gona and Youth Gona – 2-days in community together telling stories – priorities come out of these → shape work around this
- Data can be collected through online surveys, one-on-one interviews
- Melissa – info collected in survey tends to be dehumanized – lose emotions. Storytelling helps convey emotion not captured in prose. Data – not personal, not human. Video – hear story in person’s own words.
- Gary – Vision PDX – 4 narrative questions - had to put responses in buckets – painful experience.
 - o Project – went to community with money and asked them to figure out how to get responses
 - o Theater example – actors asked audience 4 questions throughout the play
 - o Reached 15,000 people
- Donita – Vision PDX was a good experience – felt heard, build capacity. Problem was that after this, asked to participate in other similar engagement efforts. Community didn’t understand why had to do it again.
- Mike – benefit of doing this work collectively to lessen burden on CBOs
- Gary – will find best answers by reaching hardest to reach
- Cynthia – meeting in a box is a way for remote communities to weigh in
- Mike – has experience with that, but not that successful
- Heather – go even further and have community decide what tools should be in the box

- Greg – agency data, looking across all programs and seeing where agency is putting resources
 - o Where are contracts to facilitate orgs engagement
 - o Not coming in with your staff and telling how it will be done
- Jennifer – sat on committee to select CBO to run Community Summit - RFPs for community engagement missing evaluation of their own work – suggestion to include this as requirement for RFP
- Donita – Should look at “Diversity and civic leadership” model from City of Portland
 - o City funds five culturally-specific partners to build capacity within communities in the city
- Greg – does Metro aggregate public engagement data across agency?
- Becca – standardization of demographic data is one step Metro is taking in that direction – we can share this with you after the meeting
- Greg – staff survey – level of confidence staff has in work they are doing, where training is needed
- Donita – Connect to Nature grant – produce community engagement report
- We don’t have system in place to get benefit of work being done
- Jennifer – is there a regional bulletin board of engagement activities to look for opportunities to collaborate?
- Gary – no, but check out CNRG – newsletter about public engagement network

VI. Next steps

- Erin will send out meeting survey, when2meet poll to schedule next meeting, and meeting notes