



Public engagement quick guide

Including information on Title VI and Environmental Justice compliance

Regional flexible funds 2019-21

Introduction

This guide is meant as a quick resource for regional flexible funds applicants to support grantee efforts to conduct meaningful opportunities for the public – including those who have been historically underrepresented – to be involved in the local planning process. The guide provides examples of the tools and techniques that grantees may use – or may have used – to communicate with and receive input from the public. For additional information, download Metro’s full Public Engagement Guide at oregonmetro.gov/public-engagement-guide, or contact Metro staff.

Best practices for inclusive public engagement

Effective public engagement takes careful planning. The first step is to identify the purpose of the program or project and the anticipated level of public engagement. A well-defined public engagement objective for each phase of the program or project is important to identify the appropriate engagement tools and activities.

Public engagement purpose statements:

- The purpose of this project is...
- This project will result in...
- The purpose of public engagement for this project is to...
- Members of the public who should be engaged are...
- The public engagement will be successful if...

Identifying participants

Before a program or project-specific engagement plan is developed, a stakeholder analysis should be conducted to identify the viewpoints and interests of those impacted by the project and to ensure meaningful involvement opportunities for all people. This necessitates identifying a broad range of participants, including:

- business leaders
- community- and faith-based organizations, neighborhood associations and civic organizations
- historically underrepresented populations in which demographic, geographic or economic characteristics impede or prevent their access to public services.

Historically underrepresented populations include those with limited English proficiency, diverse cultural backgrounds, low-income or disability, seniors and youth. To identify underrepresented communities for your project, it is helpful to:

- compile and map data from the U.S. Census Bureau, school districts and other available sources (Metro has resources to help agencies who may not have the staff or technical resources for this)
- field check and determine gaps in data by reviewing results with local cities and counties, community organizations, neighborhood associations and civic organizations.

To engage communities that have a limited ability or comfort speaking English, consider the following.

- Build relationships and trust with communities that have a limited ability to speak English through partnerships with community-based organizations.
- Speak the language or find a trusted community leader to speak on your behalf.
- Use culturally specific images and limited text to help convey the message.

After developing a scope and budget, a program- or project-specific public engagement plan should be created. Based on the desired project outcome and identified key audiences, the specific engagement plan will include:

- the tools and techniques to achieve the outcome
- a description of how follow-up with audiences and participants will occur
- identify success measures for each outreach strategy.

Identifying public engagement techniques and tools

There are many methods to engage people – everything from written information to booths at farmer's markets and online surveys to listening posts. Most tools can be adapted to the needs of specific populations and some can include demographic information collection to provide feedback about whether a population is being adequately engaged (see Attachment B for more information).

Working with advisory committees

Depending on the level of public engagement the project has identified, advisory committees made up of representative stakeholders can provide advice and input into the planning and decision-making process. A committee can also be a forum for developing consensus or compromise on controversial issues, developing criteria for project decisions and communicating project information to their communities.

Milestones, deliverables and evaluation

With a wide range of stakeholders involved, it is important to monitor and evaluate a public engagement process, identify issues, measure success and adjust plans accordingly throughout the process.

Developing a timeline with key milestones, target dates and engagement activities will help keep the project on track, and creating a tracking system for engagement results and how public feedback was incorporated or responded to will help with evaluating the project's outcomes. At the conclusion of an engagement process, use quantitative and qualitative metrics to evaluate the engagement process, report back to the public and improve future engagement processes.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and Executive Order on Environmental Justice

Recipients of federal funds are required to comply with:

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, which includes showing they are not excluding, denying benefits or discriminating based on race, color or national origin (including people with limited English proficiency)
- Executive Order on Environmental Justice, which includes showing how they identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of programs, policies and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.

The law and executive order require specific care in regards to communities of color, people with limited English proficiency and people with low income.

These requirements can be broken down into three phases: identifying populations, engaging populations and analyzing the effects of a project for these populations.

Identifying populations

As stated above, to identify underrepresented communities for your project, it is helpful to:

- compile and map data from the U.S. Census Bureau, school districts and other available sources (Metro has resources to help agencies who may not have the staff or technical resources for this)
- field check and determine gaps in data by reviewing results with local cities and counties, community organizations, neighborhood associations and civic organizations.

Engaging populations

When planning, implementing and documenting an engagement strategy, develop and demonstrate specific efforts to engage the communities of color, people with limited English proficiency and people with low income that could be affected by your project (both its construction and its results). This engagement should be at least to the “involve” level of the IAP2 spectrum of public participation (see Attachment A).

Analyzing the effects of projects for these populations

Analysis should demonstrate that there is not an inequitable distribution of benefits and burdens for these populations compared to those for other residents. Ideally, at least part of the analysis would connect directly what was heard from these communities about their aspirations and concerns to the benefits and burdens used in the analysis. Any finding of inequitable distribution of benefits and burdens must include documentation justifying the project and showing there is no less discriminatory alternative.

Connecting public engagement with project development and implementation

Engaging the public – including those who have been historically underrepresented – is an ongoing and iterative process that begins with identifying the need for the project through the implementation of the project. For the regional flexible funds solicitation process, agencies should be prepared to summarize how they have engaged and continue to engage the public. This section is intended to aid in the completion of **Appendix A – Environmental Justice Compliance: Public engagement and non-discrimination certification** and help agencies identify additional budget needs for public engagement and Title VI- and Environmental Justice-related engagement and analysis.

Transportation or service plan development

During development of a transportation plan or service plan, agencies take a jurisdiction- or service area-wide look at transportation needs. During this process, it is expected public engagement will inform transportation needs and aspirations, which result in the projects for the plan. This process includes identifying and engaging underrepresented populations – particularly those identified in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and the Executive Order on Environmental Justice (people of color, people with limited English proficiency and people with low income).

Documentation of efforts made in general public engagement and those made to identify and engage underrepresented populations during this process can support applications for regional flexible funding of projects that have not completed project development and the project-specific public engagement and Title VI- and Environmental Justice-related engagement and analysis addressed below.

Project development

During project development, agencies examine the area potentially affected by the project. It is expected that they will have public engagement on the public's needs and aspirations to inform the project. This includes identifying and engaging underrepresented populations – particularly those identified in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and the Executive Order on Environmental Justice (people of color, people with limited English proficiency and people with low income) – and analysis that demonstrates there is not an inequitable distribution of benefits and burdens for these populations compared to those for other residents. The analysis of the distribution of benefits and burdens is developed through the project development process, as the details of the transportation project become more defined. Any finding of inequitable distribution of benefits and burdens must include documentation justifying the project and showing there is no less discriminatory alternative.

Applying for project development funds

Applications for regional flexible funding of projects that have not completed project development can reference documentation on how the agency has engaged the public and historically underrepresented populations during the agency's transportation or service plan development. Applications should include how the agency has engaged, continues to engage, or plans to engage the public on the public's needs and aspirations to inform the project as part of project development, including identifying and engaging underrepresented populations and analyzing the distribution of benefits and burdens for these populations compared to other residents.

Project implementation

Prior to project implementation, agencies examine the area potentially affected by the project. . During project development, it is expected that they will have had public engagement on the public's needs and aspirations to inform the project. This includes identifying and engaging underrepresented populations – particularly those identified in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and the Executive Order on Environmental Justice (people of color, people with limited English proficiency and people with low income) – and analysis that demonstrates there is not an inequitable distribution of benefits and burdens for these populations compared to those for other residents.

Applying for project implementation funds

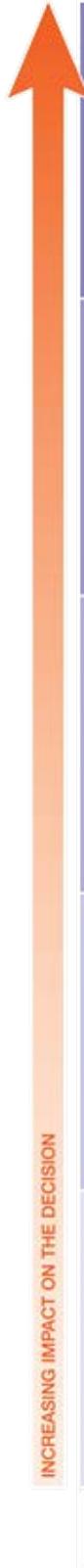
Applications for regional flexible funding for project implementation should reference documentation of efforts made in general public engagement and those made to identify and engage underrepresented populations during project development. Applications should include how the agency engaged the public on the public's needs and aspirations to inform the project as part of project development, including identifying and engaging underrepresented populations and analyzing the distribution of benefits and burdens for these populations compared to other residents.

Documentation should include an analysis demonstrating there is not an inequitable distribution of benefits and burdens for people of color, people with limited English proficiency and people with low income compared to those for other residents. Any finding of inequitable distribution of benefits and burdens must include documentation justifying the project and showing there is no less discriminatory alternative.



IAP2'S PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SPECTRUM

The IAP2 Federation has developed the Spectrum to help groups define the public's role in any public participation process. The IAP2 Spectrum is quickly becoming an international standard.

		INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 			
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
	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 throughout 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 you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Attachment B | Public engagement tools and techniques matrix

Public engagement techniques and tools					
The following is a menu of communication tools to engage the public in programs, activities and services.				IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation	
Technique/ Tool	Description	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE
WRITTEN AND GRAPHIC INFORMATION TO BUILD AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING					
Project mailing list	Database to communicate with the interested parties, stakeholders, partners, elected officials, members of committees and boards and the general public	•			
Public meeting notice	Online web calendar for advance notices of council and committee meetings and program or project events. Each meeting agenda includes the date and time of the next meeting, nondiscrimination, language assistance and ADA notice as well as TTY/TDD phone number	•	•		
E-newsletter	Email updates to the project mailing list to announce events or at project milestones, sometimes with a request to provide comments about a program or project	•			
Fact sheet	Periodic updates provided to target audiences in written form or posted on the website	•			
Good neighbor letter	Letters to program or project "neighbors" to provide project updates and announcements	•			
Flyer or brochure	Written updates that are handed out or posted in community locations to provide a project overview, project updates, refer people to the project website or highlight project milestones and offer the opportunity to participate or comment	•			
Postcard	Mailed cards used to announce meetings, events or comment periods or offer project updates	•	•		
Promotion through partners	Prepared material, email or web content that can be forwarded by cities, counties, agencies, community organizations, or public venues such as libraries, places of worship and other project partners in order to increase reach when inviting participation or seeking public comment	•			
Billing insert	Coordination with cities and counties to send out a notice of event, public comment opportunity or survey in monthly utility bills	•	•		
Web link agenda tags	Web link or other quick note about an upcoming event, public comment opportunity or survey that can be added to an email signature or the bottom of upcoming agendas	•	•		
ONLINE ENGAGEMENT					
Website	Information on programs, projects and services as well as engagement opportunities	•	•	•	
Social media	Twitter and Facebook sites to connect with the public, build awareness and share engagement opportunities	•	•	•	•
Cross-link websites	Highlights about an event, comment opportunity or survey on a related page websites of cities, counties, agencies, community organizations or other project partners	•	•	•	•
Survey	Provides a way to share views and help shape projects by responding to short surveys and/or viewing aggregate results to see how others have responded	•	•	•	•

Technique/ Tool	Description	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE
IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT					
Open house	Opportunity to drop in to see program or project information, talk to staff and offer informal or formal feedback at a location that is accessible by transit and to persons with disabilities and at a time that is convenient	●	●	●	
Public meeting	Face-to-face interaction and discussion with staff and/or elected officials to learn about programs, projects or services and provide input at a location that is accessible and a time that is convenient	●	●	●	●
Community presence	Participation in community events at faith-based organizations, community centers, grocery stores, farmers markets or other gathering places to share information, answer questions and request public input on programs or projects	●	●	●	●
Speakers bureau targeted presentations	Presentations by staff or elected officials to neighborhood, business and civic groups around the region to share information and obtain input	●	●	●	●
Stakeholder engagement	Targeted opportunities for discussion and feedback from interested parties such as community and environmental organizations, academic advisors, economic development interests, business and community leaders and representatives of other state or local agencies	●	●	●	●
Stakeholder interviews	To improve the baseline understanding of target audiences and inform communication planning, the project team may conduct one-on-one or group interviews with a broad range of stakeholders	●	●	●	●
Focus groups	Facilitated discussions held with randomly selected participants to learn about key issues, understand values and interests or test messages	●	●	●	●
Discussion groups	Facilitated forum for individuals to discuss various topics	●	●	●	
Townhalls	Informal public meeting or event open to community members and held at a location easily accessible by transit and by persons with disabilities at a time that is convenient, where community members may voice their opinions and ask questions.	●	●	●	
Workshops or trainings	Class or series of classes in which a small group of people learn about a project or program	●	●	●	
Community Summit	A public event that brings together stakeholders representing the diverse perspectives of the region to evaluate engagement practices from the previous year, share local community information and advice on priorities and engagement strategies for upcoming policy initiatives. May hold community summits on specific projects or topic areas as well.	●	●	●	
VISUAL COMMUNICATION					
Maps	Create maps that communicate spatial and other complex information visually (data sources: census, modeling, roadway and transit network, sidewalk/bike/trail network, parks and natural areas locations and more)	●			
Charts, graphs and tables	Create charts, graphs or tables to illustrate complex information in a way that is easily understandable to the public and regional decision-makers.	●			
Diagrams and graphic illustrations	Diagrams and graphic illustrations visually illustrate timelines, complex process or decision-making structures, proposed choices and their associated tradeoffs and analysis results	●			
Photographs	An extensive photo library offers access to images that clarify meaning and make reports and analysis more visually appealing	●			

Technique/ Tool	Description	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE
VISUAL COMMUNICATION (CONTINUED)					
Map-based online public comment	Enabling a map with project locations and descriptions to connect to local project information and a form for taking public comments, in English and/or multiple languages	●	●	●	
Envision tool	The tool allows users to “paint the landscape” by allocating different building types across a study area to create a land use scenario. Users can build as many scenarios as they would like and test them against each other. The tool allows real-time evaluation of each scenario’s impact on land use, housing, sustainability, transportation, and economic conditions	●	●	●	
Interactive web pages with surveys	Specially-created, web-based interactive tools that ask community members to make choices between different options by visually demonstrating the options' tradeoffs allows for participants to make choices and then explain those choices in a follow-up survey where they can also offer advice for the project or program decision-making	●	●	●	●
INVOLVING LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT POPULATIONS, COMMUNITIES OF COLOR, LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, ELDERLY, YOUTH AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES					
Relationship-building	Partnership with business, civic, faith-based and community organization leadership to reach underrepresented populations, provide targeted translated materials or announce public engagement opportunities	●	●	●	
Technical assistance contracts	Technical assistance contracts may be awarded to community organizations to conduct engagement activities, reach underrepresented populations or to help better inform a project	●	●	●	●
Audience research and analysis	Demographic and four-factor LEP analysis, community assessment and stakeholder interviews to understand different populations, abilities to speak English and cultural preferences so that engagement tools selected for public outreach are inclusive, accepted and accessible: mobile applications or text messages, online, word of mouth, radio, etc. (data sources: census, American Community Survey, schools)	●	●	●	
Plain language	Materials clearly written in plain language with a minimum of technical terms to enable people with limited English proficiency or low literacy to participate and comment	●	●	●	
Language assistance	In-person interpreters, a telephone language line or translated materials that communicate with people with limited English proficiency	●	●	●	
Alternative formats	Braille, sign language or communication aids at public meetings, upon request	●	●	●	
Multicultural media	Distribution of news releases to multicultural media to describe the project, explain timeline, highlight opportunities for involvement and comment, discuss culturally relevant issues and frame intended outcomes as they relate to culturally specific audiences	●	●	●	
Text messaging alerts	The act of typing and sending a brief, electronic message between two or more mobile phones or fixed or portable devices over a phone network	●			

Technique/ Tool	Description	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE
Barrier removal	Locations that are easily accessible by transit and accessible for people with disabilities, child care, space for wheelchairs, designated seating for persons with hearing or vision impairments, and other accommodations upon request	●	●	●	
MEDIA					
Press release	Proactive coordination with TV, radio, newspaper, blogs, community, multicultural media and other media outlets to describe the project, explain its timeline, highlight opportunities for involvement and comment, discuss relevant issues and frame intended outcomes	●	●		
Newsfeed	Story to be shared with newspaper, radio and TV, blogs, social media for the purpose of generating coverage	●			
Media calendar listings	Event information sent to newspaper, radio, TV, blogs and social media that have some kind of calendar listing or web calendar to which they can post it to increase visibility	●			
legal notice radio public Service Announcement (PSA)	Newspaper ads or legal notices, especially in community-based papers, and radio ads or PSAs are used to announce project milestones or request formal public comment and refer recipients to detailed project information online	●	●		
Public access cable	Live broadcast for Council meetings that are repeated on Community Access Network, Portland Community Media, Metro East Community Media (MCTV), Tualatin Valley Television (TVCTV) and Willamette Falls Television at various times throughout the week.	●			
OTHER TOOLS OR TECHNIQUES TO CONSIDER TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION					
Incentives	Incentives may be provided to increase participation at open houses or public events such as providing free food and drinks, snacks or free childcare. Incentives such as gift cards can increase participation in filling out survey or providing feedback	●	●	●	●