

June 30, 2022

RE: HB1168, Forest Resilience and Environmental Justice

To the Forest Health Advisory Committee:

The Forest Health Advisory Committee was tasked with providing environmental justice recommendations for investments made by the Wildfire Response, Forest Restoration, and Community Resilience account established in HB 1168, and examining tools focused on equity and environmental justice to identify/reinforce our recommendations. An environmental justice workgroup was developed for this purpose (please see accompanying tasking memo dated February 28, 2022).

We have examined several tools, methods, and assessment options for incorporating environmental justice into our forest health decisions.

We find that investments made through the Forest Restoration section of this account **must** integrate environmental justice considerations to increase the health of our forests. Environmental justice and forest resilience are complexly intertwined – environmental inequities breed less sustainable forests, and unhealthy forests have associated environmental inequities^{1,2}.

We also find that **many tools and methods we examined have shortcomings – as individual resources, they are inadequate. We find that all data, tools, and assessment methods must be used in tandem with in-depth stakeholder (see Appendix A) consultation.**

Our workgroup's three recommendations are as follows:

1. Investments made through this account must include thorough and holistic consultation.

We define consultation as a two-sided conversation, that occurs prior to any final decisions, and in a timeframe and location that prioritizes the parties affected by the decision. One-sided feedback is unacceptable. Consultation with affected groups must include listening, incorporating feedback, and asking for clarification.

¹ Harrell, S. "Resilient Forests, Resilient Communities." What Makes a Just Forest Speakers Series.9 June 2022. Lecture.

² D'Evelyn, S.M., Jung, J., Alvarado, E. *et al.* Wildfire, Smoke Exposure, Human Health, and Environmental Justice Need to be Integrated into Forest Restoration and Management. *Curr Envir Health Rpt* (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40572-022-00355-7>

2. Geospatial data sources can be ineffective or exacerbate injustices and should only be used to help support the needs outlined by stakeholders.

Geospatial data used to populate maps are often inequitably collected. Data are often disproportionately present in more affluent neighborhoods³ and do not account for historic conditions (wars, immigration policies that favored certain groups over others) and associated systemic racism⁴. We found that several of our state's data layers are plagued with these issues – air quality monitors are much less frequent in socioeconomically poorer areas of the state, and presence/absence data for certain culturally-important plants is grossly misrepresentative of actual abundance and presence of these species. These shortcomings are not the fault of the data itself, but an effect of our systemic inequities as a society.

3. We do not recommend use of an assessment tool at this time. Use of an assessment tool should only occur when an appropriate tool – developed specifically for forest health – exists, and should only be used to help clarify concerns and injustices raised by affected stakeholders. All assessment tools must be coupled with consultation with potentially affected parties.

Many industries^{5,6,7}, alliances, and jurisdictions⁸ have recently developed equity assessment tools and racial/social justice assessment tools. The variety of tools demonstrates the need for an assessment framework that is specifically developed for that given field. In our research, we could not find a robust environmental justice assessment tool tailored to forest health.

We find that these assessment tools can help fund managers develop more holistic stakeholder pools as they apply to policies, budgets, and program decisions. However, many of these tools use a linear, step-by-step approach

³ Berman, G., S. de La Rosa and T. Accone. "Ethical Considerations When Using Geospatial Technology for Evidence Generation." Office of Research-Innocenti. UNICEF. 2018. www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/DP%202018%2002.pdf.

⁴ Shanker, V. and S. Evergreen. "How Dataviz can Unintentionally Perpetuate Inequality, Part 2." EvergreenData. 2022. stephanieevergreen.com/inequality-part-2/.

⁵ Kennedy, A., A. Woten, M. Lesperance, L. Lott. "A Coworker's Guide to Gender Transition and Transgender inclusion in the museum field." Task Force for Transgender Inclusion. American Alliance of Museums and LGBTQ Alliance. 2019. www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/A-coworkers-guide-to-gender-transition.pdf.

⁶ Joe, M. and R. Waddy. "Racial Equity Toolkit: Applying a Racial Equity Lens to Your Organization." Housing Development consortium. www.housingconsortium.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Racial-Equity-Toolkit-Downloadable.pdf.

⁷ Gordon, W.M. "A Racial Equity Toolkit for Midwifery Organizations." Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health. 2016. doi.org/10.1111/jmwh.12551.

⁸ City of Seattle. "Racial Equity Toolkit to Assess Policies, Initiatives, Programs, and Budget Issues." Race and Social Justice Initiative. 2012. www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/RSJI/RacialEquityToolkit_FINAL_August2012.pdf.

(see below for issues related to this), and many can be filled out without any consultation from affected stakeholders. The assessment tools' shortcomings can easily work to reinforce individual and institutional inequities, and make 'environmental justice' initiatives into a series of 'checked boxes,' leading to little to no effective change.

We have attached (Appendix A), which includes several categories of stakeholders who have historically been underrepresented on forest health councils and advisory groups, but who have been burdened with the negative effects of these forest decisions.

Please note that this list is not comprehensive. When making funding decisions, we recommend that fund managers reach out to local organizations and groups that work with different demographics of the local community to develop a localized list of different stakeholders, then conduct outreach.

We recommend the following additional steps and considerations:

- **Approach funding decisions from a systems thinking approach.** Linear thinking, most commonly found in predominant white colonial/settler societies like our state government, attempts to isolate different components of a system (think timelines). This type of thinking often develops solutions that miss the full extent and considerations necessary for a true solution⁹. These issues are often approached from the outside, rather than starting by listening to the affected communities. Systemic thinking focuses on the relationships, interactions, and influences all people, plants, animals, and things in a system have on one another, and foster more comprehensive, sustainable solutions for all parties.
- **Unsuccessful attempts to reach out to certain stakeholders should be followed up with internal assessments of the funders/decision-makers.** Mistrust of government, historic discriminations, negative associations and lack of familiarity can all make connection difficult. Fund managers must examine the reasons why they were not able to connect with certain affected parties, and look for other options to connect. Building relationships takes time, and we recommend all fund managers take into account the need to build relationships and create safe spaces for stakeholders in these decision-making spaces. **In short, please keep the mantra of, “nothing about us, without us” close when making these funding decisions. Attempts to connect are not enough.**

⁹ “Linear Thinking.” Interaction Design Foundation. www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/linear-thinking#:~:text=See%20what%20linear%20thinking%20means%20in%20terms%20of%20problem%20solving.&text=%E2%80%9CIf%20I%20had%20an%20hour,5%20minutes%20thinking%20about%20solutions.%E2%80%9D

- As a committee, we acknowledge that DNR or other fund managers may not be the best messengers or facilitators in building these relationships with communities. Because of this, we suggest **partnering with a trusted organization in the community** (please see examples of these organizations in Appendix A).
- Finally, before funding decisions are finalized, we recommend reaching out to stakeholders again, and receiving input on funding choices. Open communication with stakeholders is imperative in this process.

Because these recommendations can be difficult to implement, we have included additional documents that help to provide examples of equitable approaches to outreach.

Appendix B¹⁰ provides an example of an equitable stakeholder outreach and engagement process using a linear and cyclical approach to better comprehend the needs of affected parties.

Appendix C¹¹ is a guide of what not to do when engaging different stakeholders – the guide outlines common “pitfalls” in community engagement, but also provides examples of what good community engagement looks like for each example group. We recommend using these guides to develop holistic, equitable engagement plans for all parties affected by potential forest health funding decisions.

Appendix D¹² provides a quick guide to the five levels of stakeholder engagement, with examples of how these different levels may play out in different outreach scenarios. We recommend fund managers use this tool before, during, and after conducting outreach as a ‘gut check’ to determine if their engagement/community ownership efforts are truly working.

Sincerely,

Forest Health Advisory Committee Environmental Justice Workgroup Members: Tia Beavert, Tiana Luke, Janene Ritchie, Laura Rivera, Nick Kunz, Raul Martinez, and Ashley Blazina-Cooper.

¹⁰ GTL Center. “Moving Toward Equity in Stakeholder Engagement Guide.” Center on Great Teachers & Leaders at American Institutes for Research. 2015. gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/GTL_StakeholderOverview.pdf.

¹¹ Bloomberg Philanthropies. “Common Pitfalls in Community Engagement.” City Budgeting For Equity and Recovery. 2021. results4america.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/WWC-CBER_Pitfalls-11x8_5-Proof211123.pdf.

¹² Gonzales, R. “The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership.” Facilitating Power. 2019. movementstrategy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/The-Spectrum-of-Community-Engagement-to-Ownership.pdf.

APPENDIX A: POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS TO CONSULT WITH FOR ALL 1168 FOREST RESTORATION FUND DECISIONS

SOVEREIGN NATIONS AND TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS

Chehalis Tribe
Chinook Nation
Colville Confederated Tribes
Cowlitz Tribe
Duwamish
Hoh Tribe
Intertribal Nursery Reforestation and Genetics Group (NRGR)
Indigenous Roots and Reparations Foundation
Intertribal Timber Council
Jamestown S'Klallam
Kalispel Tribe
Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe
Lummi
Makah Tribe
Muckleshoot Tribe
Nooksack Tribe
NW Indian Fisheries Commission
PNW Climate Change Network
Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe
Puyallup Tribe
Quileute Tribe
Quinalt Tribe
Samish Indian Nation
Sauk Suiattle Tribe
Shoalwater Bay Tribe
Skokomish Tribe
Snoqualmie Tribe
Spokane Tribe
Squaxin Island Tribe
Stillaguamish Tribe
Suquamish Tribe
Swinomish
Tulalip Tribe
Upper Skagit
Upper Columbia United Tribes
Yakama Nation

Wanapum

LATINX/E/O PARTNERS

Wenatchee CAFE

Communities of Color Coalition

Front and Centered

Latino Community Fund

Nuestra Casa

Washington State Commission on Hispanic Affairs

Washington State Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises

La Casa Hogar

MIGRANT AND IMMIGRANT WORKERS

United Forest Workers

Lomakatsi Restoration Project

United Farm Worker Fund

Northwest Immigrant Rights Project

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PARTNERS

Washington Emergency Management Division

Washington State Coalition for Language Access

WSP-State Mobilization

MULTIPLE GENERATIONS (YOUTH AND ELDERS)

Northwest Indian College - Bellingham
Northwest Indian College - Neah Bay
Muckleshoot Tribal College
Northwest Indian College - Olympia
Northwest Indian College/WSU -- Kingston
Evergreen State College/
Northwest Indian College - -Samish Longhouse, Anacortes
Salish Kootenai College -- Spokane Tribal Campus
Northwest Indian College -- Shelton
Northwest Indian College -- LaConner
Northwest Indian College -- Tulalip
Northwest Indian College -- Sedro Woolley
Washington Youth Council
Diverse Elders Coalition
Washington Farm Forestry Association
Washington Tree Farm Program
American Forest Foundation

COMMUNITY GROUPS

Pinchot Partners
Darrington Collaborative
Olympic Collaborative
Tapash Sustainable Forest Collaborative
Chumstick Wildfire Coalition
North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative
NE WA Forest Coalition
Mount Adams Institute
Glacier Peak Institute
Mt. Adams Resource Stewards/ South Gifford Pinchot Collaborative
North Cascades Institute
Fire Adapted Methow Valley

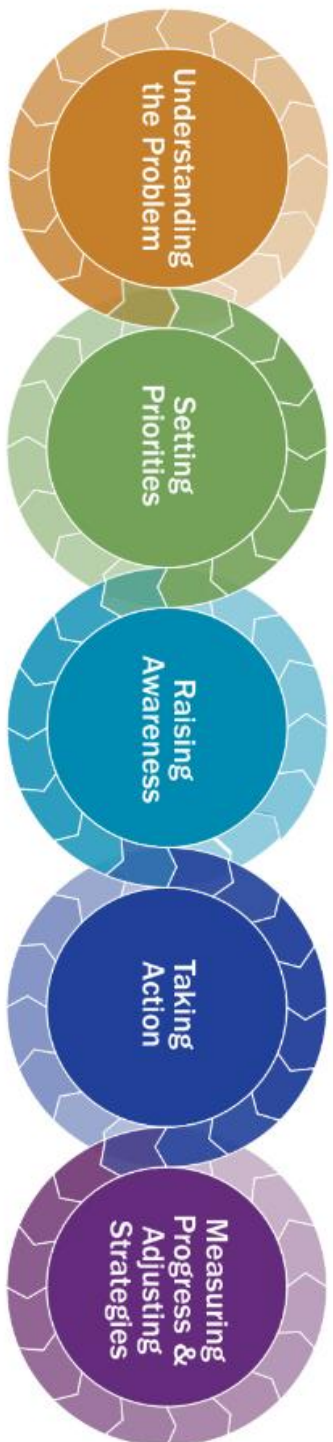
LOWER INCOME COMMUNITIES

Morton, Lewis Cty
Randle, Lewis Cty
Packwood, Lewis Cty
Mineral, Lewis Cty
Darrington
Entiat

APPENDIX B: Moving Toward Equity in Stakeholder Engagement Guide

Center on
GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS
at American Institutes for Research ■

Moving Toward Equity Stakeholder Engagement Guide



Interactive Overview

JANUARY 2015






AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH®

[Read This Interactive Overview >>>](#)

BEGIN USING THIS INTERACTIVE OVERVIEW

This *Interactive Overview*, developed by the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL Center), is designed to help Chief State School Officers and state education agency (SEA) staff zero in on strategies to engage critical stakeholders—including teachers, principals, district leaders, parents, and civil rights and community organizations—in developing and implementing a State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators. Engaging stakeholders in this process ensures that critical educational policy decisions are reached in an inclusive, collaborative manner and also presents a unique opportunity to gain input to improve student outcomes.

This interactive version is abridged from the full *Moving Toward Equity Stakeholder Engagement Guide* and consists of three parts. Start where you wish:

-  **INTRODUCTION.** Brush up on background information.
-  **PART 1 | GETTING STARTED.** If your SEA is new to stakeholder engagement or is seeking a new approach, begin your journey here by focusing on the planning and vision process.
-  **PART 2 | TAKING ACTION.** Ready to dive in? Start the stakeholder engagement process right here.

Supporting Materials

Stakeholder Engagement Resources

- Resource 1:** Four Key Steps for Equitable Access Communication Planning
- Resource 2:** Sample SEA Internal Team Meeting for Identifying Existing State Efforts and Stakeholder Groups
- Resource 3:** Example of a State Vision Statement
- Resource 4:** Sample Meeting Agendas
- Resource 5:** Incorporating Stakeholder Feedback—Discussion Planning, Recording, and Summary Forms
- Resource 6:** Sample Timeline and Timeline Template for Developing a State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators
- Resource 7:** Engaging Stakeholders in a Root-Cause Analysis
- Resource 8:** “Taking the Temperature” Activity
- Resource 9:** Sample State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators
- Resource 10:** Build Your Own State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators
- Resource 11:** PowerPoint Template
- Resource 12:** Developing a Local Stakeholder Engagement Guidance Document for Your Local Education Agencies

Companion Resources

- Moving Toward Equity Stakeholder Engagement Guide* | Complete and detailed guide for involving diverse stakeholders in developing and implementing a State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators
- Moving Toward Equity Technical Assistance Resources Overview* | Overview of the GTL Center’s technical assistance tools for analyzing root causes, reviewing data, and engaging stakeholders in equity work
- Moving Toward Equity Online Tool* | Interactive online tool with resources and strategies for ensuring equitable access
- Moving Toward Equity Quick-Start Guide* | Key questions and examples for setting priorities and taking action around equity
- Moving Toward Equity Root-Cause Analysis Workbook: A Guide for State Education Agencies* | Workbook for determining the root causes of equity gaps in access to excellent teachers and leaders
- Moving Toward Equity Data Review Tool* | Electronic tool for interpreting data, determining policy implications, and communicating findings
- Everyone at the Table: Equitable Access Choicework Discussion Guide* | Discussion starter for engaging stakeholders in constructive dialogue on ensuring equitable access to excellent teachers. (Coming Soon)
- Innovation Station Database* | Online database of cutting-edge tools and resources on how to recruit, reward, retain, and extend the reach of excellent teachers and leaders
- Everyone at the Table: Engaging Teachers in Evaluation Reform Website* | Website with online videos and materials for engaging teachers in respectful dialogue on evaluation reform

GTL Center staff are available to provide state education agencies with direct technical assistance in using these and other resources. For questions about this *Interactive Overview* or the full *Stakeholder Engagement Guide*, please contact Ellen Sherratt (esherratt@air.org) or contact the GTL Center directly (glcenter@air.org).



[CLICK ON THE TOPIC](#) you want to learn more about

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STEP 1.5 | Envisioning How Best to Prepare Stakeholders for Engagement



STEP 1.6 | Envisioning a Long-Term Equitable Access Coalition



STEP 1.7 | Planning for Stakeholder Engagement: A Suggested Approach



PART 2 | TAKING ACTION



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STEP 2.3 | Engaging Stakeholders in Raising Awareness



STEP 2.4 | Engaging Stakeholders in Taking Action



STEP 2.5 | Engaging Stakeholders in Measuring Progress and Adjusting Strategies



INTRODUCTION

On July 7, 2014, the U.S. Department of Education announced the Excellent Educators for All initiative to help states and school districts support great educators for the students who need them most. As a key piece of the initiative, each state is required to submit a State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators by June 2015 that describes how the state education agency (SEA) will ensure that students from low-income families and students of color are not taught at higher rates than other students by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers.

This *Interactive Overview*, developed by the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL Center), focuses on strategies that Chief State School Officers and SEA staff can use to successfully and actively engage stakeholders in developing their equitable access plan.

In his July 2014 letter¹ to Chief State School Officers, Education Secretary Arne Duncan stated that **“to prepare a strong plan, each SEA will analyze what its stakeholders and data have to say about the root causes of inequities and will craft its own solutions.”**

Engaging diverse groups of stakeholders as partners in this work has many benefits. By collaboratively reviewing data and identifying the root causes behind inequitable access to high-quality teaching and learning, SEAs can forge and strengthen critical partnerships while developing a strong plan that benefits all students. As a result:

- › Equitable access plans will be fully informed by the ideas, insights, and perspectives of educators “on the ground” and promote consensus and agreement among diverse stakeholder groups.
- › Equitable access plans can garner public support and political will, leading to successful implementation.

Meaningful stakeholder engagement takes time and careful planning, but the end result has enormous potential. To lead the way on equitable access to effective teaching in your state, sparking discussions with all key stakeholders must be at the center of your planning. This *Interactive Overview* provides step-by-step considerations to help you in planning and conducting those crucial conversations.

Equitable Access Toolkit

The materials in this *Interactive Overview* are based on the GTL Center’s Equitable Access Toolkit.

EQUITABLE
ACCESS TOOLKIT



In this *Interactive Overview*, you can explore:

- › *Short-term strategies* for engaging stakeholders to inform the design of an equitable access plan.
- › *Long-term strategies* for building a coalition of critical partners to sustain commitments to the educator equity goals and other systemic improvements outlined in the equitable access plan.
- › Practical ideas to implement a *system for continuous improvement* rooted in ongoing stakeholder feedback.

¹ The letter is available online.

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PART 1 | GETTING STARTED

Part 1: Getting Started guides the SEA in setting the stage and envisioning the process for engaging stakeholders in its unique state context. This process includes considerations such as effective engagement strategies, communication approaches, and data use.



Know the Dynamics of Effective Engagement

When diverse stakeholder voices come together to provide insight and input into equity work, SEAs can build buy-in and improve the long-term impact of their efforts. Effective stakeholder engagement is

**INCLUSIVE,
TWO-WAY, and
SOLUTIONS ORIENTED.**

Stakeholder engagement also should be

ONGOING (not a single event) as well as
OPEN and
FLEXIBLE (not prescriptive or focused
on a predetermined solution).



Realize the Importance of Communication

Successful stakeholder engagement begins with communication. Strategic communication is critical because it can help or hinder the acceptance of a new equitable access initiative. Communication planning should begin on Day 1. Key communication junctures in the equity planning and implementation process correspond to the five components of the *Moving Toward Equity* framework: understanding the problem, setting priorities, raising awareness, taking action, and measuring progress and adjusting strategies.



Consider Data as the Foundation for Engagement

A key ingredient for effective stakeholder engagement on equitable access is discussions centered on data and evidence—data on the scope of the equitable access challenge, data on interventions and their impact, and data on progress toward achieving equitable access goals. Possible data and evidence sources may include teacher and principal distribution and mobility data, rigorous research study findings, program evaluations, teacher supply and demand data, or other relevant data.

Looking for Data? Start Here:

- Review the U.S. Department of Education's preliminary data profile for your state.
- Your own state data office or officer is responsible for tracking information ranging from demographics to student attendance, test scores to teacher placement. Connect with the appropriate office partners to examine which data currently are available.
- The Institute of Education Sciences provides a Data Files and Tools webpage, which includes links to research, education data, and analysis on a wide range of topics for all 50 states.

For more information, see the full *Moving Toward Equity Stakeholder Engagement Guide*.

STEP 1.1 | Building an Internal SEA Team

To be successful in engaging stakeholders, the state needs to build an internal SEA team that is charged with specific tasks and reflects various SEA offices. One initial task of this team is to make an inventory of current policies and initiatives.

Determine the Tasks for the Internal SEA Team

Encourage the internal SEA team to take on the following tasks:

- Lead the preplanning process, identifying stakeholders and envisioning what their engagement will look like.
- Serve in an information support role for stakeholders, acting as a resource and point of contact as well as facilitating meetings with stakeholders.
- Serve as a critical element throughout the implementation stage by facilitating continuous, two-way feedback and leading the ongoing assessment of progress.

Determine the Members and Roles of the Internal SEA Team



In building your internal SEA team, consider and select 3–7 staff leaders from the following SEA departments:

- Curriculum and Instruction
- Teacher Professional Development
- School Turnaround
- Assessment
- Data
- Early Learning
- Special Education
- Educator Talent (e.g., licensing, hiring, and evaluation of educators)
- Career and Technical Education
- Parent Involvement and Community Outreach
- Communications and Public Affairs
- Legislative Affairs

Then consider what roles each SEA team member is best suited to fill.

For example:

- The “go to” person for research questions and data
- The communication strategy leader
- The “point person” for consolidating, reporting, and incorporating stakeholder feedback throughout the process of drafting the equitable access plan
- The “coherence” lead for taking stock of prior and existing policies and initiatives focused on equity gaps as well as relevant socioeconomic information.

Make an Inventory of Existing Policies, Initiatives, and Stakeholders

Use Resource 2: Sample SEA Internal Team Meeting for Identifying Existing State Efforts and Stakeholder Groups to create an initial inventory of current state efforts and stakeholders. Such an inventory can help your state respond coherently to suggestions from stakeholders and ensure that your equitable access plan priorities are grounded in your state’s unique needs and context.

RESOURCES

- Resource 2: Sample SEA Internal Team Meeting for Identifying Existing State Efforts and Stakeholder Groups
- Talent Development Framework for 21st Century Educators: Moving Toward State Policy Alignment and Coherence

Step 1.2 | Creating a Big-Picture Vision

This step involves envisioning the desired outcomes of your state's equitable access plan and creating a vision statement. A shared vision is vital for organizational success and will enhance your ability to make quick, agreed-upon decisions during planning and implementation.

Consider Preliminary Information

Consider the policy and political context of your state and stakeholder groups, as identified by your internal SEA team. Also consider the perspectives of key stakeholder groups.

Develop Your Vision Statement

Envision what outcomes are desirable to your team. Then outline the initial concrete goals of your stakeholder engagement process, or express the goals of your equitable access planning. Consider the following questions:

- What would it look like to have clear communication, input, and agreement from all relevant parties?
 - What do you hope to be able to say your state achieved for equitable access?
- Use the following sample vision statements to guide the development of your vision statement for equity.

Sample Vision Statement 1:

“Our mission is to provide a high-quality, comprehensive, and meaningful education for all students, with special attention given to ensure that students from disadvantaged backgrounds have access to excellent teachers and principals. To achieve this goal, we will ensure that all students have access to an excellent teacher by taking the following actions.”

Sample Vision Statement 2:

“Every student in [our state], regardless of background, will have access to an excellent teacher. [Our state] will place the highest priority on improving school climate, improving efforts to recruit and retain the most effective teachers and leaders, and providing high-quality teacher preparation.”

Refine Your Vision Statement

You may develop several vision statements and then choose the one that seems best. Remember that your vision statement is amendable. You can adjust the details of the vision later as new data, insights, and priorities arise.

RESOURCES

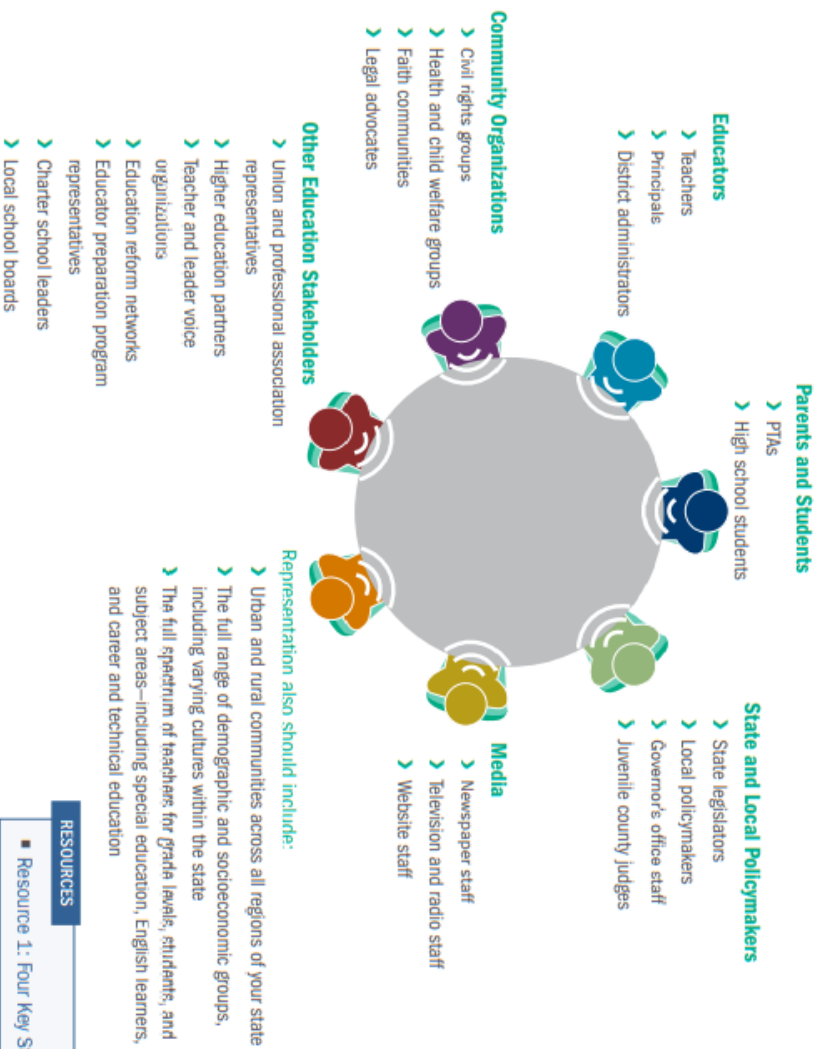
- Resource 3: Example of State Vision Statement

Step 1.3 | Identifying Stakeholder Groups

To enrich the development of the state's equitable access plan, stakeholder groups should consist of individuals from across the education spectrum, parents and students, community organizations, policymakers, and the media.

Bring Diverse Voices to the Table

Consider including viewpoints from the following stakeholders:



RESOURCES

- Resource 1: Four Key Steps for Equitable Access Communication Planning

Target the Expertise of Each Stakeholder Group

To capitalize on each stakeholder group's areas of expertise and experience, consider the following questions:

- > Which stakeholders can provide critical insights and perspectives regarding teacher and leader turnover?
- > Which stakeholders can bridge the perspectives between education-based and community-based stakeholders?
- > Which stakeholders will play an important role in implementing policy?
- > Which stakeholders can provide an understanding of the different policy levers that influence the distribution of teachers and leaders?
- > Which stakeholders can provide perspectives on the effects of the equity gap and build community credibility?

STEP 1.4 | Envisioning the Mechanisms for Engaging Stakeholders

The appropriate meeting format will set a positive tone for engaging stakeholder groups in productive conversations. Using an agenda and communicating effectively also are vital for signaling the importance of stakeholder time and viewpoints.

Use Appropriate Meeting Formats

Choose the meeting format that will ensure rich discussion, space for reflection, and broad information sharing

Small-Group Strategy Meeting (6–10 participants)



- Best Use: Strategic advisory session with leadership
- Type of Group: Heterogeneous group
- Who: Advocacy organization representatives, professional association representatives, teachers, principals, parents, or SEA representatives

Focus-Group-Style Discussion Meeting (8–12 participants)



- Best Use: Big-picture insights or specific feedback on an equitable access plan
- Type of Group: Homogenous group and moderator
- Who: Teachers, principals, district administrators, parents, advocacy groups

Town Hall (50–200 participants)



- Best Use: Presenting at the end of the planning cycle and receiving feedback on the proposed plan
- Type of Group: Diverse, heterogeneous group
- Who: All groups—teachers, professional associations, district leaders, parents, principals, other community members

Online Meeting (Up to 150 participants)



- Best Use: Presenting a proposed plan and receiving feedback
- Type of Group: Heterogeneous and larger geographic group
- Who: All groups—teachers, professional associations, district leaders, parents, principals, other community members, rural stakeholders

Create an Agenda for Each Meeting

Create a meeting agenda to help you think through the best use of stakeholders' limited time and to ensure that the meeting is focused and efficient. For ideas, see Resource 4: Sample Meeting Agendas.

Communicate Effectively

Use communications that inform, inquire, involve, and inspire. For ideas, see the Reform Support Network's *Framework for Communications and Engagement*.

RESOURCES

- Resource 4: Sample Meeting Agendas
- Reform Support Network's Framework for Communications and Engagement



Step 1.5 | Envisioning How Best to Prepare Stakeholders for Engagement

Equitable access involves complex issues and terminology that may not be familiar to all stakeholders. When everyone is on the same page, conversations will be more focused and productive. Engaging stakeholders in this process is about relationship building and ensuring that the perspectives of the participants are genuinely valued.

Create a Common Starting Point

Provide stakeholders with prereading on the following topics:

- › Importance of equitable access for students
- › Excellent Educators for All initiative
- › Importance and purpose of your state's equitable access plan
- › Past efforts that your SEA has taken to address equity gaps and any lessons learned
- › Definitions and clarifications regarding any technical terminology

Ensure Authentic Engagement

Consider the following strategies for ensuring that stakeholder *communication* becomes stakeholder *engagement*:

- › **Set Expectations Up Front.** Let stakeholders know how their input will be used—such as a presentation or a set of recommendations.
- › **Create Time for Authentic Engagement.** Set aside time for thoughtful, engaging participation of all stakeholders.
- › **Build Trust.** Create an environment that allows stakeholders to provide meaningful, productive feedback and also keeps them engaged in the process moving forward.
- › **Encourage Participation.** Encourage stakeholders to share their perspectives, suggestions, and feedback. Ensure that all participants have an opportunity to speak.
- › **"Practice" Engagement.** Begin by "practicing" on smaller, lower stakes issues to build relationships and develop trust in one another.
- › **Assign a Note Taker.** Communicate that the discussion is important and will be revisited at different stages in the planning process.

RESOURCES

- Resource 5: Incorporating Stakeholder Feedback—Discussion Planning, Recording, and Summary Forms
- Resource 8: "Taking the Temperature" Activity
- Resource 11: PowerPoint Template

Step 1.6 | Envisioning a Long-Term Equitable Access Coalition

Successful equity work takes place over time. A long-term equitable access coalition, composed of a broad range of individuals of different experience levels and backgrounds, can build institutional memory to consistently implement and monitor the shared vision over time.



Create an Equitable Access Coalition

Identify the most active stakeholder groups to help carry out the long-term vision for equity, and solicit their involvement in this coalition. Ensure that the coalition is driven not by politics and ideologies but rather by a shared purpose, vision, and responsibility for collective action.



Help the Coalition Develop a Long-Term Vision and Goals

Encourage the coalition to build on the more immediate-term vision discussed in Step 1.2. Also, encourage the coalition to consider desired long-term outcomes, a realistic timeline, and intermediate signs of success along the way.

If coalition members have differing viewpoints, work to build consensus. Promote a sense of shared responsibility for collective action toward improving equitable access.



Determine Action Steps to Meet the Coalition's Vision and Goals

Identify concrete steps needed to reach the desired vision or outcomes, such as social media campaigns and progress monitoring. These steps may involve developing materials, finding resources, or holding statewide conversations that bring everyone's voice to the discussion. The coalition could maintain responsibility for recruiting stakeholders to these conversations and for collecting and collating their input to inform ongoing modifications to the State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators.

RESOURCES

- Resource 2: Sample SEA Internal Team Meeting for Identifying Existing State Efforts and Stakeholder Groups
- Resource 3: Example of a State Vision Statement
- Resource 6: Sample Timeline and Timeline Template for Developing a State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators

Step 1.7 | Planning for Stakeholder Engagement: A Suggested Approach

The GTL Center suggests that stakeholders have clearly defined roles during specific stages of policy development. This approach, which identifies each stakeholder group as an “advisor” (during the early planning state) or a “reviewer” (providing feedback on a draft plan), ensures that stakeholder engagement is timely and meaningful.

Far too often, stakeholders are invited to participate at the end of the process, instead of being involved from the beginning. Such limited involvement may be “too little, too late” and can erode trust in the stakeholder engagement process. Instead, the “advisor and reviewer” approach can help your state avoid these obstacles.



Confirm the Following Advisor Roles

Advisors will:

- Participate in a small-group strategy session or focus group to review and discuss state data and then share what they learn with their own networks and home communities.
- Expand communications and outreach to widen the SEA’s reach.
- Participate in a root-cause analysis to help identify the potential underlying reasons behind the state’s equity gaps in access to high-quality teaching and learning. (For instructions on conducting a root-cause analysis with SEA staff, refer to *Moving Toward Equity Root-Cause Analysis Workbook: A Guide for State Education Agencies*. For instructions on conducting a root-cause analysis with stakeholders, see Resource 7: Engaging Stakeholders in a Root-Cause Analysis.)
- Provide insight into “on-the-ground” realities to inform the equitable access plan while developing stakeholder and public awareness and support for the effort.



Confirm the Following Reviewer Roles

Reviewers will:

- Participate in a larger format stakeholder group to review the SEA’s completed equitable access plan.
- Ensure that the equitable access plan is as strong as possible, reflecting as many stakeholder priorities as possible.

RESOURCES

- *Moving Toward Equity Root-Cause Analysis Workbook: A Guide for State Education Agencies*
- Resource 1: Four Key Steps for Equitable Access Communication Planning
- Resource 6: Sample Timeline and Timeline Template for Developing a State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators
- Resource 7: Engaging Stakeholders in a Root-Cause Analysis

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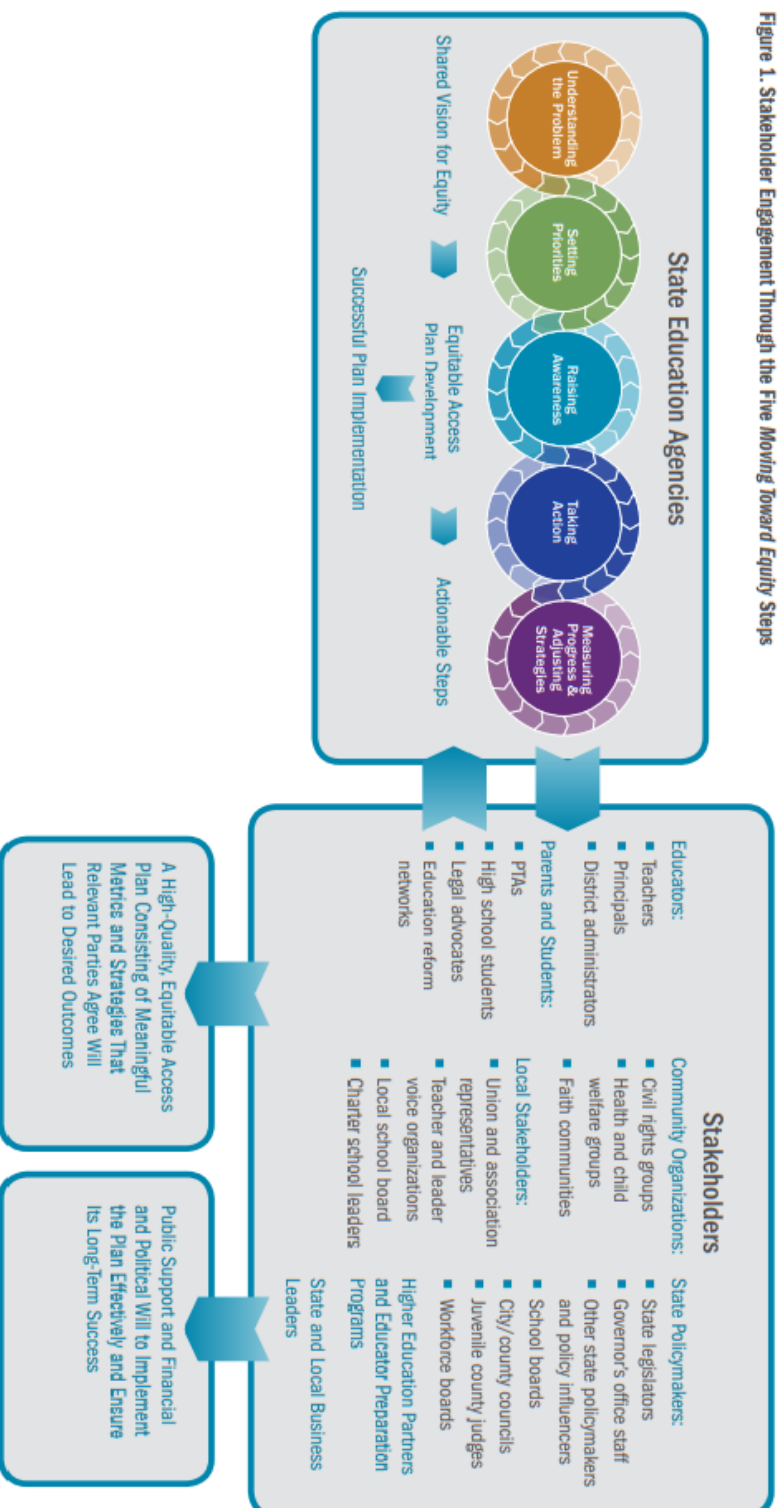
PART 2 | TAKING ACTION

- STEP 2.1 | Engaging Stakeholders in Understanding the Problem
- STEP 2.2 | Engaging Stakeholders in Setting Priorities
- STEP 2.3 | Engaging Stakeholders in Raising Awareness
- STEP 2.4 | Engaging Stakeholders in Taking Action
- STEP 2.5 | Engaging Stakeholders in Measuring Progress and Adjusting Strategies

Part 2: Taking Action provides guidance for SEA staff to engage stakeholders. It walks through the five steps of *Moving Toward Equity* framework (understanding the problem, setting priorities, raising awareness, taking action, and measuring progress and adjusting strategies), offering guidance for engaging stakeholders each step of the way. Figure 1 illustrates this process. After taking the time to plan and prepare, SEAs and stakeholders can come to the table ready to jump into engaged and meaningful discussions on equitable access. These discussions have the potential to be powerful and highly beneficial for all parties when SEAs are prepared and have structured tools to drive the conversations.

Know the Dynamics of Effective Engagement

Figure 1. Stakeholder Engagement Through the Five Moving Toward Equity Steps



Step 2.1 | Engaging Stakeholders in Understanding the Problem

To understand the problem of equity gaps and provide informed feedback, stakeholders need background information as well as opportunities to examine data on equitable access.



Provide Background Information

Use Resource 11: PowerPoint Template to provide stakeholders with an overview of information on equitable access to excellent educators. This information may include:

- › Historical background
- › Current national situation
- › Key players, timelines, and other information about the process
- › Data and research on the importance of excellent teachers and leaders—as well as students' access to excellent teachers and leaders in your state



Assess and Update Stakeholders' Current Knowledge

Use Resource 8: "Taking the Temperature" Activity for two tasks: (1) to assess stakeholders' current knowledge of equitable access concepts and terminology and (2) to provide an initial overview of the topic to help develop a shared understanding of equitable access and a common language for discussion.

Some stakeholders may need more background and explanation of the issues than others. For example, principals and teachers may be familiar with terminology (such as *value-added models*, *teacher attrition*, or *student learning objectives*) but these terms may require further clarification for parents and certainly for students.



Review the Data Profile and Other Equitable Access Metrics

Use the data profile provided to your state by the U.S. Department of Education to share relevant information about the status of equitable access in your state's context. In addition, provide any equitable access data collected by your state.

When possible, and especially when working with small groups, invite stakeholders to bring their own laptops or provide laptops to share. Always provide printed handouts of these data to ensure access. By asking stakeholders to share their personal experiences and interpretations of the data, SEA leaders may gain new insights on the nature and causes of inequitable access to effective teaching and leading in the state.

RESOURCES

- Resource 8: "Taking the Temperature" Activity
- Resource 11: PowerPoint Template

Step 2.2 | Engaging Stakeholders in Setting Priorities

To set joint priorities with stakeholders, begin by conducting a root-cause analysis to determine the issues that lie at the heart of equity gaps. Then conduct a policy coherence assessment to identify the specific policies that relate to educator talent development. These policies help ensure that all students have access to effective teaching and leading.

Conduct a Root-Cause Analysis

A root-cause analysis helps the state team and stakeholders think through the underlying reasons why equity gaps persist in their state. The *Moving Toward Equity Root-Cause Analysis Workbook* is designed for state teams. **Resource 7: Engaging Stakeholders in a Root-Cause Analysis** is designed for local stakeholders. Both documents help stakeholders identify equity gaps, review data, identify and categorize root causes, group the root causes into categories, and determine strategies to resolve root causes. The process involves engaging with data, connecting stakeholder input, and setting priorities.

Conduct a Talent Development Policy Coherence Assessment

The *Talent Development Framework for 21st Century Educators* helps states coordinate and align the many interconnected policies and practices that aim to:

- Attract the right talent into the profession to meet your students' needs.
- Prepare future teachers and school leaders to meet your students' needs.
- Develop, support, and retain educators in the field to ensure that they can continue to meet your students' needs.

This framework provides an approach to inventorying the full spectrum of existing educator effectiveness policies and initiatives as well as examining priority areas in greater depth to identify areas where they can be strengthened.

RESOURCES

- Resource 7: Engaging Stakeholders in a Root-Cause Analysis
- Moving Toward Equity Root-Cause Analysis Workbook: A Guide for State Education Agencies
- Talent Development Framework for 21st Century Educators: Moving Toward State Policy Alignment and Coherence

Step 2.3 | Engaging Stakeholders in Raising Awareness

Create a communication plan to raise awareness about the state's equity gaps as well as the actions that the SEA and stakeholders are taking to address those gaps. Throughout this process, the SEA and stakeholders continue to gather stakeholder input through two-way feedback loops to further inform the design of equitable access plan.



Develop a Communication Plan for Key Stakeholders and Wider Audiences

A strategic communication plan helps ensure that stakeholders and the broader community are informed about the steps and progress in addressing equitable access. The communication plan includes four steps:

- › Identify audiences for communication.
- › Identify and implement strategies for communication with key stakeholders and wider audiences.
- › Develop key messages for communication.
- › Monitor the effectiveness of communication.



Build Communication Loops

A critical piece of communication planning is to develop communication and feedback loops. Feedback loops provide stakeholders directly affected by a policy with the opportunity to inform those administering the policy (SEA and LEA) about its impact and potential areas for improvements. The long-term success of the equitable access plan, through its implementation, relies on a strong design for collecting and responding to feedback from the field.

Suggested methods for developing two-way, continuous feedback loops include the following:

Virtual Communication

- › Website and a designated place for open public comment
- › Online platform (e.g., website, Google Docs) to make materials (e.g., agendas, minutes, handouts, datasets) available to participants for further review or consideration
- › Dedicated e-mail address
- › Annual surveys to teachers, LEA administrators, stakeholder groups

In-Person Communication

- › Presence at stakeholder meetings and events in order to receive feedback
- › Annual stakeholder group forum to share measured progress
- › Biannual coalition meetings
- › Annual review to share measured progress with SEA team, coalition members

RESOURCES

- Resource 1: Four Key Steps for Equitable Access Communication Planning



Step 2.4 | Engaging Stakeholders in Taking Action

Successful engagement requires not only soliciting stakeholder input but also incorporating this input into the plan and the action steps.



Ensure Stakeholder Review and Feedback

Provide ample opportunities for stakeholders to review and provide feedback on the equitable access plan. Use Resource 9: Sample State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators as an example to which the stakeholders can compare their thoughts. Use Resource 10: Build-Your-Own State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators as a means for stakeholders to compose and incorporate their strategies. Frame discussions around the root-cause analysis and data review.



Use a Note Taker

Enlist a note taker to take notes during each discussion session. The note taker can prepare a summary of the discussion so that SEA staff members who are developing the plan can incorporate the stakeholders' ideas, concerns, and priorities.

Incorporate Stakeholder Feedback Into the State's Equitable Access Plan

Develop a systematic approach to documenting, collating, and incorporating stakeholder feedback into the plan. Following are some methods to simultaneously collect stakeholder feedback and share the incorporation of that feedback:



In-Person Feedback. At each face-to-face presentation, devote a portion of the allotted time to two-way feedback.



Online Feedback. Provide an opportunity for comments or questions to be included on the website and social media sites—with the option of comments being anonymous. Track these comments or questions and provide answers on the website and in “frequently asked questions” documents.



Survey Feedback. Solicit feedback while clarifying messages through an electronic survey tool. Report back to audiences about the findings. Indicate how the information will be used to improve communication, implementation, and other facets.

For additional information, see the Taking Action section of the *Moving Toward Equity* online tool.

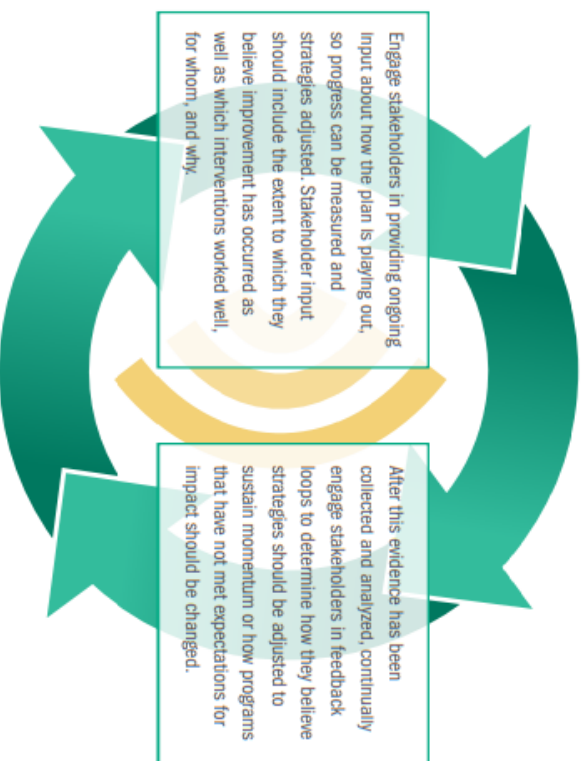
RESOURCES

- Resource 5: Incorporating Stakeholder Feedback—Discussion Planning, Recording, and Summary Forms
- Resource 9: Sample State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators
- Resource 10: Build-Your-Own State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators

Step 2.5 | Engaging Stakeholders in Measuring Progress and Adjusting Strategies

After the state's equitable access plan is adopted, ensure that all stakeholders continue to be engaged with the SEA leadership through continuous, two-way communication loops (see Figure 2). Be sure to include stakeholders at the local level. Throughout the process, continue to measure progress and adjust strategies as needed.

Figure 2. Communication Loops



Consider Suggestions for Measuring Progress

- › Collaborate with technical assistance providers—such as your regional educational laboratory, regional equity assistance center, or regional comprehensive center—for help in measuring progress.
- › Collect and analyze equitable access data.
- › Regularly analyze access metrics.
- › Establish benchmarks for success.
- › Seek out ideas for best practices from school districts that have been successful in promoting equitable access.

Consider Suggestions for Adjusting Strategies

- › Assess the effectiveness of current strategies to address equitable access.
- › Regularly review data-reporting procedures.
- › Revise policies to address equity gaps as needed.

For more information, see the Measuring Progress and Adjusting Strategies sections of the *Moving Toward Equity* online tool.

RESOURCES

- Resource 7: Engaging Stakeholders in a Root-Cause Analysis
- Resource 10: Build-Your-Own State Plan to Ensure Equitable Access to Excellent Educators
- Resource 12: Developing a Local Stakeholder Engagement Guidance Document for Your Local Education Agencies

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APPENDIX C: COMMON PITFALLS IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Avoiding Common Pitfalls In Community Engagement

Equitable budgetary decision-making should aspire to include diverse city residents in the process. The right style of engagement will depend on the nature of the decision: Your city might release a survey to gather data in order to determine budget priorities, or you might decide to partner with a local organization to learn how to improve the operation of an existing program.

Once you have defined your goals and selected the community engagement approach, watch out for common pitfalls that can turn a well-intentioned strategy into one that fails to produce the needed results, or worse, harms your city's relationship with the community. For each of the three community engagement approaches below, check the potential pitfalls and consider the tactics suggested in order to be more inclusive, gather better data, build trust, and make superior decisions. Learn more about community engagement [here](#).

Goal	Pitfall	Solution	Example
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Gather Data to Build a Clear Mandate

Use surveys, focus groups, interviews, meetings, and other tactics to identify problems, set priorities, and grasp public sentiment.

Your engagement generates useless or irrelevant data

Preview your engagement activities and questions with engagement specialists or the city, community members or groups, and the teams that will analyze the data.

Your engagement does not achieve sufficient or representative turnout

Use online and accessible in-person forums. Partner with community organizations to increase turnout. Spur participation with non-monetary and monetary incentives.

Your engagement feels extractive or condescending to participants

Tell people how you will use their input. Do not oversimplify core concepts for your audience.

You leave marginalized communities feeling unheard or excluded

Eliminate barriers related to language, technology, physical ability, work schedules and childcare responsibilities.

Your engagement activities feel performative or pointless to participants

Make sure engagement is necessary for your specific goals and will support decisions.

Using Community Engagement to Build a Clear Mandate

Miami-Dade County Launches Thrive 305 Survey and Workshops Process to Inform County Budget

In Miami-Dade County, for example, Mayor Daniella Levine Cava wanted to spark civic engagement and align her administration's agenda with constituents' priorities after taking office late last year. Her staff launched a countywide survey that could quickly reach a broad range of residents. In February 2021, more than 25,000 people completed the survey. One clear theme that emerged from the results was a concern about public safety. Specifically, many respondents expressed a desire to increase their sense of safety by improving lighting and maintenance in parks and other public spaces. With clear data to point to, Mayor Cava proposed increased funding in this area in her administration's first budget. To help turn survey results into a community-driven policy framework, Mayor Cava's team also held a series of workshop events with county leadership and staff, nonprofits, community leaders and policy experts. [\[Adapted from 2021 Medium post\]](#)

Avoiding Common Pitfalls In Community Engagement

Goal	Pitfall	Solution	Example
<p>Effective Program Design</p> <p>Organize boards and commissions to formalize community influence over specific strategies and investments.</p>	<p>Your advisory board fails to make an impact despite its long-term efforts</p> <p>Multiplying task forces and commissions lack focus or duplicate each others' efforts.</p> <p>An influential commission does not represent the community it intends to serve</p>	<p>Identify and remove the silos between the board, city departments, and relevant non-city community organizations that prevent big-picture thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving.</p> <p>Carefully define the term limits, scope, timeline, and ultimate goals of each group operating under city oversight; revisit these terms on a periodic basis. Communicate this information transparently to the public to keep task forces accountable.</p> <p>Give community members and community organizations a role in nominating and evaluating potential commission members. Formalize pipelines and inclusive onboarding processes for new members of under-represented origins. Consider compensating participants for their time to broaden access to those otherwise unable to afford participation, transportation, or associated costs.</p>	<p>Using Community Engagement to Design Programs Effectively</p> <p><u>The City of Minneapolis Partners with Community Intermediary to Run Twin Cities Boards and Commissions Leadership Institute</u></p> <p>To increase the accessibility of boards and commissions positions for City of Minneapolis residents of color, the City's Neighborhood and Community Relations department partnered with Nexus Community Partners—a community-building intermediary—to build a pipeline and facilitate onboarding for diverse participants. The program identifies, trains, and supports onboarding of residents of color into publicly appointed boards and commissions.</p> <p><u>City of Santa Monica Streamlines Boards and Commissions to Increase Efficacy and Reduce Overlap</u></p> <p>The City of Santa Monica is streamlining its boards, commissions, and task forces to increase their efficacy, diversity, and alignment with City departmental efforts. Relying on the recommendations of a community-based working group, the City recently decided to improve onboarding of new members, consolidate board budgets under associated departmental budgets, require annual workplans and progress reporting from boards, subject all advisory bodies to review every five years, improve community awareness of boards and commissions to broaden participation among more diverse community members, and share training resources on meeting management, appropriate participation, implicit bias, and parliamentary procedure. Further recommendations will advise in the future on reducing duplication of effort among the city's existing boards.</p>

Avoiding Common Pitfalls In Community Engagement

Goal

Pitfall

Solution

Example

Collaborate to Support Implementation

Collaborate and ally with institutions and community organizations to strengthen city efforts and build local capacity.

City investments duplicate or fail to connect with community organization programs and supports

Map the functions, relationships, and populations served by a given “system” —for example: business development, workforce development. Strategize with known institutions and community organizations to streamline efforts and plug in gaps.

Certain community organizations supporting a system are unreliable or lack credibility

Learn from community partners about “weak links” in a system, figure out what those organizations need, and determine whether public resources can fill the gaps.

Community organizations and networks are skeptical of city support or intentions

Be transparent about city plans, acknowledge the lived experience of participants, and respectfully leverage the expertise of local community organizations.

Collaboration stumbles due to a lack of capacity in the ecosystem of community organizations

Understand the roles of less formal networks —e.g., mutual aid, faith-based institutions. Invest in a pipeline of community organizations in a given system; help existing organizations expand programs, or catalyze the growth in promising organizations.

Using Community Engagement to Support Implementation

City Plants LA Urban Forest Project

The City of LA relies on a public-private partnership between the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, the non-profit organization City Plants, and seven other community-based organizations that work in concert with residents and businesses to coordinate tree planting and care throughout Los Angeles.

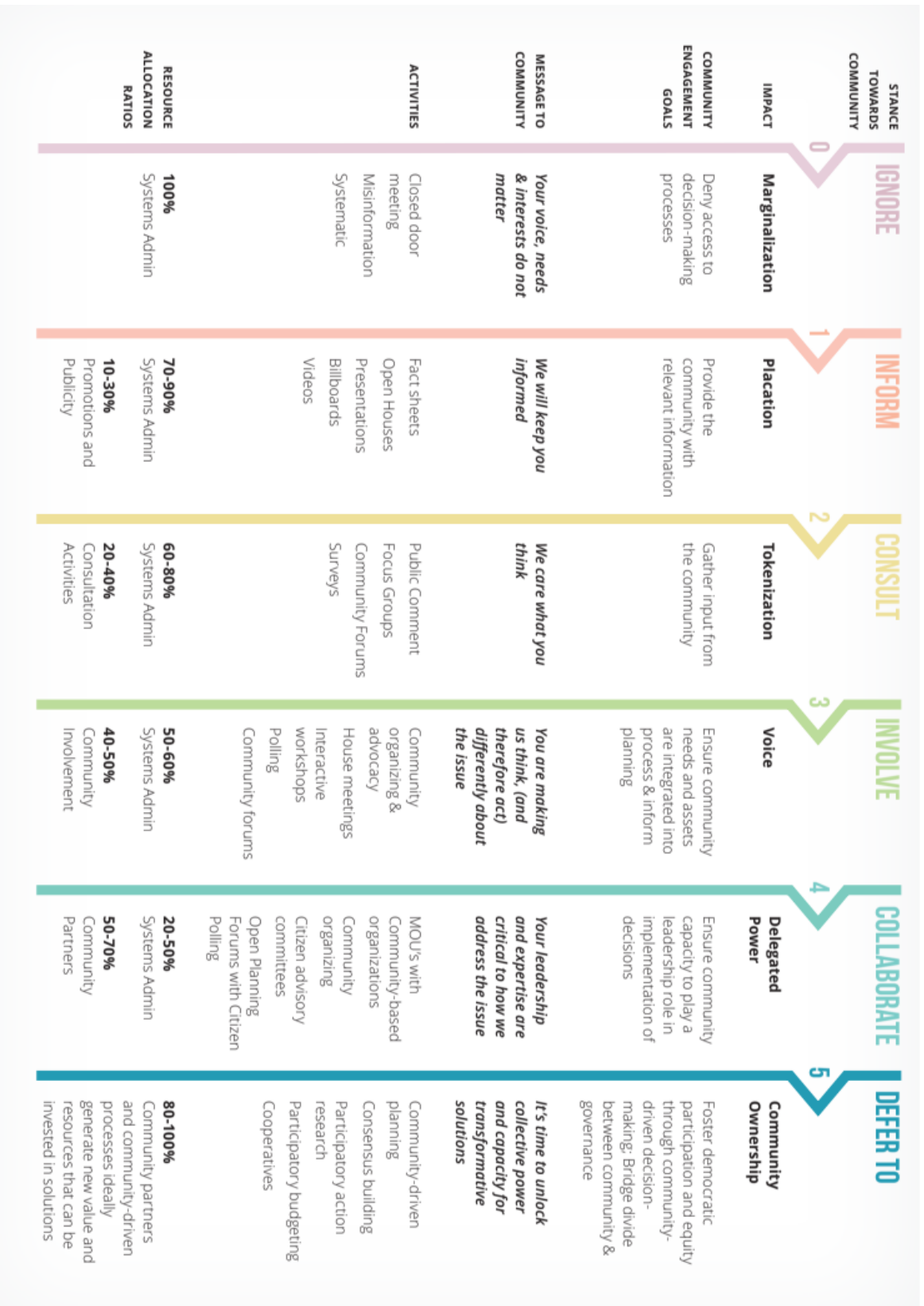
ABOUT THE CBER PROGRAM

Launched by Bloomberg Philanthropies in 2020, the **WWC City Budgeting for Equity &**

Recovery program is designed to provide critical support to mayors & city financial leaders as they navigate these challenging fiscal times.

HR&A Advisors, Inc. is an industry-leading consulting firm with over 40 years of experience. HR&A works with public and private sector clients to provide services in real estate, economic development, and program design & implementation to build communities that work for everyone. While the firm incorporates an equity lens into all of its work, HR&A Advisors has chosen to call out the importance of these values by naming Inclusive Cities as one of its primary practice areas. HR&A helps create more equitable, resilient, and dynamic communities.

THE SPECTRUM OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO OWNERSHIP



APPENDIX D: The Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership