



City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods

Systemwide Resident Engagement – A Process Guide

1	Acknowledge there is a problem. The current way your city is engaging its residents is not enough. By saying that out loud, you can start on the journey to change. By acknowledging that there were barriers, you can embark on a new way of doing business. By questioning institutional structures you can create an inclusive system for involvement.
2	Listen Meet residents where they are. Adapt to their meeting format. Talk with residents rather than at them. Ask residents what they wanted to learn about and bring those requested services with you when you speak to them.
3	Break silos Bring different partners with you to have a broader, more holistic conversation with communities.
4	Try new things Continue with the traditional and try new methods. Some will succeed and some will not. Meet at different venues, different times, etc. Aim to meet new residents and hear new voices.
5	Ensure seats at the table Continually revisit and expand your engagement efforts to ensure all demographic groups are represented in decision-making processes, not just those that are able.
6	Require all departments have an engagement strategy “Easiest” way is through an executive order. The other way is continue to break down silos, talk to different departments and ask them how they are engaging residents and put together a taskforce.
7	Be prepared for tough conversations. Equity conversations are hard. Outreach and engagement is like an onion- there should many layers and yes, sometimes it will make you cry. Create a vision. When things are tough, refer back to why you are doing this work in the first place.
8	Keep Trying Everyone has a voice and it’s your job to hear them.

For more information, contact:

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