

The Community Bill of Rights

Introduction

The Community Bill of Rights came about as a guiding tool to bridge the gaps between what truly matters to the community and the systemic injustices they endure while navigating institutions and services.

Centering community is a practice that allows for social justice efforts to build the durable solutions needed to address these systemic problems. The Community Bill of Rights provides the necessary steps for systems to reach those solutions.

To create this Community Bill of Rights, proximate leaders from communities across the country met over the course of several months to discuss the harms they have experienced at the hands of institutions and how those institutions can better center community and reduce harms going forward. These experts are people with lived experience and represent those closest to the harms and inequities. Despite the differences in geography, age and other factors, we found that they held similar experiences with systems of government, philanthropy and nonprofits: extraction of community knowledge, ignorance of history and culture, disrespect for community needs and more.

After years of experiencing these harmful practices, leaders from across the nation collaboratively developed the Community Bill of Rights to change these experiences for future generations. For institutions and systems, the Community Bill of Rights will serve as a guidepost in the collective work to reach equitable and better solutions for harmed communities; this should be integrated in all your work and new projects. For community members, the Community Bill of Rights will serve as a tool to demand accountability from the institutions and systems wherever you are. Together, this work will make centering community a new best practice.



The Community Bill of Rights

We, the Community Leaders, in order to form a unified practice for centering community, establish equitable outcomes for communities, ensure the right to responsible regenerative relationships, provide for the common consideration for civil society, advance equitable access to wellbeing, and secure blessings of dignity to ourselves and our posterity through accountability measures to collaboratively work towards liberatory solutions for those that are closest to systemic harms, do ordain and establish this Community Bill of Rights for the United States of America.

Community has the right to...



Relational Integrity

- Act with honesty, openness and integrity throughout the process, including explaining any policy or system restraints.
- Develop written rules of engagement/social contract in collaboration with all involved, including mitigating harmful tradeoffs (i.e. compensation).
- Be transparent in process and all actions, including be willing to go outside of norms in sharing information.



Holistic Identity

- Give authenticity and work to earn trust in building relationships.
- Welcome and express full self in the space, your own full self and everyone else's.
- Focus on assets and a human-centered approach.
- Adopt culturally- and trauma-responsive practices.



Historical Honoring

- Learn and acknowledge local community history and how that impacts the process and outcomes.
- Respect Indigenous and informal cultural norms and values.
- Understand oppression and history of racism, nationally and locally.
- Value community's expressed vulnerability and shared experience(s).
- Seek and support already existing community-created tools and resources, with consent of the creators.



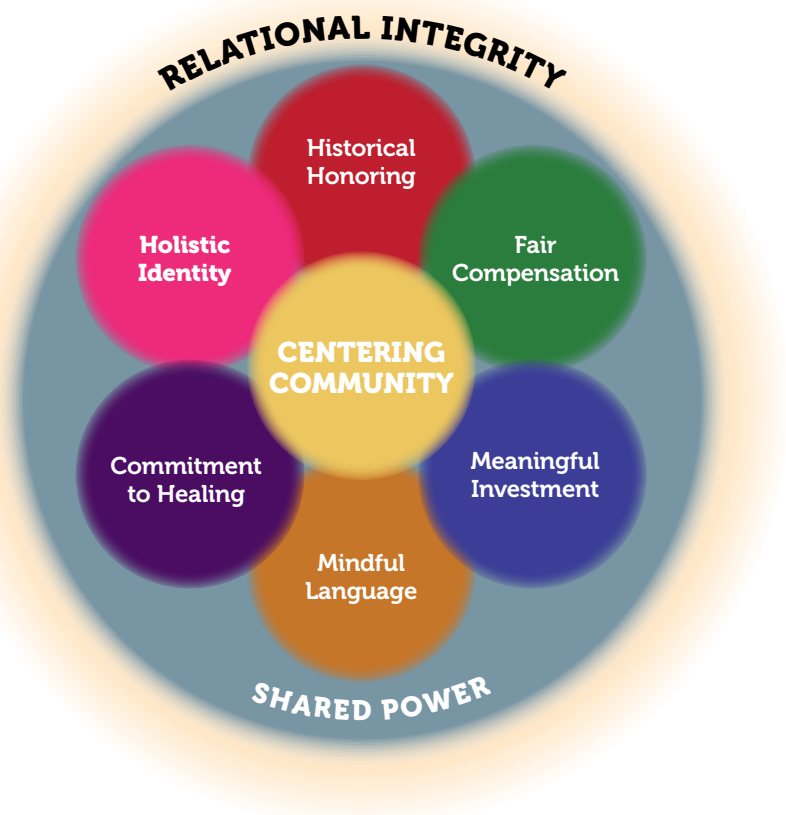
Shared Power

- Address the inequities and imbalances in power to prioritize community closest to the harms.
- Create an equal partnership where community has real influence in the decision making and problem-solving process.
- Enter the space without an intent to control the outcome, not just asking for community comment on an already developed plan.
- Build on existing community strengths.



Fair Compensation

- Pay for the time, energy and intellectual property shared, without exploiting lived experience.
- Fast track payments for community efforts, including flexibility in payment type and method.
- Provide sustainable and genuine resources to the community as a whole.
- Compensate for retelling of stories shared with consent.





Commitment to Healing

- Engage in active listening to community and integrate learnings into action and change.
- Acknowledge the historical harms to the community through extractive community input practices and the impacts on current systems and environments.
- Actively commit to the healing process, including taking responsibility and being accountable for system harms, building genuine relationship with community members and righting wrongs through centering community in the work.



Mindful Language

- Use language that is fully inclusive and avoids othering.
- Create clear conversation and avoid using internal terms, jargon, acronyms, etc.
- Provide multiple accessible forms of communication.



Meaningful Investment

- Build awareness of and invest in informal systems of care within community.
- Invest consistently and genuinely in the community, especially in currently trusted community leaders.
- Share data, information and financial resources, including measuring what the community wants measured.
- Uplift community assets and stories to shift harmful narratives.
- Support community and individual wellbeing.



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The Full Frame Initiative was founded in 2009 to make the U.S. a country where everyone has a fair shot at wellbeing — the needs and experiences essential to weather challenges and have health and hope. We partnered with communities, government and organizations to shift narratives, surface new solutions and create durable transformation. In 2025, we transitioned our mission to our network of champions and allies – because a fair shot at wellbeing was always bigger than FFI. You can learn more about our work and find resources at fullframeinitiative.org.

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