

Community Engagement Handbook

FOR ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

This handbook is a practical guide for government agencies and partners conducting community engagement around government use of AI. It explains why engagement with the public matters, outlines basic methods and stakeholder mapping techniques, and provides step-by-step guidance for planning, executing, and integrating engagement activities. This handbook includes sample timelines, templates, and agreements to support clear roles, consistent participation, and meaningful collaboration with communities.

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WHY IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AROUND AI IMPORTANT?

[Recent policy documents](#) emphasize the value of involving the public in government AI initiatives. Community engagement serves multiple purposes, often reflecting broader commitments to transparency, accountability, access, and evidence-based governance. This is especially important for public AI projects, which can significantly affect communities in ways that are often complex and difficult for the public to discern.

Community engagement can help:

- Support awareness, buy-in, and trust;
- Avoid or reduce risk of harm;
- Improve a tool's performance or its ability to meet agency goals and public needs; and
- Support democratic participation and accountability.

Without these precautions:

- Public agencies risk creating digital services that exclude people from needed services;
- Data collected for one purpose can be reused or resold for another; and
- Rapid system adoption and rollout can harm local democratic processes and erode public trust.

Consider the city sidewalk. People without mobility impairments might not notice a lack of curb cuts, but people in wheelchairs are first to notice and raise their absence as a concern. Incorporating curb cuts in advance is a benefit that helps prevent accessibility barriers for people in wheelchairs, as well as parents with strollers, bicyclists, and delivery workers. So, too, can designing new technologies in response to concerns of impacted residents protect the digital rights of everyone: surfacing and addressing needs for transparency, privacy, equity, accountability, efficacy, and recourse.



CULTIVATE BUY-IN FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Talking Points to Use with Your Leadership

As government agencies continue to expand their use of AI to deliver public services, community engagement is critical to building public trust, promoting transparency, and ensuring accountability. We want residents to understand what AI is—and what it isn't—by clearly explaining how it's used in public services and by dispelling common misconceptions. Just as importantly, we want to listen.

Residents may have valid concerns about digital rights, data privacy, and the ethical use of new technologies. We want their input not only on how AI is used, but also on which use cases we pursue in the first place. In doing so, government agencies can ensure our priorities reflect community needs and values.

One of the barriers that government practitioners may encounter to practice effective community engagement is obtaining buy-in from leadership within their organization. For a variety of reasons, your leadership and/or governing body may not yet be supportive of efforts to proactively bring residents into the process of procuring and using AI.

This guide is intended to help you, a government practitioner who wants to strengthen your agency's engagement practices, make an effective argument for doing so to your leadership.

The talking points have been crowdsourced from the GovAI Coalition's Community Engagement Committee and outline the benefits of doing community engagement from a variety of angles. You'll notice that some of the talking points appeal to democratic principles, some appeal to potential fiscal impacts, and some even appeal to public relations impacts that could reflect on the agency itself. You know best what kind of arguments will be most effective with your leadership. To aid you, we have provided a range of talking points – philosophical, pragmatic, and strategic – to support you in making your case.

Talking Points

1. Conducting outreach with constituents (residents, businesses, community organizations, others) will help ensure that the agency's work is aligned with the community's values and needs.
2. Engaging in community outreach will help build trust with our residents, which will make it easier to carry out other technology initiatives in the future.
3. Seeking feedback from the public early on can save time and money down the line.
4. Community engagement is a valuable opportunity to equip residents with the skills they need to thrive in the digital economy.
5. Early community engagement does not delay AI implementation, it streamlines it.

Talking Point #1:

Conducting outreach with residents will help ensure that the agency's work is aligned with the community's values and needs.

- Collaborating with residents leads to AI solutions better aligned with real community needs.
- Public input helps shape AI solutions to align with the community's values and local priorities, reinforcing the message that AI should be people-centered and serve the public good.
- When AI is used to support decisions that affect people's lives—such as eligibility for public programs—public participation isn't just good practice, it's a democratic imperative.

Talking Point #2:

Engaging in community outreach will help build trust with our residents, which will make it easier to carry out other technology initiatives in the future.

- Early involvement builds buy-in from the public, easing implementation and strengthening community support. In other words, by engaging early, you can reduce public resistance to change.
- Proactive dialogue identifies and mitigates risks, such as bias or privacy concerns, minimizing future conflicts.
- Taking the lead on these conversations allows the agency to shape the narrative, rather than leaving room for confusion or misinformation.
- Transparent engagement positions the agency as a trustworthy, knowledgeable leader on AI. This fosters enhanced public trust and credibility for the agency.

Ultimately, responsible use of AI includes helping residents feel informed, heard, and confident in how their government is evolving with technology.

Talking Point #3:

Seeking feedback from the public early on can save time and money down the line.

- Public input helps surface blind spots, hopes, and concerns that the agency may not have anticipated. Those unanticipated blind spots could have been costly and timely to address if they had surfaced naturally during the implementation process.
- Garnering public input early on to inform the AI project can help the agency avoid potential public relations disasters down the line. If residents learn of an AI initiative after most decisions are already made, and feel it does not reflect community needs and values, they may lose trust with the agency. This could lead to media attention and a negative public response for the agency.

Talking Point #4:

Community engagement is a valuable opportunity to equip residents with the skills they need to thrive in the digital economy.

- Engagement events are a great opportunity to provide basic AI literacy skills to residents. By simplifying complex concepts about AI through clear communication, your agency can help ensure that residents of all ages and backgrounds grasp what AI is and how it's being used.
- Through engagement events, agency staff can equip residents with the AI skills they need to participate in the digital economy, promoting accessibility and inclusion.
- Engagement can help close the digital divide by creating opportunities to engage residents who may not typically participate in civic or digital initiatives, expanding access and ensuring underserved communities are not left behind.

Talking Point #5:

Early community engagement does not delay AI implementation, it streamlines it.

- Proactive engagement helps identify community concerns early, preventing costly political or legal delays later.
- Transparent communication builds public trust, which reduces controversy.
- Taking time upfront to involve the community leads to a more efficient, accountable, and durable rollout.

Agency Spotlight

City of San José, CA



In the City of San José's Road Safety Conditions Pilot, community engagement played a central role in shaping how the City explored using AI-powered object detection to improve street safety. Throughout the first phase of the pilot, the City worked with residents, neighborhood groups, advocacy organizations, and AI ethics partners to gather input on priorities, concerns, and acceptable use cases for the technology. Outreach included public surveys, neighborhood meetings, and facilitated discussions with groups such as the Lived Experience Advisory Board of Silicon Valley and bike advocacy groups to ensure transparency and surface community feedback on privacy risks, potential bias in detection, and how AI might affect vulnerable populations. That input directly influenced pilot design by resulting in the removal of encampment and graffiti detection from testing due to privacy concerns. As a result, the pilot shifted to focus initial tests on potholes and trash and objectives were refined to better align with resident priorities like road safety, rather than surveillance or enforcement purposes.

This engagement with the community members allowed the pilot to better respond to residents' concerns and informed broader AI governance practices in the City. As a result, the City is expanding community outreach in the next phase of the pilot, by integrating feedback to detect additional hazards (e.g., bike lane obstructions) and committing to ongoing dialogue as the program evolves. San José's experience highlights how deliberate public engagement on highly visible AI initiatives can shape responsible, community-aligned approaches to municipal AI pilots.

DEFINE CLEAR GOALS

Decide what you want from engagement. Goals might include informing the public, gathering feedback, identifying priorities, stress-testing ideas, or sharing decision-making power. Different goals require different methods.

Before launching any engagement effort, ask:

- What is the goal of the project?
- What decisions need to be made?
- Who makes the final decision?
- Is public engagement legally required?
- How will public input influence the outcome?
- What is the timeline for outreach?
- Who should be engaged? Who are the stakeholders?

Use the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2 framework to guide the depth of engagement):

- **Inform** – Provide balanced information.
- **Consult** – Gather feedback on analysis or decisions.
- **Involve** – Work directly with stakeholders throughout the process.
- **Collaborate** – Partner with stakeholders in decision-making.
- **Empower** – Place decision-making in stakeholders' hands.

Consider how you can measure the success of engagement during the planning process. For example, a three-question survey administered at the start and end of an engagement event or period to determine levels of trust, impressions, and concerns can help you estimate how successful the engagement was.

Set a Clear Timeline

A typical community engagement timeline within a local government follows a structured but flexible sequence, usually unfolding over 2-6 months for a single initiative, though longer timelines are common for major projects.

1–3 Months Before Engagement: Preparation and Scoping

Begin by defining the goals of the engagement. Identify which decisions need public input and how that input will shape outcomes. Map internal and external stakeholders, select appropriate engagement methods, develop plain-language and multilingual materials, and coordinate with relevant departments, legal teams, and communications staff.

- See “Section 3: Mapping Stakeholders” and “Appendix B: RACI Template for Community Engagement” for guidance on how to map stakeholders.



2–4 Weeks Before Engagement: Outreach and Promotion

Announce the engagement activities through local government city websites, social media, neighborhood associations, community partners, and flyers. Partner with trusted intermediaries—such as libraries, schools, or community-based organizations—to reach groups that might not otherwise participate. Be clear about the timeline, purpose, and how feedback will be used.

Engagement Period

Carry out the planned activities. This may include town halls, working groups, pop-up events, surveys, or participatory design sessions. Meet communities in their own spaces and document feedback thoroughly.

0–1 Month After Engagement: Synthesis and Reporting Back

Analyze the input received, identify key themes, and summarize what was heard. Share findings publicly and directly with participants, making the connection between their contributions and decision-making explicit.

1–2 Months After Engagement: Decision Integration and Follow-Up

Incorporate community input into program design or policy recommendations. Communicate next steps to the public and evaluate the engagement process to refine future efforts.

Longer-Term Engagement

Major initiatives, such as infrastructure or agency-wide technology deployments, may involve multiple rounds of engagement over a year or more, with iterative feedback loops and ongoing participation.

MAP STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholder mapping is an important step in the community engagement process and helps identify who is interested in, affected by, or influential around your project. This step ensures that engagement efforts are targeted, inclusive, and informed by past experience.

Key Terms

Direct stakeholder

People who use the system (e.g., operators, passengers, bus drivers).

Indirect stakeholders

People affected by the system but not direct users (e.g., cyclists, pedestrians).

Influencers

Individuals or groups trusted by stakeholders who can shape perspectives (e.g., faith leaders, union leaders). Identifying influencers helps build trust and reach communities effectively.

Ask:

- Who is vocally interested in the project?
- Who will be impacted by this work?
- Who has been impacted but historically overlooked?
- Who works closely with these groups?
- What unions, community groups, others represent workers impacted by prospective AI rollouts?
- How have previous initiatives affected people?
- Who participated in previous initiatives, and how have those relationships evolved?

Spend time in existing community spaces to see who is already active. Attending public events is a simple way to spot key players. For example, at a

city-sponsored cyclist fair, observing which organizations are tabling gives insight into who is already engaging with cycling communities. Reach out to unions and other groups that represent workers, like employee resource groups.

Stakeholder mapping is both analytical and relational. Asking the right questions, observing existing networks, and applying structured frameworks like the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation ensures a solid foundation for meaningful engagement.

RACI + IAP2 Matrix

The RACI + IAP2 matrix is designed to bring clarity and intentionality to community engagement work inside city government. Engagement efforts often involve multiple departments—communications, legal, program teams, and leadership. Without a shared framework, roles can become muddled and stakeholders can be engaged unevenly. This tool addresses two common problems:

- **Internal role confusion:** Engagement activities often fall through the cracks or get duplicated when responsibilities aren't clearly assigned.
- **Inconsistent stakeholder involvement:** Teams may default to “informing” the public when more collaborative approaches are warranted. Linking RACI roles to IAP2 levels forces early decisions about who is involved, at what stage, and how.

RACI Template for Community Engagement

IAP2 Level	Description	Responsible (R): Who will do the work?	Accountable (A): Who approves or owns the outcome?	Consulted (C): Whose input is needed (two-way)?	Informed (I): Who will be kept up-to-date (one-way)?	Communication on methods (emails, meetings, public notices)
Inform	<i>Provide balanced and objective information to assist understanding of the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions.</i>					
Consult	<i>Obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions.</i>					
Involve	<i>Work directly with the public to ensure concerns and aspirations are understood and considered.</i>					
Collaborate	<i>Partner with the public in each aspect of decision making, including development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution.</i>					
Empower	<i>Place final decision-making in the hands of the public.</i>					

- See “Appendix B: RACI Template for Community Engagement” for detailed instructions on how to complete the matrix and an example of a complete template.

Outreach to Vulnerable Groups

One approach to community engagement prioritizes hearing from local organizations that serve more vulnerable or marginalized groups in your community, or the workers who will be affected by the adoption of a new system. It follows the principle from human-centered design that addressing the needs of people most likely to be adversely affected will lead to benefits for the wider public.

An example of this was shared in the introduction: curb cuts were created for wheelchair users, but also help people using walkers, white canes, strollers, and bicycles. Other examples of this principle include audiobooks, voice-to-text, and closed captioning, which were all designed for people with vision or hearing impairments, but benefit others as well.

[Research](#) demonstrates that AI systems are prone to adversely impacting some groups over others when they are inaccurate or designed incorrectly.

For example, consider [a case of a healthcare insurance algorithm](#) that relied on healthcare costs as a proxy for medical risk; the algorithm systematically underestimated the needs of Black patients compared to white patients — because Black patients were disproportionately sicker at the same level of medical spending. Quantitative approaches to evaluating the impact of this program primarily rely on examining data after system deployment. However, by the time this data exists, many people could already have been adversely affected. With community engagement, the health insurance company would have explained the algorithm to patients' groups for more vulnerable populations prior to deployment and likely raised the right questions about the system that appear to have been overlooked in that case.

- [A worksheet for creating an outreach plan to vulnerable groups is available in Appendix E.](#)
- [An email for reaching out to local community-based organizations is available in Appendix F.](#)

Agency Spotlight

City of Portland, OR

In May 2024, the City of Portland's Smart City PDX program convened a public conversation to gather community input on the ethical, equitable, and responsible use of AI in local government. To ensure meaningful participation, the City first hosted two digital literacy sessions (one in English and one in Spanish) to introduce residents to core AI concepts and how AI may be used in city operations. The main event was designed as a hybrid, multilingual engagement with accessibility supports, bringing together community members, technology professionals, advocates, and residents with varied lived experiences. Feedback and recommendations were compiled into an internal report and publicly summarized, demonstrating transparency and accountability.

For local government agencies, Portland's approach highlights several key practices: invest in digital literacy before asking for policy input; conduct targeted outreach to community-based organizations, advocacy groups, and professional networks; and plan well in advance for inclusive, multilingual, and hybrid participation. Importantly, the engagement had real impact on municipal outcomes, including community concerns and recommendations directly informing internal policies, like algorithmic impact assessments and AI audits. This model shows how agencies can structure AI engagement to build public trust, elevate diverse voices, and translate community input into concrete governance actions.



CHOOSE THE RIGHT FORMAT

Community engagement is the process of involving the public in decision-making. It ensures transparency, builds trust, and leads to better outcomes by incorporating community input into projects, policies, and services. It can take many forms from one-time interactions to on-going conversations about programs and services. Some examples of community engagement include posting on social media and monitoring replies, visiting block and neighborhood associations and community boards, tabling at public events, hosting town hall meetings, convening citizen commissions and working groups and co-designing programs with residents. Community engagement methods are called “participatory” when they seek for opportunities to share early-phase ideation, scoping, and other decision-making with residents.

Match the method to the goal and community. For quick updates or broad reach, use social media, flyers, or community newsletters. For deeper input, host workshops, listening sessions, or working groups. For shared decision-making, use participatory design sessions, advisory boards, or co-governance models.

Determining the method of engagement depends on who you are engaging and the level of engagement needed. It’s about right sizing the method to the need. There are pros and cons to each method.

Engagement Methods

In-Person Methods

- **Community Conversations:** Informal, drop-in sessions with stations and visual materials.
- **Workshops:** Structured events with presentations and small-group exercises to shape solutions.
- **Community/Neighborhood Meetings:** Presentations delivered directly to affected groups.
- **Event Tabling:** Interacting with community members at markets, fairs, or neighborhood events. Consider simple activities to engage. For example, hang butcher paper at tabling events to start a conversation about hopes and concerns about AI systems being considered for adoption.

Digital Methods

- **Online Surveys:** Use clear, accessible language and plan time for analysis.
- **Project Webpages:** Central hub for updates and engagement opportunities.
- **Social Media:** Use platforms to share updates, inform residents, or direct them to webpages for more engagement.
- **Virtual Town Halls:** Live-streamed Q&A sessions with project staff.

Creative or “Out-of-the-Box” Methods

- **Coffee Chats:** Informal meetups in local cafes.
- **Kitchen Table Talks:** Small group discussions with rotating participants.
- **Meeting in a Box:** DIY kits for community-led discussions.

Key Considerations

- Create a welcoming environment and communicate the purpose clearly.
- Allow enough lead time.
 - Advertise in advance.
 - Use flyers, email lists, social media, and community calendars.
 - Provide clear information about the event’s purpose, format, and how to participate.
- Prepare an FAQ for community members.
 - Provide staff for facilitation, greeting, and information tables.
 - Identify communication, engagement, external facing staff that may be able to assist.
 - Offer clear take-away materials with project contacts and deadlines.
- Provide staff for facilitation, greeting, and information tables.
 - Identify communication, engagement, external facing staff that may be able to assist.
- Offer clear take-away materials with project contacts and deadlines.

Other Considerations

- **Meet communities where they are:** Go to existing spaces like neighborhood meetings, cultural centers, schools, or community events. Schedule at accessible times, provide language access and childcare where possible, and design for comfort and trust.
- **Make participation meaningful:** Be clear about how input will be used. Offer concrete ways for participants to shape outcomes. Avoid token engagement by integrating feedback into actual decision-making.
- **Ensure accessibility** (routes, materials, language level, ADA accommodations)
 - Choose convenient, trusted, and appropriately sized venues.
 - Provide materials in and speakers of participants’ preferred languages
 - Offer accommodations.
 - If possible, provide gift cards or honorariums for participants.
 - Offer snacks for in-person events.
 - Include childcare options for parents who want to attend.
 - Use signage and accessible routes at events.
 - Bridge to the community present by asking a staff member or community leader to introduce the workshop.

Agency Spotlight

City of Long Beach, CA



The City of Long Beach, CA launched a five-part community workshop series focused on generative AI, digital skills, and data privacy to help residents understand emerging AI technologies and how they affect daily life. Before designing the sessions, the City distributed a community AI survey (receiving 280 responses) to assess residents' awareness, concerns, and experience; that feedback directly shaped the curriculum and examples. The workshops combined short presentations, interactive discussions, and a hands-on "AI Live Lab," where facilitators demonstrated tools like ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, and Claude in real time, with participants guiding prompts. Sessions were hosted in trusted community spaces such as libraries and parks. Post-workshop feedback showed increased understanding of AI, stronger awareness of privacy risks, and improved trust in the City's AI use.

For public agencies, Long Beach's model underscores several best practices: start with community input to design relevant programming; prioritize transparency about how and why the City uses AI; and make engagement interactive and accessible rather than lecture-based. Trust-building should be treated as a primary outcome, not a byproduct. Cross-departmental and external partnerships (such as collaboration with Libraries, Parks & Recreation, a Data Privacy Ad Hoc Committee, and trusted advisors like Data & Society) strengthened both credibility and content. By grounding AI education in human-centered design, responsible AI principles, and early partnership planning, governments can create engagement efforts that are practical, inclusive, and impactful.

CLOSE THE LOOP

After engagement, report back to participants. Share what you heard, how it influenced the project, and next steps. Follow-up builds credibility and strengthens long-term relationships.

One of the most important steps is telling the public how their feedback was used:

- Summarize what you heard.
- Explain how input influenced the decision.
- Share final and interim reports via email, social media, webpages, and project lists.
- Remove any identifying information from public comments before publishing.

CONCLUSION

You don't need to be an expert to do engagement well. Start with clear goals, listen actively, and always follow up. Engagement is about building relationships, and that starts with making people feel heard and valued.

What you should remember:

- Start early, clarify goals, and define the public's role.
- Choose the right method—from simple information-sharing to full collaboration.
- Make engagement accessible, welcoming, and well-organized.
- Use multiple approaches, both digital and in-person, to reach diverse audiences.
- Close the loop by showing the community how their participation shaped the outcome.

APPENDIX

A person with curly hair, seen from behind, is looking at a large wall covered in numerous sticky notes. The scene is dimly lit with a strong teal/green color cast. The sticky notes are arranged in a grid-like fashion, suggesting a brainstorming or planning session.

Appendix A:
Engagement Plan Template

Appendix B:
RACI Template for Community Engagement

Appendix C:
Outreach Plan

Appendix D:
Email Outreach Template

Appendix E:
Day-of “Run of Show” Plan for Engagement Session

Appendix F:
Informed Consent Agreement



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Appendix A: Engagement Plan Template

Project Name: [insert]

Start Date: [insert]

Project Team (Name, Team/Organization, Responsibilities, Contact):

- Project Manager:
- Engagement Lead:
- Communications Lead:
- Consultant(s):
- Other agency support:

Project Details

What's the motivation for this project?

Who is the project for and what is funded?

What decisions can the public impact?

What are key dates, deadlines, and milestones?

Engagement Strategy

What's the motivation for engagement on this project?

What level of engagement are we aiming for? Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, and/or Empower?

How will engagement impact this project?

What do we need from the public?

How can we prepare for potential challenges?

Research and resources: What do we already know?

Budget: Where is the funding coming from and how much is available for engagement expenses?

Communications Plan

Who is the audience?

What does the audience need to know?

What communication channels will we use?

Closing the Loop

DATA ANALYSIS: Determine deadlines, parameters, etc.

CREATE REPORT: Determine deadlines, parameters, etc.

REPORT REVIEW: Who from needs to review the report before it is published? Timeline on getting it reviewed and approved.

PUBLISH FINAL REPORT: How to share? When? Consider how to share with internal and external stakeholders and the public.

Evaluation

What was the effectiveness of engagement activities?

What was the effectiveness of communication tactics?

What would you do differently next time?

What changes do you need to make in project workflow?

Were you able to answer the questions you originally identified?

Appendix B: RACI Template for Community Engagement

How to Use This Template

This RACI + IAP2 matrix is designed to bring clarity and intentionality to community engagement work inside city government. Engagement efforts often involve multiple departments—communications, legal, program teams, and leadership. Without a shared framework, roles can become muddled and stakeholders can be engaged unevenly. This tool addresses two common problems:

- **Internal role confusion:** Engagement activities often fall through the cracks or get duplicated when responsibilities aren't clearly assigned.
- **Inconsistent stakeholder involvement:** Teams may default to “informing” the public when more collaborative approaches are warranted. Linking RACI roles to IAP2 levels forces early decisions about who is involved, at what stage, and how.

Step 1: Identify External Stakeholders

Use the **Consulted (C)** and **Informed (I)** columns to map key groups—neighborhood associations, nonprofit partners, advocacy coalitions, faith-based organizations, businesses, or specific populations such as renters or non-English-speaking residents.

Step 2: Clarify Roles Early

For each engagement step, assign:

- **Responsible (R)** – the person or team carrying out the work
- **Accountable (A)** – the one person ultimately answerable for the outcome*
- **Consulted (C)** – those whose input is needed in a two-way exchange
- **Informed (I)** – those who will receive updates but not shape decisions

*There should be only one **Accountable** party per task.

RACI Template for Community Engagement

IAP2 Level	Description	Responsible (R): Who will do the work?	Accountable (A): Who approves or owns the outcome?	Consulted (C): Whose input is needed (two-way)?	Informed (I): Who will be kept up-to-date (one-way)?	Communication methods (email, meetings, public notices)
Inform	Provide balanced and objective information to assist understanding of the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions.					
Consult	Obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions.					
Involve	Work directly with the public to ensure concerns and aspirations are understood and considered.					
Collaborate	Partner with the public in each aspect of decision making, including development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution.					
Empower	Place final decision-making in the hands of the public.					

How to Use the Template

1. Fill in Names/Groups

- o *Responsible*: Staff or team executing the engagement step.
- o *Accountable*: The one person or role ultimately answerable.
- o *Consulted*: External stakeholders, subject-matter experts, or key community partners.
- o *Informed*: Groups or individuals who will receive updates but not actively shape the decision.

2. Repeat for Each Project or Deliverable

- o You can use one sheet per project or one sheet per engagement stage.

3. Optional Add-ons

- o Add columns for **timelines** or **status updates** if you want a project-tracking version.

RACI Template for Community Engagement (Example)

IAP2 Level	Description (per IAP2)	Responsible (R)	Accountable (A)	Consulted (C)	Informed (I)
Inform	Provide balanced and objective information to assist understanding of the problem, alternatives, opportunities, and/or solutions.	Communications/Engagement Staff (create content, manage outreach channels).	Project Manager or Department Director (approves messaging).	Subject-Matter Experts, Legal (review content for accuracy).	General Public, Community Organizations, Elected Officials.
Consult	Obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions.	Engagement Specialists (design & run surveys, public comment opportunities).	Project Manager or Department Director (approves process, ensures goals met).	Community Leaders, Advisory Boards, Subject-Matter Experts.	General Public, Stakeholder Groups not directly participating.
Involve	Work directly with the public to ensure concerns and aspirations are understood and considered.	Community Liaisons / Engagement Specialists (facilitate meetings, track input).	Project Manager (ensures input meaningfully influences decisions).	Community Organizations, Neighborhood Councils, Advocacy Groups.	Broader Public, City Staff not directly involved.
Collaborate	Partner with the public in each aspect of decision making, including development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution.	Engagement Lead + Cross-Department Team (co-design process with stakeholders).	Senior Leadership / Department Director (ensures alignment with City policy).	Community-Based Organizations, Key Stakeholder Representatives, Technical Experts.	Wider Community, Media, Other Agencies.
Empower	Place final decision-making in the hands of the public.	Community Advisory Boards / Citizen Panels (facilitate and execute decision-making process).	Senior Leadership / City Council (approve delegation of decision-making authority).	Legal, Policy, and Finance Advisors (ensure compliance).	General Public, Media, Internal Staff.

Appendix C: Outreach Plan

The purpose of this document is to help identify which organizations to prioritize for outreach. Follow these steps to create a plan.

About the AI System

What AI system is being proposed?

Note: This type of engagement is triggered by the proposed use of a specific technology. The system could be AI-powered language captioning, a pedestrian counter, license plate reader, or a 311 chatbot. Anchor your impact assessment around explaining and seeking input on whether and how to use this system.

What stakeholder groups are not already well-integrated into your organization's decision-making around technology (e.g., disability advocates, frontline workers, senior citizens organizations, refugee aid groups)?

Does the technology make assessments, predictions, or suggestions based on any of the following technical approaches?

- Computer vision and/or object detection
- Facial recognition
- License plate reader / optical character recognition
- Large language model
- Risk scoring
- Anomaly detection
- Prediction/interpretation of protected demographic traits
- ...or other machine learning or AI-based approaches

Using this technical approach as a keyword, search for previous reporting or evidence that this technical approach may be less accurate for a people in a certain demographic group.

For example, technologies that rely on computer vision have been demonstrated in academic research to be less accurate for people who are Black, or at detecting people using wheelchairs. AI systems used in hiring to screen resumes have been demonstrated to discriminate against women.

Impacted Groups

Which workers or residents might be affected by this, if previously reported performance issues in this technical approach are still present (e.g., frontline workers, bus drivers, Black residents, people using wheelchairs, people with limited English proficiency)?

Are there any other vulnerable groups (by demographic or other characteristics) in the local area that should be included in the engagement process?

Note: For example, a community with a large Hmong community that is not otherwise well-represented in tech policy, or a community with a prominent Deaf university and student community.

Choose at least three (3) stakeholder groups from the answers above to prioritize in your engagement.

Note: Remember, through speaking to groups who are most likely to have concerns about privacy, equity, or transparency, program outcomes are intended to support digital rights for *all* workers or residents in your organization or community.

What community-based organizations (CBOs), unions, or advocacy groups are already organized to represent the people belonging to these stakeholder groups or interests?

Note: Ideal partner organizations have:

- A **direct relationship** to people in the community they serve, such as a membership organization, union, or one that provides essential services,
- **Full-time staff** who can support a collaborative project, and
- An **advocacy or policy dimension** to their work that motivates them to partner on impact assessment/engagement work.

Others, such as volunteer-led organizations or neighborhood associations, can also be valuable partners.

Relationship building is essential for community engagement. Check with colleagues in your department, and colleagues from other departments, to see if they have an existing relationship with the organization.

Proactive outreach to community-based organizations or other membership organizations expands the set of actors involved in tech policy decision-making and builds stronger relationships between your organization and local leaders.

In “Appendix D: [Email Outreach Template](#),” you will find draft language for an initial invitation to potential partner organizations to collaborate. It should clearly define the scope of the project goals and anticipated time required.

Appendix D: Email Outreach Template

Once you have chosen a system for this process, you will need to contact community-based organizations (CBOs) to:

- Collaborate on organizing one or more 90-minute conversations with up to ~10 total community members and staff on an AI based technology and community members' questions, concerns, and expectations. No tech expertise is necessary.
- Ask for 2 hours of a staff member's time over the coming month or two for the purpose of setting up these sessions.

This document provides an email template for this outreach. It is written for local government, but we intend that this process can be adapted by non-profit organizations or companies. Note that engagement can also be open to the public, but it is easier to pay people for their time to have a closed-door conversation.

Aim to identify email addresses at partner organizations for policy staff, advocacy staff, or those in community outreach and service provision roles. Be sure to ask relevant staff in city agencies if they have existing contacts in your prospective partner organization; they may want to be kept informed or involved but are likely willing to send an introduction email. We have found that emailing general contact addresses, such as info@NAME.ORG, can still be useful, but takes much longer and has a lower success rate.

In your follow-up communication to schedule the sessions, make sure you emphasize that CBO staff are encouraged to be present. Staff at community organizations can play an important role in the conversation, and in creating the conditions for a more open discussion.

Outreach Email Template

Subject: Invitation to collaborate: Asking members for input

Dear [ORGANIZATION STAFF MEMBER],

My name is [NAME]. I work at [AGENCY] on a project to inform how the [AGENCY] uses new technologies and promotes residents' digital rights.

We deeply admire [ORGANIZATION]'s work to connect and support the local [NAME] community. We are inviting groups like yours to elicit community members' perspectives on what the [DEPLOYER] should consider when evaluating a new AI-based technology related to [USE CASE].

If you were interested in collaborating with us on this project, we would like to:

- Collaborate on organizing one or more 90-minute conversations with up to 8 total community members and staff on an AI-based technology and community members' questions, concerns, and expectations.
- Ask for 2 hours of a staff member's time over the coming month or two for the purpose of setting up these sessions.

We are hoping to complete a session in [DATE RANGE] and could hold it as early as [SPECIFIC DATES].

People attending the sessions would receive a \$100 Visa gift card honorarium for each session; we would also provide \$300 stipends payable to your organization to acknowledge your time and expertise.

Do you have 30 minutes in the coming week or so to talk about this project idea?

Warmly,

[YOUR NAME + TITLE]

[YOUR CONTACT INFO]

Appendix E: Day-of “Run of show” Plan for Engagement Session

Day-of information

Location: [Meeting space, Office of community partner, public library, etc.]

Language interpreter: [Where possible, as suggested by community partner]

Food: [Consider asking community partner for food suggestions]

Consent forms: [Print out two (2) copies per participant, have translated if necessary]

Run of Show (Example)

Goal(s):

- Surface community hopes, concerns, expectations, and anticipated and felt impacts of the AI system.

Note: Where the impacts of an AI system are complex or contested, longer or additional sessions are appropriate.

If possible, audio-record the session and ask co-facilitators to take notes. See “Appendix F: Informed Consent Agreement” to obtain consent from participants to record the session.

The following describes the use of time in a 90-minute session.

SEGMENT	TIMING	CONTENT
Welcome + setting the table (Facilitator)	3 min buffer 4-5 min remarks	Thank you and sharing out goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project origin• Why we approached your organization• Generate questions, save answers for later• Next steps + output of the conversation Setting up conversation

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No experience with technology is needed All views welcome
Introductions	8 mins	Each person shares their name and connection to the organization [Possible icebreaker]
Object detection pilot (City staff members)	5-7 mins	Short introduction to object detection pilot <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problem Proposed solution What the technology is Its purpose How it works Where it will be
Open reaction (Facilitator asks room)	10 mins	What are your first reactions to this technology? What are your initial questions about it?
Hopes (Facilitator asks room)	15 mins	Is there anything about the use of this technology you are optimistic about? What do you hope it could be used for?
Concerns (Facilitator asks room)	15 mins	Is there anything about the use of this technology you are concerned about? What are you worried it could be used for?
Expectations and input (Facilitator asks room)	15 mins	This technology is being tested and evaluated right now. What would you expect to see about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ...how the data is used? ...who can access the data? ...protections for people in your community? ...how long the data is kept?
Closing (Facilitator)	5 mins	Amplify any relevant emergent takeaways. Give a preview of the next session.

Appendix F: Informed Consent Agreement

Purpose of This Project

You are invited to participate in a working group convened by [AGENCY]. The goal of this project is to ask residents to share questions, concerns, and expectations about technologies that the [AGENCY] is considering in its [PROGRAM/SYSTEM].

Today's working group is focused on your:

- Questions, expectations, and concerns about city-owned technologies.
- Thoughts about a draft document that tries to answer these questions.

This project will have two outputs:

- A document called an Impact Engagement Report that will be delivered to the [AGENCY] that summarizes community input about SYSTEM; and
- [OPTIONAL, IF RELEVANT] Academic paper(s) or reports about how community groups' questions and concerns about technology can lead conversations about technology oversight.

What You Will Do in The Working Group

If you decide to participate in this project, we will discuss hopes and concerns about technologies the city uses, and questions for [AGENCY] about how these technologies are designed or used. Your participation is voluntary: please feel free to skip questions, topics, or to leave the room at any time.

Time Required

The working group session is 90 minutes long. There may be future working groups that you will be invited to participate in — but these are optional.

Honorarium Payment

You will be paid [\$X] for your time and expertise. If you decide to leave the working group at any time during today's session or later, you will still receive this payment.

Confidentiality

Your identity will be completely anonymous; we will refer to the organization by name. The working group session will be audio-recorded and transcribed. Only our team will have your information; we will anonymize them in any public writing.

How To Withdraw

We care about your comfort, and you are free to stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate or withdraw later, it will not be a problem in any way; you can contact us to ask for your input not to be used.

Questions About This Project?

You can ask questions about this consent form or the project at any time. At any time, you can contact the project lead [NAME] at [EMAIL] and [PHONE] to ask questions or withdraw your comments from the record without penalty. Before we go any further, do you have any questions regarding the project, your participation, or payment?

[OPTIONAL] If You Are Willing To Be Photographed, Please Select Below:

I consent to having my photo taken for the purpose of public presentations and reports. There is no penalty for declining and you can still participate in the session.

Acknowledgement:

I understand I can withdraw my input before the project is published and that I would still receive my [\$X] honorarium payment for my time.

Consent

[AGENCY] is grateful for your input on this project. Please sign below to confirm your willingness to participate.

“I consent to participating in this study. I understand that my **identity will be anonymous**, but using **my community organization’s name with my quotes is permitted.**”

Print Name: _____

E-mail address: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

If you have questions, please contact:

[NAME] [DEPARTMENT] [EMAIL] [PHONE]