

Example Resident Engagement Approaches



The following are a variety of approaches for engaging residents, including how to:

- Gather residents' input
- Engage residents as partners in decision-making
- Support residents in taking action

Consider which approaches will best meet your needs given your local community context and your current capacity (e.g., staff, community partnerships, financial resources, time, etc.). Mix and match these methods in any way to meet your needs.

● Examples of how to gather residents' input

Existing Interactions: Have individuals who have direct or natural interactions with your priority residents ask one or two questions with each client/family they touch. You can vary the questions every few months. Create an easy way for these individuals to send you this input (e.g., scan their notes and email to you, convene them together to share what they are learning, etc.), and have them close the loop with residents so they know how their input was used.

Example Interactions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Home visitation programs• Pediatricians/Health care• Pre-school/child care• Food pantry/donation center• WIC office• Police and probation department• Help or information hotlines• Substance Abuse Programs• Employment coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Faith Based Settings (churches, synagogues, mosque, etc.)• Hair stylists, barbers, manicurists• Bank tellers• Libraries• Pharmacists• Mental Health Centers• Family support/education programs

Existing Meetings or Gatherings: Identify upcoming community gatherings or meetings engaging priority residents. Partner with the leaders of these settings to see if they could ask your questions with residents. Create an easy way for these individuals to send you this input (e.g., scan their notes and email to you, convene the providers together to share what they are learning, etc.). If possible, have them close the loop with residents so they know how their input was used.

Example Meetings or Gatherings	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighborhood association meetings • PTA meetings • School events (e.g., open houses, kindergarten roundup) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community fairs or celebrations • Sports events • Religious gatherings • Support groups

Intake Forms: Add one or two questions onto the end of an intake form or questionnaire that is completed when residents enter or exit a service setting. Shift or add questions as necessary.

Waiting Room: Have a representative ask residents in a waiting room (or when they enter or exit a setting) one or two brief open-ended questions. The person asking the questions can keep the surveys on a clipboard as they go from family to family.

Invite Residents as Guest Speakers: Invite residents to share their experiences and answer questions from staff about how to better meet their needs or improve local services. Prepare residents for these conversations by sharing questions in advance and helping them practice sharing their story.

Survey: Work with partner organizations to collectively develop survey questions for residents. Have these partner organizations give the surveys to residents they naturally interact with (e.g., while providing services, doing outreach, etc.) and share the survey results with each other for collective learning and action.

Comment Box: Create a short (5 or fewer questions) closed-ended/multiple choice survey. Leave a stack of these surveys along with pencils and a box for residents to drop off their responses.

Reviews from Former Participants: Interview people who successfully or unsuccessfully participated in a service to ask them about what they would keep or change.

Technology: Post questions on the comment section of your efforts' website or Facebook page, and check for summaries of recent community conversations/forums.

● Examples of how to engage resident as partners in decision-making

Involve Residents as Voting Members in your Decision-Making Meetings

Engage residents as voting members of committees, work groups, temporary task force teams, and even board of directors. Residents can participate in the discussions and take part in influencing final decisions. Tips for success: ensure enough residents are at the table to avoid token representation, and provide necessary supports to help residents fully participate (e.g., childcare, transportation supports, translation, resident liaisons, etc.). Also take efforts to ensure group members listen to and incorporate resident voice into the group's decisions.

Develop a Resident Coalition or Action Team

Resident coalitions can not only provide ways for local residents to give you feedback, but they can create a way for you to engage residents in helping you make decisions (e.g., selecting priorities, determining next steps, hiring staff, etc.) related to your work. Residents themselves can be hired and trained to support and facilitate these meetings.

● Examples of how to support residents in taking action

Develop a Resident Coalition or Action Team

Support residents in setting up a coalition or action team to partner with you in reaching your shared goals (e.g., preventing homelessness). These resident coalitions/action teams can not only provide ways for local residents to give you feedback and help you make decisions (see above), but they can also support residents in carrying out actions. For example, residents can co-design questions to understand local conditions related to your shared goals and then actively help collect information from the community. Residents can also develop and carry out their own action ideas to support your shared goals (e.g., create peer to peer support groups).

[ABLE Video Series on Resident Coalitions](#)

Series of brief videos describing purpose of a resident coalition and ideas for how to help launch one in your community.



Sponsor a Photovoice Project

Provide opportunities for residents to document community conditions through photography in a “Photovoice” project.¹ Residents are trained in how to use cameras and then answer questions about local community conditions by taking pictures. Residents come together to share and discuss their photos, and the information is used to raise awareness of local problems (e.g., by putting photos in “gallery” style exhibits across community) and guide the design of strategies.



[ABLe Photovoice Guide](#)

Bring photovoice to your community engagement effort using this easy to use guide.

Engage residents in helping to implement your efforts

Create new roles for residents to play in carrying out your work, and provide fair compensation for their efforts. For example, residents can co-facilitate programs or meetings, get the word out about available services and encourage residents to participate, and help with evaluations.

Develop Residents as Neighborhood Liaisons

Ask local residents to become their “Neighborhood or Community Liaison”. Liaisons gather input from their neighbors, family, and friends and share this information with local organizations to help inform planning and decision-making. In some communities, Liaisons hold these gatherings in their homes and call them “Living Room” or “Back Porch Conversations.”

Sponsor a Mini-Grant Program

Local organizations/funders create neighborhood small grant programs where residents can submit a simple application to get a small grant (\$500 or so) to support a neighborhood improvement project (e.g., clean up a park, hold a neighborhood event). To qualify for the money, residents must include other residents in planning and implementing their project.

Support Residents as Advocates

Join residents in visiting local officials to advocate around change goals and solutions they have prioritized. Consider how to build residents’ leadership capacity to further support them in taking these advocacy roles.