

Request for Feedback on Draft Outline: *A Toolkit for Broadening Public Participation and Community Engagement with the Federal Government*

SUMMARY:

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) seeks public input on the proposed outline of a U.S. Federal Public Participation and Community Engagement Toolkit (Toolkit) to help Federal agencies broaden public participation and community engagement (participation and engagement).

In developing this outline, OMB considered feedback and materials received from the public through OMB's Request For Information on [Methods and Leading Practices for Advancing Public Participation and Community Engagement With the Federal Government](#) and related listening sessions.

Participation and engagement activities in government include regulatory notice and comment processes, requests for information, consultations, listening sessions, surveys, user research, crowdsourcing, participatory science, and other activities carried out by Federal agencies to engage with the public to inform regulations, policies, program and service design, research and innovation, and other actions.

OMB is also preparing **guidance for Federal agencies** on how to conduct more effective and meaningful public participation and community engagement

DATES:

Feedback must be provided on or before **November 29, 2024**.

RESPONSES:

Please submit feedback through a simple, open-ended form at www.performance.gov/participation. Instructions for submitting feedback and options to register for live events hosted by OMB to hear from the public are provided on the site.

OMB **also welcomes feedback** through **November 29, 2024** on the draft guidance for Federal agencies on *Broadening Public Participation and Community Engagement with the Federal Government*.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please use concise, plain language in submitting feedback. You may respond to any of the questions below, and additional feedback beyond these questions is welcome. Any links to online materials must be publicly accessible.

Please share this request with colleagues or others for feedback, including those with experience in outreach to underserved communities.

OMB is particularly interested in responses to these questions:

- 1. Which proposed content do you consider to be most or least helpful to Federal agencies for their participation and engagement activities?**

2. **What other types of content could help agencies begin or improve outreach and engagement?**
3. **What other types of content could help the public better participate in engagement activities with Federal agencies?**
4. **How might you like to be involved in creating this Toolkit?**

Privacy Act Statement: Response to this request is voluntary. OMB will use your feedback to inform sound decision-making on topics related to this Toolkit. All responses received may be publicly disclosed, including any personal and business confidential information provided. Please do not include in your responses any information of a confidential nature, such as sensitive personal information or proprietary information, or any information that you would not like to be made publicly available. The OMB System of Records Notice, OMB Public Input System of Records, OMB/INPUT/01, 88 Fed. Reg. 20,913 (Apr. 7, 2023), available at www.federalregister.gov/d/2023-07452, includes a list of routine uses associated with the collection of this information.

Individuals and organizations who respond to this request may be contacted for clarification, related discussions, events, or surveys.

CONTACT:

For questions, please email publicparticipation@omb.eop.gov with “Participation and Engagement Toolkit” in the subject line, or call Vanessa Sloane at (202) 881-8309.

BACKGROUND:

The tools, templates, and leading practices in the Toolkit can help Federal agencies to plan and conduct more inclusive, effective, and meaningful public participation and community engagement. This Toolkit is intended to be a living collection of content that the public and Federal agencies can continuously contribute to and update.

The following Toolkit topics and content are illustrative, not exhaustive.¹ Final topics, content, and format of the Toolkit may change after OMB reviews all feedback received to determine its usability and applicability.

1. [About the Toolkit](#)
2. [Guiding Principles for Meaningful Public Participation and Community Engagement](#)
3. [Preparing for, Designing, Implementing, and Assessing](#) Participation and Engagement
4. [Communicating Effectively with the Public](#)
5. [Navigating the Legal and Policy Environment](#)
6. [Providing Compensation and Support for Participation](#)
7. [Special Considerations for Public Participation and Community Engagement](#)
8. [Public Participation and Community Engagement Across Agency Functions and Activities](#)
9. [Building the Public's Capacity to Engage](#)
10. [Additional Resources for Agencies](#)

¹ The resources provided here are for informational purposes only. OMB has not undertaken an empirical assessment of the effectiveness of these materials. Inclusion of materials developed by individuals and organizations external to Federal Government does not imply endorsement by the Federal Government.

1. About the Toolkit

- What is in this Toolkit?
- How and why was this Toolkit created?
- Who is this Toolkit for?
- How can I contribute to this Toolkit?

2. Guiding Principles for Meaningful Public Participation and Community Engagement

Descriptions of the five principles and examples of how they may be applied:

- Purposeful
- Inclusive, Welcoming, and Accessible
- Transparent and Accountable
- Respectful and Mutually Beneficial
- Evidence-Based and Iterative

3. Preparing for, Designing, Implementing, and Assessing Public Participation and Community Engagement

• **Stage 1 – Preparing for Participation and Engagement: Sample Resources**

- Assessing agency engagement capacity and efforts: [Community Engagement Self-Assessment](#) (Advancing Pretrial Policy & Research), [Self-assessment template](#) (City of Roseville, MN), [readiness worksheet](#) (City of Issaquah, WA)
- Determining purpose of engagement: [Guide to Developing and Using Criteria and Processes to Set Priorities](#) (University of Kansas), [clarifying objectives worksheet](#) (Government of Victoria, Australia)
- Developing agency-wide policies on engagement: [Meaningful Involvement Policy](#) (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency), [Public Engagement Policy](#) (MN Department of Transportation)
- Implementing frameworks for public participation: [IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation](#) (IAP2), [Spectrum of Public Involvement](#) (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency), [Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations Engagement Strategy](#) (U.S. Department of Energy), [Community Engagement Framework](#) (NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene)
- Building workforce capacity to engage effectively with the public: [Public Participation Guide: Online Self-Study Modules](#) (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency), [Facilitator Guide for Community Engagement Training](#) (British Red Cross), [Conflict Engagement and Resolution Workshop](#) (Comprehensive Community Planning)
- Identifying strategies to foster trust and promote trauma-informed interactions: [Building Trust](#) (City of Philadelphia, PA), [Practical Guide for Implementing a Trauma-Informed Approach](#) (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)

• **Stage 2 - Designing Participation and Engagement: Sample Resources**

- Developing participation and engagement plans initiatives: [Planning for Meaningful Community Engagement Checklist](#) (DC Mayor's Office of Racial Equity), [Community Engagement Planning Tool for Public Health Work](#) (Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry), [project budget template for engagement](#) (University of North Dakota)

- Identifying *who* to engage: [Template for Building a Community Profile](#) (DC Mayor's Office of Racial Equity), [stakeholder mapping worksheet](#) (Government of South Australia), [situation assessment guide](#) (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)
- Identifying *how* to engage participants: [Engagement Tools - Options Matrix](#) (Queensland Department of Infrastructure), [resources for Engaging People with Lived Experience to Improve Federal Research, Policy, and Practice](#) (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), [Community-Led Co-design Kit](#) (Inclusive Design Research Centre)
- Using demographic, population, economic, and other data to inform engagement strategies: [American Community Survey](#) (Census.gov), [National Equity Atlas](#) (PolicyLink and University of Southern California)
- Forming community advisory entities to support engagement initiatives: [Tools and Resources for Project-Based Community Advisory Boards](#) (Urban Institute)
- Conducting user research: [Planning Your User Research](#) (U.S. Department of Homeland Security), [Increasing public participation in user research](#) (U.S. General Services Administration), [user research recruitment page](#) (usa.gov)
- Considering ethics in community engagement: [Ethical Issues in Community Interventions](#) (University of Kansas), [Community-based participatory research: A guide to ethical principles and practice](#) (National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement)
- **Stage 3 - Implementing Participation and Engagement: Sample Resources**
 - Choosing engagement activities: [Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making](#) (U.S. Department of Transportation), [user interviews](#) (18F), [Public Participation Toolbox](#) (IAP2), [participatory algorithm design](#) (Maya Murad)
 - Conducting inclusive and accessible engagement: [Create Accessible Meetings](#) ([section508.gov](#)), [Engagement with Rural Communities](#) (Federal Emergency Management Agency), [Virtual Public Involvement](#) (Federal Highway Administration)
 - Inviting participants: [Engagement Announcement Letter](#) (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development), [stakeholder meeting invite template](#) (City Energy Project), [stakeholder invitation letter template](#) (Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency)
 - Facilitating a safe and inclusive space for engagement: [Facilitation guide for community engagement](#) (Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy), [Guidelines for Discussing Difficult or High-Stakes Topics](#) (University of Michigan), [Community Norms and Expectations](#) (Brandeis University)
 - Feeding back information to participants: [Response to Comments: EPA's Meaningful Engagement Policy](#) (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency), [Developing a Feedback Loop](#) (California Strategic Growth Council), [How to Foster Two-Way Communication During the Budget Process](#) (International City/County Management Association)
- **Stage 4 - Assessing Participation and Engagement: Sample Resources**
 - Reflecting on engagement activity: [Community Engagement Reflection Guide](#) (Association of American Medical Colleges), [Engagement Reflection Worksheet](#) (Saskatchewan Health Authority)
 - Developing logic models: [How to Develop a Program Logic Model](#) (AmeriCorps), [Logic Model Development Guide](#) (W.K. Kellogg Foundation)

- Assessing, measuring, and evaluating engagement efforts: [Participation and Engagement Evidence Challenge Toolkit](#) (The Improve Group), [Resources for Measuring Success](#) (Institute for Local Government), [CivX Metrics toolkit](#) (POPVOX Foundation), [Guide to Evaluate Civic Engagement](#) (MN Department of Human Rights)
- Including communities in the evaluation process: [Evaluation and Community Engagement: Everyone is an Evaluator](#) (Building the Field), [Evaluation Stakeholder Participation Planning Matrix](#) (U.S. Agency for International Development)

4. **Communicating Effectively with the Public: Sample Resources**

- Encouraging engagement and action using social media: [#GovCX Toolkit \(performance.gov\)](#), [Resources on Social Media \(digital.gov\)](#)
- Drafting public documents: [Press release](#) (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), [blog post](#) (U.S. General Services Administration), [newsletter](#) (Millennium Challenge Corporation), [fact sheet](#) (Administration for Children & Families), [using inclusive language](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Writing in plain language: [plainlanguage.gov](#), [Tips for Using Plain Language](#) (U.S. Office of Personnel Management)
- Ensuring disability accessibility for websites and written documents, oral presentations, and physical spaces: [section508.gov](#), [Resources on Accessibility \(digital.gov\)](#)
- Improving language access: [LEP.gov](#), [Joint Language University](#) (U.S. Department of Defense)

5. **Navigating the Legal and Policy Environment**

Existing Federal laws, policies, guidance, and other resources to understand and consider:

- [Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995](#) (PRA)
- [Federal Advisory Committee Act](#) (FACA)
- [Privacy Act of 1974](#)
- [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA) and [Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended](#)

6. **Providing Compensation and Support for Participation: Sample Resources**

Leading practices, existing agency guidance, and examples of how agencies have compensated or otherwise supported participants for their time, knowledge, and lived experience:

- [Leading in Partnership with Youth and Young Adults with Lived Experience](#) (Administration for Children and Families)
- [Use of DOT Funds for Public Involvement](#) (U.S. Department of Transportation)
- [EPA Guidance on Participant Support Costs](#) (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)
- [Equitable Compensation for Community Engagement Guidebook](#) (Urban Institute)

7. **Special Considerations for Public Participation and Community Engagement**

Leading practices, existing Federal guidance, and examples of how agencies are advancing meaningful engagement:

- Involving and consulting with State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial governments
- Ensuring access for persons with disabilities
- Fostering public engagement in science and research
- Using open-source code
- Leveraging artificial intelligence design and implementation

8. Public Participation and Community Engagement Across Agency Functions and Activities

Existing Federal guidance and examples of how agencies are embedding participation and engagement across day-to-day functions and activities:

- Policy and program design and direction (e.g., [Social Security Administration: National Disability Forum](#))
- Strategic and performance planning (e.g., [U.S. Department of the Interior: Environmental Justice Strategic Plan](#))
- Grantmaking (e.g., [Federal Emergency Management Agency: Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities](#))
- Procurement (e.g., [U.S. General Services Administration: Interact Platform](#))
- Rulemaking (e.g., [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: "Waters of the United States" Outreach](#))
- Evaluation (e.g., [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: Research Roadmap](#))
- Enforcement and civil rights (e.g., [U.S. Department of Justice: Legal Aid Interagency Roundtable](#))
- Science and research (e.g., use of the [Challenge.gov](#) and [CitizenScience.gov](#) platforms)
- Service delivery and customer experience (e.g., [Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services: Burden Reduction](#))

9. Building the Public's Capacity to Engage: Sample Resources

Tools to help members of the public better participate in engagement activities with Federal agencies:

- [Guide](#) to navigating [regulations.gov](#) (Geological Society of America)
- [How You Can Effectively Participate in the Regulatory Process Through Public Comment](#) (OMB Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs)
- [Transportation Decision-Making: A Guide to Getting Involved](#) (U.S. Department of Transportation)
- [Top 5 Tips for Powerful Comments](#) (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission)
- [Small Business Guide to Comment Letter Writing](#) (U.S. Small Business Administration)
- [Templates and examples for writing effective public comment](#) (Public Comment Project)

10. Additional Resources for Agencies

- Glossary of terms, acronyms, and definitions
- Quick list: Links to all tools and templates featured across Toolkit sections

- Quick list: Links to all agency examples and case studies featured across Toolkit sections
- Examples of collaborative platforms and technologies to facilitate feedback collection and analysis
- Sample position descriptions for participation and engagement roles at government agencies
- Sample participation and engagement toolkits produced by U.S. government agencies:
 - [Public Participation in Rulemaking](#) (Administrative Conference of the United States)
 - [U.S Public Participation Playbook](#) (U.S. General Services Administration and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy)
 - [Citizen Participation & Equitable Engagement Toolkit](#) (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development)
 - [Engaging Workers and Civil Society to Strengthen Labor Law Enforcement](#) (U.S. Department of Labor)
 - [Federal Crowdsourcing and Citizen Science Toolkit](#) (U.S. General Services Administration and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy)
 - [Principles of Community Engagement](#) (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)
- Sample participation and engagement resources produced by foreign government agencies and international organizations:
 - [Strong Engagement, Strong Outcomes](#) (Conference Board of Canada)
 - [OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes](#) (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)
 - [Principles for Effective Stakeholder Engagement](#) (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific)
 - [Our futures: by the people, for the people](#) (Nesta)
- Sample participation and engagement resources produced by other external entities:
 - [City Leader Guide on Civic Engagement](#) (Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative)
 - [Citizens' Assemblies](#) (Federation for Innovation in Democracy - North America)
 - [Community Co-design: Tools + Tactics](#) (Destination Medical Center)
 - [Community Engagement Planning Guide](#) (Brooklyn Park)
 - [Equity-Centered Community Design Field Guide](#) (Creative Reaction Lab)