



Inclusive Engagement Toolkit  
for Community Food Project Planning

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## Introduction to this Toolkit

This guide is meant to help your organization or network delve deeper into two areas of the Community Food Projects (CFP) planning process (as characterized in the [New Entry Sustainable Farming Project's](#) Tool entitled "[Planning Successful Community Food Projects Guide](#)") that may require reflection and growth beyond your primary professional skillset. Those areas include:

- "Building in grassroots participation, especially from the constituencies you intend to serve; and
- Building a shared vision with partners, with an inclusive, participatory process."

If you are approaching this guide as a potential CFP grantee, we recommend that you take a look at our "[Planning Successful Community Food Projects Guide](#)" before delving into this toolkit, as it will give you a sense of how this aspect of your process might fit into your "plan to plan" for your application.

As you likely already know, the CFP application process is competitive. CFP funding is intended to aid projects that demonstrate their potential to create lasting, meaningful change in the communities they serve, and empower communities to sustain the benefits of the programming after the funding cycle has ended. To ensure that your anticipated project will meet these criteria and that you can demonstrate this capability in your application, use the tools in this guide to reflect on and improve your partnerships, your planning process, and your application.

## What is Inclusive Engagement?

There are many different levels of intensity within stakeholder engagement that range from those that are passive on the part of the stakeholder, such as communication efforts focused on education and awareness raising, to those that involve stakeholders in co-production, co-decision-making, and more intensive forms that allow stakeholders to ultimately have direct authority over the resulting actions of your project or program. Your group should have a robust, multifaceted approach to engagement with key stakeholders and community members surrounding your proposed CFP actions.

## Using This Guide

The remainder of this guide is laid out as a progression of resources to help your group improve its inclusive engagement strategies and practices in stages. Depending on your starting point, the process of moving through these resources could take weeks, months, or even up to one year. It is important to be genuine in your pursuit of community involvement, and these

resources are meant to provide at least a rough roadmap for moving through that process effectively.

Throughout the resources, you will also see vignettes and quotes from a CFP-funded project led by Angelic Organics Learning Center in Rockford, IL. Angelic Organics Learning Center works alongside the residents of Blackhawk Courts a Rockford Housing Authority Housing Complex to build community leadership through urban agriculture. Danica Hoehn, Program Director at Angelic Organics Learning Center, graciously shared the narratives you will see in the hopes that they might help future CFP applicants imagine the ways they their projects can ensure inclusive engagement.

## Inclusive Engagement Resources

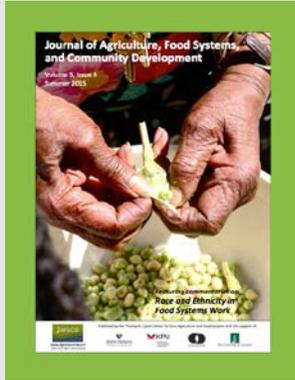
### History, Overview, and Education

The following tools may be useful for you or members of your organization who need more background on issues related to inclusive engagement and the necessity to address social justice in an intentional manner through your work.

*A participant in the Angelic Organics Learning Center's programming highlights a powerful point about the need to be intentional about inclusive engagement; too often, key community members are not consulted about decisions that affect their food environments . . .*

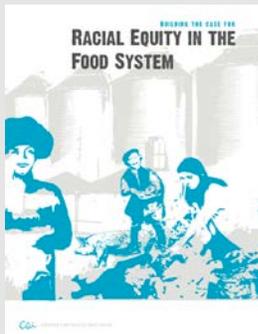
"It is an honor for me to even be asked my opinion."

-Johnny Jones, Project Participant



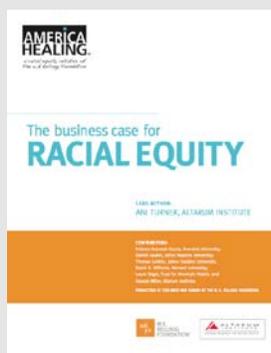
[Commentaries on Race and Ethnicity in Food Systems Work](#) – This publication is a series of editorials and comments from activists of color, leaders, consultants, white advocates, nonprofit organization staff and board members, public agency staff, and academics who are currently working on food systems issues. Their comments illustrate some stereotypes, misconceptions, and misunderstandings that can cause conflict for people with good intentions approaching community work. These vignettes offer a glimpse into particular communities, and bring the bigger picture into focus: *“Only when the food movement deliberately fosters and embraces the leadership of underrepresented peoples as service and information generators and providers — not just service and information recipients in the ghetto, the barrio, and on the reservation and other isolated rural areas — will the goals of food justice and food sovereignty in some of our most troubled communities be appropriately addressed.”*

Special Reprint of Commentaries on Race and Ethnicity in Food Systems Work.  
Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development. Volume 5, Issue 4 / Summer 2015.



[Building the Case for Racial Equity in the Food System](#) - This report shares an analysis of what it means to build a racially equitable food system – from field to farm to fork – and lays out steps toward achieving that goal. In the report, the Center for Social Inclusion: describes how policies impact racial equity in the food system; Identifies potential policy solutions and strategic opportunities to create a more racially equitable food system; and offers tools and resources to guide the creation of racially equitable solutions.

Giancatarino, Anthony, Simran Noor. The Center for Social Inclusion. 2014



[The Business Case for Racial Equity](#) – To illustrate the broader scope, this report provides data and comprehensive analyses that demonstrate how race, class, residential segregation and income levels all work together to hamper access to opportunity.

Turner, Ani. Prepared by the Altarum Institute and funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. October 2013.



[Systems Thinking and Race](#) – This document summarizes a series of workshops discussing systems thinking, power, and communication concerning race. It provides exercises for users to examine the concepts presented, highlights case studies demonstrating the concepts discussed, and offers strategies for transforming the ways we think, talk, and act.

John A. Powell and Connie Cagampang Heller, 2011. The California Endowment.



[An Annotated Bibliography on Structural Racism Present in the U.S. Food System](#) – Use this resource to dig through selected resources and publications that broadly address structural racism in the food system, across many levels of the food supply chain. Some of these resources may be effective ways for your group to form a better understanding of the history behind the issues you seek to address in your project.

Guel, Anel, Rich Pirog. MSU Center for Regional Food Systems. June 2015.

## Understanding Your Starting Point

It is important to examine where your organization is on the spectrum of health in terms of inclusive operations and engagement. This aspect of the process can help you assess whether you can realistically expect to demonstrate a strong proposal within the timeline you have before the CFP applications are due. Robust community buy-in requires that trusting, mutually beneficial relationships be established between your team and the community you intend to affect. Such relationships take time to develop.

There are a plethora of self-assessment tools online and in print that offer individuals, groups, and organizations the chance to get a glimpse into some of the underlying, implicit biases that may be impacting decision-making, and can reveal trends and practices within your organization that may need addressing between now and the time of your application. This section highlights a few of those resources.

*Why is it important to examine where individuals within your organization are coming from, on a personal level? How can an assessment of organizational culture improve the impact of your work?*

*Angelic Organics Learning Center Staff express how “blind spots” around their own approach hindered their work in early stages . . .*

“Our staff [members] are foodies. We love to cook, eat, read about cooking and eating. This is fun, but our enthusiasm . . . hindered our ability to effectively educate towards our main goal: to inspire participants to harvest or buy food from farm and prepare it at home for their households.

We would create demo meals or dishes that were beautifully delicious, but needed multiple spices, sauces, condiments, or cooking equipment, like a blender. These meals were great fun and expanded food experience, but did not translate into meals made at home with produce from the gardens. Our “aha-moment” was a tofu demonstration gone wrong. This was more than 3 years into our relationship with the residents of Blackhawk Courts. It was only then that folks finally trusted our staff enough to tell us we were off track. Since then we keep it simple, inexpensive, and relevant. We know it's relevant because the residents choose what we will prepare, cook, and serve for the seasons cooking sessions. All we do is make sure it is timed right so that the produce is available on the farm during our demonstration. Now we hear stories about how an idea from a cooking session was transformed into a meal at home.”

## Assessing Individuals

### Individual Reflection

These tools can help you and members of your group identify specific areas that you may need to develop on an individual level:



[Implicit Association Test](#) - This 10-minute test from the Social Psychology Network offers a series of images and words and asks for your immediate response to reveal potential biases you may have.

S. Plous. Social Psychology Network. 2002-2015.



[Project Implicit](#) – This site offers a variety of assessment tools to help you reveal your implicit associations about race, gender, sexual orientation, and other topics.

Project Implicit. 2011.

## Assessing Your Organization

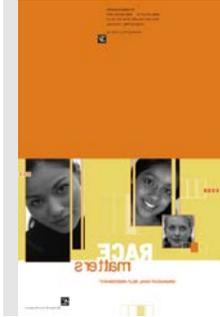
### Internal Culture

Many assessment tools have been developed for evaluating workplace and organizational culture as it relates to diversity, inclusion, and intercultural communication. Take a look at some of the self-assessment tools and consider conducting one for your organization.



[Cultural Competence Continuum](#) – This assessment is embedded in a larger toolkit aimed at training Seattle city staff on public engagement and outreach. It may provide a quick and simple self-assessment for your group to start with.

Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Guide. Seattle Racial and Social Justice Initiative. April 2009 (Revised 1/11/12)



[Race Matters: Organizational Self-Assessment](#) - Use this test to generate a “Racial Equity Score” for your organization based on issues such as staff competencies and organizational operations.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation.



[Diversity and Inclusivity Self-Assessment Tool](#) is a tool intended for non-profit organizations to serve as a starting point in gaining greater understanding of three key questions about their work: “1) Who is the community we serve? 2) How do we as an organization reflect the community we serve? 3) What are some action steps we can take to reduce any barriers to broader diversity and inclusivity?”

YWCA of Minneapolis, Charities Review Council.



[Intercultural Training and Assessment Tools](#) - This document contains a broad list of diagnostic tools to assess your organization.

Intercultural Development Inventory. June 2014.

## Program Reach

If you have current programming that is related to the activities of your intended CFP project, it may be valuable to collect demographic data from participants. You might wish to consider the demographics of your organization’s current participants and partners to determine the inclusivity of the intended project’s reach and find detail on some areas you may need to improve your reach. Also consider the stakeholders and affected individuals and groups that will be impacted by and will impact your project. Have you already established trusting and positive working relationships with stakeholders?





[In-person Trainings](#) – This Boston-based organization offers training sessions on topics related to leadership, management, and facilitation skills needed for social change. If these trainings are not accessible to you, it may be useful to seek similar offerings in your area, or search for archived webinars on the topics featured.

The Interaction Institute for Social Change



[Skill-Building Webinars](#) – These videos cover a range of racial justice issues and are designed to help audiences navigate the complex terrain of racism with greater clarity, unity, and strategy. There is a fee to view them, but they may be more accessible than the trainings listed above.

Race Forward, The Center for Racial Justice Innovation

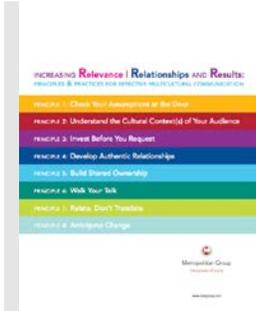
## Planning Your Project

At this point, your group probably already has some ideas for the actions and outcomes you would like your project to involve. However, it is important to engage as many community voices as possible at each stage of your planning process. Having many voices involved in a planning process can bring greater complexity, and as such, it is helpful to have frameworks to facilitate the planning process with greater intention and structure. The resources in this section highlight a few different planning theories, tools, and examples of actions that can help in the planning process.

*Staff at Angelic Organics Learning Center share how a subtle change in their thinking has shifted the way they plan . . .*

“We used to decide what we wanted to learn and ask project participants to come and tell us what they think. Now we work to listen for what they are thinking and ask about what we need to learn. Then we, of course, still hold planning meetings.”

## Project Planning Frameworks and Tools for Inclusive Engagement



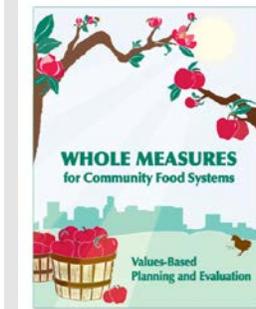
[Principles and Practices for Effective Multicultural Communication](#) This article depicts eight core principles for unlocking communication strategies that invite respectful participation and real dialogue. It also highlights tangible actions and real-world examples of the principles being applied in community work.

The Metropolitan Group. 2008.



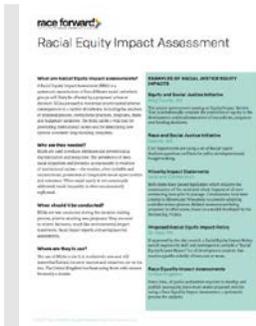
[Inclusive Outreach Guide](#) – In 2005, the Mayor of Seattle, WA established the Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI). The mission of the RSJI is to end institutionalized racism in City government and promote multiculturalism and full participation by all residents. This is intended to be a practical guide for Seattle City staff, but it includes resources that could be adapted and applied to other settings.

Office for Civil Rights, Seattle, WA. April 2009 (Revised 1/11/12).



[Whole Measures Value-Based Planning for Community Food Projects](#) – This guide is meant to help CFP grantees communicate the stories of their work and its impacts. Looking ahead to how you will evaluate and share your impact may prove helpful in your planning process.

Community Food Security Whole Measures Working Group. (Formerly) Community Food Security Coalition. 2009.



[Racial Equity Impact Assessment \(REIA\)](#) – This presents a systematic examination of how different racial and ethnic groups will likely be affected by a proposed action or decision. REIAs are used to minimize unanticipated adverse consequences in a variety of contexts, including the analysis of proposed policies, institutional practices, programs, plans and budgetary decisions. The REIA can be a vital tool for preventing institutional racism and for identifying new options to remedy long-standing inequities.

Keleher, Terry. Race Forward: The Center For Racial Justice Innovation. Applied Research Center. 31 March 2009.

## *Strategies for Assessment and Action to Guide Project Planning*

It is vitally important that your team is aware of the true assets and challenges that exist in your community food system before you create a plan of action. The following tools provide some examples of how other organizations have found more information about their own communities through Community Food Assessments, Asset Mapping, and creative engagement activities. Your team should use the information you gather from assessments such as these to design strategies that truly meet the needs of the community.

*How can you possibly ensure that everyone's voices are accounted for within your project plan?*

*Practically speaking, you probably cannot include every individual. But Angelic Organic Learning Center Staff share a vignette of a method they have used to create space for engaging a variety of perspectives at once, saving time and resources, while also incorporating many voices . . .*

"A concrete floor in a old garage becomes a large chalkboard chart so that everyone can see and participate. It is fall and we are planning what will be grow next year at the Blackhawk Courts Farm and Garden. The environment is casual, informal, relaxed. People show up early, on time, late, and, sometimes, only momentarily. Questions are asked by trained residents of Blackhawk Courts to the group now encircling the floor chart.

We are residents of Blackhawk Courts, staff, and volunteers. We answer each question with our bodies, moving to the place on the chart becomes our vote, then we talk about why we are there: why we voted the way we did. While all voices and votes in the room are weighted the same with a single tally, staff speak the least, we listen . . ."

## Community Food Assessments

### Where's the Food?



Finding out about Food in Your Community

### [Where's the Food: Finding Out About Food in Your Community](#) -

This resource can guide a group of community members through research about food issues in their neighborhood or community.

Krekoski, Erin, Moe Garahan, Elizabeth Kristjansson. Just Food, Canada. August 2011.



### [Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit](#) – The Economic Research Service of the USDA provides this set of standardized measurements for assessing community food security.

Cohen, Barbara, Margaret Andrews, and Linda Scott Kantor. Electronic Publications from the Food Assistance & Nutrition Research Program No. (EFAN-02-013) 166 pp, July 2002

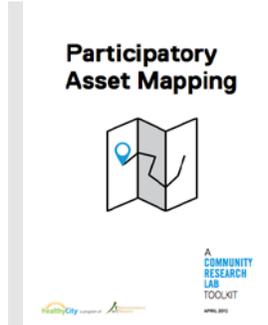
Staff at Angelic Organics Learning Center learned that it was important for them to listen first.

How did that translate into how the community responded to their project? This is what one farm apprentice had to say . . .

“The first thing that we do is talk. That’s what matters. I get the opportunity to share my ideas. The edible flowers were my idea!”

-Diamond Verner, Adult Apprentice, Blackhawk Courts Resident

## Asset Mapping and Community Case Studies



[Participatory Asset Mapping: A Community Research Lab Toolkit](#) - This document is a series of research concepts, methods, and tools that could be used in an event or workshop for planning or community research.

Burns, Janice C., Dagmar Pudrzynska Paul; and Silvia R. Paz. Advancement Project. April 2012.



[Asset-Based Community Development Toolkit](#) – The resources on this site are organized by category, and they include many Asset-Based Mapping Tools.

School of Education and Social Policy at Northwestern University.



[Planning for Sustained Youth Engagement](#) – This case study highlights one way to sustain youth-adult partnerships to facilitate community change.

Next Generation Initiative.



[Building Sustainable Communities: Ideas for Inclusive Projects](#) - This guide from the Office of Environment and Heritage in Sydney, Australia is for local council officers and educators who run projects aimed at developing sustainable and harmonious communities. There are many ideas here for running projects that can be accessible to everyone within the community, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, language, religion or other characteristics. It includes background information, tips for running different aspects of an inclusive project, and case study 'snapshots' of innovative projects to date.

Office of Environment and Heritage. Sydney, Australia. September 2011.

## Demonstrating Community Commitment in Your CFP Application

Once you have established strong community partnerships and buy-in, you will need to demonstrate that engagement in your application. The preferred format for this purpose is a letter of support from a key partner(s) or individual community members. Letters should be genuine (not a form letter), and should describe how the partner or partner organization will be involved in the proposed project in their own words.

There is also an opportunity in the application to explain the ways your group has engaged the community in an inclusive manner throughout your planning process. It may be helpful to document your engagement strategies as you go, to ensure efficiency during the final stages of your application.

Should you need further guidance, please contact Sarah Lambertson ([sarah.lambertson@tufts.edu](mailto:sarah.lambertson@tufts.edu)), Community Food Projects Coordinator at New Entry Sustainable Farming Project or visit our website [www.nesfp.org/cfp](http://www.nesfp.org/cfp).

Thank you for the work you do to improve the lives of people in your community!

“The Farm, period. That is what we helped create. I made the first draft of the planting chart. We made all this happen.”

-Yatte Moore, Adult Apprentice, Blackhawk Courts Resident