**Community Engagement: Serving Diverse Communities Where They Are – Learner Guide**

**Event Description:** In this interactive session, we will explore what it means to provide inclusive outreach to and engagement with members of your local community. How do you identify the needs of the diverse communities your library is serving? What are effective approaches for community engagement, and how do you apply what you learn along the way to improve your practice? Come prepared with a challenge or opportunity from your own community that you would like to workshop with your peers during the webinar. You will also leave with a framework and action plan for cultivating partnerships for successful community engagement.

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| **What are your goals for viewing this webinar?** |
| **Personal Goals** |  |
| **Team Goals** |  |

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| **Key terms used today – what is new to you?** |
| Review the following list of key terms. Check off the terms that you use within your own work today. Which terms are new to you or your work today? How can you begin to build these terms into your professional vocabulary?* **Community analysis**: Bringing together data & relationship building to create a profile of your community
* **Marketing**:Promotion of the library and/or it’s programs & services; **a one-way communication**
* **Outreach**: Providing library in the community & listening to needs/questions; **a two-way interaction**
* **Community partnerships**: Creation of services collaboratively or in conversation with the community, to further community goals; **a rich relationship**
* **Community engagement**: The creation of library programs and services in dialogue and partnership with the community, in order to reflect community needs and interests.
* **Equity**:The strategic use of resources to create opportunities for groups or individuals that might otherwise be excluded as the result of systemic disparities.
* **Equality**:Providing equal access to resources, without consideration of how accessible those resources may be to different groups or individuals.
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| **Community engagement best practices:** |
| * **Internally assess** gaps in programming and opportunities to connect with communities. What audiences are your programs and efforts currently reaching? **Who are you not reaching?**
* **Identify** formal and informal connections.
* **Plan** – Think about **who** you want to engage and **why**. The strategies for engagement will vary widely in different communities.
* **Reach out** to organizations who are already serving the populations you’d like to work with.
* **Invest** in relationships. Acknowledge that this work will not be done overnight. It is critical to take time to develop meaningful and trusting relationships. Real community engagement takes a lot of time.
* **LISTEN more** – talk less.
* **Share power** – Recognize how power plays out in groups, and that there may be a power imbalance between a library and a grassroots community org. Be intentional in creating space for others to share their experiences and ideas.
* **Be honest** with yourself and your partners. DO NOT commit to things you cannot deliver.
* **Form a project** with benchmarks and an endpoint.
* **Measure** mutually-agreed upon outcomes
* **Accountability** – close the loop with your work. Do not engage community and not return to report out how what you have learned will inform the work. Identify opportunities for community stakeholders to continue to being involved.
* **Be flexible.** Recognize what you planned may not always work and you have to go back and change things.
* **Recognize that relationships are ends in themselves.** Not all relationships result in an immediate project. You are doing the critical work of building extensive networks and those relationships are invaluable.
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| **Question to Consider/Discuss** |
| What can you **change to make community engagement possible** at your library in the short term? Long term? |
| **Activity: Workshop it! Before approaching a potential community partner, consider:** |
| * What are your **broad goals**? (E.g., providing programs that are accessible and relevant to Latino families; Increasing access to library services for people experiencing homelessness)

* What **strengths and experience could you** and **your work team bring** to this partnership?

* What **strengths, experience, and resources** in **your library overall** might you be able to tap into?

* Looking at your list of team/library strengths, where are **the gaps**? What **other knowledge**, **skills**, **experiences**, **or resources** will you need to be successful, that partners might be able to contribute?

* What **connections** does **your team** or **the library** already have with potential partners?

* Make a **starter list of orgs**/people you’d like to talk to.

* What is your **plan** for **internal/external communication**?

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| **Action Plan:** (include next steps, who, when, etc.) |
| * What are your **internal resources** and **assets**?
* Who is **not at your library**?
* **Where are they**? Who is **already working** with them?
* How will you **approach potential partners**?
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| **Notes:** |
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