

ENGAGE

What is Community Engagement?

Community Engagement is the inclusion of diverse perspectives towards more equitable programs, services, and outcomes. United Way of the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region intentionally designs activities to create opportunity for the aspirations, concerns, needs and values of people and communities to be incorporated at all levels and in all sectors in planning, decision-making; policy development, understanding and reducing disparities, service delivery and assessment, etc.

We know that community members are key partners in creating a vibrant community where all people realize their full potential. Community Engagement is *how* UWBCKR approaches opportunities to learn from the perspectives of residents, clients, other agencies and organizations, donors, communities and other stakeholders within our region to inform the work that we do together and achieve greater outcomes.

Whether we're facilitating a conversation with people experiencing homelessness to better understand and address barriers to housing, or surveying the community to find out how we can better connect people to volunteer opportunities, the following **key principles of community engagement** guide our work:

Integrity – when there is openness and honesty about the scope and purpose of engagement;

Inclusion – when there is an opportunity for a diverse range of values and perspectives to be freely and fairly expressed and heard;

Deliberation – when there is sufficient and credible information for dialogue, choice and decisions, and when there is space to weigh options, develop common understandings and to appreciate respective roles and responsibilities;

Influence – when people have input in designing how they participate, when policies and services reflect their involvement and when their impact is apparent.

Services Include:

Coaching- Discover ways in which your business or organization can better engage with the community and use that information to inform your decisions, programs, and services.

Facilitation- UWBCKR offers a network of experienced facilitators to gather community input through conversations and interviews, gain consensus among groups, process data and more.

Community Input Design and Implementation- We can help you determine what methods of engagement will best suit the needs of the population you are trying to reach while also meeting your own timelines.

Community Knowledge Sharing- UWBCKR is committed to sharing community knowledge with other people and organizations that are positioned to take action on the issues that impact our communities. We're happy to share what we've learned about the populations, issues, and opportunities that exist in our region.

For more information about Community Engagement Services, contact Laura Otte, Associate Director of Community Engagement at (269) 441-1716 or lotte@uwbckr.org

Past and Present Community Engagement Service Clients Include:

United Way of the Lakeshore- trainings for community members to learn more about how engaging with the community can inform their work, how to facilitate authentic conversations, and how to put the information gained from conversations to good use towards greater impact.

Indiana Association of United Ways- conference session on community engagement work in Battle Creek, lessons learned, how to use and share community knowledge to inform work in communities

First Congregational Church- facilitation of conversations to understand shared aspirations in support of reaching consensus, facilitation to gain stakeholder input for strategic planning

City of Battle Creek- facilitation of conversations with large groups of community stakeholders to gain perspectives on issues, facilitation of targeted conversations to get input regarding potential decisions for services, coaching and moderation of a work group

BC Vision- development and implementation of community engagement strategies, future infrastructure for community engagement.