

VIRGINIA COMMUNITY VOICE

Organizational Equity Improvement Process

Assess | Plan | Improve

The Organizational Equity Improvement process is rooted in continuous improvement methodology (Plan-Do-Study-Act). The process is built on a Pyramid of Equitable Community Engagement & Decision Making and our Community Voice Model (Listen, Connect, Craft, Reflect).

The pyramid has four levels: Aware, Intentional, Centered, and Equitable. Through this process, organizations build a foundational awareness of equity and move over time toward equitable outcomes. **Awareness at the foundation, equity at the peak.**

Assess Phase

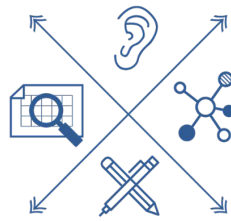
During the assess phase, clients complete an organizational self-assessment with a team from their organization. The assessment can be completed online or PDF versions can be provided. The assessment includes two types of questions, philosophical and practice. Philosophical questions help us understand institutional norms and attitudes, which often translate into practice. Practice questions show us how the institution is living out their philosophies.

As needed in the assess phase VACV may review documents and observe meetings and events related to public outreach and engagement with historically marginalized communities.

VACV analyzes self-assessment data and provides clients with a score for each of the four domains. These data are used to prompt conversation about inequitable practices and start improvement planning.

Deliverables at this stage include an assessment report.





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Plan Phase

VACV works with clients to develop improvement goals together. We will offer recommendations on improvement goals, and facilitate the client's team through development of *BESMART Goals* (Bold, Equitable, Specific, Measurable, Realistic, and Time-Bound). Improvement goals may be tied to one pyramid level, may relate to multiple, and/or may relate directly to the Community Voice Model (Listen, Connect, Craft, Reflect). In the first year of working with a client, we recommend prioritizing 3-5 goals for action.

Deliverables at this stage include an improvement plan (see sample below).

Improve Phase

During the improve phase, the client works on making internal organizational changes per their improvement plan. VACV provides training and coaching to support staff in making those changes. Once a client feels that observable changes have been made, VACV will reassess through observation, document review, or by inviting clients to retake the self-assessment. Observation and self-reported improvement are the measures of progress toward meeting the goals in the improvement plan. This process is cyclical and continuous, so a client may opt to continue the process with coaching and reassessment for several years.

Deliverables at this stage include training and coaching.

Training Topics

- Racial equity in community engagement
- How to conduct a community listening process
- How to hire, train, supervise and support local community members
- How to form decision-making bodies in marginalized communities
- How to build representative decision-making tables within your organization
- Identifying Allies & Key-Decision Makers / Power Mapping
- Crafting equitable, community-rooted solutions
- Leveraging resources to implement community ideas
- Evaluating the impact of your community engagement and decision-making
- Identifying white dominant culture norms and that impede community engagement

Aware

Values

Organization has a values statement on community engagement and centering people directly impacted.

Knowledge

Organization has deep and evident knowledge of the history of the community, current data, and lived experiences of people directly impacted. (Data Sweet Spot)

Commitment

Organization has openly (and publicly as appropriate) acknowledged its past failings to engage people in marginalized communities who are directly impacted equitably and has stated its desire to improve.

Score:



Improvement Goals:

1. Do the work as a staff to get consensus around a definition of “racially equitable communities.”
2. During focus group or information sessions openly address and talk about the city’s housing failures in the community. Openly address and talk about the organizational benefits and limitations for client (what can and cannot be done in the community) and what the personal benefits and limitations are of owning a house.

SAMPLE

Intentional

People

Organization staff & board demographically reflect the population served / engaged.

People from the community are on staff/paid by the organization.

Interactions

POC & community members are given preference/deference when speaking in meetings.

The lived experiences of community members are valued as much as or more than other types of knowledge (data, history, scientific evidence, etc.)

Environment & Language

Meeting time, location, compensation, childcare, food, transportation all work for people in marginalized communities.

Language is accessible both for ESOL groups and for people with low reading / comprehension.

Score:

0

100

Improvement Goals:

SAMPLE

Centered

Finances & Governances Related to Community Engagement

Community Engagement (CE) expenses are included in the organization's approved budget

CE is seen as an integral part of the organization's work, not as an add-on.

Decision-making about CE finances & governance includes CE staff and community members.

Community Engagement / Program Implementation

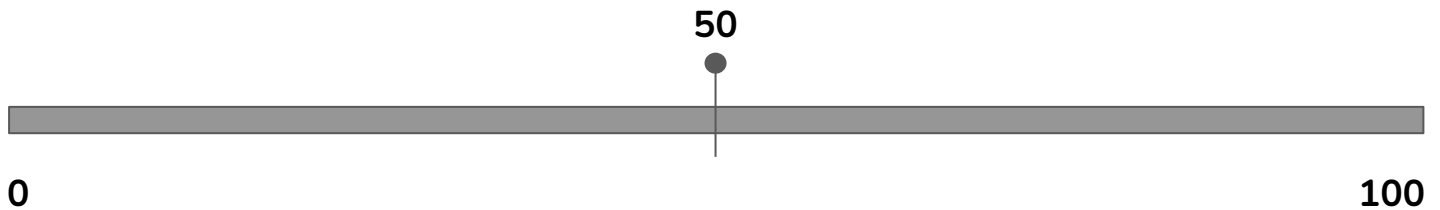
Decision about CE or programs in marginalized communities are informed by people directly impacted.

A community listening process is done before programs are designed and implemented.

The community regularly gives input on programs.

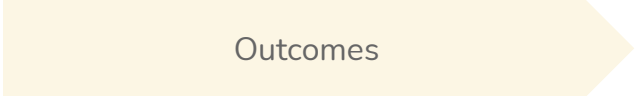
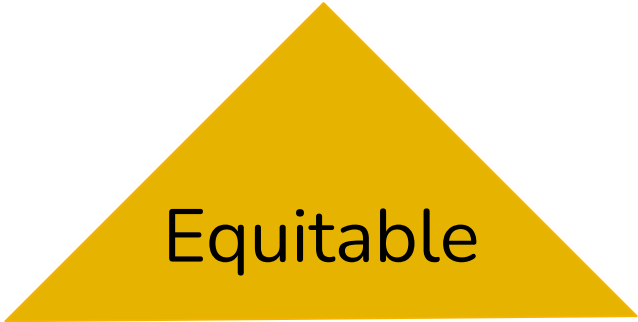
Community members (e.g. the people directly impacted) are satisfied with the engagement opportunities to give input.

Score:



Improvement Goals:

SAMPLE



Community members (i.e. people directly impacted) are involved in crafting solutions.

There is evidence of ownership of the outcomes by community members.

Score:

Improvement Goals:

SAMPLE