



## City of Seattle

Community Involvement Commission

Co-chairs: Patricia Akiyama, Felix Chang, Julie Pham, Alison Turner

### Community Involvement Commission 2017-18 Annual Report Launch Event January 22, 2019

The City of Seattle's [Community Involvement Commission \(CIC\)](#) published their [first annual report](#) in which they highlighted commission members' efforts to stand up the commission and get to work advising City departments and staff.

**They shared this report at a successful launch event on January 22, 2019.** The event was attended by City staff, as well as dozens of commissioners from other City Commissions. CIC members presented about their work and then hosted breakout discussions aimed at helping City Commissioners highlight best practices, build connections, share resources, and apply a race and social justice lens to their outreach work. **Notes from the breakout sessions are captured below:**



#### [Breakout Discussion - Applying a race and social justice lens to outreach](#)

- **What is diversity to you?**
  - Diversity is being mindful of everyone's needs
  - "Diversity is for white people" <<< we don't want this!
  - You have to empower and engage all the folks in a group
  - Bringing in multiple voices (race, class, gender)
  - People from all walks of life coming together to work as one group
- Got Green is doing a great job doing outreach to POC communities, the leadership looks like the communities they serve
- We need to work with communities in order to be united for change
- **How do we share people's stories without being exploitative?**
  - Have leadership focus on systems and not stories. All stories exist within oppressive systems
- **How do we let folks know that they are complicit in racist systems, and how do we diffuse defensiveness?**
  - Implicit bias training at the Office of Civil Rights
- When doing outreach, educate yourself about the communities you work with. No "one size fits all." There is no monolith of identity in POC communities
- Show the data that comes from outreach strategies
  - If 100 POC applied to the job but you didn't hire any, then what was the outreach for?
- Developing conversation sand framing of racism at the workplace, community etc.





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- Work with Race & Social Justice Initiative to develop a collaborative plan

### Breakout Discussion – Effective Resources for Community Engagement

- **What works?**
  - Word-of-mouth
    - E.g. [People’s Academy for Community Engagement](#) (PACE) tracks how applicants learned of the program
  - Media – traditional and social
  - Access to resources and resource information equals empowerment for youth, young people and many other groups
  - Community Resource Hub/Get Engaged Toolbox on DON web site (<http://www.seattle.gov/resourcehub/get-engaged>)
  - Its printed counterpart, “Get Informed, Get Engaged, Get Organized”  
[http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/Shared/CommunityResourceHub/DON\\_Handbook\\_web.pdf](http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/Shared/CommunityResourceHub/DON_Handbook_web.pdf)
  - Surveys
  - Newsletters
  - Feedback from grantees
- **Missed Opportunities**
  - Boards and Commissions, who straddle both City and community
  - Engagements outside the usual, siloed Seattle “think tanks”
  - Move beyond word-of-mouth to find pipelines, pathways and connectors
  - Access to resources outside “normal” working hours and in locations outside the downtown core
  - Allow for digital/remote participation
    - E.g. opportunity to make statement/ask question during City Council meetings, instead of just passively watching it online
- **Actions**
  - Tap into the various City of Seattle Boards and Commissions
  - Packets to renters/new residents (encouraging them to live \*and\* engage here)
  - Social media tags to boost viewers/awareness
  - Determine ways to leverage tech companies





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### Breakout Discussion - Building Community Connections

- **What's working?**
  - [Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs](#) – it's important to recognize that policy and budget decisions should be informed not only by “traditional experts” who have the education, job training/knowledge base, but also people who have lived the experience and know from real life how policies and budget decisions impact the community. They need to be part of the discussion
  - [People's Academy for Community Engagement](#) (PACE) is a great resource to learn skills and identify helpful resources within the City
  - [Seattle Department of Human Resources](#) working across silos and pooling resources to track who is going to different types of training to avoid sending several people to same training/outreach activity. Challenge is to track Return on Investment – was it worth the investment? How do you measure “relationship building”?
  - Face-to-face connections are important. Phinney Ridge Neighborhood Association makes it a priority to greet new businesses/storefronts with a welcome package that includes community resources and helpful information to help the new neighbors feel connected, informed, and seen
- **Challenges**
  - [Seattle City Light](#) has capital projects that clearly impact customers/residents, yet it is hard to get them to come to open houses to learn what is going on in their neighborhood.
    - How do you get to the right people to inform them?
      - One tip if you're trying to reach renters or owners living in large buildings with front desk/concierge services is to talk to the staff and ask them to post the info in the building. Can ask to hold an info meeting in the building community room so it's easy for residents to attend the meeting
  - What are important things to know when you want to engage in communities of color and you're white?
  - [Democracy Voucher](#) program has lack of capacity for outreach; it's basically two staff people who have this as part of their larger responsibilities. They are excited to share information but don't know where to go and how to connect to the right people.





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Candidates are good advocates but how to reach voters? There is a lack of understanding and knowledge about vouchers, how they work.

- **Top Takeaways:**

- Department of Neighborhood's [Community Resource Hub](#) is a great resource – not just for citizens but for City departments too (could help with Democracy Voucher outreach ideas)
- People's Academy for Community Engagement is effective way to connect to a lot of City resources
- Understand barriers to community – perhaps they aren't attending meetings because of childcare issues, site is not near transit, ADA access, time of day – important to look at your outreach plans with an objective eye to see what's missing (and ask for feedback)
- Remember to create a continuous feedback loop. Example of "Fresh Bucks" program not being used until the intended recipients were asked for feedback. Then it became clear they are not in the habit of shopping at Farmers' Markets – they shop at neighborhood ethnic stores instead. So, program was adjusted to pilot using Fresh Bucks at certain ethnic stores and the utilization dramatically increased. Need to know the community you're trying to reach. Talk to them about what works and why.
- Get out in the community and be a connector. Sometimes what is needed is a person who will introduce people to each other in the community. People remember the people who connected them to others.

