




# 10 Tips to Encourage Community Engagement in Diverse Communities



Encouraging minorities to participate in community engagement can be an overwhelmingly tough task. It's too often that these community members don't participate in consultations for various reasons.

Consulting with minorities is substantially different than the process of a general community consultation and can be extremely complicated and sometimes even frustrating. It is essential to nurture positive relationships with diverse communities to ensure that minorities feel comfortable giving feedback in community consultations.



## 1 Plan to spend a lot of time

Consider your engagement process - prepare, consult, and report. You will need to be at the forefront from the very beginning of your consultation and keep in contact afterwards in order to create a lasting relationship with participants.



## 2 Research the culture

When you research the culture ahead of time, you'll be able to find ways around specific barriers that you may run into during the consultation.



## 3 Don't take anything personally

Cultural differences can often leave people feeling confused or out of place, so don't think too much about a specific instance that made you feel uncomfortable or offended.



## 4 Be patient

If you've ever been to another country, you will understand the importance of patience when it comes to language and cultural barriers. Think about how hard it would be to express your feelings about a certain topic to someone who doesn't speak the same language as you and put yourself in their shoes.



## 5 Be creative

Think of ways that you can make it easier for these community members to participate. This will take some extra time, but imagine if you could sit down with someone who speaks a different language one-on-one and ask them to express their feelings about a specific topic to you using emojis, pictures or simply drawing like a game of Pictionary.

## 6 Create an inclusive social group

Sometimes creating an event at your community center or a weekly coffee event specifically for the minority you are trying to reach is enough to bring people together and encourage them to engage while assuring that you have a particular interest in them.



## 7 Reach out to leaders within their minority group.

In many minority groups within a community, there will be some members who are considered leaders. By reaching out to these people, you can often gather feedback which is representative of a large part of the group.

## 8 Provide a digital option

A digital option gives community members the option to engage anonymously from the comfort of their own home. You can provide the digital engagement option in their language or show them how to translate their entire web browser to be in their own language. Although a digital option for diverse communities can sometimes seem like a lot of work for you, the benefits that community members experience are worth it.



## 9 Explore and ask questions

Nothing makes a minority feel more important than when people are actually interested in their culture. Make sure that when you spend time with these community members you are asking questions and really getting to know them and their way of life.



## 10 Make them feel safe

It can be extremely intimidating for someone of a minority to give feedback to their local council. It is absolutely essential to ensure these community members that their feedback will be considered and that they are safe to give their opinion, even if it opposes the majority.



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