

LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT THE CORE PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

What are the “Core Principles of Community Engagement”? The [“Core Principles of Community Engagement”](#) (the Principles) were developed as part of the implementation of the Vermont Environmental Justice Law (or Act 154 of 2022) and refer to a set of guidelines and values that outline how individuals, organizations, and communities should interact, collaborate, and communicate with each other in various contexts to overcome systemic barriers to meaningful engagement.

These Principles can be used for any community engagement process – even ones outside the context of the Vermont Environmental Justice Law – to ensure that processes are inclusive, respectful, transparent, and effective. The Principles serve as a foundation for meaningful and constructive engagement between individuals, organizations, and communities, whether in the context of public policy, social initiatives, research projects, or other endeavors.

What is the purpose of the “Core Principles of Community Engagement” under the Vermont Environmental Justice Law? Under the Vermont Environmental Justice Law, the purpose of these Principles is to support the agencies covered in the Law in addressing systemic barriers to meaningful engagement with a special focus on environmental justice focus populations. Additionally, the Law states that these Principles will guide the development and implementation of community engagement plans by the agencies included in the Law.

What are community engagement plans used for? An engagement plan is a written document that outlines best practices regarding outreach and public participation strategies to achieve sustainable outcomes, equitable decision-making processes, and deepen relationships and trust between government organizations, agencies and communities.

Who created the “Core Principles of Community Engagement”? These Principles were developed by the VT Interagency Environmental Justice Committee (the IAC) in close consultation with the VT Environmental Justice Advisory Council (AC) and the VT Agency of Natural Resources. The IAC and the AC were created by the Vermont Environmental Justice Law to advance the implementation of the Vermont Environmental Justice Policy and Law.

What is the Vermont Environmental Justice Law? Also known as [Act 154 of 2022](#), the Vermont Environmental Justice Law is the state’s first law specifically meant to address environmental health disparities and improve the health and well-being of all Vermont residents. This Law also establishes an Environmental Justice Policy for the state.

What are the twelve Principles of Community Engagement?

Section 1. Laying the Groundwork: The first six principles will guide Vermont State agencies in building a strong foundation for equitable community engagement.

- Principle 1. Utilize existing guidance for equitable community engagement.
- Principle 2. Value and integrate community input at every stage of agency action.
- Principle 3. Build your agency's internal capacity for meaningful engagement.
- Principle 4. Coordinate with other agencies to de-silo policy conversations and share resources.
- Principle 5. Build resilience and trust by building ongoing, reciprocal relationships.
- Principle 6. Prioritize voices most impacted by environmental injustices and address systemic barriers to participation.

Section 2. Meaningfully Engaging Communities: The following six principles will guide Vermont State agencies as they engage in meaningful community engagement with Vermonters, focusing on best practices for engaging environmental justice focus populations.

- Principle 7. Compensate community members for their expertise and efforts.
- Principle 8. Do your homework and adapt engagement to the communities' needs.
- Principle 9. Conduct accessible and inclusive outreach and engagement.
- Principle 10. Be transparent and accountable from start to finish.
- Principle 11. Commit enough time to do engagement well.
- Principle 12. Show up on the ground and work towards equitable solutions alongside community members.

How can I get involved? If you would like to let the State of Vermont know what you think about the "Core Principles of Community Engagement," please provide your public comment in writing to the [Public Comment: Core Principles of Community Engagement Microsoft Form](#).

What is a public comment period? A comment period is the range of time members of the public have to submit feedback before a government entity makes a final decision on a proposed action. These Principles will be open for public input until June 14, 2024 at 5:00 pm EST

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