Equitable Community Engagement Guide for Disability Inclusion

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# Overview

Community engagement is vital to advancing equity and inclusion at the University of Waterloo. Members of equity-denied groups face unique barriers that other University community members do not. This includes persons with disabilities who face barriers that include attitudes, systemic processes, and physical design. The views of equity-denied groups, including disabled persons, are often not well represented in decision-making processes and thus result in amplified barriers within our institution. Participation is a fundamental human rights principle, and we must include the voices of disabled persons in all the work occurring on campus. Community engagement with disabled persons will result in our projects better serving the disability community and reaching more accessible outcomes.

This Guide aims to provide guidance on deciding when and how to engage with members of equity-denied groups, with a focus on persons with disabilities, as a way to support the integration of lived experiences into the University of Waterloo projects and processes. The common adage “nothing about us without us” iterates the importance of lived experiences as central to leading and advancing accessibility and inclusion.

This Guide complements the work of the Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism in [How to Consult & Engage with Groups from Marginalized Identities](https://uwaterloo.ca/equity-diversity-inclusion-anti-racism/how-take-action/how-consult-engage-groups-marginalized-identities), which offers useful information on key terms and navigating power and positionality in community engagement.

# Accessibility Statement

This Equitable Community Engagement Guide includes the following accessibility practices:

* MS Word’s built-in headings;
* Table of Contents created using MS Word’s built-in templates;
* Numbered and bullet-point lists;
* Accessibility Statement describing the design, format, and navigation options;
* Navigation can be done using either a keyboard or mouse;
* Black or dark text on a white background.

If you need this guide in an alternative format, or if you have suggestions for including more options for navigation and readability, please contact [aoda@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:aoda@uwaterloo.ca).

# Background

The Equitable Community Engagement Guide for Disability Inclusion was developed by the Disability Inclusion Team to support the University of Waterloo in achieving legislative requirements in the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/05a11) (2005) (AODA) and the [AODA Postsecondary Education Standards recommendations](https://www.ontario.ca/page/development-proposed-postsecondary-education-standards-final-recommendations-report-2022) (2022). This guide also supports the advancement of the University’s strategic priorities of empowering community members to operate as leaders and changemakers on our campus, found both in the [Provost’s Advisory Committee on Building a Resilient University of Waterloo](https://uwaterloo.ca/provost/reports/provosts-advisory-committee-building-resilient-university), the [Waterloo at 100](https://uwaterloo.ca/waterloo-100/) strategic plan, and the [Waterloo Student Experience & Engagement (WatSEE) Framework](https://uwaterloo.ca/provost/reports/waterloo-student-experience-engagement-watsee).

As per the [Freedom of Expression and Respectful Engagement Taskforce](https://uwaterloo.ca/freedom-of-expression/) report, the University has an obligation to exercise its duty of care for the University community as part of fostering an environment of freedom of expression and inclusive engagement. The report emphasizes empowering voices from equity-denied communities, stating that “in a world where power and privilege are not distributed equally, universities need to ensure that those from historically marginalized groups” are able to “speak and to be heard”. This Guide seeks to support community members in accepting the onus placed on the University to undertake measures to enhance speech and engagement.

This guide focuses on the inclusion of disabled voices due to the legislative requirements from the AODA and the AODA Postsecondary Education Standards recommendations. However, many of the principles and recommendations discussed in this guide emphasize intersectionality and can support community engagement with diverse equity-denied groups.

# What is Community Engagement?

Community engagement is a formal process in which we can value our community members' voices, ideas, and lived experiences. This Guide considers community engagement as a broader set of strategic processes that aim to empower and involve equity-denied communities beyond limited consultations.

It is vital that we acknowledge that community engagement at the University of Waterloo is often done from a position of power and privilege. We must meaningfully design all community engagement with a user-centered approach that incorporates purposeful decolonization efforts and recognition of intersectional equity-deserving identities.

# Core Principles of Equitable Community Engagement

This guide builds on five overarching principles that are essential to planning for inclusive and equitable community engagement:

1. We value our community members and must center their voices and ideas in each of our projects.
2. Our goal is to empower members of the disability community to impact decision-making by amplifying voices and meaningfully designing participation and engagement opportunities.
3. Lived experiences are a form of expertise that must be valued in project planning and implementation.
4. Stories are a meaningful form of data that can challenge dominant narratives and amplify voices beyond the abilities of quantitative data.
5. Proactive planning for accessibility and disability inclusion, including in budgets and timelines, are necessary to ensure inclusive and equitable consultations.

# Planning for Community Engagement

These considerations when planning for community engagement are adapted from the International Association for Public Participation (Canada)’s principles for inclusive and equitable public participation - see [IAP2 Inclusion and Equity in Public Participation (PDF).](https://drive.google.com/file/d/17Z9hL1GAsnPAJhHKtaaMDf48WcWz7s_I/view)

1. **Invest in on-going relationship building** with members of the disability community to ensure trusting, equitable, and collaborative partnerships;

A commitment to **relationship building with both** **participants and partners** is a vital part of respectful engagement and ensuring that the community engagement results in the sharing of authentic experiences, stories, and voices. **Before engaging**, invest in time to learn about the cultures and histories of the community you hope to consult through meaningful conversation, literature reviews, or engaging with cultural and historical assets. Show respect and build trust by spending time with participants and partners and having conversations about the project and its mutual benefits. **Throughout the community engagement**, continually connect with participants and partners to share current activities, learnings, and intermediate findings. **Ensure that the relationship does not end after the community engagement**. Follow-up with participants and partners to thank them for their participation, summarize findings and mutual benefits that occurred, and share how they can stay connected with the project and future actions.

Refer to [A Pathway for Indigenous Community Engagement (Sharepoint)](https://uofwaterloo.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/VPRI/InclusiveResearch/Shared%20Documents/A%20Pathway%20for%20Indigenous%20Community%20Engagement.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=c8HkrL) from the University of Waterloo Inclusive Research Hub for fundamentals of relationship building during community engagement.

1. **Plan** **early and proactively** for intersectional inclusion and equity, ensuring that community engagement is part of your project plan, timeline, and budget;

Ask yourself:

* When would stakeholder input be beneficial?
* Are there multiple times when stakeholder input would be beneficial?
* Is there an opportunity to use feedback gathered for meaningful change in the project and its direction? (If not, feedback may be collected too late in the process.)
* Is there appropriate budget allocated to community engagement, including to build accessible spaces and compensate participants?
* What are the goals and objectives of the community engagement?
* Are all questions asked during the community engagement relevant to these goals and objectives? (ex. it is not always necessary to discuss both assigned sex at birth and gender). Consider the Inclusive Research Hub’s resource on [General guidelines on asking for demographic information](https://uofwaterloo.sharepoint.com/sites/VPRI/InclusiveResearch/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FVPRI%2FInclusiveResearch%2FShared%20Documents%2FGuidelines%20on%20asking%20for%20Demographic%20Information%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FVPRI%2FInclusiveResearch%2FShared%20Documents).

1. **Demonstrate accountability and transparency** in planning, reporting, and evaluation;

Ask yourself:

* How often will you be checking in with engagement participants (ex. those in the focus group) and those in the broader community?
* How are you keeping the community informed of progress and/or changes in activities?
* What are the best communications platforms to engage with the community (ex. social media, website, town hall)?

1. **Commit to ongoing learning** that includes reevaluating and changing your processes in response to feedback.

It is vitally important that community engagement participants have the opportunity to impact the project processes and outcomes. If new information is learned, either through formal community engagement or informal feedback, reevaluate the project’s processes.

Stay informed with new research or evolving best practices by connecting with the [Office of Research](https://uwaterloo.ca/research/) or [IAP2 Canada](https://iap2canada.ca/).

1. **Consider the potential need for research ethics** depending on your goals for communication and use.

Refer to [Does my data collection activity require ethics review? (webpage).](https://uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics/research-human-participants/pre-submission-and-training/human-research-guidelines-policies-and-resources/does-my-data-collection-activity-require-ethics-review)

# Choosing a Community Engagement Format

Community engagement is built on the principle that disabled persons are affected by decisions made on campus and have a fundamental human right to participate in the decision-making process, whether this includes being informed, providing feedback, or leading the process. The type of community engagement you choose impacts the commitment you make to your stakeholders.

Consultation is only one example of community participation in decision making. Consider your goal in engaging the public and disabled persons along the spectrum of community engagement that recognizes increasing power of participants: inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower (see [IAP2 Resources](https://www.iap2.org/page/resources) for full resource).

People from equity-denied groups have systemically less access to power and decision making or leadership structures. Members of equity-denied groups are often seen as research subjects or participants, as opposed to leaders or knowledge experts. It is important that our community engagement practices challenge these oppressive, systemic norms.

**Note:** The term “consultation” is intertwined with a history of harm and exploitation in Indigenous communities. Consider using alternative terms such as “community engagement”, or by explicitly naming the format, for example “focus group”.

**Spectrum of Community Engagement**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Purpose** | **Inform** | **Consult\*** | **Involve** | **Collaborate** | **Empower** |
| **Goal** | To provide the community with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunity, or solution. | To obtain community feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions. | To work directly with the community throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered. | To partner with the community in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution. | To place the final decision making in the hands of the community. |
| **Sharing Information** | Organization shares information with community | Community shares information with organization | Organization and community share information | Organization and community share information | Organization and community share information |
| **Final Decision** | Organization | Organization | Organization | Organization | Community |
| **Commitment to the Public** | We will keep you informed. | We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how community input influenced the decision. | We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how community input influenced decisions. | We will look to you for advice and innovation in forming solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions. | We will implement what you decide. |
| **Example Formats** | * Fact sheets * Websites * Open houses | * Surveys * Focus groups * Interviews | * Workshops | * Advisory committees | * Planning committees |

**Examples of Community Engagement**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Consultation Type\*** | **Description** | **Pros** | **Cons** | **Reasons to Choose** |
| Survey  (Example: Consult) | A series of questions distributed in-person or virtual. | * Efficient timeline * Effective sampling may result in more accurate characteristics of large populations or different audiences * Creates private, anonymous setting to gain more candid answers * Quantitative data may be easier to analyze | * May result in less detailed feedback * No opportunity for clarifying questions | I want to hear from many, diverse voices. |
| Interviews  (Example: Consult) | In-depth individual interviews with a set number of participants that run in-person or virtual, often consisting of open-ended questions. | * Gives all participants space to speak without one participant dominating a group conversation * More detailed feedback from each participant | * Relies heavily on moderator knowledge and skill * Requires knowledge of notetaking and qualitative data analysis | I am later in project timeline and want to explore specific topics through deeper dialogue. |
| Focus group  (Example: Consult) | A selected gathering of people (either in-person or virtual) that participate in a moderated discussion. | * Participants can consider and respond to other perspectives * Explore new ideas outside the scope of your structured questions * Allows for flexibility to ask for clarification or more detail, as well as dive deeper into specific topics | * Requires knowledge of notetaking and qualitative data analysis * May capture skewed perspectives based on participant sampling and dominant conversations * Relies heavily on moderator knowledge and skill | I am early in my project timeline and want to understand broad topics. |
| Workshops  (Example: Involve) | A selected gathering of people that emphasizes collaborative and participatory activities and exercises. | * Creative and action-oriented activities help create new ideas that the researchers may not have considered * Avoids group discussion biases and inadvertent consensus by dividing participants into smaller groups * Supports introverted and extroverted participants in full engagement | * The potential formation of new ideas demands the potential for action or integration of these new ideas into your work | I am in early in my project timeline and want to generate new ideas. |
| Public meeting / Townhall  (Example: Inform) | An gathering open and available to everyone in the community where moderators will guide group conversation. | * Opportunity to hear more voices without researcher sampling bias (note that self-selection bias remains) | * Limited opportunities to hear diverse voices * Difficult to garner specific thoughts, and may tend towards “informing” audience rather than “consulting” | I want to inform stakeholders about and collect general feedback on my project plan and progress. |
| Advisory and Planning Committees  (Example: Collaborate or Empower) | A small group of representative stakeholders that are convened by a sponsor for an extended period of time to represent a range of stakeholder groups for the purpose of sharing opinions, studying issues, and developing recommendations. | * Opportunity to meaningfully engage community members in the length of the project, ensuring stakeholder input at multiple stages | * Potentially high turnover of committee members due to other stakeholder responsibilities or academic semesters. * Community awareness of an advisory or planning committee, as well as how to contribute, may still be low and require meaningful strategy. | I want to empower stakeholders to have meaningful impact on the direction of and decisions made within the project. |

# Recruitment of Participants

Consider **multiple, different forms** of recruiting participants to ensure your communication reaches diverse individuals and that all community members have the chance to participate. Make sure that all communication materials are available in accessible formats, including alternative text on images and closed captions on videos. Consider **personalized recruitment** to students or departments with pre-existing relationships.

**Set clear expectations for:**

* What activities participants will engage in;
* Available accessibility tools and the process to request accommodations;
* What impact participant engagement will have on the project;
* How participants will be compensated (including amount, format, and timeline);
* How participants can stay informed about the project process.

When working with members of 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, **avoid including room numbers in broad recruitment promotion**. Members of vulnerable, equity-denied groups may feel safer if the broader community is unaware of their exact location at a specific time. If possible, communicate the exact location of the community engagement in individual, private communications (e.g. registration follow-up emails). Note that this recommendation may differ depending on the intended audience; for example, including room numbers may provide access information for persons with disabilities to use in planning without forcing disclosure.

When recruiting participants, apply an intersectional lens that ensures engagement with the full diversity of our community. Provide explicit opportunities for members of equity-deserving groups, including Black, Indigenous, and 2SLGBTQIA+ community members, to participate in your community engagement. Consider promoting your community engagement through established affinity networks for equity-deserving groups, including:

* Student networks (Glow Centre, RAISE, Women’s Centre, Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre, etc.)
* Employee networks (UW Gender and Sexual Diversity Alliance, Women and Nonbinary Wednesdays, Black Faculty Association, etc.)

Self-selection for participation means a built-in bias. This can be appropriate for this type of community engagement because they focus on storytelling rather than generalizable quantitative data. The data can be meaningful to guide your project but does not allow you to speak for generalized communities or cultures.

# Implementing Safe Community Engagement

## Designing the Questions

Meaningfully design your questions to elicit authentic answers that do not have pre-determined conclusions or expected outcomes. Consider having someone with lived experience expertise vet your questions to ensure that appropriate terminology is used.

Design questions to support disabled and neurodivergent participants, such as by providing questions in written and verbal formats, and writing materials in plain language.

**Designing Diverse Engagement Opportunities**

Provide engagement options and alternatives to support diverse participation preferences. This may include supporting diverse communication styles, such as group discussion or individual interviews, using the chat or unmuting yourself in virtual meetings, sharing stories orally or in written surveys. Plan for flexibility and be prepared for someone needing adjustments during the activity. Avoid calling on participants and ensure they always have the opportunity to not participate.

Set aside more time to allow for different processing speeds, communication styles and breaks, especially for activities that are over an hour. Ensure that you are repeating important information in multiple formats.

Consider engagement options that include activity to accommodate neurodiverse needs, such as drawing on a posterboard, writing on a table mind map, moving around the room, or provided fidget toys.

## Choosing the Space

The physical space and accessibility of this space is a vital part of a participant’s comfort and ability to participate. Choose a space that accommodates for physical barriers, such as through ramps, elevators, open spaces without tripping hazards, and a close distance to accessible and gender-neutral washrooms. It’s also important to consider potential sensory barriers, including loud hallway noises between classes, air quality from construction, and scent-free environments.

Consider the need for ASL translation and closed captioning (AI-captioning or live captioning); requests for these services may take many weeks to fill.

Food and refreshments can help build community and safe spaces, especially when engaging people from diverse cultural or Indigenous backgrounds. Note that food and refreshments are not an alternative to compensation.

For in-person and virtual community engagements, including focus groups, workshops, townhalls, and interviews, follow the guidelines for [Campus event planning](https://uwaterloo.ca/university-relations/resources/campus-event-planning).

## Choosing a Facilitator

Consider who is leading the consultation. Community members will relate most to facilitators they can trust with vulnerable lived experiences. This may require paying an external facilitator (ex. Student facilitator for student consultations), or choosing a facilitator that has similar identity lived experience as the group being consulted. It’s important to ask “when does my presence become unhelpful” and “who is best to hold this vulnerable space”.

Consider attending a workshop with Organizational and Human Development: [Facilitating with Confidence](https://uwaterloo.ca/human-resources/learning-and-development/employee-workshops-and-programs/facilitating-confidence).

## Prepare Participants for the Community Engagement

Share written materials (including slide decks) in advance. Deliver detailed information and instructions in advance to give participants the opportunity to determine what accommodations they will need (you can’t expect every accommodation, and people can’t tell you what they will need if they don’t know what to expect).

Provide participants with plenty of time to ask questions and request accommodations.

## Collecting Consent

Ensure that there is an appropriate mechanism to collect and record participant consent to the community engagement process.

Reference the Office of [Research’s Sample consent and permission forms](https://uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics/research-human-participants/application-process/samples-and-other-supporting-materials/information-consent-samples/sample-consent-and-permission-forms).

## Support Participant Burnout

Ensure that you are supporting participants in sharing vulnerable information by being aware of potential triggers, exhaustion, and content impacts. Supporting a participant as a wholistic person and ensuring appropriate relationship building may require sharing support resources (ex. Good2Talk for students, Homewood Health for employees) or having access to counsellors, social works, or Knowledge Keepers.

Consider these trauma-informed principles with an ethic of care from [Medium (webpage)](https://medium.com/@sft7la/an-ethic-of-care-for-research-participants-as-trauma-survivors-8ce9fbbd92d).

1. **Track and notice** verbal and nonverbal cues of warning signs from participants throughout the community engagement (ex. sudden fidgeting, heavier breathing, agitation).
2. **Acknowledge and validate** warning signs as soon as they are noticed, including through affirming language (“I’m sorry that happened…”) that does not interrogate or pry.
3. **Offer options for support** that include formal pathways (ex. Good2Talk, Homewood Health, counsellors, Knowledge Keepers) and options for breaks or soothing activities (ex. fidget toys, coloring).
4. **Follow their lead** and emphasize that participants are in control of the engagement, which may include following shifts in conversations or moving on to different questions.
5. **End on a caring note** that includes thanking the participant and re-emphasizing options for support.

**Be Mindful of Power & Positionality**

The power and positionality of project coordinators, facilitators, and participants must be considered before and during the community engagement. This may include watching for unequal power dynamics in the space, such as some participants needing more time to respond to questions or prompts.

Reference the Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism’s [How to Consult & Engage with Groups from Marginalized Identities](https://uwaterloo.ca/equity-diversity-inclusion-anti-racism/how-take-action/how-consult-engage-groups-marginalized-identities) for more information on key definitions and recommendations for navigating power and positionality in community engagement.

# Analyzing Data

* **Recognize individual experience**. Community engagement is a vital aspect of any project’s process, however, it is important to consider that one person’s experience may not be generalizable to the whole identity demographic. Community engagement must be an ongoing commitment to learning that does not tokenize or universalize one participant.
* **Accurately depict disability**. Consider how to usefully analyze and report on information about participant’s identities and disabilities. Disability is a broad category with nuance in how an individual identifies. For qualitative research, a descriptive account of a participant’s disability may be appropriate, taking care to reflect the participant’s own words. For quantitative research, your data may require that you group diverse disabilities, for example, to make sure you have enough sub-group populations to support data anonymity or statistical processes. Be clear about how you categorized or coded each sub category, including your rationale and purpose in doing so.
* **Employ intersectional data analysis**. Be aware of limitations in the generalizability of your data. For example, if the majority of your disabled participants identified themselves as white, then any generalized claims regarding disabled participants in your community engagement would not accurately reflect the experiences of disabled people of Colour.

# Communicating Results

There are many ways to share the results of your community engagement. Try to engage in as many approaches as you can, including a combination of conventional academic approaches (ex. conferences, scholarly journals) and community-oriented approaches (ex. social media, infographics, blog posts).

Emphasize the following best practices in communicating community engagement results:

1. “Close the loop” with participants and partners to share findings and mutual benefits
2. Emphasize clarity and accessibility in your communication.
3. Empower participants and partners to understand how they can use your findings to support their work.
4. Report accurately without sensationalizing findings or misrepresenting the data of equity-deserving groups.

Access the University of Waterloo’s [Inclusive Communications Guide (website)](https://uwaterloo.ca/university-relations/resources/inclusive-communications-guide/language-and-written-style) to support inclusive and accessible media development.

Ask yourself:

* Am I accurately representing the barriers faced by participants?
* How I am I generalizing the experiences of participants to the nuanced experiences of a larger, demographic?
* How are my findings and the communication of those findings addressing intersectionality?
* How can I offer this information to people who could use it?

# Evaluating Your Community Engagement

It is important that we commit ourselves to continuous improvement and learning. Evaluating your community engagement is one process to advance this commitment.

**Rowe and Frewer’s “Nine Criteria Approach” to Evaluation**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Evaluation** |
| Acceptance (Fairness) Criteria | |
| Representativeness | Do participants comprise a broadly representative sample of the affected public? |
| Independence | Was the public engagement conducted in an independent, unbiased manner? |
| Early involvement | How early was the public engaged during the decision-making and implementation process? |
| Influence | Did the output of the public engagement have a genuine impact on the project? |
| Transparency | Was the public able to see and understand what was going on and how decisions were being made? |
| Process Criteria | |
| Resources | Did participants have access to appropriate and sufficient resources to enable them to fulfill their designated role? |
| Task definition | Was the nature and scope of the participation task clearly defined so participants knew what was required of them and why? |
| Structured decision-making | Did the mechanisms of the participation exercise allow for fair and accurate information exchange? |
| Cost-effectiveness | Was the public engagement cost-effective from the point of view of the sponsors? |

Source: [A White Paper on Challenges and Advancements in Evaluating Public Participation (PDF)](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-X3U0XoYSsfTTJlYkJXQ25LaDQ/view?resourcekey=0-Xxzh-cz1prjX-OaQ-iwvnw)

**Reflexivity**

Evaluation can also include the practice of reflexivity or acknowledging your role in the community engagement. Ask yourself how your power and positionality may have impacted the work, what preconceptions you held during the community engagement, and how you can continue your individual commitment to learning as a tool to improve your community engagement.

# Appendix A Budgeting for Consultation

Consider the following potential budget items in advance of every community engagement. It is essential that accessibility is a proactive thought.

**Potential Accessibility Budget Items** (note that this list is not exhaustive)

* ASL interpretation
* Closed captioning
* Assistive listening devices
* Communication Access Real-Time translation (CART)
* Materials in alternate formats
* Personal care attendants
* Room bookings
* Facilitator fees
* Technology support for live-streaming

**Equitable Participant Compensation for Community Engagement**

Valuing participant time, emotional work, and lived experiences requires appropriate reciprocity, which may come in the form of compensation. The design of the community engagement, including accommodation costs or meals shared, does not traditionally count towards compensation.

Consult the **Guide for Equitable Compensation for Community Engagement** for detailed considerations and compensation recommendations.

# Appendix B Equitable Compensation for Community Engagement

## Guiding Principles for Equitable Compensation

The following guiding principles for equitable compensation are adapted from the [Urban Institute, 2023](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2023-08/Equitable%20Compensation%20for%20Community%20Engagement%20Guidebook.pdf).

1. Offer compensation that reflects your respect for community members’ expertise. Compensation rates should reflect the importance of community contributions to the project.
2. Be transparent and honest. Share project goals and budget and compensation forms and timelines with all community members, both during community engagement promotion and at the start of the community engagement. Ensure that you communicate early and often.
3. Seek community feedback on equitable compensation structures. The importance of community engagement also extends to compensation structures. Listen to and center community feedback at the outset of and throughout the relationship.
4. Strive for flexibility in your compensation structure. This may include offering different options or alternatives for compensation (ex. different gift card options, option for gift card or WatCard honorarium).

## What is Not Compensation

The following items are necessary for accessibility or reimbursement for cost of participation, as well as beneficial to build trust and comfort with community members. However, they are not replacements for compensation. Ensure that participants are informed if the following will be provided.

* Accessibility costs, such as ASL interpretation or alternate formats, or required to ensure inclusive and accessible engagement. These costs should be budgeted for separately from compensation.
* Shared food during community engagement can be an important cultural consideration for building community, trust, and comfort.
* Transportation costs may be necessary to support community members in getting to the community engagement.
* Childcare costs or arrangements can ensure that all community members are able to attend the community engagement.
* The use of draws or incentives may be used due to lack of resources. For example, participants could participate in community engagement for the chance to win a WatCard payment or gift card. Ensure that you are still following the guiding principles of equitable compensation and clearly communicating changes to participants.

## Determining Compensation Rates

When determining how much money should be given for a monetary compensation, consider the following list:

* Audience (ex. equity-denied community or community-at-large; student, staff, or faculty)
* Type of community engagement (ex. interview, focus group, survey)
* Time commitment of community engagement
* Emotional labour required to participate (ex. are you asking equity-denied community members to relive traumatic or painful events?)
* Relevance to pre-existing job description (ex. is this community engagement part of their required duties and activities?)
* Related policies around compensation (ex. how does you compensation structure compare to the payment of wages?)

## Determining Compensation Form

The following table highlights the rationale for different forms of compensation and considerations to ensure equitable compensation when choosing a particular format.

| **Compensation Form** | **Rationale for Use** | **Considerations for Equitable Compensation** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Gift card | Physical gift cards can provide timely, immediate compensation.  Gift cards may be received negatively due to the historical tendency for those in power to dictate how members of equity-denied groups spend their money. | Provide a choice between 2-4 gift card types to ensure relevance to each unique community member  Ensure that virtual gift cards are delivered in a timely fashion. |
| WatCard honorarium | WatCard payments are most relevant to students who use their WatCard often, as opposed to staff and faculty. | Ensure that WatCard honorariums are processed and delivered in a timely fashion. |
| Payroll honorarium | Payroll honorariums are most relevant to staff and faculty who are already in the Human Resources payroll system.  Payroll honorariums may create barriers for folx who do not have or use SIN numbers, for example those from Indigenous communities. | Honoraria are processed bi-weekly. This can create delays in payment. |
| Direct payment | Direct payment does not tie community members directly to the University and can protect their desire for confidentiality surrounding personal information.  Direct payment can provide timely, immediate compensation.  Examples of direct payment: cash, cheque, e-transfer | Provide options for direct payment that protect unique community member’s need for confidentiality, including not sharing home address or banking information. |
| Tenure-track record of service letter | For tenure-track faculty members, letters can support required records of service, thus supporting integration of community engagement into faculty roles. | Be upfront and transparent about the compensation form and timeline for faculty members to receive letters. |
| Integration of community engagement into job description | For staff members, compensation may come in the form of direct integration of the community engagement activities into their official job description.  This would require conversation with the direct supervisor and advocating for the importance of the community engagement to broader institutional goals.  This form of compensation may allow for staff with diverse job positions to engage, including those with and without flexible work hours. | Budget for enough time to have meaningful conversations with supervisors and ensure that you are checking back with both the community member and their supervisor to advise on project progress. |

# Appendix C Additional Resources

[International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)](https://www.iap2.org/mpage/Home)

[Beyond Inclusion: Equity in Public Engagement (Simon Fraser University) (webpage)](https://www.sfu.ca/dialogue/what-we-do/knowledge-practice/beyond-inclusion.html)

[United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy: Consulting Persons with Disabilities](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un_disability-inclusive_consultation_guidelines.pdf)

[Neuro-Inclusion in Public Participation (IAP2 Canada)](https://cdn.wildapricot.com/44479/resources/Documents/RESEARCH/Neuro-Inclusion%20in%20P2%20-%20IAP2%20Canada%20-%20March%202024%20FINAL.pdf?version=1711035989000&Policy=eyJTdGF0ZW1lbnQiOiBbeyJSZXNvdXJjZSI6Imh0dHBzOi8vY2RuLndpbGRhcHJpY290LmNvbS80NDQ3OS9yZXNvdXJjZXMvRG9jdW1lbnRzL1JFU0VBUkNIL05ldXJvLUluY2x1c2lvbiUyMGluJTIwUDIlMjAtJTIwSUFQMiUyMENhbmFkYSUyMC0lMjBNYXJjaCUyMDIwMjQlMjBGSU5BTC5wZGY~dmVyc2lvbj0xNzExMDM1OTg5MDAwIiwiQ29uZGl0aW9uIjp7IkRhdGVMZXNzVGhhbiI6eyJBV1M6RXBvY2hUaW1lIjoxNzMzNDk2NDU4fSwiSXBBZGRyZXNzIjp7IkFXUzpTb3VyY2VJcCI6IjAuMC4wLjAvMCJ9fX1dfQ__&Signature=jDYr-8jrlyuz7EHkToR8HZEHFoidS7bVBZh2f1XstOcK3FGEmTxQR-ZPbjdhBVKkzMYZ0XXk4I-nrIn7RB6iUzmij2s5V3GSlgYcziZHpZnOQiYwX19gDWQufxIgBH81YyHbIRzCaxgFL4jahMln54iQtSRQWr3OHsAS8lpe4TqASn64IcAUS6Tq2g3x~VjuMPDA9KxqP4nKthkCunTZ-ivNecyrNaaosXGF9MlxS~sIAAXPXkZSUkHhGb5VR81BtUi74W8-8IJOwnd4dw~6n~-LEEiD3IWe3tc-XiPzGW3rSGAI2iqHV7BxWVe4fedzvB904a~grjqV4RQHx-eTRg__&Key-Pair-Id=K27MGQSHTHAGGF)

[Guide to Accessible Public Engagement (OMSSA)](https://www.omssa.com/docs/OMSSA_Guide_to_Accessible_Public_Engagement.pdf)