

Community Engagement Plan Outline

This template supports DSD staff in planning a community engagement — a structured outreach, consultation, partnership, or co-design process with a community DSD serves or seeks to serve. It is not a communication plan (see C04 Presentation Outline) or a training plan (see C03 Training Outline). It is an engagement plan: a document for thinking through how DSD will enter, partner with, and be accountable to a specific community.

Content

Community Engagement Plan Outline

Resource type: Template — collaborative document surface

Hub home: General Resource Library (collaborative documents surface; L02 Intercultural/CQ; L10 CLAS/ Language Access)

Companion to: T04_04 Cultural Humility; T03 CQ Cultural Briefs; T04_11 Intersectionality; T04_13 Historical Trauma; T07_20 Authentic Community Engagement Foundations

Charter authority: Program Charter v1.1 Article 20

Version: 1.0 — May 2026

IMPORTANT: Tribal Nation Referral

If any portion of this community engagement involves tribal nations, tribal communities, or tribal members in their tribal context:

This template does not apply to tribal-specific engagement planning. DSD respects tribal sovereignty by not assuming the authority to advise on how to engage tribal governments or communities. All tribal engagement planning must be coordinated with the ADSA Tribal Collective.

For general awareness of Indigenous community contexts, see the One DSD Cultural Observance Calendar entries for Indigenous Peoples' Day and Native American Heritage Month. For operational specifics, consult the ADSA Tribal Collective.

This referral is a floor-level commitment of the One DSD program (Charter Article 13; Charter Article 16.7).

About This Template

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to a specific community.

One DSD Professional Support can help develop this plan — surfacing relevant CQ guides (T03), checking for cultural humility considerations, identifying language access requirements, and flagging cultural observance conflicts.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Engagement title: _

Lead staff: _

Community: _

(Name the community specifically. If multiple communities, create separate plans or note any intersections.)

Engagement purpose: _

(What is DSD trying to accomplish with this engagement? Service improvement? Co-design? Consultation? Information sharing?)

Engagement dates / timeline: _

Version: _

Section 1: Community Context

What CQ guides and library assets apply to this community?

(Check T03 CQ Cultural Briefs for the relevant community/communities. Note the specific card(s).)

What do I know about this community's history with government systems — including DHS and DSD?

(Consult T04_13 Historical Trauma for foundational context. Consider whether this community has reasons to distrust government engagement, and how that shapes your approach.)

What cultural observances are relevant to this community and this engagement timeline?

(Check the One DSD Cultural Observance Calendar. Note any dates to avoid for scheduling.)

What languages are present in this community, and what language access is required?

(Per CLAS standards — T04_16 CLAS Standards; L10 Language Access — language access is a requirement, not an option. Note required languages and interpretation/translation plan.)

Who are the community's trusted voices, organizations, and entry points?

(Do not assume DSD's existing contacts are the whole community. Who is typically left out of engagement processes? How will you reach them?)

Section 2: Power and Access Analysis

Who has historically been included in DSD's decision-making that affects this community?

Who has historically been excluded?

What power does DSD hold in relation to this community?

(Over service access, funding, policy? How might that power dynamic affect what community members say and don't say in an engagement process?)

What would meaningful power-sharing look like in this engagement?

(Are community members participants, consultants, partners, or decision-makers? Which level is appropriate for this engagement's purpose?)

Section 3: Engagement Design

Engagement method(s):

☐ Community listening sessions

☐ Focus groups

☐ Surveys

☐ One-on-one interviews

☐ Community advisory structure

☐ Co-design sessions

☐ Partnership with existing community organization

☐ Other: _

Why this method for this community:

Where will engagement happen?

(Community-controlled spaces? DSD offices? Virtual? Hybrid? Note accessibility requirements for each location.)

Who will facilitate?

(Consider: Does this community trust DSD as a facilitator? Should a community member or a trusted neutral party facilitate? Is the facilitator intercultural-competent for this specific community?)

How will participants be compensated?

(Community members' time has value. What compensation, stipends, or gift cards are available? What child care or transportation support?)

Language access plan:

Language needed — Number of speakers estimated — Interpretation strategy — Translation strategy

— — —
— — —

Accessibility plan:

(What disability-related access needs must be planned for? Note specifics.)

Section 4: What DSD Will Do with What It Hears

How will DSD use the input from this engagement?

(Be honest and specific. If input may not lead to changes, say so — and explain why engagement is still valuable.)

How will DSD report back to the community on what it heard and what it did with it?

(Closing the loop is a core accountability practice. Engagement without feedback is extractive.)

Timeline for reporting back:

What happens if community input conflicts with DSD's existing plans or constraints?

Section 5: Anti-Tokenization and Authenticity Check

Before finalizing this plan, ask:

Is this engagement performative or substantive?

(Performative engagement: DSD has already decided; this is checking a box. Substantive engagement: input genuinely shapes the outcome. Which is this?)

Is DSD asking the community to do DSD's work for it?

(Are community members being asked to educate DSD staff, provide unpaid expertise, or solve systemic problems DSD created? If so, what does DSD owe in return?)

Whose definition of success is being used?

(DSD's metrics, or the community's sense of what would constitute a meaningful outcome?)

Section 6: Cultural Humility Commitments

For each of the following, note what DSD will do and who is responsible:

Commitment — What DSD will do — Responsible person

Enter with humility (we don't know this community better than it knows itself) — —

Ask before assuming (about community needs, preferences, and norms) — —

Follow the community's lead on pacing and process — —
Acknowledge and learn from any past harm DSD has caused this community — —
Be honest about DSD's limitations and constraints — —
Ensure community members are not put in a position of speaking for their whole community — —

Section 7: Library Assets Referenced in This Plan

Asset — How it informs this engagement

—
—
—

One DSD People, Equity and Culture Program — Minnesota DHS Disability Services Division. Community engagement plans for tribal nations or tribal communities must be coordinated with the ADSA Tribal Collective — this template does not apply. All other engagement plans require consultant review before implementation. Always defer to the community in front of you.

Ask: What CQ guides and library assets apply to this community?

Ask: What do I know about this community's history with government systems — including DHS and DSD?

Ask: What cultural observances are relevant to this community and this engagement timeline?

Ask: What languages are present in this community, and what language access is required?

Ask: Who are the community's trusted voices, organizations, and entry points?

Ask: Who has historically been included in DSD's decision-making that affects this community?

Ask: Who has historically been excluded?

For community engagement staff, use Community Engagement Plan Outline to draft, structure, test, and distribute communication in usable formats; plan accessible participation, make influence visible, and close the feedback loop with community partners. Start by ask: What CQ guides and library assets apply to this community?

For facilitators learning leads, use Community Engagement Plan Outline to identify affected communities, plan accessible influence, and report what changed; build the guidance into preparation, practice, debrief, access checks, and follow-up. Start by ask: What do I know about this community's history with government systems — including DHS and DSD?

For consultant operations, use Community Engagement Plan Outline to draft, structure, test, and distribute communication in usable formats; adapt the guidance to the request, test assumptions, document advice, and route authority questions. Start by ask: What cultural observances are relevant to this community and this engagement timeline?

Use cultural and community context to ask better questions, never to predict an individual or treat a group as monolithic.

Do not replace official legal, policy, clinical, supervisory, program, or Tribal authority.

Do not infer an individual's identity, preferences, needs, or experience from group-level information.

State uncertainty, use current authoritative sources, and escalate when the decision exceeds the user's role.

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