

Community input requested after the decision is effectively final

Area of work: Community engagement and co-design

The situation

A program change has been approved and funded. A manager asks for listening sessions with affected communities before rollout. Two of those communities were asked similar questions last year by another DHS unit and never heard what happened.

What to notice first

- The level of influence is inform, not consult, and saying otherwise would damage trust.
- Prior contacts exist; repeating requests extracts labor.
- A report-back on last year's input is still owed.

Questions to ask before acting

1. What can this engagement still change? If nothing, how will you say so honestly?
2. Who asked these communities last year, and what were they told?
3. What will people receive for their time, and who owns the relationship afterward?

Practical next moves

- **Engagement that shares influence** — program page </resources/ja-engagement-influence-ladder>
- **Reporting back** — program page </resources/ja-report-back>
- **Community engagement or co-design (Practice path)** — program page </paths/gp-3>

Who to involve

Connect with your community relations lead so this engagement builds on existing relationships rather than repeating requests. Tribal Nations are a separate government-to-government route.