

The background features a photograph of a building with arched windows. One window has a sign that says 'RECORDS'. A person in a colorful costume, possibly a character from a movie or TV show, is standing in front of the building. The image is overlaid with large, colorful geometric shapes: a teal triangle on the left, a large red shape on the right, and a yellow shape at the bottom left. The text is overlaid on the red shape.

Community Engagement Conversations

*Evaluating Community
Engagement*

April 17, 2025



Welcome!



Introduce Yourself in the Zoom chat

- Name
- Pronouns
- Agency / Organization
- ***What is one evaluative question you have about your organization's community engagement work?***

An evaluative question asks,
“Well, did it work?”

It should be directed toward assessing the design, implementation, improvement, or outcomes of a program

Welcome!

Group Agreements

- Listen for understanding, not disagreement
- Consider the opinions and experiences of others
- Bring a spirit of experimentation and creativity
- Step up, step back (take turns speaking, make room for others to speak)
- Have fun

What is MAPC?



The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)

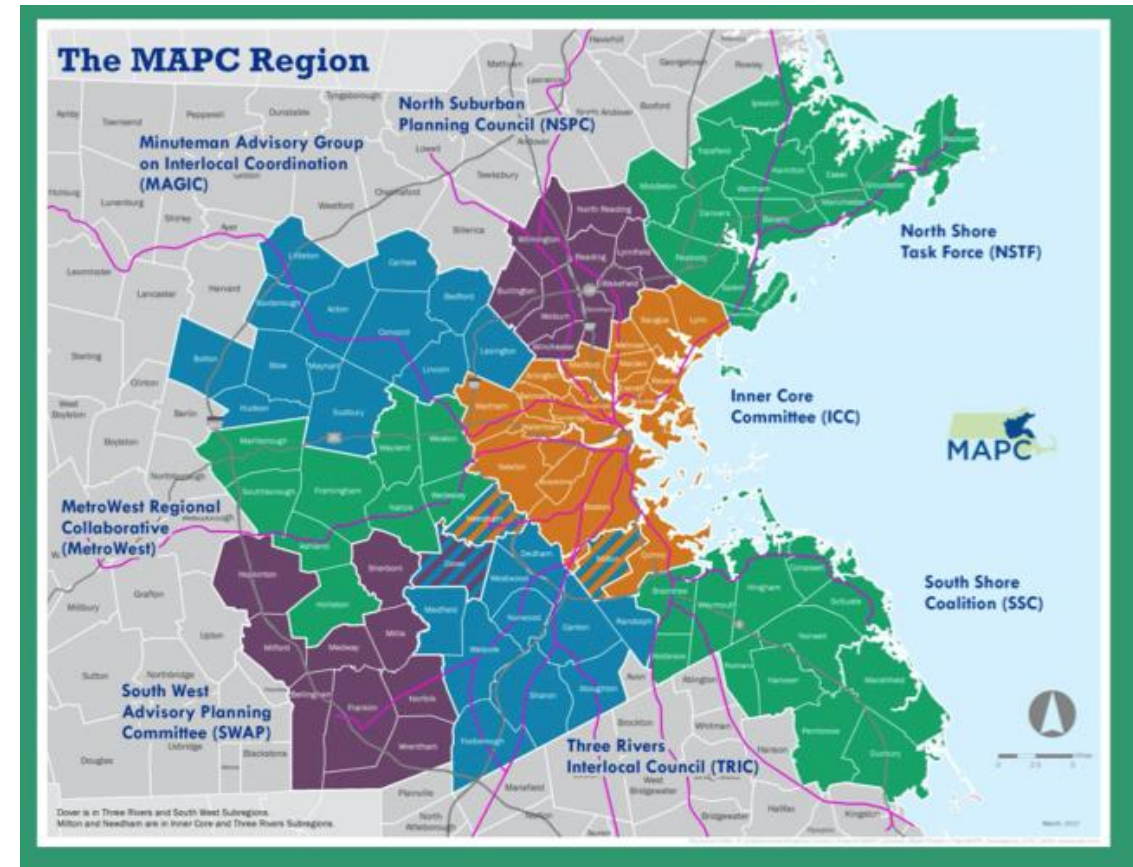
is the regional planning agency serving the people who live and work in the 101 cities and towns of the Metropolitan Boston region.

Our Mission:

We work toward a more equitable, sustainable, collaborative, and climate resilient future for the people who live and work in Greater Boston.

Areas of Work:

arts and culture, clean energy, climate, community engagement, land use planning, economic development, environment, housing, public health, public safety, transportation, public procurement



Welcome!

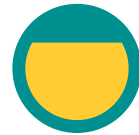
Agenda



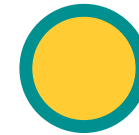
Introductions
and
Overview



Overview of
Program
Evaluation
and MAPC's
Approach



Breakout
Discussion
and
Reflection



Closing and
Next Session

Community Engagement Conversations



Objectives for This Series:

- Create a space for attendees to share barriers they face around community engagement
- Gain a group understanding of community engagement principles, strategies, and frameworks
- Introduce participants to MAPC Community Engagement Team and how they can support your work

Objectives for Today's Session:

- Develop a shared understanding of how program evaluation principles can be applied to community engagement in policy and planning
- Share how MAPC has been experimenting with evaluating community engagement
- Introduce tools for evaluating equity in your community engagement efforts

Overview of Program Evaluation and MAPC's Approach



How might assessment be an empowering process that enables us to ***create our path forward together***, helps us ***“walk the talk” of our highest values***, and allows us to ***share the story of our work*** in ways that are not only accurate but also authentic?

—***“Democratically Engaged Assessment”, Imagining America***

Why Evaluate Community Engagement?

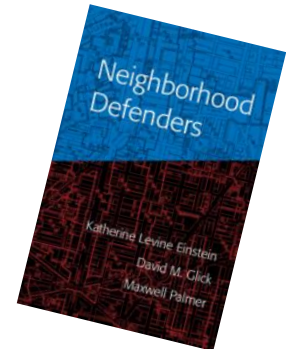
Program Evaluation:

A practice that is used in various fields to **understand the effectiveness and impact** of programmatic work through **systematic analysis**

Accountability for alignment of actions with stated values

Understanding effectiveness of **relational work**

Demonstrating the need and impact of community engagement



Example: Katherine Levine Einstein's *Neighborhood Defenders* research

Purpose of Evaluating MAPC's Community Engagement



We are evaluating community engagement in order to:




Test our hypothesis that inclusive, equitable community engagement makes our plans more reflective of community needs and goals

Understand which community engagement approaches are **most effective** in different communities





Ensure the funding we put toward community engagement is **resulting in better plans** that get implemented

Approaching an Evaluation

Types of evaluations

-  **Needs / Demand Assessment**
-  **Process Evaluation**
Formative, Implementation, Performance
-  **Outcome Evaluation**
Summative, Output, Impact, Results, Efficiency

Components of an evaluation

-  **Purpose of Evaluation**
-  **Audience**
-  **Methods or Tasks**
-  **Data and Analysis Approach**

Components of All Evaluations



Purpose of Evaluation

- What evaluative question are you seeking to answer?
- Why are you embarking on this evaluation? How can this evaluation advance broader organizational goals?



Audience

- Who will be receiving or reviewing the results of your evaluation?
- How will community be involved throughout this process?
- What decisions or actions will this evaluation inform?



Methods or Tasks



Data and Analysis Approach

Components of All Evaluations

 **Purpose of Evaluation**

- What evaluation methodologies will you use and who will be involved in determining them? What phases of steps will you need to undertake?
- How can methodologies accommodate for multiple ways of knowing?

 **Audience**

 **Methods or Tasks**

- What kinds of data do you need to collect to inform your evaluation question and purpose?
- How will you analyze the data in a manner consistent with the types of data you collected and the evaluation's purpose?
- What is needed to inspire trustworthiness and confidence across your audience?

 **Data and Analysis Approach**

Example: Evaluating Community Engagement Methods

What engagement methods are most effective in different contexts?

Planners will use this evaluation to develop better project scopes with engagement methods tailored to ensure relevant community members are included.

Planners will measure who participates and ask them to report the effectiveness of different engagement methods.

Evaluators will aggregate the data by engagement method and analyze reach and effectiveness by engagement method.

 Purpose of Evaluation

 Audience

 Methods or Tasks

 Data and Analysis Approach

Example: Evaluating Community Engagement Methods

 **Purpose of Evaluation**

What engagement methods are most effective in different contexts?

Planners will use this evaluation to develop better project scopes with engagement methods tailored to ensure relevant **community members** are included.

 **Audience**

Planners will measure who participates and ask them to **report the effectiveness** of different engagement methods.

 **Methods or Tasks**

Evaluators will **aggregate the data by engagement method** and analyze reach and effectiveness by engagement method.

 **Data and Analysis Approach**

Example: Evaluating Community Engagement Methods

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 **Methods or Tasks**

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 **Data and Analysis Approach**

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Example: Evaluating Community Engagement Methods

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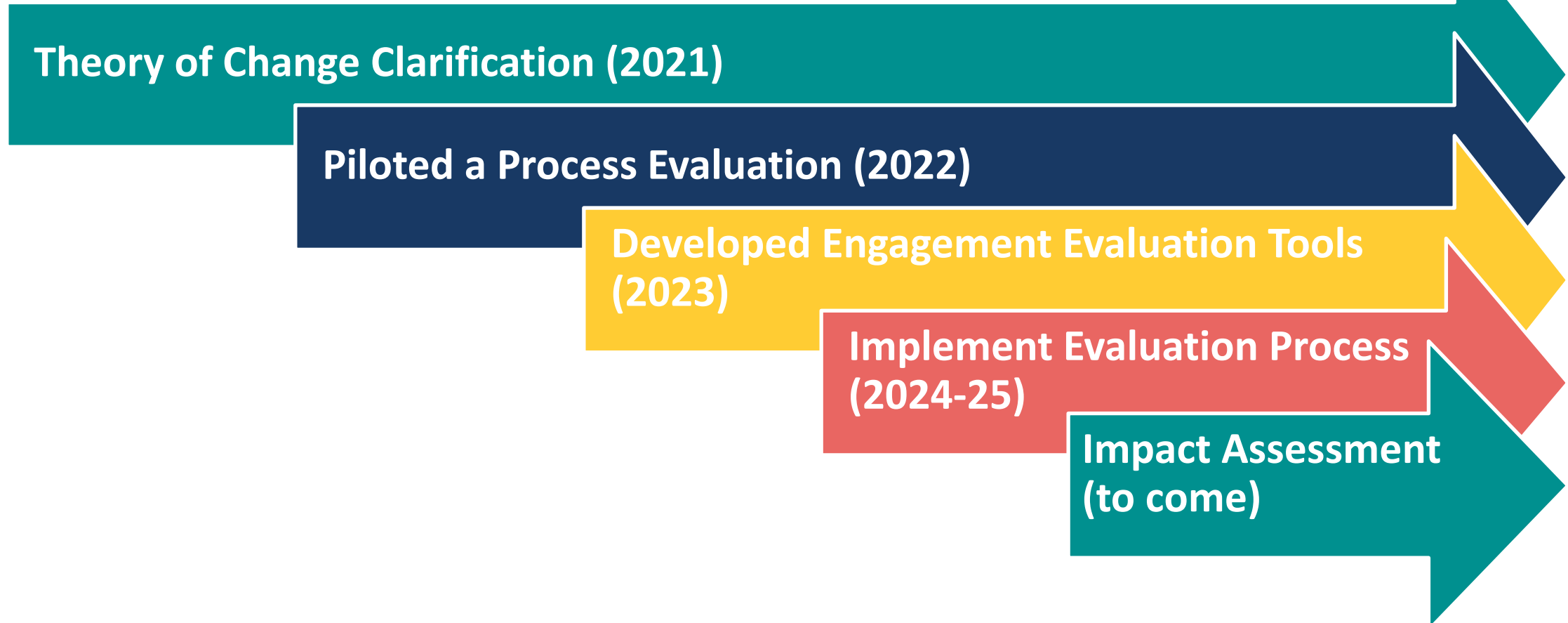
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 **Data and Analysis Approach**

Evaluators will **aggregate the data and** analyze reach and effectiveness by engagement method.

Start Where You Are

MAPC Community Engagement Team's Evaluation Journey



Designing an Evaluation of Your Community Engagement Practice



Your Turn: Evaluating Your Community Engagement Efforts



2 minutes

Silent Reflection

- Grab a blank paper or open a text doc.
- Revisit the “evaluative question” you wrote in the intro chat. Make any edits based on the content discussed so far.
- Note who is the audience of the evaluation.
- Brainstorm what methods and data might be relevant.

10 minutes

Pair and Share

- Take 2 minutes to introduce yourselves.
- Then, share your evaluation question and explain how it is relevant to your organization and your work.
- Halfway through, switch to the other person.

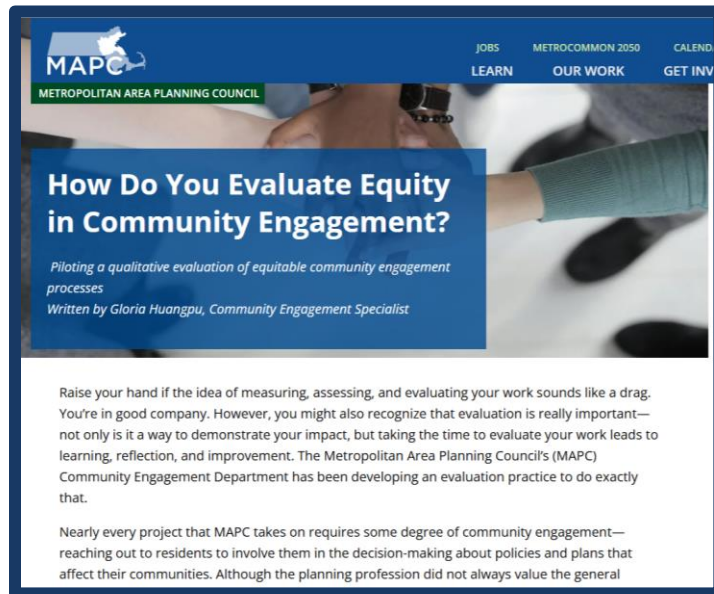
Breakout Group Debrief

Respond to the following questions in the Zoom chat:

- What came up in your breakout?
- How did your evaluative question change?
- What questions or reflections do you have about evaluating your organization's community engagement work?

Resources and Tools

Report (2022): Equitable Community Engagement Evaluation



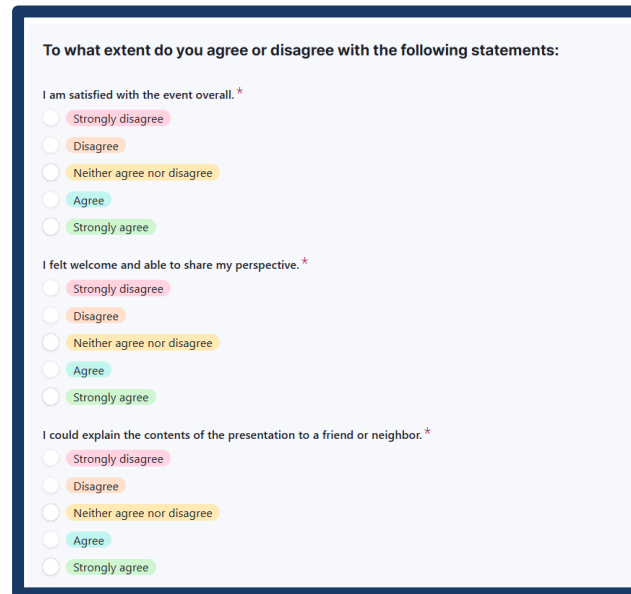
How Do You Evaluate Equity in Community Engagement?

Piloting a qualitative evaluation of equitable community engagement processes
Written by Gloria Huangpu, Community Engagement Specialist

Raise your hand if the idea of measuring, assessing, and evaluating your work sounds like a drag. You're in good company. However, you might also recognize that evaluation is really important—not only is it a way to demonstrate your impact, but taking the time to evaluate your work leads to learning, reflection, and improvement. The Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC) Community Engagement Department has been developing an evaluation practice to do exactly that.

Nearly every project that MAPC takes on requires some degree of community engagement—reaching out to residents to involve them in the decision-making about policies and plans that affect their communities. Although the planning profession did not always value the general

Toolkit: Collecting Data to Evaluate Community Engagement



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

I am satisfied with the event overall.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

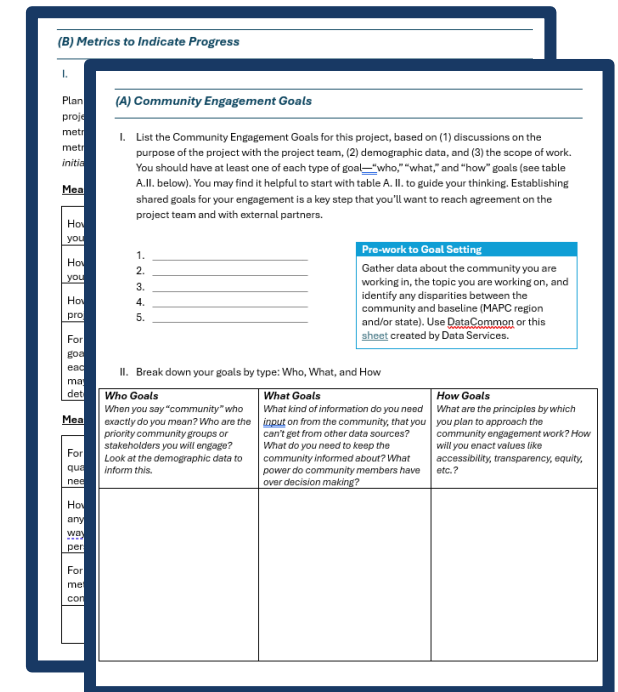
I felt welcome and able to share my perspective.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

I could explain the contents of the presentation to a friend or neighbor.*

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Workbook: Guide to Evaluating Community Engagement



(A) Community Engagement Goals

I. List the Community Engagement Goals for this project, based on (1) discussions on the purpose of the project with the project team, (2) demographic data, and (3) the scope of work. You should have at least one of each type of goal—“who,” “what,” and “how” goals (see table A.II. below). You may find it helpful to start with table A. II. to guide your thinking. Establishing shared goals for your engagement is a key step that you’ll want to reach agreement on the project team and with external partners.

Pre-work to Goal Setting
Gather data about the community you are working in, the topic you are working on, and identify any disparities between the community and baseline (MAPC region and/or state). Use [DataCommon](#) or this [sheet](#) created by Data Services.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

II. Break down your goals by type: Who, What, and How

Who Goals	What Goals	How Goals
When you say “community” who exactly do you mean? Who are the priority community groups or stakeholders you will engage? Look at the demographic data to inform this.	What kind of information do you need (input on from the community, that you can't get from other data sources? What do you need to keep the community informed about? What power do community members have over decision making?	What are the principles by which you plan to approach the community engagement work? How will you enact values like accessibility, transparency, equity, etc.?

Reach out if you want to help us test out any of these tools!
CommunityEngagement@mapc.org

Closing



Reflections on Today's Session

Today's Objectives

- Develop a shared understanding of how program evaluation principles can be applied to community engagement in policy and planning
- Share how MAPC has been experimenting with evaluating community engagement
- Introduce tools for evaluating equity in your community engagement efforts

Closing Questions:

- Something that squared up, or affirmed, what I already know?
- Something that changed my thinking or is new knowledge?
- Something that has me thinking in a new direction that I will take forward by applying or learning more about?



Please complete our feedback survey!

Next Community Engagement Conversation

<p>September 19, 2024 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>Principles of Community Engagement</p> <p>You will be introduced to MAPC's approach to community engagement work.</p>	<p>October 17, 2024 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>Conducting a Stakeholder Analysis</p> <p>How to engage different voices when considering your strategic direction and plans.</p>	<p>November 21, 2024 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>The Community Engagement Wheel</p> <p>Learn about the framework that can be used to approach any community engagement project.</p>
<p>January 16, 2025 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>Establishing Relationship Foundations</p> <p>Gain an understanding of how to build core foundational relationships with stakeholders, members of your community, partners, and others.</p>	<p>February 27, 2025 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>Designing Accessible Engagement</p> <p>Build an understanding of tools you can use to make engagement accessible for people of different languages and for persons with disabilities.</p>	<p>March 20, 2025 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>Building/Engaging Community Groups</p> <p>Learn about the best ways to involve key stakeholders in decision-making processes and how to manage expectations from residents while leading impactful public participation work.</p>
<p>April 17, 2025 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>Evaluating Community Engagement</p> <p>Build an understanding of tools to implement evaluation of equity in your community engagement.</p>	<p>May 6, 2025 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.</p> <p>Facilitation Techniques</p> <p>Build an understanding of how to facilitate digital and in-person meetings to help your participants share their needs and challenges.</p>	



Register at
mapc.org

Reach Out – We Can Help

Services

- Development of Community Engagement Strategies
- Facilitation
- Strategic Coalition, Partnership, and Network Development
- Creative Engagement

Trainings and Workshops

- Principles of Community Engagement
- Hybrid Engagement
- Language Access
- Stakeholder Analysis
- Building and Engagement Community Advisory Groups

Contact us at: CommunityEngagement@mapc.org



Thank you!

