

## **HRIEC Working Strategy Proposal**

### **Introduction:**

The Council of the City of Roseville, MN formed the Human Rights, Inclusion and Engagement Commission (HRIEC). The commission has three duties: to evaluate the City's outreach efforts, to advise the City Council on strategies to improve outreach and communication and increase engagement, and lastly to engage residents and businesses through City Council-approved programs, events and projects that support the commission's purpose.

Over the past year, since the formation of this new commission, a lot of effort and work have been done to make the commission function effectively and efficiently. The reality, however, is that the commission still needs to put in place its working strategies to fulfill its duties.

This proposal intends to summarize a working strategy pending full commission discussion followed by approval by the City Council.

This proposal is not an attempt to run the commission in any way that is contrary to the City Council's vision and norms. It is not an attempt to take over the functions of vital services that different departments of the city government provide to the community. This proposal intends to improve the quality of already existent outreach efforts and to design new engagement and inclusion programs.

### **A. Background on Community Engagement**

**Definition:** The process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

Community Engagement has some roots in the 1600's Central European Slogan of "*Nothing About Us Without Us*" used to communicate the idea that no policy should be decided by any representative without the full and direct participation of members of the group (s) affected by that policy.

It was also the basis of the American Revolutionary War's saying "*No Taxation Without Representation.*"

### **B. Benefits of community engagement:**

- Collective intelligence and working together more accurately identify problems and develop more elegant and effective solutions.
- Minimization of conflict if community "buys into the process."
- Building of trust between government and community.
- Development of new leaders.

**C. General Strategies of Community Engagement:**

- Two-way communication (Bottom-up Approach) establishing stakeholder type of relationship as opposed to Top-Down Approach.
- Meeting and discussing with the community in the community (not in the halls of government).
- Community Engagement Commissions serve as a liaison between government and community.
- Community Engagement Commissions are not the focus of their activities but represent a vehicle to transmit messages between government and community.
- Outreach to under-represented/immigrant communities usually requires preparatory work prior to set meetings with experts discussing specific issues/projects. Processing information for accurate depiction of what's at stake takes longer time and effort in immigrant communities not fluent in the language of their new home.

## **HRIEC working strategies**

Community Engagement is primarily a fieldwork. Meeting the community at locations more convenient for them has a higher engagement success rate.

1. Evaluate City's Ongoing Outreach and Engagement Efforts
  - a. Specific projects/policies affecting specific groups:
    - i. City-Council and City Departments will identify groups that would be affected by a potential City Policy/Project.
    - ii. HRIEC will be provided with information on affected groups and the Project/Policy by Council or by City Department.
    - iii. HRIEC will design/put together engagement strategies specific for affected groups and the Project/Policy.
    - iv. HRIEC will work together with Volunteer Services (and City Departments if indicated) for the implementation of the designed strategies for education (pre-meeting ground work) as well as collection of thoughts from such groups.
    - v. If needed, HRIEC members will participate in meetings between Project Managers/Departments/Council and such groups.
    - vi. HRIEC will provide to Council or Department or Project Manager a blueprint for future similar projects.
    - vii. HRIEC will archive engagement processes for future reference.
  - b. Engagement and Inclusion of Historically under-represented/marginalized groups in government.

*Engaging this group of community members is one of the main reasons for the creation of the HRIEC. The commission shall design new engagement strategies to reach these communities.*

- i. City shall identify specific communities historically under-represented/marginalized in government that it wishes to engage.
- ii. Identify leaders in those communities if there are known leaders.
- iii. If no known leaders, members of the HRIEC to establish relationship with members of the groups in order to build trust and to identify leaders in the groups.
- iv. Listening sessions to identify issues important to them that the city may not be aware of.
- v. HRIEC to design new programs intending to display the diversity in the city.
- vi. Proposals for new programs will be discussed by the Commission and voted on. Programs passed by the Commission will then be sent to the Council for approval before implementation of such programs.
- vii. HRIEC will archive engagement processes for future reference.
- viii. Self evaluation process for HRIEC for self improvement and necessary changes.