

Identifying and Overcoming Barriers to Recruitment and Community Involvement

From the Engage! Toolkit for Courts

Identify the barriers likely to affect your target groups—and strategies you can use to overcome those barriers—so more people and groups are involved in your engagement.

Directions for analyzing barriers and strategies:

- REVIEW: List the target groups, agencies, and individuals that you would like to engage. Use the groups you identified on worksheet “Recruitment and Community Involvement: Identify Partners and Participants.”
- List the logistical, cultural, personal, and other barriers that may prevent these groups/people from attending and participating in your engagement. See list of example barriers to get started.
- Brainstorm strategies for overcoming the barriers. See examples of strategies to get started.
- Work with representative partners from target audiences to identify additional specific barriers facing their community and evaluate the likely effectiveness of different logistical, cultural, and motivational solutions.
- Evaluate the likelihood of success of the strategies you will employ to encourage attendance.

Examples of Barriers and Barrier-Reduction Strategies

Potential Barriers	Potential Strategies
<i>Logistical</i>	
• Inaccessible times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider lunch hour, evening, weekend times • Offer multiple time options to address differing schedules
• Inaccessible places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct engagements in proximate locations (e.g., community centers) • Provide transportation assistance and ensure available parking
• Family care obligations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide childcare at the event • Offer monetary assistance for child care costs likely to be incurred
• Lack of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct at a meal time and provide the meal • Conduct during planned events that people are already attending
<i>Cultural/Social</i>	
• Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide interpreters and materials in multiple languages
• Ability/disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure accommodations are available for persons of varied abilities
• Trust/Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train or work with community leaders to recruit, conduct, and/or facilitate the engagements. If appropriate, court actors could observe or the leaders could report back to the courts
<i>Personal/Motivational</i>	
• Trust/Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with trusted leaders in the community to determine what would increase trust in the process given lack of trust in the courts • Communicate with transparency, care/concern, honesty, vulnerability • Reduce uncertainty by providing additional detail about the purpose, invitees, and activities that will take place during the engagement
• Lack of interest or prioritization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with community to define issues of high interest to its members • Provide incentives (gifts, cash, meals, coupons, and so on) • Use reminder emails or phone calls just prior to the event
<i>Other/General</i>	
• Reaching group members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use social media, press releases, flyers, outreach by partners • Use short, low-commitment “recruitment surveys” to generate interest, and then extend invitations to more in-depth engagements

Analysis of Barriers Matrix Tool

Target Group		Potential Barriers	Potential Strategies	Representative Partners and Strategy Evaluation
Example	<i>Indian/Native American participants (Could also list specific tribes and subgroups)</i>	<i>Time, transportation, childcare, lack of priority, lack of trust, few court actors share their culture (including conveners)</i>	<i>Conduct at local venue, offer gift card incentive, tribes assist with recruitment, Native American facilitator, share a meal</i>	<i>Tribal leaders and Consortium of Tribal, State, and Federal Courts assist with planning/recruitment (Strong plan overall)</i>

Looking at the barriers and strategies you have identified, to what extent do they meet the following criteria?
 (Note: This evaluation can be completed for each group/barrier, and/or for the set of groups/barriers.)

	Weak (low) likelihood of success	Moderate likelihood of success	Strong (high) likelihood of success	Complete (very high) likelihood of success
✓ Barriers are verified by members of the target community as inclusive of all actual and likely barriers	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Complete
✓ Strategies verified by members of the target community as likely to be effective for their community	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Complete
✓ Adequate resources are available to employ the strategies that are necessary to ensure attendance	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Complete