

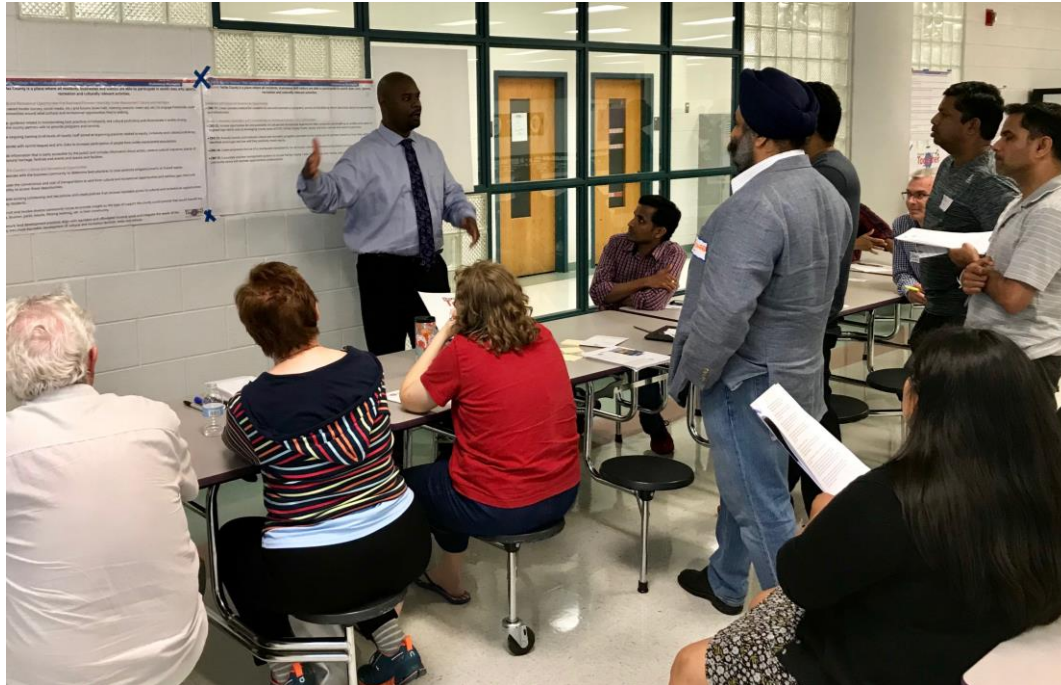


A Framework for Inclusive Community Engagement in Fairfax County





Engagement in Fairfax County



Community engagement has always been an important hallmark and experience in Fairfax County.



Key Reasons to Enhance Engagement Efforts

Provide historically overlooked voices a seat at the table.

Amid a pandemic, government requires new engagement approaches.

Engagement is more than a survey; requires building long-term relationships.

Better outcomes for residents and stakeholders.

Greater ownership in community decisions.

What is Inclusive Community Engagement?

From One Fairfax Policy:

“To foster civil discourse and dialogue, community engagement shall ensure that the breadth of interests, ideas, and values of all people are heard and considered. Outreach and public participation processes will be inclusive of diverse races, cultures, ages and other social statuses.

Effective listening, transparency, flexibility and adaptability will be utilized to overcome barriers that prevent or limit participation in public processes.”





Benefits of a Consistent Approach to Engagement

Framework provides a direction for improving our current community engagement practices. It enables departments to continue effective strategies while integrating inclusive community engagement concepts to expand and deepen participation.

Ensures stakeholders have fair and equal access regardless of the host department.

Raises awareness and collaboration among departments so we avoid duplicative or dueling engagement – more coordination.

Supports engagement through countywide, centralized functions to provide guidance, tools, networks, data analysis and more capacity.



6 Themes From Root Cause Analysis

We conducted a thorough analysis to help to identify why we have inequitable outcomes.



- 1.) Longstanding cultures within agencies where community engagement efforts are designed to benefit the government and not the community.
- 2.) Structured in a way that makes it difficult for agencies to share engagement resources.
- 3.) There is sometimes fear and distrust in the community due to historical, structural, and institutional racism. Some people in our communities are dealing with past traumas that make them distrustful of government or are hesitant to engage with government.



6 Themes From Root Cause Analysis

We conducted a thorough analysis to help to identify why we have inequitable outcomes.



4.) There is no standardized countywide training for employees on community engagement: its importance, best practices, the diverse communities we serve, etc.

5.) As a government, we sometimes do not collect or use data about our communities effectively and we sometimes do not share our data with other county agencies or with the community.

6.) We do not have a clear vision or consistent process for equitable community outreach and engagement.



DRAFT Core Principles of Fairfax County Engagement

- 1. PRIORITIZE EQUITY** – In prioritizing equity, it is critical that we acknowledge intentional and unintentional inequities as we move toward a more inclusive engagement process.
- 2. ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN TRUST** – Work with communities in an honest and transparent manner, considering and respecting history, culture and trauma.
- 3. DEVELOP DATA-DRIVEN PROCESSES** – Equip staff and residents to utilize data to inform all aspects of the engagement process.
- 4. ESTABLISH CLEAR EXPECTATIONS** – Develop clear and transparent processes to achieve expected outcomes for the community. Identify appropriate roles and responsibilities.
- 5. ENABLE ENGAGED COMMUNICATIONS** – Communicate clearly and openly for meaningful public input, broad community participation, and engagement in the decision-making process.
- 6. PROMOTE AND CREATE ACCESSIBLE GOVERNMENT** – Collaborate with the community to ensure public engagement processes are broadly accessible to all members of the public to promote meaningful participation.

Fairfax County Community Engagement Spectrum

CORE PRINCIPLES: Equitable Trusted Data-Driven Meaningful Transparent Accessible

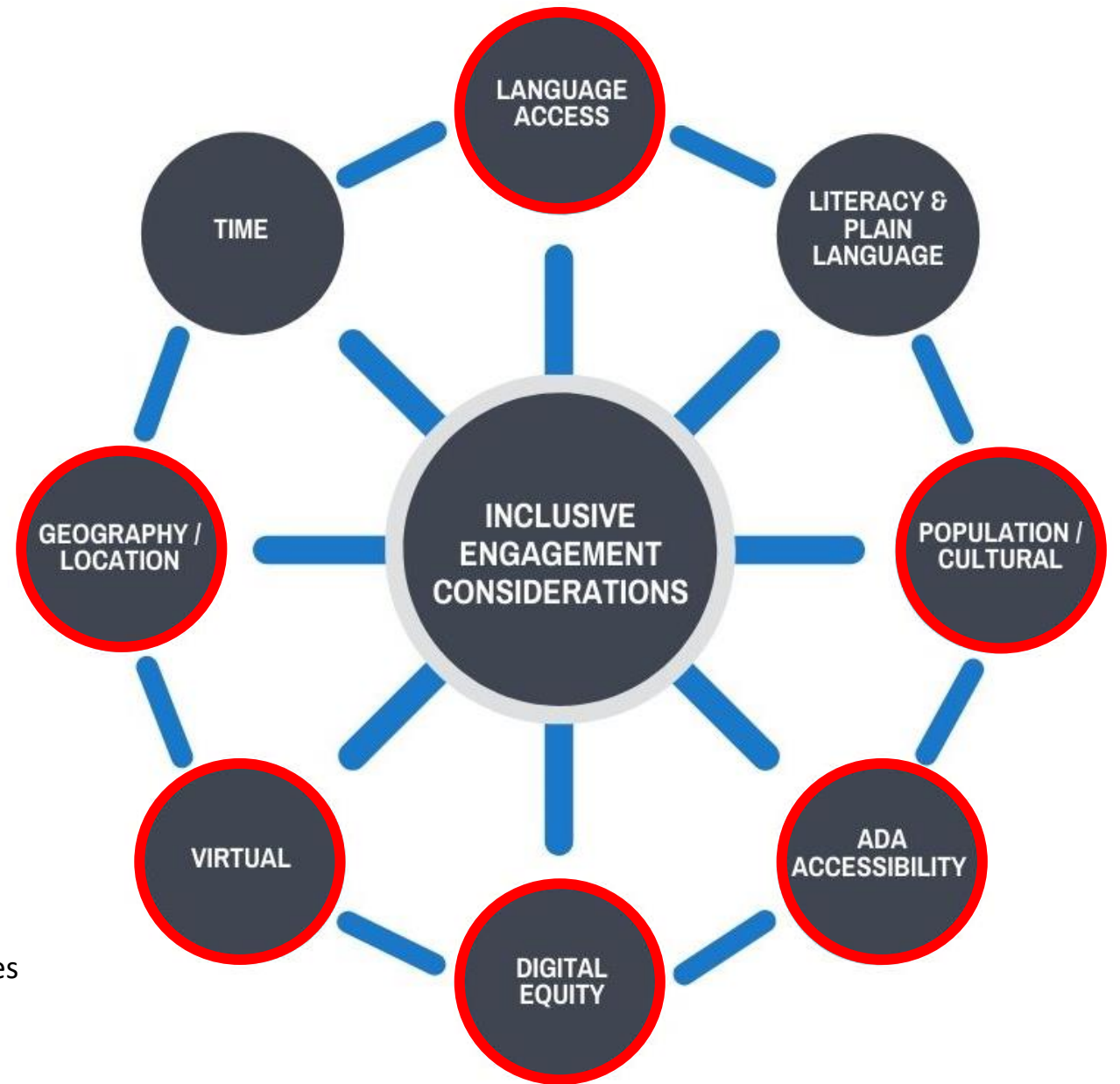
Engage

The county's commitment to the community is to be clear about the level of engagement expected for decisions.

Various relationships, capacity building, community outreach, communications and marketing happen constantly and concurrently to support the engagement levels noted to the right.

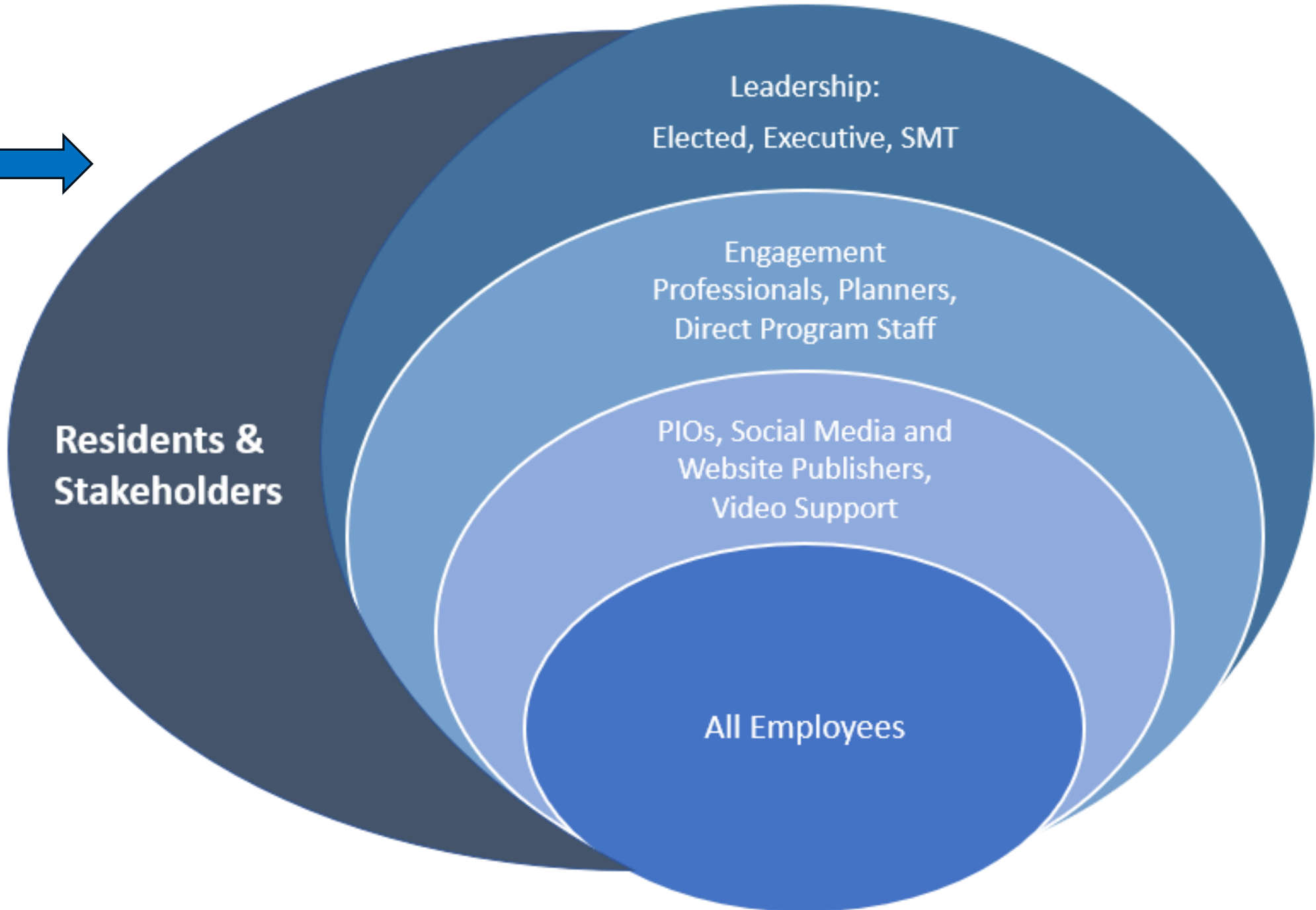


What Makes Engagement “Inclusive”



= Will require additional infrastructure and resources

We all have a role to play in promoting more inclusive community engagement.





Next Steps

- ✓ Seeking feedback, including yours.
 - Capacity and Needs Survey will be conducted
- ✓ Developing implementation plan, including measuring impact.
- ✓ Developing resource plan and prioritizing specific budget requests to support centralized engagement infrastructure.
 - Countywide training
- ✓ Continuing to build engagement culture, including by:
 - Piloting framework for the Strategic Plan, Mount Vernon Athletic Club, etc.
 - Including engagement goals/strategies into Department Equity Impact Plans
 - Leveraging GIS and other tools
- ✓ Continuing to listen, refine and adapt framework and approach.

