

**NE Iowa F&F Inclusive Team Meeting Notes  
Tuesday, March 25, 5:00 pm - 8:30 pm.**

**Present:** Larry McGee, Leah Brown, Lori Eagan, Lana Snitker, Teresa Wiemerslage, Paul Raul, Brenda Ranum, Ann Mansfield, Rick Pinderhughes and Deborah Walker

**Absent:** Lora Friest, Solveig Hanson

**Welcome & Introductions – Eating together followed by time for sharing and getting to know each other**

**Discussed shared the following handout with some key points:**

**Principles of Community Engagement (With A Public Health Focus)**

**BEFORE STARTING A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EFFORT . . .**

1. Be clear about the purposes or goals of the engagement effort, and the populations and/or communities you want to engage.
2. Become knowledgeable about the community in terms of its economic conditions, political structures, norms and values, demographic trends, history, and experience with engagement efforts. Learn about the community's perceptions of those initiating the engagement activities.

**FOR ENGAGEMENT TO OCCUR, IT IS NECESSARY TO . . .**

- 3 . Go into the community, establish relationships, build trust, work with the formal and informal leadership, and seek commitment from community organizations and leaders to create processes for mobilizing the community.**
4. Remember and accept that community self-determination is the responsibility and right of all people who comprise a community. No external entity should assume it can bestow on a community the power to act in its own self-interest.

**FOR ENGAGEMENT TO SUCCEED . . .**

5. Partnering with the community is necessary to create change and improve health.
- 6. All aspects of community engagement must recognize and respect community diversity. Awareness of the various cultures of a community and other factors of diversity must be paramount in designing and implementing community engagement approaches.**
7. Community engagement can only be sustained by identifying and mobilizing community assets, and by developing capacities and resources for community health decisions and action.
8. An engaging organization or individual change agent must be prepared to release control of actions or interventions to the community, and be flexible enough to meet the changing needs of the community.

9. Community collaboration requires long-term commitment by the engaging organization and its partners.

**Discussion occurred around the Different Aspect of Diversity.** This discussion included the power dynamics of people seeing themselves as better than or less than another person:

- Race/Ethnicity
- Gender
- Class
- Age (Adultism and Ageism)
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion
- Language
- Immigration Status
- Physical/Mental Ability

Leah offered to share information about the Kosher diet and the Jewish community's need for space/places for physical activity and play for men and women.

Deborah asked us to discuss the PURPOSE of our work group. Lana suggested we are the connection between the regional team and communities. Teresa said we want to create accessibility to all aspects of the Food & Fitness Initiative. Larry said we are to advocate for different populations of diversity. We're the watchdog and advocate. The group decided they will become the INCLUSIVE Team. Leah suggested we be the voices of Inclusion. The group decided to use the word "team" to indicate that their work will be on-going through the Community Action Planning Phase. The group said they want to work to ensure accessibility to the process and end point of the initiative by all diverse members of our community.

PURPOSE: The Inclusive Team will:

- work to ensure diverse populations have access to the Planning process and voices are present during the Planning & Community Action Planning Phases.
- investigate and report on the needs of the various diverse communities.
- be a voice of the various diverse communities.
- empower various diverse populations.
- educate and be educated by the diverse populations we represent.
- serve as a resource for the Regional Team, Work Groups, Communities and Ourselves.

Deborah encouraged our group to think about:

- Can this team consider having a member participate on each of the other work groups?
- Can we begin to pull others from our county teams/communities to be members on this team?

Lori – I'm amazed with the establishment of "us" as a community. We need to know about each other.

Leah – I agree. This is the first time I have felt a part of a team.

Rick – How are you going to take care of yourselves because this work is hard?

Lana – We know communities need to take care of themselves and we can serve as a resource to them.

Leah – What do we need to know?

Teresa – What else do we need to know for Hispanic/Immigrant Population?

Paul – They've been able to integrate and create some of their own soccer leagues. They're not totally left out due to their culture.

Lori – With my exposure to young Hispanic women, they don't exercise. Why? What are their barriers?

Deborah – With the Hispanic culture – Who are we talking about? Viktoria, who are the E. Europeans? Drilling deeper will help us better understand what they need to be included.

Ann – we also need to include Larry and Lori in this discussion for the populations they represent.

Paul – A large segment of the Spanish speaking population in Postville is from Mexico and Guatemala. Guatemalans walk to work more and play more soccer.

Deborah – What might support look like if they were engaged in conversations around Food and Fitness?

Viktoria – Can we have all diversity aspects but focus on some?

Deborah – This would allow for us to have BOTH/AND thinking. Listen for needs that arise in work groups AND look at needs before they arise.

Leah – How much do we need to keep addressing needs that have been brought to the Regional Team and the work groups? Once we bring it to them, isn't that enough?

Deborah – Our workshop tomorrow will help others to become allies. They will gain additional skills to help this Inclusive Team.

Paul – Guatemalan communities are not necessarily Catholic and they celebrate religious holidays in different ways.

Deborah – Are there others who could be invited in to share information with this Team?

Paul – Merle Turner and I tried to bring more diversity leaders in from Postville but it is hard to get them in the conversation. This is a problem with our Diversity Council.

Leah – That's a problem in the Jewish community as well.

Deborah – What is the Diversity Council's purpose and what is the reason it was formed?

Viktoria – We want to make change but we don't know how.

Deborah – Maybe your Team could meet with the Postville Diversity Council and be a resource.

Larry – In the Mennonite community we have cordial relations but no on-going interactions. They volunteer but don't go to meetings. You can't ask questions of them. We need to go on their turf.

Brenda – We have good connections with the Mennonite communities related to food production. They have more advanced techniques than our other fruit and vegetable farmers. We have people from ISU Extension that are working with them and they are willing to share their techniques with others if you come to them.

Ann – What about the low income?

Larry – We have access to these communities.

Teresa – I agree.

Larry and Teresa shared information around the Horizon projects.

Larry – We've seen many good things going on. (listed several examples)

Deborah – I would consider as a group, what has worked in communities thus far and what's already good that's going on.

Teresa – She gave examples of this with the little bit of \$ sparked community engagement in the Horizon Project and \$ for Producer Grants

We closed with Appreciations for Self, Others, Process and Regrets. Deborah said this is an important technique for “Keep on Keeping On!” Self-appreciation is a critical skill personally and in larger groups to build team in an on-going way.

Deborah – In your next conference call, take 5 minutes at the beginning to say what it took to be on this call. At the end of the call, share appreciations and affirmations for what you do and who you are.

Submitted by: Brenda Ranum