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NEXUS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INSTITUTE
MACARTHUR FOUNDATION SAFETY AND JUSTICE CHALLENGE

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WHO WE ARE

Nexus Community Engagement Institute (NCEI) is housed within Nexus Community Partners. Our work advances and strengthens communities through equity-based community engagement, both locally and nationally. Our mission is to create an equitable and just society by advancing the practice of community engagement.

Every jurisdiction has the capacity to do community engagement. Resource limitations can impact the ability to do this work, but commitment and creativity are the only real requirements. We also believe all community members, especially those who have been historically oppressed and ignored, should be engaged in and have authorship of their lives and future. For NCEI, Community engagement is a life-long commitment to a set of values that places equity, inclusion and community at the center.

“

It's not our differences that divide us, it is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences”

- Audre Lorde

OFFERINGS WITHIN SJC

As part of its partnership with the MacArthur Foundation and the Safety and Justice Challenge (SJC), NCEI offers technical assistance with various jurisdictions around community engagement. Our work is aimed at advancing authentic community engagement in jurisdictions with various stakeholders to honor the voices and experiences of those directly impacted by the justice system.

To advance the community engagement efforts within SJC sites, NCEI offers the following services:

- Network Wide Webinars, Trainings and Workshops
- Coaching and Consultation
- Environmental Scan/Community Engagement Assessment with Recommendations

NCEI offers webinars, trainings and workshops to all SJC network members; innovation, implementation, technical providers and network partners. Our trainings cater to a wide array of experiences from counties, organizations, individuals etc. that are just beginning to think about community engagement as a critical strategy to change within the criminal legal system to advanced practitioners of engagement. While there are no requirements to participate in any of our webinars, trainings, or workshops, we ask for there to be a willingness to engage and learn new policies, practices and processes.

TAPPING THE POTENTIAL OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Tapping the Potential of Community Engagement is one of our bodies of work that we have adapted to better equip SJC members with a solid foundation of community engagement practices. By participating in this series member will walk away with the following:

- Principles and values of community engagement and how it differs from other practices, such as outreach and the traditional social service model
- Explore how community engagement leads to equity and how understanding equity is essential for effective community engagement
- Assess your agency's/site's readiness and capacity to incorporate community engagement as an approach in your work

PAST WEBINARS & TRAININGS:

Circles of Impact in Community Engagement:

A Model for Centering Community *(July 2019)*

Outreach, Service, and Engagement - What's the difference? *(Sept 2019)*

Healing through Community Engagement - A Safe and Just Challenge *(Oct 2019)*

Evaluating Community Engagement - A Developmental Approach *(Oct 2019)*

Community-Centered Language within the SJC *(Jan 2020)*

COACHING AND CONSULTATION

**NCEI ADVISORY
COMMITTEE**

We partner with community members throughout the metro area to sit on our community advisory committee.



When a site has a person or persons tasked with implementing community engagement strategies their district/jurisdiction, NCEI offers coaching and consultation. A site will check in with NCEI on a regular basis, providing documentation review, thought partnership, and strategic planning. If needed there is the availability to visit a site and offer additional support within the Safety and Justice Challenge.

COACHING & CONSULTATION EXAMPLE: CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

In 2019, the City of Philadelphia hired a racial and ethnic disparities manager and a community engagement manager to develop strategies and policies to better inform positive outcomes for jail reform. NCEI has reviewed the creation of newsletters, community surveys, and helped inform thinking around recruitment and onboarding of the community advisory council. Additionally, in our relationship with the site, we have helped provide knowledge around re-granting to assist in the creation of the [Criminal Justice Innovation Fund](#). This fund provides microgrants to community-based organizations to further reform within the criminal legal system.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

For jurisdictions that are interested in further support than coaching and consultation NCEI supports work within sites to boost the capacity of various stakeholders to do community engagement. Our process begins with an environmental scan/ community engagement assessment that allows us to evaluate the local landscape. After an assessment is done, we produce a report siting our findings and recommendations. We then offer continued support should a site need assistance in implementing proposed recommendations.

STAKEHOLDER CONVERSATIONS

A team of NCEI staff will conduct conversations with various stakeholders to begin understanding the particular roles, policies, and practices that support community engagement. Specifically, through this assessment process, we will be asking questions related to the following areas:

- Relationships with community
- Purpose for your jurisdiction's or department's community engagement initiative(s)
- Process and timing for community involvement
- Ideation process for community problems and solutions
- Departmental policies and structures that support engagement
- Departmental policies and structure that block engagement



Conversations can last between 45- 75 minutes. While themes and relevant information will be shared as a part of a larger report, these conversations will be confidential. Following this assessment, the site will receive a report along with recommendations for a community engagement strategy and an offer for continued coaching and consultation should a site adopt the proposed engagement strategy.

OUR PROCESS

Our process for deep engagement within a jurisdiction can be summarized into a three part process; planning, evaluation and implementation. For any additional questions regarding site support, please contact Octavia Smith at osmith@nexuscp.org.



BUILDING MORE ENGAGED AND POWERFUL COMMUNITIES