

C.4: Worksheet — Convening Stakeholders

1. Deciding when to engage

Generally, IDS are encouraged to engage select groups of stakeholders as early and as often as is practical. While engagement for general IDS efforts should be on-going, it may also be necessary to conduct engagement activities for specific IDS use cases. One easy way to think about when to create engagement opportunities is to think about a typical integrated data lifecycle, and where along it stakeholders' insight would be most significant:

IDS Use Case Lifecycle

- 1. IDS use case conception and formulation.** Engagement at this stage is particularly valuable (to project teams) and meaningful (to stakeholders), as clear input can easily shape the entire effort and community ideas and priorities can be immediately reflected. Understanding and respecting stakeholders' views around data and privacy *before* personal data is obtained is essential to responsible research.
- 2. Secure legal agreements for integrating data.** Outside legal or policy experts may be engaged at this point to review proposed data use agreement terms or serve on oversight panels. Internal agency leadership or champions may also have strategic input at this stage.
- 3. Cleaning and linking data.** Data owners, data scientists, and technical experts from both outside and within the state/local government may be helpful here, for example, in staffing a disclosure review board to limit re-identification risk or evaluating the effectiveness of data linking protocols. Typically, non-technical stakeholders would not be engaged at this stage.
- 4. Analyzing the data.** At this stage, subject matter experts, advocates, and data scientists may be brought in to help review the analysis or test for disparate impact. A more diverse group of experts and community representatives, particularly from traditionally under-represented and/or marginalized groups, may also be considered at this stage.
- 5. Disseminating findings.** Community organizers and advocates, public officials, agency leaders, business leaders, and a wider range of stakeholders can have real impacts at this stage by leading broader discussions focusing on potential policy recommendations arising from the IDS's findings. External community stakeholders may be particularly effective in making the IDS's findings relevant and accessible by traditionally overlooked groups within the community.
- 6. Wrap up and review.** Any stakeholder who participated earlier in the process should have an opportunity to close the loop by evaluating the effectiveness of the use case and of the engagement itself.

Tips:

- It may not be practical or necessary to engage every (or any) stakeholder at every phase of the data lifecycle. While some stages, like defining your use case and research questions, or sharing your findings, lend themselves to a broad range of stakeholder inputs, more technical stages, like securing legal agreements or cleaning and linking your data, may be better suited to smaller engagements with groups of content specific experts.
- Consider balancing out a phase with weaker engagement by increasing efforts at another stage (e.g., spend less effort engaging on data linkage and more on use case conception and formulation).
- Recurring engagement activities help stakeholders feel invested in the IDS and often improves the quality of their input; however, participation also has an opportunity cost for stakeholders and too many engagement requests may exhaust even the most dedicated supporter.

2. Deciding what engagement activities are the best fit for your IDS and use case

There are as many ways to engage stakeholders as there are opportunities to do so, but not every method of engagement is a good match for every stakeholder.

You can learn what is the right fit for your set of stakeholders through experience, or by asking others who have hosted engagement activities within your community. Factors to consider might include:

- › **Structured/unstructured** – formal processes may be more comfortable for some stakeholders, while others may prefer loose and informal convenings.
- › **In person/virtual** – some people may work best face-to-face, while others may desire the anonymity or unstructured response times of an online platform.
- › **Active/passive** – more active engagement methods will create more meaningful experiences for stakeholders, but may be more expensive or time-consuming to provide.
- › **Group size** – larger stakeholder convenings may allow for more perspectives to be included at once, but may also make it more difficult to manage the flow of conversation.
- › **Stakeholder priority** – stakeholders with more interest or more influence in the IDS or use case might benefit from more active engagement opportunities than those with less interest or influence.
- › **Cost** – depending on you and your partners' resources (such as access to physical spaces or web hosting), costs may vary significantly between in-person and virtual activities.
- › **Timeline** – timelines for these activities may vary widely, but in particular consider how many times the activities will need to be held; how long logistical details will take to secure; how much notice participants will need to ensure sufficient attendance; and how long will be needed for internal approvals during planning and follow-up.

Tips:

- › Strive to create opportunities to *empower, collaborate, or involve* your stakeholders, rather than simply *consulting or informing* them of what you are doing. See diagram in the *Engaging Stakeholders around Integrated Data* section for more.
- › See the diagram in Step 4 of the *Engaging Stakeholders about Integrated Data* section for examples of specific engagement activities.

3. Engaging Inclusively

Engagement planning teams should proactively build capacity to host engagement activities that appreciate the implications of race, language, culture, and socioeconomic status on stakeholder engagement. Considerations for culturally diverse and inclusive spaces, platforms, and materials include:

- › **Language and literacy**, such as by using bilingual facilitators, providing translators, or providing for oral participation.
- › **Food**, such as providing vegan, halal, or kosher meals.
- › **Location**, such as by meeting near public transit or in spaces familiar to traditionally marginalized or underserved populations.
- › **Time**, such as hosting multiple engagements to allow shift workers or students to participate or accommodating prayer times for religious participants.
- › **Childcare**, such as by providing childcare during in-person meetings.
- › **Incentives**, such as by providing free food and drinks at meetings, gift cards for filling out surveys, or compensating participants for their time and knowledge.

- › **Appeal**, such as by increasing use case relevance and impact on particular community groups.
- › **Power dynamics**, such as by offering meaningful decision-making authority over IDS and use case design and direction.
- › **Accessibility** (physical and digital),³⁹ such as by providing ADA-compliant physical and digital spaces or providing assistive technologies for those with physical or mental disabilities.

Tips:

- › As you build your IDS’ capacity for cultural responsiveness, resources like the City of Seattle’s [Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Guide](#)⁴⁰ and the University of Washington Tech Policy Lab’s [Diverse Voices Guides How-To Guide](#)⁴¹ may be helpful.

	← <i>more active</i> ----- <i>more passive</i> →				
	Empower	Collaborate	Involve	Consult	Inform
Use case conception and research formulation					
Securing legal/partner agreements					
Cleaning and linking data					
Analyzing data					
Disseminating finding					
Wrap up and review					

4. Engagement Matrix

It may be helpful to visually brainstorm or document potential engagement opportunities in a matrix like the one below, keeping in mind that no two IDS engagement strategies will look alike. Your IDS should use the combination of engagement activities that best fits your needs based on the scale, scope, and context of your data-driven activities, as well as the time and resources available to you and your stakeholders.

Tips:

- Strive to create opportunities for more active participation when possible.
- Remember that you do not necessarily need to engage all stakeholders at all stages in the IDS lifecycle, and can balance out more passive engagement at some stages with more active engagement activities at others.
- To see a sample, hypothetical IDS use case illustrated in a similar template, see Appendix 1 in the ADRF Network's Report on Communicating about Privacy and Security (developed in collaboration with FPF, AISP, and other administrative data users).⁴²