



Seattle
Neighborhoods

FACT SHEET

FROM SEATTLE DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOODS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fact Sheet: Equitable Outreach and Engagement – a key component of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods

SEATTLE (January 20, 2017) – In July 2016, Mayor Murray signed [Executive Order 2016-06](#) reaffirming his commitment to advance effective implementation of [equitable and inclusive engagement strategies](#) across all City departments. In November, as part of the 2017-2018 budget process, the City Council passed legislation that formalized the Mayor's outreach and engagement principles, outlined a new citywide framework for community engagement, and created a Community Involvement Commission.

[Seattle Department of Neighborhoods](#) (DON) is leading this citywide effort. This directive is reflected in our mission - ***to strengthen Seattle by engaging all communities***. We do this by fostering community partnerships, cultivating emerging leaders, and facilitating community inclusiveness, especially for underrepresented communities. We are:

- Focusing on more access and more opportunity. We are broadening our reach and working with many groups, knowing that no one speaks for all. Everyone has a voice, and it is our job to listen.
- Implementing a broad range of new initiatives and tools to encourage greater and more diverse participation (see graphic below).
- Working with city departments to ensure their outreach and engagement work is equitable and transparent through consultation, collaboration, and tools to assist in their work.

Below is our work plan and timeline:

Outreach + Engagement Work Plan



DON Programs and Services

Seattle Department of Neighborhoods provides programs and services for all community members while specifically ensuring that immigrants and refugees have the knowledge, ability, and opportunity to participate. Below is information about three of our programs and their work with underrepresented communities.

[Public Outreach and Engagement Liaisons](#) (POELs) are independent contractors to DON who are expert community navigators in historically underrepresented communities. Liaisons respect community cultures and are fluent in their respective languages. Equitable outreach and engagement is conducted in a culturally-specific manner allowing participants some familiarity and comfort while navigating the City's processes. Our liaisons provide their outreach and engagement services to City departments in 30 different languages. Last year, **staff tripled the number of City projects that the POELs supported** and more than doubled its recruitment of liaisons to 62.

In addition, last year our POELs reached more than **2,000 people last year in 16 languages, 60% of whom had never interacted with City government** through our Community Conversations. Organized by our staff, this model brings together City presentations and resources to different community-based settings and organizations.

[Neighborhood Matching Fund](#) (NMF) provides matching dollars for neighborhood improvement, organizing, or projects that are developed and implemented by community members. Dozens of organizations serving historically underrepresented communities have received awards from NMF. In 2017, the program made **significant improvements to its program** to make it simpler and easier. It also now provides **equitable access for ethnic organizations to get funding for nongeographic-based projects** (citywide projects were not available in our largest fund). In addition, the program:

- Simplified the fund opportunities, going from three to two.
- Simplified the application process with a single application and streamlined questions.

- Increased the limits for the Small Sparks Fund from \$1,000 to \$5,000.
- Increased the frequency with three opportunities each year to apply for funds up to \$100,000.
- Will make more timely funding decisions so that the funds can be distributed more quickly.

In addition to NMF, **Duwamish River Opportunity Fund** is another program that DON oversees. The fund is focused on challenges faced by the communities on the river that are affected by the Superfund clean-up.

[P-Patch Community Gardening Program](#) oversees more than 90 community gardens across the city. One of its core values is supporting underrepresented populations. An example is our Market Garden Program that enables low-income and immigrant families living in Seattle Housing Authority properties to garden and sell their produce. Last year **14 gardeners representing seven cultures** collaborated to provide produce for farm stands, senior centers, and a community-supported agriculture (CSA) program.

In 2016, **nearly 300 community members speaking 21 languages** (other than English) participated in our P-Patch gardens.

To learn more about Seattle Department of Neighborhoods and all our many programs and services, visit seattle.gov/neighborhoods or call 206-684-0464.

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