Engaging the community in the development of a local housing strategy overview

Across the country, officials are recognizing that engaging the community in the development of their local housing strategy can lead to stronger solutions and smoother implementation, and they are employing a broader, more creative set of engagement tools.

Engaging the community may seem daunting, but officials should consider the strategies being explored in several cities, towns, and counties to engage the community, especially marginalized groups, from the start in transparent processes that can pave the way to a better understanding of community concerns and government needs, a smoother implementation of the housing strategy, and a stronger relationship between the government and community.

Based on interviews with local government officials, community members, housing practitioners, community organizers, and advocates in cities, towns, and counties that have recently engaged in community engagement processes, the sections below aim to:

- Outline the reasons to engage the community in the development of a city’s housing strategy;
- Walk through questions to guide the design of an effective community engagement process;
- Provide examples of engagement strategies that have been successful;
- Offer a deeper dive into the principles that should guide a process that can build trust in government and overcome historical inequities; and
- Suggest measures of success to assess a community engagement processes.