
2023

ENGAGING COMMUNITY

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A BIT ABOUT ME



ENCOLOR

I AM:

- A **facilitator** and **strategic consultant**, with 15 years of professional experience working with utilities, non-profits and public organizations
- **Founder & CEO** of **Encolor**, a firm committed to supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives
- A certified Diversity Professional (**CDP**), qualified administrator of the Intercultural Development Inventory (**IDI**), and **Lean Six Sigma Green Belt**
- **M.B.A.** graduate of California State University, Dominguez Hills
- A member of the Board of Directors of the **Association of Energy Services Professionals** (AESP) and a member of the **DEI Council**



GROUND RULES

- Come with an open mind — be present!
- This is a conversation, not a lecture. If you have a question, comment, or insight, just raise your hand to speak up.
- Be comfortable with not knowing the “right” answer



TODAY'S GOALS

- ✓ Think about power and privilege
- ✓ Hear community voice
- ✓ Discuss how power and community intersect



Why are power dynamics so important?

How do people 'feel' energy burden?

What can we do?



But first...

Power Dynamics



What is **power**?

1. ability to act or produce an effect
2. the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events
3. legal or official authority, capacity, or right
4. possession of control, authority, or influence over others



POWER DYNAMICS

“Power dynamics” refers to the degree of **influence** or **control** one person, or group of people, can exercise over another person or group of people. There are **various types of power**, which may impact the various types of relationships and interrelationships between people, whether personally or systemically.





ACTIVITY: POWER & PRIVILEGE

1. **REVIEW:** Take few minutes to complete the self assessment.
Put an **X** on where you land on the privilege spectrum.
2. **REFLECT:** Consider the following:
 - Are you surprised where you fall on the spectrum?
 - Are there aspects of your identity that more or less influence how you perceive the world — or how the world perceives you?
 - Discuss with people at your tables, if you are comfortable.





DISCUSSION: **POWER, PRIVILEGE, COMMUNITY**

1. **REFLECT:** Now circle each demographic as I read it out.
2. **REVIEW:** How do you think power and privilege plays into how we approach energy burden within community?



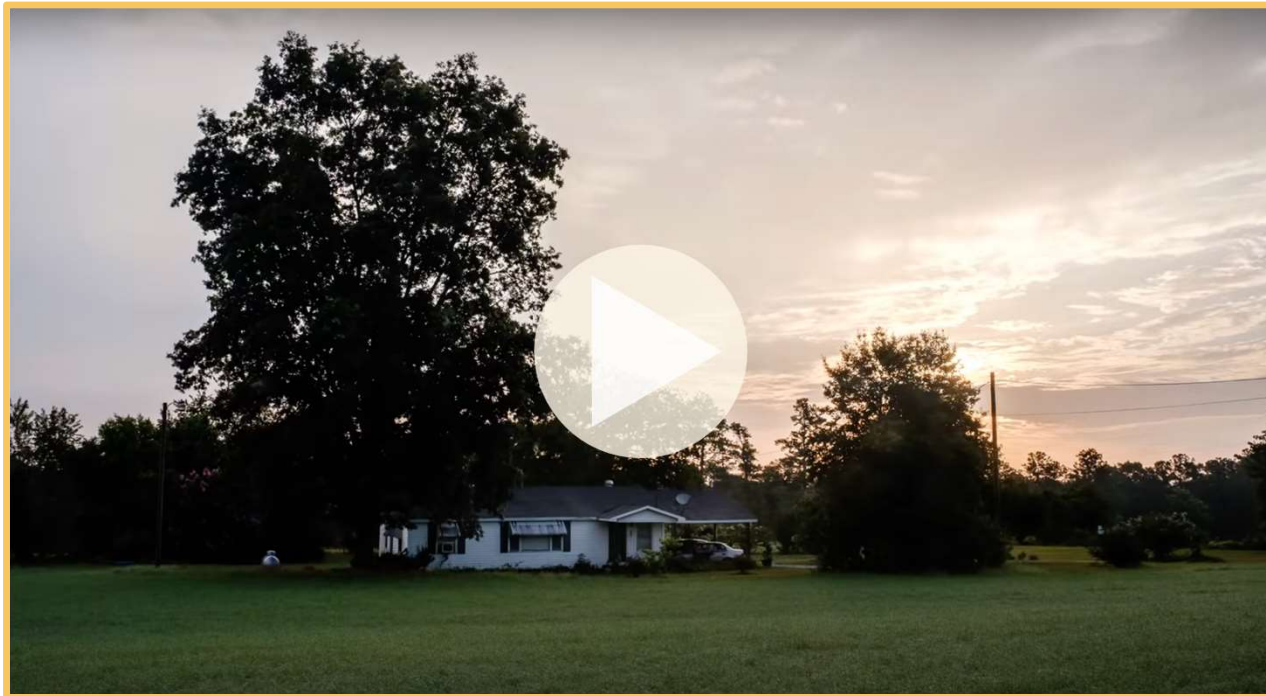
ENERGY BURDEN



WATCH: 2020 Energy Burden Report



WATCH: Rural Energy Burden



WATCH: Facing the Energy Burden



UPLIFTING COMMUNITY



PURPOSE

Provide products and services compatible with and dictated by the interest, needs, and concerns of the community.



Understand 'why'

To address the needs of the community, we need to understand their 'why.'

- This isn't your *why*. This is the communities' *why*.
- Understand why the community has been underinvested, likely in multiple areas including - healthcare, education, transportation as well as energy infrastructure
- Educate yourself beyond cultural competency and think about structural competency.

ACTIVITY: Think about your own community or a program you are currently designing, implementing or evaluating.

- Do you know the communities' *why*?
- What are three reasons/issues/challenges that they are facing that your program could help them solve or mitigate?



The State of Equity Measurement lists a few questions to ask:

- Do you understand the historical legacies of disparities in which an intervention — be it a specific service, program, agency or institution — is implicated?
- Do you have a detailed awareness of populations that were affected by past disparities and of new populations that may be negatively affected by planned interventions?
- Have you included the perceptions and insights from all recipients or stakeholders at all levels of intervention design, staffing, management and execution?
- Have you ensured that the processes for eligibility and application for a service are not exclusionary - that is, that access is equitable, not discriminatory and fair?
- Are there differences in service outputs which can indicate underlying disparities between groups' needs or constraints in relation to an intervention, or in the intervention's design?
- All things being equal, have you acknowledged that a service may produce desirable or unintended disparate impacts between groups despite purported equal access and treatment?



What are your desired outcomes?

First and foremost, you must identify your desired outcomes.

- What do you want to achieve from the program?
- Does it align with the *why* of the communities?
- How do your goals impact community?

ACTIVITY: Write out your initiative or program goals.

- Did community influence them?
- How could you ensure they are community-focused, even if your goals are required by policy, law, or regulation?



Who have you engaged?

Before beginning, consider:

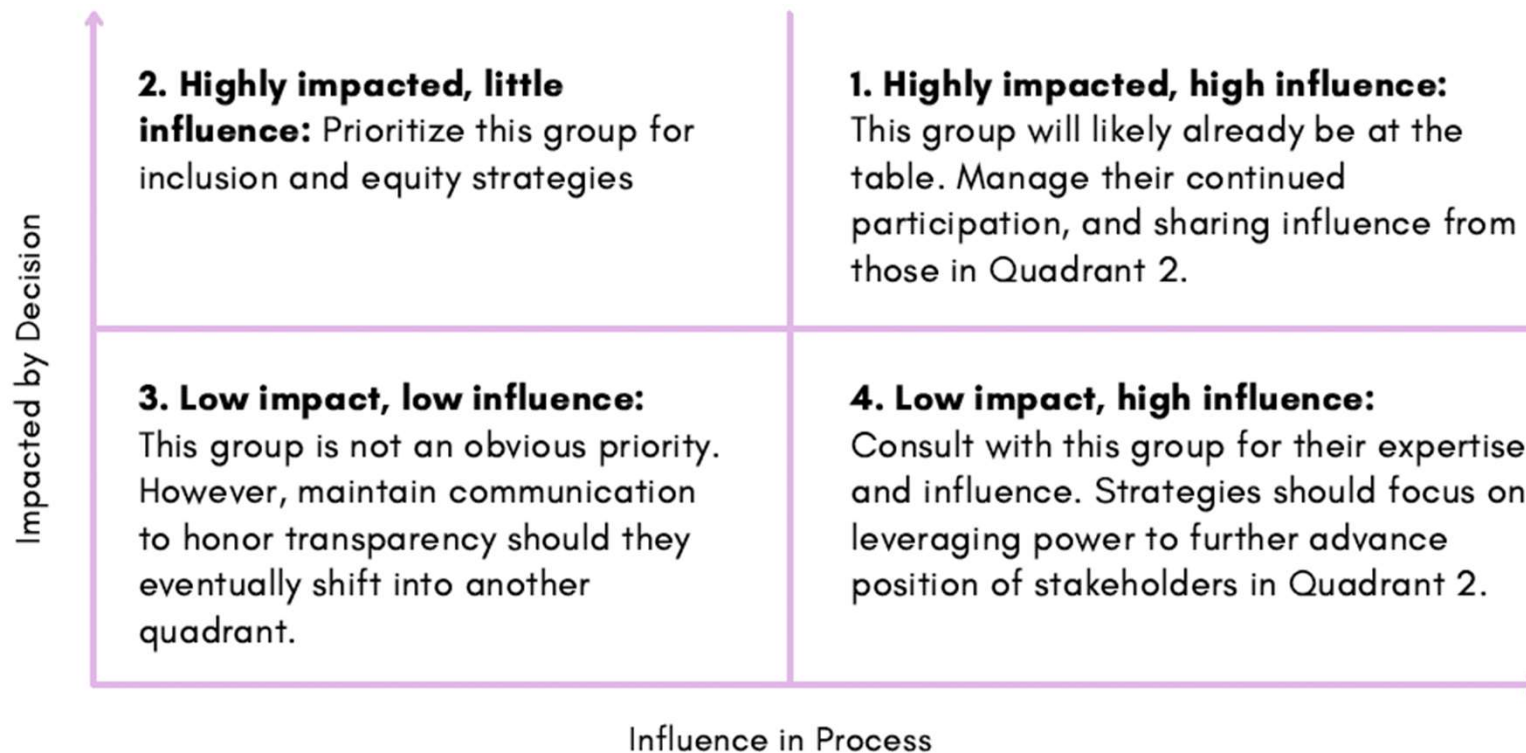
- Do you know the stakeholders in the community?
- Have you engaged key influencers?
- Does your network include the community?
- Have you included community in the conversation?
- Who is in your community who might be hidden or unseen?

ACTIVITY: Practice network mapping and review the spectrum of engagement.

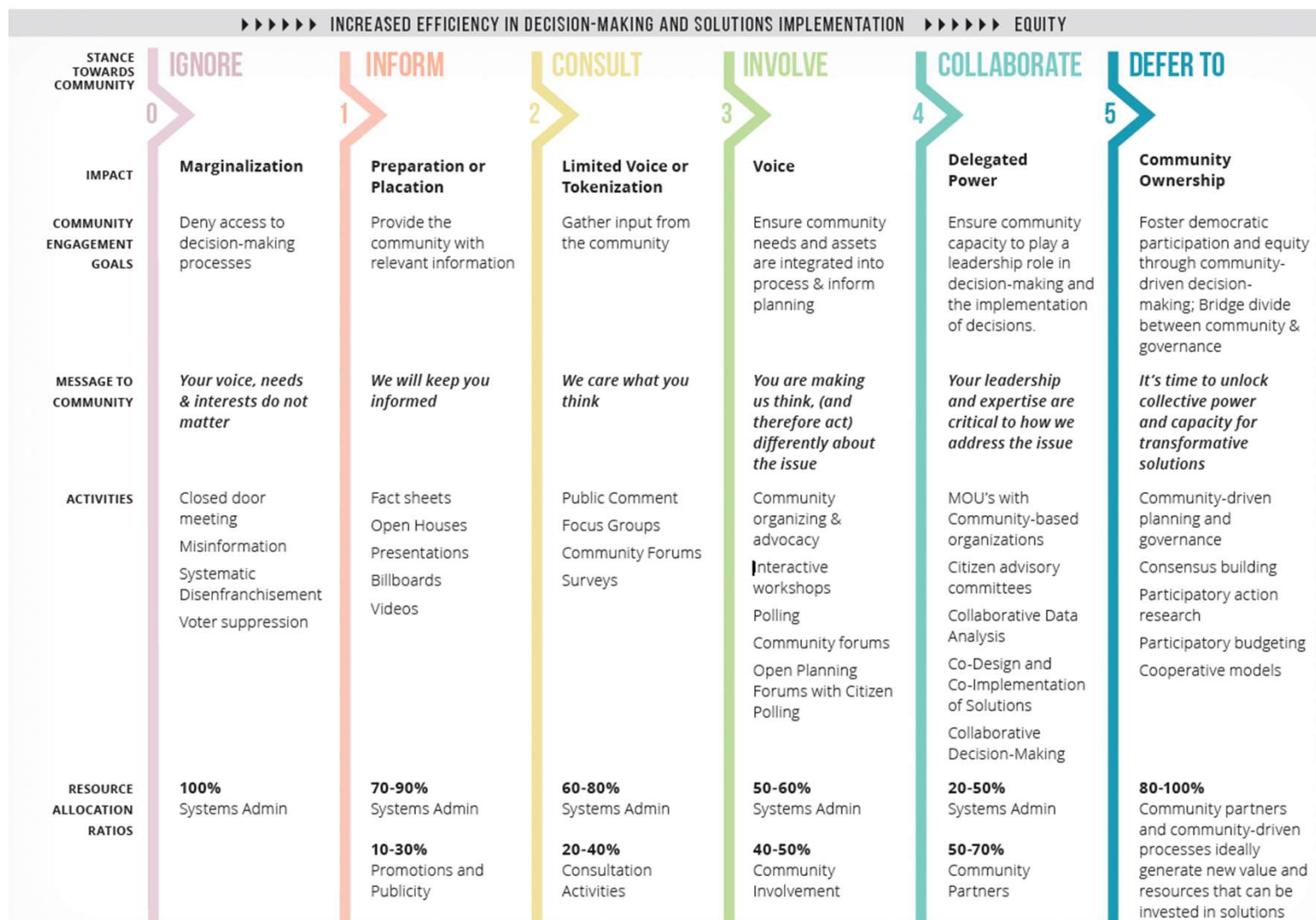
- Practice Network Mapping: Who do you know? Who might they know? How close are you to key influencers in the community?
- Review the Spectrum of Engagement. Have you brought community into the room? In what Stage of the decision-making process?



COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (CBO)



SPECTRUM OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO OWNERSHIP



Source: Facilitating Power



Be aware of power dynamics

It is our job to create the conditions necessary to inspire participation and a sense of agency among our residents and community stakeholders?

This is an opportunity to incorporate equity into the process — not just in the *outcomes*.

CONSIDER:

- How can we shift power?
- Who has traditionally made energy decisions for folks in these communities?
- How do we encourage these stakeholders to take a step back and let community have a seat at the table?



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Ameren IL and
Peoria Guild of Black Artists



How do we achieve engagement without overburdening?

For community engagement to actually work toward social justice, it must:

- Turn the directional flow of resources around to ensure human capital and knowledge flow toward the community.
- *Traditional engagement can run the risk of draining resources away from the community.*

CONSIDER:

- What are you giving back to the community in your engagement effort?
- Are you establishing sustainable programs that improve energy behaviors and outcomes in target communities?
- Are you properly compensating community for their lived experience and knowledge?
- How much weight does this data ultimately play in the analysis and decision-making process?



What does success look like?

Reevaluate your definition of success.

- Success is often measured in energy or demand reductions, dollars saved, or equipment installed.
- When thinking about community and energy burden, we must consider how our actions may cause unintended harm.
- We must ensure our programs are funneling sustained resources into the community.

CONSIDER:

- If program activities end, will the community be able to sustain the desired outcomes?
- How will our programs positively impact the community as a whole?
- Are the outcomes in line with community expectations?
- Have we left the community more vulnerable than they were before?



PILLARS OF AN EQUITABLE ENERGY SYSTEM



Structural Equity

Decision-makers **recognize the historical, cultural, and institutional dynamics** that have led to energy inequities



Procedural Equity

Decision-makers **create inclusive and accessible processes** to develop and implement energy programs



Distributional Equity

Energy policies and programs **fairly distribute benefits and burdens** across all segments of communities



TAKE ACTION

What is the first action you can take when you return to the office?



Inclusion is not a **program**. Inclusion is a **mindset**.
It is the way we **treat others** and the way they **treat us**.
Inclusion is the opportunity to
learn together and from **one another**.
And we do it because it is the **right thing to do**. Period.

REMOVING THE STUMBLING BLOCK



Thank you!



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