

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT CHECKLIST


THIS CHECKLIST HAS BEEN DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT THE TOWN OF HALTON HILLS, COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS IN EFFECTIVELY ENGAGING YOUTH AS PARTNERS IN ADVISING, PLANNING, DELIVERING AND EVALUATING OUR COMMUNITIES INITIATIVES, EVENTS, COMMITTEES AND SERVICES.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Empowering all youth as valued partners in addressing and making decisions about issues that affect them¹.

MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

Embedding youth involved into the core of what you are doing and allowing them to be the drivers or leaders on what they feel is important and meaningful to them.



**ACHIEVING MEANINGFUL
YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
BENEFITS THE PROJECT,
THE ORGANIZATION AND
THE COMMUNITY.**

ENGAGING YOUTH IN MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITIES



Invite youth to be a part of an advisory committee or board.

- » Youth can be recruited to be voting or non-voting members of an advisory committee related to issues that interest them. In addition, terms of reference should include information about the youth's participation as a member of the committee.
- » Take into consideration the committee's term lengths. It would be beneficial to make the terms similar to that of a school year.



Invite youth to participate in Strategic Workshops and Focus Groups

- » Host the workshops and focus groups at the school locations or through local youth serving agencies. Youth are already at these locations, therefore this options provides a great level of accessibility for youth engagement.
- » If these locations are unavailable, try hosting your communication session in close proximity to where youth are and at times that would encourage a high level of participation.



Utilize Surveys, Polls & Voting

- » Youth can be engaged through mail out communication, literature, online surveys and social media.
- » Providing resources, surveys or request for feedback through the internet ensures accessibility to youth.
- » Methods of communication should include social media opportunities such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and utilizing school communication tools.

¹ Pereira, Nancy 2007, *Ready, Set, Engage*



RECRUITING YOUTH

In alignment with youth friendly approaches and positive youth development, the recruitment of youth can be done in the following ways but is not limited to:

- » Contacting local high schools and providing an overview of the project and time commitment.
- » Preparing school announcements and newsletter content
- » Connecting with school parliaments and councils to recruit youth or to provide information
- » Include opportunities for engagement on the High school's volunteer information sheets or by utilizing Volunteer Halton directory
- » Connect with local youth servicing agencies to provide an opportunity for recruitment and information sharing
- » Work around special events such as 'Take your Kids to Work Day' initiative to provide youth with opportunities for engagement
- » Sending messages through social media



CREATING A YOUTH FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

- » Youth may not have access to transportation to attend meetings, focus groups, and workshops based on the selected location. Transportation might need to be provided for youth that would include, scheduling a taxi or a bus.
- » Youth may not be able to attend during business hours, be open to meet outside regular business hours
- » Create a space that is: Welcoming, Friendly, Safe and incorporates youth from the start and allows an atmosphere for youth to express their ideas and values
- » Use technology such as music or video clips
- » Provide opportunities for input and feedback. This may take some prompting questions, this doesn't mean they are not engaged, but could mean they are thinking before they answer or require a shift in thinking to provide their input
- » Provide clear goals and objectives about their roles in the project, even if the roles are the same for everyone around the table or everyone involved.
- » Provide opportunities for creative brainstorming
- » Offer time to provide their own opinion or feedback, possible small group break out tasks or going around the room to provide input
- » Provide food during their duration of a meeting or focus group.
- » Allow youth to take on leadership positions within the group and provide support so they are successful
- » Ask youth what they feel comfortable doing and that would provide them with a positive challenge
- » Be patient, sometimes it might take longer to reach a goal or outcome but be aware quality output might take longer. Plan accordingly².

**CONSIDERING THESE THINGS NOT ONLY
CREATES A YOUTH FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT,
BUT A FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT
BENEFITTING EVERYONE.**



² Pereira, Nancy 2007, *Ready, Set, Engage, Excerpts from Position Youth Development resources manual*: ACT for Youth Centre of Upstate Excellence



BENEFITS TO YOUTH

- » A clear purposeful role is a strong motivator for youth to become engaged.
- » Knowing that their input and participation will make a difference to their current and future community is another important incentive for youth engagement.
- » Development of transferable skills
- » Exposure to different career information
- » Working with friends or peers and creating the chance to build more relationships
- » Creative, youth friendly incentives (i.e. food, prizes, rewards)
- » Future co-op placements or paid positions
- » Acknowledgement of their volunteer hours
- » Reference letter for the purpose of schools endeavors or employment
- » Acknowledgment and recognition through the schools and community (e.g. annual youth awards and volunteer appreciation ceremony)
- » Acknowledgement on documentation of results as part of the study, action plan or strategic plan.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Town of Halton Hills Youth Engagement Policy and Procedures
www.haltonhills.ca/YEpolicy

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities: Youth Engagement Handbook
www.fcm.ca/Documents/reports/FCM/Municipal_Youth_Engagement_Handbook_EN.pdf

Our Kids Network Asset Building Toolkit
www.ourkidsnetwork.ca/Public/AssetBuildingToolkit

