**High-Level Overview for Organizing a Community Engagement Event**

**Focused on Food, Nutrition, and Health**

The files and folders provided in this toolkit are designed to help facilitate community conversations on food, nutrition, and health. They are built around the premise that “one size doesn’t fit all” when it comes to food and nutrition, and real-world conversations are needed to identify the opportunities and challenges that are specific to a given population.

These files are provided as part of the USDA ASCEND for Better Health initiative, which aims to use food and nutrition to improve health-related outcomes for all Americans, and especially in historically underserved populations. For more information about ASCEND, and to read reports generated from our community engagement events, please visit our [website](https://www.nutrition.gov/topics/ascend-better-health/engagement).

**Key goals for community engagements:**

* Build trust with community members and establish two-way communication.
* Ensure that those with lived experience have a voice at the table and are empowered to engage in and lead this work.
* Identify challenges and opportunities for conducting and translating nutrition-related research with specific populations, with an emphasis on engaging people with lived experience.
* Develop **shared goals** on improving health through food and nutrition, with a clear understanding that everyone has an important role to play in achieving them.

**Strategy:**

* Leverage existing relationships within the community to help with recruitment and engagement (e.g., partner with a minority serving institution that already has trusted relationships in place)
* Balance collection and sharing of information a way that adds value to community member participation.
* Develop an engaging program that builds on an intentional storyline focused on community health, and the idea that community input is essential to address issues together; we all have a role to play!
* Ensure that data collected is shared back to the community and keep them informed on how their information is used in the future to inform research and program efforts (usually facilitated through the local partner).

**Key positions, roles, and responsibilities:**

* **Event Leader** – Responsible for overall coordination of the event, identification of Team Leaders, scheduling Team Leader meetings, ensuring all tasks are delegated and/or accounted for, and ensuring timelines and deliverables are met.
* **Run of Show Team Leader** – Responsible for assembling team of people experienced in World Café program delivery and/or Leaders as Conveners, developing a run of show with input from local host organization (usually informed by Local Host and Logistics Team activities), and providing training to local team leaders and table hosts.
* **Logistics Team Leader** – Primary point of contact for the local host organization. Assembles team to coordinate on-site activities.
* **Comms Team Leader** – Responsible for developing and executing communication plans. Partners with host organization to coordinate communication, press releases, and branding efforts. Assists in developing promotional materials and other graphics. Coordinates the Story Booth for recording “Stories for Better Health.” Partners with Event Leader to develop a strategy for sharing the summary report and other information, usually through the web.
* **Share Fair Team Leader** – Responsible for contacting organizations and other government offices to participate in the Share Fair. Coordinates on-site setup.

**Key considerations:**

* As soon as host organization is identified, establish funding mechanism or needed agreements.
* Communicate the vision of event with host organization and share a mock agenda to give them a sense of the overall goals, as well as roles and responsibilities.
* Comms Team Leader should contact local comms team to collect information and graphics for co-branding the event.
* Identify key leaders who will provide opening comments at the meeting. This is needed for early promotional materials.
* Develop a registration form with all desired information, including information required, as well as voluntary information such as demographics.
* Discuss IRB approval with host organization. Best to have this in place, to share information in reports and presentations.