

being seen

**CONSIDERATIONS FOR
WRITING ENGAGEMENT
PLANS**

Production



Considerations for Writing Engagement Plans - PRODUCTION

Introduction

Funders and broadcasters are asking producers of screen-based content (primarily film and television but could include interactive digital media) to provide a Community Engagement Plan (also referred to as a Diversity Plan or an Inclusion Plan) as part of the producer's application or as a subsequent deliverable. This is a positive step towards requiring producers to both consider and plan for authenticity of their content and for them to demonstrate that they have read, understood and plan to implement both the [On-Screen Protocols and Pathways](#) and [Being Seen](#). However, there is no consistency of standards for what should be in a Community Engagement Plan, how detailed it should be or when it should be provided.

The 'Being Seen' Collaborative Network, an ad hoc group of funders, broadcasters, producer associations and other affiliated organizations, has developed the following considerations to assist producers in the development of Community Engagement Plans and to assist smaller funders and broadcasters who have not had the resources to develop their own Community Engagement Plan process. This document is a tool that can be provided to producers, with an addendum to request any additional information that an organization may need, such as self-identification data or hiring goals.

It is intended to help producers to write these plans, whether they are called a Community Engagement Plan or a Diversity and Inclusion Plan. Organizations may wish to set a page limit or word count for each section or the entire document. Where an organization's requirements are in conflict with this document, the organization's requirements shall take precedence. They may wish to require producers to acknowledge that they have read the [On-Screen Protocols and Pathways](#) and [Being Seen](#) before completing the Community Engagement Plan. As these considerations are not being provided directly by the funders and broadcasters, producers should visit the funders and broadcasters specific websites for exact criteria required.

This document will evolve based on community feedback and consultations as it is used by the industry. In time it is hoped that this process will become an organic part of the creation of any project as production teams work to create the best, most authentic, content possible.

Community Engagement Plan for Production

The purpose of a Community Engagement Plan is for producers to talk about their working process and demonstrate meaningful engagement with all areas of potential impact of their project. It is a way to demonstrate thoughtful consideration of the issues of authentic representation, storytelling and how communities can be impacted by the creative choices of the production team.

Appropriate engagement will depend on the content of the project, the knowledge of the team and the communities being represented on-screen, as well as the locations where the production is being shot or portrayed, but all projects are encouraged to complete a Community Engagement Plan. This document outlines the considerations for a comprehensive Community Engagement Plan that are generally required prior to production. For development phases, please see the Community Engagement Plan Considerations for Development. Note that each broadcaster or funder will identify which plan will be a requirement at each stage in funding.

Community Engagement Plans for Production may include, but are not limited to:

A mission statement that outlines the overall goal of the Community Engagement Plan for Development and its importance to the development of the content. The mission statement may also include references to requirements and goals of funders and/or broadcasters.

Research practices, including primary and secondary sources. An example of a primary source would be interviews with subject matter experts. An example of a secondary source would be research reports such as the race-based audience research 'Being Counted' or Statistics Canada data on demographics.

How will the identity and lived experiences of the key creative team and leadership positions inform the creative and production elements of the project, and what will be the process for incorporating those experiences in the content.

How will sensitive content (e.g. suicide, police brutality, racist incidents and other storylines, scenes, interview subjects or dialogue that could offend or upset the viewer) be treated in scripts or, in the case of unscripted in the editing phase. How has the team engaged resources (e.g., consultants, subject matter experts, research materials) to address sensitivities appropriately and how will it be handled from pre-production to production and post-production.

Engaging with local communities, organizations, and/or businesses to the extent suggested by the content.

Engaging appropriate and specialized expertise, including (but not limited to): hiring advisors, consultants, on-set counsellors, local crew or crew from relevant communities, cultural knowledge keepers, etc., with information on when and how often they will be engaged.

Creating a safe and inclusive workspace through all phases of production and implementing accessibility, anti-bias, anti-racism and/or anti-harassment training or providing information on previously conducted training. If available, share who will be conducting the training.

Engaging production team members from the appropriate community. See [HireBIPOC.ca](https://www.hirebiopoc.ca), [AccessReelworld](https://www.accessreelworld.com), [Out on Set](https://www.outonset.com), [Culture Brew](https://www.culturebrew.com) for help in discovering new potential team members. If none are available, are there opportunities to provide mentorship and training opportunities to grow the talent pool.

The extent to which authentic casting practices will be incorporated. See ACTRA's DEIB Hub for resources.

Compensating all roles, including trainees and interns, appropriately.

The extent to which the production team will be engaging with the community in promotion and marketing, taking into account the format of the content (i.e., film, television or interactive digital media) and the extent that funding rules allow for it.

The details of the plan will depend entirely on the specific needs of the project, the communities involved, and what the production team deems is appropriate for their project.

The details of the plan should be reflected in the Production Schedule and the Production Budget. For example, if the plan includes a review of scripts by a cultural consultant, that review should be provided for in the schedule and there should be a line item for the fee for the consultant in the budget. The plan should also identify which members of the production team will be responsible for implementing the Community Engagement Plan.

Accountability

Producers are encouraged to develop a plan that they are confident that they can execute but to also provide contingency plans should elements not be possible. For example, experienced screenwriters from a particular community might not be available. Contingencies could include a junior writer working under the mentorship of a more experienced screenwriter or engaging a cultural consultant to review scripts.

Throughout implementation of the Community Engagement Plan, producers should analyze their success, their challenges and how they can improve on future productions. They may be required to deliver a formal report to funders or broadcasters on the implementation of the Community Engagement Plan.

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