

# Guiding Principles for Community Engagement

Clearly understand the limitations of data.

Keep an open mind. Do not let your opinions or biases influence your interactions or interpretations.

Remember that there is a human being behind every data point.

Don't be extractive. Make it a partnership.

Go in with mouth closed, ears open.

Be open to a diversity of experiences.

Remember that you are doing a job, but participants are sharing personal details of their life.

Be present and focused. Actively participate.

**WAIT.**  
Be aware. Ask yourself, "Why am I talking?"

Get feedback. Engage and report back to communities continuously.

Use a strengths-based perspective to capture positive efforts.

Follow through on what you say. Be transparent.

Follow best ethical practices (Do not have ulterior motive, do no abuse data, do IRB, etc.)

Create a safe space and build trust and relationship. Give space to others.

**Be trustworthy.**

Educate yourself about communities before approaching them. Be considerate and respectful in your approach.

DOH FHSD, University of Alabama at Birmingham's Applied Evaluation and Assessment Collaborative, and Hilopaa Family to Family, Inc. gathered state and community partners in May 2024 to discuss the priorities for the Title V Maternal and Child Health Needs Assessment. Mahalo to all of our partners who attended this meeting and informed us of these guiding principles for community engagement.