



# Community Connections Strategy

## Implementation Update

March 2024



Our Progress Since the Creation of the Strategy in 2019

### OBJECTIVE 1

Increase the diversity of residents engaged in Town processes and programs to fully reflect the composition of the community, with particular focus on engaging populations that have been historically disengaged or disconnected from the Town.

#### Result 1

The Town creates effective pathways for residents to learn about and engage in Town processes and programs.

Strategies	Status	Notes
1 Conduct gaps analysis & engagement study		
2 Assess engagement tools		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff assessed engagement tools used by Town departments in winter 2020.</li> <li>The Engagement Study further assessed engagement tools and recommendations are included in the immediate next steps.</li> </ul>
3 Pilot new approaches		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff piloted a variety of new engagement approaches:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing technology tools to community members engaged on Town boards</li> <li>Expanding interpretation and translation services</li> <li>Providing one-on-one support for community members engaging with the Town</li> <li>Using new social media tools</li> <li>Expanding multi-lingual communication tools, purchasing additional technology</li> <li>Providing compensated engagement to residents</li> <li>Hosting UNC Peoples Academy for students</li> <li>Piloting community office hours with the launch of Cookies and Community</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

#### Result 2

Town communications are accessible to Chapel Hill's diverse community.

Strategies	Status	Notes
5 Create a Language Access Plan (LAP)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council approved Town-wide Language Access Plan and staff began implementation in November 2019 .</li> <li>Town LAP received state-wide recognition and serves as model to other local governments across North Carolina.</li> <li>Town received \$375K Blue Cross Blue Shield grant to support implementation in July 2022.</li> </ul>
6 Train Town staff on Language Access Plan (LAP) and plain language guidelines		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LAP Introductory Training provided to all Town departments.</li> <li>Plain Language Training provided to targeted staff.</li> <li>Tilde Language Justice Cooperative provided two-part training to key communications staff in fall 2020.</li> <li>Staff provided Language Justice Training to all Town employees in summer 2023.</li> <li>Staff expanded online and in-person plain language trainings to all Town employees in summer 2023.</li> </ul>
7 Explore implementation of new communications and marketing tools		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff have used a variety of new tools, including:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordable Housing and Community Connections bi-weekly newsletter</li> <li>Multi-lingual social media messages, sidewalk decals, bus ads, and video recordings</li> <li>Plain language, multi-lingual pocket service guide, COVID-19 community resource guides and flyers</li> <li>I Speak pins</li> <li>Mobile technology tools (iPad), translation apps</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
8 Develop and implement plain language guidelines		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff formed Plain Language Team.</li> <li>Online Town Style Guide launched to improve Town communications and promote transparency in summer 2023.</li> </ul>

#### LEGEND

completed

ongoing

in progress

not yet started

For more information, visit:

[townofchapelhill.org/government/departments-services/housing-and-community/community-connections](https://townofchapelhill.org/government/departments-services/housing-and-community/community-connections)



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## OBJECTIVE 2

Deepen the Town's connections and engagement with organizations, groups, and populations that historically have been disengaged or disconnected from the Town.

### Result 3

The Town builds community partnerships and programs that prioritize the needs and interests of residents historically disengaged and disconnected from the Town.

#### Strategies

#### Status

#### Notes

9 Determine who the Town is currently serving



- Staff completed the Engagement Study in February 2023.
- Staff gathered available data from Town departments and developed a prototype for engagement and demographic data to collect going forward.
- Staff is piloting the draft engagement summary template before expanding to all Town departments.

10 Increase Town investment in community organizations and organizing



- Since FY 18-19 Town Council has allocated over \$4.5 million to support implementation of the Community Connections Strategy.
- Through the COVID-19 pandemic, the Town invested in community organizations and partnerships to respond to human service needs including:
  1. Emergency Housing Assistance
  2. Family Check Ins
  3. Food Distributions
  4. Neighborhood Support Circle & Scholastic Support Centers

11 Pilot new partnerships and programs



- Staff piloted new partnerships and programs, including:
  1. Cookies and Community Initiative
  2. Family Check Ins
  3. Laptop and internet hotspot distribution
  4. Neighborhood Support Circles & Scholastic Support Centers
  5. Neighborhood Library Circulator Programs
  6. UNC Peoples Academy

### Result 4

The Town strengthens internal capacity and coordination to implement the Community Connections Strategy.

#### Strategies

#### Status

#### Notes

12 Define roles and charter for Community Connections Team



- Staff formed Community Connections Team, composed of engagement staff from across Town departments.
- Community Connections Team re-branded as Community Connections Collaborative.
- Collaborative meets monthly and provides ongoing cross-department support on Town equity-centered engagement efforts.

13 Conduct internal analysis to identify gaps in Town capacity



- Staff conducted initial internal gaps analysis in winter 2020 that informed the comprehensive Engagement Study that was completed in winter 2022.

14 Develop Community Engagement Toolkit



- CC Staff developed a toolkit that includes resources, templates, prototypes, etc. to assist staff with their engagement efforts.
- Toolkit updated in May 2023 and is being used by staff across Town departments.
- Staff will annually evaluate the Toolkit and revise as needed.

15 Build skills and shared understanding among employees of Strategy



- Staff briefed leadership and the Community Connections Collaborative on the Community Connections Strategy.
- CC Staff provides ongoing training/learning opportunities to Collaborative Team and ongoing technical assistance to Town departments.

16 Further develop cohort of multilingual and multicultural employees



- Multi-lingual staff have assisted with translations of Town communications.
- Staff is exploring strategies to increase workforce diversity.
- Staff researched language pay incentive programs and is working to draft a Town program.

#### LEGEND



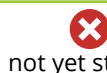
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