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# Checklist to Raise the Bar for Maternal Health Equity and Excellence

## As a Community Partner

### Getting Started

- Assess your organization's current relationships, initiatives, and reputation regarding community engagement.** The assessment should include:
  - Cataloging relevant community-based organizations and their current leadership, contact information, and activities.
  - For nonprofit hospitals, reviewing the most recent triennial community health needs assessment (CHNA), or carrying out the next CHNA, including maternal-newborn health needs.
  - Reviewing their performance on the Lown Institute Hospitals Index of social responsibility, which provides results for dozens of metrics in equity, value of care, and outcome domains.
  - Assessing the composition of the board of directors for gaps in representation from the community and by various demographic subgroups, including people with disabilities and LGBTQIA+ individuals. Ensure representation of members with knowledge of maternal health issues.
  - Assessing the availability and composition of advisory committees and other governance structures, and performing the same representative and demographic analysis.
  - Assessing policies and existing structural supports for engaging community members.
- Create a responsive plan, which may involve the following strategies:**
  - Prioritizing and valuing community engagement across the enterprise.
  - Ensuring the creation of a plan for representation of diverse community members on the board of directors.
  - Requiring proportionate community representation – based on race and ethnicity, ability, and sexual orientation and gender identity in the service area population – on advisory committees and other governance bodies with meaningful decision-making roles.

- Approving flexible budgets with longer-term cycles to support community-based partners.
- Sharing non-financial institutional assets with community partners.
- Hiring staff members responsible for engaging with the community.

## Specific Recommendations

- Create structures and opportunities to listen to birthing people** with the goal of trusting their lived experience and expertise and incorporating these learnings into policy and program development.
- Implement best practices for engaging community members**, with a focus on mitigating the impact of racism, addressing social needs, and dismantling systemic racism and other structural inequities.
- Create and support a maternity-specific patient and family advisory council.**
- Establish the necessary budget(s) and practices to compensate and support community leaders and residents** for participation on boards and committees.
- Educate and support staff to engage with community members.**
- Invest in and support diverse midwives, nurses, doulas, and health workers** who have relationships with, or are from, the community.
- Create pipeline programs that engage with community members** on maternity-specific activities.

### Opportunities for Nonprofit Hospitals: Leveraging Community Health Needs Assessment and Benefit Requirements

Because of their tax-exempt status, not-for-profit hospitals have a higher responsibility to invest in their communities. To maximize impact, support the following actions:

- Committing to community engagement in the CHNA process** – IRS code section 501(r)(3) – including the needs of childbearing families.
- Requiring public reporting of the CHNA results and ensuing plan**, including meeting the needs of childbearing families.

Find detailed recommendations and more resources at [nationalpartnership.org/raisingthebar](https://nationalpartnership.org/raisingthebar)

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