



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR RESIDENTS OF MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING

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URBDP 562, Introduction to Neighborhood Planning and Community Development



The LCY research team with instructor Richard Conlin (far left) and Edward Anderson, Homeowner Association President of Bellevue Towers (second from right). RICHARD CONLIN

THE CHALLENGE

Bellevue is a growing city with a large renter population — more than 75% of multi-family unit residents are renters, and this number is expected to grow. Renter and multi-family housing residents are a unique population — their interests, needs, and modes of communication are unique compared to single family communities. The research team has been tasked with identifying effective modes of outreach and engagement with renters in multi-family units in order to strengthen the connections between the City of Bellevue and its residents. The research team is looking into the current assets and community networks used by multi-family renters, where they look for pertinent information regarding their communities and city services, and what they feel is necessary to know to be active participants in the City of Bellevue.

OUR METHODS

The research team met with City officials to learn about the complex relationship between planning, community engagement, and connecting with renter populations. After reading articles based on the theory of effective community engagement and outreach, the team developed a survey for residents of Andrew's Glen, Bellevue Towers, and 12 Central Square apartments. The research team met in person with property management and residents to discuss the survey, gain more qualitative information regarding effective outreach and existing community networks, and to find out what is important to these multi-family unit communities.

After the survey results have been coded and analyzed, the team will be compiling a set of findings and recommendations to the City of Bellevue on how to better connect with the renter and multi-family housing population. .

OUR PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Engagement with renters living in multi-family communities should be conducted differently than the traditional methods of outreach for single family housing. Multi-family communities and renters function differently and have different needs and existing assets.

Although language and time barriers may dictate the residents' ability to be informed and engaged, there are also unique social networks and opportunities in multi-family communities that City officials can tap into. Multi-family communities host community dinners, have board meetings, and a plethora of events that City officials can coordinate with to integrate community engagement and participation in a meaningful way that fits the needs of each community.

Outreach efforts should be inclusive and elastic in the time of day and type of outreach activity.

Trust between the city and multi-family communities is essential to foster meaningful social networks.



The LCY research team meets in Bellevue Downtown Park with Edward Anderson, Homeowner Association President of Bellevue Towers. RICHARD CONLIN

