

OUTREACH PLAN

Impact assessment elicits input from local organizations that serve more vulnerable or marginalized groups in your community, or the workers who will be affected by the adoption of a new system. Impact assessment follows the principle from human-centered design that addressing the needs of people most likely to be adversely affected will lead to benefits for the wider public.

In the Start Here document, we discussed how curb cuts were created for wheelchair users, but also help people using walkers, white canes, strollers, and bicycles. Other examples of this principle include audiobooks, voice-to-text, and closed captioning, which were all designed for people with vision or hearing impairments.

Research demonstrates that AI systems are prone to adversely impacting some groups over others when they are inaccurate or designed incorrectly.

For example, consider an infamous case of a healthcare insurance algorithm that relied on healthcare costs as a proxy for medical risk; the algorithm systematically underestimated the needs of Black patients compared to white patients — because Black patients were disproportionately sicker at the same level of medical spending¹. Quantitative approaches to evaluating the impact of this program primarily rely on examining data *after* system deployment. However, by the time this data exists, many people could already have been adversely affected. With community engagement, the health insurance company would have explained the algorithm to patients' groups for more vulnerable populations **prior to deployment** and likely raised the right questions about the system that appear to have been overlooked in that case.

¹ Obermeyer, Ziad, Brian Powers, Christine Vogeli, and Sendhil Mullainathan. "Dissecting racial bias in an algorithm used to manage the health of populations." *Science* 366, no. 6464 (2019): 447-453.

The purpose of this document is to help identify which organizations to prioritize for outreach. Follow these steps to create a plan.

1. What data or AI system is being evaluated?

Impact assessment begins with the selection of a specific technology. This system could be AI captioning, a pedestrian counter, license plate reader, or a 311 chatbot. Anchor impact assessment around explaining and seeking input on whether and how to use this system. Robust public engagement should be conducted on any system that would impact the opportunity to receive or maintain housing, employment, or healthcare.

Type here to answer...

2. What stakeholder groups are not already well-integrated into your organization's tech policy decision-making?

Type here to answer... E.g. disability advocates, frontline workers, senior citizens organizations, refugee aid groups...

3. Does the technology make assessments, predictions, or suggestions based on any of the following technical approaches?

- Computer vision and/or object detection
- Facial recognition
- License plate reader / optical character recognition
- Large language model
- Risk scoring
- Anomaly detection
- Prediction/interpretation of protected demographic traits

...or other machine learning or AI-based approaches

Using this technical approach as a keyword, search for previous reporting or evidence that it may be less accurate for a people in a certain demographic group.

Type here to answer...

For example, technologies that rely on computer vision have been demonstrated in academic research to be less accurate for people who are Black, or at detecting people using wheelchairs. Systems used in hiring to screen resumes have been demonstrated to discriminate against women. Even as recent technological development may have improved system performance for that group, critical questions about its performance remain salient for an evaluation process.

4. Which workers or residents might be affected by this, if previously reported performance issues in this technical approach are still present?

Type here to answer... e.g., frontline workers, bus drivers, Black residents, people using wheelchairs, people with limited English proficiency, etc.

5. Are there any other impacted or vulnerable groups (by demographic or other characteristics) that are salient for the local area?

- 1. Type here... e.g. a community with a large local immigrant community that is not otherwise well-represented in tech policy, or a community with a prominent Deaf university and student community.*

2.

5. Choose a range of 3+ stakeholder groups from the answers above to prioritize in your engagement.

Remember, through speaking to groups who are most likely to have concerns about privacy, equity, or transparency, program outcomes are intended to support digital rights for all workers or residents in your organization or community.

1.

2.

3.

4.

6. What community-based organizations (CBOs), unions, or advocacy groups are already organized to represent the people belonging to these stakeholder groups or interests?

Ideal partner organizations have:

- 1.** A direct relationship to people in the community they serve, such as a membership organization, union, or one that provides essential services,
- 2.** Full-time staff who can support a collaborative project, and
- 3.** An advocacy or policy dimension to their work that motivates them to partner on impact assessment work.

Others, such as volunteer-led organizations or neighborhood associations, can also be valuable partners.

Local groups serving stakeholder group #1: 1. 2. 3.
Local groups serving stakeholder group #2: 1. 2. 3.
Local groups serving stakeholder group #3: 1. 2. 3.

7. Organization's previous ties to any of these groups

GROUP	The "point of contact" within your own organization: name, department, and contact info
[Community-based organization name]	E.g. Network engagement lead...

Relationship building is essential for community engagement. Check with colleagues in your department, and colleagues from other departments, to see if they have an existing relationship with the organization.

Proactive outreach to community-based organizations or other membership organizations expands the set of actors involved in tech policy decision-making and builds stronger relationships between your organization and local leaders.

In the [Email Outreach Template](#), you will find draft language for an initial invitation to potential partner organizations to collaborate. It should clearly define the scope of the project goals and anticipated time required.