

## Illinois Action for Children's Community Engagement Framework

*"Change occurs at the speed of trust."* – Stephen M.R. Covey

Illinois Action for Children implements a **community engagement** approach that brings together the skills, experiences, and resources of individuals in the community to increase their power to influence policies and work toward social change."<sup>1</sup>

### What We Believe

- Trust is the foundation of meaningful and transformative community relationships.
- People directly impacted by policies and issues are a critical part of understanding, assessing, and developing strategies for social change.
- Transformative and long-lasting community change cannot happen without the engagement and involvement of diverse stakeholders.

### Guiding Principles of Community Engagement

- **Build trusting relationships** – Long-term and sustainable social change requires collaboration with people. Relationship building is at the core of collaborative work and trust is the glue that helps a group have open and honest conversations, solve problems collectively, make shared decisions and take the collective risks needed to create change.
- **Create a shared "community" space** – Building spaces where people feel safe and comfortable to share their perspectives take time.
- **Deeply engage people in the work** – Building collective momentum helps to engage people in your work and connect to your shared vision and purpose.
- **Foster leadership** – People all have strengths and skills that they bring. Know what strengths people bring and develop ways for people to deepen and grow.



<sup>1</sup> The definition of "community engagement" is adapted from Mimi Kim's Community Engagement Continuum: Outreach, Mobilization, Organizing and Accountability to Address Violence against Women in Asian and Pacific Islander Communities. The continuum offers four strategies often used to engage the community. These strategies are understood as a "continuum" because they are defined by how the strategy increases a community's ability "to transform relations of power." [http://www.apiidv.org/files/Community\\_Engagement\\_Continuum-Report-2005%28Rev.2010%29.pdf](http://www.apiidv.org/files/Community_Engagement_Continuum-Report-2005%28Rev.2010%29.pdf)