

Engagement Glossary

As part of Towson University's [Strategic Plan](#) to work for the public good, this glossary centers and clarifies collective engagement work. These definitions and concepts are intended to be applied through anti-racist and justice-centered approaches to address inequities that impact our campus community and the Greater Baltimore region.

Anchor Institution: Place-based, mission-driven entities such as hospitals, universities, and government agencies that leverage their economic power alongside their human and intellectual resources to improve the long-term health and social welfare of their communities.

Anchor Mission: A commitment to intentionally apply an institution's place-based economic power and human capital in partnership with community to mutually benefit the long-term wellbeing of both.

TU Anchor Mission: As an anchor institution, TU recognizes and leverages its economic power and human capital to improve the socioeconomic conditions, the long-term stability, and the growth of Greater Baltimore and the state.

Capacity Building: The process of developing or strengthening skills, knowledge, and dispositions needed to effectively achieve goals in creating a more resilient, equitable, and prosperous society.

Civic Action: Efforts taken by individuals or groups to promote, protect, or enhance the well-being of their communities or society at large, generally motivated by a desire to improve the common good and make positive contributions to society.

Civic Agency: The ability of individuals or groups to actively participate in and shape their communities by taking responsibility for their actions and working towards the betterment of society as a whole.

Civic Communication: The exchange of information and ideas among individuals or groups with the goal of promoting public dialogue, civic engagement, and democratic participation to foster mutual understanding, promote informed decision-making, and build social trust.

Civic Engagement: The participation of individuals or groups in activities that promote the well-being of their communities to ensure the inclusion of diverse voices, advance equity, encourage civic responsibility, and foster a sense of shared purpose and belonging.

Civic Ethos: The set of values, beliefs, and attitudes that guide individuals or groups' actions towards promoting the common good and the well-being of their communities, grounded in the belief that collective action is necessary for positive social change.

Civic Life: Actions and behaviors of individuals or groups who aim to promote the well-being of their communities or society at large by contributing to the common good and shaping social, economic, and political systems, promoting social justice, equality, and human rights.

Civic Professionalism: Professionals' moral responsibility to serve the public interest and contribute to the well-being of society, promoting ethical and socially responsible behavior to address complex social issues and challenges.

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This glossary is the product of a collaboration between the [Office of Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility](#), the [Office of Partnerships and Outreach](#), and the [Office of Inclusion and Institutional Equity](#).

Co-Creation: Participatory process aimed at fostering creativity, inclusivity, and collaboration among stakeholders to create or improve something with the goal of driving social change.

Community Engaged Research: A collaborative process between the researcher and community partner that creates and disseminates knowledge and creative expression with the goal of contributing to the discipline and strengthening the well-being of the community.

Community Engagement: The collaboration between higher education and individuals, organizations, and communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in the context of partnership and reciprocity to create meaningful and sustainable change.

Community Engaged Teaching and Learning: A pedagogical approach that connects students with activities that address community-identified needs through mutually beneficial partnerships that deepen students' academic and civic learning (e.g., service-learning courses, community-engaged projects).

Community Outreach: Direct support and programming to the Greater Baltimore community with no external partners involved. Examples include the Institute for Wellbeing and the COE Reading Clinic, both of which offer services to the public but have no external partner directly connected to or supporting their work.

Economic Engagement: Actively and effectively utilizing research, entrepreneurship, human capital, talent development, and/or community stewardship to positively impact the economic prosperity of the region.

TU Economic Inclusion: Providing equitable and inclusive employment opportunities to residents in Greater Baltimore; buying from local, small, and diverse businesses; working with TU's vendor network to create and expand local employment opportunities; and delivering workforce development programs to stimulate the economy.

Engagement Type: This describes the activity taking place between TU and an external partner. One partnership can have multiple engagements across campus.

Board Representation: TU faculty and staff who serve on boards of local and national organizations.

Emerging Idea: An idea, conversation, or developing concept for a new relationship or partnership.

One-time Collaboration: A single or short-term activity with a partner that has a beginning and an end date.

Ongoing Relationship: Collaborations between TU and an outside entity with a formal or informal agreement in place, working toward mutually beneficial outcomes, with no estimated end date.

Transactional: Engagements that are limited to financial support through sponsorships with an external organization.

Partnership: Mutually beneficial collaborations between TU and external entities and communities to exchange knowledge, expertise, and resources, while providing community-engaged teaching and learning opportunities for faculty, staff, and students that ultimately benefit the public good.

Public Purpose: A type of leadership that transcends functional or instrumental leadership (e.g., personal career vs. political gain, narrow business vs. organization outcomes), in pursuit of collective public goods like justice, equity, diversity, and liberation.

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