

LIVED EXPERTISE

ACCOUNTABILITY

RIGHTS

NON-NEGOTIABLES

The LIVE & L.E.A.R.N. Document



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The LIVE & L.E.A.R.N. Document

Lived Expertise, Accountability, Rights, and Non-negotiables



“Lived Experience is more than an asset, it’s an expertise!”

The LivedPay Movement is a call for social justice and equity for community members in Kent County, Michigan and beyond. In order to build strong, supportive, and successful communities that provide access to life-sustaining resources and services, institutions must take a more collaborative and inclusive approach when designing and implementing community-driven initiatives and policies; community members must recognize their power.

As a community member, you hold a form of expertise that cannot be duplicated and one that deserves to be honored and respected in decision-making spaces that you chose to enter. The Live and Learn Document is a form of accountability that outlines the rights of community members during community engagement opportunities. As you engage with institutions we urge you to advocate for your rights and non-negotiables. Additionally, we have resources for institutions that amplify equitable community engagement practices. Below is a list of rights that apply to all community members.

Where we haven’t lived and LEARNED

These are the reasons that community engagement efforts are unsuccessful, lack equity, or have adverse effects. We like to call these the **pitfalls of community engagement**:

Community members are **tokenized** rather than valued as full partners.

Their likeness, image, and stories are **used irresponsibly or without consent**.

Re-engaged only when convenient, rather than intentionally including diverse and unique voices.

Engagement often feels like a one-sided transaction instead of a mutual relationship.

Community involvement is treated as a checkbox, not as a core component of the work.

Institutions fail to act with urgency when systems-level changes are needed.

Engagement is extractive; focused on taking knowledge without caring for the expert behind it.

Strategies often lack depth, reflection, and intentional design.

Timelines are unrealistic, leading to surface-level commitments and shallow outcomes.

Community engagement is under-resourced and treated as an afterthought rather than a priority.

LivedPay Bill of Rights

The Rights of the Lived Experience Experts



Right to Respect and Dignity

Lived Experience is a form of expertise that must be held in such regard. Community member's contributions must be acknowledged, appreciated, and reflect their actual words and ideas. Their insights deserve the same attention, care, and respect as other contributors. This form of expertise stands alone as a critical component of ensuring the growth of our community, therefore, lived experience experts should not be undermined when they come to the table; institutions must set the conditions ahead of time.

Right to Transparent Processes

Community members have a right to know how their contributions may show up, including for promotional, academic, or financial purposes. Institutions are called upon to establish a commitment to transparency throughout the entire duration of a project or community engagement opportunity. This entails clear documentation of processes agreed upon or affirmed by community members.

Right to Name Barriers

Community members must have space to explore and name the barriers and challenges that impact their level of participation. Institutions have a responsibility to support community members in navigating such barriers like transportation, meeting times, childcare, etc. Naming one's challenges should not automatically disqualify them from contributing.

Right to Privacy and to withhold one's image and likeness

Community members have the right to exercise intellectual property rights that protect them against the unauthorized or misappropriated use of their name, photography, likeness, or other rights related to their personal identity.

Right to Equitable Compensation

Community members are lived experience experts and require equitable compensation for sharing their intel with institutions. Compensation must be offered in a form that meets the needs of the community member and is not limited to monetary compensation. The LivedPay Compensation Model serves as a starting point with suggested minimum rates.

Right to Attribution

Community members have the right to be credited and acknowledged for their contributions when their likeness or expertise is used in publications, presentations, or other forms of media. Attribution should be given in a manner that respects the community member's preferences. This looks different for each organization and individual, and it is best to transparently discuss how this is determined.

Right to Withdraw

Community members must have space to withdraw from engagement activities as they need to or desire, with no repercussions or ill-will. The complexities that accompany one choosing to engage often are invisible to institutions and sometimes high in urgency and sensitivity. Institutions are encouraged to design the appropriate on and off ramps to engagement. Lived Experience Experts have the right to remove their materials, voices, relationships, etc., when they choose to off ramp.

Right to Advocacy and Brave Spaces

Community members deserve to enter into safe spaces and to have point people from an institution that will advocate and support their voices being heard and respected. Overall, there must be an institutional commitment to equitable engagement and mechanisms have to be in place to handle grievances. As a community member it is also important to know that not implemented does not mean not heard.

Right to Accessible Language and Dialogue

Community members have the right to be fully informed and equipped when they enter into community engagement activities with institutions. Institutions must do the pre-work to identify and address language barriers and ensure there are intentional opportunities to discuss things that might not be understood.

Right to Leverage Critical Relationships

When people who are closest to the pain come in contact with systems that they need, they are going to leverage them to their benefit and that is a positive thing. As community members engage in the work, it is expected that they will expand their network and build relationships that support their overall mobility.

Right to Leadership Development

As a community expert, being called into various spaces and opportunities, there are leadership skills that one might desire. If there are opportunities for leadership roles that you are interested in, we encourage you to ask about them and pursue them as your schedule allows.

Right to Owning Your Data/Expertise

Any data provided by community experts by way of survey, interviews, focus groups, discussions, etc., remains their personal property and they retain the right to withdraw, delete, or modify it as needed. Additionally, data should not be used beyond any agreed upon conditions. It is up to the organization to communicate ideal and appropriate timelines for this to happen.

Right to Informed Consent

Community experts must be provided with accurate and timely information about how their materials, insights, image, etc., will be used to offer informed consent.





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