
SAMPLE COMMUNITY VISIONING PROCESS

Community visioning is a common element in the strategic planning literature. Visioning can be helpful in the early stages of program planning, or later when there is a need to reevaluate existing conditions or activities. The process outlined below is adapted from the University of Wisconsin Extension's "Overview of Vision and the Visioning Process."¹

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY VISION?

A vision statement is a description of the way a community wants the future to be. Often a vision statement includes information about goals, values, and strategies for achieving the desired future state.

WHY SHOULD YOU CREATE A VISION WITH COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS?

Although all stakeholders likely have their own idea of what they want for the future, a shared vision can provide an important touchstone for all. In addition to providing a common direction, a shared vision can help all stakeholders see how they can contribute to the greater good.

HOW CAN YOU ESTABLISH A SHARED VISION?

The process outlined below is just one possible approach to community visioning for an organization or partnership. In essence, it is a guided conversation about the future. It may or may not be facilitated by an outside entity, but should involve organizational leaders, staff members, parents, and youth participants.

OPTION 1: SMALL GROUP OR PARTNER VISIONING

Using the worksheet on page 2, have participants work together in groups of 2 or more to answer the questions provided (1-4 only). Reconvene as a group to discuss answers to the questions. Then have partners or groups write a draft vision statement based on their answers and on the conversation. Partners or groups can share their individual vision statements with the larger group. Commonalities can be pulled out and a common vision statement created.

OPTION 2: INDIVIDUAL VISIONING

Same as the process above, but rather than sharing out individual vision statements, participants can pass their vision statements around the table and have other participants circle words or phrases that they like.

OPTION 3: VISUAL OR REPRESENTATIONAL VISIONING

Rather than having participants draft vision statements, it can be effective to have participants draw a picture or write a newspaper headline that represents their vision for the future. They can then share their image or headline with the group to identify common themes.

With all of these options, it is recommended that the group not try to finalize wording; it normally works better to have an individual tackle this job and present a final version to the group for approval at a later meeting.

¹ UW Extension (2005). Overview of vision and the visioning process. Retrieved from <http://uwcc.wisc.edu/coopcare/docs/vision.pdf>

COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHEET

PART 1:

Individually or with your group or partner, write down answers to the following questions.

1. What are the *five* most important core values for this organization?²
2. Use the values in a sentence or series of sentences that describe the way you want this organization to look in the future?
3. How will things be different for young people – particularly those who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color – if we embody these values? Why?
4. What do you see as this organization's (or partnership's) strengths? What about challenges?
5. How can we maximize our strengths while addressing challenges?

PART 2:

Based on your answers above, and on the group discussion, draft a vision statement for your community or organization below:

² It may be helpful to provide a list from which participants can choose. See, for example, the core values list at <https://www.taproot.com/archives/37771>