22 Questions for Civic Readiness

Community projects take trust, relationships, and engagement to be successful. This self-assessment tool will help you and your group evaluate the civic capacities for creating the kind of change you want in your town or neighborhood.

Get Started!

1. Have each group member go through this self-assessment <u>on their own</u>, marking the column with the answer they think best describes the condition of this statement in your group or community.
2. Once you get to the end of the grid, <u>circle the three statements</u> you think will have the greatest impact on your success. These could be strengths that you believe are important to build on or weaknesses you think could hinder success if not addressed.
3. When everyone has finished and circled their three statements, follow the group discussion prompts below the grid.

- ❖ **STRENGTH = This condition is present and contributes to the success of our efforts.**
- ❖ **WEAKNESS = We want to improve or bring about this condition.**
- ❖ **MIXED = There are both strengths and weaknesses present.**
- ❖ **UNSURE = We need to do more homework and outreach.**

Self-Assessment

Small Group Set-up	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	MIXED	UNSURE
1 We have a **core group** we are working with on this project.				
2 We have clearly **defined our community** and any specific populations we'll be serving with this project.				
3 The core group has clarified **how and when it will meet and communicate** with each other.				
4 The core group has designated a **point person** (or persons) to help us communicate among ourselves and keep things moving forward.				
5 The core group has a shared understanding of when and how it needs to bring on **new members.**				
Network Planning	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	MIXED	UNSURE
6 The core group has a **clear picture of most of the organizations, institutions, and networks** in the town or neighborhood.				
7 The core group has **direct representation or relationships** with people who can serve as connectors to the key networks that reflect the **real diversity and interests** of the town or neighborhood.				

		STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	MIXED	UNSURE
8	The core group has access to **trusted and reliable communication channels** to reach community members where they are.				
Issue Exploration		STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	MIXED	UNSURE
9	Our core group has **clarity about the issue** at hand and the **benefits** we hope the community will see as a result of our actions.				
10	The core group has clarity on the purpose and value of the **actions we are proposing to take** to address the issue at hand.				
11	We have listened to many **stories** and examples from the community about this issue and possible solutions.				
Trust & Conflict		STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	MIXED	UNSURE
12	Our lead organization/institution/group is **trusted and known** in the community.				
13	In public discourse around this issue, people will likely **respect differing opinions** and work collaboratively to find solutions.				
14	**Positive working relationships** exist among various people and groups who need to be engaged in this process.				
Decision Making		STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	MIXED	UNSURE
15	Community **residents are aware** of this issue and want to do something about it.				
16	Community **leaders are aware** of this issue and want to do something about it.				
17	Our decision making for this project **incorporates voices of the community** or population we're trying to reach or impact.				
18	If we need to advocate for policy or regulatory changes, **residents are comfortable reaching out** to their elected or appointed leaders.				
Collaborative Action		STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	MIXED	UNSURE
19	We have identified **local groups** who may be willing to commit **support or volunteer time** to this effort. We understand these groups' strengths and aspirations.				
20	We have identified **local sources of funding** which can be used towards solutions.				

21	Our community has connections to **outside expertise and funding**, as well as other peer communities, that can help this effort where necessary.				
22	Multiple **partners and stakeholders** in the community are **connected to action items** to address this issue and they understand their role.				

Discussion Guide:

Small Group Discussion

1. Divide into small groups of three or more, depending on the size of your full group.In your small groups, take turns sharing the three statements you circled and why.
2. *As a small group,* select the three statements you think will have the greatest impact on the community's success and write them down.
3. For each statement you wrote down, discuss the following questions as a group and have someone record the responses:
   a. What examples from your experience influenced the selection of these statements?
   b. How can your group's effort benefit from these conditions or how might its success be hindered if this condition is not addressed?

Large Group Discussion

Bring the *large group* back together. Have each group report out on their three statements and share some highlights of their discussion. Then discuss the following questions:

1. Where are responses similar?
2. Do some of the headings (Small group set-up, Network planning, etc.) have group agreement as strengths or weaknesses?
3. Where are the responses different?
4. What action items come to mind to capitalize on a strength or take advantage of an opportunity for growth?

The headings above each group of statements represent different areas your group could work within to strengthen civic readiness. Go to the 'civic readiness' page under Civic Nebraska's rural programming webpage to learn more about actions you can take.