

SHARPENING SOLUTIONS DEVELOPMENT*

DEFINING THE PROBLEM & THE SOLUTION

1. **Address the problem.**

- Clearly state the problem you are trying to address.
- Who is most marginalized by the problem, and where are they located if geography is relevant? Pay attention to race, gender and class.
- What policies, institutions, and corporations are impacting the problem? (Institutions may be impacting the problem by doing something wrong, doing something right, doing nothing, or some combination of all three).
- Which of the policies, institutions, and corporations impact the root causes of the problem?
- What historical roots of the problem must be addressed to solve it?

2. **Name the solutions.**

- What opportunities and solutions would you like to create or put forward to address this problem?
- Why is this important? Describe the values or principles that you want to see at the center of your solution.

Assessing the Solution for Implementation

- A. How does this solution advance a bigger vision that you have for your community—even if it's a small piece?
- B. Who is directly impacted by this solution: Who benefits? (Be specific.) Will communities directly impacted by structural racism and/or economic violence benefit, or be in a position to lead and own decision-making?
- C. What are the unintended (or intended) consequences for this solution? Are there any trade-offs that you are okay with moving forward?
- D. Who bears responsibility for this solution (by increased taxes, penalties, or actions that need to be taken)?
- E. What is the decision-making authority? Who has the power to determine whether or not the solution can go into effect?
- F. What specific actions will advance your solution? Where are the entry points for implementing this solution? How would you get started?
- G. Name where the solution should be implemented, and what entity should be in charge.
- H. How much will the solution cost (ballpark figure) and where will the financing come from? Where are these resources directed? (This should reflect the “who.”) Is there a timeline?

*Adapted from [We Power Policy: Community-Driven Participatory Policymaking Toolkit](#)