



A practical guide for moving community work forward - together.

This roadmap is for coalitions, community organizations, and partners working with community members to understand needs, make decisions, take action, and build lasting change.

Use it as a cycle, not a checklist. These practices often happen together and repeat over time. Start where your community is, then revisit assessment, capacity, planning, action, learning, and sustainability as conditions change.

Putting the Roadmap to Work

Use the questions at each stop to guide discussion, identify gaps, and decide what comes next.

ASSESS & UNDERSTAND Goal: Understand community needs, strengths, assets, and priorities. Questions to Fuel Action • What does the data tell us? • Who have we heard from? • What strengths already exist? • What issues matter most to the community? Pause & Reflect: Have you heard from the people most affected by this issue?	ORGANIZE & BUILD CAPACITY Goal: Strengthen people, partnerships, skills, and resources. Questions to Fuel Action • Who needs a seat at the table? • Which sectors are missing? • What skills or training are needed? • What resources are already available? Pause & Reflect: Does the coalition or partnership reflect the community?
PLAN FOR ACTION Goal: Create a realistic plan that fits community needs and strengths. Questions to Fuel Action • What outcomes do you want to achieve? • Which strategies fit the community? • How will success be measured? • What barriers might you encounter? Pause & Reflect: Was the community involved in shaping the plan?	TAKE ACTION Goal: Put plans into practice. Questions to Fuel Action • Are you reaching the right people? • Are partners engaged? • Is the plan being implemented as intended? • What early wins can be celebrated? Pause & Reflect: Are you staying flexible and listening as you go?
LEARN & IMPROVE Goal: Use feedback and results to strengthen future efforts. Questions to Fuel Action • What worked well? • What challenges are emerging? • Did you do what you planned to do? • What should you keep, adjust, or try next? Pause & Reflect: Have you asked the community what is working and what should change?	SUSTAIN & GROW Goal: Create lasting impact and shared ownership. Questions to Fuel Action • What efforts should continue or expand? • Who can lead next? • How can you build on success? • What systems have been strengthened? Pause & Reflect: Are you sharing leadership so the work can continue?

AT EVERY STOP: HOW IS THE COMMUNITY ENGAGED?

Community engagement is not one activity or one level. Different situations call for different ways of involving people. Use this continuum throughout the roadmap to consider how community members are participating in the work.

INFORM Share information with the community. Community members receive clear, timely information.	CONSULT Ask for input and listen. Community members provide feedback that can inform decisions.	INVOLVE Work with the community to ensure all voices are included. Community members help shape ideas, priorities, and approaches.	COLLABORATE Partner with the community in decision-making. Community members and partners make decisions together.	SHARE OWNERSHIP Share leadership and responsibility for lasting change. Community members have meaningful power, leadership, and ownership.
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Use the Continuum as a Reflection Tool

Before you begin Who is most affected by this issue? Who is missing from the conversation? What level of engagement is appropriate now?	As you plan How will community input influence goals, strategies, and decisions?
As you act and learn Are people participating in meaningful ways? What are you hearing? What needs to change?	As you sustain the work Where can leadership, responsibility, and decision-making be shared more fully?

A Simple Check for Every Decision

Are we doing this FOR our community or WITH our community?

The goal is not to move through the continuum mechanically. The goal is to choose meaningful engagement that fits the situation - and to build toward shared ownership whenever possible.

Community engagement is strongest when listening, learning, relationships, shared ownership, action, and recognition of progress are built into the work - not added at the end.



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