



Using Community Indicators for Community Development

Building on CIC's experience

Before starting a community indicators project:



What are the expectations that this effort is intended to meet?



Is there anyone else in this area already doing similar work? If so, can we work together?



Do we understand the need for such an effort in the community?



Is my organization totally on board with this idea?



What are the resources my organization can dedicate to this effort and for how long?



What is my organization's relationship with the community and with other community-based organizations?



What role will my organization play in this effort?

Issue	Strategies to consider
Funding is drying up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a good understanding of all the costs, including technology, surveys, datasets, and staffing of community engagement and share that information with management and funders – no surprises! • Ensure that everyone understands from the start that this is a long-term endeavor. • Consider fee-for-service activities, such as charging for data analyses • Maintain a strong network of partners and consider asking for support from partners in exchange for making their work visible and supporting their grant-writing activities
Community members do not feel included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin by knowing who is in the community – start with demographic data. • Be proactive in going to them. • Use existing networks that extend into these pockets of the community to reach out to these community members. • Honor the many skills, experiences, and insights held by these community members. • Make sure communications and events are culturally competent.
There is tension between the knowledge bases of community members and experts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include both community members and experts together on panels and give them time to engage in dialogue. • Consider using a trained facilitator. • In processes like indicator selection, a weighting system may help balance the needs of the community with the views of the experts in an objective, quantifiable way.

Too much time is spent on data, not enough on people

- Begin the project with the conviction that this is a core element of a community indicators project, and make an explicit commitment to community engagement.
- Specify goals for community engagement at the outset of the project.
- Develop a community engagement team or task force that can oversee this effort.

Volunteer fatigue.

- Acknowledge, communicate, and celebrate contributions and milestones – even small ones; a sense of progress is important.
- Be efficient and punctual in any interactions.
- Let volunteers know from the beginning what their expected time commitment will be and honor it.
- Seek sources of funding for compensation when possible.

Leadership issues

- Apply good leadership practices, such as collaborative leadership to build capacity throughout the organization and among partners to foster an open, creative environment
- Shift focus from reactive to proactive
- Offer different options for ideas and concerns to be shared, from open meetings to anonymous suggestion boxes
- Listen!

Keeping the website fresh

Have clear goals and clean organization

Keep your audience in mind

Use the right medium

Less is more. Keep it simple!

Use colors and graphs judiciously

Keeping the community engaged

Visioning

Support, care and feed your volunteers & committees

Organize community meetings

Participate in other groups community meetings

Go where the community goes

Attend political and business events

Use technology that is accessible