



# Nonprofits Integrating Community Engagement Guide

# Acknowledgements



Building Movement Project

For over a decade, The Building Movement Project (BMP) has been working at the national level to support and advance the potential for nonprofit organizations to be sites for progressive social change. We develop research, tools, and training materials that help nonprofit organizations support the voice and power of the people they serve.

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Using a “Research to Practice” platform, the Alliance is committed to identifying and exploring both academic and practitioner research and field experiences in peer-to-peer exchanges designed to identify what we need to know to increase the effectiveness, capacity and impact of the social sector.

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# Introduction

The Nonprofits Integrating Community Engagement (NICE) Guide offers information, tools, case studies and other resources to help nonprofit groups develop core competencies on constituent and community engagement. The NICE Guide is designed for organizational development experts, management support organizations, and internal and external consultants to facilitate efforts to integrate the voice of community members and constituents into the daily practice of nonprofit organizations.

NICE is a joint project of the Alliance for Nonprofit Management (The Alliance) and the Building Movement Project (BMP). The Alliance is a membership organization that seeks to improve the effectiveness of those in the social sector and to help nonprofits and communities achieve positive social change. The Building Movement Project has published a library of materials to guide organizations to integrate social service and social change. Key among BMP's resources is *Social Service to Social Change: A Process Guide*, a foundational document that can inform consultant learning and contribute tools and resources when working with organizations. [Social Service to Social Change: A Process Guide](#)

## Core Values

The NICE Guide is based on the belief that people can and want to transform their lives and regain the power and voice that may have been muted because of environmental circumstances. In addition, the focus on service organizations and the people who access services is grounded in the belief that:

1. Service agencies are too often overlooked as sites of social change / social justice work;
2. All individuals and communities rely on services - visible or invisible, provided formally or informally;
3. Service agencies have unparalleled reach into low-income communities; and
4. Service providers understand systemic and structural barriers.



Service providers and other social sector organizations are interested in engaging their constituents and community in solving the larger problems facing the people who engage in their programs; but often there is little support for this work. Those groups that engage in social change efforts have noted the importance of capacity building experts to help with this process.

## Framework

The NICE Guide is structured in a way that helps consultants and other organizational development experts to facilitate and sustain a change process within nonprofits that deepens their commitment to constituent engagement and social change. The tools provided include research links so that the consultant has easy reference to ground and expand their knowledge base in each of the topic areas. Other resources and links are provided as examples, case studies and activities to use with the organization.



## The Consultant Role

Independent or internal capacity building consultants working with service organizations seeking to embark on or enhance efforts for social change initiatives will recognize some of the materials in this guide. Engaging in social change efforts may involve fundamental changes in the organization's values, strategy, and structure. It also may include working with staff in other organizations, advocating for policy changes, and engaging constituents in new ways that require difficult conversations about equality and power. The consultant role can help to create systems for learning among staff with diverse life experiences and perspectives, to address what constituent and community engagement means for the organization, and to support the alignment of practice with the organization's values and mission.

The **Readiness Section** offers two things: (1) some basic assumptions about consultant readiness to facilitate change efforts, and (2) an assessment to gauge the organization's readiness to embark on social change/social justice work. Both include resources for deeper exploration. Each of the subsequent sections includes research, resources and activities in the following areas:

1. A statement of why the topic is important in contributing to social change
2. A brief assessment for the topic area
3. Goals and an approach to a theory of change
4. A focus on organizational and/or community culture
5. Activities and tools meant to integrate goals into practice
6. An emphasis on evaluation and measuring impact



## A Note on Language

Throughout the guide, the term “constituent” is used to identify a broad range of individuals that are part of the organization who might participate in the change process. Many organizations have moved beyond using the word “client” as it connotes a hierarchical relationship where the agency staff is primarily a helper or expert offering services to someone in need. The term “participant” is often used because it depicts a more respectful and equal relationship between the worker and someone accessing services or participating in programs. By choosing “constituent” in the guide, we are attempting to expand the view of participation to include individuals, family members, community members and members of other organizations that are connected to the organization.

## Tools Common to all Sections

### THEORY OF CHANGE (TOC)

Theory of Change is a method or technique that can assist communities to think about, plan and evaluate their work. It involves ‘backwards mapping’ from the goals or desired outcomes of the program to identify what is needed in the program design to accomplish these goals. See [www.theoryofchange.org](http://www.theoryofchange.org) for in-depth resources, guides and examples.

The TOC may be applied in each section of the Toolkit to help identify goals and establish a common understanding of the local landscape. In addition, each section includes other resources and suggestions for specific goals and outcomes relating to the topic. Preparation for TOC and other goal setting activities requires the following:

1. Agreement about when to embark on the process and who to involve
2. A clear understanding of the time and resources required
3. An individual or small group that will work with the consultant in between large group process to integrate ideas and shape the final document

### RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:

#### Theory of Change Facilitator Source Book

This well written and easy-to-follow facilitator source book defines TOC vocabulary, offers suggestions for preparation for group process and provides a step-by-step explanation of what it takes to design a TOC.

#### Developing a Logic Model

#### The Difference between a Theory of Change and a Logic Model

A logic model can be used separately or in addition to a TOC, though the focus of a logic model is more programmatic. Two sources are offered here: (1) a guide to developing a logic model and, (2) a presentation that helps distinguish between the two.





## SECTION ONE:

# Readiness

## Ready Consultant

This Guide acts as a “toolkit” for consultants working with nonprofits towards individual and social change. It offers detailed information, resources, and case studies for what you need to know as an internal or external consultant helping with the change process. There are several fundamental principles that help consultants understand what it means to lead social change work. These include:

1. Relationship building with constituents based on respect and a strengths-based approach is a best practice in effective organizations.
2. Creating a learning environment is primary to advance knowledge and spark action.
3. Using their skills and strategies, consultants can help nonprofits to work both within and organizations, and across sectors to make needed change.
4. Understanding that social change efforts are long-term requires groups look at the incremental steps they can take.
5. Believing in individual change is key to facilitating the transformation process.
6. Using evaluation tools can inform learning, decision-making and action.

### RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:

#### Movement Capacity Building

This fact sheet from BMP highlights some key differences between capacity building for organizational sustainability and capacity building for social change. It identifies nine areas identified as important building blocks of social movement capacity for nonprofit organizations.

#### Social Service to Social Change: A Process Guide

In 2006, the Building Movement Project published *Social Service to Social Change: A Process Guide* for staff and board members of nonprofit service organizations to learn to incorporate social change values and practice into their work. While it has many activities that will be referenced in subsequent sections, understanding the “Transformation Process” on page nine is foundational to making lasting change.

#### Developing a Learning Culture in Nonprofit Organizations

Viewing organizational learning as a key to long-term change and individual improvement, author Stephen J. Gill published *Developing a Learning Culture in Nonprofit Organizations* in 2010. This online publication is very readable and contains many tools and resources.

#### The 5th Discipline

Peter Senge’s, *The Fifth Discipline*, was published in 2006 to focus on group problem solving and organizational learning. This link to the Change Forum provides a summary of the concepts and access to the book.

## Ready organization

Part of the consultant’s work with organizations is to assess how ready groups are to become involved in the constituent and community engagement process. The Readiness Assessment is designed as a tool to help organizations explore the status of their vision and mission, their relationship to staff, partners and constituents, and their leadership approach as part of an organizational culture conducive to social change efforts.



[Readiness Assessment](#)



[Facilitator’s Guide](#)



## RESOURCES FOR THE ORGANIZATION:

### Wheel of Change:

In addition to the Readiness Assessment, the Wheel of Change Planning Template is a planning tool to explore what is currently in place or will be needed to embark on a social change effort.

### What does Social Change Look Like?:

This creative exercise uses a series of images as prompts for a conversation about what group members associate with the term “social change”. (Adapted from the Visual Explorer® exercise developed by the Organizational Culture and Practice of the Board: Creating Access and Success for All.

### Somos Mayfair:

This video shows how members of a small community used the strength of its culture to address issues of voter capacity and civic apathy

### Learning Organization Assessment Tool:

This assessment, from Stephen Gill, covers six areas of organizational learning.

See pages 12 and 13 for the assessment tool.

## PLAYERS AND PARTNERS FOR READINESS

Before conducting assessments, be prepared to discuss with the organization several decisions they will need to make.

1. Who should be involved and how will you include those who live the experience including what responsibilities they will have, and how best to engage?
2. Who will see the results and how they will be presented?
3. How will the conversation about results be facilitated and how will ideas and recommendations be acted upon going forward?
4. Who within the organization and which partners and/or constituents will participate in the change process?



## SECTION TWO:

# Constituent Engagement



## Why it's important:

Organizations that are interested in changing some of the causes of the problems facing their constituents can start by learning from the insights of those who “live the experience”.

Organizations in the early stages of embarking on social change often see constituents as “clients” or people who come to access services and are provided with referrals and resources to receive help for their current situation. As the organization considers a changing approach to and role for constituents, it may create strategies for leadership development both within and outside the organization and find, that overtime, opportunities expand to include community organizing, civic participation, public advocacy and other activities that promote change. Engaging constituents beyond the service delivery process helps organizations to learn about common barriers that they face such as a non-responsive landlord, as well as problems navigating and accessing systems that are designed to help them. Building the role of the client moves them from a recipient to someone with agency, what we call a constituent. Finally, partnering with clients and supporting their leadership results in working with people rather than for people, making the service provider’s job more effective.

Service organizations are sites where people can gather socially and to address local issues. Inviting constituents to participate in activities within the organization can create the first steps to build confidence and acquire new skills. In addition, constituent participation establishes connections that can reduce isolation and increase social cohesion, both of which have been shown to have a direct relationship to good health. The challenge for organizations is to understand their current approach, where they want to go and what needs to be considered in their culture and practice.

### RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:

#### [From Input to Ownership: How Nonprofits Can Engage with the People They Serve To Carry Out Their Missions](#)

In this article, the authors discuss ways that nonprofits are engaging their constituents for input as well as for programmatic co-creation and ownership where a more active role is taken.

#### [Caught in the Middle: Community Development Corporations and the Conflict between Grassroots and Instrumental Forms of Civic Participation](#)

This article explores the various roles clients can play as citizens participating in

community based organizations (specifically community development corporations). It includes a “Citizen Participation Continuum” which helps organizations and groups understand the source of conflicts between different types of citizen participation and provides organizations with a road map for evaluating programs that promote change in society.

#### [Listening to those who Matter Most](#)

This Stanford Social Innovation Review article offers a basic understanding of the importance of including the views and experiences of beneficiaries.





## RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION:

### [Integrating Civic Participation Strategies into Service Organizations:](#)

The goal of this toolkit by the National Council of La Raza, is to create a “participation continuum” that links constituencies to a variety of civic opportunities such as citizenship promotion and engaging in issues. It describes the continuum, a sample intake form, tools that leaders can use to engage constituents, and sample workshop materials. See section 2 for “Civic Participation as a Component of Service Provision”.

### [Catalysts for Change: Centro Binacional Para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño:](#)

This case study can be used as part of a learning community activity. Group members might read it before meeting and answer questions about different ways to be engaged and overcome barriers to participation. Then, discuss what is similar and different about their situation and strategies for change. See page 11 of Case Study.

### [Discussion Guide for Exploring Community Engagement:](#)

This is a series of small-group discussion questions to use during an agency retreat or extended meeting that offers a structured opportunity to explore the organization’s potential for community engagement work.

## Initial Assessment for Constituent Engagement

The simple assessment shown here is meant to (1) help the organization determine readiness to explore this topic, and (2) spark thinking about where to begin and what goals to develop. The tool consists of statements that describe constituent role in the organization and how they are currently involved. It can be best used if the organization:

1. Carefully considers when and with whom to conduct the assessment. Will you use it in a staff meeting, at a board meeting, with leadership, with other partners?
2. Is clear about what to do with the results. Will they be shared broadly? How will the results impact planning and goal setting?
3. Uses the results to think through operations, programs and process as it relates to constituent engagement.
4. Enhances discussion about trends, patterns and current practice

When giving directions, emphasize that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers and for respondents to check “all that apply”. Determine who will compile the responses and how they will be presented.

Constituent	Organization
A. Constituents are service recipients only	A. We provide services based on regulations and requirements of our funding sources and does not include client/constituent feedback.
B. There is a mechanism for constituents to give us feedback on services (e.g. surveys, evaluations, comment cards)	B. Some programs include constituent involvement/feedback.
C. Constituents regularly have input on their case planning	C. Staff at all levels are trained to listen and respond to constituents voices
D. Constituents have input in program design	D. Constituents are partners in the work
E. Constituents are on the board or other governing structures	E. Constituents successfully participate in the organization at every level

## **HANDOUT | Community Development Roles**

Nonprofit service organizations can play a variety of roles in advancing community development. The following questionnaire asks you to consider how your organization’s experiences and interests might be tied to a specific role.

**1. Consider the following roles listed below and circle the level of experience and interest that best matches your organization.**

- 6 = Strong experience and strong interest
- 5 = Some experience and strong interest
- 4 = Some experience and some interest
- 3 = Low experience and strong interest
- 2 = Low experience and some interest
- 1 = No experience and no interest

**2. Add your total score for each alphabet. While FRCs can and do play a variety of roles in advancing community development, a higher score may suggest that your organization is more likely to take on a particular role.**

Total for A = \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total for B = \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total for C = \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total for D = \_\_\_\_\_



### **RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION:**

An organization may take on a variety of roles as it works with the community. The following handout was developed by the National Community Development Institute (NCDI) to encourage organizations to reflect on those roles. Once the participants complete the assessment and analysis, lead a discussion about the alignment of “what they do” (roles assessment) with the above responses. If organizations are doing advocacy or facilitator work, how are constituents involved? What does the mission say about the work? Is it aligned with the roles that the organization plays? What are the implications for goals?

	Roles Our Organization Might Play	Organization’s Experience and Interest					
		6	5	4	3	2	1
A	Called on by local decision makers (e.g., health department) to offer your opinions.						
B	Experienced in bringing different people together for discussions.						
C	Interested in starting a new project that will benefit the community.						
D	Able to manage complex programs or activities.						
A	Experienced in participating in local planning processes.						
B	Interested in bringing people together to identify and address common priorities.						
C	Able to envision projects and activities that have not been tried.						
D	Called on to fix or improve an existing program or service.						
A	Interested in analyzing policies that impact our constituents.						
B	Able to collaborate on projects of common interest.						
C	Called on to work with others on new projects that can benefit the community.						
D	Experienced in formulating and carrying out plans.						
A	Able to assist others in raising their own concerns or views.						
B	Called on to help resolve conflicts or disagreements.						
C	Experienced in working on new projects that can benefit the community.						
D	Interested in managing a project that will benefit the community.						





## HANDOUT | Community Development Roles

### A = ADVOCATE

As an advocate, organizations are involved in monitoring and influencing decisions that have the potential to impact your core constituents. Some examples of activities that might engage advocates include:

- Helping community members understand proposed or approved rules or policies.
- Developing relationships with local decision makers and create opportunities for community input and participation.
- Initiate, support and sustain a community organizing campaign.
- Monitoring proposed legislation and policy.

### B = FACILITATOR

As a facilitator, organizations are involved in creating a “safe space” for dialogue among community members. Some examples of activities that might engage facilitators include:

- Creating opportunities for people to meet and discuss community-wide issues.
- Serving as a clearinghouse for information on a range of issues that interest the community.
- Helping to resolve conflicts or disagreements.
- Collaborating on a project that brings together local schools and nonprofit service providers.

### C = DEVELOPER

As a developer, organizations are involved in starting activities or projects that are of interest to the community. Some examples of activities that might engage developers include:

- Working with others on a new project to benefit the community.
- Identifying unmet community needs and beginning a process to address them.
- Seeking seed funding to support a new project.
- Introducing a new service or program.

### D = MANAGER

As a manager, organizations are involved in ensuring that the implementation of an existing program or service is done effectively. Some examples of activities that might engage managers include:

- Fixing or improving an existing program or service.
- Formulating and carrying out plans.
- Managing multiple people, programs or activities.
- Owning, operating or managing a shared facility.



## Goals and TOC

As a result of the previous assessment(s), goals will begin to emerge about constituent engagement that will set the stage for determining strategic direction and the action necessary to accomplish those goals. The Theory of Change (TOC) method, described in the Introduction, can assist communities to think about, plan and evaluate their work. This section includes suggestions for specific goals and outcomes relating to Constituent Engagement. Preparation for this requires the following:

1. Agreement about when to embark on the process and who to involve
2. A clear understanding of the time and resources required
3. An individual or small group that will work with the consultant in between large group process to integrate ideas and shape the final document



### RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION:

When deciding who to involve in the process of goal setting, it may be useful to ask the following questions about a broad range of stakeholders:

1. What viewpoints and expertise are necessary to make informed decisions present?
2. Who can effectively participate in the discussion (Are there any barriers in terms of language, substantive knowledge of the programming area, hierarchy, or politics?)
3. What they will get out of participating in the design workshop
4. Is this the best way to gather information from them?
5. Do they have the time and resources to participate?

### Sample Goals and Outcomes:

It may be helpful to have sample goals and outcomes for constituent engagement in mind prior to the meeting to help guide the discussion and formulate questions.

- Get input from constituents on effectiveness of program and program design
- Build the ability of constituents to advocate for themselves and others
- Bolster constituents' ability to be engaged citizens and get involved in the community
- Ensure constituents are on staff or serve on the Board of Directors
- Build power with the community

### Case Studies

The following case studies can be used to spark thinking about how different organizations engage their constituents. The process below can help the group learn from the case studies and apply to their organization:

- Use three charts labeled “What?”, “So What?”, and “Now What?”
  - What did you read that resonated for you? (WHAT?)
  - What did you learn about the agencies as it relates to Constituent Engagement? What were some of the issues they addressed and how? (SO WHAT?)
  - How can this apply to your organization? (NOW WHAT?)
- Pairs or 3s start at a different chart
- 5 minutes per chart to add strengths/focus areas
- Move to next chart – each group at each chart
- What would you like to learn more about?

**Shields for Families:** This case study tells the story of Shields for Families in Los Angeles that actively integrates social change and service provision by building on the leadership capacity of their clients and staff. Shields creates many opportunities for learning, engagement, and social change efforts that are exemplary. Use this case study to learn from Shields and discuss what would work locally and how to move forward. See page 29 of Case Study.

**Developing the Leadership of Recipients:** This monograph from BMP is part of a series highlighting 5% shifts, or small changes that organizations can make to “reinvent” themselves. In this edition, two examples are presented with agendas for discussions, questions to explore, and a handout to consider different types of engagement.



## CULTURE | RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:

### Engaged Governance

This article includes several models for community engagement governance that can be used to explore how the organization is currently governed and what might happen when other stakeholders are engaged in all aspects of the organization

### Overarching Questions to Address In Each Area of Organizational Assessment

The questions below are adapted from Cultural Competency: Organizations and Diverse Populations: The Handbook of Community Practice, Patricia St. Onge, 2013. It can be part of the process to assess organizational cultural competency. Questions are based on the belief that working towards organizational cultural competence is an on-going process that requires constant vigilance because the negative effects of racism, sexism and oppression need on-going understanding and confrontation.

- Does this aspect of our organization actively work to erase inequity?
- Is this aspect of our work part of the greater movement to create and support social change?
- What are the power dynamics at play?
- Is there a single cultural lens through which things get interpreted for the group?
- Whose voices are at the table? Whose are not?
- Who benefits from the way things are currently done?
- Who is hurt by the way things are currently done?
- Are differences celebrated or tolerated?
- What other questions do we need to ask?

## PRATICE | RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:

### Creating effective feedback loops

This essay provides a set of principles that practitioners can use to design feedback loops with a higher probability of success. It suggests that effective efforts benefit from getting constant feedback about what works and makes the case that the constituent voice (or consumer) is critical to design systems that are effective and responsive.

## Culture

Setting goals to fully engage constituents often means exploring the organization's culture of power dynamics. Every organization, team, and community experiences elements of power which can be seen in the light of relational power, or power with someone or over someone, as well as the kind of power which comes from having influence in a situation.

Discussions about power may lead to an exploration of cultural proficiency, or how we value others, especially others who are different from us. One way we demonstrate how much we value others is in how we share power with them. How does power operate within the organization? What are the organization's assumptions about getting to goals? How do staff and leadership see their current culture and practice?



### RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE AGENCY:

**Case Study: Sources of Power:** This case study is written from a consultant's perspective who was invited to work with an organization to increase its effectiveness working with communities of color. It follows the consultant through the process of identifying and working with a design team and engaging non-traditional departments for social change: fundraising and legal. It describes the questions asked and learning gained through the process.



### HANDOUT | Sources of Power

This handout can be used with organizations working with constituents and in partnerships. It is helpful to understand the different ways that participation and communication styles can be perceived in groups, and encourages users to consider how to share power in order to establish trust.

## Practice

Establishing awareness and setting goals helps challenge the assumptions we hold about how things operate. Learning together can spark new thoughts and feelings about how things work in the organization. Putting learning into practice is a continuous process. The consultant role here is to establish the foundation for iterative practice – learning, practicing, studying results and continuing to change and learn.





## RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION

**PDSA Cycle:** The PDSA Cycle, or Plan, Do, Study, Act is a series of steps to gain knowledge for continuous learning. It was designed by W. Edward Deming for systems and management improvement and was adapted for use in the health care field and social services. It can be utilized in any situation where continuous learning is a goal.

**Increasing Constituent Voice:** This agenda and activity worksheet is designed to identify opportunities for constituents to have more voice and leadership in your organization and to generate a list of concrete practice shifts that can be proposed to others in the organization.

## Impact

Service organizations are very often well-practiced in measuring outcomes about individual and/or family progress using an array of outcomes that are program related. It is common to ask if a “client” or constituent is better off as a result of services or program participation. It is less likely that organization measure the impact of constituent engagement in building the organization or in civic engagement activities. While the results of service provision are an important part of the organization’s story, expanding the view to include the impact of constituent engagement contributes to long-term change beyond the individual.



## RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION:

**My Healthy Organization Assessment:** This guide explains how to use the My Healthy Organization Tool (MHO Assessment Tool). The guide describes:

1. Why and when to do an assessment.
2. How to implement the process and use the assessment tool, including risks and challenges
3. How to use the process and results to improve your organization

Nine areas are identified as important building blocks of movement capacity of nonprofit organizations: Vision, Principles, Learning and Reflecting, Issues of Race and Power, Work Across Boundaries, Work Across Generations, Constituent Involvement, Structure, and Funding.

**Constituent Voice Feedback Systems:** Constituent Voice™ is a methodology developed by Keystone Accountability to enable organizations to improve results by optimizing their relationships with their constituents. Steps are 1) Designing; 2) Collecting; 3) Analyzing; 4) Closing the loop; 5) Course correcting

**Feedback Loops:** The purpose of this guide is to help organizations create a framework for developing strategies, building partnerships, planning interventions, gathering evidence of success or failure and, most importantly, analyzing and learning from this evidence through open dialogue among constituents and stakeholders who have a real interest in change.



## IMPACT | RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:

### Measuring the Impact of Civic Engagement Tracking Outcomes in Health, Education, and Economic Security:

This report provides an overview of a process to develop tools to measure the impact of civic engagement practices in human services. The Civic Engagement Measurement System (CEMS) is an inter-related set of tools that are believed to represent a promising new approach to the measurement of outcomes and impacts in civic engagement.

### Beyond Marketing: Becoming a Constituent Centered Organization

Maintaining change overtime requires using evaluation data to inform practice. This paper, while using “marketing” language, offers suggestions for long-term, mutually beneficial change. It suggests that being constituent-centered is as much a mindset as it is a set of activities. It gives examples and ideas to ensure that the organization is mindful of its constituents at all times—in all its activities, policies, and programs.

## SECTION THREE:

# Partnering With Community



## Why It's Important

Service organizations typically reside within the communities they serve and staff have a fairly clear picture of the neighborhood or geographic area where constituents live, or the larger population that represent their constituents. The organization can help people connect to community resources and to activities where people can learn new skills and reduce isolation.

When an organization decides to integrate community change work in this area they see their work as part of a developing community as well as a service provider to individuals. It means the organization is ready to expand its impact beyond the one-to-one worker/individual or family relationship, and to explore staff roles and responsibilities in relation to the community's assets and interest

Staff and members of the local community develop a reciprocal relationship where constituents contribute their knowledge of and experience in the community, and staff help to find and mobilize structures and supports that help create conditions where people can thrive. Staff participate in community events as partners and represent the organization which is constantly learning about the role it plays and changing as conditions evolve. Power between the community and organization is equalized.

### RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:

#### Advancing Community Level Impact:

This report examines how two organizations (The Mutual Assistance Network of Del Paso Heights in Sacramento, CA and the Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation in Brooklyn, NY) developed and executed strategies that advanced their commitment to bridge the service-organizing "divide" by thinking beyond individual needs to address problems at a community level.

#### Building Alliances with Diverse Community Groups:

This section of the University of Kansas Community Toolbox explores building alliances with diverse and marginalized groups, promoting leadership and supporting people to gain power in their community.



### RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION

**Components of Community:** This guide helps organizations explore the key components of community building, evaluate how community building is currently taking place in the organization, and opportunities to expand community building. This exercise uses a worksheet that can help organizations discuss areas of work and to generate more concrete ideas for next steps.

**Building Strong Neighborhoods for Families with Children:** This four-session discussion guide is to help people make their neighborhoods better places for families with children by identifying challenges and opportunities, and working toward solutions. It is from the Study Circles Resource Center, developed in collaboration with the Anne E. Casey Foundation project: Making Connections.



## Initial Assessment for Partnering with Community

The simple assessment shown here is meant to (1) help the organization determine readiness to explore partnering with their community, and (2) spark thinking about where to begin and what goals to develop. The tool consists of statements that describe constituent role in the community and how the organization relates to the community. It can be best used if the organization:

1. Carefully considers when and with whom to conduct the assessment. Will you use it in a staff meeting, at a board meeting, with leadership, with other partners?
2. Is clear about what to do with the results. Will they be shared broadly? How will the results impact planning and goal setting?
3. Uses the results to think through operations, programs and process as it relates to partnering with the community.
4. Enhances discussion about trends, patterns and current practice

When giving directions, emphasize that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers and for respondents to check “all that apply”. Determine who will compile the responses and how they will be presented.

Constituent	Organization
A. We work with the constituents of our services only	A. The organization focuses on our staff, clients, and volunteers
B. We encourage constituents to bring family and community members to the organization	B. Staff participate in the community (such as local events and celebrations)
C. We visit constituents' homes to meet them in context	C. Community members can use the organization's facilities for events and meetings
D. We reach out to make community members welcome in some of our activities	D. Staff are encouraged to attend community meetings (e.g. Community Board meetings)
E. Community members visit the organization even if they are not constituents. There are activities for all members of the community	E. Staff and Board members come from the community



### RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION:

**Asset Based Community Development:** Asset Based Community Development is a strategy to link individual and community assets to the larger change initiatives so that communities can drive the development process by identifying and mobilizing existing, but often unrecognized assets, and thereby responding to and creating local economic opportunity. This website is a link to Asset Based Community Development resources. It provides talking points, asset mapping tools and facilitation tools. In the context of assessment, the approach uses a capacity inventory rather than a “needs” assessment to identify assets within the community that may not be obvious or useful to residents.



## Goals and Theory of Change

As a result of the previous assessment(s), goals will begin to emerge about partnering with the community that will set the stage for determining strategic direction and the action necessary to accomplish those goals. The Theory of Change (TOC) is a method or technique that can assist communities to think about, plan and evaluate their work. Resources for TOC are listed in the Introduction Section. This section includes suggestions for specific goals and outcomes relating to Partnering with Community. Preparation for either approach requires several things:

- Agreement about when to embark on the process and who to involve
- A clear understanding of the time and resources required
- An individual or small group that will work with the consultant in between large group process to integrate ideas and shape the final document.



## RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION:

When deciding who to involve in the process of goal setting, it may be useful to ask the following questions about a broad range of stakeholders:

1. What viewpoints and expertise are necessary to make informed decisions?
2. Who can effectively participate in the discussion (are there any barriers in terms of language, substantive knowledge of the programming area, hierarchy, or politics?)
3. What they will get out of participating in the TOC design?
4. Is this the best way to gather information from them?
5. Do they have the time and resources to participate?

It may be helpful to have sample goals and outcomes for Partnering with Community in mind prior to the meeting to help guide the discussion and formulate questions.

**Community Asset Mapping Workbook:** Community Asset Mapping is an activity that can help organizations and their constituents understand more about where they live. It can be used as a way to organize people to become more involved in changing the conditions of their neighborhoods and identifying available resources, where people gather and involvement opportunities – in essence the assets that exist to build upon for change.

### Sample Goals and Outcomes:

The organization helps develop leaders who are recognized and respected within the community.

Constituents speak up about issues within the community.

Community members participate in evaluation of the organization and its activities.

Community members are motivated to take action on issues.

Staff participate in community events to represent the organization and build relationships with community members.

## Case Studies

The following case studies can be used to spark thinking about how different organizations engage their constituents. The process below can help the group learn from the case studies and apply to their organization:

- Use three charts labeled “**What?**”, “**So What?**”, and “**Now What?**”
  - What did you read that resonated for you? (WHAT?)
  - What did you learn about the agencies as it relates to Constituent Engagement? What were some of the issues they addressed and how? (SO WHAT?)
  - How can this apply to your organization? (NOW WHAT?)
- Pairs or 3s start at a different chart
- 5 minutes per chart to add strengths/focus areas
- Move to next chart – each group at each chart
- What would you like to learn more about?

**Sacramento, CA Building Healthy Communities:** This is a link to The Hub, a media portal for the California Endowment’s Building Healthy Communities Initiative in Sacramento, CA. There is a variety of articles about issues relating to their work, from focus on school suspensions, urban farming, advocating for health services among others. They could be used to spark thinking about partnering with the community and as examples about how to get the word out.

**Queens Community House:** This case study describes how Queens Community House in New York, fashioned after the settlement house tradition, offers services and programs to help individuals improve their situation and strengthen their community. It follows the story of Queens Community House from a service provider to a powerful community building organization.



## Culture

As an organization begins to shift its practice and partner with community in new ways, it is helpful to explore the existing culture to surface assumptions about process and players. Creating a safe place to have continuing discussion about current conditions means identifying strengths and values as well as asking questions that will reveal areas for change.

Setting goals to fully engage constituents and their communities often means exploring the organization's culture of power dynamics. Every organization, team, and community experiences elements of power which can be seen in the light of relational power, or power with someone or over someone, as well as the kind of power which comes from having influence in a situation.

Discussions about power may lead to an exploration of cultural sensitivity, or how we value others, especially others who are different from us. One way we demonstrate how much we value others is in how we share power with them. How does power operate within the organization? What are the organization's assumptions about getting to goals? How do staff and leadership see their current culture and practice?

### **HANDOUT | Sources of Power**

This handout can be used with organizations working in partnerships. It is helpful to understand the different ways that participation and communication styles can be perceived in groups and encourages users to consider how to share power in order to establish trust.



### **RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION:**

**Asking Powerful Questions:** This publication includes a conceptual framework, examples, agendas and worksheets to learn to and apply asking powerful questions.

**Cafe to Go:** The World Café has been asking important questions and sparking conversations for many years all over the world. These guidelines provide the tools needed to hold a Café conversation that can be used in many different settings and with a variety of stakeholders. It is a valuable resource and can be adapted for use in many of the topic areas of the NICE Toolkit.

## **CULTURE | RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:**

### Understanding Culture and Diversity in Building Communities:

This toolbox contains information on understanding culture and diversity, how to strengthen multicultural collaboration, and building inclusive communities. It includes descriptions, examples and power points to adapt to any organization

## Practice

As the organization and its constituents become clear about goals, assumptions and culture, the next step is to develop a plan to implement action to reach the goals. Partnering with the community, by its nature, requires a plan that promotes full participation from key stakeholder groups. The consultant role is to guide the organization to consider who needs to be involved, how to best recruit them and to eliminate barriers for participation.

## **PRATICE | RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:**

### Caught in the Middle: Community Development Corporations and the Conflict between Grassroots and Instrumental Forms of Civic Participation:

This article – also noted in the constituent engagement section – explores the various roles of citizen participation in community based organizations (specifically community development corporations). It includes a “Citizen Participation Continuum” which helps organizations and groups understand the source of conflicts between different types of citizen participation and provides organizations with a road map for evaluating programs that promote change in society.

### Developing a Plan to Encourage Participation:

This resource provides a comprehensive list of questions to ask when developing a plan to become more inclusive of community members. It offers a checklist of action, examples to study and a PowerPoint presentation that summarizes the key points in the section and could be used as a foundation to customize for the organization.





## RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION:

**Increasing Participation and Membership in Community Change:** This toolkit provides step-by-step guidance for increasing participation and engaging constituents and community members in a change process

**Community Engagement Governance™:** In the Community Engagement Governance™ framework, responsibility for governance is shared across the organization, including the organization's key stakeholders: its constituents and community, staff, and the board. Community-Engagement Governance™ is based on established principles of participatory democracy, self-determination, genuine partnership, and community-level decision making. It can be explored as a way to ensure that engagement is integrated into daily practice.

## Impact

Evaluating change in Partnering with Community focuses on four areas: (1) what has changed for the individual who is a participant in services at the organization; (2) what has changed within the organizational structure; (3) what has changed in how the community views the organization and (4) what has changed in the community.



## RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION:

**Unique Methods in Advocacy Evaluation:** This brief describes four methods that were developed to respond to the unique challenges of measuring advocacy. Included are step-by-step instructions for use, rating scales, and sample questions that can guide evaluation.

**Transactions, Transformations, Translations: Metrics that Matter:** Metrics that Matter is a way of looking at organizational growth and the alliance building that brings groups together. This evaluation approach can capture the importance of narrative and numbers, of politics and policies, of transformation as well as transaction. Included are transactional and transformational criteria for measuring leadership and organizational development, and movement.

## IMPACT | RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:

### **A Framework of Factors that Affect Political Support:**

Frameworks can be useful in that they can be customized for a particular organization and its focus. This framework describes three factors that can impact the amount of attention an issues receives: (1) the actors involved (individuals and organizations); (2) the story the actors tell about the issue; and (3) the environment surrounding the organization. It can be used with an organization to evaluate the impact of the role played by constituents and the organization, and the change in conditions within the environment.

### **Pathways for Individual and Collective Empowerment:**

This detailed diagram illustrates how collective involvement and individual development empower social justice actions within a community. It can be used with the organization to measure change across a spectrum to increase understanding of the forces that are driving change and where efforts need to be focused.

### **Participatory Evaluation:**

This article focuses on Participatory Evaluation and seeks to provide a framework for making evaluation accessible to all who are involved. Stakeholders are involved in all aspects of evaluation. Members of the program community are involved in defining the evaluation, developing instruments, collecting data, processing and analyzing data, and reporting and disseminating results. The authors believe that to the extent that practitioners are privy to and participate in making sense of raw data, their understanding will be deeper and more meaningful than if they were merely to process someone else's interpretation.

## SECTION FOUR:

# Coordination, Collaboration, Collective Impact



## Why It's Important

Larger problems facing constituents and communities are rarely solved by one organization. That is why so many organizations are involved in coalitions, networks, collaborations and alliances. This reflects how critical it is to understand that social change requires that individual organizations work together to achieve long-term impact.

The different ways groups work together may lead to different results. Some groups' work together is very formal with anchor organizations steering the activities and decisions, while others are more loosely formed. No matter what the type or level of coordination, these formations should pay attention to participation, especially constituent involvement. Efforts aimed at changing outcomes for constituents should be especially attentive to power and influence, including who speaks for the group and how constituents views are included in these efforts.

This section includes resources that reflect a variety of approaches including networks, collaboration and "Collective Impact" which is defined by five specific elements and approach. The "Continuum of Collaboration" provides a range of ways for organizations to work together.

### RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:

This article focuses on cross-sector collaboration that is required to remedy complex public problems. Based on an extensive review of the literature on collaboration, the article presents an inventory organized around the initial conditions affecting collaboration formation, process, structural and governance components, constraints and contingencies, outcomes, and accountability issues.

#### [The Design and Implementation of Cross-Sector Collaboration](#)

While focused on philanthropy, this paper provides a good foundation for understanding the character of movements, stages of movements and outcomes and examples of successful movements.

#### [Social Movements and Philanthropy](#)





## RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION

The Continuum of Collaboration can be used in an activity to further the understanding of the different types of organizing and when each is most effective.

Divide into small groups and assign each group a different type of collaboration to discuss. Propose the following questions:

- What about this group is unique?
- What can it accomplish?
- Who might be involved?
- How would they make decisions?

Report out by each group and capture similarities and differences

### The Continuum of Collaboration

Breaking down the silos between service providers, and the barriers between providers, advocates, and organizers is critical to knitting together and protecting a strong social safety net that helps build community. Furthermore, fostering collaboration between organizations (and often even within organizations) can help better identify community level issues that a strong ecosystem of organizations can address together. This report explores partnerships initiated in two cities that are facing similar social and economic struggles.

### Crossing Organizational Boundaries to Build New Partnerships

### **This checklist assessment is designed for collaboratives that:**

1) have just begun planning, or are in the early stages of rolling out operations; 2) may be facing some challenges; or 3) are willing to revisit basic principles to maximize chances for success. It is very comprehensive and an organization might want to focus on only one or two parts.

### Community Collaborative Assessment

## Initial Assessment

The simple assessment shown here is meant to (1) help the organization determine readiness to explore this topic, and (2) spark thinking about where to begin and what goals to develop. The tool consists of statements that describe the constituent experience in collaboration efforts and how the organization partners with other groups or organizations. It can be best used if the organization:

1. Carefully considers when and with whom to conduct the assessment. Will you use it in a staff meeting, at a board meeting, with leadership, with other partners?
2. Is clear about what to do with the results. Will they be shared broadly? How will the results impact planning and goal setting?
3. Uses the results to think through operations, programs and process as it relates to constituent engagement.
4. Enhances discussion about trends, patterns and current practice

When giving directions, emphasize that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers and for respondents to check “all that apply”. Determine who will compile the responses and how they will be presented.

Constituent	Organization
A. We refer constituents to other organizations if they have needs we can't meet	A. Our organization acts independently
B. We work with other organizations where we refer constituents and follow-up on referrals to advocate for constituents	B. Our organization works with other organizations on the larger goals of helping constituents succeed
C. We train constituents on how to advocate for getting their needs met from other groups and build partner relationships that are receptive to this process	C. Our organization includes constituent voice in formal partnerships
D. We include constituents in case meetings with other organizations to discuss how they can be best supported	D. We have joint policy goals with other organizations that involve integrating constituent voices
E. We work with constituents and other organizations to identify common problems and how to address them	E. Constituent voice is an integral part of all our partnerships and collaborations

## Goals and Theory of Change

The general goal of collaboration is to bring together individuals, agencies, organizations and community members in an atmosphere of support to systematically solve existing and emerging problems that could not easily be solved by one group alone. Collaboration should focus on increasing capacity, communication and efficiency while improving outcomes.

As a result of the previous assessment(s), goals will begin to emerge about collaboration that will set the stage for determining strategic direction and the action necessary to accomplish those goals. The Theory of Change (TOC) is a method or technique that can assist communities to think about, plan and evaluate their work. Resources for TOC are found in the Introduction Section.

This section includes suggestions for specific goals and outcomes relating to collaboration. Preparation for either approach requires several things:

1. Agreement about when to embark on the process and who to involve
2. A clear understanding of the time and resources required
3. An individual or small group that will work with the consultant in between large group process to integrate ideas and shape the final document



### RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION

When deciding who to involve in the process of goal setting, it may be useful to ask the following questions about a broad range of stakeholders:

1. What viewpoints and expertise are necessary to make informed decisions?
2. Who can effectively participate in the discussion (are there any barriers in terms of language, substantive knowledge of the programming area, hierarchy, or politics?)
3. What they will get out of participating in the TOC design?
4. Is this the best way to gather information from them?
5. Do they have the time and resources to participate?

### RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:

#### Resources for Learning: Collaboration

This resource describes the elements in collaboration and includes links to information, fact sheets and articles about collaboration.

### Sample Goals and Outcomes:

It may be helpful to have sample goals and outcomes for collaboration in mind prior to the meeting to help guide the discussion and formulate questions.

- Advocate to include constituent voice when making referrals to other organizations
- Engage constituents in collaborative efforts
- Establish forums to share with constituents and communities public knowledge
- Effective communication systems between and among collaborative partners.

### Questions for Reflection:

There are several questions to pose for reflection as the organization moves toward goal setting:

- What is the readiness level of the organization to collaborate with others?
- Why forces are moving the organization towards collaboration?
- What exists within the organization that supports collaboration? What factors are barriers to collaboration?
- What staff commitments are necessary? Are organizational structures in place that support collaborative efforts (e.g. staff job descriptions that identify tasks involved in collaborating)
- What coordinating mechanisms does the organization need to ensure that collaboration is effective? This might include shared intake, shared information, regular meeting technology, systems for share data.

Community Democracy Workshop The Kettering Foundation hosted the Community Democracy Workshop that explored issues relating to community collaboration. Included were: assumptions and beliefs about learning and knowledge building; the various approaches to community engagement; and, the relative value and effectiveness of these approaches to advancing community democracy. These notes from the meeting provide a structure for delving into these issues and can be adapted for working with any organization.

Putting Community in Collective Impact The Harwood Institute makes the case for including community in cross-sector, high impact efforts from the perspective of Collective Impact. This paper includes questions for consideration and could be used to spark a goal setting session.



## Culture

In order to take on community change goals that, by their nature, must include those who live the experience as well as a broad array of community partners, the organization's leaders need to possess qualities to be adaptive, inclusive, curious and collaborative. In addition, the organizational culture might need to be shaped to value and deepen trust and openness.

Setting goals to fully engage constituents and work across organizations often means exploring the organization's culture of power dynamics. Every organization, team, and community experiences elements of power which can be seen in the light of relational power, or power with someone or over someone, as well as the kind of power which comes from having influence in a situation.

### CULTURE | RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:

#### [The Culture of Collective Impact](#)

This article from the Collective Impact Forum identifies five core values that help leaders at all levels work better together. By using these values as a guide, practice follows that deepens the culture needed to be successful at cross-sector efforts.

### PRATICE | RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:

#### [A Framework for Collaboration among Community Partnerships, Support Organizations, and Funders](#)

This guide focuses on understanding community change, who to involve and how to engage them. It explains seven key factors for community change and how to develop a plan. In addition, it provides a checklist for roles and responsibilities for various players at different points of the process and a power point that summarizes the main points in the section.

#### [The Collective Impact Forum](#)

##### [Road Map Project](#)

The Road Map Project is a collective impact initiative focused on closing the student achievement gap and increasing the number of students acquiring a post-secondary degree or credential. This case study can be useful to understand the elements of a collective impact approach including structure, results, conditions required for success and lessons learned from the Road Map Project. Download the case study from the link to the Collective Impact Forum and find many other resources on the Forum site.

Discussions about power may lead to an exploration of cultural proficiency, or how we value others, especially others who are different from us. One way we demonstrate how much we value others is in how we share power with them. How does power operate within the organization? What are the organization's assumptions about getting to goals? How do staff and leadership see their current culture and practice?



### [HANDOUT | Sources of Power](#)

This handout can be used with organizations working in partnerships. It is helpful to understand the different ways that participation and communication styles can be perceived in groups and encourages users to consider how to share power in order to establish trust.



### RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION:

[Sharing Values](#) This exercise is designed for working with partners to explore where values are aligned and where there might be differences. There is a discussion guide that focuses on both the alignment and possibilities where values differ.

## Practice

There are many tools that can be used to overcome challenges and address real barriers to success in any stage of development. Intentionally addressing elements like levels of commitment by participating organizations (through a membership agreement or Memorandum of Understanding), membership, decision-making processes, governance (organizational structure) and strategic direction (vision, mission, values, goals), can provide the tools to achieve outcomes beyond what a single organization can do alone.



### RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION:

This concise guide, from United We Serve, provides information, tools, examples and resources for collaboratives to succeed at any stage from planning and development, through roll-out and course-correcting, and on to deciding its



next steps. The first two sections focus on establishing a working structure and selecting goals. The last three sections will help to stay on track to create the kind of outcomes that are inherently community-changing.

**Toolbox for Building Needle-moving Collaboratives**

Different groups will emerge by different paths and require activities that reflect the local conditions and players. However, this checklist can be useful, regardless of the stage of development, to identify the implementation activity that can fill a gap or move the group forward.

**Collective Impact Implementation Activity Checklist**

While this manual was last revised in 1997, it provides information, tools and examples for collaboratives across developmental stages. Newer groups can benefit from the “how-to” sections and more established collaboratives will benefit from learning through more complex discussions.

**The New Community Collaborative Manual**

## Impact

A central feature for evaluation in collaborative efforts is the engagement of stakeholders in developing and implementing plans. This requires establishing a value in the process of evaluation as well as ensuring that a plan is in place to inform continuous improvement.

Some organizations experience evaluation as way to prove whether or not results have been achieved. However, evaluation takes on a different feel if it’s seen as a process that is integrated into change efforts (rather than something that happens after) and provides a way to reflect on what works. In this scenario, data from evaluation efforts informs decisions rather than makes a judgement about efforts.

Creating an evaluation plan includes identifying outcome measures and indicators that describe progress towards those measures. Conducting evaluation in a collaborative environment requires a look at the impact of the group’s activities on all member organizations and whether or not they change the way they do business as appropriate to the information they receive.



### RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION:

**The Road Map Project - Measuring Success**

This overview from the Road Map Project might be used as a case study when preparing for an evaluation plan. Organization or collaborative members might read through the overview and identify the processes and indicators and match them to the goals of the project. Then, the group might discuss how to apply this learning to their situation. The overview describes two kinds of indicators: on-track and contributing that allow for setting long-term and interim targets.

**Evaluating Collective Impact: Five Simple Rules**

Download the article to learn the five simple rules that that can assist participants, funders, and evaluators of collective impact initiatives to track their progress and make sense of their efforts.

**Evaluating Collective Impact**

Follow this link to find the “Guide to Evaluating Collective Impact” report and a supplement with sample questions, outcomes and indicators.



### IMPACT | RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:

**Model for Evaluating a Community Program**

This example is a model for evaluating a community program or initiative. It walks through phases of evaluation, types of stakeholders, and steps to developing an evaluation plan.

## SECTION FIVE:

## Social and

## Systems Change



## Why Important

Many problems that constituents and communities face could be eased or solved if there are changes in policies, laws, administrative mandates and other systems. Systems change efforts require long-term commitment and often include a variety of partners ranging from advocates to organizers to providers, with a clear understanding of the roles each plays. Key stakeholders develop strategies, share information and data, and decide on what are short and long-term goals. Part of this work is to include community members, including constituents who live the experience, to be engaged in all stages of the effort.

In collaborative efforts that address systems change, it is often the role of service organizations to understand systemic barriers facing constituents. In addition, service organizations are well-placed to promote constituent engagement in those and other efforts while continuing to provide connections and resources for those who need them.

Organizations might contribute their efforts through advocacy, organizing and social and media campaigns to get the word out about the issue. Using the constituent voice in the message is a potent way to spread the word and to empower people to feel that their experience has value and impact.

### RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:

#### [Forces for Good: The Six Practices of High-impact Nonprofits](#)

This book, first published in 2007, is a guide to how nonprofits achieve extraordinary social impact. After studying 12 nonprofit, the authors identified six practices that lead to success. Advocacy and constituent engagement are key.

#### [Better Together](#)

This website is the portal to “Better Together”, the 2000 report that identified America’s civic apathy and ways to revitalize it. There are links to the book, “Bowling Alone”, which describes how isolated members of our society have become, as well as a social capital primer, research and measurement tools.

#### [Social Movements and Philanthropy: How Foundations can Support Movement Building](#)

#### [Social Service and Social Change: A Process Guide](#)

On page 17 of this report, social service organizations are identified as places that have not been organized to contribute to social change efforts. The author cites the Building Movement Project’s Social Service and Social Change: A Process Guide as a tool to increase engagement as well as noting other strategies for recruitment.



## Initial Assessment

The simple assessment shown here is meant to (1) help the organization determine readiness to explore this topic, and (2) spark thinking about where to begin and what goals to develop. The tool consists of statements that describe the constituent experience in system change efforts and how the organization views their role in the same. It can be best used if the organization:

1. Carefully considers when and with whom to conduct the assessment. Will you use it in a staff meeting, at a board meeting, with leadership, with other partners?
2. Is clear about what to do with the results. Will they be shared broadly? How will the results impact planning and goal setting?
3. Uses the results to think through operations, programs and process as it relates to constituent engagement.
4. Enhances discussion about trends, patterns and current practice

When giving directions, emphasize that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers and for respondents to check “all that apply”. Determine who will compile the responses and how they will be presented.

Constituent	Organization
A. We don't involve constituents in systems change work	A. We provide services only; the organization does not seem interested in doing social change work, such as advocacy or teaching our constituents about their rights
B. As part of case management, we help constituents see their problems not just as individual ones but also as larger community issues	B. Our organization belongs to coalitions that advocate for funding and issues related to our constituents
C. We take constituents to lobby days and other collective actions	C. Our organization is a leader in addressing systemic issues affecting our constituents
D. We refer constituents to community organizing groups or similar groups for leadership development and/or involvement	D. Our organization works with organizing and other groups to train constituents to address systemic change.
E. Our programs develop constituents as leaders working to address systemic issues	E. Our organization supports constituents to become leaders in social change efforts with our and other groups.



## RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION:

### Theory of Social Change

This discussion guide and exercise applies an adapted version of this familiar framework to your organization in order to help participants consider how service work differs when it incorporates social change goals. Both types of planning and impact are important.

### Catalysts for Change

In 2009, the California Endowment and the Building Movement Project surveyed more than 450 California nonprofit service providers about their methods used to integrate social change activities into their work. Five main themes emerged from the survey results, as well as several case studies. These themes offer insights into what service providers can focus on in order to increase their capacity to engage in social change activities. The link below is to Part One of Catalysts of Change. The five themes are outlined on pages 5 and 6. The handout may be used as a way for organizations to assess their readiness to engage in social change work from multiple perspectives.





## HANDOUT | The Five Themes for Integrating Social Change into Direct Service Work

In 2009, the California Endowment and the Building Movement Project surveyed more than 450 California nonprofit service providers about their methods used to integrate social change activities into their work. Five main themes emerged from the survey results, as well as several case studies. These themes offer insights into what service providers can focus on in order to increase their capacity to engage in social change activities.

*(Summarized from [Catalysts for Change: How California Nonprofits Can Deliver Direct Services and Transform Communities](#) –The California Endowment and Building Movement Project, 2010)*

Constituent Voice	External Action	Internal Capacity	Strategic Partnerships	Organizational Leadership
<p>Organization engages in activities that support clients' Ability to develop leadership skills and to build their civic voice both in and outside of the organization.</p>	<p>Organization participates in external Action that is aimed at creating social change.</p>	<p>Organization has put internal practices into place that support Activities beyond direct services.</p>	<p>Organization seeks out strategic partnerships and Alliances that enable it to participate in larger change efforts even with limited resources.</p>	<p>Organization experiences strong, focused, value-driven leadership.</p> <p>Organization experiences strong, focused, value-driven leadership.</p>
<p>Provides training and support to help community members better identify and speak to issues that affect them.</p> <p>Helps constituents better understand their rights within broader systems (e.g., health care, education, etc.).</p> <p>Offers educational forums on issues facing constituents.</p> <p>Offers constituents opportunities to develop leadership skills.</p> <p>Offers constituents opportunities to participate in organizational decision-making, goal-setting, program planning processes.</p> <p>Provides voter/census education and registration.</p> <p>Provides training to community members to enable engagement in local politics or to testify before legislative or decision-making bodies.</p> <p>Utilizes Promotores or community/peer educators' model.</p>	<p>Participates with other collective bodies that seek to address systemic issues impacting clients.</p> <p>Takes public positions on policies, legislation that directly affect its clients.</p> <p>Engages in grassroots, community, and/or youth organizing.</p> <p>Meets with policymakers/legislators about specific issues, policies, legislation.</p> <p>Participates in rallies, boycotts, etc.</p> <p>Uses research to inform advocacy work.</p>	<p>Solicits client input/feedback about programs and priorities.</p> <p>Provides staff and BOD opportunities to learn about root cause issues and policies/legislation impacting clients.</p> <p>Creates organizational culture where connection between service delivery and social change is consistently and frequently reinforced.</p> <p>Vision/mission statement, strategic plan, job descriptions reflect commitment to social change.</p> <p>501 (h) election is taken.</p> <p>Meets with clients to discuss their views on key issues.</p> <p>Staff and board members reflect diversity of clients and community served.</p> <p>Outcomes and evaluations are related to social change activities.</p>	<p>Participates in alliances that work to address policy changes or take collective action on issues that directly impact constituents and their communities.</p> <p>Partners with other groups to use resources strategically to ensure that resources are available for activities beyond direct service delivery.</p>	<p>Organization is able to successfully articulate and fulfill a mission that is focused on helping individuals and changing unjust systems.</p> <p>Leadership is able to inspire staff and board members to embrace the mission.</p> <p>Leadership is committed to developing both staff and constituent leadership at all levels of the organization to promote community engagement and civic participation.</p> <p>Organizational culture actively supports serving clients, listening to their needs and concerns, identifying larger issues, and creating plans for action.</p>



## Goals and Theory of Change

As a result of the previous assessment(s), goals will begin to emerge about working with constituents towards social and systems change that will set the stage for determining strategic direction and the action necessary to accomplish those goals. The Theory of Change (TOC) is a method or technique that can assist communities to think about, plan and evaluate their work. Resources for TOC are found in the Introduction section.

This section includes suggestions for specific goals and outcomes relating to Partnering with Community. Preparation for either approach requires several things:

1. Agreement about when to embark on the process and who to involve
2. A clear understanding of the time and resources required
3. An individual or small group that will work with the consultant in between large group process to integrate ideas and shape the final document



### RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION:

When deciding who to involve in the process of goal setting, it may be useful to ask the following questions about a broad range of stakeholders:

1. What viewpoints and expertise are necessary to make informed decisions?
2. Who can effectively participate in the discussion (are there any barriers in terms of language, substantive knowledge of the programming area, hierarchy, or politics?)
3. What they will get out of participating in the TOC design?
4. Is this the best way to gather information from them?
5. Do they have the time and resources to participate?

## Culture

An important element in organizational culture as it relates to systems change is the space to enhance constituent leadership. This fundamental belief in the capacity of constituents to lead change efforts opens possibilities within the organization to build powerful partnerships between staff and constituents. Additionally, it is essential to create a culture of learning, where perspectives are shared and a new reality is shaped.

### Sample Goals and Outcomes:

It may be helpful to have sample goals and outcomes for Social and Systems Change in mind prior to the meeting to help guide the discussion and formulate questions.

#### Midwest Academy Strategy Chart

This handout can be used to spark conversation when developing goals and strategy. It guides the organization to explore what is currently happening within the organization as well as identifying those who will work with you and those who might block your efforts.

#### An Advocacy Theory of Change

This tool can be used to design an “advocacy” theory of change. It leads a group through six questions for discussion, provides facilitation tips, and several graphic representations of what final strategies might look like.

- Understand and identify the systemic barriers facing constituents
- Increase partner organizations’ awareness of conditions that impact root causes
- Constituents hold leadership positions in community change efforts
- Constituents are engaged in efforts across the spectrum of collaborative/collective impact activities



## CULTURE | RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:

### Learning Circles in Culture Change: Why Use It?

This paper, while focused on the topic of senior services, gives clear, basic information about the purpose of learning circles. It includes tips for the facilitator, logistics and suggested ground rules. It also offers questions (on the topic) for learning at different developmental stages of the group. Questions can be customized for other groups and topics.



## RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE AGENCY:

### The Power of Stories

This webpage has a link to a video that describes the cultural treasures of one community in California. The video highlights youth working for change and developing leadership through civic engagement and advocacy.

### Where I Found Role Models Who Look Just Like Me

This motivating story by a youth leader can be effective to spark conversation about engaging often overlooked constituents for leadership roles. After reading and viewing, the organization might discuss possibilities for its marginalized populations and opportunities to learn from them and open doors to leadership.

## Practice

The tools for this section focus on building organizational knowledge and capacity to engage in social change and to expand leadership capacity of constituents as allies. Organizations that have the tools to conduct root cause analysis, have the knowledge about the rights and limits of advocacy activities and have the ability to promote civic engagement as a key for leadership will see their work as a part of the spectrum that includes direct community action.



## RESOURCES WHEN WORKING WITH THE ORGANIZATION:

### Root Cause Analysis

#### Causes and Consequences

These two activities are used to conduct a root cause analysis and to explore the causes and consequences of issues that staff and constituents deal with on a daily basis. The root cause analysis includes a handout for the discussion about “why” conditions exist. The causes and consequences handout helps organizations explore the focus of the impact of their work. Are they addressing the (root) causes of conditions or the consequences, which doesn’t lead to changing conditions and often creates the “revolving door” of service provision.

## PRACTICE | RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:

### Learning Circles for Root Cause Analysis

This handout from BMP offers information and a process to engage staff and constituent partners in learning circles focused on root cause analysis. It describes how to organize the learning circle, set it up for success and provides tips for the facilitator.

### Nonprofits Must Speak Out about Poverty and Income Inequality

This paper makes the case for nonprofits to work to ameliorate income inequality beyond providing services to those who are already poor or are in danger of falling out of the shrinking middle class and into poverty. The author suggests several strategies and offers a case study that could be used to explore possibilities within the organization.



### Deriving Power from Constituents

Nonprofits that look to their constituents for leadership and direction can change the structure and governance of the organization. This case study describes a move to build leadership within the organization that not only reflects the community it served, but to become that community. In this way, the leaders of the organization and of the community were the same, and thus able to address the root causes of the conditions that acted as barriers to change.

### Nonprofits and Lobbying

This document provides the lobbying rules for nonprofit, 501(c) (3) organizations. Contrary to popular belief, nonprofits can “lobby freely” if they follow the rules included here. This opens up many possibilities for advocacy and engaging legislators and policy makers around issues impacting local conditions.

### Vote with your Mission Campaign Kit

These materials, provided by California Nonprofits, help organizations promote civic engagement and leadership. When nonprofits use voting power, they will be able to advance their causes and mission. CalNonprofits’ campaign goal is to have 100% of eligible nonprofit staff, board members, and volunteers vote.

### Everyday Advocacy Resources

This website from the National Council of Nonprofits has a wide array of resources for advocacy. It includes links to engaging the board in advocacy, all you need to know about legislation, “how-to” worksheets, and material about federal, state, and lobbying laws.

## Impact

Evaluation of social and systems change can be complex and require thoughtful planning at the beginning of an initiative. What kind of knowledge and data will drive goal setting? How will the organization and its partners gather information that can be useful, confidential and fair? Who will design an evaluation plan and how will it be shared across users? All of these questions and more must be explored.

This section will offer some resources for cross-sector, social change evaluation as well as narrow the focus to advocacy and leadership development. Whatever approach is taken, organizations need to evaluate their efforts regularly and use the information to adapt to new conditions, some of which happen as a result of the organization’s efforts towards change.

### **RESOURCES TO USE WITH THE ORGANIZATION:**

#### Advocacy Evaluation Case Study

This case study provides an example of an evaluation of the Chalkboard Project’s civic engagement efforts. Because of its adaptive approach, it was well suited to lift up evaluative thinking in ways that fostered strategic learning. The case study presents an outcome data map and interview techniques that could be adapted for a specific organization.

#### Transactions, Transformations, Translations: Metrics that Matter

Metrics that Matter is a way of looking at organizational growth and the alliance building that brings groups together. This evaluation approach can capture the importance of narrative and numbers, of politics and policies, of transformation as well as transaction. Included are transactional and transformational criteria for measuring leadership and organizational development, and movement.

## **IMPACT | RESOURCES FOR THE CONSULTANT:**

### Evaluation for Strategic Learning

This paper makes the case for the value of using evaluation to inform strategic learning. Organizations that are set up for learning will make the best use of this type of evaluation approach. The paper includes a description of evaluation for strategic learning, questions, examples, and tools to adapt to any organizations situation.

### A Practical Guide to Evaluating Systems Change in Human Services Systems

This Guide is for practitioners and evaluators who would like a practical way to think about systems and systems change. The author presents a framework (page 4) that looks at the collaborative group as a way to organize for systems change – not the change itself.





## Nonprofits Integrating Community Engagement Guide



Building Movement Project



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For more information, please visit  
The Building Movement Project at  
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