

COLLECTIVE
IMPACT

Week 1: Why Involve Community Members in Collective Impact

First Module for “The Why and How of Working
with Communities through Collective Impact” E-
Course

March 2015



LIVING CITIES
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Why Involve Community Members in Collective Impact

This free e-course will help you better understand the process of working with community members through collective impact.

Time: ~30 minutes of reading; ~2 hours of group time

This is the first of five course modules to help collective impact initiatives better understand why and how to work with community members. Each module includes resources, discussion questions and interactive exercises. While the course can be taken as an individual, it is recommended that participants discuss the modules in a group, with other members of their collective impact initiative. We recommend setting aside a few hours each work week to discuss the resources and complete the exercises. We also offer questions for each resource to help guide discussion.

This module has **four components** to complete: **Reading materials, an exercise, online discussion** and a **post-module survey**. There is also an additional exercise and additional resources to go deeper in certain areas.

This e-course is not intended to be seen as the final word on community engagement in collective impact, but rather a starting place for the conversation. We offer these curated resources as an introductory scan of the literature and a way for your collective impact initiative to begin developing strategies for partnering with community members more deeply.

Module 1 Purpose

This module will help you think through the “why” behind working with community members.

The reading materials are curated to provide exposure to a variety of purposes for involving community members in collective impact, as well as a framework for developing intentional strategies and goals for engagement. The exercises will help you think through how these ideas apply to your own work and develop actionable takeaways.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the main challenges of involving community members in collective impact
- Understand the different levels across the engagement spectrum and what they look like in collective impact
- Understand how to develop strategies for working with community members that align with engagement goals
- Connect your motivations for involving community members in your initiative with specific levels of engagement

Reading Materials:

These can be found in PDF form in the “Reading Materials” folder of the asset package you downloaded.

Why Involve Community in Collective Impact At All?

This blog from Living Cities is meant to frame the main learning objectives for this module. It a tool to help you think through how and why to work with community members, which will also be used in the module exercise below.

Guiding discussion questions:

- Where on the spectrum do you think your community engagement work currently falls?
- When you think of “community,” who do you think of? Who isn’t in that picture?

Roundtable Discussion on Community Engagement and Collective Impact

This *Stanford Social Innovation Review* article introduces some overarching reasons about why it is important to involve community members within collective impact. It also features some of the leading thinkers on this topic.

Guiding discussion questions:

- Which person’s perspective best resonates with you?
- What is your motivation for involving community members in your collective impact initiative?

The Problem with ‘Community Outreach’

This blog post provides a hypothetical example of why you need to align the strategies for working with community members with your goals for doing so.

Guiding discussion questions:

- Where have you seen a similar example in your work?
- Why do you think it’s important to understand the goals for engaging community members before deciding to work with them?

Exercise:

This exercise can be found in the “Exercise” folder of the asset package you downloaded.

Assessing Your Engagement Strategies: This exercise, adapted from resources from the Tamarack Institute, will walk you through how to link your strategies for working with community members with your goals for doing so. This exercise will serve as the foundation for much of the course, but should be revised in each module as you further explore how to work with community members. Again, it is best completed with other members of your collective impact initiative.

Guiding discussion questions:

- How intentional have you been in designing your community engagement strategies in the past?
- What can you change today about how you work with community members?

Online Discussion:

There are many ways you can discuss the course topics in this and other modules with participants:

You can join the on-going conversation on the Collective Impact Forum [community discussion page](#), which requires free registration.

To join the conversation with other course participants, join our Twitter “study hall” on Friday, March 20th at 1pm ET (10am PT; 6pm GMT) to ask your questions and share your insights. Use the hashtag [#CEinCI](#) to join in.

This week, we will be joined by Sheri Brady from Aspen Institute for Community Solutions to help spark and moderate the discussion.

Post-Module Survey:

Once you and our team have completed this module, please [complete the post-module survey](#), which will take five minutes to complete. This survey lets us know you have completed this module, and it also gives us valuable feedback on how to improve the e-course.

The following exercise and resources are recommend but not required as a part of the module.

Additional Exercise:

Complete the [“Community Rhythms” Toolkit](#)

If you want to further explore how well the different parts of your community are connected, this tool will allow you to determine what stage of “community life” you are currently operating in. This tool is about more than just the goals of your particular collective impact initiative, but the overall health of your community relationships. This tool may be helpful for you if Rich Harwood’s comments in the “Roundtable Discussion on Community Engagement and Collective Impact” were of particular interest. This [introductory blog](#) about the exercise will help you complete it.

Additional Resources:

- [Putting Community in Collective Impact](#) and other resources from the [Harwood Institute](#)
- [It's About Community: Why Community Engagement and Process Matter in Collective Impact](#) (Webinar recording—requires free registration)
- [Tamarack Institute](#)
- [Designing Public Participation Processes](#) by Bryson, et al. This is an academic paper and it provides the theoretical basis for how to design engagement strategies that link to your engagement goals.