LIBRARIES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

Communities
have challenges.
Libraries can help.

**A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE
TO "TURNING OUTWARD"
TO YOUR COMMUNITY**

ALA American Library Association

LIBRARIES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

PLA Public Library Association
a division of the American Library Association

HARWOOD The Institute for Public Innovation

All communities have challenges. Libraries can help conquer them — given the right tools.

The tools in this workbook are designed to help libraries strengthen their role as community leaders and bring about positive change in their communities.

"Turning outward" is a step-by-step process developed by The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation. It entails taking steps to better understand communities; changing processes and thinking to make conversations more community-focused; being proactive to community issues; and putting community aspirations first.

Taken together, these resources provide a 90-day plan to help your library "turn outward."

We hope you find these materials useful, and we welcome your feedback. Please e-mail your comments and questions to the American Library Association's Public Programs Office at publicprograms@ala.org. For more resources and information about how libraries nationwide are using these tools, visit ala.org/LTC.

ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

About Libraries Transforming Communities

Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC) is an ALA initiative that seeks to strengthen libraries' roles as core community leaders and change-agents. LTC addresses a critical need within the library field by developing and distributing new tools, resources and support for librarians to engage with their communities in new ways. As a result, we believe libraries will become more reflective of and connected to their communities and build stronger partnerships with local civic agencies, non-profits, funders and corporations. The initiative is made possible through a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

About the American Library Association

The American Library Association (ALA) is the oldest and largest library association in the world, with approximately 58,000 members in academic, public, school, government and special libraries. The mission of the American Library Association is to provide leadership for the development, promotion and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all.

About The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation

The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation is a national non-profit organization based in Bethesda, Md., that teaches and coaches people and organizations to solve pressing problems and change how communities work together. The Institute is guided by Richard C. Harwood, whose transformational work during almost 30 years has spread to thousands of communities nationally and worldwide, from small towns to large cities.

THE FIRST 30 DAYS: GETTING STARTED

The first step in the "turning outward" process is to learn to think in a "turned-outward" mindset. Most of us are conditioned to think in an "inward" way — putting our organizations first — so this shift may take some work. In the first 30 days, start working with your own team (library staff, board, volunteers, etc.) to understand your current mindset and figure out what needs to change for your thoughts and decision-making to become more outward-facing.

FIRST 30 DAYS: GETTING STARTED	THE TOOL	WHAT IS IT?	HOW CAN IT HELP?	GET THE TOOL
Begin to talk to your library team about their hopes and goals **Put in place the thought processes that will lead to long-term change**	**Turn Outward**	A short quiz to help you and your team understand what it means to turn outward toward the community	Illustrates what the concept of turning outward means in practice and lays the groundwork for future action Use individually or with a group, such as in a staff meeting or board retreat	Turn Outward (See pgs. 3-4)
	Aspirations	A 60- to 90-minute conversation with an existing or newly formed group (i.e., staff task force, board committee, new community group) designed to help the group decide what they want to work on together	Starts the conversation with aspirations, as opposed to problems—keeping the focus grounded in reality with a sense of possibility Composed of three questions that culminate in a brief story summarizing your community's aspirations and challenges	Aspirations (See pgs. 5-6) Aspirations Facilitator's Guide (See pgs. 7-8)
	Intentionality Tests	A series of self-assessment questions to help you learn to make turned-outward decisions grounded in aspirations and the 3 A's of Public Life: Authority, Authenticity and Accountability	Tests offer touchstones for decision-making you can use in your daily work	Intentionality (See pgs. 9-10) Engagement Paths (See pgs. 11-12) 3 As of Public Life (See pgs. 13-18) Sustaining Yourself (See pgs. 19-20)

TURN OUTWARD

Look at the two columns below. For each row choose the word that best describes the focus of your work or efforts in the community.

INWARD

I am generally focused on:

- ☐ Activity
- ☐ Programs
- ☐ My Organization
- ☐ People as Consumers
- ☐ Process
- ☐ Outreach
- ☐ Public Relations
- ☐ Inputs
- ☐ Claiming Turf
- ☐ Charity
- ☐ Feeling Good

OUTWARD

I am generally focused on:

- ☐ Action
- ☐ People
- ☐ My Community
- ☐ People as Citizens
- ☐ Progress
- ☐ Engagement
- ☐ People's Reality
- ☐ Impact
- ☐ Coming Together
- ☐ Change
- ☐ Doing Good

Count the checkmarks in the right column to find your Turn Score ☐

TURN OUTWARD

Take your score from the first page and rate yourself:

(0-3)   Good Start: Focusing on Aspirations leads us to Turn Outward. Try the Aspirations tool to remind yourself of the kind of community you want.

(4-7)   Real Progress for you and your community: As you work to Turn Outward it's critical to focus on making intentional choices and judgments. Use the Intentionality tool to help accelerate your progress.

(8-11)   Keep Your Focus: Congratulations, you're Turned Outward toward the community. Use the Sustaining Yourself tool to think about the support you need to stick with it.

HOW TO MAKE IT WORK

1   Post this at work or at home. Remind yourself to refer back to it. Ask yourself: What would it take for you to more fully Turn Outward?

2   Share this exercise with others—with your co-workers, at your place of worship, with friends, your PTA, your board, etc. Ask: What are the implications for our work? What other groups could use this exercise for their own work?

ASPIRATIONS

Talk about aspirations and find common ground for working with others:

Take a moment to focus on your community aspirations and to identify next steps you want in creating change. Add your aspirations, challenges, and the new conditions to create in the spaces provided below. Use this on your own and then try it in a group setting — check out the Aspirations Facilitator's Guide to help in leading an aspirations conversation.

ASPIRATIONS

My aspirations for my community are:

....

....

....

CHALLENGES

The challenges we face in reaching these aspirations are:

....

....

....

NEW CONDITIONS

The changes needed in my community to reach our aspirations are:

....

....

....

ASPIRATIONS

Create a story for your community. Describe the key insights from the first page as a single word or phrase. Write down that word or phrase in the corresponding sentence below to create your story. Use this story as a reminder of your goals and share it with others.

My community aspirations

My hope is to live in a community where _____ (aspirations).

However, right now we face _____ (challenges).

In order to get there as a community, we need to _____.
(new conditions, change).

HOW TO MAKE IT WORK

1   Post this at work or at home. Remind yourself to refer back to it. Ask yourself: Am I focused on my aspirations?

2   Share this exercise with others to find common ground—with your co-workers, at your place of worship, with friends, your PTA, your board, etc. Ask: How can our efforts reflect these shared aspirations?

3   Use these questions with others to begin finding shared community aspirations. Check out the Aspirations Facilitator's Guide for instructions on how to lead the conversation.

ASPIRATIONS FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Instructions for leading a conversation about aspirations

Take a moment to focus on your community aspirations and to identify next steps you want in creating change. Add your aspirations, challenges and the new conditions to create in the spaces provided below. Use this on your own and then try it in a group setting.

- For this exercise you'll be asking the three questions shown below and helping to identify patterns or themes from the answers given.

- Make sure everyone has a copy of the Aspirations questions.

- Give your participants ten minutes to read and write down their answers to these three questions.

- Go through the questions in order and for each, record their answers on a flip chart and identify any patterns or themes that emerge from their answers.

1. WHAT ARE YOUR ASPIRATIONS FOR YOUR COMMUNITY?

Record your participant's answers on the flip chart. Capture the key words they use. Ask the group:

- What patterns do you see?

- Are there any themes emerging? Name some of these themes.

Make sure that you've captured the essence of their thoughts and responses.

2. WHAT CHALLENGES DO WE FACE IN REACHING THESE ASPIRATIONS?

Record your participant's answers on the flip chart. Capture the key words they use. Ask the group:

- What patterns do you see?

- Are there any themes emerging? Name some of these themes.

Make sure that you've captured the essence of their thoughts and responses.

ASPIRATIONS FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

3. WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE IN THE COMMUNITY TO REACH OUR ASPIRATIONS?

Record your participants' answers on the flip chart. Capture the key words they use. Ask the group:

- What patterns do you see?

- Are there any themes emerging? Name some of these themes.

Make sure that you've captured the essence of their thoughts and responses.

HOW TO SUMMARIZE:

Once the three questions have been answered and the responses recorded, summarize what your participants have said by telling a story.

We began by saying that we wanted a community where ＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿ (aspirations) but we face ＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿ (challenges). So if we want to reach our aspirations, we need to create ＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿ (new conditions/change).

HOW TO MAKE IT WORK

1 Record the themes and post them where people will frequently see them. Ask: If this story about our shared aspirations is true, then what does that mean for our work together?

2 Share this exercise with others—with your co-workers, at your place of worship, with friends, your PTA, your board, etc. Ask: What are the implications for our work? What other groups could use this exercise for their own work?

INTENTIONALITY

Each day, we make hundreds of choices, and while we can't control everything, if we become more intentional about the choices we do make—we can have far greater impact.

Test the quality of your choices by asking yourself the following questions:

1 **TURN OUTWARD:**
Am I turned outward toward the community?

2 **ASPIRATIONS:**
Are my actions rooted in people's shared aspirations?

3 **AUTHORITY:**
Could I stand up on a table and talk to people about their community, their aspirations and concerns, and would they believe me?

4 **AUTHENTICITY:**
Do I reflect the reality of people's lives and do they believe I have their best interests at heart, even when we disagree?

5 **ACCOUNTABILITY:**
Am I living up to the pledges and promises I have made?

6 **URGE WITHIN:**
Am I staying true to my urge within?

INTENTIONALITY

HOW TO MAKE IT WORK

1 Post these Intentionality questions in your office or at home. Ask yourself: Am I acting with Intentionality?

2 Use the Intentionality questions in meetings. Ask yourself and others: Do the choices being made reflect shared aspirations and true authority, authenticity and accountability?

3 Share this exercise with others — with your co-workers, at your place of worship, with friends, your PTA, your board, etc. Ask: What are the implications for our work? What other groups could use this exercise for their own work?

ENGAGEMENT PATHS

How People Engage

PERSONAL REALM

People are living their daily private lives. Conversations tend to focus on concerns that have a direct impact on their own lives or the lives of those close to them. They talk to those whom they know and with whom they feel comfortable.

NASCENT TALK

People begin to connect personal and public lives. This step looks like discussions we have with people every day, a mixture of gossip and conversation about an issue. People in this step are not usually motivated to solve problems or make decisions.

DISCOVERY

People cross over from thinking about issues in a private sense to thinking in public terms. They gain a sense of possibility and begin to see that common ground for action might be found. They become invested in finding a solution while working with others.

DELIBERATION

People make choices, wrestle with values and trade-offs, and figure out what to do in the context of their aspirations. This step is a prerequisite to taking purposeful public action.

COMPLEMENTARY ACTION

A wide range of individuals and organizations take action, informed by deliberation. The actions are typically not coordinated, but are carried out with a shared sense of purpose.

ENGAGEMENT PATHS

How Organizations Engage

RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENTS

The organization determines community needs, often so it can tailor an already existing service or program to fit into the community.

EDUCATE COMMUNITY

The organization provides people in the community with information, typically about a specific topic, issue or program, to help people understand what the organization knows and embrace the organization's conclusions.

IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

The organization convenes people to make decisions about strategies and action plans and assigns responsibilities for program implementation. The method of planning often includes community leaders, service providers and other stakeholders.

COLLABORATION

To reduce duplication of efforts and leverage scarce resources, the organization seeks to coordinate its efforts in the community with groups working on similar issues. Organizations are asked to make agreements about how to collaborate. Often, agreements must be revisited if the players change.

How do you describe the way you or your organization currently engage the community?

What are the implications for the way you or your organization engage the community?

What would it take to shift to engagement that is more community-orientated?

THE 3 A'S OF PUBLIC LIFE

Self-Assessment Questions

Purpose: To measure individual progress in Authority, Authenticity and Accountability.

Directions: Please respond to the following 20 statements in terms of your personal work. Rate the questions use this rating scale:

THE HARWOOD RATING SCALE

Rating	What it means
We've Got It	We feel good about saying we've got this factor.
Real Progress	We're steadily improving and moving in the right direction. Still room for improvement.
Starting to Improve	We're beginning to demonstrate genuine effort. Things are starting to get better.
Lip Service	We're talking a good game, but our actions are not in line with what we're saying.
Business As Usual	We haven't changed at all—it's "business as usual."
Not Applicable	This factor is either not relevant to our work or not on our radar.

THE 3 A'S OF PUBLIC LIFE

Self-Assessment Questions: Authority

Rate yourself for each question below in terms of your personal work.

	We've Got It	Real Progress	Starting to Improve	Lip Service	Business As Usual	Not Applicable
We hold deep knowledge about the community: we understand people, their lives, where they live, and their aspirations and concerns.						
Our internal conversations reflect a deep knowledge of the community.						
We actively apply knowledge of the community in making internal decisions and working with external partners.						
We design and implement our programs based on a deep understanding of the community.						
People outside the organization would describe us as operating as part of the community rather than apart from it.						

THE 3 A'S OF PUBLIC LIFE

Self-Assessment Questions: Authenticity

Rate yourself for each question below in terms of your personal work.

	We've Got It	Real Progress	Starting to Improve	Lip Service	Business As Usual	Not Applicable
What we say and do rings true to people in the community.						
People in the community believe we have the community's best interests at heart.						
We see and treat people as community residents, rather than mostly as donors or members.						
We exercise a sense of affection for the community in our daily operations and work.						
Our work reflects the wholeness of the community, capturing the different perspectives, ambiguities and tensions that exist.						
If you asked people in the community, they would say our words and actions reflect the reality of people's lives in the community.						
We have created ways to deeply listen to the community in an ongoing way.						

THE 3 A'S OF PUBLIC LIFE

Self-Assessment Questions: Accountability

Rate yourself for each question below in terms of your personal work.

	We've Got It	Real Progress	Starting to Improve	Lip Service	Business As Usual	Not Applicable
We are focused on pursuing actions that are meaningful for people and we are careful to avoid window-dressing.						
We set realistic expectations about the potential impact of our work in what we promise to people in the community.						
We don't do things just because they sound good; we are focused on what will make a real difference in improving our community's civic health.						
We have a culture open to learning about the community and we account for what we learn in our daily work.						
We know the role we want to play in the community—it's clear internally and to those outside the organization.						
We regularly take stock of our pledges and promises to the community and whether we are fulfilling them.						
We clearly work from the assumption that community change unfolds over time and our work reflects that understanding.						
In working in the community, we actively seek to build on what came before and create a foundation for what might follow.						

THE 3 A'S OF PUBLIC LIFE

Small Group Discussion

1. Looking at the 3 A's Self-Assessment Questions, what key concepts jumped out at you? Why those?

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2. What are the implications of the 3 A's for how you work in the community?

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NOTES

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THE 3 A'S OF PUBLIC LIFE

Authority

- Holding Authority means having knowledge rooted in the community—understanding people, their lives, where they live, their aspirations and their concerns. You hold a deep knowledge of the community.

- Holding Authority means applying this knowledge to inform your decisions, how you design and implement programs, and how you conduct yourself. Your actions are pivotal.

- Holding Authority means acting as part of the community as opposed to acting apart from it. You are rooted in public life.

Authenticity

- Being Authentic means that your words and actions reflect the reality of people's lives. Being Authentic means that you see and treat people in a human way, not as objects to be manipulated.

- Being Authentic means seeking to understand the wholeness of a situation—capturing the different perspectives, ambiguity and tensions that exist. What you say rings true.

- Being Authentic means genuinely listening to the community in an ongoing way. You can then reflect the community in your work.

- Being Authentic means that the community believes you have their best interests at heart. You exercise a sense of affection for the community.

Accountability

- Exercising Accountability takes being open to learning along the journey of change. You must account for what you are learning.

- Exercising Accountability takes setting realistic expectations for change and making progress. You must account for your own pledges and promises.

- Exercising Accountability takes understanding and reflecting a sense of public time and rhythms. You can accelerate the natural rhythms of a community, but you cannot violate them.

- Exercising Accountability takes pursuing actions rooted in purpose and meaning for people. You must avoid window-dressing or merely undertaking actions that sound appealing.

SUSTAINING YOURSELF

Getting people across the community to work together takes a great deal of personal commitment and energy. It's important to make sure you keep your own "batteries charged" when you do this valuable and often difficult work.

Take a moment and write down what you need to sustain yourself as you do community work.

WHAT REJUVENATES ME?

What are the three things that rejuvenate you? What gives you energy, renews you and reduces your risk of burning out?

1. ....

2. ....

3. ....

WHO REJUVENATES ME?

Who are the three people you can turn to for support, people who know your values, who "get" why you do this work, and will take your call anytime day or night? Who are the people you can turn to when you're struggling or worried you've lost your way?

1. ....

2. ....

3. ....

DO I MAKE THE TIME FOR WHAT REJUVENATES ME AND THE PEOPLE I CAN TURN TO?

If someone followed you around or looked at your calendar over the last month, would they see that you'd made time for those things that rejuvenate you and those people whom you can turn to for support? Or would they find that when your schedule got hectic those were the appointments you canceled first?

SUSTAINING YOURSELF

HOW TO MAKE IT WORK

1 Schedule activities that rejuvenate you.

2 Reach out to at least one person you listed and share this exercise so they can help keep you on track.

3 Act with intentionality when scheduling and canceling appointments. Check your calendar to make sure you have times blocked to renew and sustain yourself.

30–60 DAYS: GOING INTO THE COMMUNITY

Once your team is comfortable with the concepts behind turning outward, it is time to shift your focus outside the library's walls. (We estimate that this transition should occur around the 30-day mark, but go at your own pace.) All too often, change-leaders make assumptions about what their communities need and want; the turning outward process, on the other hand, emphasizes going straight to the source, learning about your community's aspirations and using that knowledge to determine your course of action.

For the next month or so, your team should start talking to your community members to determine what they want. Start small, with the short Ask exercise, and then ramp up to full Community Conversations. Ultimately you will collect all the community's feedback and determine common themes that will shape your next steps.

30-60 DAYS: GOING INTO THE COMMUNITY Begin facilitating conversations with your community	THE TOOL	WHAT IS IT?	HOW CAN IT HELP?	GET THE TOOL
	Ask Exercise	Four simple questions you can ask people one-on-one—patrons, even folks on the street—to begin learning what kind of community people want	A starting point for learning about your community's aspirations Gain confidence in engaging people—even those you don't know—in conversation Takes just 5 to 10 minutes Can be completed with minimal planning	Ask Exercise (See pg. 21)
	Community Conversations	A series of 90- to 120-minute conversations with community members about what they want their community to be; what challenges they face in realizing these aspirations; and what changes are needed to overcome them	Help you engage others, find partners and develop strategies that strengthen the library's relevance and significance in the community Templates in Community Conversation Workbook make it easy to invite, facilitate and follow up	Community Conversations Workbook (See pgs. 22-43) Theming and Using Public Knowledge Workbook (See pgs. 44-48) Also see the following webinars at ala.org/LTC/resources: Webinar: "Hosting and Leading Community Conversations" Webinar: "Theming and Using Public Knowledge" Webinar: "Calibrating Community Conditions"

ASK EXERCISE

We want to get a sense of people's aspirations for their community and learn about the kind of community they want to create. Introduce yourself and say, "We're trying to learn more about people's aspirations for their community. Would you be willing to answer four quick questions?"

1. What kind of community do you want to live in?

....

2. Why is that important to you?

....

3. How is that different from how you see things now?

....

4. What are some of the things that need to happen to create that kind of change?

....

NOTES FROM CONVERSATION

Who did you talk with?

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Key ideas you want to remember:

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COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

The Value of Community Conversations

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS SERVE TWO IMPORTANT PURPOSES:

- They are a turned-outward way to authentically engage members of the community.

- They generate Public Knowledge that can then be used to inform decision-making of all kinds.

ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY TO UNDERSTAND:

- People's aspirations for the community.

- People's concerns.

- How people think and talk about a given issue in relation to the community.

- The changes needed to reach our aspirations for the community.

- What people believe we can do, and who they'd trust to take action.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION THEMES HELP INFORM HOW YOU:

- **Engage the community:** Inviting new people opens the door to new relationships.

- **Find new partners:** Sharing Public Knowledge creates coalition opportunities.

- **Develop strategies:** Working on the issue AND building capacity to work together.

- **Mobilize resources:** Creating natural pathways for people to contribute.

PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

The value of Public Knowledge:

- Roots your work and decisions in what matters to people.

- Identifies key issues and their connections in language that people use.

- Uncovers a sense of common purpose.

- Enables you to set realistic goals.

- Informs your choices so your work is more relevant and has greater impact.

- In most communities, few leaders or organizations HAVE Public Knowledge.

- Too often we substitute expert knowledge for Public Knowledge.

Public Knowledge	Expert Knowledge
Comes from engaging with people around their aspirations, their concerns, how they see their community.	Comes from professional analysis and reporting of statistics, trend data, poll data, market and audience studies.
In plain language that everyone can understand.	Often in language that only professionals understand.

Notes

PLANNING THE CONVERSATION

The ideal size for these conversations is between 8 and 15 people. To get that many, invite at least 20 people, as some will be unable to make it. If fewer than 8 show up, that's fine. Go ahead. It'll be worth your time. If more than 20 show up, consider breaking into two groups.

Decide whom to invite

These conversations are a powerful way to get to know different parts of the community or learn from voices not usually heard. Think about what you want to learn. Do you want to get a general understanding of how people see the community? If yes, then invite a broad group of people to come and talk. This is a great starting point. Maybe you want to get a better sense of how a specific group of people or people from a certain part of town think and talk about their community. Then you will want a more targeted strategy in inviting people. Any of these options is fine. No matter what you choose, remember since these are conversations, not rigorous academic research, you do not need a random or demographically representative sample.

After you've identified whom you want to engage, think about the individuals or groups who could help you reach those people. Ask yourself:

- Who knows the part of the community or the people we want to talk to?
    - » Staff, volunteers, board members
    - » Partners and their staff

- Who already brings people together? Think about asking for help from:
    - » Local businesses: barber shops, beauty parlors, diners
    - » Religious leaders, congregations, choirs, prayer groups
    - » Book clubs, gardening groups, parenting groups, neighborhood associations
    - » Groups like YMCA, Rotary, the PTA, unions

Tips for getting people to come

- Invite people personally and encourage your staff and partners to do the same.

- Contact people on your email lists or via social media.

- Ask people to suggest others to invite (friends, neighbors, peers).

- Set clear expectations in the invitation. (See next page.)

- Follow up by email or phone to determine how many people are coming.

- When possible, try to invite people at least two weeks before the event.

SETTING EXPECTATIONS

Setting realistic expectations

As you invite people to the conversations, it is important to set clear, realistic expectations. These are different from the conversations most groups hold, so it is helpful to explain what these conversations ARE and what they ARE NOT.

First, what these conversations are:

- Ninety-minute to two-hour conversations that help us better understand the community and how we can restore our belief that we can get things done together.
- Focused on learning. We pledge to follow up with you after the conversation to share what we've learned and how we will use that information.

Secondly, what these conversations are not:

- A town hall, academic research or a focus group. They are conversations.
- Sponsored by a political party, a business development effort, etc.
- About trying to sell a particular solution or approach
- A gripe session

Suggested Community Conversation invitation template

We are hosting a Community Conversation at _(location)_ from _(start time to end time)_ on _(date)_. (IF YOU HAVE A PARTNER HELPING YOU, BE SURE TO MENTION THEM HERE.)

This conversation is one of several that we'll be having with people across the community. Each one is a chance for us to better understand people's aspirations for their community, the concerns they have and what they believe might make a difference in strengthening the community. We'll take what we learn from these conversations and use it to help make our work in the community more effective.

We can't promise the conversation will lead to a new program or policy. We pledge to get back to you with what we learned and let you know how we'll use what we heard.

Hopefully you'll be able to join us. If so, please RSVP to _(person)_ at _(contact info)_ so we can be sure to have enough refreshments on hand.

Thank you.

PS. For more information don't hesitate to contact _(person)_ at _(contact info)_.

WHERE TO HOLD COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Site location can have a big impact on the success of your Community Conversation. The setting can affect who attends each Community Conversation, the quality of the conversation and the group's ability to get its work done. Ensure that the invited participants will be comfortable in the chosen location.

Look for a place that:

- Folks are familiar with and use frequently.

- Is considered to be part of the community. Usually this excludes government or "official" places and schools.

- Has a second or third room available if you need to divide up a large group.

- Is available in the evenings and/or on weekends.

- Offers a comfortable environment.

- Is not too noisy or full of distractions.

- Is easily accessible to all participants: plenty of parking, centrally located, safe, near public transportation, accessible to those with disabilities.

- Is affordable given project resources.

More and less desirable places to look for sites

Here are some examples of both more and less desirable places for the Community Conversations. This is not an exhaustive list; think about other potential sites for the Community Conversations in your area.

More Desirable	Less Desirable
Public libraries	City hall
Community centers	Government buildings
Places of worship	Schools
Community organizations (YMCA, etc.)	Fancy hotels
Recreation centers	Office buildings (especially after hours)

TRAITS OF CONVERSATION LEADERS

The responsibility of a Conversation Leader

The main responsibility of a Conversation Leader is to create an environment that enables you to learn about the community and people's aspirations. It's more than just running a meeting. Good Conversation Leaders are curious listeners, focused on creating a conversation where people can discover and learn from one another and explore their own ideas.

An effective Conversation Leader:

- Remains neutral about the topic under discussion; is not seen as having his or her own agenda or siding with one group.

- Explores ideas with people; displays a genuine sense of curiosity.

- Listens to people and builds trust.

- Pushes people to consider different perspectives, helping folks to understand why others think in different ways.

- Helps people reconcile conflicting remarks in a non-confrontational manner.

- Has experience leading or facilitating group discussions.

- Stays focused on the goal of the conversation — this is about learning, not promotion.

- Prepares for each conversation by reading the guide and going over notes from previous conversations.

Note: Conversation Leaders do not need to be experts on these issues. They are there to guide, not participate in, the conversations.

TIPS FOR LEADING CONVERSATIONS

To get the most out of the conversation, you want to go beyond people's surface reactions. Here are several rules of thumb to use when leading these conversations:

Take nothing at face value: Notice the words and phrases people use. Probe by asking, "What do you mean?" and "What are you getting at?"

Listen for where people get stuck: Watch for places where people need more facts or where a perception prevents them from saying more about a concern.

Engage people early on: Make sure everyone says something early on. Ask people what they think about what others are saying.

Ask people to square their contradictions: Illuminate what folks are struggling with. Ask, "I know this can be a really tough issue, but how do the two things you said fit together?"

Keep juxtaposing views and concerns: Pointing out contrasts will help people articulate what they really believe and give you a deeper understanding of what they think.

Help keep the conversation focused: Help people stay focused. Remind participants what they are discussing. Don't let things get too far afield.

Piece together what people are saying: Folks won't make one all-inclusive statement about what they think. Say, "This is what I'm hearing. Do I have it right?"

Keep in mind the "unspoken" rules: Different conversations and spaces have their own sets of "rules." Check the level of trust people have and what it means for how you should interact.

Watch out for your own preconceived views: Everyone has biases that can filter our questions and interpretations. Be alert to them.

TIPS FOR LEADING CONVERSATIONS

Troubleshooting Guide

IF	THEN
A few people dominate the conversation	Engage each person from the start. Make sure everyone says something early on. Ask, "Are there any new voices on this issue?" or "Does anyone else want to jump in here?" Be direct and say, "We seem to be hearing from the same people. Let's give others a chance to talk." Call on people by name to answer.
The group gets off on a tangent or a person rambles on and on	Ask, "How does what you're talking about relate to our challenge?" or "What does that lead you to think about (the question at hand)?" Ask them to restate or sum up what they said in a few words. If you can't get a person to focus, interrupt him/her when they take a breath and move to another person or question. Then bring him/her back into the conversation later.
Someone seems to have a personal grudge about an issue and keeps talking about it	Remind the person where the group is trying to focus. Ask him/her to respond to the question at hand. Acknowledge the person and move on. Say, "I can understand where you are coming from, but we need to move on." If the person continues to be disruptive, interrupt them. Say, "We heard you, but we're just not talking about that right now."
People argue	Don't let it bother you too much — it's okay as long as it is not mean–spirited. Find out what's behind the argument; ask why people disagree, get to the bottom of it. Break the tension with a joke or something funny. Stop to review the ground rules. Take a break.
People never disagree or are "too polite"	Play "devil's advocate." Bring up or introduce different or competing ideas and see how people respond. Tell the group you've noticed that they don't disagree much and ask if everyone is really in as much agreement as it seems.

CONVERSATION GROUND RULES

1. **Have a "kitchen table" conversation**
   Everyone participates; no one dominates.

2. **There are no "right answers"**
   Draw on your own experiences, views and beliefs. You do not need to be an expert.

3. **Keep an open mind**
   Listen carefully and try hard to understand the views of those who disagree with you.

4. **Help keep the discussion on track**
   Stick to the questions; try not to ramble.

5. **It is okay to disagree, but don't be disagreeable**
   Respond to others how you want to be responded to.

6. **Have fun!**

SETTING UP THE CONVERSATION

1. Introductions

- Introduce yourself.
- Thank any groups or individuals involved in setting up the conversation.
- Thank the participants for coming.

2. Set expectations

- Over the next few months, we will be holding conversations like this one with people across town to talk about their aspirations, their concerns and how we can move forward.
- Tonight's conversation is a chance for us to better understand how you see things in our community.
- We can't promise to create a new program based on this conversation. We will promise to get back to you with what we learn tonight and how we'll use it.
- These conversations usually last between 90 minutes and two hours, though sometimes folks want to talk more.

3. Review the ground rules

- Go over the ground rules. Ask, "Do those rules work for everyone?"

4. Explain your role as a Conversation Leader

- Tonight, my role is to ask questions that help us have a good conversation. I won't participate or offer my views — this is a conversation about what you think.
- To be sure I get what you're saying, I may ask follow-up questions or play "devil's advocate."
- To make sure we hear from everyone, I may ask you to hold off on comments at times.

5. Identify the Note-taker (See page 34)

- We have someone (point them out) taking notes tonight. The notes won't include anyone's name or be made public; they're to make sure we catch what you're saying.

6. Get started

- Before we get started, please tell us your first name, where you live and what you like to do in your free time.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

1. **What kind of community do you want?**

   - Why is that important?

   - How is that different from the way things are now?

2. **Given what we just said, what are the two or three most important issues when it comes to the community?**

   - Decide which issue is most important for the group and use it for the discussion.

   - If you are going to test a specific issue, introduce it here. How about _____, how does that fit with what we're talking about? What concerns do you have about that?

3. **What concerns do you have about this issue? Why?**

   - Does it seem like things are getting better? Worse? What makes you say that?

   - How do you think the issue/concern came about?

4. **How do the issues we're talking about affect you personally?**

   - What personal experiences have you had?

   - How about people around you — family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, others — what do you see them experiencing?

   - Are some people affected more than others? Who? In what ways? Why?

5. **When you think about these things, how do you feel about what's going on?**

   - Why do you feel this way?

   - How do you think other people (in different parts of town) feel about this?

6. **What do you think is keeping us from making the progress we want?**

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

7. **When you think about what we've talked about, what are the kinds of things that could be done that would make a difference?**

   - What do you think these things might accomplish?

   - How about in terms of individuals: What are the kinds of things that people like us could do to make a difference?

   - What's important for us to keep in mind when we think about moving ahead?

8. **Thinking back over the conversation, what groups or individuals would you trust to take action on these things?**

   - Why them and not others?

9. **If we came back together in six months or a year, what might you see that would tell you that the things we talked about tonight were starting to happen?**

   - Why would that suggest things were changing? What would it mean to see that?

10. **Now that we've talked about this issue a bit, what questions do you have about it?**

    - What do you feel you'd like to know more about that would help you make better sense of what's going on and what should be done?

    - What kind of follow-up would you like out of this discussion?

THE ROLE OF NOTE-TAKER

The main responsibility of a Note-taker

The main responsibility of a Note-taker is to capture key insights, ideas, themes, turning points and quotes from the Community Conversation. Note-takers work with Conversation Leaders to identify themes within conversations and across several conversations.

> **Note:** Don't try to write down everything you hear (it's not a transcript). Nor should you just summarize a few points. The goal is to capture details, key quotes, turning points and patterns that can be used to create themes.

An effective Note-taker:

- Is curious about how people think about the world.

- Is observant, noting what people say, how they say it (the emotion, tension or doubt) and even what people aren't saying (what's being ignored).

- Captures the essence of the conversation without inserting his/her own voice, words or judgment.

- Is good with details (like the specific words that people are using) AND able to help translate that into larger themes.

- Stays focused on the goal of the conversation: "What are we learning?"

Immediately after the conversation, talk with the Conversation Leader to compare notes. Ask:

- What did you make of the conversation?

- What ideas, actions or comments really seemed to resonate with the group?

- What did you notice in terms of the group's energy and emotion?

- What quotes stood out for you? What do we need to write down while it's fresh?

> **Key Step:** Be sure to organize your notes. After the conversation, **the Note-taker should organize their notes into six categories: *Aspirations, Main concerns, Specific issue concerns, Actions, Who people trust and Questions.*** These categories will be critical for identifying themes and implications later in the process. The goal is to capture details, key quotes, turning points and patterns that can be used to create themes.

TIPS FOR NOTE-TAKING

What to look and listen for:

During conversations, look and listen for these key concepts to help you better understand what participants are saying. **The goal is not just to hear what participants are saying, but to understand why they are saying it** (as well as what they might not be saying).

Starting points: What are participants' initial thoughts and perspectives? How do their starting points differ with where they end the discussion?

Language: What words do participants use? How is their language distinctive?

Body language: Are participants engaged or do they hang back?

Emotions: What feelings do participants bring to the table? How strongly do they feel these emotions? What emotions prevail in the conversation?

Common ground: Where do folks agree? How strong are these areas of agreement?

Tension: Where do participants disagree? What is at issue for them?

Ambivalence: On what issues are participants torn and why?

Obstacles: What emotional, factual or perceptual barriers are preventing participants from moving forward? How intractable are these barriers?

Connections: What issues do participants seem to link together?

Hidden story: What are participants not saying? What is going on beneath the surface that drives what people are saying?

Turning points: Where were you able to break through in the conversation? What questions or issues triggered that?

NOTE-TAKING TOOL

Use this note-taking tool during conversations to capture the key points voiced. Do this carefully. It's critical to understanding and getting the most out of the conversation. *Afterward, take the time to talk with the Conversation Leader to compare insights — this will strengthen your notes.*

**Aspirations
Main Concerns
Specific Issue
Concerns
Actions
Who People Trust
Questions**

1. **What kind of a community do you want?**
   (Listen for aspirations.)

2. **Given what we just said, what are the two or three most important issues when it comes to the community?**

3. **What concerns do you have about this issue? Why?**

4. **How do the issues we're talking about affect you personally?**
   (Look for connections people make between ideas.)

5. **When you think about these things, how do you feel about what's going on?**
   (Listen for emotions and intensity and for places where people voice a sense of hope.)

NOTE-TAKING TOOL

6. **What do you think is keeping us from making the progress we want?** *(Listen for barriers in the community or in the nature of relationships.)*

> Aspirations
> Main Concerns
> Specific Issue
> Concerns
> Actions
> Who People Trust
> Questions

7. **When you think about what we've talked about, what are the kinds of things that could be done that would make a difference?** *(Listen for what gives people hope, who they think could/should act.)*

8. **Thinking back over the conversation, what groups or individuals would you trust to take action on these things?**

9. **If we came back together in six months or a year, what might you see that would tell you that the things we talked about tonight were starting to happen?** *(Listen for what gives people confidence, where they see a place for individuals to act.)*

10. **Now that we've talked about this issue a bit, what questions do you have about it?**

ORGANIZING YOUR NOTES

Review and combine your notes from the different conversations. Organize them into six categories. It's okay if these are fairly long or overlap. You want to keep things broad here so you can see patterns. You'll be narrowing and clarifying as you go. Have notes in a form that will be easy for people to access and use (e.g. electronic file they can print and bring with them).

Aspirations (for the community, their children):

Main concerns (top-of-mind concerns about the larger community):

Specific issue concerns (those concerns related to the issue you're exploring):

Actions that would make a difference:

Whom do people trust to act:

Questions people have:

COMMUNITY NARRATIVE TEMPLATE

One of the best ways to make sense of what you're learning and stay focused on the essence of your Community Conversations is to try to tell a story about what you're hearing in language that people use every day. A clear story combined with personal examples from Community Conversations is a powerful combination of Public Knowledge you'll use regularly.

Community Narrative Template

People want   (aspirations) , but they're concerned that   (main concerns) . As people talk more

about those concerns they talk specifically about   (specific issue(s)) . They believe we need to focus on

  (actions)   and if   (groups)   played a part in those actions that folks would be more likely trust

the effort and step forward.

GETTING STARTED WITH CONVERSATIONS

Holding your first Community Conversation

The most important step you can take here is to get out into the community and get started. Use your first conversation as a way to build up momentum and get your feet wet.

For the first conversation:

- Where can we get started?

- Where could we hold a conversation and simply get a feel for what these are like, and get moving?

Potential locations for the first conversation	Person responsible for identifying location	Finalize location by (date)

Groups/individuals to help recruit for our first conversation	Person responsible for recruitment	Finalize recruitment plan by (date)

Conversation Leader	Note-taker(s)	Person responsible for coordinating	Finalize leader and Note-taker by (date)

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION WORKSHEET

Use this worksheet to pull the key details behind hosting conversations into a single place.

The conversation will be with:

The conversation will be held:

TIME:

PLACE:

The Conversation Leader is:

The Note-taker is:

TIPS

- Arrive one hour early. Leave time to set up the room before people arrive.

- Put up signs to direct people from the main entrance to the meeting room.

- Have a sign-in sheet for participants. Have people fill this out before the conversation.

- The room should be well-lit, not too bright. Make sure the room is a comfortable temperature.

- Make sure the room has tables. Tables signal we're doing work, and it's easier to take notes.

- Provide blank name tents for people to write their name. Encourage folks to use first names.

- Put refreshments in a location easily accessed without interrupting the discussion.

- Find the restrooms so you can tell people where they are before the discussion begins.

SUPPLIES

- Extra pens/pencils

- Name tags and table tents

- Sign-in sheets

- Paper to make signs

- Charts and easels (if needed)

- Refreshments

- Copies of the ground rules (See page 30)

FOLLOW-UP COMMUNICATIONS

Suggested template for follow-up communications

Thank you for coming to the Community Conversation on (date) .

We appreciate you sharing your time and insights. As promised, we wanted to share with you what we heard and learned and how we're thinking about using that moving forward.

From the conversation it seems like people want (aspirations for the community) but right now (concerns) make that difficult. It was also clear that people believe there are steps we can take — things like (actions) . Does that fit with how you saw the conversation?

Moving forward, we are going to pull together what we're hearing and learning from different conversations and we will (how you are going to use what you've heard) .

Thank you again for taking time to come to the conversation. We'd love to stay in touch as we move forward.

If you have any questions about the conversation or our work, don't hesitate to call (person) at (phone) .

Sincerely,

 (Name)
 (Organization)

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION STRATEGY

There are three basic variables to consider when holding a conversation:

Who is in the room?

Are you hoping to get a mix of people from different groups within the community, or are you trying to reach a specific group of people—immigrants, faith leaders, teachers, parents, etc.?

Where are people from?

Are you looking to engage people from across the community or from a specific neighbourhood?

What are you discussing?

Is this a general Community Conversation, or are you looking to learn more about a topic/issue?

These three strategic variables make up a broad vs. deep tension that you need to manage in relationship to the work you are doing as an organization.

- You want to be well-grounded in the aspirations of the broad community before you engage in issue specific conversations.

- You want to ground participants at the beginning of the "deep" conversations with the broad community aspirations, especially if they have not participated in a general community conversation.

- Keep asking yourself what work you want these conversations to do:

  » Do you want the conversation to increase your Public Knowledge? To be an engagement tool?

  » How can further conversations help the community move toward its aspirations?

  » Given your organization's aspirations for the community (the work you're doing), where should you hold additional conversations? Why?

BROAD: who, where, what

DEEP: who, where, what

THEMING AND USING PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

Step 1: Organizing Your Community Conversation Notes

In this step you are organizing your notes to make it easier to identify themes and patterns.

1) Organize your notes from individual conversations under the following six categories:

- Aspirations
- Main concerns
- Specific issue concerns
- Actions that would make a difference
- Whom do people trust to act
- Questions people have

2) Combine notes from different conversations and organize them under the same six categories

TIP: Start with notes from at least three conversations

Step 2: Identifying Themes & a Story

In this step you are:

- Helping people involved in running Community Conversations gather Public Knowledge
- Using questions to find meaning, get to the essence of what people are saying
- Trying out themes together
- Looking to see how those themes combine into a story or stories

1) Meet to theme

- Hold a meeting with people who have been part of running the conversations
- Give everyone copies of the combined notes you created at the end of Step 1
- Set clear expectations: Explain that the goal is to identify themes and what you're learning
- Go over the ground rules:
  » Start with what you can agree upon — build momentum
  » Don't debate language — discuss meaning
  » Ask questions to gain clarity and understanding instead of arguing a point
  » Keep the themes loose at first — only narrow as you go

THEMING COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

2) Identify themes

During the meeting, ask questions like these to help you identify themes emerging from the conversation:

- Looking at the groupings, what do you see?
- What are people trying to say?
- How do the ideas and concepts fit together?

3) See how the themes fit together

After discussing emerging themes:

- See how the themes you identified fit together—the key is to think about:
  - » What's the story here?
  - » What's going on?
  - » How do these things fit together? And where don't they seem to fit?
- Work together, try out different stories to describe what's going on.

TIPS:

1) Don't look for perfection, look for meaning.

2) No story will explain everything.

3) "Play" with the themes; try different ways of fitting things together.

4) If some themes don't fit, it's fine, make note of these but don't get stuck.

4) Try out your stories

One way to test your themes and story is this "Community Narrative."

- People want _____ (aspirations).
- But they're concerned that _____ (main concerns).
- As people talk more about those concerns they talk about _____ (specific issue(s)).
- They say that we need to focus on _____ (actions).
- And if _____ (groups) played a part in those actions folks would be more likely trust the effort and step forward.

BEING A STEWARD OF PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

What They Are

Various definitions of stewardship include descriptions like: "the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care" and "an ethic that embodies the responsible planning and management of resources." Stewardship carries an ethical responsibility and is linked to the principle of sustainability.

Stewards of Public Knowledge are people and organizations that gather, share and use the knowledge gained from Community Conversations in a way that contributes to the common good.

Essential and Practical Ideas

People enter into Community Conversations in good faith and see you as a trusted convener. To maintain and build that trust, give attention to the following essential ideas:

Stewardship rather than ownership and control: People share very personal information with the expectation that you will use it to improve conditions in the community. While you do have a responsibility to protect people's privacy, you cannot withhold the Public Knowledge gained for your exclusive use. (Note on privacy: Theming Community Conversations lifts up the essence of what people are saying without singling out a specific individual.)

Follow-up with participants: This is one of the simplest but most often over-looked steps in hosting Community Conversations. People don't expect to know what you will do with the information right away. They do appreciate knowing that you listened and they were heard. (See page 42 for a sample email.)

Use Public Knowledge sensitively: Moving from raw conversation notes to a community narrative provides different levels of detail and specificity. Be really clear about your audience and the level and types of detail that they will benefit from having. For example, you may want to share specific details with an elected official in a one-on-one session while your newsletter shares the essence of the same information. (Note on language: This is obviously an art rather than a science. It is important not to sugar coat difficult information or people will not trust your stewardship.)

Be creative about sharing: The more ways you can get Public Knowledge in circulation, the more people you will engage in the action that leads to change in the community. Post it publicly in your reception area; include it in meetings wherever you go; ask partners to spread it in their networks; and use different kinds of media.

USING PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

Public Knowledge can be applied to all aspects of your work:

- Engaging the community and creating new relationships

- Finding new partners and focusing the work with existing partners

- Developing strategies that more effectively create impact

- Mobilizing resources and creating new capacity in the community to work effectively together

Step 1: Getting the "Right" People

In this step you are identifying who to share Public Knowledge with and the level and types of detail they will benefit from having.

TIPS:

Start within your organization: Volunteer and staff decision-makers from across departments and functions. The important thing for this audience is being able to apply the Public Knowledge as they think about the implications for communication, working with partners, strategy and resource development in addition to programs.

Look to partners: Once you are confident your own organization will use Pubic Knowledge, start sharing it with key partners, especially if some of the information would be sensitive in the public space.

Broader community: Move as quickly as you possibly can to share Public Knowledge broadly throughout the community. Be proactive about sharing with informal as well as formal networks.

Step 2: Creating the "Right" Space

In this step you are ensuring that the meeting is set up so that participants can quickly get to a meaningful discussion about learning and applying Public Knowledge.

TIPS:

Safe space: Use the same ground rules that you did in Community Conversations.

USING PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

Sharing what you learned and the importance of this learning:

- Have Community Narrative(s) available but not circulated in advance. (These are open to interpretation that can sidetrack the meeting.) Verbally supplement Community Narrative(s) with quotes and examples that illustrate the Community Narrative points.

- Stay focused on what you learned and the importance of this learning from the conversation team's perspective. Be disciplined about sharing the narrative, not the details. You are trying to create shared meaning. DO NOT go into process details (how many conversations, how they are run, etc.)

- A typical meeting will last 60–90 minutes with two-thirds of the time spent on implications and takeaways.

Step 3: Shared Meaning and Implications

In this step you are working with others to move from understanding Public Knowledge to applying it — i.e. taking action.

TIPS:

Shared meaning and implications: Ask the participants the following questions in order. These questions are designed to build on the conversation team's understanding to create a wider circle of shared meaning. The goal is for everyone to make better informed decisions and take action together.

- What do you make of what we are learning?

- What are the implications for our work?

- Where could we use what we are learning?

- What are the possibilities for moving ahead?

Takeaways that prepare you for action: Ask participants the following questions.

- Who else needs to know about what we are learning? (Be strategic here — not everyone who would have an interest but those who can get action underway.)

- How can we apply what we are learning to our work?

- Where can we best get started? (Resist the temptation to try and do everything at once!)

60 – 90 DAYS: SHARING WHAT YOU LEARN

As your team learns more about your community's aspirations, it is important to put practices into place within your library that will help you process this newfound knowledge. Innovation Spaces are meetings designed solely for that purpose. They are not planning meetings; instead, these gatherings give your team space to share insights and create a better shared understanding of what your community is telling you.

60-90 DAYS: SHARING WHAT YOU LEARN Share knowledge and evaluate team progress	THE TOOL	WHAT IS IT?	HOW CAN IT HELP?	GET THE TOOL
	Innovation Space	Regularly scheduled meetings (once every four weeks) to bring members of your team together to focus on what you're learning and identify implications for your work going forward	Time set aside for asking "what are we learning?"— not "what are we doing?" Taking time to reflect on what you are learning helps your team maintain a turned-outward mindset	Innovation Spaces (see pgs. 49-53) Innovation Spaces: Behaviors to Watch For (See pg. 54) Also see the following webinars at ala.org/LTC/resources: Webinar: "Hosting and Using Innovation Spaces" Webinar: "Partner Selection and Managing Relationships"

INNOVATION SPACES

INNOVATION SPACE TOOL

You want to turn outward so you can accelerate and deepen your impact.

But those changes won't just happen on their own. After all, the kinds of meetings and conversations that we're used to having quite often pull us back inward, away from the community. With days spent in planning meetings, focusing on ever growing to-do lists, activity chokes out action. And in all those meetings we rarely bring in people from across the organization or group — instead we retreat to silos and turf battles. To create the change we want out in the community we need to turn outward. That means we need to create room for a new, different kind of meeting and conversation, one focused on working across silos, learning from one another and innovating. That means creating an Innovation Space. Innovation Spaces are regularly scheduled conversations (once every four weeks) that bring different departments and groups together to focus on what you're learning as an organization and how to use what you're learning to create change. These aren't your usual staff or project meetings; here the goal is learning and innovation, not just planning and assigning.

This tool will guide you step by step through creating an Innovation Space.

THE POWER OF INNOVATION SPACES

"This has been a culture-changing activity." When a public broadcasting station wanted to turn outward and connect more authentically with its community, the station manager used Innovation Spaces to create a different conversation internally. These conversations led to changes in how the station assessed staff performance, who they engaged in the community, what they put on the air, and where they invested resources. Innovation Spaces "helped us move from one culture to a new culture. We are healthier because of it."

"I couldn't imagine my job now without Innovation Spaces." Innovation Spaces can be a powerful way to brainstorm and create together, but they are also key drivers of accountability. As one leader in an early childhood collaborative shared, "I could not imagine our community without them," but "the key is being intentional and holding the meetings to a higher standard."

INNOVATION SPACES

Keys for Leading and Holding Innovation Spaces

The key to a successful Innovation Space is creating the conditions that generate a certain kind of conversation. As you set up, create and hold your Innovation Spaces, these are key ideas to keep in mind. This tool will guide you step by step through creating an Innovation Space.

THE CONVERSATION IS ABOUT LEARNING, NOT PLANNING

- Use the questions provided. They work.
- Use the ground rules to create a safe place to have this kind of conversation.
- Designate someone to take good notes. Track what you're learning.
- Post what you are learning in the space so others can see. Refer to it.

INVOLVE PEOPLE FROM ACROSS THE ORGANIZATION

- Include people from different departments, go beyond the "regulars."
- Invite and push to include senior leadership, so what's learned can be applied.
- After a few conversations, encourage others to lead the Innovation Space from time to time. Don't go it alone.
- Let people come and go. Not everyone has to attend every Innovation Space. The key is creating a different space — not creating perfection.

THE GROUP MUST HOLD ITSELF ACCOUNTABLE FOR MAKING THIS WORK

- Set aside specific time — don't fold these conversations into other meetings.
- Assure people the meeting will start and end on time — then keep to it.
- Innovation Spaces only work over time. If people push back or it gets rocky after a few — keep going. You're creating new norms — that takes time. Stick with it.

INNOVATION SPACES

GAUGING SUCCESS

As you set up your Innovation Space, ask yourself:

- Have we set aside a dedicated time for Innovation Spaces?
- Is it a safe space with clear ground rules?
- Are we sticking with this and keeping the space open over time?
- Are we continually drawing lessons from our work?
- Are we applying what we are learning?
- Do we check in and discuss the group's performance from time to time?
- Are we creating a culture of accountability?
- Does the space include others in this work, from different parts of the organization?

INNOVATION SPACES

Innovation Space Agenda

Allow 60 minutes for this conversation. Designate someone to take good notes. Make sure you hang up what you learned from the last Innovation Space.

START ON TIME

1 **Welcome participants (5 minutes)**

Remind people that this is an Innovation Space and the focus is on learning and innovation, not planning and evaluation. Go over ground rules.

2 **Four key questions (35 minutes)**

Ask these questions and discuss:

a. What are we learning? Why is this important? What are the implications?
b. Where else could we use what we are learning?
c. What are we seeing that suggests things are changing in the community or the organization?
d. What possibilities are there for moving ahead?

At least every six months, instead of the four questions above, use the "Are We Turning Outward?" questions with the Harwood Rating Scale.

3 **Harvest what you learned (15 minutes)**

Ask the group:

a. What insights did this conversation spark? (Write them down.)
b. What do we want to make sure we carry forward for next time? (Write down.)

4 **Wrap up (5 minutes), Set date for the next Innovation Space (ideally every four weeks).**

a. The next Innovation Space is in ___ weeks. What date is that? _____

ADJOURN ON TIME

INNOVATION SPACES

Intentionality and Innovation

Creating Innovation Spaces and turning outward require that we act with intentionality. Without being intentional about our choices and actions, nearly any effort can seem plausible. Acting with intention is crucial for sustaining change. It is easy to get derailed. These questions will let you check in and see how you are doing and ensure you're focused on the things that really matter in terms of creating change.

Use the Harwood Rating Scale with these questions. discuss the scores you give each. Record and save the group's answers. Chart your progress over time.

- Are we turned outward toward the community?

- Are our actions rooted in people's shared aspirations? Could we stand on a table and talk to people about their aspirations and concerns for their community and would they believe us?

- Do we reflect the reality of people's lives, and do they believe we have their best interests at heart, even when we disagree?

- Are we living up to the pledges and promises we have made?

- Are we staying true to our urge within?

Rating	What it means
We've Got It	We feel good about saying we've got this factor.
Real Progress	We're steadily improving and moving in the right direction. Still room for improvement.
Starting to Improve	We're beginning to demonstrate genuine effort. Things are starting to get better.
Lip Service	We're talking a good game, but our actions are not in line with what we're saying.
Business As Usual	We haven't changed at all – it's "business as usual."
Not Applicable	This factor is either not relevant to our work or not on our radar.

INNOVATION SPACES

Behaviors to Watch For

Innovation	Planning
Trial and error; always learning	Avoids failure and/or appearance of failure
Wants to make a leap	Seeks to tweak or fix existing approach
High-degree of interaction with others	A small number of experts will have the answer
Leverages ambiguity and dissonance to make leaps	Maximizes certainty
Know enough to move now	Need resolution of problems before moving ahead
Aware of changing conditions and responds—grounded in reality	Fears unexpected disruptions; seeks to control variables; insular
Relentless focus on what is possible	Focus on what is the problem
Always recalibrating	Maps out predictable, manageable process.
Embraces organic, emergent nature of change	Takes linear approach; controls moving parts

90 DAYS AND BEYOND: TAKING ACTION

By now, your library has collected and organized input from your community; you understand their concerns and issues, and you're ready to take action. But how do you know which actions will work best at this point in time? This final set of tools will help you gauge your community's condition and help you determine a course of action that will be embraced and accepted.

90 DAYS AND BEYOND: TAKING ACTION	THE TOOL	WHAT IS IT?	HOW CAN IT HELP?	GET THE TOOL
	Community Conditions/ Sweet Spot	Questions and tools to help you assess your community's "stage"—its readiness for and receptivity to change—and use that knowledge to take action	Meeting your community "where it's at" will make your community engagement plan more effective Helps you take what you have learned from community conversations and translate that knowledge into action that will effect lasting and positive change Helps you determine which actions to take alone and which to take with partners	Calibrating Community Conditions/Moving from Aspirations to Action (See pgs. 55-59) Community Rhythms/ The Stages of Community Life (See pgs. 60-62) Sweet Spot (See pgs. 65-68) Also see the following webinar at ala. org/LTC/resources: Webinar: "Calibrating Community Conditions" Webinar: "Sweet Spot"

ALA American Library Association   LIBRARIES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES   PLA Public Library Association a division of the American Library Association   HARWOOD The Institute for Public Innovation

CALIBRATING COMMUNITY CONDITIONS: "FOR A BETTER COMMUNITY"

Instructions

1. Take a few minutes to read the material below.
2. Using the descriptions from Stages of Community Life (see page 65), determine which stage this community is at.

For a Better Community, your organization, has been hosting Community Conversations for the past three months. People from across diverse parts of the community have participated. The team leading this work has created a summary Community Narrative of what you have heard in the voice of the community.

> **Community Narrative**
>
> We want our community to be a place where we "make room for people" and are open and inventive about how to engage diverse voices and ideas. We want a safe community, which means different things depending on where you live in the community. We want to make sure that there are more and equal opportunities for people to have good jobs and a quality education. A few things are getting in the way. We "do too much to people versus with people." People are afraid to speak out, to fail, and there is a lack of trust in each other and our ability to move beyond "turf." There aren't enough people and leaders who are able to work together to make things happen. People talk about being divided and disconnected. People on the east side of the community want to find a way forward but don't seem to know how to connect. There appear to be few organizations able to move the community forward and few leaders are seen with credibility on both sides of the community. What needs to change to reach our aspirations? We need a new mindset, a willingness to act together and take ownership and commit to doing this together. If we do this, we will give people hope.

MOVING FROM ASPIRATIONS TO ACTION

Step 1: Take Effective Civic Action — Working Document

Fill out the chart as completely as possible. Do not get bogged down on questions you cannot answer.

Strategy Element	Public Knowledge for Community of Focus	Implications for Our Organization
Shared Aspirations	What are the shared aspirations for our community? (List from the Community Narrative) • • •	How does our current work help address people's shared aspirations? • • •
Main Concerns & Specific Issues (Sweet Spot)	What are the main concerns and specific issues? List concerns and related issues from the Community Narrative. For communities in Waiting Place or Impasse, this may be sketchy. • • • Is there one main concern and/or specific issue that has surfaced above others? (Note: If the community is at Waiting Place or Impasse, you can work on almost any issue and achieve good results.)	What do the main concerns and specific issues identified by the community tell us about where to focus our work? How does our current work fit with what's going on in the community? Does the Public Knowledge match with our assessment of the issues based on local data and expert knowledge? Do we need to adapt or adjust our current strategies, action plans or programs based on the Public Knowledge gained?

MOVING FROM ASPIRATIONS TO ACTION

Strategy Element	Public Knowledge for Community of Focus	Implications for Our Organization
Stage of Community Life	What stage of community life is our community in? (Determine from the Community Narrative and Community Rhythms tool.) • Generally • On main concern and/or specific issue \<\<name\>\> • On main concern and/or specific issue \<\<name\>\>	What are realistic expectations for: • The speed of change? • The scale of change? • How many pockets of change should we work on at one time? • The degree of coordination we should attempt? What types of action we should focus on?
Public Capital Factors (Sweet Spot)	What are the two or three most important Public Capital Factors to work on? (From the Community Narrative and Community Rhythms tool.) • • •	How does our current work support these Public Capital factors?

MOVING FROM ASPIRATIONS TO ACTION

Strategy Element	Public Knowledge for Community of Focus	Implications for Our Organization
Boundary Spanning Functions	• Given the work that needs to be done, what boundary spanning function(s) do we think is/are needed at this point? E.g. convener; funder; researcher; storyteller; catalyst, etc. • Consider Public Knowledge and information you have gathered using the Community Rhythms tool, and which Public Capital factors you have chosen.	Can our organization take on any of these functions? At this time? Does taking on this/these function(s) make sense given the work of other organizations, partners and institutions in the community? Given the impact we are trying to create in and with the community, we also need partners who can take on the following boundary spanning functions: • • • Note: The answers to the above questions can be summarized as "the space you want to occupy in relation to the community."

If you left a cell blank due to insufficient information or Public Knowledge, ask yourself:

- Do we know enough to get started?

- If not, who do we need to talk with to gain this knowledge? What do we need to know or learn?

MOVING FROM ASPIRATIONS TO ACTION

Community Rhythms Implications for Change Chart

Stage	Speed	Size	Consensus	Coordination (See Collective impact note)	Pockets of Change	Actions for Changed Conditions
The Waiting Place	Slowly	Small	No, people can't name the problem	No	Create	Help people name the aspirations, concerns, issues and changed conditions. Demonstrate small signs of progress.
Impasse	Slowly	Small	No, people may be angry, but don't agree what's an issue	No, these will fail	Create	Discover shared aspirations. Identify taboo issues. Help people imagine alternate future. Create organized spaces for people to convene.
Catalytic	Quicker, particularly in pockets	Small	Yes, but it's not wide-spread	No, but you can form informal networks	Create and Loosely Connect	Try lots of small things in pockets. Encourage informal networks and new leaders. Help share the emerging narrative. Model desired community norms.
Growth	Quickly	Broad	Yes	Yes, particularly to address systemic issues	Connect and Coordinate	Work community wide. Coordinate and accelerate collective action. Highlight new narrative. Bring in new leaders.

Sustain and Renew (5th stage) — is rare and not included in this tool.

COMMUNITY RHYTHMS TOOL

> Answer each question by checking the box beside the answer you believe best represents how you feel about the community.

1 How broad and deep is the leadership at all levels of the community (including official leaders, quasi-official, people on neighborhood blocks, connectors between organizations) — that is, leaders who understand the true concerns of the community as a whole and who hold strong credibility and trust?

- O Not much depth beyond some official leaders and civic leaders (if they even meet the definition above).
- O A core group of such leaders starting to emerge.
- O Core group expanding; depth within the community starting to form.
- O Rich supply of leaders at all levels of and throughout the community.

2 How strong and constructive are the community norms for public life that help guide how people and organizations act individually, interact and work together?

- O Stuck in old patterns such as finger-pointing; looking for ways to place blame; turf battles; mistrust; divisive, frustrated or non-existent community conversations.
- O While old patterns still exist, can see new ones starting to develop. People starting to work more toward solutions, hold more constructive conversations, take greater personal responsibility. Seeds of trust appearing.
- O A common sense of direction and purpose flourishes throughout community; people in the community work well together; things get done; constructive community–wide discussions are the expectation. Trust exists.

3 How broad and deep are the "informal networks and links" that connect various individual, groups, organizations and institutions together to create a cross-fertilization effect of experiences, knowledge and resources in the community — the networks through which people carry and spread ideas, messages and community norms from place to place?

- O Tattered.
- O Forming, but not yet strong, broad and deep.
- O Strong, growing, widespread, functioning really well.

4 How strong is the collection of catalytic organizations—those that help engage people in public life, spur discussion on community challenges, and marshal a community's resources to move ahead? These organizations help lay the foundation for community action, often convening different groups and resources, but once an initiative is up and running, they move on to the next challenge.

- O We've got lots of organizations, but can't really see more than one or two catalytic organizations — and I am not sure if they're even the real thing.
- O We've got one or two true catalytic organizations but they're often overworked and/or overwhelmed; they often tend to have a hard time keeping their focus.
- O We've got a real handful of true catalytic organizations; you can feel their presence and good work. They enjoy strong credibility and trust across the community.

COMMUNITY RHYTHMS

THE HARWOOD INDEX

5 Stages of Community Life

| The Waiting Place | Impasse | Catalytic | Growth | Sustain/ Renew |

On the index, what stage do you believe your community is in?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

THE STAGES OF COMMUNITY LIFE

THE WAITING PLACE

- In the Waiting Place, people sense that things are not working right in their community, but they are unable to clearly define the problem; the feeling could be described as a "felt unknown."

- People feel disconnected from leaders and from different processes within the community for making decisions; the community itself is fragmented; discussion about common challenges is infrequent and/or highly divisive.

- Community discussion about challenges is infrequent and/or highly divisive. People want to create change, but negative norms for public life keep them locked into old patterns.

- People often are waiting—for issues to become clearer, for someone else to "solve" their problems. People in this stage often say, "Everything will be better when we get the right mayor to save the community!" So people just wait.

IMPASSE

- At Impasse, the community has hit rock bottom, and people can be heard saying, "Enough is enough! It can't go on like this any longer!"

- In this stage, unlike in the Waiting Place, there is a sense of urgency in people's voices; people are tired of "waiting." But while people want change, they lack clarity about what to do.

- The community's norms and ways of working together keep the community stuck in an undesirable status quo. The community is mired in turf wars; it lacks leadership at different levels of the community; and people seem fixated on their own individual interests.

- People's frustrations have hit the boiling point but the community lacks the capacity to act.

CATALYTIC

- The Catalytic stage starts with small steps that are often imperceptible to the vast majority of people in the community.

- Small numbers of people and organizations begin to emerge, taking risks and experimenting in ways that challenge existing norms in how the community works.

- The size of their actions is not the vital gauge. Their actions produce some semblance of results that give people a sense of hope.

- As this stage unfolds, the number of people and organizations stepping forward increases, and links and networks are built between and among them.

- A key challenge in this stage is the emerging conflict between a nascent story of hope and the ingrained narrative that "nothing can change." Even as change appears, the old narrative will still dominate people's communication and outlook until more progress is made and trust builds.

GROWTH

- During the Growth stage, people begin to see clearer and more pervasive signs of how the community is moving forward.

- People in the community are able to name leadership at all levels and where such leadership is expanding and deepening—from the official level to neighborhoods, within civic organizations and non-profits. Networks are growing and a sense of common purpose and direction are taking deep root.

- People feel a renewed spirit of community. More people are working together. Efforts are taking place across the community and are targeted to more concerns.

- A feature of this stage is that you can randomly ask people on the street what kind of community they live in, and they provide similar answers. A common story has emerged about the community.

SUSTAIN AND RENEW

- In Sustain and Renew, the community is ready to take on, in a deeper and more sustained way, the tough, nagging issues that may have been tackled before but were not adequately addressed.

- Such issues might include the public schools, racism and race relations, and economic growth in all neighborhoods; change on these concerns typically requires sustained, long-term effort.

- Lessons and insights and new norms that have emerged over time now pervade the community.

- But the community may be struggling to maintain its momentum. It must find new ways to bring along a new cadre of leaders, civic groups and active citizens, as others tire or move on.

- There is a danger that the community will fall into a new Waiting Place as it comes to rest on its laurels.

COMMUNITY LIFE DO'S AND DON'TS CHART

Be careful not to	What to do	What to think about
THE WAITING PLACE		
• Inflate expectations by announcing grand plans • Start visioning exercises that fail or don't have enough community support for action • Try to engage people by making them feel guilty they are not involved • Rely on one-shot projects	• Create forums for conversation and interaction where people feel they belong and crystallize feelings of frustration • Connect community actions to realities in people's lives • Demonstrate small signs of progress • Keep working, despite feelings of limited progress	• Do you really know how committed your partners are? • What small things could help us move forward?
IMPASSE		
• Inflate expectations by announcing grand plans • Convince yourselves there are strong networks and organizations to support new civic work • Shut out community members because they are frustrated • Try to develop action plans too quickly	• Let people share their concerns and discover common aspirations for something different • Identify taboo issues that contribute to impasse • Find language that helps people imagine an alternative future • Look for windows to pull people into small efforts	• What issues are citizens most immediately concerned about? Are those issues being worked on? • What is being done to bring people back into public life?
CATALYTIC		
• Coordinate activities too quickly, stifling innovation and action • Rush to visioning exercises before the community is ready • Do too much, too fast	• Try lots of small things with room for failure; emphasize learning • Build Boundary-Spanning Organizations that can generate change • Encourage informal conversations, networks and new engagement norms • Develop a new cadre of leaders • Tell authentic stories of progress over time	• What is motivating folks to work together? • Where are the Boundary-Spanning Organizations in the community? Who supports them? • What are we learning? • How do we know if our work is grounded in the community's aspirations?
GROWTH		
• Miss parts of the community left out of progress • Let "official leaders" drive the action • Neglect the need to continually strengthen networks, leaders and organizations that can keep the community moving forward • Ignore underlying community issues	• Use community-wide engagement activities to coalesce and spring forward from the Catalytic stage • Do bigger projects, building on natural progress and collaborations that have come before • Reinforce positive norms for working together and continue to develop Boundary-Spanning Organizations and new leaders	• Who is doing the hard work? Are community members involved? • Are new people getting involved in the efforts? • How are the new efforts connected to the work done before?
SUSTAIN AND RENEW		
• Think "success" has been achieved • Assume others know the story of progress and norms for action that have been built • Become arrogant and feel you have solved it all • Start to rest on laurels	• Develop new leaders across the entire community and new Boundary-Spanning Organizations to create progress • Continue creating opportunities to bring community members into processes—especially new residents • Look for challenges not yet tackled to focus energies, and use lessons learned to expand progress	• Who are the new leaders? • Who is still missing from the community's progress? • How are we feeling about ourselves: pride, fully humble or smugly self-confident? • How are we consciously strengthening our norms of working together?

COMMUNITY RHYTHMS

My Community

Discuss the following questions with your team:

1. What stage of community life is your community in?

_____

_____

2. How did you come to that conclusion?

_____

_____

3. What will you need to think about in terms of things like:

- Knowing and sharing the community's aspirations, challenges and conditions for change

- Choosing a focus for action

- Setting realistic expectations for change — scope, scale, speed

- Knowing what partners you need at this stage

_____

_____

4. What are the implications of your answers (above) for the way you work and your strategies?

_____

_____

THE SWEET SPOT OF PUBLIC LIFE

The Sweet Spot is where you take action on issues the community cares about in a way that builds the conditions for change in your community at the same time.

SWEET SPOT

Main Concerns & Specific Issues

Public Capital (Community Conditions)
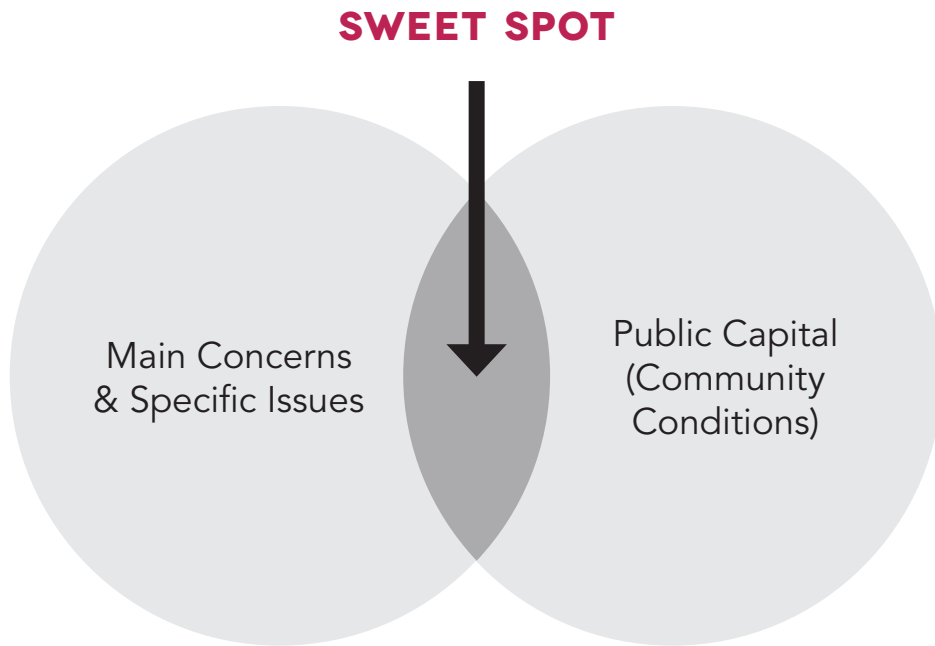
NOTES

THE SWEET SPOT OF PUBLIC LIFE

Public Capital: The Conditions for Change

Working in the the Sweet Spot of Public Life requires a focus on Public Capital — the conditions for change that enable communities to move forward. These are the factors that shape the ability and capacity of a community to work together and create change.

An Abundance of Social Gatherings that enable people to learn about what is happening in the community and begin to develop a sense of mutual trust.

Organized Spaces for Interaction where people can come together to learn about, discuss and often act on community challenges. These spaces help a community begin to identify and tap resources to address concerns.

Boundary-Spanning Organizations that help engage people in public life, spur discussion on community challenges, and marshal a community's resources to move ahead. These organizations help lay the foundation for community action, but do not act as the driving force.

Safe Havens for Decision Makers where a community's leaders can deliberate and work through community concerns in "unofficial," candid discussions.

Strong, Diverse Leadership that extends to all layers of a community, understands the concerns of the community as a whole, and serves as a connector among individuals and organizations throughout the community.

Informal Networks and Links that connect various individuals, groups, organizations and institutions together to create a cross-fertilization effect of experiences, knowledge and resources. People carry and spread ideas, messages and community norms from place to place.

Conscious Community Discussion where a community has ample opportunity to think about and sort through its public concerns before taking action. People play an active role in helping decide how the community should act.

Community Norms for Public Life that help guide how people act individually, interact and work together. These norms set the standards and tone for civic engagement.

A Shared Purpose for the Community that sends an explicit message about the community's aspirations and helps reinforce that everyone is headed toward a common goal.

THE SWEET SPOT

February 26, 2007
by Richard C. Harwood

Finding the 'Sweet Spot'

Increasingly, as I travel the country, I find myself talking about the "sweet spot of public life"— how we can take action on specific issues and build community at the same time. This past week was no different. I spent two days with 40 leaders of local collaboratives in Newark, N.J., good people who are urgently focused on strengthening families and children.

The challenges in Newark (and Essex County) are tough, long-standing, often depressing — but doable. In these communities, people often feel that no one speaks for or listens to them. Finding sustainable pathways for improving their local conditions can be hard. People worry that they are being left behind. Truth be told, many people are falling through the cracks.

The collaboratives sit at two critical nexus points in relationship to these challenges. They work among people in neighborhoods trying to create change; and they sit between "official" city structures and the local neighborhoods and communities to ensure that all people are at the table of public discussion and decision-making. Indeed, they serve as essential connective tissue that can help to bring about a greater sense of community wholeness.

No doubt, there is compelling need for better policies and programs that address people's core concerns around families and children; but it is also the case, according to the folks in Newark and Essex County, that effective policies and programs also require the community coming together in new ways — from people supporting one another to people taking more responsibility for themselves.

Indeed, a recurring theme of the conversation in Newark was how to tap people's own potential to create change and come together to forge stronger communities. But what does this mean? How does it happen? How does it sustain itself? This is a challenge I hear everywhere I go.

We must design initiatives that not only focus on a specific issue, but that also build the relationships, leaders, networks, and norms of communities —

the stuff that makes communities go — what I call "The Sweet Spot." In Newark and Essex County, there were three key components of The Sweet Spot that need attention if the community is to effectively address its core concerns around families and children:

- Cultivating leaders: There is a real need to identify and engage "untapped" leaders in the community who hold authority and authenticity in the eyes of residents. These leaders can help engage, inspire, and support people and their causes in ways that leaders outside the community simply cannot.

- Creating safe space for discussion: There is a real need to create safe spaces in which people can come together to identify their aspirations, wrestle with competing values, and find ways to join hands in building a stronger community and strengthening families. The conversations that are now taking place too often focus on complaints and expert-framed policy issues that fail to move individuals and the community forward.

- Building networks: There is a real need to build networks in which organizations and leaders can learn about each other, build trust, and discover new ways (or strengthen existing ways) of working together. These networks reduce the time and costs associated with mistrust, the spinning of wheels, the pointing of fingers, and the inaction that results when we are unable to overcome obstacles.

The importance of finding The Sweet Spot cannot be over-emphasized. For it is not merely an academic point, or something simply to theorize about.

Rather, the challenge is, how can we move ahead?

Let's face it, whether in Newark or in other communities, we will never have all the resources, time, and people we want to address the challenges before us. Instead, we must find ways to leverage our resources for making progress. That, I believe, requires that we find The Sweet Spot. Then we can have the very capacities we need to act on the challenges we seek to overcome.

THE SWEET SPOT

Key Ideas for Moving Communities Forward

SWEET SPOT OF PUBLIC LIFE

Hidden Narratives
All communities have an ingrained narrative that can help to accelerate or block effective civic action. The key is to know the narratives at work in your community and the implications for moving ahead.

Pebble Theory of Change
Progress often emerges through pockets of change whose effects ripple out over time and eventually overlap, helping to forge new shared values, norms, networks and relationships.

Arc of Public Time
The Stages of Community Life are rooted in notions of time; all change unfolds over time. It is essential to think clearly about the span of time in which your work will take place and the implications for what you need to do during that time.

Expectations
Setting the right expectations for change efforts is essential to make hope real in communities. Too often expectations for change are overblown and dash people's sense of possibility and hope.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The field of library-led community engagement is thriving, and many organizations offer free resources to help you bring innovation and positive change to your community. Explore the following websites to learn more.

ALA Center for Civic Life, http://discuss.ala.org/civicengagement/

Choices Program, http://choices.edu/

Community Conversations, http://www.community-conversations.org/

Creating Community Solutions, http://creatingcommunitysolutions.org/

David Mathews Center for Civic Life, http://mathewscenter.org/

Everyday Democracy, http://www.everyday-democracy.org/

The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, http://www.theharwoodinstitute.org/

Kettering Foundation, http://kettering.org/

National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD), http://ncdd.org/

National Dialogue Network, http://www.nationaldialoguenetwork.org/

National Issues Forums Institute, http://www.nifi.org/

Public Agenda, http://www.publicagenda.com/

Public Decisions, http://www.publicdecisions.com/