

Sharing Power with Communities Toolkit: Starting Out and Making the Case

The resources offered in this toolkit are designed to guide nonprofit organizations, foundations, and folks working in the social sector in their pursuit of sharing power and resources with the communities they seek to serve. Toolkit resources include practical tips and guides for making the case along with facilitation guides and models for getting started.

Choosing an Engagement Strategy

There are several models that you and your team can choose to build on in your practices to engage communities in your work. Here are two examples that we use in our work with clients.

Possible Models

Example Advisory Committee:

Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A regional health foundation wanted to refresh its strategy focused on the health of kids ages 0-8 and wanted to engage parents in the process.
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The foundation formed a strategic planning team of 3 parents, 3 nonprofit partners, 4 foundation staff• The strategic planning team oversaw research questions & focus, interpret results, and developed vision, outcome and strategies• Parents received support from parent organizing groups: training, compensation, childcare, transport• Before implementation, the foundation continued to seek feedback on the strategy from community and nonprofits
Key Learnings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Balance power within the group; help foundation / nonprofit staff step back to center community• Focus where community has interest and experience• Bring in broader input; don't expect a small group of individuals to represent the whole community

Example Participatory Committee:

Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A national nonprofit focused on quality and affordable childcare is developing a strategic plan and wants to include parents in the process.
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The organization hired a team of 15 parents of kids ages 0-5 to develop recommendations on ways to expand quality childcare for those historically denied access• the team meets for 2 hours weekly by Zoom for 4 months, with facilitator support and compensation• The team designed surveys of 400+ parents and conducted over 100 focus groups / interviews• The team used that information to make recommendations to organizations on ways to improve affordability, accessibility, safety/trust and finding resources
Keys and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focusing on relationships and common experiences creates community, helps teams show up with collective power vs. advocating for individual perspective• Intensive process requires time, resources, skilled facilitation and qualitative research methodology that involves researchers and participants working together• Parents/people know if you are/are not authentic - be committed to authentically listening and power sharing before you start



Community Wealth Partners is a social impact consulting firm guided by a vision of a world where all people have what they need to fully live into their potential, particularly those who are kept furthest from resources and power.

Get In Touch

- ✉ hello@communitywealth.com
- 🌐 communitywealth.com