



# HOW TO IDENTIFY COMMUNITY NEEDS

An identified community need is the foundation of your project and your grant application. By knowing the community need, your project will be well justified. When you identify community needs, your project and grant application will involve the community and reflect an understanding of the local context.

There are four steps to identifying community needs.

## Step One: Community Engagement

### *What is community engagement?*

#### **Community engagement:**

- Is ongoing and evolving
- Involves interacting with the community to build trust and understanding.
- Is vital in contributing to local outcomes.

Gathering information through community engagement will assist with project development.


### *What are the benefits of community engagement?*

Community engagement identifies issues and opportunities by involving the community in matters that affect them.

#### **Community engagement:**

- Results in better project and services delivery outcomes.
- Strengthens relationships with the community.
- Ensures work is meeting local needs.
- Creates opportunities to discuss complex and emerging issues.
- Provides an opportunity for a diversity of voices to be heard.

### *What are some tools for community engagement?*

- Print and online advertisements
  - Advisory committees
  - Community reference groups
  - Events
  - Organisation websites
  - Flyers, brochures, fact sheets and posters
  - Focus groups or workshops
  - Information sessions
  - Social media
  - Surveys/questionnaires
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## ***Community engagement tips***

### **Don't limit who you ask!**

Being inclusive strengthens the information you collect when engaging the community. Contact as many people, groups, and businesses as possible. This is also a good opportunity to identify potential partners to work with.

### **Use existing resources.**

Community engagement does not need to be expensive or time intensive. Your website, mailing lists, local newsletters, social media, and networks can broaden your reach.

## **Step Two: Community Consultation**

### ***What is community consultation?***

#### **Community consultation:**

- Puts community voices first on matters that affect them.
- Informs the appropriate design of community work.
- Is vital to designing the solution (your project) and is a form of research.
- Provides evidence for the need for the project you are considering.
- Recognises the unique perspectives that everyone in the community brings.
- Provides an opportunity to discuss possible solutions.

### ***How is community consultation different to community engagement?***

#### **Community Consultation**

- Time-limited
- Focused on a particular project and/or subject matter
- Involves reporting back to those involved.

#### **Community Engagement**

- Ongoing and evolving.
- Builds trust and understanding.

### ***Methods of community consultation***

The method you choose for consultation should consider the people involved, the subject matter and the nature of feedback sought. Methods of community consultation should also involve consideration of impact, influence, and involvement. Community consultation can be conducted through:

- Focus groups
- Community meetings
- Surveys
- Workshops
- Committees





## Step Three: What did the community tell you?

**Analyse the information collected through the community engagement and community consultation process. Identify themes from what the community has said and compare with pre-conceived ideas and plans for your project.**

This information will ensure that your project is responding to a known and informed community need. The information gathered will strengthen your responses in a grant application.

Ensure that findings are reported back to the community.

## Step Four: Start developing your project

**Your project can now respond to a clear need, identified through community engagement and community consultation. Project development steps involve:**

1. Defining the need and focus of the project.
2. Engaging potential partners to enhance the impact of the project.
3. Creating a high-level project plan for implementation.
4. Being clear on how you will measure any change in the community.
5. Identifying suitable funding opportunities.

