



TOOLKIT FOR INCREASING UPWARD MOBILITY IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Creating a Community Vision Statement

This worksheet is part of the Upward Mobility Initiative's [Toolkit for Increasing Upward Mobility in Your Community](#). Use it to cocreate a vision for your community with your Mobility Coalition. The activity can be adapted and adjusted as needed for your group and can help build excitement and energy around the work you are doing together.

Step 1: Engage the Group in Individual Reflection on the Community's Past and Future

You can start this process by asking group members to begin reflecting before the meeting. At the start of the meeting, allow a few minutes for reflection for group members to reconnect with any thinking they have already done.

Step 2: Reflect on the Past Together

Consider using the questions below to guide a group discussion (you can include additional questions, but try to keep the overall list to no more than six or seven):

1. What are some of the notable moments of this past year or past few years for our community?
2. What are some of your organization's accomplishments?

Step 3: Visualize the Future

Lead a coalition in thinking about their hopes and aspirations for the next five years that will advance upward mobility and racial equity in the community. Tell the group members that in 3 years (or 5 years, or 10 years, depending on their implementation timeline), a local news host will do a special report on your community, highlighting your progress on upward mobility and equity and the successful interventions you have implemented to address community challenges. Keeping in mind what they shared in Step 2, give the group 3–5 minutes to write down what this news host would say. You can also prompt them with more specific examples like: "Take our visitors first to a new child care facility. What is going on? How has this made a difference in the community?"

Step 4: Find Common Themes

Ask group members to share their future visions with the group. Once everyone has shared, identify the common themes and record them on a medium everyone can see. This will provide keywords to include in the vision statement.

Facilitation tip: Much research indicates that visual cues help us better retrieve and remember information. Consider engaging a graphic facilitator who can capture your discussion visually. Graphic facilitators use a combination of graphics such as diagrams, pictures, symbols, and writing to lead a group to a shared goal. You can then display the resulting artifact at all your meetings to keep the group focused and grounded in your vision for the future.

Step 5: Finalize Your Vision Statement

Allow the group a few minutes to reflect on the keywords and themes identified and draft their own vision statements. Write down all the draft vision statements. Ask the group to vote on their top choices for further refinement.

Facilitation tip: Don't let the group get too caught up in semantics. If you reach a stalemate, take a break or end the meeting. Have the core team discuss the keywords and themes and craft a statement to bring back to the group. This is where it is important for everyone to have a clear sense of who has the authority to make the final decision.

Step 6: Confirm Final Buy-in

Once you have the final vision statement, do a quick check around the room to gauge enthusiasm and support. Ask group members to show a thumb up if they are excited and support the vision, a thumb turned sideways if they support the vision, and a thumb down if they do not support the vision. If a sizeable portion of the group does not support the vision, you may need to repeat some of the steps above or take a different approach to agreeing on a vision for your community.