

Facilitation Guide

USING THIS GUIDE

The following guide is a companion to the posters and tools that will help you introduce and guide the conversation that your community will have around code enforcement issues.

In the following pages, you will find step-by-step instructions, talking points and tips for encouraging conversation with community members. You can distinguish them this way:

In bold: Step-by-step instructions for leading the activity

In *italic*: Talking points

In bold, *italic*: Talking points that are important to emphasize

DON'T FORGET TO DOCUMENT!

Make sure to document the engagement by taking notes, photos of engagement posters at the end of the event, and photos of the event and participants.

After the event, please take a few minutes to do two things:

Fill out the engagement reportback form at: bit.ly/CitiesRISE-ReportbackForm

Send pictures and raw notes to:
citiesrise.hst@gmail.com

FACILITATION TIPS

Facilitators should encourage discussion among participants, not lead it. The facilitator's role is describe and introduce activities, move the discussion along with prompting questions and answer any questions about the goals and next steps for the engagement. The following are some general tips for facilitating conversations:

- Your role as facilitators is to gather the ideas, opinions, and concerns of the participants.
- Be a neutral listener and curious learner: this is not the time to share personal or professional opinions
- Ask for facts, information, experiences, ideas, and feelings from participants to encourage and build group discussion.
- Create a welcoming environment at your table: Encourage participation from all group members and return to community agreements as needed.
- Keep it moving and don't get stuck on a single idea or concern for too long. If someone has a personal matter that is taking over the conversation, offer to connect with them after or ask another staff member to speak with them on the side.
- Keep track of time – note that there are times in the draft agenda of how long each section should be, make sure you or someone on your team is keeping track of time to ensure you get through all activities.
- Be honest about what you don't know and make sure to follow-up if a participant wants answers – ask to see them after the workshop or direct them to another staff member in the moment, and make sure the issue is captured in the notes.

Introduce the process

1. INTRODUCE THE PROCESS (2 MIN)

Thank you for joining us today. Our organization is hosting this community conversation because we are partnering with the City of _____ as part of Cities Rise project. Through this process, the City is looking at how Code Enforcement can be equitable.

Our organization signed up to get involved in this effort because we want to make sure your voice is heard in this process – so over the next few hours we will be having conversations about your neighborhood and housing situation, and we will be taking notes and photos to give back to the City. All the information collected will be completely anonymous. Our goal is to enable and support the city in tackling problem properties and code enforcement challenges in an innovative way to improve our neighborhoods.

If city staff or other organizations are doing a presentation, it would be part of this introduction.

2. INTRODUCE COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS (2 MIN)

Because we will be sharing personal information, we want to set some Community Agreements that will help make sure our conversation stays productive and respectful. Here are a few suggested agreements:

Respect everyone's opinions – we are not here to debate with anyone. In fact, there are no right answers to the questions we are asking today, so everyone's experience is valid.

1, 2, 3 then me – if you notice you are talking a lot, make sure to let three other people speak before you jump back into the conversation so that we can hear from everyone.

One microphone – please speak one at a time and do not interrupt anyone. Wait until someone is done speaking before offering your opinion. Speak slowly and clearly as people might process information differently, and because we are taking notes!

Be a good listener – we ask that you stay present for the conversation. If you need to be on your phone or make a call, no problem – we ask that you please just step away from the table to be respectful of others.

Keep mindful of the time – we have a lot to cover today, so I may jump in and ask us to wrap up a topic to keep the conversation moving, or if someone brings something up that is not directly connected to the discussion, I may ask us to pause and we can always discuss the issue after the conversation.

3. LEAD PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTIONS AND ICEBREAKER (3 MIN)

We are really looking forward to learning from you and talking together. Let's start by getting to know each other. Please share...

- *Your first name*
- *Preferred gender pronouns*
- *The neighborhood you live in*
- *What is the greatest challenge that you are facing in this community?*

Understand neighborhood conditions and challenges



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Printed poster
- Dot stickers
- Sticky notes
- Markers and pens



OBJECTIVES

OPTION 1: NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS

- Kickstart a broad conversation on housing and neighborhood challenges.
- Gather baseline information on resident experiences and the types of issues facing the community.

OPTION 2: CODE ENFORCEMENT CHALLENGES

- Surface personal experiences and challenges residents have faced with housing and code enforcement.
- Identify resource gaps and strengths in the community.

NOTE: this activity includes two options that can be completed together or separately.

OPTION 1: Neighborhood Conditions
(Instructions begin on page 3)

OPTION 2: Code Enforcement Challenges
(Instructions begin on page 4)

OPTION 1: NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS

CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS

of Home Owners _____ # of Issues _____

CITIES RISE Cities for Responsible Investment and Strategic Enforcement

Place a dot in the 3 circles that are most important to you.

HOUSING

- HOUSING CONDITIONS**
How do you experience your housing? Is it safe, affordable, or healthy?
- AFFORDABLE HOUSING**
Do you experience difficulty affording housing? How do you manage?
- RELATIONSHIP WITH LANDLORD**
Do you have a positive relationship with your landlord? How do you resolve issues?
- OTHER**

CITY CONNECTIONS

- CODE ENFORCEMENT**
Do you know what code enforcement is? How do you feel about it?
- CITY RESOURCES**
Do you know what city resources are available? How do you use them?

NEIGHBORHOOD

- VACANT HOMES AND LOTS**
How do you feel about vacant homes and lots in your neighborhood?
- SAFETY**
How do you feel about safety in your neighborhood?
- SENSE OF BELONGING**
How do you feel about your sense of belonging in your neighborhood?
- NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES**
How do you feel about amenities in your neighborhood?
- OTHER**
- OTHER**

Tell us why you picked an issue:

- Half of my home is not in a good state.
- Handrails are broken.
- Scared to walk our children to play outside.
- Scared to pay for vacant tax.
- We have to go through a nice search. Landlord is not helping with negotiation.
- Land is destroying again.
- Rapid response to our calls/texts.
- Landlord is overcharging the house.

OPTION 2: CODE ENFORCEMENT CHALLENGES

CITY OF ROCHESTER CODE ENFORCEMENT EXPERIENCES

of Home Owners _____ # of Issues _____

CITIES RISE Cities for Responsible Investment and Strategic Enforcement

1. Discuss experiences that participants might have had using the examples below as a starting point.
2. Place up to 4 scenarios that resonate most with your group on the activity sheet and discuss how they responded.

EXAMPLE EXPERIENCES:

- The landlord is difficult to reach and does not respond.
- The landlord is charging too much and it is hard for me to find a good quality home.
- I have not had any code enforcement issues in my neighborhood.
- I have not had any code enforcement issues in my neighborhood.
- I have not had any code enforcement issues in my neighborhood.
- I have not had any code enforcement issues in my neighborhood.

Scenarios: Describe a situation you have been in | **How did you respond?**

Scenario #1 The wall of my house is crumbling and I am afraid to walk on it. I have called the code enforcement department but they have not responded for 4 weeks.	My landlord is overcharging me and it is hard for me to find a good quality home. I have not had any code enforcement issues in my neighborhood.
Scenario #2 The landlord is charging too much and it is hard for me to find a good quality home. I have not had any code enforcement issues in my neighborhood.	We suggest a complaint in police department.
Scenario #3 I received a call from the code enforcement department but they have not responded for 4 weeks.	I called for a home search and they have not responded for 4 weeks. I have not had any code enforcement issues in my neighborhood.
Scenario #4 I received a call from the code enforcement department but they have not responded for 4 weeks.	I called the code enforcement department and they have not responded for 4 weeks.

At the end of the session, the Code Enforcement Department can share information on rights and resources that residents can use to deal with each of these situations.

Understand neighborhood conditions and challenges

OPTION 1: NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS

4. INTRODUCE ACTIVITY (5 MIN)

We know that Code Enforcement is an important factor in improving our neighborhood and community. In this activity, we want to understand challenges you face in your housing and neighborhood. The activity sheet includes several icons representing types of issues you may face. I am going to walk through each of these in more detail and ask you to place a dot sticker in your top 3 neighborhood concerns.



Housing Conditions

Does your home have repair or maintenance issues such as a leaky roof, mold, or pests?



Affordable Housing

Do you have access to quality affordable housing (including housing that accepts vouchers)?



Relationship with Landlord

Does your landlord makes repairs promptly? Are you treated fairly or discriminated against?



Code Enforcement

Do you what Code Enforcement officers do? Do you know any Code Enforcement officers? Have you ever made a complaint?



City Resources

Do you know how to take care of a code violation? Are you aware of resources to help you if you cannot afford to pay fines or make repairs?



Vacant Homes and Lots

Are there many vacant homes and empty lots in your neighborhood?



Safety

Is crime an issue in your neighborhood? Do you feel safe?



Sense of Belonging

Do you feel connected to your neighbors and your community? Do you feel you belong?



Neighborhood Amenities

Do you live in neighborhood that has access to amenities like quality and affordable grocery stores, parks, playgrounds, libraries, community centers, and other amenities?

Additional Reasons: if there was another key challenges that you are facing while living in your neighborhood that was not listed, please add it on your activity sheet

Understand neighborhood conditions and challenges

5. ASK PARTICIPANTS TO PLACE DOTS ONTO ACTIVITY SHEET (2 MIN)

Now that we've gone through each of these issues, I invite you to place a dot in three of the concerns that most resonated with you.

6. IDENTIFY RESPONSE PATTERNS AND LEAD DISCUSSION (10-15 MIN)

It seems like a lot of us have concerns regarding (list key factor that shows up on the group chart) I noticed that X number of people put a sticker on (list key factor) – can someone who selected this explain why?

Can someone who placed a dot here share why this is important to them and elaborate on it using a post it?

Is anyone else facing similar or different challenges? For how long have you been facing this issue?

OPTION 2: CODE ENFORCEMENT CHALLENGES

7. INTRODUCE ACTIVITY (2 MIN)

We recognize that these are all very difficult challenges that deserve to be discussed in great depth. In this activity, we want to discuss your personal experiences around housing conditions and repairs, landlord issues, housing vouchers, and code enforcement inspections and violations in more detail. We might not be able to resolve them today, but it is important for us to hear your experiences so that we can share these experiences with the City and take steps to address these issues.

8. READ EXAMPLE SCENARIOS (3 MIN)

The scenarios listed are a few common examples of code enforcement challenges people may encounter. As I read them please pay attention to identify if you have been in any of these situations.

Repairs

- “My landlord has refused to make basic repairs”
- “I or my landlord cannot afford basic repairs to my home”
- “I paid a general contractor for repairs. They did not do a good job and I received another violation notice again”

Housing and neighborhood conditions

- “I receive a housing voucher and its hard for me to find a good quality home”
- “I have put up with undesirable housing conditions because I couldn't find good quality housing I could afford”
- “I have decided not to report issues to code enforcement for fear of having to leave my apartment if violations are found”
- “The vacant buildings in my street or in my neighborhood are rundown and feel unsafe”

(LIST CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)

Understand neighborhood conditions and challenges

Code Enforcement

- “My neighbors have continually reported me to code enforcement”
- “I am not sure how to make a complaint to the code enforcement department”
- “I received a violation from Code department but I didn’t know what to do”
- “I received a violation from the code department, but I could not afford to make that repair”
- “When my apartment had code violations, the resources available from the city and county weren’t helpful”

9. ASK PARTICIPANTS TO SHARE EXPERIENCES (5 MIN)

Ask participants the questions below to spark conversation and write each scenario mentioned in its own separate row on the activity sheet.

- *Do any of these scenarios resonate with you? Which ones?*
- *What has your experience been? Do you have any examples you would like to share?*

10. ASK GROUP TO SELECT 3-4 SCENARIOS TO DISCUSS (10-15 MIN)

Thank you all for sharing your experiences with the group. Let’s talk about these scenarios in more depth and discuss how we responded to these challenges.

Start with the first scenario and work your way down. The questions below are for each scenario. After you’ve filled out the first row, continue to the next scenario.

- *Can anyone who ticked this scenario explain why or how you identified with this one? Why it stood out to you?*
- *How did you react/respond? What actions did you take to address these challenges?*
- *Have you received support to deal with this situation? Who was helpful?*
- *Has anyone with a similar situation tried this same solution? Different solutions? This is an opportunity for all of us to share solutions to support each other too.*

11. CLOSE THE DISCUSSION (5 MIN)

If you are doing other activities after this, feel free to skip this step. This could be complemented with closing statements by the city agencies attending.

That was a great discussion! Thank you so much for sharing your experiences with us. Everything we talked together today will be used by the city to make improvements in how they tackle problems in our neighborhoods.

Thanks for coming and we hope that everything that we talked about today has been helpful and you are inspired to continue being involved. Remember that if you have a code enforcement or repair issue, you can always call the Code Enforcement department for assistance.