

Activity 5.2 Developing an Awareness of Stakeholders¹

Description

When collaborating with others on civic or public issues, it is important to ensure that a wide variety of perspectives on the issue are considered and that those with a stake in the issue are involved in collaborative efforts to address the issue. This activity helps participants consider how to identify and think expansively about stakeholders.

Learning Goal

- Distinguish and identify various types of stakeholders in civic issues.

Practice (50 minutes)

Step One	<i>Explaining the various types of Stakeholders.</i> As we think about complex issues, we need to think about who the issue “touches” and then find out ways to gain their perspectives. One place to start is by thinking about stakeholders. A stakeholder is someone with an interest in the issue. This might be hard to conceptualize at first, so it may help to think about four categories of stakeholders in public issues: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Affected: Those directly impacted by the issue, whose lives are directly touched by the issue2) Helpers: Those who try to help those impacted, this could be family, friends, support groups, non-profits, institutions, etc.3) Influencers: Those who try to influence how the issue is defined and/or advocate for changes4) Decision-Makers: Those who have the power to make change through policy. (Policy being defined as a change in the status quo which might include, but is not limited to legislation.) Tip: Work through an example of an issue with the group to show examples of the various types of stakeholders.	15 min
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¹**Citation for this activity:** Lori Britt (2023). Developing an Awareness of Stakeholders. In Hartman, Britt, & Byrd (Eds). *The Interactivity Foundation Collaborative Discussion Toolkit*. Retrieved from <https://www.collaborativediscussionproject.com/module-5-civic-collaboration-1>

<p>Step Two</p>	<p>Assign small groups to one of the “winning” issues from Activity 5.1 Civic Passion.</p> <p>Tip: You might choose to have groups all focus on the same issue to be able to compare and add depth, or you may wish to have groups working on several of the final four issues.</p>	<p>5 min</p>
<p>Step Three</p>	<p>Have participants create a chart of stakeholders in each of these categories [Affected, helper, influencer, decision-maker] for their assigned issue. Encourage them to keep thinking for several rounds to encourage consideration of those beyond the “usual suspects” or people who are normally associated with the issue. But be sure these are people with a stake, connected with the issue in some way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who is directly impacted by the issue? ● Are their others affected indirectly? ● Who are the people or organizations who help those impacted? ● Who has the authority to make decisions about this issue? ● Who might inform those decisions? ● Who is shaping public perception of this issue? ● Who has critical information about this issue? ● Who is involved in addressing the issue? 	<p>20 min</p>
<p>Step Four</p>	<p>Debrief. As a full group, share your small group’s chart. Discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are there any “surprise” stakeholders on these lists? ● What are some strategies you can use to recognize the less obvious or marginalized stakeholders? ● Why is it important to consider as many stakeholders as possible? What is gained by this? When might this hinder progress or development? 	<p>10 min</p>

Reflection Assignment

- If everybody in your community thinks the same way, how do you seek out divergent or different perspectives? What strategies could you use to help you think beyond your comfort zone?
- Are there ever disadvantages to seeking out too many diverse perspectives on an issue? When might you want to filter or limit perspectives on an issue?

Practice Journal

This week, think of a particular topic (it could be your passion topic from Activity 5.1) Make a list of the stakeholders. What sort of stakeholders are hard to identify? How might you better identify stakeholders on this topic? What can you gain by understanding the levels of stakeholders on this topic?

Dive Deeper: Additional Resources

- [Identifying Stakeholders and Their Interests. Community Toolbox Chapter](#)