Tools and Tactics for Engaging Communities around Code Enforcement

APR 2019

CITIES RISE | Cities for Responsible Investment and Strategic Enforcement

HESTER ST

V2

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

US

RECOMMENDATIONS

OBJECTIVE 1 - INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING WITH DEEP AND VAR... AFFORDABILITY IN ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT.

RECOMMENDATION 1.1 - Ea... ... affordable housing in total across a... ...ly rezoned sites wi...

RECOMMENDATION ... of low and mo... ...medians and re... Households in ... year, or abou...

- 37%...
- 16%...
- 1...

...Department ... ...ACS and Scho... ...the impacts of r... ...establish ap...

...of 3rd, 2nd ...top of (land ... ...inclusionary ...ity can... ...reached. [This ...ensity bonus.] Consider application of ...to portions of Madison, Lexington and ...dy needs to be done to establish how ...an be built in and still make the project

...establishment of a linkages between the ... .8 and EIS-related recommendations) ...rkforce that requires living wages, local ...ship programs.

...at construction jobs for affordable ...ges, advance local hiring, and provide ...s so that East Harlem residents can ...work environments, with long-term

...ABLE HOUSING TOOLS AND ...FORDABLE HOUSING IN NEW

...public sites that can be ...a change in zoning designation, should be ...its, and these units should be required to ...of affordability up to 130% of AMI. ...20% of the units at or below 30% of AMI.

RECOMMENDATION 2.2 - If residents decide that new infill development is appropriate for their NYCHA development, create additional affordable housing on available NYCHA sites in conjunction with active engagement with the development residents.

RECOMMENDATION 2.3 - Explore the potential for adaptive re-use, co-location and development of underutilized buildings for affordable housing and other community uses.

RECOMMENDATION 2.4 - HPD should provide more affordable artist live/work spaces through its programs in East Harlem. Locate these spaces ...appropriate areas as part of potential rezoning, such as along the ...e Avenue viaduct (allow artist live/work housing to use commercial ...should the area be rezoned).

RECOMMENDATION 2.5 - Encourage HPD to work with the community to ...sites and funding to create more affordable housing for seniors.

RECOMMENDATION 2.6 - Seek to create more supportive housing, and ensure ...uilt in conjunction with an experienced non-profit supportive ...providers for those groups most in need in the district as ...ity Community Board.

RECOMMENDATION 2.7 - Increase the amount of City subsidy available to ...levels of affordability.

RECOMMENDATION 2.8 - For public site RFPs:

2.8.1. Require maximum and deep affordability.

2.8.2. Require permanent affordability strategies.

2.8.3. Require that developments meet community-defined program and design requirements, including those for open space and community facilities, and housing for the homeless.

2.8.4. Encourage that HPD require involvement of locally-based non-profit developers/owners.

2.8.5. Explore the potential for the conveyance of vacant and underutilized City-owned land to a community land trust.

RECOMMENDATION 2.9 - Encourage private developers to work with the East Harlem community (non-profit developers, community-based organizations, service providers, the Community Board, et al) to ensure that all new developments meet community needs and priorities.

RECOMMENDATION 2.10 - Make community preference in affordable housing a requirement of development in East Harlem

OBJECTIVE 3 - IMPLEMENT TOOLS TO ADDRESS DISPLACEMENT OF BOTH RESIDENTS AND BUSINESS OWNERS.

RECOMMENDATION 3.1 - Adopt anti-harassment measures to discourage the displacement East Harlem residents.

RECOMMENDATION 3.2 - Discourage speculation and encourage community-centric development with an anti-warehousing policy, and an investor/purchaser transfer tax.

RECOMMENDATION 3.3 - Encourage the leasing of ground-floor commercial space to local small business owners through coordinated outreach to landowners and landlords. Ensure that DCP, HPD, EDC and SBS coordinate efforts and resources to strengthen strategies for small ...business creation and retention along commercial corridors in East Harlem.
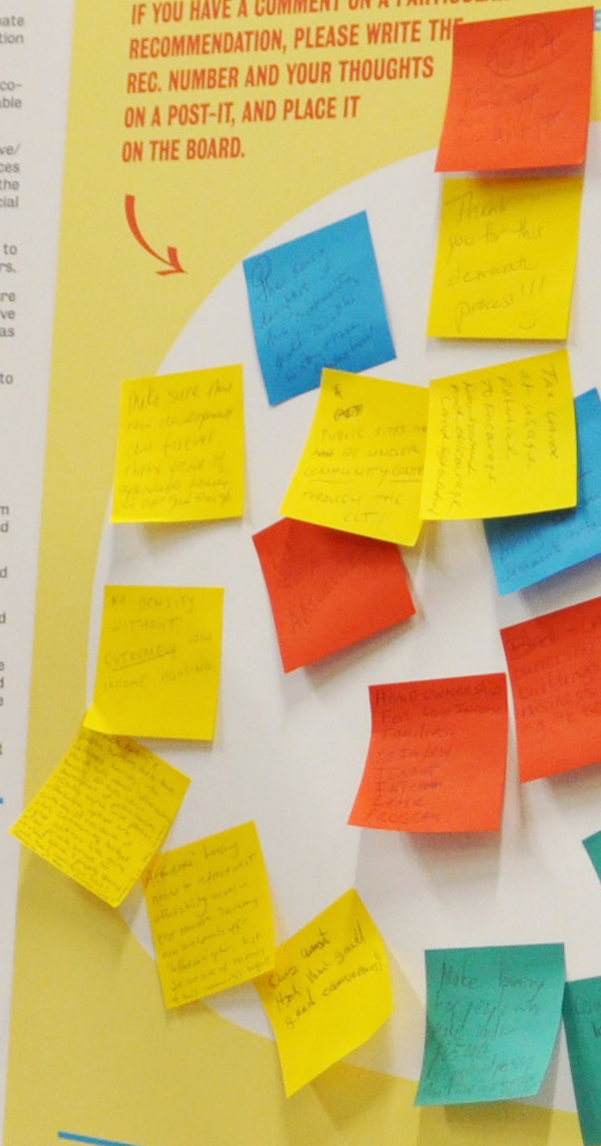
VIVIENDAS ASEQUIBLES

PLAN
Comunitario
PARA EL BARRIO

ZONING & AFFORDABLE

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

IF YOU HAVE A COMMENT ON A PARTICULAR RECOMMENDATION, PLEASE WRITE THE REC. NUMBER AND YOUR THOUGHTS ON A POST-IT, AND PLACE IT ON THE BOARD.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP PRIOR... RECOMMENDATIONS, PLEASE FILL OUT A PA... LEAVE IT AT THE STATI...

SI USTED DESEA AYUDAR A PRIORIZAR LA... INDIVIDUALES, POR FAVOR LLENE EL E... ENCUENTRA ABAJO Y DEJELA EN...

EAST HARLEM *Neighborhood* **PLAN**

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Introduction

Congratulations on being selected as a Cities RISE Phase II grant recipient!

Hester Street is excited to support your municipality in Phase II of Cities RISE to meaningfully engage residents and stakeholders. The process seeks to include community voices in developing and implementing innovative and equitable code enforcement strategies, with an emphasis on reaching traditionally underrepresented and marginalized populations such as low-income communities, communities of color, recent immigrants, undocumented persons, families with young children and seniors.

During this community engagement process, we will support your city in:
- **Gathering input** to understand community priorities
- **Collectively generating potential solutions** to advance equitable code enforcement
- **Soliciting community feedback on potential projects** or programs that can be piloted or advanced through the Cities RISE program

The community engagement process will help your city shape an innovation grant application for Phase III of Cities RISE that responds to community needs. We also hope that the process can support you in creating new relationships with community members, stronger partnerships with community based organizations and residents and help you build capacity for future community engagement.

This guide is intended as a resource throughout your community engagement process around code enforcement issues. It provides an overview of programs, processes, tools and outcomes expected from cities. We also hope that you continue to refer to it as a resource and reference beyond Cities RISE.

All materials included in this manual serve as a starting point as you plan engagements. These materials and resources will be refined and tailored to the unique issues and needs in your city.

We look forward to working with your city to design and implement an exciting and dynamic engagement process!

PROCESS OVERVIEW

About Cities RISE

Cities for Responsible Investment and Strategic Enforcement (Cities RISE) is a program funded by the NY State Attorney General's Office. The program provides municipalities across New York State with critical tools and support in the development and implementation of new approaches to problem properties and code enforcement challenges that produce positive social outcomes, including:

- Fewer problem properties and fewer at-risk properties
- Higher code compliance rates
- Safer, healthier, higher quality living conditions for residents
- Greater sense of belonging, ownership and empowerment in neighborhoods

In Phase II of Cities RISE, participating municipalities receive technical assistance in the following areas:

- **Harvard Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation** - Organizational change management and executive leadership
- **Hester Street** - Civic and community engagement
- **Tolemi** - Data integration and analysis

Technical assistance providers are supporting each municipality in their application for an **Innovation and Implementation Grant of up to $1 million** for projects that advance proactive, transparent and equitable solutions.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY INPUT

As part of the Cities RISE Phase II, municipalities will conduct meaningful and inclusive engagement with underrepresented and marginalized populations to:

- Gather input on local priorities for code enforcement and housing
- Identify issues that an innovation grant can address
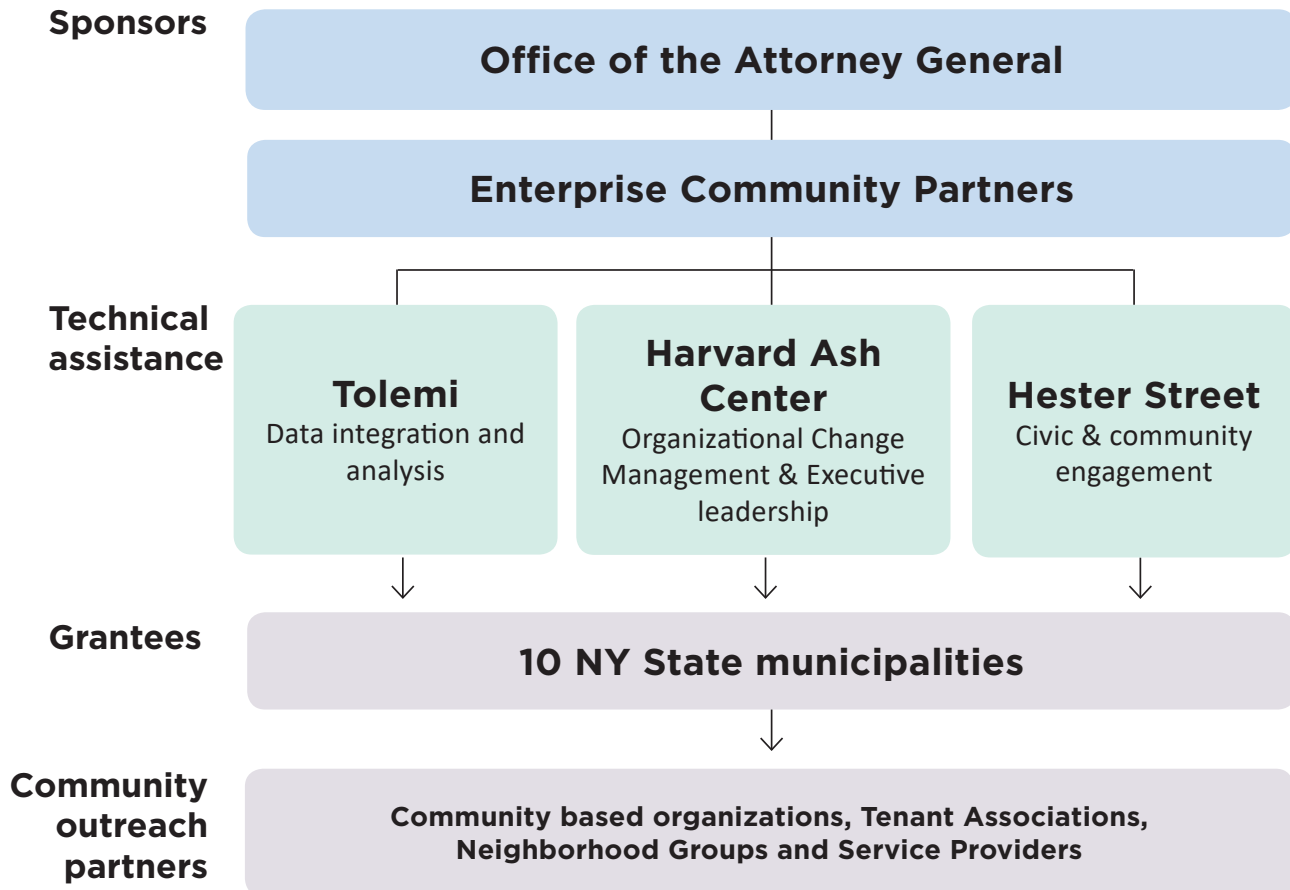- Create an innovation grant proposal grounded in community priorities

Each municipality is provided with resources, technical assistance and a $30K outreach grant to conduct outreach and host community events through partnerships and stipends to local community based organizations, service providers and neighborhood associations.

COMMUNITY INPUT IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THIS PROCESS!

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

1 Identify priority populations and issues

2 Define engagement strategy

3 Gather community input

Roles

Sponsors

Office of the Attorney General

Enterprise Community Partners

Technical assistance

Tolemi
Data integration and analysis

Harvard Ash Center
Organizational Change Management & Executive leadership

Hester Street
Civic & community engagement

Grantees

10 NY State municipalities

Community outreach partners

Community based organizations, Tenant Associations, Neighborhood Groups and Service Providers

4 — Synthesize engagement results

5 — Reportback to community

6 — Incorporate community feedback into city policies, programs, and innovation grant

Community Outreach Grant Guidelines

As part of the engagement process, each municipality has received a $30K grant to fund community outreach for Cities RISE Phase II. The following table provides guidelines for the disbursement of grant funds:

TYPES	DO	DON'T
Community partners	• Compensate residents, community leaders, community based organizations, service providers, for their participation and partnerships towards engagement and outreach. • Regrant money to organizations serving, organizing and advocating for low income communities of color and other constituents who aren't currently involved in decision-making.	• Compensate city staff, either for their full-time hours or overtime to attend engagement events • Regrant all money to only one or two community organizations, or exclusively to organizations that you already work with consistently. • Regrant money without being present or involved in the engagement conducted by your community partners.
Hard costs	Put together attractive and inclusive community events by investing in or regranting money for: • Printing of flyers, engagement posters and popular education on code enforcement • Materials needed for engagement, like post its, easel pads, markers, stickers, etc. • Food, refreshments, and if possible, giveaways • Childcare • Translation of materials and interpretation for non-English speakers or people with disabilities • Venue rentals (up to $300 per event)	• Spend most of the grant on hard costs • Forget to include event costs in the regrant amount you are giving to community partners. • Spend lavishly on hard costs, when other community assets are available. For example, renting an expensive venue instead of using a community center or partnering with an organization who has their own venue.

Event types	Use funds to creatively engage hard to reach populations through events like:
	• Focus groups
	• Workshops
	• Tabling in public spaces and at already planned and well attended community events
	• Putting together community events related to code enforcement, like:
	  • Neighborhood cleanup days
	  • Neighborhood sweeps
	  • Meet a code officer
	  • Know-your-rights trainings for community partners and residents
		• Spend most of the grant on engaging your steering committee or task force. They should be helping you brainstorm how to better engage with the wider community.
		• Resort to only doing big public meetings. They are not necessarily the best way to deeply engage with hard to reach constituents.

Examples and suggestions on how the $30,000 outreach grant may be utilized during the engagement period:

TYPES	ACTIVITIES	RANGE OF COMPENSATION
Residents	**Taskforce or Working Group Meetings** • Honoraria for participation in (3-5) meetings and/or attending 1 to 2 public meetings/focus groups/community events **Code Enforcement Ambassadors** • Honoraria to talk about code enforcement or conduct outreach in hard to reach areas (includes training time and report back)	• $500 to $1,000 per person
Community organizations, service providers, and tenant associations	**10-25 person Focus Group:** • Grant to conduct outreach and host event **Public meeting of 25+ persons:** • Grant to conduct outreach and host event • Note: City staff to be present, speak, provide materials, giveaways etc. with HST support.	• $500 - $1,000 per Focus Group • $1,500 to $2,500 per meeting depending on size, translation
Events hosted with community organizations	**Neighborhood clean-up day** • with music, food, performances, etc. **Code Enforcement Resource/Information Fair or Pop-Ups** • at Health Fairs or other Muni events	• $2,000 to $10,000 depending on size, frequency etc.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BASICS

Guiding Principles

Keep in mind these suggested guiding principles as you plan for community engagement events or processes:

Create easily accessible and understandable graphics and visual tools

Be transparent about project parameters and constraints– Clearly define opportunities for input

Follow an iterative process–Stakeholders and decision makers are partners throughout

Acknowledge and respect participants time– provide food, childcare and other incentives

Be expansive and inclusive in outreach and engagement– consider language, ability and time constraints

Prioritize local partnerships within the community, reach people where they are– markets, churches, libraries, schools

Ensure that participants have the information and inspiration they need to engage in a meaningful way
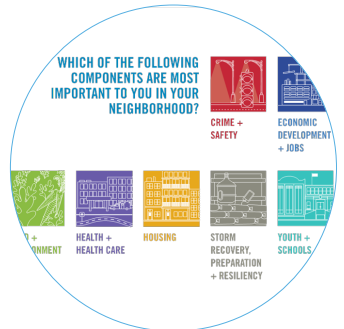
Develop evaluation criteria with community residents at the beginning of the process and use throughout

Engagement Techniques

Engagement methods should be tailored to the audience, venue and overall process goals. It is always advisable to combine a variety of techniques to gather both broad and deep input in any process.
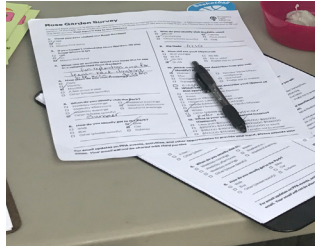
Interviews

One-on-one conversation with stakeholders

Helpful when:

- First approaching a community
- Identifying key stakeholders and neighborhood dynamic
- In-depth discussions on a topic

Surveys

Written questionnaires to gather feedback

Helpful when:

- Stakeholders can't dedicate a lot of time
- Gathering broad based input from multiple communities
- Identifying community needs and opinions

Tabling

Attend community events and gathering spaces

Helpful when:

- First approaching a community
- Gathering input from hard to reach communities
- Building trust and relationships

House gatherings

Intimate conversations with 5-10 neighbors

Helpful when:

- Reaching populations that might not attend public events
- Focusing on personal experiences and stories
- Building trust and relationships

Public workshop

One large event to reach a variety of residents

Helpful when:

- Strong outreach can ensure attendance is diverse and representative
- Diversity of experience is imporant to conversation

Focus groups

Round table discussion with 10-20 residents

Helpful when:

- Reaching constituents of a community partner organization
- Delving deeper into discussion of community needs and wants

Block cleanup party

Collaborative event to address neighborhood conditions

Helpful when:

- Building trust and relationships
- Proactively approaching code violations
- Providing resources to residents

Planning for Successful Engagement

The following checklist can help you plan for a successful engagement event:

PLAN ▶

- ☐ Confirm an event location, date and time *(refer to Venue Selection Checklist on next page)*.

- ☐ Create an event budget and discuss how to spend or raise funds.

- ☐ Discuss who you want to attend the event and what strategies you'll use to reach them.

- ☐ Refine and tailor toolkit materials as necessary so they are specific to your community.

OUTREACH ▶

- ☐ Do your research. Make sure you know the socio-economic and demographic make-up of the community so you can ensure you are being inclusive in your outreach strategy *(refer to Outreach Strategy Checklist in following pages)*.

- ☐ Find other community partners who can help organize, outreach, and/or assist with the event.

- ☐ Post flyers around the neighborhood.

- ☐ Send flyers to local newspapers and blogs.

- ☐ Post event to social media and send out e-blasts.

PREPARE ▶ HOST ▶ DEBRIEF

☐ Create a staffing plan for the event: include facilitators and note takers for each table, an MC, people to staff sign-in tables and to float around the room.

☐ Arrange for any necessary language translation, childcare, and food and refreshments.

☐ Print all event materials: posters/worksheets, sign-in sheets, agendas, building signage and photo release forms.

☐ Hold a facilitator training meeting/call to make sure everyone staffing the event understands their roles and the run of show.

☐ Set up tables, chairs, and event-related support materials.

☐ Have your sign-in sheets and pens ready for when people arrive.

☐ Take photographs and/ or video throughout to document the event and capture community stories.

☐ Be flexible! If the materials are not producing a productive discussion, adjust your facilitation style.

☐ Thank everyone who pitched in for their time and effort!

☐ Debrief with facilitators, note takers, partners and Hester Street to discuss what worked well and what could be improved upon. Think about effectiveness of community outreach, lessons learned and recommendations for next event.

☐ Create and distribute a short user friendly community report back to share findings from the meeting and next steps with all who attended

Venue Selection

Use the checklist below to ensure that you pick a venue that meets the needs of your engagement event.

Capacity of the venue

☐ What is the capacity of the venue? Will it accommodate the number of people that we expect?

☐ How many tables and chairs will we need? What is the shape and size of the tables? Does the venue have tables that we can use or do we need to rent them?

Logistics

☐ Is the venue available during the time slot that we need it for? Be prepared with multiple options!

☐ What is the rental fee? Does it fit within our budget?

☐ Who will be our main point of contact to finalize plans for the venue and make bookings?

☐ Will there be someone to help us set the space up? Do we need to meet with them in advance?

Location

☐ Is the venue centrally located in order to ensure maximum participation? How much signage will be required for people to find it?

☐ Are there subway stations, bus stops or bike parking facilities in the vicinity?

☐ Are the entrances, room and restrooms ADA accessible?

Facilities

☐ Does the air-conditioning/ heat work effectively? Will there be fans?

☐ Is food consumption and catering allowed within the premises?

☐ Does the room have A/V Equipment? This includes a projector, a screen/wall to project on, controllable lights to darken the room, extension cords, a sound system and a mic.

Documentation

☐ Take pictures and make a rough layout with some basic measurements! This will help you plan the arrangement for tables, chairs, childcare, food, sign-in table and activities in advance.

Outreach Strategy

Outreach is critical to the success of your event! It is crucial to have a robust outreach strategy to ensure that an event is attended by a broad cross-section of your community.

Partnerships

☐ Work with community-based organizations as outreach partners to organize and promote workshop through email lists, social media outlets and membership networks.

☐ Recruit volunteers to help with distributing flyers or take the help of any partner organizations that may have greater capacity.

Outreach

☐ Remember to target outreach to non-English speaking populations, tenant associations, libraries, schools, senior citizens etc.

☐ Use building-to-buildings flyers, mailers, face-to-face interactions in order to spread the word far and wide.

☐ Table at events that you think are relevant in the week or month prior to the event.

Logistics

☐ Provide transportation to workshop venue or ensure that public transportation is available.

☐ Keep workshops less than 3 hours long , especially during a week night.

☐ Provide child care and food/refreshments.

☐ Where possible, recruit local residents or leaders as facilitators or note takers for the event.

Overcome Language and Accessibility Barriers

☐ Provide large format materials if you expect participants with low vision

☐ Provide simultaneous translation for every non-English community or ASL participants whose participation you expect for opening remarks, presentations, report back and wrap up. For facilitated small group tables, ensure that there are separate tables for each language.

☐ Provide print and presentation materials in multiple languages.

Facilitation Strategies

Effective community meetings require conversations moderated and faciliated by a designated facilitator. Facilitators should encourage discussion among participants, not lead it. The faciliator's role is to 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:

Facilitation tips

- 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.

Community agreements

One of the facilitator's most important roles is to help set and enforce community agreements to ensure equal and civil participation in the conversation. The following are examples of community agreements that facilitators can introduce. Feel free to invite participants to build on them as desired:

- **ONE MICROPHONE:** If a person is sharing, allow them to share their complete thoughts, avoid interrupting them, and listen actively.

- **MOVE UP, MOVE UP:** If you are someone who speaks often, move up to listen more. If you are someone who prefers to listen, move up to speak out and share more often.

- **BE AWARE OF TIME:** Please come back on time from breaks, and refrain from long monologues to keep the conversation moving.

- **NO ONE KNOWS EVERYTHING, TOGETHER WE KNOW A LOT:** Share what you know, respect every participants point of view and learn from each other's experience.

For more tips and resources check out:
https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/shortfacilitation

https://www.odbproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/ODB_DDP_HighRes_Single.pdf

http://aorta.coop/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/AO-Facilitation-Resource-Sheet.pdf

CITIES RISE COMMUNITY PLANNING TOOLKIT

Tools for Engaging Communities on Code Enforcement

Gathering meaninful and actionable input from community members requires presenting data and information simply, and making the conversation relevant and relatable. Hester Street is keenly aware that each municipality and audience is unique, and how you frame and conduct conversations about code enforcement issues will vary greatly. With that in mind, we have created a flexible and adaptable toolkit that you can draw from for a variety of engagement types. Depending on where you are in the process, who you are talking to and what format the conversation will take place in, Hester Street can work with you to customize one or multiple tools for each engagement.

What are the overarching goals of your engagement?
Use the categories below to find tools that match your goals.

Share information

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Understand neighborhood conditions

pg. 24

Prioritize community needs

pg. 28
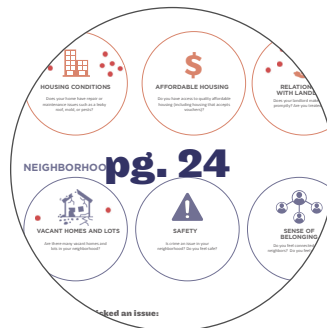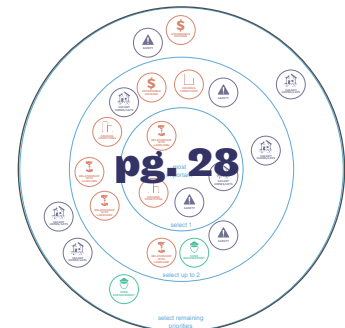
Brainstorm potential innovative solutions
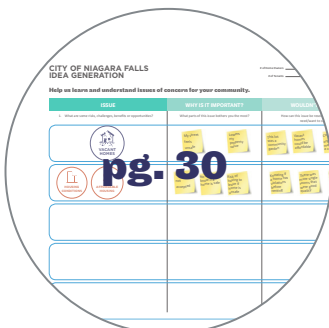
pg. 30

Gather feedback on potential Innovation Grant ideas

pg. 32

Report back on what you heard

pg. 34
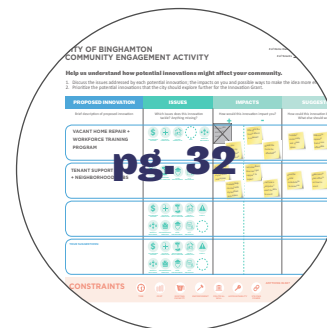
Share Information

OVERVIEW

Objective
- Share information with the public in an accesible and engaging way to capture attention, create awareness of city issues and policies, and encourage participation.

When to use
- Outreach for engagement events
- Tabling
- House gatherings
- Focus groups
- Public workshops
- Block cleanup party

TOOL DESCRIPTION

The following tools can help you share information with your constituents:

Flyer
The flyer template is useful for conducting outreach for public events related to Cities RISE. The flyer is easily customizable according to the event theme and location.

What is Code Enforcement? brochure:
The general public you are engaging with might not understand the code enforcement process or why it is important for safe and healthy neighborhoods. This brochure is a public education tool that explains code enforcement and its importance in an accessible and graphic format. Hester Street can help you customize the brochure to remove text that is not relevant, include city-specific resources and contact information, as well as tenant and owner rights. The brochure is intended for use with other materials, flyers or brochures on code enforcement that your city already distributes.

City context poster
Sharing maps, demographic and code enforcement data using graphic techniques makes information more accessible to a wide audience. Use posters like this one to help community members understand the housing and code enforcement issues in you city. This poster or handout is also useful at the start of engagement events to provide some context for the conversations during tabling events, focus groups and workshops. It is meant to be used in conjunction with other tools in this toolkit.

Event Flyer

What is Code Enforcement? brochure
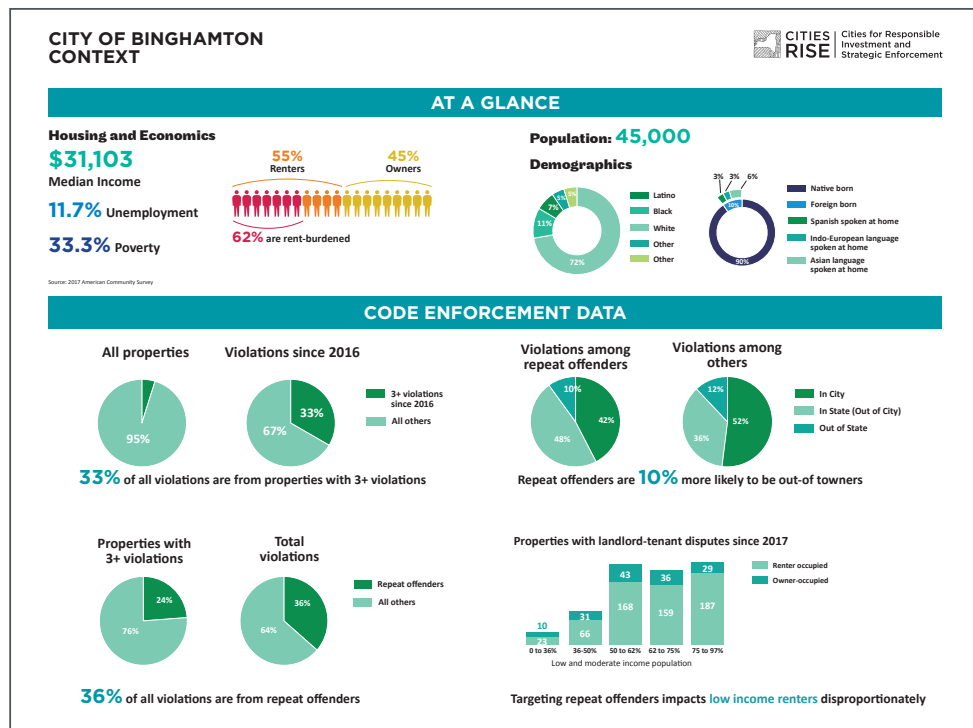
City Context Poster

Understand neighborhood conditions and challenges

OVERVIEW

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

When to use
- Tabling
- House gatherings
- Focus groups
- Public workshops
- Block clean up party

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

TOOL DESCRIPTION

The engagement activity poster (*facing page)* can be used to capture experiences and information on broad issues residents are experiencing. It can also be used to find out which issues are most pressing or important to a particular neighborhood or population groups. The tool can be used in 2 ways:

Tabling
Use the poster to quickly gather feedback on neighborhood issues by asking participants to place a dot sticker on their top 3 neighborhood concerns.

If participants have more time, encourage them to elaborate on an issue or situation they have faced by placing a post-it on the poster.

As part of a focus group or a workshop
When using as part of a group conversation, the poster can be the first activity of the event.

Facilitators can introduce all the issues on the poster, ask the whole group to identify the most important issues for them with dot stickers, and then encourage the group to share examples and experiences of the main issues they identified.

Data tip: Collating and comparing the findings from different neighborhoods or populations can help you gather qualitative information on resident identified priorities.

Hester Street will work with you to tailor this engagement activity poster to your community as needed.

ACTIVITY OPTION 1

CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS
NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS

of Home Owners _____

# of Tenants _____

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

HOUSING

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?

OTHER

CITY CONNECTIONS

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?

NEIGHBORHOOD

VACANT HOMES AND LOTS
Are there many vacant homes and 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? Do you feel you belong?

NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES
Do you live close to quality and affordable grocery stores (including those that accept food stamps), banks, childcare, doctors, or other amenities?

OTHER

OTHER

Tell us why you picked an issue:

Roof of my house is not in a good state

Handrails are broken

Scared to send our children to play outside

Scared to pass by vacant lots

My house is igoing through a mice issues. Landlord is not helping with extermination

Leak in drainage pipes

Barely responds to our calls/texts

Landlord is overcrowding the house

Understand neighborhood conditions and challenges

OVERVIEW

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

When to use
- House gatherings
- Focus groups

Materials needed
- Printed poster
- Scenario list
- Sticky notes
- Markers and pens

TOOL DESCRIPTION

This second engagement activity poster *(facing page)* is useful to capture specific resident experiences in small group conversations.

Facilitators state that they want to understand resident experiences around housing conditions and repairs, landlord issues, housing vouchers, and code enforcement inspections and violations.

They share a few common scenarios, for example:

"I have decided not to report issues to code enforcement for fear of having to leave my rental apartment if violations are found"

"The abandoned home next to my house has become rundown and feels unsafe"

Facilitator then asks participants to share some experiences they might have had by asking open ended questions.

The group chooses 3-4 scenarios that are the most common or resonate with the most people. They discuss their experience, how they dealt with the issue and any share resources that were helpful.

The conversation will be captured in the poster through post-its and notes to document main ideas and takeaways expressed.

At the end, Code Enforcement shares relevant resources and rights to deal with the most common issues surfaced by particpants.

ACTIVITY OPTION 2

CITY OF ROCHESTER CODE ENFORCEMENT EXPERIENCES

of Home Owners _____
# of Tenants _____

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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:

- My landlord has refused to make basic repairs
- I receive a housing voucher and it is hard for me to find a good quality home
- I received a violation from the code department, but I didn't know what to do

- I / my landlord cannot afford basic repairs to my home
- I have put up with undesirable housing conditions because I couldn't find good quality housing I could afford

Scenarios: Describe a situation you have been in

How did you respond?

Scenario #1

The roof of my house is caving in, but I am afraid of calling my landlord or code enforcement for fear of ICE

My landlord lives in another city. I tried contacting him multiple times but never recieved a response. I was afraid to register complaint against him. So used my savings to fix the roof.

Scenario #2

The lot next to my house is vacant and creates issues for me and my neighbors.

We logged a complaint in Police Department

Scenario #3

I receive a DSS or section 8 voucher and its hard for me to find a good quality home.

I settled for a house which was relatively in a good state. But it was a big task and took me almost 2 months to find one.

Scenario #4

I received a violation from the code department, but I didn't know what to do

I called the department and they guided me through the process

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.

Example scenarios:

Repairs

- "My landlord has refused to make basic repairs"

- "I/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/ neighborhood are rundown and feel unsafe"

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"

Prioritize Community Needs

OVERVIEW

Objective
- Identify which issues (surfaced through Cities RISE or other public engagements) should be a priority for the city to act on.

When to use
- Tabling
- House gatherings
- Focus groups
- Public workshops
- Block cleanup party

Materials needed
- Printed poster
- Issue stickers
- Sticky notes
- Markers and pens

TOOL DESCRIPTION

This engagement activity poster *(facing page)* can help residents rank community issues according to importance or urgency. This information will be helpful to city agencies in developing new processes and programs throughout the Cities RISE process. This tool can be used at:

Tabling
When tabling, facilitators can provide an overview of the issues to residents by showing them stickers with different housing and neighborhood issues (vacancy, building conditions, etc) that have been identified through previous engagements or data. Facilitators then encourage participants to choose three issue stickers and place them in order of importance on the bullseye.

As part of a focus group or a workshop
When using as part of a group conversation, this poster can be used in conjunction with the *"Understanding neighborhood conditions"* poster (p. 22). Facilitators will identify the five main issues deriving from that conversation and ask participants to rank these issues by order of importance by placing the issue stickers on the bulls eye.

Hester Street will work with you to tailor this engagement activity poster to your community as needed.

CITY OF BINGHAMTON COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

of Home Owners _____

# of Tenants _____

CITIES RISE | Cities for Responsible Investment and Strategic Enforcement

1 Rank your city's top priorities in order of importance using the bull's eye diagram.

most important

select 1

select up to 2

select remaining priorities
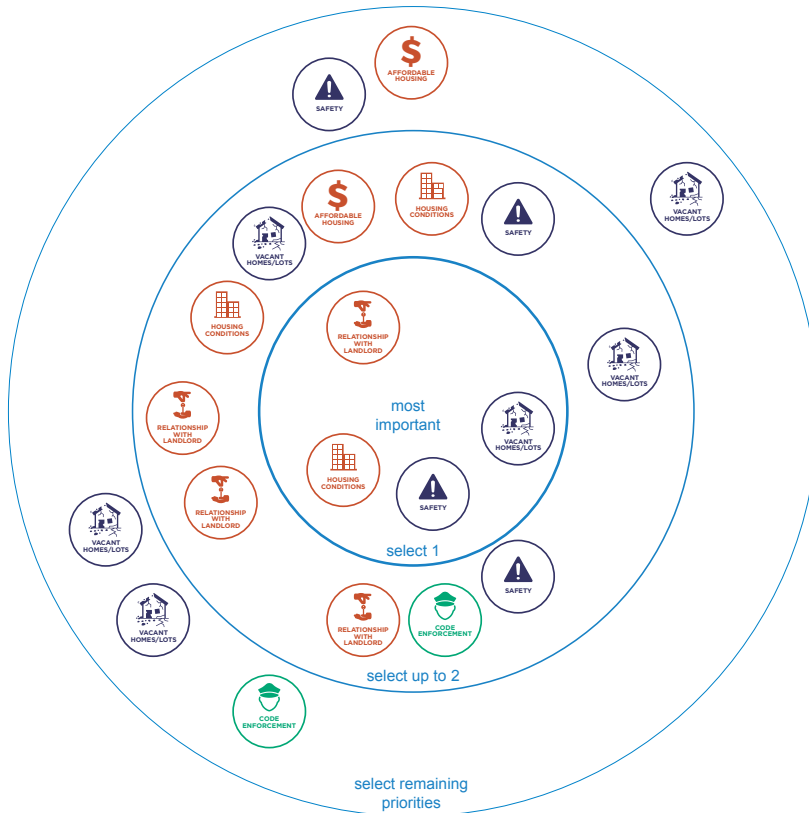
2 Count the total number of each community priority in the inner circle (most important) and record below.

HOUSING CONDITIONS	RELATIONSHIP WITH LANDLORD	VACANT HOMES/LOTS	CITY RESOURCES	SAFETY
3	2	2	2	1
total #	total #	total #	total #	total #

NEIGHBORHOOD

- VACANT HOMES/LOTS
- SAFETY
- NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES
- SENSE OF BELONGING

HOUSING

- HOUSING CONDITIONS
- AFFORDABLE HOUSING
- RELATIONSHIP WITH LANDLORD

CITY CONNECTIONS

- CODE ENFORCEMENT
- CITY RESOURCES

ADDITIONAL CONCERNS

Brainstorm innovative solutions

OVERVIEW

Objective
- Collectively brainstorm potential solutions to community needs identified through engagement by encouraging creative thinking.

When to use
- Tabling
- Focus groups
- Public workshops
- Block cleanup party

Materials needed
- Printed posters
- Sticky notes
- Markers and pens

TOOL DESCRIPTION

This engagement activity poster *(facing page)* should be pre-filled with priority issues identified through previous engagements to ground the conversation in the the main concerns already expressed by residents. It can then be used to brainstorm creative solutions to the problems affecting a particular community or the city at large.

Facilitators first introduce the issues that have been previously identified, as well as why it matters to residents. For example, if an issue is abandoned homes, why it matters could be criminal activities, pests, or reduced property values. The facilitator then asks if there is anything more residents want to add about why this issue matters and other related concerns.

Following a discussion on the issues, the facilitator will open a conversation on possible solutions for the issues and concerns identified by asking questions like:
- Do you have any ideas or thoughts on how we could address this issue?
- Are there any programs or solutions that you would recommend here?
- What would be most useful to you for dealing with this issue?

This conversation is intented to allow residents to think big and generate ideas for how code enforcement and other city agencies could tackle these issues in a holistic way. Facilitators can have some case studies or precedentson how other cities have tackled these issues to share with residents for inspiration.

Hester Street will work with you to tailor this engagement activity poster to your community event as needed.

CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS
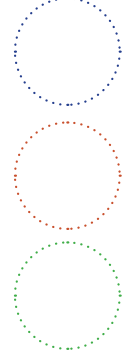# IDEA GENERATION

Help us learn and understand issues of concern for your community.

ISSUE	WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?	WOULDN'T IT BE GREAT IF...
1. What are some risks, challenges, benefits or opportunities?	What parts of this issue bothers you the most?	How can this issue be resolved? What resources would you need/want to solve for this issue?
VACANT HOMES	My street feels unsafe — Lowers my property value	This lot was a community garden — Vacant homes could be affordable — Community org ABC made it into a center — Teach kids construction skills while repairing them
HOUSING CONDITIONS — **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**	Vouchers not accepted — No way to know if a home is safe — Risk of having to leave if home is unsafe	Knowing if a home has violations before renting — There was more single rooms that were good quality — Help for tenants to find better housing

Gather feedback on potential Innovation Grant ideas

OVERVIEW

Objective
- Gather feedback on a potential solution or innovation the city is piloting or thinking of implementing.

When to use
- House gatherings
- Focus groups
- Public workshops

Materials needed
- Printed posters
- Sticky notes
- Dot stickers
- Markers and pens

TOOL DESCRIPTION

This engagement activity poster *(facing page)* should be prefilled with a user friendly simple explanation of the the proposed innovation or idea that your city is thinking about piloting or implementing. Ideally, innovations proposed here will have been identified through previous engagement and the city's own planning processes.

City staff can introduce residents to each of the proposed innovation ideas and the big picture issues it address.

Facilitators will then lead the group into a conversation about the impacts, both positive and negative, that each innovation may have on their housing conditions and neighborhood.

The group will then discuss suggested changes to the proposed idea to make it more effective for them and their neighborhood.

Finally, each participant is given a chance to prioritize two innovations they would most want the city to implement by placing a sticker next to two Innovation ideas.

Hester Street will work with you to tailor this engagement activity poster to your community event as needed.

CITY OF BINGHAMTON
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY

of Home Owners _____
# of Tenants _____

CITIES RISE | Cities for Responsible Investment and Strategic Enforcement

Help us understand how potential innovations might affect your community.

1. Discuss the issues addressed by each potential innovation; the impacts on you and possible ways to make the idea more effective.
2. Prioritize the potential innovations that the city should explore further for the Innovation Grant.

PROPOSED INNOVATION	ISSUES	IMPACTS		SUGGESTIONS	PRIORITY
Brief description of proposed innovation	Which issues does this innovation tackle? Anything missing?	How would this innovation impact you? **+**	**−**	How could this innovation be more effective? What else should we consider?	Which 2 innovations would you prioritize?
VACANT HOME REPAIR + WORKFORCE TRAINING PROGRAM	AFFORDABLE HOUSING · HOUSING CONDITIONS · VACANT HOMES/LOTS · JOBS · SENSE OF BELONGING	Creates jobs and trains our kids · Can you start on my block? There are so many!	Who gets the home after it is repaired? · Would the home be affordable?	Consider community and green space · Make sure repaired homes are affordable · How to create long-term jobs	• • •
TENANT SUPPORT PORTAL + NEIGHBORHOOD HUBS	HOUSING CONDITIONS · RELATIONSHIP WITH LANDLORD · CODE ENFORCEMENT · CITY RESOURCES	It would help me deal with my landlord and repairs · It would help me deal with my landlord and repairs	I am a landlord. How can I get support to repair? · I can't use a computer. I won't be able to use it!	Have the portal include links to resources · Make sure to train officers on how to use it · Call number or office to make accessible	• •
	AFFORDABLE HOUSING · HOUSING CONDITIONS · RELATIONSHIP WITH LANDLORD · VACANT HOMES/LOTS · SAFETY · SENSE OF BELONGING · NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES · CODE ENFORCEMENT · CITY RESOURCES				
YOUR SUGGESTIONS:	AFFORDABLE HOUSING · HOUSING CONDITIONS · RELATIONSHIP WITH LANDLORD · VACANT HOMES/LOTS · SAFETY · SENSE OF BELONGING · NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES · CODE ENFORCEMENT · CITY RESOURCES				

CONSTRAINTS

TIME · COST · EXISTING CAPACITY · ENFORCEMENT · POLITICAL WILL · ACCOUNTABILITY · STAYING POWER   ANYTHING ELSE?

Report back on what you heard

OVERVIEW

Objective
- Summarize and analyze engagement results to report the results of the community engagement process to the community and other government agencies.

When to use
- House gatherings
- Focus groups
- Public workshops
- Task force meetings
- Executive retreat

TOOL DESCRIPTION

It is good practice to close the engagement loop and share a summary of what was heard back to community participants. Hester Street can help you tailor a user friend engagement reportback *(facing page)* to share the themes and takeaways from the Cities RISE engagement events in your city.

The reportback will include basic information about your city's engagement strategy and process and will summarize community input into:
- Engagement stats
- Key takeaways
- Participant quotes
- Priority innovations
- Feedback on innovations

This reportback can be used in several ways:

As part of an engagement event
If used as part of an engagement event, the reportback can be presented at the start of an event by government officials. This presentation will set the tone for the engagement event and ensure that new conversations and feedback builds on what other community members have shared previously. Sharing the results of engagement also helps build trust in the community that their comments are being heard and incorporated into new rounds of engagement.

To brief partners on the results of engagement
This engagement reportback can also be helpful as a tool to brief city leadership (mayor, City Council, department directors), other government partners, community-based organizations, and other Cities RISE participants on the city's engagement strategy and community priorities and input.

CITY OF ROCHESTER ENGAGEMENT REPORT BACK

What we did

5 Meetings/focus groups

300 Survey responses

6 Tabling and community sessions

Community partners:
- Ibero
- Refugee Resettlement Network
- People's Climate Coalition

Who we heard from

400 People participated
- Low-income, communities of color
- Transient populations
- Latino immigrants

Languages Spoken: Spanish, Somali, Burmese, Congolese, Nepali, Swahili

Topics covered

- **59% of survey responders** are unsatisfied with their current housing
- **67% of survey responders** had never had an interaction with code enforcement
- **Poor housing conditions** were identified as a barrier to affordable housing

Concerns

- **Limited stock and quality of affordable housing** were other factors identified
- **Neighborhood service centers** were a great asset for community, but more outreach is needed to ensure everyone has access to their services

Opportunities

- **Interactions with code enforcement officers**
- **Receiving a code violation** was an issue for most households since they do not have the money on hand to make the needed repairs
- **Neighborhoods with large vacancy issues**

> "I have not contacted code enforcement in the past because I was not sure how to. But getting to meet the officer was helpful"
> - Workshop participant

> "It has been hard to get my landlord to make repairs to my home and I am afraid I will have to leave my home because it is in really bad conditions. I wish there were more resources to find better quality housing that is affordable or repair the vacant homes in the neighborhood"
> - Workshop participant

CITY OF ROCHESTER ENGAGEMENT REPORTBACK

Potential solutions discussed

1. Vacant home repair and workforce training program lead by community organization XYZ in Northwest neighborhood

Feedback received:

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2. Tenant support portal that will allow community organizations and residents to have code enforcement info and resources

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3. Improve Neighborhood Service Centers to include better support for tenants and homeowners in addressing repairs

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Next steps

May engagement events

Thursdays at Farmer's Market	5/27: Focus group with Ibero	5/30: Task force meeting