

EDMONTON

# Neighbourhood Engagement Strategy Toolkit



[www.edmonton.ca/engagement](http://www.edmonton.ca/engagement)

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# Introduction

This toolkit has been created to provide you with tips and tools for bringing the people in your neighbourhood together. Here are some guiding principles that may help you as you move forward:

1. Whoever comes are the right people.
2. Whatever happens is the only thing that could have.
3. Whenever it starts is the right time.
4. When it's over, it's over.

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## Step 1: Ignite and Invite

This is an opportunity for people in your neighbourhood to come together for a shared purpose.

### Activity: Socialize

Host a conversation café, block party, neighbourhood celebration, or get to know your neighbour potluck meal. The most important thing to remember is to make it FUN for people to get together!



## Step 2: Share Strengths and Successes

Find out more about the people in the room, their strengths, and passions.

Celebrate differences, recognize that EVERYONE has something to contribute, and focus on the strengths within your neighbourhood. Ask, "What are you passionate about?"

### Activity: Explore your Neighbourhood

Identify people, groups, organizations, and institutions from as many of the areas found on the Community Asset Map diagram as you can. Call it a scavenger hunt and learn about what is in your neighbourhood.

## Step 3: Research your Community

The focus should be on what assets already exist in your community, not what is missing. Ask yourself what can be built upon, not where there are gaps.

### Activity: Six Degrees of Separation

Take time to watch the documentary film *How Kevin Bacon Cured Cancer* and discuss the idea of everyone being connected in some way.

Ask yourself and others in the group:

- Who lives in your neighbourhood?
- How are they connected?
- What are they already doing?

Map it out and create a diagram to show these connections.

## Step 4: Define Priorities

Consider what you have been talking about with others in your neighbourhood.

### Activity:

What are some of the common interests, ideas, or possibilities you may want to act on?

What are the goals for your neighbourhood?

Discuss time, money, people, skills, knowledge, and special qualities. Be clear about the date you hope to make this happen.



## Step 5: Engage Others

Revisit your original gathering and then expand the invitation list to include others.

If a group is going to be successful in making a difference in their neighbourhood, it won't happen without identifying and working with others early on in the planning process.

### Activity: Create a Buzz!

Host another gathering for a larger group such as a world café or presentation. Advertise your project idea through a newsletter, do a volunteer call out, use changeable copy signs to share your idea, employ social media like Facebook or Twitter. Share your idea with others, find out who wants to help, and get them involved.

## Step 6: Create a Vision

The vision statement defines success, inspires, motivates, imparts stability, links the present to the past, and commits to the future.

### Activity: Visualize

Picture success. What will it look, smell, sound, taste, and feel like? Record everyone's thoughts using words or pictures.



## Step 7: Describe your Purpose

The purpose for the group, or mission, describes the function of the group. The group purpose should remain constant, be simple, and easy to use.

### Activity: Become a Newspaper Reporter

Answer the following questions:

- Who are we doing this for?
- What is it that we are doing?
- How will we do it?
- When will we do it?
- Where will we do it?
- Why are we doing it?

Now, create one clear and simple sentence describing the reason for your project, organization, or event to exist.



## Step 8: Identify Outcomes

The outcome is the desired result or impact of the process, project, or event. Every activity can have more than one outcome. The outcome describes the benefit for the neighbourhood during and after the project, event, or activity.

### Activity: Show the Benefits

For each activity step planned for your process, project, or event, identify what will be different than it is now. Specifically, what is the benefit?



## Step 9: Develop Strategies to Take Action

Identify action steps and just do it.

### Activity: Plan to Act

Create an action agenda using the three Ds: Duties, Deadlines, Dollars.

**Duties:** What needs to be done and who will do it?

**Deadlines:** Set deadlines and create a timeline from today's date to the date of the event or project completion.

**Dollars:** Attach realistic costs to everything and ensure that you have your costs covered.



## Step 10: Learn, Celebrate, Tell your Story

This provides an opportunity to reflect and appreciate all that you have accomplished. Share it with others and inspire more people in your neighbourhood to become involved in making it a better place to live, work, and play!

### Activity: Review and Renew your Plan

Determine how to keep the momentum going.

Share your story through words and pictures. Your story should inspire and energize others to get involved! Stories capture attention, build credibility, establish rapport, and bring people closer together.

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**For additional information and funding applications go to [www.edmonton.ca/engagement](http://www.edmonton.ca/engagement).**

**Links to other Asset Based Community Development Resources**

[www.neighbourpower.org](http://www.neighbourpower.org)

<http://acecommunities.ca>

[www.mike-green.org](http://www.mike-green.org)

**Congratulations you have  
successfully acted to make your  
community a better place.**

***CELEBRATE!***

Our thanks to ACE Communities and Alberta Recreation and Parks Association for permission to base these neighbourhood strategies on the community development planning framework presented in their "Toolkit for Community Leaders".

Other materials referenced from Mike Green with Henry Moore & John O'Brien  
Foreword by John McKnight — ABCD in Action: When People Care Enough To Act, 2006, Inclusion Press; Jim Diers — Neighbor Power: Building Community the Seattle Way, 2004, The University of Washington Press; Harrison Owen — Open Space Technology <http://www.openspaceworld.com/index.htm>.

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