

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THE LINKING NEIGHBORS WORKSHOP SERIES?



- * Product of a four year long Americorps*VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) project in partnership with Community Services Planning Council
- * An asset-based community development approach from John McKnight's *Mobilizing Communities Within: An Asset-Based Approach*
- * A user friendly tool to help communities make positive changes
- * A guide for organizing groups to address an issue, to plan and take action
- * Community planning process that can be tailored to be used by different group to tackle diverse issues

This guide reflects ideas and concepts from a number of residents and organizations involved in neighborhood improvement efforts

INTRODUCTION

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN THE WORKSHOPS



- * Gain focus and organization to take action as a group (group self-esteem and individual self-esteem will increase)
- * The product of the workshops, the action oriented plan, will be the sole input of the workshop participants (so the more participants, the better)
- * "Brainstorming" is the main process by which information will be obtained from workshop participants. Brainstorming:
 - * Creates comfortable environment
 - * Encourages participation
 - * Limits criticism
 - * Limits intimidation

BENEFITS OF FACILITATING THE WORKSHOPS

- * Gain skills and knowledge to conduct community building workshops for your own community/organization or for other communities/organizations
 - * Plan for a group
 - * Compile information
 - * Facilitation skills
 - * Manage time
 - * Research
 - * Evaluate/Monitor/Update plans
 - * Analyze information
- * As you train groups, you will make connections with other communities/organizations
- * As you gain experience in facilitating workshops, you can train other interested people in conducting the workshops

INTRODUCTION

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE



- * The first part of the manual, the *General Guide*, contains general information on being an effective facilitator to conduct the Linking Neighbors Workshop Series. The second part of the manual contains seven workshops which will guide you through planning, designing and facilitating the workshops. The third part of the manual, the *Appendix*, contains information on past workshop results, list of icebreakers to use for the workshops and a term glossary used in the workshop series.
- * For each workshop, the facilitator will be provided with:
 - * Introduction (Contents, Objectives, List of needed materials/supplies)
 - * Overview
 - * Background information
 - * Proposed workshop guide with timelines
 - * Workshop preparation workbook
 - * Sample agenda
 - * Recording worksheets (not for all)
 - * Handouts
- * As a facilitator, first use the *General Guide* to learn basic training principals and methods and then tailor the workshops to meet the needs of the groups interested in undergoing the workshops. This manual is to be used to lead groups in community planning process.

INTRODUCTION

HISTORY OF LINKING NEIGHBORS PROJECT

- * The Linking Neighbors Project began in 1996 due to the recognized need for assistance to community members doing community planning. The project focuses on neighborhood led improvement projects to increase effectiveness of community efforts. Linking Neighbors does this by facilitating a workshop series that can be used by different groups to tackle diverse issues.
- * In first and second years of Linking Neighbors Project, an introductory workshop series on community planning was developed and tested in the following communities: North Sacramento, Oak Park, Del Paso Heights, Meadowview and South Sacramento. Using this workshop series, VISTAs facilitated training of community members in community planner techniques.
- * The third and fourth years of the Linking Neighbors Project focused on sustaining these workshops throughout the community. Community residents, members of community based organizations and a city neighborhood resource coordinator participated in facilitating the Linking Neighbors Workshops. A certification program was implemented to recognize the new trainers.

VISTAs that contributed to this manual are:

Keisha Tyler	from 1996 to 1997
Raquel Ramírez	from 1997 to 1998
Karen Zimmer	1998
Amy Studdiford	from 1998 to 1999
Scarlet Zohrabi	from 1999 to 2000

INTRODUCTION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	Int-1 to Int-13
GENERAL GUIDE	GG-1 to GG-10
WORKSHOP 1: Identifying and Mapping Assets	WKP 1-1 to WKP 1-18
WORKSHOP 2: Finding and Collecting Information	WKP 2-1 to WKP 2-16
WORKSHOP 3: Making Sense of Information	WKP 3-1 to WKP 3-18
WORKSHOP 4: Setting Outcomes and Goals	WKP 4-1 to WKP 4-18
WORKSHOP 5: Objectives and Community Consensus	WKP 5-1 to WKP 5-26
WORKSHOP 6: Get Ready to Implement	WKP 6-1 to WKP 6-21
WORKSHOP 7: Monitor, Evaluate and Update	WKP 7-1 to WKP 7-19
APPENDIX 1: Past workshop results	PastWkp -1 to PastWkp -16
APPENDIX 2: Icebreakers	IceB -1 to IceB - 5
APPENDIX 3: Term glossary	TermG -1 to TermG - 4

INTRODUCTION

LINKING NEIGHBORS WORKSHOPS SUMMARIZED

WORKSHOP 1: IDENTIFYING AND MAPPING ASSETS

The group is introduced to the Linking Neighbors Workshop Series, community planning, asset identification and asset mapping.

WORKSHOP 2: FINDING AND COLLECTING INFORMATION

The group learns how statistical information can be used for planning and how it can help the group present their ideas effectively. They brainstorm information sources, types of information, and the location of information.

WORKSHOP 3: MAKING SENSE OF INFORMATION

The group learns to interpret information and make it applicable in addressing their issue. They brainstorm strengths, challenges, opportunities, and threats (SCOT) of their neighborhood.

WORKSHOP 4: SETTING OUTCOMES AND GOALS

The group brainstorms possible outcomes they would want to see accomplished in their community. By discussing how their community would benefit from these outcomes, they brainstorm possible appropriate goals to help reach the outcomes.

WORKSHOP 5: OBJECTIVES AND COMMUNITY CONSENSUS

The group brainstorms objectives needed to accomplish the goals. The group also learns four methods of getting community input regarding their action plan (participatory goal setting.)

WORKSHOP 6: GET READY TO IMPLEMENT

The group brainstorms possible alternatives for goals and objectives under the top prioritized outcomes. Then the group brainstorms strategies/ activities and specific actions. Finally the group creates timelines for the prioritized action plan components.

WORKSHOP 7: MONITOR, EVALUATE AND UPDATE

The group is introduced to the concept and importance of indicators. They are also introduced to the steps of monitoring, evaluating and updating their plan/ project.

INTRODUCTION

Three ways to fill the roles necessary for conducting the workshops

1. Fill in all the roles yourself
2. Get participants involved in helping (note: this might take away from their participation time and effort)
3. Get individuals interested in becoming Linking Neighbors trainers to help out and get first hand

ROLES	NEEDED WHEN?
Researcher: Finds information for the issue, about the neighborhood and regarding the workshop	Before setting up the workshop session dates
Planner: Organizes the overall layout of the workshop series/sessions and tailors the workshop to the audience	Before setting up the workshop dates, after getting group input
Trainer: Explains community planning techniques to participants	Before each workshop session
Facilitator: Guides the group discussion process, encourages brainstorming, builds group consensus and guides group decision making to include everyone	During the workshop sessions
Timekeeper: Keeps the group on task by ensuring agenda timelines are followed	During the workshop sessions
Recorder: Documents and records ideas from workshop sessions on easel paper and organizes group ideas	During the workshop sessions, after sessions
Compiler: Compiles results of each workshop session into an organized document for the next workshop session and compiles results of all workshops into an action plan	After each workshop session
Evaluator: Assesses workshop progress, priorities for each workshop session, technique effectiveness and methods to try based on feedback from each workshop	Before and after each workshop session, halfway through series, end of series

INTRODUCTION

21 STEPS TO CONDUCTING THE WORKSHOPS

1. Get input from potential workshop participants about issue(s) to be addressed
2. Research about the issue(s) which will be addressed at the workshops
3. Find out or decide who and how many people will participate in the workshops
4. Ask each workshop participant or group representative about their expectations of the facilitator and of themselves (workshop participants)

Example:

- * Mandatory attendance for all workshops
- * Completing assigned tasks between workshops
- * Take on a role during the workshop (Ex. timekeeping, recording, etc.)
- * Extent of participation in implementing the action plan

5. Tailor the workshop series to:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| * The issue you want to address | * The number of participants |
| * The neighborhood | * The amount of time you have |
| * Your audience | * Cultural issues |

6. Set up times, dates and location for the workshops
7. Gather materials and supplies for the workshop series
8. Identify and recruit people to help plan, prepare and compile workshop results
9. Decide which workshop sessions would be best to use for the issue
10. Plan how to help the group to use the information they have collected
11. Plan how to involve other community members in participatory goal setting

INTRODUCTION

12. Tasks to do for each workshop session:
 - a. Plan what you want to accomplish with this session
 - b. Decide how to explain the community planning ideas and examples to use
 - c. Decide what input you want from workshop participants
 - d. Revise the agenda to include times, activities and roles
 - e. Put yourself in place of the participants. Does the workshop presentation make sense?
 - f. Provide handouts, materials and supplies
 - g. Facilitate the workshop
 - h. Keep time
 - i. Assign tasks
 - j. Record and compile the results of the workshop session
 - k. Evaluate the progress: issues, timeline and outcomes
 - l. Plan the next workshop based on the results of the prior trainings
13. Plan the times, date, volunteers and other details for participatory goals setting
14. Create a final action plan by compiling results of all the workshops
15. Decide how to implement the plan
16. Decide how to monitor and evaluate the progress towards implementing the plan
17. Evaluate the workshop series
18. Assign roles to people involved in implementing the plan
19. Celebrate the completion of the workshops
20. Certify the newly trained individuals who were involved in facilitating the workshops as Linking Neighbors Trainers
21. Provide technical assistance to the group to implement the action plan

INTRODUCTION

WORKSHOP CALENDAR

MONTH _____

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT

INTRODUCTION

ARE YOU READY TO CONDUCT THE WORKSHOPS?
ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS AND YOU WILL KNOW 😊

1. Why would you like to conduct these workshop series?

2. What strengths and assets of yours will help you in conducting the workshops?

3. Who will participate in the workshops and help you plan the workshops? What are their strengths and assets? What are their skills?

INTRODUCTION

4. In conducting the workshops, what role will your assistants have?

- * Researcher _____
- * Facilitator _____
- * Timekeeper _____
- * Recorder during the workshop _____
- * Recorder after the workshop _____
- * Consensus builder _____
- * Technical assistance provider _____
- * Other: _____

5. As a planner and as a community, what do you hope to accomplish from conducting the workshop series?

6. What issue(s) will be addressed at the workshops?

INTRODUCTION

WORK IN PROGRESS

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- * We are interested in your feedback. Tell us how you used the information, and how the Linking Neighbors Project can assist you in your neighborhood improvement efforts.
- * Please look for ways to improve or change the structure and content of this guide to better meet the needs of the community.
- * If you have any suggestions or want to learn more about the Linking Neighbors Project, call (916) 447-7063 or write to:

Linking Neighbors Project

909 12th Street, Suite 200

Sacramento, CA 95814

email: link@communitycouncil.org

fax: (916) 447-7052

- * A free copy of this guide can be downloaded from Community Services Planning Council website at:

www.communitycouncil.org

Click on "Linking Neighbors Project"