



Social and Economic Education for Development

Calendar of Activities for a County Visioning Process

by Lorraine Garkovich

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University of Kentucky

Cooperative Extension Service

Months One and Two

1. Develop some promotional materials for the community visioning project. The materials should include:
 - * A script for a public service radio announcement
 - * A brochure describing the community visioning process -- why it is happening, why everyone needs to participate, and how the information will be used
 - * A poster and box-style advertisement announcing the process
2. Develop a list of all the formally organized groups in the county that conduct at least monthly meetings. Send a letter and informational materials to each group asking if they will "host" a community forum at a regularly scheduled meeting. To host a forum would require identifying a member of the organization who would be trained as a facilitator.
3. Develop a list of all neighborhoods and/or geographically distinct communities within the county. Then:
 - * Identify a contact person or group within each area
 - * Identify a "public space" within each area that may serve as the site for a community forum
 - * Call or meet with the contact persons to see if they will coordinate conducting a forum in their area and/or be trained as facilitators to actually conduct the forum, or identify someone within the area who would be willing to be trained as a facilitator to conduct the forum
4. Contact the school superintendent(s) and explain the community visioning process with an emphasis on the importance of gaining youth perspectives on community life. Ask if they would be willing to work with the planning group to have middle school and high school social science, civics, or American government classes host a youth community forum. [It would be best if students themselves served as facilitators for the youth forums, although teachers can also perform this role.] If agreeable, begin making the contacts to conduct youth forums in the schools.
5. Contact local government and county officials. Explain the community visioning process and seek their support in the effort -- their willingness to receive a report on the results of the forum and, to consider citizen perspectives in their decision-making. Ask if they would be willing to participate in their own forum at a special work session.

6. Meet with owners/general managers of local media and seek their cooperation in presenting informational stories and/or carrying public service advertisements on the community visioning process and the forums.

Month Three

1. Begin first wave of advertising and informational stories in local media. Explain what the community visioning process is and the need to identify local citizens willing to serve as forum moderators.
2. Review contacts list. Assess whether you have identified citizens in all geographic areas of the county and all (or most) organized groups who will be serving as moderators. Send these individuals a letter requesting their best time for training during the months prior to when you will be initiating the community forums effort (days of week, daytime or evening). Continue making contacts with groups or areas of community to identify more moderators.

Month Four

1. Schedule training sessions for community forum moderators. Personally contact all those who have already expressed an interest to gain a commitment to participate in a specific training session. Advertise training dates and invite interested citizens to contact the county Extension Office to sign up for a training session.
2. Conduct training sessions and begin community forums

Month Five

1. Continue forum moderator training sessions (if necessary)
2. Begin second wave of publicity for community visioning process. Invite citizens to contact the county Extension Office if they are interested in hosting a community forum in their home or neighborhood
3. Conduct community visioning forums
4. Begin processing information from forums

Month Six

1. Complete community forums
2. Complete processing of information from forums; develop an executive summary and a complete report

Month Seven

1. Present findings of community visioning process to planning group; local public officials; and other interested groups
2. Prepare publicity on the results of the community forums and work with the local media to present the results to the larger community

Month Eight

1. Working group evaluates the results of the visioning process and begins developing plans to implement aspects of the vision.

This may involve one of two efforts or a combination of these efforts.

- a. The working group may choose to use the results of the visioning process as the basis for developing a strategic economic development plan that includes: a mission statement; a set of guiding principles; specific goals and for each goal, strategies and tactics with identified individuals and/or organizations that will assume responsibility for implementing the strategies and tactics; a method for increasing resources available to the community for implementing the strategic plan; and, an evaluation process. The development of the strategic economic development plan can be completed within four to six weeks. At this time the plan should be presented to local decision-makers (e.g., City Council, County Fiscal Court) for their endorsement of support.

This option will rely upon a continued commitment of the current working group. Once the strategic plan is designed, teams must be organized for each identified tactic, drawing upon groups and individuals in the community with an interest in or organizational mission related to the tactic. Each tactic team will develop a specific plan of action for implementing the tactic for which they are responsible.

- b. Formation of implementation committees that will focus on an aspect of the vision and develop a project (one that can be accomplished within two years) that will demonstrate the community is able to take aspects of the vision and make it real.

This option has a looser organizational structure since each implementation committee operates independently of the others. Primary responsibility for success thus rests with each committee rather than a single coordinating group.