

Introduction

This worksheet helps your team clarify why you must act together and what long-term impact you are working toward collaboratively. Just remember this is a drafting exercise, not a final product. Getting started and making progress is more important than perfection. Your sense of urgency will evolve throughout your Maximize [My Community] Journey™.

PART 1: YOUR CASE FOR CHANGE

This is your "Burning Platform" for collective action. A strong Case for Change creates shared urgency and alignment across sectors. It explains why acting together is necessary now and why this time and the people you have showing up to participate matter. Your case can help convince others that the time, approach to the work, and people involved are the right combination for moving forward from the status quo that is no longer producing the desired and needed outcomes of your community.

Instructions

Answer the prompts below as a team. Be specific. Draft 3–5 bullets OR 3–4 sentences that clearly explain why action together is urgent.

1. THE CORE ISSUE

What is the community challenge or opportunity we are trying to address together?

Describe the problem or opportunity only, not any solutions or actions yet. In your work together, you may discover there are other deeper root level issues that are underlying the core issue that you want to address. At this point, don't get overwhelmed with all the complexities. Just state what you think, and feel must be addressed now before the issue worsens or opportunity passes. Additional questions that may help you clearly define your core issue are:

- What condition or outcome can no longer be ignored?
- What opportunity(ies) will we miss by not acting?
- What strengths or assets in our community create a foundation for change?
- What's beginning to shift already that we could build on?
- Where do we see momentum or alignment among partners that signals the time is right to expand the cross-sector group and collaborate on meaningful and positive difference-making change?
- Without stating what we think "should" or "could" be done about the issue, what would meaningful improvement look like?

2. WHO IS AFFECTED

Who experiences the greatest impact of this issue today?

Be specific and human-centered in your answer. Consider what residents, neighborhoods, age groups, sectors, income levels, employment classification, industry, segment of population, or other shared diversity characteristic is affected. Other helpful questions include:

- Who is harmed the most if we stay on the current path?
- Who benefits the most if we act now? Whose lives would be changed for the better?
- What is personally at stake for each of us as leaders?
- Whose experiences or outcomes reveal the clearest reason that change is needed?

3. EVIDENCE OF URGENCY

What tells us this issue requires action now?

Include one key data point, trend, or lived experience that is concerning and attention-grabbing because it is much higher, lower, faster, slower, etc. than it should be if who is affected were living their best **quality of life in all seven aspects**.



4. THE COST OF INACTION

If nothing changes in the next 5-10 years, what gets worse?

Think in terms of people, systems, and community conditions. What is likely to be the intended and unintended consequences of maintaining the status quo by not addressing your core issue now? It may also be helpful to state what timeframe is necessary or realistically desired to mitigate the problem or leverage the opportunity.

Draft Your Case for Change

Combine your responses from the four points above into one clear and concise paragraph.

REMEMBER . . .

Your Case for Change can evolve over time, but its existence and regular reference to it is critical for your core group's sustained success. A strong Case for Change at any point in your journey answers two things:

1. **WHY action is needed now, or why business as usual isn't working, or a gap exists in your community's quality of life, and**
 2. **WHY this moment and this cross-sector group of individuals and organizations matter, or why this time is a rare and urgent opportunity to align and act together. If urgency isn't shared, alignment won't last.**
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Once drafted, test your message before moving on. Ask yourselves:

- Would someone outside this room understand why action is urgent?
- Is it clear who is affected and what's at stake?
- Does it explain why this team exists?
- Does it reflect the urgency we feel and find in data?
- Does it mention solutions or specific projects? (It should not.)

PART 2: YOUR PURPOSE STATEMENT / LONG-TERM GOAL (The Impact You Seek)

While your Case for Change answers “Why and why now?”, your Purpose Statement is your long-term overall goal and answers, “Why us and to what end.” Combining your purpose and your long-term goal avoids confusion with your vision. We will address vision statements in another activity on The Impact Pathway. A couple of things to keep in mind as you craft this statement together:

- If achieving this wouldn't change what you prioritize, fund, or measure, it's too vague. Strive to be more specific.
- If your statement could apply to any group working in any place, it is too ambiguous. Again, ensure you are specific to your unique place and people.
- Does the statement explain why this team exists?
- Does it provide focus on impact (not activities) now, and would it guide future decisions as participation in your group ebbs and flows over time?
- Does it reflect the urgency of your Case for Change?

Your long-term goal translates urgency into direction. It describes the future state your team is working toward if you succeed together. This statement reflects your commitment to shared ownership, community outcomes, and long-term improvement, all of which are consistent with the core values of The C.O.R.E. Guide's focus on results and sustainability.

Draft Your Problem / Long-Term Goal Statement

PROMPT . . .

If our collaboration is successful, what will be meaningfully different for people in this community 10-20 years from now? What will quality of life look and feel like for the next generation?

SENTENCE STARTER OPTION #1

By _____, _____ in _____
(when) (who) (where and are currently experiencing)

Will experience _____, resulting in _____.
(will instead be experiencing) (measurable improvement)

SENTENCE STARTER OPTION #2

Our purpose is to _____ so that, over the next _____ years,

(meaningful and measurable improvement/change accomplished)

Write your draft below in no more than 1-2 sentences.
Be as brief and specific as possible using plain language.
