

COLLECTIVE  
IMPACT

# Cross-Sector Partnership Assessment

GROUP PLANNING & DISCUSSION  
GUIDE



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# I. Purpose and Goals

## Thank you for your interest in the Living Cities Cross-Sector Partnership Assessment

**The purpose of this planning and discussion guide is to help you use the Living Cities [Cross-Sector Partnership Assessment](#) to:**

- Provide individuals involved in your cross-sector partnership with a “snapshot” of the partnership at a particular point in time.
- Enable individuals involved in your cross-sector partnership to identify differences of opinion about the partnership.
- Help partners identify their strengths and areas for improvement.
- Provide a framework for a strategic discussion about the way your cross-sector partnership operates, and how that may need to change.

**The desired outcomes for this process are that your cross-sector partnership will walk away with:**

- A group assessment of your cross-sector partnership’s structure and operations.
- A shared understanding of your cross-sector partnership’s strengths and areas for improvement, so that you can work to strengthen the foundation of the partnership.
- A list of at least three things you commit to doing to strengthen your cross-sector partnership in the next six months.

## II. Design and Use

### How We Designed the Cross-Sector Partnership Assessment to be Used

The Cross-Sector Partnership Assessment is most useful if multiple representatives complete the Assessment and then discuss the feedback they receive. Through the discussion of these findings, individuals can raise challenges and concerns with partners and determine potential solutions.

Here are some ways to think about using this Assessment with your partnership:

#### 1. Invite representative stakeholders to complete the Cross-Sector Partnership Assessment.

We encourage you to identify a representative group of individuals involved with your cross-sector partnership to complete [the Assessment](#) (~5-12 people depending on the size and complexity of your effort). We'd suggest that you consider including representatives from the following when identifying who should complete the Assessment:

- Leaders or chairs of your cross-sector partnership
- Participants in each of your partnership's committees/work groups (if relevant)
- Individuals who work in different sectors
- Individuals who represent different interests
- People who have been involved for different periods of time (new to the partnership versus there from the beginning)
- Members of the partnership who have had different levels of involvement (active versus inactive)
- Staff of your partnership

We'd also recommend that you give your invitees a deadline by which to complete their online Assessment. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

#### Resource:

- Draft invitation language can be found in [Appendix A](#).
- The Assessment can be [completed online](#).

## 2. Representatives review and compile the feedback they receive.

- Each person who completes the assessment will receive an individual feedback report via email, tailored to their responses.
- We recommend that you have a point person to whom those who took the survey will forward their reports so all the data can be amassed prior to your meeting.

## 3. Plan and convene a meeting of the cross-sector partnership (or appropriate sub-group).

In this meeting, representatives of your cross-sector partnership will:

- Share the aggregated finding from the Assessment. As noted above, we suggest that there be a point person who assesses the data, and presents it to the full group. We'd also encourage individuals to bring their reports as a reference.
- Review the data as a group to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- Discuss what these findings mean for your cross-sector partnership and what you could do to strengthen it.
- Make commitments about how you are going to strengthen your cross-sector partnership.

### Questions to Consider

Do you want to hire a facilitator for this discussion? How long should this meeting be? (Depending on the complexity of your cross-sector partnership we estimate that this discussion can take from 2 hours to a full day.)

### Resources

- A sample agenda with discussion questions can be found in [Appendix B](#).
- [Action Commitments Exercise](#)
- [Wedding Seating Chart Exercise](#) (for considering who needs to be at what table.)

## How We Plan to Use the Data Collected

The information gathered through the Cross-Sector Partnership Assessment will be used by Living Cities in the following ways:

- To provide you with an Assessment of the structures and behaviors of your cross-sector partnership.
- To serve as an input to additional research on cross-sector partnerships by Living Cities and its partners. This includes, but is not limited to, the improvement of this Assessment, creation of other tools, resources, presentations, papers, blog posts, etc. Information identifying you or the cross-sector partnership you are assessing will not be shared publicly without your permission.

# Appendix A

## Sample Cross-Sector Partnership Assessment Invitation Language

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thanks for your participation in [insert cross-sector partnership name]. In our ongoing efforts to improve our cross-sector partnership, we're undertaking a "snapshot" assessment process to better understand its operations, and what it will take for them to be set up to support the success of our work.

**I'm writing to ask you to be part of a small group of members of our cross-sector partnership to complete an online assessment. The assessment will provide us with some important data about the strength of our partnership, as well as areas for improvement that we may not be seeing or addressing.** The assessment will take you ~10 minutes to complete. To access it, visit <http://bit.ly/xsectorLC>. **We ask that you please complete the assessment by EOD [insert date]. If for any reason you are unable to accept this invitation, please let me know as soon as you are able.**

**After you complete the assessment, you will receive a feedback report via email. Please forward me your report, and plan to join us for a** strategic discussion about the findings from the assessments, what those findings tell us about our partnership, and what next steps we are committing to take to improve our partnership's likelihood of success. This meeting will be taking place [insert date/time/location information].

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_ [insert name]

# Appendix B

## Cross-Sector Partnership Assessment Meeting Example Agenda & Discussion Guide

### Meeting Goals

- Engage in a strategic discussion about our cross-sector partnership to identify its strengths and areas for improvement.
- Identify steps we commit to take to improve our cross-sector partnership so that we are well-equipped to achieve our goals.

### Agenda (Estimated time: 2-3 hours)

#### 1. Welcome, Meeting Goals, and Introductions

During introductions, in addition to having people state their names and affiliations, we'd suggest using one of the following questions:

- Why are you here trying to solve this problem?
- What's one thing that has/hasn't worked in previous cross-sector partnerships you've been involved with?
- How will your life/work be different when this cross-sector partnership succeeds?

#### 2. Review of the Data and Feedback from the Assessment

- Overview Presentation of Collected Data

#### 3. Analyzing/ Interpreting the Data and Identifying What Needs to Change

- On what questions was there clear agreement?
- What questions didn't have clear answers?
  - a. Why do we think this was the case?
  - b. Based on the feedback you received, what do you think are our partnership's strengths? Areas for improvement?

#### 3. Making Commitments

- What are 3-5 commitments you will make over the next six months to strengthening the cross-sector partnership? (Use the [Action Commitment Exercise](#))

#### 4. Wrap Up & Next Steps

## Join the Conversation

Join the conversation and find additional resources about cross-sector partnerships at [www.LivingCities.org](http://www.LivingCities.org) or on Twitter [@Living\\_Cities](https://twitter.com/Living_Cities), or by using the hashtag **#xsector**.

## About Living Cities

Founded in 1991, Living Cities harnesses the collective power of twenty two of the world's largest foundations and financial institutions to build a new type of urban practice. Together, we are working with cross-sector leaders in cities to develop and scale new approaches to dramatically improve the economic well-being of low-income people. Our investments, research, networks and convenings catalyze fresh thinking and combine support for innovative, comprehensive, local approaches with real-time sharing of knowledge to accelerate and deepen adoption in more places. Learn more at: [www.LivingCities.org](http://www.LivingCities.org).

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