

HOW TO ENGAGE YOUR YOUTH IN COMMUNITY PLANNING

Engaging young voices in your community offers valuable insights into its strengths and potential for growth. Their perspective can highlight positive aspects that can be built upon, while their involvement fosters a sense of belonging and ownership. By including youth in community discussions and initiatives, you not only gain a fresh outlook but also empower the next generation of local leaders.

TIPS FOR ENGAGING YOUTH



Offer creative volunteer work

- Organize community art projects to beautify public spaces
- Create social media campaigns to increase community pride
- Develop youth-led community gardens



Implement a mentorship program

- Pair youth with local professionals or community leaders
- Offer both one-on-one and group mentoring opportunities



Minimize barriers by keeping language simple

- Use clear, jargon-free communication on community outreach materials
- Use visuals and infographics to make outreach materials engaging for younger audiences



Create a youth council

- Establish a diverse youth council that has a voice in local government decisions
- Host consistent planning meetings where members can brainstorm



Host interactive community action planning events, such as using the below spaces to places workshop template

- Use the provided spaces to places workshop to conduct an interactive workshop with students
- Host collaborative, interactive events that young people can attend to offer insight



Collaborate with the school system to offer school credit for community engagement

- Develop service-learning projects tied to curriculum
- Create internship programs with local organizations
- Invite community leaders to speak at schools



Leverage technology and social media

- Use popular social media platforms to share opportunities and gather input
- Host virtual town halls or Q&A sessions with local leaders



Provide leadership development opportunities

- Offer workshops on public speaking and community engagement
- Support youth-led initiatives with resources and guidance

YOUTH WORKSHOP TEMPLATE

A creative way to engage your youth in community planning is to conduct a placemaking workshop with high school students. This workshop can help gauge the things in your community that help create a sense of place, as well as ideas for things to implement that would appeal to your younger population. You can tailor the following questions and exercises to your specific community.

Exercise 1:

QUESTIONNAIRE

- What do you like about [community name]?
- What do you dislike about [community name]?
- Where do you hang out with your friends?
- What places make [community name] home?

Exercise 2:

DREAM COMMUNITY

In small groups, ask the students to draw or write out the main features of your community, then create a new map or list of a DREAM community, using the following prompts:

- What places would you keep in your dream [community name]?
- What places are in your dream [community name]?
- What do you want to see downtown?
- What events do you go to in [community name]?
- What events do you want to go to in [community name]?
- What volunteering do you participate in?
- What other volunteering would you do?
- How should we reach out to students to get their input on community needs?

Exercise 3:

PROJECT IDEAS

Ask students to come up with project ideas for budgets of \$5,000, \$500,000, and infinite funding, and write on individual post-it notes.

Note: Make sure to provide realistic examples for the students for each budget level.