

THE MEETING CHECKUP

Questions for Strengthening Facilitation and Functioning

THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

The Meeting Checkup was created to help community coalitions addressing the needs of young people track attendance and demographics and provide insights into the quality and productivity of meetings held to determine community priorities. Use the checkup questions at the end of each meeting to examine these key components of high-quality meetings:

- Racial equity and inclusion
- Positive interpersonal dynamics
- Meeting productivity
- Diversity in perspectives and ideas

USING THE CHECKUP QUESTIONS

The questions, with response choices, are in a separate Word document that you can format using your organization's logo and visual identity. The survey is to be filled out anonymously. The 15 questions fall into the categories listed above. You can tabulate the results and calculate means and distributions using Excel. Alternatively, the questions can be programmed into a survey tool for online distribution and faster reporting.

Most items are scored in a five-point Likert scale from 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent). See below for an example:

<input type="checkbox"/> 1 (Poor)	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 (Fair)	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 (Good)	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 (Very good)	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (Excellent)
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When reviewing the data to make decisions about how to improve your meetings, you will want to pay attention to the means and distributions. If the mean response is below 3, this might be an item that needs improvement. You should give special attention to items where the most frequent response is either 1 (Poor) or 2 (Fair). Ask probing questions similar to the ones suggested in the table below and brainstorm potential solutions with trusted members of your group or leadership team.

MEETING COMPONENT

POTENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR DIAGNOSING NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS

RACIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION

- Were the meeting attendees representative of our community?
- Did community residents make up a significant proportion of the attendees?

- How did participation look? How was participation divided among residents versus nonresidents?
- Which sectors are represented on our board or leadership group? Which sectors are missing? Which sectors have more (or less) representation than the others?

POSITIVE INTERPERSONAL DYNAMICS

- Did you notice a low level of involvement or engagement during particular activities?
- Did you notice some members being left out of the group, or other members holding exclusive conversations during the meeting?
- How did conversations play out during the meeting? Did you sense hostility or judgment? Was anyone not paying attention when others were talking or sharing ideas?
- Do certain members miss meetings or show up late and leave early? Do any seem distracted?
- Does the group share values and a mutual stake in the initiative? What is the level of trust among members?

MEETING PRODUCTIVITY

- Was there a lot of discussion and questions that prevented movement into decision making? How engaged was each individual in the discussion?
- Did any situation arise that the meeting facilitator did not know how to handle? For example, did a difficult question or an unexpected comment come up, or was there a lengthy silence during a discussion?
- Were decisions made on each item that needed resolution? How were those decisions made? How was the decision communicated to the group after it was made?
- How often did you use a “parking lot” or “bike rack” for items to be handled later? Was this function used for side tangents that surfaced through discussion, or were items originally scheduled for the agenda set aside for later, after additional research and discussion?
- How clearly did you plan the agenda and set specific objectives? When and how did you communicate the expected meeting results or objectives?

DIVERSITY IN PERSPECTIVES AND IDEAS

- How many different people suggested ideas regarding the discussion items? How were new ideas suggested (e.g., were they suggested with confidence, or dismissed by the person as they were suggested)? How were new ideas received by meeting attendees? What was their body language like? What verbal comments were made?
 - Which sectors were the most vocal during the discussion? Which sectors contributed ideas to the discussion that were considered in the final decision-making process?
 - How many community residents actively participated in the discussion, either by contributing feedback on ideas proposed by others or by suggesting an alternative viewpoint to be considered alongside the other discussion items?
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