

Creating a Stakeholder Group

What: A stakeholder is any person (or group of people) who is interested in or affected by the decision being made.

Why: Having a stakeholder group enables everyone to clearly understand the big picture. A stakeholder group makes sure that different people's concerns are heard and their needs are served. A decision that incorporates the feedback of a stakeholder group may be more acceptable to different groups of people and implemented with greater fidelity and less resistance. A stakeholder group can help:

- Ensure transparency in decision making;
- Create a decision-making process that is centered around stakeholder consensus and is less biased;
- Build implementation capacity by proactively troubleshooting implementation issues; and
- Promote relationship building and collaboration.

How: The first step is to compile a list of potential stakeholders. These include decision makers, people who are interested in the decision, and people who will be affected by the decision. The goal is to bring a diverse group of stakeholders to the table with different experiences, perspectives, and expertise. The more involved stakeholders are in the thinking process, the more likely they will be engaged in creating the outcomes. Think about the following questions.

- Do the stakeholders represent a wide range of perspectives, experiences, and roles relevant to the decision at hand?
- Do the stakeholders reflect diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, education, or other important characteristics that are critical for the initiative to be successful?





- Who can spread positive messages about the value of this decision, and can they be included in the stakeholder group?
- Who are the critics of this decision, and can they be included in the stakeholder group?
- Are there additional organizations and/or individuals who should be included that have not been identified?
- Plan an initial stakeholder meeting that is informative, interactive, and facilitated in a way that promotes open dialogue among the stakeholders.
- Call each stakeholder to invite him or her to the meeting.
- Send a follow-up email to each stakeholder with the logistics and purpose of the meeting.

Once potential stakeholders have been identified, it is important to communicate roles and expectations to all of the group members. Next steps can include the following.

Keeping stakeholders involved after the initial meeting is essential. Collaboration with stakeholders should be part of the long-term plan to achieve successful outcomes for all involved.



For more information, please contact research@nccdglobal.org; visit our website, www.nccdglobal.org; or call (800) 306-6223.