

Checklist for Planning a Community Leadership Summit

This tool contains steps and guidelines to help public broadcasting organizations plan a Community Leadership Summit.

What is a Community Leadership Summit?

A Community Leadership Summit is a vehicle for convening local community organizations to identify community needs and look for collaborative opportunities. The focus of the meeting is listening and exchanging ideas. The meeting allows plenty of time – often an entire day – for thoughtful discussion. The hope is that the day’s ideas will lead to partnership opportunities and create possible steps to address identified community concerns. Community Leadership Summits tend to take two forms:

- **Strategic Summit:** Convene a variety of community organizations to learn about common goals and discuss collaborative opportunities. Collectively identify local community issues and design a plan of action to implement cooperatively. Brainstorm and design a plan with action steps to work together on outreach initiatives around a local community concern. This model involves a broad needs assessment and a wide variety of participants.
- **Thematic Summit:** Brainstorm with community organizations about a particular theme or issue already identified in your community or state (e.g. diversity, health, literacy). Design a plan with action steps working with these organizations around this theme. This model involves a topic-specific assessment of participating organizations’ missions and goals.

In both cases, it’s important to approach the meeting *without* a preconceived notion about what *ought* to be done. Rather, approach the day with an open mind.

Preparation before the summit:

- **Invitations:** Invite a diverse group of organizations that mirror a cross section of your community, e.g., organizations representing youth, elderly, rural, people of color, etc. Look for organizations that might not have otherwise connected with each other or organizations that aren’t on the usual list of suspects for a meeting. Try to get representatives who have enough authority in the organization to support action steps.
- **Meeting Facilitator:** Hire a third-party professional to facilitate the Leadership Summit. Meet with the facilitator before the summit to communicate your needs and goals. He or she can help create the agenda by contributing ideas that will help move the meeting along. If possible, find someone who understands public broadcasting and community engagement. (See Tips for Finding a Facilitator)