

MORE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT KEY ALLIES:

- To whom do you turn (informally) for input and advice? How well does this group of informal stakeholders reflect the full demographic and geographic diversity of the community?
- How is this “inner circle” perceived by others in the community?
- In what ways do these stakeholders interact with larger networks of people?
- How many people serve on local commissions, boards, and other public committees? How well does this group of formal stakeholders reflect the full demographic and geographic diversity of the community?

POTENTIAL NEXT STEPS:

- Think about your community as a set of networks and groupings of people. Which networks are not represented among your informal or formal stakeholders? Reach out to leaders of these networks and find ways to bring them into the circle.
- Talk with city commissions and boards about these issues of representation and engagement – what kinds of roles do they think would allow them to contribute best to local governance?
- Work with a civic group, a community foundation, a United Way or another local partner to assess how well various kinds of grassroots organizations – neighborhood associations, PTAs, crime watch groups, advocacy groups and nonprofit organizations – are able to represent their constituencies. How do leaders within these groups and networks understand their roles? How do they engage their members?