

communitiesofexcellence²⁰²⁶
GETTING STARTED READINESS SELF-ASSESSMENT

In order to ensure that you and your community have the most positive and productive experience engaging in the spectrum of Communities of Excellence 2026 programs, we request that you complete this self-assessment.

STEP 1:

Gather a small group of people who are interested in learning more about applying the Communities of Excellence Framework to your community development and improvement efforts. This worksheet is designed to help your group determine where to start in embarking upon your Communities of Excellence Journey as a community excellence group.

STEP 2:

We recommend that each person in your group complete the assessment individually and then come together to discuss each statement and/or question to come up with a collective answer. If there are varying levels of knowledge about a topic, go with the most knowledgeable perspective in your group. If you are not sure of the answer, use your best judgment. You are also free to contact our Executive Director Stephanie Norling at snorling@communitiesofexcellence2026.org or 619-719-1045 to discuss your questions.

STEP 3:

Mark the box that best describes your understanding of your community and its leaders in formal (*i.e. those with elected or paid titles*) and informal (*i.e. civic and social organization volunteer titles*) positions.

| # | Question | We don't know enough to answer. 1 POINT | No, this doesn't describe our situation. 2 POINTS | This sort of describes our situation. 3 POINTS | Yes! This describes our situation! 4 POINTS |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| EX | We are interested in learning more about how communities across America are improving the places they live, learn, work, and play. | | | | 4 |
| 1 | We are a group of at least 3-5 individuals who have gathered to complete this assessment and are committed to working together over the next several years. | | | | |
| 2 | Our community has an existing organized group with several representatives from the community who work together on shared priorities. This group has been together for several years or more. <i>(If you responded with a 3 or 4, please fill in the answers to the next two questions before moving to Question 3.)</i> | | | | |
| 2a | <i>What is the name of the group?</i> | | | | |
| 2b | <i>How is it structured? (Formally organized, informally organized, hierarchal or distributed leadership?)</i> | | | | |
| 3 | Our group, whether new or existing, is made up of representatives from multiple sectors/ population segments/areas of interest within our community. | | | | |
| 3a | <i>Who is involved? What sectors are represented?</i> | | | | |
| 4 | Our community group's collaboration (working together) efforts could improve to more effectively produce our intended results. | | | | |

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| 5 | <p>We have important issues or challenges that need addressing in our community that fit into one or more of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) health care, wellness and safety, (2) educational quality, access, and attainment, (3) economic and business vitality, and (4) quality of life, including housing, utilities, recreation, social connections, broadband, infrastructure, or other elements. <p><i>(If you responded with a 3 or 4, please fill in the answers to the next two questions before moving to Question 6.)</i></p> | | | | |
| 5a | <i>What are these issues or challenges?</i> | | | | |
| 5b | <i>Who is already working on these issues or challenges in your community?</i> | | | | |
| 6 | The formal leaders (<i>i.e. those with elected or paid titles</i>) in our community are interested in becoming a community of excellence by working with informal leaders and residents. | | | | |
| 7 | Our informal leaders (<i>i.e. civic and social organization volunteer titles</i>) are interested in becoming a community of excellence by working with formal leaders. | | | | |
| 8 | Our community actively engages youth in decision-making and civic involvement and invests in leadership development activities and programs for all ages of youth and adults. | | | | |
| 9 | Our group would benefit from having a proven framework that helps us be more inclusive, organized, and sustainable. | | | | |
| 10 | We want to empower our group and others to be more engaged and effective at collaboration, decision-making, and following through on our plans for our community. | | | | |
| 11 | The formal and informal leaders in our community could improve their efforts to build relationships with people representing many different voices in the community (ages, genders, races, religions, income levels, political views, neighborhoods, etc.). | | | | |

STEP 4:

Total the score in each column. If your group scored a 3 or 4 on nearly all of the statements (total of 30 or more), your group is likely ready to get started with the next offering of the Communities of Excellence 2026 three-phase National Learning Collaborative. If your group scored a 1 or 2 on most of the statements (total is less than 30), we welcome the opportunity to discuss your results and determine whether our introductory workshops or the first phase of the Collaborative is the right place for you and your group to get started on your Community Excellence Journey. We look forward to engaging with you as you apply the Communities of Excellence Framework to difference-making collaboration in your community.

STEP 5:

Please contact our Executive Director Stephanie Norling at snorling@communitiesofexcellence2026.org or 619-719-1045 today to discuss next steps. Thank you!