

# Advice Campaign

## A Beginners Toolkit



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United Church of Christ  
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# What is an Advice Campaign?

In our shared journey of faith, we recognize the transformative power of collective action in addressing the pressing needs of our communities. This toolkit aims to guide your congregation in organizing an advice campaign, a dynamic and collaborative process designed to build mutual knowledge and understanding.

An advice campaign is a powerful vehicle for community engagement and prophetic witness. It provides a structured approach to listening, learning, and sharing insights within and beyond the congregation. Through this process, we can forge authentic connections, understand the nuanced needs of our community, and actively contribute to positive change.

An advice campaign serves as a catalyst for proactive involvement in the wider community. It fosters a culture of dialogue, empathy, and collective wisdom, aligning with the core principles of our faith tradition.



# The Strategic Role of an Advice Campaign

An advice campaign is not a standalone initiative; rather, it complements and enhances your congregation's broader community engagement strategy. It is particularly impactful during the early stages of strategic planning when the discovery phase is underway. Whether you are embarking on an appreciative inquiry process to explore your congregation's strengths and aspirations or conducting a comprehensive community needs assessment and asset mapping, an advice campaign can be seamlessly integrated.

## **1. Appreciative Inquiry Process:**

### *When Exploring Strengths and Aspirations*

Use the advice campaign as a tool to discover and amplify the positive stories, unique talents, and collective dreams within your congregation. By engaging in conversations that focus on strengths, you lay the foundation for a vision that is rooted in the collective spirit of your community.

## **2. Community Needs Assessment and Asset Mapping:**

### *When Identifying Needs and Resources*

Integrate the advice campaign alongside these processes to ensure a holistic understanding of your community. The insights gathered during the campaign can inform the identification of needs, assets, and potential collaborators, creating a comprehensive foundation for strategic planning.

# Guiding Principles for Success

As you embark on this journey, remember that an advice campaign is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor. Adaptability, cultural sensitivity, and an openness to diverse perspectives are key. The success of the campaign lies not only in the insights gained but in the relationships nurtured and the sense of shared purpose cultivated within your congregation and the broader community.

This toolkit provides a step-by-step guide for each stage of the advice campaign, offering practical tips, checklists, and tools to support you. May this campaign be a testament to our commitment to love, justice, and the prophetic witness we are called to embody. Let us embark on this journey of community engagement together, seeking wisdom, sharing counsel, and standing in solidarity with those whose voices may be unheard. May Living Water flow through us as we strive to make a positive impact in the communities we serve.

*Mighty Creator,*

*Bless our community engagement journey and our prophetic witness. May our advice campaign be guided by your Spirit with empathy, justice, and understanding. Strengthen the bonds within our congregation as we build mutual knowledge and seek positive change. In unity, may we be a beacon of light, embodying love and compassion.*

*—Amen.*

# Stage 1: Inside Your Congregation

In Stage 1, we begin a journey of active listening and deep understanding. Through intimate conversations and structured sessions, we seek to build mutual knowledge within our community, unraveling the rich tapestry of stories and experiences that shape our collective understanding of our communities blessings and challenges.



# Objectives

## 1. Build Mutual Knowledge

*Understand the needs and aspirations of individuals within your congregation.*

Mutual knowledge is the cornerstone of authentic community engagement, forging connections rooted in understanding rather than assumption. It empowers us to collaboratively address needs, build empathy, and foster a collective strength that transcends individual perspectives.

## 2. Initiate Learning

*Begin the process of active listening and knowledge-sharing within the community.*

Active listening and knowledge-sharing form the bedrock of our advice campaign, enabling a dynamic exchange of insights within our community. By attentively listening to diverse voices and sharing wisdom, we create a space for collective understanding, nurturing a network of shared knowledge that moves us toward impactful community engagement.





# Action Steps

## 1. Identify Interviewees

- Choose a diverse group representing various demographics and perspectives within your congregation.
- Include long-time members, newcomers, and individuals with different backgrounds.

## 2. Conduct Listening Sessions

- Organize structured listening sessions or one-on-one interviews to gather insights.
- Encourage participants to share personal stories and experiences related to community needs.

## 3. Capture Learning

- Use audio or video recording with permission to preserve the authenticity of responses.
- Create a simple questionnaire to document key insights and common themes.

## 4. Compile Findings

- Summarize and analyze the collected information.
- Share the findings with the congregation through reports, presentations, or discussions.



# Nudge! Jobs to Be Done (JTBD) Interviews

*Jobs to Be Done (JTBD) interviews can be a valuable tool during the listening sessions in Stage 1. While often used in product design, JTBD interviews can be a great tool for congregations to focus on understanding the underlying motivations and needs of individuals, aiming to uncover the "job" or purpose they are trying to fulfill in a particular context. Using JTBD interviews can provide a structured framework for exploring not just what individuals do, but why they do it, helping to reveal deeper insights into their aspirations, challenges, and desires within the community. This approach provides a structured framework for building mutual knowledge and gaining a nuanced understanding of the diverse perspectives within the congregation.*

<https://jobs-to-be-done-book.com/>





# Learning Capture Worksheets

Create worksheets for active listening that include prompts and categories for interviewers to record key insights, common themes, and personal stories shared during the listening sessions.

## **1. Participant Information:**

- Name, age, background, etc.

## **2. Key Insights:**

- Notable points or revelations shared by the participant.

## **3. Common Themes:**

- Emerging patterns or recurrent topics across multiple interviews.

## **4. Personal Stories:**

- Anecdotes and narratives that provide depth to the understanding of community needs.

## **5. Reflections:**

- Interviewer's own observations and reflections on the conversation.

# Stage 2: Engaging Community Leaders

In Stage 2, we extend our dialogue beyond the congregation to influential non-profit and community leaders. Building upon the insights gained from within our community, we aim to foster connections that transcend our immediate circle. Through purposeful conversations and collaborative meetings, we can amplify our collective voice and establish meaningful partnerships with those at the forefront of community impact.



# Objectives

## 1. Expand Understanding

*Connect with influential non-profit and community leaders.*

Our primary objective is to connect with influential non-profit and community leaders. By forging these connections, we aim to tap into a wealth of collective knowledge, garner support for our community engagement initiatives, and establish partnerships that amplify the impact of our shared vision for positive change.

## 2. Establish Partnerships

*Identify potential collaborators to address community needs.*

Our intention should not only be to connect with influential leaders but also to establish partnerships that foster collaboration and collective action. These partnerships will serve as catalysts for addressing community needs, leveraging diverse strengths, and creating a synergistic force for lasting and meaningful change.



# Action Steps

## 1. Identify Key Leaders

- Research and identify influential leaders within the community.
- Prioritize individuals with a history of community engagement.

## 2. Arrange Interviews/Meetings

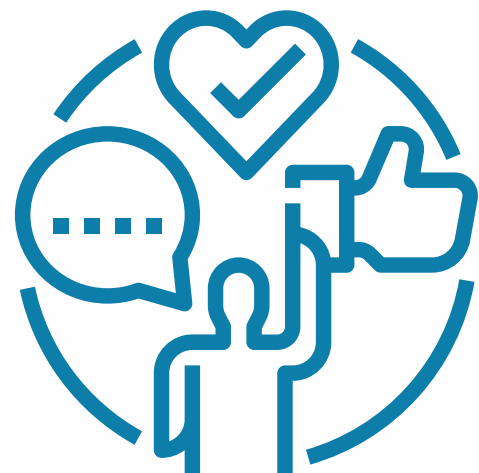
- Reach out to leaders for one-on-one interviews or group discussions.
- Share the insights gathered from Stage 1 to foster meaningful conversations.

## 3. Highlight Congregational Vision

- Clearly articulate the congregation's vision for community engagement.
- Discuss potential collaboration opportunities and shared goals.

## 4. Document Agreements

- Formalize any agreements or partnerships in writing.
- Establish clear roles and responsibilities for both parties.



# Stage 3: Engaging Government

In Stage 3, our focus shifts towards engaging with local and state government officials. Building on the connections established in earlier stages, we seek to bridge the gap between our community and government representatives. Through purposeful dialogue and consultations, we aim to actively listen to the perspectives of government officials, providing valuable advice grounded in the insights gathered from our community. This stage emphasizes a collaborative approach, fostering understanding and contributing to more informed decision-making for the benefit of our shared locality.



# Objectives

## 1. Listening to Government Perspectives

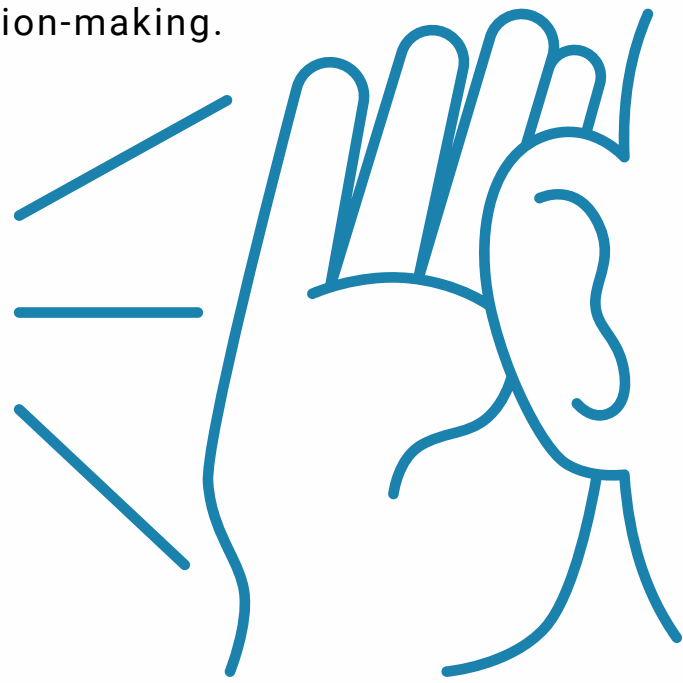
*Engage in purposeful dialogue and consultations with local and state government officials.*

Our primary focus is on actively listening to the perspectives, concerns, and priorities of government representatives regarding community needs. Through purposeful dialogue and consultations, we aim to bridge the gap between our community and government officials.

## 2. Providing Valuable Advice

*Share the insights gathered from the community during earlier stages with government officials.*

The core objective is to offer constructive advice and recommendations to government officials based on the insights gathered from our community. By sharing the experiences and aspirations of our congregation, we aim to contribute valuable perspectives to inform government decision-making.





### **3. Fostering Understanding**

*Build mutual understanding between the community and government by facilitating open and respectful conversations.*

In this stage, we prioritize building mutual understanding through open and respectful conversations. By fostering a collaborative environment, we aim to establish a connection between the community and government representatives, seeking common ground and shared goals.

### **4. Contributing to Informed Decision-Making**

*Emphasize the role of community insights in contributing to more informed decision-making by government officials.*

The overarching goal is to highlight the role of community insights in the decision-making process of government officials. By advocating for the integration of community perspectives, we aim to contribute to policies and initiatives that align with the genuine needs and aspirations of our community.



# Action Steps

## 1. Identify Relevant Officials

- Identify relevant government officials responsible for community-related matters.
- Prioritize officials who have a vested interest in understanding and addressing community needs.

## 2. Schedule Meetings

- Reach out to officials to schedule meetings or presentations.
- Present a comprehensive overview of community needs and proposed solutions.

## 3. Foster Understanding

- Identify opportunities for joint forums or roundtable discussions.
- Prioritize open dialogue, creating a space for community members and government officials to share perspectives.

## 4. Contributing to Informed Decision-Making

- Advocate for the integration of community perspectives into decision-making processes.
- Collaborate with government officials to establish ongoing channels for communication and collaboration with the community.



# Toolkit Checklist

- Identify interviewees for each stage.
- Plan and conduct listening sessions or interviews.
- Capture and document key insights.
- Compile and share findings within the congregation.
- Identify community leaders for engagement.
- Arrange and conduct meetings with community leaders.
- Establish partnerships and collaborations.
- Schedule and conduct meetings with government representatives.
- Advocate for policy changes based on community needs.