



Pre-Fellowship Focus Project Worksheet Idea Generation

Introduction

What is a Focus Project?

The Focus Project is an exercise you will complete during the Fellowship that provides an opportunity for you to connect Fellowship learning to your own professional pursuits. As part of your pre-Fellowship preparation, you will complete this worksheet to identify a Focus Project topic. During your Leadership Institute, you will work independently through a toolkit of exercises and resources to create an action plan for advancing your work after the Fellowship. For example, you might create a plan to establish an executive board to support your non-profit organization or develop a strategy to expand your business to neighboring communities. Through the Focus Project, you will develop a tangible framework to implement in your professional activities after the Fellowship. Institute staff, faculty, or designated coaches will support your Focus Project through three one-on-one coaching sessions.

Focus Project Coaching

During the Fellowship, you will complete three 60-minute one-on-one coaching sessions. Your Leadership Institute will assign you a coach, who you will meet with to discuss your vision and individual progress on the Focus Project toolkit. Coaches are Institute staff, faculty, or other professionals with experience in project planning and implementation. Please note that coaches may not have expertise in your professional sector. However, they are established professionals and will be able to guide you through the project-planning process while providing you with feedback and accountability during your Institute.

Focus Project Resources

- **Pre-Fellowship Focus Project Worksheet:** You will use the pre-Fellowship period to identify an idea or topic for your Focus Project. The *Key Questions* and *Worksheet* below will guide you in identifying challenges, problems, or needs facing your organization, business, or community and help you narrow your focus to a key challenge, problem, or need you would like to address. These *Key Questions* and the *Worksheet* are the initial steps in your project-planning process and will help prepare you for your conversations with your coach during your Institute. ***This worksheet is part of the required Pre-Fellowship Modules and should be completed no later than May 23, 2022. Institute staff will reach out to you with additional instructions on how to submit your completed Pre-Fellowship Focus Project Worksheet by May 23, 2022. Please also bring your completed worksheet to your first coaching session at the start of your Institute.***



- **Focus Project Toolkit:** During the Fellowship, you will have the opportunity to expand upon your idea using the Focus Project toolkit. This toolkit is an action-planning framework that encourages you to process and apply lessons from the Fellowship to your work outside of the Fellowship. The toolkit will walk you through the stages of project planning so that you are prepared to implement your vision after the Fellowship. While you are required to complete the toolkit during your Institute, you are not required to implement your Focus Project in order to be considered a Fellowship Alumni. The toolkit will serve as an ongoing resource to use as part of your coaching sessions and for future project planning and professional growth. You will have access to the Focus Project toolkit in early June.

Key Questions

Prior to completing Worksheet 1 (located on page 6), answer the following key questions:

What are some of the challenges, problems, or needs facing your organization or community that you would like your project to address? It is important that you start thinking about some challenges, problems, or needs that your organization, business, or community face. These could include a new program or product you are trying to introduce to address a gap in your local community.

A vision is an ideal, a picture of a reality that does not yet exist. Your strategic vision should not represent change simply for the sake of change. Instead, it should represent the kind of change that will have a meaningful and positive impact on your organization, the target beneficiaries, the immediate community, and/or society at large. This strategic vision should represent the kind of change that will position your organization, business, or community to achieve its mission more effectively, while also enhancing the quality of life for all concerned.

What is your strategic vision for change within your organization, business, or community? What is the goal that you hope to achieve? How will your organization, business, or community look different once you have achieved your vision or goal?

Prior to implementing your vision for change, it may be necessary to conduct a needs assessment to obtain input from others and garner their ownership, or buy-in, into the change process. Additionally, obtaining input from others will enable you to accurately assess the problem or situation. This process of obtaining input can be done informally on a one-on-one basis or through formal processes, such as community or organizational surveys, public meetings, or focus group discussions.

How will you engage others in refining your strategic vision for change? How might you expand the range and number of stakeholders in your vision? How can your personal vision for change become a collective vision for change within your organization, business, or community?

What will your role be in implementing this Focus Project, and how should you prepare yourself to serve in a leadership capacity to promote and sustain your vision and its related work processes? Are you willing to assume a leadership role to make your vision for strategic change a reality?

Consider internal and external factors that may prevent you from achieving your goals and objectives. What are the obstacles you must overcome to achieve your vision and goal? Which people or groups could be adversely affected by your vision for change? Are there legal or operational barriers that may hinder your progress? Is a lack of resources a problem?

What strategies will you employ to overcome these obstacles? What can you do to address or overcome the barriers you have identified? Can these obstacles be resolved? Are there other conditions that cannot be changed, especially in the short term?

Worksheet 1: Focus Project Idea Generation

1. What are three challenges, problems, or needs facing your organization, business, or community that you would like your project to address?

Challenge/Problem/Need A:

Challenge/Problem/Need B:

Challenge/Problem/Need C:

2. Which of these challenges, problems, or needs would be easier to address and why?

Challenge/Problem/Need	Why?

3. Which of these challenges, problems, or needs would be difficult to address and why?

Challenge/Problem/Need	Why?

4. Which of these challenges, problems, or needs is of the greatest interest to you and why?

5. What is a possible title for the challenge, problem, or need that you want to address? Please come up with three different titles addressing the chosen challenge, problem, or need.

Title A

Title B

Title C