

## Town Selection Committee

### *Forming an Advisory Committee that Reflects Your Whole Community in Five Steps*

The role of the town selection committee is to select the town's advisory committee members through an inclusive process. We recommend these five steps to establish your town's inaugural advisory committee.



Each town's selection committee will decide on the best process to make sure that the advisory committee is as inclusive as possible and reflects all members of your community. We hope that the suggestions provided below offer some guidance to help achieve the best possible advisory committee for your town.

## Step 1: Identify who lives in your community

The most successful efforts value different perspectives and practice inclusion. There are many ways to think about different perspectives.



### *Ask yourself:*

How can you make sure that different perspectives in your community have been considered? How can you be sure that all voices have been heard and valued equally?

Town demographic information generally includes data on race, ethnicity, age, gender, and income. Check out demographic information for your town here to learn more about who lives in your town: <http://profiles.ctdata.org/> (We'll get you a copy of the information for your town!)

Think broadly to identify additional characteristics of those in your community: for example, those who are differently-abled, retired or working, single or living with dependents, homeowner or renter, etc. By first identifying who lives in your town, you can develop ways to reach all town residents and consider who should be included in an advisory committee that truly reflects everyone.



Source: Johns Hopkins University, Diversity Leadership Council  
[http://web.jhu.edu/dlc/resources/diversity\\_wheel/index.html](http://web.jhu.edu/dlc/resources/diversity_wheel/index.html)

## Step 2: Get the Word Out

How can you get the word to all town residents?

Here are some ideas to consider as you share information about the opportunity to serve on the advisory committee:

- The media: local newspaper, town website, social media pages and groups for the town
- Through institutions and civic organizations



- Word of mouth: Let your friends and family know! Ask your friends to tell their friends.
- Signs: Display signs on the town green or in public parks (ask your town's Park and Rec department first!); post flyers at the library or on a community board at the supermarket or a popular coffee shop.
- Host a town meeting or get on the agenda for an existing town or neighborhood meeting.



### Resident Tip:

Everyone needs to eat!  
Post a notice at town supermarkets.



### Ask yourself:

*However we get the word out, will our message reach everyone in town?  
Who might we miss and how can we reach them? How do different groups in town get information  
and communicate?*

### Step 3: Collect applications and nominations of members

- Use or adapt the application and nomination forms available through this toolkit.
- Offer a verbal application option. Selection committee members can learn more about prospective members over the phone or through one-on-one conversations.
- Consider an online survey monkey version for the tech savvy.
- Keep track of everyone who is interested and collect the same information from everyone who is interested.
- Give people a reasonable deadline to express interest and make sure the deadline is publicized widely.
- Follow up with town residents who have already expressed interest via the Hartford Foundation (we'll provide a list of names and contact information) and invite them to complete your process.



#### *Ask yourself:*

*Will some members of our community be unable to express interest in this opportunity because of the process we have established? For example, if we require written applications to be emailed to us, does everyone have access to a computer and email address?*

*Is everyone able to apply in English—either in written or verbal form?*

*How can we collect consistent information from everyone who is interested?*

## Step 4: Review applications and select members

- Review criteria established by The Hartford Foundation. (See “Advisory Committee FAQ and “Advisory Committee Conflict of Interest Policy” in this tool kit) If you have many applicants to choose from, what other criteria will you consider?
- Does each applicant understand that serving on the advisory committee will take some time and is each able to make time in order to serve?
- Once you have a set of members identified, review the composition of the group as a whole and go back to step 1. Is this group reflective of your community? Who is missing? For example:
  - Are young people represented?
  - Are residents of different neighborhoods represented?
  - Are there both long-time and new members of the community?



### *Ask yourself:*

*Do we have enough people to carry out the tasks of the Advisory Committee?*

*Are there too many qualified applicants to get the work done efficiently?*

## Step 5: Share your proposed set of advisory committee members with your contact at the Hartford Foundation.

**You are done!**