

People Acting Together in Howard (PATH)

an affiliate of the Industrial Areas Foundation

Economic Pressures Briefing Sheet on House Meetings

Purpose of the meetings:

- To learn how the changes in the economy are affecting our communities;
- To identify leaders within the organization or community;
- To identify key issues that leaders are willing to research and to act on;
- To build new or strengthen old relationships; and
- To develop existing leaders.

What does a House Meeting on the Economy look like-

Size: 4-8 people

Time: 60 minutes OR LESS, with the discipline of starting and ending on time.

Location: Congregation, home, apartment, school, workplace, congregation ministry site, and/or community facility.

Who to invite:

People You Know: congregation members, neighbors, co-workers, etc;
Community Residents: school parents, small business owners, low-income apartment residents, recreation center youth/volunteers, senior center/nursing home residents, Boy Scout troop leaders, ESL students, food pantry customers, homeless shelter residents, day laborers, childcare center workers/parents, etc.;

People who like you will act on their values.

Basic Structure of the Meetings:

1. **Opening & Frame.** Introduction of yourself. It is important to mention who you are, which congregation or group you belong to, and the connection of the House Meeting/Listening Session to your congregation and PATH. Let the group know that PATH leaders have committed to do 50 House Meetings by July 2009 to learn how the economy is affecting our communities. On June 18 at 7:30 PM we will reconvene at Owen Brown to: 1. Share what we learned from the House Meetings. 2. Discuss possible collective action.
2. **Rounds.** Have each person say their name and congregation/affiliation (school, community center, etc.).
3. **Questions.** Below are two questions. It is best to be prepared with an example and/or story for each of the three questions. Be prepared to share your story/example first, if people seem to need an example. Give everyone a chance to answer the question before moving on to the next one.

Questions:

1. How has the current economic situation affected you or your family? (*have everyone answer this question before moving onto the second question*).
2. What are some of the common themes we heard in this group? What are some specific ways these specific issues could be dealt with? (*What is most important is to figure out the common themes and what problems we should look at addressing with our agenda.*)

Some of the ideas we have heard so far are:

- Increase in affordable housing, especially for seniors who are moving out of the county because they cannot afford to retire here.
- Health insurance, especially for people who have been laid off, or young adults who don't have jobs.
- Scholarships for students to attend Community College—many parents have lost the savings they put away for their children to go to college.

4. **Discussion after Questions:** Sometimes the rounds will flow right into this part, into a solid discussion. If the rounds go quickly, then you need to draw people out. Get people thinking about *specific* ways of dealing with their *specific* issues. **PRIORITIZE THE ISSUES RAISED IN THE MEETING: ASK LEADERS TO RANK THE TOP 3-5 ISSUES.** Why are they a priority?

End and Next Possible Steps: Thank everyone for participating. Then, consider:

- Do Individual meetings with the most promising leaders who attended your house meeting;
- Contact those individuals most interested and channeling them into research teams on specific issues raised in the house meeting.
- Organize a second house meeting either in your home or in the home of one of the participants to pursue the discussion;
- **Invite the most promising leaders to join your PATH core team and to attend the PATH follow-up house meeting action to hear what we learned from the 50 house meetings that PATH leaders have led.**

PLEASE COMPLETE THE HOUSE MEETING EVALUATION SHEET. Keep one for yourself and give one to PATH Team leader at your institution.

PLEASE CALL OR EMAIL CYNTHIA MARSHALL WITH THE TIMES/DATES OF YOUR HOUSEMEETINGS, or

with any questions: cell: 443-433-8054 or email: path.iaf@gmail.com

People Acting Together in Howard (PATH)
HOUSE MEETING/LISTENING SESSION EVALUATION SHEET

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

ORGANIZATION: _____

DATE OF LISTENING SESSION: _____ NUMBER ATTENDING: _____

PRIORITY ISSUES RAISED:	REACTION (Circle)
1. _____	Strong Moderate Weak
2. _____	Strong Moderate Weak
3. _____	Strong Moderate Weak
4. _____	Strong Moderate Weak

LEADERS OR POTENTIAL LEADERS THAT WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE:

<u>NAMES</u>	<u>CONTACT INFO: Phone/E-mail</u>	<u>ISSUE OR INTEREST</u>
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE MEETING?

WHATS NEXT?

Individual Meetings?

Research Action(s)

Other?