Advocacy – supporting an idea or cause through public and private communications, and collecting evidence to support one’s position
Examples:
• Speaking or writing to individuals, groups, or elected officials on behalf of a cause
• Sharing a video about your cause on social media

Charitable Volunteerism – addressing immediate needs, most often through social service agencies, churches, or schools
Examples:
• Tutoring a child or an adult once a week
• Serving food or registering people at a soup kitchen or shelter

Community & Economic Development – acting to provide economic opportunities and improve social conditions in a sustainable way
Examples:
• Developing marketing plans, websites, or other supports to help small businesses grow
• Providing microloans or training to aspiring entrepreneurs

Community-Based Participatory Research – conducting research in partnership with members of a community with an intention to benefit the community
Examples:
• Defining a research agenda and implementing each aspect of research projects with local stakeholders
• Jointly publishing results to ensure they reach public as well as academic audiences

Community-Building – strengthening through interpersonal connections the capacity of local residents and associations to work together
Examples:
• Creating local history projects profiling both long-time and new residents
• Organizing neighborhood clean-ups or National Night Out activities

Community Organizing - bringing people together to act in their shared self-interest
Examples:
• Mapping the skills, interests, relationships, and other assets of residents to inform work on particular issues
• Developing an issue campaign to call for change in a troubling practice, such as the overuse of school suspensions

Deliberative Dialogue – exchanging and weighing different ideas, perspectives, and approaches around particular issues in a public setting
Examples:
• Organizing ongoing local discussion circles
• Using a National Issues Forums guide to prompt a group to consider multiple options on an issue

Informal Associations & Mutual Aid – unpaid, collaborative work or sharing of resources by people seeking to improve their collective quality of life
Examples:
• Starting a support group around an issue of concern
• Participating in disaster relief efforts or opening your home to a displaced person

Philanthropy – Donating money to increase the well-being of humankind or advance another social good
Examples:
• Holding a fundraiser for a nonprofit organization
• Providing cash or in-kind donations yourself

Protests & Demonstrations – expressing public disagreement with a situation or policy in a visible, non-violent way
Examples:
• Participating in rallies or marches in support of a cause
• Creating public visual or performance art intended to draw attention to an issue

Social Entrepreneurship – creating a new venture or using entrepreneurial principles to change an existing one
Examples:
• Launching a business with a clear social benefit
• Developing a new product that affordably provides clean water to people in areas without it

Socially Responsible Daily Behavior – acting on one’s values and civic commitments in one’s personal and professional life
Examples:
• Challenging racist or sexist words or behavior
• Buying from locally owned or socially responsible businesses

Voting & Formal Political Activities – mobilizing others to influence public policy through formal political channels – and participating yourself
Examples:
• Organizing a voter registration drive
• Running for public office or working or volunteering on another candidate’s campaign

Socially Responsible Daily Behavior

Community Organizing

Community-Building

Community & Economic Development

Charitable Volunteerism

Community-Based Participatory Research

Advocacy

Deliberative Dialogue

Informal Associations & Mutual Aid

Philanthropy

Protests & Demonstrations

Social Entrepreneurship

Socially Responsible Daily Behavior

Voting & Formal Political Activities

All of these strategies can contribute to social change.
What does Community Involvement mean to you?
People define community involvement in many different ways. Read the following list of examples of different types of community involvement; select the five that most closely match your personal philosophy of community involvement. Rank them 1–5, with 1 being the closest to your philosophy.

- Defining a research agenda, implementing a research project with stakeholders
- Launching a business with a clear social benefit
- Organizing a voter registration drive
- Buying from locally owned or socially responsible businesses
- Tutoring a child or an adult once a week
- Developing an issue campaign to call for change in a troubling practice
- Challenging racist or sexist words or behavior
- Developing marketing, websites, or other support to help small businesses grow
- Speaking or writing to individuals, groups, or elected officials on behalf of a cause
- Running for public office; working or volunteering on a candidate’s campaign
- Organizing neighborhood clean-ups or National Night Out activities
- Providing cash or in-kind donations yourself
- Organizing ongoing local discussion circles
- Developing a new product that provides clean water to people in areas without it
- Serving food at a soup kitchen or shelter
- Creating local history projects profiling long-time and new residents
- Starting a support group around an issue of concern
- Using a guide to prompt a group to consider multiple options on an issue
- Creating public visual or performance art intended to draw attention to an issue
- Jointly publishing results to ensure they reach public as well as academic audiences
- Participating in rallies or marches in support of a cause
- Mapping skills, interests, relationships, assets of residents to inform work on an issue
- Sharing a video about your cause on social media
- Holding a fundraiser for a nonprofit organization
- Providing microloans or training to aspiring entrepreneurs
- Participating in disaster relief efforts or opening your home to a displaced person

Group Exercise

Break into small groups based on peoples’ reactions to a particular strategy (either positive interest or negative perception).

Ask each group to discuss the following questions:
- Why did you choose this particular area?
- What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of this approach to change?
- What are the skills or knowledge you think most important to doing this kind of change work well?

Divide into groups based on interest in specific social issues.

Have each group brainstorm and analyze ways that multiple strategies could be used to address the necessary change that needs to happen to create change around their issue.

Social Change Wheel Discussion Questions

Why might it be necessary for more than one strategy to be employed?

Which part of the wheel are you drawn to the most? Why?

What strategies do you have experience with?

What strategies have you seen others use effectively?

Which part of the wheel do you find most challenging or unappealing? Why?