Activity 5.2: Understanding Policy Recommendations & Targets

Tools Needed:

Tool 5.2: Policy Recommendations Matching Activity (pre-cut into individual examples)

Tool 5.3: Levels of Government Chart

Materials needed:

Butcher Paper
Markers
Sticky tack or tape

Key Terms:

Federal Government
State Government
Local Government
Policy

Intended Audience:

Members

Time Needed:

1 hour 40 minutes

Purpose of Activity:

The purpose of this activity is to familiarize participants with different categories of policy recommendations and the government institutions that create and change policy in order to prepare your group to craft policy recommendations for your report.

By the End of Activity Participants Will:

Review what a policy recommendation is and what it is not

Learn about categories of policy recommendations

Review examples of policy recommendations that other organizations have used for PAR projects

Learn about and create a diagram of key policy targets for your issue at the Federal, State and Local levels

Before this Activity Participants Will Need to:

Be familiar with the overall design and timeline of the research project

Part I. Understanding Types of Policy Recommendation (1 hour)

Facilitator Instructions:

1. Provide some context of your PAR project and the campaign it is connected to. Explain that this activity will explore different categories and examples of public policy as we prepare to create policy recommendations for our report.

2. Put up two pieces of butcher paper. On one piece write, "The city council and Mayor should pass a law mandating that all workers are paid a living wage." On the second piece of paper write, "All workers deserve a living wage."

3. Ask the group: What is the difference between these two statements? Which of these is a policy recommendation and which is not? Why? What is a policy recommendation? Popcorn responses and record on butcher paper.

4. Summarize what has been said and explain:

    Policy Recommendation--is a solution that you propose that will make a systematic change to a problem you have identified through your research. It is specific and is targeted to a particular person or entity with the power to make the change that you propose.

5. Write 5 categories below on butcher paper. Introduce and discuss/clarify the definitions and ask for examples for each category. Explain that these are not the only categories of recommendations but that we will be using these categories for this activity.

Five Categories of Policy Recommendations:

- **Legislative**: involves changes to existing laws or introducing new laws. These laws can be local laws, state laws or federal laws.

  Example: The Mayor and City Council should pass a living wage law.

- **Enforcement**: calls for the enforcement or implementation of laws that already exist on the books but may not be implemented in practice.

  Example: The Department of Labor should enforce the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights.

- **Budgetary**: calls for funding changes, such as increased or decreased funding for a particular program or community or opposition to budget cuts.

  Example: The Governor should allocate $20 million dollars for housing for people living with HIV/AIDS in the state budget.

- **Oversight**: calls for monitoring and oversight over a particular issue, agency or program from either governmental or citizen committees or individuals.

  Example: The Mayor should appoint an independent monitor to oversee the New York Police Department.

- **Democratic Participation**: calls for increased public and citizen participation or democracy in an issue or government body.

  Example: The Mayor should appoint a new Charter Revision commission, which includes low-income people of color, to revise the city charter.

6. Next put five sheets of butcher paper up in different parts of the room with one of the five policy recommendation categories above written on the top of the sheet.

7. Next split participants into two groups. Give each group half of the sample policy recommendations from Tool 5.2 "Policy Recommendation Matching Activity."

8. Instruct each group to read and discuss each sample policy recommendation and decide which category it fits into. After they've made a decision have each group tape the recommendation onto the corresponding butcher paper sheets placed in different parts of the room.

9. After each group has finished discussing and placing each of their sample policy recommendations, come back together as a big group. Go through each of the categories and read off each of the policy recommendations placed on the sheet. Ask the group that placed it there to explain why they chose that category. If an answer is wrong see if anyone can figure out the correct answer. Make sure each policy recommendation is placed in the right category (use the end of T5.2: Sample Policy Recommendations Cheat Sheet for correct answers). Discuss each sample in each category until you're finished.

10. Debrief the activity. What did participants learn about policy recommendations? Were there any samples that were particularly hard to place? Why? Were there any that could fit into more than one category?

Part II. Understanding Targets for Policy Change (40 minutes)

Facilitator Instructions:

1. Remind the group of the focus on your research project and some of the policy recommendations you have developed.

2. Frame the activity: today we will discuss the institutions and individuals that have power over the policies that we are trying to win. We'll call these institutions and individuals our targets. At the end of this activity we will have created a diagram of the targets for the policies we are trying to win.

3. Popcorn questions to the group: Where do we go when we want to demand a policy change for our community? What institutions or individuals do we target? What are the three major levels of government that have power to create and change policies? (Federal, State, Local).

4. Next split into three groups. Hand out Tool 5.3: Levels of Government Chart. Remind the group about the three levels of government (Federal, State, Local). Make sure each group has butcher paper and markers.

5. Give each small group 10 minutes to 1) brainstorm all of the possible institutions, agencies, or individuals that could be targets for the policy your organization is working on at the federal, state and local level. Then 2) come up with a visual diagram or drawing, with as much detail as possible, to represent the possible policy targets you discussed.

6. Come back together as a big group and have each small group present and explain their drawings at the front of the room. Be sure to discuss questions that come up and to fact check the diagrams created. (As a facilitator you might want to create a list of key target institutions in advance of the session that you want to be sure are represented on the diagrams).

7. Keep the diagrams for use in later activities.