Brainstorming Community Issues: Decision Matrix

**Step 1: Ask each participant to list community issues.** Working alone, each person will list as many issues as he/she can think of.

**Step 2: Create one list from the group.** Collect issues from the whole group into one list or several lists, sorted by topic. Options: each person post sticky notes (one issue per sticky note) on a flip chart or wall; ask participants to call out issues, one by one, while one person records on a flip chart; give each participant a pen to write issues on a shared flip chart or wall chart.

**Step 3. Eliminate duplicate issues; clarify issues.** The group can discuss and clarify all ideas and issues are listed. *Remember:*

1. Do not censor or restrict ideas.
2. All ideas are worth consideration. Aim for quantity, not quality.
3. Do not discuss or evaluate yet.
4. Build on the ideas and issues suggested by others.

**Step 4: Use a decision matrix.** Complete the table below with issues (i.e., A, B, C, D, etc. as needed). Evaluate top issues on criteria (see the left column) (rating 1-5 and tally at end) Criteria can be:

* Timely
* Easy
* Cost-effective
* Impact
* Desired
* Urgency

Rate each idea from 1 to 5 (1=low; 5=high) along each type of criteria.

Here is an *example* of a *completed* decision matrix:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria: | Idea A | Idea B | Idea C | Idea D |
| Timely | 5 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Easy | 4 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Cost-Effective | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| Impact | 2 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| Desired | 3 | 5 | 5 | 2 |
| Urgent | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| TOTAL | 16 | 27 | 15 | 16 |

**Step 5:** Total the scores to identify priority issues that the community should work on, and which issues will be saved for later.