What Do You Want?
Choosing a Local Policy Goal

The purpose of this tool

Coalitions and organizations often struggle to determine which, among several, potential local policy goals they should pursue. Competing interests, varied mandates from funders and organizational leadership, and limited advocacy assets can make it hard to reach consensus focused on winning and inclusion. It helps to have a specific set of criteria by which to screen and score each potential policy goal and use that criteria to inform decision-making. While the scoring process is subjective, the tool is objective in that it is a consistent set of measures that is applied to each proposed policy goal.

The goal is to utilize the tool to facilitate meaningful discussion and decision-making grounded in objectivity and facts. The tool should *not* be utilized in such a way that the policy with the highest score is selected! In many cases, there are excellent reasons for choosing a policy goal that does not score as highly as another policy goal. The point is to be aware of where it scores low and make intentional and well-informed decisions grounded in facts rather than feelings and personal or organizational agendas.

How to use the tool
There are 4 recommended steps in this process:
1. Work individually, in small groups or in pairs to score each potential policy goal using the criteria grid.
2. Share composite scores for each policy to see how close or how far apart scores are. Then, discuss areas of differences. For example, identify areas where one group answered "Yes" and others answered "No" and then discuss those as a group.
3. After the group discussion, try to work together as a group to score each policy goal.
4. Facilitate conversation, based on the scores, about where to move forward and why. If there are proposals to move forward on a policy goal that scored low, individuals should describe why that is the right policy despite the low score. *[Refer to M+R's Consensus Decision-Making Tool for a framework for facilitating group discussions to come to consensus decisions.]*

Some important notes:
- The status quo policy should always be considered as one of your options.
- If you think you have the right policy in place but it is not being enforced, you might want to consider a campaign to secure enforcement of the existing policy.
- It is also possible that you have the right policy in place but it is not being equitably enforced across all populations and/or in a way that promotes health equity, and that might be what you select as a campaign goal.

Note that strong group facilitation skills are required! And, the facilitator should not be participating in the scoring and discussion. This might mean bringing in an outside facilitator in order to free up the coalition coordinator to participate.

What you will need
- Copies of the Criteria Grid – enough copies so that each person/team will have one sheet for each potential policy goal being considered
- Flipchart paper and markers

Potential Policy Goal: _____

_____

Criteria for Consideration
 Score each on a scale of 1 through 4 as follows:
     1 = No
     2 = Maybe, but closer to no than yes
     3 = Maybe, but closer to yes than no
     4 = Yes
     Leave blank if undecided
 Trust your initial gut instinct on scores – try not to overthink any of these!
	Score

This is a specific policy or systems change goal.	
There is data to support and defend this goal.	
This goal addresses a current challenge facing a specific population that recognizes the need for change. (This need for change has been validated – ideally through a series of one-on-one resident conversations.)	
There is evidence that this goal will effectively impact the problem we are trying to solve, improve lives, and reduced disparities.	
There is a clear decision-maker (i.e., an individual or institution) who can make this goal happen.	
This goal is achievable.	
This goal provides a compelling platform to have essential conversations.	
Those in the community who are currently focused on the issue support this goal.	
Coalition partners and other community organizations support this goal.	
Grassroots individuals (i.e., residents who live in the community), especially those being impacted by the problem, support this goal.	
We have access to the resources we need to embark on this goal.	
If successful, this goal would significantly enhance our ability to achieve our mission.	
We have the ability to follow through with implementation of this goal.	
A campaign to achieve this goal will help us build clout, credibility, and influence.	
We expect to have at least one identifiable decision-maker champion.	
This goal will help us attract new partners.	
There is energy, enthusiasm, and strong commitment for this goal within our organization/coalition, including board, staff, donors, and volunteers.	
Total Score for this policy/systems change option	