



Prioritization & Planning Tool

Whether your group is just getting started or has been active for years, this tool can help you:

- Identify what's most important right now
- Reduce activities when things feel too busy
- Support sustainability and prevent burnout
- Make sure roles and responsibilities are shared

Take as long as you need to complete this sheet. You might spread the activities and reflections across multiple meetings with your group.

Helpful resources

Print any of these additional resources that might help you with this activity:

- Your survey results (if you've done a survey) or other community feedback
- Tools from the **Starting** Workbook:
 - [NORC Ambassadors Program Inspiration Book](#)
 - [Exploring Your Neighbourhood Tip Sheet](#)
 - [Partner Resource List](#)
 - [Establishing Roles & Responsibilities](#)
- Tools from the **Sustaining** Workbook:
 - [Keeping Your Community in the Loop](#)

The NORC Building Blocks

The NORC Building Blocks are four areas that help communities become more connected, supportive and resilient. They are based on health research and what we've learned from successful aging in place communities.

The four Building Blocks work best as a mix. You don't need equal effort in every area, but considering all four can help people stay independent and supported over time.



What Are People Talking About?

Understanding Community Needs and Interests

There are many ways groups learn about community needs. What are the top interests or areas of opportunity in your community? Which categories of the NORC Building Blocks do these align with?

You might consider:

- Surveys
- What you have heard through conversations in hallways or elevators, coffee chats and social gatherings
- Community meetings or events
- Feedback from volunteers and partners

Think about:

- What people are excited about
- What people are struggling with
- What comes up again and again

What are the top 1–3 things your community cares about right now and what are their corresponding NORC Building Blocks?

What Would We Like to Focus On This Year?

Choosing What to Start, Continue, or Reduce

Now it's time to be realistic and intentional. For newer groups:

- What feels meaningful and doable to start with?
- What small steps could build confidence and momentum?

For more established groups:

- Which activities matter most or have the biggest impact?
- What might you continue, simplify, pause or let go of?
- Is there anything missing, like more fun or time for reflection?

It's okay to focus on fewer things. The goal is to choose what makes sense for your community right now.

What are your top priorities for this year? Who could take the lead: residents, a community organization or both?

Considering all 4 Building Blocks

A Balanced Initiative Matters to Successfully Age In Place

Research and experience tell us that all four Building Blocks contribute to healthy aging in place communities.

Many groups start with Healthy People and Healthy Communities, bringing people together, building friendships and creating opportunities to stay active. That's a great place to start.

Over time, it's worth considering the other Building Blocks too. Healthy System helps people connect with the health and social supports they need. Healthy Growth helps groups learn and adapt so their initiatives can continue over time.

You don't need to work on all four at once, and one activity may support more than one Building Block. Every so often, ask: Is there a Building Block we haven't thought about in a while? Even small steps can help create a more balanced and sustainable initiative.

Are Our Priorities Sustainable?

Sharing the Work and Preventing Burnout

Before moving ahead, let's reflect on how the work will be carried out.

Ask yourselves:

- Who is currently doing most of the organizing?
- Is this manageable for them long-term?
- Do we have backup if someone needs a break?
- Are there opportunities to involve more people?

Strong programs share responsibility and make it easy for people to step in and out. Consider:

- Rotating roles (facilitator, note-taker, organizer, connector)
- Co-leading instead of leading alone
- Time-limited roles (e.g., "for 6 months")
- Mentoring new volunteers
- Building small teams instead of relying on one person

What are some key opportunities for your group's health and sustainability?

What Steps Could Help Bring This to Life?

Turning Priorities into Action

Think about what you already have that could help bring your priorities to life:

- People with skills or connections
- Available spaces
- Organizations you could partner with
- Existing tools and resources

What are some practical next steps you could take?

How Will We Keep Community in the Loop?

Building Participation, Trust, and Momentum

Once you've made some decisions, think about how you'll share them with your community. Using more than one way to communicate can help you reach more people.

Let neighbours know:

- What you heard
- What you decided to do
- How their ideas were used
- How they can get involved

How will you share updates and invite participation?