

Visioning Exercise: Postcard from the Future

For this visioning exercise, the Coordinator will need to prepare mock postcards. After giving participants a postcard, pen and highlighter, ask participants to close their eyes and imagine that they had been living overseas – e.g., Australia, France, Thailand, for ten years and are coming back to visit the community for the first time since leaving.

Explain that they are driving into town on a particular highway or road and as they enter the downtown, they notice that things look and feel different. As they get out of the car and walk around, they realize that their downtown has transformed over the ten years into the place they always dreamed it could be. Ask participants to notice what has changed, how the downtown looks and feels, and what they now love about it.

After a couple of minutes of talking them through their mental tour of the downtown, ask them to open their eyes, remain quiet and begin to write a postcard to a friend from their overseas country. In the postcard they should describe how wonderful their community has become, how it feels to be there, why they love it, and what is special. Once they finish writing, the process for creating a vision statement begins by asking them to highlight their top three concepts.

Participants transfer up to three concepts to individual sticky notes — only one idea per sticky note. A volunteer is asked to share one of the top ideas — to say it aloud and then post it at the front of the room. Additional volunteers are asked to post a different idea. Once five to six separate ideas have been posted, ask the group if anyone has a completely different idea. These are also posted. Then the group is collectively asked to post any remaining similar ideas under the sticky note that reflects their ideas. Similar ideas are thus grouped together. The ideas supported by the majority of sticky notes are moved to the centre, and each grouping is given a positive title or description.

The Coordinator will use the concepts from this exercise and the wording of the participants to draft a vision statement.