

Government, Community, and Sports Teams: Tax Credits

Discussion Guide



Let's review

At the start of each discussion, review the conversation ground rules for returning and new members alike to set the stage for active participation by all. You may want to use a timer as you go around the room. And don't forget to decide who will take notes and post a discussion recap.

- **Be open and curious:** Everyone has a unique perspective, so be prepared to hear a different point of view. Listen first, and focus on the facts.
- **Be respectful and engaged:** Be sure that everyone has a chance to speak before adding a second comment or perspective. Encourage each other's participation.
- **Be focused and concise:** Keep the conversation centered on the issue and the brief.

The "Table-it" Rule: If the group has gone off-topic but the area is of interest, the group can table the conversation and save it for another time to be addressed in a different manner.

Let's begin

*Each member is invited to answer the following questions in a **two-three minute reaction** to the brief.*

- Introduce yourself, and share what "lens of care" did you wear when reviewing this brief (e.g. personal, professional, community, state, nation, global)?
- What did you find most interesting or surprising from reading the brief? What matters?

Let's discuss

Pick 2 or 3 questions that resonate with the group and discuss, or choose your own.

- Do professional or local and youth sports teams play an important role in your community? How so?
- As part of a billion dollar industry, do professional sports teams need tax breaks?
 - Are professional sports leagues in your city tax exempt?
 - Have they received subsidies?
- Do you see the economic or social benefits of professional sports teams in your community?
 - Have professional sports teams generated new construction projects, shops, restaurants, or other similar developments?
 - How do professional sports teams engage in your community?
- How do local sports and the community interact on neighborhood level?
 - Do you see a partnership between business and youth leagues? What are the benefits of these partnerships? Should they continue?

Let's act

Spread the Word: Some Facts to Share

- [Estimates show](#) the sports industry generates around \$70 billion annually in North America.
- Stadiums across the country have relied on [public financing](#); the Raiders received almost [\\$750 million in subsidies](#) to move from Oakland to Las Vegas.
- Since 2000, the [federal government has subsidized](#) the construction and renovation for 35 professional sports stadiums with \$3.2 billion in federal taxpayer dollars.
- [Many economic studies](#) have found the “[b]enefits generated by professional sports facilities and franchises are smaller than the cost of subsidies.”
- No [congressional efforts](#) to eliminate tax exemptions and stadium subsidies have successfully ended the practice.
- Sports teams frequently give back to their communities, including 3800 hours of community service by the [Chicago Cubs](#), youth programs by the [Detroit Lions](#) and [San Francisco Giants](#), and food drives by the [Milwaukee Bucks](#).

Engage Locally

- *Learn more:*
 - **Research your elected representatives' positions** and their visions for how to tackle the challenges regarding facing Americans at large and your community specifically. Research the professional or local sports teams in your area.
 - Your legislators, state comptroller, attorney general and other local elected officials want to know their constituents. Write to them about your interest in sports teams in your community.
 - You can find contact information for federal, state, and local government officials [here](#). Your state or municipality's websites will also have information to contact leaders. Try looking at the drop-down menu for a *Government* tab.
 - **Explore how sports teams engage in your community.**
 - How do sports teams engage in your community, and are there opportunities for further engagement?. You can search on sports' teams websites. Look for a dropdown menu titled “*community*.”
 - Research development initiatives that may have started due in part to the presence of sports teams. Try searching “*economic development*,” or “*community development*” in the search bar on your municipality's website.
 - On your state or municipality website, look for a “government” or “departments” drop-down tab to learn more about your elected officials. See who is on boards such as an economic development board, zoning board, or a township committee.
 - Consider asking your local business owners or your local Chamber of Commerce about economic effects and development due to the presence of sports teams. You can find your local one [here](#).

- *Reach out:*
 - Explore what organizations, legislators, and journalists you could contact to ask questions, learn more and get engaged.
 - If you have trouble finding the information you are looking for on your municipality's website, consider contacting agency or department heads. You can find the contact information for federal, state, and local government officials [here](#).
 - The Policy Circle offers a number of resources for engaging on the local level. Learn how to write a letter to the editor on [The Policy Circle website](#).
 - It's easy to establish a relationship with your legislators. Start by introducing yourself. You can also learn to write to your representatives or set up a meeting with a legislator on [The Policy Circle website](#).

Post a Recap/Dive Deeper:

- Summarize your discussion to share thoughts with members not present. Designate who will post a meeting recap.
- Decide your next meeting topic. Want to discuss a related brief at your next meeting?
 - [Stitching the Fabric of Neighborhoods](#)
 - [Housing](#)
 - [Aging in the 21st Century](#)
- Dive Deeper into this area. If this is an area you would like to pursue further, consider taking possible steps to influence policy. The Policy Circle offers resources for [developing a message about your issue](#) and [organizing a petition](#) to amplify your voice and raise awareness.