

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

- Take five minutes to walk through the brief. Highlight the main point of each section and key statistics.
- Each member is invited to answer the following questions in a **two 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?

Spread the word: facts to share during your discussion

- [Estimates show](#) the sports industry generates around \$70 billion annually in North America, which places the sports industry in the top 50 on the [Fortune 500 list](#).
- Between 2000 and 2015, the [federal government subsidized](#) the construction and renovation for 35 professional sports stadiums with \$3.2 billion in federal taxpayer dollars.
- 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](#).

Let's discuss

Below are questions for the group to consider and discuss, or choose your own.

- **Community:** Do professional or local and youth sports teams play an important role in your community? Do you see economic or social benefits from their presence?
- **Government:** Do professional sports teams need local or federal tax breaks? Are professional sports leagues in your city tax exempt? Have they received subsidies?
- **Business:** Have professional sports teams generated new construction projects, shops, restaurants, or other similar developments?

Let's act

1. **Take it local.** Talk to neighbors, friends, and family who participate in sports. Ask for their views and perspective on the impact of local and professional sports teams. Consider hosting another conversation with these community members.
2. **Explore the impact of legislation related to sports in your community.** Research development initiatives that may have started in part due to the presence of sports teams. Try searching “*economic development*,” or “*community development*” in the search bar on your municipality’s website. Look for a “government” or “departments” drop-down tab to see who is on boards such as an economic development board, zoning board, or a township committee. Consider asking local business owners or your [local Chamber of Commerce](#) about economic effects and development due to the presence of sports teams.
3. **Investigate community programs** in your state or municipality. Are there any initiatives led by professional sports teams in your community?
4. **Research your elected representatives’ positions** on subsidies for sports teams, and their vision for how to tackle related challenges facing Americans and 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.
5. **Establish a relationship with your legislators.** 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](#).
6. **Consider writing a letter to the editor or an op-ed on your stance on subsidies for sports teams in your local paper.** Learn how on [The Policy Circle website](#).

Next Steps for Your Circle

- **Post a Recap:** Summarize your discussion to share thoughts with members not present, and share planned actions from group members. Designate who will post a meeting recap on your circle page.
- **Decide your next meeting topic.** Want to discuss a related brief at your next meeting? Suggestions include:
 - [Stitching the Fabric of Neighborhoods](#)
 - [Government Transparency & Accountability](#)
- **Dive Deeper into the issues.** 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. Don’t miss our [latest events](#) that help you dive deeper on this issue and more.