

## Module Two: A Congregational Self-Assessment

**Facilitator's Note:** Prior to the presentation of this module, you will need to enlist the staff of your faith community for assistance in completing the spreadsheet "Inventory of Nonprofit Partners." This can be found on the website [FaithfulEngagementRVA.com](http://FaithfulEngagementRVA.com) and on the next page.

While staff should be able to provide the names of the recipient organizations and the amount of the most recent contributions as well as those of the last five years, your fellow volunteers may be needed to estimate the # of volunteers (within your faith community) participating annually with the nonprofit as well as the number of people served by these projects. Of course, if your community utilizes a grant application/reporting requirement that includes these elements, then these data points should be available in those reports.

We suggest that you leave the last category—Relief/Empowerment/Systems Change—for group discussion when reviewing the spreadsheet.

Completing this spreadsheet should provide a clear picture of congregational priorities and, perhaps, highlight any disconnects between people's assumptions about priorities versus how the dollars are actually deployed and the volunteers utilized.

To complete this module, you will need to visit [FaithfulEngagementRVA.com](http://FaithfulEngagementRVA.com) and print off the following documents for each participant:

- 1) Inventory of Nonprofit Partners
- 2) Action/Alignment Chart



*“I am a little pencil in the hand of a writing God who is sending a love letter to the world.” Mother Teresa*

Why do we volunteer, why do we give?

We “give back” because our parents taught us to do so, or it’s a cultural norm, or it’s a status symbol, or it makes us feel good, or we want to model servant leadership for our children, or donations make for good tax deductions. As individuals we volunteer our time and give our money for a number of reasons. As people of faith, we want to ease and end suffering. As our sacred texts and traditions tell us, to seek to meet human need is to love god.

In the Gospel of Matthew (25: 31-40) we read: “Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’”

And from the Quran (76: 8 – 9)-we hear these words: “[The righteous are those] who feed the poor, the orphans and the captive for the love of God, saying: We feed you for the sake of God alone; we seek from you neither reward nor thanks.”

### **Facilitator’s Note—Commentary to Introduce the Inventory of Nonprofit Partners:**

Beyond the question of “why” we engage—whether through donations or volunteer service projects—there are some equally important questions that we need to reflect upon and to do this it will be helpful to review our giving/volunteer patterns over the last five years.

## PAUSE VIDEO

### Review Inventory of Nonprofits Spreadsheet with Participants

**Facilitator's Note: Consider recording the responses to the discussion questions on a flip chart, so folks know that their voices are heard. After participants have had a chance to review the spreadsheet, resume the video, pausing for each discussion question.**

#### Discussion Questions:

In reviewing the spreadsheet, what are your general impressions? Do you see any patterns or priorities reflected in our giving?

Based on our giving and volunteer patterns over the past five years, are we seeking to serve a specific geography? A target population? A specific need(s)?

Thinking back to Module One and what we learned about our region's most pressing needs, is our engagement aligned with these needs? In other words, is it relevant, impactful?

Does our engagement perpetuate the status quo? If so, what are the consequences of our actions for our neighbors and their neighborhoods? Is our engagement helpful or harmful?

Are we engaging with organizations focused on meeting immediate needs, empowering others, or systems change? For example, food pantries meet immediate needs; community gardens empower people to create and sustain their own food sources; and organizations that advocate for public policy changes to eliminate food deserts are working towards systemic change.

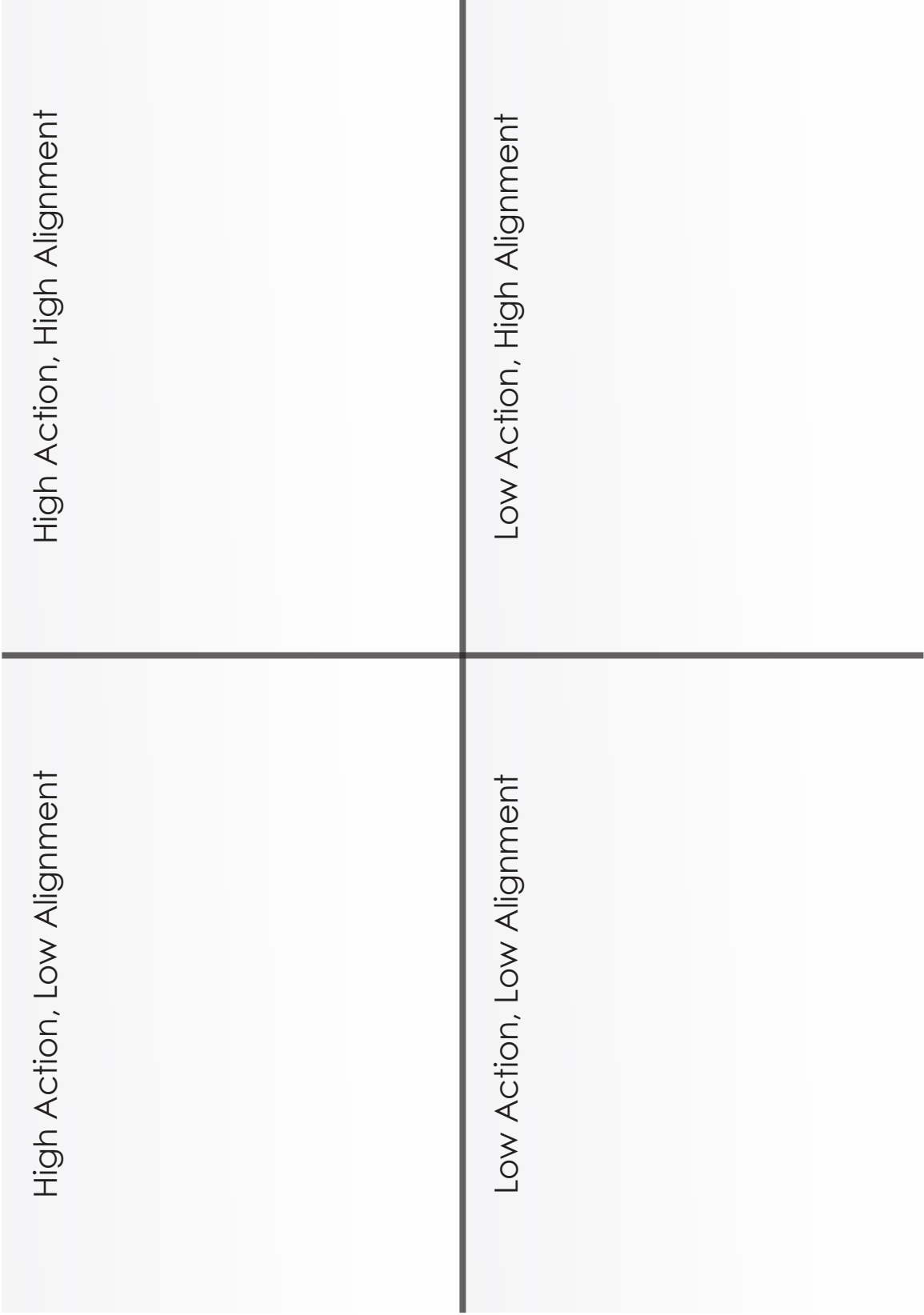
**Facilitator's Note: During this discussion, complete the last column of the spreadsheet.**

Based on our giving/volunteer patterns, what are our engagement priorities?

Have we been intentional in our decisions regarding why, when, where, and how we engage?

**Facilitator's Note: Provide each participant with a copy of the Action/Alignment Diagram – available on the next page & [FaithfulEngagementRVA.com](http://FaithfulEngagementRVA.com)**

Moving the Needs: System Changes, Lives Transformed



Community Needs: Shelter, Food, Health, Education, Transit

## Resume Video

Now that we have reflected upon how we engage in metropolitan Richmond, let's ask the alignment question of our nonprofit partners. Does their work align with the region's most pressing problems? Some nonprofits do amazing work, but their missions are not focused on the regional challenges that impede people's ability to flourish. Other nonprofits seek to address these challenges, but their efforts produce few results.

The following diagram is designed to help us evaluate the relevance and impact of our nonprofit partners. The vertical axis measures impact. If the nonprofit is changing lives, transforming neighborhoods, and accomplishing systemic change, then the nonprofit should be placed in one of the upper "high action" quadrants; if their impact is minimal, then they should be placed in one of the lower, "low action" quadrants. The horizontal axis measures alignment. If the mission of the nonprofit focuses on the most pressing regional needs, then the nonprofit should be placed in one of the quadrants on the right side of the chart. If the nonprofit's work focuses on issues that are not related to those community characteristics necessary for people to thrive, then the nonprofit should be placed in one of the quadrants on the left side of the chart.

**Facilitator's Note: Pause video to allow participants to complete the diagram and discuss why they have located each nonprofit in a given quadrant.**

### **Discussions Questions – Pause video after each question**

Are we partnering with nonprofits that have high alignment and high impact?

If not, why? If there are specific reasons, what are they? Let's name them.

Are there adjustments we should make in our giving/volunteer decisions? If the answer is yes, Module 3 will offer tips on how to make those adjustments.