

EXAMPLE OF ONE POSSIBLE MEETING STRUCTURE

GATHERING (15 minutes prior to meeting time) Offer name tags, refreshments, and greetings by the sponsoring organization, Nebraska Humanities Council and the facilitator.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION (15-20 minutes) Facilitator welcomes and introduces participants, the rules of civility, the goals of discussion and the desired outcomes, and introduces the question or theme.

PRESENTATION (10-30 minutes) Options to consider include, but are not limited to, presentation of a historical perspective and/or different points of view. The presentation may be made by individuals or through media such as video clips, readings, etc.. A presentation might not be necessary in all instances.

DISCUSSION (30-80 minutes) Options to consider include facilitation with the whole group or with breakout groups, open (raised hand) participation, go-around with pass option, etc.

SUMMARY (10 minutes) Facilitator summarizes points of discussion and requests each participant complete an online evaluation of the meeting experience.

Consider a follow-up meeting or meetings which might include a report of participant evaluation of the first meeting, further facilitated discussion, discussion of interest in other issues, or discussion of steps for continued community collaboration. (Funding for continued community discussion and collaboration may be available through Nebraska Humanities Council competitive grants.)

One example of possible NHC contribution and cost to sponsoring organization*

	NHC	Sponsoring Organization
Facilitator	\$625	\$0
Presenter	\$200	\$0
Meeting space	\$200	\$0
Meeting materials	\$225	\$0
Refreshments	\$250	\$0
Marketing	\$0	\$100
Total	\$1500	\$100

* NHC does not anticipate providing funding in excess of \$1500. Depending on the needs of a particular meeting and possible in-kind contributions, NHC funding may be less and may be applied in different expense categories. Costs in each category may vary from this example.



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NEBRASKA CONVERSATIONS

A Guide for Civil Discussion

The Nebraska Humanities Council's civil discussion program is designed to provide a safe, comfortable and reflective environment for community discussion of any important issue.



Sponsoring organizations will propose discussion programs to meet the needs of their own communities.

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Discussion participants will represent a cross-section of the community. Each will have the opportunity to be heard.

Balanced facilitation will be provided.

Participants will explore a topic or question together with the goals of appreciating multiple points of view, respecting differences of opinion, expanding knowledge, recognizing the value of diversity of thought, and exchanging and exploring ideas and nuances together.

The program is designed to encourage full participation, civility, balance and learning.



ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF CIVIL DISCUSSION

The topic.

No specific topics are prescribed for participation in this program. The topic will be of your choosing but should be important and of concern to your community. The topic should lend itself to exploration and exchange of ideas among community members and inspire citizen reflection on a specific issue or problem.

The site.

Among the most important elements of a successful discussion is the selection of a neutral and comfortable site. Such a location might be a school, library, museum, community center, coffeehouse, or other facility with appropriate meeting space.

The facilitator.

Perhaps most essential is a skilled facilitator and a good facilitation plan. The Nebraska Humanities Council will work with the applicant to identify an appropriate facilitator and facilitation plan for the chosen topic.

The meeting structure.

Depending on the proposed topic and the presentation and discussion options selected, an appropriate meeting length might be from 1 to 2-1/2 hours. A successful meeting can be structured in a variety of ways. The Nebraska Humanities Council is open to many possibilities.

Seating is an important element of successful discussion too. Arrangements to consider include small tables for 4-6 grouped closely together allowing for both small group and large group discussion, circle of chairs, living room style if furniture is available, etc.

ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION

Any nonprofit or governmental group may apply. Eligible organizations include, but are not limited to, schools, libraries, museums, civic groups, service clubs, tribal organizations, professional associations, historical societies, educational institutions, local governments, governmental agencies, and community organizations.

Interested organizations are strongly encouraged to submit an application at least 60 days prior to the date of a proposed discussion meeting and should consult with Nebraska Humanities Council staff prior to submission. Less than a 60-day approval window may be considered with prior staff approval.

The application will identify a coordinator for the project, describe the topic to be explored, why the community needs this opportunity, how the community might benefit from the discussion and what the organization's goals are for the project. These goals should be compatible with Nebraska Humanities Council objectives outlined on page one. The applicant will also propose a meeting structure and a publicity or invitation plan to assure representation of a cross-section of the community and multiple points of view.

The application form is available online at www.nebraskahumanities.org.

Notification of the results of your application can be expected within two weeks of submission.

The Nebraska Humanities Council will schedule teleconferences for any who are interested in learning more about the proposal process. Contact the Council or check the web site for the next scheduled teleconference.

TERMS OF PARTICIPATION

If accepted, the applicant will agree to:

- Work with NHC to meet objectives; this may include conference calls and/or meetings;
- Provide meeting site and food (stipend provided by NHC);
- Invite attendees and otherwise publicize as agreed to by NHC and the applicant;
- Identify a mechanism to share results with the community-at-large;
- Submit a report to NHC at the conclusion of the project;
- Other items as needed to achieve the stated purposes of the project as agreed to by NHC and the applicant.

NHC will agree to:

- Provide a discussion facilitator(s) and presenter(s) as needed;
- Work with applicant including consultation on topics, approaches and representative points of view;
- Provide a stipend for meeting materials, space rental and food;
- Provide templates for fliers, invitations, etc.;
- Provide an additional invitation list;
- Provide an evaluation mechanism with input from applicant in an effort to measure outcomes;
- Collect and summarize participant evaluations via a web survey tool;
- Share summary information with sponsoring organization, governmental bodies, community-at-large, funders, etc., as appropriate.