

The background features abstract, overlapping green geometric shapes, primarily triangles and polygons, in various shades of green, creating a modern and dynamic visual effect.

All-American Conversation

An Effort to Understand Each Other

Bridging Divides and Building Communities

- ▶ A meaningful conversation with three main focuses
 - ▶ How our community can reflect the best of what we see in America.
 - ▶ What the divisions in our community are and how they impact our ability to live in the kind of community we want.
 - ▶ How we can bridge these divisions.

Why?

- ▶ Great way to engage underrepresented groups or perspectives and provide helpful insight.
- ▶ Can use these conversations to identify shared values between groups on different sides of key issues.
- ▶ Can learn how, together, we can take several small actions to make progress despite our differences.
- ▶ Reinforce, in multiple settings, the idea that the city is committed to learning about residents' experience and working across dividing lines.
- ▶ Can help identify previously unknown trusted local leaders or groups in the community that can help move things forward.

Who?

- ▶ Along with the usual suspects (residents with high visibility and/or accessibility), include typically underrepresented groups.
- ▶ Engage diverse perspectives- doesn't necessarily mean that each conversation has to include people representing the full diversity of the community.
 - ▶ Talking to partners/leaders and others who work directly with the group in question to learn how to best recruit or engage a population.
- ▶ People of Color, Different Religious Perspectives, Youth/younger Residents, LGBTQI, Low-Income Residents, Recent Immigrants and/or ESL, Renters

How?

- ▶ Identify what you want to learn and whom to engage.
- ▶ Reach beyond the main perspectives.
- ▶ Mapping and engaging the different perspectives in your community.
- ▶ Decide where to hold the conversations and how to set up the room.
- ▶ Select and prepare facilitators and note takers.
- ▶ Know what questions to ask.
- ▶ Determine how to review and theme your notes to find action steps.

Conversation Structures

► Small Group Conversations

- Three 90-minute small group (8-15 people) conversations
 - allows for flexibility as lessons learned from the first conversation can shape recruitment, timing, facilitation and other factors for future conversations
- After the conversation, pull together staff and partners to discuss next steps.
 - Do you want to delve deeper into a specific topic, or learn more about a specific group's perspectives?
 - Do you want to bring different groups together in a common conversation. Should you broaden the focus of the learning?

► Large Group Conversations

- Like a town hall - where participants break up into multiple tables for simultaneous small group discussions.
- enables a community or organization to engage many people in one evening.
- May spread note takers, resources, and facilitators thin, engage only usual suspects, and uncomfortable for marginalized groups

How they will be successful

- ▶ Selecting a Good Location
- ▶ Good facilitators
 - ▶ Curious
 - ▶ Prepared to approach the meeting with a learning mindset
 - ▶ Rarely subject matter experts
 - ▶ Able to stay neutral
 - ▶ Comfortable with disagreement and tension
 - ▶ Willing to play devil's advocate
- ▶ Good note takers
 - ▶ Pays attention to language, themes, emotions, turning points, common ground

Making Sense of What you Heard

- ▶ Organize your notes by category.
- ▶ Identify initial themes.
- ▶ What are people saying?
- ▶ What was learned.
- ▶ Follow up with participants.