FORWARD CITIES

A GUIDE TO INCLUSIVE FACILITATION & PROGRAMMING

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ABOUT FORWARD CITIES

Forward Cities is a national learning network of cities committed to advancing inclusive innovation and economic development in their communities. Launched in 2014, Forward Cities started in partnership with four cities: Cleveland, Detroit, New Orleans, and Durham. It built on this work with a similar multi-city learning collaborative in North Carolina called InnovateNC and through a recent merger with CEOs for Cities, a seminal U.S. urban leadership network, Forward Cities has grown to a network of over 30 member cities nationally and expanded its capacity-building, convening, and communications support for cities.

"The single biggest problem with communication is the illusion that it has taken place."

George Bernard Shaw

PLANNING CHECKLIST

In preparation for your upcoming meeting…..

Secure an appropriate venue

If in person, is your venue….
- Handicap Accessible
- Accessible by public transportation
- In or near the neighborhoods where your constituents live
- Conducive for your meeting needs (e.g. audience size, AV requirements, working groups)
- Family-friendly (e.g. offer daycare)

If your meeting is virtual…
- Select an online platform that will be easy for your users to access by phone and or computer (it should be free and user friendly)
- Make sure that you are familiar with the settings, functions, and restrictions for the platform you choose
- Identify the location that you will place the call from and make sure there is adequate lighting, limited noise, and a great Wi-Fi connection (consider using headphones)

Develop and distribute an <u>agenda</u> in advance
Does the agenda include the following:
- Location (physical and or virtual)
- Background information (e.g. Goals & Objectives, Review of previous work)
- Agenda items with timing
- A list of items or questions that will be discussed

Determine and request the assistance you will need (e.g. note-taker, support from colleagues)

Develop and procure and list of supplies, materials, etc.
Have you acquired the following?
- Materials/Copies **(**e.g. PowerPoint, Activity Instructions, Resources)
- Supplies (e.g. Flip Charts, Markers, Post-it Notes)
- <u>Meals & Refreshments</u>

Map out how you will stage the room based on meeting goals and activities

Brainstorm & prepare for concerns or conflict that may arise during the meeting

PRE-MEETING PULSE CHECK

1) **Deliverables**

   a) What deliverables were <u>to be done</u> for this meeting? Are they done? Done well enough? Done with enough time to spare that the group can use meeting time to <u>extend</u> rather than <u>review</u> that work?

   b) What needs to get done in the meeting that you are preparing now?

      i) **At a surface level:** Agenda, work products, decisions about upcoming actions, assignments of who will take on work in the next month, what tasks are coming up, and what kind of team cadence is needed to see those tasks through to completion.

      ii) **At a deeper level:** What is your assessment of the cohesiveness and morale of the group or council right now? What do you think are the factors that are contributing to that state of affairs (whether positive or negative)? Are any corrective measures needed to keep the collective spirit strong? Are there individuals or factions that require special attention?

      iii) How do you want people to walk out of the upcoming meeting? Feeling well oriented? Feeling involved, and with clear instructions on what contributions are needed from them now? Something else? *Putting it all together, what will you do consciously and actively with this upcoming meeting to build the identity, commitment, and cohesiveness of your council?*

2) **Communication and Collaboration**
   <u>Two weeks</u> ahead of the meeting, dedicate thinking time for yourself. Use this checklist. Think through a meeting where everyone's time is well used and the meeting accomplishes its purpose. Do this in advance so that you have time to lay the groundwork as needed for an effective meeting.

   a) What is the purpose? Have you communicated it in advance?

   b) What can people absorb before the meeting to move more smoothly once they are together? Do they have that in hand, yet? When will they get it?

   c) Where do you expect to encounter resistance, delays or roadblocks? Where/whom do you expect those to come from?

   d) Who are your allies for making progress at an acceptable pace?

   e) What can you do to ensure everyone is with you by the end?

   f) IF you are walking into a conversation you expect will be difficult, get beyond the general sense of difficulty and past the need to brace yourself. Pick it apart. Why will it be difficult? For whom will it be most difficult? What can you do to make it better?

i) Confirm that this meeting, these people, and this timing is your best shot at getting through the tough stuff and accomplishing your purpose. If it is not, what needs to be different? More time? A different time? More allies in your corner (i.e. people you have spoken to in advance, know where they stand, who will help you out in a pinch)? Different venue? Subgroup or executive committee to recommend a course of action and share ownership of that recommendation in the larger group?

ii) **Give yourself permission** to solve for your meeting objective in creative ways. Think through alternative plans and compare them. Run it by trusted colleagues in other cities, or others who can help you fill gaps or shine a light on blind spots you may have.

Notice your own instincts -- what you <u>think</u> will work, what <u>feels</u> most aligned with the values of the project (even if it is not the easiest path).

3) **Materials & Flow**
a) When will you use slides vs. flipcharts? How will you keep the meeting flow crisp? Ultimately, you want to <u>be</u> prepared, <u>appear</u> prepared, and <u>manage the flow</u> in a way that takes advantage of your strengths.

Remember -- no meeting is perfect, and nobody runs a perfect meeting. But there is a lot you can do to make it better by thinking it through in advance. If you get stuck, reach out for help! Sometimes a quick sounding board can allow you to "see around corners" or unlock ideas that make your job easier and that lead to a better meeting.

MEETING FACILITATION TIPS

Remember that Your Presence Matters
1) Be friendly, alert and enthusiastic. If you are, the participants are likely to do the same.
2) Learn the names of as many participants as you can (or have them make name badges). Use individuals' names; not just to ask questions, but if you refer to a point made by a participant, acknowledge it by naming the person.
3) Demonstrate genuine interest in what people have to say have to say

Use Verbal & Non-Verbal Communication to Create Connection
1) Share your personal pronouns during your introduction and invite participants to do the same
2) Allow for silence. Instead of filling in pauses allow for 3-45 seconds of silence to allow people to process and respond
3) Make eye contact with all the participants (without staring). Brief eye contact can be a great way to acknowledge people's presence in the room
4) Use the audience appropriate language. Avoid jargon, and high context language like acronyms unless you plan to define them
5) As much as possible, use a microphone. Having a loud voice, or being able to project, doesn't mean that individuals who are hearing impaired can hear you well.

Know Your Participants
1) Remember why your participants are attending in addition to their expectations; fears and concerns; range of experience, background, age, gender, and status.
2) Provide context and background information to ensure understanding and facilitate ideation and dialogue (In other words, make sure that they have what they need to meet your objectives)
3) Establish ground rules to mitigate general and specific challenges that you anticipate (e.g. Extremely vocal participant(s)

Pause and Pivot When as Needed
1) If your planned approach is not working, try a different approach (e.g. open to small group discussion, use different examples)
2) If for some reason you need to regroup or address and issue, take a break. If you provide refreshments, it's easy to give your group a planned or unplanned break.
3) If small groups become disengaged, redirect them or bring everyone back to the full group
4) Use visual parking lots or learning trees to capture ideas and acknowledge points of resistance that you'll revisit later in or after the session. This strategy can help you to move forward without coming across as dismissive

Finish Strong
1) Summarize what was covered and or decided while everyone is still together
2) Discuss what is happening in the next
3) Get clear public commitments from those needed in the next work phase and let them know you will follow up individually

POST-MEETING FOLLOW-UP

Following Your Council Meeting…..

Send a follow-up email to the group including…..
- Meeting Agenda
- Approved Meeting Minutes
- Documents presented and/or distributed during the meeting (documents should be shared in PDF version unless council members are being invited to provide feedback.)
- Request feedback (may be useful when ideas are presented or for milestone meetings)

Send calendar invite for the next meeting

Individually contact people you need help from before the next meeting.
- Make a plan with them for how and when that work will get done.

REFLECTION

1) What goals were accomplished during the meeting? What goals were not fully accomplished and how might that impact your next steps?

2) What went well? In hindsight, what would have made you feel better prepared?

3) What if any follow-up conversations do you need to schedule? And with whom?

4) How did you feel about the council's energy and level of engagement during the meeting?

RESOURCES

Every meeting and communication is an opportunity to reflect your organization's values and your pride in the work that you do. The following tips and tools are available for your review and customization.

Meeting Prep
- Agendas:
  - Sample Meeting Agenda (Generic)

- Meeting Room Setup Styles: Depending on the goals of your meetings, your room set up may vary. If you're presenting information or managing a large crowd, theater-style might be advantageous. However, if your meeting includes activities and group dialogue clusters or banquet rounds might be more appropriate. As you prepare for set up, ask yourself, "What setup style will help facilitate the agenda and activities that I have mapped out?"

- Meals & Refreshments: Hosting events that require food and refreshments creates a great opportunity to support small businesses in the communities that we are working in. Consider engaging a local caterer when possible. Other suggestions include:
  - Anticipate special needs:
    - Avoid common allergens and dietary restrictions when ordering food (e.g. nuts, pork)
    - Include sides and entrees that are vegan or vegetarian (e.g. wraps, hummus, salads)

Post-Meeting & Event Follow-Up:

- Convening Feedback/Survey
- Getting Feedback on Ideas

Sample Agenda

Meeting Name
{{Date}}, {{Time}}
{{Location *(Address)*}}

Documents & Background Materials:
- Agenda (Required)
- e.g. Meeting Minutes
- Common Language

Agenda

   1. Welcome   **X:XX – X:XX AM**
       a. Goals of this session
             1. Introduction to new members
             2. e.g. Review progress
             3. e.g. Identify 2-3 Minimal Viable Solutions

   2. Goal 1   **X:XX – X:XX AM**
       a.
       b.

   3. Goal 3   **X:XX – X:XX AM**
       a.
       b.

   4. Next Steps: **X:XX – X:XX AM**
       a. Next Meeting Date & Location
       b. Committee Action Items

Common Language for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
(Indianapolis Specific)

Forward Cities is a national capacity-building and learning network working within and between cities and micropolitans to create more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem development.
We understand that leading change towards equity and inclusion requires a knowledge base grounded in an understanding of issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The resources below, derived from a wide range of resources, provide opportunities for Council Members to increase their awareness.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- **Equity** relates to systemic outcomes and exists when they are no longer predicted by an aspect of an individual's identity. (Creative Reaction Lab)

- **Inclusion** means authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policymaking in a way that shares power.

- **Place-Based** initiatives focus on understanding how members of a specific community support and engage each other; identifying barriers that prohibit individuals from thriving; and exploring support and resources that can be more intentionally aligned and leveraged to increase positive impact and efficacy.

- **Inclusive Innovation Ecosystems** allow for the development and engagement of diverse talent, information, and resources to ensure that underrepresented and under-resourced individuals have access to an economic future and a higher quality of life.

- **Systems Mapping** is the process through which resources (people, places, and programs) that exist within or form a community are identified and examined in order to understand their purpose and interdependence. As a tool, Systems Maps aid in decision making and action planning.

- **Capacity Building** a proprietary set of activities, resources, and interventions designed to accelerate and sustain inclusive economic growth.

- **Systemic Racism** in the U.S. is the normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics – historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal – that routinely provide preferential treatment for whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for Black, Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, Arab and other oppressed people. (Racial Equity Tools)

- **Micropolitans** are labor market areas in the United States centered on an urban cluster with a population of at least 10,000 but fewer than 50,000 people. (US Office of Management & Budget)

Relevant Local & National Resources
- Brookings Institute, Advancing Opportunity In Central Indiana https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/2018.15_BrookingsMetro_Indy-Opportunity-Industries_Report_Shearer-Shah-Muro.pdf
- Center for Racial Justice Innovation, https://www.raceforward.org/videos/systemic-racism
- Inclusive Growth in Indianapolis Recommendations and Overview of Local Strategy https://drive.google.com/file/d/15ZHXOkuK_milbl3q7xj8qwcMfqNUugfB/view?usp=sharing
- The Case for Reparations, Ta-Nehisi Coates
- Foreign to Familiar: A Guide to Understanding Hot and Cold-Climate Cultures by Sarah Lanier
- Open Source Leadership Strategies, http://www.opensourceleadership.com/documents/DO%20Definitions.pdf
- Racial Equity Tools, www.racialequitytools.com
- "Who Owns the Ice House? A Lessons from an Unlikely Entrepreneur"
- "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" by Martin Luther King Jr.
- PolicyLink, "Equity Manifesto": https://www.policylink.org/about-us/equity-manifesto

Events
- Undoing Racism workshop The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond (PISAB), https://www.childadvocates.net/undoingracism/
- Trinity Episcopal Church Love Thy Neighbor Series: Majora Carter: Sustainable Urban Growth – Mapleton Fall Creek Neighborhood, **https://trinitychurchindy.org/love-your-neighbor-series/**
- Trinity Episcopal Church Love Thy Neighbor Series: Michael Mather – Mapleton Fall Creek Neighborhood, **https://trinitychurchindy.org/love-your-neighbor-series/**