Changing Faces, Changing Communities

Immigration

&

Race, jobs, schools and language differences

2nd Edition

A guide for public dialogue and problem solving.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Why should we talk about immigration and race, jobs, schools, and language differences?

In 1992, the civil unrest in Los Angeles woke up a lot of people in the nation. Some wondered if people from different races and cultures could ever really live and work together. After the violence, the National Civic League brought together a number of people who lived in Los Angeles to talk in focus groups. They looked at ways to stop these violent flare-ups from happening. What they found was a very complex picture.

People talked about conflict at many levels:

- *between* races and cultures – whites, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos
- *within* races and cultures
- in schools
- between those who spoke different languages
- between those competing for jobs

One big issue that came up in the focus groups was immigration. People who are newcomers to this country (some of whom were in the focus groups) were often in the middle of much of the tensions. These new immigrants had also helped the economy and brought many cultural gifts to the community.

To make their communities work better, people said they wanted:

- safe settings to talk with people from different races and cultures about common problems
- chances to get rid of stereotypes about each other
- chances to make a difference, and to work with others to do something positive
- ways to be heard by public officials and other community leaders

Los Angeles is a very complex and diverse place. It also shows how many other places in America will probably look in the future. Many communities are already becoming very complex and diverse. One reason for this is that more and more people are moving here from other countries. For many of us, immigration is not a distant national issue; it is part of our everyday lives.

The purpose of this guide is to help people use study circles to talk about and take action on these community changes. It is set up to help people do the same things they wanted to do in Los Angeles:

- honest and positive talk
- local action
- community building
- changes in government policy

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What are study circles?

Study circles are small-group democracy in action.

A study circle is a group of 10 to 15 people who come together to talk to each other about complex public issues. In study circles, people try their best to understand others' views. There is no pressure in a study circle for everyone to agree to everything. People do not have to give up things that are important to them for the study circle to be a success. By sharing common concerns and looking for ideas for action, people often can work together to improve their community.

The group is led by a facilitator who is not an expert on the issue, but is there to help the meeting go well. The facilitator and the discussion materials help the group stay focused and look at many different views.

Study circles work best when there are many going on at the same time in a community. They need the support of a number of key groups and leaders in town. These study circle programs can include thousands of people. Study circles can be used to discuss many issues, such as race, crime and violence, or schools.

As a result, people from different cultures and races form new networks to work together. They see some common ground and gain a greater desire to take action – for themselves, with others in small groups, or as voters.

Study circles on community change

Talking about immigration can be hard. The questions that come up are difficult to answer: Who are "we" in the first place? How many people and which people should be allowed into the community? It is important to look at these questions, think deeply about them, and give our public officials some thoughtful ideas for change. Session 4A in this guide gives several views about what direction our government policies could take. Session 4B is a guide for meeting with public officials.

In most communities, national policy issues seem far away. Local issues about immigration seem more important. We need to decide what to do about such issues as:

- the effect of immigration on racial tensions, jobs, and schools
- language differences
- prejudice against immigrants

This guide can help you deal with these issues. Sessions 1, 2, and 3 deal with immigration in our community. In these sessions we will look at how immigration issues touch our daily lives and how they affect our communities. Session 5 has a list of action ideas on how to make a difference on your own, in small groups, or with the whole community.

Tips on how to make the most of your study circle

In the study circle, the way people talk with one another is as important as what they are talking about. People talk to each other with respect, listen carefully, and treat each other fairly.

Each study circle belongs to those who take part. Here are some things you can do to get the most out of your study circle:

- Come to all the meetings. It takes time to build trust.
- Help keep the discussion focused. Make sure what you say is to the point.
- Seek first to understand, then to be understood.
- Help develop one another's ideas. Listen well, and ask good questions.
- Be open to changing your mind. This will help you listen to others' views.
- If people argue, don't take it personally. Look to see what ideas are in conflict. Look closely at these ideas to see what the common concerns are.
- Think about how you might work together to act on your common concerns.

Setting clear ground rules

Setting ground rules is a very important step for the group. Ground rules help everyone manage the discussions even if they become difficult. At the beginning of the study circle, the facilitator will help the group establish its own ground rules for how they want their group to behave together. The facilitator might begin by offering one or two suggestions to get the group started, and then ask members to add their own. Be sure to talk about how the group will handle conflict and disagreement, as well as confidentiality. And post the ground rules where everyone can see them. Your group can always add to the list as the weeks go on.

Here is a list of sample ground rules that are tried and true:

- Everyone gets a fair hearing.
- Share "air time."
- One person speaks at a time.
- Speak for yourself, not for others.
- If you are offended, say so.
- You can disagree, but don't personalize it. Stick to the issue. No name-calling or stereotyping.
- What is said in this group stays here, unless everyone agrees to change that.

SESSION 1
Who are we?
The many faces of our community

Changes are making the places we live more and more complex. In some communities, immigration is a big part of these changes.

People have many ideas about immigration. Some people say that when we talk about it we also need to talk about:

- racism and ethnic backgrounds
- jobs, money, and where we work
- schools and neighborhoods

No matter how long we have lived in the U.S. or how we got here, we are all part of the changes going on in our communities. We can't just sit back and watch what is going on.

Before we try to change things and do something about our problems, we need to listen to each other. Let us listen with respect to each other's ideas and concerns. The purpose of this first session is to:

- share stories and views
- listen with respect
- talk about what we have lived through and seen

SESSION 1

★ *Tips for the facilitator*

Here are a few ideas to keep in mind as you facilitate this session:

- **➢ Set the ground rules.**
- **➢ Break the session into two parts.**
- **➢ In the first hour, focus on people's own experiences.**
- **➢ In the second hour, discuss the stories (see "Stories to Discuss") which talk about many of the real issues involved. These stories will help to build bridges between each person's experiences and those of others.**

PART I
Starting the discussion

Here are some questions to talk about. Choose the ones you think are best for your group.

1. Who are you? Introduce and describe yourself to the group.
2. Why have you described yourself this way? How are you like others in the group? How are you different?
3. How would you describe yourself to groups other than this study circle? How might your description be different? the same? Why?
4. What was it like when you were growing up? How did growing up affect the way you see yourself?
5. How have others described you? How is it the same as or different from the way you describe yourself?
6. How are things different for you now, as compared to a few years ago?
   - in the mix of people living near you?
   - in how people get along?
7. How have recent changes in the mix of people living in your community changed things at work and at home?
   - in your place of worship?
   - in school?
8. How is the way you think about these issues different from your parents? How is it the same? Why?
9. How often do you talk to new immigrants? to people from other cultures?
10. How does it affect you when people speak a different language than the one you speak?

? QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN DISCUSSING THESE STORIES

- What is your first response to each of these stories?
- Do you have stories like this? What about stories of your friends or family? Why are they important?
- What, if anything, should the people in the stories do?
- What, if anything, should others do? community groups? businesses? churches and other places of worship?
- What, if anything, should the government do?

PART II
Stories to discuss (Read over and pick a few)

- ❑ An African American man is looking for a job. All the jobs he hears about are looking for someone who speaks two languages. He speaks only English and is very upset.
- ❑ A man from a country in Central America brings his family to the United States. They left the war there and did not come here through legal channels. The U.S. says it will deport him and his family. He argues that the U.S. helped start the fighting in the first place.
- ❑ A white mother worries about the schooling her children are getting. The classes are crowded. Many of the other students are new immigrants and demand a lot of the teacher's time.

- ❑ An Asian American man is riding on a bus. Someone asks him if he can speak English. He says, "I was born in New York and have lived here all my life!"

- ❑ A new immigrant is working as a housekeeper in someone's private home. She is not in the U.S. legally. After several weeks of work, her boss refuses to pay her. She is afraid to go to the police because she doesn't want to be deported.

- ❑ An African American woman gets a hard time from some of her fellow workers. They make fun of her when she does her hair in braids and beads or wears African dresses.

- ❑ A white man owns a local company. He sees the government giving money for loans to help women, people of color, and new immigrants starting their own companies. He is angry because he never got this kind of help for himself.

- ❑ A mother of three children is about to lose her food stamps and welfare because of the new welfare reform laws. She is in the U.S. legally, but is not yet a citizen. She is worried about how to support her three children.

- ❑ An Arab American college student often travels by plane. At the airport he is often stopped and his bags searched.

- ❑ Even when the U.S. soccer team is playing at home, the crowd often cheers for the other country's team.

Final Questions (Use these questions to summarize your discussion.)

- ◆ Why did you want to be part of this study circle program?
- ◆ What did you learn from this meeting? What new insights and ideas did you get from listening to others?

For next time

- ◗ *When it comes to immigration, race, schools, and language differences, what problems are we facing?*

★ Extra facilitator tip: Additional activities for involving participants in study circles

Some members of your study circle may find it difficult to work with the amount of written text used in the discussion sessions. Although we have tried to keep the language as clear and simple as possible, even people who are good readers sometimes prefer a more "hands on" approach to understanding new ideas. Such approaches can also bring a sense of action to the discussion process, preparing participants for the closing study circle sessions in which they explore different action options. Here are a few ideas for involving participants in the sharing of experiences and ideas about immigration and community change:

- ✔ Ask people to bring in a photograph, drawing, or any other object that illustrates for them the impact that immigration has had on their life and their community.
- ✔ Invite people to make a list of individuals or groups in their communities who are working to make a difference on the issues being discussed in their study circle. Ask them to take a few minutes to talk about what these individuals and groups do. Examples can range from things such as informal day care at a neighbor's house, to police-sponsored block watches.
- ✔ Ask participants to talk with their friends and neighbors about the issues being discussed in their study circle. Suggest that they seek out people who may not feel comfortable in a study circle, but who they think are likely to have important insights.
- ✔ Ask the study circle participants what else they might like to do to gain a better understanding of the issues being discussed.

SESSION 2
How is our community changing?

You often hear people say "Our world is changing so fast." One way or the other, we all feel the effects of these changes. This is why they seem to overpower us at times.

Newcomers to this country change our community. This has been true throughout our country's history.

How are our communities changing now? How can we use what we know about these changes to build a better community?

Each of the following views is written in the voice of a person who holds that view. Use these views to start talking about issues and to come up with your own best thinking.

★ *Tips for the facilitator*

Here are a few ideas to keep in mind as you facilitate this session:

- **Ask a few members of your group to volunteer to read each view out loud.**

  OR

  Ask members to read each view to themselves.

- **After reading the views, ask some of the "Questions to think about" listed below.**

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN DISCUSSING THE VIEWS

- Which view(s) is closest to your own? Why? What are the beliefs or things you have done or seen that have helped form your ideas?
- Think about a view you don't agree with. What might lead someone else to agree with that view?
- What other views would you add? What points of view are missing?

VIEW 1
Racism is on the rise.

Racism has always been a major force in the community. Having so many newcomers here makes it even harder to deal with racism. People still judge others because of the color of their skin. Immigrants from Europe are accepted more easily than people from Latin America, Africa, or Asia. Sometimes, white people think Asian and Latino people are new to this country, even if they have lived here a long time.

Newcomers also bring old racist ideas and cultural conflicts with them. We need to bring issues of race and racism out into the open so we can deal with them.

VIEW 2
Our schools have a hard time teaching children from other countries.

Teaching young people is a hard job. It is even harder to teach people who are new to this country, who aren't used to being here, and who may not speak English. This is especially true of cities where the schools have less money and there are more students who are newcomers to America.

Schools have always been places where people learn about our country and our culture. Today, all kinds of different ethnic groups and cultures are filling up our schools. This is a challenge for the schools. The schools need a lot more help if we expect them to do their job.

VIEW 3
We have stopped trying to keep our common culture.

All Americans used to have the same values and ideals. Children used to learn the Pledge of Allegiance, sing the "Star-Spangled Banner," and read the "Gettysburg Address." We still do these things, but no one seems to really care about being an American. Why? Because of all the new people coming here.

Newcomers have their own books, songs, politics, languages and beliefs. Schools for both children and adults spend too much time on these issues and not enough on civics or American history. It doesn't even seem like we're living in the same country anymore. There are certain ideals that make us Americans, and we need to hold on to them.

VIEW 4
It creates problems when people don't speak English.

When you shop, talk to a neighbor, or take a taxi, and the people you meet don't speak English, it's a problem. At the very least, people who speak another language are annoying. At the most, they make you feel like you are not part of the same community or even the same country. The problem is getting worse with more and more new people moving here.

There are whole parts of our town where people never speak any English and don't seem to want to learn it. Now businesses and the government print things in other languages. Don't they care if people can't read English? To get along and to work together, we need to be able to communicate.

VIEW 5
New cultures make our community better.

Each new group of people coming here brings a whole new culture. This has always been true. Immigrants bring all kinds of new music, foods, languages, clothes, and ideas. This is so great for our community. It makes us more diverse and exciting. People should not have to give up their cultures just to be like other Americans. We should celebrate the many cultures around us.

VIEW 6
When new immigrants do well, racism gets worse for African Americans.

As we get more diverse, things seem to be getting more unfair. Racism is one of America's oldest problems. It is more hidden and more painful than ever. On TV, newcomers see people of color as drug addicts and robbers. Racism in institutions is everywhere: in banks, stores, welfare offices, the courts and more.

African Americans are hurt by this. When a new immigrant group does well in our community, white people ask, "Why can't you people succeed?" To have a diverse community that is fair and open, we need to address racism in institutions head-on.

VIEW 7
People are coming here just to make money, not to become Americans.

The reasons people come to America are changing. The more recent newcomers seem to be mostly interested in making money. They want the benefits of being an American, but do not want to be part of the community. Many of them want to go back to their own country some day.

If people just want to make money, keep their own cultures, and remain separate from everyone, we end up with communities with no common bonds. We need to insist that people who want to move and work here must also want to become Americans.

Final Questions (Use these questions to summarize your discussion.)

- What did you learn from this meeting? What new insights and ideas did you get from listening to others?
- How has our community gotten better with the coming of new immigrants? Name three or four of the most important benefits.
- What are the three or four biggest problems we face in our community around immigration, race, language, and schools? Why are these problems so important?

For next time

- *Is it easier or harder to find a good job than it was a few years ago? Does immigration seem to have anything to do with this?*
- *How have newcomers to our community affected jobs, wages and money? What does this look like? For example, do we have new types of jobs coming into the community?*

SESSION 3
How are jobs and the economy changing in our community?

Being able to earn a living is a big concern for almost everyone. Whether you came here recently or have lived here all your life, getting and keeping a job is very important.

The ways people get jobs and money in our community are changing rapidly. How are these changes taking place? How can we use what we know about these changes to make it easier for people to earn a good living?

Each of the following views is written in the voice of a person who holds that view. Use these views to start talking about these issues and to come up with your own best thinking.

★ *Tips for the facilitator*

Here are a few ideas to keep in mind as you facilitate this session:

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- Think about a view you don't agree with. What might lead someone else to agree with that view?
- What other views would you add? What points of view are missing?

VIEW 1
There are more people competing for jobs.

People want jobs that will give them a decent wage, help them support their families, and make them feel secure about the future. There don't seem to be as many of those jobs as there used to be. To get a good job these days you need more skills, schooling, and experience than ever.

Many jobs have moved overseas. For other jobs, the wages keep falling as people agree to work for less and less. Some jobs are being filled by newcomers willing to work for less money: for example, janitors, construction, and service jobs. With each newcomer, the chances of getting a job go down.

VIEW 2
Some people are trapped in poor jobs.

There are whole groups of people working at poor and dead-end jobs. They live day-to-day working in garment, hotel, meat-packing, and other industries. Many are recent immigrants who cannot read and don't have many skills. These jobs are very hard on the body. Many of these jobs are also very dangerous.

Racism also plays a role. If the workers were white, people would not allow such bad working conditions. Some people who hire newcomers take advantage of them by denying them basic rights, and exposing them to many health hazards. An immigrant worker who does not have a green card will remain silent because he or she is afraid of being deported.

VIEW 3
People new to this country are hard workers.

Over the years, immigrants have added a great deal to our work force and economy. They bring new skills and ideas. Even newcomers with low skills are eager to work hard and succeed. Having more people compete for more jobs is good for business.

When people move here they are at the bottom of the job ladder, but with hard work and long hours, they can make a better life for themselves. Many immigrants have started new businesses which, in turn, create more jobs. As rich and poor strive for a better life, each person's efforts improve life for everyone.

VIEW 4
It is harder to find the "American Dream."

Many people still want the "American Dream," which means that with hard work we can be successful and we can prosper. In today's complex world, basic job skills are no longer enough. Jobs in fields like medicine, law, and engineering demand years of schooling that cost a lot of money.

Blue-collar jobs are also demanding more and more high-tech skills. Today almost everyone needs to know how to use a computer. People who came here years ago did not face these issues. Many newcomers today don't have the schooling or high-tech skills needed to reach the American Dream.

VIEW 5
Workers from many cultures are needed more than ever.

More and more the economy is connected all around the world. We rely more on other countries for trade and goods. Communities with diverse cultures have an advantage. Companies benefit greatly from having a work force that knows many languages.

Cities with strong ties to other parts of the world can more easily build bridges of trade and business to other countries. A diverse community is attractive to tourists from around the world. Newcomers have started many new businesses themselves and are helping to build the economy of our cities.

VIEW 6
There is a much greater burden on our social services.

With more and more people in need, our social services and schools have a hard time keeping up. It costs money to support new immigrants who are poor, do not know our culture, and can't speak English.

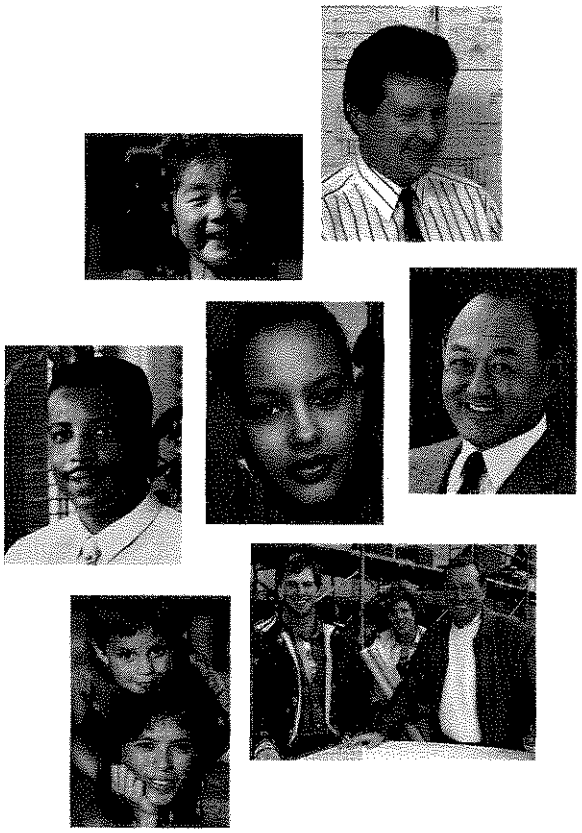
In 1996, the U.S. Congress made it harder for newcomers to get welfare. Political refugees, though, can still get welfare, housing, and classes to learn English. Meanwhile, these welfare cuts also affect many other poor people. People who are already here end up making sacrifices to fund the programs that newcomers need.

Final Questions (Use these questions to summarize your discussion.)

- What did you learn from this meeting? What new insights and ideas did you get from listening to others?
- What are the common concerns?
- What are the two or three most important changes you have seen in our local economy in recent years? What seems to be driving these changes?

For next time

- *How can the institutions in our community and nation help make the changes we want?*
- *What can the government do? What direction should our public policies take?*
- *How can families, schools, religious groups, the news media, and business help?*
- *What can each of us do to make a difference?*



SESSION 4A
What should we do about immigration and community change?

What can we do to deal with our common concerns about immigration, race, jobs, schools and language differences? How can we best solve our problems and meet our goals?

The more we talk about immigration, the more we must talk about the government's policies and their impact on all of us. Many changes in immigration policy have been made in recent years and there may be more to come. It is important that we as citizens – or future citizens – have a voice in what these changes look like.

The goals of this session are to:

- "try on" some of the views listed below and learn from each other's ideas
- talk about government policies that address how immigration has changed our community and nation
- prepare for possible meetings with public officials
- think about what actions each of us can take to address how newcomers have changed our community

★ *Tips for the facilitator*

Here are a few ideas to keep in mind as you facilitate this session:

➢ Ask a few members of your group to *volunteer* to read each view out loud. *Do not* spend time at the beginning of the session reading aloud each view's list of ideas about possible policies and actions. These lists of ideas work best as "action examples" that people can use once the discussion of the views begins.

OR

Ask members to read each view to themselves.

➢ After reading the views, ask some of the "Questions to think about." Pick two or three questions that build on some of the main topics raised by people in Sessions 1-3. *Do not* try to work through the entire list.

➢ Whether or not your group will be meeting later with public officials, make sure to spend at least 20 to 30 minutes on the "Final Questions."

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN DISCUSSING THE VIEWS

- After reading all four views, discuss some of the "Questions to think about" on page 22.

VIEW 1
We should protect all people who want to live here.

Immigration has been good for the United States. Except for Native Americans, we are all immigrants to this land. Immigrants have filled our country with jobs, cultural diversity, hope and new ideas. Allowing newcomers here shows America as strong and noble. America is proud of giving a home to those who are persecuted.

In the past, we often invited people to live here just because they were against communism. Now that the Cold War is over, the U.S. should allow anyone who is being persecuted to move here. We should also make it easier for people living in poor countries to move here.

The new U.S. immigration policies make it harder for people to come here and have good lives. When we try to enforce these policies, both newcomers and U.S. citizens often lose their basic civil rights.

Once someone comes to the U.S. through legal channels, we should protect their rights and help them live here. Everyone should be treated fairly in finding a job, a place to live, and schooling. Even those who come here through illegal channels should be offered basic human rights until the government decides if they can stay.

Policies and actions that someone who agrees with View #1 might support:

- Give more people permission to immigrate to the U.S.
- Give stiffer penalties to those who mistreat newcomers in housing, jobs, or schools. Hire more federal agents to protect the rights of immigrants.
- Overturn recent changes to the immigration laws that limit newcomers' access to welfare, food stamps, and Medicaid.
- Make it easier for people to become legal citizens. Then people won't have to go underground to flee the INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service).
- When new immigration laws are enforced, make sure people's rights are respected.
- Broaden the INS definition of "political persecution" so more people can come here.
- Hold community discussions between people of different races and ethnic groups to build trust.
- Increase funding for social services and schools that serve immigrants.
- Help teachers in schools learn how to teach students about different cultures, how to respect each other, and how to welcome new people.
- Expand ESL (English as a Second Language) programs. Lend a hand by teaching English to someone.
- Create services for new people that offer job training, job placement, and housing advice.

What other ideas do you have for actions that go with this view?

VIEW 2
We should first help people who are already here get better jobs.

We already have too many poor and working class people who need jobs. Current immigration policy gives businesses lots of low-cost workers. What about the poorest parts of the African American community and other poor people? These policies seem foolish when the government is trying to get people off welfare.

Maybe we should not reduce the number of immigrants. But let's look at who we are allowing into the country. We are focusing mostly on reuniting families and not on creating more and better jobs. Many entry level jobs go to new immigrants and not to our own poor people. Look at the workers in hotels, janitors, the garment industry, and hospitals.

Newcomers who are skilled workers can help the economy. Poorly educated and low-skilled workers only cause more problems. We should keep everyone but the most skilled workers out.

We also need to make stronger connections between newcomers here and markets in Latin America, Asia, and other parts of the world. That way, immigration will help create more jobs, not take them away.

Policies and actions that someone who agrees with View #2 might support:

- Replace the policy that allows families to reunite with a policy that allows more skilled and educated workers to come here.
- Create more job training and schooling for ***everyone***, not just immigrants.
- Stop supporting any business that knowingly hires workers who are here illegally.
- Support the growth of unions so that people are better able to get and keep jobs that have good wages.
- Enforce labor laws to punish bosses who exploit immigrants. This will make businesses improve working conditions and raise wages for everybody.
- Give job-training and support to low-skilled immigrants who are fleeing political persecution.
- Create programs that give small loans to people who want to start a small business.
- Confront or report people who are breaking the immigration and naturalization laws.

What other ideas do you have for actions that go with this view?

VIEW 3
We should allow fewer people to move here.

It is not fair to people who already live in the U.S. to let more people move here. There are so many newcomers that the need for housing, health care, and schooling has become too much. Maybe the federal government is getting more tax dollars from immigrants with jobs, but it is the local communities that are stuck with the bill for services, often in the form of higher property taxes.

Trying to meet the needs of immigrants means that the needs of America's poor (especially people of color) are not being met. Many of our schools are already too full of newcomers.

We destroy the environment when we let too many newcomers move here. Farms and forests are being plowed under to make room for all the new people. Soon, many communities will not even have enough water for everyone. Why cause such pressure on nature?

How can newcomers be part of our political and cultural life if they cannot even speak English? We don't do enough to get newcomers to learn English. When we all don't speak the same language, we split our community into too many separate groups.

We must guard the U.S. borders and stop people from coming across them. We should also take away any real "safety net" for those wanting to come to the U.S. in search of a free ride.

Policies and actions that someone who agrees with View #3 might support:

- Reduce, by law, the number of people allowed to come to the U.S. each year.
- Print official things in English, and teach only English in schools so that newcomers have to learn the language and fit in.
- Return extra federal tax money to local communities to help with schools and health services.
- Give every citizen and legal resident a job ID card. Then, when people are hired, we can make companies do the right thing.
- Enforce housing codes to limit the number of people who can live in single-family homes. This will protect the schools and public services from having to serve too many people.
- Keep recent changes in the law to limit welfare, food stamps, and Medicaid for newcomers.
- In places where a lot of people are out of jobs, extend the time when people can be on welfare.
- Increase funding for the INS to stop people from coming here illegally.
- Keep recent changes in the law that make families take financial responsibility for relatives they bring to the U.S.
- Deny citizenship to American-born children of people who came here through illegal channels. We might have to change the U.S. Constitution to do this.

What other ideas do you have for actions that go with this view?

VIEW 4
We should help countries around us solve their own problems.

This is a long-term and real answer to the problems of immigration: Help other countries help themselves. The U.S. spends very little to help other countries. In 1995, the U.S. spent .15% (less than one percent) of its federal budget to help other countries. Canada and Denmark put aside .43% and 1.03%, respectively, of their budgets to help poor countries.

We should do all we can to help poor countries with their problems of war, poor health, too many people, and pollution. We do not want a "quick fix." We want programs that really help people help themselves. This will reduce people's desire to move here.

We, as a nation, have helped cause some wars and we have given money to support brutal governments. Now, we owe the people fleeing from those countries a safe home here in the U.S. Also, if a U.S. business sinks a competing business in a poor country, we should help pay them for the loss.

Policies and actions that someone who agrees with View #4 might support:

- Give more aid and trade benefits to Mexico, the Caribbean and other poor countries close to the U.S.
- Urge other rich countries to join the U.S. in helping the economy of poor nations.
- Stop the "brain drain." Do away with policies that try to bring talented and skilled workers here from poorer countries.
- Businesses should pay better wages to workers they hire in other countries.
- Use "sister city" programs to lend help to poorer countries.
- Don't buy products made in countries that treat their workers unfairly.
- Join the Peace Corps or other programs that help countries get the skills they need to compete in the world economy.
- Create programs that give small loans to people in poorer countries who want to start a small business.
- Urge U.S. businesses that have branches in poor countries to invest more money in those countries. They need to do more than just create jobs.
- Urge U.S. businesses to hire native workers at all levels, not just the lower levels of work. This will help countries develop more skilled workers, better jobs, and a better economy.
- Force U.S. businesses to protect and not pollute the other countries in which they are located. They should use the same standards as in the U.S.

What other ideas do you have for actions that go with this view?

Questions to think about

Here are some questions to talk about. There is not enough time to discuss them all. Choose the ones you think are best for your group.

1. Which view(s) is closest to your own? Why? What are the beliefs or things you have done or seen that have helped form your ideas?
2. Think about a view you don't agree with. What might lead someone else to agree with that view?
3. What other views would you add? What points of view are missing?
4. Current policy allows immigrants into the U.S. for the following three reasons:

   - to bring family members back together
   - to bring in well-trained or skilled workers to help the economy
   - to protect people fleeing social, political, or religious persecution

   Which of these reasons is most important? Which is least important? Why? What other reasons may be missing?
5. What, if anything, does the U.S. owe people who are being persecuted? What about those living in deep poverty?
6. What, if anything, does the U.S. owe people who are here legally but are not citizens? What about social services, food stamps, welfare, and Medicaid?
7. Should the U.S. deny citizenship to American-born children of people who came here through illegal channels?
8. In order to immigrate to this country, what kind of family ties should be given first preference? For example: Who should be allowed to come here first?

   - spouses and children of immigrants who are here legally but who are not yet citizens

   OR

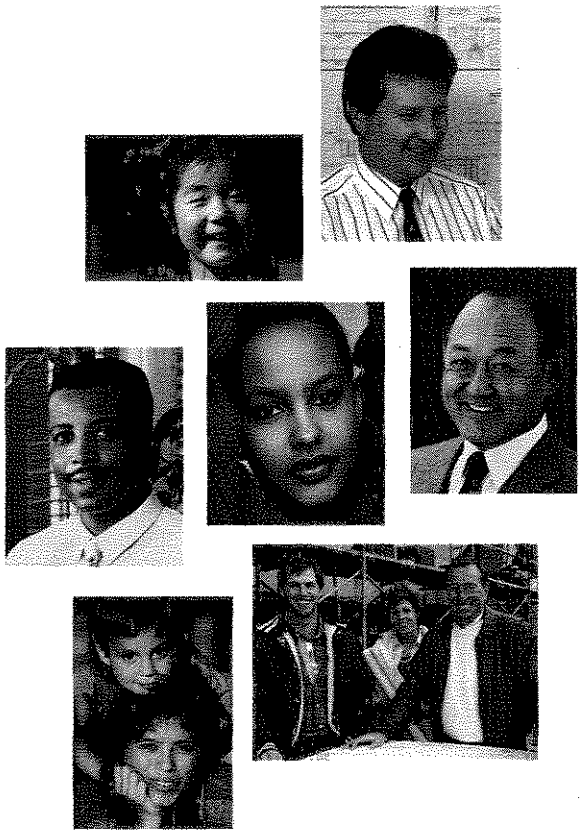
   - the "extended family" (brothers, sisters, and adult children who are married) of any citizen
9. What changes in public policy do we need locally – and at the state level – to deal with the changes that come with large numbers of new immigrants?
10. Are laws and government policies the best solutions to immigration?
11. What can each of us do now?

For next time

Getting ready to meet with public officials

Many study circles invite public officials to join them for Session 4B. The purpose of such a meeting is to include public leaders in a respectful and free-flowing discussion of ideas. This discussion should feel like the other study circle sessions. These questions will help you prepare for the next session.

- *What are the most important things to talk about with public officials? For example:*
  - *What are our hopes and concerns for the community when it comes to immigration?*
  - *Which policies and actions seem promising to address our concerns?*



SESSION 4B
Meeting with public officials

In this session, we plan to meet with public officials. These may be elected officials or people who are paid to work for the government in certain departments like welfare, health, or police. They may be local, state or federal (U.S.) officials.

To face the changes that immigration has brought to our community, we need to have our public officials in the discussion. You will hear how both officials and community people see the issues and what needs to be done. In this way, both community people and officials in government can come to better understand each other.

SESSION 4B

An optional companion session to 4A

★ *Tips for the facilitator*

Here are a few ideas to keep in mind as you facilitate this session:

- **This session should have the same reasonable, respectful tone as the other sessions. You are simply expanding the study circle discussion to include public officials.**
- **Because of the unique dynamics of this session, you may need to work extra hard to keep the discussion on track. Make sure that everyone follows the ground rules.**
- **Break this session into three parts. Use the questions and suggested time limits noted for each part to guide your discussion.**

PART 1
Preparing to meet with public officials (30 minutes)

If your study circle is part of a larger community effort, it is good to prepare for a meeting with public officials. You need to know what to expect and be able to express the views of the whole community.

1. The ground rules on this page address some of the problems that come up when citizens and public officials meet together. Add them to the ground rules you have been using in earlier study circle sessions. Make changes to the list, as you see fit.
2. Review what you have already discussed by using the "focus questions." They will guide your meeting.

Ground Rules

We agree to:

- Have a give-and-take discussion. We do not lecture or "sell" our point of view.
- Let everyone look at all sides of an issue. No one has to have an instant answer.
- Keep our personal complaints to ourselves.
- The news media can come to the meeting only if we all agree. Comments during the meeting are "off the record" and not to be used in the media.

PART 2
Talking with public officials (60-75 minutes)

Before starting the meeting, look over the ground rules and see if anyone, including the public officials, wants to add anything to the list. Then, in order to "break the ice," have 2 or 3 people share what they have learned from the study circles so far. Keep these comments brief and related to the "focus questions." This will keep people relaxed and on-track.

Focus Questions

1. What are our hopes and concerns for the community when it comes to immigration?
2. What are the most promising ideas for change? Why?
3. What questions or doubts do we have about these ideas?
4. How can government help us address the change that immigration has brought to our community?
5. What questions do we have for our public officials? Why are these questions important?

Next, open up the discussion to everyone. Ask people to ask each other questions. Use the "focus questions" to guide the talk.

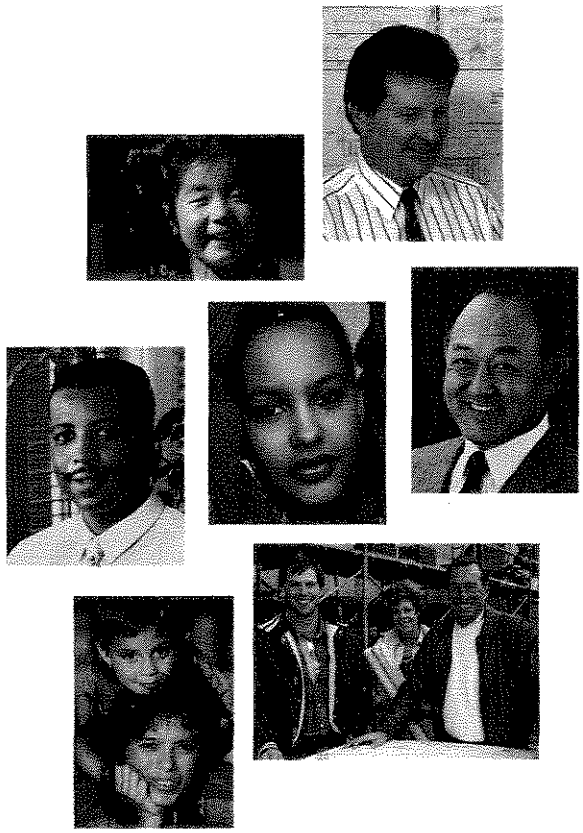
PART 3
Ending the discussion (15-30 minutes)

To close the meeting, ask people what they have learned from each other during the discussion. Make sure that both public officials and study circle participants get a chance to say what they think.

For next time

By the end of this session, you may have a clearer idea of how to address the problems and chances for progress in immigration, race, jobs, schools, and language differences. Between now and the next meeting:

- *read the "Action ideas from other communities" on pages 27-30 in Session 5. They provide examples of things that other people around the country are doing to work on these issues; and*
- *think about what you can do on your own – and what you can do with others – to move toward the kind of future you want for your community.*



SESSION 5
Making a difference: What can we do in our community?

As we try to take on the issues of immigration, race, jobs, schools, and language differences, we need to involve everyone. Facing the problems and chances for progress when newcomers arrive in our community is a job worth doing.

Coming together to learn from each other and share ideas is a very real form of action. Finding ways to keep talking and include more and more people from the community is a very good next step. Study circles often lead to action groups in which some people decide to put their ideas from the study circles into action.

The following questions will help you think about actions you might want to take to address the issues you have discussed in earlier study circle sessions.

SESSION 5

★ *Tips for the facilitator*

Here are a few ideas to keep in mind as you facilitate this session:

- **Before your discussion starts, ask participants to take a few minutes to look over the action ideas and examples. (See "Action ideas from other communities" on pages 27-30.)**
- **Break this session into three parts. Use the questions and suggested time limits noted for each part to guide your discussion.**
- **Make sure you leave time for the questions in Part 3. It is important for people to talk about what their participation in the study circle has meant to them.**
- **Emphasize that all decisions to be part of actions that come out of the study circle are voluntary. People are likely to have lots of different ideas and to want to act on different levels. Participants should feel free to chose their own paths.**

PART 1
Thinking together about how we can make a difference (45 minutes)

Use the following questions to come up with ideas for action steps. As you discuss the questions below, keep track of the ideas that emerge by writing them on newsprint or on a chalkboard. Try making three different lists of the types of actions that can be taken by individuals, small groups, and institutions (for example: churches, schools, businesses, government).

1. Think back to the issues and concerns discussed in your study circle. What things would you most like to see people in our community work on? Why?
2. What can each of us do to make a difference?
3. How have other communities like ours faced these issues and changed things for the better? What ideas in the list of "Action ideas from other communities" seem promising? What other action ideas would you like to see put into use in our community?
4. What efforts are already going on in our community to address these issues? What groups or institutions (private and public) are trying to do something and make changes? What other groups could help, and how can we reach them?

PART 2
Setting priorities for action (45 minutes)

Use the following questions to decide what needs to be done to begin organizing for action, and to help you prepare for an action forum:

1. What two or three ideas seem most practical and useful?
2. What would it take to turn these ideas into reality? What kinds of support or help do we need in order to take these steps?
3. What resources are already in place that could help us move ahead? Where is our community already strong?
4. What is our next step? What other groups should we link up with?
5. Will we be meeting with other study circles to share ideas for action? If so, what ideas do we want to present?

PART 3
Final Questions (30 minutes)

- What have you learned so far that has surprised you? What will have the biggest impact on how you think? On your actions in the community?
- What did you learn from the session with the public officials? What new questions or concerns were raised which you want to discuss?
- How has your participation in the study circles affected the way you think about issues of immigration, race, jobs, schools, and language differences? How will it affect your involvement in the community?
- How will you continue to make a difference on these issues in the community?

Action ideas from other communities

The ideas for action listed below reflect many different views about issues of immigration, race, jobs, schools, and language differences. Use them as a resource to jump-start your own thinking.

People with very different opinions about these issues can all find action ideas that match their views. Which action steps best fit your views about immigration and the effect it is having on our community?

What can each one of us do?

- Take leadership. You don't have to be a public official or a well-known person to lead. Ask top community leaders to talk about this issue in public. Start study circles with your neighbors. Your skills will improve and your role in the community will grow.
- Help immigrants, even long-time community members, go through naturalization. This is the formal process of becoming a citizen.
- Learn about other cultures and traditions. Start with your own and branch out to others.
- Keep a file on local immigration stories. Note the ones that talk about the costs to the community. Use these stories to convince public officials to change the laws so that fewer people can move here.
- Don't do business with places that hire workers who came here illegally.
- Help teach someone to read or write English.
- Be an informed voter. Learn about your elected officials. Are the people in your community well-represented?

  After being in several study circles, one group in New Jersey focused their efforts on local school board elections.

- Write or call your elected officials and tell them how you feel about changes in immigration policy.
- Support your local border patrol.
- Write letters to your local papers about problems caused by high immigration.
- Teach immigrants their basic rights: minimum wage, safety at work, fair housing, and freedom from family abuse.

  In Howard County, Maryland, the Foreign-Born Information and Referral Network was founded to help immigrants adjust to American life, learn English, file for citizenship, find jobs, and enroll their children in school. It also offers workshops on citizenship and immigration law.

- Ask yourself some basic questions: Do you know or are you close to people from different cultures? Why or why not?
- Support and join national groups that push for the same things you believe in.
- Be willing to change any racist ways or ideas you might still have.
- Join the Peace Corps or other programs that help poorer countries get the skills they need to compete in the world economy.
- Confront or report people who are breaking the immigration and naturalization laws.

Notes:

Notes:

What can we do with our neighbors?

- Reach out and welcome new neighbors who are immigrants.
- Hold events that bring people together, such as sports events or lunches with foods from different cultures.

  In Miami, Florida, city commissioner Willie Gort organized domino contests between the neighborhoods of Little Havana and the mostly African American Black Grove. The contests go beyond just playing dominos, and foster lots of cultural and community exchange.
- Hold classes on being a good citizen. Share U.S. history and culture.
- Start an ESL (English as a Second Language) class for your new neighbors.
- Start programs to teach poor people job skills, about housing, reading and writing, and more. Immigrants are not the only people who are poor and need help.
- Help prepare our young people to deal with different cultures:

  ✔ Ask stores to carry toys and books that reflect different cultures.

  ✔ Teach young people not to stereotype people, but to care about the "content of a person's character" (Dr. King).

  ✔ Find out about special events or holidays in other cultures. What do they mean to those who observe them? Talk to children about what they mean.
- Work with a number of racial groups and cultures to take on a common community problem.

  In Los Angeles, California, All Peoples Christian Center worked with the Newton Street police station to start a neighborhood watch group. It was made up mostly of immigrants who set out to stop crime and reduce the power of gangs.

  In Eau Claire, Wisconsin, a city-sponsored youth group formed a Teen Advisory Group (TAG) to recruit Hmong and white students to work together on community projects which the students selected.

  In Hartford, Connecticut, a youth leadership program called Common Ground, brings together area high school students for leadership training and community service. The program gives youth a chance to learn how people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds can work together.

What can we do in our community?

- If there are ongoing tensions between groups in a community, leaders could form an alliance to talk about what to do.

  In New York City, African American and Korean American leaders worked together to create the "Black/Korean Mediation Project."

  In Miami, Florida, the Hispanic Affairs Advisory Board holds discussions between the Cuban and Puerto Rican communities.

- People from different faiths could hold joint services, or work together on a common problem.
- Work with local city or county officials to pass resolutions calling for less immigration.
- Start a community art project. Use the arts and the media for groups to express their cultures and beliefs. Some examples are: a cultural festival; a photo show; painting a mural; or holding a "speak out" on TV or radio.

  In Springfield, Ohio, they held a cultural festival to show off and celebrate local ethnic cultures. At the event, there were bands, local artists, various acts, and food.

  In Lima, Ohio, three different churches got together to do a stage production of "Godspell."

- Insist that public officials, agencies, and the Chamber of Commerce make businesses hire only legal immigrants.
- Help new immigrant parents talk to their children's teachers and school officials.

  In Fairfax County, Virginia, Annandale High School hired three parents who speak Spanish, Korean, and Vietnamese, in addition to their ESL staff. These parents act as translators and help explain about school life to non-English speaking parents. A school counselor is also there to help with problems.

  In response to concerns by Hmong parents in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, a youth coalition started a parent support network to give counseling and help on parenting skills to immigrant parents.

  The Washington, D.C. public school district started a special "newcomer school," Bell MultiCultural High School, that helps ease the transition of immigrant youth into their new life in the U.S.

- Join your local PTA or PTO (Parent-Teacher group).

  In San Antonio, Texas, a first grade teacher worked with neighborhood mothers in immigrant communities to form Avancé, a community-based early childhood program. Now there are workshops on parenting, a family support center with on-site nurseries, and skills classes for adults. Today the program is used throughout Texas. Avancé kids are proud of a 90% high school graduation rate, with half of the graduates going to college.

Notes:

Notes:

- Create homeless shelters for workers who are newcomers but are not here legally. They face poverty and the fear of being deported and abused.
- Hold a big citizenship drive to help those who want to become citizens. Teach them where to get help.
- Create services for everyone (not just newcomers) that provide job training, job placement, and housing advice.

  In Eau Claire, Wisconsin, the city worked with a local community college and local businesses to start an internship program for people of color. The program found and trained people of color to intern for jobs in local businesses and in city government.

  In Massachusetts, The United Electric Control Corporation launched an in-house training program for its non-English-speaking workforce. Workers in the program were given time off work to attend ESL classes.
- Start a "sister city" program with a city in a poorer country to share ideas about how they can improve their economy.
- Create programs that give small loans to people in poorer countries who want to start a small business.
- Offer workshops to local officials and other public servants on cultural diversity.

  The Hmong Mutual Assistance Association and the Eau Claire, Wisconsin Coalition for Youth have offered community workshops for teachers, police, and service providers on Hmong culture and history. Local Hmong citizens led the workshops. Over 200 members of the police department in Lansing, Michigan have been in study circles run by the Lansing Coalition for Community Concerns. The program has been a critical step in dealing with race relations within the police department and between the police and the community.
- Find ways to get young people into study circles. Including youth in talks about these important issues is very good for the community and our nation.

  In Tallahassee, Florida, The Public Agenda project started "Teen Speak-Out Forums" for teens to speak about difficult issues including race, affirmative action, cultural differences, myths and lies about race.

Glossary

Asylee – A person who asks to immigrate to the United States and is allowed to stay here because he or she is fleeing violence in their home country due to their race, politics, nationality, religion, or membership in a social group. When such a person is allowed to live here, it is called *asylum*. An asylee must live in the U.S. for one year before asking to be a full citizen.

Green Card – A written record that allows someone who is not a U.S. citizen to work in the United States. Not all immigrants can get green cards. Green card holders are also called *lawful permanent residents.*

Illegal Alien – A person living in or visiting the U.S. who does not have the proper legal documents allowing them to be here. Also known as an *undocumented alien.*

Immigrant – A person who is a citizen of another country, and who is allowed to live in the U.S. legally.

Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) – The federal agency that carries out and enforces U.S. immigration laws and rules. The INS takes an immigrant through the formal process of becoming a citizen. It also searches for and deports people who are found to be living here illegally.

Naturalization – The process by which a person who is not born in the United States becomes a U.S. citizen. Examples:

- A lawful permanent resident who applies and is accepted for citizenship
- A person who is born in another country to at least one parent who is a U.S. citizen

Refugee – A person who is allowed (by the INS) to immigrate to the U.S. because he or she has fled violence in their own country due to race, religion, politics, nationality or being a member of a social group. Some people have been allowed to move here as refugees because of great poverty in their home country.

Resident Alien – A person who is a citizen of another country, but is legally allowed to live in the U.S. This person may be a new immigrant or someone who has lived here for many years. Resident aliens have the right to work. They do not have other rights like voting or running for office. They do, however, have duties like paying taxes and Social Security.

Student Visa – A written record that allows a person to live in the U.S. for a certain period of time so that he or she can go to school.

Undocumented Alien – See illegal alien.

Undocumented Worker – A person working in the U.S. without the legal right to do so.

Current Federal Regulations: How to Become a Citizen

For an adult immigrant to become a citizen he or she must:

- be at least 18 years old
- be a Lawful Permanent Resident (Green Card holder) for at least five years, or three years if married to a U.S. citizen
- be a good, moral person
- not have broken the law or done a serious crime
- know and understand what are the basics of U.S. history and how the government is run

Other ways to become a U.S. citizen are:

- be born in the United States
- be born outside of the U.S., with at least one parent who is a U.S. citizen

Three reasons why immigrants are allowed into the U.S.:

1. **to bring family members back together.** (also known as **Family Sponsored Immigration**).

   Those first in line to move to the United States are people with family members living in the U.S. who want to sponsor relatives coming here. The sponsors do not need to be U.S. citizens, but they must be lawful permanent residents. The sponsor supports these relatives legally. If the immigrant relative cannot find a job, the law says that the sponsor must support them.

2. **to bring well-trained or skilled workers to help the economy.** (also known as **Employment - Based Immigration**).

   Workers from other countries can come to the United States if a U.S. employer wants to hire them. The U.S. employers must prove to the government that they cannot find a U.S. citizen for the job.

3. **to protect people fleeing social, political or religious persecution** (also known as **Refugee or Asylum status**).

   People who ask to move to the United States for this reason must be able to prove that their fear of persecution is real.

The information in this glossary was drawn, in part, from the following documents:

The A, B, Cs of U.S. Immigration. Washington, DC: National Immigration Forum, 1997.

Becoming an American: Immigration and Immigrant Policy, A Report to Congress. Washington, DC: U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform, 1997.

The study circle process:

Tips for study circle organizers and facilitators

Each community must find its own way to build dialogue and citizen involvement. There are, however, important precedents, principles, and lessons that can provide guidance along the way.

This section provides a basic "toolbox" for organizers and facilitators of study circles. The advice found in these pages summarizes what we have learned from hundreds of visits, phone conversations, reports, news articles, and more.

An overview of study circles

What is a study circle?

The study circle is a simple process for small-group deliberation. Some of its defining characteristics follow:

- A study circle is comprised of ten to fifteen people who meet regularly over a period of weeks or months to address a critical public issue in a democratic and collaborative way.
- A study circle is facilitated by a person who is there not to act as an expert on the issue, but to serve the group by keeping the discussion focused, helping the group consider a variety of views, and asking probing questions.
- A study circle looks at an issue from many points of view. Study circle facilitators and discussion materials give everyone a home in the conversation and help the group explore areas of common ground.
- A study circle progresses from a session on personal experience (How does the issue affect me?) to sessions providing a broader perspective (What are others saying about the issue?) to a session on action (What can we do about the issue?).

What is a community-wide study circle program?

Study circles can take place within organizations, such as schools, congregations, workplaces, or government agencies. They have their greatest reach and impact, however, when community organizations work together to create large-scale programs. These community-wide programs engage large numbers of citizens – in some cases thousands of people – in study circles on a public issue such as race relations, crime and violence, or education. Broad-based, cross-sector sponsoring coalitions create strong, diverse community participation. Participants in study circles have an opportunity to make an impact on an issue they care about.

How do community-wide study circle programs come into being?

Typically, a single organization such as a mayor's office, a school board, or a human relations commission initiates and staffs the project. In most communities, one organization takes the lead and approaches other key organizations to build a sponsoring coalition. Most community-wide programs have ten to thirty organizations as sponsors or endorsers. Grass-roots organizations such as churches, neighborhood associations, businesses, schools, and clubs often take part.

What are the outcomes of community-wide study circle programs?

By participating in study circles, citizens gain ownership of the issues, discover a connection between personal experiences and public policies, and gain a deeper understanding of their own and others perspectives and concerns. They discover common ground and a greater desire and ability to work collaboratively to solve local problems – as individuals, as members of small groups, and as members of large organizations in the community. Community-wide study circle programs foster new connections among community members that lead to new levels of community action. They also create new connections between citizens and government, both at an institutional level and among parents and teachers, community members and social service providers, residents and police officers.

If you would like to know where community-wide study circles are happening, or where study circle coalitions are forming, please contact the Study Circles Resource Center.

Organizing study circles on immigration and community change

Concerns about immigration are often at the heart of community issues, whether we are talking about education, economic development, human services, housing, or the ways in which immigration affects existing racial and ethnic tensions. The challenge is knowing how to get started, and how to approach an issue as complex as immigration.

As an organizer of a study circle program on immigration and community change, you will provide a way for people to come together to address an issue that touches everyone. You will be working to welcome and include everyone in the conversation, and to let them know that the study circles will be safe places where they can share their ideas, listen to others and be listened to, and work together to make an impact on the issues that affect their lives.

There are several key questions you need to consider before you get started.

What are you trying to achieve?

Keep in mind that study circles have many uses and many benefits. Through study circles, people can educate themselves, establish new relationships and new community networks, recognize ways to change their own behavior, cooperate with others to solve common problems, and help to create much larger political changes in their communities. Do you want your study circle(s) to help people achieve all or some of these benefits? Are there only one or two which interest you? What needs in your community do you think study circles might address? What kinds of benefits do you think the people you recruit will want to achieve? Your answers will help you grapple with the next question.

What will the scope of your study circle program be?

If you want your study circles to achieve all of the benefits mentioned above, from empowerment to community change, you must think big. To organize such a program, you will need to establish a broad-based organizing coalition and recruit hundreds of participants. You can, however, start small. Many large study circle programs begin with a single pilot study circle; some pilots have five to ten circles. Other programs start in a particular sector – pairing congregations, for example, or in one neighborhood. Try looking at the question like this: What will the scope of your program be in the short term? in the long term? Here are some of the possibilities:

1. **A single study circle**

   How to begin: Invite ten to fifteen key people for three to six sessions.

   Benefits: Mainly educational, creates new relationships, can affect individual behavior.

   Possibilities: It can help you create an organizing coalition for a much larger effort.

   Organizing effort: Minimal – One person can make this happen easily.

   For help: Contact SCRC or CX for a copy of "Starting Small, Thinking Big" in *Planning Community-wide Study Circle Programs: A Step-by-Step Guide.*

2. **A set of study circles among young people**

   How to begin: Base your efforts at a high school or in a youth program, and create study circles involving young people and the adults who work with them.

   Benefits: Basically the same as for a single study circle, but a set of circles can also affect the schools and youth programs involved.

   Possibilities: Can be a stepping stone for a larger effort involving adults.

   Organizing effort: Minimal to moderate – depends on the number of circles involved, but it will take time to train facilitators and organize the program.

   For help: Contact SCRC or CX for a copy of *Youth Issues, Youth Voices.*

How can you get the resources you need?

By providing discussion materials and advice on organizing, the Topsfield Foundation, SCRC, and CX cover some of the start-up costs of a community-wide study circle program. In financial terms, therefore, study circle programs usually aren't expensive for organizers. However, organizing study circle programs is labor-intensive. In fact, the largest single expense is usually the cost of funding a study circle coordinator. Programs solve this challenge in a variety of ways: sometimes an organization in a study circle coalition allows one or more of its employees to do study circle work full-time; sometimes a coalition looks for funding from a community or private foundation; sometimes a company lends an executive, or a university assigns a graduate student to coordinate study circles for credit. Most of the other resources required for a program – such as training – can be provided in-kind by the organizations in the study circle coalition.

3. **A set of study circles involving paired organizations**

   How to begin: Start with the leaders of a network of institutions, such as churches, neighborhood associations, clubs, or businesses, and achieve diversity in each study circle by pairing the organizations.

   Benefits: Basically the same as for a single study circle, but pairings can also affect the institutions involved, and perhaps have some impact on problems in the larger community.

   Possibilities: You can build up to a community-wide program by first achieving success in particular sectors of the community.

   Organizing effort: Moderate. This could involve several people from the participating organizations.

   For help: Contact SCRC or CX for a copy of *Study Circles in Paired Congregations.*

4. **A community-wide study circle program**

   How to begin: See "Basic steps" on page 35.

   Benefits: Same as for a single study circle, but a community-wide program can also lead to problem-solving action by individuals, small groups, large organizations, and the community as a whole. These programs can also have a profound effect on people's sense of community.

   Possibilities: Can lead to permanent mechanisms for public deliberation and problem solving.

   Organizing effort: Considerable – Large programs with many circles across sectors of a community take the coordinating effort of several people or groups.

   For help: Contact SCRC or CX for a copy of *Planning Community-wide Study Circle Programs: A Step-by-Step Guide.*

Basic steps in creating a community-wide study circle program

Every community-wide program adds to the store of information about how to organize study circles. At SCRC we've tried to learn from every organizer, using each new lesson and innovation to modify the basic model. The following steps represent our most current thinking about what works best:

1. ***Find a few allies.*** Single out a few people you know well, have worked with before, and who would be excited about this project. Tell them your plans, and introduce them to the process by holding a single pilot study circle with this group.

2. ***Begin building a coalition,*** *using pilot study circles.* A sponsoring coalition is the organizing "engine" that makes study circles happen in a community. You need a wide variety of people and organizations, including some with high visibility on the issue, some with strong connections to the grass roots, and some on opposing sides of the issue you're addressing. Try to make the coalition a microcosm of the community. This phase of a study circle program is key; you are laying the foundation for all that follows, so don't hurry.

   It is essential that as many of your coalition members as possible take part in pilot study circles. This introduces them to the process, builds relationships and trust, and equips them to be informed advocates for the program. Within the coalition there will probably be a smaller group of people who are involved more intensively in the program; this is often called the working group.

3. ***Find a coordinator.*** A good coordinator is the linchpin of a successful program. The ideal coordinator is an experienced organizer, is detail-oriented, works well with different kinds of people, and is well-connected to many sectors of the community. Sometimes, one of the organizations in the coalition can assign a salaried person to serve as a coordinator; other times, coalitions submit funding proposals to a local foundation or company to enable them to hire someone. Some communities get their programs started by enlisting volunteer coordinators, including graduate students, loaned executives, and recently retired people. A good rule of thumb is that a medium-sized or large city will probably require a full-time coordinator, while a town may be able to get by with a part-time coordinator.

4. Once the coordinator is on board and the coalition has made a commitment to move ahead, the first order of business is to create committees to handle the following tasks (These committees should be up-and-running at the same time):

   a) ***Work with the media.*** First try to recruit media outlets like newspapers and radio and television stations to join your coalition; in that capacity, they can play a much greater role in bringing a study circle effort to life than simply giving some coverage. Develop press releases and public service announcements for all the media outlets in the community.

   b) ***Plan for action.*** Planning and publicizing the action component of your program will attract more participants and will help the program reach its potential to make a difference on the issue. The action committee should include professionals in the issue area. The committee should keep records of the themes and action ideas being brought up in the study circles, and use them to plan the action forum (this information can also be used in a program report). At the action forum, establish task forces to implement action ideas on those themes that emerged. For each task force, recruit one or two professionals in that area to serve as the initial convenors.

   c) ***Develop a budget and plan for fundraising.*** Though study circle programs are more labor-intensive than capital-intensive, you should make sure that your resources can match your needs. In most cases, the two major budget items for study circle programs are the coordinator and the evaluation effort. If these costs can't be carried by the coalition, seek funding from a local institution such as a community foundation, large corporation, Chamber of Commerce, or city government.

   d) ***Build documentation and evaluation into the program.*** Through documentation and evaluation, you can better assess your program, learn about what kinds of impacts it is having, and discover ways to strengthen it. These processes need to be part of the initial planning; they can't be accomplished after the study circles have ended. From start to finish, keep track of your efforts by creating and saving minutes of meetings, schedules and plans, lists of attendees, and the like. The evaluation committee should begin its work by describing the specific goals of the study circle program and deciding what kinds of things it wants to measure. For evaluation help, look for partners in the social science departments of a local university, in local government, and in local research firms.

e) ***Find, recruit, and train facilitators.*** A well-trained facilitator is the key to a well-run study circle. That means you need to develop a strong capacity for finding and training facilitators. Fortunately, there are probably a number of people in your community who have experience training facilitators, whether in businesses, universities, religious organizations, or other community groups. The committee needs to find people who have good facilitation skills, conduct a number of trainings, and convene meetings of facilitators to support those who have already been trained.

f) ***Recruit participants.*** Every organization in the coalition should take responsibility for recruiting a certain number of its constituents to be study circle participants. The recruitment committee should assist in these efforts, and also try to reach segments of the community not represented in the coalition. The committee will need to create basic outreach tools like brochures, small newsletter articles for school and church bulletins, one-page flyers, and sign-up sheets which can be distributed throughout the community.

g) ***Plan the kickoff.*** The kickoff is a great opportunity to show the community that many different organizations are involved in the program, that community leaders have 'bought in' to the idea, and that taking part in a study circle will give citizens a real opportunity to effect change on an issue they care about. The kickoff committee should plan an event which includes some combination of high-profile speakers, an explanation of the program, testimonials from people who participated in pilot study circles, and breakout study circle sessions.

Pilot study circles

Pilot study circles are invaluable for a number of reasons. You can use them to help you build and expand the coalition, spread the word about the program, and provide practice for newly-trained facilitators. You may even want to hold an entire round of pilot study circles before you officially kick off the community-wide phase. Try to make your pilots as diverse as possible. A note of caution: make sure you explain the purposes of pilot study circles, and how they differ from the community-wide phase to come. For instance, the pilots may not represent the full diversity of the community, and they are unlikely to lead to significant action. They *will* help you create a community-wide program, where many people from all walks of life take part in meaningful dialogue and constructive action.

h) ***Find sites and handle other logistical details.*** Public buildings such as schools, libraries, church halls, community centers, businesses, firehouses, union halls, police departments, and social service agencies make excellent sites for study circles. The committee should set times and dates for all the different study circles, and develop a plan for matching study circle participants, facilitators, and sites. Also think about child care, transportation, food, translators, and accommodations for people with special needs. To ensure a mix of participants in each group, consider pairing organizations or gathering demographic information about participants when they sign up; most organizers use a strategy that combines both.

5. ***Hold the kickoff.*** This is the "big bang" – a way to generate enthusiasm in the community, promote public participation in study circles, and create media interest and exposure.

– Study circles begin
all over the community –

6. ***Monitor the program and support the study circles.*** The coordinator will be doing a fair amount of trouble-shooting while the study circles are underway. The facilitation committee should convene the facilitators so they can compare notes. The sites and logistics committee should start new study circles for late registrants, rather than allow them to join groups already in progress. The action committee should collect the records from each study circle. The media committee should help journalists report on the study circles to the larger community.

– Study circles conclude –

7. ***Hold the action forum.***

8. ***Support and track action efforts.*** Stay in touch with the task force convenors and monitor their progress. Encourage media coverage of the task forces. Consider establishing a newsletter, and find other ways of publicizing the action efforts.

9. ***Take time to pause and reflect upon your study circle program, and make necessary changes for the future.***

10. ***Repeat steps 2-8.*** Take advantage of the hard work that has gone into the first round of study circles by expanding the coalition and planning another round, either on the same issue or a new issue. In this way, you can sustain and deepen your study circle program and continue to build the civic life of your community.

Involving public officials in study circle programs

Study circle organizers, participants, and public officials all benefit from working together in study circles. When citizens and officeholders work together to build study circle programs, they strike an informal but powerful bargain. On one hand, citizens gain opportunities for their voices to be heard in a meaningful way; on the other hand, public officials gain the added problem-solving capacity that comes from an engaged and involved citizenry. Citizens and government become partners rather than adversaries, and the entire community benefits.

Benefits to study circle organizers and participants

Public officials offer a unique kind of support to study circle programs. More than any other potential program co-sponsor, public officials can help create structures and situations that allow people to realize the full potential of study circles. Officeholders can:

- raise your program's visibility and credibility
- help recruit both participants and a broad range of sponsoring organizations
- provide unique insights into important public policy questions
- help participants take action on the issues they face;
- channel the insights of study circle participants into government policy decisions
- strengthen people's sense that their participation in politics can make a difference

Benefits to public officials

Here are a few of the ways in which public officials can benefit from participating in study circles:

Reaching out beyond core constituencies. Study circles provide officeholders with opportunities to talk with diverse groups of citizens who care deeply about issues, but who are not locked into hard-and-fast advocacy positions. Study circles create a non-hostile environment in which public officials can reach out and meet with people who may fall outside of their core constituencies.

Getting to the essence of public views. Study circles encourage citizens to discuss their personal connections to complex public issues. Participants typically explore the essence of their values, concerns, and aspirations regarding public challenges. Information of this sort is invaluable when it comes time for public officials to make difficult policy decisions on a wide range of issues.

Supporting the search for non-governmental solutions. Study circle participants are making a serious effort to understand and resolve public issues for themselves. These people believe that government action alone cannot solve all of society's problems. Through face-to-face dialogue, public officials can help study circle participants to think more broadly about the nature of the challenges that confront their communities and the nation, and also help them sort through the pros and cons of different courses of action.

Recognizing active and engaged citizens. Officeholders and "good government" advocates frequently worry about steadily decreasing rates of voter turnout. Public officials can demonstrate their dedication to creating a more informed and engaged citizenry by meeting with study circle participants who carve time out of their busy schedules to examine, discuss – and take action on – our country's most difficult public challenges.

Building stronger relationships. Study circles provide an opportunity for public officials to reach out and form stronger relationships with their constituents. Citizen participants greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet in settings that are not about campaign-style "selling" of predetermined policy positions, or about "damage control" techniques common to most public meetings. The trust that is built in these meetings gives office-holders greater credibility on other difficult issues as they arise.

What roles can public officials play in your study circle program?

When deciding which public officials you want to invite to join your program, think about the role you would like them to play. Two of the most common roles for officeholders are helping with organizing, and joining in face-to-face dialogue with study circle participants.

Help with organizing. Local government agencies with a particular interest in your issue may be willing to lend a hand with the basic tasks of organizing a study circle program. For issues of immigration and community change, you might approach organizations such as the mayor's office, school board, human relations commission, or economic development agency. Working with these sorts of local government agencies often makes it easier to convince higher-level elected officials to join your study circle.

Face-to-face dialogue with study circle participants. The single most powerful thing public officials can do to strengthen your program is to have a candid, face-to-face dialogue with study circle participants. But first, you may have to convince officeholders that it is in their interest to do so. Some public officials will be very comfortable with the give-and-take style of study circles. Others, though, may be wary of new formats that differ from the typical public hearing, town meeting, or focus group. Your best bet is to start by recruiting officeholders who seem likely to enjoy study circles.

When deciding which public officials to invite to your study circle, you have a wide range of choices – from mayors and city councilpersons, to police chiefs, county planners, and school superintendents, to state legislators and Members of Congress. If your main goals are improving the program's visibility and participant recruitment efforts, try to recruit the highest level public official possible. ***With issues of immigration and community change, it makes good sense to start by inviting one or more of your Congressional Representatives.*** If they are unavailable, look to those state and local officials who are working on related issues such as jobs and schools.

Important points to emphasize when inviting public officials to participate

- **This is not a special interest project.**
  Study circles do not promote any particular partisan viewpoint or special interest position. Citizens participate in study circles because they allow people to explore different points of view without pushing participants in a particular direction.
- **How much time will it take?**
  The time commitment for public officials can be as little as a single one-hour meeting. If they prefer, officeholders may choose to participate in a longer sequence of study circles over a period of weeks.
- **How many citizens will be involved?**
  This will vary from program to program. But no matter what the size of the meeting, the study circle process will create opportunities for more meaningful dialogue than is found in most other types of public meetings.
- **How are participants recruited?**
  Every effort is made to recruit as representative a cross-section of the community as possible. Much of this is done by creating a diverse coalition of organizations – such as civic associations, clergy associations, schools, businesses and other employers – who, in turn, reach out to people they are in daily contact with.
- **Will the news media be involved?**
  Some public officials may want the publicity that comes with the news media's presence. Others may prefer to downplay the role of the news media in order to create more opportunities for frank conversation. The news media should be invited only if this is agreed to by everyone. Moreover, comments made during the meeting between study circle participants and officeholders should be off-the-record.
- **No surprises.**
  Offer to brief public officials beforehand on the main themes that study circle participants have been discussing regarding their concerns, aspirations, and action plans. Emphasize that the meeting will be a structured one, with a trained facilitator and ground rules. Make sure officeholders understand that this will not be a free-for-all.

Keeping track of the outcomes of study circles

It is always a good idea to "harvest" the outcomes of your study circles as they progress. It is especially important to do so if you will be meeting with public officials. Even though it is not the purpose of study circles to guide people to a consensus position, officeholders will hope to gain a sense of the broad themes that are emerging from the participants' deliberations.

Keeping track of the main ideas that come out of your study circles will help create the conditions for a more meaningful and productive dialogue with public officials. Please see page 39 for advice on how to **"Create a study circle recording process to track themes."**

For more information and assistance on working with public officials, contact SCRC or CX.

Organizing for action

The opportunity for participants to take action is a key component of a successful study circle program. Many of the people and organizations you involve in your program will take part because they hope to make a difference on the issue. Making people aware that you are planning for an action phase helps you recruit; when participants know that action is part of the program, there is also a more constructive dynamic for the dialogue inside the study circles.

Community-wide study circle programs around the country have shown that tremendous progress can be made on an issue when organizers plan for action. From grassroots projects like the Daily Bread soup kitchen in Lima, Ohio, to state legislation like Oklahoma House Bill 1213, study circle participants have proven their capacity for public problem solving.

How to do it

Organizing for action requires planning ahead. Study circle organizers who are deep into getting a program off the ground sometimes say that the action phase feels like another big task. It is. However, organizers who plan for action from the earliest stages find that it is not only possible, it strengthens the entire program and benefits the whole community. Here are some lessons and suggestions:

1. *Form an action committee within your organizing coalition.* Since many organizations are attracted to the coalition because they want to help move the community to action, it makes sense to form an action committee. This committee is responsible for creating the conditions that help participants take action, not for deciding what those actions will be. It will help if the people on your action committee represent a mix of professions and approaches to the issue, since action can take many forms.

2. *Create a study circle recording process to track themes.* It is helpful to have a brief session-by-session record of the discussion within each study circle. Records from all the study circles can be combined into a report for the program as a whole; they will be useful in planning action forums for the program; and they can be used to give updates to public officials and journalists. Ask one of the participants to jot down notes on the most important points, particularly the action ideas and main areas of agreement or disagreement. This record doesn't have to be scientific or complex, but it does have to fair and objective. At the end of the session, make sure everyone agrees the summary captures what happened in the session. The Board of Selectmen of Pomfret, Connecticut, used study circle records to create a report on citizens' views on the future of the town; the County Manager's Office in Sedgwick County, Kansas used study circle records to develop their solid waste disposal plan for the county.

3. *Reach out to organizations already working on the issue.* All of these organizations need to know that the study circle program will produce many energized citizens looking for ways to get involved. Ask the organizations how they could use volunteers and how they would like to receive citizen input (contact SCRC for a copy of a form developed for this purpose for a study circle program in Northeast Connecticut).

4. *Hold an action forum.* The action forum at the end of each round of study circles is your most important opportunity to galvanize problem-solving efforts. At the kickoff, announce the date of the action forum. Invite the study circle participants, coalition members, area organizations working on the issue, and other community members. Use the study circle records to identify themes which emerged from the groups. At the action forum, give people the opportunity to sign up for task forces on those themes. For example, the task forces for a program on race might focus on themes such as improving police-community relations, reducing bias crime, and dealing with race relations among young people. Ask people with some professional expertise in each topic to join that task force. If you are writing a report based on the study circle records, the action forum is an excellent time to release it. Contact SCRC for copies of study circle reports and coverage of action forums around the country.

5. *Support the task forces as they move forward.* It is critical for program organizers to stay in touch with the task forces. Help them get off the ground by identifying convenors and setting meeting dates. To keep task force efforts in the public eye, create a newsletter which reports on their progress, and encourage newspapers and television stations to cover their work. Provide ways for newcomers to join task forces as the program moves along. The study circle program in Lima, Ohio, went even further, winning a grant from the Ohio Bureau of Justice Services to fund a Violence Prevention Center. The Center was designed to provide staff time to support the eleven task forces which arose from the study circle program. Finally, it is important to celebrate the task force achievements and build on them. One way to do this is through periodic large-group meetings.

Democracy in action

One of the most common action ideas voiced by study circle participants is the need for more study circles. Take advantage of this opportunity to strengthen your program by involving more people as facilitators, organizers, and coalition members. The task forces may also want to revisit the first session of the study circle materials, so that their members can better understand one another and work as a team.

It is vital to maintain the spirit of deliberation as citizens and organizations plunge into the action phase. Your participants will benefit from opportunities to work together in small groups and celebrate their achievements at large forums. With careful planning, your study circle program can exemplify democracy in action.

★Tips for study circle leaders

A study circle leader does not need to be an expert (or even the most knowledgeable person in the group) on the topic being discussed, but should be the best prepared for the discussion. This means understanding the goals of the study circle, being familiar with the subject, thinking ahead of time about the directions in which the discussion might go, and preparing the discussion questions to aid the group in considering the subject. Several of the sessions in this guide offer more options for discussion than you can cover in two hours, which is the normal length of each session. Choose the options that you think will be most interesting and relevant to your group. (You may want to consider having extra meetings.) Solid preparation will enable you to give your full attention to group dynamics and to what individuals in the group are saying.

Stay neutral!

The most important thing to remember is that, as a facilitator, you should not share your personal views or try to advance your agenda on the issue. You are there to serve the discussion, not to join it.

Set a relaxed and open tone.

- Welcome everyone and create a friendly and relaxed atmosphere.
- Well-placed humor is usually appreciated.

Establish the purpose of the study circle, and help the group establish ground rules.

At the beginning of the study circle, remind everyone that the purpose of the study circle is to deliberate on the issue at hand in a democratic and collaborative way. Also remind them that your role as leader is to remain neutral, keep the discussion focused, and guide the conversation according to the ground rules.

Start with the basic ground rules listed below, then ask participants to add their own ideas.

- Everyone gets a fair hearing.
- Share "air time."
- One person speaks at a time.
- Speak for yourself, not for others.
- If you are offended, say so.
- You can disagree, but don't personalize it. Stick to the issue. No name-calling or stereotyping.
- What is said in this group stays here, unless everyone agrees to change that.

Stay aware of and assist the group process.

- Always use your third eye. You are not only helping to keep the group focused on the content of the discussion, but you will be monitoring how well the participants are communicating with each other – who has spoken, who hasn't spoken, and whose points haven't yet received a fair hearing.
- Consider splitting up into smaller groups to examine a variety of viewpoints or to give people a chance to talk more easily about their personal connection to the issue.
- When wrestling with when to intervene, err on the side of nonintervention. Don't allow the group to turn to you for the answers.
- Resist the urge to speak after each comment or answer every question. Allow participants to respond directly to each other. The most effective leaders often say little, but are constantly thinking about how to move the group toward its goals.
- Once in a while, ask participants to sum up the most important points that have come out in the discussion.
- Don't be afraid of silence! People sometimes need time to think before they respond. If silence feels awkward to you, try counting silently to ten before you rephrase the question. This will give people time to collect their thoughts.
- Don't let anyone dominate; try to involve everyone.
- Remember that a study circle is not a debate but a group dialogue. If participants forget this, don't hesitate to ask the group to help reestablish the ground rules.
- Keep careful track of time!

Help the group grapple with various points of view.

- Your role as facilitator requires that participants see you as impartial and fair, not favoring any one point of view.
- Use these written materials to help participants consider a wide range of views. Rely on the guide rather than presenting something as your idea. Referring to the text helps you maintain your neutrality. You might ask participants to consider a point of view that is underrepresented in the discussion. Ask the group to think about the advantages and disadvantages of different ways of looking at an issue or solving a problem.

- Ask participants to think about the concerns and values that underlie their beliefs.
- Don't allow the group to focus on or be overly influenced by one particular personal experience or anecdote.
- Help participants to identify common ground, but don't try to force consensus.

Ask open-ended questions that don't lend themselves to easy answers.

Open-ended questions are questions that can't be answered with a quick 'yes or no.' They push people to reflect on *why* they believe what they do. Open-ended questions also encourage people to look for connections between different ideas.

Familiarize yourself with these questions. They are a great resource during any study circle.

- What seems to be the key point here?
- What is at the heart of your disagreement?
- What do you think is really going on here? Why is that important?
- Could you give an example or describe a personal experience to illustrate that point?
- Could you help us understand the reasons behind your opinion?
- What experiences or beliefs might lead a reasonable person to support that point of view?
- What do you think is really important to people who hold that opinion?
- What would be a strong case against what you just said?
- What do you find most persuasive about that point of view?
- What is it about that position that you just cannot live with?
- What have we missed that we need to talk about?

Be aware of the dynamics of cross-cultural communication.

- Awareness of cross-cultural dynamics is always useful in a study circle setting, but this is especially true when issues of immigration, race, and ethnicity are the subject of conversation.
- Even though some of the conversation inevitably revolves around differences, set a tone of unity in the group. While our differences may separate us on some matters, we have enough in common as human beings to allow us to talk together in a constructive way.
- Facilitating in pairs is often helpful in study circles on immigration and community relations. Having co-moderators from different demographic groups can help establish unity. For example, the co-facilitators could be a man and a woman, a white person and a person of color, an adult and a young person, a manager and a clerical assistant. Furthermore, a newly trained facilitator is likely to learn a lot from an experienced facilitator who has firsthand knowledge about how cross-cultural dynamics can work in a study circle.
- Sensitivity, empathy, and familiarity with people of different backgrounds are essential qualities for the facilitator. If you have not had the opportunity to spend time in a broadly diverse setting, get involved in a community program that gives you that opportunity and helps you understand cross-cultural dynamics.
- Help people to appreciate and respect their own and others' communication styles. People's cultural backgrounds affect the ways in which they communicate. For example, some cultures tend to be more outspoken and directive, while others are more reserved. Some cultures value listening more than speaking. In other cultures, taking a stand is of utmost importance. Help group members to realize there is no right way to communicate, and that understanding one another takes practice! Your leadership should demonstrate that each person has an important and unique contribution to make to the group.
- Don't let participants' awareness of cultural norms lead to stereotyping. Generalizations don't necessarily apply to individuals within a culture.
- Remind the group, if necessary, that no one can represent his or her entire culture. Each person's experiences, as an individual and as a member of a group, are unique and valid.
- Encourage group members to use their own experiences as they attempt to empathize with those who have been victims of discrimination – in the workplace or elsewhere. Many people who have been in a minority group have experiences that make this discussion a very personal issue. Others, particularly those who are usually in the majority, may not have thought as extensively about their own culture and its effects on their lives. To aid this, you may want to encourage people to think about times in their own lives when they have been treated unfairly. Be careful not to equate the experiences. Instead, try to draw on them to help participants identify with the kinds of treatment others have encountered in

their lives. For those study circle participants who are currently at the receiving end of mistreatment, this could seem invalidating unless you explain that you are trying to build empathy and understanding among all members. Remind people that no one can know exactly what it feels like to be in another person's shoes.

- Encourage group members to talk about their own experiences and cultures, rather than other people's. In this way, they will be less likely to make inaccurate generalizations about other cultures. Also, listening to others recount their own experiences breaks down stereotypes and broadens understanding.

Close with a summary of the discussion. Provide time for evaluation, and set the stage for the next meeting.

- Give participants a chance to talk about the most important thing they gained from the discussion. You may wish to ask participants to share any new ideas or thoughts they've had as a result of the discussion.
- If you will be meeting again, remind the group of the readings and subject for the next session.
- Provide some time for the group to evaluate the process in writing. A brief written evaluation allows participants the chance to comment on the process and give feedback to the facilitator.
- If the groups are meeting with the intention of having an impact on community decision making, be sure to document the content of the discussions. In some study circles, participants record common concerns and points of agreement and contention, as well as ideas for action steps.
- Thank everyone for their contributions!

A comparison of dialogue and debate

Adapted from a paper prepared by Shelley Berman, which was based on discussions of the Dialogue Group of the Boston Chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR). Other members included Lucile Burt, Dick Mayo-Smith, Lally Stowell, and Gene Thompson. For more information on ESR's programs and resources using dialogue as a tool for dealing with controversial issues, call the national ESR office at (617) 492-1764.

Dialogue is collaborative: two or more sides work together toward common understanding.	Debate is oppositional: two sides oppose each other and attempt to prove each other wrong.
In dialogue, finding common ground is the goal.	In debate, winning is the goal.
In dialogue, one listens to the other side(s) in order to understand, find meaning, and find agreement.	In debate, one listens to the other side in order to find flaws and to counter its arguments.
Dialogue enlarges and possibly changes a participant's point of view.	Debate affirms a participant's own point of view.
Dialogue reveals assumptions for reevaluation.	Debate defends assumptions as truth.
Dialogue causes introspection on one's own position.	Debate causes critique of the other position.
Dialogue opens the possibility of reaching a better solution than any of the original solutions.	Debate defends one's own positions as the best solution and excludes other solutions.
Dialogue creates an open-minded attitude: an openness to being wrong and an openness to change.	Debate creates a closed-minded attitude, a determination to be right.
In dialogue, one submits one's best thinking, knowing that other peoples' reflections will help improve it rather than destroy it.	In debate, one submits one's best thinking and defends it against challenge to show that it is right.
Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs.	Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.
In dialogue, one searches for basic agreements.	In debate, one searches for glaring differences.
In dialogue, one searches for strengths in the other positions.	In debate, one searches for flaws and weaknesses in the other position.
Dialogue involves a real concern for the other person and seeks to not alienate or offend.	Debate involves a countering of the other position without focusing on feelings or relationship and often belittles or deprecates the other person.
Dialogue assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can put them into a workable solution.	Debate assumes that there is a right answer and that someone has it.
Dialogue remains open-ended.	Debate implies a conclusion.

Resources for further discussion and action

Organizations

In study circles exploring issues of immigration and community change, participants often discover that they want to talk about a broad range of concerns that are closely connected to their everyday lives, such as race and ethnic relations, education, language differences, and job opportunities. The list below provides a small sample of the many organizations working around the nation to address issues of immigration and community change. All offer assistance and can provide referrals.

American Friends Service Committee
1501 Cherry Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
215.241.7275 • fax: 215.241.7275
afscinfo@afsc.org; www.afsc.org
AFSC provides various regional programs and services addressing poverty, injustice, and war.

American Immigration Lawyers Association
1400 Eye Street, N.W., Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20005
202.371.9377 • fax: 202.371.9449
www.aila.org
AILA is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization which provides legal education, information, professional services, and expertise regarding immigration law to its member lawyers. AILA members represent immigrants who have applied for permanent residency and businesses employing foreign workers, as well as students, entertainers, athletes, and asylum seekers, often on a pro bono basis.

Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS)
Attn.: Cultural Arts Program
2651 Saulino Court
Dearborn, MI 48120
313.843.2844 • fax: 313.842.5150
ACCESS fosters greater understanding of Arab culture as it exists both here and in the Arab world. Contact the Cultural Arts Program for information and educational materials. "Culture Kits" – containing discussion aids about Arab history, culture, and contemporary life – are available for loan.

The Boys and Girls Clubs of America
1230 West Peachtree Street, N.W.
Atlanta, GA 30309
404.815.5700
The Boys and Girls Club of America is a national movement providing youth development activities, with an emphasis on those from disadvantaged circumstances. Some clubs are involved with providing intensive services to youth members of gangs. Four such programs are: "Making it Happen" in Jacksonville, FL; "Kids at Hope" in Phoenix, AZ; "Gang Intervention Program" in Chicago, IL; and "Project Outreach" in Lawrence, MA.

Center for Equal Opportunity
815 15th Street, N.W., Suite 928
Washington, DC 20005
202.639.0803 • fax: 202.639.0827
www.ceousa.org
CEO is a private, nonprofit research institution dedicated to the idea that America should be one united nation and that its citizens of all colors should be treated equally. CEO promotes race-neutral and pro-assimilation policies through media outreach, Congressional and state legislative testimony, research, and educational events.

Center for Immigration Studies
1522 K Street, N.W., Suite 820
Washington, DC 20005-1202
202.466.8185 • fax: 202.466.8076
www.us.net/cis
CIS is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization devoted to research and policy analysis of the economic, social, and demographic impacts of immigration on the United States. The Center publishes a quarterly titled, *Immigration Review*, as well as other educational resources. In addition, CIS sponsors symposiums and maintains an e-mail list on immigration policy, called CISNEWS, to foster a national dialogue on immigration.

The Federation for American Immigration Reform
1666 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 400
Washington, DC 20009
800.395.0890
www.fairus.org
FAIR is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that advocates national immigration policy reform. FAIR calls for a temporary moratorium on all immigration except for spouses and minor children of U.S. citizens and a limited number of refugees. Their activities include research, public education, media outreach, grassroots organizing, legal action, and advocacy on local, state, and national levels.

The Japanese Citizens League
National Headquarters
1765 Sutter Street
San Francisco, CA 94115
415.921.5225 • fax: 415.931.4671
jacl@hooked.net
JACL advocates for the civil and human rights of Asian-Americans and the preservation of Japanese culture and values. JACL sponsors U.S. citizenship workshops to assist Asian immigrants applying for citizenship and conducts community education forums on hate crimes and anti-affirmative action initiatives.

Laubach Literacy
P.O. Box 131
Syracuse, NY 13210
315.422.9121 • fax: 315.422.6369
Laubach Literacy is a nonprofit, educational corporation. Its purpose is to enable adults and older youths to acquire the listening, speaking, reading, writing, mathematics and technology skills they need to solve the problems they encounter in daily life; to take advantage of opportunities in their environment; and to participate in the transformation of their society.

Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
634 South Spring Street, 11th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90014
213.629.2512 • fax: 213.629.3120
MALDEF works on behalf of Latinos to safeguard their civil rights, advance political participation, and to improve educational opportunities. MALDEF pursues these goals through advocacy, community education, research, leadership development, and legal action.

Negative Population Growth
National Headquarters
1608 20th Street, N.W., Suite 200
Washington, DC 20009
202.667.8950 • fax: 202.667.8953
www.npg.org
NPG is a national membership organization which advocates a smaller U.S. population through family planning incentives and limiting immigration to 100,000 newcomers annually. NPG provides information to the public and policy makers on the linkage between immigration, population growth, and the quality of our environment.

National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise
1424 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036
202.518.6500 • fax: 202.588.0314
info@ncne.com • www.ncne.com
NCNE is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research and advocacy organization which is focused on empowering low-income Americans. NCNE works with neighborhood organizations to reduce crime and violence, restore families, create economic opportunity, and revitalize low-income communities. NCNE meets these goals by identifying positive neighborhood agents who are finding solutions to problems in their communities and supporting these movements through training, technical assistance, and links to outside support sources.

The National Conference
71 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1100
New York, NY 10003
212.206.0006 • fax: 212.255.6117
members.aol.com/natlconf
The National Conference is a human relations organization dedicated to fighting bias, bigotry, and racism in America. Contact the national office or one of the many regional offices for information about public programs, community dialogues, prejudice reduction workshops, workplace diversity programs, publications, and school curriculum.

National Council of La Raza
1111 19th Street, N.W., Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20036
202.785.1760 • fax: 202.776.1792
NCLR is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization established to reduce poverty and discrimination, and to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans. NCLR works toward this goal through support of community-based organizations, applied research, policy analysis, and advocacy. NCLR also produces public information, media activities, and special and international projects.

The National Immigration Forum
220 I Street, N.E., Suite 220
Washington, DC 20002-4362
202.544.0444 • fax: 202.544.1905
www.immigrationforum.org
NIF employs a combination of advocacy, media work, research, and public education to provide accurate data to policy makers, the press, and the public about newcomers to our country. NIF supports immigrant and refugee rights and promotes cooperation and understanding between immigrants and other Americans.

The National Network for Immigrant Rights
310 8th Street, Suite 307
Oakland, CA 94607
510.465.1984 • fax: 510.465.1885
nnirr@nnirr.org • www.nnirr.org
NNIR is a national coalition composed of immigrant and refugee support groups and a broad network of civil rights organizations and activists. The Network serves as a forum to share information, educate communities, and to develop and coordinate action plans on important immigrant and refugee issues.

National Urban League
120 Wall Street
New York, NY 10005
212.558.5311 • fax: 212.344.5189
NUL is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, community-based movement dedicated to helping African-Americans attain social and economic equality. The NUL is headquartered in New York City with professionally staffed affiliates in 115 cities and 34 states and the District of Columbia.

Organization of Chinese Americans
1001 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 707
Washington, DC 20036
202.223.5500 • fax: 202.296.0540
oca@ari.net • www2.ari.net/oca
The OCA is a nonprofit, advocacy organization focused on improving the welfare of Asian Americans. Their primary objectives include promoting Asian American participation in civic and national matters, securing social justice, equal opportunity, and fair treatment of Asian Americans, and promoting the cultural heritage of Chinese and Asian Americans. Their programs focus on education and youth issues.

Southern Christian Leadership Conference
334 Auburn Avenue NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30312
404.522.1420 • fax 404.524.7957
Founded in 1957 by Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph David Abernathy, Sr., Joseph E. Lowery, and others, SCLC is a nonsectarian civil rights organization which works to promote human rights nationwide and abroad, advance Christian principles, and foster direct action programs to end discrimination. SCLC encourages nonviolent resistance to all forms of racial injustice, operates and sponsors leadership training programs, and sponsors citizenship-education schools. SCLC achieves these goals through gun buyback programs and voter registration drives throughout the South.

The United Way of America
701 North Fairfax Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-2045
800.441.UWAY (8929)
www.unitedway.org
The United Way of America is comprised of 1,300 local United Ways which provide fundraising for local community organizations and programs. They focus on issues such as health care, drug abuse and addiction, illiteracy, poverty, and homelessness. Each United Way is supported by private funds and largely volunteer efforts. Their funds are directed to a wide variety of programs and services which meet the specific needs of each community.

Publications

This bibliography offers a sampling of available works on the topics of immigration and community change in the United States. This list was selected primarily from recent works to reflect aspects of the current national dialogue. Many of these sources were very helpful to us as we developed this guide.

In addition, both of the study circle discussion guides, *Facing the Challenge of Racism and Race Relations* and *Toward a More Perfect Union*, listed under **Publications designed to promote deliberation and dialogue**, contain extensive bibliographies that may be of interest to anyone seeking additional information or resources.

Becoming an American: Immigration and Immigrant Policy. U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1997.

Beck, Roy Howard, *The Case Against Immigration: The Moral, Economic, Social, and Environmental Reasons for Reducing U.S. Immigration Back to Traditional Levels*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Co., 1996.

Brimelow, Peter *et al.*, "Immigration and Politics." *The National Review*, June 16, 1997.

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Fuchs, Lawrence H., *The American Kaleidoscope: Race, Ethnicity, and the Civic Culture*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1991.

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Knobel, Dale T., *America for the Americans: The Nativist Movement in the United States*. New York, NY: Twayne Publications, 1996.

Lind, Michael, *The Next American Nation: The New Nationalism and the Fourth American Revolution*. New York, NY: Free Press, 1996.

Lowe, Lisa, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996.

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Portes, Alejandro, ed., The New Second Generation. New York, NY: The Russell Sage Foundation, 1996.

Schlesinger, Arthur M., *The Disuniting of America.* New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 1991

Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, prepared annually by INS. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

Suro, Roberto, *Strangers Among Us: How Latino Immigration is Transforming America.* New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998.

Zentella, Cilia, *Growing Up Bilingual.* Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Publications designed to promote dialogue and deliberation

Admissions Decisions: Should Immigration Be Restricted? The National Issues Forum. Dubuque, IA: Kendal/Hunt Publishing Co., 1994. For more information contact The National Issues Forum at 1.800.228.0810.

Facing the Challenge of Racism and Race Relations. Prepared by the Study Circles Resource Center (SCRC), a project of the Topsfield Foundation. To order, or for more information, contact SCRC at P.O. Box 203, Pomfret, CT 06258 or call 860.928.2616.

Toward a More Perfect Union In an Age of Diversity. Prepared by the Study Circles Resource Center (SCRC), a project of the Topsfield Foundation. To order, or for more information, contact SCRC at P.O. Box 203, Pomfret, CT 06258 or call 860.928.2616.

U.S. Immigration Policy in an Unsettled World - Teachers Resource Book. Providence, RI: Choices for the 21st. Century Education Project, the Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies at Brown University, 1992. Available for $12.00 from Choices for the 21st Century Education Project, Box 1948, Brown University, Providence, RI 02912.

Contact the Study Circles Resource Center for copies of the following publications:

Campbell, Sarah vL. *"When a church is burned in our town ...": A Guide for Community Dialogue and Problem Solving.* Pomfret: Topsfield Foundation, Inc., 1997. (This condensed manual was produced in conjunction with the Community Relations Service of the U.S. Department of Justice for use in community-based programs.)

Campbell, Sarah vL. and Mark Niedergang. *Youth Issues, Youth Voices: A Guide for Engaging Youth and Adults in Public Dialogue and Problem Solving.* Pomfret: Topsfield Foundation, Inc., 1996.

Flavin, Catherine. *Working in the USA: Making a Living, Making a Difference.* Pomfret: Topsfield Foundation, Inc., 1997. (This guide was prepared for the State of the Union Labor Day special, "That's Why They Call It Work." The State of the Union series is part of the PBS Democracy Project.)

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Scully, Patrick and Matt Leighninger. *Changing Faces, Changing Communities: Immigration & Race, Jobs, Schools, and Language Differences.* 2nd edition. Pomfret: Topsfield Foundation, 1998.

Study Circles Resource Center. *Focus on Study Circles.* (SCRC's quarterly newsletter. Call SCRC for a complimentary subscription.)

Study Circles Resource Center. *Planning Community-wide Study Circles: A Step-by-Step Guide.* Pomfret: Topsfield Foundation, Inc., 1996.

Study Circles Resource Center. *Study Circles in Paired Congregations: Enriching Your Community Through Shared Dialogue on Vital Issues.* Pomfret: Topsfield Foundation, Inc., 1995.

Coming soon: New guide on community growth and sprawl. Contact CX for a copy.