



2020 Conversation Host Guide on the table

In January 2020, hundreds of community conversations will take place throughout Silicon Valley. Neighbors, friends, family members, colleagues and acquaintances will gather together to discuss civic engagement in our region. We believe that in our current political climate, creating space for these exchanges is a powerful civic act. Anyone can host a conversation and we invite you to be part of the movement!

PLANNING YOUR CONVERSATION

- ❑ **Make a plan:** Once you decide to host a community conversation, determine what you hope to achieve. Are you trying to solve a problem, build community or learn about others' experiences?
- ❑ **Decide on partnership:** If you want to divide up responsibilities like inviting guests and taking notes, you can invite someone to co-host your conversation. This is entirely up to you.
- ❑ **Register your conversation:** Visit siliconvalleycf.org/onthetable to register your conversation. When you register, you will receive resources, updates and collective learnings from Silicon Valley Community Foundation.
- ❑ **Determine time and location:** You can host your conversation at any time during January 2020, whenever is most convenient! Conversations can take place in a home, office, place of worship, community center or library. Having food is optional, but encouraged. Consider a potluck, meeting at a coffee shop or providing light refreshments.
- ❑ **Invite your network:** You choose who to invite. In addition to the people you know, consider bringing together community members who don't often have the opportunity to meet. If your conversation grows beyond six to ten people, we encourage you to break into smaller groups so everyone has a chance to be heard!
- ❑ **Create connections:** Print a sign in sheet for your conversation so that you can follow-up with your guests later. You can also invite participants to share contact information with each other and invite them to sign up for your services or newsletter.
- ❑ **Document the conversation:** During your conversation, we encourage you or a co-host to take notes. These notes may serve to as a starting place for next step following your conversation and will help SVCF get a taste of the community issues, aspirations and solutions discussed throughout the region.
- ❑ **Snap pictures and be social:** We encourage hosts and guests to share stories and photos on social media using the hashtag **#OntheTableSV**.
- ❑ **Share your story:** We look forward to hearing about the stories, ideas and solutions discussed at your gathering. Scan or take photos of your notes and send them, along with photos of your conversation, to onthetable@siliconvalleycf.org.

CONVERSATION SURVEY

With Hart Research and Public Opinion Strategies, SVCF created a post-conversation survey for your guests to complete. On the day of your conversation, please explain that survey responses provide important learnings about civic engagement in our region.

To take the survey, ask your guests to **text "OTT" to 30644**. They will immediately receive a link to complete the survey. It should take no more than 5-10 minutes to complete. All responses are anonymous and encrypted.

If your guests prefer to complete the survey online, please send them this link: bit.ly/OTT2020

SVCF can also provide printed paper surveys upon request.

THE ON THE TABLE APPROACH

On the Table community conversations build community engagement and create spaces where residents and community leaders discuss relevant issues, define their priorities, develop solutions and act on behalf of one another. They are creative, productive and fun!

These community conversations are designed to be **flexible, relevant** and **civil**. This approach builds trust and shifts long standing power dynamics. They root our work and decisions in what matters most to people in our region.

YOUR CONVERSATION

Having conversation guidelines can help everyone feel welcome and we encourage you to share some with your guests. Additionally, ask them if they have any guidelines they would like to add.

Remind your guests to keep your conversation **local**. Ask them to think about their involvement in community at their neighborhood, city or county level. Focus your conversation on the issues people care most about.

Conversation Facilitation Guidelines

- We all share responsibility for the conversation.
- Allow time for everyone to share. Every guest's ideas and stories are important.
- Listen to learn from people's different experiences.
- Treat each other with respect, even if you disagree about something.
- Remember why we're here. We all care about our communities.

Conversation Questions

1. How do you see your network – friends, family, neighbors and co-workers – participate and feel engaged in your local community? Lead local efforts, recommend solutions or advocate on their own behalf in your community?
2. What are the obstacles that you and your community face that limits how you participate or feel engaged in your local community?
3. How much or how little do you see the local issues and solutions you care about reflected in decision-making?
4. How might you and the people you know collaborate with community leaders to address the challenges in our communities?



Silicon Valley Community Foundation is committed to addressing local challenges, building strong, inclusive communities and bringing about positive change.