



A DCI Deliberation Guide

Immigration

Who should we welcome? What should we do?

I. Format for Deliberation

Before the Deliberation

- I. Read this document (Required)
- II. Read the “Immigration Who Should We Welcome? What Should We Do?” Issue Guide from the National Issues Forum Institute (Required)
- III. [US Immigration & Border Security Statistics and Data Trends: Foreign-born population, naturalizations and more](#). *USAfacts.org* (Optional)
- IV. [Americans Showing Increased Concern About Immigration](#). Gallup (Optional)
- V. [The U.S. Immigration Debate](#). Council on Foreign Relations (Optional)

During the Deliberation

- I. Setting Expectations – 5 min.
- II. Getting to Know Each Other – 15 min.
- III. Understanding Option 1: Welcome Immigrants and Be a Beacon of Freedom – 20 min.
- IV. Understanding Option 2: Enforce the Law and Be Fair to Those Who Follow the Rules – 20 min.
- V. Break – 5 min.
- VI. Understanding Option 3: Slow Down and Rebuild our Common Bonds – 20 min.
- VII. Weighing the Options – 20 min.
- VIII. Reflections – 15 min.

II. Setting Expectations (5 min)

In this section, we will review the “Expected Outcomes,” “Deliberative Dispositions,” and “Conversation Agreements” below.

Expected Outcomes of the Conversation

The purpose of this deliberation is to deepen our understanding of the arguments surrounding immigration in the United States. Over the course of the deliberation, we will have the opportunity to listen to the perspectives of our fellow deliberators as well as share our own experiences and beliefs related to immigration. By the end of the conversation, we will have deliberated about the strongest and weakest arguments for the three options outlined in the NIF issue guide – welcoming immigrants and being a beacon of freedom, enforcing the law and being fair to those who follow the rules, and slowing down and rebuilding our common bonds. Finally, we will have reflected on our conversation, our areas of agreement and disagreement, and what we have learned from our time together.

Deliberative Dispositions

The DCI has identified several “deliberative dispositions” as critical to the success of deliberative enterprises. When participants adopt these dispositions, they are much more likely to feel their deliberations are meaningful, respectful, and productive. Several of the Conversation Agreements recommended below directly reflect and reinforce these dispositions, which include a *commitment to egalitarianism, openmindedness, empathy, charity, attentiveness, and anticipation*, among others. A full list and description of these dispositions is available at <https://deliberativecitizenship.org/deliberative-dispositions/>.

Conversation Agreements

In entering into this discussion, to the best of our ability, we each agree to:

1. Be authentic and respectful
2. Be an attentive and active listener
3. Be a purposeful and concise speaker
4. Approach fellow deliberators’ stories, experiences, and arguments with curiosity, not hostility
5. Assume the best - and not the worst - about the intentions and values of others, and avoid snap judgements
6. Demonstrate intellectual humility, recognizing that no one has all the answers, by asking questions and making space for others to do the same
7. Critique the idea we disagree with, not the person expressing it, and remember to practice empathy
8. Note areas of both agreement and disagreement
9. Respect the confidentiality of the discussion
10. Avoid speaking in absolutes (e.g., “All people think this,” or “No educated people hold that view”)

III. Getting to Know Each Other (15 min)

In this section, we will take less than a minute to share our names, where we are currently located, and answer one of the questions below.

- What are your hopes and concerns for your family, community and/or country?
- What would your best friend say about who you are?
- What sense of purpose / mission / duty guides you in your life?

IV. Understanding Option 1: Welcome Immigrants and Be a Beacon of Freedom – 20 min.

In this section, we will examine the arguments for and against Option 1: Welcome Immigrants and Be a Beacon of Freedom introduced in the NIF Issue Guide (page 4). We will each take 1-2 minutes to answer each of the questions below, without interruption or crosstalk.

- *What are the **most important advantages and disadvantages** associated with this option?*
- *Which of these arguments do you find **most persuasive**?*

After everyone has answered these questions, the group is welcome to take a few minutes for clarifying or follow up questions and responses as time allows.

Throughout our discussions, if there is strong disagreement in the group, we will try to explore the underlying reasons for the disagreement – are they based on different factual interpretations, different value emphases, or different life experiences? Perhaps we can agree on where precisely we disagree, which can be helpful. Alternatively, if there is widespread agreement in the group, try to dig deeper and examine the nuances of these policies – are there particular contexts, for example, where our agreement breaks down? Or perhaps our reasons for supporting particular policies are different? Exploring this complexity can be helpful as well.

V. Understanding Option 2: Enforce the Law and Be Fair to Those Who Follow the Rules – 20 min.

We will now discuss the advantages and disadvantages of Option 2: Enforce the Law and Be Fair to Those Who Follow the Rules (page 9). We will each address the question below, and then together we'll explore our areas of agreement and disagreement. We can also generate additional ideas that may transcend and elicit more support than the policies discussed in the guide.

- *What are the **most important advantages and disadvantages** associated with this option?*
- *Which of these arguments do you find **most persuasive**?*

As time allows, we should engage with one another on our answers to these questions.

VI. Brief Break (5 min)

Use this time as a chance to stretch your legs, go to the bathroom, get a drink of water, and re-charge for the next part of the deliberation.

VII. Understanding Option 3: Slow Down and Rebuild our Common Bonds – 20 min.

We will now evaluate arguments for and against Option 3: Slow Down and Rebuild our Common Bonds. We will each address the questions below, and then together we'll explore our areas of agreement and disagreement.

- *What are the **most important advantages and disadvantages** associated with this option?*
- *Which of these arguments do you find **most persuasive**?*

As time allows, we should engage with one another on our answers to these questions and the specifics of this option.

VIII. Weighing the Options – 20 min.

This is a time to discuss the relative importance of the three options we have discussed so far.

- After considering the specifics of each option, which of these three options should we prioritize?
- Are there ways you would prefer to combine or link these options?
- Are there other options we haven't considered yet?
- In light of our discussion, what specific strategies and policies should we pursue moving forward?

We can frame our discussion around these questions, and together we can explore our areas of agreement and disagreement.

IX. Reflections (15 min)

While today's conversation is an important step in the journey, effectively managing the tradeoffs associated with our immigration policies will take time and commitment. Please reflect on the insights from your discussion with your fellow participants today, and then answer one of the questions below without interruption or crosstalk. After everyone has answered, the group is welcome to continue exploring additional questions as time allows.

1. What was most meaningful or valuable to you during this deliberation?
2. Where are the areas of both agreement and disagreement in your group?
3. Have any new ways to think about this issue occurred to you as we have talked today? Any new ideas that might transcend our current way of conceiving of the problem and its potential solutions?
4. Was there anything that was said or not said that you think should be addressed with the group? Are there any perspectives missing from this conversation that you feel would be important to hear?
5. What did you hear that gives you hope for the future of conversations on issues related to immigration?
6. Is there a next step you would like to take based upon the deliberation you just had?

About This Guide

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The Deliberative Citizenship Initiative

The Deliberative Citizenship Initiative (DCI) is dedicated to the creation of opportunities for Davidson students, faculty, staff, alumni, and members of the wider community to productively engage with one another on difficult and contentious issues facing our community and society. The DCI regularly hosts facilitated deliberations on a wide range of topics and organizes training workshops for deliberation facilitators. To learn more about these opportunities, visit www.deliberativecitizenship.org.

DCI Deliberation Guides

The DCI has launched this series of Deliberation Guides as a foundation for such conversations. They provide both important background information on the topics in question and a specific framework for engaging with these topics. The Guides are designed to be informative without being overwhelming and structured without being inflexible. They cover a range of topics and come in a variety of formats but share several common elements, including opportunities to commit to a shared set of Conversation Agreements, learn about diverse perspectives, and reflect together on the conversation and its yield. The DCI encourages conversations based on these guides to be moderated by a trained facilitator. After each conversation, the DCI also suggests that its associated Pathways Guide be distributed to the conversation's participants.

DCI Pathways Guides

For every Deliberation Guide, the DCI has also developed an associated Pathways Guide, which outlines opportunities for action that participants can consider that are related to the covered topic. These Pathways Guides reinforce the DCI's commitment to an action orientation, a key deliberative disposition. While dialogue and deliberation are themselves important contributors to a healthy democracy, they become even more valuable when they lead to individual or collective action on the key issues facing society. Such action can come in a range of forms and should be broadly understood. It might involve developing a better understanding of a topic, connecting with relevant local or national organizations, generating new approaches to an issue, or deciding to support a particular policy.

If you make use of this guide in a deliberation, please provide attribution to the Deliberative Citizenship Initiative and email dc@deliberativecitizenship.org to tell us about your event. To access more of our growing library of Deliberation Guides, Pathways Guides and other resources, visit www.deliberativecitizenship.org/readings-and-resources.