



VoicesDMV

ON THE TABLE CONVERSATIONS

Powerful things happen when people come together.

Thank you for agreeing to be a host for VoicesDMV *On the Table*, presented by the Greater Washington Community Foundation. This powerful civic engagement initiative will bring people from across the region together through virtual or face-to-face small-group conversations on a single day – Thursday, October 1, 2020 – to discuss and reimagine the future of our communities.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic and recent incidents that highlighted how far we have to go to address the deep inequities experienced by so many, residents of the DMV region faced economic and social challenges that disrupted families and communities. As we work to build a stronger and more resilient community where racial justice is prioritized and everyone has equal opportunity to thrive, it is critical to understand the diverse experiences of the people who live and work in the Greater Washington region.

When we come together to talk with, listen to, and learn from each other, we have the power to enhance community well-being and improve the quality of life for everyone. That's what *On the Table* is all about.

This toolkit provides some tips for planning your *On the Table* conversation, and facilitating an interesting and meaningful discussion.

About VoicesDMV

On the Table is part of The Community Foundation's VoicesDMV initiative, which launched in 2017 as a way to explore the region's challenges and opportunities related to housing, transportation, safety, economic security, race relations, and community well-being. What we learned provided a road map to inform The Community Foundation's *Building Thriving Communities* framework and our approach to civic engagement, community-driven development, policy, and grantmaking to better serve our region.



COMMUNITY
INSIGHTS



ON THE TABLE
CONVERSATIONS



COMMUNITY
ACTION AWARDS

This year, VoicesDMV returns as a three-part initiative to tap into *Community Insights* through a regional survey, *On the Table* conversations that bring residents together to discuss the issues that matter in their community, and *Community Action Awards* to help advance ideas sparked during those discussions.

As a host for *On the Table*, you will coordinate and facilitate a virtual or face-to-face small-group dialogue about how to make your community stronger.

Each conversation will be unique, but we hope every *On the Table* is filled with forward-looking and thought-provoking discussions and ideas on how to improve the quality of life for all residents of our communities. Following your conversation, we encourage you and your conversation participants to apply for small Community Action Awards to support the implementation of ideas coming out of the discussions.

Planning Your Conversation

Where and When

You can plan your *On the Table* conversation any time on Thursday, October 1, 2020. Use our customized, interactive platform called AllSides Connect with an easy-to-use built-in discussion guide; gather people using a videoconference tool you're comfortable with; or come together face-to-face with proper social distancing. You can learn more about using AllSides Connect at www.VoicesDMV.org.

Around the Table

The invite list is up to you. Start with people you know – friends, family, colleagues, and neighbors – or expand your circle. Consider co-hosting your event with a friend, colleague, or even a local church or nonprofit organization. Invite people from your personal and professional networks who don't already know each other. Ask your guests to bring a friend.

Six-to-eight guests per conversation is ideal. *On the Table* is about giving everyone a chance to speak and be heard.

Registration

You'll be automatically registered as a host when you set up your conversation in AllSides Connect. However, if you are not planning to use this platform, please visit www.VoicesDMV.org to register your event so that we can keep track of how many conversations are taking place across the region.






Check Out Our Resources

The Community Foundation engaged professional public opinion research firm, Gallup, to conduct a regional survey and thousands of residents shared their feedback about the most important issues facing the Greater Washington region. The full report, along with summaries of survey responses by geographic region and a customizable data dashboard that helps you explore the report, are available at www.VoicesDMV.org.

We encourage you to download the report of survey findings and share the link to the data dashboard in advance of your conversations with those who will be participating to help inform your discussion.



Our virtual platform, AllSides Connect, has a built-in discussion guide – general or topic-specific – to help guide your conversation. If you’re hosting outside of this platform, we have created a list of general conversation prompts to help get your conversation started. If you have invited your guests to explore the data on the VoicesDMV website, ask them what they found most interesting, concerning or surprising – or pull out a few data points to share and help spark your discussion.

-  **What brought you to this conversation?**
-  **What are your hopes for our community, now and in the long-term?**
-  **What does our community need? What can we do individually or together to address those needs?**
-  **Let’s chose a problem facing our community, neighborhood or region, and discuss how we address it.**
-  **What is one next step you would like to take, either individually or together, based on our conversation?**

Conversation Facilitation Tips

- Encourage everyone to participate.
- Invite guests to follow-up and expand on each other’s ideas.
- Share your ideas and stories on Thursday, October 1, 2020 using the hashtag #VoicesDMV on social media.
- Don’t micromanage the conversation; let it flow freely.



Beyond the Table: What Happens Next?

Following your *On the Table* conversation:

1. **Complete the host survey so The Community Foundation can learn more about your experience.** The host survey will be emailed to you the day after your conversation and will also be posted on the VoicesDMV website. Part of the survey will give you the option to share your guests' information with us so we can keep them up-to-date on what comes out of these conversations and provide them with information about how to apply for the *Community Action Awards*.
2. **Move your ideas into action by applying for a *Community Action Award*.** The Community Foundation will offer *Community Action Awards* to identify and invest in new, actionable ideas and approaches to benefit for our communities. Awards will range in size from \$1,000-\$5,000. Share your ideas with us - we want to hear what you would like to do to strengthen your community. For more information and application details, visit www.VoicesDMV.org following your conversation.

About the Greater Washington Community Foundation

Since 1973, the Greater Washington Community Foundation has been a champion of thriving communities and a catalyst for change through local philanthropic engagement, effective community investment, and civic leadership. We work with donors and partners to enhance the quality of life in the District of Columbia, Montgomery County, Northern Virginia, and Prince George's County. As the region's largest local funder, The Community Foundation has invested more than \$1.3 billion to build more equitable, just, and enriching communities where all residents can live, work, and thrive.

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