



Celebrating Our Community's Future A Facilitator's Guide

Welcome

I Community History

II. 2030 Vision

III. Action Planning

Community Celebration

In two hours let's reflect together about our
community's
past, present and future.

PURPOSE

To celebrate America's 250th Birthday, communities in Illinois are invited to participate in a two hour "community meeting" that commemorates not only America's founding, but celebrate their community's past while projecting future dreams and actions.

ARRIVALS

As people arrive, they register and are encouraged to go to two sides of the room to brainstorm their memories and vision:

- On the **COMMUNITY HISTORY** wall is a timeline starting with the community's beginning date until present, divided into decades. People fill out half-sheets of paper answering the question, **"What are events, accomplishments, memories of this community?"**
- On the **2030 COMMUNITY VISION** wall is a row of 8 half-sheets with generic symbols on them. People fill out half-sheets answering the question, **"What would you like to SEE in place (your hopes and dreams) in this community by 2030?"**

Each participant places responses under columns, putting similar ideas together in same column.

MATERIALS

Space, flipchart pad, bold markers, large sticky notes (approx. 8.5"x5.5"), masking tape, stickable large dots, refreshments, microphone (if needed), and Action Planning Worksheets.

OPENING - 20 minutes

Host or facilitator makes appropriate introductions:

- VIPs
- Sponsors

Host walks through the agenda:

- Why we are here: Remembering the 250th Anniversary of the USA by celebrating the role our community has played in its past and anticipate a new future. Similar events are occurring across IL and the USA.
- What we plan to do: Reflect on the input for our community's history and 2030 Vision. Then prioritize vision suggestions and work in small groups to create action plans for implementing our vision. Close with a celebration of who we are in terms of a song, story, symbol and slogan. Everything will be documented and copies sent to each participant for future reference.
- Timeline: In two hours we will be moving along, not debating, but brainstorming and prioritizing our best thoughts.

I COMMUNITY HISTORY – 20 minutes

Facilitator turns to **COMMUNITY HISTORY** wall:

- Reviews what is on the wall
- Asks participants to add additional information, writing and adding to wall.
- Requests a volunteer tell the community story (beginning, middle and ending with present time).
- Tells group that a group will write this story at the end of our time together.

II. 2030 PRACTICAL VISION - 20 minutes

Facilitator walks to the **“2030 COMMUNITY VISION”** wall.

- Reads vision responses and asks for additions and gives quick “name” to columns to indicate what related vision elements.
- Each person given dots (or given markers to make dots), answering the question, **“What vision elements would create the most “visible results - easiest - have most impact on the community?”**
- Facilitator/group Select the vision elements with most dots for action planning and assign tables for Action Planning Teams.
- Individuals self-select table/action most passionate about implementing. Walk through Action Planning form.

III. ACTION PLANNING – 30 minutes

At each table there are Action Planning Worksheets. Walk through the worksheet: Brainstorm and record “What is blocking this action from happening?” Then brainstorm action steps to address blocks and realize vision of the action. Prioritize action steps below.

Action Planning Worksheet

Brainstorm and record “What is blocking this action from happening?” Then brainstorm action steps to address blocks and realize vision of the action. Prioritize action steps below (there may be more than 3).

	Priorities	Action	People	Date
1				
2				
3				

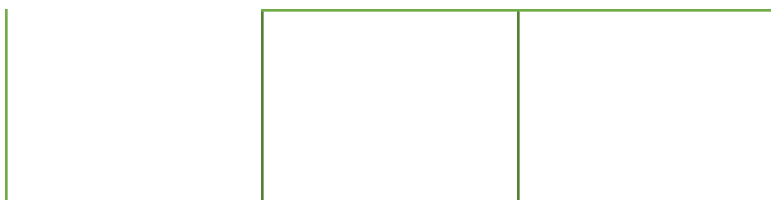
Collaborative Actions

What actions could we ask others to assist?

List names of people in Action Planning group.

Decide date of group meeting to implement action steps.

Practical Actions	Organizations / Individuals	Date
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COMMUNITY CELEBRATION - 30 minutes

Reconvene as a whole group: Have each table read their key ACTION STEPS with applause for each group.

Create a SONG, STORY, SYMBOL AND SLOGAN

Have participants self-select which corner of the room they are most passionate about:

- If you love MUSIC to create a song, go ____;
- If love STORYTELLING to write a story; go ____;
- If an ARTIST to create a community symbol, go ____;
- If love MARKETING to create a slogan, go ____.

Give these instructions to each group:

- **SONG:** Select an EASY tune that most people here would recognize and easily sing. Write verses to song large on flipchart paper to have group sing along with you.
- **STORY:** Looking at the Community Wall of Wonder, write 3 paragraphs: past, present and future of this community. Prepare story to read to group.
- **SYMBOL:** Consider what visuals would best represent and showcase the community. Draw agreed upon symbol on flipchart paper.
- **SLOGAN:** Brainstorm phrases and images that could be used in community slogan? Write slogan on a flipchart paper to share with the group.

In 20 minutes TOTAL GROUP returns to SHARE RESULTS of the four groups. Have SONG group present last and total group sing.

Closing Remarks

- “How is this community going to be different as a result of our time together today?”
- Make sure results of all four groups given to facilitators to be typed into community document in the next week to be emailed to all participants.
- Thank yous ...

WHY A COMMUNITY MEETING

1976 was the year of America's 200th Anniversary. In celebration of the anniversary, the ICA and friends facilitated Town Meetings in every county of the United States w

2026 What if community meetings happened in US counties for America's 250th Anniversary? The ICA, in partnership with IL 250, is offering this guide to make it possible for you to facilitate a planning event in your community.



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