



How can Maine communities be a welcoming place for all?

Share your ideas for how your community can be a great place for all people to live, learn, work, and thrive?

(This is an abbreviated community dialogue example for workshop purposes.)

Group agreements for a productive conversation...

- When one person is talking, others are listening.
- Take space, make space. Share air time.
- If you disagree, consider asking a question rather than arguing to prove your point.
- It's ok to disagree, but don't personalize it. Stick to the issue, not the person.
- Speak for yourself, not for others and not for an entire group. Use 'I' statements.
- What's said here, stays here. What's learned here, leaves here. Ask permission before sharing someone else's personal story.
- We share responsibility for making the group productive.
- Be respectful of each other.

Welcome:

Your small group has a neutral facilitator whose role is to:

- Help with the process and keep time
- Serve as a reminder of our group agreements
- Make sure everyone gets a chance to participate, and
- Record key information on flip charts

5 min:

Introductions: One benefit of these conversations is to be in groups with people whose experiences and perspectives are different from your own. As a way to get to know each other a bit, please share your:

- Name, Maine hometown, and a few hats you wear in your community...
- Share one place where you personally feel a sense of belonging in your community

5 min:

Brainstorm:

To get us started, let's think in general about what it means for a community to be welcoming? What does it mean to be welcoming to all – newcomers, visitors, long-term or multi-generational residents? As you make a list, consider which of these topics are most important to you.

It may be helpful to go around the circle to brainstorm a list of key topics and priorities to discuss in more detail. At this time, keep each idea at a few words or a phrase. In the next section you will have time to talk more in depth.

10 min: Key Questions and Priorities

Consider the framing question: **How can Maine communities be a welcoming place for all?**

Given your priorities and experiences, discuss the key issues and their importance to you. Each person is welcome to speak briefly about their perspective. The additional questions may be helpful to prompt conversation:

- How is your community a welcoming place now? How could it be more welcoming?
- How can your community be a great place for all people to live, learn, work, and thrive?
- What does it mean to have a sense of belonging and how does that factor in?

5 min: Final Priorities

Based on your group's conversation, *"Are there any common-ground thoughts or ideas in this group? If so, what do we want to report out? If not, what diverse points of view do we want to convey?"*

A consensus is not the goal. If the group will put forward two or three primary points of conversation, that is fine. These will represent your key recommendations or findings, though all the notes will be compiled.

5 min: Report out – 1 min each group!

1 person from your group (not the facilitator) please share 2 – 3 main ideas

Possible next steps:

- The notes will be compiled, themed, and summarized and provided back to participants and organizing organizations.
- Action forum, dot-voting, to prioritize actions for next steps
- Connecting with decision-makers and organizations to share the information heard
- Creating a coalition of individuals and organizations to work on the effort