

## *Neighbor to Neighbor Community Conversations*

Report of Research Findings

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Kettering Foundation wants to understand the challenges in how communities “get started” in doing politics differently. The Foundation retained the services of Audience Impact Research to do follow-up research into the Cincinnati Neighbor to Neighbor project which dealt with racial tensions following the disturbances in April 2001. Part of the strategy in Cincinnati was to train a large cadre of moderators to do forums in neighborhoods across the city. In August and September 2002, Audience Impact Research conducted three focus groups with Neighbor to Neighbor moderators to determine the following:

- Many of the moderators had prior experience in facilitating other forms of public meetings. Did their prior experience seem to help or hinder them in grasping the insights about the role of a moderator in deliberative public forums?
- How did the ideas about public deliberation compare/contrast with their existing “models” of how to get things done in community politics? (For example, did people who are teachers act like teachers in the forums; did people who are traditional activists act traditionally in the forums?) How were the ideas about public deliberation assimilated into practice?

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Selection Of Participants, Segmentation Of Focus Groups**

Of the 106 volunteers who had agreed to moderate, most had dropped out of the process (conducted 0-2 conversations) because of schedule conflicts or other priorities. We interviewed those moderators who conducted at least one session and whose serious

interest in Neighbor to Neighbor was indicated by their continued involvement in behind-the-scenes activities.

Based on our preliminary research, we segmented the focus groups as follows. Many volunteers who had little or no prior facilitation experience stopped facilitating Neighbor to Neighbor conversations after one or two sessions out of frustration; the first focus group consisted of these inexperienced volunteers. Thirteen experienced facilitators conducted the lion's share of the conversations - some led 10-13 sessions – and so a separate focus group was held to explore their insights and experiences. African-American volunteers encountered a situation that may be unusual for NIF moderators: intentionally or unintentionally, many white participants focused on them personally - as ersatz representatives of their race – instead of accept them in their role of neutral moderator; the third focus group explored these moderators' insights and experiences about deliberative public forums, including both experienced and inexperienced facilitators who are African-American.

### **Follow Up Research**

After the focus groups were completed, Audience Impact Research emailed survey questions to all the Neighbor to Neighbor moderators who had facilitated one or more conversations, to gain further clarification from those who had participated in the focus groups and to gain additional insights from those who had not. (35 out of 80 responded)

## **CONCLUSIONS**

### **1) Who The Moderators Were:**

- Most were moderate or liberal in their political thinking. Only a small minority had any background in political activism, which may reflect the conservative cultural climate of Cincinnati. Community problem solving in Cincinnati tends to take the form of charitable donation of funds or time to church, school, and social service agencies. Indeed, participating in Neighbor to Neighbor was typically regarded as additional volunteering along those same lines.

- Most were professionals, representing a wide range such as teachers, sales personnel, IT professionals, government employees, social service agency managers, and marketing executives.
- Almost one third of the 106 volunteers were experienced facilitators. Most of these were professional facilitators (focus group moderators, trainers, human resource facilitators) and others had been trained to facilitate diversity conversations sponsored by the National Conference of Community and Justice.

**2) To An Extent, Prior Facilitation Experience Helped Rather Than Hinder The Moderators In Understanding The Role Of A Moderator In Deliberative Public Forums.**

As is suggested by their comments below, they brought the following essential skills to Neighbor to Neighbor:

- Maintain a neutral position: e.g., “Even when I do training, my goal is to get out of the way. The information and energy and solutions are with the group.”
- Elicit the viewpoints of the participants while steering the discussion: e.g., “Keep everybody on track and at the same time validate the different realities.”
- Defuse a provocative situation: e.g., “Sometimes people would make a statement that could be interpreted as provocative but they didn’t mean it that way – they were trying to find the right words. [I would] help people find the right words, note people’s reactions to what people were saying and try to find the intent behind the words with the speaker so that understanding and communication could be restored.”
- Push participants to think beyond their current and sometimes unexamined assumptions, e.g., “There was their reality, which was perfectly consistent, and they couldn’t understand what all the rioting and the fuss were all about. I tried to push them – ‘let’s talk about whether you interact with the African Americans who go to your church.’ Try to find a bit of a step to get them to relate to this problem.”

**3) We Identified Three Challenges, However, In How Cincinnati Got Started In Doing Politics Differently:**

1) the volunteers did not receive the usual amount of moderator training, 2) some of the ideas of public deliberation were not applied successfully in practice, 3) the volunteers' current views of community problem solving are influenced by the successes and failures of the Neighbor to Neighbor conversations.

- 1) Moderator training: the "Facilitator Orientation" was 2-3 hours in length and covered six topics, of which only one dealt with the practice of facilitating deliberative discussion. However, the Community Conversation Agenda contained twelve 12 [!!] separate agenda items. The complexity of the task led to a decision to have a more detailed outline that scripted the words and timing.
- 2) Assimilating ideas about public deliberation into practice: counter to the NIF practice of allowing only a limited amount of time for personal stories, personal stories turned out to be of paramount importance in the Neighbor to Neighbor conversations because segregated Cincinnati was divided over whether a race relations problem even existed. As a result, the issue book lost much of its potential relevance and power.
- 3) Current views about community problem solving: Now that the *Enquirer* has bowed out of Neighbor to Neighbor leadership and a Steering Committee comprised of the original hosts and facilitators has taken over, it is possible to see the effect of the training and practice on the facilitators' political views. The Steering Committee has adopted an approach that stresses community relations as well as political values and solutions. This view is consistent with the views expressed by the facilitators in the focus groups and follow-up survey questions.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **April 2001**

“No one fully understood the danger of Cincinnati's deep racial divisions until a white police officer shot and killed an unarmed black man in April.

African-Americans were outraged. Within days, the anger and frustration that had been building for years spilled into the streets. Rioters broke windows, looted stores, burned trash bins and threw bricks at passing motorists. A city once known as a good place to live and raise kids was embarrassed and stunned.”

Dan Horn

*The Cincinnati Enquirer*

### **1) Adoption Of The NIF *Racial And Ethnic Tensions* Book And The “Forum In Every Neighborhood Plan”**

Following the April 2001 disturbance, the *Enquirer* began to investigate how to shift the focus from the Cincinnati Police/African-American leadership negotiation to a broader discussion of race relations in the Cincinnati area. Two objectives were identified: the first was to involve a much wider segment of the population than had been involved in previous attempts to improve race relations; and the second was to move beyond “just talk” to “solutions-focused” discussions.

The *Enquirer* contacted the Kettering Foundation to inquire about the feasibility of using the NIF model for the planned citizen discussion of race relations. Kettering responded with an offer to demonstrate a deliberative forum with the Editorial Board using the NIF *Racial and Ethnic Tensions* issue book. This demonstration was persuasive, and the *Enquirer* indicated its intent to adopt the issue book and the deliberative forum model for use by the new Neighbor to Neighbor project. Estus Smith of Kettering arranged for David Patton at Ohio State University to provide Neighbor to Neighbor with advice on adapting the NIF model.

During the summer the Steering Committee began to identify potential co-sponsors and debated the best way to design the community forums. A key issue was whether to have the forums at the community level or on a more regional level. The first approach would make the forums more easily accessible but would lead to a greater percentage of the forums being racially segregated. The second approach would probably produce more integration but might not draw out the more timid citizens.

The principal components of the plan that emerged were the following:

- (a) Neighbor to Neighbor would seek to convene a forum in November or December in every city neighborhood and surrounding jurisdiction in Hamilton County and Northern Kentucky – an extremely ambitious 145 targeted areas.
- (b) Local organizations would be identified by *Enquirer* staff in each area and would be asked to host the forum. They would be encouraged to schedule the forum at a time that they felt would work best for the audience they sought to attract.
- (c) A parallel effort to recruit forum moderators would be led by community groups. A series of 2-3 hour orientation/training sessions would be scheduled for October and all moderators would be required to attend one of the sessions.
- (d) Each forum would conclude with a group process that would request (1) personal commitments to do something to improve race relations, and (2) recommendations to be sent to community leaders.

**2) Moderator Recruitment: range of professions and political backgrounds; prior experience in facilitating other forms of public meetings**

A community organizing effort recruited facilitators from all sectors of the economy and all segments of the community. Municipal leaders sent letters to city and county employees soliciting experienced facilitators. Leaders of political organizations asked for facilitators from among their ranks. Heads of local professional associations that were likely to have facilitators or qualitative researchers among their membership sent letters such as the following:



Aug. 30, 2001

Dear Facilitator Friend:

We are a growing group of concerned citizens, brought together by *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, who want to make a difference in our community on the critical issue of race relations.

The Cincinnati Chapter of the American Marketing Association has formed a partnership with *The Cincinnati Enquirer* to identify professional facilitators among our membership to facilitate these conversations. We'd like to enlist your help as a facilitator.

Our goal is to engage the citizens of Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky in a solutions-oriented conversation on race during the latter part of October. The goal is ambitious because we hope to reach every city, village and township in the region, along with each of the city's 48 neighborhoods. That's about 145 conversations in all.

As a facilitator, this is what we'd ask of you: 1. A commitment to attend a 2-hour training session. 2. A commitment to lead at least one conversation in one neighborhood. 3. A commitment to write a summary of that conversation and forward it to the group's website.

Imagine, if you will, the entire region engaged in a conversation that identifies where common ground exists on the racial issues that divide us. Imagine the citizens of Greater Cincinnati building a "citizens report" on how the region should respond. Imagine the citizens of Greater Cincinnati giving the nation a model for how a community can rise above its past and become a place where people of all races and ethnicities want to live and do business.

Following the neighborhood conversations, we expect a second, follow-up forum that will become the basis for a televised town hall meeting simulcast on WCET-48, another local TV station and several local radio stations. Also, Cincinnati.Com will host a website to help citizens track what everybody's saying. This is all part of the Cincinnati Media Collaborative announced last week.

The conversation model comes from the National Issues Forums and the Kettering Foundation, a nonpartisan think-tank outside Dayton that is dedicated to helping communities solve their problems. The model allows people to get their stories and

opinions on the table, find where there might be agreement and then make choices about what should be done.

We're committed to keeping the initiative alive at least a year, perhaps 18 months, depending on how much energy and community action it creates.

Please help us make a difference by offering your talents to help citizens be heard and understood.

Please e-mail the attached response form to Barbara Rugen at [brugen@cinci.rr.com](mailto:brugen@cinci.rr.com) and let us know if you're willing to participate. We can then begin the task of assigning neighborhoods and communities to individuals. And if you know any other professional moderators who might be interested in joining this initiative, please pass along this invitation.

Thanks very much for your consideration and your help.

Ric Sweeney  
President,  
AMA Cincinnati Chapter

Ward Bushee  
The Cincinnati Enquirer

Susan Sumner  
Catholic Social  
Services of N. Ky.

Roger Stephens  
Retired teacher

Dorothy Battle  
Kettering Foundation

Dave Patton  
Ohio State Univ.

Charles Houston  
Community Action Agency

Rosemary Goudreau  
The Cincinnati Enquirer

Danielle Battle  
student

Brian Woods  
student

James Jackson  
Cincinnati.com

Sean Hinken,  
student

Deb Carney  
Ohio State

Crystal Bossard  
Cincinnati State

Barbara Rugen  
Audience Impact  
Research

Despite the call for “professional facilitators,” the response included both professionals and people who had little or no facilitation experience but who were inspired by the letters to action. The marketing associations yielded qualitative researchers and also such neophytes to facilitation as two marketing professors, two freelance writers, a graphic designer, a video producer, two advertising agency executives, and a brand manager at Procter & Gamble. The volunteers who were city and county employees included such highly skilled facilitators as the city manager’s communications manager and the metro system’s human resources manager as well as people who had never conducted a public

meeting before. It was the same kind of range among the political facilitators from the Community Action Agency and the National Council for Community and Justice.

Simultaneous with these grassroots organizing efforts, the *Enquirer* solicited facilitators in daily newspaper articles. Readers were told they would play “a unique role in an historic project that holds great potential. We share your dream of a just, proud Greater Cincinnati where citizens of all races want to live and work together.” The response to the newspaper articles ranged from raw recruits to heads of nonprofit organizations skilled in handling group dynamics. The professions drawn from the newspaper solicitations included architects, theatre designer, IT specialists, hypnotherapist, nurses, social workers, administrative assistants, professor of theology, schoolteacher, salesmen, sales trainer, company managers, and housewives.

The political backgrounds were far less varied than the professions. When asked, “What was your political background before Neighbor to Neighbor,” the majority of facilitators said they had no political background beyond voting, and some were startled at being asked to think of Neighbor to Neighbor in a political context: e.g., “I never connected politics to that whole process. I guess because there was no government agency involved I thought of it as more of a community effort – which may have been a reason why I was willing to be involved.” For the majority of facilitators, Neighbor to Neighbor was a community service effort much like the school, church, and charity volunteer work they had done before, but on a city-wide scale. A few, however, had been active in unions, civic associations or political campaigns, and one had managed political campaigns.

By the time the conversations were underway, 106 facilitators had volunteered. The mission the *Enquirer* had offered was compelling: to engage “in a conversation that identifies where common ground exists on the racial issues that divide us.” The facilitators came because they wanted to “make a difference instead of grousing on the sidelines,” attracted to Neighbor to Neighbor by a format that was solutions-oriented and that allowed those with previous facilitation experience to use their skills to help heal the city. Sample comments:

- “It sounded like **the voice of reason**, a way for people to talk and exchange ideas. Part of the problem in Cincinnati is, **when the king is naked nobody wants to say he’s naked**. The problem is that it’s business as usual” (Communications manager, whose previous political experience was served on a village planning commission)
- “I grew up in the 60s when civil rights was an informing issue for our generation. I **don’t speak much about social and political issues in Cincinnati**, where people are so conservative. But when the rioting happened and I got the email inviting me to participate as a moderator I thought, **this is where I can make a difference** because I know how to do this” (market research moderator).

### **3) The Design of the Neighbor to Neighbor Community Conversation**

Adapting the NIF model to the Neighbor to Neighbor Community Conversation led to considerable discussion on the Steering Committee. There were four issues that required considerable deliberation.

- (a) One issue involved the proper length of the community conversation. NIF has always suggested a two-hour forum. Many on the Steering Committee felt that with all the expectations being placed on the session, a longer time was needed. Others cautioned about the difficulty of recruiting people to come to a long session.
- (b) Some people familiar with the work of groups like the National Conference for Community and Justice pointed out the importance of providing ample time for people who had a major investment in righting the wrongs of racial injustice to “tell their stories.” This idea ran counter to the NIF practice of allowing only a limited amount of time for personal stories so that most of the time could be devoted to deliberating over what could be done to address the problem.
- (c) Some people were bothered by the fact that the NIF issue book was very broad and included issues such as making English the official language. They wondered whether the book shouldn’t be modified to make it more immediately relevant to race relations in Cincinnati. This suggestion ran counter to the NIF model which

stresses broadening people's view of the issue to break them out of their current, frequently polarized, thinking.

- (d) The longest most difficult discussions dealt with how to move the Community Conversation from "just talk" to some sort of action steps. In most NIF forums no action recommendations emerge. It was felt that this would be an unacceptable conclusion for this project, which was being promoted as moving beyond talk to possible solutions.

The Steering Committee, in the end, resolved the first three of these issues as follows: (a) by adopting a 2½ hour format for the Community Conversations; (b) by only allowing 5 minutes for people to "tell their stories;" and (c) by agreeing to use the unmodified NIF *Racial and Ethnic Tensions* issue book with accompanying video.

The fourth issue was resolved by moving away from NIF practice by structuring into the Community Conversation two closing 25-minute segments. The first was titled "Recommended Actions for Citizens Like Us." Facilitators were instructed to pose the following question to the participants: "What one action can citizens like us – or we ourselves – agree on to improve race relations in our community or neighborhood?" After having all the suggestions recorded, the group was to have a discussion and then select its most preferred action.

This was followed immediately by a segment titled "Recommended Priorities for Community Leaders." Facilitators were to ask: "What should be the priority for action by our community leaders?" Following a similar process, facilitators were to get the group to select a single suggestion for community leaders.

#### **4) Designing the Facilitator Orientation**

As with designing the Community Conversation, there was extensive discussion on the Steering Committee on how to best get facilitators ready to conduct the conversations. People familiar with NIF suggested that to do this properly would require 6 – 8 hours of

training. This suggestion was fairly quickly abandoned on the grounds that volunteers would not be able to give that much time to the effort. The decision was to schedule 2 ½ hour sessions (with supper provided). The training thereafter was labeled “Facilitator Orientation.”

Another suggestion was to design a 3 or 4 hour training session that would lead to certification for those who desired that credential. There were three problems with this idea. First, NIF does not certify people as moderators. Any such certification from the Ohio State University Civic Life Institute would be quite arbitrary. Second, the proposed time for the training was always insufficient. And third, if the goal was to get a large number of people ready to facilitate these sessions, giving extra training to a few seemed a distraction.

Another issue involved the fact that some of the prospective facilitators had professional backgrounds in facilitation while others would be quite inexperienced. Could the training sessions be segregated by experience so that experienced people could explore the model in more depth, while the less experienced could try to get comfortable with the basics? It was decided that there was no practical way to implement this idea because people would need to choose a session that fit their calendar.

Based on these Steering Committee decisions, David Patton designed a 2 1/2 hour facilitator orientation session that covered the following topics:

- (a) National Issues Forums – The history and organizational structure of NIF.
- (b) The concept of public deliberation – An analysis of how deliberation differs from just letting everybody “have their say” and also how it differs from debate. The extremely difficult concept of “common ground for action” was to be covered briefly.
- (c) Issue framing – What is the logic of the “approaches?” Do people have to choose among them?

- (d) The *Racial and Ethnic Tensions* issue book and video – An overview of the issues raised in the material.
- (e) The Community Conversation agenda – Following all the steps in an NIF forum plus the action steps items led to an agenda with 12 [!!] entries. This section of the orientation was focused on time management.
- (f) “Facilitator tips” – Considerable time at each orientation session was to be devoted to the special problems that this agenda would present to facilitators. It was essential that all facilitators follow the same process to elicit the “recommended actions.”

Following this agenda, James Jackson of the *Enquirer* was to go over the myriad logistical issues involved for the facilitators, including instructions on the process for filing the facilitator report following the conversation.

## **CHALLENGES IN DOING POLITICS DIFFERENTLY**

### **Challenge #1, Facilitator Orientation**

As noted above, the facilitator orientation sessions were a brief 2 ½ hours long. Individuals conducting the orientation were well aware that facilitators were being overwhelmed with the complexity of what they were expected to do. But with the need to train approximately 100 individuals in four similar orientation training sessions on how to work through the complex conversation agenda, it was felt there was no way to change the orientation session significantly.

However, following the first session, a participant called in with a request to have a “script” developed to help facilitators move through all the discreet tasks listed on the agenda. While this request seemed inconsistent with the spirit of an NIF forum, it actually made sense given the limited amount of time the facilitators were going to have

for each of the multiple tasks. Such a script was prepared in time for the second Orientation Session (Appendix A).

In the follow-up study, facilitators were asked to discuss the effectiveness of the orientation session. In many cases, facilitators evaluated the orientation session in relation to their evaluation of the NIF approach, which was also intertwined with their view of the entire Neighbor to Neighbor project.

Several facilitators commented that the NIF issue book encouraged a discussion of a very sensitive issue without requiring that participants reveal and defend their view of the April 2001 disturbance. As one put it, “I think it’s kind of Zen. It puts their attention on something vs. just talking about their painful experience.” At the same time, some facilitators felt the NIF approaches prevented people from talking about what they really wanted to talk about. “People didn’t come to talk about those scenarios; they came to talk about the problem.”

As for the training itself, most felt it was very helpful. An inexperienced facilitator commented: “I was delighted with the training. It gave me all this videotape and structure and approaches that gave people a way to talk about things.” On the other hand, a facilitator said, “We didn’t walk away knowing what we had to do.” Another commented: “They relied heavily on us to read the book and learn the script – essentially to train ourselves.”

In summary, most people found the orientation helpful but most were aware that they really should have had more training, especially a chance to practice. It appears that following the orientation sessions the more inexperienced people became quite focused on the script and how it would get them through the conversation. On the other hand, experienced people began thinking of ways to use their previous experience to accomplish their understanding of the goal of Neighbor To Neighbor. One experienced facilitator said, “There were multiple goals – to accomplish our agenda, but also just to get people to think or talk or listen, and the goal of individuals connecting with each

other.” That seemed more important to them than trying to adhere to the brief orientation they had received to the NIF approach.

### **Challenge #2. Assimilating The Ideas About Public Deliberation Into Practice**

Although some facilitators may have gone into the Community Conversations with their own ideas about civic participation, three factors were the overall determinants of their practice of public deliberation. First, whatever their individual intentions, the facilitators frequently encountered prejudice and confrontations among participants, which forced many of them to learn to listen and try to reconcile participants’ views, putting aside individual agendas: e.g., “I tried to say, ‘It’s not my ideas and what I want.’” Second, skill-level became critical in controlling the racial tensions: novices to facilitation tended to either cling to the script or stop facilitating, and even the experienced facilitators struggled to maintain their neutral role. Third, as novices dropped out, one group took over and did the lion’s share of the Community Conversations. The experienced facilitators, most of whom had no background of political activism beyond other forms of public facilitation, typically reorganized the community conversations to enable participants to understand each other’s personal experiences first and political agendas second. In this sense, their sessions were largely de-politicized into opportunities for dialogue about race relations. Among the experienced facilitators, many African-American experienced facilitators had felt all along that communication between the two races should be the primary objective of the deliberation:

At the very core of the matter is a problem with the way people view each other: a lack of respect for people who were different. If we could all start there and accept that (including African-Americans), we could move into some of the underlying causes as to why we don't all see each other as equal human beings.

#### 1) Did the experienced facilitators who took over help or hinder the process?

In retrospect, it was unrealistic of the Neighbor to Neighbor organizers to expect that two races so disconnected from one another would find “common ground on the racial issues

that divide us” in a 2 1/2-hour session. The African-American facilitators were right: Cincinnati had to acknowledge that the king was naked and face its racial prejudices before it would be possible to listen to each other and work together toward political solutions. The experienced facilitators had the training to recognize this intuitively and allow dialogue about the racial prejudice to infuse the community conversations. Indeed, the NIF issue book on which the Neighbor to Neighbor conversations were based aptly describes the situation in referring to cities where “there are no race relations. We are two different communities in two different worlds that hardly have anything to do with each other” (p. 3). The goal of Neighbor to Neighbor to find common ground was valid, but segregated Cincinnati needed to move in stages: first engage in a new conversation about the issues and perceptions that divide us, then enter into fresh and meaningful dialogue about the solutions that can help us become one. The experienced facilitators had the conflict resolution and diversity management skills needed in this situation. As one of them said, “conflict resolution is a matter of getting individual realities and needs to be acknowledged by all concerned, then negotiating how to make the changes and spread the resources so that all needs are met better.”

## 2) Racial tensions and stereotypes threatened to derail the community conversations.

### Struggling to remain neutral. Clinging to the “script” instead of pushing for solutions

The Community Conversations were typically held in homes and churches, with 15-25 participants. The facilitators had been trained to keep the discussion focused on the three approaches in the issue book and to pace the 2 1/2-hour session so that the discussion would conclude with participants choosing action steps. The action steps were to be (1) personal commitments to improve race relations, and (2) recommendations to be sent to community leaders.

Frequently, however, the participants refused to focus on the approaches. In all-white groups, many wanted to understand why the riots had occurred, while others argued there was no racial problem. Usually the co-facilitators were racially paired – one black, one white – and participants in the all-white sessions often tried to make the black facilitator explain or defend the behavior they attributed to his or her race. When the sessions were

racially segregated – which happened frequently, since this was a neighborhood initiative and most of Cincinnati’s neighborhoods are de facto segregated – racial stereotypes often dictated people’s thinking. Participants sometimes told the facilitator, “You’re different from the other black people,” and then described blacks in subhuman terms.

The few all-black sessions tended to collapse in failure: e.g., “I had one group of all black people, all educated, and they called it a ‘crock,’ ‘blah, blah, blah.’ I stopped trying to bring them back on focus.” The major reason given for such failure was the inability of facilitators to demonstrate the benefit of public deliberation. The topic was too explosive among African Americans for novices to handle:

It was just the usual discussion. Is this a good idea? Is that a good idea? We’ve had these things before – we’ve talked about bussing and such. Hit people where they live. Show me what’s in it for me. There was nothing in this for most black people other than sit around and talk. For the good white folks, it was a chance to get engaged, which is fine.

The racially mixed groups were often confrontational. “One of the hardest things to deal with was when African-American respondents and Caucasians got into a confrontation, and before each could explain their thoughts, other people in the groups started taking sides. Trying to diffuse that while trying to maintain the notion that we can all have different realities that cause us to respond differently – to such a hot topic – was very challenging.” Also, “people have different abilities to communicate in a non-provocative way, and some people got angry at the provocative things being said.”

Staying neutral under such conditions was extremely difficult. A white facilitator who had joined the civil rights marches in Selma and is now an established qualitative researcher at a leading research company said that facilitating Neighbor to Neighbor conversations was “extremely challenging. I felt frustrated and inadequate.” A black facilitator who tolerated assaults on her humanity as an African American concluded, “White people see what they do as right and justifiable whether it is or not, and black

people can't seem to break through that and make them see that our issues are real." Two of the less experienced facilitators told the participants off.

Some facilitators were able to stick to the plan of discussing the three approaches to easing racial tensions and pacing the 2 1/2-hour session to conclude with action steps. A few were able to do this because they didn't encounter any of these problems: "I often felt I was preaching to the choir. These were already the community activists. They already had programs in place"; "they were examples of a committed group who act on this issue, they're an example of the success that we want, but they were all on board to begin with."

But often other facilitators stuck to the format in effort to impose structure on the "gut-wrenching things involved." Typically they were the less experienced facilitators. These sessions tended to be the least successful for the following reasons:

- Participants felt offended at being cut off: e.g., "African American participants started to relate stories of prejudice in their lives and started to lecture to the group. I was torn between listening to something valuable and cutting them off so we could hear what other people had to say. I cut them off and they were offended. They felt I didn't want to hear about their experiences of prejudice."
- The sessions were "surfacy": e.g., "The dialogue was approaches to dealing with racism, but we skipped over 'why are you people so angry,' 'why are you white people so blind?'"
- The approaches seemed almost irrelevant because they were being used to put a lid on what people wanted to talk about and hence to restrain rather than stimulate "a new way of talking about racial differences, suspicions, and conflicts" (issue book, p. 5). In public deliberation, personal experience and the approaches become the stimulus for meaningful dialogue; but "we had a list about the pros and cons of the three approaches and we'd just go through the list. People didn't come up with things on their own or really think about what the issues meant to them."

If a black man is shot to death we react. I want to know why he ran. I wanted to hear how other people think about that. I know what baggage I carry with me, what do they bring to the table? The format kept this from being a free-for-all, but the focus on the three approaches kept us from thinking about what we were there for and had to do.

- The breadth of the approaches fueled the sense of talking around the problem. Participants who refused to acknowledge that Cincinnati had a racial problem were sometimes reinforced in their thinking by the references to such issues as making English the official language. For novices in particular, the breadth of the approaches made a daunting job harder:

I didn't like the three examples because people here in Cincinnati couldn't relate to them, like the Hispanic issues and the bi-lingual issues. People would try to make the transition to Cincinnati issues, but it was hard.

- Inevitably – because such Community Conversations had become pro forma – the action plans were often inane: “People thought, ‘Whatever.’ They were ready to go home. They came up with ‘Smile at people,’ not something concrete.”

### 3) Novices stopped facilitating, experienced facilitators took over.

Despite requests for help, most facilitators declined to facilitate more than two Community Conversations, although many continued with behind-the-scenes involvement. Of the 106 facilitators recruited, 13 experienced facilitators took over the lion's share, leading between five and thirteen Community Conversations each. Essentially, the differences between the novice facilitators who stopped and the experienced ones who continued are:

- The novices were disillusioned because they lacked the skills to generate meaningful discussion about either the nature of the city's racial divide or what to do about it: “I had a group of people who didn't know each other and had no commonality when they walked in, and they also didn't have any commonality when they walked out. So bringing together people with no particular connection and trying to get them to listen to each other and have a really productive conversation and then decide what they're going to do together – that was very

- ambitious.” In contrast, the experienced facilitators possessed the necessary skills to stimulate meaningful dialogue, particularly about confronting the racial divide.
- The novices who were African Americans took the racism personally: “The group I helped facilitate was very accusatory and unwilling to do more than meet again without any making any personal or group pledges to improve the racial climate in Cincinnati.” The experienced facilitators who were African American were committed to breaking through barriers: “My goal was that I wouldn’t react to any negativeness or ignorance, not take anything personally. And also, I knew I could make a difference.”
  - In a few instances, the dropouts were blinded by their own prejudice: “My original attendance was in anticipation of some open, interacting, and meaningful discussions on race relations. From the beginning it became apparent that it was nothing but a pity party for the African-American people. Was that the intention? With the outline given, that was the only conclusion that could be reached.” The experienced facilitators knew enough to examine their prejudice: “I was concerned with my own abilities to listen, given any racial bias I might have had.”

4) Acknowledging that the king is naked: the 13 experienced facilitators allowed personal stories about racial prejudice to infuse the community conversations

Their sessions tended to have the following characteristics, reflecting their conflict resolution and diversity management skills:

- (a.) “Keep everybody on track and at the same time validate the different realities. I did 12 sessions and it worked.”
- (b.) “Get out of the way. The information and energy and solutions are with the group. I did six sessions. You have to let them know that and just keep them on track.”
- (c.) Push participants to move beyond their original assumptions: “I had an all white group denying there were any racial problems. I tried to push them. ‘Let’s talk about whether you interact with the African Americans who go to your church.’ Try to find a bit of a step to get them to relate to this problem.” “Give them a

point of reference – ‘let’s say your kid goes to college and his roommate is an African-American. Let’s talk about how you feel about that.’”

But keeping participants on track also meant **leveraging the approaches with stories of personal experiences**: “We could, for example, figure out how a personal story fit into one of the approaches and set of values being discussed. The approaches gave people ways to solve racial tension, so that brought to bear that there is a problem of racial tension, and how can I relate to it.”

- “At one meeting there was an African-American woman, and I asked her to tell us how she felt about this. She told how she’d been mistreated all her life – told of the indignities, the shame and harassment to which she has been subjected. Having people like this in the all-white sessions was a teaching experience. The same thing happened in another session. We talk, but we do not realize. When they talk, and the others listen, then people learn in their hearts.”
- “You could see the confusion in [white] people’s faces. That they had no idea. They needed to hear some real experiences of black people to be able to move on. One man told about his experience with police when he was stationed in Alabama. A white woman started weeping and said she didn’t know a neighbor had been through such an experience. The experience that he related changed the whole tone of the session.”

In one instance, a facilitator **added a second videotape** that “a guy brought out to show us on police brutality toward his cousin. I let him show it provided we could go through the Neighbor to Neighbor agenda first.”

As a result, the issue book became “an academic frame for carrying on this discussion. It puts their attention on something instead of just talk about their painful experience or the ignorance that other people have. This brings focus into which we can integrate the personal experience.”

Instead of insisting upon action steps, most of the experienced facilitators encouraged the participants to meet again to build some group cohesiveness out of which community action might develop. Many of the groups did indeed meet again, led by some of these same facilitators. “So back to goals, there were multiple goals – to accomplish our agenda, but also just to get people to think or talk or listen, and the goal of individuals connecting with each other.”

### **Challenge #3: Their Current Views About Community Problem Solving**

Most of the facilitators think Neighbor to Neighbor should continue, and the Steering Committee, which is comprised of many of the original novice and experienced facilitators, has voted to expand Neighbor to Neighbor to reach into businesses, schools and into more neighborhoods as well as revisit the original neighborhoods. Plans are currently being formulated. Given, however, their successes and failures in facilitating the Community Conversations, most of the facilitators favor a broader model for dealing with Cincinnati’s racial tensions than public facilitation. Many favor a multifaceted approach that may include public deliberation, for example:

Bring folks together and allow the emotional discharge. Then add a pronged approach of education and deliberation. Psychologists say education is what happens when people come into differences, so people can distance themselves from their emotions and say, ‘oh yeah I’m kind of fitting into that model.’ Then get into the deliberative piece: how are we going to work through these issues together and build some bridges.”

Indeed the Mission Statement of Neighbor to Neighbor has changed from the values of public deliberation to the values of community building:

**NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR, 2001:** To create a model for facilitated deliberative dialogue that explores all sides of the issue, find participants’

common ground, stimulate participants to take action, and produce reports for public distribution in order to educate others.

**NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR, 2002:** To serve as a catalyst for continuous community dialogue to increase understanding and appreciation, promote relationships and encourage all citizens to take action to improve themselves and their communities.

The goals of the facilitators for Neighbor to Neighbor as expressed in the research and on the Steering Committee are psychological as much as political: “diversity-awareness for kids, parents, business community, and churches,” “emphasize the human potential,” “identify and listen to problems as well as solutions,” “share personal experiences of diverse individuals,” and “discover deeper understanding of issues.” Immediate plans under consideration include “build on cross-neighbor communications with something family oriented,” and story-telling: “reconciliation begins with truth telling: I understand your truth - not argue or debate but understand. - and next time I’ll tell you my truth.”

## APPENDIX A

# NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR CONVERSATION AGENDA

(VERSION FOR 2 ½-HOUR CONVERSATIONS)

### Key to This Guide

Actions are underlined.

*Suggested language for facilitators is italicized.*

(Advice and information appear in parentheses.)

### Before the Conversation

#### In advance of the meeting

1. Contact your host early to confirm all the details. Be sure they understand the conversation is structure to last two and half hours.
2. Contact your co-facilitator to discuss roles, including flip chart duties.
3. Does the meeting site have a TV? A VCR? Flipchart? Markers?
4. Does the host need help in getting people to attend?
5. Do you have enough supplies? Handouts? Name tags? Voting dots?
6. Is there a pen or pencil for each participant to use?
7. Discuss possible refreshments and food.
8. Review the new Public Outcomes Report Form so that you understand what you'll be asked to communicate to us. It has changed a bit since the training session.
9. If there are any problems or unmet needs, call 513-768-6010.

#### Set up

1. Double-check the TV and VCR. Can everyone see it?
2. Set up your flip chart. Find wall space.
3. Prepare spaces for name tags, handouts, etc.
4. Hang copies of the Ground Rules sign on the walls.
5. Be sure you know where the restrooms are.
6. If a reporter is in attendance, be sure they understand the guidelines that Neighbor to Neighbor has communicated to local media:
  - They will be unobtrusive and not interrupt or interfere in any way.
  - They can take notes but must get permission to quote individuals.
  - Photographers can only take photos near the end, during the

discussion about priorities for community leaders.

.....

**0:00 Arrival (5 minutes)**

1. Make sure each participant has a name tag if they want one.
2. As guests arrive, give them the Pre-Forum Questionnaire (Handout #1) from your GREEN FOLDER.

*This questionnaire is designed to capture your thoughts going into this conversation. Everything is anonymous and confidential. Your answers will help us to better understand attitudes in Greater Cincinnati.*

3. Circulate the attendance roster.

*We'd like to be able to keep in touch with this new network of citizens interested in this issue. This information will not be shared.*

.....

**0:05 Welcome and Overview [Host and/or facilitator] (5 minutes)**

Explain the purpose of the conversations:

- *We hope participants will better understand the issues and each other and that they will be inspired to take action. Neighbor to Neighbor is unique because our forums conclude with plans to do something, empowering people to move from talk to action.*
- *We hope the groups will identify priorities for action by community leaders.*
- *From the neighborhood reports, we will build a "Citizen's Report" that will be published in The Enquirer and on Cincinnati.Com. The newspaper's print and Web editions will report on the actions and outcomes over the next year or more.*
- *Outcomes will be published online, by neighborhood, to give groups the opportunity to link with others interested in similar actions and outcomes.*

Housekeeping.

- *This conversation will last up to two and half hours. You'll find the time will go quickly.*

- *No breaks are scheduled, so feel free to get up at any time to use the restroom / stretch / refill your beverage / get something to eat.*

Comments in the event that news media attend the session.

(Read *only* if you know that a reporter plans to attend.)

- *The media is interested in covering how this conversation develops in our neighborhoods and region. Press coverage can stimulate even more conversation in our region and help people learn how new perspectives can come from talking about options for solutions. Journalists understand there may be some hesitation on your part if they attend. To strike a balance, we've set clear ground rules for journalists. A reporter is with us tonight, taking notes to capture the process of how we move through the issues. However, you will not be named or quoted unless you give your permission. At the end of the conversation, if there is something you said that he or she would like to publish, he or she will approach you for permission, or for the chance to talk with you more. If you're asked, I would encourage you to agree, but the choice is yours.*

(Read *only* if you know that a photographer or cameraperson plans to attend.)

- *Near the end of our conversation, when we're discussing priorities for community leaders, a photographer plans to join us. They're looking for photos (or video) of citizens in action, making choices. They will try to be invisible; just try to ignore them. If you have serious objections, please let the photographer know and your concerns will be honored.*

.....

**0:10 Participants Introduce Themselves. (5 minutes)**

1. Ask participants to say their names and neighborhoods.
2. Collect the Pre-Forum Questionnaire.

.....

**0:15 Explain the Conversation and Review the Ground Rules (10 minutes)**

1. Lay the foundation
  - *This is a different kind of talk – not a debate or a public hearing. It's a structured conversation, examining one approach at a time. Think of the forum as if you were a jury, working through issues and making hard choices.*
  - *Each person comes with their own sets of beliefs and values. We recognize and value those differences. We're here to surface those areas where diverse people can agree and then, what can be done to make a difference.*

2. Circulate the issues map and explain it:

- *We're going to talk about the three approaches to solving racial tensions, developed by Kettering researchers based on public opinion polls, focus groups, media reports and interviews with experts and citizens. These are the three most common themes that emerge when people discuss solutions. The model is also designed to prevent a debate between just two approaches. We don't need to read this now. We're going to discuss this further in a few minutes.*

3. Display and review the Ground Rules:

- *These are very important to keeping the conversation respectful, productive and open to all viewpoints. You may want to mention that the group wants to hear the stories of each others' experiences, but ask participants to honor the time limits we're under.*

.....

**0:25 Video to Prompt Conversation (10 minutes)**

Show the ten-minute video that briefly summarizes the three approaches.

.....

**0:35 "Personal stake" (5 minutes. Optional if meeting is running late.)**

*Why are you here tonight? We'd like to ask two or three people to volunteer to say a few words about how this issue personally affects them.*

(This is an optional icebreaker. Keep responses limited and keep it short.)

.....

**0:40 Approach One: Look Beyond Race and Ethnicity. (15 minutes)**

1. Introduce Approach One and create a labeled flip chart page:

*Now we're going to discuss each of the three options in detail, the pros and the cons, one at a time. On your handout, you'll notice some examples of what other people have suggested as possible actions, drawbacks or tradeoffs to this approach.*

*Let's start with the first approach, "Look Beyond Race and Ethnicity." You can read along with me.*

*"Focus on what unites us, not what divides us. We will all benefit if we stop seeing everything through the lens of race and ethnicity. There has been great progress in race relations and there will be even more if we eliminate racial and*

*ethnic preferences. Give everyone a fair, equal chance, but treat everyone the same — as Americans. This means immigrants, too, who need to assimilate rapidly.”*

2. Ask the following questions and record the essence of the answers:

- What are the benefits of this approach?
- What are the dangers and drawbacks of this approach?
- What might this look like if it were adopted?

(You only have 15 minutes on this approach. It’s not necessary to answer each question in detail. You’re trying to get people to discuss this issue from various angles and to hear one another. You’ll follow this process for the other approaches. If someone dominates, refer to ground rules. Be sure to hang flip chart pages as you go.)

.....

**0:55 Approach Two: Build Self-Identity First. (15 minutes)**

1. Introduce Approach Two and create a new labeled flip chart page:

*The second approach is called “Build Self-Identity First.” You can read along with me.*

*“To reduce ethnic and racial tensions, we must first build racial and cultural identity within the individual groups that comprise life in America. The simple fact is that our society is multicultural. We will never learn to get along with others well until we first know who we are, as individuals who belong to different ethnic histories. Only through making sure that our particular group has its place in the sun, is recognized and strong, can we relate to others. We must allow communities and schools to set their own course, even if it means accepting some self-segregation.”*

2. Ask the following questions and record the essence of the answers:

- What are the benefits of this approach?
- What are the dangers and drawbacks of this approach?
- What might this look like if it were adopted?

.....

**1:10 Approach Three: Open All Doors to Everyone. (15 minutes)**

1. Introduce Approach Three and create a new labeled flip chart page:

*Now let’s discuss the third approach, “Open All Doors to Everyone.”*

*“We must all take an active part in integrating our society, and we must not encourage or accept racial and ethnic separatism. Finishing the job of integration — in our schools, our offices, and our neighborhoods — should be one of our highest priorities. Only through living, working, and going to school together, will prejudice begin to subside. This also means making continuous efforts to meet, talk, and understand each other better.”*

2. Ask the following questions and record the essence of the answers:

- What are the benefits of this approach?
- What are the dangers and drawbacks of this approach?
- What might this look like if it were adopted?

.....

**1:25 “Reflections” (10 minutes. Optional if meeting is running late.)**

*Has your thinking changed about this issue? If so, how?*

(It’s not necessary to capture the replies on the flip charts.  
There’s only time for two or three people to speak.)

.....

**1:35 Recommended Actions for Citizens Like Us (25 minutes)**

*In this last segment, we’re going to talk about recommended actions for citizens like us and, later, suggested priorities for community leaders. First, let’s talk about what we can do.*

*All the Neighbor to Neighbor Conversations are being asked to address one specific question:*

***‘What one action can citizens like us – or we ourselves – agree on to improve race relations in our community or neighborhood?’***

I want to start by having each of you jot down an action that you favor. Then I will go around the room asking each of you to share your idea. If you don’t want to give one, that’s fine too. We will record your ideas without any discussion. After they are all on paper, we will have a “straw vote” -- everyone gets three votes -- to see which ones seem to be most acceptable. Then we’ll discuss the three most-favored ideas. Following that discussion, we will vote to select our preferred action.”

1. Ask each person to write down their suggested action. They may want to review the flip chart pages around the room for inspiration.
2. Go around the room and record each participant's ideas, without discussion.
3. Ask each person to vote for three. Read each suggested action and call for a show of hands or allow them to use the "dots."
4. Identify the three top vote-getters.
5. Discuss the three top vote-getters in more detail, and then ask participants to vote on just one action.
6. Ask what the group is willing to do to make these actions happen.

.....

**2:00 Recommended Priorities for Community Leaders (25 minutes)**

If a photographer is waiting, now is the time to let him or her in.

*Now we're going to talk about where we'd like to see community leaders place their priorities. By community leaders, we could mean elected officials, school, social service or religious leaders or even members of the business community.*

*Again, all the Neighbor to Neighbor Conversations are being asked to address this second specific question:*

***What should be the priority for action by our community leaders?***

We're going to use the same process. Each of you will jot down your suggestion, and then we'll call them out without discussion. Then we'll vote for our three favorites before choosing our top recommendation.

1. Ask each person to write down their suggested action. They may want to review the flip chart pages around the room for inspiration.
2. Go around the room and record each participant's ideas, without discussion.
3. Ask each person to vote for three. Read each suggested action and call for a show of hands or allow them to use the "dots."
4. Identify the three top vote-getters.
5. Discuss the three top vote-getters in more detail, and then ask participants to vote on just one action.

6. Ask what the group is willing to do to make these actions happen.

.....

**2:25 Closing Comments and Questionnaire (5 minutes)**

1. Explain that you will be giving a report to Neighbor to Neighbor.

*Excerpts of this conversation will be published in The Cincinnati Enquirer and on Cincinnati.Com. Your conclusions, along with those of citizens across the region who are participating in this conversation, will be built into a broader “Citizen’s Report” that the newspaper plans to publish and pursue over the next year.*

*You can track or reach Neighbor to Neighbor online. The address is Cincinnati.Com. On the Web site, you’ll find what participants in other neighborhoods decided they wanted to do. If you decide to take action on what you’ve decided tonight, you may find some partners there.*

2. Circulate the Post-Forum Questionnaire (Handout #3) in your ORANGE FOLDER. (Be sure to use the corrected questionnaire mailed to facilitators.)
3. Circulate “Thank you” letter (Handout #4) from PURPLE FOLDER. The letter actually contains a form to encourage continued contact.

*“If tonight’s conversation has inspired you to get involved, we’d like to keep in touch and keep track of what you decide to do.”*

4. (Optional) Additional Closing Comments by Host or Facilitator

.....

**2:30 Adjourn**

1. Collect the questionnaire from participants before they leave.
2. Collect the attendance roster.
3. Collect forms from “Thank you” letter, if any have been filled out.

.....

**After the Conversation**

1. Within a day, submit the **Public Outcome Report** at <http://cincinnati.com/neighbors/facilitators/>. The Enquirer will publish excerpts to let people around the region know what citizens are saying. Please hurry, but be concise and reflective. If you have questions or need help, call Dave Hofmeister at 513-755-4145.

2. If you any suggestions about how to improve the process, or personal comments about your experience, please call or email James Jackson at 513-768-6010, [james@cincinnati.com](mailto:james@cincinnati.com).
3. Within a week, submit the **Facilitator's Meeting Summary** at <http://cincinnati.com/neighbors/facilitators/>. This background information will help The Enquirer create the "Citizen's Report."
4. Within a week, mail the Attendance Roster and Pre- and Post-Forum Questionnaires to us at: Neighbor to Neighbor; 2055 Reading Rd., Suite 500; Cincinnati OH 45202. If you prefer to drop them off, you can find directions at <http://cincinnati.com/helpdesk/directions/>
5. If you are not facilitating other meetings, please return the videotape and any unused handouts as quickly as possible for use by other facilitators. A self-addressed envelope was included in your packet.

## **CONTENTS OF FACILITATOR KIT FOR NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR CONVERSATIONS Fall 2001**

### **RED FACILITATOR FOLDER**

1. Letter of Welcome
2. List of Contents of this Facilitator Kit
3. Frequently Asked Questions about Neighbor to Neighbor
4. Facilitator Information Form
5. Standard Agenda for Neighbor to Neighbor conversations
6. Reminder Checklist for Facilitators
7. Facilitator's Meeting Summary
8. Facilitator's Public Outcome Report
9. Blank participant roster for meeting attendees to fill out.
10. Original of Flyer to promote meeting. **Please distribute!**
11. Original of Sign-up Form to facilitate/host a forum: **Please distribute!**
12. Original of "Pre-Forum Questionnaire" (Handout 1)
13. Original of "Issues Map" (Handout 2)
14. Original of "Post-Forum Questionnaire" (Handout 3)
15. Original of "Thank you/follow up" letter to participants (Handout 4)

16. Blank name tags for attendees to fill out and wear at the meeting
17. Colored dots for optional use by the group to prioritize written items
18. “Racial and Ethnic Tensions” Moderator Guide
19. “Racial and Ethnic Tensions” Issue Book for National Issues Forums

**GREEN HANDOUT FOLDER: #1 PRE-SURVEY**

Twenty-five copies of “Pre-Forum Questionnaire” (Handout 1).

**YELLOW HANDOUT FOLDER: #2 ISSUES MAP**

Twenty-five copies of “Issues Map” (Handout 2).

**ORANGE HANDOUT FOLDER: #3 POST-SURVEY**

Twenty-five copies of “Post-Forum Questionnaire” (Handout 3).

**PURPLE HANDOUT FOLDER: #4 THANK YOU LETTER**

Twenty-five copies of “Thank you/follow up” letter to attendees (Handout 4).

## APPENDIX B

### Focus Group Discussion Guide (used by Audience Impact Research to interview Neighbor to Neighbor Facilitators) and Follow-Up Questions (sent to all facilitators who conducted one or more conversations)

#### *Neighbor To Neighbor Qualitative Research Study* *Facilitator Reactions and Recommendations*

August 22 and 23, September 10, 2002

#### **Objectives:**

- To gain feedback from N2N facilitators on their orientation and training, their facilitation experience, the impact of their deliberative forum on the citizen participants, and the next steps they recommend.
- To understand whether their prior public facilitation experience as teachers, moderators, activists, etc. helped and/or hindered them in grasping the insights about the role of the moderator in deliberative public forums

#### **WARM UP (15 min.)**

- Agenda. Facility, confidential, no right or wrong
- Names and occupations
- Recall exercise (situational drawing)

#### **BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE (20 min.)**

- Why did you volunteer to be N2N facilitators?
  - What facilitation or public interaction background were you bringing to the process?
  - What prior activism or involvement in an effort to change something in a community?
  - What outcomes did you maybe hope to achieve when you agreed to volunteer?
- When you learned about the deliberative forum process, did the process, as described, seem to mesh – or not seem to mesh – with these concerns and expectations about N2N? Explain; give examples
  - Is public deliberation the same or different from your prior experience or expectations about how to get things done in community politics? Explain.
  - What do you see as the role of the moderator in deliberative public forums?

- How did you reconcile your prior political experience/expectations with your role as moderator of public deliberation?
- What do you see as the similarities and differences between the interpersonal skills you use professionally as moderators, teachers, salespeople, managers, etc and the skills required in conducting a deliberative forum?
- Did your professional experience help or hinder you? Explain.

#### **EVALUATION OF THE ORIENTATION AND TRAINING (10 min.)**

- Strengths. Weaknesses.
- Suggestions for improvement.

#### **EVALUATION OF THE SESSIONS THEY FACILITATED (20 min.)**

- What worked – explain. What didn’t work – explain.
- Suggestions for improvement.

#### **EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF THE DELIBERATIVE FORUM ON THE PARTICIPANTS (15 min.)**

- Respondents explain the points they wrote down from their exercise.
- What kind of impact did you hope to have on the participants?
  - What kind of impact did your session/s have? Explain.
- Was concluding with an action plan a good idea?
  - Did the participants have the tools they needed to enact their action plan?
- What do you recommend to achieve a desired impact or a stronger impact? Explain.
- Recommendations for next steps in the Neighbor to Neighbor initiative. Explain.
  - How would these next steps be implemented? Explain

#### **OVERALL REACTIONS (25 min.)**

- [Divide into 2 groups] If you were to design an initiative to ease racial tensions in Cincinnati, what would it look like? Be sure your answers include the following:
  - Who would sponsor the initiative? Why this choice?
    - Would other organizations be involved? Why and in what way?
  - What would the program be? Why do you select this?
  - Who would it be directed to? Explain
  - Where would it be best delivered? Why this choice?
 [Each group presents results]
- How are these program designs better than what exists now? What important gaps do they fill?
- Impact of the Neighbor to Neighbor experience on your subsequent political or professional activity, if any.
- Was the N2N initiative a good idea? Explain.

## **BACK ROOM FOR QUESTIONS (5 min.)**

### **D. Follow Up Questions**

- What was your political background before Neighbor to Neighbor, (e.g., types of things you may have gotten involved in)?
- How did your Neighbor to Neighbor training and facilitation compare/contrast with your existing political views of how to get things done in community politics?
- If you became involved in another political issue, would you want to use the deliberative forum approach?