

SHAPING OHIO'S **FUTURE**



**SPEAK UP,
OHIO, WE'RE
LISTENING**



**LISTENING
FOR CHANGE**



**WE WANT
TO HEAR
FROM YOU**



ACLU of Ohio

Community Conversations Toolkit

Thank you for agreeing to host a Community Conversation as part of our ACLU of Ohio Listening Campaign. We believe that the voices of everyday Ohioans are critical to understanding the most urgent needs of our time. Across the state, thousands of others are participating in this same conversation. We will use the results to pick our 2023 ACLU of Ohio Campaign Priorities. Most importantly, we hope to forge connections with diverse people all around Ohio who will rally around the issues they care most deeply about.

What follows is an adaptable template to use for your conversation. We encourage you to make it your own, and please remember the following:

Before

1. Invite 20 people in order to get 8-10 to attend
2. Send reminders 1 week and 1 day before your meeting
3. Work with your ACLU of Ohio organizer or regional representative if you need a Zoom account or physical location for your meeting.
4. Establish a timekeeper and notetaker to help you facilitate the meeting.

During

5. Make sure to capture the names and contact information for participants either with a paper sign up form or virtually in the **chat box** or a [google doc](#).
6. Share with people why community conversations are important to the work of justice, and thank participants for being part of this process.
7. Make time for participants to introduce themselves and share why they are attending this conversation.
8. Make sure to ask all the discussion questions.
9. Introduce your timekeeper at the beginning and let people know you may have to interrupt to keep moving.
10. Encourage people to keep their comments succinct. Limit answers to one to two minutes so everyone has time to share.
11. Make sure all attendees complete the survey at the end of the conversation. This will ensure we have complete data for our final analysis.
12. Invite all participants to remain part of the process and encourage them to join the **Action Team** by signing up at acluohio.org/action-team.

After

13. After your meeting, fill out and submit the [reporting form](#) for your group so we are able to capture the input and reflections of community members.
14. Send a thank you note to your attendees.

Facilitation Tips

Good Group Facilitation

- a. If online: Explain how Zoom works
- b. If in person: sit in a circle so everyone can see each other
- c. Don't Talk Too Much or Over Explain — listening is your superpower!
- d. Encourage all to participate — invite everyone to share
- e. Don't allow one or two people to dominate — redirect if needed
- f. Be fully present with those who are gathered — put away your phone and email
- g. Get a volunteer note taker so as facilitator you are not tied to notes
- h. Review your script beforehand so you are able to be fully present



I. Welcome and Why

Thank you for participating in our community conversation. I am _____ and I am leading this conversation because _____.

This session is one of thousands of similar conversations happening around the state of Ohio in concert with the ACLU of Ohio. The ACLU of Ohio champions and expands constitutional and other fundamental rights. We exist to pursue racial, economic, gender, and social equity for all Ohioans with no political partisanship. The ACLU of Ohio advances this mission through an anti-racist, intersectional lens with determination, agility, practicality, and hope. Your participation in this process will help the ACLU of Ohio set priorities and an agenda for 2023 that is rooted in the hearts of people like you.

We also want to invite you to join our Action Team, the ACLU of Ohio's community organizing arm. The Action Team is the political home for activists, volunteers and supporters who want to deeply engage in the public arena to build power and protect Ohioans' rights. After this conversation you'll have a chance to sign-up to join.

II. Introductions: Who is in the Room?

If your conversation has 12 people or less, have each person share their name, neighborhood, congregation, or organization if applicable.

If the group is more than twelve people, have them break into smaller groups of 8 to 12 people and answer the same questions. If you expect to have more than 12 people, prep another person to facilitate the second breakout.

Community Agreements:

Ask everyone to agree to these tenants (feel free to add your own too!)

- One mic: one person talk at a time
- Step up, step back: make space for everyone to share by talking less if you usually speak first and talking more if you're usually quiet
- Everyone's experience is welcome
- Be curious

Introductions:

- Name, city/neighborhood, and one thing you love about your community

Sign-in sheet

- Ask guests to sign in or put their names in the chat box



III. Key Questions:

Before launching into the questions, share the following:

We have about an hour to talk through six questions about our community. This is not enough time to exhaustively cover every question. We have ten minutes on each question, so please keep your responses succinct: 1-2 minutes per question. _____ will help us keep time and let us know when to move on, so they may have to interrupt. We also have an anonymous survey that will allow every person to share their thoughts on a broad range of topics affecting our community at the end of the meeting.

Community Conversation Questions

We want to know about what's going on in your life, your neighborhood, your community. This isn't about what's the most important headline, this is about better understanding how the systems we interact with affect each of us individually and collectively. Take time to think personally and locally as you answer these questions.

- 1. What do you believe is the biggest problem facing those who live in your community? How does it affect you?**
- 2. Is there any area of your life, or that of your loved ones, where you/they are unable to access the resources to live safe, healthy lives?** Some people might say the high cost of housing or inability to find safe housing, access to reproductive care like abortion, or health care that affirms one's gender identity, or even access to mental or physical health care. All of these are examples of an inability to live a safe, healthy life.
- 3. Have you or a loved one ever been treated unfairly by the criminal legal system? If so, what was this experience like? What would you like to have seen done differently? *If not, why do you think that is?** Some people will say that the criminal legal system treats some people unfairly — because of things like their race, the amount of money they have, or their geographic location — they can have a very different outcome in front of a police officer or a judge.
- 4. Have you ever experienced difficulty voting? What happened?** We consider examples of barriers to voting to include finding your polling place, knowing when registration deadlines are, how to vote by mail, and even knowing who to vote for.
- 5. Do you believe that racism is prevalent in your community?** If so, can you share examples of where you've seen or experienced racism in your community? Racism can look different to each person, some examples that we've seen are housing discrimination, overt or covert racism based on skin color, anti-Black or Brown sentiments. Other examples of racism may also exist in your community.
- 6. What do you feel hopeful or excited about in your community- locally or statewide?**



IV. Conclusion and Next Steps

Thank you for participating in this conversation today. It's been wonderful to get to know each of you better and I thank you for your openness and vulnerability. Before we close today, I'd like to ask you to do three things:

1. Fill out our listening survey at bit.ly/SurveyACLUOH. It's important that everyone fills out this survey so that we have concrete data from everyone who participated. It will take about 5-10 min.
2. Sign up for the ACLU of Ohio Action Team at acluohio.org/action-team. Your survey will ask you if you want to join at the end.
3. If you'd like to be in a photo that I'll share on social media, gather round and say cheese! I'll post this on social media and tag you if you'd like. Please share and help us spread the word and celebrate this conversation!



SURVEY

Next Steps

Community Report Out: We will report on the results of these community conversations across the state in early October at our Community Report Out. Make sure you're signed up for the Action Team to get the registration details as we get closer.

Candidate Engagement: We will also be releasing Candidate Guides before the 2022 Election based on the results of these surveys. These will be designed for you to engage your local and state wide candidates on the topics raised by people like you in our listening sessions. Make sure you sign up for the Action Team to get these guides!



V. Invitation Scripts

Email Script [to participate]:

The ACLU of Ohio is embarking on a deep listening campaign over the next few months, holding conversations with all kinds of people to better understand the needs of all Ohioans. Everyone in our state should be heard and centered in the work of the ACLU. The results of this campaign will inform the ACLU of Ohio's 2023 issue priorities.

I am hosting a listening conversation on the ACLU's behalf and would love for you to join me - your voice is a valuable piece of this process.

I'm hosting my conversation on _____ at _____. Would you join me?

Thank you,

[Name]

Email Script [catch-all]:

Dear [Name],

The ACLU of Ohio is embarking on a deep listening campaign over the next few months, holding conversations with all kinds of people to better understand the needs of all Ohioans. Everyone in our state should be heard and centered in the work of the ACLU, and we need your help to make sure they are.

If you are interested in participating in a 1 to 1 ½ hour community conversation, hosting a conversation on the ACLU's behalf, or just filling out our online survey, we would so appreciate your participation.

The links for each participation option are below:

- Complete our **listening survey** here: bit.ly/SurveyACLUOH
- **Sign up for participate in the process** here: <https://action.aclu.org/webform/oh-lc-volunteer-sign>
- **Find all the info about the process** at acluohio.org/speakup

Please let me know if you have any questions and I can put you in touch with the organizers for more details.

Thanks so much,

[Name]



Text Script:

Hey [name]! ACLU Ohio is holding a series of listening conversations over the next few months so they can hear directly from all kinds of people, and I'm hosting a conversation on their behalf. I'd love for you to join me so the ACLU can hear your story and what matters to you. I'm hosting mine on _____ at _____. Will you join me?

Social Media Posts:

The ACLU Ohio wants to hear from you! We are holding listening conversations this summer to make sure that the voices of all Ohioans are heard and centered in our work. I'm hosting a conversation on their behalf and would love for you to join me. My conversation is _____ at _____. Comment or message me if you want to come!

Thank Yous [after your conversation]

Thank you for joining my ACLU of Ohio Community Conversation. It is vitally important that we hear from folks like you, and by participating you've made your mark on this campaign. I loved learning about how you.... (insert here).

This conversation isn't the end- it's only the beginning. Please sign up for our Action Team at acluohio.org/action-team, and make sure you take the ACLU OH Survey at bit.ly/SurveyACLUOH. It's anonymous and the results will help us choose our next issue priority.

We will gather in October to hear the results of the Listening Campaign and I hope you'll join me there to hear what other groups discussed. I'll remind you beforehand, but mark your calendar now!

Thanks,

[Name]



Take the digital survey today and share your experiences and thoughts!

