INNOVATION SPACE TOOL

Use this tool to bring people together and generate a conversation on what they're learning as an organization or group in working with the community **and** how to use that learning to accelerate and deepen change. Using this tool will enable people to work across silos, learn from one another, and innovate together. This tool will guide people, step by step, through creating a space to *civically* learn together.

WHAT IS AN INNOVATION SPACE?

An Innovation Space is a regularly scheduled conversation that brings diverse perspectives and groups of people together to focus on what they are learning and how they can use that learning to create change. Typically, innovation spaces occur once every four-to-six weeks.

- To create change in the community, individuals, organizations, groups, and networks need to Turn Outward. That means creating room for a new, different kind of meeting or conversation—one that focuses on learning, innovation, and working across silos.

- Innovation Spaces are not the typical staff or project meetings. Rather, the goal of an innovation space conversation is to learn and innovate together.

CONTEXT FOR THE CONVERSATION

As you invite people to the Innovation Space and at the start of the conversation, you want to address the following:

- Let people know that the purpose of an Innovation Space is to create a space to focus on what you are learning in working with the community **and** to use that learning to accelerate and deepen progress.

- Let them know that the conversation is **not** about planning, doing project work, creating budgets or timelines.

- Let them know this space is intended for learning together.

- Let them know that there is a series of questions that will guide the conversation.

- Let them know this conversation might take up to 90 minutes.

STEP 1: CREATE THE RIGHT SPACE

Use the following format for your conversation. Be sure to designate someone to take good notes during the conversation. Be sure to distribute what you learned from the last Innovation Space conversation.

A. Explain the Goals and Set Ground Rules (5 mins). Welcome people. Remind them that this is an Innovation Space and the focus is on learning and innovation, not planning and evaluation. Set ground rules for the discussion (see below).

INNOVATION SPACE – GROUND RULES

HAVE A "KITCHEN TABLE" CONVERSATION
Everyone participates; no one dominates.

THERE ARE NO "RIGHT ANSWERS"
Draw on your own experiences, views, and beliefs. You do not need to be an expert.

KEEP AN OPEN MIND
Listen carefully and try to hear and understand the views of others, especially those you may disagree with.

HELP KEEP THE CONVERSATION ON TRACK
Stick to the issue at hand. Try not to ramble.

IT'S OKAY TO DISAGREE, BUT DON'T BE DISAGREEABLE
Respond to others how you want them to respond to you.

HAVE FUN!

B. Engagement (60 mins). Engage people in a conversation on what they are learning using the questions below.

QUESTIONS (AT A GLANCE)

1. What are we learning? Why is this important? What are the implications?
2. Where else could we use what we are learning?
3. What are we seeing that suggests things are changing in the community or the organization?
4. What possibilities are there for moving ahead? Who else do we need?

NOTE: At least every 6 months, instead of using the four questions, rate yourselves on how Turned Outward and intentional you are (see Step 2).

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C. **Reflect on the Conversation (20 mins).** Spend time as a group harvesting what was learned using the questions below.

QUESTIONS (AT A GLANCE)

1. What insights did this conversation spark?

2. What do we want to make sure we carry forward for next time?

D. **Wrap-up (5 mins).** In closing, set a date and time for the next Innovation Space conversation (ideally this would happen in the next 4-6 weeks).

Our next Innovation Space conversation will happen on _____.

ADJOURN ON TIME.

INNOVATION SPACE QUESTIONS

1. What are we learning? Why is this important? What are the implications?

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2. Where else could we use what we are learning?

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3. What are we seeing that suggests things are changing in the community or the organization?

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4. What possibilities are there for moving ahead? Who else do we need?

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"REFLECTING ON THE CONVERSATION" QUESTIONS

1. What insights did this conversation spark?

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2. What do we want to make sure we carry forward for next time?

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ADDITIONAL NOTES

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