

Recruitment of Study Circle Facilitators

In study circles, facilitators are essential in helping the members talk and work together productively. They are a key component in making sure the process is successful. Using facilitators from your community builds human capital that resides in your community for future small group discussions.

Facilitator Recruitment

Facilitators can be recruited in several ways. Each community may use a combination of methods:

- A community steering committee for the project might have several people within the committee that want to volunteer to lead a group;
- As the effort is being promoted (via traditional or electronic newspapers, newsletters, or through presentations to civic groups or by word-of-mouth) people may want to volunteer ; and
- The steering committee or the group that is organizing the study circle may want to identify and ask certain people to participate based on their expertise, network of contacts, or past connections with community improvement efforts.

Facilitator Skills

A good facilitator is someone who...

- sets a relaxed and welcoming tone.
- knows when to not push own agenda or personal opinions, is a good listener.
- knows how to talk with people, lead small group conversations, able to draw out opinions.
- has respect for others, builds trust.
- able to synthesize information.
- is committed to the process and will see it through.

A good facilitator helps participants...

- speak honestly and listen to others with respect.
- build trust across differences.
- explore a range of viewpoints on the issue.
- explore a range of approaches to address the issue.
- explore disagreements and identify areas of common ground.
- develop action ideas to make progress on the issue.
- think about how they might help implement solutions.
- understand how their work connects to the larger community effort.

Training

Tentative dates for Box Butte County are Saturday, April 14 starting at 1:30 and concluding before 4:30 pm, (place to be determined).

It is important that facilitators attend a training session prior to the kick-off where they can review the study guide as a group and develop or refresh their small group facilitation skills. Bringing facilitators together also gives them the opportunity to get to know one another so that they can informally network

while they are working with their study circle groups. Some facilitators may even want to team up and work with a single group.

Content

The training will highlight the key facilitation skills that need to be addressed to ensure a smooth running and productive study circle.

The Marketing Hometown America process...

- is organized by a diverse group of leaders from different parts of the community.
- includes a large number of participants from all walks of life.
- uses balanced discussion materials, with a range of viewpoints.
- relies on trained facilitators to run the small-group discussion.
- helps the community connect dialogue to action and change.

Expectations

Facilitators are key to the implementation of the Marketing Hometown America study circle process. All Facilitators will need to plan to be involved in the following activities:

1. Facilitator Training (*3-4 hour training*)
2. MHA Kick-off which will be completed by steering committee members going to organizations and through media
3. Conduct **four 2-hour** small group discussion with participants (8-12 is a nice group) and follow the study guide (*some follow-up time between sessions*)
 - Facilitators determine when and where to meet and conduct the study circle sessions.
 - Work with the study/circle note taker to keep records of conversations and key points.
 - Work with UNL and steering team members to keep people involved and aware of any date and time changes for sessions.
4. Attend a pre-forum meeting, tentatively scheduled for **June 12, (place to be determined)** with steering team (*1-2 hours*)
 - Work with UNL and steering team to synthesize notes, prepare for forum and present findings.
5. Attend the Action Forum, tentatively scheduled **for June 14, (place to be determined)** and help launch new ideas for the County! (*2 hours*)