



## Creating A Safe And Generative Space

As we build movements that are rooted in collective struggle and liberation, we have to make sure we create spaces that are safe for everyone who wants to take action with us towards a pathway to citizenship for 11 million people in the US. But creating a safe space is only the beginning, it is critical that our collective moves toward strategic action that builds power in our communities for this fight and beyond.

This section is intended to provide ideas on how you can facilitate such a space during the Summit. It focuses on the following outcomes:

- To identify logistical and messaging considerations for in-person convenings, including COVID safety and other areas.
- To propose foundational norms to allow collectivism and respectful collaboration.
- To identify commitments and accountability systems to move people to action.

### **CREATING A SAFE SPACE**

#### In Person Summits and Gatherings

It's important that you don't make assumptions on what will help people feel safe during an in person event. Every individual is mitigating the risks of the pandemic in different ways, and every community has different dispositions and practices to what safety looks like. We recommend that you check the latest [CDC guidelines](#) about in-person gatherings, and to consider the checklist below to ensure people feel safer coming to the Summit if it's done in person:



## **Creating A Safe Space Through Norms**

Every effective gathering should include community agreements or norms. This allows for facilitators to move conversations long, but also to create a space where people feel included, encouraged and listened to. Here are some norms we recommend:

### **Introductions**

Ask individuals to share their full name and personal pronouns. [Use this guidance to share what pronouns are, and don't assume or judge people who may not know what they are!](#)

### **Moderating discussions**

One speaker at time, step up and step-back, speak from your own experience using I statements, ask questions for a deeper understanding of perspectives and ideas, preface sensitive topics with trigger warnings.

### **Relationship management**

Question the idea not the individual, avoid discrediting perspectives or experiences.

Once you share some initial ones, you can ask the group what else helps them feel safe, and try to collect others if offered. A big mistake we often make is to ask people to list norms in a piece of paper, and we sometimes end with 10-15 norms that are hard to remember, or aren't even lived during meetings. We recommend choosing five or fewer agreed upon norms, selecting more may inhibit a free-flowing discussion or overwhelm participants. If more are added, make an effort to ask people if theirs can be included into the themes you found.

Make sure the norms are in a visible place, and revisit them every day that you are together. You can also ask someone to be a "Circle-Keeper" and be a person to remind others about agreements by pointing to the facilitator if some agreements are being forgotten. This allows for more opportunities for others to participate, but also creates a sense of accountability.

To ensure people know that you are prepared to support anything that comes up, assign someone from your team to be a point person if anyone needs anything to feel more comfortable. Sometimes we call these folks a Comfort Captain, someone who might have medicine in case someone is having a headache, or needs personal health products. This person should be introduced at the beginning of the meeting, and make sure they are in one consistent location for people to approach if they need something.



### CREATING A GENERATIVE SPACE

There's nothing worse than putting together an event to create collective action that ends with nothing concrete to take action on. This brief section provides you with a checklist you can use to ensure your meeting generates concrete next steps and follow up:

Share the Summit objectives - Make sure people have them in front of them, that they are reviewed at the top of the event, and that you point out to the objective you are working on during the specific section

Create a container - This campaign is not about solving all the problems of our broken immigration system. It's about creating a pathway to citizenship for 11 million individuals in the US. While there are many efforts necessary for our collective liberation, this Summit won't be enough to cover them all. Post a flip chart paper on a wall and call it a Parking Lot or Bike Rack, and tell people that if they have items they want to cover, to make sure they use this space if it's not related to the conversation at hand. Use this container when the meeting derails, or you need to move forward. Make sure you build enough time on your agenda to go over the container items at the end of the day and ask who will follow up on those conversations to make sure people who proposed them are heard and have a vehicle for their desire for change.

Prepare the room - Have some flip charts around the room with information like the meeting objectives, norms, the parking lot or bike rack, a jargon jar (where people can write terms they don't understand or want clarity on), next steps, and a playlist.

Play music! - Meetings' energies are set by the energy people feel from the moment they walk in, to the moment they walk out. Make sure you have music before people arrive at the venue, during breaks and breakouts, and at the end of the Summit.



### CREATING A GENERATIVE SPACE

Capture and Delegate Next Steps - We are all busy people, but this campaign has a very small window of opportunity to create a pathway to citizenship for 11 million people, and we need to make sure our commitments are not only captured, but are delegated. Place Next Steps flip chart paper around the room, and assign leads for each team to capture Next Steps and the Owner of the task and date expected to be completed, to make sure State Leads can follow up with them. Ask the leads to be in the planning conversations and to ask people to move to specific commitments that can be captured and shared. At the end of the day, the team leads should share out loud all the next steps captured, the person who will take lead on the specific task, and by when they will have it completed. It'd be ideal to have all the items captured on a [Task Tracker](#) with the proper assignments, so that you can check on the progress made!