

HOST TOOLKIT

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REGISTRATION

Join us! Register as a host for The Big Table at <https://cbusfdn.org/BigTableHost>

QUESTIONS?

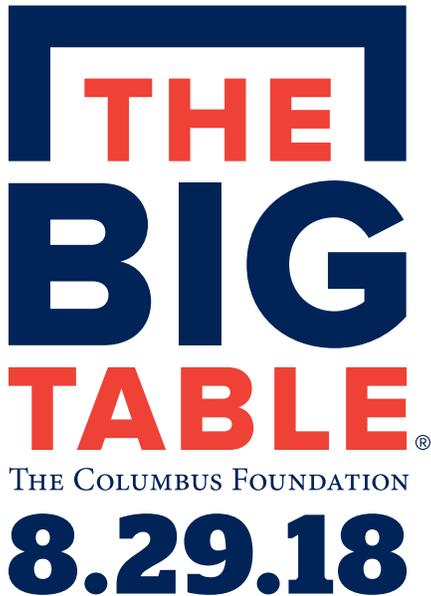
Contact us at bigtable@columbusfoundation.org

LISTEN. LEARN. LEAD.

1234 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43205-1453

Phone: 614/251-4000
Fax: 614/251-4009

[columbusfoundation.org/
thebigtable](https://columbusfoundation.org/thebigtable)



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The Big Table Fact Sheet

WHAT?

The Columbus Foundation invites the people of central Ohio to listen, learn, and lead by discussing what will make us a strong and connected community. Open, thoughtful conversations will spark new relationships and new ways for working together by deepening our understanding of each other and what the community needs.

WHEN?

On August 29, 2018, people from across central Ohio will gather for conversations throughout the day. Conversations will happen at breakfast, lunch, dinner and any time in between—whenever a group of dedicated people can come together to share their thoughts for creating a bright future.

WHO?

Hundreds of hosts will invite thousands of others who care about each other and the future of our community to meet in small groups throughout central Ohio. Most conversations will include 8–12 people. Those participating in conversations will also be able to use social media to share their thoughts and experiences with others.

WHERE?

A host chooses a location where a group can comfortably meet to have a conversation and share some food and drink. Locations may include homes, restaurants, community centers, libraries, offices, and places of worship, among others. Refreshments may range from snacks to full dinners—whatever each group can enjoy together.

WHY?

Columbus is a city that thrives because we care. We are willing to give our time to listen and learn from one another. When we do that, we draw each other closer and create the power to lead our community to an even better future.

HOST RESPONSIBILITIES

As a host, you would:

- Invite 8–12 people for a conversation on August 29;
- Find a suitable location for the conversation;
- Provide some food and drinks, ranging from snacks to full meals, to enjoy with your guests during the conversation;
- Serve as the conversation guide;
- Complete a brief survey regarding your conversation experience;
- Encourage your guests to respond to the brief survey as well.



Preparing for Your Conversation

A Guide to Help You Host Your Big Table Conversation

Central Ohio is a region that thrives because we care. We give our time to listen and learn from one another. When we do that, we draw each other closer and create the power to lead our community to an even better future.

SETTING THE BIG TABLE

How can we work together to create a strong and connected community?

Thank you for being a critical part of The Big Table on August 29. The Big Table is a community-wide effort, and we are grateful for your partnership as a host.

On August 29, thousands of people representing different backgrounds, neighborhoods, and interest groups will join hundreds of conversations to connect and discuss the future of our community.

The Big Table is a day of community building designed to bolster understanding in these challenging times. We hope The Big Table generates open, thoughtful conversations that will spark new relationships and new ways of working together by deepening our understanding of each other and what the community needs. Emphasis is not on finding immediate solutions, but rather on creating authentic human connection and civic engagement through conversation.

Without hosts, this community-wide effort would not be possible. You are the catalysts that will move these conversations forward.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A HOST?

As a host, you believe in each person's power to make a difference. As an engaged resident of our community, you are committed to convening others so they can collectively explore issues important to our community and share unique perspectives and innovative ideas that will build and sustain our community moving forward.

Anyone interested in convening a conversation may host. Your conversation can happen at any time of day in any place where guests are comfortable. Food and drink can range from light snacks to full-course meals. The only requirement is that hosts provide productive environments for authentic conversations about how to create a strong and connected our community.

In addition to this toolkit, there will be two host information sessions at **The Columbus Foundation's Davis Hall** (1234 East Broad Street, Columbus, OH 43205). While attendance is optional, you'll have the opportunity to meet other Big Table hosts, ask questions about guiding your conversation, and hear

from others about their Big Table experiences.

The first will take place on **Monday, July 16** from **noon-1:00 p.m.** RSVP to attend this session at <https://cbusfdn.org/BigTableInfo>.

The second will take place on **Monday, August 20** from **5:30-6:30 p.m.** RSVP to attend this session at <https://cbusfdn.org/BigTableInfo2>.

HOST KIT PICK-UP

Your host kit may be picked up starting on **Monday, August 20** at **9:00 a.m.** through **August 29**.

HOST RESPONSIBILITIES

If you haven't already, please take a few minutes to register as a host by going to: <https://cbusfdn.org/BigTableHost>

Hosts will:

- Find a suitable location for the conversation on August 29.
- Invite 8-12 people to join the conversation.
- Provide food and drinks, ranging from snacks to full meals, to enjoy with your guests during the conversation.
- Serve as the conversation guide.
- Respond to a survey and provide feedback regarding your conversation experience.
- Encourage your guests to respond to a brief survey and provide feedback as well.

LOCATION

Conversations can happen anywhere that your group would feel most comfortable. Possible venues include homes, churches, community centers, businesses, restaurants, backyards, and picnic areas, among others. When planning your conversation, consider the best atmosphere that you can create for honest and open conversation. The more relaxed that your guests are, the better the conversation will be.

REFRESHMENTS

Like the location, refreshment choices are up to you. Please choose any food and drink that your guests will enjoy together. Refreshments may range from light snacks to full meals and everything in between. If you aren't sure what to provide, consider hosting a potluck so that your guests can share their favorite dishes with each other. Others may simply decide to share the check at a local restaurant. Chips, cookies, pizza, and ice cream—it's all fair game! Have fun with it! Sharing food and drink sets the stage for the conversation to follow so choose something that will help bring your group together to listen and share.

INVITING YOUR GUESTS

The optimal number of people per conversation is 8-12. The Big Table is about giving everyone a chance to share their voice and be heard. Groups larger than 12 people tend to break into smaller groups, dividing one powerful conversation into many disjointed conversations.

If you know more than 12 people who would like to participate in a conversation, please ask a friend or friends to partner with you in hosting conversations so that you can each host a table of only 8-12 people. The conversations can still happen at the same location, but make sure you have room for participants to break into groups of 8-12. If there are several tables at one location, please make sure that each table has its own host.

Also, when inviting guests, we encourage you to have a good mix of different experiences and perspectives. Consider inviting some people who you may not spend much time with socially. Use this as an opportunity to extend your network past your normal routine. In fact, you may consider inviting people you don't know at all. Ask a few of your friends or colleagues to bring others you haven't met yet, or invite people from your favorite coffee spot, your child's school, your church, or your community center.

Here's an example of an invitation to send to your guests. Please feel free to use this in an email or letter to your potential guests, or create your own. Guests can be invited in whatever way is easiest for you.

Hello XX,

On August 29, I am joining a community-wide effort called The Big Table. On this one day, thousands of people representing different backgrounds, neighborhoods, and interest groups are participating in hundreds of conversations to discuss how we create a strong and connected community.

I am hosting one of these conversations, and I would like to invite you to join me and others as we listen to and learn from each other.

Location:

Time:

If you would like more information about The Big Table, please visit: columbusfoundation.org/thebigtable.

Please RSVP to me if you would like to attend this fun and important conversation.

I look forward to seeing you on August 29 for our Big Table conversation!

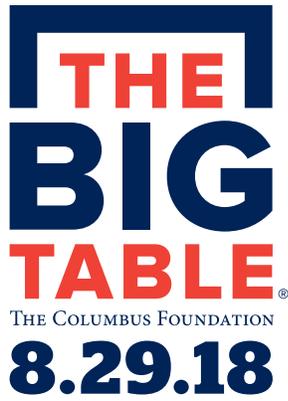
If you'd like to share more information with your guests, ask them to visit The Big Table webpage at: columbusfoundation.org/thebigtable.

QUESTIONS?

Contact us at bigtable@columbusfoundation.org or **614/251-4000**.

NEXT STEPS

For information on how to guide your conversation, check out The Conversation Guide, the next part of The Big Table toolkit.



The Conversation Guide

A Guide to Help You Host Your Big Table Conversation

Central Ohio is a region that thrives because we care. We give our time to listen and learn from one another. When we do that, we draw each other closer and create the power to lead our community to an even better future.

GUIDING YOUR CONVERSATION

We hope The Big Table generates open, thoughtful conversations that will spark new relationships and new ways for working together by deepening our understanding of each other and what the community needs. Emphasis is not on finding immediate solutions, but rather on creating authentic human connection and civic engagement through conversation.

How can we work together to create a strong and connected community?

We know there's no single way to get there. It will take the involvement of individuals, families, businesses, governments, and nonprofits. All ideas are welcome, and all voices will be heard.

This conversation can focus on any topic. We recommend against choosing the topic for your conversation. While you may put together a group that will quickly and naturally settle on a particular area of shared interest, it is best if the topic develops organically as the group shares their voices. The conversation should be open and natural, which may mean multiple topics are discussed.

Here are a few tips on how to get started:

ORGANIZING THE CONVERSATION

- **First**, introduce yourself. Share your name, background, and why you decided to be a host for The Big Table. Perhaps add a quick fun fact about yourself to further break the ice.
- **Second**, invite your guests to introduce themselves and talk about what brings them to the table. Ask them to share a similar fun fact about themselves.
- **Third**, urge your guests to stay focused during the conversation. Ask them to put their cell phones and other distractions away until the conversation has ended.
- **Fourth**, encourage guests to share their thoughts about the community and their ideas for working together to create a strong and connected community.

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR CONVERSATION

- **First**, the fundamental question—how can we work together to build a strong, connected community?—is intentionally left open-ended. Think creatively and productively. Encourage guests to reflect on possibilities rather than dwell on already identified challenges.
- **Second**, warm up the guests. Consider asking guests to identify their favorite thing about our community. Or perhaps you may ask the guests to share what they'd most like to change. This helps everyone get into the conversation while providing focus.
- **Third**, consider the conversation as a journey where the process is as important as the destination. Be willing and prepared to take detours along the way. Help your guests reflect on what they value most and consider the choices and tradeoffs related to their ideas.
- **Fourth**, most importantly, remind your guests that conversations are as much about listening and learning as they are about talking. Make sure all ideas are invited and all voices are heard.

CONVERSATION PROMPTS

For your reference, we've compiled a list of prompts that you may want to use to kick off and guide your conversations. You do not have to use these. They are simply ideas that may help you steer your group in a productive direction.

1. What are the best things about our community and how can we use them to build a strong and connected community?
2. What does our community need and what steps, no matter how small, can we take to meet those needs?
3. What can we do to spread more kindness in our community?
4. What would you like to learn from the others in this conversation?
5. What commitment can we make, big or small, to better our community?

QUICK TIPS FOR YOUR CONVERSATION

DO

- Host the event at a comfortable, inviting place where all of your guests will feel welcome.
- Encourage everyone to participate by talking, listening, and learning from each other.
- Promote creative and productive dialogue, rather than focus on negativity.
- Invite guests to expand on their ideas.
- Take notes and encourage guests to do the same.
- After the conversation, share your ideas, photos, and topics on social media using #TheBigTable.
- Exchange contact information so your group can keep in touch in the future.

DON'T

- Demand that your group focus on a topic that you chose ahead of time; be open to what your guests think is most important to discuss.
- Micromanage the conversation; let it flow freely.
- Be judgmental or dismissive of any person's comments or ideas.
- Promote complaints, arguments, or unproductive debates; these conversations should not dwell on what is wrong but rather what will make us better.
- Be afraid to ask questions.
- Be nervous; conversations should be casual, comfortable, and fun.
- Stop sharing when your conversation ends; keep discussing your ideas with colleagues, friends, and neighbors, or on social media using #TheBigTable.

AFTER YOUR CONVERSATION

In today's world, coming together has never been more important. We hope your Big Table conversation connects you, your guests, and our larger community in a new way. Listening to and learning from each other is an important first step toward creating a strong and connected community.

SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK

As a host, it is critical that you share your feedback about your Big Table conversation. Please take notes during your conversation and share your thoughts afterwards. After The Big Table has ended, you will receive a brief survey from The Columbus Foundation to assist you in providing your feedback. Please make every effort to respond to this survey in a timely manner. Additionally, feel free to share any additional information not requested by the survey via email to bigtable@columbusfoundation.org.

Before your guests leave, remind them that they will receive a link to the survey from you and strongly encourage them to respond and provide their feedback as well.

KEEP IN TOUCH

We hope The Big Table is only a starting point in sparking conversations, and that you and your guests are inspired to continue to listen to and learn from each other as you create the power to lead our community to an even better future. Please don't forget to thank your guests for participating in The Big Table. By participating in The Big Table, they are giving our community a great gift. We hope you stay in contact with your guests and continue the conversations by setting up additional get-togethers or talking with others who may be interested in the ideas your group shares. This is a day focused on community-building—but The Big Table is always open for conversation.

INFORMATION SESSIONS

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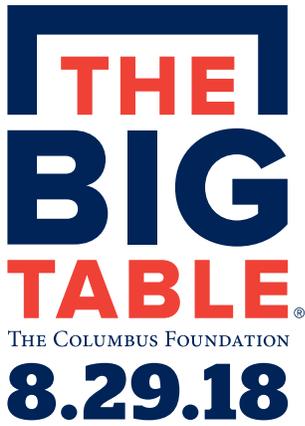
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ABOUT THE COLUMBUS FOUNDATION

The Columbus Foundation serves more than 2,500 individuals, families, and businesses that have created unique funds and planned gifts to make a difference in the lives of others through the most effective philanthropy possible. Nearly 75 years strong, The Columbus Foundation is Your Trusted Philanthropic Advisor® and ranks among the top ten largest community foundation in the United States. The Foundation's Giving Store is a one-stop shop for easy and effective philanthropy. Visit columbusfoundation.org to learn more.

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Social Media Tips

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SHARING IDEAS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

We hope your conversations will remain personal and interactive with both you and your guests staying present and engaged in the discussion. When you aren't participating in your conversation, we encourage you to share your experiences on social media so that others can learn about and interact with your group's thoughts and ideas as well!

Before and after your conversation, share your excitement about The Big Table and some of your observations about the experience. Include photos or videos that you take or create with your group and encourage your guests to do the same. While social media should be a supplement to, not a focus of, your conversation, it's a great way to extend connections with your guests and to continue the discussion online, even after the physical conversation has ended. You may want to share usernames and other social media information as an icebreaker to start your conversation. After all, we hope you walk away from the conversation with new friends!

SOCIAL MEDIA IDEAS:

- Post a fun group photo with your guests gathered around your table. #TableSelfie, anyone?
- Capture a powerful quote from the conversation and share it with a picture of the person who said it.
- Share the general topic of your conversation and your group's top idea for making the community stronger and more connected.
- Post a photo with a new friend and tag them!
- Connect with your guests on social media; mention or tag them using their usernames.
- Share your group's thoughts on how to spread more kindness with #KindColumbus.
- Share what you are committing to do for our community as a result of your conversation.

Be sure to include #TheBigTable with all of your social media posts!

CONNECT WITH THE COLUMBUS FOUNDATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

 **Facebook:** facebook.com/TheColumbusFoundation

 **Twitter:** @colsfoundation

 **LinkedIn:** linkedin.com/company/the-columbus-foundation

 **Instagram:** @colsfoundation

Hashtag: #TheBigTable



Guest List

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HOSTS

Please use this Guest List to record your guests' contact information so that you can distribute the survey link to them afterwards.

Host Name: _____

Email: _____

Location: _____

Time: _____

