



# Economic Growth

## Discussion Guide

### Let's review

*At the start of each discussion, review the conversation ground rules for returning and new members alike to set the stage for active participation by all. You may want to use a timer as you go around the room.*

*And don't forget to decide who will take notes and post a discussion recap.*

- **Be open and curious:** Everyone has a unique perspective, so be prepared to hear a different point of view. Listen first, and focus on the facts.
- **Be respectful and engaged:** Be sure that everyone has a chance to speak before adding a second comment or perspective. Encourage each other's participation.
- **Be focused and concise:** Keep the conversation centered on the issue and the brief.

**The "Table-it" Rule:** If the group has gone off-topic but the area is of interest, the group can table the conversation and save it for another time to be addressed in a different manner.

### Let's begin

*Each member is invited to answer the following questions in a **two-three minute reaction** to the brief.*

- Introduce yourself, and share what "lens of care" did you wear when reviewing this brief (e.g. personal, professional, community, state, nation, global)?
- What did you find most interesting or surprising from reading the brief? What matters?

### Let's discuss

*Pick 2 or 3 questions that resonate with the group and discuss, or choose your own.*

- In your opinion, what is the priority in regards to the economy and economic growth?
- Were there some points with which you strongly agreed or disagreed? Was there a perspective that was missing?
- Are individuals, the private sector, or the government better equipped to make economic decisions?
- How fast should GDP growth be? Are there other indicators to measure economic growth?
- How should the U.S. handle its federal debt and deficit?
- Do we, as a nation, still feel that it is all right to get rich and innovate? How should economic growth and equality be balanced?
- Have you seen any signs of an upcoming recession in your community, state, or in the nation? Or is the economic engine still running strong?

# Let's act

## Spread the Word: Some Facts to Share

- The U.S. GDP per capita is [one of the highest in the world](#) at \$62,641 as of 2018
- Since the Great Recession, GDP growth has averaged around 2.3%, the slowest growth rate of any expansion post-World War II. Still, even at its slow rate, July 2019 marked 10 years since the Great Recession and [the longest expansion since 1854](#).
- The largest source of federal government revenue comes from [individual income taxes](#), although a 2008 study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development found that high [corporate taxes tend to be the most harmful to economic growth](#).
- [Current U.S. debt](#) is over \$22 trillion, meaning the U.S. debt is now larger than its GDP.
- In September 2018, [the unemployment rate dropped to 3.7%](#), the lowest since 1969; still, more than 8 million Americans (amounting to about 5% of all workers) [were working more than one job](#) in July 2019 because their full-time job did not pay enough.

## Engage Locally

- *Learn more*
  - **Research your elected representatives' positions on economic policies** and their visions for how to tackle the economic challenges facing Americans at large and your community specifically.
    - Your legislators, state comptroller, attorney general and other local elected officials want to know their constituents. Write to them about your interest in the economic growth of your community.
    - You can find contact information for federal, state, and local government officials [here](#). Your state or municipality's websites will also have information to contact leaders. Try looking at the drop-down menu for a *Government* tab.
  - **Explore the impact of taxes, rules and regulations in your community.**
    - On your municipality's website you can find information pertaining to taxes, business rules and regulations, and economic development initiatives.
    - You can search the various departments, agencies, and programs related to businesses, consumers, and taxes on your municipality's website. These options are likely available in a dropdown menu.
    - Alternatively, you can try using search words such as "taxes," "finance," "economic development," or "workforce development."
- *Reach out*
  - Explore what organizations, legislators, and journalists you could contact to ask questions, learn more and get engaged.
  - If you have trouble finding the information you are looking for on your municipality's website, consider contacting agency or department heads. You can find the contact information for federal, state, and local government officials [here](#).
  - The Policy Circle offers a number of resources for engaging on the local level. Learn how to write a letter to the editor on [The Policy Circle website](#).
  - It's easy to establish a relationship with your legislators. Start by introducing yourself. You can also learn to write to your representatives or set up a meeting with a legislator on [The Policy Circle website](#).

## Post a Recap/Dive Deeper

- Summarize your discussion to share thoughts with members not present. Designate who will post a meeting recap on your circle page.
- Decide your next meeting topic. Want to discuss a related brief at your next meeting? This brief is part of the: Five that Impact Business [Conversation Series](#). Others in the series include:
  - [Free Enterprise](#)
  - [Government Regulation](#)
  - [Taxes](#)
- Dive Deeper into this area. If this is an area you would like to pursue further consider taking possible steps to influence policy. The Policy Circle offers resources for [developing a message about your issue](#) and [organizing a petition](#) to amplify your voice and raise awareness.