

Immigration

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 immigration? What is the goal of immigration policy?
- Were there some points with which you strongly agreed or disagreed? Was there a perspective that was missing?
- What current policy works well and what needs to change?
- What is the right level of immigration for our country?
- How are business owners affected by immigration policy? What about immigrants who need certain licenses (such as a driver's license) to complete their work?
- Do illegal immigrants have a right to government-funded education or healthcare? Why or why not?
- What should be done when illegal immigrants break the law?

Let's act

Spread the Word: Some Facts to Share

- Immigration policy today is based on the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, signed into law by Lyndon B. Johnson.
- In 2017 [CIS](#) reported that 44.5 million immigrants (lawful and illegal) lived in the United States, 13.7% of U.S. population.
- On average, the United States issues 500,000 [new green cards](#) (permanent U.S. resident on the path to citizenship) and over 500,000 [temporary immigration visas](#) each year.
- Only 13-16% of green cards are awarded based on the skills they bring to the U.S. The majority is based on familial connection ([Migration Policy](#))
- The U.S. resettled 53,000 refugees in FY 2017 and 22,500 in 2018 ([CIS](#))
- Just under 3.8 million people are on the legal immigrant visa waiting list to gain a visa to enter the United States. Approximately 97% have been sponsored by a family member in the U.S. ([State Department](#)).
- As of 2016, approximately 10.7 million illegal immigrants reside in the United States; the number peaked in 2007 at 12.2 million, 4% of the U.S. population ([Pew Research](#))
- Together, the first generation (foreign-born) and second generation (children of the foreign-born) comprise almost one in four Americans ([National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine](#)).

Engage Locally

- *Learn more:*
 - **Research your elected representatives' positions** on immigration, and their vision for how to tackle the challenges of immigration facing Americans and your community.
 - Your legislators, state comptroller, attorney general and other local elected officials want to know their constituents. Write to them about your interest in immigration.
 - 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 immigration in your community.**
 - On your state or municipality website, look for a dropdown menu or tab labelled "*citizen resources*," "*community*," or "*families*." Alternatively, try searching "*immigration*" in the search bar.
 - [Ballotpedia](#) has economic, social, legal, and demographic immigration information on a state-by-state basis. Search "*immigration in*" + your state in the search bar on the main page.
 - See if your city is a [sanctuary jurisdiction](#).
 - Consider reaching out and asking your local business owners or your local Chamber of Commerce about economic effects of immigration. You can find your local Chamber of Commerce [here](#).

- *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 for a World View, Five for Business, and Five for Communities [Conversation Series](#). Other briefs in these series include:
 - [Foreign Policy Middle East](#) and [Foreign Policy Asia Pacific](#)
 - [Creating Career Pathways](#)
 - [Stitching the Fabric of Neighborhoods](#)
 - [Poverty](#)
- 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.