

## Facilitator Orientation

### *Organization and preparation*

Preparation for a group discussion utilizing one of the ÉXITO EN EL NORTE/Success in the U.S. videos/DVDs may consist of two main elements: generating interest in and organizing a group of participants, and any research on local or state services that may apply to your topic. The first of these, which addresses the general question of establishing a group of interested participants, is discussed below. The specific task of researching localized information and resources for each title will be addressed in the part of discussion guide directly related to the specific topic. Please refer to the “Preparing to Facilitate” section found in every discussion guide for each of the ten titles.

Below are a few suggestions for bringing together a group of Spanish-speakers to watch a title in the ÉXITO series, to be followed by a facilitated discussion:

### *Determine interest and support*

If you do not have a pre-existing relationship with immigrants in your community, work to build rapport and then trust in gradual stages. Some ways to reach out may include:

- *Co-facilitate*: Invite a Latino opinion leader or person trusted by the Latino immigrant community to be a co-facilitator. You may need an interpreter as well, if you are not a fluent Spanish speaker. Your co-facilitator can also be a powerful recruiter.
- *Attendance at popular functions*: Showing interest and participating in activities of interest to new residents may help forge new relationships within communities. These could involve cultural events that reflect new residents’ country of origin, or more general activities such as sporting or religious events.
- *Partnership*: Building a working relationship with community members that already have a connection with new residents may strengthen any future alliance. This could include directors and other staff from local Latino centers, other community centers, clergy, local employers, etc. It may also be helpful to contact and get to know local service providers working in your community, particularly those that work with Spanish-speakers, and in the topic you wish to present/discuss.
- *Posters or flyers*: Creating posters or flyers to engage your intended audience may remind people of the event, but is unlikely to have much impact by itself. These may be placed in businesses and other locations frequented by new residents, with local employers, sent home with school children, etc. Posters should reflect a realistic literacy level, utilize a few eye-catching graphics, and always be in immigrants’ native language.

### ***Set program goals and objectives***

Once you have determined that you have sufficient interest to bring together a group to watch a video and participate in a discussion, it will be helpful to clarify the session's goals and objectives. The more input you have from the community, and particularly Spanish-speakers, the more effective the presentation/discussion will be. Questions you may have for yourself and your audience include:

- *What are the overall goals? Which areas are most important in relation to the specific topic to be discussed? Where does my community need the most support? You may be able to identify several focus areas.*
- *What specific objectives will help achieve these goals? What steps, information and resources will help provide participants with the tools to achieve the above goals? Knowing this will aid you to select from suggested discussion questions and/or activities.*
- *Will the presentation be strengthened by a guest speaker or presence of local service providers? Could you partner with certain service providers in the community in order to enhance the presentation? Including a “guest” may help build locally supportive relationships between Spanish-speakers and those who offer services and assistance to them.*
- *What practical issues need to be addressed to assure that the discussion runs smoothly when determining location, time and other needed logistical information (see General Suggestions)? Nailing down the details will help presenters and participants focus on what is important: discussion, resource sharing, and building leadership.*

### ***Consider real-life factors that may impact a group's success***

When planning discussion sessions, it helps to consider the practical aspects of the daily lives of those who will be attending.

- *Work schedules:* Try to find out ahead of time what type of schedule participants have, including home schedules and commitments. Work schedules may also vary depending on time of year – a day and time that works in the fall may not in the spring or summer.
- *Transportation:* Is the meeting location in a place that participants can reach easily? Do participants have their own transportation, and if not, could this need be met by public transportation or some other means?
- *Childcare:* Do the majority of participants have children? If so, women in particular may be more likely to attend if childcare is provided.
- *Reminders:* With busy schedules, almost anyone can benefit from a reminder. Contacting participants to remind them of the discussion may help keep attendance high.

### ***Make location and environment as comfortable as possible***

If you and discussion participants are comfortable, then the discussion is more likely to be productive.

- *Location:* In addition to it being physically accessible, is the location “friendly” for participants? Any type of government building, for instance, may not be a comfortable location for new residents, who may be wary of government agencies. A familiar location with a “friendly” environment may hold the best chance for success.
- *Space:* Is the space adequate, and does it provide the right tools to achieve your identified goals? Is the room large enough to hold all participants comfortably, and is there enough seating? If childcare is provided, where will the children and their caretaker stay, and are there child-friendly and child-safe activities or materials? Are acoustics adequate so all can hear?
- *Materials:* Other than any handouts, do you have all the materials you need for the discussion? Is there a DVD player or laptop readily available? Do you need a place to write, such as a blackboard? You may wish to consider having drinks or food available – food may help serve as an icebreaker, breaking down barriers and encouraging interaction.

- *Respect personal information:* People may be reluctant to provide personal information, so it may be counter-productive to ask participants to “sign-up” for or “sign-in” to a discussion. Make certain that any guests are also sensitive to this, particularly when discussing immigration status.

### ***Account for cultural differences that may affect communication***

Different cultures and assumptions may have an unintended effect, particularly if a presenter is not bilingual and/or bi-cultural.

- *Timing:* While the U.S. focuses on starting a meeting “on time,” timing may vary with participants from other cultures. It is more important to remain true to overall timing (the overall length of a session, regardless of when it starts or stops). Individual guides will give some suggestions on how long a segment might last, to allow for productive discussion, without overwhelming participants.
- *Separation of sexes:* Today, in the U.S., both sexes commonly study and work together. In some regions of Latin America, separation of men and women may be common; it particularly can be sensitive for a woman to interact with an unmarried man. This may affect the “balance” of participants, with some topics bringing in a predominantly male or female audience, depending on the issues/concerns.
- *Role-playing:* Not all participants may feel comfortable using role-playing as an activity. You may want to gauge how at ease participants seem with these types of scenarios, and gradually work one in as an activity.

### ***Facilitating discussions***

Once you have a group, a comfortable location, and goals and objectives in mind, you will be ready to host a discussion and share one of the ÉXITO EN EL NORTE/Success in the U.S. videos with a group. Below are a few final ideas that can increase your own comfort and confidence as you lead a discussion promoting “Success in the U.S.”

- *Prepare ahead of time:* Watch the video at least once, preferably several times. With the aid of suggestions and resources provided in each individual guide, gather any materials you may need, such as Spanish brochures, list of contact names and information for further assistance in Spanish, etc.
- *Language spoken:* Each of the ÉXITO videos is presented completely in Spanish. Scripts in English accompany the DVD. If the facilitator is not bilingual, then interpretation must be provided (this will reduce the amount of time that can be devoted to discussion). Any auxiliary materials should be provided in Spanish.

- *Number of speakers:* While guest speakers can greatly add to a discussion, and help build relationships to service providers, remember to either limit the number of speakers, or offer more than one session. One of the main goals for the ÉXITO videos and guides is to open a two-way dialogue between existing and new residents. Leave plenty of time for interaction.
- *Discussion based on group needs/interests:* It may be tempting to conjecture what a group's needs are, from observation or educated guess. However, new residents themselves have the personal experience to know what will most benefit the group. Participants should be consulted to the fullest extent possible in determining group goals, objectives, and activities.
- *Remain flexible:* While being prepared and maintaining structure will help keep the discussion organized, it is also beneficial to remain flexible and open to the dynamic within a group. It may not be productive to try to force a topic, discussion or activity that is not “working.” On the other hand, if a group seems to have a particular interest or animation for something that is not planned, this may be the most effective tool of all.
- *Ask open-ended questions:* Some of the best facilitators/presenters succeed by getting a group to come up with the “answer” themselves, or (better yet) ask the question themselves. Any question that can be answered with a “yes” or “no” (“Has a police officer ever stopped you and asked you for your license when you do not understand English?”) is often much less effective than one that requires members to share an experience. For example, you may ask participants to “Tell us about a time when you may have been stopped by an officer, and you didn’t understand what he or she wanted? What did you do?”).
- *Follow-up:* Decide with the group how to follow-up with your session. Did one session explore all the issues and answer all the questions participants have? Are there enough auxiliary materials, including local or regional contact information for assistance in Spanish? Are participants feeling comfortable that they can obtain future help they may need?

Finally, how can participants work together to possibly advocate for positive change in how local services are provided, and open new leadership possibilities for new residents? See **Voices for Community Success** program.