

CHINA TOWN HALL: MODERATION FACILITATION GUIDELINES AND RESOURCES

Thank you for agreeing to be part of this year’s CHINA Town Hall (CTH). We hope the enclosed guidelines can assist you with facilitating a local program that catalyzes the important conversations CTH is all about.

There is no “right” way to facilitate a local program. Some partners choose to host a lecture-style program where an expert presents a specific topic of interest to the community. Others convene a moderated conversation where constituents talk amongst themselves about their attitudes and concerns about the relationship. Still others do a combination of the two, or something else altogether. The most important thing is that the local conversation meets the needs of your community.

For those opting for a moderated conversation option, we offer the following suggested guidelines and resources. Please take from them what you find most beneficial.

SUGGESTED OUTLINE FOR MODERATED CONVERSATION

Program Goals

* To provide an opportunity for a discussion on the topic of U.S.-China relations and how the current state of those relations affects the attendees personally, their families, their jobs, their educational institutions, etc.
* To help participants synthesize and reflect on the content presented during the national webcast, this year with Ambassador Nicholas Burns
* To give attendees the opportunity to learn how other members of their community view the U.S.-China relationship

Suggested Discussion/Conversation Outline

* Facilitator introduces himself/herself, states the purpose of the town hall, and establishes the ground rules for discussion (5 mins)
* Introductions and impressions (15 mins)
* Ask attendees to introduce themselves and share their thoughts on the national webcast (if you have a particularly small or intimate audience)
* Question prompts:
  + What did you learn?
  + What surprised you?
  + What one point did Ambassador Burns make that you particularly agreed or disagreed with?
* Open discussion (25 mins)
* Broader topical questions on the U.S.-China relationship. You can find suggested questions on the next page
* Wrap-up reflection (10 mins)
* Question prompts:
  + Why does the U.S.-China relationship matter to you? Why should it matter to the community?
  + How will you stay informed going forward?
  + Do you think it important to stay engaged? If so, how might you do so?
* Conclusion and next steps (5 mins)
* Thank participants for coming
* Share that more reading materials and resources can be found on the National Committee’s website and that participants can follow the National Committee to stay up to date on the U.S.-China relationship.
* If applicable, share upcoming relevant events at your institution/organization

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

*China and Your Community*

Although U.S. politics has become more polarized, there is bipartisan agreement on national security concerns over the Chinese government and its related entities. In response, some localities have instituted legislation specific to Chinese nationals, ranging from deterrence in academic research at U.S. institutions or restrictions on home ownership. What impact does this type of targeted ethnicity/nationality-based legislation have on your community? What type of policies can localities institute that ensure national security concerns while being mindful of avoiding ethnic discrimination and anti-Asian sentiment?

China has increasingly been criticized for its role as the primary source of the fentanyl that is fueling an opioid crisis in the U.S. The Biden administration and members of Congress are passing policies to disrupt the supply chain and institute higher penalties for drug traffickers. What China-related drug policies would specifically benefit your local community?

The U.S. and China are each other’s largest trading partners and China is the top partner for over 120 countries. However, the U.S. is imposing export trade restrictions on Chinese industries ranging from semiconductors to Chinese-made clothing due to national security and human rights violations concerns. How might these trade restrictions affect small and large businesses in your community? Or your daily life?

*U.S.-China Relationship*

Despite the Chinese spy balloon flying unannounced over the continental U.S. in late January 2023 that caused national security concerns, the Biden administration is resuming high-level diplomacy after a two-year hiatus with visits to Beijing by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken in June, U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen in July and U.S. Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo in August, respectively. Are high-level visits by cabinet secretaries enough to keep U.S.-China relations on track? How else might the U.S. re-engage with China?

China is gaining international recognition for its facilitation of the peace agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia, a mediator role that the U.S. is known to have in the middle east. What does this mean for U.S. presence in the region? What does it mean for the U.S.’ position as mediator in general?

In July 2023, U.S. Special Envoy on Climate Change John Kerry met with Chinese counterparts to begin to rebuild trust and discuss climate cooperation on methane reduction commitments, reliance on coal, trade restrictions on solar panel and battery components, and climate finance. More talks are set to continue in November at the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28). What key points should be discussed between the two largest greenhouse emitters at COP28? How else could the U.S. and China cooperate on climate change?

RESOURCES: BEST PRACTICES FOR TOWN HALL AND DISCUSSION FACILITATION

We know many CHINA Town Hall discussion facilitators have experience in this type of role. However, if you would like some tips on how to best facilitate a discussion, we have assembled a list of publicly available resources that you might find helpful.

* [*Facilitating Effective Discussions*](https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/alternatives-lecturing/discussions/facilitating-effective-discussions)*,* Center for Teaching Excellence, University of Waterloo
* [*How to Facilitate Discussions*](https://blink.ucsd.edu/HR/training/instructor/tools/discussions.html#3.-Guide-the-discussion), University of California, San Diego
* [*How to Organize a Town Hall Meeting: A Planning Guide*](https://guideinc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Organizing-a-Town-Hall-Meeting.pdf)*,* GUIDE, Inc.
* [*Tips on Facilitating Effective Group Discussions*](https://www.brown.edu/sheridan/teaching-learning-resources/teaching-resources/classroom-practices/learning-contexts/discussions/tips), The Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning, Brown University