



CHINA TOWN HALL: MODERATION GUIDELINES AND RESOURCES

Thank you for agreeing to be part of this year's CHINA Town Hall (CTH). We hope the following guidelines support you in facilitating a local program that sparks the important conversations that lie at the heart of CTH.

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 among 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 model, 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 to discuss U.S.-China relations – or a particular aspect of it – 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 Stephen Biegun and Sarah Beran.
- 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)
 - o Ask attendees to introduce themselves and share their thoughts on the national webcast (if you have a particularly small or intimate audience)
 - o Question prompts:
 - What did you learn?
 - What surprised you?

- What point(s) did the national speakers make that you particularly agreed or disagreed with?
- Open discussion (25 mins)
 - o Broader topical questions on the U.S.-China relationship. You can find suggested questions on the next page
- Wrap-up reflection (10 mins)
 - o 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's important to stay engaged? If so, how might you do so?
- Conclusion and next steps (5 mins)
 - o Thank participants for coming
 - o 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.
 - o If applicable, share upcoming relevant events at your institution/organization

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

China and Your Community

1. Economic Engagement and Local Business: Washington has announced policies aimed at reducing U.S. economic reliance on China. What does “decoupling” or “de-risking” look like in practice? How has it affected American companies (and their supply chains) in your community? With major federal investments aimed at bringing semiconductor, battery, and advanced manufacturing back to the U.S., what does this mean for your community?

2. Digital Platforms and Data Security: With increased federal, state, and local restrictions on Chinese-owned apps and digital platforms citing national security and data privacy concerns, what has been the impact on local businesses, schools, creators, and consumers in your community? How can these policies address security risks without disrupting legitimate community use?

3. Chinese Students and Researchers in the U.S.: Pre-pandemic and at its peak, there were over 300,000 Chinese students matriculated at U.S. universities. Today, Chinese enrollment in the U.S. has declined significantly, largely due to increased visa scrutiny and geopolitical tensions. What impact, positive or negative, does this reduction have on local universities, research institutions, and the broader community? How can academic institutions navigate concerns over security while maintaining open academic exchange?

4. People-to-People Exchange: With Beijing's visa initiatives (such as a 10-day visa-free transit policy) to attract American students, tourists, and businesspeople to China, and the U.S. government's decision to lower its China travel advisory, has interest in travel to China among people in your community rebounded at all? Where do the local organizations, businesses, and universities stand in terms of organizing China visits? How important is it to have U.S. citizens traveling to China?

5. Public Perceptions: As U.S.-China relations become more contentious, public discourse around China has grown more polarized, shaped by media coverage, social media, and concerns about foreign influence and misinformation. How are local institutions—such as schools, universities, and civic organizations—balancing legitimate national security concerns with the need to avoid

stereotyping, mistrust, or discrimination? What approaches have helped promote informed dialogue and media literacy? What role can local communities play in fostering nuanced understanding and social cohesion amid sustained U.S.–China rivalry?

U.S.-China Relationship

1. Taiwan, Deterrence, and Regional Security: Rising military activity around the Taiwan Strait, combined with expanded U.S. security cooperation with Taiwan and close coordination with allies such as Japan, South Korea, Australia, and the Philippines, has increased concerns about crisis stability in the Indo-Pacific. How are evolving deterrence strategies by the United States, China, and regional allies reshaping the broader security architecture in East Asia? What are the implications for cross-Strait relations, U.S.–Taiwan and PRC–Taiwan ties, and the economic resilience of Taiwan and the wider region?

2. Trade and Decoupling: With Washington pursuing policies aimed at reducing U.S. economic reliance on China, what does “decoupling” or “de-risking” look like in practice? How does it affect American companies, supply chains, and global economic stability?

3. Global Governance: As the United States places renewed emphasis on strategic primacy in the Western Hemisphere — a modern return to Monroe Doctrine–style thinking — and China continues to expand its economic and institutional presence across the Global South, what does this mean for global governance? How are these approaches shaping the effectiveness, legitimacy, and inclusiveness of international institutions, development finance, and norm-setting processes?

4. Artificial Intelligence and Tech Competition: AI, advanced computing, and semiconductors remain central domains of U.S.–China tech competition. In the absence of robust international governance frameworks for AI, how are national security-driven policies — such as export controls, talent restrictions, and subsidies — reshaping global innovation ecosystems? What are the implications for technological leadership, diffusion, and global inequality, and where — if anywhere — can scientific cooperation or shared norms still be sustained?

5. Future Trajectory of U.S.–China Relations: As both nations navigate domestic political pressures, U.S. electoral politics could reshape trade policy, tech restrictions, and cooperation on global challenges such as climate change and public health. How might election-year dynamics in the United States influence the tone and substance of engagement with China? What outcomes would you like to see come out of the next Trump–Xi summit scheduled for April 2026?

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*](#), Center for Teaching Excellence, University of Waterloo
- [*How to Facilitate Discussions*](#), University of California, San Diego
- [*How to Organize a Town Hall Meeting: A Planning Guide*](#), GUIDE, Inc.
- [*Tips on Facilitating Effective Group Discussions*](#), The Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning, Brown University