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**Introduction & Ground Rules \_\_\_ minutes**

**Purpose: Look at Alternative Approaches to the Issue and Hear Different Points of View**

* This is not a debate; we’re not here to “win” an argument.
* We’ll look carefully at alternative approaches—all of them with trade-offs and drawbacks.
* At the close of the forum, we’ll reflect on what we’ve heard, looking for common ground, but also recognizing remaining areas of tension or ambivalence.
* We’ll try to think about what matters most to us and what we are willing to give up to make progress on resolving this issue.

**My Role: Serve as Impartial Facilitator**

* I’m here to help us have a conversation that is as deliberative as possible.
* I’ll encourage everyone to consider different viewpoints.
* I’ll watch the time to ensure we talk about all the options and have time for reflections at the end.
* From time to time, I may point to specific questions and ideas in the guide, especially if they represent voices not in the room or trade-offs we haven’t talked about.
* This is your conversation. Please talk to and listen to each other.

**Structure: The Four Parts of a Deliberative Forum**

* Ground Rules
* Personal Stake
* Deliberating on the Options: Option 1, Option 2, Option 3
* Closing Reflections

**Ground Rules \_\_\_ minutes**

**Some sample ground rules used by forum moderators**

* Listen to other voices. Listening is as important as speaking.
* Consider each approach fairly, looking at its benefits and its trade-offs.
* Everyone is encouraged to participate. No one or two individuals should dominate.
* It’s okay to disagree, but do so with curiosity, not hostility. Learning more about how others think is one of the most interesting parts of a forum.
* Keep an open mind. Avoid coming to conclusions until we’ve deliberated on all the options.
* Are there additional ground rules we would like add?
* Do we all agree to follow these ground rules and hold one another accountable to them?

**Personal Stake: \_\_\_ minutes**

**Some questions moderators often use to encourage participants to talk about their personal stake in the issue.**

* Why did you come out to the forum today?
* What aspect of the issue concerns you most?
* How has this issue affected you personally? What about your family or your community?
* When you think about this issue, what bothers you?
* How does this problem impact the things in your life and community that are most important to you?

**Option 1: Jumpstart the Economy, Recap and Questions for Deliberation \_\_\_ minutes**

Our major goal, according to this option, should be getting our economy up and running again. We need to restore and create jobs by investing in infrastructure, aiding small business, beefing up unemployment insurance, and making childcare more available and affordable. Governments should keep money flowing so businesses can expand their operations and so working people can survive until their jobs come back or they find new ones.

**BUT** these strategies have been tried many times, and they often end up benefitting stockholders and CEOs and creating low-wage, temporary, or part-time jobs.

* Should we be pouring federal and state funding into infrastructure, expanded unemployment benefits, and childcare when governments at all levels are struggling with debt. Does adding so much red ink really help the economy?
* This option aims at getting us back to the economy we had before the pandemic. But many Americans worked for low wages and without good benefits before COVID. Is returning to our pre-COVID economy good enough?

**Option 2: Move to a Sustainable Economy, Recap and Questions for Deliberation \_\_\_ minutes**

Our major goal, according to this option, should be to move from an out-of-date economy to a more future-oriented and sustainable one. The pandemic showed us that we can drive less, fly less, use less electricity and generate less pollution, and still be productive. We need to continue those new habits and plan for a different future by providing high-speed internet everywhere and putting more emphasis on scientific skills and technology, which are vital to our economy and health.

**BUT c**utting back on commuting and business travel permanently will severely damage businesses that employ tens of thousands of Americans. It will starve urban centers of the commercial rents and consumer spending that makes them vibrant.

* Conducting more of our work lives online is far better for the environment since it reduces commuting and traffic and saves energy. But what do we lose? Would some people suffer economically and in other ways from these more sustainable work arrangements?
* Other countries are shifting more of their economic activity to science and technology and doing more work online. Will the U.S. fall behind if we don’t make the changes suggested in this option?

**Option 3**: **Put Domestic and Local Needs First,** **Recap and Questions for Deliberation \_\_\_ minutes**

Our major goal, according to this option, is to protect American workers and companies from being undercut by other countries. Too many nations, especially China, have taken advantage of free trade in ways that have seriously damaged U.S. manufacturing and lowered wages. The answer is to employ tariffs to protect U.S. companies, push executives to keep more manufacturing here, and reduce immigration when it takes jobs away from our citizens.

**BUT** many American jobs and companies depend on robust international trade and thrive by exporting their products to other countries. This will hurt us in the long run by causing trade wars and chipping away at the vibrancy and distinct American character that comes from immigration.

* How likely is it that the U.S. could impose tariffs on foreign companies without igniting a trade war that would damage everyone? If other countries retaliate by blocking American products, what should we do?
* This option assumes that American-born workers will take jobs currently done by immigrants and that employers will raise wages to attract them. How realistic is this?

**Closing Reflections \_\_\_ minutes**

Bringing our economy back to health after the pandemic will be a massive and complicated undertaking. Not everyone defines “a healthy economy” the same way. Attempts to improve the economy don’t necessarily affect people equally—one group may benefit while another doesn’t. We can’t pursue too many initiatives at one time, especially in a time of limited economic resources.

That means it is important to think carefully about how each of these ideas and proposals would work and what the advantages, trade-offs, and risks might be—in your community and for the country as a whole.

* Most Americans say that reducing racial and economic inequality is a top priority.
  + Which ideas in this guide seem most likely to reduce inequality?
  + Are there ideas here that might increase inequality rather than reduce it?
* Nearly everyone wants the economy to create more and better jobs.
  + Which ideas in this guide seem most likely to create new jobs?
  + How likely are these new jobs to be well-paying and secure?
  + Would some of these ideas be particularly promising for your own community?
* Often, proposals for change produce near-term results, or longer-term results, but not both.
  + Will some ideas in the guide produce positive near-term results, but create long-term risks?
  + Will some require sacrifice now, but produce positive long-term results?
  + Given the near-term / long-term trade-offs, which ideas seem most promising to you?
* Many economic proposals affect different parts of the country and different groups of people differently.
  + Are there ideas here that would be particularly good for your own region or community?
  + If an idea is good for your own community, but harmful to others, should it be pursued?
  + Are there ways to address the downsides for other communities or groups of people?

**Other important questions to consider:**

* Now that we have deliberated, are there ideas or viewpoints you hadn’t considered before?
* Can you now identify any shared concerns or hopes we have discovered in our deliberations?
* How has what you heard affected your thinking?
* What could you do as an individual? What could the community do? What should we expect of our elected officials at the local, state, and national level?
* Can you identify any tensions or potential unintended consequences that came up during the forum?
* What questions remain? What work do we still need to do? Who else do we need to talk to?