



Youth host guide

Put your voice in a
Memo to the Mayor

TUESDAY, MAY 14, 2019

*Thank you for participating
in On the Table*



⌚ Any time of day

On a single day, Tuesday, May 14, 2019, you'll be part of an exciting, region-wide initiative to explore the ways in which we can work together to make our communities stronger, safer and better.

For the past five years, *On the Table* has proven that Chicago-area residents—young and old— share a desire to come together, collaborate more, become more civically involved and more committed to our community. Young people are our future. Engaging your students and encouraging them to share their views, values and voices in this discussion only strengthens our community. We appreciate your facilitation and support in this powerful exercise of civic discourse.

on the table.  THE CHICAGO
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INCORPORATED



Memo to the Mayor

About On the Table

The issues facing our region don't often offer a "quick fix." On the contrary, progress will only result from residents and organizations working together to improve the place we call home.

Your voice matters. Through *On the Table*, your students will not only discuss what matters to them. They will suggest solutions in a **Memo to the Mayor**. Youth have the power to make communities better.

About The Chicago Community Trust

The Chicago Community Trust, our region's community foundation, partners with donors to leverage their philanthropy in ways that transform lives and communities. The Trust connects the generosity of donors with community needs by making grants to nonprofit organizations working to improve metropolitan Chicago. Since our founding in 1915, the Trust has awarded approximately \$2 billion in grant funding to more than 11,000 local nonprofit organizations.

Why should youth participate in On the Table?

On the Table is an excellent learning opportunity—a great way to model civic responsibility, learn about other perspectives and explore ways to become more engaged in your community.

On the Table can help your students:

- Deepen their knowledge and understanding of local issues.
- Explore ways to make a difference in their community or for the causes they care about.
- Enhance their sense of connection and commitment to their communities, schools and peers.
- Have fun and learn together.

What you will find in this guide

- Instructions for organizing an *On the Table* conversation
- Prep lesson to do with your students prior to your *On the Table* conversation
- A facilitation guide and discussion prompts for the *On the Table* conversation (ideally held on May 14, 2019)

- Follow-up lesson to do with your students after your *On the Table* conversation
- A sample template for drafting your **Memo to the Mayor**.

More information is available at www.onthetable.com.

How to use this guide

We have provided a list of suggested ways to engage in *On the Table*. However, do not feel constricted by these options, as they are only suggestions. We encourage you to customize your *On the Table* experience to best suit the individual needs of your school/community. The goal is for young people to gather and discuss ideas to improve their schools, communities and region and think about ways they can act to make our region stronger in the future.

Mikva Challenge and the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Office of Service Learning have partnered with The Chicago Community Trust to develop this conversation guide to support your engagement.

Conversation menu of options for On the Table

There is no one way to host *On the Table*, but we have compiled some ideas to help you get started. You should not feel limited by the choices provided. Consider the following:

- Host an *On the Table* conversation within your class
- Partner with another teacher(s) at your school to host *On the Table* conversations across classrooms/grade levels
- Conversation guides here at onthetable.com can help you consider a topic and prepare to discuss it.
- Invite community members (parents, local business people, clergy, community based organizations, your alderman, etc.) to join your students for an *On the Table* conversation
- Organize some after school clubs to participate in an *On the Table* conversation together (e.g., get the basketball team talking with the drama club)
- Host a school-wide *On the Table* conversation in the lunchroom
- Partner with another school to host an *On the Table* conversation in the lunchroom

Before your On the Table conversation

Be sure to visit www.onthetable.com to register your event.

During your On the Table conversation

In today's world, this act of coming together has never been more important. *On the Table* 2019 will connect individuals and communities of diverse perspectives and backgrounds. Talking—and listening—to our neighbors is an important first step toward making our community better. But we won't stop there. We'll turn our discussions into actions that can make our communities and lives better.

The most important action for *On the Table* 2019 is preparing a **Memo to the Mayor**. Your youth memo will be integrated into a larger memo that will be presented to the mayor and other leaders to help bring about change.

A memo template on page 6 will help you get started.

Template:

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Memo to the Mayor

Date: May 14, 2019

To: Mayor-elect Lori Lightfoot
(*or name of your city's mayor*)

From: Concerned Citizens of Chicago (*or name of your city*): Joe Smith, Alicia Ward, Kim Davis, Thomas Johnson (*add the names of people from your table here*)

Re: High unemployment rate of youth
(*Enter the issue that you're concerned about here*)

Dear Mayor Lightfoot:

(Greeting and statement of concern)

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a letter on issues that concern us and possible solutions.

We're concerned about the high unemployment rate of youth in the Roseland community.

(State how this problem affects your neighborhood or city)

We believe this problem has triggered increased violence and drug use in Roseland. As you may know, children can't even play in their backyards anymore, let alone a park, because of parents' fear of their children being gunned down. If more youth are working, they're less likely to be idle and mixed up with unproductive or criminal activity.

(Offer a solution)

We know that the City of Chicago offers great programs to help put youth to work, like One Summer Chicago and After School Matters. Our group has an idea for another program to get youth employed. The city could offer churches grants to hire youth to work in church-run summer camps. In addition, the city could offer technical assistance and training to churches to help them establish the summer camps. In return, churches could teach youth moral values and the importance of loving your neighbor, in addition to academic lessons. The city could also offer the churches a youth development coach skilled in running programs for youth.

Thank you for hearing our concerns and our solutions. Should you want further information on our group's idea, contact Suzy Johnson as SuzyJ24@yahoo.com (*enter a contact person from your group*).

Youth Conversation Lesson

Overview

The purpose of this lesson is to facilitate a group discussion where students generate ideas for improving Chicago.

Objectives

- Reflect on positive work occurring in communities
- Identify work that still needs to be done
- Discuss ways in which youth can make a difference
- Collaborate with peers in a civil discourse

Materials

- Facilitation guidelines
- Guiding questions
- Note-taking template

Preparation

Have students sit at tables that seat 8–10 people. Depending on the composition of your group, we recommend mixing up ages, grade levels and schools (if applicable). In other words, to the greatest extent possible, try to get youth talking with other youth they don't normally get a chance to talk with. We also recommend trying to have at least one adult at each table, but DO NOT require that the adult act as the facilitator. Instead, the adult can act as a participant at the table with a student facilitator. You can prep students to facilitate discussions prior to the *On the Table* event. Use the facilitator guide and prompts provided here to help prepare students.

Bell-ringer: Introductions

Welcome everyone and explain that they will be participating in a momentous event where people from across metropolitan Chicago are meeting today to discuss how we can create a stronger community

through a program called *On the Table* sponsored by The Chicago Community Trust. Explain that the hope is that conversations will generate new ideas, inspire community-based action, and cultivate relationships and collaborations that help to build and maintain strong, vibrant, safe and dynamic neighborhoods.

BEFORE: Assigning roles

Have each group assign a note-taker, a facilitator and a time-keeper.

DURING: On the Table conversations

- (1) Using the conversation prompts, the facilitators should guide a conversation while the note-taker uses the template to capture the main ideas of the discussion and the time-keepers monitor the clock.
- (2) Facilitators should also guide students in drafting a group **Memo to the Mayor** that offers solutions to a challenge(s) discussed.

AFTER: Next steps

- Allow enough time for groups to begin to think about and discuss actions that they could take to address some of the issues they raised in their discussion.
- Each student presenter (one per group) shares the main ideas from his or her group discussion.
- Ask students to join the *On the Table* discussion online using the hashtag #OnTheTable2019 and on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Flickr and YouTube. If your school has a policy against using social media during school hours, encourage your students to join the conversation at home.
- Please send your **Memo to the Mayor** and other outcomes from your table discussion through onthetable.com.

Facilitator guidelines

- Create a friendly and welcoming environment
- Keep the group focused and on task
- Make sure everyone is participating and has time to talk
- Make sure no single student is dominating the conversation
- Identify one note-taker at each table

Facilitator prompts

Use the prompts below to spark conversation. You need not use all of the prompts nor go in any particular order. Allow the conversation to flow organically and work to get everyone participating.

- After welcoming everyone, go around the table and have participants introduce themselves and share a personal experience about their community.
- Describe a strong, well-functioning school, community or region. What are the qualities and characteristics? What makes it strong?
- What is the most important issue facing our community?
- What can we each do to make our school, community or region better?
- What recommendations would you make to the mayor for addressing the issues you've identified?

Note-taker

- Capture the main ideas suggested by members of your group.
- Complete the note-taking template sheet.

Timekeeper

- Monitor the clock.
- Keep the group focused on task.
- Be a participating member of the group.

Presenter

- Have your group select the main ideas to share with the class.
- When presenting, be sure to state the issue your group focused on first, followed by the solution(s) your group identified.
- Be a participating member of the group.

Note-taking template

Issue(s) discussed as a group (for example, education, employment, health, safety, etc.):

Possible solutions to the issues:

What the mayor should do to address the issues:

Share your memo, ideas or commitments

Starting on May 14, you can share your [Memo to the Mayor](#), ideas or commitments in the following ways:

- Submit your notes, ideas or commitments at onthetable.com.
- Share your notes, ideas or commitments on social media using #OnTheTable2019.
- Mail your notes, ideas or commitments to:

The Chicago Community Trust
On the Table
225 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 2200
Chicago, IL 60601

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COMMUNITY TRUST
AND AFFILIATES



Memo to the Mayor