



## Conversation

### Preparation For House Meeting Hosts

#### **1. CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE**

Remember the key principles of meaningful messages:

- **Perception > reality.** A person's opinion isn't based on reality—it's based on their perception of reality. Listen and understand your audience to meet people where they are.
- **Emotion > logic.** Logic plays a part in decision-making, but emotion is always the main ingredient. To get people to be passionate, appeal to emotions first.
- **Your audience > you.** Always prepare for the people in the room to make sure your audience can connect with your message and answer for themselves, "So what?"

While many of us want to begin the process of educating community members by starting with the "how" (for example, explaining the resettlement process itself), it's more effective to begin the conversation by **first connecting to the values and worldview** that will help your audience understand and connect emotionally to the issue and to refugees themselves. From there, you can then go on to address the facts and factors that shape community resettlement.

#### **2. Values, Proposition, Solution, and Action**

Considering your guests, To help your guests become fully engaged in the discussion, use a *values, proposition, solution, and action* formula to frame your conversation. Below is an example; there are other frames on the reverse. (You can combine elements of various--or all--themes. If the conversation veers off course, bring the conversation back to your homebase value.

*FREEDOM Frame (Read through this outline and put it into your own words):*

1. **Value:** Our nation's founding principles, including **freedom** of religion, are as important today as they have ever been. (Other important American values: Justice, equity, fairness, and dignity.) Ask guests what values inspired them to attend the meeting.
2. **Proposition:** We know it's not what you look like or where you were born that makes you American—it's how you conduct yourself and what you do that defines your role here in this country.
3. **Solution:** Right now, we have the opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to these values by being more (not less) welcoming to people fleeing oppression and disaster, no matter where they come from or how they choose to worship. This means we are committed to listening to our neighbors and building community with everyone who lives here.
4. **Action:** As a start, we're going to build a more connected San Diego that is not afraid to stand alongside our newcomer families. It's everyone's responsibility—the media, society, and politicians, and regular people like us—to make sure our democracy reflects our value of welcoming people of all origins, backgrounds, and faiths.

## Other Frames

- **FAITH**

People of all faiths stand together. America welcomes all religions—it is one of our nation’s core values. We can’t let fear diminish the core beliefs that have guided us for centuries. No community should fear that how they worship or dress might target them for physical attack or removal. We will work together to solve problems—not make each *other* the problem. We’re proud our Constitution protects religious freedom for everyone.

- **COMPASSION**

Almost all of us are Americans because our parents, grandparents, or great grandparents were refugees who sought to escape poverty and violence elsewhere. The United States opened its doors, and we should carry on this proud history. It’s important that people around the globe know that we are willing to extend a hand in friendship to those who want to be a part of it. We need to protect people who experience oppression abroad, or hate crimes here based on their religion, how they dress, or the color of their skin. We commit to finding common ground to build from, and won’t let our country be divided.

- **AMERICANISM**

We are a nation of values, founded on an idea—that all men and women are created equal. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all people have rights no matter what they look like or where they come from. So how we treat refugees reflects our commitment to the values that define us as Americans. Being American is not about what you look like, it’s how you live your life and what you do here that defines you. Refugees who come here embody these American values, defying all odds to leave behind discrimination, threats, and even violence.

- **DIGNITY OF WORK**

Out of many cultures, our country’s strength is grounded in our ability to work together. From the man down the street who cooks our food to the woman who created an innovative new business in your town, new immigrants and refugees realize the value of working hard and doing their part in exchange for the blessings of liberty. As Americans, we all do our part to contribute, and we’re all the better for having hardworking refugees as contributing members of our communities: they are customers in our stores, small business owners who pay payroll taxes, and neighbors who give to churches and charities.

- **PEOPLE MOVE**

The same is true today as it has been throughout history: People move to make life better for themselves and their families. It’s hard to move—to pack up everything and go to a new place takes courage—but you do it in order to put food on the table, to provide for your family or send your kids to a decent school. Newcomers who arrive in San Diego as refugees move here for the promise of freedom and opportunity in this country, and to escape persecution and violence. Moving to make a better life for your family is one of the hardest things—and one of the most American things—a person can do.

### **FURTHER READING**

This guide was based on Welcoming America’s [Stand Together](#) and [Reframing Refugees](#) toolkits. Check out both these tools for additional examples of how you might frame your message.