

Facilitation Guide | “What” and “So What”: Reflecting on Past Experiences

85 minutes

Facilitation Approach: Story Harvest (Adapted)

Purpose

Through collective story harvesting participants share stories of personal experience and also engage in shared listening and sense making to learn about what the shared stories means for individual and collective future.

Breakout Goals

- Provide a safe space for grantees to share successes and challenges.
- Share learnings and discuss implications of what happened and why it mattered

Facilitation Flow	Facilitation Notes
<p>Storytelling and Collective Responses 75 minutes (~18 total minutes/storyteller)</p>	<p><i>A handout for participants which explains the protocol and provides for notetaking is in their folder. An example is attached here for your reference.</i></p> <hr/> <p>Step 1: Storytelling ~10 minutes/storyteller</p> <p>Each group member will share their stories for both prompts incorporating their response to the question prompts that were provided. The rest of the group will be active listeners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROMPT #1: As you think about this last election cycle, share a story of something your organization experienced or worked on of which you feel especially proud. What made that moment or that success possible? What was the impact for you and/or others? What will you start, stop, or continue doing for future work? • PROMPT #2: As you think about this last election cycle, share a story of something your organization experienced or worked on that was particularly challenging or didn't go as planned. What led to that moment or situation? What was the impact for you/others? What will you start, stop, or continue doing for future work? <hr/> <p>Step 2: Listener Observations ~6 minutes for collective sharing</p> <p>Once the storyteller is finished, listeners will take a moment to jot down thoughts to the following prompts about either or both stories they heard. Participants will share their reflections Round Robin style as storyteller listens.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I heard . . . (listener can restate what they heard, share something that stood out, etc.) • I wonder . . . (listener can share a question, wondering, differing perspective, etc.) • I have . . . (listener can offer an idea, recommend a resource, etc.) <hr/> <p>Step 3: Storyteller Response ~2 minutes for collective sharing</p>

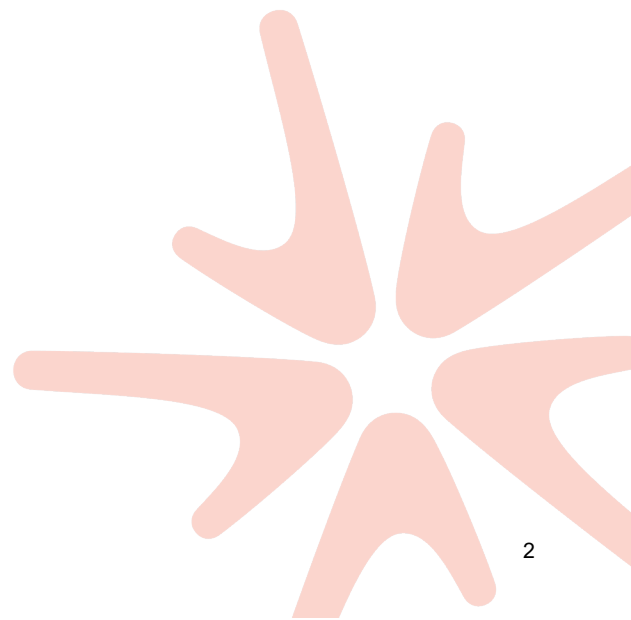
Once the storyteller is finished, listeners will take a moment to jot down thoughts to the following prompts about either or both stories they heard. Participants will share their reflections Round Robin style as storyteller listens.

Repeat steps 1-3 for each storyteller.

“So What” Group Reflections
10 minutes

As a group, reflect on the following questions and any themes that arise across stories:

- *What are our observations of where our organizations were successful and/or challenged?*
- *What has enabled our organizations’ successes and/or what slowed us down?*
- *What opportunities could arise if we act on what we’ve learned?*



BREAKOUT #1 | 2026 Election Cycle Planning (Continuity and Pivoting)

Discussion Guide

Purpose

Reflect on successes and challenges from the last election cycle (2024–25) to identify what should continue and what should pivot for 2026.

Part 1: Successes and Challenges (“What?”)

- **Prompt #1 | Success: What is something your organization experienced or worked on that you found especially successful?** What made that moment/success possible? What was the impact on your team or community? Which parts of this approach still feel relevant for 2026?
- **Prompt #2 | Challenge: What is a challenge you experienced or something that *didn't* go as planned?** What led to this moment or situation? What was the impact? What does this suggest needs to be adapted or pivoted for 2026?

Listen Fors. As you listen to the group share their experiences, reflect on:

- What worked well and why?
- What conditions made success possible?
- What common threads or recurring aspects are we noticing across our stories of success?
- What do the challenges reveal about what needs to change?

As a group, capture 2–3 insights about what should be continued for 2026.

Part 2: Adapting and Pivoting for 2026 (“So What?”)

Considering what emerged in our “What?” reflections and the insights the speaker shared earlier.

- What have we learned from where previous approaches fell short? In what ways can those challenges inform our current approaches?
- What's emerging or has shifted since the last election cycle? (e.g., voter behavior, redistricting, narratives, opportunities, etc.)
- What past approaches may no longer fit the 2026 landscape? What conditions or behaviors will be essential for success in 2026?
- To respond effectively, what assumptions need to be further examined, or what unknowns do we need to prepare for?
- What shifts do we need to make for 2026? What should we start, stop, and continue?

As a group, capture 2–3 recommendations of pivots for 2026.

Individual Reflection | “Now What?”

Reflecting on your group's discussion, what insights or ideas are relevant and important for you and your organization's work in 2026?

