

## Facilitation Guide | Breakout #3: Visioning Beyond 2026

80 minutes

### Facilitation Approach: Three Horizons

The Three Horizons framework is a future thinking tool that supports examining current realities/approaches (Horizon 1), identify shifts needed to evolve (Horizon 2), and articulate a longer-term vision for the future they want to create (Horizon 3). *The protocol explores the horizons in the following order: Horizon 3, Horizon 1, and Horizon 2.*

#### Protocol References

- [Unlocking Future Success: Navigating the Three Horizons Framework - Systems Thinking Alliance](#)
- [International Training Centre Foresight Toolkit: Three Horizons Framework](#)
- [Three Horizons: A way of working with change](#)

### Purpose

Guide organizations in envisioning meaningful leadership pipeline progress by 2028/2030 and identifying the shifts needed before 2028 to move toward that future. This conversation supports reflection on long-term aspirations, current realities, vulnerabilities, and pre-2028 pivots.

### Breakout Goals

- Define what meaningful pipeline progress could look like for the field in 2028/2030.
- Examine current strengths, constraints, and vulnerabilities of where we are today.
- Identify actionable Horizon 2 shifts: pre-2028 strategies, pivots, and investments essential for movement toward the long-term vision.

### Materials

- Breakout #3 Participant Discussion Guide (*Also included at the end of this document for reference.*)
- Three Horizons poster (printed at Staples)
- Individual Three Horizons placemat
- Color-coded sticky notes (three colors for H1, H2, H3)
- Printed Breakout Discussion Guide

### Facilitation Flow

#### Overview (Full-Group)

**10 minutes**

*Ground in Day 1 discussion about 2026 election cycle and make connections to 2028 and beyond, which is the focus for Day 2*

### Guiding Questions

*(Before breakouts)* Remind the group that during Day 1 we focused understanding and examining organizations' 2026 plans and priorities including the leadership pipeline and what needs emphasis to be ready for the 2026 cycle. Today (Day 2), we'll be extending the thinking to 2028 and beyond to understand what long-term progress looks like and what needs to start happening now to get there. We want to focus on preparing for a range of outcomes, identifying what is most at risk, and designing a strategy that strengthens the pipeline no matter what unfolds in this next election cycle

Potential suggestions for what to recap from Day 1:

- Where orgs currently cluster in the pipeline
- Common bottlenecks/challenges that were elevated
- Strengths identified at the different levels of the pipeline

- Unknowns/risks surfaced on Day 1.

Invite participants to share reflections about their/their organization's experience:

- Something that surprised/resonated with them from Day 1
- Something that feels like a risk for 2028+ if not addressed now.

Share any final thoughts before providing instructions for breakout.

## Breakout Groups

### 60 minutes

*Discussing long-term vision, current realities, and needed shifts.*

### Facilitation Note(s):

- Using a popcorn-style discussion approach, each group should work through the following questions.
- Please note the recommended times for each part of the conversation as some have been given more time than others (i.e., Horizon 1 = 10 minutes for less emphasis on that topic).
- While all identified breakout questions are relevant to the discussion, if facilitators need to prioritize questions at any time based on time, the most essential questions have been bolded throughout the protocol.
- When the large group reconvenes, each group will be asked to share: one key insight from the group's 2028 and beyond visioning, one key pre-2028 pivot or building need, and one essential move for 2028.

### Part 1. Horizon 3: 2028 and Beyond Pipeline Vision

#### 15 minutes

Remind the group that we'll be focusing on future thinking during this breakout and articulating a longer-term vision. During the discussion we'll be examining where we are now and identify the immediate shifts and work that needs to happen during the next two years to move toward that future.

Inform group we're going to first focus on the long view (Horizon 3). Imagine it's 2028 or 2030: What does meaningful pipeline progress look like for your organization and for the communities you serve? Think about the leaders you're cultivating, the influence you're building, and the role you want to be known for in strengthening democratic participation.

- **By 2028/2030, what does meaningful pipeline progress look like for our organization(s) and our communities?**
- **Where should we be placing or supporting leaders in the pipeline?**
- **What capabilities, relationships, and narrative power will be essential for our success?**
- **Whose leadership pathways are still under represented, and what must be true by 2028/2030 to change that?**

### Part 2. Horizon 1: Current State

#### 10 minutes

Invite the group to think about where their organizations are in the work today. Yesterday they had considered the strengths, challenges, and opportunities given where they currently are in the pipeline. Building on those insights and reflections, the group will be exploring what's working effectively right now, what may be limiting their effectiveness, and where approaches may have vulnerabilities moving into 2028 and beyond.

- **Thinking about where our organization is focused in the pipeline now, what's working?** What are the limitations or areas that need strengthening for 2028/2030?
- **Where do we see vulnerabilities or risks in our current approach(es)?** (For example, are there places where we may be relying too heavily on one leader, one strategy, one funding source, or one key partnership.)
- Which of the things we're assuming for 2026 might not hold true as we move into 2028 and beyond?

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### **Part 3. Horizon 2: Pre-2028 Pivots and What We Need to Build** **20 minutes**

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The group will now focus on the shifts their organizations need to make before the 2028 election cycle. This part of the discussion will explore what actions, priorities, capabilities, partnerships, or conditions need to pivot, be built, or be strengthened to achieve the future vision they described at the beginning of the breakout. The intent of the discussion isn't to build a full plan but to identify the strategic shifts and critical infrastructure that will set the work up for success in 2028 and beyond.

- **What are the key shifts we need to make before 2028 to move toward our longer-term vision?**
- What do we need to build or strengthen (e.g., capabilities, relationships, leadership pathways, narrative strategy, data/digital capacity, internal systems) to be effective and aligned with our 2028 and beyond vision?
- **What should we start, stop, or continue in preparation for our 2028 and beyond vision?** (This includes both what parts of current work are relevant and what isn't relevant or effective.)
- What are the most at-risk elements of our current plan, and what supports or conditions would help mitigate those risks?

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### **Part 4. Contingencies + Essential Moves for 2028 and Beyond** **12-15 minutes**

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To close out the breakout, the group will look at how plans might need to adapt based on what happens in the 2026 election cycle. Some parts of the work might slow down or face challenges, and other parts may move more quickly than expected. Considering both possibilities helps strengthen strategic decisions and actions to move toward the 2028 and beyond vision. The group will also identify 2-3 Essential Moves for 2028 and beyond that must be advanced regardless of what scenario plays out in 2026.

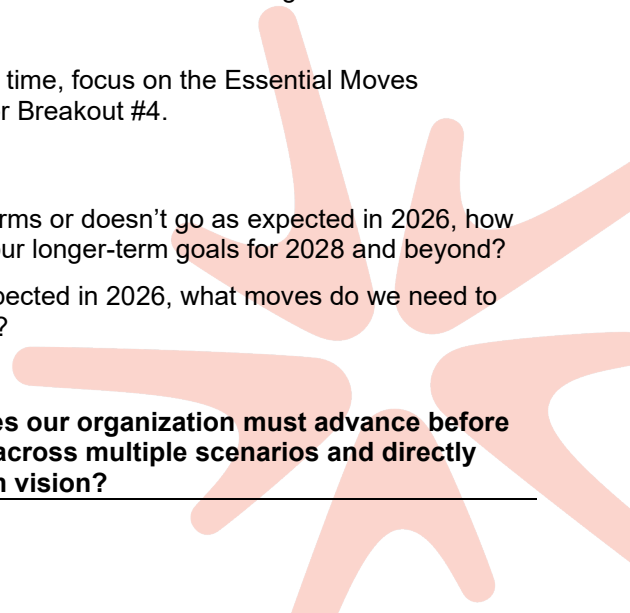
**Facilitation Note(s):** If running short on time, focus on the Essential Moves question since those will be important for Breakout #4.

#### **Contingency-Related Prompts**

- If something important underperforms or doesn't go as expected in 2026, how will we pivot while still protecting our longer-term goals for 2028 and beyond?
- If things accelerate faster than expected in 2026, what moves do we need to make to adapt or scale effectively?

#### **Essential Move(s) Prompt**

- **What are the 2-3 Essential Moves our organization must advance before 2028 — the actions that matter across multiple scenarios and directly move us toward our longer-term vision?**



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**Full-Group Share-out**

**10 minutes**

*Share small group insights and takeaways with the entire group*

**Invite each group to share:**

- One key visioning insight for 2028 and beyond
  - One key pre-2028 pivot or building need
  - One Essential Move for 2028 (and/or beyond)
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