

## Facilitation Guide | Breakout #1: 2026 Election Cycle Planning (Continuity and Pivoting)

65 minutes

### Facilitation Approach: World Café Protocol (Adapted)

Structured small-group dialogue to explore meaningful questions, share diverse perspectives, and surface collective insights. Through conversational reflection and collective meaning-making, this approach supports quickly surfacing participants' experiences and collective insights.

#### Protocol References

- [World Café Method](#)
- [FSG: Guide to the World Café Method](#)
- [CLEE: Virtual World Café](#)
- [The World Café Method: Hosting and Facilitating Collaborative Discussion](#)

### Purpose

Engage participants across organizations in reflective small-group conversation that surfaces experiences, insights, and emerging needs to inform strategies and approaches for the 2026 election cycle.

- What strategies or approaches from the past cycle(s) clearly still apply in 2026?
- Where do we need to pivot our approach for 2026 given what's different in this cycle?

### Breakout Goals

- Elevate cross-organizational insights about effective past strategies and persistent challenges.
- Clarify which approaches remain relevant for 2026 and which require adaptation or new thinking.
- Build shared understanding that strengthens alignment for 2026 and surfaces the priority pivots required for the evolving election landscape.

### Materials

- Breakout #1: Participant Discussion Guide (*Also included at the end of this document for reference*)
- Chart paper (for full-group reflections)
- Markers (for full-group reflections)

Facilitation Flow	Facilitation Flow
<p><b>Overview</b> <b>5 minutes</b></p> <p><i>Provide an overview and instructions to entire group before breakouts</i></p>	<p>Participants will be breaking into small groups (cross-organization) to explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insights and learnings from previous election cycle successes and challenges (What)</li> <li>• Discuss implications for the 2026 election cycle: what strategies and approaches are still relevant or necessary pivots</li> </ul> <p>Core questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What strategies or approaches from the past cycle(s) clearly still apply in 2026?</li> <li>• Where do we need to pivot our approach for 2026 given what's different in this cycle?</li> </ul>

Breakout Groups will have ~50 minutes to discuss, and then everyone will return for full-group reflection

## Breakout Groups 50 minutes

Reflecting on past election cycle successes and challenges

### Part 1: “WHAT”: Successes and Challenges from Previous Election Cycles 25 minutes

#### Facilitation Note(s):

- Each participant will briefly share one success and one challenge from the last election cycle to ground the group in lived experience before moving into the collective sensemaking in the So What part of the conversation.
- This part of the breakout is meant to elevate experiences and what individuals think is relevant without a lot of attention to what needs to pivot.
- **For notetaking, capture (a) general insights about successes, (b) general insights about challenges, (c) 2-3 specific insights from the group about what should be continued for 2026.**

**Prompt:** *As you think about the last election cycle (2024–25), reflect on the successes and challenges of your experience:*

- **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?*
- **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?*

**As individuals share, the group listens for:**

- *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?*

**Ask the group to identify 2-3 insights from the discussion about what should be continued for 2026.**

### Part 2: “SO WHAT”: Implications and Takeaways for 2026 Election Cycle 25 minutes

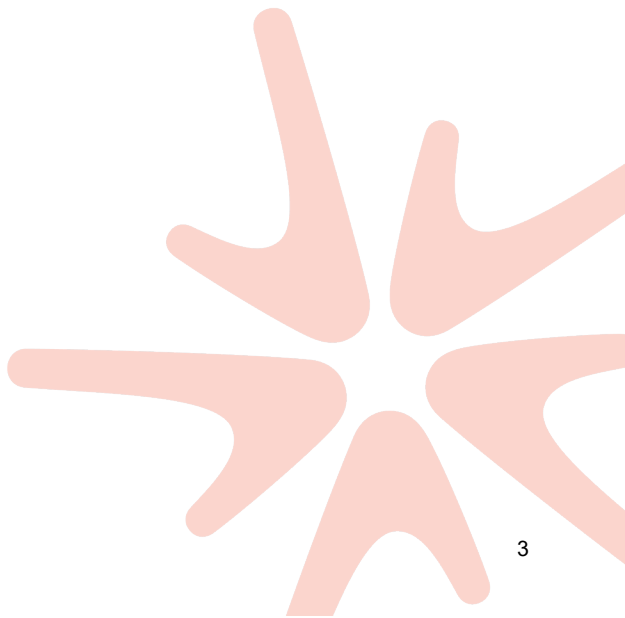
#### Facilitation Note(s):

- This part of the breakout connects earlier reflections with insights from the guest speaker to clarify what shifts are needed for 2026.
- **For notetaking, capture general (a) insights about lessons learned and how those can inform current approaches, (b) what is essential for success in 2026, and (c) 2-3 specific recommendations of pivots for 2026.**

**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?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What’s emerging or has shifted since the last election cycle? (e.g., voter behavior, redistricting, narratives, opportunities, etc.)</li> <li>• What past approaches may no longer fit the 2026 landscape?</li> <li>• What conditions or behaviors will be essential for success in 2026?</li> <li>• To respond effectively, what assumptions need to be further examined, or what unknowns do we need to prepare for?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Full-Group Debrief/ Reflections</b> <i>10 minutes</i></p> <p><i>Share individual and small group insights and takeaways with the entire group</i></p>	<p>Each group shares:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One strategies/approaches that are <b>still applicable</b> for 2026</li> <li>• One <b>needed pivot</b> for 2026</li> </ul> <p><b>Facilitation Note(s):</b> Invite groups to contribute anything additional that came up in their group’s list that hadn’t been named already</p> <p>General reflections (from anyone)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One thing you’re carrying into the rest of the convening.</li> <li>• One shift you’re thinking differently about for 2026.</li> </ul>



## 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?

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

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#### 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?

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

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#### 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?

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