



- > [issue books](#)
 - > [reports](#)
 - > [about forums](#)
 - > [home](#)
 - > [about us](#)
 - > [contact](#)
- > [calendar](#)
 - > [news](#)
 - > [for educators](#)
- > [network contacts](#)
 - > [online discussion](#)
 - > [NIF store](#)



FORUMS

- > [about nif forums](#)
- > [participate in a forum](#) > [forums for the fourth](#)
- > [organize a forum](#) > [sample materials](#)



[✉ Join Our Free Email Mailing List](#)

Privacy by SafeSubscribeSM

NIF PUBLICATIONS

[Public Deliberation Booklets & NIF Brochures](#)

QUICKLINKS

choose a destination
▼

About NIF Forums

National Issues Forums (NIF) is a nonpartisan, nationwide network of locally sponsored public forums for the consideration of public policy issues. It is rooted in the simple notion that people need to come together to reason and talk — to deliberate about common problems. Indeed, democracy requires an ongoing deliberative public dialogue.

These forums, organized by a variety of organizations, groups, and individuals, offer citizens the opportunity to join together to deliberate, to make choices with others about ways to approach difficult issues and to work toward creating reasoned public judgment. Forums range from small or large group gatherings similar to town hall meetings, to study circles held in public places or in people's homes on an ongoing basis.

Forums focus on an issue such as health care, immigration, Social Security, or ethnic and racial tensions. The forums provide a way for people of diverse views and experiences to seek a shared understanding of the problem and to search for common ground for action. Forums are led by trained, neutral moderators, and use an issue discussion guide that frames the issue by presenting the overall problem and then three or four broad approaches to the problem. Forum participants work through the issue by considering each approach; examining what appeals to them or concerns them, and also what the costs, consequences, and trade offs may be that would be incurred in following that approach.

Most documents require Adobe Acrobat Reader. [Click here to download it.](#)