

Facilitating

All FoodCorps service members introduce themselves to school staff at the beginning of the year. And throughout the school year, you may be called upon to convene a group, lead a meeting to share ideas and goals for service, or present on a topic related to service. In these instances, good facilitation is key to ensure your meeting uses time well, that you have clearly shared your goals, and that the meeting creates space for all members of the group to participate. Here are some tips for success:

Meeting Planning Tips

- Location: Where will you be meeting? How is the room set up?
- Food: Bring food! Well-fed people are happy and engaged.
- Notes: Consider asking someone in the group to be the note taker, so you can focus on facilitation. How will this person take notes? On a flip chart or chalkboard? (We recommend transferring notes to a computer after the meeting.)
- Timing: Start and end on time to value all meeting participants' time.
- Materials: Be sure to print important materials, especially if participants haven't had time to review important information ahead of the meeting.

Meeting Agenda Tips

- Decide on the *purpose* and *outcome* of the meeting. Make sure to share them with the group. The purpose is the broad *meeting goal*, and the outcome is *what you hope to get done* by the end of the meeting.

- Consider what you will cover during the meeting. Is the goal of the meeting to collect information, have a discussion, make a decision, or all three? How often will the group meet? What can the group realistically accomplish within the time you have?
- If members of the group don't already know each other, lead a short icebreaker activity. For example, ask participants to share their favorite fruit or veggie or favorite food memory.
- Use a variety of information-sharing techniques, depending on group size. For example, "round robin," "think-pair-share," or "shout out/popcorn."
- Remember to leave time to discuss next steps.

Meeting Facilitation Tips

When you facilitate a meeting, you are guiding the conversation. If you are new to facilitation, keep the following tips in mind:

- Practice neutrality: let your own opinions take a back seat so that you can take a neutral point of view, and guide the conversation according to what other participants think and feel.
- Develop a way for people to participate in the conversation so that everyone's ideas can be heard.
- Help the group come to an agreement or compromise so that they can make a decision.