



THE STATE LEGISLATIVE
LEADERS FOUNDATION

PRESENT



CIVILITY, BIPARTISANSHIP, & LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS FOR STATE LEGISLATORS

nxtgenusa.org/workshops | 614-398-0773

Building Trust through Civil Discourse Workshop (4 ½ hours)

Legislators begin with a meal to honor fellowship, learn about the foundation and critical role of civility to our nation's Founders, and watch examples of unlikely friendships. Then, a bipartisan team of Next Generation Facilitators – current or former state legislators from nearby states - move the large group into breakout rooms for small group work. No more than 20 Democrats and Republicans from both chambers will share personal journeys, define the current state of civility, identify barriers and opportunities to leverage change, and create an action plan. During the last hour of the workshop, all legislators return together to report action plans and vote on priorities.

The Case for Civil Discourse: Founding Fathers (1 or 1 ½ hour session)

The nation's capacity to work across our differences respectfully and with civility has reached record lows. Analyses of the more than 13 million roll call votes cast since 1789 reveal that the Congress is now the most polarized ever. The American Founders recognized that differences escalating into dysfunctional partisan animosity was the chief reason every previous republic had failed. Building a republic robust to partisan animosity was the chief problem the Founders aimed to solve in framing the U.S. Constitution. The main reason the American system takes separation of powers further than any other is to prevent parties from imposing their will on everyone else.

The Bay of Pigs and the Cuban Missile Crisis (1 or 1 ½ hour session)

This session explores how to realize the benefits of diverse perspectives within a legislature or a caucus without falling into dysfunctional conflict. Drawing on research in group decision making, National Institute for Civil Discourse Executive Director Keith Allred leads this interactive, skills building session. The conversation starts with a discussion of the Kennedy Administration's decision to sponsor an incursion into Castro's Cuba and the monumental blunder that it turned out to be. Just 18 months later, the same group confronted a daunting challenge in the Cuban Missile Crisis. This time, when the stakes could hardly have been higher, Kennedy managed differences within his administration completely differently with vastly superior results.

Leading with Civility - A Practical Approach (1 or 1 ½ hour session)

Have you ever wondered what makes a great leader—one that can motivate and inspire others to achieve extraordinary results? Drawing on their long legislative experiences leading a state Senate or House, a member of Next Generation Leadership or the Advisory Board will explore the vital role civility played in the founding of America and its continued importance in today's political environment. Whether a freshman legislator or seasoned lawmaker, each participant will discover practical civil discourse best practices as they relate to leadership skills.

Getting to Yes: A Legislative Budget Building Exercise (1 ½- 2 ½ hours)

The only way to get a bill passed in the legislature or an ordinance passed through city council is to get a majority of your colleagues to support it. There are no dictators in American politics. While coalition building is essential for a functioning democracy, it seems to have become a lost art of late. In this session, we will help participants rediscover the art of finding common ground by examining and practicing strategies for finding that “sweet spot” in negotiations where everybody gets something and nobody gets nothing. Participants will take part in an activity where they have to find consensus as members of the House and Senate Budget Conference Committee on a variety of contentious issues.

Getting to Yes: An Exercise in Bringing Diverse Groups Together (1 ½- 2 ½ hours)

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What Does it Mean to Lead? A Look from Plato’s Cave (¾ - 1 hour)

Leadership is never easy, especially when those being led want to go a different direction than their leaders. Using Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave,” this session examines the responsibility of leaders when those they lead, perhaps out of fear or ignorance, don’t want to follow. Should the leader leave them where they are familiar but in darkness or lead them out into a better place even if they are reluctant? We will examine what it means to lead and the “darkness” that may restrict all of us in our “caves.”

Ethical Leadership: Knowing and Doing the Right Thing (1 -1 ½ hours)

It seems that almost daily, we are reading or hearing about a public official who has behaved in an unethical manner—someone takes a bribe, harasses an employee or misuses campaign funds. In this session, we will explore the difference between ethical and legal as well as the reasons that unethical behavior seems to be on the rise. Further, we will use real world scenarios (developed by public officials) to discuss what is and is not ethical behavior. This session will give participants the opportunity to think about what they should do in the calm of hour before they get caught up in the heat of the moment.

The Seven “Abilities” of Effective Leadership (½ - ¾ hours)

Have you ever wondered what makes a great leader—one that can motivate and inspire others to achieve extraordinary results? Reflecting on American Presidents from the last eighty years. In this session, we explore seven qualities associated with effective leadership, linking each one to a particular president. For example, one of the reasons that Ronald Reagan was an effective president was his credibility. People, friends, and foes alike trusted that Reagan meant what he said. Effective leaders are true to their word and make promises rather than threats. The other “abilities” are likeability, capability, adaptability, comfortability, compatibility and visi(ona)bility.

The Constitutional Significance of Compromise (¾ - 1 hour)

America’s Founders intentionally designed the Constitution with defensive barriers to restrain any one faction from imposing its will on everyone else. By design, governing within this constitutional structure promotes if not requires solutions that are wise enough to attract broad, bipartisan support. Leadership skills to find and champion these commonsense solutions are essential for our republic to work as intended by the Founders.