



CivicLex

# Host Guide

## On the Table

March 25, 2020



Let's talk about our neighborhoods.

# What is On the Table?

On the Table (OTT) is a city-wide conversation that allows us to get to know each other better and discuss what is and is not working in our communities.

OTT started in Chicago as a way for people to have conversations about their community over a shared meal. In 2017, the Blue Grass Community Foundation brought the model to Lexington as a way of getting public input about how our city should grow.

After a three-year pilot run, Blue Grass Community Foundation handed off the program to us — CivicLex! We're working with a 40-person team of made up of educators, civic leaders, community organizers, and more to reimagine what OTT can do for Lexington.

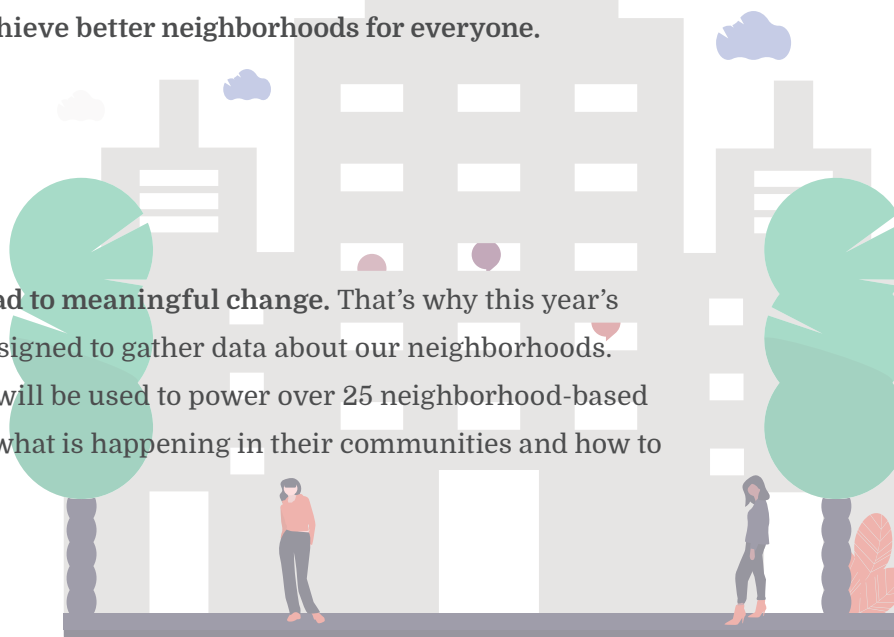
If you've participated before, things are going to be a little bit different this year as we shift the focus to our neighborhoods and communities. We're going to be starting each conversation with a brief survey, and that data will be one of the main outcomes this year. Please read through the entire host guide to learn what else is different for this year's OTT.

## Why neighborhoods?

Neighborhoods shape our city and define so much of our everyday life. Rising rents, new businesses, increased traffic, better sidewalks — all across Lexington, our neighborhoods and communities are changing. **This year's On the Table is built to foster conversations about what is changing in our neighborhoods so we achieve better neighborhoods for everyone.**

## So what happens after?

We know that conversations alone won't lead to meaningful change. That's why this year's conversations will all start with a survey designed to gather data about our neighborhoods. These results, along with other public data, will be used to power over 25 neighborhood-based reports that will help residents understand what is happening in their communities and how to advocate for change.



# Planning your table

On March 25, anyone, anywhere, can host a table. We've built this guide to make it as easy as possible for you to host.

## *Step 1: Register as a Host*

Register by visiting our website [ottlex.org/register](https://ottlex.org/register). The process should only take 2-3 minutes. Registering ensures that you will be kept in the loop, sent materials and information, and it will also allow us to send you the follow up reports we will develop.

There are two hosting options — **public** and **private**. If you want your conversation to be open to anyone, **register as a public table**. We'll then list it on our website for anyone to find. If you don't want it listed on our website, **register as a private table**.

## *Step 2: Plan a time and place*

Conversations can happen anywhere - homes, restaurants, places of worship, coffee shops, schools, libraries, offices, parks, and other locations. If you are planning to host your conversation in a public place, make sure the space is available and accommodates your expected attendees before the day of. OTT conversations typically take just over an hour.

## *Step 3: Invite your guests*

Generally, it's hard to keep conversations with more than 10 people on track. So if you are planning to have more than 10, you may want to host more than one table. Additionally, while it can be easy to stay inside your friend or family group, consider inviting people you don't know as well, or ask someone in your group to bring someone new.

While registration is not required, we encourage you to ask your guests to register at [ottlex.org/register](https://ottlex.org/register). Registering will enable them to stay up to date with results when they are released, and it also gives us a more accurate understanding of how many people are participating. The survey process is a big part of this year's On the Table. If your guests won't have smartphone or internet access, make sure to either contact us for printed materials or print them out yourself from [ottlex.org/materials](https://ottlex.org/materials). You should also provide pens/pencils if you are using the paper surveys.

# The conversation

Unlike in the past, this year's On the Table conversation is about a specific topic and follows a specific format. Following the steps below will help you keep the conversation on track and will help us get more survey participation!

**Step 1:** Start by welcoming everyone to the conversation and doing a round of introductions.

**Step 2:** Explain how On the Table works, what the purpose is, and what will be done with the information afterwards (you can use the script we've provided).

**Step 3:** Invite everyone to fill out the survey. We have both digital and physical versions available, but we prefer that people fill out the digital version in the interest of data privacy.

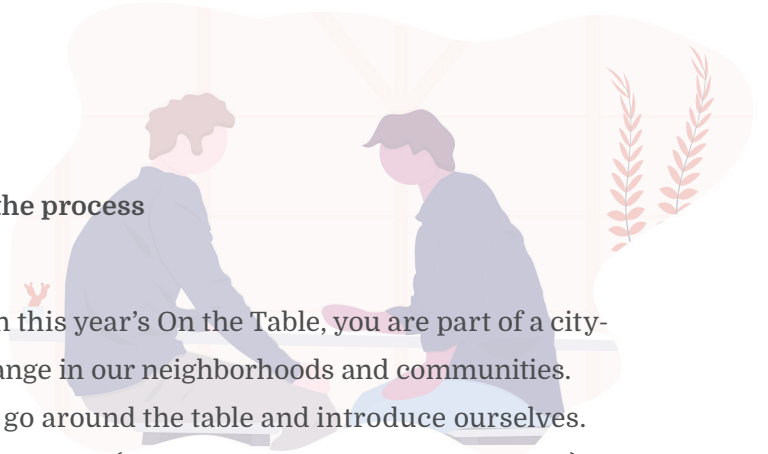
**Step 4:** After the survey, start the conversation! While your conversation can take whatever direction seems most natural, we suggest following the general format of the survey. This is what is provided in the script on the following pages.

# A note on facilitation


Being a facilitator in these conversations can be tricky. In a normal facilitator role, you would not provide your opinion, but in OTT, we encourage you to participate fully in the conversation. When disagreements come up, though, make sure you are keeping the space safe for everyone and that the discussion stays on track and moves forward. Remember, this is a dialogue, not a debate.


Pay attention to the group dynamic — some people may feel more or less comfortable talking due to their race, class, age, political affiliation, gender, nationality, religion, and many other factors. Invite others to be respectful of everyone in the group when sharing their opinion and be aware if anyone is taking over the conversation. Ensure that those who are not typically given a chance to speak in these settings are heard from. For more tips on facilitation, visit [ottlex.org](http://ottlex.org).


# The Script





 = Your script


 = Notes on the process


 "Welcome, everyone! By participating in this year's On the Table, you are part of a city-wide discussion about good and bad change in our neighborhoods and communities. Before we get too far into it, though, let's go around the table and introduce ourselves. Let's start with first names, and where you live (include an icebreaker if you'd like)."

 Let your guests introduce themselves.

 "Great! We're all here today to talk about our neighborhoods. We'll start things off by taking a five-minute survey together. After that, we'll have a group conversation about our neighborhoods. In the next few weeks, the team behind On the Table will process all of the survey data and then send each of us reports about what is happening in our neighborhoods and how we can get involved. Does this make sense to everyone?"

 Answer any questions that your guests may have. If you are having trouble answering, you can refer to our Frequently Asked Questions page at [ottlex.org/faq](https://ottlex.org/faq).

 "Let's take the survey! You can find it on your phone or device at [survey.ottlex.org](https://survey.ottlex.org). We'll have around five minutes to take the survey, but don't worry if it takes longer!"

 If you are using paper surveys, this is the time to distribute them alongside pens/pencils. You'll collect these once the conversation is over.

Set a timer for 6 minutes or keep an eye on a clock. Once the time has passed, let people know that it's time to start wrapping up. Of course, they can have more time if they need it.



"OK! Now that we're done with the survey, let's share our thoughts with each other. Please remember to listen respectfully, be aware of how much you are talking, and remember — this is a dialogue, not a debate."

"Let's start with the first question on the survey — what is going well in your neighborhood? Who wants to start it off?"



Keep this section to about 15 minutes. Sometimes it can be intimidating to be the first to talk. If no one volunteers, start with one of your own thoughts, and ask how others react to it. Once 15 minutes have passed, and everyone has had a chance to share, move on to the next question.



"Now that we've had some time to talk about what is going well, what do you see happening in your neighborhood that is not going well?"



Keep this section to about 15 minutes as well. Consider inviting someone who has spoken less to start things off. This could be the most difficult part of the conversation. Try to be respectful of the experiences of others. Lean in to uncomfortable conversations by inviting people to share more about negative issues. Once 15 minutes have passed, and everyone has had a chance to share, move on to the last question.



"Thank you all for sharing your experiences. So we have talked about positives and negatives in our communities. Now it's time to talk about solutions. Given what we have just talked about, what are some things that could be done to address these issues or improve our neighborhoods?"

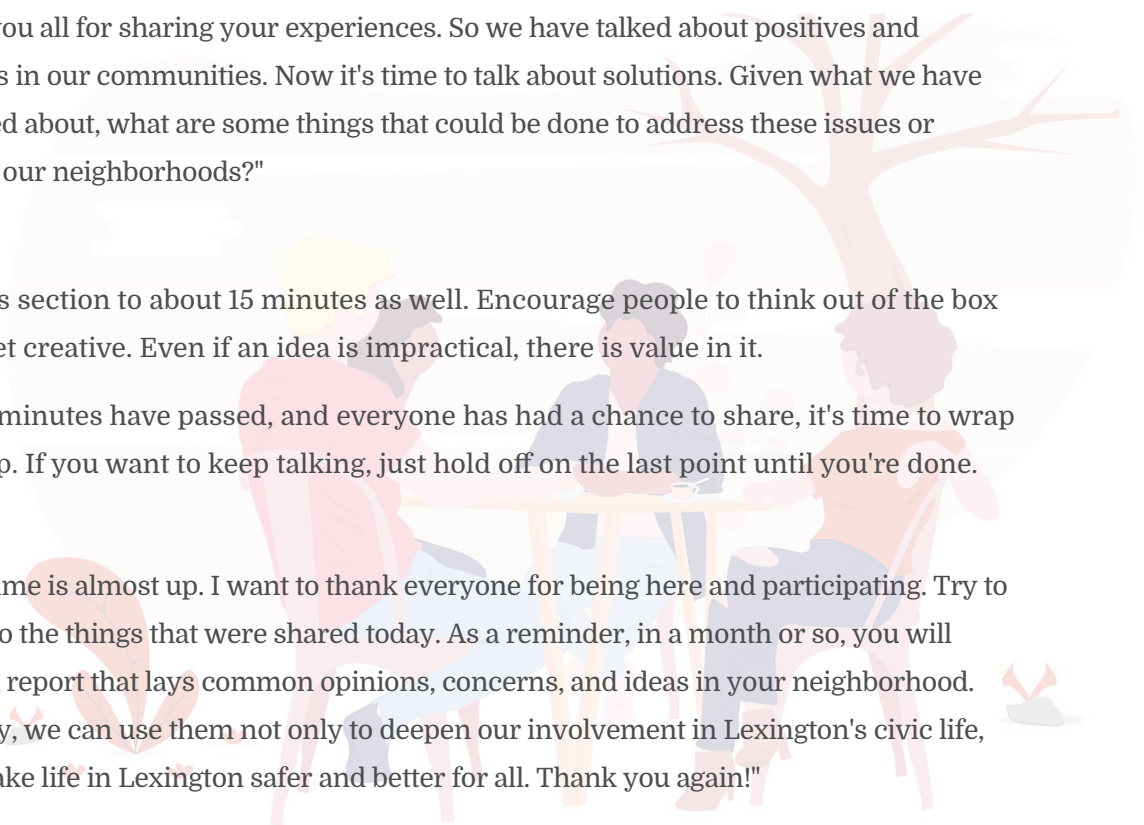


Keep this section to about 15 minutes as well. Encourage people to think out of the box and to get creative. Even if an idea is impractical, there is value in it.

Once 15 minutes have passed, and everyone has had a chance to share, it's time to wrap things up. If you want to keep talking, just hold off on the last point until you're done.



"So our time is almost up. I want to thank everyone for being here and participating. Try to hold on to the things that were shared today. As a reminder, in a month or so, you will receive a report that lays common opinions, concerns, and ideas in your neighborhood. Hopefully, we can use them not only to deepen our involvement in Lexington's civic life, but to make life in Lexington safer and better for all. Thank you again!"



# What happens next?

If you used paper surveys, the next step is getting them turned in to our data team. You can take photos of the surveys and email them to [info@ottlex.org](mailto:info@ottlex.org) or you can drop them off at any Public Library branch in Lexington. We will pick them up there.

Once all the surveys are returned, our team will begin analyzing the data. For more information on what this means, visit [ottlex.org/data](http://ottlex.org/data).

This summer, every participant in On the Table will receive a report that is tailored to their neighborhood. This report will summarize the responses to the survey from residents as well as provide additional ways to get involved. The OTT team will also present this information to divisions within Lexington Fayette Urban County Government to inform policy decisions.

## Continuing the Conversation

On the Table 2020 kicks off a week of civic engagement, culminating in the launch of the 2020 US Census. We're partnering with a number of organizations across Fayette County to make sure that the conversation about our community doesn't stop after OTT day ends.

*For up-to date info on continuing conversations, visit [ottlex.org/keepgoing](http://ottlex.org/keepgoing)*



**WeCountLex**  
Census 2020

The US 2020 Census launches April 1, exactly one week after On the Table. The Census counts every single person in the US, and it touches almost every part of your life - from what potholes get filled to who represents you in government. Find out more at:

[wecountlex.org](http://wecountlex.org)

# OTT Engagement Team

The On the Table Engagement Team is a volunteer group that made this possible. A big thank you to the members: Barbara Fischer, Brooke Raby, Brittany Roethemier, Carly Muetterties, Carmen Wampler-Collins, Chhaya Kolavalli, Craig Cammack, Daniel Sheehan, Daniela DiGiacomo, Hannah LeGris, Jason Tate, Julius Johnson, Grace Ragain, Lauren Weaver, Lisa Adkins, Mariam Addarrat, Michelle Hollingshead, Miranda Scully, Mizari Suarez, Reva Russell English, Ryan Kaffenberger, Taryn Henning, Tevin Monroe, Todd Stolfus, & Valarie Friedmann.

## About CivicLex

CivicLex is the organizing lead for 2020's On the Table. We are a non-profit civic education organization that brings daylight to the issues, policies, and procedures impacting Fayette County. Find out more about our work at: [civiclex.org](http://civiclex.org).

The CivicLex Team members that worked on OTT are: Kit Anderson, Megan Gulla, Eric Shelton, Sara Trapp, and Richard Young.



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OTT is supported, generously, by:

On the Table Lexington was started by Blue Grass Community Foundation.

