

Kitchen Table Talks

with
Democrats
Abroad

What are Kitchen Table Talks?

Kitchen Table Talks are small group events held by Democrats Abroad members to talk about policy issues that matter to Americans abroad, and to give members a chance to let Democrats Abroad know their thoughts and experiences around these issues.

KT Talks are also a great way for members to help inform and shape the **2020 Democrats Abroad Platform**.

Kitchen Table Talks run from October through December, 2019.

How do Kitchen Table Talks work?

- Moderators review the Kitchen Table topics list and download topics that most interest them.
- A moderator invites a group of friends to meet in person or on a call to discuss and answer questions on these topics.
- During the conversation, the group records their answers and later submits them to the Kitchen Table feedback form.
- This feedback helps shape the way Democrats Abroad views these topics and describes them in the 2020 Democrats Abroad platform.

Prep work

When setting up a Talk, think about who will host, moderate and take notes. We recommend having at least two people on your host team so that one person can moderate while the other takes notes. The host team should organize the space and meeting time.

Recruit guests

- Invite up to a dozen people you think might have something to say and an interest in the topic(s) you'll discuss.
- Send your invite at least a week ahead of the time. The invite should include date, location, and timing plus the topics and discussion description (sample invite below).
- Send a reminder message the day of the meeting, to help nudge folk to attend and make sure they have the right address and time.

Prepare your space

- Set up a comfortable talk location with chairs facing one another.
- Consider including a table for everyone to use to take notes on.
- Provide printouts of topic(s) for everyone to read and review.

The Talk

Build community

- As guests arrive, ask everyone to introduce themselves.
- Consider including a short social time, either before or after the discussion.

Kick off

- Invite guests to state their names, where they vote and what their expectations are for the discussion.
- Review what a Kitchen Table talk is, the steps involved, how long the discussion will last and what will happen to the results.
- Walk through the discussion guidelines.
- Identify who will moderate and who will take notes. Explain how information will be shared with Democrats Abroad and make sure everyone is fine sharing.

Work through your topic(s)

For each topic, we'll ask your team to answer the following questions:

- Does your team support this stance and DA's actions to address it?
- How important is this topic for you and your group?
- If you were working on this topic to submit it as a plank for the Democrats Abroad platform, what additional information would you provide?
- How would you change the content in this topic to more closely match it to your group's thoughts on this issue?
- If you, or anyone you know, is directly affected by this topic, please consider sharing your story, either anonymously or with the story sharer's name included.

Afterwards

Following the meeting, either the moderator or the note taker should upload the group's answers to the Kitchen Table feedback form. We recommend uploading the notes within a week of your conversation, when details are still fresh.

Other optional follow ups

- Consider sending a brief email thanks to each of your guests and let them know that their answers have been sent in to the Kitchen Table team.
- Let Democrats Abroad know if you have suggestions or feedback for improving the process, or would like to contribute further to the Platform, or other volunteer actions.

MORE DETAILS

Role: Moderator

- The main role of the moderator is to make sure that guests are all able to contribute and be heard, and that discussion is productive.
- Pay attention to everyone in your group.
- Check to make sure each person understands the question being addressed.
- Make sure people take turns when speaking.
- Consider using a timer for comments (set that guideline at the beginning of the meeting). Three minutes is generally long enough for anyone to make a point.
- Energize the group when needed (through humor, a stretch break, etc).
- Ask and suggest that the group move on to another topic or question when necessary.
- Paraphrase and summarize to help bring a topic to a close or move on to another topic.
- Check in regularly with your note taker to make sure they feel included in the discussion, and are able to keep up with the feedback.
- Consider using visual aids for note taking and questions (write questions on a big pad or flip chart, add brainstormed comments, etc).

Role: Note Taker

- The main role of the note taker is to accurately record the group's answers to each topic question, and submit the answers to the Kitchen Table topic form within a week of the conversation.
- When recording answers, the note taker might also consider also noting quotes as well.
- After each question, check with guests to make sure the answer is clear and the team agrees on the result.
- Encourage guests to write down their quotes (legibly) for later transcription.
- Share final answers with the moderator and interested guests before submitting to the Kitchen table feedback form.
- Suggested supplies: we find paper and pen, a smart phone for snapping pics of guest notes, and large pads of paper useful for this type of note taking work.

Sample Invitation to Guests

Hi {Friend name},

Are you interested in getting together to talk about US policy {insert time}? Democrats Abroad is getting a head start on their platform process by asking members to send in our opinions on platform topics. I wondered if you'd like to meet up for what they're calling Kitchen Table talks to discuss a few of these topics.

Right now the topics I've pulled from the list are {insert topics}. For a full list check out the ones listed here: {insert link}.

If this sounds interesting, how does {date and time} at {address} work for you to meet up?

Sample Agenda

- Meet up, and welcome guests
- Introductions - of each other and KT conversations
- Review process and conversation guidelines
- Discuss topics and answer questions
- What's missing? What still needs to be said?
- Thank you and close the meeting