

Request for Proposal:

Hosting Community Conversations

Sponsoring organizations:

The Goshen Community Relations Commission (CRC) and the Goshen Community Schools (GCS) wish to foster improved community relations and greater respect and appreciation for all members of our community. Both the CRC and GCS are interested in promoting tolerance, understanding and gratitude for people of every ethnicity and every socio-economic level.

Background:

Goshen has seen significant demographic changes in recent decades. Where several decades ago Goshen was a “Sundown Town”, the community now enjoys a diverse population with (mostly white, English-speaking) families who have lived in Goshen for generations living and working next to relative newcomers from a variety of races, ethnicities, and languages.

Goshen Schools are now 54% Latinx. And these Latinx communities are not homogenous, with micro-communities from many countries in Central and South America. These changes reflect the shift in the general population, although there is a quite a difference between the student population within the Goshen Community Schools and the population within the Goshen city limits (see Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1 Demographic Data, Goshen Schools

	% Hispanic	% White	% Multi	% African American
2018-2019	54.3	38.5	3.5	2.3
2013-2014	48.6	44.8	2.9	2.4

Data from Indiana Department of Education

As evident from this data, Goshen Community Schools has become a minority majority district over the last few years. This trend is expected to continue with the Hispanic population increasing at a rate of 23.6% and the white population decreasing by 17.6% (Statistical Atlas).

Table 2 Demographic Data, City of Goshen

	% Hispanic	% White	% Multi	% African American
2018-2019	30.0	62.6	3.0	3.0

Data from Statistical Atlas

So far, Goshen has absorbed these changes well. But both the CRC and GCS recognize an opportunity to build more and better bridges between the diverse groups in the community. Building these bridges can foster greater social resilience and social cohesion. It can also help foster greater community involvement in the schools resulting in a better education for our young people. From this, we hope that the citizens of Goshen will embrace to even a greater degree the diversity within our community and view that diversity as a guiding strength of our community.

In the winter of 2018-2019 representatives of these two organizations began to explore ways to work together to host community conversations.

Request for Proposal:

The Goshen Community Relations Commission and the Goshen Community Schools envision a series of meetings or events that bring diverse groups of people together to have conversations and share food.

Our goal is to host a pilot community conversation towards the end of April or Early May, 2019. Learnings from that pilot event would be used to design, propose, and implement a series of events in the fall of 2019. The topic of the pilot meeting would be to answer the question: What are the most important opportunities to build social cohesion in our community? The community conversations should build personal connections by helping persons see their commonalities while still respecting their differences.

These meetings will be designed and facilitated by a skilled professional leader who has experience bringing diverse groups of people together.

These meetings will be promoted by the Community Relations Commission and the Goshen Community Schools.

Proposals should include:

- A proposed meeting format, including agenda and sample questions to guide the interaction of those in attendance
- Cost to design the event(s) and facilitate an initial pilot event
- Preliminary estimate of cost to host subsequent events
- Facilitator CV outlining prior relevant experience
- Measures for sustainability
- Sample pre- and post event survey tool

Goals:

We hope to see from pilot event:

- The participation of about 100 Goshen citizens, young and old, from many ethnicities and socio-economic groups
- Participants should feel a greater sense of belonging to the Goshen community, measured through a short pre- and post event survey.
- Positive response to a “Would you recommend this event” question on a post event survey, along with each participant identifying at least one other person to invite to a future event.
- Identification of the top two or three topics that future community conversations should address.

Deadlines and approval process:

To meet these goals, please submit your proposal by February 22, 2019. This will enable the CRC to approve your proposal at their March 12, 2019 meeting. This gives 6-8 weeks lead time to recruit participants for a pilot meeting by early May.

After the pilot event, the facilitator and representatives of the CRC and GCS will evaluate the pilot event and make final plans for events in the fall of 2019.

