#### CONVENING FACILITATOR GUIDE

Group exercises to determine goals, priorities, and next steps

## At a glance

This guide can help you facilitate two group exercises that allow attendees engage with each other to explore network goals and opportunities, identify network priorities, and create post-convening action steps.

* How to facilitate effective meetings
* Supply list
* Instructions for Group Exercise 1: Explore network goals and opportunities
* Handout for Group Exercise 1
* Instructions for Group Exercise 2: Identify network priorities and discuss next steps
* Voting tracker for Group Exercise 2

While this guide is designed primarily for in-person convenings, it includes suggestions for adapting the exercises to virtual and hybrid environments. Look for this icon A picture containing grate

Description automatically generated for those ideas.

## Introduction

The following group exercises help convening attendees work together to prevent and respond to cases of elder financial exploitation.

* **Group Exercise 1: Explore network goals and opportunities**Working in small groups, attendees will identify current successes, challenges, and opportunities related to six themes:
  + Case review and resolution  Legislative and regulatory policies
  + Community education and outreach  Cross-training and resource sharing
  + Legal aid and victim assistance  Local or regional response protocols
* **Group Exercise 2: Identify network priorities and discuss next steps**Facilitators will lead attendees in a voting exercise to determine network priorities and then rate the difficulty and importance of each priority. Attendees will then use the priorities and ratings to inform next steps.

For more information about elder fraud prevention and response networks, visit

[consumerfinance.gov/eldernetworks](https://consumerfinance.gov/eldernetworks).

# How to facilitate effective meetings

## Make your convening and ongoing meetings more effective with these tips and techniques

### Set ground rules for communication

Consider establishing rules for respectful communication at the beginning of the meeting, such as:

* Allow only one person to speak at once
* Set time limits for comments
* Assume the best intent
* Ask questions to facilitate or improve understanding
* Respect differences of opinion

### Determine how the group will make decisions

Establish a standard voting process in order to make group decision-making more productive.

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Description automatically generated For virtual convenings and the virtual portion of hybrid convenings, the options for voting will depend on the platform you use. Many platforms include hand-raising feature and other ways to indicate a preference. Polling is also a common feature. You can also invite people to vote by turning their cameras on or off to indicate their preference.

**THUMB VOTING**

Conduct thumb voting by asking members to vote using one of these hand symbols:

* **Thumbs up** to signal they are in favor of the decision
* **Thumbs to the side** to signal that the decision is satisfactory
* **Thumbs down** to signal that they are not in favor of the decision

**MAJORITY VOTING**

The facilitator asks members to vote yes or no, and the majority vote becomes the decision of the group. You can vote:

* Verbally
* With a show of hands
* On slips of paper

**VOTING PLUS LEADERSHIP DELIBERATION**

The facilitator asks members to vote, and then network leadership takes the results,

deliberates, and brings a final decision back to the group at the next meeting.

**CONSIDERING “ NO” VOTES**

If many members vote “thumbs down” or “no” to a decision, consider asking what changes would make the decision more satisfactory and then adapting the proposed decision to reflect their feedback.

### Other meeting facilitation tips

* Recruit a volunteer to act as timekeeper to help the group stay on track.
* Stay focused on the purpose and topics of each meeting.
* Be clear about the time available for each topic and move on if discussion becomes repetitive.
* If one member is taking up a large amount of speaking time, consider interrupting them politely and speaking to them outside of the meeting to clarify their goals and interests.

# Supply list

## The supplies suggested below will help ensure an effective network convening.

To help minimize costs for in-person convenings, you can get creative on supplies that meet the needs of yourparticipants. Don’t forget to print a copy of the supply list to bring with you to the convening.

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Description automatically generated Fewer supplies are needed for virtual convenings and for the virtual portion of hybrid convenings. However, knowledge and mastery of the platform features you will use is essential. For instance, chat functionality built into most platforms can take the place of easel paper for group brainstorms. For more complex group work, you may want to use a virtual whiteboard. Some platforms include built-in virtual whiteboards. Other virtual whiteboard options are available for use in tandem with your platform and may offer advantages over the built-in options.

### Supplies (for in-person convenings)

* Sticky notes
* Easel
* Easel paper (self-sticking or include masking tape)
* Tape
* Pens for facilitator and for participants
* Writing paper
* Handouts or extra writing paper for participants to use during Group Exercise 1
* “Voting tracker” or notepaper to tally results of Group Exercise 2
* Mobile phone camera to use throughout the day (optional)

### Group exercise prep

On the day of the convening, display themes on the convening room walls for the group exercises. Write down the following six themes, each on its own sheet of easel paper:

* Case Review a Resolution • Legislative and Regulatory Policies
* Community Education and Outreach • Professional Cross-Training and Resource Sharing
* Legal Aid and Victim Assistance • Local or Regional Response Protocols

Write “Parking Lot for Afterthoughts” on a piece of easel paper. On the day of the convening, display this paper in a convenient location on a wall, for attendees to add new ideas to throughout the day.

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Description automatically generated For virtual convenings and for the virtual portion of hybrid convenings, use virtual breakout rooms for small group discussions focused on the topics above. For the Parking Lot, consider maintaining that list in an electronic document that you periodically display. Invite people to submit parking lot topics via chat or aloud.

Instructions

# Group exercise 1: Explore network goals and opportunities

## This exercise will help attendees develop a sense of current successes, challenges, and opportunities for growth.

What to do

* 1. **Write down the six themes on easel paper, with one theme per page, and display them on the convening room walls.** Break attendees into small groups of four to eight people, making sure, if possible, that each group has a variety of stakeholder expertise. Give each group a copy of the handout (or plain writing paper). Ask each group to choose a notetaker and a spokesperson.
  2. **Instruct participants to focus on this guiding question**, “How can our elder justice stakeholders work together to prevent and respond to cases of elder financial exploitation?”
  3. **Review the six themes with the small groups.** Ask the groups to spend 20 minutes discussing the themes. For each theme, the groups should generate as many thoughts as possible on:
     + **Successes:** things that are already working well
     + **Challenges:** things that present barriers or obstacles
     + **Opportunities:** things that have the potential to increase collaboration and effectiveness of the network.

Note: if groups are still talking after 20 minutes, consider adding more time.

* 1. **Ask each group to share**. The spokesperson from each group should share the thoughts and ideas the group has identified, organized by theme. the notetaker should use sticky notes to add the group’s insights onto the corresponding easel paper. If similar ideas are raised by multiple groups, the notetaker can group the sticky notes together on the paper.

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Description automatically generated For virtual convenings and for the virtual portion of hybrid convenings, use virtual breakout rooms for small group discussions. The breakout group discussion leader can use a virtual whiteboard in place of easel paper. Alternatively, that person can share their screen as they record key points from the discussion in a shared electronic document.

## Next steps

Collect the handouts (or writing paper) and let attendees know that their thoughts will be used to create a summary for all attendees.

**Group Exercise 1:** Explore network goals and opportunities

## How can our elder justice stakeholders work together to prevent and respond to cases of elder financial exploitation?

1. Choose a person to take notes during group discussion. Notes will be collected afterwards for a summary that will be shared with all attendees.
2. Think about the following question with the group: how can our elder justice stakeholders work together to prevent and respond to cases of elder financial exploitation?

For each theme, write down the group’s thoughts on:

* + **Successes.** What is already working well?
  + **Challenges.** What is presenting barriers or obstacles?
  + **Opportunities.** What might increase collaboration and the effectiveness of the network?

1. Choose a spokesperson to report out to all the other groups.

### Case review & resolution

Opportunities.

Challenges

Successes

Community education & outreach

Legal aid & victim assistance

Opportunities.

Challenges

Successes

Legislative & regulatory policies

Opportunities.

Challenges

Successes

Local or regional response protocols

Opportunities.

Challenges

Successes

Cross-training and resource sharing

Opportunities.

Challenges

Successes

Instructions

# Group Exercise 2: Identify network priorities and discuss next steps

## After generating ideas, attendees can collaboratively identify and rate priorities and discuss the network’s next steps.

Voting and rating (15 minutes)

##### Ask attendees to vote on their priorities. (5 minutes)

Each person should take three sticky notes to vote. Instruct them to place the sticky notes on up to three themes they think should be the network’s top priorities. The three themes with the most votes will be the network’s priorities.

##### Rate the ease and importance of the three priorities (5 minutes)

This part of the exercise focuses on the three priority areas identified.

Instruct attendees to raise their hands to vote on the relative degree of ease of each priority on a scale of one to five. explain that “one” means the most difficult for the network to accomplish and a “five” is the easiest. For example, something might be more difficult if it requires a large amount of time, effort, or funding.

For each priority, call out each number on the scale and count how many attendees raised their hand for each number. Count which numbers receive the most votes and select an “ease” rating from one to five based on the votes.

After you've voted on the degree of ease of each priority, repeat the voting process for importance, with “one” being the least important and “five” being the most important.

##### Review the ratings (5 minutes)

Read the ratings back to the group and note which priorities were voted the most important and the easiest to accomplish.

## Discussion of next steps (10 minutes)

Discuss next steps and action items that the group identified. the priority ratings can inform this discussion. For example, the easiest priority could be addressed first, in order to build interest and enthusiasm for the network. Note that during the next meeting, attendees can form working groups focused on each of the identified priorities.

Remind attendees to write additional thoughts on the sticky notes provided and stick them in the “Parking Lot for Afterthoughts.”

* For virtual convenings and the virtual portion of hybrid convenings, use on-screen displays of participant ideas, rather than easel paper. The options for voting will depend on the platform and how you choose to display participant input. If you are using a virtual whiteboard, see whether it includes a voting function. If not, explore whether participants could vote by moving stars or other small images next to virtual post its or items in a written list. There are other voting options, as well. Many platforms include hand-raising feature and other ways participants can indicate their preferences as a facilitator reads out options aloud.
* For the Parking Lot, consider maintaining that list in a shared electronic document that you periodically display. Invite people to submit parking lot topics via chat or aloud.

**Group Exercise 2:** Voting tracker

##### Count the total number of sticky note votes for each theme.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **THEME** | **TOTAL VOTES** |
| Case review and resolution |  |
| Community education and outreach |  |
| Legal aid and victim assistance |  |
| Legislative and regulatory policies |  |
| Local or regional response protocols | |
| Professional cross-training and resource sharing | |

1. **Ask attendees to rate the importance and ease of each priority on a scale of one to five.** Tally how many people chose each rating level for each priority. Give each priority a rating based on the average.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **THEME** |  | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **RATING** |
| Case review & resolution | Importance |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ease |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Community education & outreach | Importance |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ease |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Legal aid & victim assistance | Importance |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ease |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Legislative & regulatory policies | Importance |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ease |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Local or regional response protocols | Importance |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ease |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cross-training & resource sharing | Importance |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ease |  |  |  |  |  |  |

1. **Use this graph to plot the importance and ease ratings of your priorities (optional).** The gray area indicates the priorities that were rated most important and easiest to accomplish. Create a poster-size or electronic version of this graph to display the results to all participants.

**5**

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|  |  |  |  |  |

**4**

**3**

**2**

**1**

**1 2 3 4 5**

**EASE**

**IMPORTANCE**