

# National Peace Academy

*The National Peace Academy supports, advances and nurtures cultures of peace by conducting research and facilitating learning toward the development of peace systems – local to global – and the development of the full spectrum of the peacebuilder – inner and outer, personal and professional. In fulfilling this purpose, the National Peace Academy embodies and reflects the principles and processes of peace.*

## National Dialogue Dinners

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### Introduction

The National Peace Academy's National Dialogue Dinners are intended to foster thinking and conversation on critical issues related to peace, justice, community well-being, and change. These dialogues are motivated by the National Peace Academy's understanding of peace that is found in the [Earth Charter](#): "peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part." We hope these dialogues will encourage participants to critically inquire into the possibilities and obstacles of living in "right relationships" with others that might lead toward new visions and actions for establishing peaceful, just, healthy and sustainable communities in the United States and around the world.

Dinners like yours are being held in many communities, and people around the world are discussing the same important questions. A key aspect of these dinners is to collect the important exchange of ideas that your gathering will generate. We ask that you share with us some of the highlights of your community inquiry that will be gathered with highlights from others into a national report that the National Peace Academy will publish on its website. Analysis of this report will provide the National Peace Academy with insight into the concerns of communities across the country and the strategies peacebuilders are exploring to address these concerns. This data will in turn be utilized by the National Peace Academy to aid in the design of its future programs.

### Specifics

We encourage you to invite your friends, neighbors and work colleagues to join you at your home for an evening of dinner and dialogue. To make it a community affair you might consider hosting it as a potluck. For meaningful dialogue, we suggest no more than 10 to 12 participants. Please visit the [National Dialogue Dinners section of our website](#) to download a sample invitation that you can email or print and distribute. The National Peace Academy has developed a set of guiding questions for your party to explore together. These guiding questions can be found later in this document. The National Peace Academy has also developed a common response form to help us gather the details of your conversation. Please print out and use this response form to take notes during your dialogue. After your dialogue is complete we ask you to return to the [National Dialogue Dinners section of our website](#) and input these responses into our online form or email to [Kristin@nationalpeaceacademy.us](mailto:Kristin@nationalpeaceacademy.us).

### Raising awareness about the National Peace Academy

The National Dialogue Dinners are also an excellent opportunity to inform your friends, colleagues and neighbors about the National Peace Academy. We encourage you to print out the background documents available at the [National Dialogue Dinners section of our website](#) to share with your dinner guests. These resources outline the purpose of the National Peace Academy, the four cornerstones of peace learning upon which our programs are based, and information about initial programs and projects. Please take some time during your dinner to share this information with your guests.

Please also consider using this evening as an opportunity to help financially support the National Peace Academy. 10% of all of donations raised through the National Dialogue Dinners will be designated toward establishing an endowment for the National Peace Academy. The remainder will be used to support our innovative programs and general operations.

## A National Dialogue Exploring Community Security and Well-being

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This dialogue will explore community security and well-being. Americans are experiencing a period of change of historic magnitude. Political, business, social and community leaders are struggling to develop strategies and alternatives to address our severe economic decline and the degradation of civility in our public spaces. This struggle is also pursued by everyday citizens who are seeking opportunities to establish secure, healthy and sustainable communities in which people are able to live with dignity, free from violence.

The guiding questions that follow are designed to help provide a diagnosis of present conditions contributing to insecurity in our communities; to stimulate envisioning and planning of alternative possibilities; and to encourage personal and community action toward making such alternative possibilities reality.

### Suggested Dialogue Process & Guidelines

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**Time:** Allow at least 1 ½ to 2 hours for the dialogue. We recommend the dialogue take place before serving dinner as eating can easily be a distraction. This will also allow for informal, continued dialogue to carry on during the meal.

**Roles:** Designate 1) a dialogue facilitator and 2) a reporter. The dialogue facilitator introduces the questions and assures that each person has opportunity to share and is respectfully listened to. The reporter takes notes during the dialogue and assures that each question is answered and reporting guidelines are met.

**Process:** It is preferable to sit in a circle or around a table where everyone can see each other. After introducing each question we recommend that each person be allowed to share (going around the circle) at least once before additional questions are asked and dialogue ensues. Kindly ask people to wait to respond to others' comments until everyone has had a chance for initial sharing.

**Reporting:** After a general discussion on each question has ensued, the reporter asks dialogue participants to determine specific responses that will be shared with the National Peace Academy. Responses that we are particularly seeking for each question are indicated below. We encourage the reporter to use the question response form provided. Please also consider sending a photo or two from your event.

Please kindly upload your community dialogue responses via the National Peace Academy's online reporting form that can be found at: [www.nationalpeaceacademy.us](http://www.nationalpeaceacademy.us) or email to Kristin at [Kristin@nationalpeaceacademy.us](mailto:Kristin@nationalpeaceacademy.us).

## Guiding Questions

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### **Question 1: Foundations of Security and Well-Being**

What conditions are necessary, and what needs must be met, to assure security and well-being in our community?

**Reporting:** After a general discussion, the reporter asks the dialogue participants to designate the top 5 most significant agreed upon needs and conditions (5 each).

### **Question 2: Diagnosis**

What are the existing obstacles and detriments to the security and well-being of our community? (Try to identify both general and specific obstacles)

**Reporting:** After a general discussion, the reporter asks the dialogue participants to designate their top 5 most significant, agreed upon obstacles.

### **Question 3: Inventory of Existing Initiatives**

What programs or initiatives currently operating are addressing the obstacles and detriments to our community security and well-being that we've identified in question 2? Are these programs effective at assuring the conditions and needs we designated in question 1?

**Reporting:** After a general discussion, the reporter asks the dialogue participants to designate the 5 most significant existing programs. Please also designate the effectiveness of each of these programs using the following scale: 1 = not at all effective, 2 = minimally effective, 3 = somewhat effective, 4 = generally effective, and 5 = absolutely effective.

### **Question 4: Future Possibilities for Increased Community Security and Well-being**

Now it's time to be creative. What are some possible community projects or programs that might help overcome these obstacles and assure the conditions and needs we designated in question 1 are met? (Feel free to also consider how you might change and improve existing programs.)

**Reporting:** After a general discussion, the reporter asks the dialogue participants to designate the 2 most promising projects or programs. Develop a 1-paragraph description for each. Be sure to identify the audience of the project; the people and institutions responsible for conducting the work; and the general goals and objectives.

### **Question 5: What do we need to learn?**

What knowledge, skills, and capacities might we need to acquire to make the projects and programs we envisioned in question 4 a reality?

**Reporting:** After a general discussion, the reporter asks the dialogue participants to designate the 5-10 most significant knowledge, skills or capacities required. These answers will help to inform the design of future National Peace Academy educational programs and trainings.