

Community Response Board

Organizer Guide

A dynamic display, often combining physical and digital spaces, for community members to respond to thought-provoking One Small Step questions. Located in a high-traffic area, it invites participants to reflect and share thoughts publicly, read others' responses, and engage in asynchronous conversation with neighbors. The board serves as an opportunity to practice intentional communication and acts as a visible symbol of ongoing community connection.

Advanced Planning: Goals and Steps

Goals:

- Create an accessible space for community members to share diverse perspectives
- Foster asynchronous dialogue between participants who might not otherwise interact
- Increase visibility of the community board as a community conversation/connection hub
- Connect physical engagement with digital participation opportunities
- Build awareness of upcoming dialogue-focused programming (optional)

Steps:

The first step is selecting an appropriate high-visibility location with adequate space, lighting, and accessibility for the response board. This should be an area where participants naturally pause and have enough room to read and respond.

Next, design the physical board structure with clear sections for questions, responses, and program information.

Establish a digital component including a dedicated website page, social media integration, and QR code access. This extends engagement beyond the physical space and creates opportunities for broader participation.

Prepare engagement materials including response cards in various colors, writing tools, response intake box, and take-home OSS bookmarks (see below). Having materials readily available encourages spontaneous participation.

Develop a rotation schedule for featured questions and staff moderation responsibilities. Questions should be changed regularly to maintain interest, typically weekly or bi-weekly.

Create clear guidelines for appropriate responses and moderation procedures. Staff should understand what content is acceptable and what requires removal.

Set up evaluation methods to track engagement metrics and impact, including response counts, digital engagement, and thematic analysis of responses.

Marketing

Reach a wide audience by using multiple marketing channels. Display response board and promotional signage in high-traffic areas throughout the community. Feature the response board in a local newsletter and website.

Create social media posts highlighting interesting responses (with permission) to generate interest. Include information about the board in relevant program announcements.

Encourage staff to mention the board during interactions with community members, particularly those interested in community issues or dialogue. Partner with community organizations to spread awareness of the board.

Highlight the board's purpose and impact in local communications, emphasizing the opportunity for community members to connect and see their commonalities and differences of opinion.

Budgeting

The program requires attention to the following costs:

- Initial Materials: ~\$50 (response cards, optional bookmarks, answer box, writing materials, signage)
- Digital Integration: \$0-200 (depending on existing website capabilities)
- Marketing: ~\$25 (promotional materials, signage)
- Monthly Materials: \$15-50 (replacement cards, writing materials)
- Staff Time: ~1-2 hours per week for moderation, updates, and maintenance

Tips to cut costs:

- Use existing physical or digital bulletin boards or wall space instead of purchasing new displays
- Create digital materials in-house using any needed software and templates
- Repurpose scrap paper for response cards

Day-of-event Activity

On the day of installation, to prepare the space. Install the main board structure in the selected high-visibility location, ensuring it is secure and accessible. Document the setup and initial engagement with photos (with appropriate permissions) for future marketing, reporting, and program evaluation.

Set up the response card station with writing materials and clear instructions. Post initial questions and example responses to seed engagement and demonstrate the purpose of the board.

Ensure QR codes link properly to digital components by testing all links. Stock take-home materials (such as OSS bookmarks, linked below) and program information in accessible holders.

Train any staff or volunteers present on basic moderation procedures and response protocols. Photograph the initial setup for documentation and promotional purposes.

Program Execution

Begin with a daily moderation schedule, spending 15-20 minutes each morning to review new responses, remove any inappropriate content, restock materials, and document engagement.

Implement weekly maintenance tasks, taking 30 mins-1hr to hours to rotate questions, post responses to the board, update highlights, archive responses, post to social media, and update program information.

Collect and analyze response data regularly to identify themes and insights from community participation. Use these insights to inform future questions, programming, and community initiatives.

Regularly refresh the display to maintain visual interest and engagement. Consider changing layouts or themes seasonally to keep the board looking current. Partnering

with a local organization with a custom question theme of the month is also an option.

Maintain the digital component by updating online archives, featuring selected responses, and connecting digital participants to physical programming opportunities or takeonesmallstep.org.

Capture photos of meaningful interactions and community engagement throughout the program (ensuring proper photo permissions are in place) to document impact, share success stories, and support future funding requests.

Advice

Select questions that invite storytelling and personal narrative rather than debate or positions on certain topics. This helps create a welcoming environment for diverse perspectives without encouraging conflict.

Using color-coding for different response categories helps organize the display and makes patterns of community thought more visible. This visual organization makes the board more engaging for casual browsers.

Establishing clear moderation guidelines is crucial to maintaining a respectful environment. Staff should understand what content may be inappropriate and how to handle sensitive situations. One Small Step's community agreements can be on display and used for moderation.

Incorporating questions relevant to current community's issues increases relevance and participation. This creates natural connections between the response board and other local initiatives.

Balance thought-provoking questions with lighter, more accessible topics to engage a broad audience. Not every question needs to be the most profound to foster meaningful engagement.

Create a "staff asks back" with affirmations/questions from staff section to highlight particularly thoughtful responses. This adds a personal touch and shows that community contributions are being read and valued.

Develop a system for archiving and potentially displaying past responses. These can become valuable community artifacts and conversation starters for future programming.

Remember that this is an evolving program. Be prepared to adjust based on community response and staff capacity to maintain the board effectively.

Take pictures!