**National Dialogues on Immigration**

**The National Center for Civil and Human Rights Program Description**

**Contact Information**

The Center for Civil and Human Rights

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**Organization Profile**

The Center for Civil and Human Rights in Downtown Atlanta is an engaging cultural attraction that connects The American Civil Rights Movement to today’s global Human Rights Movements. The Center will feature three immersive exhibit spaces, including a continuously rotating gallery of items from the Morehouse College Martin Luther King Jr. Collection, where visitors can view the personal papers and items of Dr. King. The Center will also provide designated event spaces and educational programs that will inspire visitors to join the ongoing dialogue about contemporary movements for human rights around the world.

**Abstract**

As a participant of the National Dialogues on Immigration, the National Center for Civil and Human Rights will be convening a group of local, diverse community members who will meet semi-weekly for two months. This cohort will be comprised of individuals from a wide spectrum; we will encourage participants who are from various generations, backgrounds and industries. Additionally, we would like to further empower individuals who are already active citizens in their communities. Group members will be coming to the table with varying levels of knowledge and perspectives on past and present immigration issues.

The cohort will participate in four programs that highlight specific media, including: lecture, film, music, and performance. After each immersive experience, the group will engage in thought-provoking dialogue (led by a facilitator with guided questions), synthesizing what they learned during the experience and tying that to their own experiences and feelings. At the end of each session, participants will leave with one “action item” to complete before the next meeting. Action items will be small, simple assignments intended to allow participants to apply their knowledge to everyday life. Facilitators will also gather quantitative and qualitative data throughout the series. Furthermore, at the conclusion of the series, the group will work together to develop a joint set of goals and measurable outcomes to further bring the lessons learned from these dialogues to the broader community.

Because the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is central to The Center’s mission, its articles and overarching themes will also be woven throughout the program and there will be basic training on human rights principles for all participants. The dialogues will seek to contextualize issues around immigration in a broader discourse of human rights and social justice, focusing on the intersection of race and ethnicity and immigration status.

Humanities Themes Guiding the Program

* Immigration in the United States: Then and Now
* Migration and Labor
* Assimilation and Exclusion
* Solidarity vs. Competition

**Program Script, Program Walkthrough and Dialogue Arc**

These four installations will take place over the course of two months, semi-weekly.

1. Immigration in the United States: Then and Now
	1. This program will be a stimulating and informative lecture on the trajectory of United States immigration policy and how these policies have at times constrained and freed immigrants. A brief lecture on this theme will then be followed by a facilitated dialogue and a discussion of action steps.
	2. Guiding Questions

1. What role does the immigrant narrative play in the collective American identity?

2. How does race and racism seem to factor into immigration policy?

3. Does immigration policy in the United States seem to evolve in a progressive or regressive trajectory?

1. Migration and Labor
	1. This session will examine the role labor and economics play in the push and pull factors of migration. A film will be screened prior to a facilitated dialogue. At the conclusion of this session, participants will have determined action steps.
	2. Guiding Questions

1. How does labor impact immigration policy in the United States?

2. How did this film complicate the dominant narrative that immigrants “take jobs away from Americans”?

3. Do you think migrant labor is a “push” or “pull” factor in immigration? Could it be both?

1. Assimilation and Exclusion
	1. The third session will delve into the topic of assimilation and its implications for immigrants in the United States. For the programming portion of the session, participants will see a performance by a local dance troupe. Following the performance, a facilitated dialogue will encourage participants to think about the factors that lead to assimilation or exclusion and how they affect local communities and the nation generally. At the conclusion of this session, participants will have determined action steps.
	2. Guiding Questions

1. What does “melting pot” mean to you?

2. What is the value of assimilation to you? Is it primarily a detractor from cultural diversity?

3. How is exclusion distinct from self-imposed isolation? Why is it important to recognize the difference?

1. Solidarity vs. Competition
	1. During this final session, the participants will explore the concept of solidarity with and between immigrant groups and other disenfranchised communities generally and specifically in Georgia. Participants will explore the value of solidarity as opposed to viewing immigrants as competition for jobs and resources. Following this open discussion, the group will have a follow-up debrief that will synthesize and conclude the series. An important aspect of this concluding session will be the development of goals, next steps, and measurable outcomes with the intention of further spreading the cohort’s learnings. These outcomes will be in the form of legal and/or civic engagement.
	2. Guiding Questions

1. What is the value of solidarity between native residents and immigrants?

2. Why do you think narratives of competition dominate over that of class unity?

3. How is the United States strengthened as a country when it welcomes and supports immigrants?