

HOW TO INITIATE AN IDEA OF AMERICA SEMINAR IN YOUR COMMUNITY

ACTION STEPS:

- ONE: Identify an appropriate setting for a seminar. We recommend that each seminar involve no more than 25 participants to ensure sufficient time for dialogue and debate. This is not a lecture program, but a seminar to engage citizens in current issues facing our local communities and our nation. It is an action-oriented seminar.
- TWO: An appropriate setting can be in any location of your choosing. Suggested locations include: community senior centers, local library, private home, places of worship, any setting that ideally will allow participants to be comfortable and engaged. Think of a "book club" type setting.
- THREE: Alternatively, the seminar could be sponsored and located at a local college or university that has an Osher Lifelong Learning Institution. This program is now offered in 120 colleges and universities across the country. Check website for possible Osher program in your community (www.osherfoundation.org). Each program is operated by a staff at the college/university that determines what courses will be offered. We have used the Osher program in several of our seminar programs with great success. But it will entail that you initiate a contact with the local Osher Institute program and propose that they consider sponsoring an Idea of America Seminar. Note: You can contact Dr. John Oliver Wilson for guidance in how to pursue this option.
- FOUR: Register proposed seminar with Idea of America Network. Send a brief statement stating seminar facilitator (leader), location, timing and any proposed changes (new case studies). Send to: Dr. John Oliver Wilson, director
- FIVE: Support material and recommended reading sources are available (listed on the website). The primary resource is: John Oliver Wilson, *The Idea of America; Our Values, Our Legacy, Our Future* (The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2017) along with suggested "Study Guide." Supplemental resources are listed on the website. It is recommended that the seminar entail six sessions as outlined in the "Study Guide."
- SIX: Market your proposed seminar with listing in appropriate newsletters or local newspaper, notices, fliers etc. See on the website for suggested forms used by past seminars. Marketing will be unique to each seminar and material will need to be developed and distributed by you as facilitator. Note: You can contact Dr. John Oliver Wilson, director for suggestions and guidance.
- SEVEN: As facilitator, your task is to ensure that seminar participants respect the ideas and issues presented by other participants (show respect for others views even though there may be strong disagreement among participants), ensure that no individual participant dominates the discussion (this is a seminar for debate and discussion, not a forum for imposing a given position), and maintain a non-partisan environment for open and engaged discussion (this is not a seminar program with a hidden political or other agenda but an open forum for debate recognizing and respecting the fact that each individual participant will probably attend with strong political-social-economic or other pre-conceived positions.)