

FACILITATOR GUIDE

A MINNESOTA HUMANITIES CENTER COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

Nuestro NORTE

A FILM BY MARTÍN BLANCO

Minnesota Humanities Center

NUESTRO NORTE FACILITATOR GUIDE

A Minnesota Humanities Center Community Dialogue

Overview

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a facilitator. This Guide has been prepared to assist you in guiding a community conversation following a screening of the film, Nuestro Norte. This Guide includes *sample language in italics*, suggested timing, discussion questions, and facilitator notes. Think of this script as a guide, not a performance. Use your own voice while preserving the purpose of each section.

When you arrive, please check in with Minnesota Humanities Center (MHC) staff and/or the host organization to determine how many people you will be expecting for the event and get an understanding of the layout of the venue. As discussed below, this information will be helpful for you in determining how you will facilitate the post film discussion and report out by audience members to maximize community conversation.

Evening Format

We suggest the following two-hour format, excluding registration period, for the evening:

6:00 p.m.	Doors open & registration
6:30 p.m.	Welcome
6:35 p.m.	Introduction of the Film (includes Director's 2-minute video)
6:40 p.m.	Film Screening
7:15 p.m.	Facilitated Discussion
8:00 p.m.	Audience Report Out
8:20 p.m.	Exit Survey and Closing

Pre-Show

We suggest that you arrive as soon as the doors open for the event and check-in with the host organization representative or MHC staff member. When you meet with the host organization representative or MHC staff member you should:

Do a sound check on your microphone and microphones used for the audience

- If the film is being shown in a theater with fixed seats, you should work with the host organization representative or MHC staff member to identify who will run the microphone to individuals in the audience. Please remember that we ask people to use microphones not because people can't project their voice but rather because there might be people in the audience who can't hear unless speakers use a microphone.

Introduce yourself to the person who will formally introduce you during the welcome

- Please pronounce your name a couple of times to the person who will introduce you. We want you to feel honored for helping lead the discussion.

Determine how you will lead the facilitated discussion

- If the room is a theater with fixed seats, you may wish to ask people to discuss the prompt questions with the people seated in their row or in their section. Appreciate that you may need to be more actively involved in speaking with the audience to get their feedback.

- If the room has tables to allow people to have discussion in small groups, we suggest that you evenly divide up the number of people with the tables you have to similar numbers of people at each table, and should have no more than eight (8) people at each table to ensure adequate time for everyone to participate.

Determine how you will lead the discussions.

- If the room is a theater with fixed seats, appreciate that you may need to treat the audience report out as an extended facilitated discussion as the audience might not have had an opportunity to interact with one another.

- If the room has tables, you may want to consider how much time you wish to give each table before the film is shown. We are suggesting 20 minutes for audience report out, so for example if you have nine tables, you might wish to hear from three tables on question number 1, three different tables on question number 2, and the three tables that have not had an opportunity to contribute would speak to question number 3. Alternatively, if you only have four tables, you may wish to give 5 minutes to each table to answer all three questions. If you have so many attendees that 20 minutes doesn't feel like it will be sufficient, you may wish to ask the audience for their indulgence to extend the report out period for an additional 10 to 15 minutes.

- Determine whether the clock has a room to keep track of time or whether you will need to use your phone or watch.

Welcome Remarks

The host organization representative or the MHC staff member will offer a welcome to all attendees and then introduce you. After you briefly introduce yourself, you can use the following text to welcome the audience:

> *Welcome and thank you for joining us for Nuestro Norte, a film rooted in the stories, histories, and leadership of Minnesota's Latine communities. Tonight, we are invited to honor the distinct experiences represented in the film while also considering what these stories reveal about our collective community, and the future we are creating together.*

Introduction of the Film

Now introduce the film:

Nuestro Norte, or Our North, is a cinematic portrait of five community leaders from across the metro and greater Minnesota. Their lived stories are interwoven with symbolic fictional scenes, memories, and original musical performances. More than a documentary – the film is a love letter to Minnesota's Latine community – honoring its history, celebrating its leadership, and imagining its future. At the same time, Nuestro Norte offers a visual aspiration for a collective "we": a Minnesota where people can see one another more fully, recognize our shared humanity, and imagine a future shaped by dignity, belonging, mutual care, and hope.

- Nuestro Norte was produced in partnership with the Minnesota Humanities Center, LatinoLEAD and Dual Studios; was directed by Martín Blanco, and was created with guidance from community leaders Sandy Vargas, Elsa Vega Perez, and Jessica Lopez Lyman.
- This project was supported by the Minnesota Humanities Center, with funding from the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund from the Legacy Amendment and the Northwest Area Foundation.

Now let us hear from the Director about the making of Nuestro Norte, Martín Blanco.

The host or audiovisual tech plays a 2-minute Director's Intro video.

Take a moment to frame the evening for the audience and clearly state the goals of the event:

Our conversation tonight is grounded in humanities. The humanities live in the stories we tell, the histories we confront, and the conversations we are willing to have across our differences.

Tonight, we have three goals:

1. **Leadership:** To develop a greater appreciation and understanding of how culture, family, and lived experience shape leadership and identity.
2. **Community aspiration:** To reflect on the shared human needs for dignity, purpose, recognition, and belonging.
3. **Collective action:** To consider how individuals, communities, and institutions can help create a stronger collective "we" rooted in opportunity, mutual care, and hope.

Film Screening

Before the film begins, invite participants to watch with attention and notice the artistic choices that connect individual experiences to a larger human story.

> *As you watch, notice a moment, image, sound, or story that stays with you. Consider what it reveals about leadership, identity, belonging, or a human truth that reaches beyond any one community.*
>
> *Now, let's get to tonight's film. Please enjoy, Nuestro Norte.*

The host or audiovisual tech plays the 30-minute Nuestro Norte film.

Facilitated Discussion

Moment of Reflection

First, ask the group to take a moment to reflect on the ideas raised within the film.

> *Thank you for watching Nuestro Norte. Before we begin our discussion, I invite you to take a quiet moment to notice what you are feeling or thinking. Please remember, there is no single correct response to the film – our goal is to learn from the film and from one another.*

Allow approximately one minute for quiet reflection.

Establishing Group Norms – Building a Respectful Discussion Space

Next, open the conversation about a group agreement or establish group norms for common language.

> *Before we begin our conversations, we need to establish our group agreement for a respectful and welcoming experience. Does anyone have any suggestions?*

Give the group members a few seconds to offer out ideas. If they do not suggest the following, please provide these guidelines.

- Speak for yourself and from your own experience.
- Listen with curiosity and reserve judgment.
- Allow everyone to have an opportunity to share.
- Remember that no one person represents an entire community.
- Practice self-awareness about how much time and space you are taking.
- Give yourself permission to step out if you need to process.
- Does anyone have questions or concerns about these guidelines in our group agreement? Is there anything else the group needs for members to participate fully?

Address any concerns briefly and invite the large group to agree to the shared expectations before proceeding.

Small Group Conversations or Large Group Facilitation

Small Group: Next, direct the audience to break up into small groups if possible. Groups should have no more than 6-8 people at a table. Allow people time to move to new places within the room if breaking into small groups.

Large Group: If you are in a theater with fixed seats, please ask folks to turn to their neighbors and share throughout the evening.

First, we will do an icebreaker. Please state:

> *In order to facilitate meaningful conversations and get better acquainted with your neighbors, we ask that you turn and greet someone who is seated near you that you did not come to the theater with and introduce yourself. As an icebreaker, share the place of birth of your grandparents.*

Discussion Questions

Once people have had two to three minutes for the icebreaker, ask if they are ready for our discussion questions. When you see that they are ready to proceed, let participants know you are all going to discuss three questions throughout the time together.

Put the first question on the presentation screen.

> ***Question No. 1*** *–What moments, stories, or artistic images stayed with you, and what did they reveal about how identity, lived experience, or culture shape leadership?*

State the background:

> *The film introduces us to leaders whose paths were shaped by family, culture, responsibility, hardship, creativity, and service. Their leadership is not defined only by a formal title. It is also expressed through care, sacrifice, relationships, and commitment to community. The film's music, imagery, memories, and symbolic scenes invite us to feel these stories as well as understand them.*
>
> *For the next 12 to 15 minutes, discuss what you stayed with you and why. As you listen, notice where your own understanding of leadership is affirmed, expanded, or challenged.*

Small Group: Give participants time to discuss as a small group.

Large Group: If the group is seated in a theater, you will need to facilitate this conversation with the help of the person you identified at the beginning of the night to take questions from the audience.

Here are some optional follow-up prompts.

- *Which person, scene, image, music, or statement stayed with you most strongly?*
- *How did the film expand or challenge your understanding of who becomes a leader*
- *What truth in the film felt deeply human or universal to you?*

Put the second question on the presentation screen.

> ***Question No. 2*** *– What did the film reveal about the human need for dignity, purpose, recognition, and belonging? Where did you see these needs affirmed, challenged, or denied?*

State the background:

> *The film also asks us to consider belonging what it means to feel seen, valued, and connected to a place, and what happens when people or communities are invisible, stereotyped, or only partially understood. While the stories are grounded in Latine experiences, they also invite people from many backgrounds to recognize shared longings for dignity, purpose, connection, opportunity, and hope.*
>
> *For the next 12 to 15 minutes, discuss how identity and lived experience shaped the people in the film. You may also reflect on your own experience or community*

Small Group: Give participants time to discuss as a small group.

Large Group: If the group is seated in a theater, you will need to facilitate this conversation with the help of the person you identified at the beginning of the night to take questions from the audience.

Here are some optional follow-up prompts:

- *What is the impact when communities are invisible, stereotyped, or reduced to a single story?*
- *Where did you see yourself or your own community reflected in the film?*
- *Which experiences or values felt familiar, even when the cultural context was different from your own?*

You may wish to remind participants to speak from their own experience and avoid asking participants to explain or represent an entire community.

Put the third question on the presentation screen.

> ***Question No. 3*** *– What responsibilities do individuals, communities, and institutions share in creating greater opportunity, belonging, and hope? What would a stronger collective "we" look like in practice?*

State the background:

> *This question asks us to move from reflection toward shared responsibility.*
> *For the next 15 minutes, discuss what it would take to create communities and institutions where more people are seen, valued, supported, and able to contribute to our collective future.*

Small Group: Give participants time to discuss as a small group.

Large Group: If the group is seated in a theater, you will need to facilitate this conversation with the help of the person you identified at the beginning of the night to take questions from the audience.

Here are some optional follow-up prompts:

- *How can institutions broaden the ways they recognize leadership and potential?*
- *What stories or perspectives about communities need greater visibility and understanding?*
- *What holds back progress?*
- *What can individuals do differently? What can institutions do differently?*

Please encourage reflection without centering blame, guilt, or defensiveness. Keep the focus on awareness, responsibility, and growth.

Report Out

During this portion of the event, we would like participants to have the opportunity to share observations with others.

Next, put these questions on the presentation screen to help groups prepare and read them aloud:

1. *What new insight or perspective did your group gain about how culture, family, and lived experience shaped leadership and identity?*
2. *What did your group learn or understand in a new way about the human needs for dignity, purpose, recognition, and belonging?*
3. *What responsibility, opportunity, or action did your group identify for strengthening belonging, expanding opportunity, and building a stronger collective "we?"*

Small Groups: If you are in small groups, ask each group to select one person to speak to on behalf of their group. Allow approximately five minutes for groups to prepare and 10 to 15 minutes for report-out.

Please state:

> *Thank you for the thoughtful conversations. Now, we would like to hear from each group about what was discussed and learned today about Nuestro Norte. We would like each group to select someone to speak on behalf of your group. We will give you about five minutes to discuss how you might wish to summarize the conversation that was had. To assist you, we have prepared three questions for you to use in summarizing your conversation.*

Large Group: If the group is seated in a theater, let people know that you would like for a few audience members to share their reflections on the three questions. Feel free to call on individuals or let them self-identify.

During the group share out, please invite themes rather than personal disclosures. Participants should not repeat another person's private story without permission. You may need to call on one group or an individual to get the conversation going.

Exit Survey and Closing

Once the report out is done, let folks know that you will now move into the closing reflection.

Exit Survey

Introduce the Minnesota Humanities Center or host representative to provide instructions for completing the program exit survey. A QR code or paper survey may be provided.

> *Thank you for sharing your time, experiences, and perspectives. The Minnesota Humanities Center values your feedback in creating programming and facilitating conversations on humanities topics and issues. We hope the film and conversation have deepened your understanding of leadership, culture, identity, and belonging, and has helped you imagine a Minnesota where our distinct stories contribute to a stronger shared future. Please complete the brief survey before you leave so that the Minnesota Humanities Center can create high-quality programming and we extend the impact and reach of the film.*

Please state:

> *Nuestro Norte means Our North. A north can be a direction, a point of orientation, or something that helps guide us. The film asks us not only where we are headed as individuals or as distinct communities, but also what might guide us toward a more expansive collective "we." As we close, consider what you want to carry forward from the film and conversation.*

Invite all participants to pick one of the following prompts and respond, popcorn style:

- What is one idea or question you are leaving with?
- *What does "Nuestro Norte" or "Our North" mean to you now?*
- *What is one thing you may do differently after this conversation?*
- *What is one way you can help create a community where more people feel seen, valued, and part of the collective story?*
- *Who is a community-rooted leader you want to recognize, support, or learn from?*

Event Concludes

Please extend and thank our host organization, LatinoLEAD, Dual Studios, and the Minnesota Humanities Center.

Finally, thank all who attended the event for coming out and wishing them a good evening.

Optional Activities for Longer Programs

Here are some additional optional activities for longer programs. Always set timeframes for participants for any of the following activities.

Personal Leadership Reflection

Invite participants to take five to 10 minutes and share in pairs or small groups:

- *Someone who shaped their understanding of leadership.*
- *A value they carry from their family or community.*
- *A time they felt seen, supported, or invited to lead.*
- *A time they felt unseen or underestimated, and what they needed in that moment.*

Letter to Community

Replay the epilogue or another selected closing scene. Invite participants to write an individual brief letter to their community, a younger generation, a future leader—or to write one as a group. The letter may begin with one of these prompts:

- *What I hope you remember is…*
- *The leadership our community needs is…*
- *I want you to know that you belong because…*
- *My hope for Minnesota is…*

Community Leadership Story Sharing

Invite participants to name and share stories of community leaders whose contributions may not be widely recognized. This activity can be adapted into a story wall using post it notes and a backdrop. Set a timeframe for them to do this and invite them to share why they put a name and story up for all.

Post Film Panel Reflection

You can arrange a panel discussion for after the film and/or after the small and large group discussions. A panel may include people featured in the film, members of the Latine community, people from different generations, or professionals working within education, government, philanthropy, media, business, and/or nonprofit systems. Ask panelists to reflect on the film rather than speak for an entire community.

Postscript: About Project Partners

Please feel free to share the following information if people who are interested in learning more about the organizational partners that participated in collaborating on this project.

LatinoLEAD

LatinoLEAD is a network of leaders working across sectors and communities to advance collective influence, opportunity, and the leadership of Minnesota's Latine community. Visit LatinoLEAD's website to learn more about its leadership network and work.

Minnesota Humanities Center

The Minnesota Humanities Center is a nonprofit which aims to create a just society that is curious, connected, and compassionate. We believe that humanities live in the stories we tell, the histories we confront, and the conversations we are willing to have across our differences. We do this by bringing people together to share experiences and stories – through programs, events, and in partnership with organizations that we administer grants to. MHC also operates a full-service event center in a historic building on St. Paul's East Side.

Mission: To spark positive change by increasing collective understanding of ourselves, our communities, and our histories through stories and experiences.

Vision: A just society that is curious, connected, and compassionate.

Suggested Minnesota Resources

The following resources to help facilitators learn more about Latine history, demographics, leadership, and community contributions in Minnesota:

- *Cultural communities | MN Compass*
- *Latine Leadership Network in Minnesota | LatinoLEAD*
- *Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs (MCLA) / Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs*
- *Minnesota: Latino Journeys in Minnesota | MNopedia*
- *CLUES (Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio)*
- *PUBLICATIONS & REPORTS - HACER*

Final Note to Facilitators

This guide is intended to be flexible and adaptable across classrooms, workplaces, leadership programs, community screenings, and public dialogue spaces. Select the questions and activities that best fit the audience, available time, and purpose of the gathering. The goal is to honor the cultural specificity of the stories, recognize the human truths that connect us, and create a thoughtful space where people can listen, reflect, learn, and consider how they may help build a stronger collective "we"—one in which more people are seen, valued, supported, and able to shape our shared future. Thank you for your partnership.

If it is appropriate to do so, please consider sending us your key takeaways and notes from the event, and any photos that you would be willing to share.