



SISTER TO SISTER SALON CONVERSATION TOOLKIT



www.HigherHeightsforAmerica.org



The late Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm's statement rings true today; Black women have an important role to play in politics.

According to a study by University of California researcher Zoltan L. Hajnal, the U.S. political system ignores Black women's voices in political decisions more than any other group. We think you would agree that this is not fair or just and the successes and challenges of 2016 elections provides a unique opportunity to harness Black

women's political power and leadership potential from the voting booth to elected representation.

Our voice, our vote, and our leadership matters. That is why we are asking Black women across the country to host Sister to Sister Conversations. We are seeking to host 50 salon conversations across the country in 2017 to elevate Black women's voice in the national political debate.

As one of the 50 Salon conversation hosts, your gathering will be a part of the ongoing #BlackWomenLead national conversation on harnessing our political power and leadership potential.

We think you would agree that there is power in numbers. Higher Heights is growing a national network of Black women ready to take action from the voting in every election and holding elected leaders accountable to running for office.

With your help, Higher Heights can galvanize, organize, and mobilize Black women's political power, giving them the tools to effectively engage, advocate, and lead. We can't wait to hear what your salon has to say.

Onward,

Glynda C. Carr Kimberly Peeler-Allen
Co-Founders

ABOUT US

Higher Heights is building a national infrastructure to harness Black women's political power and leadership potential. Headquartered in New York, NY, Higher Heights for America, a national 501(c)(4) organization is investing in a long-term strategy to analyze, expand, and support a Black women's leadership pipeline at all levels and strengthen their civic participation beyond just Election Day.

OUR APPROACH

- Reconfigure the make-up of decision-making tables to include Black Women from across the socio-economic spectrum at all levels.
- Elevate Black women's voices to shape and advance policies and politics directly impacting their lives.
- Foster creative collaboration across constituencies and issues ensuring that race/gender equity and inclusion are incorporated in ongoing progressive-based building efforts, issue-based advocacy campaigns, and in voter engagement campaigns and electoral strategies.

MEMBERSHIP

Higher Heights' goal is to mobilize one million Black women over the next five years, empowering them to make informed decisions, providing a space for Black women to elevate their voices on important policy issues, and raising awareness among our membership of Black women running for multiple levels of office nationwide.

With a minimum investment of at least \$25 annually, members receive real-time access to: (1) emerging news and reports impacting Black women's political representation, (2) upcoming events (in-person and in the comfort of their homes), and (3) additional opportunities to add their voice to the national conversation on the politics and policies impacting their lives and communities.

Visit www.HigherHeightsforAmerica.org/Membership to become a member today!

RESEARCH

Research on Black women's political and civic leadership is a key first step to developing a long term-strategy to expand Black women's civic participation and leadership. Higher Heights' research is the foundation to build a national strategy, create a national network of individuals and funders to support this work and develop an effective program with tangible outcomes and defined timeline.

OUR PROGRAMS

SISTER TO SISTER SALON CONVERSATIONS

Salon conversations are gatherings in which Black women come together and share their views, concerns, and opinions about their political power and leadership potential. We also encourage Black women to host their own salons in their communities by providing an easy to follow toolkit.

These interactive conversations explore the issues that Black women care about and possible solutions, as well as identify the barriers and opportunities that exist to build an effective strategy to support and expand Black women's leadership.

SUNDAY BRUNCH WITH HIGHER HEIGHTS

Sunday Brunch with Higher Heights is bringing the power of talking and brunching into the twenty-first century. This monthly social-media-driven series seeks to encourage Black women to become part of national conversations on trending political and current events affecting our communities.

Our effort to engage and mobilize Black women—one of the largest groups of users of social media—through this monthly Sunday Brunch series provides opportunities for them to learn, comment, and take action on important legislative, policy, and leadership issues of the day across multiple social media platforms.

These virtual brunches take place from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. EST every second Sunday of the month. These events offer up a compelling menu of opinion pieces, blogs, Twitter town hall chats, and live webcast interviews with well-known and emerging politicians, journalists, activists, and political analysts.

SISTAS TO WATCH

Whether we are looking at corporations, government, universities, the media, or leaders of advocacy groups, we see more and more Black women leading.

The Sistas to Watch program profiles the accomplishments of phenomenal Black women who are galvanizing, organizing, and mobilizing political power locally and nationally to impact change.

A photograph of two Black women in conversation. The woman on the left has long dark hair and is wearing a dark top with a floral pattern. The woman on the right has short curly hair, is wearing a red blazer over a patterned top, and is holding a small round object. The background is a bright, indoor setting with a window and a pink fire alarm pull station.

SO YOU ARE HOSTING A SALON?

#BLACKWOMENLEAD

SALON PRE-PLANNING

Included in this toolkit are the tools you need to organize and host your salon conversation. We cannot do this work alone and we thank you for joining our efforts.

WHO TO INVITE?

To develop your invite list, consider gathering your girlfriends, sorority sisters, chapter sisters, neighbors, church members, work colleagues, your hairdresser, cousins, mom, grandmother, aunts, and sisters.

Depending on your venue, the optimal number of attendees is 25 guests and should be no more than 50. Keep in mind that your invite list should be a little larger to account for last-minute cancelations.

CONSIDER A CO-HOST

You can certainly host the salon on your own but you could also share the planning responsibility by asking a sister, a girlfriend, or a neighbor to co-host. Having a friend to work with allows you to split up the planning responsibilities and expand your invitation list.

CHOOSE A VENUE

Salon conversations have been held in large homes, small apartments, church basements, conference rooms, and hair salons. The venue should be a private space that is comfortable, provides for larger and small group discussions,

and allows for attendees to mingle.

BUDGET & SETUP

Hosting a salon does not require a large financial commitment. The costs associated include light refreshments you plan to provide, printing or copying of materials and invitations, name badges, and postage. Your expenses will vary depending on how many guests you are hosting but remember the food and beverages are intended as means to the conversation, so don't overspend.

SALON FORMAT

As you plan your salon, it is important to keep in mind that the format is designed to create an environment in which attendees feel comfortable engaging and working together.

As a host, you should be mindful to avoid lengthy presentations and instead promote dialogue and conversation among your guests.

#BlackWomenLead Sister to Sister Conversation

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING TO HELP PLAN YOUR SALON.

Salon Location: _____

Salon Hosts: _____

SALON BUDGET

Food & Beverage	\$
Postage	\$
Printing (invitation, sign-in sheets, other materials)	\$
General Supplies (name badges, pens, notepads, etc)	\$
	\$
	\$
TOTAL	\$

of People Invited: _____

of People RSVP'd: _____

of People Attended: _____

SAMPLE EMAIL INVITE

SUBJECT: Join me on _____ for a salon conversation on Black women's political power

Did you know that black women represent a growing economic and voting base? We vote in higher numbers than our male counterparts. We influence how 85 cents to every dollar is spent in our community. We volunteer and donate our time and money to community organizations and our churches. Yet, according to a new study from the University of California, the U.S. political system ignores Black women's voices in political decisions more than any other group.

The late Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm once said, "At present, our country needs women's idealism and determination, perhaps more in politics than anywhere else." This statement rings true today and Black women have a pivotal role to play.

I have joined Higher Heights' efforts to engage and mobilize Black women just like us.

I want to make sure we are a part of this national effort and conversation to elevate Black women's voices in the national political debate. That is why I am hosting a Sister to Sister Salon Conversation in our community on _____ **(Insert Date, Time, Location)**.

I hope you will join me for this timely and important conversation. Please let me know if you can attend by **(INSERT DATE)**.

Sincerely,

(YOUR NAME)

DAY OF SALON HOST GUIDE

The Sister to Sister Salon Conversations are two hours long that will include a mix of individual and small group work. Remember that at the end of the salon your group should have identified a set of issues and solutions that you will submit to Higher Heights.

Here is a sample schedule for a salon conversation.

Guests Arrive:	As guests arrive have them sign in and mingle with other arriving guests. You can have the refreshments served or give instructions for guests to self-serve. (20 Minutes)
Welcome and Introductions:	The host(s) will give a brief welcome to begin the formal portion of the salon program and guests will introduce themselves to the group. (10 Minutes)
Why We Are Gathered:	A host/facilitator will read the “Why We Are Gathered” statement included in this guide (page 12-13) to set the tone of the conversation. (5 Minutes)
Group Activity:	Attendees should be split into groups of 4-6 people, depending on the total number of attendees. The groups should be given 20-25 minutes to complete the group activity. Instruct the groups that they should pick a scribe (someone to capture the group responses) and a reporter (someone who will present the summary of the groups responses). (25 Minutes)
Report Back:	Reconvene the larger group and have the reporter from each group present their group responses. (20 Minutes) After all of the groups have presented, identify a scribe to take down the larger group discussion. The facilitator/host should then lead the larger group in prioritizing the issues and solutions presented. (20 Minutes)
Wrap-Up:	Using the “Staying Engaged” sheet as a guide, (page 18), the host/facilitator will discuss next steps.

WHY WE ARE GATHERED

Black women represent a growing economic and voting base. We vote in higher numbers than our male counterparts. We influence how 85 cents on every dollar is spent in our community. We volunteer and donate our time and money to community organizations and our churches. Yet, the 22 million Black women in America are seriously underrepresented and underserved.

Let's take a moment to put tonight's/today's conversation into context to help frame our dialogue by showing a snapshot of the state of Black women in America by the numbers:

Did you know? Black women's spending power is estimated at over \$565 billion. Yet, Black women earned 64 cents for every dollar earned by a white man. (1)

Did you know? Black women are an important voting base; we have surpassed all other race and gender subgroups in voter turnout in the 2008 and 2012 elections. Yet there are only two Black women currently elected to statewide executive office, 18 Black women serving in U.S. House of Representatives, not one single Black woman elected to the U.S. Senate and just four elected Black woman mayors of the 100 largest cities. (2)

Did you know? One in four Black women over 55 has diabetes, four times the rate for white women. In addition, Black women with cervical cancer are twice as likely to die from the disease as their white counterparts. (3)

These numbers are compelling and shocking. Despite Black women's consumer and electoral power, we have been unable to adequately harness our political power to overcome the gaps in elected leadership. The result is the extreme disparity between the wealth and health of Black women and the opportunities presented by our consumer and electoral power.

These examples extend into many other areas of our lives, including our ability to have our voices heard on important debates in the country such as domestic violence, reproductive justice, and the education of our children.

That is why Higher Heights has launched the Sister to Sister Salon Conversations to elevate Black women's voices to shape and advance policies and politics directly affecting our day-to-day lives.

WHY WE ARE GATHERED CONT'D

That is our work for the day. Higher Heights wants to hear from Black women from across the country just like us. What are the issues we are most concerned with that affect our families, communities, and nation? What are our thoughts on the best way to address these issues? Why are there not more Black women in elected leadership and what do we need to do to recruit, support, and elect more?

There are no right or wrong answers, just honest ones. We want you to imagine an America in which Black women are full participants in making the decisions that affect our lives, communities, and nation.

We are going to start by taking some time individually to write down our thoughts and then break into small groups to discuss. Each group will work together to determine what are the strongest themes emerging from your discussion that you will report back to the entire group.

We will reconvene as a full group to discuss and prioritize a set of top issues and barriers, opportunities, and solutions that this salon will report back to Higher Heights.

This information will be compiled salon by salon and will be highlighted on Higher Heights' website as well as help guide Higher Heights' work to mobilize and elect Black women. But that is just the start!

There is power in numbers and Higher Heights is growing a national network of Black women ready to take action from voting in every election and holding elected leaders accountable to running for office.

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1. Data from National Women's Law Center.

www.nwlc.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/equal_pay_for_afam_women_2.pdf; July 2014

2. Data from the Center for American Women and Politics, Eagleton Institute for Politics, Rutgers University.

www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/women_of_color/FastFacts_AfricanAmericanWomeninOffice.php

3. R.A. Williams, "Cardiovascular disease in African American women: a healthcare disparities issue," 2009 in *Journal of National Medical Association* 101(6):536-40. Pub Med, PMID:19585921.

Break up into groups of 4-6 people, depending on the total number of attendees and work together to answer the following set of questions.

ATTENDEE GROUP WORKSHEET

Groups have 20-25 minutes to complete the group activity. Each group should identify a scribe (someone to write down the group responses) and a reporter (someone who will present the summary of the groups responses).

1A). What are the top three issues facing our community?

2A). What are the barriers preventing more Black women from running for elected leadership?

1B). What can Black women do collectively to make 2017 the year of #BlackWomenRun, #BlackWomenVote and #BlackWomenLead?

2B). What is the one **YOU** can do to make 2017 the year of #BlackWomenRun, #BlackWomenVote and #BlackWomenLead?

POST SALON WRAP-UP

THANK YOU'S

Be sure to thank your hosts and attendees for their participation. You can use the sample thank you note on the next page but feel free to customize it to your liking.

REPORT BACK:

Share the details and information from your salon with Higher Heights and add to the voices of hundreds of Black women across the country. We ask that you share the following:

- Completed Salon Logistics Sheet (page 10)
- Copies of Salon Sign-In Sheets
- Copies of each group scribe worksheet and the large group worksheet

SUBMIT YOUR INFORMATION TO HIGHER HEIGHTS

VIA EMAIL: Attach copies of the items listed above and email them to info@higherheightsforamerica.org

VIA FAX: Fax a copy of the items listed above to (646) 349-9690

BY MAIL: Mail copies of the items listed above to:

Higher Heights for America
147 Prince Street, Suite 36
Brooklyn, NY 11201

SAMPLE THANK YOU NOTE/EMAIL

Thank You!

I think you would agree that the #BlackWomenLead: Sister Salon Conversations was powerful!

Your participation was greatly appreciated.

The conversation reinforces the need to not only harness Black women's collective political power to address the inequities that exist in our communities, but also the need to develop a leadership pipeline of Black women ready, willing, and able to run for elected office at all levels.

I hope you will join me in becoming a member of Higher Heights and consider hosting your own salon conversation with your extended network.

To learn more about membership, visit Higher Heights online at www.HigherHeightsforAmerica.org/membership

Thank you.

(YOUR NAME)

STAYING ENGAGED

We are excited that you are interested in supporting our efforts to build a nationwide movement. But we need your help! Please consider adding to our work in the following ways:

IMPACT

Use the enclosed membership envelope or visit us online at www.HigherHeightsForAmerica.org/Membership to complete your membership donation of \$25 or more and become a dues paying member of Higher Heights.

INFLUENCE

Connect us with activists in your community that we should collaborate with to host salon conversations and other events to engage more Black women.

INVOLVE

Connect with us on social media and add your voice to our regular online discussions.



Like Us on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/HigherHeights4>



Follow us on Twitter @HigherHeights4

Join the ongoing conversation using the hashtag #BlackWomenLead



Follow us on Instagram @HigherHeights4



BECOME A MEMBER

HIGHER HEIGHTS is building a national infrastructure to mobilize and elect Black women by harnessing our political power and leadership potential.

Yes, count me in! I want to solidify my commitment to invest in Black women's collective future by becoming a member of Higher Heights for America* at the following level:

General Member: \$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500

I would like to set up a payment plan:

2 Payments billed on _____ and _____

4 Payments billed on _____, _____, _____ and _____

I would like to be a sustaining supporter of Higher Heights.

Please charge my card \$_____ (\$5.00 minimum) every month beginning _____.

WAYS TO GIVE:

I have enclosed a check payable to **Higher Heights for America**

Please charge the contribution(s) to my Visa MasterCard American Express

Name on
Card:

Billing
Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Signature:

Card
Number:

Exp.
Date:

Security
Code:

Email:

Phone:

Please mail or fax back form to:
Higher Heights for America
147 Prince Street, Suite 36, Brooklyn, NY 11201
(646) 349-9690 (Fax)

Donate online at www.higherheightsforamerica.org/membership

Higher Heights a national 501(c) (4) organization focused on elevating Black women's voices to shape and advance progressive policies and politics. By strengthening Black women's civic participation in grassroots advocacy campaigns and the electoral process; Higher Heights for America will create the environment in which more Black women, and other candidates who are committed to advance policies that affect Black women, can be elected to public office. *Contributions are not tax deductible. No limits on size of gifts.

**For more information, please contact call (646) 494-9620 or
email us at info@higherheightsforamerica.org**

NOTES

NOTES

Higher Heights
147 Prince Street
Brooklyn, New York 11201

info@higherheightsforamerica.org

Phone: (646) 494-9620



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#BlackWomenLead