

COMMUNITY AGREEMENT

This Community Agreement stands as Financial Beginnings' guide to facilitate spaces where every individual feels safe, supported, open, and trusting of one another.

- **Take space and make space.** If you usually talk a lot, be mindful to step back and make space for quieter voices. And if you are usually quiet, challenge yourself to take more space.
- **Listen with an active ear and to understand.** Allow people to finish their thought and try to understand their point of view before sharing your perspective. Avoid making assumptions and over-generalizations. Ask clarifying questions when necessary to ensure you understand the full picture.
- **Come with an open mind and respect all perspectives.** Approach conversations with an open mind and agree that it's not about being right or wrong. Respect that there are many different perspectives, all of which are valuable. And remember that mistakes will happen. This is the space to share learnings from those mistakes for the betterment of collective learning and growth.
- **Demonstrate empathy, patience, and grace.** Be curious, respectful, and professional, even when you disagree. No shaming, blaming, or scolding. Call in, not out. Throw sunshine, not shade. Avoid "but" and consider replacing it with "and."
- **Respect various communication styles.** Provide various ways to share input and feedback that are not just speaking during meetings. For example, give opportunities for written comments or anonymous submissions.
- **Take care of yourself.** Honor your needs. Listen to your body and emotions. Ask for a break if you need it.
- **Recognize when you feel discomfort or unsafe.** If either of these feelings prevent you from fully participating in a discussion, take a step back and encourage yourself to reflect on what it is that is making you feel this way and how you can overcome it.
- **Respect the group and the individual.** Consider if this is a conversation that needs to be had with the entire group, a smaller group, or an individual. Think through the best use of everyone's time. Call ELMO when necessary – "Enough, let's move on." In other words, let the discussion move forward if what you wanted to say has already been said or if you recognize that the discussion is moving in circles.