



# ALF Silicon Valley Affinity Group

## DIY: Do-It-Yourself Guide

Steps and questions to consider if you are interested in working with other Sr. Fellows on a shared interest.

### What is an ALF Affinity Group?

Senior Fellows, driven by a common interest or goal, come together in affinity groups. Joining an affinity group is a great way to build your network and find like-minded Senior Fellows who want to have deep dialogues and find solutions to problems in our communities and beyond. Current affinity groups include:

- Arts & Culture Leaders
- Faith Leaders
- Foundation Leaders
- Nonprofit CEO DIEL cohorts
- Equity, Justice and Public Safety Learning Community
- San Mateo County Sr. Fellows
- Sustainability (environmental/climate)
- Racial caucuses: AAPI Caucus, Black@ALF, La Comunidad for Justice, Equity & Inclusion (Latino/a/x Sr. Fellows), Anti-Racist Learning Circle (White identifying Sr. Fellows)
- Work Life Transitions

### Consider starting an affinity group

#### 1) Clarify your interest and purpose

- What is your interest? What's the issue, opportunity or challenge? How does it relate to ALF's ultimate goal: Courageous, diverse networks of cross sector leaders are working towards an equitable and thriving Silicon Valley.
- What is your goal? Are you wanting to create:
  - a learning community to gain knowledge and understanding?
  - a group to collaborate on a project or take collective action?
  - a group primarily to bring people together around a shared interest and/or to bring people together from different perspectives?
- Staff can help you think this through

## 2) Explore who else might be interested

- Search in Weavr.app for keywords related to your interest
- Ask staff for input and connections ([Akemi@alfsv.org](mailto:Akemi@alfsv.org))
- Consider reaching out to Sr. Fellows with diverse perspectives and skills, ranging from big ideas, facilitation, coordination, etc.
- Are you able to find enough people who are interested in participating?
  - If you find fewer than 10 interested Sr. Fellows, you could start through conversation with them to explore if together you could identify enough people (at least 10 to start an affinity group)

## Creating a structure to start and sustain an affinity group

**3) Who will provide leadership for the group?** Shared leadership can provide an inclusive approach for the group and a manageable workload for the leaders. Current affinity groups are led by between 2 and 6 leaders. More leaders means more time needed to coordinate and more people to share the load, including:

- Developing a framework / proposed purpose for the group
- Planning agendas & facilitating meetings
- Taking notes and sharing updates
- Completing [this form](#) after each meeting (<https://forms.gle/dXft7TbCAZ79CwB27>)
- Scheduling ([alfsv@alfsv.org](mailto:alfsv@alfsv.org))
  - Consider how often you would like to meet. e.g. quarterly, monthly
  - What are some good times to be accessible for diverse Sr. Fellows? Morning, afternoon, or evening? Weekdays or weekends?
- Engaging existing and new members, including turn-out for meetings and additional check-ins for input, as needed
- Periodically and continuously evaluating the group process and making adjustments as needed (e.g. who's missing? Is the energy and commitment of the group sustaining, growing, or waning?)

#### 4) How will you communicate and coordinate the work?

- Staff can help create an email group and Slack channel ([Mark@alfsv.org](mailto:Mark@alfsv.org))
- Who will send out meeting reminders and updates between meetings?
- Leadership teams of many current groups use running Google docs for keeping shared notes and planning, drafting and confirming agendas and plans
- Leadership teams also use spreadsheets of Sr. Fellows/Fellows to identify, recruit, and engage others (and track RSVPs and participation and coordinate who will reach out to whom)
- Some groups use JamBoards for brainstorming and organizing ideas both during meetings and between

#### Not ready to start an affinity group? Consider other options

Have a conversation with a staff member to consider if a single session might be a better fit (at least to start) ([Akemi@alfsv.org](mailto:Akemi@alfsv.org))

- **Dialogue session** - If you have an interest you are exploring and wrestling with, you could invite a small group of Sr. Fellows to participate in a dialogue session using ALF [dialogue guidelines](#) and practices. Staff could help you identify and invite Sr. Fellows and possibly facilitate the dialogue, as availability and capacity allows.
- **Power circle** - If you are looking for input and potential partners for a project you have already defined or developed, staff could help you identify a small number of Sr. Fellows - from different perspectives and sectors - to invite to learn from you, share their input, and possibly share connections and resources to help advance your project.