



# Your Community **YOUR VOICE**



## **What are National Issues Forums?**

National Issues Forums (NIF) bring people together to talk about important issues. No two forums are exactly alike. They range from small study circles held in peoples' homes to large community gatherings modeled on New England town meetings. Each forum focuses on a specific issue such as: illegal drugs, Social Security, or juvenile crime.

## **Where and when are these forums held?**

NIFs are held in communities across the country. They are convened by a wide variety of non-partisan, non-profit and locally financed groups. This includes libraries, high schools, community colleges, women's groups, literacy councils, churches and synagogues, labor unions, civic clubs, and many others.

## **What is the goal of National Issue Forums?**

The purpose of these forums is to help people of diverse views find common ground for action on issues that concern them deeply.

## **What makes these forums different from debates or other discussion groups?**

NIFs are structured discussions, led by trained moderators. Using nonpartisan issue books, participants weigh several possible ways to address a problem. They analyze each choice and the arguments for and against it. Moderators encourage participants to think not only as individuals but as members of a community.

## **What happens after the forums?**

The results of the forums are shared with national and local leaders. In addition, citizens who have attended a forum often decide to band together to address problems in their community.

## **What if I don't know much about the issue?**

The forums and discussion guides are designed to help you learn about the issues. No one needs to be an expert to participate. It is more important to be able to listen and share your ideas.

University of Illinois Extension in partnership with the College of DuPage and the Statewide Housing Assistance Council has completed a discussion guide on Affordable Housing.

Join us for an upcoming issue forum on:

## **Affordable Housing**


**October 20, 2003**

**11 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

## **Macomb City Hall Community Rm.**

Register by calling U of I Extension—McDonough Unit at (309)837-3939.



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