Curious about Conversations on a Bench? Start here.

Whether you're ready to participate or simply wondering what Conversations on a Bench could look like for your ministry, you're in the right place.

At its core, **Conversations on a Bench is simple:** For 24 hours, ministry leaders sit on a bench and invite their communities into meaningful conversations about homelessness, addiction, poverty, recovery, and hope.

Ministries across North America participate together, creating a collective voice that elevates stories, builds awareness, and invites communities to see homelessness differently.

And your Bench doesn't have to look like everyone else's.

Some ministries focus on **awareness and storytelling**. Others use the opportunity to **fundraise and engage donors**. Many do both.

Step 1: Understand the Opportunity

Conversations on a Bench is more than a fundraiser, livestream, or awareness campaign. It's an opportunity to create space for people to be seen, heard, and valued—and to join ministries across North America in a collective conversation about homelessness.

For 24 hours, your Bench becomes a place to:

- Share stories of transformation
- Talk honestly about homelessness in your community
- Invite community leaders into the conversation
- Engage churches, donors, volunteers, and partners
- Amplify your ministry's work through social media and email
- Raise financial support, if you choose

You don't have to do all of it. **Build the Bench around what matters most to your ministry.**

Step 2: Imagine Your Bench

Before worrying about technology, schedules, or logistics, think about what your 24 hours could look like.

Who could sit on your Bench?
A person with lived experience. A donor. A volunteer. A pastor. A business leader. A mayor or community leader. A staff member. A graduate of your program.

What could you talk about?
The realities of homelessness in your community. Recovery. Addiction. Faith. Transformation. Misconceptions. What gives you hope. What your community can do.

Your Bench doesn't need to be elaborate to be meaningful.

Step 3: Choose Your Focus

What would make participating worthwhile for your ministry?
Maybe you want to:

- Raise awareness
- Tell stories differently
- Educate your community
- Engage churches and partners
- Recruit volunteers
- Strengthen donor relationships
- Raise financial support

Choose what matters most. **You don't have to make Conversations on a Bench a fundraiser.**

If you choose to fundraise, registered ministries receive access to a **Fundraising Playbook** with tools to help build a strategy around the event.

If awareness is your primary goal, you'll receive **Social Media and Email Playbooks** with ready-to-use content and tools to help you promote your Bench and engage your community.

Want to do both? You can—and the Playbook Hub will help you bring it all together.

Step 4: Decide If It's Right for Your Ministry

Talk with your leadership team:

- What do we want our community to better understand?
- What stories do we want to elevate?
- Who would we invite to the Bench?
- Would our focus be awareness, fundraising, or both?
- Who could lead this internally?
- Are we ready to add our voice to the collective movement?

You don't need to have every detail figured out before you say yes.

Step 5: Register + Unlock Your Resources

Ready to join us? Register your ministry for Conversations on a Bench.
Once registered, you'll gain access to the **Conversations on a Bench Playbook Hub**, where we'll walk you through the entire process.

Inside you'll find:

Learn
Get the vision and prepare your team.

Plan & Recruit
Build your schedule, recruit your crew, and work through logistics.

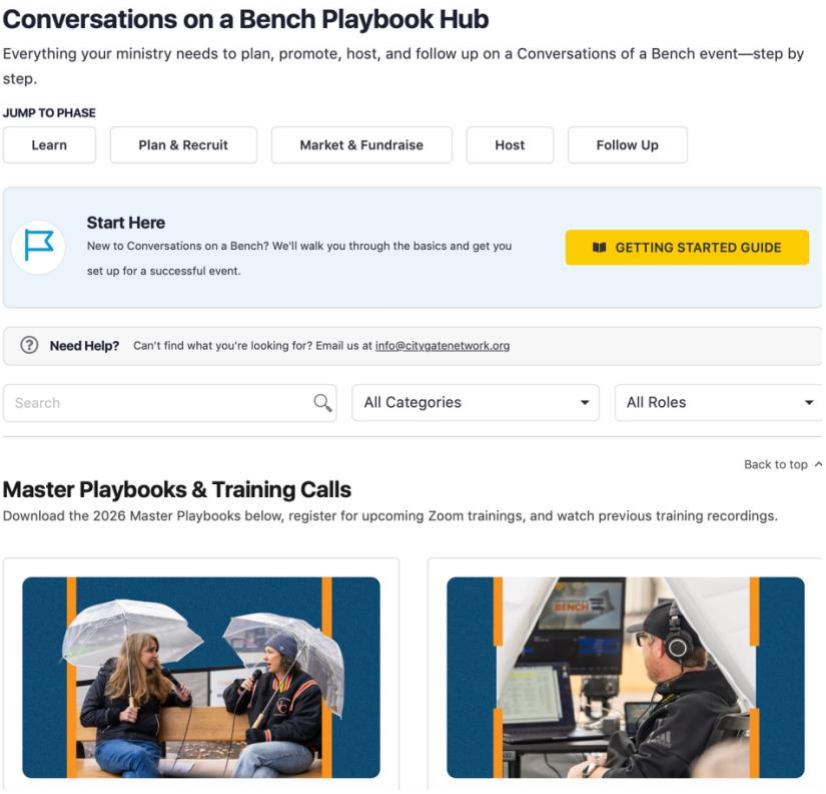
Market & Fundraise
Access social media, email, fundraising, sponsor, and promotional resources.

Host
Prepare your technology, conversations, team, and event-day experience.

Follow Up
Thank supporters, share your impact, and build on the momentum.

Inspire
See what other ministries are doing and help grow the movement.

You'll also have access to **training, templates, guides, and ready-to-use resources** designed to make hosting your Bench as simple as possible.



You Don't Have to Have It All Figured Out
You just need to decide whether you want to be part of the conversation.

Ready? Register your ministry and unlock the Playbook Hub.

Questions? Contact Bethany at bwininger@citygatenetwork.org.