



# MINUTES OF EQUAL RIGHTS COMMISSION

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2025, 5:30 PM**

**City Hall, Room 604 - The Harry Maier Room.**

**Virtual attendance is also available via Zoom.**

## **A. ZOOM MEETING INFORMATION.**

- I. Join Zoom Meeting Online:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87139363656?pwd=MHRIUUVyb3dmd2x6eHhsN0x3Ry9yZz09>

Or call in by phone: +1 312 626 6799

Meeting ID: 871 3936 3656

Passcode: 182212

If you wish to speak at this public meeting or leave a comment, please fill out the online [Comment Form](#) prior to the meeting. More detailed [Zoom Instructions](#) can be found online.

## **B. ROLL CALL.**

Present: Tara Yang, Michael Vinson, Jon Shelton, Stephanie Guzman, Joey Prestley, Natalie Hoffman, Workplace Culture Specialist - Andrea Fox, and others.

Excused: Marcus Grignon

## **C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.**

- I. Approval of the Thursday, January 9, 2025 Equal Rights Commission meeting agenda.

Moved by Jon Shelton, seconded by Stephanie Guzman to approve.

Motion Passed.

Yes- Tara Yang, Michael Vinson, Jon Shelton, Stephanie Guzman, Joey Prestley, Natalie Hoffman,

No- None, Abstain- None.

#### **D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**

- I. Approval of the December 12th, 2024, Equal Rights Commission meeting minutes.

Moved by Board Member Natalie Hoffman, seconded by Stephanie Guzman to approve.

Motion Passed.

Yes- Tara Yang, Michael Vinson, Jon Shelton, Stephanie Guzman, Joey Prestley, Natalie Hoffman,

No- None, Abstain- None.

#### **E. REGULAR BUSINESS.**

- I. INFORMATION ONLY - Jeff Brooks presentation on Helena Group's Catalyst Cities project.
2. For consideration with possible action to revise Section 12-11 Equal Rights Commission of the City's Chapter 12, Civil Rights Ordinance. Link:  
[https://library.municode.com/wi/green\\_bay/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=COOR\\_CH12CIRI\\_S12-11EQRICO](https://library.municode.com/wi/green_bay/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COOR_CH12CIRI_S12-11EQRICO)

Moved by Stephanie Guzman, seconded by Jon Shelton to hold until the next Equal Rights Commission meeting.

Motion Passed.

Yes- Tara Yang, Michael Vinson, Jon Shelton, Stephanie Guzman, Joey Prestley, Natalie Hoffman,

No- None, Abstain- None.

#### **F. INFORMATIONAL.**

- I. Chair update.

#### **G. ADJOURNMENT.**

Moved by Stephanie Guzman, seconded by Board Member Natalie Hoffman, to adjourn.

Motion Passed.

Yes- Tara Yang, Michael Vinson, Jon Shelton, Stephanie Guzman, Joey Prestley, Natalie Hoffman, No- None, Abstain- None.

# HELENA

# America in One Room

# 2025

## Catalyst Cities: Green Bay

Prepared January 2025 for Helena Group Foundation.

The materials and information enclosed in this report are intended for internal use only.



# The Problem: Local Political Discourse is Breaking Down



Political will and sustainable momentum are becoming harder to build. Local forums for public engagement have become contentious and divisive. Mutual distrust replaces understanding, with vocal minorities dominating discussions and silencing diverse perspectives. This drives away dedicated individuals, leaving communities fractured and progress stalled.

# The Solution:

## People Power, Reignited by Deliberation

Catalyst Cities revitalizes local democracy through inclusive, deliberative practices. By empowering citizens to actively participate in decision-making processes, we rebuild trust, foster mutual understanding, and create collaborative solutions to the challenges facing our communities. Participants experience the human dignity of their neighbor's life experience and are changed by it.



# Solution Elements

## Political Sponsors

Bipartisan partnership among major political bodies at city and county level empowered by statute, capable and willing to take political action.

## Supporting Partners

Local media, university research support, and key stakeholders engage with deliberative body to promote, inform, implement solutions, and build their own capacity.



## Expert Guidance

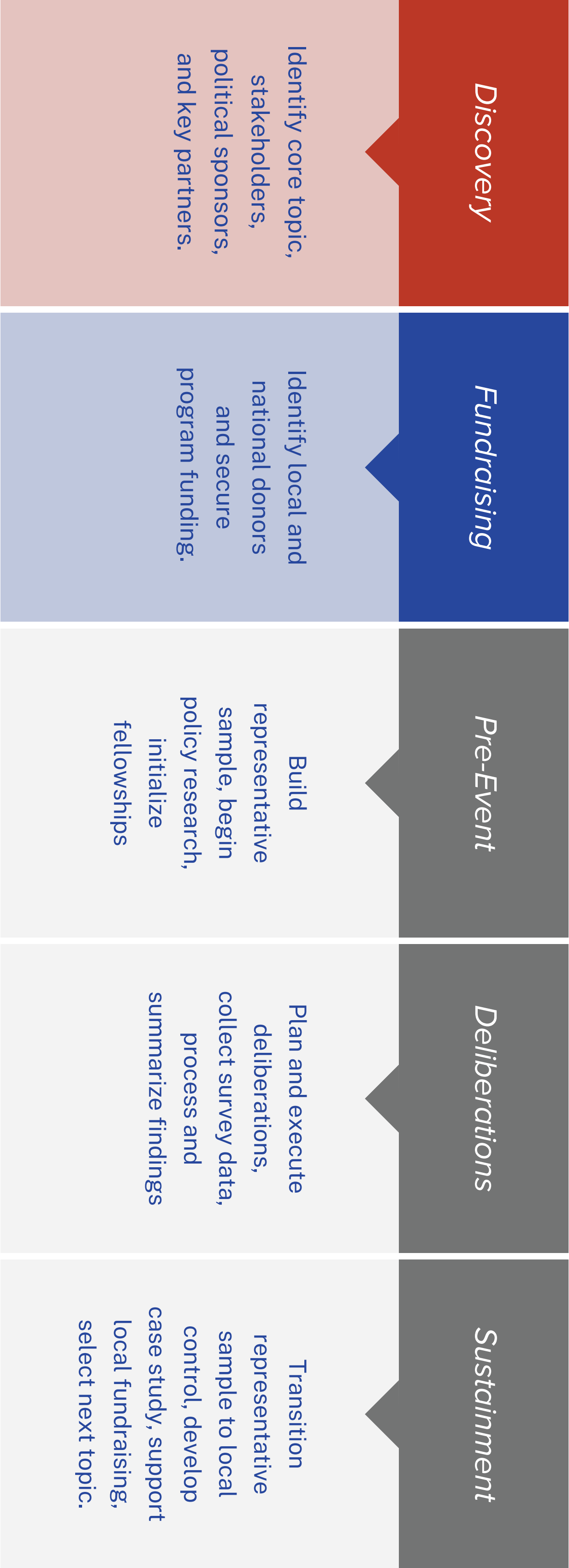
Helena and Stanford's Deliberative Democracy Lab provide operational and academic support, along with a network of polling, research, and media support. Our goal is to make this project a model for other cities.

## Representative Sample

A demographically representative body large enough to draw statistical conclusions from among demographic subgroups.



# Program Phases



# Appendix



# The A1R Approach

## Harnessing Deliberative Polling

- Deliberative polling isn't just process; it's a community breakthrough.
- The process has been proven to enhance subject knowledge, improve opinions on democracy, boost political agency, and efficiently depolarize participants both directly and indirectly.
- Participants are the most dramatically impacted; for some, the experience is life-changing.
- Media coverage illuminates organic, authentic narratives that emerge from the deliberative process, helping to reframe and depolarize the policy discussion in the wider community.

## Practical Action through Defined Policy Focus

- The process zeroes in on well-defined policy issues with clear potential decisions, guiding participants to examine and express policy preferences.
- Deliberations create rich data that leaders can use to understand the context of polling responses.
- Often unexpected axes of agreement are uncovered, signaling political opportunities and coalitions.

## Inclusive and Balanced Representation

- Robust representative sampling of local communities is key. We are uncompromising in our pursuit of a strong sample and strive to include traditionally hard-to-reach constituencies.
- Partnership with local polling groups, subject to quality standards and oversight, builds local credibility

# Program Goal: Achieve Transformative Local and National Impact

## Local-Level Objectives

- Policy Impact. Identify and address policy topics stymied by inaction or division, in partnership with political sponsors with authority/ability to act.
- Data-Driven Action. Ensure political sponsors and their constituents are committed to integrating deliberation outcomes. Ideally, a temporary trial policy is adopted in response to deliberations.
- Community Coalition Building. Convene local NGOs, community activists, and political donors to form bipartisan coalitions supporting participatory processes, sustaining advocacy for 1-2 years.

## National-Level Aspirations

- Influencing Legislation. Aim to bring participatory democracy closer to tangible policy outcomes, addressing a national need for democratic reform.
- Media Engagement. Reinvigorate national attention on a hopeful future through actionable findings.
- Unique Positioning. Make our Catalyst Cities standout examples of durable, repeatable improvements in policy and community engagement.

## Balancing Local and National Goals

- Adaptive Approach. Each Catalyst City will address immediate community needs while integrating local political culture and norms. Each project will feel truly local.
- Model for the Nation: Fulfilling community desires and impacting policy leads the nation forward.



# **Program Structure: Elements of Catalyst Cities**

## **Engage a Representative Sample**

- At the center of each Catalyst City is a Deliberative Poll on a topic determined with political sponsor
- A representative sample of the local electorate is built and convened for in-person deliberations

## **Engage Local Stakeholders Who Sustain and Expand Process**

- Alongside the Deliberative Poll, we engage community stakeholders to build awareness, interest, and support for the process and policy impact it will have
- Stakeholders will be invited to a unique event, where they will observe the final rounds of deliberative polling and network with bipartisan politicians, NGOs, and community activists in the spirit of constructive dialogue and mutual respect
- Ultimate goal to sustain future deliberations with local funding

## **Engage Partnership Model for Execution**

- Include high-quality local partners for key parts of the process (sample building, event hosting/moderation, in-depth media coverage), laying groundwork for future events
- Sustainability plan positions local partners as agents to empower local constituencies

# Engaging Diverse Stakeholders: Traditional and Non-Traditional Allies

## Two-Tiered Stakeholder Approach

- Traditional Stakeholders. Policy-minded non-profits, political donors, community activists, etc., who are already engaged in local policy offer expertise/experience
- Non-traditional Stakeholders. Groups new to the policy issue or political projects, with diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

## Balancing Process Integrity with Involvement

- Deliberative Polling Process. Run independently to ensure data integrity and unbiased outcomes.
- Observation Opportunity. Allow stakeholders to observe deliberations for transparency and to experience the re-invigorating energy of deliberation vs. the depleting grind of traditional discourse.
- Post-Deliberation Involvement: Stakeholders and participants have a meaningful role in shaping future participatory processes for the city.

## Cultivating Long-term Support

- Targeted Events for Stakeholders: Community leads organization of future events with A1R help to form a core group of supporters.
- Exploration of Participatory Methods: Community and A1R collaborate on future methods for community engagement based on unique community needs/values.

# The Deliberative Process: How It Works

## Assembly and Selection of Participants

- Mini-Public Formation. Gather a representative group of several hundred (approx. 300) people representing the full demographic and attitudinal range of the community.
- Representative Sample (sortition). Use existing polling database (if available) or work with polling group to conduct phone surveys (or similar) to build representative sample from random selection

## Preparation of Briefing Materials

- Bipartisan Advisory Committee Consultation: Collaborate with experts to develop fair and comprehensive briefing documents and video briefings on policy proposals, ensuring balance
- Exclusion of External Influence: Funders, political sponsors, and other third-party groups are not permitted direct access to participants (outside of in-person observations), maintaining process integrity.

## Engagement and Deliberation

- Small Group Deliberations: Sample randomly divided into groups of 12 for policy discussions.
- Expert Plenary Sessions: Small groups collaborate and present questions to expert panelists

# Post-Deliberation Activities: Activating Community

## Utilization of Insights

- Policy Trials: Utilize findings to trial policies aligned with deliberation outcomes. Political sponsor engagement will determine the final use of outcomes. Policy impact is critical.
- Community Advocacy and Engagement: Build support coalitions around participatory processes, iteratively focusing on different policy issues.
- Data Analysis and Reporting: A1R partners analyze data for insights and share findings with the government and community.
- Influence on Future Processes: Use insights to inform and improve subsequent participatory processes in the city.
- Media Engagement: Publicize results and policy actions through local media for broader awareness and engagement.

# Benefits to Cities

## Tangible Benefits:

- Data Quality and Reliability: Access to high-quality, unbiased data from the Deliberative Polling process, useful in making well-informed policy decisions.
- Media Coverage and Publicity: National media attention, highlighting the city's innovative approach to participatory democracy and enhancing its public profile.
- Event Documentation: Comprehensive documentation of the deliberative process and outcomes, serving as a valuable resource for future reference and policy development.
- Enhanced Community Engagement: Active involvement of citizens in the decision-making process, fostering a sense of community ownership and civic responsibility.

## Intangible Benefits:

- Breaking Political Deadlock: Addressing divisive policy issues through informed community dialogue, facilitating consensus and collaborative problem-solving.
- Empowering Policy Change: Utilizing community insights to drive policy changes that are more reflective of public opinion and needs.
- Promoting Transpartisan Cooperation: Encouraging collaboration across political lines, reducing polarization and promoting unity.
- Building Public Trust: Strengthening trust between citizens and local government by demonstrating transparency, responsiveness, and a commitment to public participation.

# Partnership Model: Designing Catalyst Cities for Success

## Local Government Collaboration

- Partnership with a primary political office or official who holds administrative authority over the chosen policy topic.
- Commitment to taking public action based on deliberative polling findings, with a focus on enthusiastic implementation and bipartisan involvement.
- Consultative process in determining policy topics for deliberation, ensuring relevance and potential for policy action.

## Media Partnership

- Example: Collaboration with NYTimes: The Upshot in 2019 “America in One Room” project
  - Media partner provided unique insights into the program, leading to compelling content creation that resonated with wide audience
  - Emphasis on crafting content from organic narratives that emerge from the event, framing local and national interests

## Academic Institution Engagement

- Collaboration with local university for support in polling, training moderators, event hosting, and research for briefing materials
- Utilization of existing partnerships with renowned research institutions like Stanford University for expertise and operational support



## **Next Steps: How to Become a Catalyst City**

### **To Initiate Engagement**

City officials interested in the Catalyst Cities program are encouraged to contact Jeff Brooks, Director of America in One Room, at [jeff@helena.org](mailto:jeff@helena.org) to schedule an introductory call

### **Funding and Selection for Catalyst Cities**

Funding for inaugural Catalyst City events are generously provided by Helena Group Foundation donors, subject to successful application submission and selection.

Applications are competitive. Cities are transparently evaluated and selected by Helena Group Foundation through a consultative application process.



# America in One Room: Catalyst Cities

## Bridging Communities Through Deliberative Democracy

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### I. Introduction

In towns and cities across the country, a troubling trend is unfolding. Conversations with city officials reveal that meetings once characterized by constructive dialogue—such as school board and city council gatherings—have become battlegrounds of polarization and anger. What were once routine forums for community engagement have turned contentious, even dangerous, for local officials and concerned citizens alike.

This breakdown in political discourse is particularly harmful at the local level, where communities have every reason to collaborate toward common goals. Instead of mutual understanding, there is mutual distrust. A vocal minority often dominates these spaces, drowning out diverse perspectives and making the essential work of governing increasingly difficult. As a result, dedicated individuals on all sides who genuinely seek progress are being pushed away, leaving communities fractured and stagnant.

**Catalyst Cities** aims to address this pressing issue by revitalizing local democracy through inclusive, deliberative practices. By empowering citizens to actively participate in decision-making processes, we strive to rebuild trust, foster mutual understanding, and create collaborative solutions to the challenges facing our communities.

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### II. Executive Summary

Catalyst Cities is an innovative program designed to bridge divides within communities by fostering deliberative democracy at the local level. By combining centralized support with local autonomy, the program equips residents with the tools, resources, and platforms needed to collaborate effectively with each other and with local governments. Through inclusive deliberation and strategic partnerships, Catalyst Cities seeks to create a network of engaged, informed, and empowered communities capable of addressing their most pressing issues collaboratively.

Catalyst Cities is an [America in One Room](#) (A1R) Project. Since its inception in 2019, A1R has successfully facilitated informed dialogue, bridged divides, and generated thoughtful policy recommendations on topics ranging from election reform to climate change. It has been featured on the [cover of \*The New York Times\*](#) and publicly hailed by multiple former US Presidents.

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### III. Program Overview

#### Structure of the Catalyst Cities Program

Catalyst Cities is designed with a balance between centralized support managed by **Helena**—a non-profit organization dedicated to civic engagement—and locally managed elements tailored to each community's unique context. This structure ensures consistency and scalability while allowing for local adaptation.

#### Key Components

- **Representative Deliberative Panel:** Modeled on Deliberative Polling®, a representative panel of citizens partners constructively with policymakers.
  - **Online Tools:** Tools for discussion, learning, and chapter management.
  - **Data Analysis:** Policymakers receive durable policy insights, while chapter leaders and funders receive analytic support to inform decisions and evaluate impact.
  - **Training and Capacity Building:** Programs for leaders, facilitators, and participants focused on building local capacity with local resources.
  - **Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborations with local governments, universities, and community organizations.
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### IV. Centralized Support Managed by Helena

#### 1. Initial Sample Building

Working with trusted polling partners, Helena establishes a representative participant group in each new city, ensuring diversity and inclusivity from the program's outset.

#### 2. Online Tools

Helena provides a program website and digital tools to facilitate moderated discussions and educational resource sharing. These tools enable participants to engage in meaningful dialogue, visualize community opinions, and access curated policy information, regardless of their ability to attend in person.

#### 3. Data Analysis and Insights

In partnership with Stanford University, Helena collects and analyzes data from public surveys and deliberations. This centralized approach identifies trends, best practices, and areas for improvement across all participating cities. Over time, we plan to develop local capacity for this analysis by partnering with local universities or experts.

#### 4. Training and Capacity Building

Collaborating with university partners, Helena curates or develops training covering deliberative democracy principles, facilitation skills, and community engagement strategies. Training is delivered through various formats, emphasizing on-the-ground training and feedback gathering in early cities to inform educational materials.

#### 5. Best Practice Sharing

Helena facilitates knowledge sharing among participating cities through online

resources, virtual meetings, and in-person events, promoting collaboration and the dissemination of effective strategies.

6. **Stakeholder Engagement Strategies**

The program provides frameworks and toolkits for local leaders to effectively engage key stakeholders, building trust and support for the deliberative process.

7. **Communication and Branding**

Helena develops consistent messaging, branding, and communication materials that local chapters can customize, ensuring a unified identity while allowing for local adaptation.

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## **V. Locally Managed Elements**

1. **Deliberative Panel Ongoing Recruitment and Onboarding**

After the initial deliberative panel is convened, local chapters lead ongoing efforts to recruit diverse community members, with guidance from Helena and Stanford, to ensure the deliberative panel maintains its representativeness.

2. **Issue Identification and Prioritization**

Communities engage in inclusive processes to identify and prioritize local issues, ensuring that deliberations reflect the true needs and concerns of residents.

3. **In-Person Deliberation Events**

Local leaders organize facilitated discussions where participants explore issues in depth and develop recommendations. These events foster relationship-building and collaborative problem-solving.

4. **Recommendation Development**

Participants create actionable solutions, with local chapters supporting research and refinement to ensure feasibility and alignment with community values.

5. **Partnership Building**

Local chapters cultivate relationships with organizations, businesses, and institutions to support program goals and enhance community impact.

6. **Local Communication and Outreach**

Communication strategies, including partnership with local media outlets, engage the broader community, utilizing various channels to raise awareness and encourage participation.

7. **Continuous Improvement**

Local chapters regularly evaluate program performance, collecting feedback to adapt and improve over time.

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## **VI. Key Partnerships and Programs**

These programs are intended to build critical capacity to sustain the program using local resources, and provide a path for community members to build careers supporting the work.

## 1. Fellowship Program with Local Government

The Catalyst Cities Fellowship embeds dedicated staff within city agencies to support integrating deliberative practices into government processes.

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Fellows serve as liaisons between the program and local officials, facilitating information flow, building relationships with stakeholders, supporting participatory processes, and monitoring impact.
- **Integration with Local Priorities:** Aligning program activities with government agendas ensures relevance and effectiveness.
- **Training and Support:** Fellows receive comprehensive training and ongoing support from Helena and university partners.

## 2. Fellowship Program with Local University & University Partnerships

Collaborations with academic institutions enhance the program through:

- **Policy Research:** Provides participants and public with high-quality research on policy options.
- **Faculty Engagement:** Experts contribute to program design, implementation, and evaluation.
- **Developing Skilled Facilitators:** Creating a pipeline of trained individuals to support program sustainability.
- **Long-Term Collaboration:** Joint research projects and community-based learning initiatives foster continuous improvement.

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## VII. Participant Engagement and Value Proposition

### Short-Term Benefits

- **Direct Compensation:** Participants are compensated for their time and participation.
- **Empowerment and Influence:** Participants feel their voices are heard and valued.
- **Skill Development:** Opportunities to enhance critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills.
- **Networking:** Building relationships with diverse community members.

### Medium-Term Benefits

- **Recognition:** Potential for community acknowledgment and leadership roles.
- **Access to Decision-Makers:** Direct engagement with local officials and influencers.

### Long-Term Benefits

- **Community Impact:** Contributing to tangible improvements in local policies and services.
- **Personal Growth:** Experiences that support personal and professional development.
- **Legacy and Purpose:** Being part of a movement that strengthens democracy and community well-being.

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## VIII. Safeguards Against Special Interest Capture

To maintain the integrity of the deliberative process, Catalyst Cities implements multiple safeguards:

1. **Transparent Recruitment**
  - Open and widely advertised processes.
  - Clear selection criteria to ensure demographic and attitudinal diversity.
  - Public information on participant demographics and selection methods.
2. **Robust Facilitation**
  - Trained, impartial facilitators guide discussions.
  - Structured formats prevent dominance by any group.
  - Active moderation promotes respectful dialogue.
3. **Stakeholder Monitoring**
  - Regular analysis to identify potential conflicts of interest.
  - Strategies to balance diverse stakeholder interests.
  - Procedures for disclosing and managing biases.
4. **Independent Oversight**
  - Helena provides quality control and evaluation.
  - Mechanisms for reporting concerns or grievances.
  - Transparency in processes and decision-making.
5. **Transparent Communication**
  - Accessible reporting of activities and outcomes.
  - Opportunities for public input and feedback.
  - Clear explanations of how participant input is utilized.

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## IX. Metrics and Evaluation

### Primary KPI

- **Government Funding Influenced:** Measuring the amount of government program funding determined or influenced by deliberations.

### Supporting KPIs

1. **Relevance of Issues Addressed**
  - Percentage of topics tied to community needs and government priorities.
  - Number of stakeholders consulted in issue selection.
2. **Quality of Recommendations**
  - Adoption rate by governing bodies.
  - Feasibility assessments and alignment with priorities.
3. **Stakeholder Buy-In**

- Engagement levels of key stakeholders.
  - Number of endorsements and resources contributed.
  - 4. **Strength of Government Partnerships**
    - Frequency of collaborative meetings and shared initiatives.
    - Resources provided by governing bodies.
  - 5. **Effective Communication**
    - Media impressions and public engagement metrics.
    - Utilization of diverse communication channels.
  - 6. **Participant Engagement and Diversity**
    - Number of participants and demographic representation.
    - Engagement rates across different community segments.
  - 7. **Community Satisfaction**
    - Ratings from participant and community surveys.
    - Feedback on the deliberation process and outcomes.
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## **X. Conclusion**

Imagine a community where contentious meetings are replaced by constructive dialogues, where citizens feel empowered to contribute, and where local governments collaborate effectively with their constituents. **Catalyst Cities** offers a pathway to transform the current climate of polarization into one of mutual understanding and cooperative problem-solving.

By fostering inclusive deliberative democracy, we can rebuild trust, bridge divides, and create lasting positive change. This initiative not only addresses the immediate challenges faced by local governments and communities but also lays the foundation for a healthier, more resilient democracy.

**We invite you to join us in this vital endeavor.** Your support can amplify the impact of Catalyst Cities, helping to restore healthy political discourse and strengthen the fabric of our communities. Together, we can make a tangible difference in the lives of citizens and set a new standard for civic engagement.

### *About Helena:*

*Helena* is a global problem-solving organization that seeks to implement solutions to critical societal challenges through nonprofit, for-profit, and legislative actions. Helena operates its projects alongside a small group of leaders called [Helena Members](#). They include Nobel Laureates, Academy Award winners, policymakers, technologists, entrepreneurs, explorers and more. Helena's nonprofit projects have included *America in One Room*, which garnered praise from *The New York Times* and Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama; *Biosecurity in the Age of AI*, which focuses on risks emerging at the intersection of AI and biotechnology; and *The COVID Project*, which supplied tens of millions of units of personal protective equipment to frontline responders during the COVID-19 pandemic. Helena supports mission-driven for-profit efforts through its investment arm. Its portfolio includes innovations in grid-scale energy storage (Energy Vault, NYSE: NRGV), AI controls to dramatically reduce energy consumption in industrial processes and data centers (Phaidra); and Digital Twin technology enabling chronic disease reversals (Twin Health), among others..