

Civic Assembly Starter Kit

A Guide to Hosting Nonpartisan, Citizen-Led Deliberations

By House of Concord — Practicing Democratic Neutrality

Purpose of the Kit

This starter kit helps citizens convene structured, respectful discussions on major public issues — free from partisanship, media distortion, or conformity pressures. It provides a repeatable process anyone can use to host civic assemblies, gather authentic community input, and turn that input into formal deliberation packets for elected officials.

Contents

1. Guiding Philosophy
2. Workshop Overview
3. Preparation Checklist
4. Facilitation Tools
5. Templates & Worksheets
6. Expert Recruitment Guide
7. Turning Deliberation Into Action
8. Ethical & Legal Notes
9. Future Assemblies

1. Guiding Philosophy

Democratic Neutrality: Citizens can deliberate truthfully only when freed from partisan identity.

The Marble Analogy: Ideas are marbles, not possessions. We must be willing to trade and examine them honestly.

Principles for Deliberation: Neutrality, Transparency, Inclusion, and Independence.

2. Workshop Overview

Each workshop focuses on one public issue (e.g., representation, education, resilience). Use this 9-step format:

1. Frame of Mind Exercise (Marble Analogy)
2. Issue Brief (Experts + Affected Citizens)

3. Problem Statement Development
4. Root Cause Analysis & Purpose Statement
5. Stakeholder Mapping
6. Solutions Development
7. Sharing
8. Cross-Examination & Refinement
9. Closing & Next Steps

3. Preparation Checklist

- Identify your issue (start with one).
- Secure a venue (library, school, community hall).
- Recruit 1–2 experts and 1–2 citizens directly affected.
- Print or share an Issue Brief (facts only, no spin).
- Recruit note-takers and a timekeeper.
- Have recording sheets ready (templates included).

4. Facilitation Tools

Facilitator Role: Create balance, not consensus.

Tips: Ask open questions, acknowledge contributions, redirect partisanship, and keep time fairly.

Participant Pledge: “I commit to reason, respect, and openness. I am here to explore truth, not defend a tribe.”

5. Templates & Worksheets

Printable forms: Problem Statement Worksheet, Root Cause Diagram, Stakeholder Map, Solution Brainstorm, Cross-Examination Form, Deliberation Packet Summary Template.

6. Expert Recruitment Guide

Identify credible local experts, send neutral invitations, and clarify that their role is educational, not advocacy.

7. Turning Deliberation Into Action

How to create and send your Deliberation Packet: summarize findings, publish online, and send to representatives, media, and civic groups.

8. Ethical & Legal Notes

Do not contact judges directly — make results public instead. Keep sessions open to all citizens. Encourage political discussion outside the deliberation framework.

9. Future Assemblies

Encourage participants to host their own assemblies, stay connected through House of Concord, and track responses from officials.

Appendices

Sample agenda, expert brief, example deliberation packet, contact sheet template, and publicity flyer.