



Assembly Design & Project Management

For a civic assembly to truly work, everyone—participants and the broader public—needs to trust that the process is **independent, fair, and inclusive**. A neutral third-party convener ensures:

- **Credibility and Trust** — clear independence from City politics or departments
- **Expertise** — deep experience in sortition, deliberative design, and civic engagement best practices
- **Capacity** — the ability to dedicate a specialized team without pulling City staff from core duties
- **Transparency** — documentation and reporting that stands up to public scrutiny

The City remains deeply involved at key decision points, while the convener handles the complex design, management, and delivery.

Unify America's Scope of Work & Deliverables

1. Design & Planning (80–100 hrs)

What's Included

- Designing the overall arc of the assembly (orientation → learning → deliberation → decision)
- Aligning assembly goals with City priorities
- Anticipating risks (low recruitment, accessibility barriers, public skepticism)
- Building in equity and support mechanisms

Deliverables

- Assembly design blueprint
- Written design rationale
- Risk and accessibility plan

City's Role: Approves goals and guiding principles and provides input on policy context and issue framing.

What Success Looks Like: The assembly is structured to be equitable, clear, and aligned with City priorities, and public confidence in the process is high.

2. Project Management (70–90 hrs)

What's Included

- Coordinating across City staff, community partners, vendors
- Maintaining project schedule, milestones, and budget
- Providing progress updates

Deliverables

- Master project plan and timeline
- Biweekly progress reports
- End-of-project activity summary

City's Role: Designates a single point of contact for approvals and participates in coordination with City as needed.

What Success Looks Like: The project runs on schedule and budget with smooth coordination and clear communication between all stakeholders.

3. Agenda Development & Facilitation Support (80–100 hrs)

What's Included

- Designing daily agendas (expert input, small-group, plenary)
- Preparing facilitation guides
- Recruiting and managing the facilitation team
- Training facilitators in deliberation methods and neutrality
- Supporting real-time adaptations

Deliverables

- Daily agendas
- Facilitation playbooks
- Trained facilitator team
- Daily feedback and adjustments

City's Role: Provides input on themes or desired outcomes and participates in facilitator selection.

What Success Looks Like: Agendas are engaging, adaptable, and implemented by neutral facilitators who maintain participant focus and inclusivity.

4. Expert & Stakeholder Engagement + Solutions Team Support (70–90 hrs)

What's Included

- Recruiting diverse subject matter experts
- Preparing experts for accessible, balanced presentations
- Supporting the **Solutions Team** (group that narrows the options for assembly consideration) — process design, meeting facilitation, and synthesis of inputs

Deliverables

- Confirmed expert roster and bios
- Balanced expert presentations
- Solutions team process design and outputs

City's Role: Suggests experts and stakeholders and approves the final roster.

What Success Looks Like: Experts are credible, presentations are balanced, and the Solutions Team produces actionable options for the assembly.

5. Participant Recruitment & Support (Sortition) (80–100 hrs)

What's Included

- Designing and managing the sortition process
- Creating invitation materials
- Providing participant support: stipends, transportation, translation, childcare, accessibility
- Setting up communications channels for delegates

Deliverables

- Sortition and recruitment report (demographics, process)
- Invitation package
- Participant handbook and support infrastructure

City's Role: Publicly endorses the process to build legitimacy and provides mailing lists or contact data as needed.

What Success Looks Like: The participant pool is representative, supported, and engaged, with a transparent and credible recruitment process.

6. Briefings & Materials (60–80 hrs)

What's Included

- Preparing balanced, nonpartisan briefing books
- Producing fact sheets, infographics, and summaries

- Translating materials as needed
- Reviewing materials for neutrality

Deliverables

- Draft and final briefing book
- Fact sheets and visual aids
- Online resource hub

City's Role: Reviews drafts for accuracy and approves final publications.

What Success Looks Like: Materials are accurate, neutral, accessible, and fully prepare participants to engage meaningfully.

7. Outreach & Public Communications Strategy (30–40 hrs)

What's Included

- Designing assembly outreach strategy (press, social, community groups) with support from City channels and team
- Creating plain-language summaries for public distribution
- Coordinating with City communications team for aligned messaging

Deliverables

- Outreach plan
- Communications toolkit (press releases, social media templates, FAQs)

City's Role: Amplifies messages through official channels and coordinates with local media partners.

What Success Looks Like: The public is informed and engaged, and outreach reaches a diverse cross-section of the community.

8. Final Report & Documentation (30–40 hrs)

What's Included

- Synthesizing deliberation notes, participant inputs, and recommendations
- Documenting process for transparency
- Producing executive summary and visual highlights
- Coordinating public release

Deliverables

- Comprehensive final report
- Executive summary

- Visual communication products (infographics, charts)
- Public release plan

City's Role: Approves the final report and decides on release event or strategy.

What Success Looks Like: The report clearly reflects the assembly's work, is transparent and accessible, and is successfully shared with the public.

Unify Cities

A Moment of Opportunity

Imagine a city where public decisions are shaped not by the loudest voices—but by real, representative conversations between neighbors. While polarization and mistrust rise across the country, we're seeking local municipalities with the people, partnerships, and momentum to build something different: a civic model that the nation can follow.

Nonpartisan nonprofit **Unify America** is currently searching for potential **flagship cities** to pilot a scalable, transformative model of civic problem-solving: the **Democracy League**.

What is a Democracy League

A **democracy league** is a new kind of civic institution — a local hub that runs **well-designed public deliberations** and builds **long-term community capacity** for healthy, collaborative civic life.

THE POWER OF DELIBERATION

Unlike traditional town halls, where the loudest voices often dominate and public officials receive little usable input, a democracy league offers a deliberative process with:

- **Representative Public Voice:** Residents are invited through broad outreach and selected via lottery to mirror the city's demographics and ideologies
- **Compensated, Respectful Participation:** Participants are supported with honoraria, caregiving, interpretation, and accessibility services
- **Credible, Informed Processes:** Sessions are facilitated by trained professionals and grounded in comprehensive data, diverse perspectives, and transparent learning, with enough time to allow participants to explore trade-offs, generate ideas, and build shared recommendations

- **Commitment from Decision-Makers:** City and sector leaders commit to responding to recommendations and integrating insights into real decisions

Democracy Leagues serve not only city governments, but also **school boards, regional authorities, and major cultural or economic institutions** such as libraries, museums, and chambers of commerce. This creates a new civic resource for institutions seeking evidence-based, high-quality, community-rooted input.

BUILDING CAPACITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Beyond running regular public deliberations, the Democracy League invests in **long-term civic infrastructure**—developing local skills, partnerships, and a lasting culture of engaged problem-solving. With Unify America’s support, the League will:

- Train a **local team of staff and facilitators** to lead and sustain the work
- Host **learning events** to spread civic skills like collaboration, critical thinking, and deliberation
- Partner with **existing organizations and civic pathways** to:
 - Create space for **diverse social and service activities** that foster connection and belonging
 - Do **neighbor-to-neighbor outreach**, ensuring every corner of the community is invited to participate

Here’s the overarching goal: To **permanently weave thoughtful, informed public participation into the civic fabric of the municipality**. That means giving people a genuine, meaningful role in self-governance—and doing so in a way that builds trust, strengthens relationships, and leads to tangible results.

Unify America will pilot the Democracy League in a small number of communities, including Akron, OH, with an eye toward national scale.

Pathways for Partnership

ONE-YEAR PILOT INVESTMENT

Launch a high-quality public deliberation, grow local leadership capacity, and lay the groundwork for long-term sustainability

Goals:

- Host one (1) civic assembly
- Add capacity by training local volunteers and/or staff
- Establish initial coalition and engagement programming

Budget Estimate: \$500,000

- \$250K for an initial civic assembly (design, research coordination, participant compensation, facilitation, logistics, outreach, oversight, and data collection/reporting)
- \$250K for civic training, staff, outreach, and local engagement

City's Role:

- Provide in-kind support (like event space and expert testimony)
- Staff and local outreach support and coordination
- Commitment to consider and respond to pilot recommendations

Support from Unify America:

- Full design and facilitation of the pilot, including:
 - Recruitment, random selection, and onboarding of participants
 - Creation of issue materials and facilitation of the event
 - Logistics, communications, and synthesis of recommendations
- Professional/ongoing support from world-class partners
- Civic training modules
- Technology and communications tools

In addition to services funded by the city, Unify America will contribute **in-kind support** to co-develop training, technology, and communications infrastructure, and to spotlight the locality as a national model for democratic innovation.

Benefits for Residents

Most importantly, what's the value of this new, deliberative civic infrastructure to the community and its residents?

#1: Better Local Problem-Solving

Residents co-create solutions through rigorous, equitable, and informed deliberations—producing community-backed recommendations with real legitimacy.

#2: Rebuilding Trust and Belonging

These processes have been proven to reduce polarization, foster empathy, and increase personal agency, belonging, and civic trust.

#3: Measurable Community Impact

Participants and residents experience reduced social isolation, increased civic engagement, and more faith in local governance.

About Unify America

Unify America is a national nonprofit dedicated to replacing political fighting with collaborative problem-solving. Founded by mission-driven tech entrepreneurs, Unify is:

- Hosting over **26,000 participants** in virtual civic skill-building programs, with partners at **200+ colleges and universities**
- Supporting other cities, including [Montrose, CO](#), in its first civic' assembly, leading to concrete solutions for local childcare challenges
- Utilizing expertise, guidance, and programmatic elements from partners and experts across the globe, including:
 - Deliberation designers
 - Think tanks and deliberative democracy advocacy groups
 - Leading researchers, authors, and practitioners at Harvard University, Stanford University, Ohio State University, and Penn State
 - Depolarization and bridging groups
 - National narrative and strategic communications partners

Together with Unify America, we can build a local Democracy League that honors our public voices, develops lasting community infrastructure, and leads the country in transforming public decision-making.

OPTION 1: ONE-YEAR PILOT INVESTMENT

Assembly Costs	Item	Cost	Notes	In-Kind Possible
Delegate support	Stipends for delegates	\$48,000	Assumptions: \$20/hr	
	Childcare	\$7,200	Assumptions: 15% potential need for childcare, \$20/hr.	
	Language accessibility services	\$4,000	Assumptions: Spanish-English live interpretation and ASL interpretation at \$50/hr each.	☒
Event facilities and logistics for Assembly	Venue rental	\$8,000	Meeting space for duration plus equipment rental	☒
	Catering and refreshments	\$10,800	Meals, drinks, and snacks. Assumption \$30 per day per delegate	
Program design and facilitation	Facilitator fees	\$24,000	Assumptions: groups of 5 with local and trained facilitators at \$50/hr.	☒
	Materials, printing, and resources	\$1,500	Workbooks, handouts, etc.	☒
	Expert speaker honorariums	\$4,000	Compensation for guest speakers. Assumption: the vast majority of expertise on a topic is provided by in-kind support	☒
	FIDE - North America's quality assurance and technical guidance throughout design and implementation	\$23,000	\$1,500 per month for 12-month engagement + travel	
	Unify America (or contractor) design + operator cost	\$82,500	Design, project management, planning and delivering organized agenda per day of deliberation, selection of experts (working with the City and other stakeholders as needed for sufficient diversity), invitations design, sortition process, delegate support services, and briefings. Estimate between 500-600 total hours at a \$150/hr combined team cost.	<i>This, eventually, could be local staff and the local Democracy League</i>
Public communications and	Website and online platform	\$4,000	Information hub, participation tools	☒
	Recruitment and advertising	\$40,000	Mailers, online ads, community events, follow up	☒ -- up to half
Evaluation	Data collection and analysis	\$2,000	Surveys, interviews, report writing	
	FIDE's independent evaluation and hiring of local evaluation fellow	\$15,000		
	Report dissemination	\$2,000	Publishing and sharing evaluation findings	
TOTAL		\$276,000		
Capacity & Coalition Building Costs	Item	Cost	Notes	In-Kind Possible
Public communications, engagement, and capacity building	Community outreach initiatives	\$40,000		☒
	Venue and rentals for outreach events	\$10,000	Venue space and rentals for capacity building learnings, civic lottery, open house, and public response to recommendations	☒
	Public learning sessions, including compensation for participants, partners, and supplies	\$45,000	Collaborative problem solving learning program and capacity building (including local partners, national civic partners, logistics and supplies) to expand civic skills like facilitation, collaboration, critical thinking, and deliberation	
	Catering and refreshments (non-Assembly events)	\$15,000	Drinks and snacks. Assumption \$15 per person and at least 1000 people engaged	
	Local contractors	\$120,000	Stipends for the local project managers and outreach team (trained by Unify America) for long-term capacity building. These are the local people who are contract employees of Unify America and support the on-the-ground outreach about assemblies and deliberative public problem-solving in general.	
Tools and Technology	Technology and creative support		In-kind from Unify America to co-develop training, technology, and communications infrastructure — and to spotlight Dayton as a national model for democratic innovation.	☒
TOTAL		\$230,000		
Assembly size assumptions				
# of delegates =	60			
hours of deliberation =	40			
# of deliberative sessions =	6			

PROPOSAL: One-Year Pilot Investment

Launch a high-quality public deliberation, grow local leadership capacity, and lay the groundwork for long-term sustainability

Goals:

- Host one (1) deliberative event
- Add capacity by training local volunteers and/or staff
- Establish initial coalition and engagement programming

Total Budget Estimate: ~\$500,000

Direct Assembly Costs: \$267,000

Local Capacity Building: \$230,000

City's Role:

- Provide in-kind support (like event space and expert testimony)
- Staff and local outreach support and coordination
- Commitment to consider and respond to pilot recommendations

Support from Unify America (and/or our contractors):

Full design and facilitation of the pilot, including:

- Recruitment, random selection, and onboarding of participants
- Creation of issue materials and facilitation of the event
- Logistics, communications, and synthesis of recommendations
- Professional/ongoing support from world-class partners
- Civic training modules
- Technology and communications tools

A note on additional services

Deliberative Town Halls

- Deliberative Town Halls can be used to define the topic and/or connect the CA with the broader public before or after the Civic Assembly.
- This would be done in collaboration with the Institute for Engagement and Accountability (IDEA) at Ohio State University.
- A budget can be provided at a later date with IDEA offering significant in-kind support.