



STRENGTHENING DEMOCRACY by improving **CIVIC DISCOURSE** and advancing **INFORMED, CITIZEN-LED SOLUTIONS** to public policy issues.

Jefferson Center activity was concentrated in early 2012. The staff noticed the continued struggles of the U.S. economy and the growing concerns about the federal budget. At the same time, there appeared to be a lack of constructive engagement about these issues—discussions were shallow and partisan, fueling anger and leading to further gridlock.

In February of 2012 the staff decided to see if the Citizen Jury method could be used as a way to move forward. After a several intense weeks of planning, two twelve-person citizen juries were convened in May of 2012—one on economic issues, the other on the federal debt.

The objective of this experiment was to determine two things. First, how should we Americans discuss economic issues? After examining information on major policies affecting the economy, one jury made practical suggestions about issues that deserved more attention from the public and policymakers. Second, what range of policies should we use to tackle the federal government debt? Can we find areas of agreement between the so-called “budget hawks,” who want to reduce government deficits immediately, and Keynesians who believe short-term stimulus is more important. For both questions, participants were given background information by experts and advocates of different economic philosophies shared their perspectives.

This group of regular citizens came together and demonstrated that people of different backgrounds, perspectives and political persuasions could learn about hotly debated issues in an open, constructive and engaging way. Their policy recommendations and thoughts about the process are fully available on the [Jefferson Center Website](#).



2012 at a Glance

- Conducted *two* simultaneous Citizens Juries: one on federal debt, the other on understanding economic issues
- Contacted 90 potential presenters to enlist the fifteen regional experts who agreed to participate
- Sent out 20,000 of surveys and contacted 50 potential jurors to get the 24 who participated
- Upgraded and redesigned website to better promote the Center’s activities



Jefferson Center - 2012 Audited Financials



		2012
Support / Revenue	Donations	\$ 248,738
Expenses	Staff Salary-Related Expense	\$ 105,883
	Office Expense (Rent, equipment, services)	\$ 19,131
	Program Consultants	\$ 75,687
	Professional Services (legal, accounting, IT, etc.)	\$ 11,724
	Marketing /Advertising	\$ 52,483
	Field Development (staff travel, etc)	\$ 13,241
	Insurance	\$ 1,894
	MN Citizens Jury on Budget and Economy	\$ 85,182
	Miscellaneous	\$ 4,154
Total		\$ 369,379



" I know of no **SAFE** depository of the ultimate powers of society but the **people THEMSELVES**.
And if we think them *not enlightened enough to exercise their control* with wholesome discretion,
the **REMEDY IS NOT TO TAKE IT FROM THEM,**
BUT TO INFORM THEIR DISCRETION."