



Annual Report 2018

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2018 – Expanding the Boundaries of Democracy

“We need to come to the table, not just wonder what we can do.”

This statement, drafted by participants at the end of our 2017 Willmar Community Assembly, probably rang true for many of us throughout 2018. We know that when it comes to the myriad issues we hear about in the local news, encounter on social media, and discuss with our neighbors, there’s something that needs to be done, but we’re not always sure where to start. Or, we don’t feel like we’re the right people for the job. Or we’re too busy. Or we know voices like ours have been shutout in the past. We don’t want to stay silent, but there are countless barriers preventing us from participating in our communities and making a difference.



These barriers mean that far too many of the creative and innovative ideas originating from “everyday” citizens are overlooked and left out of the decision-making process. But since 1974, we’ve used Citizens Juries and other engagement methods to break down these barriers by doing things a little differently: providing people with the information, tools, and time they need to create thoughtful recommendations to complicated challenges. And this year, we saw this strategy produce results long after the actual Citizens Jury events had concluded through the sustained involvement of event participants.

Three participants from our recent projects ran for City Council in 2018 and each identified their Jury experience as a contributor to their decision to run for public office. For these three, their participation in the Jury provided an opportunity to work with those they disagreed, a chance to speak confidently in front of their peers and elected officials about important issues, and an exploration of how they could strengthen their involvement in local government. We also caught up recently with Shona Snater, who participated in the Winona County Climate Dialogue in 2016. Shortly after the dialogue, Shona applied for a job in soil health outreach with the Land Stewardship Project. Snater said the experience “helped develop her voice,” making her feel more prepared to speak with public officials, who “don’t like having their feet held to the fire, but that’s what we need to do if we want to see change happen.”

The challenges facing democracies around the world can appear overwhelming and, at times, insurmountable. We believe the solution is to expand the boundaries of democracy - creating more opportunities for people to participate fully in policy development and civic life. It is through these opportunities that the most creative, innovative, and productive solutions are crafted. While we don’t believe methods like the Citizens Jury can solve every problem, we saw this year that they can create a more empowered and engaged citizenry, who, piece by piece, are improving communities around the world.

Thank you for joining us and believing in the exciting future of democracy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kyle B.", with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Kyle Bozentko

Executive Director



Our Mission

The Jefferson Center is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that partners with citizens, communities, and institutions to design and implement informed, innovative, and democratic solutions to today’s toughest challenges.

Our Vision

The public’s trust in democracy and in their fellow citizens seems to be weaker than ever: corporate interests, suppression of free speech, fake news, silencing of the press, intense partisan polarization, and more have got in the way of democracy working as planned. But we envision a world where individuals can once again engage with...

- one another
- their communities
- public & private institutions
- government & elected officials

... to shape the decisions that affect their lives.

What We Do

We strongly believe in the power of “everyday people” to restore democracy. That’s why we give individuals the knowledge, resources, and time they need to create innovative solutions to today’s biggest challenges.

Our process also provides decision-makers with an informed voice of their constituents, shrinking the current gap between the public and our leaders.



CO-DEFINE

We research and build relationships with stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of the challenge at hand.



CO-DESIGN

We design and implement a custom engagement process, such as a **Citizens Jury**, providing participants the resources they need to create recommendations.

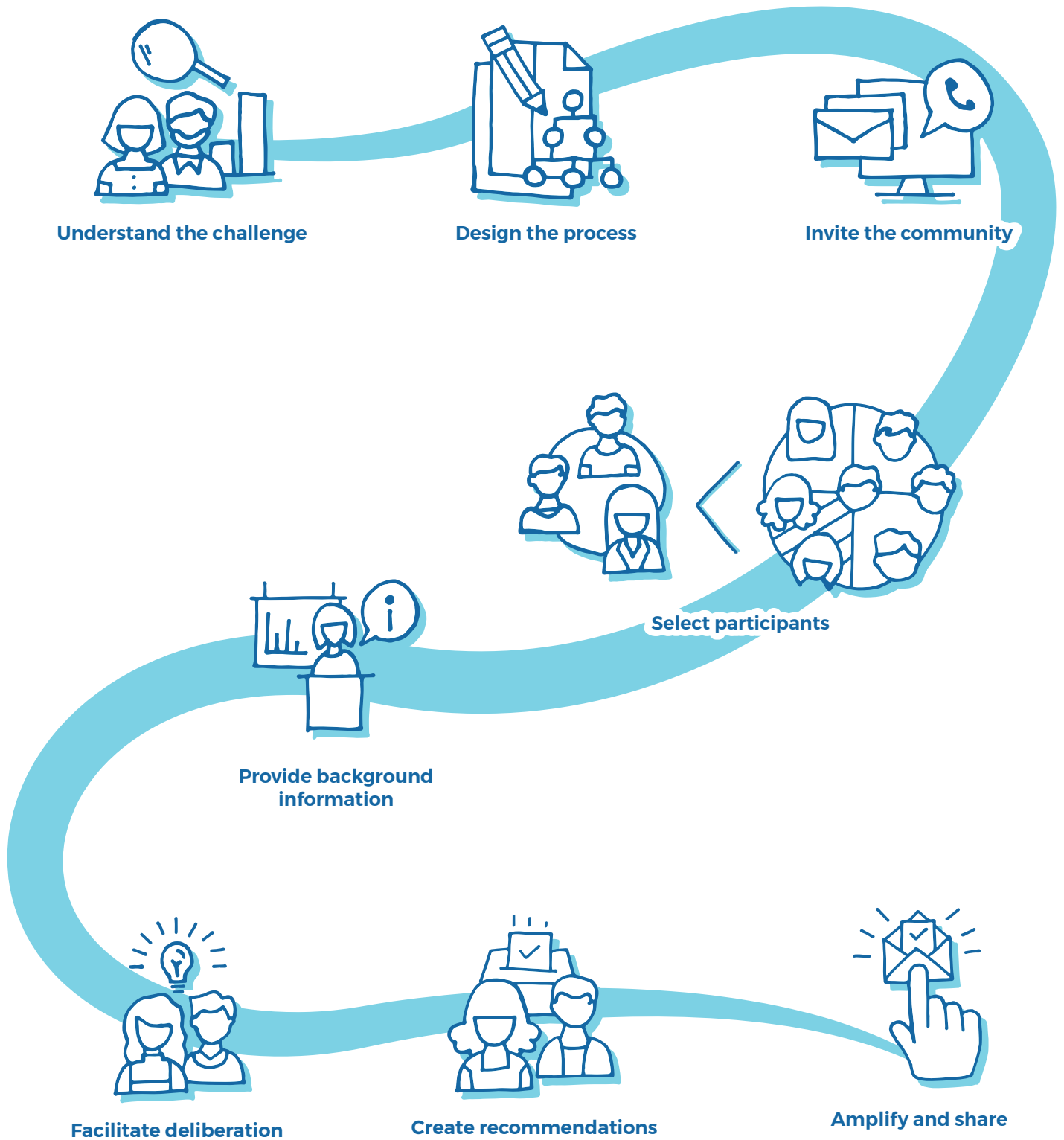


CO-CREATE

We amplify and share participant recommendations and support implementation by sponsors, partners, and community members.

The Citizens Jury

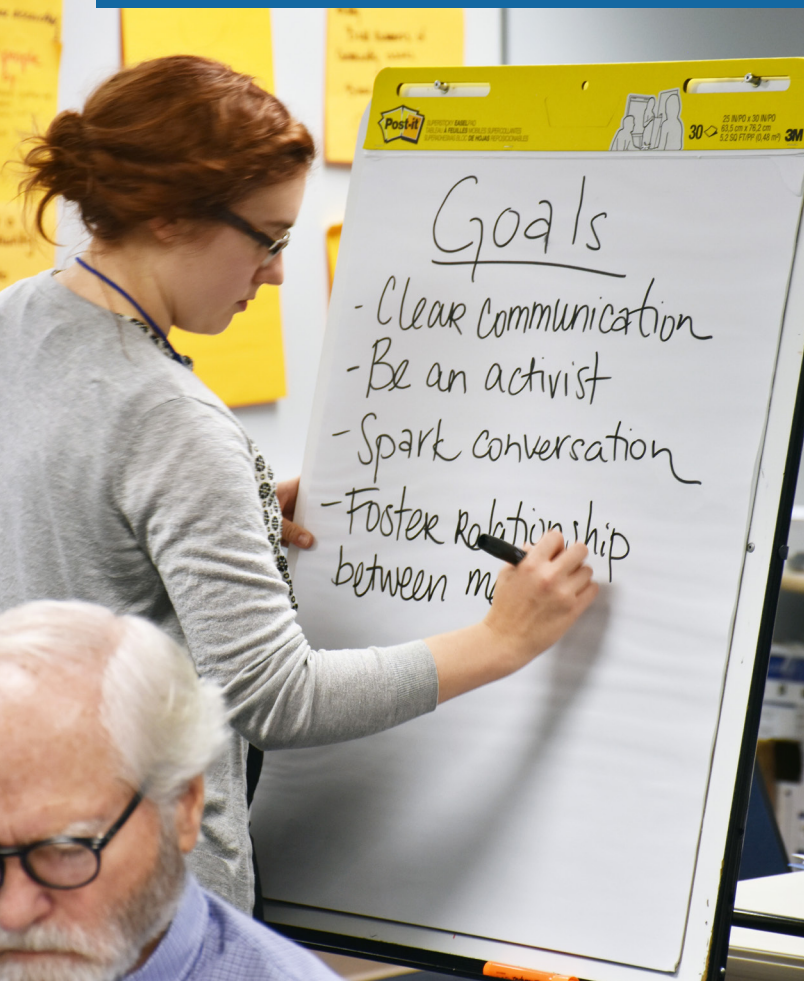
Our primary engagement process is the Citizens Jury, but we're continuously designing, testing, and exploring new methods of high quality, inclusive engagement.





Campaigns, Governance, & Media

We research, pioneer, and advocate for the most effective ways to make campaigns more responsive, local media more trustworthy, and our democracy more participatory.



Campaigns, Governance, & Media

Last year, we expanded the Your Voice Ohio media collaborative, which now includes 53 print, radio, and tv news outlets committed to responding to the needs and aspirations of all Ohioans. People statewide are facing big challenges, including the addiction crisis and a changing economy. To address these challenges, we're making it possible for journalists and the communities they serve to work together as partners to create a more vibrant Ohio. **In 2018, we...**

Committed to Community-Driven Journalism

If journalists want to create stories that reflect their community, it helps to sit down with their readers and hear directly about their experiences with addiction, job loss, recovery, and more. They had the chance to do this at over 29 community conversations on the opioid crisis and local vibrancy, where attendees could speak freely about their concerns, opinions, and needs from the local media.



Over the year, journalists in our collaborative sat down with over 700 people from different corners of the state, quickly uncovering underreported problems and overlooked solutions. After attending a local forum, reporter Jordyn Grzelewski, reflected: “We were really participants in the sessions, rather than observers. I think it let people know that we are part of the community too and we do care about this. We live in this time when people aren’t super trustful of journalists and it was a really good engagement thing to do to sit at tables with them.”

Identified Information Gaps

Our collaborative wanted to host conversations on opioids and addiction because coverage wasn’t resonating with audiences. Readers were growing overwhelmed by daily reports of overdose statistics and stories with no hope in sight, which was leading to disengagement, apathy, or in some cases, outright hostility towards journalists.

So at our community forums, we asked people: what questions and ideas about addiction do you want journalists to explore? This gave the collaborative a clear direction for stories and follow up right after the events, and they were able to respond to their reader’s information needs quickly. Katie Wedell, a reporter for the Dayton Daily News, commented, “We came out of those sessions with a big, long list of things people wanted us to write about... Some of it was things that I hadn’t even really thought of. Some people were still confused about what an opioid is... We forget sometimes that when we’ve covered something for so long that some people are new to the story and don’t know what we’re talking about.”

Strengthened Trust and Increased Understanding

Almost all journalists, public officials and the typical “experts” are college educated. Seventy-five percent of Ohioans are not, but we believe they should be recognized as experts in their own right. Their expectations and experiences are far different from decision-makers, and genuinely understanding and addressing those differences is key to rebuilding trust.

We saw journalists leave each event with a clearer understanding of the challenges faced by their community, plus a better idea on how to report on those challenges. On the other hand, community members left with a clearer understanding of the challenges faced by journalists and a renewed appreciation for journalism. Face-to-face meetings between journalists and community members rarely happen outside of reporting circumstances, and this gave both the opportunity to see each other as fellow community members with shared goals.

Delivered Solutions Stories

One of the biggest sentiments we heard again and again was that people were tired of hearing journalists chronicle how supposedly bad their lives are. Instead of this negativity, Ohioans wanted to know how they could face the challenges affecting their lives. After hearing this feedback, reporters included call-out boxes in their articles detailing relevant local resources. For instance, if a journalists did cover overdose data, they would also link to a story of someone in recovery, discuss local solutions addressing addiction in the community, and include contact information of local recovery centers.

Envisioned a Vibrant Ohio

Ohio's economy has experienced big shifts over the last 20 years, including changes in manufacturing, the gig economy, loss of farmland, declining household incomes, and more. We hosted a Citizens Jury in September, where twenty-three Ohio residents met in Columbus to learn about vibrant communities and local journalism. At the end of the event, they created recommendations to help Ohio media partners improve their reporting on local economies and community vibrancy in order to better serve communities across the state.

In 2019, we will continue to test, evaluate, and refine storytelling and engagement practices that rebuild local journalism, in turn strengthening our democracy.



If we want change, we have to invest in people and in our communities. Our shared challenges are not that daunting if we communicate openly, sharing our different ideas and viewpoints.

–Vibrant Communities Citizens Jury participant



Climate & Community Resilience

We empower rural communities to learn, plan, and act around local climate and energy issues.



Climate & Community Resilience

In 2018, we helped citizens explore the future of local energy in Stevens, Itasca, and Winona Counties, in Greater Minnesota. Although these communities are a primary source for energy production, residents tend to spend a higher percentage of their income on energy bills than their urban counterparts. The Rural Energy Dialogues seek to give communities the opportunity to shape the future of local energy, and create a system that is resilient, affordable, and reliable for all. **Last year, we...**

Made energy accessible

Energy isn't always the easiest concept to understand (or communicate), especially when it comes to things like "the grid" or "peak demand". That's why our community partners were excited to hold town meetings where local officials and the public had the opportunity to learn more about the local energy system works and make more informed energy decisions together.

To kick off each dialogue, we recruited a group of experts from local utilities, businesses, state agencies, and nonprofits. Participants gained a balanced understanding of how exactly energy works, where it comes from locally, and projections for the future, from this range of perspectives.

Built on local progress

Many local groups in these three counties were working on exciting energy projects before the dialogues: in Stevens County, community members were discussing a local district heating project. Groups in Itasca County were taking steps to install a community solar garden. A collaboration in Winona County helped give hundreds of low income residents free energy audits. At the dialogues, we wanted to explore how the broader public could be more involved in these projects.

Participants learned about local energy goals, action, and groups they could talk to learn more. Many were excited about the jobs and economic opportunities local energy and new technology could bring. Meanwhile, officials were excited the conversation was happening—getting people in the same room is the first, and often most difficult, step to creating sustainable community change.

Engaged students

Youth know the actions we take now on local energy, agriculture, and the climate will have long-lasting effects on the rest of their lives. That means they shouldn't be left out of community discussions on the future of energy. Our events welcomed participants of all ages, and we also hosted a mini-dialogue with students at Winona Senior High School to identify local energy challenges and opportunities. At the end, they let us know their questions about local energy, which we answered using Groundsource, a mobile platform that allowed us to text the answers.

In Stevens County, we also worked directly with the Office of Sustainability's student intern team to get students more involved in the community discussion and plan a follow up film screening exploring energy.

Created representative energy policy

Rural residents spoke directly with their public and utility officials about the future of energy, including how to make the system more reliable, affordable, environmentally-friendly, and supportive of local jobs and investment.

Next, they brainstormed concrete actions that could achieve those goals, and identified who could be involved in the next steps. At the end of the event, one attendee shared, "I'm not an expert, but I feel way more well-informed. I'm looking forward to staying in connection with people here, and having conversations with people outside this room."

In 2019, we'll continue to work with partners and community leaders to identify resources to bring community energy recommendations to life, as well as explore renewable energy siting in different communities across Greater Minnesota.



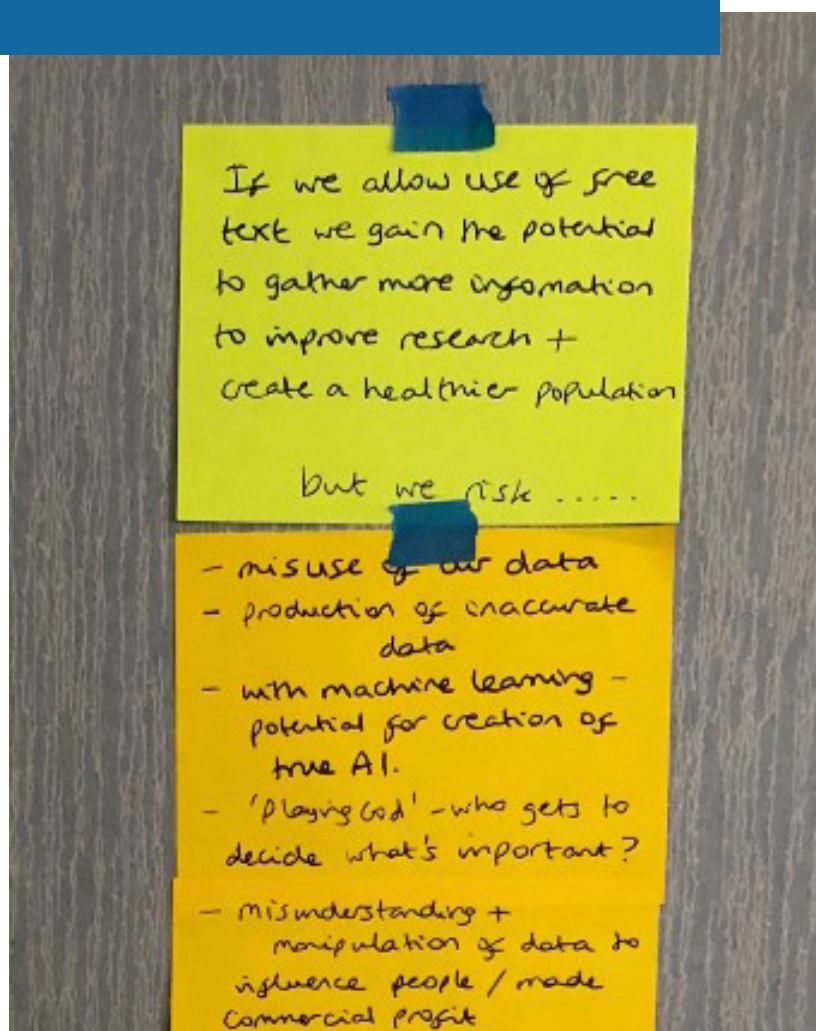
I'm not an expert, but I feel way more well-informed.

—Winona County Energy Dialogue Participant



Patient Engagement & Policy

We promote new opportunities for patient engagement in clinical settings and patient participation in healthcare policy.



Patient Engagement & Policy

We've been busy creating new ways for patients, providers, researchers, and advocacy groups to work together to improve the quality of care. **Last year, we...**

Established Data Sharing Guidelines

What's important to the public when it comes to sharing their confidential health information? Is the sharing of private health data acceptable in certain situations? We worked with the National Data Guardian and Connected Health Cities in the United Kingdom to conduct a Citizens Jury that would give Jurors the time and resources to think through these questions.

The Jurors were supportive of data sharing, with implied consent, for routine, direct care scenarios, such as a general practitioner sending your data to a hospital. They agreed that this kind of information sharing is acceptable, since this practice should benefit those receiving care.

Explored Uses for Free-text in Health Data

Patient medical notes often contain a lot of information, which could be used for health research. But in many cases, researchers are refused access to this text based on concerns about privacy breaches. We convened a Citizens Jury in Brighton, UK, to explore if handwritten doctor notes should be anonymized for research.

The results showed broad support for using handwritten health data for health-related research, as long as there was a transparent process for patients to easily opt out of their data being used in this way.



Determined the Location of a New Community Hospital

After the Gloucestershire Care Services National Health Service Trust in the United Kingdom voted to close two rural community hospitals, they needed a way to consult community members about where to build an updated centralized facility.

With our UK-based partner, Citizens Juries c.i.c., we conducted a Citizens Jury where Forest of Dean residents learned about more about local geography, demographics, equality concerns, population growth, and transportation, then recommended which of 3 towns should be the location for the new hospital. The Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group and Gloucestershire Care Services NHS Trust unanimously decided to back the jury's recommendation, and the hospital is expected to be built within 3-4 years.



We were hugely impressed by the way that the jury was facilitated and members were supported during a challenging week.

—Caroline Smith, NHS Gloucestershire CCG

Athens Democracy Forum

Building the Field

Just like you, people around the world are ready for more participatory, deliberative, representative, inclusive, and creative approaches to democracy. With your help, we brought the Citizens Jury process to Arizona, California, Canada, Colorado, Florida, Greece, South Korea, Tennessee, Texas, Washington DC, and the United Kingdom.

Bringing the Citizens Jury to Athens

On September 16-18, 2018, journalists, international business leaders, policy makers, students, and delegates from around the world attended The New York Times Athens Democracy Forum to explore opportunities for strengthening democracy. We adapted the Citizens Jury format to ask delegates the following question: “What new ideas, insights, or solutions do you have for strengthening or advancing democracy based on what you have learned at the Athens Democracy Forum?”

Charged with identifying contemporary and future challenges to democracy, columnists of The Times and members of its editorial board joined delegates in these workshops to collaboratively identify concrete actions that businesses, citizens, governments, and NGOs can take to strengthen democracy. Delegate recommendations informed the “Talk with The Times” session the next day, where senior Times journalists and editors assessed the findings and provided their own outlook on the state of democracy.

As Serge Schmemmann of the New York Times wrote about the forum and the workshops, “For six years now, The New York Times has joined with the City of Athens and the United Nations to co-host the Athens Democracy Forum, and during this time the issues have become more urgent, complex and necessary. At this year’s Forum in September, the challenge to liberal democracy posed by populist leaders riding a backlash against migrants, globalization and social change were gathering momentum in real time by social media.

This year’s Forum represented more than in previous years: It was also an attempt to draw participants into a discussion about what the response to these challenges can and should be.”



An Exploration in Revitalizing Democracy

In 2018 the Jefferson Center team embarked on a journey to explore how our work and Citizens Juries can produce national impact in the United States. A commitment from our founder and his family have allowed us to think bigger about how we can advance our mission, allowing us to investigate activities that will achieve our vision of citizens working together and contributing meaningfully to a stronger and healthier democracy.

We worked with Edelman, a global communications firm, to research and assess our potential for impact. Through our partnership they determined that “from the House floor to your neighbor’s house, discussions about what pressing issues our country must address have some similarities. The economy, national security, job creation, technology and civic engagement are consistently the focus of conversations between constituents, policymakers, media pundits and opinion leaders. What is lacking from these conversations are actionable bipartisan solutions that put citizens and communities first.

Across these issues, an opportunity exists for everyday Americans to come together to solve our nation’s most complex problems and provide fresh perspectives for our country’s leaders.”

With this message in mind, we consulted with experts in politics, policy, deliberative democracy, media, and philanthropy, to lay the groundwork for a national effort that might:

- Build national awareness of the Citizens Jury
- Engage the broader public with results/ recommendations of CJ participants through social media
- Demonstrate that citizens can work together to address an issue of national concern or relevance
- Appeal to and build support for investing in democracy among donors

In 2018, we generated leads and outreach opportunities for potential congressional allies, developed a better internal understanding of the legislative and policy environment that could be supplemented by Citizens Juries, and met with many potential partners, allies, and funders. This year, we’ll determine our next steps for bringing the Citizens Jury to the national stage. As we move forward, we will continue to inform our supporters and partners about our efforts for nationwide impact through our newsletter, blog posts, and social media.



An opportunity exists for everyday Americans to come together to solve our nation’s most complex problems and provide fresh perspectives for our country’s leaders.

—Edelman



What We've Learned

Over the course of 2018, we tackled a range of projects in a diverse set of communities. Here are a few ideas we're taking with us into 2019 and beyond:

Creating deeper, sustainable changes may come (initially) from outside government

There's a lot of focus in the democracy field on getting governments to understand the value of Citizens Juries. We agree democracies around the world would benefit from embedded deliberation, but it's key to consider challenges that can arise, such as:

- Bureaucracy may limit transformative change. When Citizen Jurors create a recommendation, there usually remains a long process for the sponsor government to implement or otherwise act upon that recommendation. Both delays in acting upon or outright rejecting a Jury's recommendation, without clear rationale, damage trust in the deliberative process and hurt relationships between participants, stakeholders, and project sponsors who dedicated their time, resources, and energy to the process.
- When working with a government, deliberation practitioners often have to assume the historical baggage in the relationships between government and its constituents. The Citizens Jury organizers and the process itself may face backlash or deep skepticism – even though the real source of this conflict is rooted in historical challenges between governments and communities. While Juries and other deliberative engagement methods can help governments address embedded community conflicts, they can't magically or immediately resolve long-standing tensions, and practitioners should be prepared to confront and navigate this reality.

Framing Matters

Over the course of 2018, our local newsroom collaborative Your Voice Ohio embarked on a mission to talk to communities around the state about how they're experiencing the opioid crisis and local job loss, poverty, and other economic issues. The first set of conversations on addiction and opioids drew large crowds to each event, with the spaces often at full capacity. But in the latter half of the year, when we hosted conversations on "local vibrancy," we faced a lower turn out. Regardless, the stories and ideas that came out of these vibrancy conversations drew attention, as people wanted to know how to confront job loss, get better healthcare, and make education more accessible.

Moving forward, instead of using a broad frame such as "Community Conversations on Local Vibrancy," which we thought would capture a wide swath of the population, we'll ask newsrooms to focus more specifically on problems that are unique to their community, such as a recent plant closure, a new school, or lack of public parks, so it's easier and more manageable for participants to think about the topic in the context of their daily lives.

What We've Learned

We should create, support, and *transition* community partnerships

In Marietta, Parkersburg, and Belpre, Ohio, we worked with local journalists to host community conversations about how residents were experiencing addiction. We also worked with community partners including What's Next MOV, Sisters Health Foundation, and Community Recovery Center to get out the word to community members on the ground. While we had previously used social media, newspaper ads, and radio spots to advertise different community meetings, in this region, collaboration with these local groups was key to get people talking about the event, sharing with their neighbors, and hanging up posters in community spaces.

Meanwhile, in other communities where we've had established partnerships for a few years, we're working with organizations and institutions to build interest in, and capacity for, ongoing community engagement.

- Jefferson Center staff worked with the Winona County group, Sustain Winona, to embed community engagement within water and energy conservation pilot projects.

- We partnered with the Grand Rapids Public Utility, a Minnesota municipal utility, to hold a participatory public meeting during Public Power Week. The public had the chance to learn more about a proposed community solar garden and provide their feedback.
- In Summit County in Northeast Ohio, our news partners are now leading their own collaborative community engagement efforts after seeing them work successfully as a result of Your Voice Ohio activities in 2017 and 2018. WKSU Public Radio has implemented the "Hearken" model to invite questions from their audience and report on the answer with the question-asker. Meanwhile, the Akron Beacon Journal, the Akron Devil Strip, and WKSU are convening a new round of community conversations to engage Akron residents around election issues and a vision for the future of the city.

As our programs grow, we will continue to support transformative community change by equipping partners with the knowledge and experience necessary to incorporate engagement into their regular practices.





Team

In 2018, we were thrilled to welcome a new board member, Kathleen Yang-Clayton. Dr. Yang-Clayton is a clinical professor at the Department of Public Administration, College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois-Chicago, where she also serves as the director of Undergraduate Studies and Civic Partnerships for the Department. She reflected: “Bridging divides and embracing a shared vision of inclusion, equity and democracy drives me to serve on this board.”

We are grateful for author and foundation consultant Judy Healey’s invaluable contributions to the Jefferson Center board. Judy retired in 2018, after almost 25 years of offering her wisdom, knowledge, and expertise to help create the organization we are today.

We were also excited to announce our research analyst intern, Katherine Sims, joined our team as a full-time Program & Research Associate. Katherine, who believes “dialogue is at the heart of democracy and good governance,” supports program development and implementation, and conducts outreach and research.

Staff

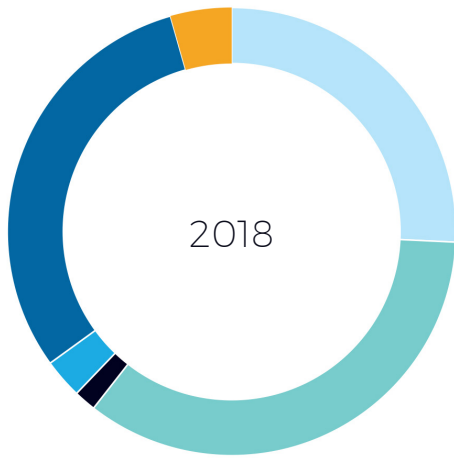
Kyle Bozentko, Executive Director
Larry Pennings, Associate Director
Andrew Rockway, Program Director
Camille Morse Nicholson, Program Manager
Katherine Sims, Program & Research Associate
Dawn Dettinger, Project Administrator
Annie Pottorff, Communications Coordinator
Doug Oplinger, Your Voice Ohio Project Manager

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Mark Ritchie, Former Minnesota Secretary of State
Kathleen Yang-Clayton, Clinical professor and director of Undergraduate Studies and Civic Partnerships, University of Illinois-Chicago



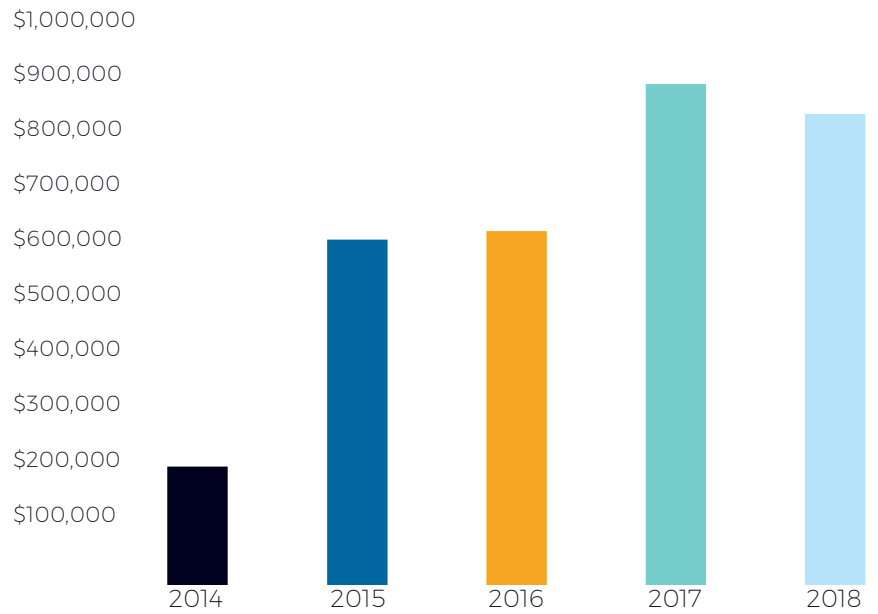
Finances



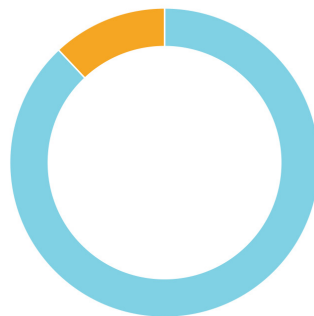
Total Revenue = \$866,218

- FOUNDER CONTRIBUTIONS
- FOUNDER SPECIAL PROJECT
- INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS
- GRANTS
- PROGRAM REVENUE
- OTHER

Revenue 2014-2018



Expense Allocation



- PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT & DELIVERY
- ADMINISTRATION



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