Citizens Juries

Citizens Juries convene panels of everyday people, who are randomly selected and representative, to help elected officials tackle tough policy questions.

Following a highly structured process, each panel conducts research, interviews experts and staff, deliberates on policy alternatives, and recommends a course of action to decision-makers. Because the panel is a microcosm of the public – in terms of age, ethnicity, political party, gender, and other factors – its resulting report comes with an inherent legitimacy that sets it apart from conventional citizen committees.

Local governments in Canada, Australia, and across Europe regularly employ Citizens Juries as public decision-making tools. In the US, Healthy Democracy uses a specialized, research-tested Citizens Jury, called the Citizens' Initiative Review, to provide voters with trustworthy information about ballot measures. Oregon enshrined the CIR in law in 2011 and publishes CIR statements in the state's voters' pamphlet.
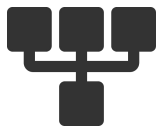
The Citizens Jury Process

1. Hear Evidence
Panelists question a wide variety of experts, evaluate facts & identify the most salient info.

2. Deliberate
Panelists define decision-making criteria & compile all potential recommendations.

3. Prioritize
Panelists review evidence, apply criteria to potential recommendations & rank alternatives.

4. Write & Refine
Panelists narrow alternatives, clarify rationales, add dissenting opinions & make final edits.

Local Pilot Projects

Healthy Democracy is inviting local governments in Oregon to pilot Citizens Juries in 2019-2020. We will provide comprehensive process design and project management, including public outreach, professional facilitation, event logistics, and assistance with grant writing to fund the project.

Successful pilot sites will have a well-defined but politically complex policy question, staff members who are available to collaborate on issue framing and logistics, and elected officials who are committed to seriously considering the panel's results.