



Overview

In Spring of 2024, Deschutes County, The City of Bend, and the Central Oregon Youth Action Board partnered with the Central Oregon Civic Action Project, Healthy Democracy, and DemocracyNext to facilitate a [Civic Assembly](#) that engages the community in discussions about the issue of youth homelessness in Central Oregon. The [Deschutes Civic Assembly on Youth Homelessness](#) is reflective of Deschutes County's many diversities and brings new voices into the conversation. Assembly delegates will meet between September and October to gather information and collaboratively write recommendations that will be considered by local governments and other stakeholders.

*This is the second weekend of the Deschutes Civic Assembly. During the first weekend, Delegates were in the 'Information Gathering' stage and learned about the topic of youth homelessness in Deschutes County through a series of presentations, workshops, and resource documents provided by local stakeholders. Afterwards, Delegates submitted requests for specific information, presenters, and representation that they felt was missing from the first weekend - **that's where you come in!***

Panelist Role

Panelists provide Delegates with a wide range of information about the topic of youth homelessness. Delegates will spend about a third of their 30+ total hours gathering information – staying open-minded to new perspectives, before generating recommendations. Delegates rely on panelists like you to provide the information they will need to consider in answering the following question: **“What should our priorities be for building community solutions to prevent and end youth homelessness?”**

Panel Structure

You will present in a 45-minute “block” on October 4th or 5th. We ask you to arrive 30 minutes early just in case there are changes to the schedule. There is no need to prepare a presentation, hand-outs, or other materials.

You and your fellow panelists will have the opportunity to briefly introduce yourself at the beginning of the panel. After each panelist has introduced themselves, a staff member from Healthy Democracy will moderate a Q&A between the panel and the members of the Assembly. You may share whatever information you feel is relevant in your introduction. If it is helpful, below are a few talking points to cover in an introduction that have shown to elicit good questions:

- Who you are



- Your experience with the topic (if any - it's okay if you don't have any! The Delegates are also interested in learning about different sectors, their scope, the services they offer, and how they might intersect with the topic.)
- What you would most like to be asked
- One/two things you think are most important to share

Panel Descriptions

Below is a description of each panel as well as examples of the questions Delegates may ask. This isn't comprehensive - interest in different topics and new questions will arise the more the Delegates learn from you. You will be part of one of the following panels:

Governance Panel | October 4th, 2024 9:30-10:15 am

The Governance Panel consists of representatives from government bodies. Topics that the Delegates are curious about include public transportation, funding for public programs, and preventative efforts to address homelessness. You might expect questions along the lines of:

- What kind of public funding is available to address homelessness and how is it used? What are the key policies and programs currently in-place – and what has worked and what hasn't?
- Transportation has been identified as a barrier for people experiencing homelessness in terms of their ability to access resources, jobs, school, etc. Is there more that can be done to provide safe, consistent transportation?
- What can your organization do to increase awareness of community needs? What barriers might you face?

Services Panel | October 4th, 2024 10:45-11:45 am

The Services Panel is made up of local organizations, primarily nonprofits, who provide services to the community. Topics that the Delegates requested to learn about include low-income housing, how homeless youth can access resources, and local partnerships. You might expect questions along the lines of:

- What incentives exist to build low-income housing?
- What services do you offer to support homeless youth?
- What services are available to prevent at-risk families from experiencing homelessness?

Community Reflections Panel | October 5th, 2024 9:15-10:00 am

The Community Reflections Panel consists of individuals who experience specific identities or are part of a group that is often underrepresented in Deschutes County. This includes—but isn't limited to—culturally-specific organizations, people with a physical or mental disability, and members of the LGBTQ+ community. Instead of (or in addition to) your professional expertise, Delegates are interested in unique challenges faced by you/your community, a diverse set of perspectives on the issue of youth homelessness, and specific needs that you/your community might have. You might expect questions along the lines of:



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- What are the unique experiences, if any, you/your community face around housing and homelessness?
 - Do local services need to be adapted in any way to better serve your community?
 - What risk or protective factors might people in your community experience?

Panel Guidelines

Assembly processes are meticulously designed to be accessible, inclusive, and collaborative. Following these guidelines will help ensure Delegates get the most out of the information you share with them:

- **Speak to everyone.** As much as possible, please try to avoid technical language, jargon, or acronyms. You will be speaking to Delegates aged 16-85, with a wide variety of educational backgrounds and life experiences. Consider which key concepts you'd most like to emphasize, and please keep your comments brief, so that others in your group can jump in and/or ask questions.
- **Come with a collaborative attitude.** Delegates will be eager to hear what you have to say. They will have been asked to suspend judgment for the entire information gathering phase of the process, so that they can consider all perspectives on this topic. In our experience, Assemblies tend to react poorly to overly inflammatory or divisive messaging, preferring guests who seek to share their knowledge and experience to assist the Assembly's efforts.
- **Stick to content.** Please keep your comments directed towards the topic at hand, not toward other topics, long anecdotes, or specific individuals. Delegates are looking to you to learn about this topic and will appreciate information that aids them in moving forward in their work.
- **Use respectful language.** Do not use language that disrespects anyone's religion, culture, racial identity, appearance, gender, sexual orientation, etc. Those who speak and act respectfully toward the Assembly are most likely to receive a positive reception to the information they present. Assembly members, staff, and visitors will all be expected to abide by a set of Discussion Agreements that the Assembly will approve on Day 1. These will be visible in the room at the event.

Logistics

The Assembly sessions will be held on the Oregon State University-Cascades campus in the Charles McGrath Atrium (Edward J. Ray Hall). Please check in at the sign-in table with a member of the Project Team about 30 minutes prior to your scheduled start time.

Edward J. Ray Hall, Atrium
Oregon State University-Cascades
1500 SW Chandler Ave
Bend, OR 97702



Panelist stipends are available upon request, and are intended especially for those contributing their time on a volunteer basis.

Questions

If you have any questions, please contact Josh Burgess (josh@edgeeffectgroup.com) or Lauren Babcock (lauren@healthydemocracy.org) by email or phone (503-841-6865). You may also have the opportunity to discuss this information and any other questions you have during a phone call with Josh and/or Lauren, if you would find it helpful to have a more in-depth conversation (we're happy to chat - send us an email and we'll set something up).

Observing the Assembly

The Assembly is open to the public, and the plenary (large group) portion of the Assembly will be livestreamed on YouTube. If you would like to view presentations from the first weekend, you can watch them on Healthy Democracy's YouTube Channel. If you would like to observe the Assembly October 4-6, please feel free to join us or watch the live stream.