

Youth Needs Assessment Self Guided Tour

A Facilitator Guide for Youth Service Providers



Civic
Engagement
Commission



Coro

NEW YORK
LEADERSHIP
CENTER

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is for youth service providers, teachers, or anyone who would like to run their own needs discussion with a group of young people to contribute towards the Civic Engagement Commission's 'It's Our Money' initiative, the first city-wide youth Participatory Budgeting (PB) process.

This guide was developed by Coro New York Leadership Center's PB Youth Fellowship team and shares the script that youth fellows designed to run a needs gathering and idea collection session with youth across New York

City. Coro worked with the PB Youth Fellows to design and test youth-led solutions to the equity problems that emerge when outreach is only possible through virtual channels.

The PB Youth Fellows re-imagined what in person PB idea collection assemblies could look like virtually, tested it by running sessions with youth across the city, and it is now publicly available for anyone to run their own session.



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide helps you run your own virtual session to uncover what youth in New York City need.

The guide begins with a visual overview of the steps to take before (set-up), during (facilitation), and after (notes & [incentive request submission](#)), as well as materials you will need to run your session. It is followed by the facilitator guide to use during the session (pgs 4-12). The facilitator

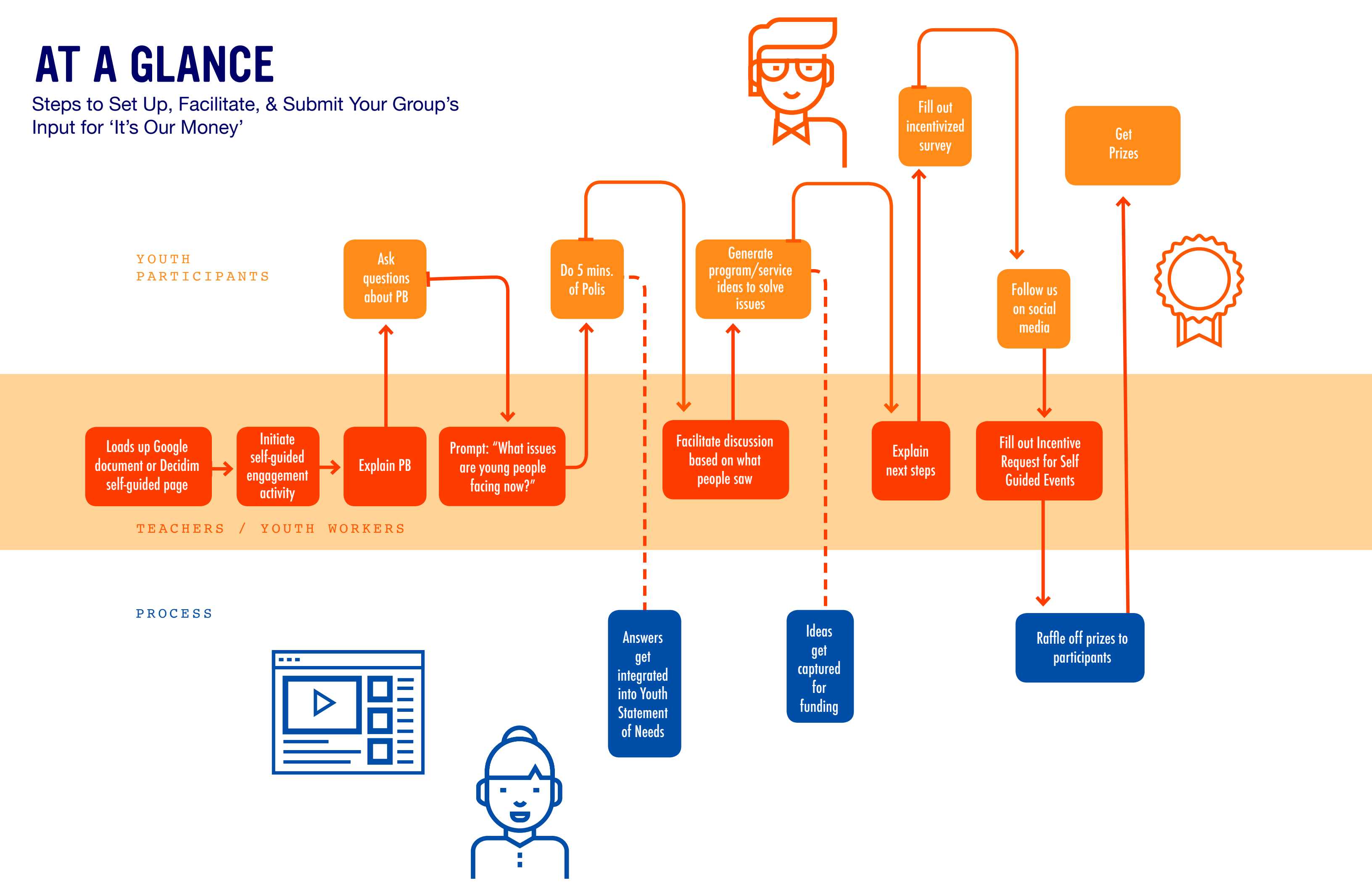
guide provides the script and helpful context to facilitate each section of the needs gathering and idea collection session to go along with the Google slides presentation you will use.

After reading the facilitator guide you can simply use the Google slides presentation, or you can have both open on separate tabs. For an overview of 'It's Our Money,' make sure to read the ['It's Our Money' Info-sheet](#).

Thank you for helping the young people you know contribute towards and be represented in New York City's first city-wide youth PB process! For more information or if you have further questions, please contact participate@civicengagement.nyc.gov.

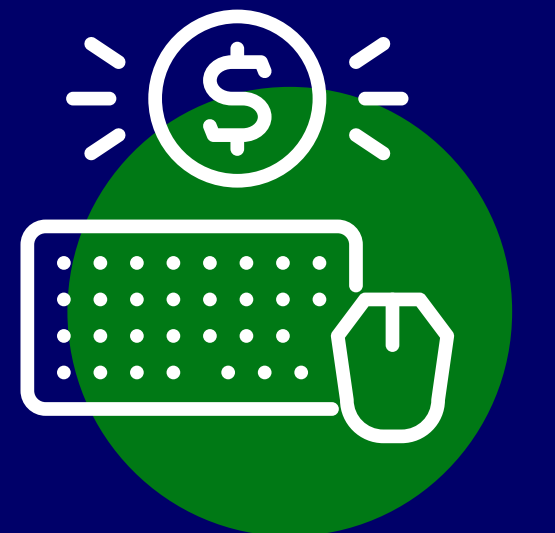
AT A GLANCE

Steps to Set Up, Facilitate, & Submit Your Group's Input for 'It's Our Money'



MATERIALS GUIDE

1. [It's Our Money Info-sheet](#): This 1 pager provides an overview of 'It's Our Money.' It explains the timeline & process. We recommend reading it before the session to help you answer any questions during the session. You can also share this 1 pager with your network to encourage others to run their own session.
2. [Google Slides Presentation](#): Use this presentation with your group to help explain the contents of this facilitator guide. Basic prompts and cues are listed in the notes section of the presentation. We recommend having the facilitator guide open in a separate tab for the presentation.
3. [Polis Link](#): We use Polis to help us start the conversation about what young people need in New York City. Polis works by creating a conversation that participants engage with by adding their opinions and voting on the opinions of others. Your group will see the statements that other young people who have participated in 'It's Our Money' have made, and will be able to agree or disagree and add their own statements. At the end of the process, we'll have visual data about correlations between opinions and participants, and areas of consensus or disagreement. To read more about Polis visit the [Polis site](#).
4. [Link to idea submission form](#)
5. [Participant survey](#): Instruct participants to fill out the participant survey at the end of the session. Survey results are anonymous, and will help the Civic Engagement Commission know who is participating and who is being left out to inform its outreach.
6. [Incentive Request Form](#): You'll fill out this form to request incentives we have available for the first few participants who show up to your session. You'll also submit ideas collected during your session and any additional notes. We'll use this form to collect information about the engagement, such as the number of participants who attended, and their age group.
7. [Helpful Resources About PB](#): Visit the Participatory Budgeting Project's resources section if you would like to read more about Participatory Budgeting.



WELCOME + INTRO

7 MIN

Goal

Break the ice, introduce participants to each other (if they don't know each other), & set a fun tone for the session.

Materials

[Google Slides Presentation](#)

Set-up

- Feel free to play music while you wait for people to come in.
- Remind participants to name themselves on zoom.
- If participants don't know each other, invite participants to include their pronouns in their name on the platform you are using.
- Remind people to mute themselves when they're not speaking.

Instructions

Icebreaker: If the group is small enough, the icebreaker question can be taken up in conversation. Alternatively, if the group is large, you may want to invite them to type this in the chat.

Ask:

What borough do you live in and what is the last thing you ate?



SPECTRUM EXERCISE

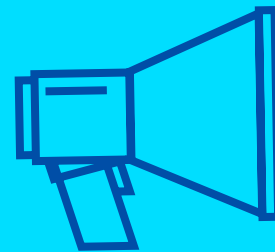
10 MIN

Goal

Prime the group to understand PB as a powerful tool for residents of all ages to become engaged in local government, budgeting, & decision-making (before introducing what PB is).

Materials

[Google Slides Presentation \(slides 2-3\)](#)



Instructions

Activity Framing (Slide 2)

Say:

- We're going to do something called a "Spectrum Exercise"
- I'm going to read a series of statements.
 - *If that statement applies to you, or you agree with the statement, give a thumbs up into the camera.*
 - *If you don't agree with this statement, you can give a thumbs down. If you're not sure, you can give a shrug.*
- For folks not on camera, use the reactions: thumbs up if you agree; clap if you disagree.

Say (from statements in slide 3):

- I took a shower today
- I have an instagram account
- I have two instagram accounts
- I know who the Mayor of New York City is
- Feel free to ask who it is
- I can name my City Council Member
- Feel free to ask who it is
- I feel like I'm influential in my communities
- I think all neighborhoods were affected equally during COVID
- I know the difference between "equity" and "equality"
- I think young people should have more power in government



Probing questions

(to ask as you see fit after people respond to different statements)

- What made you agree with this statement?
- What made you disagree with this statement?
- Tell me more...

Closing

"I'm so happy to see many of you with your thumbs up for that last statement. We KNOW young people need more say in government, which is why we're doing what we're doing today."

SHORT VS. LONGER SESSION OPTIONS

If you prefer to run a shorter session, do the “Intro to Project” section and skip the “Intro to PB” section.

If you have the time to explain the participatory budgeting, skip the “Intro to Project” section and do the “Intro to PB” section.



INTRO TO PROJECT

**5 MIN**

Civic Engagement Commission Youth Led Process (Called ‘It’s Our Money’)

- **Youth led:** Young people have largely designed this process
 - Coro New York Leadership Center’s Participatory Budgeting Youth Fellows have led and designed the activities you will be participating in today. Those young people have now shared the activity they designed so that more youth programs and schools across the city can participate and lead the activity themselves.
- **Youth focused:** This process is focused on the needs of young people; the money available is for youth between the ages of 9 and 24.
- \$100,000 available.
- Money can be used to help run programs, provide services, and buy goods; but these projects must be done quickly, because we need to spend all of the money by June!
 - Examples: an activity such as a workshop or awareness campaign, or equipment such as laptops.

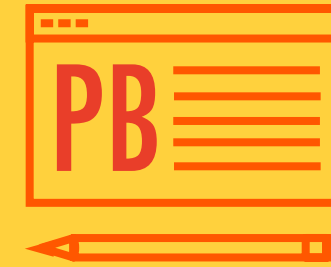
About the Civic Engagement Commission (CEC) (Slide 6)

- ‘It’s Our Money’ is led by the Civic Engagement Commission, which was established by New York City voters in 2018. Their mandate is to enhance civic participation, promote civic trust, and strengthen democracy in NYC. This PB process is ONE of the Civic Engagement Commission’s projects.

What does this mean for you?

- As a result of Covid-19, many youth programs have disappeared due to budget cuts across the city, and many of those cuts were made in areas that affect youth, yet these decisions were made without youth input.
- The CEC believes youth have a unique perspective that is not typically sought out. These insights are valuable contributions towards making New York City a better place to live.
 - That’s why the Civic Engagement Commission is excited to hear your insights on what you think young people in New York City need right now.

INTRO TO PB



15 MIN

Goal

Introduce participants to PB, learn about the PB context in New York City, and understand how to participate.

You should have everything you need in this facilitator guide to explain PB, and should not need to do additional research; if you would like to make sure you understand this process, read the [‘It’s Our Money’ Info-sheet](#). If you would like to use this session to invite young people to learn more about how PB has been implemented in NYC and in other cities around the world as a way of giving people power over public budgets, check out the helpful context links, and [What is PB?](#) link in particular.

Materials

- [Google Slides Presentation \(Slides 4-9\)](#)

Helpful Context

- [To learn more about PBNYC](#)
- [To learn more about the Civic Engagement Commission \(CEC\)](#)
- [It’s Our Money Info-sheet \(To learn more about this process\)](#)
- [What is PB?](#)
- [NYC Budget Basics](#)

Instructions:

Ask: “How many people have heard of PB?”

1. What is PB? (Slide 4)

- Participatory Budgeting, or PB as it is commonly called, is a democratic process in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget.
- PB exists in many places in the world- it’s origins are traced to Porto Alegre, Brazil in 1989 where the process was started to encourage participation in government & redirect resources towards low-income communities.
- Usually takes place in several stages:
 - Idea collection: collect project ideas from residents.
 - Proposal development: research ideas and develop them further to put them in the ballot for a vote.
 - Vote: community members vote on which projects they think should get funded.



2. PB in New York City (Slide 4)

City Council Process (Called PBNYC)

- **History**
 - PB came to NYC in 2011 when 4 Council Members decided to try out the process.
 - Since then, over 33 City Council districts have invited their residents to decide how to spend at least \$40 million in public funds.
- **How it works**
 - \$ Amount for residents to allocate: The 33 participating districts set aside some money out of their budget, usually 1-2 million dollars, to run this process. Last year, amongst all 33 districts, there was a total budget of \$42 million dollars.
 - Voting age & other requirements: PBNYC's voting age is 11 years old and there are no identification documents required.
 - This process is currently on pause because of Covid-19.

Budget: PBNYC's Capital Budget Vs the Civic Engagement Commission's Expense Funding (Slide 4)

- **Budget**
 - **PBNYC's Capital Budget**
 - City Council members are required to put up at least \$1 million of their own discretionary money in order to participate- some put a little more and some put up a little bit of expense funding, which allows for more flexibility and does not require a minimum project value. Some expense projects can be funded quickly, while capital projects often take five years or more from start to finish.
 - Capital funding is what is used to fund the vast majority of projects in PBNYC but there are specific requirements for what it can be used for - think brick & mortar projects, or physical structures such as school or park improvements (basketball court repairs). It can also be used for equipment such as computers but it has to be at least a minimum project value of \$35,000 and be useful for at least five years. For more information regarding city funding and eligibility requirements, click [here](#).

Civic Engagement Commission Process (Called 'It's Our Money')

- **Differences between 'It's Our Money' and PBNYC**
 - The PB process that we're participating in today is different from PBNYC because it is a youth led and youth-focused process.
 - **Youth led:** Young people have largely designed this process.

Coro New York Leadership Center's Participatory Budgeting Youth Fellows have led and designed the activities you will be participating in today. Those young people have now shared the activity they designed so that more youth programs and schools across the city can participate and lead the activity themselves.
 - **Youth focused:** This process is focused on the needs of young people; the money available is for youth between the ages of 9 and 24.
 - **City Wide process:** unlike PBNYC districts don't have to opt in- it's city-wide.
 - \$100,000 available.
 - Money can be used for programs, services, and goods, as opposed to large, long-term investments in physical infrastructure (as is the case in PNYC).
 - Examples: an activity such as a workshop or awareness campaign, or equipment such as laptops.

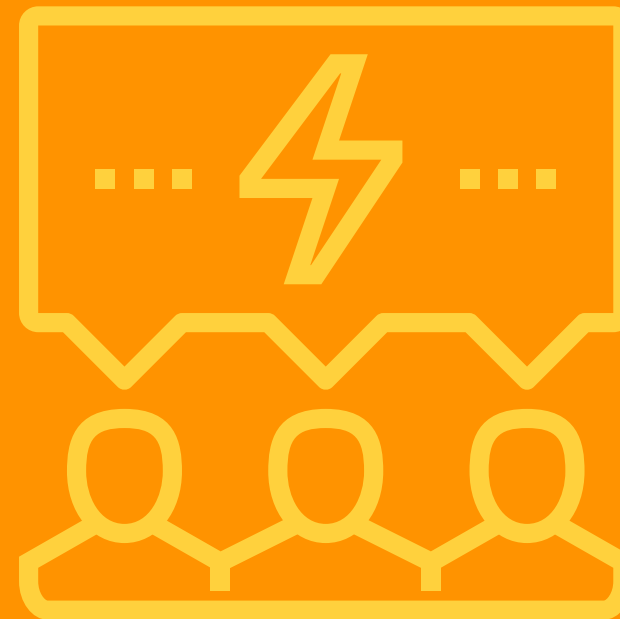
INTRO TO PB



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What does this mean for you?



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 - That's why the Civic Engagement Commission is excited to hear your insights on what you think young people in New York City need right now.

Q & A

5 MIN

Goal

Clarify lingering questions about what was covered in the presentation up to this point.

Note: You are not meant to be an expert on PB to facilitate this discussion. If participants ask specific PB questions you don't know the answer to, that's ok- you can explain PB is new to you too.

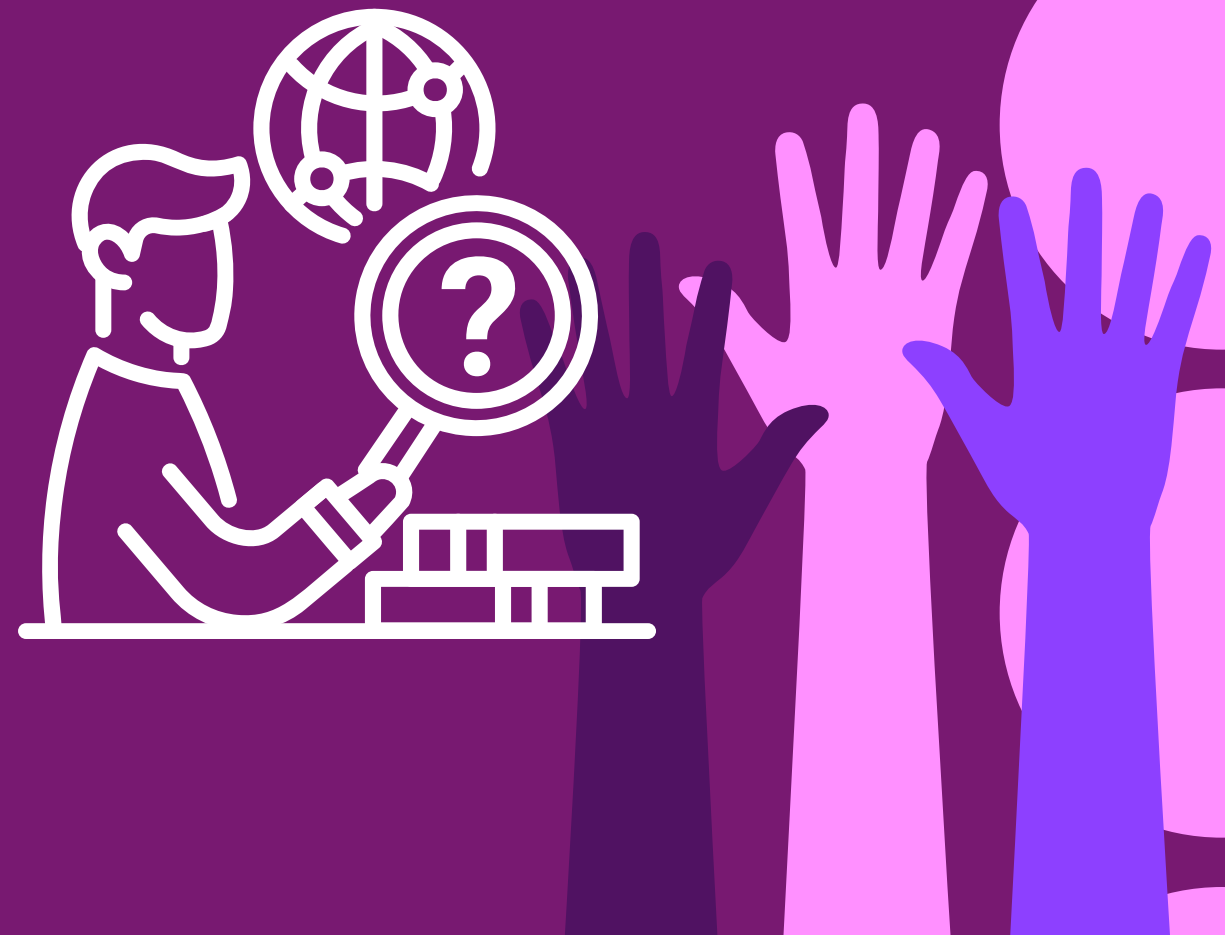
Doing background reading is not required to lead this discussion; however, If you would like to read up on PB before facilitating the discussion, you can visit the Helpful Resources about PB link in the Helpful Context Section below. You can also refer them to the helpful links (below), or make it a challenge (after the session) where participants look up the answer.

Materials

- [Google Slides Presentation \(Slide 10\)](#)
- [Helpful Resources About PB](#)

Instructions:

- We're going to jump into the PB activity in a minute, but first wanted to make space for any questions you have about what we've talked about so far?
- Do you have any questions about why this process might be relevant to you?



FRAMING QUESTIONS

25 MIN

Goal

Identify what young people in New York City need right now, as well as ideas to help meet these needs.

This is the most important part of the session, as the insights gathered from this discussion will be reflected in the youth statement of needs that local organizations will use to propose goods, programs and services. The issue identification begins through a series of prompts on the Polis platform, and is followed by a facilitated discussion aimed at understanding what young people need in more detail, why they have those needs, and what ideas would help meet these needs.

Note: You can take notes on the specific ideas young people propose and submit them through the Idea Submission Form.

Materials

- [Google Slides Presentation \(Slides 11-14\)](#)
- [Polis Link](#)
- [Idea Submission Form](#)

Set-up

- Put Polis link in the chat in case the presentation QR code in the Google Slides presentation doesn't work.
- On a separate tab, load the Idea Submission Form to submit the group's ideas for 'It's Our Money' (expense/programs/service) ideas.

Instructions (Part 1)

Needs Gathering: Polis Prompts (Slide 11)

- **Explain Polis**
- **Say:** *Now we're getting to the important part.*
 - There's a QR code on this slide (in the presentation)
 - If you have a phone you can take it, go to your camera app as if you're going to take a picture and hover your computer or tablet screen with your phone. You should get a prompt to tap to go to the Polis website.
 - Give me a thumbs up when you're on the website.
 - If the QR code doesn't work for you, you can use the link I posted on the chat.
 - We're using this platform called Polis to get an idea of young people's needs and priorities in New York City right now.

FRAMING QUESTIONS



We're going to start by answering the question: **What issues are young people facing right now?**

- What you're going to see are a series of statements that other young people have made in New York City.
- Please do two things: vote on other people's statements & submit your own statements (by clicking "submit your own statement" at the bottom).

Do: Give participants 5 minutes to use Polis.

Needs Gathering: In-depth discussion ('It's Our Money' Ideas)

Ask:

- Were there any statements that stood out to you?
 - [Ask probing questions about their answers; ex: why did that resonate with you right now?]
- How does that affect young people?
- How does that affect you personally?
- Do you find you're hearing the same types of issues from your friends?

Ask:

For each issue that comes up:

- **Ask:** How can we use \$100k to help with this issue?

Say: Ideas for goods, programs and services can look like:

- Hosting trainings/workshops.
- Having events
- Other

Ask: the following probing questions:

- How can this help?
- Who would this be used for?
- Where would this happen?
- Why is this important?

CLOSING

5 MIN

Goal

Inform participants about the next steps in the process so they understand how to plug in.

Materials

- [Google Slides Presentation \(Slides 15-17\)](#)
- [Incentive Request Form](#)
- [Participant Survey](#)

What next?

Say:

- Thanks everyone for contributing your valuable thoughts about what young people in NYC need right now.
- The Civic Engagement Commission will compile all of the needs and ideas that the young people across the city submitted. These needs and ideas will be compiled into a statement of needs and will be published on the Decidim website (the Civic Engagement Commission's new civic engagement platform that was designed by youth!)

- In November, nonprofits will be invited to suggest proposals for goods & programs that help meet these needs.
- Starting in November, you'll be able to join the rest of the young people in the city in providing live feedback on proposals submitted through the Decidim platform.
- You'll also be able to vote in January!
- We have incentives for the first (you will need to reach out to Participate@civicengagement.nyc.gov to confirm availability of incentives - the first organizations to participate and submit the form will receive gift cards).
- Fill out the participant survey right now! This will help the Civic Engagement Commission understand who is participating and point them to the areas of the city they need to be focussing their outreach.
- To stay up to date on the process and see opportunities for young people to earn money, follow [teen_york_city](#) on instagram.

Do:

Fill out the incentive request form including any ideas or notes you took from the session.