

## Basic standards for organizing citizens' assemblies

Found online at [citizensassemblies.org](http://citizensassemblies.org)

1. Clear purpose – the task for the citizens' assembly is clearly outlined, there is a call for solutions with regards to the matter of public importance.
2. Random selection of participants – all members of a citizens' assembly are selected by lot. Random selection is carried out in two stages: the first is inviting randomly selected citizens to participate, and the second is selecting at random the final group of assembly members, including alternates.
3. Inclusiveness – every member of the population eligible to take part in a citizens' assembly is potentially able to receive an invitation to participate. Some exemptions to become an assembly member may apply in order to ensure credibility of the process.
4. Demographically representative composition of the assembly – the composition of a citizens' assembly broadly matches the demographic profile of the community participating in the process. A set of criteria is used to ensure demographic representativeness of the group, like age, gender, geographic area, or others. The aim is to create the miniature of a given community. The size of the group allows for inclusion of a wide variety of views.
5. Accessibility – When creating the timetable, care is taken to ensure that the dates and hours of the meetings are suitable to the largest number of people. People with disabilities are provided with support. If needed, in-person meetings include childcare services. Expert presentations are given in the language that is easy to understand. A stipend is provided to all assembly members.
6. Clear rules of the game – all principles and procedures related to carrying out the assembly are laid out clearly and made available for the public.
7. Independent coordination – the citizens' assembly is run by an independent team of coordinators, which is responsible for preparing the process of random selection, developing the agenda, inviting experts and facilitators, etc. If the citizens' assembly is organized by local authorities or the parliament, it is important that members of the civil service are not part of the coordinating team. The coordinators should be impartial, for example, not active politicians or direct stakeholders.
8. Independent oversight – a method of monitoring the process's compliance with the standards, principles and procedures is provided. The mechanism is independent of the coordinating team and serves to correct the course of the assembly, in case, for example, the coordinators take steps that are not in accordance with the standards.
9. Skills training phase – introduction for assembly members is provided to allow them to get acquainted with their role and to practice skills that are useful for taking part in the assembly.
10. Learning phase – the process starts with a learning phase that allows assembly members to understand the topic thoroughly and to formulate well-thought-out recommendations.
11. Freedom of expression – all assembly participants are free to express their views and opinions, as long as it is respectful of others.
12. Inclusion of a widest practical range of perspectives – ideally, all of the perspectives and solutions on a topic are presented during the learning phase of the citizens' assembly. A method of combining perspectives due to a limited time or other practical considerations may be applied.

13. Openness – all members of a community are able to provide input to the citizens’ assembly in the form of comments, proposals or suggestions.
14. Inviting all stakeholders – any organization, informal group or an institution whose area of work and expertise is related to the topic of the citizens’ assembly has the right to present its opinion to the citizens’ assembly. The role of the coordinating team is only to identify the stakeholders, not to select them. Due to limited time and a large number of stakeholders, a method of choosing their representatives may be used. In this case, a diversity of perspectives should be taken into account.
15. Assembly members can invite experts – despite the programme being prepared by the coordinating team, the assembly members can invite additional experts or witnesses of their own choice.
16. Deliberation – discussions which include listening to others mindfully and considering potential solutions are the key elements of a citizens’ assembly. The programme involves discussions in small groups as well as in the plenary in order to maximize opportunities to speak and to be heard. The deliberation phase is supported by skilled facilitators.
17. Review phase – before the final vote of the assembly members takes place, there is an opportunity for experts, stakeholders and the public to review the proposals for recommendations and to provide input in the form of comments and suggestions.
18. Sufficient time for reflection – providing a sufficient amount of time for reflection is necessary to achieve well-thought-out decisions. If the matter is not urgent, it is best not to rush. The assembly members are able to prolong the meetings – their length and number – if they choose to do so.
19. Impact – the level of commitment to follow-up on the citizens’ assembly’s recommendations is clear from the outset. Ideally, recommendations that receive the support of the citizens’ assembly at an agreed threshold should be treated as binding (to such an extent that is legally permissible in the given situation).
20. Transparency – all presentations during the learning phase are transmitted live and recorded. All materials presented to assembly members are made available online. A report presenting the details of the process methodology is provided by the coordinating team.
21. Visibility – each citizens’ assembly is an important event in the life of a community. It is publicly announced before the process starts, and citizens are provided with information on how they can get involved.
22. Fun – the process of the citizens’ assembly is designed and run in such a way that it can be enjoyed by all of its participants.