

Critical Opportunities for Public Health Law 2013 Toolkit





Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



Introduction

The Critical Opportunitues initiative of the Public Health Law Research (PHLR) program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation presents evidence and ideas for proposed legal and policy changes that can positively impact public health challenges. Critical Opportunities initiatives include five-minute presentations delivered by an informed expert who identifies a public health problem and proposes an evidence-based legal or policy solution. The presentations include the practical and political feasibility of implementing the proposed solution. They are ideally made and video-taped before an audience that is given the opportunity to participate in a discussion and ranking of each presentation.

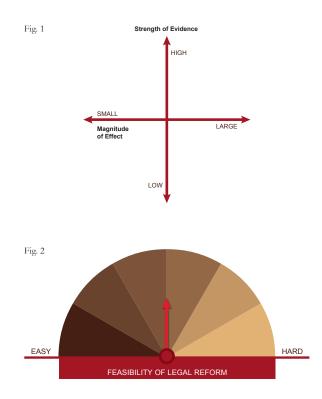
A journal article outlining the concept and the framework for the initiative has been published by the *American Journal of Public Health*, and several five-minute videos of presentations are already available for viewers at: <u>http://www.youtube.com/criticalopps4PHL</u>

This toolkit on Critical Opportunities provides a step-by-step approach so that government agencies, private funders, academic institutions, teachers, advocacy groups and others can hold Critical Opportunities sessions during their own meetings or in other appropriate settings. The ultimate aim is to create a publicly available, thought-provoking presentation that inspires people to develop solutions to pressing public health problems.



Criteria for Critical Opportunities

The Critical Opportunities ideas and presentations are built on a standard template. Each one uses the same four slides to convey the evidence and argument. The slides use the following criteria:



1. IDENTIFY THE PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE

On the first slide, presenters introduce the public health issue they seek to address with a legal intervention. They identify the scale of the problem by explaining the burden of disease, defined in terms of prevalence, severity, disability or disparities.

2. WHERE DOES THE LAW FIT IN?

On the second slide, the presenter briefly explains how a new or revised policy, regulation or law would solve or lessen the problem. It is important for presenters to be specific. Speaking in general terms will not solve the problem — actionable ideas that can be supported and tested by evidence are the goal.

3. EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE REFORM

The presenter provides evidence that supports using the intervention. This evidence can include studies of this kind of law, or similar laws, or experiences reported from places where a similar law or legal approach has been used successfully. The slide also features a chart (Fig. 1) where the presenter ranks the strength of the available evidence and the level of impact the evidence suggests the intervention will achieve.

4. "A WAY FORWARD"

This slide asks the presenter to interpret the feasibility and possibility of the proposed legal reform. It also includes a scale graphic (Fig. 2) where the presenter ranks the feasibility of the legal reform somewhere between "easy" and "hard."



Critical Opportunities Events

Critical Opportunities events can unfold in a variety of formats, including a full conference session, a classroom and a reception. In all session types, the Opportunities are presented in front of an audience that is given the opportunity to vote on their favorite idea. In a classroom session, faculty, outside guests or other students can serve as panelists, who offer feedback on the ideas. Sessions can be held for any public health law topic, or organizers can choose a specific public health topic or even a specific issue (e.g., developmental disabilities, with a focus on laws that could improve screening of young children for developmental disabilities).

Regardless of the session type, presenters are given exactly five minutes to present. There must be a hard stop at the five-minute mark; presentations that exceed five minutes are ineligible to be included in the video library. A time-keeper will give presenters a one-minute warning and a 30-second warning. **FULL SESSIONS** are typically held during a plenary session or larger format event during conference proceedings. These events are generally about an hour and a half long, and feature approximately six presenters and three to four panel experts who provide feedback on the ideas. A sample timeline of a full session Critical Opportunities event is included on page 8.

RECEPTION SESSIONS are smaller and shorter. They typically run about 25 to 30 minutes, feature three to four presenters and no panel. This session type has been compared to a poetry slam, where instead of a formal question and answer session, presenters may join the audience for more informal discussion and networking. A sample timeline of a reception session Critical Opportunities event is included on page 8.

CLASSROOM SESSIONS may vary in length and structure depending on the learning objectives of the course and the time constraints of the class. Instructors will typically assign the Critical Opportunities paper published in the *American Journal of Public Health* as background reading. From there, instructors may distribute a modified toolkit that explains the assignment of crafting and delivering a Critical Opportunities presentation. Faculty or outside guests may serve as panelists. The presentations could be filmed for advocacy practice and assessment, and may or may not be graded. The timeline used for a full session could be adapted for a classroom session of Critical Opportunities presentations.

> Law is often overlooked as an intervention used for solving public health problems. A Critical Opportunities event is meant to highlight the potential uses for law or legal interventions, and inspire creative problem solving within a community. The fun, interactive sessions bring evidence and research to the forefront, and clearly outline actionable opportunities to improve health.



Key Steps in Organizing a Critical Opportunities Session

There are several key steps in organizing a Critical Opportunities session. These sessions can be a part of a meeting with a larger, broader agenda attended by informed or concerned individuals, or they can be standalone Critical Opportunities sessions.

The key steps are:

- 1. Generate interest in the importance and value of holding a Critical Opportunities session.
- 2. Identify, recruit and educate thought leaders or experts so that they submit ideas for Critical Opportunities.
- 3. Recruit a three- or four-member panel to react to each presentation (with strict time limits).
- 4. Emphasize an energetic event and audience participation.
- 5. Video record and edit the five-minute presentations, adding key slides on the evidence and the feasibility of implementing the proposed legal or policy solution to the public health problem.

GENERATING INTEREST IN A CRITICAL OPPORTUNITIES SESSION

This is a key step in a successful Critical Opportunities session. These sessions are an interactive and innovative way to inspire everyone to think critically and creatively about ways to use law to improve health. Because they are interactive, the sessions serve as nice icebreakers at the beginning of a conference, or as an engaging wrap-up at the end. These events also provide an opportunity to involve more attendees with presenter roles. The panelist role is also a great opportunity to engage additional targeted populations, such as practitioners and policy-makers who may be best suited to act upon the ideas presented.

Critical Opportunities could also serve as a creative classroom assignment. Students could be asked to identify or could be assigned public health topics, and would then be required to follow the criteria and make a presentation to the class. This presentation format teaches valuable public speaking, research, argument formation and time-management skills.

The session types can be adapted to various environments, and should be chosen based on considerations of the audience and time constraints of the conference or classroom.

IDENTIFY & RECRUIT IDEAS

When hosting a Critical Opportunities session at a conference, soliciting presenters is one of the biggest organizing challenges. Providing an explanation of the event, its purpose and the general criteria are crucial

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to creating a clear understanding of expectations and opportunities. Additionally, it is valuable to link to the PHLR Critical Opportunities library so that potential presenters may see examples of successful presentations that may serve as models.

Presenters are encouraged to consider a few questions as they plan their presentations:

- Are there currently laws/regulations being used to change behaviors or environments that we could apply to a different setting?
- Are there products/services/environments ripe for change? Do we need to change behaviors, environments, or both? Is it individual or group behavior? Are the laws encouraging or discouraging certain behavior, i.e. "carrot" or "stick"?
- Are there laws on the books where the evidence shows they are not effective? How could we change that law to make it more effective?

Presenters should be given at least a month to prepare, and the solicitation process should begin as soon as possible once it has been decided a session will be hosted. Presenters should be given presenter information sheets, which feature a timeline of the event, outline their roles/ responsibilities and provide suggestions for success (see Appendix for sample information sheet and sample solicitation emails). The session organizer may also ask to see preliminary drafts of the presentations to be sure they appropriately meet the criteria.

RECRUITING A PANEL OF EXPERTS

Critical Opportunities sessions may feature a panel of experts who evaluate the presentations for the strength of the evidence and the feasibility of the solution. The sessions often benefit from the inclusion of practitioners or policymakers on the panel — these experts can offer real-world experience with the problems addressed and occasionally with the solutions presented. Panelists should be recruited as soon as possible once the decision has been made to host a session. A panelist information sheet should be provided, with a clear definition of the time commitment being made and an outline of their roles/responsibilities (see Appendix for sample information sheet and sample recruitment emails). It's helpful to share videos from the Critical Opportunities library with potential panelists so they may better understand the scope of what they're being asked to judge. Please note, panelists may ask to see the presentations in advance of the live session — this is permissible, but panelists should be discouraged from doing any additional research into a topic. The presentations should be considered based on the arguments and evidence provided during the session only.

EMPHASIZE AN ENERGETIC EVENT AND AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The time constraints within these sessions are what make them so successful — all participants are forced to be concise and thoughtful in their presentations, critiques, questions and responses, which keeps the session moving and energetic. The moderator and time-keeper are crucial to the smooth flow of the event. The moderator should be given a script and a copy of the timeline for the event. Moderators are responsible for mediating the question-and-answer session, initiating the voting phases and keeping the presenters on track.

Session coordinators should use a voting technology that enables immediate and anonymous participation. In the past, PHLR has used a website, <u>http://polleverywhere.</u> <u>com</u>, for voting at Critical Opportunities events. This technology is relatively inexpensive and enables audience members to cast votes using a number of platforms, including SMS messaging (texting), Twitter and through a website. We have found that the variety of platforms encourages greater voting participation.



CREATING A VIDEO ARCHIVE

Creating a video archive of the presentations ensures that they may be accessed and viewed beyond the live event. By capturing these presentations, they become valuable resources for media, policy-makers, researchers and others. Should video be used, PHLR will review the videos and may post the final edited version to the Critical Opportunities page on the PHLR website and to the Critical Opportunities YouTube page. Outside videos will only be accepted if the Opportunities presented clearly and precisely follow the Criteria; meet PHLR standards of quality; and have secured the necessary release forms for each presenter.

The following are a few best-practices that have emerged when recording and editing the videos:

• RECORD THE PRESENTER, NOT THE PRESENTER'S SLIDES

Slides can be edited into the video presentation using video editing software; focus cameras on the person.

• USE TWO CAMERAS

If possible, having a camera that can capture the presenter's expressions and a camera that can capture the larger scene provides a fuller view of the event. Because these are live and often un-scripted presentations, having more than one angle can improve the quality of the final video.

MINIMAL GRAPHICS ARE NECESSARY

The first slide, which features the presentation title and the presenter's information, and the last two slides, which feature the evidence and feasibility graphics, are the only truly necessary graphic elements. Additional graphics, such as those that reiterate and emphasize points made by the presenter (such as the lower-third graphics in the PHLR-produced videos) are useful, but not crucial to producing a successful Critical Opportunities video.

• CONNECT TO THE "HOUSE SOUND" WHEN FILMING

If possible, work with the conference organizers to connect your camera to the "house sound." This ensures that you will be capturing only the presenter's words, not the ambient noise.

• USE A PODIUM MICROPHONE OR A HANDHELD MICROPHONE ON A STAND

While these limit the mobility of the presenter, they ensure each presenter will be heard and recorded effectively. Using a lavaliere (or wireless) microphone for presenters is not recommended unless a lavaliere microphone is available for every presenter, as the process of switching microphones during the session after each presenter can be time-consuming and slow down the pace of the event.



Hosting a Critical Opportunities Event

SESSION PLANNER DUTIES

- · Establish the type of session and venue.
- Solicit presenters and advertise for the session.
- Solicit panelists (if hosting a full session).
- Solicit moderator.
- Coordinate video recording and editing, including receiving all necessary audio/video release forms.
- Coordinate logistics for the event, including audio/video set-up (an internet connection may be necessary for voting).
- Work with presenters to ensure their presentations meet the Critical Opportunities criteria.
- In the week before the event, secure the presentations from presenters and create a master slide deck containing all the presenters' slides in the order they will be presenting, to maintain smooth transitions between presentations. At this point, it is acceptable to send panelists the presentations, should they request them.
- Serve as time-keeper during the session.

PRESENTER DUTIES

- Strictly adhere to the Critical Opportunities five-slide template and four-pronged criteria.
- Provide your slides to the session planner at least 24 hours in advance of the session. The session planner will place all presentations into a master slide deck, so no changes may be made to a slide set after it has been turned in to the session planner.

- Practice delivering your argument in five minutes or less. You will be stopped after five minutes and will not be able to continue.
- Consider panelist criticism and audience questions carefully. You will be given an opportunity to respond to questions, but will be limited to a brief response (one minute or less).

MODERATOR DUTIES

- Introduce the Critical Opportunities initiative and its criteria.
- Introduce each presenter in turn, and usher them on and off the stage after their five-minute presentation.
- Introduce each panelist and keep the flow of panelist remarks moving, supporting the time-keeper in cutting off the panelists should they go past their allotted five minutes.
- Facilitate the voting process.
- Act as an engaging and entertaining "emcee" for this fast-paced, energetic event.

PANELIST DUTIES

- Listen carefully and critically to all presentations.
- During your designated five minutes, you may ask questions, critique the pitched ideas, alert the audience to key points or potential research areas, etc.
- Limit remarks to the focus of the initiative and the topical areas presented in the pitches.



Sample Session Timelines

FULL SESSION - 9 TO 10:30 A.M.

- 8:45 a.m. All panelists and presenters must arrive at the session location. Panelists take their places on the podium; presenters take their designated seats (the front row, immediately in front of the panelist table).
- **9:00 a.m.** Moderator calls the room to attention and opens the session, providing background information on the initiative.
- **9:10 a.m.** Moderator alerts audience, panelists and presenters to the cameras; introduces the voting process and order of the events; and calls the first participant to the podium. Participants begin making their pitches (five minutes each, times six presenters). Order is shared prior to the session and determined by the session planner.
- **9:40 a.m.** Participants conclude their pitches. Moderator asks audience to cast their preliminary votes.
- **9:45 a.m.** Moderator closes voting, provides brief introductions of the panelists and allows each panelist five minutes to react to the presentations. Panelists may ask questions, critique ideas, alert the audience to key points or potential research ideas, etc.
- **10:00 a.m.** Moderator opens floor for Q&A to presenters from audience. Responses from presenters should be kept short.
- **10:20 a.m.** Moderator thanks presenters, panelists and audience, then asks audience to cast final vote.
- **10:30 a.m.** Moderator announces winner and runner-up, closes session and begins closing remarks.

RECEPTION SESSION - 6 TO 6:30 P.M.

- 5:45 p.m. All presenters must arrive at the session location. Presenters take their designated seats (the front row, immediately in front of the panelist table).
- **6:00 p.m.** Moderator calls the room to attention and opens the session, providing background information on the initiative.
- **6:10 p.m.** The moderator alerts audience and presenters to the cameras; introduces the voting process and order of the events; and calls the first participant to the podium. Participants begin making their pitches (five minutes each, times three presenters). Order is shared prior to the session and determined by the session planner.
- 6:25 p.m. Participants conclude their pitches.
- **6:25 p.m.** Moderator thanks presenters and audience, then asks audience to cast vote.
- **6:30 p.m.** Moderator announces winner and runner-up, closes session and encourages audience to discuss the Opportunities among themselves and with the presenters during the remainder of the reception.



SAMPLE PITCH LETTERS FOR RECRUITING PRESENTERS

The letter to the right was originally written to solicit presenters for the Critical Opportunities session at the 2012 Public Health Law Conference. The Critical Opportunities session was the final plenary for the conference. This letter was sent to presenters to recruit them to "reprise" their presentations from earlier in the conference as a way to reach the full meeting audience. Conference presenters and attendees in general are good sources of potential presenters for Critical Opportunities because they are already aware of the conference theme, goals and proceedings, and they are already planning to attend.

This letter could be adapted to pitch conference presenters or attendees to participate in a Critical Opportunities event: Dear Public Health Law Conference presenter [or insert name]:

I want to ask you for a little of your time during the next day or so to participate in an opportunity to expand the audience for your work and help us with the Public Health Law Conference final plenary session devoted to PHLR's new initiative: Critical Opportunities for Public Health Law.

The Critical Opportunities Initiative draws attention to innovative ways law can improve public health. Critical Opportunities can be new laws, changes in existing laws, or a wider adoption of laws that are proven effective. The plenary session in Atlanta will feature a set of 5-minute presentations where presenters will make a "pitch," or argument, for an idea they have for the best evidence-based solution to a current public health problem. Working with RWJF, PHLR is taping these presentations as part of a broader initiative to show policymakers and the public what law can do. Each pitch will become part of the PHLR Critical Opportunities Library, a resource for policy-makers looking for new ways to solve public health problems.

We would like this session to be a "highlights reel" of the best ideas presented at the conference - your ideas.

If you can think of one critical factor that would change the landscape, we encourage you to submit your ideas for the Critical Opportunities plenary. Many of you will have already identified ideas of this caliber in your presentations earlier in the conference.

Presenters use a standard slide template to describe the health problem, specify the legal change, summarize the evidence the law can work and assess the feasibility of change. The template is attached here, and will guide you through the process of developing your idea and creating the five slides.

Please visit PHLR's web page on Critical Opportunities for more information. You may also email Bethany Swanson, PHLR Director of Communications with questions. She is able to work with you to help you develop your slides and your pitch.



Another way to solicit Critical Opportunities presenters is to send a more generic email to a broad group of relevant potential participants. The sample email to the right was sent by a group in the CDC who hosted their own topic-specific Critical Opportunities session. This email was sent to a mass distribution list and could be adapted for a Critical Opportunities session that is not topic-specific:

SOLICITING SUBMISSIONS FOR CRITICAL OPPORTUNITIES: SCREENING OF YOUNG CHILDREN FOR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES DUE JUNE 3, 2013

Are you interested in presenting a health policy Critical Opportunity? In the presentation you will make the case for a potential public health policy intervention that could improve screening of young children for developmental disabilities. These sessions are designed based on the Public Health Law Research (PHLR) model, as seen at their 2012 Annual Meeting. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention's National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD) plans to host one session on Thursday, July 11 from 3:15-4:30 p.m. at the Autism Society's 44th National Conference in Pittsburgh, with two additional sessions in the coming months at major conferences. The goal of these sessions is to creatively identify public health policies and the public health research gaps, which if addressed could improve screening of young children for developmental disabilities.

We ask participants to make submissions that make the case for a public health policy that could improve screening of young children for developmental disabilities. The submissions will be judged by the NCBDDD staff and experts in the field of public health and public health law and several will be selected for presentation. Selected participants will be invited to make a timed 5-minute pitch to the audience and a panel of experts at the Autism Society's National Conference. The audience will be polled to rank the most compelling critical opportunities and each of the panelists will offer their feedback to help presenters and attendees consider the opportunity from multiple angles.

Submissions are due by June 3, 2013.



SAMPLE INFORMATION SHEET FOR PRESENTERS AND PANELISTS

This master document should be edited and sent to panelists and presenters. It can be used as a tool when recruiting, but should be sent as soon as possible once an individual agrees to participate in the session.

PANELIST/PRESENTER INFORMATION – CRITICAL OPPORTUNITIES PLENARY Public Health Law Conference 2012 – Atlanta, 10:15-11:30 a.m.

Thank you for participating in the Critical Opportunities plenary session at the 2012 Public Health Law Conference.

The goal for the session is to draw attention to innovative ways law can be used to improve public health by enabling presenters to pitch their idea in a public forum and receive feedback from expert panelists.

PLENARY TIMELINE

- **10:00 a.m.** Panelists and presenters arrive at plenary location (Salon D, E & F) and take their places on the podium or in their designated seats (someone from PHLR will be able to direct you to your seat).
- **10:15 a.m.** Moderator calls the room to attention and opens the session, providing background information on the initiative. Moderator then introduces Paul Kuehnert, Director of the RWJF Public Health Team.
- 10:20 a.m. Kuehnert provides brief opening remarks..
- 10:30 a.m. Moderator thanks Kuehnert. The moderator alerts attendees to the cameras; introduces the voting process and order of the event, including brief introductions of the panelists; and calls the first participant to the podium. Participants begin making their pitches (5 minutes each, times seven presenters). Order is shared when presenters arrive at 10 a.m. the day of the plenary.
- 11:05 a.m. Participants conclude their pitches. Moderator asks audience to cast their preliminary votes
- **11:05 a.m.** Moderator closes voting, and allows each panelist 5 minutes to react to the presentations. Panelists may ask questions, critique ideas, alert the audience to key points or potential research ideas, etc.
- **11:18 a.m.** Presenters are given an opportunity to respond to panelist questions -1 minute each. Once panelist questions have been answered, the moderator opens the floor to questions by the audience.
- 11:28 a.m. Moderator prompts audience to cast their final vote using the polling system.
- 11:30 a.m. Moderator announces winner, then offers thanks to attendees, presenters and panelists.

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INSTRUCTIONS TO PANELISTS

Panelist Reactions: Panelists may ask questions, critique the pitched ideas, alert the audience to key points or potential research areas, etc. We ask that panelists limit remarks to the focus of the initiative and the topical areas presented in the pitches.

Audience Questions: The audience may pose questions to the panelists and presenters, but this section of the session will not be run as a Q&A, with responses kept short and on-topic. The moderator will control the dialogue.

INSTRUCTIONS TO PRESENTERS

Pitches: A few suggestions to help you prepare your pitch in advance:

• PRACTICE

Time yourself for five minutes — You are only given five minutes to present your pitch. You will be shown a sign alerting you that you have "1 minute remaining" and then "30 seconds remaining," At the end of five minutes, a bell will sound signaling the end of your presentation. If you have not completed your presentation at the end of five minutes, you cannot continue.

• REFINE YOUR SLIDES

Be sure your slides are clear and concise, and that they clearly identify a suggestion for a law (either an expansion of an existing law, or a suggestion for a new law). Also, remember that the room will be large, so slides should have limited text.

• BE AWARE OF THE CAMERAS

You will be filmed by two cameras during your presentation. You do not need to look at them, but be aware that your audio and video is being recorded.

• ANSWERING QUESTIONS FROM PANELISTS AND THE AUDIENCE

Panelists and the audience will be given an opportunity to ask questions about the pitches they have heard. Responses by presenters should be concise — you will be given one minute to respond.



SAMPLE SCRIPT FOR FULL SESSION MODERATOR

This script could be adapted and shortened for sessions of all types. Essentially, the moderator must serve as the emcee for the event, explaining its purpose, the process and timeline that will be followed; introducing the presenters and panelists in turn; and keeping the session moving and on-time.

Good morning, fellow public health law enthusiasts!

This session is dedicated to big ideas; or as we like to call them "Critical Opportunities" for public health law.

This session is part of a year-long outreach effort by Public Health Law Research to identify critical areas where law could be used to improve the public's health. We want to be sure we're putting funding dollars to work in the right places.

Over the next hour, you will hear from six presenters who will offer up their pitch for an idea they have for the best evidence-based solution to a current public health problem.

The presenters will be given only five minutes to convince you, the audience, and our panel of experts, that their idea is the most feasible. We have a bell. And we will use it. After all the presenters have made their pitch, we'll play a little game of "American Idol" or "Opportunity Idol" — except you will be given the chance to vote twice: Once before we hear from the expert panelists, and once at the very end, after the presenters have had a chance to respond to questions and the panelist critique.

You may have noticed that we have a few cameras around the room. PHLR is working with RWJF to tape these presentations. The pitches will become part of the PHLR Critical Opportunities Library, a resource for policy-makers looking for new ways to solve public health problems.

OK, now it's time to begin. I will call the presenters up one by one to make their pitches. Once they start, their time will start with them.

The first presenter is: [INTRODUCE EACH PRESENTER JUST BEFORE THEIR PRESENTATION.]

Let's give our presenters a big round of applause! Thanks to all our presenters for sharing their big ideas.

It's now time to for you to cast your votes for your current favorite Opportunity.

If you are using a hand-held mobile device – please take it out now.

To cast your vote, you can either text [NUMBER CODE WILL BE GIVEN] to [PHONE NUMBER WILL BE GIVEN], tweet that same number to [WILL BE GIVEN] or visit [URL WILL BE GIVEN].

--pause for voting for about a minute--

OK. Thank you all for casting your vote for your current favorite Opportunity. Now it's time to hear from each of our experts with their feedback on the opportunities.

The panelists beside me will each offer a short critique of the Opportunities they have heard. Let me introduce them:

[INSERT PANELISTS NAMES and TITLES]

--pause for Panelist feedback - limit to 5 minutes each--

At this point, we would like to open the floor for questions from the audience. Presenters, you will be allowed to respond to any questions or comments about your presentation, but we ask that you keep your responses brief (one minute at the most).

[WE WILL HAVE ABOUT 20 MINS FOR THIS]

It's now time to cast our final vote. Everyone, you know the drill: To cast your vote, you can either text [NUMBER CODE WILL BE GIVEN] to [PHONE NUMBER WILL BE GIVEN], tweet that same number to [WILL BE GIVEN] or visit [URL WILL BE GIVEN].

--pause for voting for about a minute--

It looks like we have a favorite! [SAY NAME]

Let's give them and all our presenters a round of applause. Thank you all for joining us here today. We hope you've heard an idea here that sparked the possibility of change in your own communities. Thank you again!