



PEOPLES' TECH
A S S E M B L I E S

Conversation Toolkit

Use this toolkit to facilitate a conversation that contributes to New York City's technology agenda.



About the Peoples' Tech Assemblies

The Peoples' Tech Assemblies is a joint initiative to gather input from New Yorkers to inform how the City of New York (our government) uses technology to serve the public and govern into the future. Our coalition members are The New York City Office of the Public Advocate, The Office of the Manhattan Borough President, BetaNYC, New America's Public Interest Technology team, the Urban Tech Hub at the Jacobs Cornell-Technion Institute, the College of Staten Island, CivStart, volunteer advisor Ariel Kennan and a growing number of organizers and allies interested in seeing to it that the City uses technology for the public good.

Learn more at < <https://peopletech.nyc> >.



Start a conversation!

This toolkit is a guide for New Yorkers who want to hold conversations that help account for the many and diverse perspectives in our communities. It has everything you need to facilitate a Peoples' Tech Assemblies conversation with friends, families and community members. Use it to bring NYC residents together to discuss and identify the needs, calls-to-action and proposals they have for how our city government should use technology to govern. Make your community members' voices heard and help reimagine the future of NYC with us.

What is a Peoples' Tech Assemblies Conversation?

Conversations are facilitated dialogues between New York City residents about the role of technology, data and design in civic society. The goal of each conversation is to elicit structured community feedback on resident needs, calls-to-action, and proposals for the future.

Why facilitate a conversation?

Your community's insight is essential to the democratic practice of our city. Start a conversation to help shape future decisions around technology and inspire NYC to think big and tread thoughtfully. Through structured dialogues and standardized documentation, we plan to bring what you have to say to the attention of the many new decisionmakers entering NYC government in 2022.

Our goals are to...

1. Gather input from all New Yorkers
2. Build new pathways for New Yorkers to contribute to and inform local decision-making
3. Inspire the next administration's tech policy agenda and leadership





How to host a conversation

A step-by-step guide to organizing your conversation

Follow these steps to facilitate a conversation that contributes to the Peoples' Tech Assemblies.

Step 1: Choose your Topic

Step 2: Identify your Participants

Step 3: Decide When and How

Step 4: Make a Run of Show

Step 5: Choose an Objective & Facilitation Method

Step 6: Share your Plan

Step 7: Host your Conversation

Step 8: Report Back!



I am hosting a conversation about
[**your topic**] with
[**your participants**] so that we can
[**your objective**].

Questions? Email peopletech@beta.nyc or join our team at a [weekly info session](#) every Friday at 12pm ET.



Step 1

Choose your topic!

Step 1 Choose your topic

Technology intersects with just about every aspect of civic society in NYC. Broadly speaking, what topic do you want to address? **Choose 1 or 2 to focus your conversation.**



Click the topic to explore keywords and issues that relate to technology, design and data and get inspired before your conversation!



Step 2

Identify your **participants**

Step 2 Identify your participants

You can hold a conversation with just about anyone. Whomever you bring together, **be intentional** about it. Your participants should be **NYC residents** and/or they should have **insight into your topic** area.

We recommend holding a conversation with anywhere from **2 to 12 people** at a time.



What to consider:

- Who has unique perspective on the topic?
- Whose voices need to be heard?
- Who has insight into the topic?
- What communities are new to the topic?
- Who has a stake in the topic?
- Whose life does the topic touch or impact?

Examples:

- friends or family members
- neighbors
- colleagues
- classmates
- community organizations
- advocates and advocacy organizations
- small businesses
- civic leaders and community organizers
- elected officials and policymakers
- government staff and decision-makers



Step 3

Decide **when** and **how** you will host your conversation

Step 3 Decide when and how you will host your conversation

When?

- Set a **date** and **time** between now and November 15th.
- Set a **duration** for your conversation. We suggest 60-90 minutes. You can always follow-up with participants and/or host a follow-up session if you need more time.
- Create a way for people to **RSVP**. How will you confirm participation? Sending text messages or emails works just fine! If you are hosting a more official event, create a RSVP page using a tool like [Eventbrite](#) or [Splashthat](#).

Where or How?

- **For in-person conversations:** identify a venue. This could be anything from a dinner table to a conference room or community center! Please follow [COVID safety guidelines](#). Prepare to bring some materials with you like sticky notes, pieces of paper and pens!
- **For virtual events:** use a virtual meeting software like [Zoom](#), [Google Meet](#), [WebEx](#), or [Jitsi](#). Prepare to ask people to use a collaborative notetaking tool like [Google Docs](#) or [Miro Boards](#) to share thoughts and document your event.
- For partner events: if you're interested in using the [Citizen Lab Workshop](#) software, talk to us!



Step 4

Make a Run of Show

Step 4 Make a Run of Show

A **run of show** is a document detailing each moment of your conversation. Before your event, spend some time thinking about the structure of your conversation and how you'll spend the time. Below is a suggested structure and some recommendations to warm up the room by making introductions and introducing the community census and then spending the majority of your time engaging!

Set the Tone (ie. 20 min)

- ❑ Introduce yourself and ask others to introduce themselves
- ❑ Introduce the Peoples' Tech Assemblies
- ❑ Conduct an icebreaker.
- ❑ Ask everyone to participate in the community census.
- ❑ Introduce the topic and your objective

Engage (ie. 40 min)

- ❑ In Step 5 of this toolkit, choose an objective and a facilitation method and follow instructions to conduct an activity
- ❑ If you have a large group, break out into smaller groups
- ❑ Designate someone to be a notetaker.
- ❑ Be mindful of time— use a timer!

Wrap up (ie. 15 min)

- ❑ Leave time to reflect at the end.
- ❑ Gather documentation in one place and confirm everyone has contributed what they wanted.
- ❑ Remind participants what the Peoples Tech Assemblies is and show them how to join us at peoplestech.nyc!
- ❑ Thank everyone for their time and contributions.

Step 4 Make a Run of Show

Add the community census to your run of show and decide how you will conduct it:

Option 1: Print out [this worksheet](#) for each participant and hand them out at the start of your conversation. Then either a) tally up responses and include them when you fill out the [Reportback Form](#) or b) take pictures of each completed worksheet and send them to peoplestech@beta.nyc

Option 2: Direct your participants to **this link** to fill out the community census form during your event (be sure to designate enough time!). Instruct them to use your name in the field where we ask for the facilitator's name.

What is the Community Census?

The community census asks participants of the Peoples Tech Assemblies five questions about: Age, Location of Residence, Preferred Pronouns, Identity, and Industry

The purpose of asking participants to take this community census during your conversation is to understand whose voices are represented and whose have been left out in the input we collect. Responses are all kept anonymous. If anyone is uncomfortable answering any questions, that's totally fine! Ask them to choose "No Response".



Step 5

Choose your objective and facilitation method

Step 5 Choose your objective and facilitation method

What do you want to get out of your conversation? Decide your objective so you can facilitate an effective conversation. Choose 1-3 of the objectives below and read on to learn more about them and the facilitation methods we suggest you use to achieve them.

Understand

Understand community issues and resident needs. Surface insight into values and goals to build a shared understanding of the topic's intersection with technology, data and design. Then, draft a list of **'Resident Stories'** to share back as building blocks for innovation.

Define

Turn known resident needs and issues into goal-oriented prompts or challenge statements that others can use to call decision-makers into action. Follow instructions to submit a list of **'How Might We' Statements**.

Propose

Already have insight into the needs of your community and the needed change? Propose ideas or recommendations for addressing them through an **Ideation Activity**.

Objective: Understand

This is a great place to start if you want to explore issues within a topic broadly.

Conversation Goal: Choose a topic and explore community issues and resident needs within it that potentially relate to technology, data and design. Create a Shared Understanding of the topic space and submit a list of Resident Story Statements that frame issues in an actionable and people-centered way. These are the building blocks of civic innovation!

Facilitation Methods: [Shared Understanding](#), [Resident Stories](#)

I want to understand what issues exist in my community, how technology relates to them, and create a list of high-priority needs.

Create a Shared Understanding of the Topic

Suggested Time: 20-30 min

Instructions: As you discuss your topic, explore what it means to your participants and their expectations and doubts around it. What do we hope for NYC residents? What do we fear? Ask participants to respond and capture what they say on stickies, paper, or in a shared google doc. As a group, spend a few minutes reflecting on what stands out and identify any themes that you see. Then, cluster the responses into categories. Use this as a basis for coming up with a shared understanding of your topic or subtopics. What values emerge? Go around the room and ask participants to share a statement of understanding. Document them, and once everyone has gone, work together to synthesize them into one shared statement of understanding of your topic. Report it back to the Peoples Tech Assemblies.

Examples of prompts:

- What are you optimistic about? What do you want the City to accomplish? I hope / I would love for...
- What are your fears? What situations do you want to avoid in the future? What are you cautious about?
- I want to avoid / I'm worried about...
- Why are we discussing this topic? What values are important to it? Who is important to this conversation?
- To me, we'll see success when...
- Values driving my perspective of this topic are...
- For us, [the topic] means... and it is important to us because...
- What does [topic] mean to you when you think of a healthy technologically savy civic society? What values are important to it? Create a shared definition of the topic as group.

Activity: Create “Resident Story” Statements

Suggested Time: 20 - 30 minutes

Instructions: As you explore the topic, keep track of issues and challenges that residents raise in your discussion. Identify what the issues are and whom they are an issue for. Ask someone to help document these on a piece of paper, in a shared google doc, or with stickies on a wall. Next, reframe the discussion to be resident-centered and action-oriented. Ask, “What does our resident actually need in this situations?” and prompt everyone to create “Resident Story” statements as they can by filling in the blanks below. Collect everyone’s statements to report back to the Peoples Tech Assemblies.

Tips:

- Decide how you’ll work: Individually? In small groups? Together as a group?
- You could set a timer for 60 seconds and ask participants to create as many Resident Stories for one resident category at a time (ie. “users of wheelchairs”).

As a	who?	, I need	what do they need?
so that	what is their goal (in reference to this experience)?		

Objective: Define

If you have a solid understanding of your topic and some of the existing community issues and resident needs within it, this is a great format for you.

Conversation Goal: Dig into your topic by discussing participants' lived experiences and inviting their insight into New Yorkers' needs. Then, draft a list of ['How Might We' Statements](#) to define a solution space for addressing them and inspire others into action.

I want to use my understanding of an issue and help call others to action by building 'How Might We' statements.

Activity: Draft a list of 'How Might We' statements

Suggested Time: 30 min

Instructions: Before starting the activity, it's helpful to prepare a list of user needs or 'resident stories' (refer to [this activity](#) in the toolkit). If you don't have one prepared, give your participants 5-10 minutes to generate a list of them at the start of your session.

Have participants break out into groups of 2-3 (or work individually if preferred!) and ask them to select user needs or resident stories and draft 'How Might We' (HMW) statements in response to them. To write a HMW follow the structure of the sentence below and fill-in-the-blanks. You can also try rephrasing your resident stories by adding 'how might we ' at the start.

Regroup and going around the room one group at a time, ask them to share one HMW statement and ask the others to listen and help refine it by providing feedback. Is it too broad or too narrow? How could it improve? Iterate on each group's statement until it's in a good place and capture it for reporting back. Repeat this until everyone has share all of their HMW statements.

Tips:

- Your statements should not suggest solutions, rather they should provide a new frame for thinking about solutions
- Sometimes it's hard to write statements like these in big groups. Try breaking out into groups of 2-3 or even working individually.

How might we

what action?

for

what NYC resident or stakeholder

so that

what change do we need to see?

Objective: **Propose**

If you already have a lot of context into a challenge space and the needs of residents, and you are ready to go to the drawing board, use this format!

Conversation Goal: After introducing the topic and sharing some of your insight into it, pose the challenge(s) that you would like your participants to address in your session. Guide them through an [Ideation Activity](#) to come up with a list of proposals, ideas or recommendations for civic solutions.

I want to propose ideas or recommendations to address known public interest challenges and help shape the NYC's tech and policy agenda.

Objective | Propose - Brain Dump and Ideation Activity Instructions

Part 1: Decide the challenge(s): Introduce the challenge(s) you have prepared for your conversation and spend 5-10 minutes discussing them with your group. You should touch upon: 1) What is the unmet need? 2) Who does it affect? and 3) What what is their goal? (Tip: Review the [‘How Might We’ statement activity](#).)

As a group or working individually, ask participants to choose challenge statement(s) to address.

Part 2: Respond: Set a timer and tell participants they have 3 minutes to come up with as many ways to address the challenge as possible. Consider defining the categories for your proposals or recommendations, ie. programs, policies, legislation, or services. They should capture their proposals in a written list on paper or in a shared google doc, or with stickies (1 per sticky). Encourage everyone to think outside the box and to focus on quantity, not necessarily quality. If folks prefer to draw or sketch their idea, that’s great— whatever effectively communicates their idea! Just, don’t dwell— move quickly through this activity!

When capturing your proposal, try to incorporate the who/what/where/when/why/how of it.

Part 4: “Yes! And...?” At the end of 3 minutes, ask participants to put their pens down. Going around the room, have participants share one idea aloud at a time. Spend a couple of minutes building on each idea as it is presented. After listening to the presenter, say “Yes, and...!” to engage in constructive conversation around it. Document the final iteration of the idea before moving on to the next person. This is what you’ll report back! Go around the room until everyone has shared at least one idea and you have a substantial list to report back. Now you can choose a new challenge and repeat the activity

Bonus Points:

- Analyze your list. What do the ideas have in common? Cluster them into categories or themes.
- Vote on your list. Which ideas do folks want to see implemented? Give each participant 3-5 votes and then re-order your list according to priority (dot stickers or simply asking folks to raise their hands works well!).

Helpful Tips

Depending on how much time you have, do this activity for multiple unmet needs and challenge statements.

Break large groups into smaller groups of 4-5 people.

Set expectations upfront:

- You want to stay within the time constraints (use a timer to start and stop each part of the conversation!)
- You want to hear from all voices in the room
- This is a safe space for constructive conversations, negativity should be left behind!.



Step 6

Share your plan!

Step 6 Share your plan!

Connect with us!

- Let us know you're holding a conversation by submitting a response to this [form](#) if you haven't already.
- Attend a weekly office hours session by RSVPing at bit.ly/weeklypta
- Contact us at peopletech@beta.nyc.

Tell others to join you!

- Once you have set up your RSVP page, promote it!
 - Post on social media! Example: "I'm hosting a #PeoplesTech Assembly on [topic] to [objective]. Join me on [date] at [time]. RSVP here: [link]. @BetaNYC @nycpa"
 - Send emails to your community and networks
 - View more sample promotion language and resources [here](#)!



Step 7

Host your conversation!

Step 7 Host your conversation!

Pre-Event Checklist

- Send reminder email to RSVPs
- Notetaker
- Timer
- Community Census
- Code of Conduct

If in person:

- Gather supplies (ie. paper, sticky notes, pens, nametags, easel boards)
- Set out a sign-in sheet

If virtual:

- Set up a space for collaborative notes ie. a Google Doc or Miro Board
- Log-in to your virtual space early!

As the facilitator, you are responsible for ensuring that

- Your session follows its agenda
- Your participants respond to the optional Community Census
- Everyone follows the [Code of Conduct](#)
- **You report back** to the Peoples' Tech Assemblies so we can include your outcomes in our synthesis!
 - Community Census Results
 - Activity Outcomes



Step 8

Report back

You did it! Thank you for organizing a conversation on behalf of New Yorkers and the Peoples' Tech Assemblies. Now, don't forget report back! If you have any questions email us at peopletech@beta.ny

Please gather all documentation and report back by filling out [this form](#).

Tools and Resources

- [Community Census \(Print Me!\)](#)
- [Civic Tech Keywords / Issues for Exploration](#)
- [Project Design Assets](#)
- [Our Data Policy](#)



Community Census - About

One of the goals of the Peoples' Tech Assemblies is to report out basic demographics of the people who participated so that we know whose voices have been represented and whose have been left out. Using the questions and answers below, poll your participants. We recommend doing it at the start of your conversation. If you're using a virtual meeting software, try using a poll feature if it's available (ie. on Zoom). Otherwise, if you are in person, you can print out [this worksheet](#) for each participant and ask them to circle their responses. Or, ask folks to respond using note cards, stickies, or dot stickers.

Note: If someone is uncomfortable answering any of the questions, that's totally fine. Ask them to submit "No Response" option.

Community Census Worksheet - Circle your response!

What age are you?

5-9
10-13
14-16
17-24
25-34
35-44
45-64
65+
No Response

How do you identify?

Asian
Black/African
Caribbean
Caucasian/White
East Asian
Hispanic/Latinx
Middle Eastern / North African
Multiracial
Native American / Alaskan Native
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander
Oceanian / Australasian
South Asian
Other
No Response

What are your preferred pronouns?

She/Her/Hers
He/Him/His
They/Them/Theirs
Other
No Response

Where are you a resident?

Bronx
Brooklyn
Manhattan
Queens
Staten Island
Nassau County
Rockland County
Suffolk County
Westchester
NYS
Other NJ
USA (Not NY or NJ)
Not in the USA
No Response

What industries do you work in or have you worked in?

Government
Private Sector - Startup
Private Sector - Corporate
Private Sector - Small Business
Non-Profit or Community-based Org
Academia
Media
N/A - Student
Other
No Response

Report Back - What to prepare to report back

After hosting your conversation, report back to us by clicking this link and filling out the fields in the Conversation Report Back Form. The information you should be prepared to share includes:

- Conversation Title
- Date of Conversation
- Facilitator or Host Name(s)
- Number of RSVPs
- Number of Participants
- Format was your conversation (offline, online, online via CitizenLab)
- Topic of Conversation
- Objective of Conversation
 - [Understand - Reportback Fields]
 - [Define - Reportback Fields]
 - [Propose - Reportback Fields]
- Short summary and key insights or takeaways
- Feedback for Peoples Tech Assemblies



Resources - keywords and issues related to technology, design, and data by topic area

- ★ Voting rights and accessibility
- ★ Voting technology
- ★ Participatory budgeting in all NYC agencies
- ★ Immigration rights and access to civic resources (I.e. NYC ID)
- ★ Community Board Operations - Accessibility and Inclusion
- ★ Cbs - Open Meetings Law
- ★ Community Board representation - demographic data analyses
- ★ Civic engagement commission
- ★ Board of Elections and campaign structuring (improved website and data publication.
- ★ Governmental Transparency



Resources - keywords and issues related to technology, design, and data by topic area

- ★ Small businesses and nycers to create equity and make progress
- ★ Small businesses and their regulatory landscape need a 21st century refresh: the red tape and antiquated city systems they have to interact with -- big businesses are gaining advantage; example: EDC's ideas for small businesses
- ★ Unions
- ★ Women / mothers in the workforce and affected by pandemic
- ★ Childcare Resources and Access in NYC
- ★ Digital and tech equity in schools
- ★ Admissions Algorithms
- ★ New models of learning in schools and data-driven evidence (ie. healing center schools)
- ★ Reimagining education bureaucracy - what does it look like in xyz neighborhood
- ★ What did you learn from the past year / remote learning? Who has been doing research on remote learning and collecting stories/insight from.
- ★ Participatory curriculum creation
- ★ Pipelines - access to diverse opportunities to learn things
- ★ Mapping resources for education services



Resources - keywords and issues related to technology, design, and data by topic area

★ {add here}



Resources - keywords and issues related to technology, design, and data by topic area

- ★ Public Housing: quality, conditions and repairs, broadband access (NYCHA tenant boards not being included in processes for broadband), privacy (city proposing entry system and facial recognition)
- ★ Affordable Housing - city uses data to drive policies about what constituents affordable
- ★ Zoning/ relying on Federal funds / using data to make decisions: Data they are using is based on model AMI, it includes counties not just NYC that skew our AMI numbers to a point where you can get an affordability ranking of someone making 6 figures).
- ★ Insecurity
- ★ Homelessness - dept of homeless census each year
- ★ Tenants rights- how we use open data for transparency (OPA's watchlist for landlord accountability)
- ★ Eviction protections tools for tenants: housing court data example - <https://map.displacementalert.org/#close>
- ★ Housing Data Coalition <https://www.housingdatanyc.org/#portfolio>
- ★ Who Owns What for transparency etc - why wasn't HPD focusing resources on making this? Why did a community have to? Or how can gov collaborate more with community (ie CTOxFellows)



★ {add here}

Resources - keywords and issues related to technology, design, and data by topic area



Resources - keywords and issues related to technology, design, and data by topic area

- ★ Policing - predictive, enforcing, over policing
- ★ Surveillance
- ★ Facial recognition
- ★ Public Safety
- ★ Prisons and ADS - facial recognition of visitors
- ★ Mental Health
- ★ Community policing
- ★ Crisis Management
- ★ Health Access and Equity - vaccine websites, passport apps,
- ★ Maternal health specifically for Black Women - Health + Hospitals technology not working for many communities - maternal health mortality rate - the system they built is not working.
- ★ Alternative 911 systems (ie. <https://not911.nyc>)



Resources - keywords and issues related to technology, design, and data by topic area

- ★ Digital Divide and push for municipal broadband
- ★ Air quality monitoring
- ★ Flood Zones / Sensors
- ★ Ridesharing
- ★ Public power / grid is outdated
- ★ Penn Station Rezoning and regulations that go into it
- ★ Curb space / street parking / open streets
- ★ Equitable water infrastructure
- ★ National grid pipeline in brooklyn - equitable distribution of clean energy
- ★ Transportation justice

Resources - Tools for Virtual Conversations

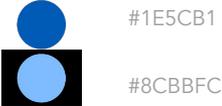
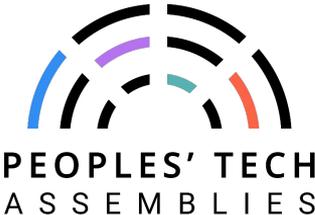
- Airtable: <https://airtable.com>
- Hopin: <https://hopin.to>
- Ideaboardz: <https://ideaboardz.com/>
- Jamboard: <https://jamboard.google.com/>
- Jitsi: <https://jitsi.org>
- Kahoot: Kahoot! | Learning games | Make learning awesome!
- Meet: <https://meet.google.com>
- Mentimeter: <https://www.mentimeter.com>
- Miro: <https://miro.com>
- Google forms: Google Forms: Free Online Surveys for Personal Use
- Mural: <https://mural.co>
- Sli.do: <https://www.sli.do>
- Survey Monkey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/>
- TypeForm: <https://try.typeform.com/>
- Thinglink: Create unique experiences with interactive images, videos & 360° media — ThingLink
- Canva: Collaborate & Create Amazing Graphic Design for Free (canva.com)

Source: TechSoup Europe's [Offline to Online Education Transformation Resource Guide](#)

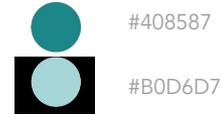
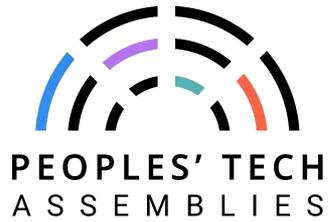
Our Data Policy

Data collected by the Peoples' Tech Survey will be stored by the New York City Office of the Public Advocate (OPA). Data collected by the survey will not include any personal identifying information. Data collected will be used by OPA, The Office of the Manhattan Borough President, BetaNYC, New America's Public Interest Technology team, Urban Tech Hub at the Jacobs Cornell-Technion Institute, The College of Staten Island, CivStart and any volunteers or advisors involved with the Peoples' Tech Assemblies to assess the civic technology knowledge and pressing issues of participants. Do not submit any additional personal information with this form. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to OPA via phone at 212-669-7200 or email GetHelp@advocate.nyc.gov. Changes and updates to the Peoples' Tech Survey may be necessary and will be reflected in this notice.

Design Assets - Primary brand colors



Design Assets - Secondary brand colors



Design Assets - Topics





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A S S E M B L I E S

Print Me!

Print out slides 55-62 if you'd like some visual prompts at your in-person conversation. You might put them up on a wall and provide post-it notes

<https://peopletestech.nyc>

As a...

(Who? What NYC resident or stakeholder)

I need...

(What is their unmet need that needs to be addressed?)

so that...

(What is their goal?)

How might we...

(What action needs to be taken?)

with / for...

(Who? What NYC resident or stakeholder?)

so that

(What change do we want to see?)

In 2022, I want NYC government to...

How do you want NYC to govern with technology in the future?

What policies, programs and services are important to you?