



In order to make this tool as useful as possible, we have included several concrete examples of how we at Next100 executed some of these elements in a roundtable remix we conducted in Oregon.

Before the Roundtable Begins

Community and Content

- ✓ **Define the problem to be addressed**, set parameters around the scope of the issues to be discussed, and set preliminary goals for the roundtable.

The goal of the Next100 policy roundtable in Oregon was to bring together Direct Cash Transfer (DCT) participants, Community-Based Organizations, and policy professionals to leverage their experience with the Oregon DCT program and other national models to inform a forward-thinking set of effective, permanent, youth-centered policy solutions to end youth homelessness and create economic mobility in Oregon and influence national policy.

The Policy Roundtable in Oregon was not an attempt to address all aspects of youth homelessness in just four hours. Instead, it focused on a specific issue, using the Oregon DCT program as a foundation for discussion. By narrowing the scope to a clear, attainable objective with actionable steps, the roundtable ensured the conversation was both productive and impactful.

- ✓ **Ask, do we have the right people to lead this roundtable authentically?** If yes, initiate advance conversations with people with lived experience and give a strong rationale for why their voice matters in this policy area.

For the Next100 policy roundtable, we invited twenty-four individuals who were knowledgeable about DCT either through lived experience or research to participate in the conversation. To ensure their voices were genuinely heard and integrated into the shared vision of the remix, we gathered feedback on the agenda and created space for collaboration through one-on-one meetings with each participant. These one-on-ones were essential for building trust, fostering relationships, and positioning ourselves as partners with a shared vision to expand DCT programs.

During these advance meetings, we addressed participants' questions, ensured their needs were met, and provided necessary accommodations to make participation as accessible as possible. Our goal was to meet young people where they are, removing barriers and ensuring their engagement was easy.

- ✓ **Create an ideal guestlist** that includes traditional experts and lived experience experts; consider the ratio, so that participants with lived experience have a critical mass of nontraditional policy experts; also, consider the diversity of prospective participants, thinking about race, SES, ability status, age, gender, education levels, and other factors that feel germane to getting a robust and diverse set of perspectives.

In Oregon, we carefully selected participants to foster a dynamic and inclusive environment. We excluded individuals who might upend the power dynamics, such as those directly overseeing the existing pilot in which most of the individuals with lived experience were participants. However, we recognized the importance of including case workers, whose insights were invaluable during our one-on-one meetings and weekly calls. A legislative staffer was a participant to ensure that the findings were shared with policymakers and used to drive policy change.

- ✓ **Enlist trusted community partners** to help lay the groundwork for the exercise and prepare for the day.
- ✓ **Put in the time to build two-way, trusting relationships** with participants, including in one-on-one meetings whenever possible.

In the two months leading up to the roundtable, we engaged with twenty-five individuals through approximately fifty meetings conducted via FaceTime, Zoom, and phone calls. These meetings were crucial for developing the session structure and collaborating with organizations to ensure logistical support for young people was good and all taken care of. We also maintained weekly meetings with case managers to build trust, address their needs, and facilitate the use of our host's facilities. Furthermore, we frequently engaged with policymakers to involve them in the agenda and overall planning process, ensuring that their perspectives were integrated alongside young people with lived experience.

- ✓ **Engage participants and partners** in co-creating and designing the day and ultimately create a clear agenda for participants and facilitation guide for planners.

Here is a [link to the day's agenda in Oregon](#). Note: the facilitation guide was much more detailed with a description of sub-objectives, activities, and facilitator moves.

- ✓ **Bring participants together for a group call** in advance of the roundtable to define norms, finalize logistics, and set expectations for the day.
- ✓ **Assume that gaps in background knowledge will need to be filled** in for all participants and differentiate the approach accordingly (for example, some participants might not know what is meant by “policy,” whereas others might not personally know anyone who has been incarcerated).
- ✓ **Set expectations for people who may not have participated in a policy roundtable before** by explaining what they can expect and answering any questions.
- ✓ **Set expectations for people who regularly participate in policy roundtables** by describing how the roundtable remix is different and encouraging participants to think about how they show up in group settings.
- ✓ **Carefully consider pre-reading or pre-work** for participants that is broadly accessible across language and education levels and serves to provide a common frame for the policy roundtable.
- ✓ **Prepare a thin packet of relevant data** that can help guide participants throughout the discussion and is available to participants in advance.

Location and Accessibility

- ✓ **Finalize the location** for your roundtable remix and be responsive to what works best for lived-experience experts.
- ✓ **Pay close attention to travel and other accessibility needs** to ensure participants can attend, including paying for travel when possible.
- ✓ **Make informed decisions about location and accessibility** based on strategic relationship-building and conversations with participants in the lead-up to the roundtable day.

Incentives and Compensation

- ✓ **Investigate and determine appropriate compensation** for lived-experience experts, which serves to honor their time and expertise as well as to professionalize the experience for participants.

Previous research published at Next100 gives some guidelines for how to think about compensation for participants:

In deciding how much and how to pay lived-experience experts, organizations should consider the following:

- *What amount would be meaningful to participants?*
- *Do participants have bank accounts, or are alternative methods of payment needed? (Consider options for flexible payment, such as direct deposit, checks, Venmo, Zelle, and cards with preloaded cash.)*
- *How might any payments interact with other sources of income or benefits? What implications might payments have for income taxes?*
- *What steps can you take to ensure all participants overcome potential barriers to payment?*

- ✓ **Be clear and transparent about payment and reimbursement** amounts and processes in advance.

For our roundtable, we paid participants \$80 an hour for their work and the payment methods were flexible—in one case, we sent money via Zelle to a participant because direct deposit was not working.

During the Roundtable

Building Trust and Warmth

- ✓ **Affirm group norms and community agreements** established in the pre-call.
- ✓ **Use first names only** and intentionally leave out titles and affiliations to foster an equal playing field.

For example, one of our participants has been conducting research on DCT for eighteen years and has published several articles on the matter; however, participants did not know about her background until it emerged much later in the day as she stepped up to facilitate a portion of the content. This enabled the group to avoid harmful power dynamics and engage in free-flowing conversation.



- ✓ **Consider choosing a group name**, to help build shared identity and purpose for the day—in many cases, groups that come together for policy roundtables see fellow participants as competitors for their ideas rather than a collective driving towards a shared goal.

For example, the group in Oregon dubbed itself the “visionaries,” and created a space of shared purpose by spending a brief amount of time engaged in an activity that activated the visionary in each participant, as they drew an image of a young person thriving after participating in a direct cash transfer program. Many of these images were of young people thriving, housed and truly happy.

- ✓ **Take time to build trust** within the group and for all participants to get to know each other as individuals.
- ✓ **Reiterate the goals and align the group on expectations.**
- ✓ At the end of the day, **be clear and transparent about next steps and opportunities to stay engaged.**

Authentic Leadership and Modeling Inclusion through Creativity

- ✓ **Embody authentic leadership** by leading with vulnerability and personal connection to the work: “I am.... And this work matters to me because....”

Our lead facilitator, Sofie, was the ideal choice to lead the experience. With her extensive experience in both focus groups and policy roundtables, she understood how to create a space where everyone’s voice was valued, regardless of their title or background. By emphasizing lived experience and fostering a collaborative environment, Sofie ensured that the loudest voice in the room was not necessarily the one with the most traditional credentials; rather she centered everybody’s voices.

- ✓ **Ask for accountability** (explain what you seek to create, and encourage folks to call it out when you fall short).
- ✓ **Intentionally create opportunities for different voices** to be heard in the space.

- ✓ **Avoid the typical roundtable trap of hours of sitting and discussing** and instead plan for a diverse range of creative activities that enable various methods of participation and engagement and are designed to foster equity of voice.

Three examples of nontraditional activities we employed for the roundtable remix:

Spectrum Activity: Participants were asked to respond to a series of “this or that” questions related to cash transfers. They then physically positioned themselves on a spectrum across the room, symbolizing their stance on each issue. This activity encouraged movement and facilitated lively discussions.

Coin Allocation Exercise: Participants were given a limited number of coins to allocate to various supportive services. This hands-on activity helped to prioritize needs and spark conversations about resource allocation, since it required participants to make difficult choices and tradeoffs.

Post-it Note Reflections: Throughout the day, participants used colored Post-it notes to share their thoughts and ideas. These notes were displayed on a wall, creating a visual representation of collective insights and fostering a collaborative atmosphere.

- ✓ **Consider exercises that get people moving around the space**, play to different strengths (consider art as expression, small group formats), create opportunities for nonverbal or anonymized sharing (Post-it notes on shared walls) or other approaches that feel responsive to participant styles and preferences.
- ✓ **Bring levity** when appropriate (consider fidget toys, art supplies, and other ways for folks to stay engaged) and use music strategically.

In Oregon, we asked participants to submit songs in the pre-call and used these songs strategically throughout the day as part of a playlist. Individuals were excited to hear “their song” pop up at various points in the day. We also had fidget toys and the small touches helped to create a more comfortable and inclusive environment.

- ✓ **Play to people’s strengths when choosing facilitators:** Who is direct? Who is an empath? Who pushes people’s thinking? Who can adapt/pivot on the fly?

For example, on our team, Lucy is very direct and to the point. She was an ideal candidate for giving directions that might otherwise have been tricky. Rudrani is very creative and attentive to individual needs, and she was able to guide conversations effectively and ensure equal participation and all voices were heard. Sarah is an expert on benefit coaching and so she was able to lead a somewhat technical and detail-oriented session.



Getting to Solutions

- ✓ **Chunk the content into logical sub-areas to be discussed** and discuss the scope and parameters of the each sub-area before diving into discussion.

Our roundtable discussion focused on three key areas: Cash Components/Duration of Direct Cash Transfers, Supportive Services, and Protecting Benefits with DCT. To maintain participant engagement, we incorporated short breaks between each session.

- ✓ **Keep visible notes** from participant discussions and activities throughout the day.
- ✓ **Create regular checkpoints** to summarize themes and lessons learned.
- ✓ **Utilize forced-choice or prioritization activities** to ensure participants grapple with tradeoffs that exist in policy decisions.
- ✓ **Facilitate debate and vigorous discussion** about various potential policy options.
- ✓ **Save time at the end** to summarize the learning and takeaways.

Logistics

- ✓ **Feed participants** and be responsive to dietary needs.
- ✓ **Come prepared to finalize compensation paperwork** in-person and make time to give one-on-one support.
- ✓ **Be mindful of how you set up the room**, dress code, music, affirmations, and other “first impression” choices that can enhance or hamper feelings of belonging.

In Oregon, we were intentional about the room setup to create an open and inclusive space. We arranged four corner tables and left the center open with chairs facing inward. This configuration allowed for easy movement and collaboration, ensuring that everyone felt comfortable participating. Additionally, participants were encouraged to dress comfortably, and facilitators adopted a more casual attire.

- ✓ **Be intentional about reflecting and gathering feedback** on the roundtable to inform future engagements.

After the Roundtable

Foster the Feedback Loop

- ✓ **Thank everyone in person and via email.**
- ✓ **Distribute a survey** to all participants to give feedback on the day and potential next steps.
- ✓ **Offer one-on-one meetings** to any participants who want to continue the conversation and/or stay involved.

We've conducted fifteen follow-up conversations with young people, case managers, and policy individuals to gather their perspectives and feedback on the policy roundtable. These one-on-one meetings provided an opportunity to build upon the trust established before the event and explore ways to collaboratively advance our shared vision for advocacy in expanding Direct Cash Transfer.

Advance the Work in Continued Partnership

- ✓ Recognize that many participants who were previously new to policy will likely see themselves differently—foster that empowerment and agency with opportunities for follow-up between those with lived experience and influencers/decisionmakers.

As a result of the roundtable, two young people with lived experience will join Sofie at the Innovation Summit in Oregon to lead a breakout session, sharing lessons from DCT and recommendation for policy change. It's essential to ensure that spaces like these prioritize lived expertise and engage young people directly with decision-makers. Moving forward, these young advocates will continue to make their voices heard, including by testifying to state departments about DCT's impact and proposing specific policy solutions based on the policy roundtable remix.

- ✓ **Consider producing a publicly accessible write-up** of the roundtable findings, distributing to program participants for input before publication for genuine feedback.
- ✓ **Be responsive to next steps** generated by roundtable participants. Follow through!

Need More Guidance?

Feel free to reach out to the Next100 team (hello@thenext100.org) if you are considering remixing the traditional policy roundtable experience and need support.

While this checklist can provide helpful guidance, there are many additional lessons that we've learned along the way that can make this an invaluable experience for participants and facilitators.