YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Hosting a Youth Summit
Youth Summits

Do you want to hear the opinions of your younger constituents and interact with them first hand? You might consider hosting a Youth Summit.

Youth summits can be an effective way to begin a new youth-focused city initiative, or a means of gathering youth views to guide municipal policies and planning. They provide a forum where young people can interact and brainstorm while community leaders hear youth’s opinions on various topics with relation to city government.

Before the Event

■ Define the Goal of the Event
  • Have youth involved with setting the goals.
  • Dedicate time at the beginning of the summit to ensure everyone shares an understanding of the goals and how city officials will apply input from youth.

■ Age range: Make sure to have an idea of the age range of the attendees to the summit.
  • Is this going to cater more towards the issue for teens or younger children?
  • Will adults also be attending the event?
  • If so, what role will they play in summit?

■ Resources/Funding: Consider how much funding you’re working with as well as potential collaborators, facilitators, and speakers.
  • Take note of amenities and services, such as food, your event will need.
  • Look for potential in-kind resource from partners.

■ Location and time of event: Pick a time and place that is accessible to young people, considering the constraints, such as lack of transportation, that can hinder their ability to attend.

■ Programming logistics: Consider the programming of the summit when selecting a location. For example, more small rooms for workshops or more large auditoriums for speakers.

■ Outreach: Reach out to schools and community organizations to publicize the event and advertise through social media.
During the Event

- **Presentations:** Set the tone of the event, to introduce the main topics of the summit, and ensure that all participants understand the goal of the summit.
  - Keep any presentations engaging.
  - Limit the time in which adults are talking at youth. The main priority should be to have adults listening to youth.

- **Workshops and sharing sessions:** Give participants a space to discuss the topic of the summit and other ideas in a structured, collaborative way.

- **Formal/Informal networking:** Formal networking can consist of including time for Q&A between youth, adult facilitators, and speakers. Informal networking opportunities can be as simple as the transition time between events.

After the Event

- **Feedback:** Giving participants a way to provide feedback about the event will help all those involved in planning it learn about what went well and what can be improved. This can be done through a follow-up survey or other type of communication.

- **Follow up:** Make sure to follow up with participants after the event.
  - Let them know how what they brought up during the summit influenced changes in the city.
  - Give them opportunities to stay civically involved.