



DELIBERATION ON CHILDCARE REPORT

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Unify Montrose Overview

The mission of the Unify Montrose project was bold: a group of randomly selected residents, representative of the demographics of their community, would deliberate together over the course of 12 weeks to converge on solutions to a pressing problem in the community: the shortage of affordable childcare in Montrose.

Did it work?
What was the process?
Why childcare?
Who is Unify Montrose?
And what is deliberation, anyway?

If you're asking any of those questions, welcome. You've come to the right place.

The following pages explain who was involved in the 12-week deliberation and how the childcare shortage was selected as the focus for the deliberation even though (as in every community) there are many issues deserving of attention. This report describes what happened during each of the 12 weeks of deliberating and provides the results of that process. Finally, it shares insights from the Unify Montrose deliberation and describes innovations attempted.

First, though—what is deliberation, anyway?

Deliberation, defined

All over the world, and most recently in Montrose, Colorado, people are using deliberation to make decisions that are wise and well-informed and that affect their lives and their communities.

Unlike a political process, where different interests are competing with each other to get their way, the

process of deliberation brings people together for well-informed and respectful conversation, takes advantage of their different experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives, and asks them to learn from each other to create a “collective wisdom” to determine how best to achieve a Shared Goal.

For Unify Montrose, the Shared Goal took shape over the course of many weeks and after many conversations with over 70 parents, childcare leaders, government officials, and other Montrose residents. In its final form, the Shared Goal for Unify Montrose was phrased like this:



Shared Goal

“Every parent and guardian in Montrose shall have access to dependable, safe, affordable, and enriching childcare options so they can work, attend school, or otherwise contribute to our community.”

Over 12 weeks, the Unify Montrose Assembly of 46 Montrose residents participated in a series of online conversations where they got to know one another, learned about the childcare problem in great detail, discussed and weighed the merits of various ways of solving the problem, and ultimately voted on whether any of those possible solutions would improve the current situation.

About Unify Montrose and Unify America

The deliberation in Montrose was organized by Unify America in partnership with local leaders in the Montrose community. That partnership, eventually including the 46 residents who made up the deliberating Assembly, was named Unify Montrose.

Unify America is a non-partisan, non-profit organization whose mission is to replace political fighting with problem solving. Partnering with communities, non-profits, and other organizations, Unify America combines interactive technology and entertainment with best practices in civil discourse and deliberation to reduce political polarization, teach problem-solving skills, and empower people to make civic change.

Unify America is supported by individual donations and grants from organizations like the El Pomar Foundation, the Boettcher Foundation, and more. You can read more about Unify America, its founder Harry Nathan Gottlieb, and its vision by visiting unifyamerica.org/about-us.



Unify America Deliberation Manager Joshua Chittum (green shirt) with Leah Okeson (middle) and children during an event at San Juan Brews in Montrose

How the Unify Montrose deliberation came to be

In 2022, Unify America was on a nationwide search for a municipality that had between 15,000 and 50,000 residents and that was willing to try solving a problem through deliberation. The partnership with a small community would allow Unify America to pilot, at a small scale, a model for deliberation that was meant to eventually work across vast geographic areas, using technology and other methods so that many thousands of people could participate.

Besides its capacity to work at scale, the model's other aim is to tackle complex issues that have been politically intractable by creating significant consensus on a way forward. The model's hypothesis is to establish a Shared Goal, identify multiple possible actions that might help achieve that goal, and deliberate over those actions to form a shared set of solutions.

The model is called "The Sovereign Model of Deliberative Democracy." The Unify Montrose pilot project focused on applying the Sovereign as a Citizen's Assembly, at a small scale, with the goal of doing a lot of learning before attempting it with more delegates over a wider geography.

Unify America's search for a partner community had a specific focus on Colorado, based on existing relationships in the state that could be helpful in terms of funding and making connections. Unify America's founder, Harry Nathan Gottlieb, was in Colorado Springs to give a keynote address at a conference for the El Pomar Foundation.

The evening before that keynote, he met, in a buffet line, Don Coram, a former Republican state senator and local community leader. Don invited Harry and Unify America's President, Michelle Sobel, to join him for dinner at a table with Linda Gann (a longtime community leader in Montrose) and other members of the San Juan Regional Council (the El Pomar delegation that represents Montrose County). Interestingly, the delegation included folks who were both right-leaning and left-leaning.



Don Coram, Matt Carpenter (Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for El Pomar Foundation), Harry Gottlieb (Founder of Unify America), and Kyle Hybl (President and Chief Executive Officer for El Pomar Foundation)

During that dinner, the group discussed some of the public problems Montrose was facing, as well as Unify America's ambition to find a municipality to pilot a new model for deliberation to solve public problems. At the end of the evening, the Montrose delegation strongly urged Unify America to consider Montrose for the pilot.

During Unify America's first trip to Montrose in February 2023, Unify staff presented to and met with over 50 community members. They were impressed by the civic spirit in the Montrose community, and found the community leaders and residents to be united in their desire to do what's best for their community, even if they didn't always agree on what that is. Basically, it was clear to Unify America that Montrose leaders and residents had a mindset conducive to deliberation.

The Process Overview

With the goal of gathering residents to deliberate and collaboratively identifying solutions to a local problem, the Unify Montrose deliberation took on four distinct phases of activity. In each phase, Unify Montrose sought to achieve a process with community-centric solutions, high levels of integrity and transparency, and outcomes that would be actionable and sustainable for the community.

#1

EXPLORE AND RESEARCH

Learning about local issues, and existing networks and collaborators; identifying a public problem for deliberation; collaboratively exploring and researching local and expert perspectives and solutions to the problem with members of the community
(February to May 2023)

#2

RECRUIT AND CONVENE

Creating wide awareness of the Unify Montrose project and the Assembly's topic of childcare and recruiting for the Assembly with a goal to find over 200 hand-raisers willing to serve in the Fall 2023 deliberation
(May 22 to July 2023)

#3

DELIBERATE AND ENGAGE

Conducting the deliberation and connecting with the wider community.
(August to November 2023)

#4

REPORT AND PURSUE

Reporting on the process and outcomes of the Assembly to Delegates and the wider community; planning for and implementing recommended actions by the Implementation Team and Advisors
(December 2023 - onward)





Residents and community leaders during the February 2023 focus groups

#1: EXPLORE AND RESEARCH

Deliberation Topic Selection

The process began when community leaders invited Unify America to Montrose. From February through April 2023, Unify America held a dozen focus group meetings, gave two public presentations, and had many conversations with community leaders and elected officials. The goals of those events were to establish possible partnerships and collaborative relationships and to explore potential subjects of the deliberation.

During these events, Unify America staff asked local residents what community challenges they thought would benefit from a collaborative public problem-solving process (aka “deliberation”).

Several challenges quickly rose to the top, including housing, economic development, mental health, youth development, and the lack of childcare.

In collaboration with local leaders, Unify America selected childcare as the topic for the deliberation and formed Unify Montrose, a partnership between Unify America and Montrose residents.

Ultimately, the issue of childcare was selected with guidance from local leaders, partially because of the work that had already been co-sponsored by the City of Montrose, Montrose County, Bright Futures, and the Uncompahgre Valley Alliance.



You can see the full 2021 Montrose County Childcare Needs Assessment report [here](#).



The Research Process

A goal in the Unify Montrose project was to provide Delegates with the information needed to meaningfully deliberate ways of achieving the Shared Goal:

“Every parent and guardian in Montrose shall have access to dependable, safe, affordable, and enriching childcare options so they can work, attend school, or otherwise contribute to our community.”

To that end, Unify America’s research staff and contractors consulted childcare and education experts and providers, academic literature, and the [Montrose County Childcare Needs Assessment](#) report to develop background information (the “Status Quo”), inform the design of Actions, estimate budget and Economic Impacts, and respond to research requests from Delegates.

The process included defining terms used in the Shared Goal:

- In Montrose (i.e., is the deliberation focused on the city of Montrose, Montrose County, the Montrose Valley, etc.)
- Dependable
- Access
- Safe
- Affordable
- Enriching
- Childcare

Additionally, terms and organizations relevant to the issue of childcare in Montrose and Colorado were also defined, including:

- Childcare Desert
- Economic Impact
- Colorado Shines

To develop the Status Quo Lowdown for Delegates, the team researched and answered a number of questions:

- What is childcare?
- Why does childcare matter?
- What is the supply and demand for childcare in Montrose?
- How is the cost of childcare determined?
- What is the cost of childcare in Montrose?
- How is childcare quality evaluated?
- What are perceived barriers to providing childcare?
- What is the profile of early care and education (ECE) professionals in Montrose?
- What is the profile of parents and guardians in Montrose in need of childcare?

These terms, definitions, and information on the Status Quo are elaborated in the Full Homework for week 4, which is linked in the Appendix.

Once the deliberation began, Unify Montrose received research requests from Delegates about the Status Quo and particular aspects of the eight Actions. The team responded to most questions before the next week’s deliberation, but on some occasions required an additional week. Unify Montrose posted responses, including corrections to information originally provided in the Assembly Scoops (short presentations that kicked off the Meetups), and/or in the [FAQ section](#) of the Delegate website.



Developing Actions for Deliberation

During community meetings and interviews between February and June 2023, Unify America collected ideas for Actions to achieve the Shared Goal. To that end, Unify America conducted 1) interviews with local experts and leaders in childcare, education, business, and government sectors; 2) community focus groups; 3) on-the-ground outreach like door-to-door canvassing and tabling at events and high-traffic locations; and 4) marketing and promotion in local radio, social media, newspapers, and digital ads that directed people to an online idea submission form. In total, Unify America directly spoke to over 70 residents, childcare experts, and community and business leaders, and over eight weeks collected [62 Action ideas](#).

In the same period of time, more than a dozen local leaders in childcare, education, youth services, and business volunteered to participate on a Solutions Team to narrow down these ideas over two marathon work sessions of over four hours each. The Solutions Team included the heads of:

- Montrose Recreation District
- Boys and Girls Club
- Community Options, provider for children with special needs
- Montrose County School District
- Bright Futures, the regional Early Childcare Council
- Maslow Academy, the largest private childcare provider in Montrose

The Solutions Team was asked to grade ideas on how impactful they would be towards achieving the



Solutions Team meeting to curate Actions for consideration by the Assembly

Shared Goal and to exclude ideas that required state or federal action to be viable.

They were asked to include only ideas that the local community could implement independently. Unify America then combined elements of the highest-scoring ideas to fit the time available for the deliberation and to make sure there was more than one Action for the Assembly to consider for every age group needing childcare. This process resulted in the initial eight Actions that Delegates would consider in weeks 5-8 (future details on page 21-22):

- Action One: Camp Montrose
- Action Two: Kids Program Connector
- Action Three: Childcare Providers Fund
- Action Four: Carebucks
- Action Five: Care Corps
- Action Six: Nurture Network
- Action Seven: Early Childhood Education Center Upgrade
- Action Eight: Neighborhood Preschool Project

#2: RECRUIT AND CONVENE

Outreach

Once the partnership was formed and the topic was decided, Unify Montrose worked to create wide awareness across the Montrose Valley over 10 weeks, beginning with the website launch on May 22, 2023. The initial awareness-building stage was designed to educate the community on the Assembly process and the deliberation's childcare topic. The official recruitment for the Assembly began on June 12, 2023, with the opening of the application to join the Assembly Lottery.

The goal was to find a large pool of hand-raisers who were willing to serve as Delegates in the Fall 2024 deliberation. Delegates could apply on the website through a digital form (available in both English and Spanish) or apply with a paper application (available throughout the community at events and through a direct mail campaign).

Possible Delegates across the community were engaged in several ways:

Direct Mail

On July 1, 2023, an invitation letter was mailed to all homes with a one-page overview of the process and an application to join the Assembly. It included both English and Spanish translations. The City of Montrose and Montrose County allowed for their logos to appear on the front of the envelope to demonstrate the collaboration and process legitimacy.

Events

Unify Montrose organized and promoted 35 events where community members could learn more about the process, ask questions, and apply to be part of

the Assembly Lottery. Those events fell into four categories:

- *Tables and sponsorships* at existing events, including the weekly Farmers' Market, Montrose Wine & Food Festival, the Montrose July 4th celebration, and a "Rock the Block" festival
- *Meet-and-greets* at local businesses and spots for recreation with high traffic (from coffee shops to parks and the Montrose Recreation Center)
- *Unify Montrose "Solution Socials,"* available both online and in person and designed to dive deep into solution ideas and answer questions from residents
- *Co-hosted events* like a partnership with a local coffee shop (San Juan Brews) that regularly celebrates local non-profits

At all events, materials were available in English and Spanish. Unify Montrose also offered activities for kids (including coloring pages, bubbles, face painting, and balloons) and t-shirts for possible Delegates.



Molly Ostrem and Alex Gibson, Community Managers on the Unify Montrose team, at an information table at the Montrose Library





Community outreach events in Montrose, Colorado in the summer of 2023

Advertising

Unify Montrose also purchased ads to build awareness and recruit for the Assembly in the following outlets:

- Daily Press, Montrose Business Times, and Montrose Mirror (ads in local newspapers)
- Townsquare Media Radio and Jack FM (15-second radio spots)
- KREX Channel 5 (30-second TV commercials)
- Fox Theater and Star Drive-In Theater (15-second video spots in local movie theaters)
- Digital ads (in both English and Spanish) including email, YouTube, Google, and Facebook

Social Media

The Unify Montrose team also created social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X), and LinkedIn to regularly post, and more importantly, run ads that spanned across Montrose Valley.

Email

The Unify Montrose team established a regular newsletter to keep interested community members up-to-date and aware of news and important events. A dedicated email (montrose@unifyamerica.org) and a regularly monitored inbox was also created to respond to community questions quickly and personally.

Speaking Engagements and Club Meetings

Members of the Unify Montrose team were invited to speak on June 28, 2023, at The Forum, a weekly community speaker series held on Wednesday mornings in Montrose. (You can view the recording of that event [here](#).) Staff also sought opportunities to connect and spread the word at local club and organization meetings, including the League of Women Voters, Black Canyon Rotary, the Montrose Rotary, the Newcomers Club, and others.

Presentations at Local Government Work Sessions

Unify America was invited to speak about the Unify Montrose project to local government officials on June 5, 2023, at the City of Montrose City Council

Work Session, and on June 25, 2023, at the Montrose County Board of County Commissioners Work Session. On both occasions, Unify America's founder, Harry Nathan Gottlieb, presented information on Unify Montrose and answered questions from elected officials and the public about the project.



A desktop and mobile phone example of the homepage of Unify Montrose's website

Website

The main calls-to-action across the awareness and recruitment campaigns were to visit the [UnifyMontrose.org](https://unifymontrose.org) website, which included:

- A community calendar of events with optional RSVPs
- A growing list of FAQs from the community
- Details about the process
- A form to submit questions
- A form to submit ideas for solutions
- The application to become a Delegate
- A video about the local childcare shortage from leaders and community members

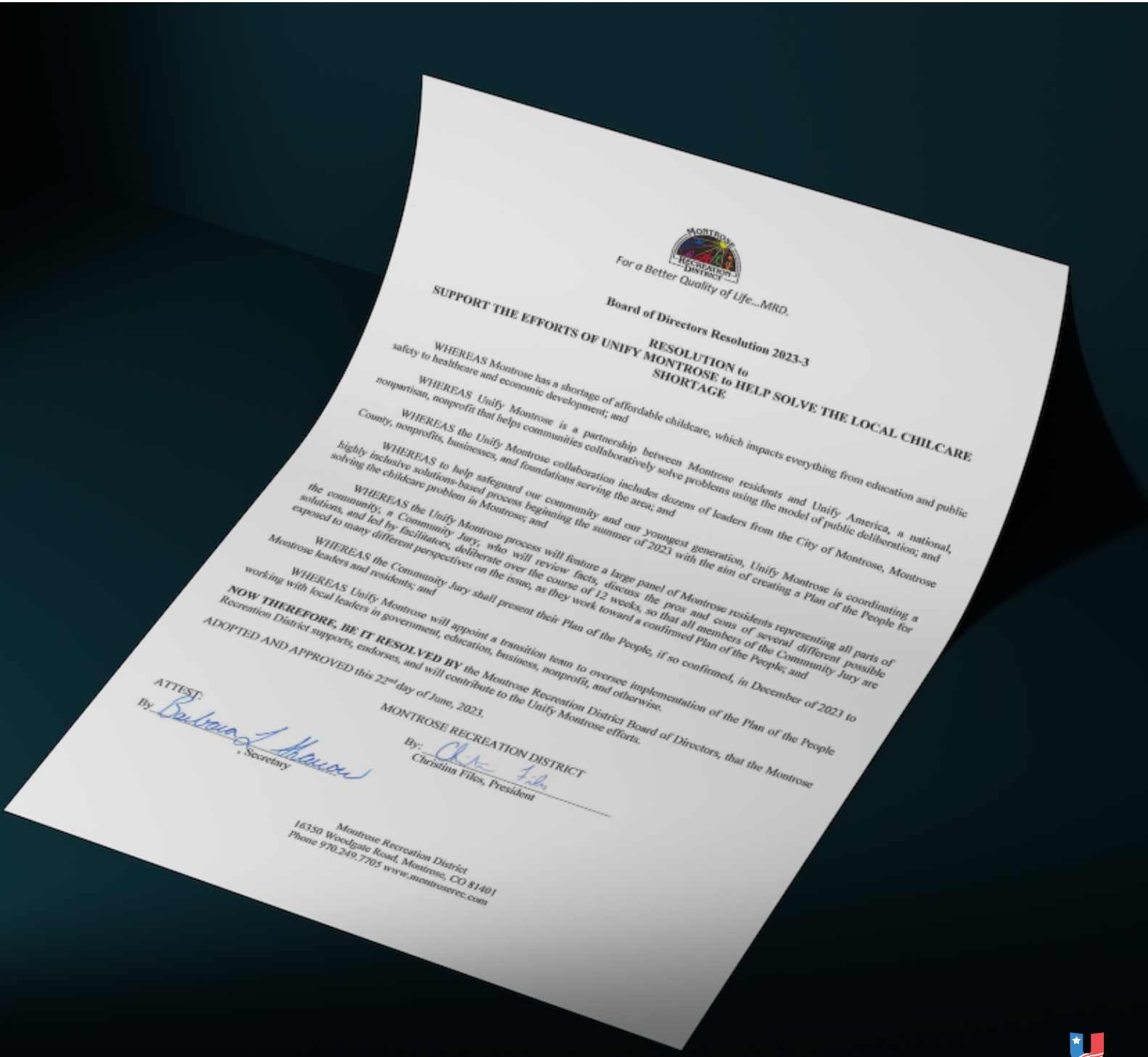


Supportive Community Resolutions

Unify America also presented at the Montrose Recreation District Board Meeting on June 22, 2023. After Sara Drury gave information during the open comment period, Executive Director Mari Steinbach introduced a resolution to support the efforts of

Unify Montrose to help solve the childcare shortage, which the Board voted unanimously to approve.

Read the full resolution [here](#)



For a Better Quality of Life...MRD.
Board of Directors Resolution 2023-3

SUPPORT THE EFFORTS OF UNIFY MONTROSE TO HELP SOLVE THE LOCAL CHILDCARE SHORTAGE

WHEREAS Montrose has a shortage of affordable childcare, which impacts everything from education and public safety to healthcare and economic development; and
WHEREAS Unify Montrose is a partnership between Montrose residents and Unify America, a national, nonpartisan, nonprofit that helps communities collaboratively solve problems using the model of public deliberation; and
WHEREAS the Unify Montrose collaboration includes dozens of leaders from the City of Montrose, Montrose County, nonprofits, businesses, and foundations serving the area; and
WHEREAS to help safeguard our community and our youngest generation, Unify Montrose is coordinating a highly inclusive solutions-based process beginning the summer of 2023 with the aim of creating a Plan of the People for solving the childcare problem in Montrose; and
WHEREAS the Unify Montrose process will feature a large panel of Montrose residents representing all parts of the community, a Community Jury, who will review facts, discuss the pros and cons of several different possible solutions, and led by facilitators, deliberate over the course of 12 weeks, so that all members of the Community Jury are exposed to many different perspectives on the issue, as they work toward a confirmed Plan of the People; and
WHEREAS the Community Jury shall present their Plan of the People, if so confirmed, in December of 2023 to Montrose leaders and residents; and
WHEREAS Unify Montrose will appoint a transition team to oversee implementation of the Plan of the People working with local leaders in government, education, business, nonprofit, and otherwise.
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY the Montrose Recreation District Board of Directors, that the Montrose Recreation District supports, endorses, and will contribute to the Unify Montrose efforts.

ATTEST:
By: *[Signature]*
Secretary

MONTROSE RECREATION DISTRICT
By: *[Signature]*
Christina Files, President

Montrose Recreation District
16750 Woodgate Road, Montrose, CO 81401
Phone 970.249.7705 www.montroserec.com



Earned Media

The Unify Montrose team also worked with local journalists and editors to answer questions and provide details in requested interviews, which included publication of the following articles and interviews:

- [Montrose Daily Press - 3.15.23](#)
- [Montrose City News - 6.7.23](#)
- [Montrose Mirror - 6.12.23](#)
- [Montrose Daily Press - 6.14.23](#)
- [Montrose Business Times - 6.15.23](#)
- [Montrose Daily Press - 6.26.23](#)
- [Montrose Daily Press - 6.29.23](#)
- [Montrose Mirror - 7.3.23](#)
- [Montrose Business Times - 8.02.23](#)
- [Montrose Business Times - 8.09.23](#)
- [KVNF News Radio - 8.24.23](#)
- [Montrose Business Times - 9.06.23](#)
- [Montrose Daily Press - 9.16.23](#)
- [Montrose Business Times - 9.29.23](#)
- [Montrose Daily Press - 9.30.23](#)
- [Montrose Business Times - 10.18.23](#)
- [Montrose Daily Press - 11.01.23](#)
- [Montrose Business Times - 11.08.23](#)
- [Montrose Daily Press - 11.08.23](#)
- [Montrose Mirror - 11.13.23](#)
- [Montrose Daily Press - 11.13.23](#)
- [KVNF News Radio - 11.22.23](#)
- [KVNF News Radio - 11.28.23](#)
- [Montrose Daily Press - 12.02.23](#)
- [Montrose Business Times - 12.07.23](#)
- [Montrose Mirror - 12.11.23](#)
- [KREX TV - 12.19.23](#)
- [KVNF News Radio - 12.29.23](#)
- [Montrose Daily Press - 1.3.24](#)

Door-to-Door Canvassing

Unify Montrose hired three local canvassers, and using a database of homes across Montrose Valley, the staff members and local canvassers left flyers and/or door hangers (available in both English and Spanish). This included over 50 hours of canvassing time.



Harry Nathan Gottlieb at the Montrose Forum

Community Flyering

Unify Montrose also placed informational postcards, flyers, and posters at local businesses, places of worship, and recreation centers with high traffic. This flyering project was also supported by local nonprofits including Community Options and the Hispanic Affairs Project. Over 2,000 flyers and postcards were distributed in both English and Spanish.

222

Montrose residents completed a form to express interest in joining the Assembly

Thanks to outreach support from the City of Montrose, Montrose County, Montrose Recreation District, and dozens of organizations and businesses during June and July of 2023, 222 hand-raisers from Montrose County filled out a form expressing interest in joining the panel as a Delegate.



Assembly Makeup

In order to create a random and demographically representative Assembly, the Unify Montrose team undertook the community engagement and recruitment tactics (as detailed above on page 10) and then hosted a live, public lottery event to select Delegates from the 222 hand-raisers.

The Lottery



The public lottery event

When community members filled out a form to express interest in being a Delegate, residents submitted their demographic information, including:

- Age
- Income
- Race and ethnicity
- Geographic location in the city or county
- Political party voting registration

Using this information, Unify America employed software called Panelot to generate 1000 representative panels of 64 Delegates, where every panel roughly reflected the demographics of Montrose. Unify America staff were assisted by the creators of Panelot, particularly Dr. Paul Gözl, who ran the software for the 1000 representative panel generation, and Bailey Flanigan, for providing crucial insights and advice.

At a live public event on Wednesday, August 2, 2023, the Unify Montrose team randomly selected one of those 1000 panels of community members as the 64-person Assembly.

In addition to selecting the Delegates to serve on the Assembly, the Unify Montrose team used the occasion to provide background information on the childcare problem in Montrose and to explain the deliberation process.



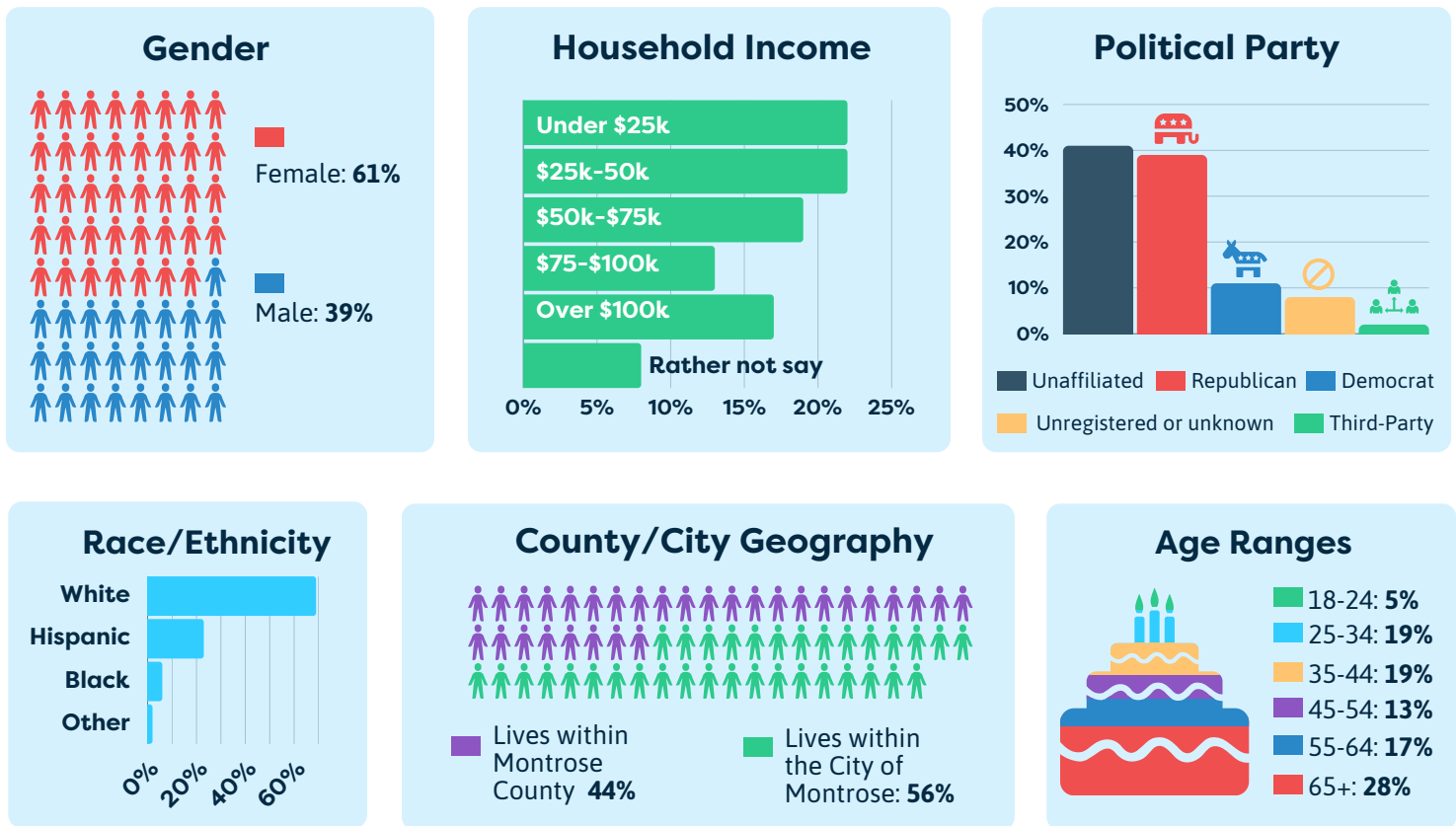
The event live-stream can be viewed [here](#).



Who was chosen for Panel #266, the randomly selected Assembly of Delegates?

The randomly selected panel of 64 Delegates represented the demographics of Montrose County based on data from the 2020 Census. Across the categories of age, household income, gender, race and ethnicity, political party affiliation, and geography, the representation of chosen Delegates reflected the demographics of Montrose County within an 11.38% margin.

More specifically, the chosen panel was within 4.38% of political registration, 3.25% of income, and 4.69% of race and ethnicity. The demographics of the 64-person Panel #266 were:



Given the topic of the Unify Montrose deliberation, residents with children under 18 currently living in their household were intentionally overrepresented. According to the United States Census, 26.3% of all households in Montrose County have at least one person under the age of 18. (1) For Panel #266, 38% of those selected had children under 18 currently living in their household.

The Unify Montrose team employed the help of the Panelot software a second time on Thursday, August 5, 2023, to select a random, representative group of 24 Alternates to serve in the event that a Delegate could no longer participate.

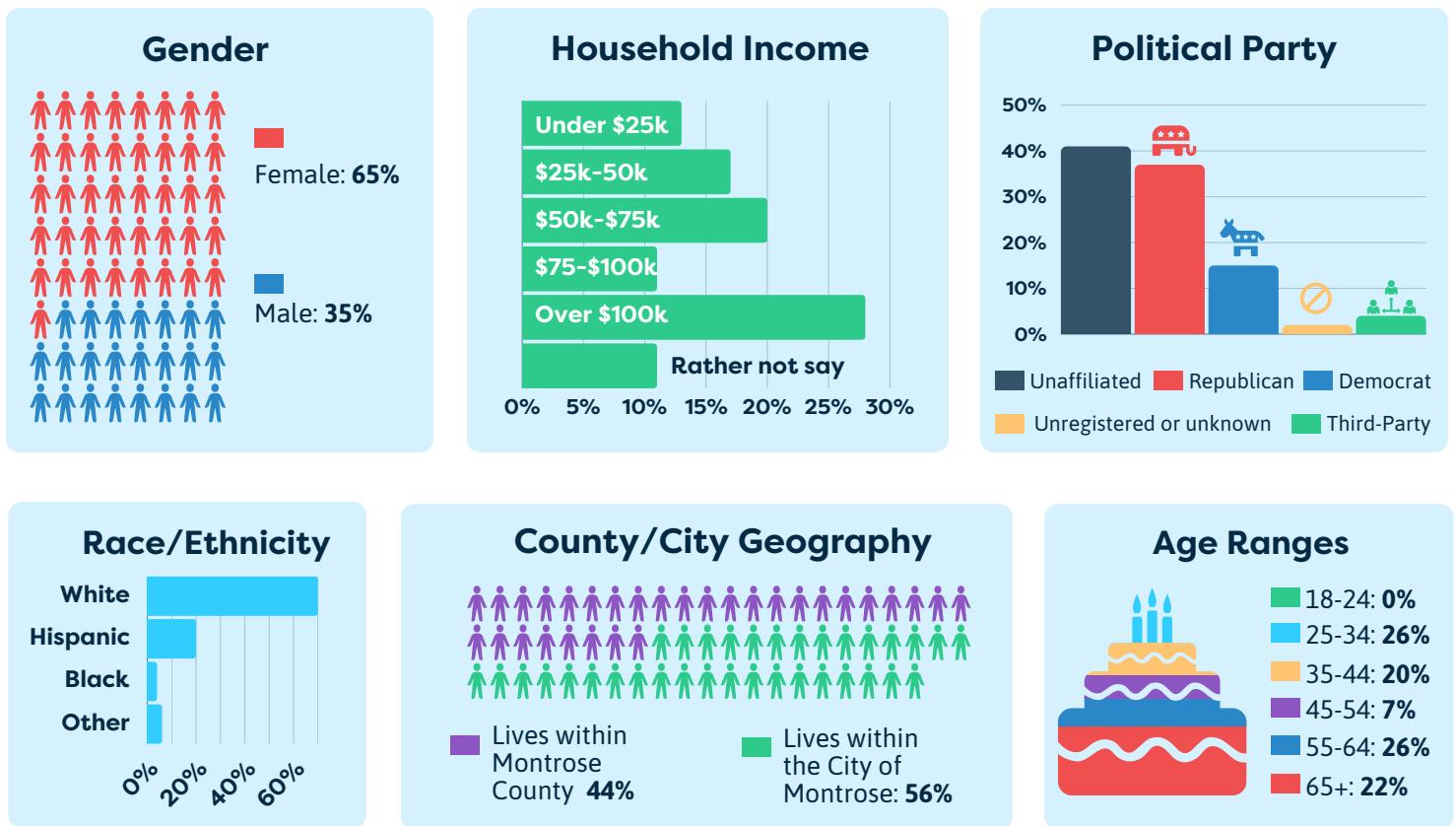
(1) U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). Households and Families American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S0101. Retrieved January 2024, from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S1101?q=Household Size and Type&g=050XX00US08085>



Unify Montrose Assembly

After the Lottery, Unify America staff contacted Delegates via email to let them know they had been selected for the Assembly. If the Delegate did not respond, they were then contacted by phone. Some Delegates declined to participate in the Assembly before the process began, due to changes in their availability. Throughout August, Unify America staff contacted all 24 Alternates via email and phone to request their participation as a Delegate. Some of these Alternates were unable to participate. The Unify Montrose Assembly began with 67 Delegates. The final Unify Montrose Assembly had 46 Delegates who participated for 12 weeks. Of these 46, 35 were members of the original 64 selected and 11 were Alternates.

The overall demographics of the Assembly remained representative. Political party affiliation remained within a 4% margin of county demographics; household income, race and ethnicity, and geography were within an 11% margin of county demographics. Gender and age were within a 15.5% margin. The demographics of the final, 46-Delegate Unify Montrose Assembly were:



Additionally, in the final 46-Delegate Assembly, 41.3% of the Delegates had children under 18 currently living in their household. This is an overrepresentation of the 26.3% of all households in Montrose County that have at least one person under the age of 18. (2)

(2) U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). Households and Families American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S0101. Retrieved January 2024, from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S1101?q=Household Size and Type&g=050XX00US08085>



Demographic Details

Demographic		Montrose Population	Panel #266 (Original 64 Delegates)	Final Assembly (46 Delegates)
LANGUAGE (3)	English	84%	86%	93%
	Spanish	6%	2%	0%
	Bilingual	10%	12%	7%
AGE (4) (5)	18-24 years	9%	5%	0%
	25-34 years	13%	19%	26%
	35-44 years	14%	19%	19.5%
	45-54 years	15%	13%	6.5%
	55-64 years	19%	17%	26%
	65 years +	30%	28%	22%
HOUSEHOLD INCOME (6)	Under \$25k	20%	22%	13%
	\$25k-50k	23%	22%	17%
	\$50k-\$75k	19%	19%	19.5%
	\$75-\$100k	15%	13%	11%
	Over \$100k	22%	17%	28%
	Rather not say		8%	11%
GENDER (7)	Male	50%	39%	35%
	Female	50%	61%	65%
RACE AND ETHNICITY (8)	White	75%	69%	70%
	Hispanic	21%	23%	20%
	Additional	4%	8%	10%
POLITICAL PARTY REGISTRATION (9)	Unaffiliated	45%	41%	41%
	Republican	40%	39%	37%
	Democrat	13%	11%	15%
	Third-Party	2%	2%	4%
	Not Registered/Unsure		8%	2%

Footnotes: Demographic Details

(3) U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). Selected Social Characteristics in the United States. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, Table DP02*. Retrieved July 2023, from https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP5Y2021.DP02?g=040XX00US08_050XX00US08085.

(4) U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). Age and Sex. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S0101*. Retrieved July 2023, from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2021.S0101?t=Age and Sex&g=050XX00US08085>

(5) Per the Census data, the total percentage of each of these age groups added together equals 79% (because no one under 18 years old is included). In order to set ranges of Delegates, these numbers had to be adjusted (or normalized) so they would equal 100% when added together. For example, 18-24 year olds make up 7% of the Montrose County population. $7 \div 79 = 0.0886$. $100 \times 0.0886 = 8.86\%$ which is rounded up to 9%. This was done for each age range percentage.

(6) U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). Household Income in the Past 12 Months (In 2021 inflation adjusted dollars). *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B19001*. Retrieved July 2023, from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2021.B19001?q=B19001&g=050XX00US08085>.

(7) U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). Age and Sex. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S0101*. Retrieved July 2023, from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2021.S0101?t=Age and Sex&g=050XX00US08085>

(8) U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). Hispanic or Latino Origin by Race. *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B03002*. Retrieved July 2023, from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2021.B03002?q=B03002: Hispanic or Latino Origin by Race&g=050XX00US08085>

(9) Colorado Secretary of State. (2023). Total Registered Voters by Party and State. Retrieved July 2023 from <https://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections/VoterRegNumbers/VoterRegNumbers.html#June>

Encouraging Participation

Unify America wanted to make sure that anyone who was chosen as a Delegate could participate in the Assembly. To accommodate the schedules of Delegates with children and jobs, weekly 90-minute Meetup sessions were offered on Sundays and Tuesdays, allowing Delegates to select the day that worked best for their schedule.

Additionally, for Delegates indicating a need, Unify America provided financial assistance for caregiving. Unify America also worked with Delegates to make sure they had the technology they needed to participate in Meetups, and provided 1 webcam, 3 computers, 1 wifi hotspot, and advice on equipment.

Finally, recognizing the importance of their time and the work they were doing for the community, Unify America provided Delegates compensation of \$15 an hour for their participation in Meetup sessions and an additional \$30 total for the cumulative time spent completing feedback surveys throughout the deliberation.

If a Delegate completed all Meetups and surveys, they were compensated \$390 total.



Delegates at the in-person orientation



Delegates at the in-person orientation

Facilitation

Unify America contracted with external, trained facilitators to guide the small groups (Trusts) during Meetups. The facilitators were selected based on their expertise in facilitating community deliberations, with emphasis on their experience in online deliberations. Facilitators followed a “passionately impartial” style for their guidance of the Trusts, focusing on leading Delegates through the process while doing so in a way that was neutral to the result and that enabled participatory, effective deliberation. Of the six facilitators Unify America hired, one was bilingual and two worked on both Sundays and Tuesdays, each leading two Trusts through the 12-week process. For more about the quality of facilitation in the deliberation, see the Survey Highlights in this document.



#3: DELIBERATE

Assembly Details

Before the deliberation began, Montrose residents, childcare and education experts, public officials, and business groups participated in the creation of a Shared Goal for childcare. The Shared Goal for the Unify Montrose deliberation was “Every parent and guardian in Montrose shall have access to dependable, safe, affordable, and enriching childcare options so they can work, attend school, or otherwise contribute to the community.”

Meanwhile, Unify Montrose collected [62 ideas for solutions](#) to the childcare problem from the groups above and from other communities around the country. Then, a Solutions Team of local childcare and business leaders convened and narrowed the list of ideas down to eight Actions:



Action One: Camp Montrose

Camp Montrose would be a partnership between Montrose youth program providers, childcare centers, and the school district, where they would bring their various expertise into a single new program. Camp Montrose would provide programming at every public K-8 school after school, on no-school days, and during the summer.



Action Two: Kids Program Connector

The Kids Program Connector would coordinate the transportation of students from all K-8 schools, public and private, to Montrose youth programs after school and on no-school days. The goal: every kid gets where they need to be as quickly as possible. Additionally, the Program Connector would host a website so parents could easily see offerings from all participating youth organizations in one place.



Action Three: Childcare Providers Fund

The Childcare Providers Fund would be a fund established by the citizens of Montrose. Licensed childcare providers in Montrose would be able to apply to the Providers Fund for reliable, multi-year grants.



Action Four: Carebucks

Carebucks would be distributed to parents living in Montrose according to household income, the number and ages of their children, and whether any of their children have special needs. Carebucks would be a supplemental form of money that can only be used to help pay for childcare and youth programs in Montrose.





Action Five: Care Corps

Care Corps would be a program that would train interested Montrose residents to fill a variety of roles in the childcare system as part-time, licensed caregivers. While open to all residents, it would target young people and seniors who could volunteer their services to the community.



Action Six: Nurture Network (10)

The Nurture Network would coordinate the efforts of local organizations that support Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) caregivers, help those organizations extend their offerings, and market to the community to encourage more FFN providers to get training, and more residents to become providers themselves.



Action Seven: Early Childhood Education Center Upgrade

The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Center Upgrade would replace the school district's trailers with a new facility that could serve 3- and 4-year-olds in Montrose. Drop-off times would be early enough and pick-up times late enough that parents could work a full day. A preschool camp would be available at the newly updated Center during the summer.



Action Eight: Neighborhood Preschool Project

The Neighborhood Preschool Project would establish preschool classrooms at every Montrose public elementary school to serve 3- and 4-year-olds in Montrose. Drop-off times would be early enough and pick-up times late enough that parents could work a full day. A preschool camp would be available at the new facilities during the summer.

More details on the Actions are available in the Appendix.



[Read the original 62 ideas at this link](#)

(10) Action Six: Nurture Network is the title used throughout this document. The original title for this Action was Action Six: Nurture Craft Network. Delegates voted to rename this Action as part of the Improvements voting process.



Assembly Meeting Structure

Starting on August 27, the Delegates joined one another in 90-minute facilitated Meetups for 12 weeks of deliberation, 11 of which took place online. During the online Meetups, Delegates were sorted into small groups known as “Trusts,” with four Trusts meeting on Sunday and four on Tuesday. Delegates met in their original Trusts during weeks 1-8, and were shuffled into new Trusts during weeks 9-11 to facilitate sharing across groups. Delegates returned to their original Trusts for week 12. The original Trusts had a consistent facilitator. The 12 Meetups were structured as follows:

Week #	Structure
Weeks 1-3	Orientation, including an in-person Meetup
Week 4	Overview of the childcare shortage in Montrose (aka, the “Status Quo”)
Week 5-8	Deliberation of eight Actions that could achieve the shared goal
Week 9	Discussion of Improvements suggested by Delegates, and the generation of Delegate Ideas, an exercise for coming up with new Ideas to consider beyond the eight determined by the Solutions Team
<i>Between Week 9 and 10, Delegates voted on Improvements, and had an opportunity to submit Delegate Ideas (to be discussed in week 12)</i>	
Weeks 10-11	Discussion of budgets and Economic Impact
<i>Between Week 11 and 12, Delegates voted on the eight Actions, as improved via the previous week’s vote</i>	
Week 12	Deliberation on the Delegate Ideas
<i>After Week 12, Delegates voted on the Delegate Ideas</i>	

All submission of possible Improvements, Delegate Ideas, Action Reactions, and voting were conducted via a Typeform survey sent to Delegates via email and shared in the Meetup. Delegate votes and comments were anonymized when shared in the [voting results document](#).



Details on the Stages of the Assembly

Orientation

In weeks 1-3, Delegates spent time getting to know one another and received Orientation to the deliberation process. The first and last of these Orientation Meetups were online. The second was in person at the Ute Indian Museum. Unify America designed these sessions to:

- Review for Delegates how they were selected and how the Shared Goal was developed
- Provide logistical information about the deliberation schedule and how Delegates would access necessary information
- Give Delegates a chance to share a meal in person, meet each other, and set norms for their small groups (Trusts)
- Share a history of deliberation and practice deliberative skills needed for the process to work

Status Quo

In week 4, Delegates learned about the pre-existing childcare landscape in Montrose.

Action Deliberation

During weeks 5-8, Delegates learned about and deliberated eight different Actions that could address the childcare shortage in Montrose.

Improvements

Prior to the week 9 Meetup, Delegates had the opportunity to submit Improvements to the eight previously deliberated Actions. These Improvements often resulted from the deliberative discussions that occurred in Trusts. Delegates submitted 128 suggestions, which were then consolidated or combined, resulting in 52 unique Improvements.

Each Improvement addressed some element of one of the eight Actions. Delegates voted on Improvements via a Typeform survey, and any Improvement that received more than 50% was adopted.

Budget & Economic Impact

In weeks 10 and 11, Delegates learned about the estimated Economic Impact of each Action (with adopted Improvements in place). The Economic Impact included three components: the estimated budget; the local return on spending, as calculated by Dr. Nathan Perry, economist at Colorado Mesa University; and the estimated impact towards the Shared Goal (e.g., how many childcare spots would be added).

Voting on the Actions

After week 11, Delegates voted on the eight Actions via a Typeform survey. Delegates indicated in their vote how much funding they would support for each Action: 100%, 75%, or 50% of the estimated budget as presented in weeks 10 and 11 for each Action. Delegates were also asked to comment on why they did or didn't support each Action. Finally, at the end of the Action voting, Delegates were asked, "As you think about your votes and the Actions you supported or did not support, what is your guidance for funding?"

Generation of Ideas by Delegates

After hearing feedback from Delegates that they wanted to generate ideas of their own, Unify America dedicated time for them to do so during the week 9 Meetup. Delegates were then allowed to submit new Ideas for Actions prior to week 12. Delegates submitted 26 Ideas, which were consolidated and combined into 16 unique Ideas. Delegates deliberated these sixteen Ideas during the week 12 Meetup, and then participated in a Yes/No vote on them.



The Assembly's Online Platform

Unify America provided Delegates access to an online learning management system branded with a Unify Montrose design scheme. Access to the learning management system was private and granted only to Delegates and certain Unify America staff. The site contained materials for Delegates to review before their Meetups, and also included the links to join the Meetup video conferences. Delegates who preferred PDF copies of the content received those materials via email.

For Delegates accessing the website, the Unify Montrose team unlocked content at least 24 hours before Meetups, and Delegates could preview at their convenience. Delegates were also given time to view the content during the Meetups, before breaking into their Trusts.

Each week, Unify America provided briefing materials for Delegates in four parts:

- **Lowdown Videos:** Videos presenting the information Delegates needed for that week's deliberation. These videos averaged 8-10 minutes in length and included professional actors, illustration, animation, music, and sound effects. Closed-captioning was available, and full transcripts could be downloaded.



Video screenshot from Week 1 Orientation



- **Lowdown Review:** A set of multiple choice review questions crafted to help solidify Delegates' understanding of information presented in the Lowdown Videos. Though Delegates could see whether they got the answers right or wrong, their responses were not tracked or stored, and the reviews were not graded.
- **Lowdown Summary:** A brief, bulleted list of main points covered in the Lowdown Video for quick review.
- **Full Homework:** A comprehensive document with detailed information and links to source materials Unify America used for creating the Lowdown Videos, Reviews, and Summaries. Delegates were not expected to read the Full Homework each week. Rather, it was provided for those who wanted to dig deeper into specifics and check the sources of information.

In addition to presenting weekly content, the Lowdown website included a map of the Assembly stages, from developing a Shared Goal all the way through to the Implementation of Ideas. Contact information for Unify America staff, a technical support link, and an FAQ page were also included.

All of the above information was also translated into Spanish, which Delegates could access on a dedicated Spanish Lowdown website.



Assembly In-Session Engagement: For Delegates

Personal Communications

The dominant engagement tactic for Delegates during the 12-week deliberation was personal communication. The Unify Montrose team individually called, emailed, and texted Delegates regularly to answer questions, offer accessibility/technology support, listen to feedback, check in on attendance, and ensure the Delegates had submitted needed forms and/or surveys.

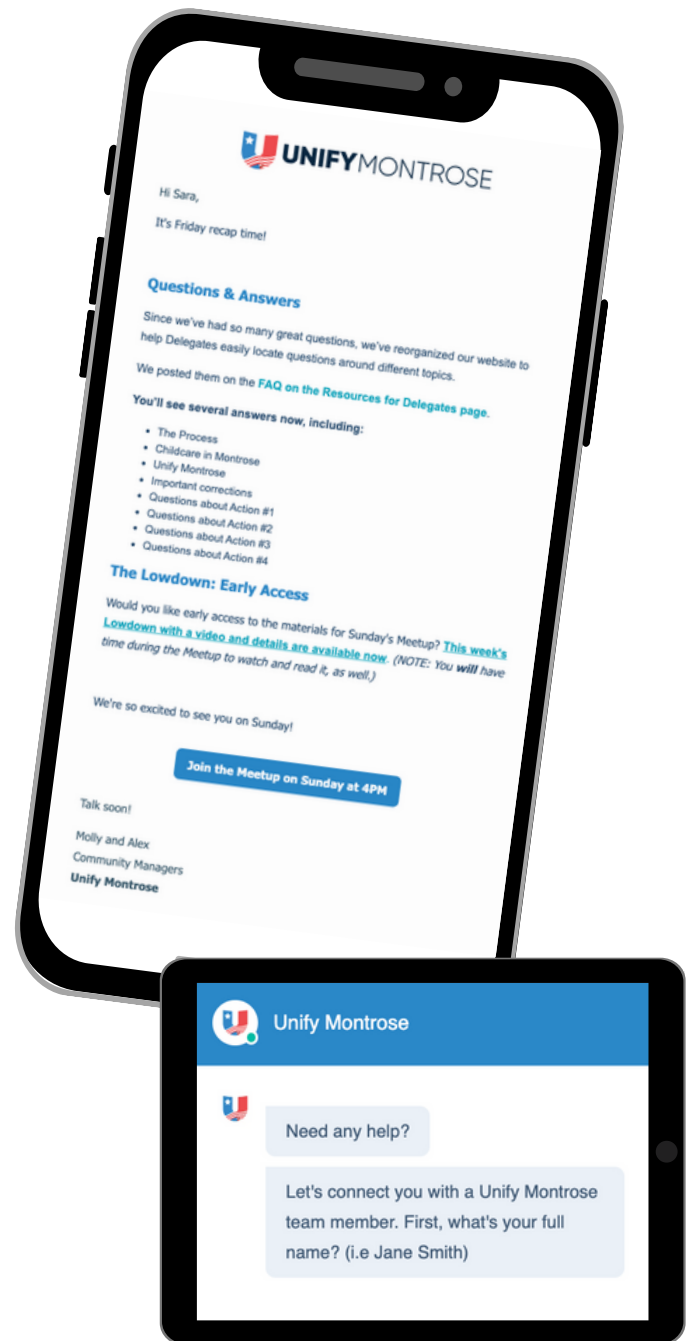
Emails

In addition to individual communications, each week during the deliberation the Unify Montrose team sent two emails to the full Delegate listserv. Every Friday, the Delegates received an email linking to information needed for their upcoming Meetup, an overview of important announcements, and a summary of answers to questions raised during the previous weeks (with a link to the FAQ page to read more).

The Delegates received a second email a few hours before their Meetup began with a reminder about the start time and a link to join the Zoom meeting.

Website & Chatbot

Unify Montrose introduced a chat feature on the UnifyMontrose.org website to respond immediately during events. If a Delegate needed assistance, they could open the chat box on the Unify Montrose page and be connected live to a staff member able to assist them with accessing materials, technical support, and general questions.



Visit UnifyMontrose.org



Assembly In-Session Engagement: For Community Members

In addition to engaging the Delegates in the Assembly, the Unify Montrose team wanted to ensure the community understood the deliberative process and had access to learn more or connect with others who valued collaborative problem-solving. Unify Montrose used three key tactics to accomplish that goal.

Catalyst Club

Unify Montrose introduced the concept of the Catalyst Club, a regular, in-person meeting of community members who wanted to deeply engage in the process and be a “catalyst” for more local collaborative problem-solving. The initial hypothesis was that participation would come from interested community members and residents who were not randomly selected to be part of the Assembly, but Delegates also joined in the Catalyst Club’s open meetings.

Unify Montrose held its first meeting of the Catalyst Club on September 7, 2023, at Pomona Brewing Company. At the initial meeting, the goals were to meet others interested in collaborative problem-solving, answer questions about Unify Montrose and Unify America, and co-create the mission of this newly formed Catalyst Club.

After the first meeting, here’s how the group defined themselves: Catalysts are local activators and ambassadors of cooperative community problem-solving. Together, the members of the Unify Montrose Catalyst Club will:

- Learn about childcare in Montrose and its full impact on the community.
- Follow the Assembly process in detail as the Delegates deliberate about potential Actions and solutions.

- Build an active, meaningful, learning-based community of other residents who want to encourage more collaborative problem-solving for Montrose County and beyond.

The Catalyst Club continues to meet regularly. At the first meeting, attendees brainstormed future topics of interest. Unify America staff then created agendas for future meetings based on those topics. Over time, local residents took over coordinating the meetings. With increasing leadership from local community members, the group also created their guiding principles and recommendations for future structure.



Catalyst Club leadership meeting

Regular emails

Beginning during the recruitment phase of the project, the Unify Montrose team shared a regular newsletter to keep interested community members up-to-date and aware of news and important events.

The team also continued the use of its dedicated email (montrose@unifyamerica.org) and a regularly monitored inbox to respond to community questions quickly and personally.

Speaking engagements

The Unify Montrose team sought opportunities to share the process during established local events, including delivering a presentation during an October 2023 Rotary meeting.





PRESUME POSITIVE INTENT
 EMPATHY CURIOSITY PRIORITIZE PROBLEMS
 DIG DEEPER ON PROBLEMS PURPOSEFUL PRODUCTIVITY
 VULNERABILITY OPEN COMM. THOUGHTFUL DELIBERATION
 HUMILITY PATIENCE BUILDING + OPEN + UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY
 COMMUNITY DRIVEN WILLING TO COMPROMISE
 WHAT IS A REAL NEED? EVIDENCE BASED EQUITABLE
 DECISIONS INFLUENCED BY PEOPLE IMPROVED



INCLUSIVE
 CHECK THE BIAS
 NON-JUDGEMENTAL
 OPEN MINDED
 ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE
 ACTIVE LISTENING
 TRANSPARENCY
 RESPECTFUL
 ACTIONABLE RESULTS → FOLLOW UP
 FEASIBLE SOLUTIONS
 MEET PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

COLLABORATIVE
 DIVERSE VOICES
 WILLING TO LEARN
 NON-DOMINANT
 SUPPORTIVE OF LEADERS
 ID RESOURCES
 PROCESS SIMPLIFICATION
 KISS.

AGILE
 DIVERSE VOICES
 WILLING TO LEARN
 NON-DOMINANT
 SUPPORTIVE OF LEADERS
 ID RESOURCES
 PROCESS SIMPLIFICATION
 KISS.



Montrose residents and Delegates attending Catalyst Club events in 2023

Assembly Meetups: Week by Week

The summarizing process involved a review of all available transcripts from more than 100 hours of small group (Trust) discussions. The Unify Montrose team analyzed transcripts, using text and video, to identify and highlight themes in the discussions, with the goal of capturing the core essence of the deliberations.

This process draws attention to topics that garnered widespread attention and agreement across the Assembly's Trust discussions. It's important to note that there are many sections of the transcripts which, while unique and valuable for the deliberation process, did not reflect a major trend and so were excluded from summaries. The summaries below also note instances of Delegate comments that raised concerns or questions. Frequently, these criticisms came from a small handful of Delegates, but they are included in the summaries in the interest of transparency and accountability.

Week 1: Orientation

Agenda

The objectives for the first week of the Unify Montrose deliberation were as follows:

- Give Delegates a chance to meet others in their Trust and their "Extended Trust" (i.e., the larger group of Delegates from other Trusts who are meeting on the same day of the week)
- Explain the role of a Delegate
- Explain the agenda for weekly Meetups
- Give Delegates a chance to share their reasons for participating
- Explain and discuss "collective wisdom"
- Explain and discuss how to avoid the "perfect solution" trap

Summary

Delegates introduced themselves to their Trusts and many shared their reasons for joining the deliberation. Common reasons for joining included being sick of normal political decision-making and wanting to improve the state of childcare in Montrose. Delegates reflected on collective wisdom and on avoiding the perfect solution trap of problem solving. Most Delegates expressed appreciation for the value of including diverse points of view to address public problems.

Week 2: Orientation

Agenda

Week 2 featured an in-person Meetup at the Ute Indiana Museum. During this Meetup, Unify Montrose aimed to:

- Give Delegates a chance to socialize in person and eat great food
- Introduce the Unify America staff
- Assist Delegates who were having access or technology difficulties in Week #1
- Build personal relationships within Trusts
- Develop ground rules for the remainder of the deliberation

Summary

Delegates gathered in person at the Ute Indian Museum. They were welcomed by the Unify Montrose team. The Meetup kicked off with two videos from Mayor Barbara Bynum and County Commissioner Sue Hansen, who expressed their support for the Unify Montrose deliberation and thanked the Delegates for their service to the





Delegates at the Ute Indian Museum during Week 2 orientation

community. Delegates were seated with the others from their Trust, and introduced themselves to one another using a series of icebreaker questions.

Delegates then generated a list of ground rules. For this process, each Delegate was asked to independently generate a list of what makes small group discussions effective and ineffective. The Delegates shared these lists with a partner in their Trust. Together, the pairs developed ground rules based on their lists. Delegates were asked to phrase ground rules so that instead of describing what not to do, they explained how the Assembly should act together (for example, not “Don’t interrupt,” but rather “Listen and wait for an opportunity to speak”).

At the end of the Meetup, each Trust shared one ground rule they felt was important with the whole Assembly. The list of ground rules was given to the Unify Montrose team, who combined them to create a list of Unify Montrose Ground Rules.

Week 3: Orientation

Goals

During the third week of deliberation, Unify Montrose aimed to wrap-up the Orientation phase of the process and covered the following topics during Meetups

- Who is Unify America?
- How to use the Lowdown website (the platform where Delegates access background information and reference materials for each week’s deliberation)
- How Delegates can submit questions and view Unify America’s answers
- The process, including explanations of the Shared Goal, how childcare was selected as the focus, and how the remaining nine weeks would be structured
- A review of the Ground Rules from the previous week’s live Meetup
- Confirmation bias and other common biases
- Active listening
- How to “make your case” by supporting your point of view using fact, opinion, and experience

Summary

Delegates reflected and discussed biases, the “make your case” format, and listening. Delegates expressed a clear understanding of confirmation bias and an appreciation for the value of listening in the deliberation process. They widely followed the best practices related to listening, turn-taking, sharing time, asking follow-up questions, adding comments that were responsive to each other, and digging deeper into topics.



Week 4: The Status Quo

Agenda

In the fourth week, the Unify Montrose team opened the Meetup with a short presentation for the entire group (the Extended Trust) before they split into their smaller groups (Trusts). This presentation intended to address questions or topics that had come up (from the Unify Montrose team or from Delegates) over the past week. The presentation was called the “Assembly Scoop,” and became a regular feature of each week’s Meetup. In week 4, the Assembly Scoop covered the following material:

- An overview of the current childcare situation in Montrose (aka, the “Status Quo”)
- An explanation of where Delegates could find Unify America’s research and sources for each week’s Lowdown (aka, the “Full Homework”)
- An explanation that some Delegates were being moved to other Trusts to ensure each Trust had at least five Delegates
- An overview of Delegate questions that Unify America had answered over the past week
- Acknowledgement that Ground Rules had been affirmed by 95% of Delegates
- An appreciation for all the kind and honest feedback Delegates had submitted to date

When Delegates split into their Trusts this week, facilitators focused the conversation on these topics:

- The list of final, Delegate-approved Ground Rules
- The Status Quo Lowdown (i.e., the current state of childcare in Montrose, as presented to Delegates via Unify America-produced videos and other materials)

Summary

Delegates reflected on the information presented in the Status Quo Lowdowns. They shared their concerns about affordability, availability, the negative consequences of insufficient childcare, and the difficulties presented by childcare providers’ business models. Delegates told stories about direct experiences with their challenges related to

childcare in Montrose and the challenges faced by their friends and family, including length of waitlists and the difficulty balancing childcare needs with work demands.

A handful of Delegates expressed doubts and criticisms about the accuracy of information and framing provided in the Lowdowns. Other Delegates asked questions about the information in feedback surveys after the Meetup. Unify America answered those questions on the Delegate FAQ page.

Week 5: Actions 1 and 2

Agenda

At the opening of week 5, Unify America presented another Assembly Scoop, which covered the following content:

- Where Delegates could find the FAQ section of the Delegate site, where questions they submit in weekly feedback surveys are answered by Unify America staff
- A description of the process by which Unify America narrowed possible solutions to the childcare problem to the eight Actions Delegates were deliberating
- An overview of the eight Actions the Delegates would begin deliberating tonight
- A description of the process Delegates would use to express their reactions to Actions and to suggest improvements to Actions
- An explanation of when, in the 12-week process, budgets for Actions would be created and deliberated

After breaking into their small groups (Trusts) and checking in with one another for 15 minutes, Delegates were asked to spend their remaining time:

- Watching Lowdown videos that described Actions 1 and 2
- Deliberating those two Actions and the benefits and tradeoffs of each
- Sharing questions they had about the Actions
- Sharing ideas for Improvements to the Actions



Summary

Delegates deliberated the benefits and tradeoffs of Actions 1 and 2 (Camp Montrose and Kids Program Connector). The most discussed benefit of Camp Montrose was the convenience for parents, who wouldn't have to leave work and transport their kids to other locations after school. Delegates also focused on a benefit common to both Actions: the creation of a website to provide an easy resource for parents.

Common tradeoffs Delegates discussed for both Actions included the logistical complexity of implementing the ideas, the difficulty of hiring sufficient staff, and the fact that neither Action created more childcare spots. Delegates also voiced concerns about the safety of the Kids Program Connector Action, given the busing environment.

In addition to discussing the Actions, many Delegates shared their confusion, concerns, and questions about the deliberation process. For example, some Delegates felt that there was insufficient time for them to deliberate and felt overwhelmed by the amount of information provided in the Lowdowns. Delegates also questioned what their role was in creating Action Ideas and how the Actions being presented had been decided upon.

Unify America responded to these concerns and answered other Delegate questions in the following week's Assembly Scoop and in the [FAQ section](#) on the Delegate site.

Week 6: Actions 3 and 4**Agenda**

During the Assembly Scoop at the start of week 6, Unify America staff continued a conversation about how they'd arrived at the eight Actions Delegates were being asked to deliberate. The discussion covered:

- An explanation of the process by which the eight Actions were determined, including where the

ideas came from, who helped narrow them down to eight, and why those people were chosen for the task

- Answers to Delegate questions about whether they would be able to contribute Action Ideas of their own
- Answers to questions about the possible costs of implementing the Actions

After splitting into their Trusts and checking in with one another for 15 minutes, Delegates were asked to spend their Meetup as follows:

- Review and discuss one Ground Rule from the list, as a refresher on how to improve the quality of the deliberation
- Watch Lowdown videos for Actions 3 and 4
- Deliberate those two Actions and the benefits and tradeoffs of each
- Share questions they had about the Actions
- Share ideas for Improvements to the Actions

Summary

Delegates deliberated the benefits and tradeoffs of Actions 3 and 4 (Childcare Providers Fund and Carebucks). The most discussed benefit of Childcare Providers Fund was the increased capacity to train, retain, and grow childcare provider staff. For Carebucks, Delegates frequently mentioned the benefit of the flexibility for families to choose where to spend their Carebucks. Delegates expressed concerns for both Actions related to where funding would come from and the consequences of not having reliable funding, the need for accountability and abuse-prevention, and a general worry about how logistically complicated the Actions were. Delegates also shared concerns and asked questions about certain facts cited in the Lowdown presentation, especially around the exact number of open childcare spots and the existing demand. A few Delegates were critical of how much information and how little time they were given before being asked to make an informed decision. Unify America staff addressed these questions and concerns in the following week's Assembly Scoop and in the [FAQ section](#) of the Delegate site.



Week 7: Actions 5 and 6

Agenda

During the Assembly Scoop this week, Unify America staff focused the presentation on the following topics:

- Reminding Delegates of the FAQ page, where they could see answers to all of the questions that had been submitted
- A preview of the plan to mix Trusts in a future week, so that Delegates could hear new voices and new perspectives
- A reminder of when, in the 12-week process, budgets would be created and deliberated
- Clarifications on certain facts previously presented in the Status Quo Lowdown
- A recommendation for Delegates to keep in mind the constantly changing supply and demand of childcare while reviewing the Actions

After splitting into their Trusts and checking in with one another for 15 minutes, Delegates were asked to spend their Meetup as follows:

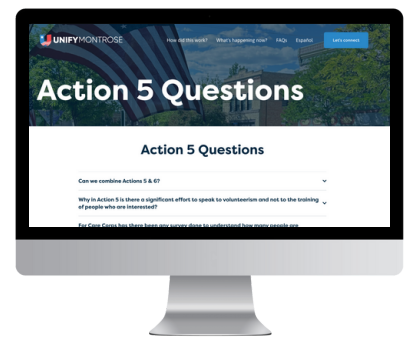
- Watch Lowdown videos for Actions 5 and 6
- Deliberate those two Actions and the benefits and tradeoffs of each
- Share questions they had about the Actions
- Share ideas for Improvements to the Actions

Summary

Delegates deliberated the benefits and tradeoffs of Action 5 and 6 (Care Corps and Nurture Network). Delegates focused on benefits of the Care Corps Action related to the building of community, empowerment of young people, the growth of the childcare provider pipeline, and the expansion of childcare availability. The most common concern Delegates expressed about Care Corps was the struggle to recruit reliable volunteers and relatedly the insufficient incentives for volunteers. To mitigate these concerns, it was widely suggested that the length of commitment should be reduced and incentives should be added.

Discussing the Nurture Network Action, Delegates discussed benefits including an increase in safety and quality of care and the encouragement of the childcare provider pipeline. As in their deliberation of Care Corps, Delegates raised concerns about the reliability of care providers and the insufficiency of incentives. They made suggestions to increase incentives for Nurture Network and to make sure to market both Actions carefully.

A few Delegates expressed concerns about the lack of funding details, and questioned whether Delegates would get a chance to advocate for their own Ideas. Unify staff addressed these questions and concerns in the following week's Assembly Scoop and [FAQ page](#).



FAQ page screenshot

Week 8: Actions 7 and 8

Agenda

During week 8, Unify America staff devoted the Assembly Scoop presentation at the beginning of the Meetup to the following topics:

- An explanation of the distinctions between Action Idea creation, Improvements to Actions, and Comments on Actions
- A preview of the upcoming Improvement Vote
- A preview of week 9's task of comparing Actions with Improvements in mind
- An explanation of how Delegates could submit new Action ideas after week 9, and how they could nominate one of the original 62 Action ideas (which were narrowed to the eight being deliberated) for voting consideration
- A reminder that Trusts would be mixed in week 9 to maximize diversity of perspectives



“I feel like even though at times we all had different opinions we respect each other, listen to each other, and we all shared the motivation to strive for succeeding at our goal to solve the childcare problem in our community.”

– Delegate Megan Wilson



After splitting into their Trusts and checking in with one another for 15 minutes, Delegates were asked to spend their Meetup as follows:

- Watch Lowdown videos for Actions 7 and 8
- Deliberate those two Actions and the benefits and tradeoffs of each
- Share questions they had about the Actions
- Share ideas for improvements to the Actions

Summary

Delegates deliberated the benefits and tradeoffs of Actions 7 and 8 (Early Childhood Education Center Upgrade and Neighborhood Preschool Project). Delegates focused on the benefits of the ECE Center Upgrade relating to the centralized location of the proposed facility, which would be more convenient for some parents, the continuity of care it would allow, and the fact that yurts are less expensive than traditional new construction. Common notes of concern Delegates expressed about the ECE Center Upgrade included the less convenient drop off for some parents and the complex logistics.

Deliberating the Neighborhood Preschool Project, Delegates frequently noted the benefit of the convenience for parents who lived further from the central location of the ECE Center Upgrade facility. The most cited tradeoff for the Neighborhood Preschool Project was the cost. Delegates suggested that yurts should be considered for the Neighborhood Preschool Project Action to keep costs lower.

Week 9: Action Improvements

Agenda

During week 9, Unify America staff devoted the Assembly Scoop presentation at the beginning of the Meetup to the following topics:

- An explanation of how Unify America grouped and consolidated the 120 Delegate-submitted Improvements to Actions into 52 for Delegates to review

- A review of the deliberation journey thus far, and acknowledgment that the original plans have been adjusted based on Delegate feedback (e.g., added steps for gathering and deliberating Delegate-generated Action Ideas)
- A preview of the process by which Delegates would vote on Action Improvements
- Explanation of how Delegates could submit their own ideas for Actions to achieve the Shared Goal
- A preview of weeks 10, 11, and 12
- A reminder that Trusts would be mixed to maximize diversity of perspectives

When the Trusts split off from the main group, their time together was divided into three parts:

- First, facilitators asked Delegates to introduce themselves, since the Trusts were mixed
- Then, Delegates reviewed the 52 Improvements that had been submitted by the entire Assembly of Delegates, deliberating the Improvements that stood out to them as most important
- Finally, Delegates take time to generate their own Ideas to achieve the Shared Goal

A second Assembly Scoop ended the Meetup this week, and included the following topics:

- A reminder for Delegates to vote on Action Improvements after the Meetup
- A reminder to complete an eight-question feedback survey after the Meetup
- A reminder to submit new Ideas for Actions
- An overview of how voting on Improvements would work

Summary

Prominent discussion themes across the Trusts this week included the fee structures for programs included in several Actions, the type of buildings that could or should be considered for ECE Center Upgrade, providing oversight and preventing fraud, and the length of time for volunteer commitments. Trusts also took time to generate new Ideas by thinking about what was missing from the existing Actions.



Week 10: Reviewing Improved Actions 1-4 and Their Economic Impact

Agenda

In week 10, Unify America staff devoted the Assembly Scoop at the beginning of the Meetup to the following topics:

- A review of the deliberation journey, including a preview of weeks 10, 11, and 12
- A description of how voting on the eight Actions would work
- Answers to questions about why sources of funding aren't part of the deliberation. Specifically, a couple of those answers included:
 - In this deliberation, the focus is on determining which ideas have merit
 - Then, after that step is complete, the community can establish costs and identify possible and appropriate sources of funding
- Explanation of materials provided for this week's deliberation, namely the annual estimated budgets, what the budgets deliver, budget assumptions, and links to estimated budget spreadsheets, a local return on spending including impact on Montrose local GDP, jobs created, and wages, as calculated by [Dr. Nathan Perry](#)
- A recommendation that Delegates focus their deliberation on whether the investment is worth the return
- A reminder to read the FAQs and keep asking questions

Delegates were once again sorted into new, mixed Trusts this week. The Trusts began their time together with a round of introductions, after which facilitators gave time for Delegates to review the Lowdown materials.

Summary

The deliberations within Trusts focused on the Economic Impact of Actions 1-4. Since this was the last time Delegates would consider these four Actions before voting in week 12, the Trusts' discussions ended with Delegates giving their

thoughts about whether these Actions would be worth the return on investment.

Week 11: Reviewing Improved Actions 5-8 and Their Economic Impact

Agenda

In week 11, Unify America staff devoted the Assembly Scoop at the beginning of the Meetup to the following topics:

- A review of the deliberation journey, including a preview of weeks 11 and 12
- A review of how voting on the eight Actions would work, and how the voting process was adjusted based on Delegate feedback. Specifically, changed to allow Delegates to vote in favor of Actions even if some of those Actions are mutually exclusive (i.e., implementing one of them would necessarily mean not implementing another).
- A reminder that Delegate-submitted comments are important, and would be reported with the voting results
- A clarification that all estimated budgets would include support for a contract grant writer
- A review of a correction to week 10's Lowdown (the estimated budget of Camp Montrose was \$240,000, not \$270,000) and an announcement that a new version of the week 10 Lowdown PDF had been posted with typographical errors corrected, a missing link in place, and a missing piece of data added. These corrections were also listed at unifymontrose.org/delegates under "Important Corrections."
- A reminder to read the FAQs online before voting, since new answers had been added to questions about the Economic Impact of Actions
- A recommendation that Delegates focus their deliberation on whether the investment is worth the return

Delegates were once again sorted into new, mixed Trusts this week. The Trusts began their time together with a round of introductions, after which



the facilitator gave time for Delegates to review the Lowdown materials.

Summary

The deliberations within Trusts focused on the Economic Impact of Actions 5-8. Since this was the last time Delegates would consider these four Actions before voting in week 12, the Trusts' discussions ended with Delegates giving their thoughts about whether these Actions would be worth the return on investment. Delegates also offered their reflections to their fellow Delegates on what they would be thinking about as they went into voting.

Week 12: Voting

Agenda

Unify America staff opened the week 12 Meetup with an Assembly Scoop covering the following:

- An overview of week 12 and the process for voting on the 8 Actions as well as Delegate Ideas
- A reminder that discussions around Delegate Ideas should keep in mind that Ideas are in their early stages and should focus on whether the Ideas should go forward to the next stage of being vetted for viability, improvement, and budgeting
- A reminder that all voting results and comments will be anonymously shared
- A reminder that there would be another Meetup on Monday, December 4, at 7pm, at which time voting results would be shared for the first time

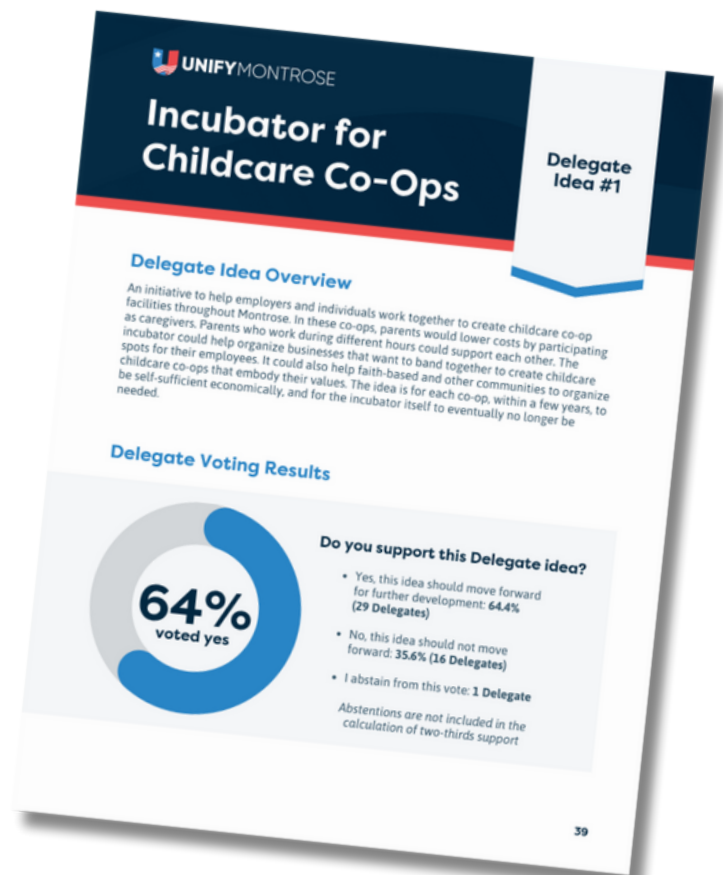
Members of the Unify Montrose Catalyst Club also took a moment during the Assembly Scoop to introduce themselves, provide an overview of the Catalyst Club, and invite Delegates to upcoming meetings on November 17 and December 5. The Catalyst Club is a regular, in-person meeting of community members who want to deeply engage in the process and be a "catalyst" for more local

collaborative problem-solving.

After the Assembly Scoop, the large group split into their original Trusts to discuss the sixteen Delegate Ideas and to reflect on their experience of the entire deliberation process.

Summary

After a short amount of time reviewing Delegate Ideas, Delegates discussed which Ideas had the greatest merit as possible solutions to the childcare shortage in Montrose. This led to a wide-ranging discussion across the Trusts. Reflecting on the deliberation as a whole, many Delegates shared their appreciation for their fellow Trust members and for the opportunity to consider new Ideas, and expressed a desire to continue this sort of community engagement in Montrose.



Example page from the public report detailing the Delegate voting results



Assembly Post-Session Engagement

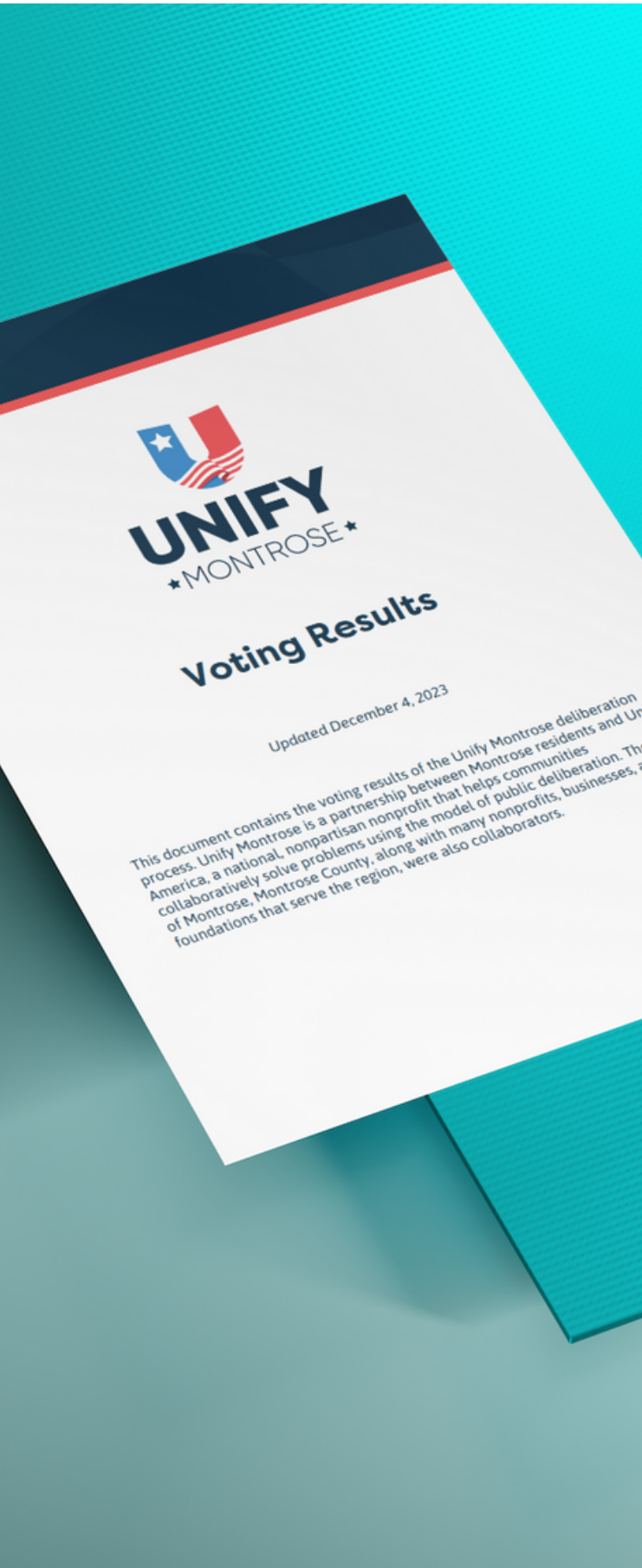
When the 12-week deliberation wrapped up, the community engagement tactics shifted to focus on appreciation, clarity, and next steps.

Unify Montrose held an optional Meetup for Delegates and members of the Solutions Team in December 2023 to express gratitude for the hard work, reflect on the 12-week journey, and share the results of the final Delegate vote. Unify America staff also organized individual interviews with Delegates to capture deeper understandings and reflections from their experiences.

Unify America also transitioned assets including social media platforms and the UnifyMontrose.org website, over to leaders of a newly formed local nonprofit designed to support the implementation of the Assembly's recommendations and continue developing opportunities for collaborative problem-solving.

Additionally, the following communication materials and events were created or planned from December 2023 to February 2024:

- [Full voting results document](#) (shared with Delegates, Solutions Team members, and members of the local media)
- This report
- A community event on the morning of February 5, 2024, to dive deeply into this report and discuss key processes and metrics
- A community event in the afternoon of February 5, 2024, to celebrate the Delegates and present the next steps from the local Unify Montrose leadership team



Voting Highlights

Delegates voted three times during the deliberation. In week 9, Delegates voted on the 52 Delegate-suggested Improvements to Actions. In week 11, they voted on the eight Actions. In week 12, they voted on the sixteen Delegate Ideas.

The voting results were released to Delegates and the Montrose community on December 4, 2023. You can read a summary of the voting process and results below. The complete voting results with Delegate comments are available [here](#).

Improvements to Actions

For each Improvement, Delegates were asked, “Do you support this Improvement?” They could vote Yes or No. Some Delegates chose not to answer. An Improvement was adopted if more than 50% of voting Delegates voted Yes.

For reference, an anonymized Improvements Voting Ballot is available [here](#). The juror number refers to the number that each juror was assigned when they signed up to participate in the deliberation.

Eight Delegate-Improved Actions

For each of the eight Actions, Delegates were asked, “Do you support this Action?” They could choose one of the following responses:

- No, not at any budget amount
- Yes, at some budget amount
- I abstain from this vote

Delegates who voted “Yes, at some budget amount” were then asked to select all levels of budget that they would support for the Action. They could select 100%, 75%, and/or 50% of the estimated budget they were provided for each Action. This means Delegates

could choose more than one funding level.

All Delegates were then asked for their comments on the Action (for example, “Are there any other comments on Action 1 that you want to include with your vote?”). Delegates were informed during multiple Meetups that all comments would be anonymized and included in the final report.

An Action is considered to be recommended by the Assembly if it was supported (that is, if it received Yes votes) by more than two-thirds of those Delegates who cast a Yes or No vote. Abstentions were not included in the calculation.

For reference, an anonymized Action Voting Record is available [here](#). The juror number refers to the number that each juror was assigned when they signed up for the Unify Montrose process.

Sixteen Delegate Ideas

For each Delegate Idea, Delegates were asked, “Do you support the Delegate Idea of [blank]?” They could choose one of the following responses:

- No, this Idea should not move forward
- Yes, this Idea should move forward for further development
- I abstain from this vote

All Delegates were also asked for their comments (for example, “Are there any other comments on Idea #13 that you want to include with your vote?”).

Delegates were informed during multiple Meetups that all comments would be anonymized and included in the final report.

A Delegate Idea is considered to be recommended by the Assembly if it was supported (that is, if it received Yes votes) by more than two-thirds of those Delegates who cast a Yes or No vote. Abstentions were not included in the calculation.

For reference, an anonymized Delegate Idea Voting Record is available [here](#). The juror number refers to the number that each juror was assigned when they signed up for the Unify Montrose process.



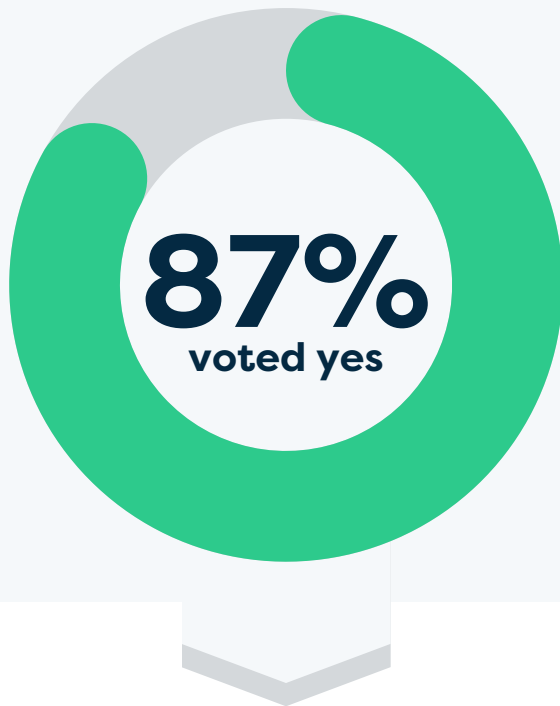


Action #1

Action Overview

Camp Montrose would be a partnership between Montrose youth program providers, childcare centers, and the school district, where they would bring together their various expertise to provide after-school, no-school day, and summer programming for K-8 students.

Delegate Voting Results: More than two-thirds support



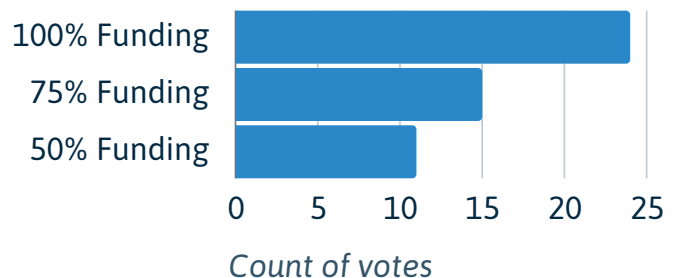
Do you support this action?

- Yes, I support this action at some budget level: **86.7% (39 Delegates)**
- No, I do not support this action: **13.3% (6 Delegates)**
- I abstain: **1 Delegate**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support

For the 87% who support the action...

Select ALL levels of estimated budget that you would support for this action



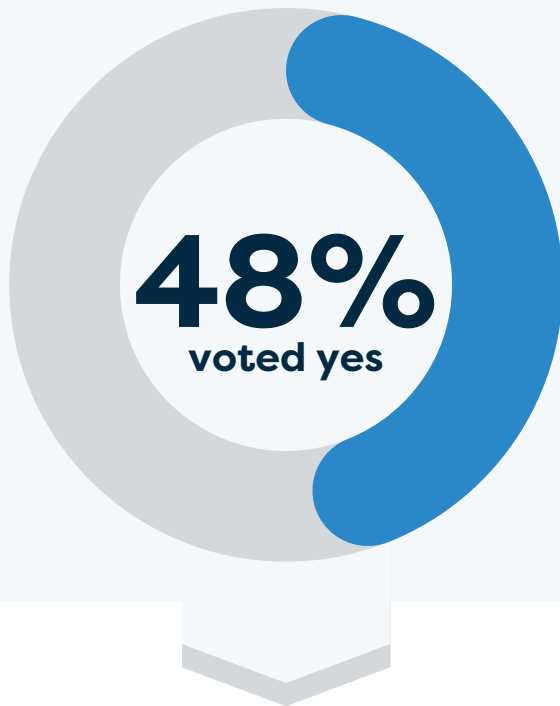


Action #2

Action Overview

The Kids Program Connector would coordinate the transportation of students from all K-8 schools, public and private, to Montrose youth programs after school and on no-school days. The goal: every kid gets where they need to be as quickly as possible. Additionally, the Program Connector would host a website so parents could easily see offerings from all participating youth organizations in one place.

Delegate Voting Results



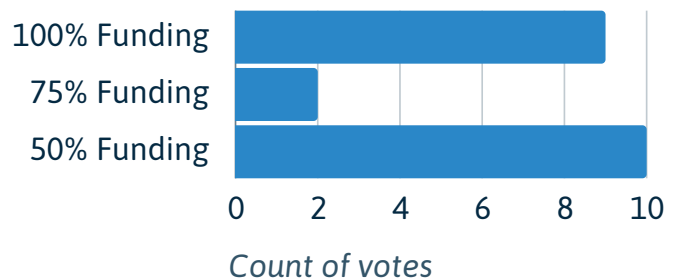
Do you support this action?

- Yes, I support this action at some budget level: **47.5% (19 Delegates)**
- No, I do not support this action: **52.5% (21 Delegates)**
- I abstain: **6 Delegates**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support

For the 48% who support the action...

Select ALL levels of estimated budget that you would support for this action



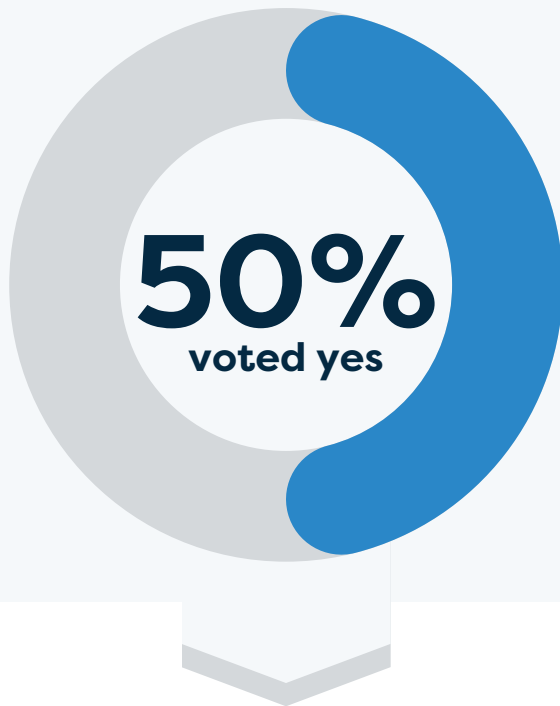
Action #3



Action Overview

The Childcare Providers Fund would be a fund established by the citizens of Montrose. Licensed childcare providers in Montrose can apply to the Provider’s Fund for reliable, multi-year grants. Providers would use this supplemental funding to pay better wages to staff and lower fees for families who can't afford tuition.

Delegate Voting Results



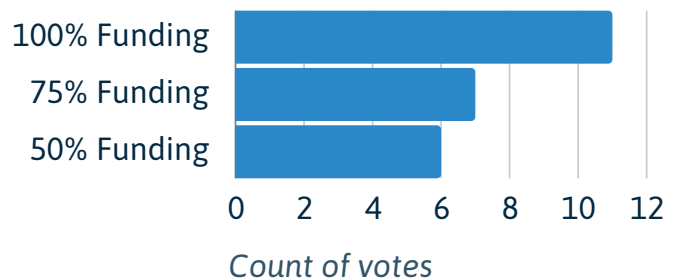
Do you support this action?

- Yes, I support this action at some budget level: **50% (21 Delegates)**
- No, I do not support this action: **50% (21 Delegates)**
- I abstain: **4 Delegates**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support

For the 50% who support the action...

Select ALL levels of estimated budget that you would support for this action



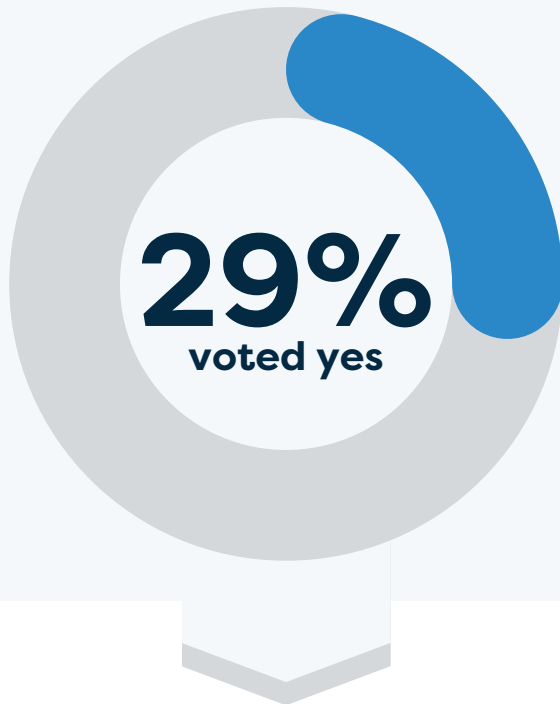
Action #4



Action Overview

Carebucks could be distributed to parents living in Montrose according to household income, the number and ages of their children, and whether any of their children have special needs. Carebucks could be a supplemental form of money that can only be used to help pay for childcare in Montrose. Parents and guardians would effectively have more money to spend on childcare, a combination of their own money and Carebucks. And then providers could charge higher fees that would allow them to pay better wages to their staff.

Delegate Voting Results



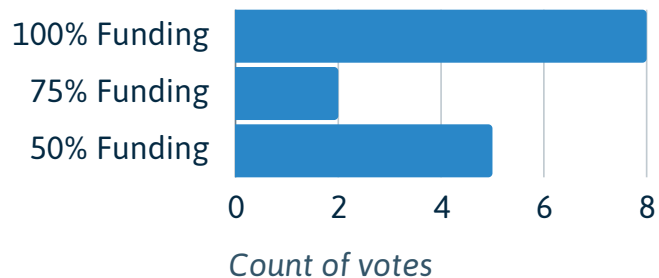
Do you support this action?

- Yes, I support this action at some budget level: **28.6% (12 Delegates)**
- No, I do not support this action: **71.4% (30 Delegates)**
- I abstain: **4 Delegates**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support

For the 29% who support the action...

Select ALL levels of estimated budget that you would support for this action



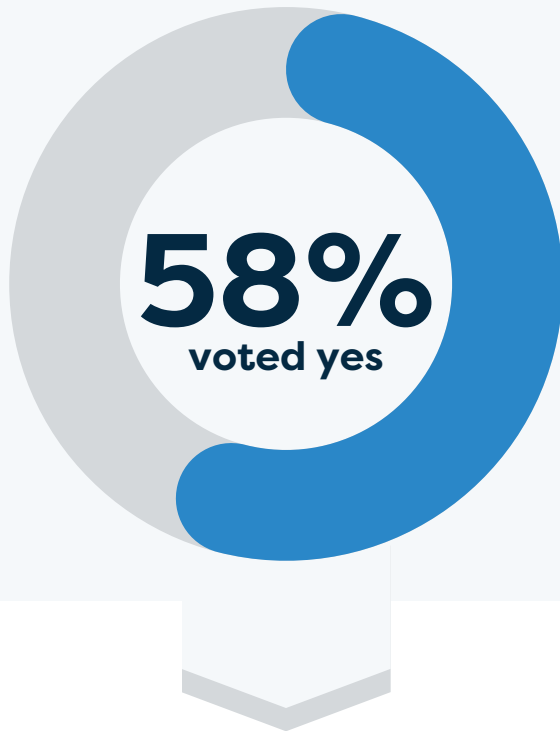
Action #5



Action Overview

Care Corps is a program that would train interested Montrose residents to fill a variety of roles in the childcare system as part-time, licensed caregivers. While open to all residents, it would target young people and seniors who could volunteer their services to the community, or work for school credit, a stipend or minimum wage.

Delegate Voting Results



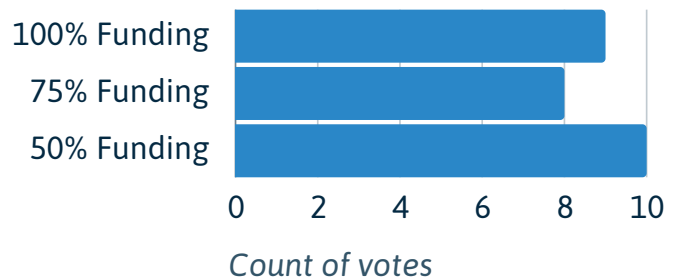
Do you support this action?

- Yes, I support this action at some budget level: **57.9% (22 Delegates)**
- No, I do not support this action: **41.1% (16 Delegates)**
- I abstain: **8 Delegates**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support

For the 58% who support the action...

Select ALL levels of estimated budget that you would support for this action



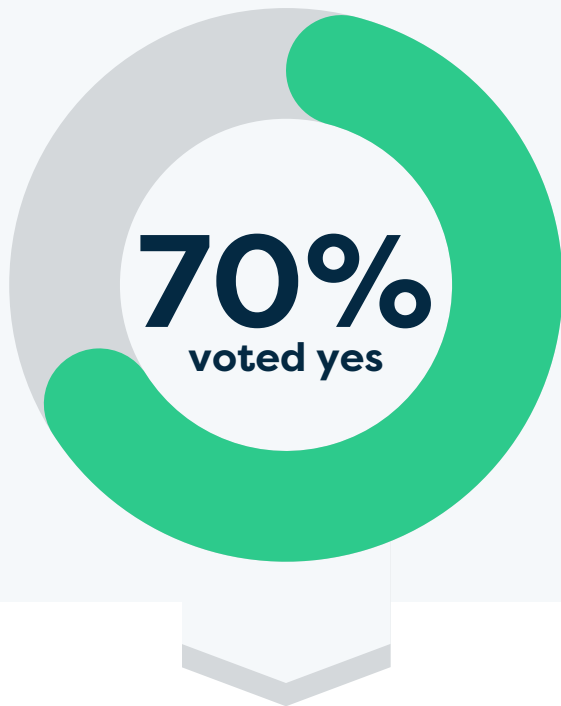


Action #6

Action Overview

The Nurture Network would coordinate the efforts of local organizations that support FFN caregivers, help those organizations extend their offerings, and market to the community to encourage more FFN providers to get training, and more residents to become homecare providers themselves.

Delegate Voting Results: More than two-thirds support



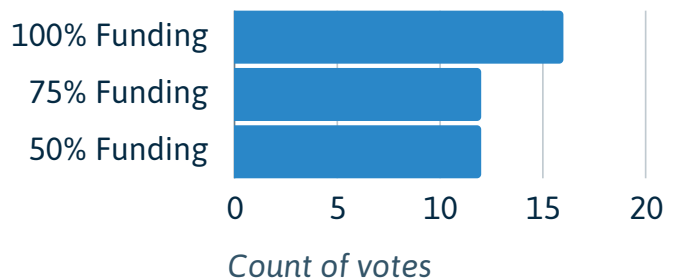
Do you support this action?

- Yes, I support this action at some budget level: **69.8% (30 Delegates)**
- No, I do not support this action: **30.2% (13 Delegates)**
- I abstain: **3 Delegates**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support

For the 70% who support the action...

Select ALL levels of estimated budget that you would support for this action



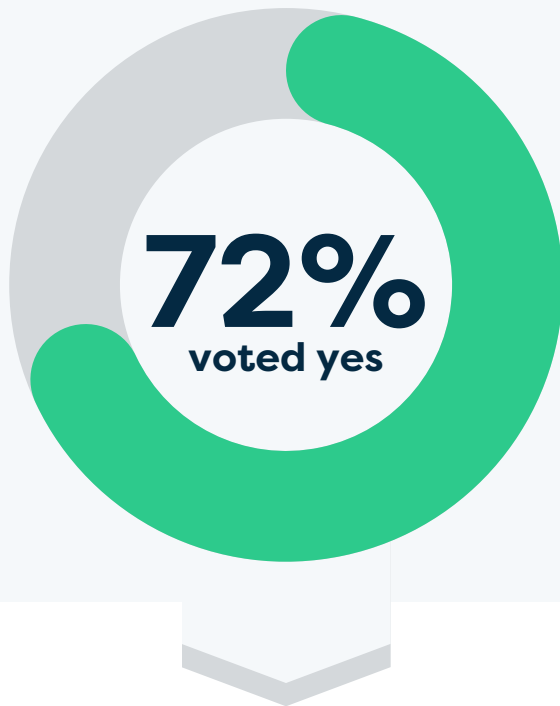


Action #7

Action Overview

The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Center Upgrade would replace the school district’s trailers with yurts that can serve three- and four-year-olds in Montrose, and would also add yurts at elementary schools as needed. Drop-off times would be early enough and pick-up times late enough that parents can work a full day. A preschool camp would be available at the newly updated Center during the summer.

Delegate Voting Results: More than two-thirds support



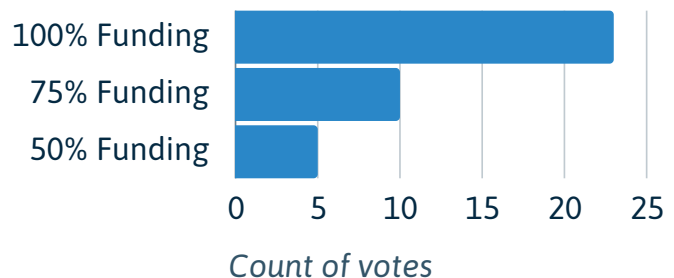
Do you support this action?

- Yes, I support this action at some budget level: **72.1% (31 Delegates)**
- No, I do not support this action: **27.9% (12 Delegates)**
- I abstain: **3 Delegates**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support

For the 72% who support the action...

Select ALL levels of estimated budget that you would support for this action



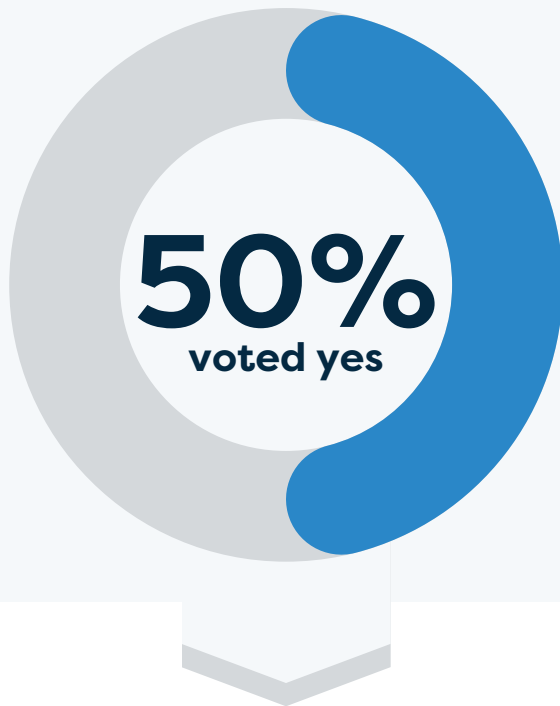
Action #8



Action Overview

The Neighborhood Preschool Project would build yurt preschool classrooms at every Montrose public elementary school to serve three- and four-year-olds in Montrose. Drop-off times would be early enough and pick-up times late enough that parents can work a full day. A preschool camp would be available at the new facilities during the summer.

Delegate Voting Results



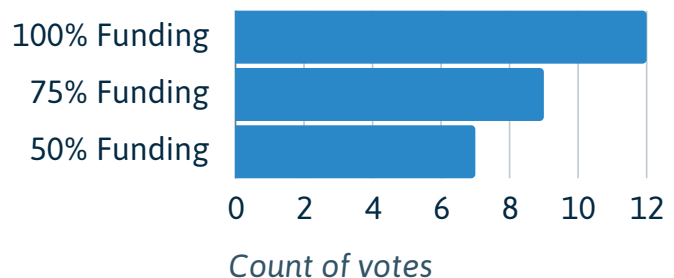
Do you support this action?

- Yes, I support this action at some budget level: **50% (21 Delegates)**
- No, I do not support this action: **50% (21 Delegates)**
- I abstain: **4 Delegates**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support

For the 50% who support the action...

Select ALL levels of budget that you would support for this action



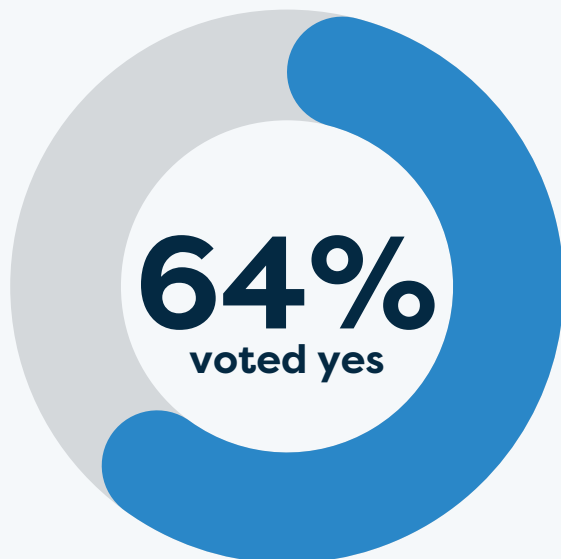
Delegate
Idea #1

Incubator for Childcare Co-Ops

Delegate Idea Overview

An initiative to help employers and individuals work together to create childcare co-op facilities throughout Montrose. In these co-ops, parents would lower costs by participating as caregivers. Parents who work during different hours could support each other. The incubator could help organize businesses that want to band together to create childcare spots for their employees. It could also help faith-based and other communities to organize childcare co-ops that embody their values. The idea is for each co-op, within a few years, to be self-sufficient economically, and for the incubator itself to eventually no longer be needed.

Delegate Voting Results



Do you support this Delegate idea?

- Yes, this idea should move forward for further development: **64.4% (29 Delegates)**
- No, this idea should not move forward: **35.6% (16 Delegates)**
- I abstain from this vote: **1 Delegate**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support

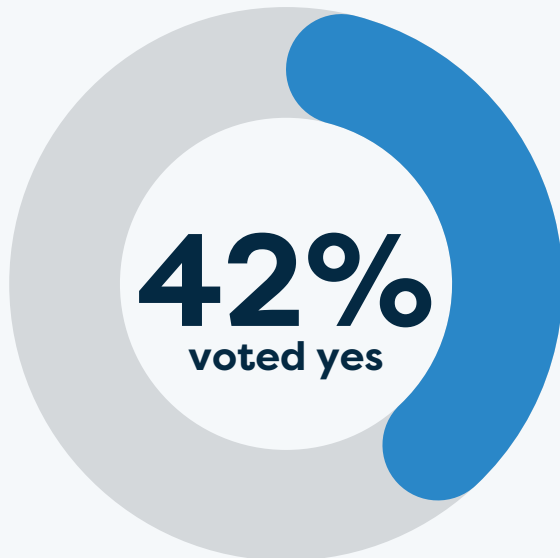
Delegate
Idea #2

Create a Childcare Center at the High School

Delegate Idea Overview

Create a facility at the high school where students could receive course credit for assisting professional childcare workers and for being trained as childcare employees.

Delegate Voting Results



Do you support this Delegate idea?

- Yes, this idea should move forward for further development: **42.4% (19 Delegates)**
- No, this idea should not move forward: **57.8% (26 Delegates)**
- I abstain from this vote: **1 Delegate**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support

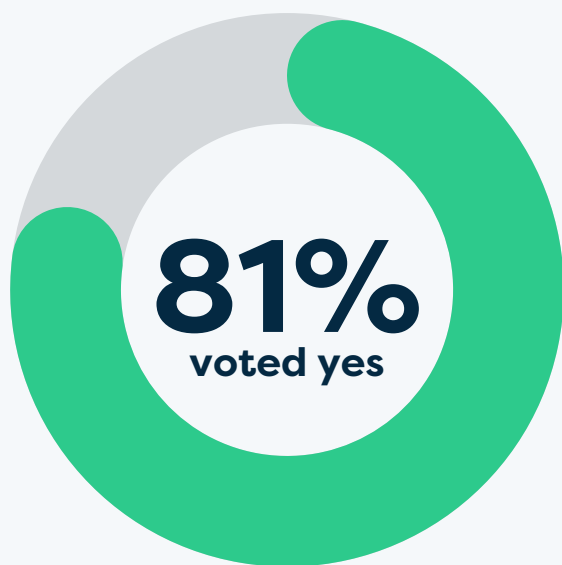
Delegate
Idea #3

Businesses Incentivized to Create On-Site Childcare Options

Delegate Idea Overview

Larger employers (such as the hospital or school district) and groups of businesses in the same location (e.g. the Target/Walmart shopping area) would be incentivized to create on-site childcare. These facilities could be physical additions to existing buildings, current spaces in existing buildings, or they could be yurts at a nearby location. The childcare centers could be open to all children in the community, but employees with children from sponsoring employers would receive a discount and could have their tuition automatically deducted from payroll.

Delegate Voting Results: **More than two-thirds support**



Do you support this Delegate idea?

- Yes, this idea should move forward for further development: **81.0% (34 Delegates)**
- No, this idea should not move forward: **19.1% (8 Delegates)**
- I abstain from this vote: **4 Delegates**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support

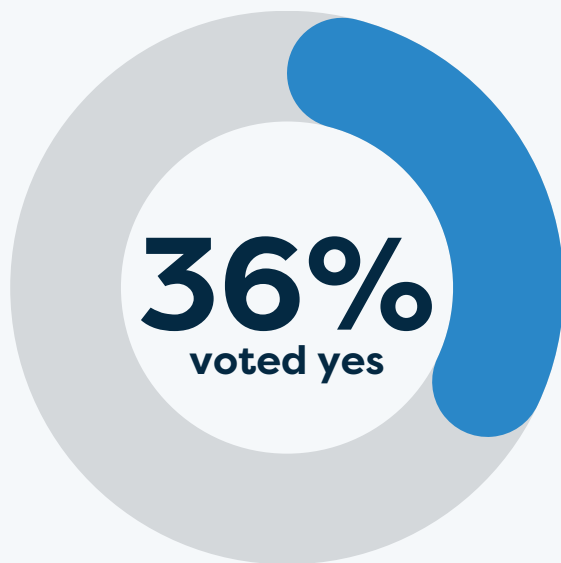
Delegate
Idea #4

Nonprofit Payroll Provider to Support Wages and Provide Benefits to Childcare Workers in Montrose

Delegate Idea Overview

Rather than increase wages of childcare workers by making grants to provider organizations (e.g. Provider Fund), create a nonprofit that Montrose providers use that handles payroll for their staff, that supplements staff pay to increase wages, and that also provides benefits (health, dental, vision, 401K, etc.).

Delegate Voting Results



Do you support this Delegate idea?

- Yes, this idea should move forward for further development: **35.7% (15 Delegates)**
- No, this idea should not move forward: **64.3% (27 Delegates)**
- I abstain from this vote: **4 Delegates**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support



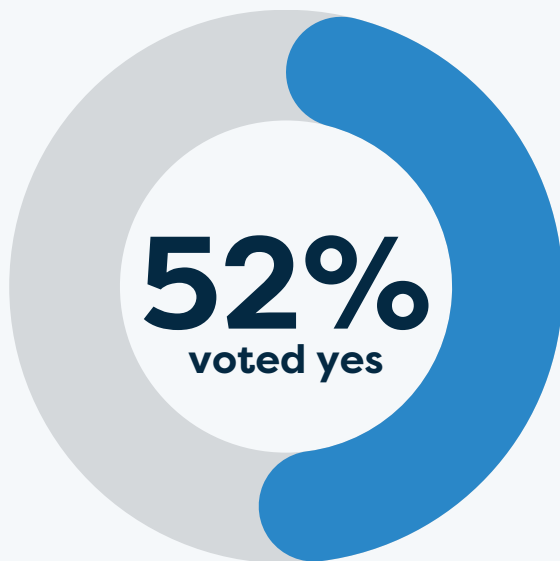
Delegate
Idea #5

Free Childcare for Childcare Employees

Delegate Idea Overview

This allows for childcare workers to be paid normal (market) childcare wages, but with a perk of free (or significantly discounted) childcare paid by local government.

Delegate Voting Results



Do you support this Delegate idea?

- Yes, this idea should move forward for further development: **52.3% (23 Delegates)**
- No, this idea should not move forward: **47.7% (21 Delegates)**
- I abstain from this vote: **2 Delegates**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support

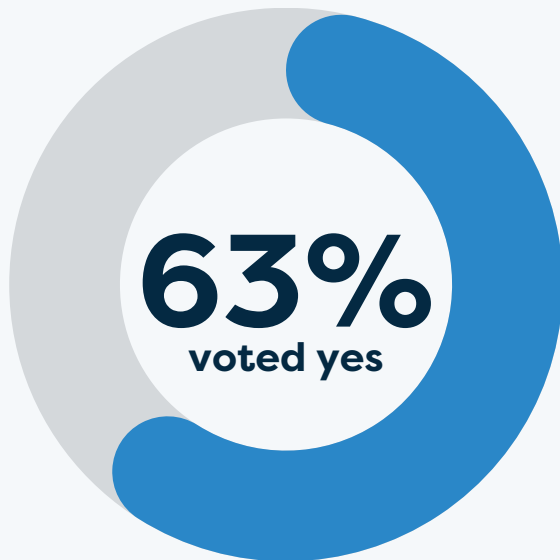
Delegate
Idea #6

Scholarships for Early Childcare Education Students at CMU-Montrose

Delegate Idea Overview

Since the CMU-Montrose courses need an enrollment of 10 students, fund annual scholarships for students studying early childhood education to drive enrollment numbers and keep students (and new early childhood graduates) in the Montrose community.

Delegate Voting Results



Do you support this Delegate idea?

- Yes, this idea should move forward for further development: **62.5% (25 Delegates)**
- No, this idea should not move forward: **37.5% (15 Delegates)**
- I abstain from this vote: **6 Delegates**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support

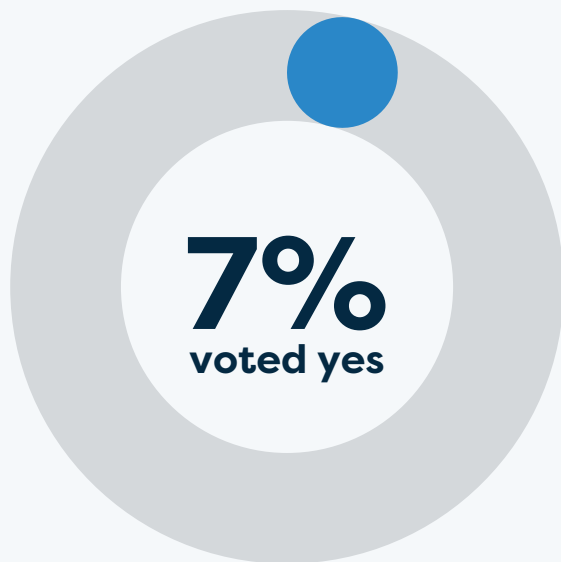
**Delegate
Idea #7**

Put the Brakes on Unify Montrose

Delegate Idea Overview

Stop current efforts of Unify Montrose and instead, focus on encouraging and enabling families to raise their own small children.

Delegate Voting Results



Do you support this Delegate idea?

- Yes, this idea should move forward for further development: **6.8%** (**3 Delegates**)
- No, this idea should not move forward: **93.2%** (**41 Delegates**)
- I abstain from this vote: **2 Delegates**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support

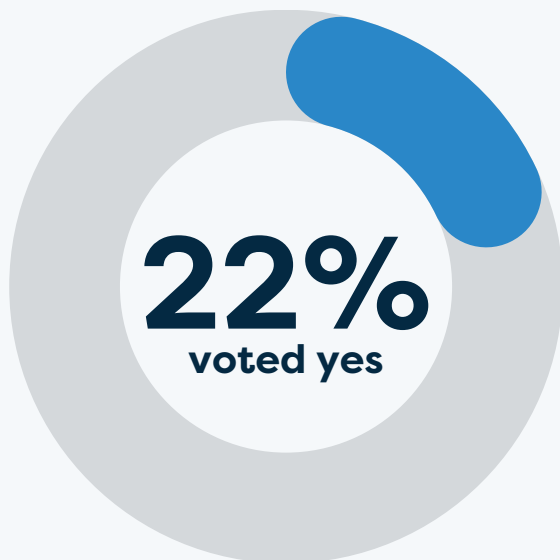
Delegate
Idea #8

Lower Taxes for Families with Young Children

Delegate Idea Overview

Lower local taxes and/or provide a tax rebate to families living in Montrose with young children, so parents have more discretionary income to better afford childcare or stay home and raise their own children.

Delegate Voting Results



Do you support this Delegate idea?

- Yes, this idea should move forward for further development: **22.0% (9 Delegates)**
- No, this idea should not move forward: **78.1% (32 Delegates)**
- I abstain from this vote: **5 Delegates**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support

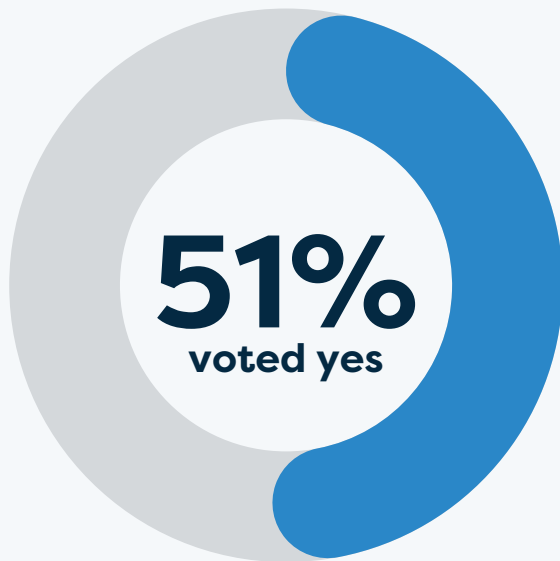
**Delegate
Idea #9**

Continue Studying and Monitoring Montrose Childcare Data

Delegate Idea Overview

Implement the number one recommendation from the Root Policy Assessment report to "continue to proactively track the key metrics for childcare demand." On an ongoing basis, update the metrics based on new, strong data, and delay any measures that have a cost to citizens of Montrose.

Delegate Voting Results



Do you support this Delegate idea?

- Yes, this idea should move forward for further development: **51.2% (22 Delegates)**
- No, this idea should not move forward: **48.8% (21 Delegates)**
- I abstain from this vote: **3 Delegates**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support

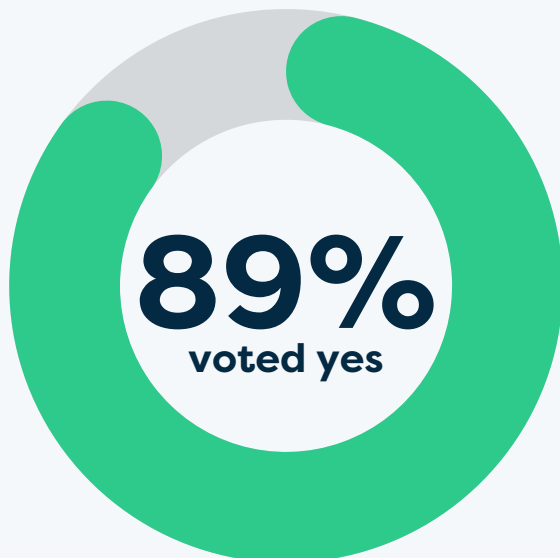
Delegate
Idea #10

Comprehensive Montrose Childcare Resources Website

Delegate Idea Overview

Create a single website portal where Montrose residents can access resources and links to local and state websites (such as CCCAP and Colorado Shines), as well as information on Actions the Assembly may adopt. The portal website should cover a range of childcare needs and include information or links on financial aid, finding childcare, transportation, etc. The website could also advertise trainings for family, friends, and neighbors. While these resources exist across several websites, there is not currently a single location for this information. The website should also include a social media presence. When possible, make use of existing resources.

Delegate Voting Results: **More than two-thirds support**



Do you support this Delegate idea?

- Yes, this idea should move forward for further development: **88.6%** (**39 Delegates**)
- No, this idea should not move forward: **11.4%** (**5 Delegates**)
- I abstain from this vote: **2 Delegates**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support

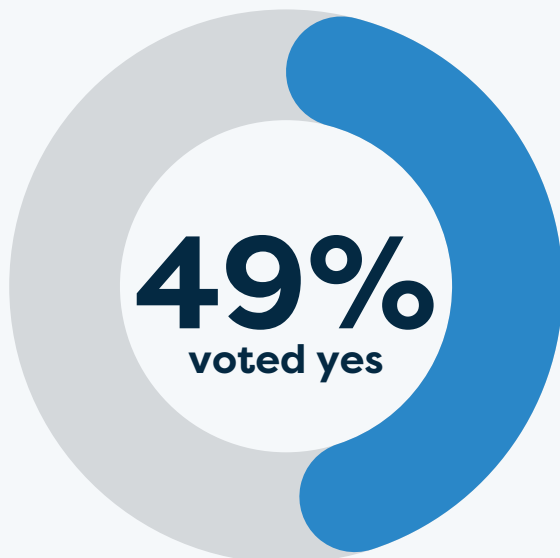
**Delegate
Idea #11**

Get What is Ours

Delegate Idea Overview

Get informed as to what is being passed at our state capital and make sure we are participating in all social programs that are already funded. Appoint a person to track down all of the programs and funding that are available to our citizens for childcare and every other program that is available. Create software for citizens to go into local retailers and access information via an interactive Kiosk.

Delegate Voting Results



Do you support this Delegate idea?

- Yes, this idea should move forward for further development: **48.7% (18 Delegates)**
- No, this idea should not move forward: **51.4% (19 Delegates)**
- I abstain from this vote: **9 Delegates**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support

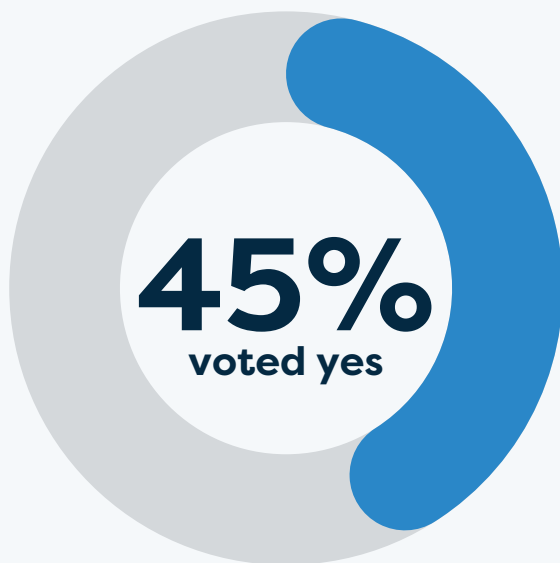
Delegate
Idea #12

Redo the 2021 Childcare Study in Montrose

Delegate Idea Overview

Conduct a new childcare study, ensuring that valid survey measures are used. Put in demographic measures to ensure representative participation. Determine who needs resources the most and identify solutions only for those in real need.

Delegate Voting Results



Do you support this Delegate idea?

- Yes, this idea should move forward for further development: **45.2% (19 Delegates)**
- No, this idea should not move forward: **54.8% (23 Delegates)**
- I abstain from this vote: **4 Delegates**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support

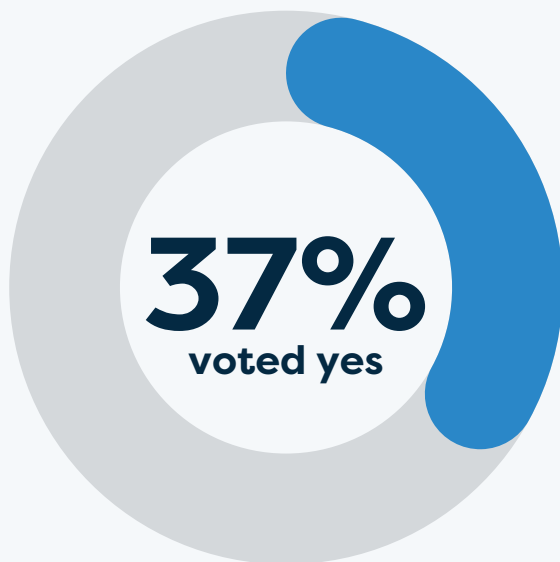
Delegate
Idea #13

Getting Neighboring Counties to Participate

Delegate Idea Overview

Many who live in Montrose work in neighboring Ouray, San Miguel, or Delta counties. If these counties want to continue to depend on workers from Montrose, they should participate in and coordinate with Montrose's efforts at providing more childcare.

Delegate Voting Results



Do you support this Delegate idea?

- Yes, this idea should move forward for further development: **36.6% (15 Delegates)**
- No, this idea should not move forward: **63.4% (26 Delegates)**
- I abstain from this vote: **5 Delegates**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support



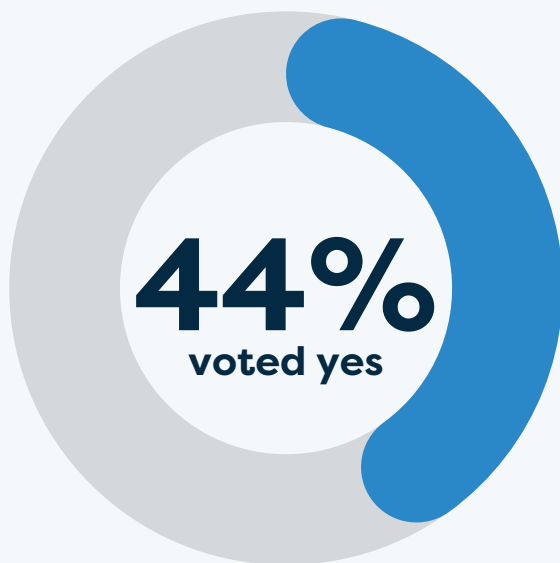
Delegate
Idea #14

Merchants United for Montrose

Delegate Idea Overview

Provide tax breaks to local businesses to encourage them to provide resources for childcare. Businesses could provide volunteer workers or contribute resources to existing childcare programs or any Actions adopted by the Assembly. Businesses could also be given a sticker or poster for their windows to publicize that they are supporting the community well-being.

Delegate Voting Results



Do you support this Delegate idea?

- Yes, this idea should move forward for further development: **43.6% (17 Delegates)**
- No, this idea should not move forward: **56.4% (22 Delegates)**
- I abstain from this vote: **7 Delegates**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support

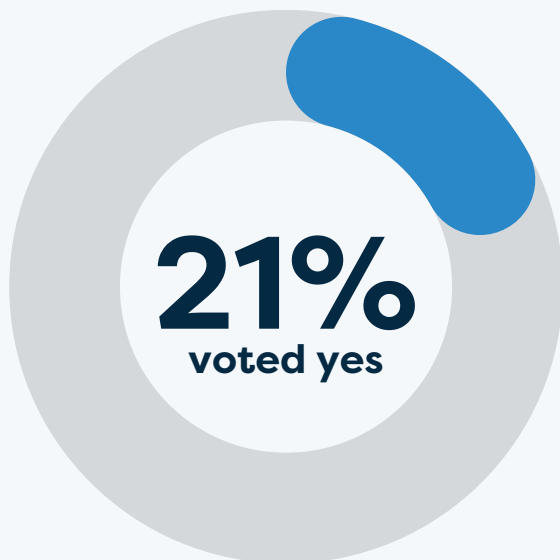
Delegate
Idea #15

FFN Childcare Points Trading System

Delegate Idea Overview

Adopt a system where family, friends, and neighbors (FFN) who provide childcare to other families earn points they can in turn use to pay for childcare for their own children, or perhaps use to pay for licensed childcare and youth services in the community.

Delegate Voting Results



Do you support this Delegate idea?

- Yes, this idea should move forward for further development: **21.1% (8 Delegates)**
- No, this idea should not move forward: **79.0% (30 Delegates)**
- I abstain from this vote: **8 Delegates**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support

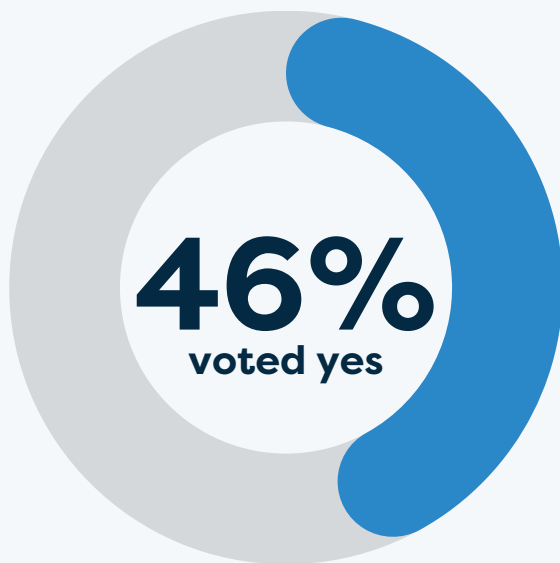
Delegate
Idea #16

Childcare Funding Foundation Using No Local Tax Dollars

Delegate Idea Overview

Create a local non-profit to fund the childcare activities in Montrose that require financial support (including Actions and ideas recommended by the Unify Montrose Assembly) where the source of funds comes from community donations, unrestricted grants, and state and federal funding, and cannot come from a reallocation of existing local government spending or new taxes. The funding of new childcare initiatives in Montrose is limited to what this organization can raise.

Delegate Voting Results



Do you support this Delegate idea?

- Yes, this idea should move forward for further development: **46.0% (17 Delegates)**
- No, this idea should not move forward: **54.1% (20 Delegates)**
- I abstain from this vote: **6 Delegates**

Abstentions are not included in the calculation of two-thirds support

Survey Highlights

Delegates in the Unify Montrose deliberation had the opportunity to take a total of 14 surveys: a pre-survey before the deliberation began, a survey after each week's deliberation Meetup, and a Post Survey in December 2023. Weekly surveys had different response rates (ranging from n=29 to n=45, with an average n=37).

The highlights below report data from Delegates who responded to surveys, and therefore do not reflect all Delegate experiences.

The highlights on the following pages focus on Deliberation Quality, Facilitation Quality, the Post Survey, and Lowdowns. The survey questions used for these weekly Meetup surveys are commonly employed across deliberative processes to ensure the quality of the deliberation.

The percentages below may not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding to the first decimal place.

Summarized survey results can be found in the Appendix.



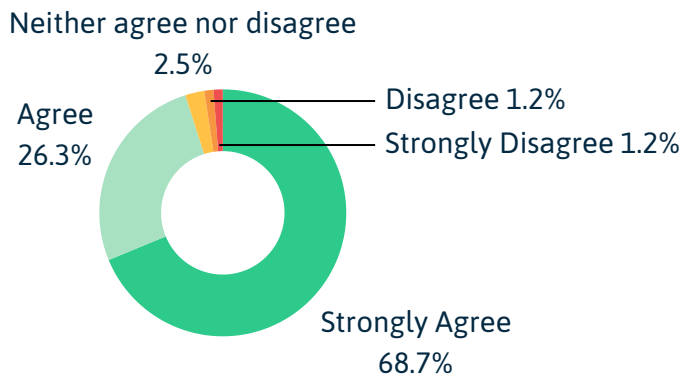
Weekly Meetup Survey Highlights

Deliberation Quality

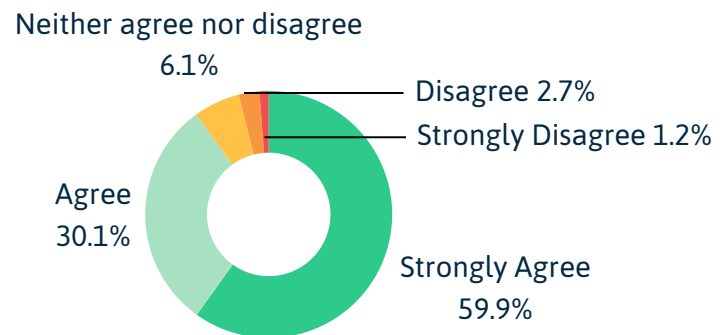
Unify America measured quality by asking survey questions relating to opportunities to speak, perceptions of respect amongst Delegates, careful consideration of others’ views, consideration of new perspectives, and whether Delegates felt pressured to agree during the deliberation. As noted below, a strong majority of Delegates found the deliberation quality to be high, with more than 85% favorable responses. “Favorable” means a Delegate replied either Strongly Agree or Agree, unless the question was reverse-coded, meaning it was asked in a way where a negative response is preferred, in which case Strongly Disagree and Disagree were preferred. Reverse-coded questions are noted below.

Survey response numbers are noted and reflect the total number of responses across the number of weeks surveyed (n=x, over y weeks). A full breakdown of the weekly surveys, including which weeks questions were asked, is available in the Appendix.

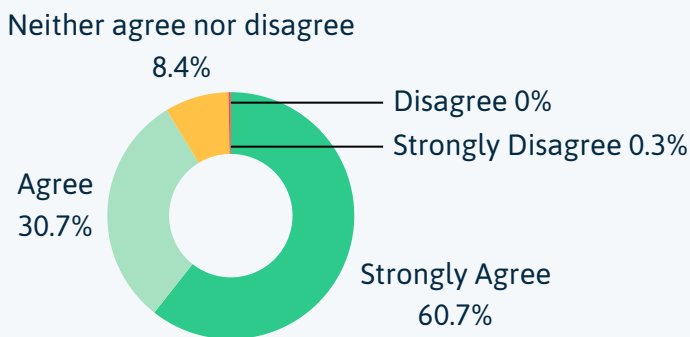
I had a sufficient number of opportunities to speak in my Trust.
(n=323, over 9 weeks)



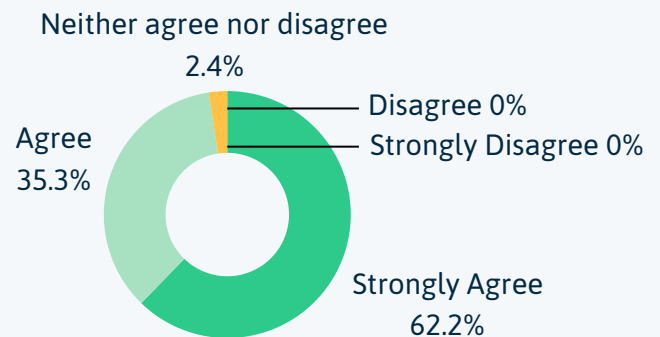
All Delegates of my Trust had a sufficient number of opportunities to speak.
(n=409, over 11 weeks)



My fellow Delegates respected what I had to say, even when they didn't agree with me.
(n=323, over 9 weeks)

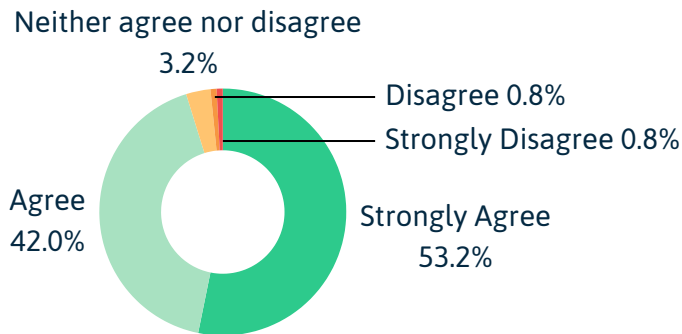


I was able to respectfully consider what my fellow Delegates had to say, even when I didn't agree with them.
(n=249, over 7 weeks)

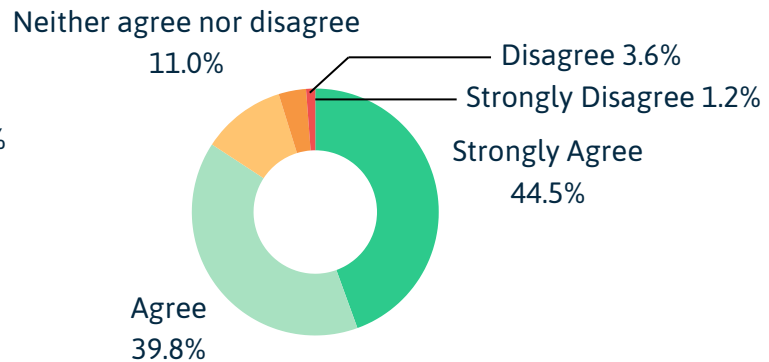


Weekly Meetup Survey Highlights (continued)

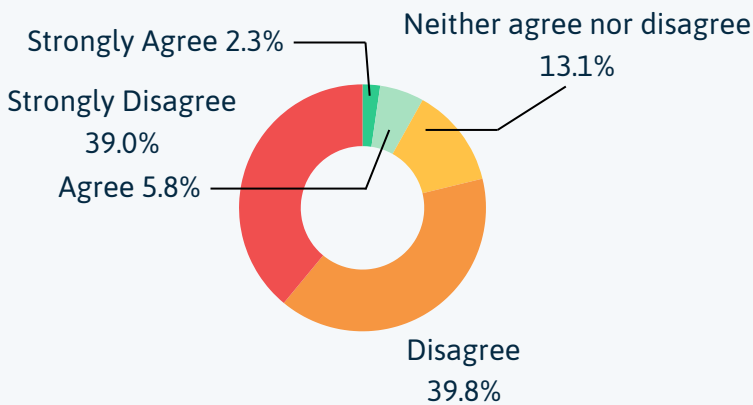
During the Trust discussion, when others expressed their views, I carefully considered what they had to say.
 (n=250, over 7 weeks)



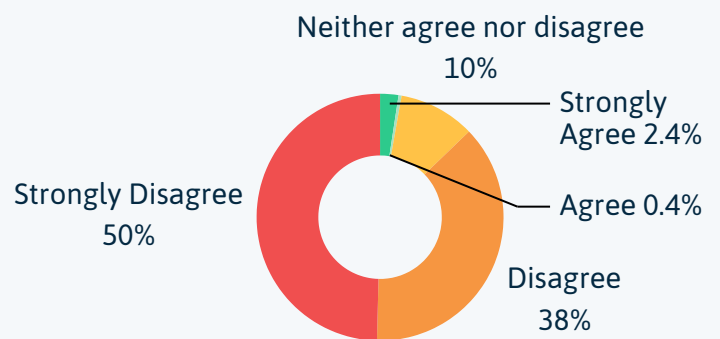
Today's Meetup helped me to thoughtfully consider new perspectives that I hadn't considered before.
 (n=337, over 10 weeks)



During today's Meetup discussion, I had trouble understanding or following the discussion. (Reverse-coded)
 (n=259, over 7 weeks)



During today's Trust discussion, I felt pressured to agree with the ideas or arguments of others. (Reverse-coded)
 (n=250, over 7 weeks)



“At first I wasn’t sure if my opinion was as relevant because I do not have children, but towards the end I felt my feedback was just as important.”

– Anonymous Delegate

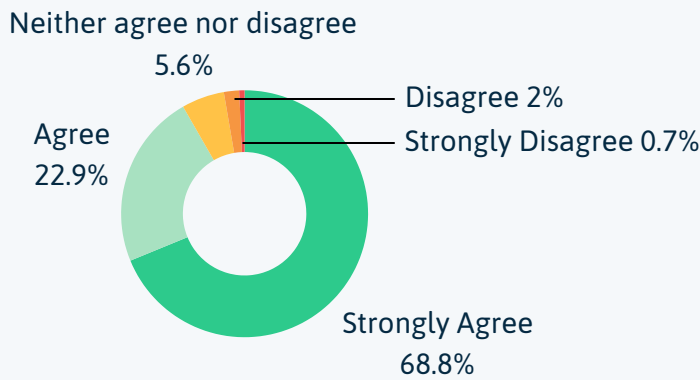
Weekly Meetup Survey Highlights (continued)

Facilitation Quality

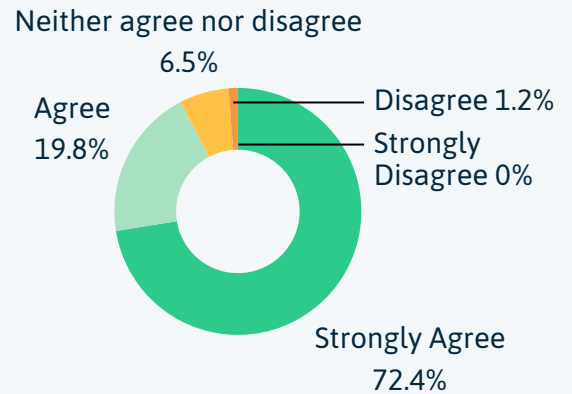
The weekly Meetup surveys included a number of questions about the facilitation quality. Below are results of two questions Delegates were asked eleven of the twelve weeks of the deliberation. Both of these questions measure important principles of deliberation, namely that everyone is included equally, and that the facilitator was neutral and unbiased in their leading of the small group.

Delegate respondents suggest facilitation quality was high, and helped them consider different perspectives.

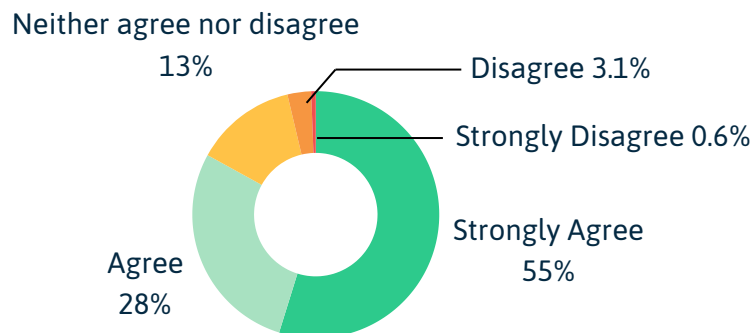
Our facilitator was neutral and unbiased (didn't favor certain opinions or offer theirs).
(n=323, over 11 weeks)



Our Facilitator Included everyone in the deliberation equally.
(n = 323, over 11 weeks)



Our facilitator helped us consider different or opposite views.
(n=323, over 11 weeks)

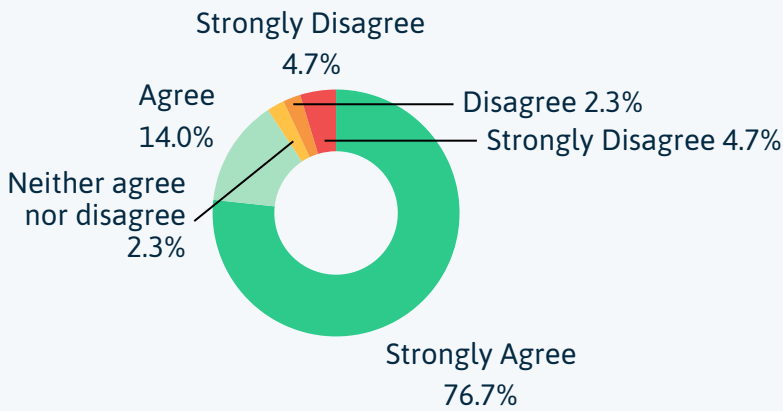


Week 2: In-Person Meetup Survey

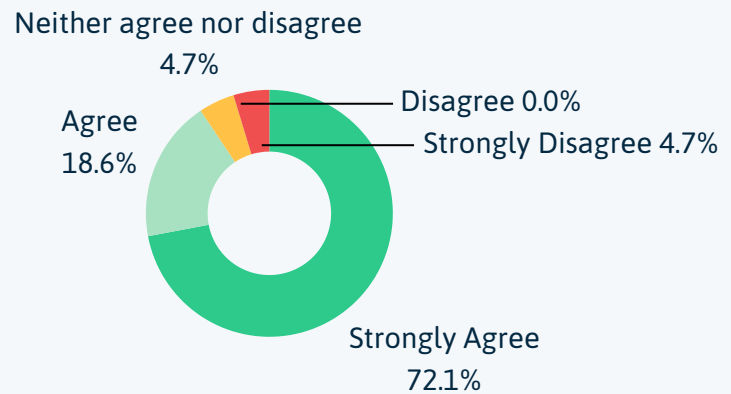
During week 2, Delegates gathered at the Ute Indian Museum for an in-person Meetup. Since the format of this event was in person rather than online, these survey items are presented separately. Delegates were seated with their Trust during the event.

Delegates responded to the survey questions below at the conclusion of the event (n=43).

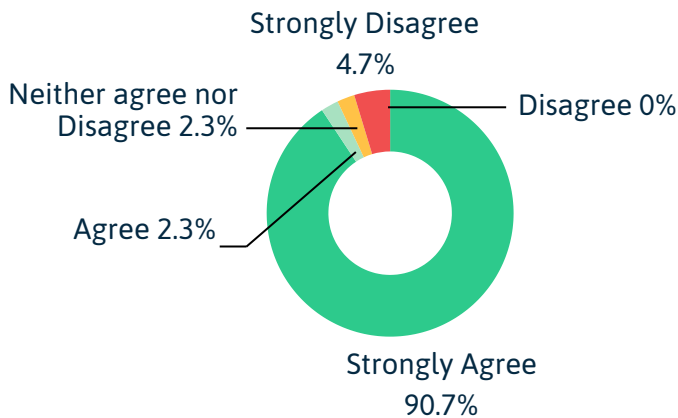
I had a sufficient number of opportunities to speak in my Trust.



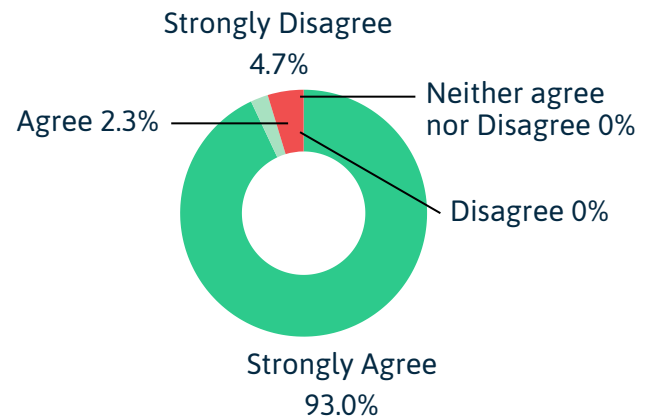
All Delegates of my Trust had a sufficient number of opportunities to speak.



My fellow Delegates respected what I had to say, even when they didn't agree with me.



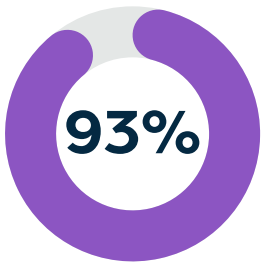
I was able to respectfully consider what my fellow Delegates had to say, even when I didn't agree with them.



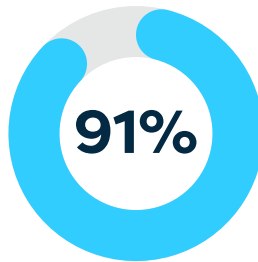
Assembly Post Survey Top Lines

The Unify Montrose Post Survey asked a number of questions about Delegate experiences throughout the entire deliberation process. Particular focus was given to considering diverse perspectives, the relationship of the deliberation process to the community, the quality of information, and the perceived impact of the deliberation.

A summary of top lines from the Post Survey shows very positive experiences amongst Delegate respondents (n=42).



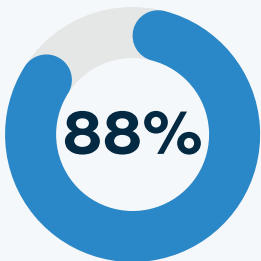
felt the deliberation helped them consider new perspectives that they had not considered before



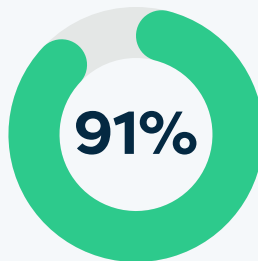
said the deliberation helped their understanding of the issue become clearer



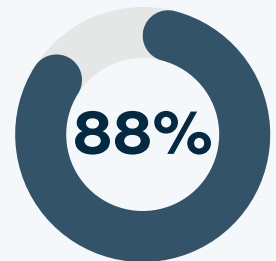
felt like they belonged in their Trust (small group)



felt like they belonged in the Unify Montrose Assembly



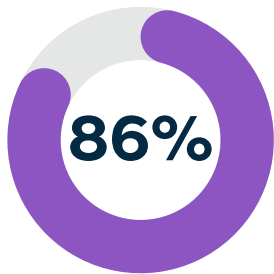
supported the overall recommendations of the Assembly, even if they don't agree with every part



felt the process was legitimate and run with integrity



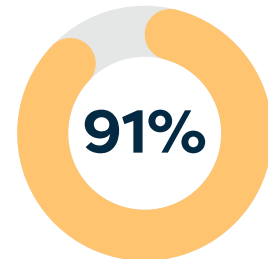
Assembly Post Survey Top Lines (continued)



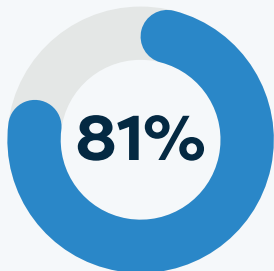
felt the information they received in the deliberation was trustworthy



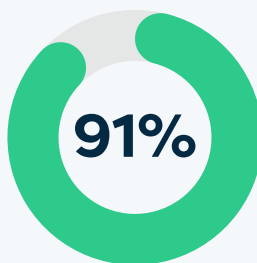
felt that when there were errors in information, they were publicly corrected and communicated to Delegates



felt that hearing and understanding the different viewpoints of fellow Delegates led to better solutions for the community



felt the process helped Montrose take a step forward in solving a problem in the community



felt the community should use a deliberative process to solve problems in the future

When asked how likely they were to recommend participating in a deliberation with Unify America on a 10-point scale, the average response was

8.3



“At the beginning I felt uneasy since I didn't know what to expect. At the end of the process, I felt that I had learned how to listen to other people's perspective and that helped me understand a different side.”

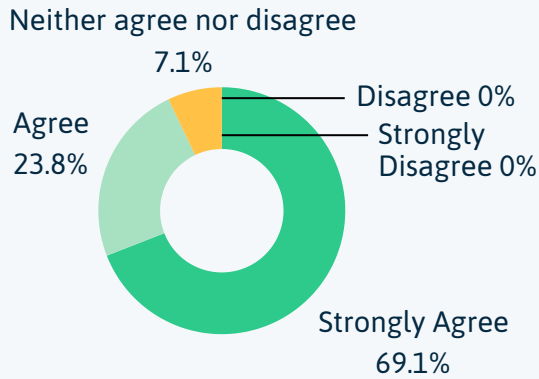
– Delegate Ana Herrera

Assembly Post Survey Results: Full Breakdown

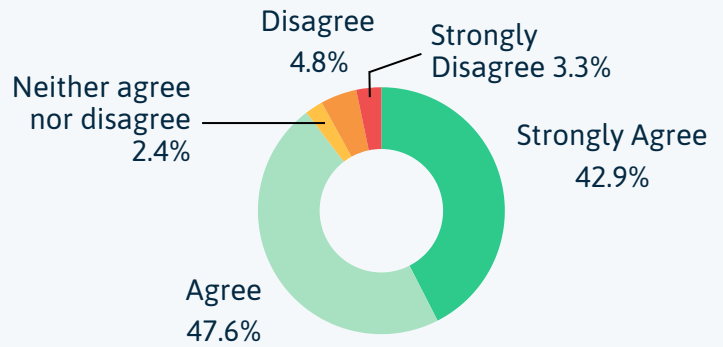
The charts below detail the specific survey breakdowns of the top lines summarized in the previous pages.

A full breakdown of the weekly surveys, including which weeks questions were asked, is available in the Appendix.

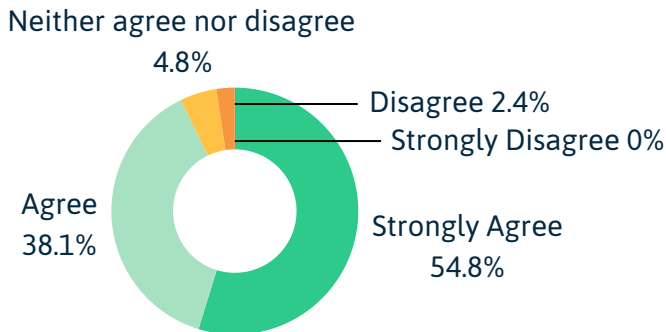
Did the Unify Montrose deliberation help you to consider new perspectives that you hadn't considered before?



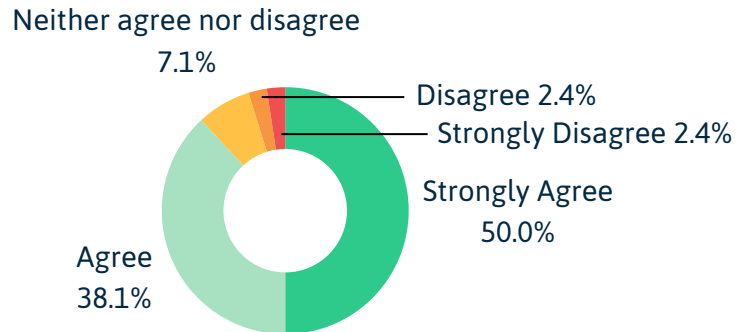
My understanding of the issue of childcare has become clearer throughout the deliberation.



I feel like I belonged in my original Trust.

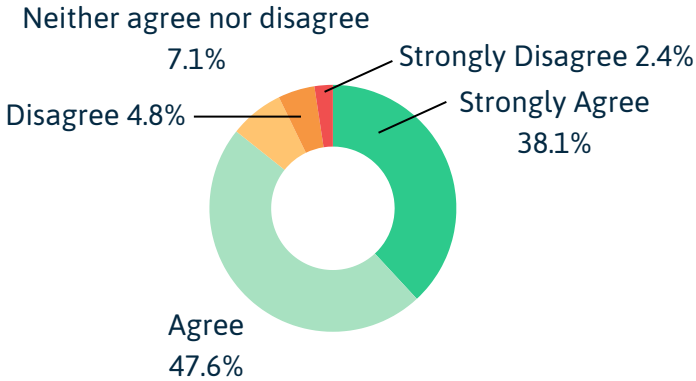


Even if I had feedback about the Unify Montrose deliberation along the way, I believe it was a legitimate process run with integrity.

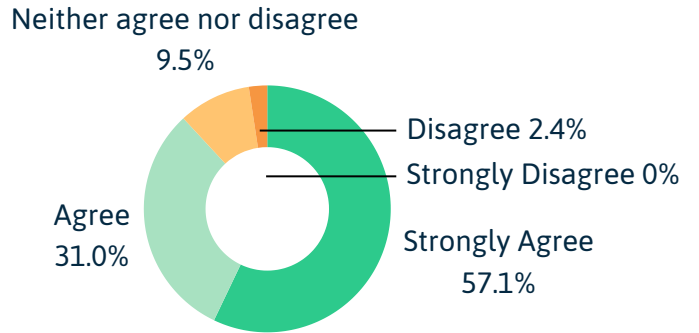


Assembly Post Survey Results: Full Breakdown (continued)

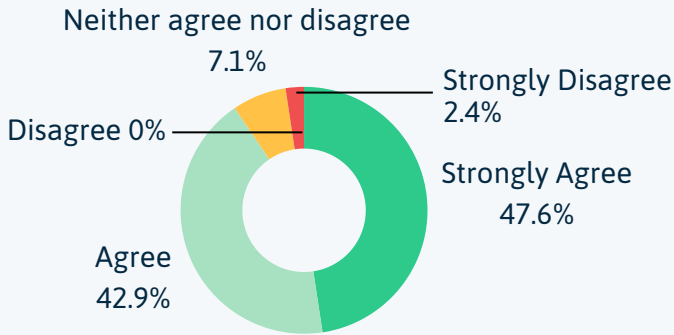
The information I received in this deliberation was trustworthy.



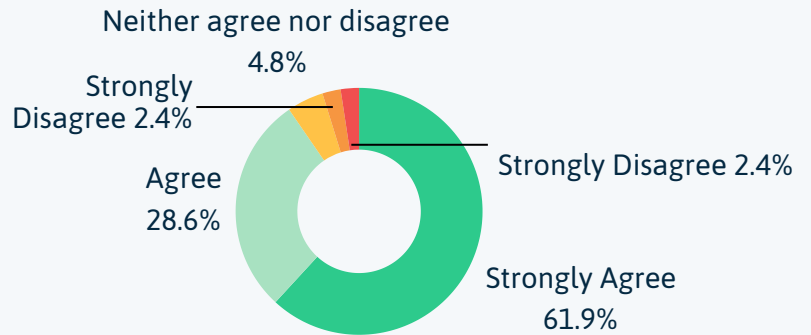
When there were errors in information, they were publicly corrected and communicated to Delegates.



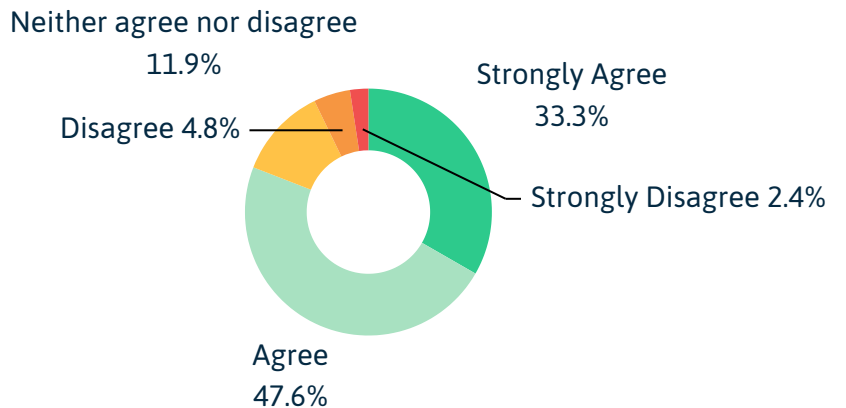
I think that hearing and understanding the different viewpoints of my fellow Delegates led to better solutions for my community.



To solve problems in the future, my community should use a deliberative process that brings together residents with different backgrounds and perspectives.



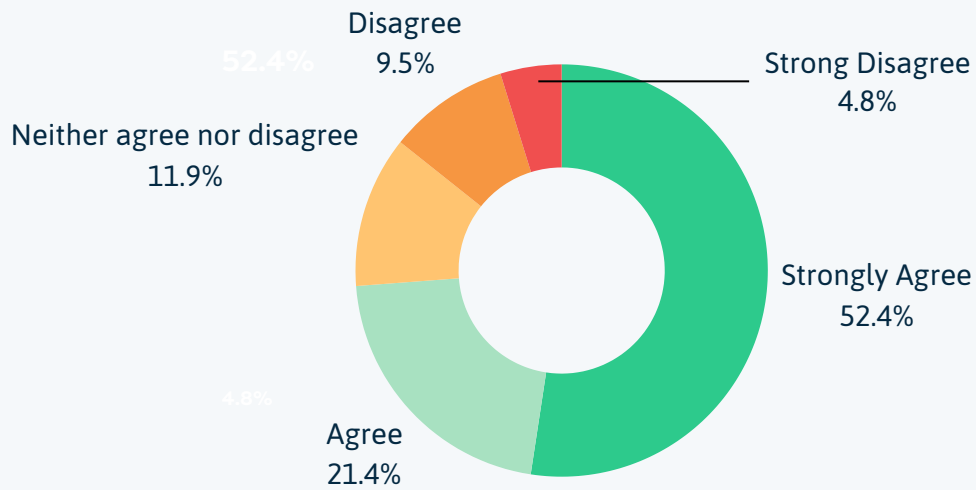
After participating in the Unify Montrose deliberation, I feel like this process helped Montrose take a step forward in solving a problem in the community.



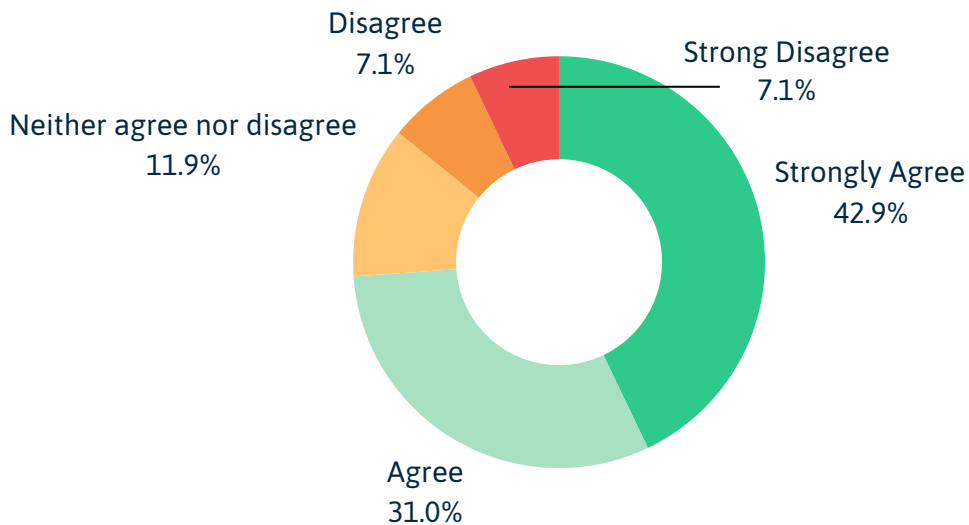
Post Survey Questions about the Lowdowns

Throughout the deliberation, Delegates received information through a Delegate-only website that contained video and text information about the topics for that week’s discussion. That material for each week was referred to as that week’s “Lowdown.” The following survey questions were asked on the Post Survey to learn about Delegate experiences with the Lowdown material. A strong majority of respondents felt that the Lowdowns were a useful part of the deliberation, as demonstrated below (n=42).

Watching the Lowdown videos was more helpful to me than just reading the material.



The Lowdown videos presented the information in a way that was unbiased and trustworthy.



Process Insights: Challenges

The Unify Montrose deliberation encountered several challenges throughout the process. Some of these were unexpected. Others reflected the known risks undertaken by Unify America to complete the deliberation within the Fall 2023 timeframe, or difficulties in execution of the deliberation plan.

#1: Set and communicate expectations with Delegates

Clear expectations are a valuable part of deliberation so that Delegates in an Assembly understand the stages of the process, their roles, how to ask questions, and so forth. Throughout the deliberation, there were a few places where Unify America did not communicate expectations effectively. Delegate comments and questions helped to identify these communication misses, and Unify America worked to clarify through emails, Assembly Scoop presentations, and the [FAQ page for Delegates](#).

One example of mismatched expectations was around the framing of Actions to address the problem of childcare in Montrose. Unify America's model of deliberation involves identifying a public problem and then an Assembly of Delegates considering multiple Actions to address that problem. In Montrose, Unify America gathered more than 60 ideas for achieving the Shared Goal from residents in the community, local experts in childcare, local officials, and outside research. These ideas were vetted by the Solutions Team, a group composed of 16 experts, business leaders, and childcare providers. In the end, the result was eight Actions that addressed different aspects of the challenge.

When the eight Actions and the Solutions Team process were introduced to Delegates, it became clear that some Delegates thought they would be the ones generating new Actions, rather than evaluating and improving Actions. These concerns were expressed in the Trust Meetups, the post-Meetup surveys, and to Unify America staff. For a few Delegates, this led to a concern that Unify America had an agenda in the Actions presented.

In response, Unify America clarified the process for generating and framing Actions as part of the weekly Assembly Scoop updates during the deliberation, and added responses to questions posed about the process on the Delegate FAQs website. Unify America also published the list of the [62 ideas](#) initially considered by the Solutions Team.

Finally, since many Delegates were eager to generate their own ideas to address the problem, Unify America changed the process to allow for idea generation. Delegates submitted and generated [16 unique Ideas](#), which they deliberated in week 12 and voted on thereafter. Ultimately, two of the Delegated Ideas received more than two-thirds support from the Assembly.

#2: Be clear about the deliberation's final deliverable

Unify America originally referred to the outcome of the deliberation as a "Plan of Action." This title may have suggested that after the deliberation, whatever the Delegates decided would be adopted as law. In reality, the goal of the deliberation was to find out what specific, concrete, realistic ideas were recommended to move to an implementation phase of further vetting, budgeting, combining, and so on. Unify America should have been clearer in communicating that specific goal.



“I was very skeptical about both the process and the motivations. I have learned to appreciate the process. You have worked hard to correct the process and make it our process rather than your guiding us to a preordained conclusion.”

– Delegate Rick Bleier



Unify America clarified this with Delegates throughout the deliberation, and with the community in a November 7, 2023 presentation.

Now that Delegates have voted, it is up to the Montrose community and local government to decide what comes next for implementation.

#3: Agree on discussion guidelines for the deliberation

The Delegates generated Ground Rules for productive discussion as part of their in-person, week 2 Meetup, held at the Ute Indian Museum in Montrose. These Ground Rules were then summarized by theme by Unify America staff members, and presented back to Delegates. Delegates were then asked to vote on the Ground Rules as a whole. While the guidelines were supported in a vote by more than 90% of the Delegates, a few Delegates expressed to Unify America that they wished they had time to discuss individual Ground Rules, or could have raised questions to the entire group about a specific Ground Rule. Future deliberations should consider reserving time for not only Ground Rule generation, but also refinement and possibly a guideline-by-guideline voting process.

#4: Before starting a deliberation process, ask Delegates if they subscribe to the Shared Goal

The Unify Montrose deliberation was undertaken from February through November 2023. This is a comparatively short period of time to identify a community problem, seek out wide-ranging and diverse perspectives, and shape a Shared Goal. The Shared Goal was shaped by over 70 community members, including local experts in childcare and local government officials. However, in the deliberation Meetups, it became clear that while many Delegates agreed with the Shared Goal, not all did. This meant that a few Delegates felt frustrated

by the process and advocated that the problem was not accurately framed nor the goal shared.

#5: Structure deliberation to manage differing needs for specificity among Delegates

Deliberation involves a careful weighing of what might be possible. Robust deliberation allows for refinement of ideas, building towards a consensus-driven solution to a public problem.

In the Unify Montrose deliberation, some Delegates found it hard to deliberate without full, complete information. Other Delegates wanted the opportunity to refine and change the proposed Actions; indeed, Unify America's process design included the opportunity for Delegates to suggest and vote on Improvements to Actions. However, because those Improvements had the potential to dramatically change the Actions, Unify America did not provide estimated budgets for Actions until after the Improvements were passed. For some Delegates, the lack of clear funding information at the first stage of the deliberation became a block to consideration.

Even in the final two weeks of deliberation, some Delegates wanted more time to deliberate. Others were ready to move to the vote and did not deeply engage around budgeting.

These challenges did not have a clear solution. Unify America provided "Full Homework" documents with more information. However, a goal of the Lowdown video and summaries was to make large quantities of information more accessible to Delegates. Reading the Full Homework PDF required additional Delegate time, which not all Delegates had available. Future deliberations should consider these differing needs for specificity among Delegates in the design of a deliberation.



#6: Recruit and retain Delegates from the Spanish-speaking community

To reflect the demographics of Montrose, which according to the U.S. Census Bureau has 6% Spanish-only and 10% bilingual Spanish and English speakers, Unify Montrose was set up to have one Trust whose Meetups were conducted in Spanish, and which would be composed of bilingual and Spanish speakers. One Trust (8 of 64 Delegates), would have represented 12.5% of the larger Assembly. Throughout the process, Unify America staff consulted with the Hispanic Affairs Project, who helped recruit the Spanish-only speaking delegates.

To recruit Spanish-speaking Delegates, Unify Montrose used several key tactics:

- **Collaboration with existing networked organizations:** Unify America worked with the Hispanic Affairs Project (HAP) in Montrose to engage their community during already-planned events and with Spanish-language flyers in their offices. HAP also consulted with the Unify America team on engagement tactics and ideas.
- **Spanish-language collateral:** For all posters, postcards, flyers, and letters, Unify Montrose created Spanish-language versions. In the informational letter sent to all homes in Montrose Valley, the application form and letter were written in both English and Spanish.
- **Spanish-language advertising:** Unify Montrose ran Spanish-language digital ads that were targeted to specific audiences in Montrose County.
- **Spanish speakers:** In the on-the-ground and digital canvassing efforts, Unify Montrose employed three native Spanish speakers.

To support retention of Spanish-speaking Delegates, the following tactics were used:

- **Spanish-language Delegate support:** Unify Montrose employed a native Spanish speaker to manage the personal outreach (via phone, email, and text message) with the Spanish-speaking Delegates.
- **Live Spanish-language translation:** Unify Montrose contracted a translator for all Delegate meetings that included Spanish-language speakers.
- **Spanish-language materials:** Unify Montrose provided all materials and research for the deliberation in Spanish, as well.

Originally, there were eight Delegates in the Spanish-speaking Trust, with a bilingual facilitator. Only four of the Delegates in that Trust attended a Meetup, and three persisted in the deliberation. The three remaining Delegates were bilingual speakers, and they decided, as a group, to conduct their Trust discussions in English.



Spanish brochure

While Unify Montrose did remain within 3% of the Hispanic population demographic of Montrose (21%) with the Delegates who did participate, it did not meet its goal of hosting a Spanish-speaking Trust. Despite this, to promote inclusion, Unify America provided interpretation during Sunday Meetups for the entire deliberation, as well as in the Voting Results Event on December 4, 2023.



#7: Improve the process of confirming and retaining a 64-Delegate Assembly

The goal for Unify Montrose was to have a demographically representative 64-Delegate Assembly. While the Assembly retained good demographic representation across the twelve weeks, **the Unify Montrose project ended with 46 Delegates.**

During the selection lottery, 64 Delegates were chosen along with 24 Alternate Delegates. Delegates were required to submit a form to opt-in and confirm their participation, and the team used both email and phone communications to confirm participation with the following results:

- Among the 64 Delegates initially chosen, 10 could no longer participate and five did not respond or were unreachable after being selected.
- Of the 24 Alternate Delegates, five did not respond or were unreachable and one could no longer participate.
- The participation confirmation rate was 76%.

After that opt-in period, the Unify Montrose Assembly began with 67 confirmed Delegates. The final Unify Montrose Assembly had 46 Delegates who participated for 12 weeks. Of these 46, 35 were members of the original 64 selected and 11 were Alternates. The retention rate among the confirmed participants was 69%.

Several factors that contributed to both the participation confirmation and Delegate retention rates are worth considering to have a clearer look at extended online deliberation for future practice. First, the Unify Montrose Assembly had strong participation requirements. Delegates were told during recruitment and in more detail once selected that they needed to make all but two Meetups across the 12 weeks, and that they had to make up any Meetups missed via an asynchronous online session. This meant that to remain a Delegate, Delegates had to participate in 83% of Meetups.

76% participation confirmation rate

69% retention rate after 12 weeks

While there are not a large number of U.S.-based examples of prolonged online deliberation, a comparative example is the Washington Climate Assembly, which counted “full participation” as at least half the meetings (50%). While Unify America staff provided technical support, equipment, and training, participation also required the use of technology, which may have created barriers for Delegates

Second, Unify America staff used email, text messaging, and phone calls to connect with the 21 Delegates who were not able to continue throughout the deliberative process. Among the Delegates who were able to respond, their reason for leaving the Assembly fell into one of three categories: changing personal circumstances, different work-related demands, or a new understanding of the time commitment that being a Delegate required.

Finally, it is worth noting that of the 46 Delegates who did persist to the end of the Assembly, participation was generally strong. **On average, the 46 Delegates missed just one meeting.**

The vast majority of the dropoff occurred between the first and third meeting. The Assembly lost just a single Delegate between September 15 and the end of the process on November 15.



Process Insights: Innovations

Unify America's pilot deliberation in Montrose included several deliberative innovations in its design. This section reports on the outcomes of those innovations.

More information about Unify Montrose Delegate surveys cited in this section is available in the Survey section and Appendix of this report. All survey data cited here reflect the responses of those Delegates who took surveys.

Innovation #1: Using videos as policy briefing materials

Unify America seeks to create an open, informative, and collaborative environment, with an eye towards scaling deliberation for large groups of people spread over a broad geography who would not be able to meet in person. It would not be possible for hundreds or thousands of Delegates in a large Assembly to gather together in one space. Nor is it possible for all of those Delegates to participate meaningfully in live information sessions with experts.



An example Lowdown video

To that end, Unify America designed a layered learning approach for Delegates which included scripted videos, high-level summaries, and a Full Homework document containing expanded explanations, details, and citations. This approach aligns with the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which emphasize providing multiple modes of representation and engagement to cater to diverse learning preferences.

While layered textual information is relatively common in deliberation, Unify America sought to experiment with video to create engaging content that walks viewers through policy issues in a way that is simple, memorable, concise, and consistent for all delegates. While many people learn well from text, video has the advantage of being able to deliver text along with audio and graphics, ideally accommodating a wider range of learning preferences.

One other benefit of using videos is that they allow for sharing of the content to the public (those outside the Assembly). This allows a richer reflection of what the actual experience was like for participants, and may be a key lever for sharing the stories of deliberation to a broader audience.

Unify America's staff has experience and a long track record of success in using entertainment to make complex subjects engaging and compelling. The Lowdown videos provided to Unify Montrose Delegates were designed to keep production costs and effort low, and relied on the key ingredient of good writing to ensure that this innovation, if successful, could be used widely in the field by practitioners who don't have access to or a budget for robust video production.



The video concept for the Unify Montrose Lowdowns featured a news anchor of a fictional program called “Unify Montrose Action News.” The anchor, Wendy LaRue, presented each Action idea and was joined by two “experts” who explained the background details of the Actions to her. The final act of each of these videos featured a couple of fictional Montrose residents who were watching the news program in their living room. They paused the program to discuss the benefits and tradeoffs of each Action. Immediately after the videos, Delegates were asked a series of multiple choice questions to reinforce their memory of key points from the video. Key points from the videos, as well as other bulleted information, was available underneath the videos as text.

Unify America made videos available at least 24 hours before the Meetups, and Delegates could review the videos after the Meetups and throughout the entire deliberation on the online learning platform.

Examples of Lowdown videos are available in the Appendix.



The Unify Montrose Post Survey offers insights into the Delegate experience of Lowdowns:

- 73.8% of Delegate respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, **“Watching the Lowdown videos was more helpful to me than just reading the material.”**
- 73.9% of Delegate respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, **“The Lowdown videos presented the information in a way that was unbiased and trustworthy.”**
- 78.5% of Delegate respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, **“I am glad we dedicated the first half hour of the Status Quo and Action-focused Meetups to reviewing the Lowdown materials.”**

In addition to the responses from the Post Survey, in weeks 4-11 of the deliberation, Delegates were asked about the Lowdowns in a weekly survey. Their responses indicate the Lowdowns were a useful tool for preparation:

- Across weeks 4-11, 83.9% of Delegate respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, **“The Lowdown for today (videos & review questions) gave me information I needed to participate meaningfully in the deliberation.”**
- Across weeks 3-8, 88.5% of Delegate respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, **“The Lowdowns were easy to understand.”**

A few Delegates expressed to Unify America staff and in surveys that they found the Lowdown videos to be “too produced” or misleading.

For example, two Delegates expressed in feedback surveys that the process would be improved by having “No Lowdowns or Lowdowns done with locals instead of actors” and that “I felt that the videos were designed to guide our conclusions; I did not appreciate that.”

The inadequate expectation setting, outlined above, may have played a factor in that last comment. Many Delegates expected they would be generating ideas, and instead they were being presented ideas.

As a result, it is possible that no matter how Delegates were presented with the Actions, they may have felt the Actions were being recommended, rather than being presented to be deliberated upon.

Future deliberations should continue to explore the video format for policy briefings, but also pay attention to setting expectations that communicate their purpose and producing them in a way that avoids perceptions of partiality.





Screenshot from the FAQ page

Innovation #2: Creating an asynchronous website for responding to Delegate concerns

The Delegates in the Unify Montrose deliberation asked a wide range of questions about the childcare problem in Montrose, the content and feasibility of the eight Actions, Unify America, and the Unify Montrose process.

Over the course of 12 weeks, Unify America answered more than 100 Delegate questions on its [FAQ pages](#). Unify America research staff and contractors consulted childcare and education experts and providers, academic literature, and the

[Montrose County Childcare Needs Assessment](#) to develop background information (the “Status Quo”), inform the design of Actions, estimate budget and Economic Impact, and respond to research requests from Delegates. Each week, answers to Delegates’ questions were communicated in a Friday email, and some questions were highlighted in the Assembly Scoop at the start of the Meetup. The answers to these questions are available at <https://www.unifymontrose.org/delegates>. The website allowed for week by week updates, topical organization of questions, and transparency. This method holds potential for asynchronous briefing of Delegates in large-scale, online deliberations.



Innovation #3: Using technology to enhance user experience of digital information

Unify America seeks to scale up deliberation through technology, particularly using online Meetup sessions for the deliberation. This could allow large groups of people to participate in a future deliberation. The Unify Montrose deliberation was a pilot, and so Unify America used existing technology, namely Zoom for the Meetups and an online learning platform called [LearnWorlds](#) for the Lowdown materials.

Benefits of an online learning platform included Delegates accessing an organized repository of information as opposed to keeping information organized themselves through separate emails or digital folders. The system also allowed for interactivity with comprehension questions, an intentional sequence of steps for users to follow, and visually engaging material such as progress maps and videos. These features were designed to increase engagement with material which, in turn,

could enhance comprehension and retention of information.

On the other hand, this online learning platform was not always easy to navigate for all participants, particularly those who did not have as much experience using this or similar technology. A few Delegates were unable to navigate back and forth between the Zoom application and the LearnWorlds website, or had trouble fully participating in the online meetings.

To assist Delegates, Unify America offered one-on-one help sessions, made an online small group session available for Delegates to watch videos during the Meetup, and made PDFs of materials available via email. Unify America also provided computers, webcams, and wifi hotspots for some Delegates. However, there were a few Delegates who stopped participating due to the technology requirements. In the future, finding ways to lower the need for technology literacy while still assembling online may improve the prospects for large-scale deliberation to be more fully inclusive.

Example Lowdown video screenshot



**THE LOWDOWN:
ECONOMIC IMPACT**

03:37



Innovation #4: Using consistent Trusts (small groups) to foster relationship-building as an important part of trust-building and depolarization

The Unify Montrose deliberation had eight Trusts, or small groups, that made up the Assembly. Four of these Trusts met on Sunday afternoons, and four of these Trusts met on Tuesday evenings. Trusts were sorted to have a mix of demographics, including political affiliation, age, and gender. The design of the deliberation kept Delegates in consistent Trusts (their “Home Trust”) in weeks 1-8. Additionally, the first three weeks of deliberation included an orientation with trust-building exercises. Each Meetup opened with a trust-building question to encourage sharing amongst Delegates.

Based on Unify America’s previous work on the [Unify Challenge](#) and in small group training, the Trusts were designed with the hypotheses that 1) more regular interactions with the same people would foster deeper belonging, and 2) these consistent interactions would result in a more trusting, honest, and overall better Delegate experience and better deliberation. Or, as Unify America explained during Orientation:

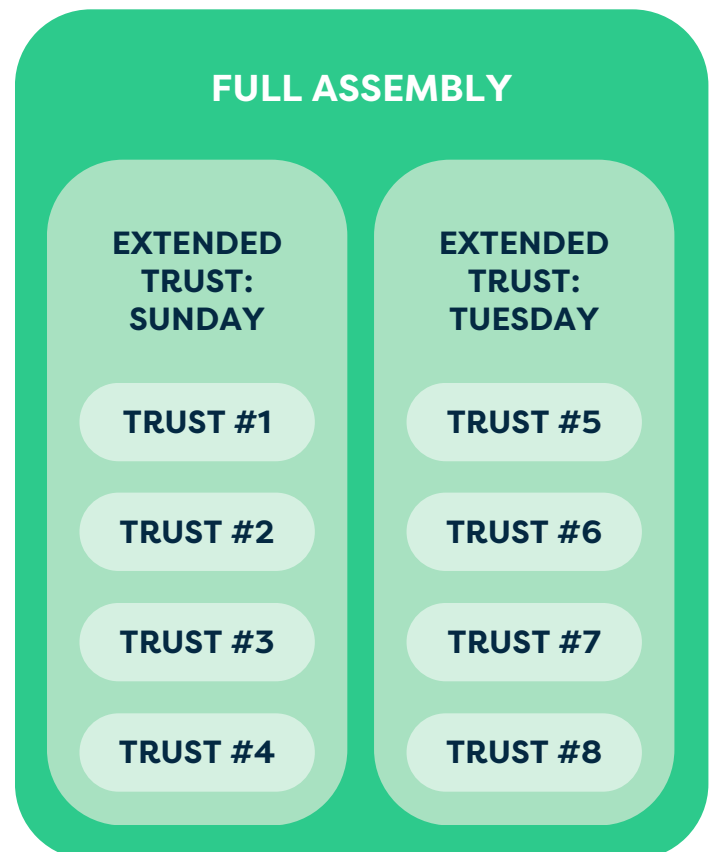
“To make better decisions, you need to be honest with each other. To be honest with each other you need to trust one another. To trust one another, you need to get to know one another.”

Moving further out, Unify America also introduced the concept of an “Extended Trust.” An Extended Trust was roughly half of the Assembly, and met either Sunday or Tuesday. The Sunday Extended Trust and a Tuesday Extended Trust each contained four Trusts. Every week, the Meetup began with all Delegates in the Extended Trust together on one screen. Unify America staff invited people to keep their cameras on so everyone could see everyone else (and most did).

A member of the Unify America staff welcomed Delegates by name as they arrived, and chatted with people while waiting for everyone to log on for a weekly Meetup.

However, recognizing that the Assembly would benefit from exposure to diverse perspectives outside of a Delegate’s original Trust, Unify America’s design sought to balance belonging and diverse perspectives by having persistent Trusts in the beginning and mixing Trusts later in the process. Therefore, in weeks 9-11, Delegates were mixed into “Temporary Trusts,” which created new small groups within their Extended Trust. In week 12, Delegates returned to their Home Trusts.

Finally, Delegates gathered twice as a complete Assembly: during the week 2 Orientation at the Ute Indian Museum, and in a Zoom Meetup to announce the results at the end of the deliberation.

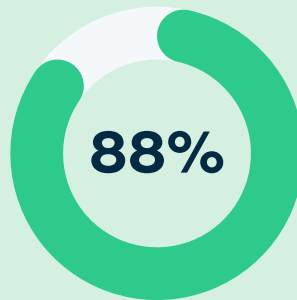


Drawing from the Meetup transcripts and the surveys, Delegates reported feeling a sense of belonging to their Home Trust and the Assembly, and that they were exposed to different perspectives. Specifically, on the post-survey (n=42, out of 46 possible Delegate responses):

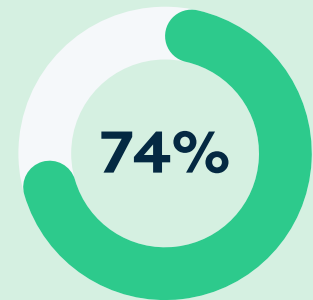
Belonging



of Delegate respondents strongly agreed or agreed that “I feel like I belonged in my original Trust.”

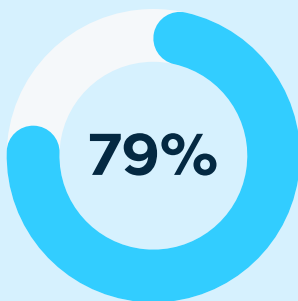


of Delegate respondents strongly agreed or agreed that “I feel like I belonged in the Unify Montrose Assembly.”

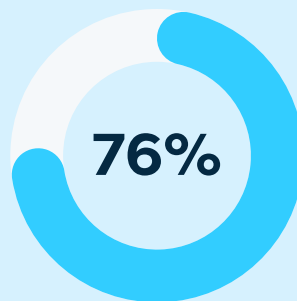


of Delegate respondents strongly agreed or agreed that “I felt understood by those from different political perspectives.”

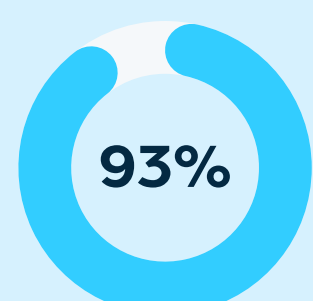
Understanding New Perspectives



of Delegate respondents strongly agreed or agreed that “During the deliberation I came to understand the experiences, feelings, and beliefs of those from a different political perspective.”



of Delegate respondents strongly agreed or agreed that “During the deliberation, I felt comfortable (not estranged or angry) with those from a different political perspective.”



of Delegate respondents reported “Yes, very much” or “Yes, a little” that the Unify Montrose deliberation helped them consider new perspectives that they had not considered before.





The first meeting of the Catalyst Club

Innovation #5: Catalyst Club

Unify America introduced the concept of the Catalyst Club, a regular, in-person meeting of community members (Delegates and non-Delegates alike) who wanted to deeply engage in the deliberative process and be a “catalyst” for more local collaborative problem-solving.

The initial hypothesis was that Catalyst Club members from the local community may be able to capture the enthusiasm of community members not chosen to be in the Assembly, support and advocate for the implementation of recommended ideas for action from the Assembly, and help to build momentum for a local culture of collaborative problem-solving.

To ensure the Catalyst Club was co-created by its members, the goals of the first meeting were to connect with others interested in collaborative problem-solving, answer questions about Unify Montrose and Unify America, and define, together, the mission of the newly formed Catalyst Club.

After the initial meeting, the group defined themselves as local activators and ambassadors of cooperative community problem-solving. Together, the members of the Unify Montrose Catalyst Club agreed to build an active, meaningful, learning-based community of other residents who want to encourage more collaborative problem solving for Montrose County and beyond. The Catalyst Club continues to meet regularly with increasing structure and leadership from local community members.

By the end of the Unify Montrose deliberation, more than 50% of Post Survey respondents had attended at least one Catalyst Club event.

Have you attended a Catalyst Club event?

- Yes, more than one: 17 (40%)
- Yes, one: 5 (12%)
- No, but I’d like to start attending: 14 (33%)
- No, and I don’t think I’m interested in attending: 6 (14%)



Innovation #6: Collaborative framing through Delegate Improvements to Action framing and Delegate Idea generation

Unify America tried to strike a balance between wide-net idea generation from the community and expert feedback to narrow ideas based on impact and feasibility. As such, the deliberation involved Delegates considering Actions that were shaped by a Solutions Team. In addition to considering the benefits and tradeoffs of those Actions, Delegates were encouraged to think about how to improve the Actions throughout the deliberation. Delegates were then asked to submit their Improvements to the Actions via a survey. **Delegates submitted 128 individual Improvement suggestions.** Each Improvement sought to address some element of an Action. Unify America staff processed the Improvement suggestions, grouping similar Improvements together and adjusting wording for clarity or concision. The result was 52 unique Improvements to Actions. [The full list of 128 suggestions and consolidated Improvements is available as a spreadsheet, and was provided to Delegates in their Lowdown.](#)

In week 9, Delegates had an opportunity to review and discuss the Improvements. Since the Meetup time was likely not going to be sufficient to review all 52 actions, facilitators encouraged Delegates to set the agenda by nominating Improvements that they felt were particularly important or essential for moving an Action forward. Delegates then voted on the Improvements via a survey. Delegates could vote Yes or No, or abstain. If the Improvements passed a 50% majority, the Actions were changed to incorporate those Improvements. Thirty-six Improvements were approved and incorporated into Actions. The Improvement Voting Results were made available to Delegates as a PDF, and incorporated into the week 10 and 11 Lowdowns. Additionally, two other Improvements were approved, but did not move forward as they were mutually exclusive with receiving the highest approval rating moved forward.

Some Improvements made small adjustments, such as identifying target groups (seniors and men) to which to market services in Action 6 (Nurture Network). Other Improvements passed by the Assembly were quite substantial, such as 82% approval to change the name of Action 6 to Nurture Network from Nurture Craft Network (several Trusts questioned the use of the term “craft” in that original name), and 75% approval for Action 7, The Early Childhood Education Center Upgrade, to rely on yurts rather than traditional construction. Delegates were eager to suggest Improvements and shape the Actions. Unfortunately, additional time for deliberation over Improvements was not possible given the deliberation time constraints, but given the enthusiasm of Delegates, should be noted for future practice of this design element.

The Improvements also gave Delegates a chance to add local experience and knowledge to the Actions, adding specificity to the details. For example:

- Improvement to Action 1: Camp Montrose would collaborate with existing outdoor summer programs (e.g., the Ute Indian Museum, Weehawken, and the Rec District) and would make sure kids get lots of outdoor time, especially during the summer. (92% approval)
- Improvement to Action 5: Care Corps would work to create a pool of licensed substitutes who can fill in for other Care Corps members or regular early childhood teachers who are sick or take vacation days. (93% approval)
- Improvement to Action 7: The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Center would help connect families with children who live further from the school so they could form carpools. (74% approval).

Future deliberation research and practice should examine how the submission of formal Improvements to Actions or Plans of Actions might be incorporated in Delegate-driven feedback for consensus-driven solutions.



“After that first meeting, I left in such an incredibly happy, excited, and awe-inspired mood because I saw just how different the people in my Trust were, and they were all motivated to solve problems. The excitement was shared, and it motivated people to come back.

Now after this process, I still see that excitement in our community, and I'm going to do my best to channel it into something really important for our community and hopefully serve as a model for others.”

– Delegate Alejandro Salazar



APPENDIX



Notes & Context

Delegate Quotations

- All Delegate quotations used in this report come from surveys collected during the deliberation.
- For all quotations used, Delegates gave permission to Unify America to use the quotation with attribution or anonymously.

Survey Details

- Delegates were invited to participate in 14 surveys on their experiences: a pre-survey, post-survey, and surveys after each weekly Meetup.
- The summarized survey data is [available here](#).
- Weekly Survey Breakdown data is [available here](#).
- Additionally, at different stages of the deliberation, Delegates were asked to provide feedback in the form of
 - Ideas for new Actions
 - Improvements to existing Actions
 - Comments in the form of Action Specific and General Comments for consideration.
- In Assembly Scoops 8 and 9, Unify staff defined these forms of feedback as follows: an Idea for a new Action proposes a new way to achieve the shared goal, Improvements are specific changes to the way an Action works, General Comments are thoughts that are outside of the scope of this deliberation but kept in mind for context, and Action Specific Comments ideas for implementation that don't fundamentally change how the Action works.
- Improvements and Delegate Ideas were shared with Delegates in Weeks 9 and 12, respectively, and discussed, voted on, and included in the Voting Results.
- Delegate feedback classified as Comments was compiled for future consideration and implementation guidance; however it is worth noting that this feedback came from Weeks 5-8 and reflects anonymized comments on un-improved Actions. [These Comments can be found here](#).



Linked Documents

- [Ground Rules](#)
- [Ideas for Actions generated from the community](#)
- [Live-streamed Unify Montrose Lottery Event](#)
- Lowdowns
 - **Week 1**
 - [Lowdown Orientation Week 1 Video](#)
 - **Week 2** - Delegates met in person; no Lowdown materials
 - **Week 3**
 - [Lowdown Orientation Week 3 Video \(Part One\)](#)
 - [Lowdown Orientation Week 3 Video \(Part Two\)](#)
 - **Week 4**
 - [Lowdown Status Quo Week 4 Video \(Part One\)](#)
 - [Lowdown Status Quo Week 4 Video \(Part Two\)](#)
 - [Full Homework The Status Quo \(including Terms and Definitions\)](#)
 - **Week 5**
 - [Lowdown Action One Video](#)
 - [Lowdown Action Two Video](#)
 - [Full Homework Actions One and Two](#)
 - **Week 6**
 - [Lowdown Action Three Video](#)
 - [Lowdown Action Four Video](#)
 - [Full Homework Actions Three and Four](#)
 - **Week 7**
 - [Lowdown Action Five Video](#)
 - [Lowdown Action Six Video](#)
 - [Full Homework Actions Five and Six](#)
 - **Week 8**
 - [Lowdown Action Seven Video](#)
 - [Lowdown Action Eight Video](#)
 - [Full Homework Actions Seven and Eight](#)
 - **Week 9**
 - [Improvements Lowdown](#)
 - [All Suggested Improvements](#)
 - **Week 10**
 - [Lowdown Video on Economic Impact](#)
 - [Economic Impact for Revised Actions One, Two, Three, and Four](#)
 - **Week 11**
 - [Economic Impact for Revised Actions Five, Six, Seven, and Eight](#)
 - **Week 12**
 - [Delegate Ideas](#)
- [Delegate FAQ Pages](#)
- [Assembly Scoops](#)
- Results of Delegate Voting
 - [Improvement Voting Results \(Released to Delegates in Week 10\)](#)
 - [Unify Montrose Voting Results \(Released to Delegates December 4, 2023\)](#)



Unify Montrose Assembly of Delegates

Unify America wishes to acknowledge and thank the Unify Montrose Assembly of Delegates.

Carol Antolovich

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Doug Maddy

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Mary Maurer

Andrea McCracken

Greg Moberg

Jessica Ochoa

Leah Okeson

Russell Pongonis

Clair Prosser

Claudia Rogers

Ruby Salaz

Alejandro Salazar

Babs Schmerler

Tamara Schwid

Ariana Smith

James Tanner

Megan Wilson

The Delegates listed above gave permission to have their name listed in publications about the Unify Montrose deliberation.



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**“Prepare to be challenged
in thoughts and ideas.
Also, prepare to make
lifelong friends.”**

– Delegate Clair Prosser





UNIFY

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