GOOD IDEAS FOR CITIES

- THE TOOLKIT -
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FOUR YEARS AGO, I was having a conversation with a graphic designer here in Los Angeles just after the presidential election. Like many creatives, this designer had worked hard on one of the campaigns, and experienced a rewarding sense of civic engagement. He was eager to continue this work, redirecting his energy to serve his city. Yet he was unsure where to start; he didn’t want his actions to be misguided or replicate something that was already happening. A few days later, I was at a meeting at City Hall with some food policy leaders who were looking for new ways to encourage Angelenos to buy locally grown produce. If only that enthusiastic designer could be hearing this, I thought.

It wasn’t until much later that I put the two incidents together. As a journalist for GOOD, I had unique insight into the challenges my city was facing, as well as access to a large community of people eager to solve them. With GOOD acting as a matchmaker between local creatives and urban leaders, there was no reason we couldn’t amass a list of L.A.’s biggest problems and hand them over to the enthusiastic designers, architects, writers, filmmakers and artists we knew in town.

In December of 2008, GOOD’s co-founder Casey Caplowe and I organized an event that assigned some of L.A.’s most invested, talented citizens to high-level problems hand-picked by local leaders. Addressing issues ranging from traffic to water to the city’s lack of earthquake preparedness, the creatives presented their visions for Los Angeles to a standing room-only crowd of urban leaders and citizens who could help make them reality. The event was so successful we immediately started fielding emails from schools, design organizations and local governments to bring the program to their cities.

Since then, our GOOD Ideas for Cities initiative has been hosting events across the country which pair teams of creatives with urban challenges proposed by city leaders. In 2011, we partnered with the urban think tank CEOs for Cities, and our program received a $85,000 grant from the new creative placemaking organization ArtPlace which allowed us to host events in six mid-sized American cities: Portland, Oregon; St. Louis, Missouri; Richmond, Virginia; Cincinnati, Ohio; Dallas, Texas; and New Orleans, Louisiana. We were also honored to be included in the exhibition Spontaneous Interventions as part of the U.S. Pavilion at the 13th International Architecture Biennale in Venice, Italy. Over 30 solutions were proposed at these events in 2012, and, more importantly, about a third of all the projects presented are now moving towards implementation.

And the solutions which are moving forward are truly inspiring. In Portland, a hackathon was held to build technology tools which can help connect the city’s large child-less population with local public schools. In St. Louis, a citywide network of beacons that encourage civic interaction is moving towards reality. In New Orleans, all four ideas, from bikeway signage to better bus shelters, are in various stages of implementation. And in one of our most successful projects, a board game was created for an L.A. homelessness organization to help train volunteers who are working to get people off the streets and into transitional housing. The organization is now using the board game in several cities, and has reported that it helped cut processing time in half.

Perhaps even more encouraging is that we’ve found the events themselves act as catalysts for the city. In 2012 the program brought together more than 2000 people across the country, and the key is that these are people from the government, arts and nonprofit worlds who don’t normally talk to each other. Many partnerships and collaborations are created in addition to the formal pairings we create at the event, and the model has inspired other organizations to create similar events.

We’ve traveled the country learning about the challenges that cities are facing, and if anything we’ve learned that the issues in each place are strikingly similar. In that sense, the GOOD Ideas for Cities program hopes to create a network of shareable—dare we say steal-able?—ideas for every city. We’ve collected videos of all the solutions on our site and have produced several follow-up articles to track implementation for the projects that have moved forward.

And now we’re hoping to use what we’ve learned to launch a movement. We’re making all of our findings public with this toolkit which you can use to host the same GOOD Ideas for Cities event in your community. We hope to see the toolkit used coast to coast, uniting local creatives and urban leaders in their efforts to build more vibrant cities together. Please contact me with your thoughts and feedback at alissa@goodinc.com. I can’t wait to hear the stories from your city.

ALISSA WALKER
Editor, GOOD Ideas for Cities
November 2012
GOOD IDEAS FOR CITIES brings together teams of creatives in cities across the country to solve real urban challenges proposed by civic leaders and present their solutions at live public events.

Since 2008, GOOD Ideas for Cities has held 25 events in 10 cities generating 120 solutions to urban challenges across the U.S. In 2012, thanks to a grant from ArtPlace, GOOD teamed up with partner organization CEOs For Cities to take the program to six mid-sized cities across the U.S. including, Portland, St. Louis, Richmond, Cincinnati, Dallas and New Orleans. Currently, about one-third of the ideas presented in 2012 are making their way towards implementation.

The ripple effect of the GOOD Ideas for Cities program reaches even further. When a group of passionate citizens come together to produce a GOOD Ideas for Cities event, they not only generate fresh ideas, they create a platform that brings the community together in a new and innovative way. Across the board those who have participated tell us that the relationships they formed through the GOOD Ideas for Cities process were some of the biggest takeaways.

Sharing what we’ve learned is a big part of this initiative, and we hope that bringing more cities into the conversation will allow us to grow our database of creative urban ideas.

Watch videos of all the ideas presented in 2012 on the GOOD.is site: good.is/ideasforcities

Read write-ups and impressions of the program by editor Alissa Walker at: artplaceamerica.org

Learn more through case studies written by GOOD Ideas for Cities partners in five different cities at the end of this document.
GOOD

GOOD is a collaboration of individuals, businesses, and nonprofits pushing the world forward. Since 2006 we’ve been making a magazine, videos, and events for people who give a damn. At GOOD, we’ve always been passionate about cities, especially when creatives take localized, urbanist action which can have global implications. As more people around the world move into urban environments, our attention is focused on the functionality of the city—the way it works, and how it can work better.

good.is

CEOs FOR CITIES

CEOS FOR CITIES is a global learning and partnership network that connects urban leaders to each other and to smart ideas and practices for making cities successful. Today, a city’s future relies upon engaged organizational leaders from across sectors with a shared agenda and a coherent voice. With more than 250 partners from over 40 cities, CEOs for Cities is a civic innovation lab and network of urban leaders and change agents from diverse sectors dedicated to building, advancing, and sustaining the next generation of great American cities.

ceosforcities.org

ARTPLACE

ARTPLACE is a collaboration of eleven of the nation’s top foundations, eight federal agencies including the National Endowment for the Arts, and six of the nation’s largest banks to accelerate creative placemaking across the U.S. ArtPlace is investing in art and culture at the heart of a portfolio of integrated strategies that can drive vibrancy and diversity so powerful that it transforms communities.

artplaceamerica.org

This toolkit was made possible thanks to a generous grant from ArtPlace
- IN 2012, GOOD IDEAS FOR CITIES: -

**HELD SIX EVENTS IN SIX CITIES ACROSS THE U.S.**

**REACHED AUDIENCES TOTALING MORE THAN 2,300 PEOPLE**

**INVOLVED 60+ URBAN LEADERS FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENT, NON-PROFIT, PRIVATE SECTOR, HIGHER EDUCATION AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS**

**SURFACED 265+ CREATIVE THINKERS TO CONNECT WITH LOCAL ISSUES**

**GENERATED OVER 30 NEW SOLUTIONS TO REAL URBAN CHALLENGES LOCAL LEADERS ARE FACING**

**HELPED MOVE ONE-THIRD OF THE IDEAS PRESENTED TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION**
WHAT WILL YOUR CITY ACHIEVE?
As part of our 2012 grant from ArtPlace, we were able to document, consolidate and report what we’ve learned while producing these events during the past four years. We’ve condensed all the information into this how-to guide that contains everything a city needs to know to build their own GOOD Ideas for Cities event.

Because our goal is to reach as many cities across the country and around the world that want to get involved, we’ve designed the toolkit as its own stand-alone guide for cities who want to take our format and run with it to create their own DIY events.

But some cities have told us that the real value of their GOOD Ideas for Cities experience came from collaborating with GOOD and CEOs for Cities to help catalyze action. In response, we’ve also created what we are calling a GOOD Ideas for Cities featured event, where our team will work closely with city organizers to help strategize the program, advise creative teams and urban leaders, moderate the event and document and share the outcomes with a wider audience.

DIY OR FEATURED EVENT?

It’s up to you to decide which type of event would be best for your city. If you’ve already got some momentum in the civic realm and have great relationships with your local urban leaders, hosting a DIY event might be the perfect way to use our structure for your program. But if you’re a city that needs new connections and fresh thinking to get the dialogue going, you might be interested in working directly with our team on a featured GOOD Ideas for Cities event.

If you go the DIY route, you’ll be able to create your own name for your event and customize the basic structure to fit your needs. All that we ask is that you refer to your event as “Inspired by GOOD Ideas for Cities” in all materials, and keep us informed of your progress via email. Send us a link to your event and we’ll Tweet it to help you get the word out. We’re excited to see what you come up with!

If you want to host a featured event, you’ll get full support from our GOOD Ideas for Cities team, including:

- **CITY-SPECIFIC BRANDING IN COLLABORATION WITH THE DESIGNERS AT GOOD**
- **EDITORIAL AND EVENT STRATEGY WITH GOOD EDITORS**
- **SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT OF URBAN LEADERS WITH CEOs FOR CITIES ADVISORS**
- **EVENT MODERATION BY GOOD IDEAS FOR CITIES EDITOR ALISSA WALKER**
- **EVENT PROMOTION THROUGH THE GOOD AND CEOs FOR CITIES NETWORKS**
- **CONTENT ABOUT YOUR EVENT FEATURED ON GOOD.IE**

However, there are some costs associated with a featured event to help pay for the time and effort of our awesome team members.

Once you’ve read through the toolkit and decided which kind of event you’d like to produce, let our team know at alissa@goodinc.com. For a featured event, we’ll discuss your city’s needs, prepare a quote, send back an agreement and get started right away.
- FIVE STEPS TO SUCCESS -

We’ve divided the toolkit into five focus areas. As you’re starting to plan your event, we suggest forming a local taskforce and using these areas as committees to help divide up responsibilities.

RECRUITING LOCAL HOSTS AND PARTNERS

The foundation of the program is a strong local team from a variety of backgrounds. Host organizations will provide the leadership for the event and act as the liaison with the GOOD Ideas for Cities team. Partners are local groups, institutions and organizations who can assist with planning and promotion. What are the active groups in your city who should be involved? Who should you reach out to for help? How should you ask them to be involved?

FUNDRAISING AND SECURING SPONSORS

Successful events work closely with local sponsors who give money or in-kind donations in exchange for promotion. Sponsors can pay for things like refreshments, AV and other costs associated with the event. Should you sell tickets to your event? Will you use Kickstarter or another crowdfunding service to raise money? How will you recognize sponsors and other contributors?

INVITING URBAN LEADERS & COLLECTING CHALLENGES

Another key part of the event is brainstorming the challenges facing the city and identifying the people who can issue those challenges from the city’s perspective. Most cities invite a minimum of five city leaders who are each committed to issuing a challenge to the creative teams. What are the big issues your city is facing? What are the organizations or government agencies that are making things happen? Who are enthusiastic local leaders?

SELECTING LOCAL CREATIVES

Strong teams of engaged local creatives are essential for an inspiring event. Cities should aim for a diverse group of multidisciplinary creatives who come from different backgrounds and neighborhoods. Deciding how to select creatives is up to your city. How will you encourage creatives to apply? What application process will you use? How will you pick which teams will present at the event?

PLANNING YOUR EVENT

Finally, putting together a fun, energetic social gathering is critical to the impact of your program. This includes securing an appropriate venue, managing AV and tech issues, working with vendors and sponsors, and providing food and drink to keep the atmosphere lively. Where will you hold your event? Who will serve food and drink? How will you organize the presentations?
The ideal GOOD Ideas for Cities event schedule starts about four months before the event date, but if you have more time to plan, we encourage you to use it! Here’s an overview of a timeline that’s worked great in other cities.
The secret to a great city-focused event is involving a variety of organizations and individuals and giving them roles that are aligned with what they already do best. You probably have your own go-to list of contacts for people you know well, but some of the strongest results we’ve seen in cities came from an eclectic mix of groups that brought different strengths and perspectives to the table. The GOOD Ideas for Cities program is a great opportunity to build a contact network that bridges across all facets of the community.

Who should be involved?

With your taskforce, brainstorm a master list of every organization, venue, publication, and individual you can think of that would, or should, be active in a conversation about improving your city. Who are the movers and shakers right now? Who are leading key initiatives? Which organizations have launched a major undertaking in the last couple of years? Where do big city forums or meetings take place? Who is hosting them? Look at the last few weeks of news articles from your local media—who is making headlines? Who is covering these stories?

Next, sort your master list into the following categories:

- Hosts
- Partners
- Media Partners
- Sponsors
- Urban Leaders
- Creatives

The first groups you’ll want to confirm are your hosts and partners so we’ll cover them here in this section. We’ll address sponsors, urban leaders and creatives later.
Establishing a solid group of host organizations is an essential first step in preparing for a GOOD Ideas for Cities event in your city. Hosts act as the on-the-ground organizers as well as the liaison between GOOD Ideas for Cities staffers and the local audience, coordinating the event itself and reporting back to our team. In our experience, having more than one host organization is an advantage, but having more than three can become hard to manage.

Since your event hosts will help to support and grow the program, we recommend choosing groups who have missions similar to GOOD Ideas for Cities. Your event hosts can be from any of the categories of outreach we’ve listed. For example, they could be the venue sponsor or even a media outlet. Ideally, your host entities are in the position to offer a great deal of volunteer time, and possibly financial and in-kind support to the program, as well. Hosts are more than someone willing to help out—these are the entities who will be vested in the success of this initiative.

When reaching out to your potential event hosts, send them an event one-sheet you’ve created about your local program. Be sure to outline your expectations of their role as a host and offer other opportunities for their involvement in the event if they are not able to serve in this capacity.

A typical host relationship has looked like this in other cities:

- Hosts will oversee the creation of the event page, RSVP system, blog posts, Facebook page and Twitter coverage using the city-specific hashtag.
- Hosts will act as the liaison between the GOOD Ideas for Cities team and the local community.
- Hosts will oversee workflow and coordination for all event planning aspects. Setting up project management software like Basecamp or Google Drive is extremely helpful.
- Hosts will help to select and vet urban leaders and creative teams.
- Hosts will act as spokespeople for the event in interviews or other coverage by media.
- Hosts will be given two minutes to introduce their organization at the beginning of the program.
- Hosts will have their names included on the event posting and all invitation copy for the event, with links to their organizations.
- Hosts will have their logos projected on screens before and after the program at the event.

Learn how Portland, Oregon worked with a local university to host the event and expand their program even more →
PARTNERS

In addition to hosts, cities planning events also rely on the help from partners who do not supply monetary or in-kind donations, rather they provide various promotional and logistical assistance with the event itself. It’s most beneficial to work with partner organizations who can reach out to their members about the event, sending details about applying as a creative team through newsletters or other emails, and then promoting the event to their members to attend the event.

Many cities have found great success in partnering with professional creative organizations like AIGA, AIA, IDSA, ASLA, as well as groups focusing on advertising, business, environmentalism, and urban redevelopment. Neighborhoods and community-focused groups also make great partners, as do alumni groups or other educational institutions.

A typical partner relationship has looked like this:

- Partners will help promote the event through blog posts, Facebook, Twitter using a link to the event invitation and the city-specific hashtag.
- Partners will blast both the call-for-creatives and the event information to their membership through newsletters or email.
- Partners will be thanked at the beginning of the program.
- Partners will have their names included as on the event post about the event and all invitation copy for the event, with links to their organizations.
- Partners will have their logos projected on screens before and after the program at the event.
- If space allows, partners can table at the event, putting their programs or publications out for the audience to view.

Local chapters of AIGA, a national design organization, served as excellent partners in all our 2012 events. Find out how you can partner with an AIGA chapter in your city ➔
One of the biggest draws for a branded GOOD Ideas for Cities program is the national and even global reach of the GOOD media network. From the print magazine to the online network, GOOD plays a big role in bringing attention to your event. However, even with such a great media partner on the national scale, nothing can replace the benefit of a solid local media partner to help you generate interest from the community and share your stories.

Remember we recommended that you include local media in your big brainstorm list of who should get involved in your city’s GOOD Ideas for Cities event. From that list, you will want to identify one or two outlets that you feel would be ideal partners in telling the story: newspapers, alternative weeklies, city magazines, radio shows, television stations. In addition to traditional media, don’t forget your local bloggers who cover urban issues. We have found that partnerships with prominent blogs have yielded some great stories and online content. Additionally, many cities have seen wonderful success working with local public media.

When you are approaching a media outlet to become a partner, it will be important for you to determine in advance what you would like the partnership to yield and what you will offer in return.

A typical media partner relationship has looked like this:

- **MEDIA PARTNERS WILL HELP PROMOTE THE EVENT THROUGH BLOG POSTS, FACEBOOK, TWITTER USING A LINK TO THE EVENT INVITATION AND THE CITY-SPECIFIC HASHTAG.**

- **MEDIA PARTNERS WILL PROVIDE COVERAGE BEFORE AND AFTER THE EVENT: ONE OR TWO BLOG POSTS OR CALENDAR LISTINGS BEFORE THE EVENT, AND A RECAP OF THE EVENT AFTERWARDS.**

- **MEDIA PARTNERS WILL LIVE-TWEET AT THE EVENT, USING THE CITY-SPECIFIC HASHTAG.**

- **MEDIA PARTNERS MAY PUBLISH CREATIVE TEAM PROFILES IN ADVANCE OF EVENT TO GENERATE BUZZ.**

- **MEDIA PARTNERS MAY PUBLISH THE IDEAS, VIDEOS AND PRESENTATIONS.**
Media partners will be thanked at the beginning of the program.

Media partners will have their names included as on the event post about the event and all invitation copy for the event, with links to their organizations.

Media partners will have their logos projected on screens before and after the program at the event.

- Creating a One Sheet -

To reach out to any potential hosts, partners or sponsors to get them involved in your event, it’s imperative that you create a simple one-sheet about the program. In the early stages, it doesn’t need to cover all the specifics, but it should have some basic background about the GOOD Ideas for Cities initiative as well as your vision for how the event will transform your city. If you have any confirmed hosts or partners, add those names and organizations. If you have a date, time and venue confirmed, you should also include that information as well.

- For DIY events, this is a good time to start thinking about your event title and graphic.

- For featured events, our GOOD Ideas for Cities team will work with you to create a graphic template for the one-sheet, including a city-specific logo for you to use throughout the program.

Public television stations make great local media partners. Watch the video that Nine Network made for the St. Louis event →

For more links to media coverage of GOOD Ideas for Cities events, check out our Storify page →

Creating a one-sheet is a great way to engage potential collaborators. Check out our sample one sheet →
One of the first official tasks for your taskforce will be organizing the happy hour kickoff event to bring together all the hosts, partners, sponsors, plus selected urban leaders and selected creative teams. You also might want to include volunteers who want to help with the event itself. This will be a chance to answer any questions about the event and to give participants an opportunity to meet each other. We suggest a very casual gathering at a place that serves food and drink which is centrally located and accessible to transit. A good timeframe for this kickoff is two months from the event date, just as you’re announcing the challenges and pairings and opening up the RSVPs. You can also speak with participants at this time about helping to promote the event.

Dallas organized their kickoff event during an annual Design Week festival. Learn how they did it
FUNDRAISING
AND
SECURING
SPONSORS

Producing a GOOD Ideas for Cities event typically requires various in-kind and monetary needs that your taskforce will have to secure. Many cities have been lucky enough to have much of their hard costs covered through generous donations, ranging from beer from local breweries to a venue offered free of change.

What kind of support is needed?

First, look at your budget for your event. If most of your needs are tangible goods and services like snacks and videography, you may be able to line up sponsors who will provide those goods in exchange for exposure. If additional funds are needed, you may want to look at fundraising, including selling tickets to the event or using a crowdsourcing platform like Kickstarter.

Working with a local sponsor can be one of the most valuable relationships in the GOOD Ideas for Cities process. As with the hosts and partner relationships, you’ll want to reach out to sponsors that have values aligned with the program. But also think of sponsors as resources. Sponsors tend to have clout in the local community and can serve as a great way to connect you to urban leaders. It’s not unusual for representatives from the sponsor organizations to join the taskforce and become extremely involved in the planning process.

Also, as you’re looking for sponsors, think about what your event can do for the sponsor. Can you offer them visibility or the chance to interact with an engaged local audience? Put together an enticing proposal for a sponsor that shows how they will be more than just a donor—make them part of the initiative.

A typical sponsor relationship has looked like this:

- SPONSORS DONATE MONEY AND/OR IN-KIND ITEMS.
- SPONSORS WILL BE THANKED AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PROGRAM.
- SPONSORS WILL HAVE THEIR NAMES INCLUDED ON THE EVENT POST AND ALL INVITATION COPY FOR THE EVENT, WITH LINKS TO THEIR ORGANIZATIONS.
- SPONSORS WILL HAVE THEIR LOGOS PROJECTED ON SCREENS BEFORE AND AFTER THE PROGRAM AT THE EVENT. THEY CAN ALSO CREATE TABLES OR DISPLAYS WITH PRODUCT OR BUSINESS CARDS AT THE EVENT.
POSSIBLE ROLES FOR SPONSORS

Venue

In many cities the generosity of sponsors (who can also be event hosts) helped to provide a venue free of charge. Civic organizations and academic institutions are usually happy to offer up their spaces, and often also have great networks through which to promote the event.

Drinks

We think our events work best when attendees can have a complimentary beer (or wine) in hand. Cities have had great success working with local breweries and wineries that can provide local flavor for the evening.

Food

Showcasing local restaurants is a wonderful part of our events. Food trucks have been a fixture in many cities, offering smaller portion sizes or a simplified menu. Sponsorships can help offset costs and guests really appreciate the gesture, especially at evening events.

Videography

Filming the presentations can be one of the more expensive items to cover when planning an event. Connecting with a vendor who will donate these services is a huge help. Cities have had luck with schools getting involved with their film students or production teams, which has given them a great opportunity for interviewing and editing.
RAISING ADDITIONAL FUNDS

To cover even more costs for your event, you might want to engage in some fundraising activities that bring in donations or ticket sales from the community. Here are a few methods we've seen work well for events like these.

Selling Event Tickets

This is probably the most simple way to raise funds. Using a platform like Eventbrite (which we recommend even if you’re taking free RSVPs) you can set ticket prices and allow attendees to pay via credit card or PayPal. If you sell tickets online, you should also be prepared to sell tickets at the door, with cash to use as change, a way to accept checks, and credit cards, if possible. Square is an easy way to take credit cards using an iPhone.

Using Kickstarter to Pre-Sell Tickets

A crowdfunding platform is a great way to not only bring about awareness of your event, but it can also serve as a great way to pre-sell tickets. Using Kickstarter, attendees can pledge their support at different levels and receive different premiums, so simply make a ticket one of the premiums. You can also use Kickstarter to “sell” sponsorships. However, your taskforce must create, distribute, and deliver upon those premiums, so think carefully about them. Also look at Indie-a-Go-Go, which works in the same way as Kickstarter, but doesn’t require a funding minimum to be reached in order for the project to be funded.

Taking Door Donations

A less-formal way to raise money is simply to ask for donations at the door of the event. You might even want to assign a specific monetary value ($10 suggested donation, for example) to encourage people to give a specific amount but not require it. Be prepared to take credit cards or checks, as many people may want to donate that way.

T-Shirt or Poster Sales

Some cities have had success in creating custom t-shirts or posters promoting the event and selling them in advance to raise funds. This is a great idea as it engages the creative community, and the posters can also be used as promotional tools.

Most GOOD ideas for Cities events have used Eventbrite to register and manage attendees. Check out the event page for our Richmond event.
The GOOD Ideas for Cities program relies on two major ingredients: urban leaders to issue the challenges and the creative teams who will work to solve them. The quality of challenges that are issued at your event, and therefore the quality of the creative solutions, depends heavily on who you can engage as urban leaders.

What issues should be addressed?

Sometimes it’s difficult to separate the process of finding good challenges and finding good leaders. You can choose to start with the challenge area—picking issues important to the city so you can go and find the leader who has the responsibility in those areas. For example, if you know biking will be a big issue for your audience, you can reach out to the local transit authority or a bicycling advocacy group. But you might know some great leaders off the top of your head who you’d want to reach out to and let them drive the scope of their challenge. In most cases, it is a hybrid of both approaches, and you can customize the process in the way that’s most appropriate to your city.

Many cities have used these challenge categories to organize issues:

- **Community**
- **Environment**
- **Culture**
- **Food**
- **Economy**
- **Public Space**
- **Education**
- **Transportation**

Once you’ve made that list, revisit your master list of potential participants in your GOOD Ideas for Cities program. Are there any city leaders and organizations who are working for change in these areas? If you have existing relationships with urban leaders, you may want to start there. If you have a connection to local government, that’s also a great place to begin.

The goal for the event is to recruit urban leaders who can actually implement the solutions proposed by the creatives, so look for people who are in positions of authority. Some sample leaders from past events include: mayors, transportation authority directors, parks and recreation directors, economic development advisors, school district superintendents, heads of non-profits and advocacy groups. We don’t recommend tapping leaders from for-profit entities because we don’t want the creative teams donating their time to work on projects for companies and corporations. Pick leaders who are known for serving their city and use your best judgment.
REACHING OUT TO URBAN LEADERS

Establishing contact with leaders can be a delicate task as you’re often dealing with people who have very busy schedules. You might want to begin by casting a wide net to gauge interest before you ask for challenge statements outright. Many of the people you reach out to may not be able to commit to the effort, so this is an excellent opportunity to engage a broad audience for the program and the event. People who are asked to get involved will likely return the favor by promoting the event, even if they aren’t able to participate.

In some cities, we’ve seen such an outpouring of interest from leaders who wanted to be involved that it made sense for leaders from similar areas to pair up and create their challenge statement together. This is a great approach and encourages wonderful collaboration between organizations and agencies.

When reaching out to your potential leaders, use that one-sheet you’ve created. Be sure to outline your expectations of their role as a leader and offer other opportunities for their involvement in the event they are not able to serve in this capacity. Most importantly, be authentic in your request—this is your opportunity to make a personal connection.

The initial contact you make with local leaders is critical. Read our sample letter for reaching out to potential urban leaders ➔
Once the city leaders are confirmed, you’ll need to gather their challenge statements for the most urgent problem facing the local community within their areas of expertise. It could be big or small in scale, specific or broad in scope, social or physical in nature. It can be geographically specific to focus on a neighborhood or even a single block. It could originate locally but be potentially applicable to cities worldwide. But it should be a problem that, if solved, would have a significant and widespread impact on the local community, improve daily life for its citizens, or truly change the way the city works (for the better, of course).

The reason we reach out to urban leaders is because we want the creative teams to address real-world challenges in the hopes that they could produce real-world solutions that could possibly be implemented. Not all the solutions are totally executable, mind you—and those kinds of solutions are important as well—but a real goal of the program is to work with the creative teams and urban leaders after the event to help fund solutions. This is something to keep in mind as you work with them to craft their statements.

The ideal challenge statements are two to three sentences long, and end with a question. Of course the urban leader can include more information or resources to pass along to the creative team, but it’s important to condense the challenge into a brief, memorable call-to-action.

Here are some examples of great challenge statements:

- **Neighborhood street corners across New Orleans are often in disrepair.** This neglect can make our blocks feel unwelcoming and unsafe. Constrained by expense and other concerns, beautification of our intersections is seldom a priority. How can we help empower artists, cultural producers, and neighborhoods to take beautification into their own hands?

- **The City of Dallas has more than 110 miles of hiking and biking trails.** But due to lack of branding, non-existent wayfinding system and a comprehensive electronic field guide, many citizens don’t know that this incredible resource exists. How do we connect the dots so local residents, business owners and developers not only know about, but make better use of our hike and bike trails?

- **There are some vibrant elementary schools in the City of Richmond.** However, middle schools can be another story. Some parents send their children to private schools starting in middle school and other parents stop showing up. The community is often more interested in volunteering in elementary schools or high schools. How can we keep the community involved with the goal of improving our city’s middle schools?

- **Located in the heartland, St. Louis has unique resources that could allow it to become a leader in urban agriculture.** Yet most of the food consumed in the region is produced hundreds or thousands of miles away, and many urban areas of St. Louis have limited access to fresh food. How can St. Louis use our resources and stakeholders to increase accessibility of healthy, locally grown food?

- **Homeowners in the Greater Cincinnati area are spending far more than they should on electricity and gas because their homes lack proper insulation, storm windows and efficient heating and cooling systems.** With the goals of saving money, reducing emissions and putting local residents to work, how do we get more Cincinnati households to perform energy efficiency upgrades on their home?
- ROLE OF THE URBAN LEADER -

Once the urban leader has proposed the challenge, you will need to pair each leader with a creative team you’ve selected from your call-for-creatives. We’ve found that each team works differently depending on the availability of their urban leader; some teams simply attend the kickoff happy hour meeting with their urban leader and then prefer to work independently until the event. Others have organized weekly meetings with urban leaders, or simply stay in touch via email. It’s important for the leaders to have at least one in-person meeting with the creative team after their challenge has been assigned. Also if the leader has an assistant or someone else in their office who can help facilitate needs from the creative teams—resources like images, contacts, data—that will be very helpful. It’s important for the teams and urban leaders to establish expectations early on that are respectful to everyone’s time.

At the event, the urban leader plays “client” as the creative team who has accepted their challenge will present their solution to them in front of a live audience. Afterwards, we think it’s important for both the creative team and the urban leader to engage in a Q&A onstage with questions from a moderator and, if time, the audience, to surface any queries or concerns. (For featured GOOD Ideas for Cities events, the Q&A will be moderated by GOOD’s Alissa Walker.) The event then culminates in lively discussion and debate about the future of cities, and the conversations make for a great cocktail hour afterwards.
Finding creative teams to participate in your event is usually the part that’s most fun for organizers. There are two steps in the process of securing creative teams. First, getting the word out to creatives and encouraging them to form teams, and second, selecting the teams who will participate. The challenge is getting the right mix of creatives in place for your event.

**How to choose creative teams?**

For most cities, a call-for-creatives is posted, and creative teams self-organize, name themselves, and apply as a unit. Most cities saw at least 30 teams apply, and opted to narrow the field to five or six teams. This method allows your taskforce to select the best candidates your city has to offer, and the spirit of competition encourages the creatives to assemble extremely diverse, talented teams.

In 2012, Richmond, New Orleans and Dallas opted to build inclusive teams, allowing individuals to apply and then grouping the individuals into teams based on their interest. This allowed everyone who was interested to participate, but it also created some logistical and organizational challenges since the teams were large and unfamiliar with each other. At the same time, most participants said they welcomed the opportunity to meet and work with new people.

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**SELECTING LOCAL CREATIVES**

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**CREATING THE CALL FOR CREATIVES**

The call-for-creatives should be posted three months out to both explain how the event will work and also get the creative community excited about participating. It’s up to your city to establish the rules and requirements for applying as a creative team, but most cities ask applicants to include a team name, names of members, short bios, work samples, preferred challenge areas, and a written statement about why they’d like to participate.

Many GOOD Ideas for Cities programs used Submittable, a submissions management tool which allows teams to upload links as well as text into various forms. You also might want to use a more simple tool like Survey Monkey or even the Google Drive form tool to track responses. Or you can simply set up an email account where teams can mail in their applications.

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**PUBLICIZING TO CREATIVES**

Posting the call-for-creatives online is only part of the process—now you’ve got to get the message in front of the right people and encourage creatives to apply. By this point in your process, the Facebook page should be created for the initiative and a city-specific hashtag already in action. Asking your hosts and partners to distribute the call to their friends and followers is a great start. If you already have a media partner in place, they should be able to help with promotion as well. Some cities have had success posting flyers at creative workspaces or co-working spaces, or giving out flyers at creative events. Perhaps your venue would allow you to put up posters or make announcements at other events.

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A call-for-creatives should be simple, clear and to-the-point. See an example we created on Submittable.
Instead of having teams apply, you may want to let all interested individuals sign up and then let them choose which challenge to work on. Learn how Dallas built inclusive teams.

This is also a great reason to choose partnering organizations that are already in touch with creatives. As we mentioned before, professional creative organizations like AIGA, AIA, IDSA, and ASLA have memberships of enthusiastic creatives. Design and art schools also usually have a great network.

**SELECTING TEAMS**

Roughly 10 weeks from the event day, the call-for-creatives closes. Your taskforce should decide how to share the submissions with the team in charge of selecting participants. Hopefully you’ll be able to meet in person to review all of the submissions with the goal of narrowing them down to the right number and mix to fit the challenges you’ve decided on for your event. There aren’t any strict guidelines for this process, since each city is unique.

**Here are some general criteria cities have used when it comes to selecting creative teams:**

**DIVERSITY:** Striking a good balance between creative disciplines as well as drawing participants from different neighborhoods and backgrounds is very important. It’s great when you can find teams that come to the competition with a diverse, multi-disciplined group. If not, be sure to mix it up team to team. The goal is to get a broad spectrum of people working on the challenges for your city.

**WORK SAMPLES:** Because the presentations are visual, it’s important that the teams demonstrate the ability to create visually intriguing work that can excite attendees. Work should not only show evidence of creative problem solving, it should also be able to inspire attendees to collaborate on the solutions.

**PASSION:** Teams should show that they’re personally invested in the idea of improving their city. Past collaborations between city leaders and creatives have gone far beyond the event, working together to make the solutions a reality. A team should demonstrate that they’re in for the long haul.
- PAIRING CREATIVES WITH CHALLENGES -

Pairing creative teams with challenges is an interesting process that’s different for each city. As we mentioned before, cities have asked teams to indicate which challenge area they’d like to focus on. Most cities like to give creatives their first or second choices of challenge areas because it means that the creatives are more likely to be personally invested in their solutions. But there’s also some value to asking creatives to step slightly outside their comfort zones. We’ve seen great examples where graphic designers were tasked with an issue around the built environment, for example, and really enjoyed the challenge.

Another way to assign challenges is to look at the type of clients or issues the creatives already work with. Again, sometimes it’s valuable to assign a challenge in-line with their existing work, and sometimes it’s fun to let them stretch a bit.

- WORKING WITH URBAN LEADERS -

Once the creative team has received the challenge, they should reach out to their urban leader. We’ve found that each team works differently depending on the availability of their urban leader; some teams simply attend the kickoff happy hour meeting with their urban leader and then prefer to work independently until the event. Others have organized weekly meetings with urban leaders, or simply stay in touch via email.

We ask for the urban leaders to have at least one in-person meeting with the creative team after their challenge has been assigned. Also if the leader has an assistant or someone else in their office who can help facilitate needs from the creative teams—resources like images, contacts, data—that will be very helpful. It’s important for the teams and urban leaders to establish expectations early on that are respectful to everyone’s time. Also creative teams should feel free to reach out to other local experts or contacts who might be helpful to their challenge.

- THE ROLE OF THE CREATIVE TEAM -

Once the challenge has been issued, the creative teams have about two months to respond to the challenge issued by their urban leader. Again, some solutions have been easily implementable and realistic, some solutions have been more radical and wildly imaginative. It’s totally up to the team to decide what kind of solution is right for the challenge. Sometimes the most outlandish ideas can help people to realize the potential of a not-so-feasible real-life solution. We see the value in both the possible and the impossible. However, we encourage creatives to think big—their solutions may respond to a particular geographic area, but ideally they could be executed anywhere in the world.

At the event, creative team presents to the “client,” their urban leader who has accepted their challenge, in front of a live audience. Afterwards, creatives should be prepared to engage in a Q&A onstage with questions from a moderator and, if time, the audience, to surface any queries or concerns. (For branded GOOD Ideas for Cities events, the Q&A will be moderated by GOOD’s Alissa Walker.) Afterwards, creatives in many cities have set up tables or stations where they can show their materials and answer questions one-on-one.
As each venue and program is different, each city will have to decide on which event format is right for them. But we have a basic formula for creatives to follow that has worked well in many cities.

Here’s a sample list of guidelines for creative teams:

- **Each team needs to prepare a seven minute presentation** for the event. We’ve experimented with many presentations and found seven minutes to be the just-about perfect length.

- **Someone should be keeping time** and signal to the team when they have 2 minutes left, 1 minute left, and their time is up.

- **Teams should turn in their presentations in a program like Keynote, PowerPoint or as a PDF.** Organizers should then merge all the presentations into one document and test it before the event. A program like PDF to Keynote will allow files to transfer easily.

- **Teams should turn in their presentations to the event coordinator by the day before the event.** If files are large, you can use services like Dropbox or YouSendit to share them.

- **Visualizations and engaging presentation design are very important.** Props, mockups and other real-life prototypes are also most welcome!

- **Teams should think about how their solution can live beyond the event.** Consider that the audience is a large group of enthusiastic local residents who want to participate. Is there a URL they can set up where people can volunteer to help? A Facebook group? A hashtag?

- **Teams often create their own websites or blogs** for their ideas where people can go for more information.

- **We recommend thinking of this like a Pecha Kucha or TED presentation,** meaning it should be provocative, entertaining and spark a lively discussion!

To ensure that the ideas presented at your event move towards reality, you might want to consider awarding microgrants to the teams. Learn how New Orleans gave $500 to each of their teams to create real world impact →

Clearly outlining the objectives of the event as well as logistical details is key. Read our sample letter to creative teams →
As with any event, GOOD Ideas for Cities events require attention to detail for everything from finding the right venue to securing food and drink to keeping everyone on track—and on time!—with a solid run of show.

What are the goals for the event?

The best way to get started with event planning a GOOD Ideas for Cities event is to think about what you want your city to get out of it. Work with your taskforce to define the big takeaway experience you want to create and make a list of your priorities. For example, some cities want to draw a large crowd to generate broad awareness, while others want to create a more intimate setting that fosters conversation and dialogue. Getting everyone on the same page early on will help facilitate the many decisions you will have to make along the way.
VENUE SELECTION

Your event venue is one of the biggest factors to consider when planning your GOOD Ideas for Cities event—it will set the tone for the entire night. The size, location, amenities and setup will shape your event almost as much as the content itself. In general, the goal is to create a fun, celebratory environment for networking but when the time comes, the space also lets your audience listen and focus on the presentations. This second part is critical, since teams have worked hard to come up with their presentations and only have a short timeframe to share them.

Here are some things to look for while selecting your venue:

- **SIZE:** Approximately 200-300 people for a mid-sized city is a good target. Be sure to find out the seated capacity as well as the standing capacity. Theater-style seating usually doesn’t offer much flexibility as far as numbers, but if it’s a more open space, it’s nice to offer both seats and places to stand since some attendees usually like to move around.

- **LOCATION:** Central and urban, preferably within a short walk to restaurants and bars, and with good access to transit.

- **REFRESHMENTS:** We think food and drink are a must. If your event space doesn’t provide, you will want to work with a caterer to secure. It doesn’t have to be a full menu, but a little sustenance goes a long way!

- **SETUP:** Theater-style is preferred to ensure that people will be able to see and hear all of the presentations without too much distraction. If you have a bar venue that allows for table seating, be sure that you move tables to the back of the room and allow for some theater-style up front, closest to the presenters.

- **AV:** Projection and amplification are key to make sure the presenters are seen and heard. Check to see if the venue provides AV or if you need to rent it.

PROVIDING FOOD AND DRINK

Following the presentations, having food and drinks available is a great way to keep the conversation flowing and encourage the kind of networking these events are known for. At past events, some of our venues have provided beer and wine plus some light snacks for the program. Where possible, it’s great to find local donors to contribute these items in-kind. If that’s not possible, you might find food trucks or other vendors to sell food and drink at a discounted price. This is a good detail to nail down quickly so you can promote any in-kind donations as you publicize the event.

Alcohol laws will vary from city to city, but typically an event venue will have some ability to accommodate either a liquor sponsorship or have a cash bar. For food, be sure to check with your venue first to understand the options and whether or not food trucks are allowed.

Think about how to give your audience an opportunity to get involved in the ideas presented. See how Cincinnati created “pledge sheets” that allowed attendees to pledge their time, talent or money.
In many of our most successful programs, the GOOD Ideas for Cities event has been promoted as part of a larger festival or conference, like San Francisco’s Architecture and the City Festival, or New York’s Urban Design Week. If that’s not possible, then it’s key to partner with art, design or other creative organizations that can co-promote the event to their members.

Our events seem to be best attended during the week, as an evening event on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. Depending on the traffic patterns in your city, you may want to start as late as 7:00 p.m. or as early as 6:00 p.m. The program itself should run anywhere from 1.5 hours to 2 hours. In many places, what has worked well is having a 30-minute “buffer” for people to arrive, then the program, then an hour-long reception after the program.

Here’s a sample run of show we’ve found works well:

1. **4:00** — HOSTS AND MODERATOR ARRIVE
2. **5:00** — VOLUNTEERS ARRIVE, VIDEOGRAPHERS ARRIVE, TEAM LEADERS ARRIVE FOR AV CHECK
3. **6:00** — DOORS OPEN, URBAN LEADERS ARRIVE, BAR OPENS
4. **6:45** — ANNOUNCE TO PEOPLE TO START TAKING SEATS
5. **7:00** — PROGRAM BEGINS: WELCOME FROM VENUE
6. **7:03** — WELCOME FROM HOSTS
7. **7:08** — MODERATOR INTRODUCES PROGRAM AND THANKS ALL HOSTS, PARTNERS, SPONSORS
8. **7:16** — TEAM #1
9. **7:25** — Q&A WITH TEAM #1 AND LEADER #1
10. **7:31** — TEAM #2
11. **7:38** — Q&A WITH TEAM #2 AND LEADER #2
12. **7:44** — TEAM #3
13. **7:51** — Q&A WITH TEAM #3 AND LEADER #3
14. **7:57** — TEAM #4
15. **8:04** — Q&A WITH TEAM #4 AND LEADER #4
16. **8:12** — TEAM #5
17. **8:19** — Q&A WITH TEAM #5 AND LEADER #5
18. **8:25** — CLOSING REMARKS
19. **8:30** — DRINKS AND MINGLING
20. **9:45** — LAST CALL
21. **10:00** — EVERYONE OUT!
There’s nothing worse than watching a great presentation that’s plagued by technical problems. You won’t want any surprises when it comes to your AV setup, so it’s important to test the system well in advance of the event, and, if possible, have a technician on-site during the presentations as well.

Although we’ve had a wide variety of stage and speaker arrangements at our events, here’s what seems to work best:

- **ONE SCREEN WITH A PROJECTOR** that uses a VGA adapter to connect to a computer
- **PROJECTOR AND SCREEN**
- **AN ADAPTER** that allows the computer to play video and audio
- **ALL PRESENTATIONS ON ONE COMPUTER** (ideally merged into one document) to minimize transition time
- **COMPUTER ON-STAGE** with the presenter so slides can be advanced by hand
- **AT LEAST THREE MICS**: One podium mic for the presenter/s, one for a moderator and one for the urban leaders to use during the Q&A. (You can also use wireless and clip on mics, which are great, but not necessary).
- **SOUND AMPLIFICATION** that’s adequate for the space
- **A SOUNDBOARD** that allows the videographer to capture sound directly from the mics way.
- VIDEOGRAPHY & PHOTOGRAPHY -

We can’t emphasize enough how important it is to capture the event through videos and still photos. This documentation rewards the creative teams and leaders with something tangible they can share with stakeholders and decision-makers, and it allows your city to distribute your ideas to a wider audience. Plus, attendees can use the videos to share their favorite ideas with other people, and they’ll also want to view the event photos—people love looking at photos of themselves! For both videos and photographs we recommend working with providers who are able to turn around the files in a quick timeframe. We suggest 10 days maximum, sooner if possible, so that you can share the results with your community quickly and keep the great momentum.

For videography, decide basic details ahead of time including file format, file size and aspect ratio. You should also talk with who will be editing the footage (often the same person who is shooting the footage) and discuss any captions or graphics that you’ll be adding. Our videos include both the presentation and the Q&A and are usually between 10 and 15 minutes in length. We suggest optimizing videos for YouTube or Vimeo so they can be easily shared and distributed.

For featured events, your photos will be uploaded to the GOOD Ideas for Cities Flickr page.

Also, it’s a good idea to identify a few volunteers ahead of time who will capture photos and video on their phones so that you can have both quick, real-time content for social media updates as well as the more polished pieces for event documentation.

- TAKING RSVPS -

The ideal sized audience for a GOOD Ideas for Cities event is about 200 to 300 people. This number allows for interaction with the audience and still creates enough energy for the presenters. But we’ve also had events in larger venues with bigger audiences. Cincinnati expanded their audience to 400 with a simulcast lounge, and St. Louis had 850 attendees!

You’ll want to decide early on if you want to sell tickets or make it a free event. Both have their own merits. Obviously if you have costs you need to recoup, selling tickets is a good idea. Also, asking people to pay even a small amount to reserve their space results in higher attendance since they feel they’re invested in the event. A free event is obviously more accessible to the general public and gives the sense that it’s truly open to anyone. But with free events, there is a high rate of no-shows. Luckily, there are always plenty of people who didn’t RSVP who simply show up at the door.

If your event is ticketed or free, you should use a system to track RSVPs. Not only will you have everyone’s email addresses captured so you can contact them with updates, but you’ll be able to keep a headcount, which is an especially good idea in a venue that could fill to capacity. Many cities used Eventbrite to track RSVPs, and for free events we recommend overbooking by about 50% to ensure there are no empty seats. We don’t recommend using waiting lists, instead you can add information to the event language encouraging people who want to attend, but who did not RSVP, to come the night of the event and wait in a rush line. Even if the event sells out, there will always be no-shows so it usually works out perfectly, and we are able to find space for anyone who shows up.

Capturing great footage of the presentations is important, but it doesn’t have to stop there. In Cincinnati, the Queen City Project created beautiful in-depth videos of each challenge, interviewing creatives and leaders.
From the moment the call-for-creatives is issued, you’ll want to activate every means possible to drum up interest and boost attendance. Of course, your media partners will be extremely helpful in getting your message out to their audience but you’ll also have to do a bit of on-the-ground publicity yourself. Social media channels like Twitter and Facebook are ideal for promoting your mission, building an audience and creating buzz about the event, while more traditional methods like posters and press releases can garner offline interest as well.

Here are some of the successful methods that cities have used to promote their events:

► **FACEBOOK:** We recommend setting up a Facebook page about three months out from the event as a place to start the conversation. While not everyone in your audience will be on Facebook, it does provide a convenient repository to capture information, post updates and answer questions real-time. Then, about one month out, create an event on the page with all the information so people can share it and post that they’re attending. Facebook has been a great way for people to not only get the latest information about the initiative, but it also provides a place to have a dialogue about other issues in the city.

► **TWITTER:** This is yet another powerful tool for both promotion and documentation. As one of your first orders of business, we recommend creating a hashtag specific to your program that you can use to track responses before, during and after the event. The hashtag should be included in all event postings and announced at the event before the presentations. These should be as few characters as possible: #GOODIdeasSTL and #GOODIdeasCincy are some examples from 2012 events. Media partners as well as a few volunteers should be charged with live-tweeting the event, using the hashtag. If you’re so inclined, you also might want to create your own Twitter account and post updates from there. Remember with both DIY and featured events, we’re happy to help you promote through our @IdeasforCities account if you email us information or use @ replies to contact us.

► **LOCAL MEDIA OUTLETS:** You’ll want to send a media alert to all local publications outlining the goals and format of the evening and inviting them to the event. This can be a very personal email—in fact, that’s what will resonate best with journalists. For reaching out to local media outlets, traditional press releases will work, or even using your updated one-sheet. You might also consider using Twitter as way of letting reporters know what’s happening and when. An @ reply on Twitter can get their attention, but don’t abuse this method or you’ll annoy your journalists!

► **POSTER AND FLYERS:** In addition to social media and traditional press, don’t forget about the power of low-tech options. Some cities create flyers and distribute them around town in coffee shops and other public venues. This could be a fun way to engage a local university or art school to hold a contest for a poster design and let students volunteer for distribution around the city.

► **PROMOTION ON GOOD.IS:** For featured events, your event will be publicized through GOOD’s website, which sees over 3 million visits per month, as well as on GOOD’s Twitter feed, which has over 680,000 followers. We’ll also make several call-outs to your event through our @IdeasforCities Twitter feed.
After the Event

In many ways, the event is just the beginning of the GOOD Ideas for Cities initiative. After the ideas are presented, the real work begins, as the community comes together to rally around its favorite initiatives and (hopefully) start moving towards implementation. As an organizer, it’s your job to make sure these ideas reach as many people as possible who might want to get involved with their outcomes.

How will you share your ideas?

It’s also important that you share what you’ve produced so other cities can learn from you. From the local taskforce you formed, to the ideas you generated, to the dialogue your event inspires in your city, the process is almost as important as the outcome. Already, we’ve discovered how many cities are facing the same challenges, and our goal is to not only pair creatives with urban leaders in their own cities, we want to bring cities together to learn from each others’ ideas.

Documenting Your Event

It’s also important that you share what you’ve produced so other cities can learn from you. From the local taskforce you formed, to the ideas you generated, to the dialogue your event inspires in your city, the process is almost as important as the outcome. Already, we’ve discovered how many cities are facing the same challenges, and our goal is to not only pair creatives with urban leaders in their own cities, we want to bring cities together to learn from each others’ ideas.

Here are a few ideas for documenting your event:

- **Archive the Presentations:** It’s a great idea to find a place for all the content created to live online. This could be a website or blog from one of the host or partner organizations, or it could be a special website created just for the initiative. As we’ve mentioned previously, videos and photos of the event are essential, since they really help to put faces and personalities to the ideas. But you’ll also want to include links to stories and blog posts about the event written both by your media partners and other media outlets. In many cities, team members themselves wrote wonderful stories about participating in the event. Having a single link you can point people to after the event will be extremely helpful as you’re working with media requests or helping the teams with implementation. After the event, you may want to consider using Storify, which aggregates a variety of links into one narrative timeline.

- **Share Your Story on GOOD:** In addition to sharing locally through your network, share the photos and video as soon as they are available through the GOOD website. HOW: We have to talk to Casey about this. For featured events, after the event happens, the program will be covered in depth on GOOD’s website and the ideas themselves will be posted individually on the GOOD Ideas for Cities site.

- **Create a Survey:** Once your event is over, it’s helpful to create a survey to send to all the organizers, leaders and creative teams in your event asking them to pass along their thoughts, feedback and anecdotes. Most cities have used Survey Monkey. The answers will help you to generate your own takeaways from the process that you can share with your community. You can use the information you receive to learn more about the great work that you are doing, document the outcomes, track impact, follow successes, and improve your process. Additionally, feel free to pass along the feedback to us.
Planning a follow-up event gives the community a chance to follow the ideas as they move towards implementation. Learn how St. Louis planned a successful event six months later.

**KEEPING THE CONVERSATION GOING**

Giving participants and attendees more chances to interact is key to implementing change in your city. After the event, the creative teams are energized, the urban leaders are enthusiastic, and the audience is curious about what happens next. The best way to keep the momentum going is to plan formal and informal opportunities to stay connected.

- **STAY CONNECTED THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA:** Many attendees will have already “liked” the Facebook page you created, so continuing to use it allows the event to stay top-of-mind for your audience. It also gives people a common place to add their comments about the event and carry the conversation for you. Post all the content from the event as well as all the media stories, blog posts, and follow-up that comes out of the event. The same is true for Twitter: Post every story about your event here and use the hashtag you created. You can keep using it to promote additional efforts by your participants or other relevant news.

- **HOST A POST-EVENT MEETUP:** A very informal yet highly effective way to keep the dialogue going is to plan a public meetup a week or two after the event. You can announce the details at the event and post on social media channels. For the audience, it gives people who get inspired a way to get involved. For the creative teams and urban leaders, it provides a somewhat structured forum to keep the energy and new relationships alive. After the initial meet-up, the group may decide to keep on meeting and take on one or more of the challenges to help see it through implementation. Action will evolve, but the important first step is to proactively structure that first opportunity.

- **PLAN A FOLLOW-UP EVENT:** Idea generation is valuable, but an idea that evolves into action is priceless. A great way to make that leap from vision to reality for your city’s creative ideas is to build in a follow-up event at least six months out. The format of the follow-up event is flexible, but the intent is to check in with at least one, and hopefully more, of the ideas that get traction from the first event. By planning a follow-up event ahead of time, you can set the expectation from the beginning that you are looking for tangible solutions from the teams and clear commitment from local leaders to implement them.
CITY CASE STUDIES

WE ADMIT, WE DIDN’T THINK OF EVERYTHING! EACH CITY WE VISITED IN 2012 CAME UP WITH THEIR OWN GREAT IDEAS FOR INCREASING THE IMPACT OF THEIR EVENT. WE’VE ASKED FIVE OF OUR PARTNERS TO SHARE THEIR KNOWLEDGE IN THE FORM OF SHORT ESSAYS.

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Organizing a Follow-up Event 98
JEANNETTE THOMPSON, ST. LOUIS
“A LOT OF PEOPLE WANT TO HELP, BUT LACK THE CONNECTIONS, ORGANIZATION, ABILITY, ETC. TO MAKE IT HAPPEN. THIS EVENT GOT LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE TOGETHER IN AN ENVIRONMENT MORE CONDUCIVE TO ACTUALLY IMPLEMENTING CHANGE.”

Mark Lea
Spire Realty Group
When GOOD Ideas for Cities agreed to come to Dallas, our local chapter of AIGA (American Institute of Graphic Design, see: Partnering with AIGA Chapters), AIGA DFW, had already planned a “creative think tank” that would serve as a gathering place to form partnerships to drive change in Dallas. We had invited attendees to come brainstorm challenges for the city which we could address as a group. Once GOOD Ideas for Cities was involved, they helped us confirm the participation of DART (Transit), the City of Dallas Office of Economic Development (Elmwood) and the Dallas Parks Foundation (Bike/Hike), who would share their challenges with us as urban leaders. This helped us focus and establish better goals for the “think tank” event. With the challenges in place, we realized the event would be a great place for interested individuals to organize into groups and create a plan of action for working together in the two months before the GOOD Ideas for Cities event.

One of our goals for the program was to make sure any interested creative who wanted to would be able to participate, so the invitation to the GOOD Ideas for Cities Think Tank was open to everyone. We spread the word through press releases, email and social media blasts. On that Friday in April, a colorful crowd of about 30 attendees attended our Think Tank kickoff event: designers, architects, environmental designers, and even those from the outer circles of the creative community we usually don’t reach.

CHALLENGE PRESENTATIONS

We set up our Think Tank with a main speaking area and three separate areas for each group to organize after the presentations. We started the Think Tank by introducing the initiative, and followed that with presentations from the three city leaders who each gave a 15 minute talk about their challenges. After each leader presented, the leaders and attendees separated into the different group meeting areas. The attendees were encouraged to go to the section of the venue that held their challenge of interest.

During the group breakouts, AIGA DFW gave each group an itinerary for the next two months: what to do, what to expect, links to previous GOOD Ideas for Cities presentations, and contact information for any help they’d need in the upcoming months. Each group was asked to pick two team leaders and have everyone “register” with us using a survey we created using Google Docs. Here they stated which group they picked, along with their name, skillset and contact information. Then for the last 30 minutes of the Think Tank, they conducted their initial brainstorms and organized their meetings for the next two months. We gave them the base tools they would need to present together in June, but the organization, and initiative was left to each group.

PROGRESS AND PARTICIPATION

AIGA DFW put together a DFW Design For Good Facebook page for the groups to communicate with each other, and for us to generate excitement about the work the different groups were doing. This is also where we published the challenges, in case other people who were unable to attend the Think Tank kickoff were still interested in participating. The growth of each group was pretty organic, and mirrored the interest and enthusiasm you already see in the city with respect to each of the challenge areas. As the weeks towards the presentations passed, the Bike/Hike and Elmwood groups kept the majority of its team members, while the Transit team lost about half of their team members. AIGA DFW kept up with each team, volunteering to fill any spots if necessary, specifically in the presentation/materials design area, but it wasn’t needed.

RESULTS

There are definitely challenges when it comes to organizing a group of strangers as opposed to working with a group of people you know. If I could do things differently, I’d better prepare our groups for preparing and presenting their proposal by giving them a better framework to present their case, showing them how to engage their audience and keep them interested, and holding a dry-run rehearsal a week prior for timing—all of which designers do regularly. But in the end, the groups were able to come together and present very interesting and engaging proposals, and the Bike/Hike and Elmwood groups are currently still working together to facilitate their plans in their challenge areas.

Frances Yllana
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“THROUGH THE GOOD IDEAS PROCESS WE WERE ABLE TO DEVELOP A STRONG PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR CREATIVE TEAM AND CONTINUE TO WORK WITH THEM TO DEVELOP A TOOL FOR ADDRESSING OUR CHALLENGE OF INCREASING COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR OUR PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM.”

Lisa Libby
Mayor’s Planning and Sustainability Director
City of Portland
I teach a course called Design Thinking at Portland State University. Most of my students are graphic design majors, looking forward to making visual communication work in studios, agencies and firms. In this course, I try to help them understand the broader context of design, exposing them to different situations to which they can apply their critical thinking and creative skills. The GOOD Ideas for Cities project was the perfect vehicle for students to direct their efforts toward their own community, an ongoing focus of our department and university.

The timing worked out perfectly. Halfway into the term, we shifted our focus to cities: we watched Gary Hustwit’s Urbanized and looked at the work of Candy Chang. Alissa visited our class that week to introduce the GOOD Ideas for Cities initiative and share past solutions that student teams had presented in their own cities.

The students attended the Portland rendition of GOOD Ideas for Cities that week, where I presented as part of a team. I had students write responses to the GOOD event: What did they like? What would they change? What solutions were their favorites, and why? Were they drawn to the outlandish solutions, or the pragmatic ones?

**ORGANIZING A STUDENT EVENT**

After the event, we set out to produce our own version of the evening, a sister event where the students would present their suggestions for change to a public audience of Portlanders. Unlike the first Portland event where teams were partnered with civic leaders and given challenges, the students were charged with identifying their own urban issues. I think this is important: the problem seeking component was just as important as the problem solving. When students are able to direct a process of inquiry that they developed from the beginning, I think they inject more energy and attention into their work.

One month later, we held an evening of presentations. Alissa returned to Portland to lecture on her current work and host the evening, and we held the event off campus in the community. We called it GOOD Ideas for Portland, and I invited local creative professionals—graphic designers, journalists, design strategists—to offer the students live feedback on their proposals.

**RESULTS**

The event was a total success. The students were nervous, but felt exhilarated after presenting their ideas to an audience of Portlanders! Our guests offered excellent feedback, and the audience was interested. The students were elated to have their work shown on good.is, alongside the proposals from professional GOOD Ideas for Cities participants across the nation. Valuing the students’ ideas in this way empowered them to understand the potential they wield as creative thinkers and the impact their efforts can have. The major piece of critical feedback from the students was that they wanted to see their ideas put into action. For future iterations of the project, they suggested more effort be made to connect to local leaders who could help implement their ideas.

We documented the students’ work on the class blog: designtinkingpsu.tumblr.com/goodideas

Nicole Lavelle
nicolelavelle@gmail.com
“EXTREMELY FANTASTIC IDEAS AND RESOURCES.”

- RICHMOND -

Christine Pizzo
Digital Advocate
Create Digital
PARTNERING WITH AIGA CHAPTERS –

Frances Yllana, Dallas

AIGA, or American Institute of Graphic Design, is a national organization of 22,000 designers in over 50 chapters across the country. In 2012 I was the vice president for AIGA DFW, serving the Dallas-Ft. Worth region. Part of AIGA's national mission is to advance design as a cultural force — to show the value of what we're trained to do for our clients by showing what we can do for our communities through community-oriented events and creative problem solving. A new initiative, Design for Good, encourages each AIGA chapter to lead projects which spark social change in their cities.

Needless to say, AIGA’s Design for Good mission is a great fit with the GOOD Ideas for Cities program and we were excited to collaborate on this program. Their contributions to our event and added exposure inside and outside of Dallas, was already invaluable to us as an organization, as well as to our city. (In fact, each of the 2012 GOOD Ideas for Cities events featured a local AIGA chapter as a partner.)

DESIGN WEEK KICKOFF

One of our goals at AIGA DFW is to reach outside of our base design community. As part of AIGA DFW’s second Design Week in April 2012, a week-long festival of design events around the city, we programmed days dedicated to interactive, women designers, freelancers and design leaders, with speakers including Doug Powell, president of AIGA national and head of the Design for Good initiative. We also used the Design Week to hold the kickoff event for GOOD Ideas for Cities, which we called a “creative think tank.”

Our GOOD Ideas for Cities Think Tank event (see: Building Inclusive Teams for details) and Design Week as a whole were great examples of how many AIGA chapters across the country plan and implement community events. A space was donated to us for the entirety of Design Week—a vacated showroom in the middle of Dallas’s Design District. All of our printing, paper and signage was also donated because we were creating networking and educational events that brought the community together. Our chairs and AV equipment were heavily discounted. So advertising, marketing, along with space for the Think Tank was already folded into our programs, press releases, email and social media blasts for the week’s events and personal alerts to our connections in the “change” community.

MANAGING THE EVENT

From April to June, my role was overseeing the progress and planning the presentation event. Each of the three groups used their own project management system. I was included on all correspondence, so I knew when and who to nag if I didn’t see progress happening. While I was finding and negotiating the venue and organizing refreshments, volunteers, door prizes, videographers, press releases and social media, Alissa helped us spread word to other design organizations which have local chapters across the country like AIA (American Institute of Architects) and IDSA (Industrial Designers Society of America).

We had a great turnout at the GOOD Ideas for Cities event on June 6. In addition to our base group of designers, we saw attendees on the outskirts of the creative community, as well as people completely uninvolved in the advertising and graphic design community. Each group presented, and conversations were started about our ability to affect change together. The best thing for AIGA DFW was the connection we made to the greater community: we showed them that we are here, we are a resource, and that we have the same goals for Dallas as many attendees do.

RESULTS

At first, we thought AIGA DFW would have a much more hands-on role with each team. We thought a board member would lead each group, but in actuality we did no more than oversee each team’s progress and plan the event surrounding their presentations. AIGA DFW became their cheerleader, their hosts and a conduit for their creativity. Another great surprising outcome was that the participants and attendees weren’t all designers. So, not only did AIGA DFW show our value to the community, we achieved our goal of showing the value of our profession. The inspiration drawn from our event’s success has propelled the success of our events afterwards. We hope to continue the model of partnership we learned, so we can continue to reach more people, spread our message and intent further. We can continue to communicate to the community that we are not only stewards of good design, but designing for good.

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“OUR IDEA HAS ALREADY BEEN IMPLEMENTED AND WE HAVE BEEN ASKED TO PRESENT OUR IDEA AT OTHER VENUES.”

Johan Barrios
Civil Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
GIVING $500 MICROGRANTS TO TEAMS

Alan Williams, New Orleans

When we first started planning GOOD Ideas for New Orleans, we looked at all of the amazingly inventive proposals that had come out of cities like St. Louis, Portland, and Cincinnati. Then we got nervous.

The ideas were creative, thoughtful, playful and visionary. And that was the problem. Neighborland, the civic engagement startup where I’m a community director, was incubated in New Orleans, with the support of the Tulane University Social Entrepreneurship program. As a company, we quickly learned what we already knew as individuals: seven years after Hurricane Katrina, New Orleanians had little interest in seeing great ideas for solving local problems. The long recovery from Katrina elicited visionary rebuilding proposals as well as more prosaic plans to address the city’s existing dysfunction and inequities—most of which never came to fruition. The result was an attitude referred to locally as “planning fatigue”. People in the city crave real, tangible change that will improve a prized quality of life, the city’s resilience to a changing climate, and the economic opportunity of its citizens. This reality deeply influenced Neighborland’s development into community focused not just on good ideas, but on collaboration to make things happen. We wanted the GOOD Ideas for Cities event to have the same goal.

ADDING FINANCIAL INCENTIVE

As a result, Neighborland decided to offer the tremendously creative participants of GOOD Ideas for New Orleans microgrants, and a design brief that challenged them to conceive projects that could go beyond mock-ups and presentations, and into the real world. We issued each team pre-paid debit cards through our bank, which sent us itemized reports on how the money had been spent each week. With proper reporting and a conversation about trust, we felt good about letting the teams spend the money as they pleased.

While Neighborland was able to invest this amount (a total of $2000) in the event, we envision that a local organization or corporation would likely be able to donate an equal amount of money in exchange for becoming a sponsor of the event. The amount of $500 was agreed upon as a figure which was just large enough to create real world impact.

REAL LIFE SOLUTIONS

With just $500, four teams of creatives came up with projects that did exactly that. Working on behalf of local bike and transit advocates, one team designed, produced and installed guerrilla wayfinding signs on one of the city’s most important, but dangerous, bicycle arteries. Supporting the city’s fledgling food trucks, another group designed and actually built a revamped online hub for food truck information. To improve public space, another group designed a low-cost, modular bus shelter and used the money as the seed of a larger investment. To tackle the wicked problem of access to healthy food, another group prototyped a pop-up farmers market at a community health clinic—bringing fresh food directly to the city’s most at-risk communities.

RESULTS

Each of these projects were a low-cost way to demonstrate real progress on the challenges New Orleans faces, bringing public attention to the issues in a way that went beyond just the event. In addition, all the teams are still collaborating in some form, which is a sign to us that the microgrant was a solid catalyst for action. But perhaps most importantly, each team learned by doing, and in the process gained both a better understanding of the issue and more credibility to call attention to the need for long-term solutions.

Alan Williams

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“HAVING ALL THOSE DECISION MAKERS IN THE SAME ROOM WITH ALL OF THE BIG IDEA PEOPLE SHOWED THEM THAT IF THEY INVEST IN THE MEMBERS OF THEIR OWN COMMUNITY, WE REALLY CAN AFFECT CHANGE, TOGETHER.”

Carrie Farler
Associate Producer
Possible Worldwide
As we considered the follow-up that might (or might not) occur after our GOOD Ideas for Cities event in Cincinnati, we realized that a simple request for spontaneous financing and volunteer support might be slow in coming without a clear mechanism to do so. While we did have the ability to extract email addresses from the online registration data, we felt that we could get something more immediate at the event itself instead of relying on follow-up email appeals.

BUILDING OWNERSHIP

We created a pledge form to hand out at the beginning of the event, hoping that participants would be struck with the urge to give either funds or time. We wanted to provide participants a chance to “own” one of the proposals by signing up through the pledges, and we also wanted each team to be able to connect directly with members of the audience who wanted to make their ideas reality.

Two versions can be found here:
- Pledge Form (Cincinnati)
- Pledge Form (Dallas)

Two versions of pledge sheets created for two different events

In the end we did not collect many pledges—only 65 sheets were returned out of 350 attendees—and only five people promised funding. However, we were able to see which proposals attendees were the most excited about, and we were then able to pass along a spreadsheet of the pledge sheet information to the leaders of each team, who could contact interested attendees and recruit them as volunteers (or solicit donations).

RESULTS

I would recommend this for any future event with a few qualifications. We found that it was difficult to collect the tickets as people were leaving, either because they had not actually filled the pledge out, or because they had discarded or lost it during the event. So the timing of the distribution of the pledge tickets needs to be carefully planned to take advantage of the peak of enthusiasm—perhaps right at the end of the event, but while people are still seated. Second, we learned that people were very excited to declare one of the presentations as their favorite, so perhaps a gaming aspect could be added by using the pledge tickets as “votes” for the “winning” proposal (and possible implementation funds could be awarded to the winners). Finally, it should be emphasized that the contribution of time is as valuable as a contribution of funds.

Frank Russell
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Two versions of pledge sheets created for two different events
“ALLOWING YOUTH LEADERS TO TACKLE BIG VISION PROBLEMS PROVIDED A FORUM FOR CREATIVITY, DETERMINATION, ENERGY AND SPIRIT THAT DOESN’T HAPPEN IN THE WORK PLACES THAT ARE TRYING TO SOLVE THESE ISSUES.”

- ST. LOUIS -

Susan Trautman
Executive Director
Great Rivers Greenway
ORGANIZING A FOLLOW-UP EVENT

Jeannette Thompson, St. Louis

In the early stages of planning our GOOD Ideas for Cities event, it became clear to our committee that people were going to want to hear more than ideas. Missouri is the “Show Me State” and many St. Louisans are tired of big campaigns with little to show. To be sure that this initiative didn’t likewise get dismissed, we decided to build in a follow-up event that would help create more accountability.

Planning a follow-up event before hosting the first one was a risky move. But given the amount of interest and support we received during the planning efforts, we had a pretty good idea that we were on the right path. The big challenge was figuring out what the event would look like and what it would offer to the creative community as a whole.

LEVERAGING OUR NETWORK

Thanks to our partners at AIGA St. Louis (see: Partnering with AIGA Chapters), we were connected with Andréa Pellegrino, president of the Pellegrino Collaborative based in New York, who has dedicated her career to helping designers and creatives get their ideas off the ground. In speaking with her, we were able to identify some of the hurdles social entrepreneurs face and how she could help as a consultant.

At first we wanted to provide her expertise to all of the teams and explored the idea of a workshop. But given our timeframe and budget, we determined that people learn more by doing and perhaps it would be better to provide more depth and less breadth. Ultimately, we narrowed the scope, awarding Pellegrino’s consultation to one team’s idea, which would culminate in a case study presentation that would serve as a feature of the follow-up event. Securing the funds was achievable through local sponsors and we were able to announce this plan to all the teams in advance of their presentations.

ROUNDING OUT THE PROGRAM

So often these events stay at the macro level and never give the on-the-ground education people really need. We decided that in addition to presenting a case study from one team, we would convene an expert panel to give some nuts and bolts about the challenges of implementing social change. We made sure to include both national and local perspectives by inviting not only Pellegrino herself to speak about the specific project in hand, but also AIGA president Doug Powell to speak to the broader initiatives AIGA is spearheading and Roseann Weiss of the St. Louis Regional Arts Commission to provide local perspectives and resources for creatives. And, of course, our event program would not have been complete without the editor and guru of GOOD Ideas for Cities, Alissa Walker, as our emcee and moderator.

Our program, named GOOD Ideas for Cities STL: Bringing Good Ideas to Life had three parts:

- **Open Mic**: Where are they now? Informal opportunity for several of the teams who had been making progress to share their updates and solicit further support.
- **Case Study**: Learning from one team’s journey as they found out what it would take to make their idea a reality.
- **Expert Panel**: Engaging in a discussion with local and national experts on design for social change.

RESULTS

GOOD Ideas for Cities sparked a wave of entrepreneurial spirit around putting St. Louis back on the map and tapping into creative talent to do it. More than 850 people showed up at the event on March 8 at the Contemporary Art Museum and the program has spawned several more spin-off crowdsourced idea generation contests and initiatives in the region.

Around 400 people turned out for the follow-up event, which was packed with content that was both inspirational and meaningful for anyone working on their own idea for St. Louis. We were able to provide takeaways, including a resources page created by the Regional Arts Commission that included various grant and funding opportunities in the city (PDF). We established an ongoing relationship with the St. Louis chapter of AIGA who agreed to carry the dialogue forward through their chapter initiatives. And we continue to post updates on the teams and other good ideas on our Facebook page.

Jeannette Thompson
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“THE MOST VALUABLE TAKEAWAY - THE BUILDING OF COMMUNITY.”

- DALLAS -

Samuel Stiles
Director
Dallas Parks Foundation
CONTACT US!

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR INTEREST IN GOOD IDEAS FOR CITIES. WE’RE EXCITED TO SEE WHAT YOU ORGANIZE FOR YOUR CITY. PLEASE CONTACT US WITH ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS.

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THANK YOU!