

# Activity 5.1 Identifying Your Civic Passion<sup>1</sup>

## Description

This activity provides an opportunity for participants to reflect on which civic issues are most important to them individually and how they might negotiate or advocate for these issues within a larger group. Through discussion, small groups will complete a “Civic Topics Sweet Sixteen Competition” which allows a playful but serious reflection on which topics are most important to them as individuals and as a group, and why.

## Learning Goal

- Participants will identify civic issues, reflect on their own priorities, and articulate their top civic passions

## Practice (50 minutes)

<b>Step One</b>	<p><b>Participants write down civic issues that matter most to them.</b> Each person should try to come up with at least 3-5 topics.</p> <p>Tip: It's best not to give examples or prompts here in order to generate a diversity of authentic issues, such as public policy issues, social welfare issues, and social justice issues.</p> <p>Tip: If possible, generate this list in advance on a digital platform. At this stage do not worry about discussing or ranking topics.</p>	<b>5 min</b>
<b>Step Two</b>	<p><b>Record and organize issues on a board or flip chart.</b> Try to consolidate or combine topics where appropriate.</p> <p>Individuals vote for their top issues. Use a rank choice voting method so that participants can vote for their top choices. For example, if doing this in-person, give each participant a marker or sticker and allow them to distribute 5 points across their top issues. They can give 1 point to 5 different topics or 5 points to a single topic. They can distribute their 5 points however they like.</p>	<b>10 min</b>

<sup>1</sup> **Citation for this activity:** Jessica Friedrichs and Shannon Hartman (2023). Identify Your Civic Passion. In Hartman, Britt, & Byrd (Eds). *The Interactivity Foundation Collaborative Discussion Toolkit*. Retrieved from <https://www.collaborativediscussionproject.com/module-5-civic-collaboration-1>

	<p>The goal is to determine the Top 16 Civic Issues that matter the most for the group.</p> <p>Digital adaptation: use Rankit.com to load all topics and allow participants to rank their top 16 issues.</p>	
<b>Step Three</b>	<p>Load or seed the Sweet Sixteen Bracket. In true tournament form, be sure to have the topic that ranks most important to the group (#1) to face off against the topic that ranks #16. You should continue to load the bracket accordingly #2 vs. #15, #3 vs. #14, #4 vs. #13, and so on...</p> <p><a href="#">Click here to download an empty bracket with the placement of each competition.</a></p> <p>If helpful, take a look at a <a href="#">Sample Civic Sweet Sixteen Bracket</a> (see page 2)</p>	<b>5 min</b>
<b>Step Four</b>	<p>In small groups (3-4 ppl), <b>play the Sweet Sixteen Civic Tournament.</b> Discuss the various competitions or face-offs. As a group, decide which topic will win and continue in the tournament.</p> <p>Helpful prompts for group decision-making:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you had to devote your life (or the semester) to the issue, which one would you pick?</li> <li>• If you had to convince others to join you to make a change for this area, which one would you pick?</li> </ul> <p>Helpful questions to ask during the discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why does this topic resonate with you?</li> <li>• Which values are helping to inform your choice?</li> </ul>	<b>20 min</b>
<b>Step Five</b>	<p><b>Debrief.</b> Return to a full group. Each group shares their final “winning” civic issue. Discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Was it hard for your group to reach this decision? Was it a tough competition? Which face-off was the hardest?</li> <li>• How did your group decide the winner if opinions differed?</li> <li>• What was the hardest aspect of this activity?</li> </ul>	<b>10 min</b>

## Reflection Assignment

- When discussing which issues to select in each bracket within your small group, what motivated you to speak up for a particular issue area? Did anyone else speak up for an issue area and persuade you and if so, what was most persuasive about their approach?
- Were there issue areas that didn't generate much debate within the group and if so, why might that be?
- What was your winning issue and what ultimately motivated the group to pick that issue? What can you learn from this?

## Practice Journal

This week, reflect on civic issues and your passions. Now that you have a “winner” (individually or through group collaboration) – how will you move forward? Take one step this week and write about it.

## Dive Deeper: Additional Resources

- [Amanda Nguyen and the Sexual Assault Survivor’s Rights Act](#). Nguyen's personal experience led to involvement in a civic issue that ultimately resulted in passage of a new law. Her story provides a good example of how identifying one's civic passion can lead to action and eventually policy change.