

# Creating a Citizens' Academy Model for the Town of Nantucket, Massachusetts

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## **Abstract**

Citizens' academies have been utilized by many towns in the U.S. to foster citizen awareness of and engagement in local government affairs. Sponsored by the Nantucket Town Manager's Office, the goal of our project was to create a citizens' academy model curriculum that informs citizens of Town government structure and operations, municipal services and funding, and the challenges faced by Nantucket. To achieve this goal, we identified best practices of existing academies and gauged Nantucket municipal officials' and citizens' civic knowledge and academy preferences through a public survey and several interviews on-island. We then produced a detailed model of one academy session with corresponding recommendations regarding academy content, delivery, organization, and evaluation of success.

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## **Executive Summary**

Like the majority of towns in Massachusetts, Nantucket encourages citizens to vote on town policies and bylaws through an [open town meeting](#) form of government. As a result, citizen knowledge of and involvement in government affairs is critical. However, only 11% of registered voters attended the 2021 Annual Town meeting (ACK-2, 2021) and 17.8% of registered voters cast their vote in the 2021 Annual Town elections (ACK-1, 2021). Furthermore, it has also been difficult to attract citizens willing to serve on at least one of more than 50 committees that enable town government to function smoothly and efficiently.

## ***Goals and Objectives***

To improve civic engagement, the Town Manager's Office proposed creating a citizens' academy to provide the public an opportunity to learn about and effectively engage with town government. The goal of this project was to address that proposal by creating a model academy curriculum that informs citizens of town government organization, how services on the island are funded and delivered, and what challenges Nantucket faces. This goal was achieved through the following four objectives:

1. Identify the best practices found in literature and in previous academies for developing and maintaining a citizens' academy.
2. Gauge current civic engagement levels in Nantucket, the citizens' knowledge of their government's organization and responsibilities, and the public's interest and preferences regarding a citizens' academy.
3. Solicit opinions from Nantucket town officials on content, structure, and delivery of a citizens' academy.
4. Develop, produce, and refine a detailed model of one academy session along with corresponding recommendations regarding academy content, delivery, organization and evaluation of success..

Based on the results of our research, we created a template for academy session curricula, a detailed model curriculum of the Nantucket Department of Public Works (DPW), a survey to gauge citizens interests and preferences for an academy, and two questionnaires that can be used to measure academy success for future iterations. It is expected that the model curriculum will be used by the Nantucket municipal government to create and offer a citizens' academy that encompasses all Nantucket town government departments and services.

## ***Methodology and Findings***

We conducted 16 interviews with current citizens' academy facilitators, Nantucket government officials, and other public figures knowledgeable about citizens' academies and/or civic engagement. We also created and distributed a public survey, offered in English and Spanish, regarding knowledge of town government and preferences for academy content, which yielded 103 responses.

The interviews provided the team with information regarding content, organization, marketing, and feedback strategies for the academy. Specific topics that were covered and from which information was obtained during these interviews included the following:

1. Academy facilitators: class dynamics, facilitators, public outreach, and feedback methods
2. Town government officials: effective display of content, translation of academy materials, and public outreach
3. Prominent public figures: delivery of course content, facilitators, translation, public outreach, and feedback

Data from these interviews indicated that an effective advertisement campaign must use multiple avenues of communication. In addition, class size should be carefully considered – smaller classes facilitate more discussion-based learning and connections between group members, while larger classes are more akin to a traditional lecture-style classroom and can reach a larger audience. Key characteristics of academy presenters include a thorough understanding of their overall department, sufficient experience in their work, and the ability to present information in an effective and engaging manner. While it was generally agreed that it was ideal to hold an academy in person, many interviewees also indicated that online components should be considered to accommodate a broader audience. Also emphasized was the importance of efficient feedback methods to improve future iterations of the academy.

Our survey data indicated that there is a demand among the Nantucket public for a citizens' academy. A majority of respondents expressed that they believed citizens need to be more engaged in and knowledgeable about town government. They also believed a citizens' academy could be an effective method of increasing citizen knowledge and engagement; however, it should be noted that only about half of the respondents indicated wanting to become more engaged in municipal government or to attend an academy themselves.

After collecting and assessing our data, we developed the following project deliverables:

1. An academy session template completed by the Nantucket DPW, Sewer Department, Finance Department, and Town Administration.

2. A detailed model session for the DPW, including a slideshow, an informational pamphlet, a case study, and a photo tour.
3. Two qualitative feedback questionnaires: one post-session questionnaire and one post-academy questionnaire.

### ***Conclusions and Recommendations***

Based on our research and interview/survey results, we identified numerous components necessary for successful organization and implementation of a citizens' academy. We recommend the following to the Town Manager's Office:

#### Academy Recommendations

1. *The Town of Nantucket should develop a budget to cover the following:* academy facilitators; compensation for presenters; childcare for participants with young children; food and venue costs; transportation to the academy and for any academy tours; advertisement; translation of material; and other academy session materials. Development of this budget is vital to many of the following recommendations for successful implementation of the academy.
  - a. At least one facilitator should be hired to run the academy by organizing and managing sessions. Responsibilities of this role include communicating with all departments involved in the academy, designing and managing the academy curriculum and materials based on information provided by those departments, and determining the schedule for the academy.
  - b. Select suitable representatives to deliver each department's presentation. Department representatives should have a thorough understanding of their overall department, sufficient experience in their work, and the ability to present information in an effective and engaging manner.
2. *The academy session content should be composed of the following:*
  - a. PowerPoint presentations and brief case studies for each department should be created using information gathered from the academy templates.
  - b. Pamphlets containing detailed supplemental information for participants to take home should be included in the academy sessions, allowing the academy session presenters to focus on a more general overview of their departments. Supplemental information may contain a review of presentation slides or more details regarding specific topics.
  - c. Interactive activities for each department, such as a tour of facilities or a budget process walkthrough.

3. *The academy should have the following structure and schedule:*
  - a. An academy schedule that starts with an overview session of town government, continues with several sessions of specific departments or groups of related departments, and concludes with a graduation ceremony session should be followed.
  - b. Follow a schedule based on the results of our survey: 5 weekly sessions in January, February, or March, each for 2 hours in the evening on Monday or Tuesday.
  - c. Both in-person and online components should be considered for academy content delivery in order to accommodate a broader audience.
4. *A means for measuring qualitative and quantitative success of the academy should be developed.* Evaluating the success of the academy is critical to academy improvement for the future and should be measured qualitatively and quantitatively through three types of questionnaires given to participants.
  - a. Qualitative: Determine a reliable and effective method of soliciting qualitative participant feedback to improve further iterations of academy sessions and the academy as a whole, such as the two questionnaires we have created.
  - b. Quantitative: Develop two identical quantitative surveys (pre- and post-academy) that evaluate the participants' knowledge of town government. These two tests can be compared to measure improvements in participant knowledge, and therefore, the success of the academy.

#### Other Recommendations

Additionally, we have found other recommendations that the Town of Nantucket may find useful for improving general civic engagement, which consist of the following:

1. Developing future versions of the Nantucket Citizens' Academy to target different audiences. These audiences may include (but are not limited to) seasonal residents, businesses, and students.
2. Producing short videos (about 5 to 10 minutes) that are accessible online and provide citizens the opportunity to learn about Town government at their own pace.
3. Offering a community service opportunity to high school students to become more engaged in local government by contributing to the creation of certain academy content, such as creating video tours for academy sessions.
4. Hiring a town operator to direct citizens' calls to the correct departments.

## Authorship

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Abstract	HS	LF
Acknowledgements	GS	HS, LF
Executive Summary	GS, GB	LF, HS
Introduction	GB, LF, GS, HS	
Civic Engagement and Awareness in the United States	LF	GB, HS
Civic Engagement in Nantucket, Massachusetts	GS	HS
Defining a Citizens' Academy	HS	GB, LF
Methods Introduction	GB, LF, GS, HS	
Methods Objective 1	GS	
Methods Objective 2	GB	
Methods Objective 3	LF	
Methods Objective 4	HS	
Commonalities in Citizens' and Police Academies	GB	GS, HS
Public Interest in Civic Engagement and a Citizens' Academy	HS, GS	LF, GB
Soliciting Municipal Official Knowledge and Preferences Regarding a Citizens' Academy	GB	GS, HS
Recommendations for Development and Refinement of a Citizens' Academy - Academy Suggestions	LF	HS, GS
Recommendations for Development and Refinement of a Citizens' Academy - Other Recommendations	LF	HS
Appendix A: General Structure and Mission of Nantucket Government	GB, LF, GS, HS	
Appendix B: Nantucket Town Manager's Office Hierarchy	LF	GS
Appendix C: Table of Project Interviewees	HS	
Appendix D-1: Sample Interview Questions and Topics - Preliminary Interview Questions Asked to Existing Citizens' Academy Facilitators in Massachusetts	GS	
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## 1.0 Introduction

In 2009, a poll conducted by the [National League of Cities](#) found that 50% of municipal officials across the United States believed that citizens lack the “necessary skills and knowledge to [engage] effectively” and that “both they [the municipal official respondents] and the public need more training for engagement processes” (Barnes & Mann, 2011, pp. iii, 21). To encourage greater civic awareness of and engagement in local government affairs, many cities and towns across the United States have implemented citizens’ academies in which citizens are given the opportunity to learn more about their government’s structure, departments, and services.

Nantucket is a small island off the coast of Cape Cod with a population of about 15,000 year-round residents (US Census Bureau, 2020), which grows to more than 50,000 residents in the summer (ACK-8, 2021). It is also a historical landmark that is recognized as both a town and a county by the state of Massachusetts (MA). This makes for a unique government structure, one that is made possible by creative, hardworking individuals who must constantly develop new methods to optimize the island’s limited supply of resources while maintaining its highly acclaimed status as a tourist destination.

Like the majority of towns in Massachusetts, Nantucket encourages citizens to vote on town policies and bylaws through an [open town meeting](#) form of government. As a result, citizen knowledge of and involvement in government affairs is critical. However, relatively few voters engage in town government affairs. Only 11% of registered voters attended the 2021 Annual Town meeting (ACK-2, 2021) and 17.8% of registered voters cast their vote in the Annual Town elections that same year (ACK-1, 2021). Furthermore, it has also been difficult to attract citizens willing to serve on at least one of more than 50 committees that enable town government to function smoothly and efficiently.

To improve civic engagement, the Town Manager’s Office proposed creating a citizens’ academy to provide the public an opportunity to learn about and effectively engage with town government. The goal of this project was to address that proposal by creating a model of a curriculum that informs citizens of town government organization, how services on the island are funded and delivered, and what challenges Nantucket faces. This goal was achieved through the following four objectives:

1. Identify the best practices found in literature and in previous academies for developing and maintaining a citizens’ academy.
2. Gauge current civic engagement levels in Nantucket, the citizens’ knowledge of their government’s organization and responsibilities, and the public’s interest and preferences regarding a citizens’ academy.
3. Solicit opinions from Nantucket town officials on content, structure, and delivery of a citizens’ academy.
4. Develop, produce, and refine a detailed citizens’ academy [Nantucket Department of Public Works](#) (NDPW) model and academy session templates for the [Nantucket Sewer Department](#) (NSD), [Nantucket Finance Department](#) (NFD), and [Nantucket Town Administration](#) (NTA).

Based on the results of our research and the methods used to address these objectives (see “Methods” below), we created a template for an academy curriculum, a detailed model curriculum of one department, and a survey that can be used to measure academy success for future iterations (Appendix E). It is expected that the model curriculum will be used by the Nantucket municipal government to create and offer a citizens’ academy that encompasses key Nantucket town government departments and services.

## 2.0 Civic Engagement and Awareness in the United States

In 2012, 153.2 million of the 215.1 million citizens over the age of 18 in the United States reported being registered to vote (US Census Bureau, 2013). Of these registered voters, 61.7% (132.9 million) voted in the 2012 presidential election (US Census Bureau, 2013). Compared to other developed countries, such as Belgium whose voter turnout in their 2014 election was 87.2%, the U.S. voting percentage is demonstrably low, as shown in Figure 1 (Statista, 2016). Voter turnout was even lower in the 2016 presidential election at 61.4%, and while it increased to 66.2% in 2020, this percentage is still substantially lower than in many other countries (US Census Bureau, 2017, 2020; Statista, 2016). This illustrates the need for more citizen participation in all levels of government in the United States.

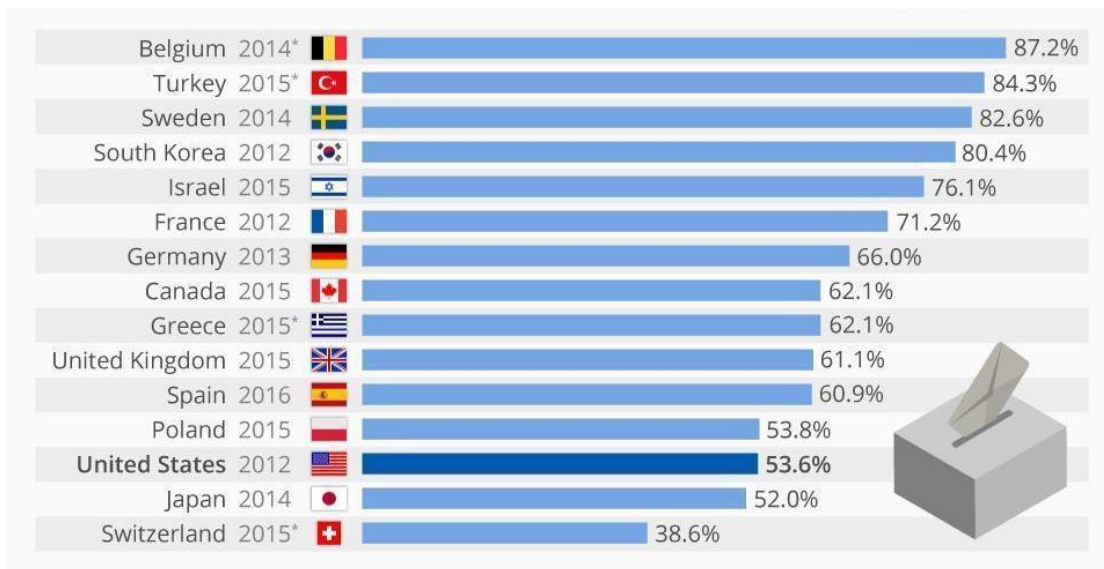


Figure 1: The US Trails Other Nations in Voter Turnout (Statista, 2016)

The lack of civic engagement in the U.S. is even more pronounced at the local level. For example, “a national study of ‘civic health’ sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service and the National Conference on Citizenship (2010) found that only 9% of respondents had attended a public meeting in the preceding two years” (Morse 2012, p. 83). Similarly, 50% of municipal officials polled by the National League of Cities in 2009 held the opinion that citizens lacked the “necessary skills and knowledge to [engage] effectively” and that “both they [the respondents] and the public need more training for engagement processes” (Barnes & Mann, 2011, pp. iii, 21).

Citizens in the U.S. also have long-standing expectations of their government, including that government agencies and officials provide their services effectively and efficiently, and that they preserve and support democratic values and processes; such values include a high quality of life for citizens, as well as government competency in responding to citizens’ concerns (Woolum, 2011). Some researchers have concluded that the ways citizens currently engage in governmental processes is not conducive to a truly effective government and

community (Woolum, 2011). Simple methods of participation, including voting and keeping citizens informed, are not enough; instead, direct engagement of citizens with the government is necessary to form more productive collaboration and ultimately, better governmental processes and policies (Morse, 2012).

Approaching citizen engagement as a more active and involved process reduces the communication gaps between the local government and its citizens. This in turn encourages closely-knit communities and better relationships between citizens and government entities. In addition, engagement empowers citizens to improve their understanding of government functions and allows them to provide authentic and informed feedback on the actions of the government (Woolum, 2011).



### 3.0 Civic Engagement in Nantucket, Massachusetts

Nantucket is a small island off the coast of Cape Cod with a population of about 15,000 year-round residents (US Census Bureau, 2020), which grows to more than 50,000 residents in the summer (ACK-8, 2021). This presents Nantucket's government with special challenges when providing expanded services to cater to this dynamic population given its limited resources. These services include amenities not typically seen in other towns of a similar year-round population size, such as an airport, nursing home, and two wastewater treatment facilities.

Similar to 262 other towns in Massachusetts, Nantucket uses an Open Town Meeting form of government. Accordingly, the annual town meeting is open to all citizens to debate and vote on a variety of legislative issues such as approving indebtedness, bylaws, budgets, and zoning, among other matters (MMMA, 2018). The [Board of Selectmen](#) acts as Nantucket's executive branch, establishing policies and providing overall direction to town operations, and the Town Manager works under the board and is responsible for the operations to achieve the board's goals. The municipal government delivers services to constituents through numerous departments and offices, including the departments of finance, health, public works, police, fire, and wastewater and the energy office and the town clerk's office (Figure 2). A more detailed overview of the departments in Nantucket's government can be found in Appendix A, while a hierarchy of positions in the Town Manager's Office can be found in Appendix B.

Like other local governments with Open Town Meetings, Nantucket's governance is hampered by low citizen engagement. For example, only 1,022 out of 9,246 registered voters (11%) attended Nantucket's 2021 Annual Town Meeting (ACK-2, 2021). Recruiting volunteers for the more than 50 committees that complement the work of town employees and elected officials is also a constant struggle. Nantucket's Volunteer Talent Bank has been attempting to recruit engaged citizens (ACK-14, 2021), but it is often unable to meet the town's demand.

One possible solution to inspire more citizen engagement on Nantucket is through civic education. As previously mentioned, it is necessary to inform citizens of topics such as strategic planning, budgeting, and performance reviewing, among others, and to obtain direct feedback from citizens (Woolum, 2011). Informing citizens allows for better communication and expression of shared interests and goals between government and citizens, ultimately establishing an effective and powerful relationship between the community and government entities. A fruitful citizen-government relationship is essential to the success of the government and the satisfaction of citizens with the state of their government and their quality of life.

In an effort to enhance citizen engagement, the Town Manager's Office proposed holding an annual citizens' academy that would aim to educate citizens about the structure, organization and functions of the various Town government departments.

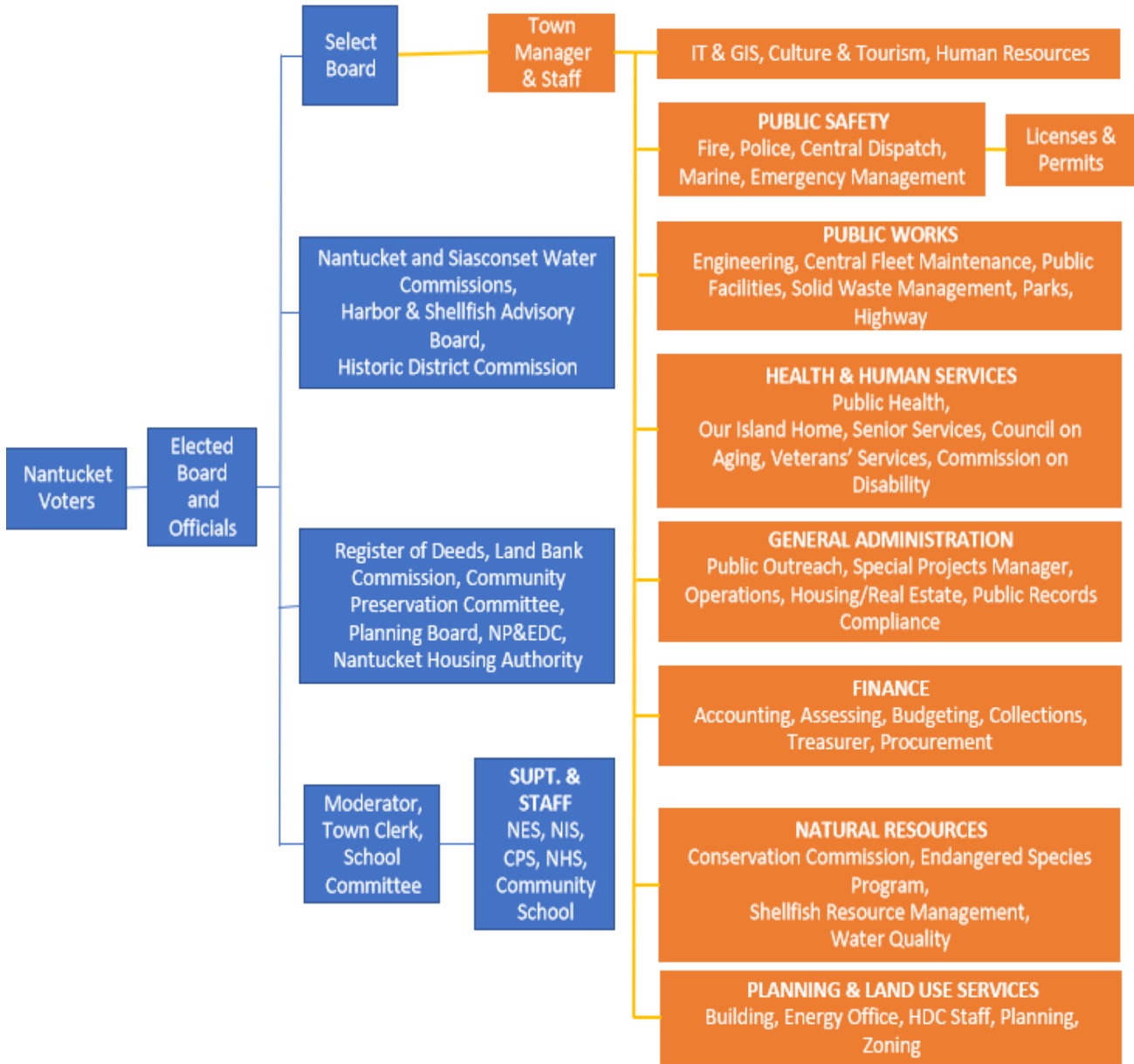


Figure 2: Nantucket Town Government Department Organization Chart  
*Adapted from (ACK-7, 2020)*

## 4.0 Defining a Citizens' Academy

Starting in the late 1990s, many towns and counties implemented citizens' academies to foster citizen awareness of and engagement in local government affairs. Although there is limited research indicating precisely how many academies have been conducted in recent years, Ricardo Morse found that over 50% of municipalities in North Carolina (NC) (that have populations over 25,000) and 22% of counties in NC (that have populations over 100,000) were conducting academies in 2012. He estimated that "if these percentages were representative of the United States as a whole, then more than 600 municipalities with populations of 25,000 and above and more than 90 counties with populations of 100,000 and above nationwide, plus many more among small municipalities and counties, are conducting citizens academies" (Morse, 2012, p. 88).

Development of these academies was based on two primary pre-existing community civic education programs: citizen academies of specific, local government departments (such as citizen police academies), and community leadership programs (Morse, 2012, p. 85). The main objectives of these two types of programs are informing citizens of specific organization or department operations, improving civilian-officer relationships, and producing active, informed members of the community (Morse, 2012, pp. 85-86). Based on his evaluation of 74 academies offered by the county and town governments in NC, Morse found that the common purposes and goals of citizens' academies could be grouped into three categories: knowledge, involvement, and community relations (see Table 1 below). The first category was *knowledge*, specifically the citizens' knowledge about their government and the government's understanding of civilian perspectives regarding the government and its policies. The second was *increased involvement*, which included increasing citizen engagement in events such as town meetings as well as direct participation in the government on boards and commissions and indirect participation as community leaders. The final category was *improved community relations*, where increased, informed communication between the citizens and government staff would allow for the improvement of government functions and establish a better sense of community.

Citizens' Academy goals are divided further into basic and advanced. Academies classified as basic are structured to generally improve citizen awareness and involvement, and to enhance the relationship between the citizens and government officials. Academies classified as advanced are structured to achieve a specific, sometimes complex goal, such as increasing citizen knowledge for the purpose of addressing local issues, creating leaders among the community who will ideally become government officials or be tasked as community mediators with the government, or improving community sentiments between each other and with the government (Morse, 2012, pp. 91, 94).

Table 1: Goals of Citizens' Academies  
*Adapted from (Morse, 2012, p. 94)*

<i>Level/ Category</i>	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Advanced</i>
<i>Knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equip citizens with basic information about local government.</li> <li>• Help citizens who participate in local government become better informed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help staff learn more about citizen perspectives on local government service.</li> <li>• Citizens learn about key issues facing the community.</li> </ul>
<i>Involvement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage increased citizen involvement.</li> <li>• Citizens learn how they can get more involved in local government.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicitly prepare participants for service on boards and commissions.</li> <li>• Cultivate community leadership in neighborhoods and the community at large.</li> </ul>
<i>Community Relations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants get to know and improve lines of communication with public officials.</li> <li>• Participants can become informal ambassadors for local government out in the community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants engage in dialogue with other citizens and local government officials.</li> <li>• Community-building among participants themselves as well as with staff.</li> </ul>

To fulfill the goals outlined in Table 1, citizens' academies typically offer their communities an annual structured curriculum that takes place over several sessions -- ideally five to ten weekly or monthly sessions. Each session ranges from one to two and a half hours long, featuring roughly 15-25 participants (Brunelle & French, personal communication, November 8, 2021; Labrecque, personal communication, November 4, 2021; Mansfield, personal communication, October 29, 2021; Morse, 2012, p. 89; Morse, 2017; Yawn, 2012). A program typically begins with an overview of the town's various departments and how they are managed. These are followed by more in-depth sessions featuring specific groups of departments showcasing their work, key members and how citizens can interact with them. Lastly, academies often conclude with an academy graduation to celebrate the completion of the academy (Brunelle & French, personal communication, November 8, 2021; Labrecque, personal communication, November 4, 2021; Morse, 2012, p. 90; Morse, 2017).

Additionally, related departments are often grouped together within sessions due to the limited time and resources of the municipalities. In this case, the departments each give 20-30 minute presentations on the same day (Brunelle & French, personal communication, November 8, 2021; Labrecque, personal communication, November 4, 2021; Mansfield, personal communication, October 29, 2021, 2021; Morse, 2017; Yawn, 2012).

The curriculum typically consists of lectures and hands-on activities such as meeting various department heads, touring facilities, and event simulations (Brunelle & French, personal communication, November 8, 2021; Labrecque, personal communication, November 4, 2021; Mansfield, personal communication, October 29, 2021, 2021; Morse, 2012; Tivnan, 2021; Yawn, 2012). Additionally, local businesses and organizations such as restaurants, historical sites, or schools are occasionally involved in hosting academy events and were found to increase the engagement of participants (Yawn, 2012). Other common locations include department facilities and public meeting rooms. Most academies deliver their content at different locations for each session according to the relevance of the material in that session (Brunelle & French, personal communication, November 8, 2021; Labrecque, personal communication, November 4, 2021; Mansfield, personal communication, October 29, 2021; Morse, 2017).

With an efficient, interactive curriculum providing interesting lessons and fun activities, positive reviews of academies by previous participants have successfully attracted more participants. Surprisingly perhaps, participants have been willing to contribute a substantial amount of time (on average over 20 hours total) and effort while town departments have found that the academies require relatively little effort and resources. Furthermore, staff have been found to enjoy the ‘show and tell’ style of the programs (Morse, 2012, p. 90). Thus, citizens’ academies can serve as an efficient tool that governments can use to generate civic engagement, improve citizen-government sentiments, and enhance staff morale.

## 5.0 Methods

The goal of this project was to create a model of an interactive curriculum for a Nantucket Citizens' Academy that will inform the citizens of their government's organization, how services are funded and delivered, and what challenges Nantucket faces now and in the future. To achieve this goal, we identified the four objectives listed below and the associated tasks illustrated in Figure 3:

1. Identify the best practices found in literature and in previous academies for developing and maintaining a citizens' academy.
2. Gauge current civic engagement levels in Nantucket, the citizens' knowledge of their government's organization and responsibilities, and the public's interest and preferences regarding a citizens' academy.
3. Solicit opinions from Nantucket town officials on content, structure, and delivery of a citizens' academy.
4. Develop, produce, and refine a detailed citizens' academy NDPW model and academy session templates for the NSD, NFD, and NTA.

### ***5.1 Objective 1: Identify the best practices found in literature and in previous academies for developing and maintaining a citizens' academy.***

To address this objective, the team identified best practices regarding the structure, organization, and advertisement of a citizens' academy. We analyzed the published materials of academies across the United States, and interviewed the facilitators of the [Nantucket Citizen's Police Academy](#), the [Lexington Citizens' Academy](#), and the [Barnstable Citizens' Academy](#) in Massachusetts. All interviews were conducted via Zoom, by phone, or in person, and were transcribed using detailed notes with consent obtained in advance. Additionally, Zoom meetings and phone calls were recorded digitally. A sample set of interview questions can be seen in Appendix D-1. From our research and interviews, we identified key similarities and differences between the various citizens' academies and were able to contextualize best practices for developing a successful citizens' academy.

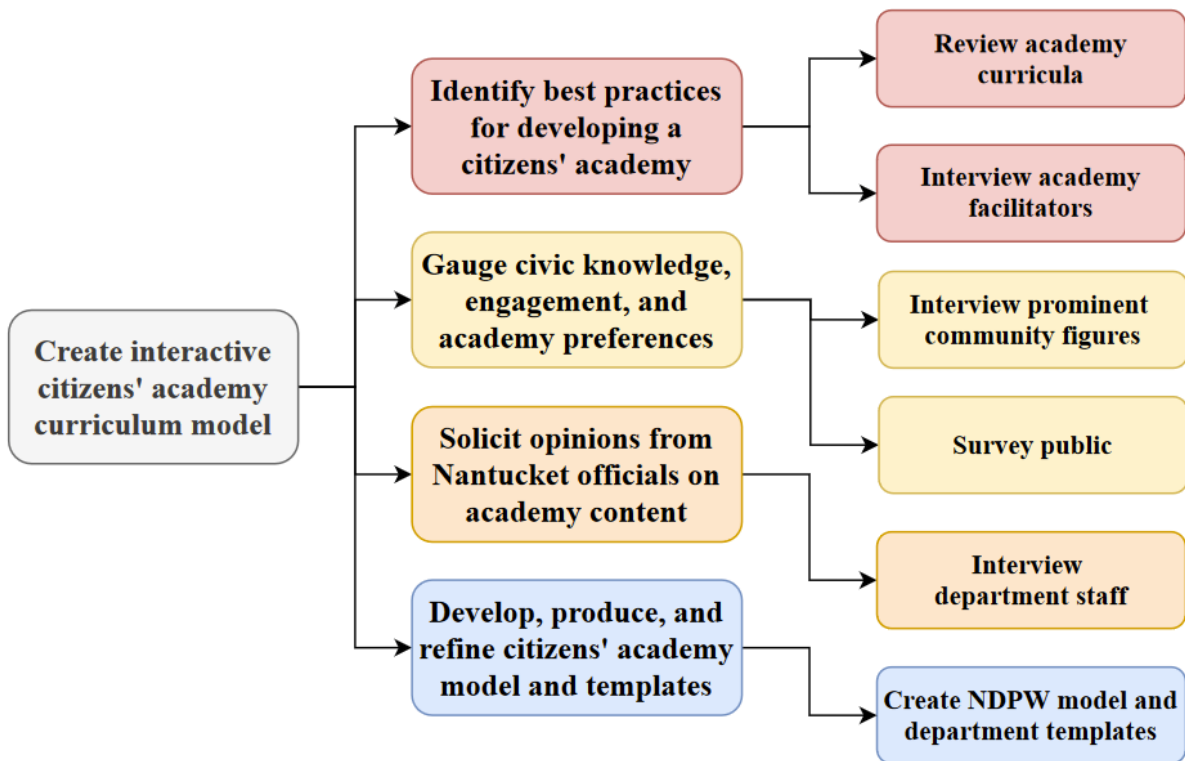


Figure 3: Nantucket Citizens' Academy Project Goal and Tasks Categorized by Objective

## 5.2 *Objective 2: Gauge current civic engagement levels in Nantucket, the citizens' knowledge of their government's organization and responsibilities, and the public's interest and preferences regarding a citizens' academy.*

To determine best practices for reaching and retaining the widest audience for advertising the academy, conveying information to academy participants, and including the differing perspectives and challenges of various groups of citizens on Nantucket, we interviewed a variety of prominent community figures. See Appendix C for the list of citizens that were interviewed.

We also developed a survey to determine the content and scheduling of the citizens' academy curriculum with regards to the needs and interests of the Nantucket community, and to ensure that the need for an academy was present. The primary target audience of the survey was determined to be year-round residents of Nantucket. The survey was designed to take 10 minutes or less to complete, and included questions that gauge public knowledge of the Nantucket town government's structure and operations, determine what citizens want to know more about, and identify which demographics are likely to attend the academy. All survey participants were informed that their responses were anonymous, particularly with regard to demographic questions about Town government involvement, Nantucket residency and voting status, age, education level, ethnicity, and language preferences. Survey questions consisted of multiple choice, Likert scale, multiple-selection, and open response questions that could be analyzed to obtain both quantitative and qualitative

feedback for the academy. A list of all survey questions is linked in Appendix E. The survey was created using Google Forms and was distributed to the residents of Nantucket in the following ways:

- Email lists maintained by the following entities:
  - Town Government
  - Church communities
  - Leaders of country-of-origin communities
  - [The Nantucket Civic League](#)
  - [The Nantucket Chamber of Commerce](#)
  - [The Nantucket Community Foundation](#)
- A poster with a QR code posted in the following locations:
  - Stop & Shop poster board
  - Vaccine clinic waiting room
- A newsletter written by the Town Manager
- Word of mouth

The survey collected results from a total of 103 participants over the duration of 2 weeks, after which we categorized the responses based on answers to the demographic questions and analyzed the results to determine the content and scheduling of a model citizens' academy curriculum and to account for potential obstacles that could arise in its creation.

### ***5.3 Objective 3: Solicit opinions from the Nantucket town officials on content, structure, and delivery of a citizens' academy.***

After consulting with our project sponsor liaisons, Elizabeth Gibson and Gregg Tivnan, about the scope of the intended citizens' academy, we determined that the initial model would include a detailed model of one department and sample academy templates for four departments that represent a range of different types of departments. This initial scope included the NDPW, NSD, NFD, and NTA, each of which would be used in further iterations of the model as a guide for other departments.

To create this model, we interviewed key individuals from each of these four departments as well as various personnel suggested to us during our interviews for additional perspectives for creating our model (see Appendix C for all interviewees). The main purpose of these interviews was to determine what the elected town officials and departmental staff would like citizens to know about town government structure, services, and operations. Topics in these interviews included the mission of the department, how they achieved their mission, what common and/or misguided questions they received from the public, and what they believed citizens should know about their specific department and structure, as well as more general functions of town government. A sample of our interview questions can be seen in Appendix D-2. We refined these questions in consultation with our sponsor liaisons, adapted them to fit the expertise and knowledge of our interviewees, and asked them following the same protocols for conducting interviews that are outlined in Objective 1.



#### ***5.4 Objective 4: Develop, produce, and refine a detailed citizens' academy NDPW model and academy session templates for the NSD, NFD, and NTA.***

The fourth objective pertains to the development, production, and refinement of a citizens' academy model. This objective included addressing the following tasks:

1. Determining the target audience for a citizens' academy.
2. Developing the basic structure, organization, functions and citizen engagement opportunities of the NFD, NSD, NDPW and the NTA that would be covered in the academy model and templates.
3. Determining the target number of academy participants, the number of weekly sessions, and how often and when the academy would be offered.

Once the above tasks were completed, the team analyzed the results of its research to create a detailed model of a citizens' academy session curriculum for the NDPW and academy session templates for the NDPW, the NSD, the NFD and the NTA, all which can be seen linked in Appendix E. All information and content used to create the preliminary model was provided with explicit voluntary, informed, official permission by the selected department themselves or obtained from published information available on the [Nantucket town website](#), and was reviewed and approved by them prior to being published. Once this preliminary model was created, we reviewed with the project sponsor liaisons, the WPI faculty advisors, and representatives from the NDPW for effective organization, program accessibility, participant engagement, and information retention.

## 6.0 Commonalities in Citizens' and Police Academies

### 6.1 *Research of Existing Academies*

Many municipalities have already established citizens' academies to educate the public and improve citizens' relationship with the local government. Despite the prevalence of academies across the U.S., research regarding such programs is relatively scarce, with case studies being the primary available resource. One such example was a case study conducted by Mike Yawn in 2012, which explored the effectiveness of a citizens' academy in Texas. Yawn compared citizens' civic knowledge before and after attending a 10 week citizens' academy program using standardized surveys. He found that all citizen academy members' knowledge of government significantly improved, and that local residents showed stark improvement compared to local university students (Yawn, 2012). This study is limited, however, by its small sample size (17 participants) and ability to gauge the depth of participant understanding through standardized surveys (Yawn, 2012).

To gain a better understanding of how citizens' academies operate, cases such as Yawn's can be examined as part of a bigger picture. Analyzing several academies at once reveals trends and commonalities between academies that individual case studies may overlook. Some relevant academies and the data that forms their trends are summarized in Table 2 below.

The first aspect of the various active academies (including those that have taken a hiatus due to Covid-19) that can be studied is their scheduling. Different schedules cater to different needs; for example, the [academy in Lakeland, Florida](#) consists of two-hour meetings that occur once a week for 6 consecutive weeks. Each meeting covers a single department or multiple related departments of the town: Finance, Police, Fire, Public Works, Electric and Water Utilities, and Parks and Recreation (City of Lakeland, Florida, 2021). This schedule is designed to cover the operations of the town government that are the most important to understand from a citizens' perspective, and to keep the program concise to avoid boredom from the participants. Towns like [High Point, NC](#) and Barnstable, Massachusetts take a different route, with both of their academies meeting in three-hour blocks once a week for thirteen weeks. These schedules contain more than double the number of meetings and more than triple the total class time. With both towns offering a citizens' police academy rather than a generalized citizens' academy, their academies provide a lot more detail on one department than Lakeland's does (City of High Point Police Department, 2021; Barnstable Police Department, 2021). Although Barnstable is not currently running a general citizens' academy, they do occasionally offer one with a similar schedule to their police academy, showing that a longer schedule can work with a multi-department approach (Town of Barnstable, Massachusetts, n.d.).

Table 2: Summary of Current Citizens' Academies' Scheduling, Teaching Style, and Attendance

Academy	Hrs per Session	# of Sessions	Total Hrs	Session Frequency	Typical Time/Day	Teaching Style	Avg. Attendance per Session
Barnstable, MA	2.5	11	27.5	Weekly	6:30-9:00 pm Tuesdays	Classroom-style with interactive elements, discussions, and tours	Over 700 participants since 2003 (over 30 per year)
Citrus County, FL	4	13	52	Weekly	1:00-5:00 pm Thursdays	Hands-on	Unknown
Danvers, MA	2.5	10	25	Weekly	6:00-8:30 pm Thursdays	Classes and interactive activities	Limit of 20 per class
Minneapolis, MN (Run by the FBI)	Unknown	6-8	Unknown	Weekly	Unknown	Discussion	Unknown
Lakeland, FL	2	6	12	Weekly	Unknown	Interactive	Limit of 30 per class
Lexington, MA	2	11	22	Weekly	7:00-9:00 pm Thursdays	Classroom-style with discussions and tours	Unknown
Monroe, IN	3	5	15	Weekly	6:00-9:00 pm Thursdays	Discussion and written handouts	Unknown
Barnstable, MA (Police Academy)	3	13	39	Weekly	Unknown	Classroom-style with tours and activities	Limited, typically fills up early
High Point, NC (Police Academy)	3	13	39	Weekly	7:00-10:00 pm Mondays	Classroom-style with demonstrations and training exercises	Unknown
Nantucket, MA (Police Academy)	3	10	30	Weekly	6:00-9:00 pm Thursdays	Classroom-style with demonstrations, tours, exercises, and other interactive activities	15-25
Suffolk, VA (Attorney's Citizens' Academy)	1.5	4	6	Weekly	6:00-7:30 pm Thursdays	Unknown	Unknown
<b>Average (A) or Mode (M)</b>	<b>2.65 (A)</b>	<b>9.36 (A)</b>	<b>26.75 (A)</b>	<b>Weekly (M)</b>	<b>6:00-9:00 pm Thursdays (M)</b>	<b>Classroom-style with interactive activities (A)</b>	<b>Unknown (M)</b>

Sources: (Barnstable, 2021; Barnstable Police Department, 2021; Citrus County, 2020; Danvers, 2021; FBI, 2020; High Point Police Department, 2021; Mansfield, personal communication, October 29, 2021; Lakeland, 2021; Lexington, 2020; PU, 2019; Suffolk, 2020)

Counties host citizens' academies as well, with [Citrus County, Florida](#), joining these two towns in offering a thirteen-week citizens' academy program, and [Rockingham County, NC](#) lying in the middle with a ten-week program (Citrus County Board of County Commissioners, 2020; Rockingham County, North Carolina, 2021). In general, a schedule that meets for a few weeks seems to be overwhelmingly common across all types of specific government department academies and generalized citizens' academies, even having been adopted by the FBI (FBI, 2020).

Some academies are designed to be more interactive than others, and the hands-on components are often emphasized to attract participants. For example, the Citrus County academy aims "...to give the residents a hands-on, inside look at what, how and why the county's departments do what they do..."; the [Danvers](#) program includes "...activities designed to...give participants an up-close view of local government..."; the Monroe academy aims to let its participating citizens meet the leaders of the county government; and Lakeland describes itself as "interactive," "hands-on," and "behind the scenes" (Citrus County Board of County Commissioners, 2020; Town of Danvers, Massachusetts, 2021; PU, 2019; City of Lakeland, Florida, 2021). The emphasis on interactivity and hands-on learning is no coincidence; it aligns with the recent general shift in perspective that citizens are collaborators and partners with their governments, rather than just its clients (Morse, 2012, p. 80).

Many academies currently or recently available to the public are free, such as those in [Suffolk, Virginia](#) (*Suffolk Commonwealth*, 2020), Citrus County (Citrus County Board of County Commissioners, 2020), and Lakeland (City of Lakeland, Florida, 2021); many more do not advertise that they are free because it is common enough to be assumed. Free citizen academies are possible because of the low cost of running them, with a median program budget of just \$1,600 across 41 different large towns and counties in North Carolina (Morse, 2012). This low cost is likely due to 95% of those academies being run directly by the government and without hiring an external company (Morse, 2012, p. 89). The relatively small budget of many citizens' academies does not appear to affect the number of citizens who participate; the usual number of participants is just over 20 and waiting lists are small if they are used at all (Morse, 2012, p. 89). Overall, the scale of many citizens' academies is rather small, but this allows them to be offered for free to all who want to participate.

## **6.2 Interviews with Facilitators of Existing Academies**

We gained a variety of perspectives on how to design a successful citizens' academy by conducting interviews with facilitators of existing academies both on and off the island. Specifically, we interviewed Keith Mansfield of the Nantucket Citizen's Police Academy (NCPA), Katharine Labrecque of the Lexington Citizens' Academy (LCA), and Deb Brunelle and Susan French of the Barnstable Citizen's Academy (BCA). Our goals for interviewing these

individuals were to determine the best way to develop and maintain a citizens' academy, what content should be included in the academy, and how the academy should be structured. All interviewees mentioned in this section can be found in Appendix C.

The academies of all three towns each have similarities to Nantucket in different ways. Barnstable had worked with the Town of Nantucket on developing a citizens' academy before, and has many distinct villages within one town, just as Nantucket is composed of smaller villages such as Siasconset and Madaket (Brunelle & French, personal communication, November 8, 2021; Karttunen, 2005, p. 304; Town of Barnstable, Massachusetts, n.d.). Lexington shares many similarities with the government structure of Nantucket (Labrecque, personal communication, November 4, 2021). The Nantucket Citizen's Police Academy was designed to cover one department in great depth rather than many departments with one session each, but it has been conducted in the same social environment and the Nantucket Citizens' Academy can learn a lot from its successes (Mansfield, personal communication, October 29, 2021).

From these interviews, we received several recommendations for a citizens' academy that were suggested by at least two academy facilitators. These included general suggestions on academy session ordering, time and locations to hold the academy, content to include in the academy (such as tours, extracurricular activities, discussions, and breaks), and advertising methods, as well as many small or specific recommendations. All of the suggestions we received during these interviews (listed in Appendix H) informed the rest of our research process, and many played a large role in determining our final academy recommendations and deliverables.

The facilitators of different academies did not always agree on all points, and emphasized that any academy should be designed to reflect local conditions and meet local needs. The NCP and BCA mentioned that hands-on, interactive learning was critical to the success of the academy, while the LCA appeared to focus more on presentations. After researching the different teaching styles and talking to several prominent figures on the island who advocated for an interactive style, including Jason Bridges, a select board member with significant public speaking experience, and Janet Schulte, who has spent years in the academic world, we chose a more interactive style with less reliance on PowerPoint slides. Another difference in execution between the interviewed facilitators was class size. All three facilitators agreed that keeping class sizes small was important to create a sense of community, as the more intimate discussion groups allow the forming of connections between the participants and the presenters, as well as among the participants themselves, but the definition of "small" varied. Considerations for making the most of the academy budget with a slightly larger class size were also expressed by Deb Brunelle and Susan French. In our interview with Officer Keith Mansfield of the Nantucket Police Department, he stated that the ideal class size when running the NCPA was 15-20 people, as it was small enough for the entire class to get to know each other, but large enough to have group

activities and avoid potential conflicts. Additionally, while most sessions ranged to be about two hours long, presenters and academy participants would sometimes stay up to two hours longer discussing both academy topics and daily life. The Lexington and Barnstable citizen academies had larger class sizes of about 30-40 participants, with the resulting dynamic creating a different learning environment, more akin to a traditional classroom rather than a discussion group. However, the benefit that both academies have with increasing their class sizes is that, due to their popularity, they can avoid putting eager participants on a waitlist, and even though there is a decrease in the potential for building a cohesive group, there is also a greater overall increase of knowledge to the citizens of the town.

With regards to a Nantucket Citizens' Academy, the class size depends on the needs of the community, so depending on whether the dynamic is similar to the one found in the NCPA (given that this academy has so far been a success on Nantucket) or to ones found in academies like the LCA and BCA, the ideal number of participants per session will be different. Another difference was that the NCPA did not base their academy on any others specifically, whereas the BCA based theirs off of their town's police academy. Our sponsor liaisons expressed an interest in using the NCPA to create the Nantucket Citizens' Academy (Elizabeth Gibson and Gregg Tivnan, personal communication, September 15, 2021), so that choice was made for us. Lastly, the choice of who should present during each academy session was a source of much disagreement. Keith Mansfield suggested that the presenter should be whoever has the most experience with the topic and works with it the most often, which will likely be a non-manager employee. The BCA took the opposite approach, choosing the department head as their presenter by default and allowing them to delegate their duties as necessary. Since our academy will be covering each department in a depth closer to that of the BCA, but will be trying to foster close discussion and freeform questioning similar to that of the NCPA, both approaches have merit for our academy, and a middle manager with experience will likely be the best option to present most academy sessions. After determining the best decisions for these choices regarding a Nantucket Citizens' Academy, they were incorporated into the final recommendations and deliverables as well.

## 7.0 Public Interest in Civic Engagement and a Citizens’ Academy

### 7.1 Current Public Civic Engagement and Knowledge of Nantucket Municipal Government

To understand and measure citizens’ levels of municipal engagement on Nantucket, including participating in Town meetings and voting, among other engagement opportunities, the team surveyed citizens about their current engagement levels. We first asked all survey participants indicate if they have worked for the Town or served on a Town board, committee, or commission (referred to as “municipally involved survey respondents” for the remainder of this report), or have not (referred to as “general public survey respondents” for the remainder of this report). We received a total of 103 survey responses, including 64 general public respondents and 38 municipally involved respondents. This comprised 79 responses from year-round residents and 21 from seasonal residents. Three people declined to give their residency status. The majority (81%) were registered voters; 18% were not registered to vote, and 3% declined to say or did not respond.

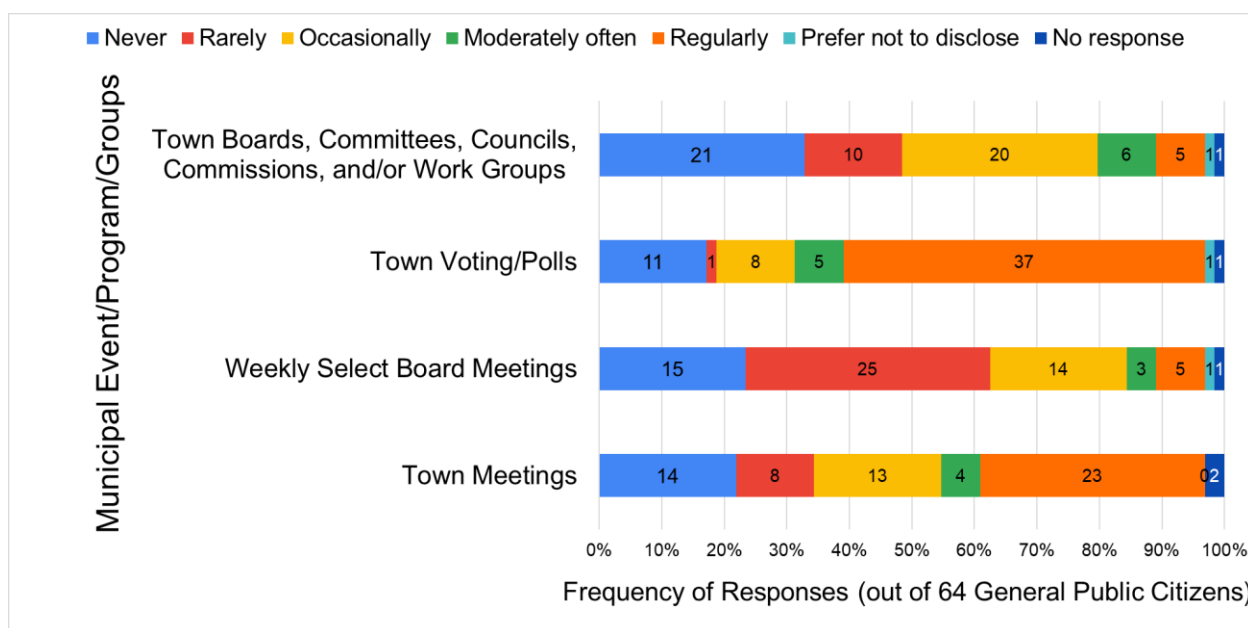


Figure 4: Civic Engagement in Nantucket of General Public Respondents

We asked all survey participants to rate how often they participate in a variety of municipal programs, events, and/or groups to indicate how they engage with Nantucket’s local government. It was found that few (34%) of the general public survey respondents indicated regularly or moderately often participating in town government affairs except to vote or attend town meetings (Figure 4). Conversely, municipally involved citizens were found to participate

far more frequently (with 63% responding regularly or moderately often) in all town affairs, especially voting and Annual Town Meetings (Figure 5).

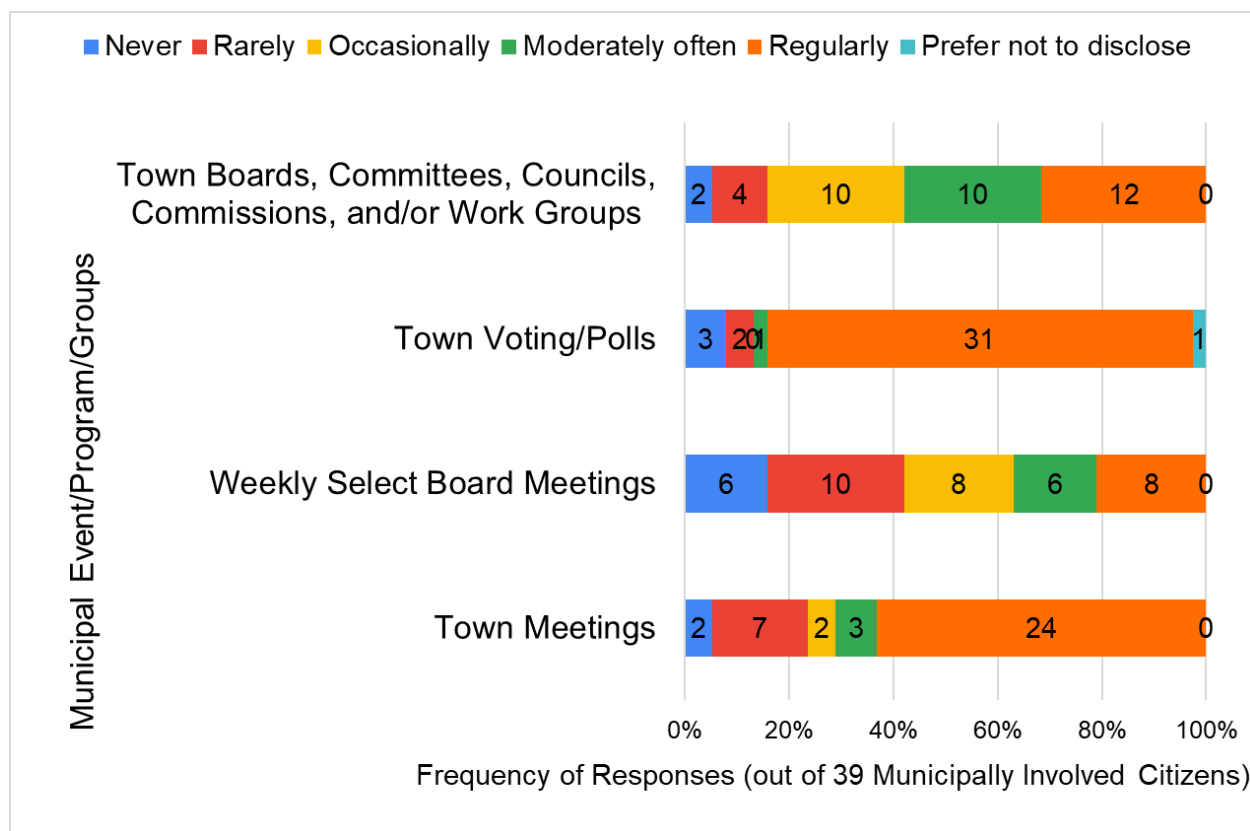


Figure 5: Civic Engagement in Nantucket of Municipally Involved Respondents

This lack in civic engagement can also be reflected in the relative lack of knowledge about Town departments among the general public. Although the relative amount of knowledge of each department all together is generally limited, there is a noticeable difference between the departments. As shown in Figure 6, aside from PLUS, 40% or more of the general public had little or no knowledge of any of the town departments listed. More than 60% had little or no knowledge of DEI, HR, IT, or the airport as town entities. In comparison, as seen in Figure 7, municipally involved respondents felt they had overall better knowledge of town departments, although more than 40% indicated little or no knowledge of IT, DEI, HR, airport, police, and water. Additionally, levels of knowledge still varied substantially by department, which may reflect what positions respondents hold or have held, and most respondents feel they are most knowledgeable about Town administration.



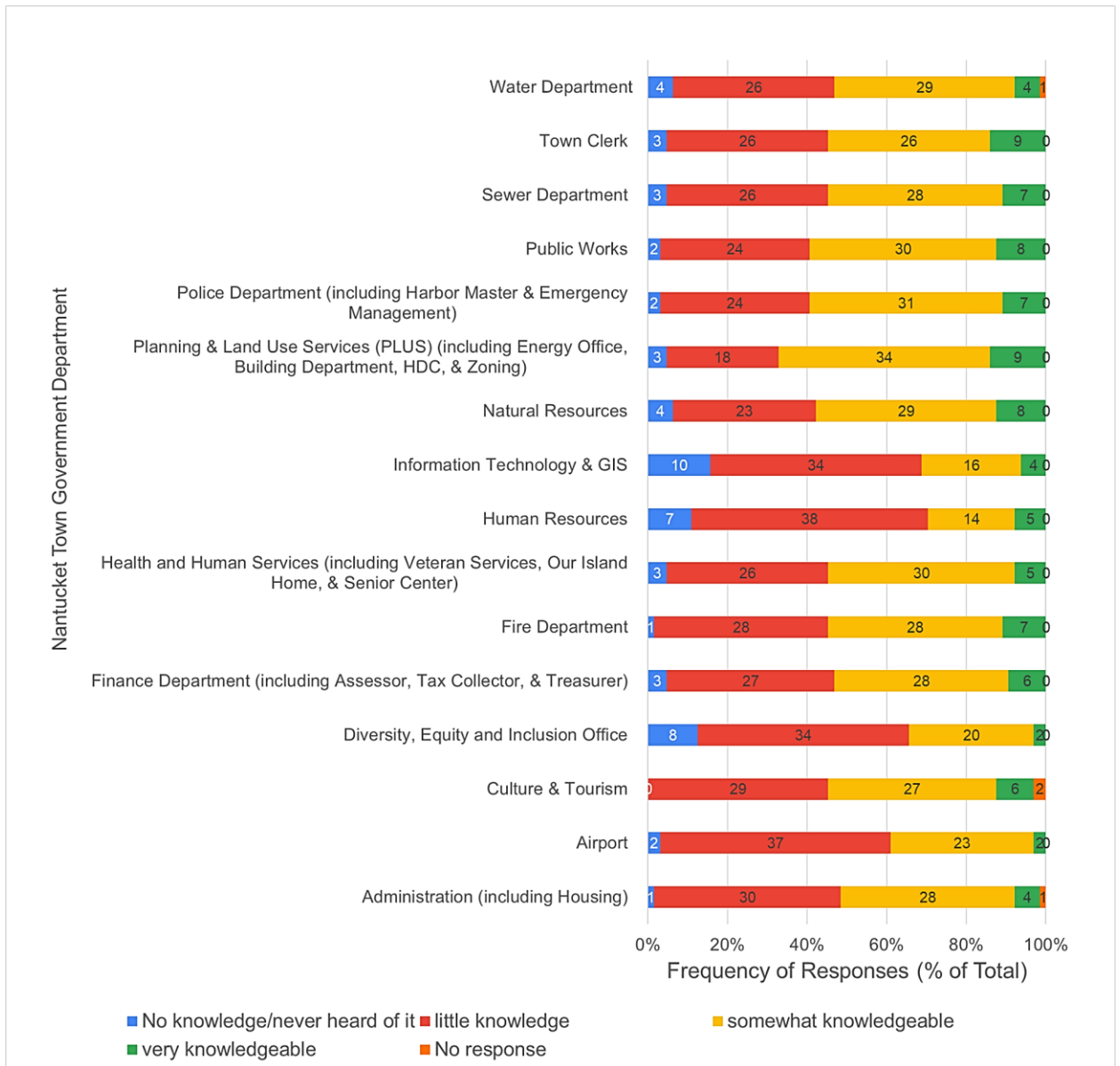


Figure 6: General Public Respondent Knowledge of Nantucket Town Government Departments

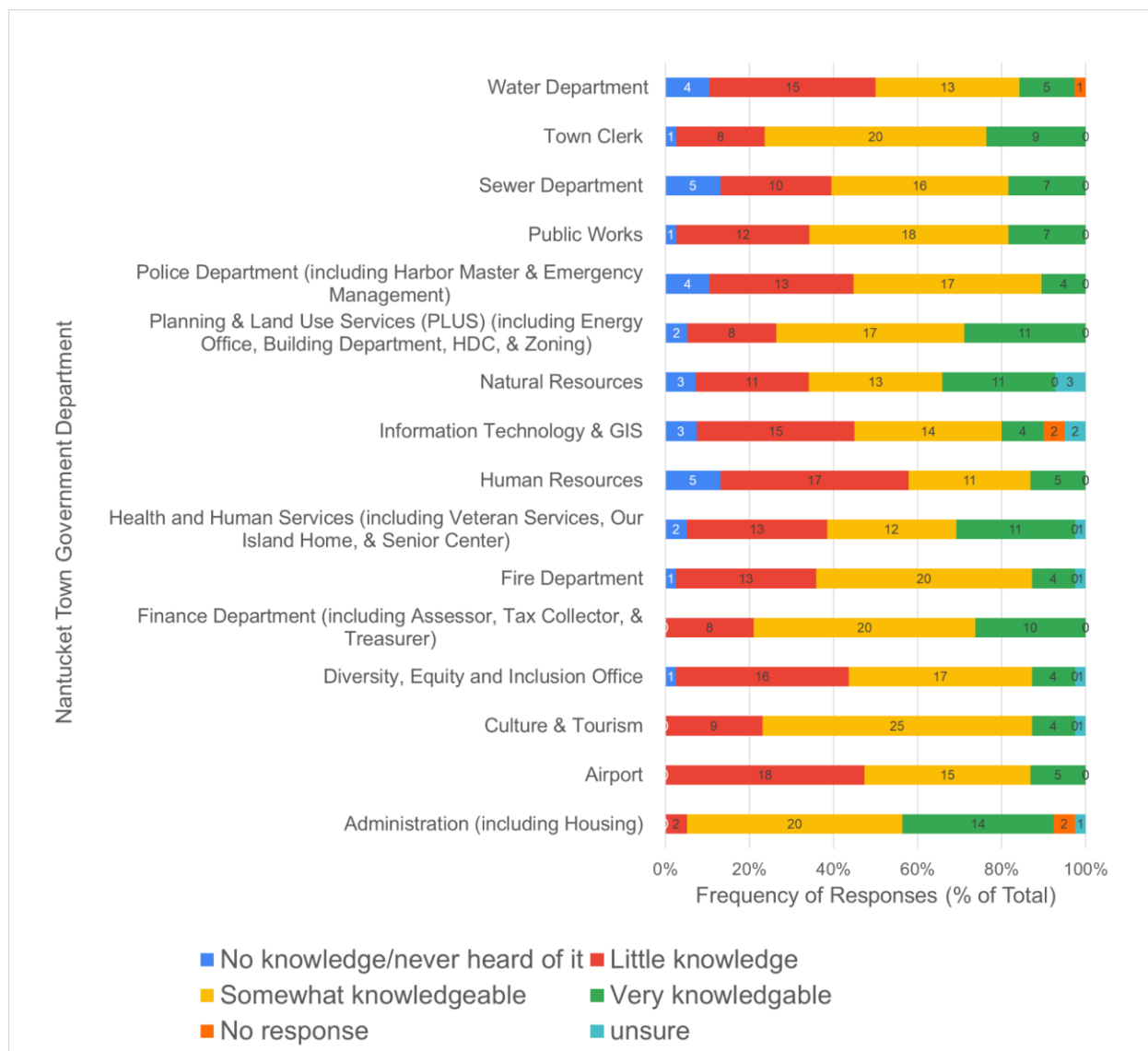


Figure 7: Municipally Involved Respondent Knowledge of Nantucket Town Government Departments

## 7.2 Limits To Participation In Nantucket Government

In order to address the various barriers that different demographic groups on the island face in terms of participation in local government, we asked general public survey participants to identify possible “limits” that they believed inhibited their participation in local government (including a fill in the blank option). As seen in Figure 8, the overwhelming majority indicated lack of time/scheduling issues (63%), followed by lack of expertise or know-how (24%).

In comparison, as seen in Figure 9, municipally involved respondents, having been provided with the same list that asked what they believed limited others, believed that lack of time/scheduling (79%) most limited citizens’ participation, followed by lack of interest (66%),

lack of expertise or know-how (47%), and lack of childcare (also 47%). Although there is a strong consensus that certain factors included in the survey limit participation in government more than others, it is still recommended that all listed limitations be taken into account when creating a citizens' academy.

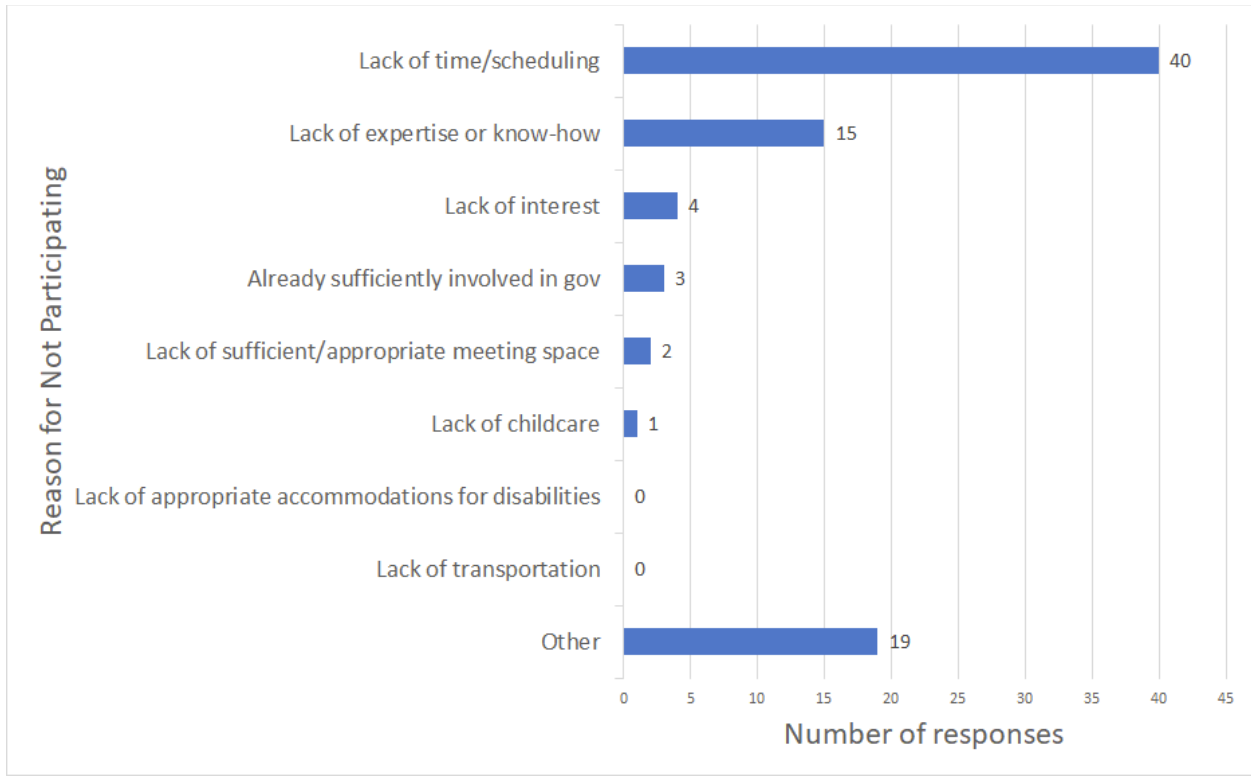


Figure 8: Limits To Participating In Local Government Identified By General Public Respondents

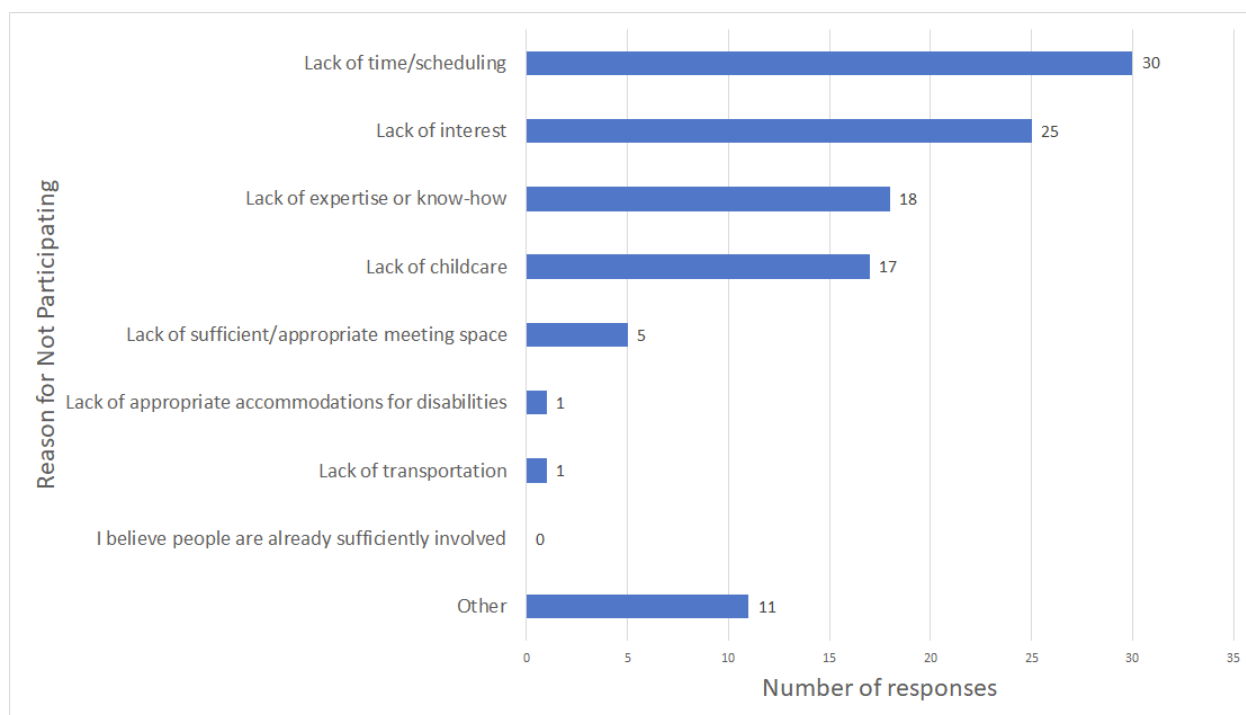


Figure 9: Limits To Participating In Local Government of Citizens Identified By Municipally Involved Respondents

### 7.3 *Public Interest in Improved Civic Engagement*

In order to improve municipal engagement in Nantucket using a citizens' academy (as suggested by our sponsor), we needed to evaluate if the public was in fact interested in improving civic engagement of citizens on Nantucket and if they believed that an academy would be an effective solution. As seen in Figure 10, a strong majority of respondents indicated that Nantucket should increase citizen participation (84% agree/strongly agree) and increase citizen knowledge (94% agree/strongly agree). This viewpoint was shared by multiple figures interviewed by the team, including Peter Morrison, Brooke Mohr, Shantaw Bloise-Murphy, and Jason Graziadei. Additionally, fewer respondents were confident of their abilities to contact the right department, etc. (49% agree/strongly agree). Although the strong majority of respondents said that civic engagement should be increased on Nantucket, much fewer respondents said that they personally wanted to become more involved with the Town government. This is shown in Figure 10, as only a slight majority (58% agree/strongly agree) indicated a willingness to engage more as opposed to a strong majority advocating for greater engagement.

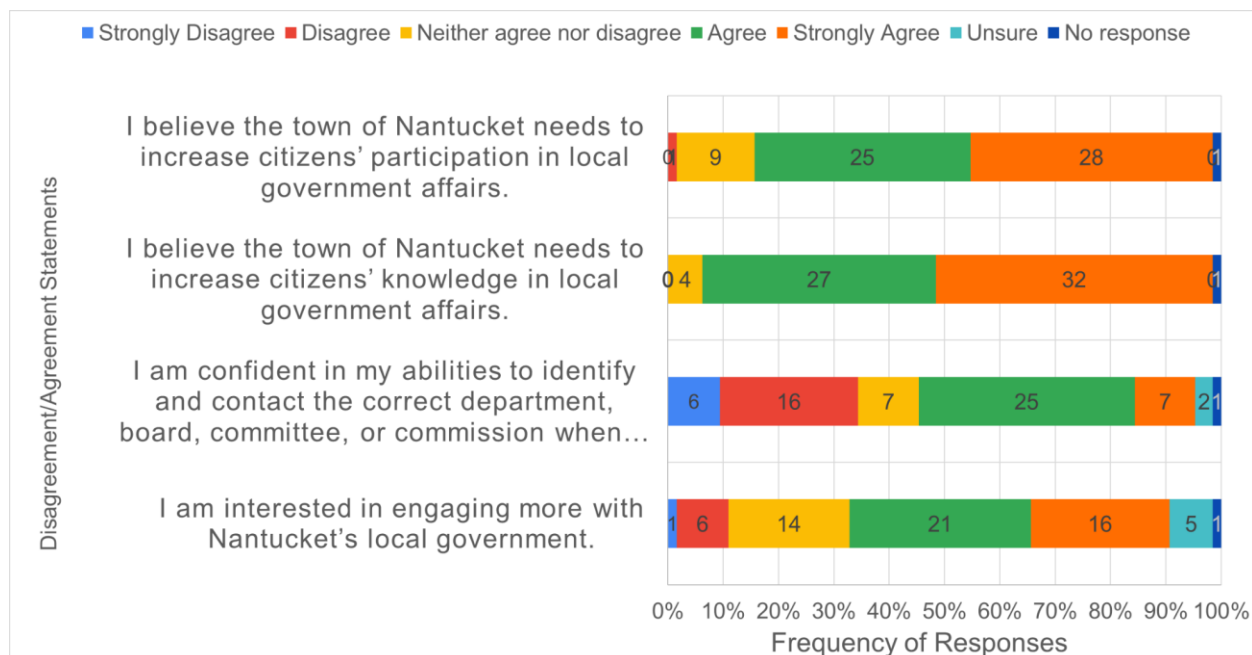


Figure 10: Beliefs and Interest of General Public Respondent Regarding Increasing Nantucket Civic Engagement

This difference is further reflected in the number of respondents that believed an academy is an efficient solution to increasing citizen knowledge and participation in municipal government (67%) compared to the number that said they were willing to actually participate in one, either in-person (40%) or online (56%), as seen in Figure 11.

Prior to creating the survey, during our interview with Shantaw Bloise-Murphy, she suggested that an online version of the academy may expand citizens' abilities to participate in an academy, particularly for citizens working multiple jobs with very limited availability. An asynchronous online academy would allow them to learn at their own pace while accommodating their busy schedules. Given that there is a relatively strong belief that a citizens' academy could improve civic engagement in Nantucket and that there is an increase in willingness to participate in an academy if it is online, it can be concluded that there is a demand for an academy, particularly one with an online option, and that it would benefit the citizens of Nantucket.

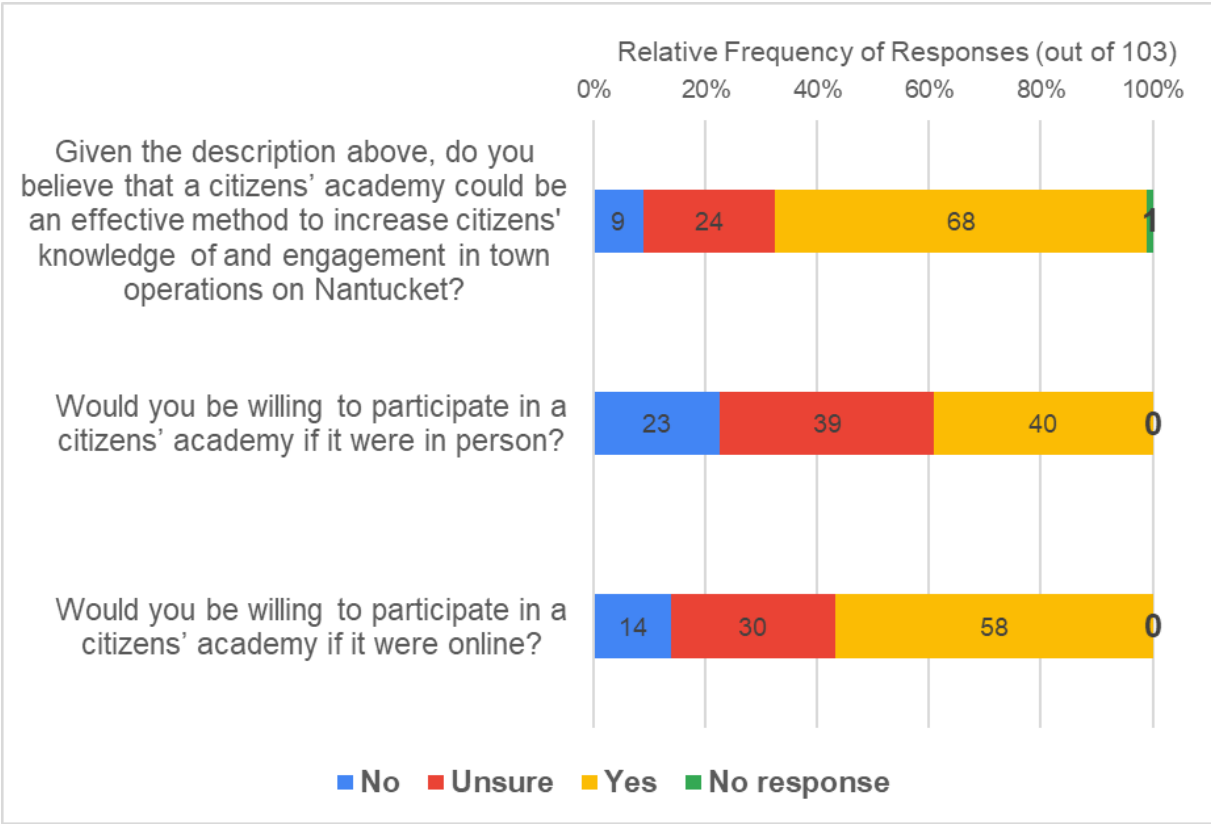


Figure 11: Survey Respondent Interest In Creation of and Participation In a Nantucket Citizens' Academy

## **8.0 Soliciting Municipal Official Knowledge and Preferences Regarding a Citizens' Academy**

In addition to the survey, several municipal officials were interviewed to determine how a citizens' academy could benefit their departments, including Graeme Durovich (NDPW, Recycling and Solid Waste Coordinator), Elizabeth Gibson & Gregg Tivnan (NTA, Town Manager and Assistant Manager of Strategic Planning), and Brian Turbitt & Rick Sears (NFD, Director of Municipal Finance and Assistant Finance Director). All interviewed officials expressed interest in participating in the academy, although not always for the same reasons.

Graeme Durovich expressed interest in the academy as a method of teaching citizens about the many programs offered by the NDPW, since many useful programs are not well-known due to the difficulties of advertisement and public outreach. The DPW has many responsibilities beyond waste disposal and filling potholes that many citizens are not aware of; this includes issuing permits, providing free floating wheelchairs for beach usage, maintaining the island's many cemeteries, and repairing non-emergency town vehicles. These services are essential to maintaining the island and improving the experiences of its citizens and visitors, and were created to "[support] the Select Board Strategic Plan's five priorities including: Transportation, Environmental Leadership, Housing, Efficient Town Operations, and Quality of Life" (ACK-15, 2021). Even within waste management, there are specialized programs that may need explanation or advertisement, such as an A to Z list of how to reuse and properly dispose of household items, volunteer events for cleaning up the island, Moby the whale (a sculpture designed to increase citizen and visitor awareness of the effect of trash on ocean wildlife; Treffeisen, 2021), and the service request system. Many citizens are aware of some of these services, but the citizens' academy is a good opportunity to correct misconceptions about some of the finer details of these programs and to increase awareness of the lesser-known ones. It will also help citizens understand and empathize with the issues the NDPW faces on a daily basis. By explaining these responsibilities and associated issues in a constructive environment, the public's perception and awareness may be improved, which will improve their relationship with the NDPW.

The Finance department shares both similarities and differences with the NDPW. Citizens do not often interact directly with the finance department like they do with the NDPW, which may be due in part to the department's lack of public-facing programs (even if citizens can directly call the office with questions and concerns, or find such information on the department's detailed page of the Nantucket Town Website; Brian Turbitt and Rick Sears, personal communication, November 10, 2021). However, citizens still maintain strong opinions about the decisions and operations of both departments. During the interview with Brian Turbitt and Rick Sears, and with other interviewees, it was noted the one challenge that the Finance department

faces is that understanding the intricate processes of their department requires moderately in-depth knowledge of municipal financial concepts to properly understand. For example, understanding a budget thoroughly enough to accurately vote on it in the time available at a town or select board meeting is a very difficult task, as many citizens do not possess the necessary context or skills to evaluate a budget (Bigelow, 2015). This is another potential use for the finance department session: teaching citizens how budgets, taxes, and other common financial concepts work in general, why they are important, and how to make educated decisions about them, while providing the context necessary for the citizens to make those decisions.

Understanding the tight constraints the finance department is under, as well as the processes that they go through every day, could greatly benefit participants as well, giving them an increased understanding and appreciation of what the finance department does. Other features of the NFD that Director Turbitt and Assistant Director Sears said would be useful for citizens to learn in an academy include the NTD's relationship with the Nantucket Finance Committee, specific programs or exemptions, and the budgetary process for events like Annual Town Meeting. The NFD's close relationship with the Nantucket Select Board, the NTA, the finance committee, and the capital program committee should also be showcased; particular attention should be allocated to ensuring the academy participants learn about the Select Board and the NTA during or before the session that covers the Finance department. The case study for the Finance department is likely to be a budgetary process, such as the process for Annual Town Meetings, that citizens are expected to participate in and that would greatly benefit from increased public knowledge of its intricacies, context, and consequences. Lastly, a tour of the finance department could prove useful in familiarizing the academy participants with their office and weakening its association with negative experiences such as paying tax bills and other fees. The citizenry and finance department alike could both greatly benefit from its inclusion in the academy.

The NTA is comparable to the finance department in many ways. They usually operate in isolation from citizens, and interact with every other department during the course of their day, assisting with and collaborating on projects, finalizing and approving proposals, and solving problems that arise from all areas of the town government. To a citizen, however, it is not so obvious what the purpose and tasks of the town administration are, and this provides a good opportunity for the citizens' academy to help. According to Elizabeth Gibson and Gregg Tivnan, the NTA oversees other town departments, prepares the warrants for Town Meeting and the annual budget for all Town departments, works closely with the Select Board to implement policies, and fields questions and concerns from the public and other departments alike, among other tasks. The NTA must work quickly to keep up with recent developments and "work to address issues before they become problems" (Elizabeth Gibson, personal communication, November 28, 2021). This information is central to the identity of the NTA, and should be



included in their academy session presentation, along with discussion of their budget, monthly meetings with other department heads, and challenges. Elizabeth Gibson and Gregg Tivnan expressed interest in the case study for the NTA session focusing on a “How Do I” question, such as how to develop a Select Board agenda or how to organize an Annual Town Meeting, to allow the academy participants to understand the perspective of the NTA. For the interactive activity, a mock town meeting following Robert’s Rules was suggested, to help familiarize participants with the process and encourage them to attend real town meetings.

## 9.0 Recommendations

Based on our interview and survey data, there is a consensus among Nantucket government officials, involved community members, and citizens of Nantucket that a citizens' academy would be an effective method for informing citizens of local government and increasing civic engagement in Nantucket. Our primary recommendation is that;

**We recommend the Town of Nantucket pursue further development of a Nantucket Citizens' Academy.**

### 9.1 Academy Suggestions

There are various components necessary to successfully organize and run a citizens' academy, including facilitators, curriculum materials, presenters, funding, and performance evaluation. The following recommendations outline the necessary elements for the development, structure, and content of a citizens' academy for Nantucket.

**1. We recommend the Town Manager's Office develop a budget to allocate money for this citizens' academy.**

A list of the various expenses for the academy can be seen below. It should be noted that this list does not include a breakdown of costs, so costs will need to be determined in order to create the proper budget.

- a. Facilitators: At least one facilitator should be hired to implement the academy by organizing and managing the sessions. The facilitator role is a part-time position that requires a salary/fee for the time spent running and organizing the academy events.
- b. Compensation for session presenters: Each department should choose a representative to present their department's information in a session; this representative should be an experienced, engaging, and effective speaker, who is knowledgeable of the department's processes and organization. Based on our interviews with Officer Mansfield, Janet Schulte, and Jason Bridges, and in accordance with the academy session presentations, it is important to have representatives from each of the Town departments to deliver these presentations. Representatives from specific departments that develop presentations and present at the academy require compensation. This can either be determined within the department as part of the presenter's regular salary, or in other forms, such as a thank you gift from the facilitators.

- c. Childcare: Childcare is a necessary component of the academy budget, as the goal is to reach as many year-round residents as possible, which includes families with young children. While it might be harder for these young families to attend an academy session, providing some form of childcare at the sessions would make attending much more feasible.
- d. Food: Because we expect the academy to be held for multiple hours, most likely close to (or during) a regular meal-time, it is important to provide some form of food for participants of the academy. Therefore, this should also be accounted for in a budget for the academy.
- e. Venues and Transportation: Budgeting for venues and transportation is also important, as the location of academy sessions is crucial to the effectiveness of the academy. While some sessions may be held at government offices or buildings, some may have to be held at a different location. This expense, along with accommodation for travel is necessary to be inclusive of all participants and to provide them with the best opportunity to attend all academy sessions.
- f. Materials: Materials, including a notebook for each participant that includes an overview of information to be covered and other related pages, need to be accounted for in an academy budget. Based on our interview with Officer Mansfield of the Nantucket Citizen's Police Academy, it is beneficial to give each participant their own personalized binder with the information to be covered, as well as room for questions and notes for each session. This encourages discussion among participants and engages them with the presenters. Materials may also include any technology that is needed to deliver presentations during academy sessions (i.e. laptop).
- g. Content Translation: In consideration of the diverse population of Nantucket, with a wide range of different languages spoken, it is important to translate the content of the academy presentations to allow residents, whose native language is not English, to feel comfortable and gain a deeper understanding of the material presented. This would allow them to refer to the materials in their preferred language while the presentations will most likely be in English. In order to do so, a translator would need to be accounted for in the budget of the academy.
- h. Advertising/Public Outreach: Lastly, it is important to account for advertising for the academy to communicate to citizens when the academy is being held and to encourage them to participate in it. A vital component of advertising is making sure that any advertisements for the academy reach the entire diverse population of Nantucket citizens. Furthermore, having funds for public outreach is necessary to ensure the academy is inclusive of all of Nantucket's diverse communities.

2. **We recommend that academy session content include a PowerPoint presentation, a supplementary informational pamphlet, a brief case study and an interactive activity (possibly in the form of a facilities tour) for each presenting department, and that this content should be collected through a standardized academy session template form. Additionally, all departments in the Nantucket Town Government should be included in the academy and all presenters should be made aware of heavily debated issues within the community.**

Samples of each component and their corresponding detailed descriptions, including an academy template, can be found in Appendix E.

- a. Academy template: All Town departments are advised to fill out a standard template developed by the team to gather information for the academy curriculum. These templates will be used to develop presentations for the academy sessions, and they provide a detailed and focused outline of what should be included in each presentation.
- b. PowerPoint presentation: Each department should create a presentation that can be used for an academy session. This should include all the necessary information outlined in the template, along with any other interesting or pertinent information to the specific department.
- c. Supplementary informational pamphlet: Any further information that a department would like to share with participants beyond the presentation content can be distributed after the session in the form of a pamphlet or brochure. Additionally, since participants can take this information home with them after each session, they can refer to it in the future if they ever find need for it.
- d. Brief case study: In order to provide participants with a more in-depth understanding of the presenting department, a brief case study featuring either a deep dive into one topic/process or a review of the daily work a department worker undergoes is suggested. The case study will also provide more context for the information they learn about in the rest of the presentation. Each case study is likely to change depending on the department.
- e. Interactive activity: An interactive activity would also allow participants to learn content outside of a traditional lecture-style classroom, which would further enhance the effectiveness of teaching. One example of this would be a facilities tour, either in-person or virtually, which would allow for participants to better understand just what it takes for the department to function. Like the case study, each interactive activity is also likely to change depending on the department.
- f. Departments: The Nantucket Citizens' Academy should be developed to include every department of Town government, with each being incorporated into an

academy session. Some departments may be grouped together into one session, depending on how integrated they are with each other, to ensure that every department can be covered in the time allotted for this academy.

- i. Presenter Awareness: Presenters of specific department academy sessions should be made aware of certain popular topics related to their departments that should be addressed in the sessions.

**3. We recommend that the citizens' academy take a hybrid approach to this academy, including both in-person and online options, and have the following structure and schedule that reflects the preferences indicated by survey respondents.**

- a. In-person and online components: From our interview with Shantaw Bloise-Murphy of the Chamber of Commerce, as well as our survey data, we learned that many residents in Nantucket work more than one job and may not be able to dedicate as much time to attending the academy sessions every week. Accordingly, an online option for the academy would allow residents to attend academy sessions at their own pace, from wherever they want. This is also especially important when considering families with young children that may not be able to attend the sessions in person. This online option should be live, as to actively engage the participants in discussions; however, these online sessions should also be recorded and sent to whichever participants are unable to attend a session. Creating this hybrid model for the academy will also ensure a better transition to a fully remote academy, if health and safety measures require such a transition.
- b. Academy content structure: This recommendation is based on research of other citizens' academies in the United States, our interviews with Officer Mansfield, Katharine Labrecque, and Deb Brunelle and Susan French, and discussions with our sponsor. The structure of the academy should be as follows.
  - i. First session - overview of town government structure (broad)
  - ii. Subsequent sessions - specific department/department-group presentations, with recurring reference to the organizational chart explained in the first (overview) session; each session should highlight different parts of the organizational chart
  - iii. Last session - graduation ceremony and celebration with academy participants; this could include attending the annual Town meeting or conducting a mock Town meeting, as well as distributing congratulatory gifts to participants (certificate, trophy, academy t-shirt, restaurant gift card, etc.)

- c. Academy schedule: Table 3 below provides a tentative schedule for a citizens' academy on Nantucket based on survey respondents preferences. It should be noted that the survey data used to make this recommendation is not representative of all citizens on Nantucket; to procure more accurate data on the availability of Nantucket citizens, an additional survey should be conducted, with the goal of reaching a larger number of citizens. A copy of the survey conducted can be found in Appendix E for future use.

Table 3: Tentative Nantucket Citizens' Academy Scheduling Details

<b>Time of Year</b>	January, February, March
<b>Day of Week</b>	Monday/Tuesday
<b>Time of Day</b>	Evening (approx. 6:00 - 9:00 PM)
<b>Duration (per session)</b>	2 hours
<b>Duration (entire academy)</b>	5 weeks (1 session per week)

4. **We recommend that the citizens' academy have a means for measuring qualitative and quantitative success of the academy should be developed.**

Evaluating the success of the academy is critical to academy improvement for the future and should be measured qualitatively and quantitatively through three types of questionnaires given to participants. The following recommendations outline the necessary materials for evaluating the success of a citizens' academy for Nantucket, including multiple surveys to obtain participant feedback that should be implemented into the next iteration of the academy.

- a. Qualitative: Academy facilitators should conduct qualitative surveys after each session, as well as after the completion of the academy, to gain participant feedback (both of which can be seen in Appendix E). Based on our research of and interviews with existing academies, it is important to solicit feedback from participants to improve for further iterations of the academy.
- b. Quantitative: Two identical quantitative surveys (pre- and post-academy) that evaluate the participants' knowledge of town government should also be conducted. These two tests can be compared to measure improvement of participant knowledge and therefore, the success of the academy.

## 9.2 *Other Recommendations*

In addition to recommendations regarding citizens' academy development and refinement for the Town of Nantucket, we have also accumulated additional recommendations regarding other methods to improve civic engagement outside of this academy.

1. **We recommend that further iterations of this citizens' academy be opened to different target audiences. These audiences may include (but are not limited to) seasonal residents, businesses, and students.** In addition to the annual citizens' academy for year-round residents of Nantucket, a second academy offering could be held at a separate time during the year for one of these other audiences.
2. **We recommend that, in addition to these recorded meetings, the Town Manager's Office consider developing shorter videos (~10 minutes or less) to teach citizens about Town government** so that residents can watch the videos that cover topics that most interest them, as well as generally keeping citizens more informed of Town government structure and processes.
3. Based on discussions with our sponsor liaisons and our interview with Janet Schulte, **it may be beneficial to offer a community service opportunity to high school students to contribute to the creation of certain academy content.** One example would be creating video tours for various departments or academy sessions. Assigning the creation of video tours as a community service project presents the opportunity for students to become more engaged in local government and to generate content for the Nantucket citizens' academy.
4. **We recommend a town operator position be opened as a viable way to direct citizens' calls to the correct departments and to minimize the number of misguided calls that each department receives.** This is based on our interview with Jason Bridges.

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## **Appendix A: General Structure and Mission of Nantucket Government**

As a small island off the coast of Cape Cod composed of about 15,000 year-round residents (US Census Bureau, 2020), Nantucket is a historical landmark that is recognized both as a town and a county by the state of Massachusetts (MA). This makes for a unique government structure, one that is made possible by creative, hardworking individuals who must constantly develop new methods to optimize the island's limited supply of resources while maintaining its highly acclaimed status as a tourist destination.

Of the four styles of government in MA, Nantucket functions as an Open Town Government (MMMA, 2018), which is also used by 262 of the 350 other towns in MA (MMMA, 2018), making it the most common political system in the state. Characterized by a legislative body consisting of registered year-round home-owning citizens, who debate and vote on a variety of issues, this open system is most evident during Nantucket's annual town meetings (ACK-1, 2021). Debated topics in these meetings include budgets, zoning, bylaws, approval of town indebtedness, and numerous other matters (MMMA, 2018).

Elections for many major government positions also coincide with these meetings. In addition to a Volunteer Talent Bank of non-elected government volunteers that serve the community on an opportunity-based schedule, (ACK-14, 2021) the majority of the town's operations are run on a day-to-day basis by boards, committees, and commissions under the authority of the Select Board and the Town Manager, as seen in Figure 2. The 5 members of the Select Board are elected on a staggered basis where a position is opened for election when a member leaves (ACK-1, 2021). They are responsible for overseeing the development of the county's policies based on the input of all of the various departments within the Nantucket government and the decisions made during town meetings (ACK-3, 2021). The board also provides guidance to the Town Manager's Office (TMO). The TMO includes 11 employees (identified in Appendix B) and is headed by the Town Manager, Elizabeth Gibson (ACK-4, 2021). She is responsible for recruitment and management within the TMO, as well as facilitating communication among the TMO, the Select Board, town offices and departments, and the citizens of Nantucket (ACK-12, 2002). Supporting her are two Assistant Town Managers, Rachel Day, who oversees general administration and supervision of all staff and work within the TMO (ACK-10, 2002), and Gregg Tivnan, who is in charge of management and implementation of all strategic projects under the TMO's jurisdiction (ACK-11, 2002).

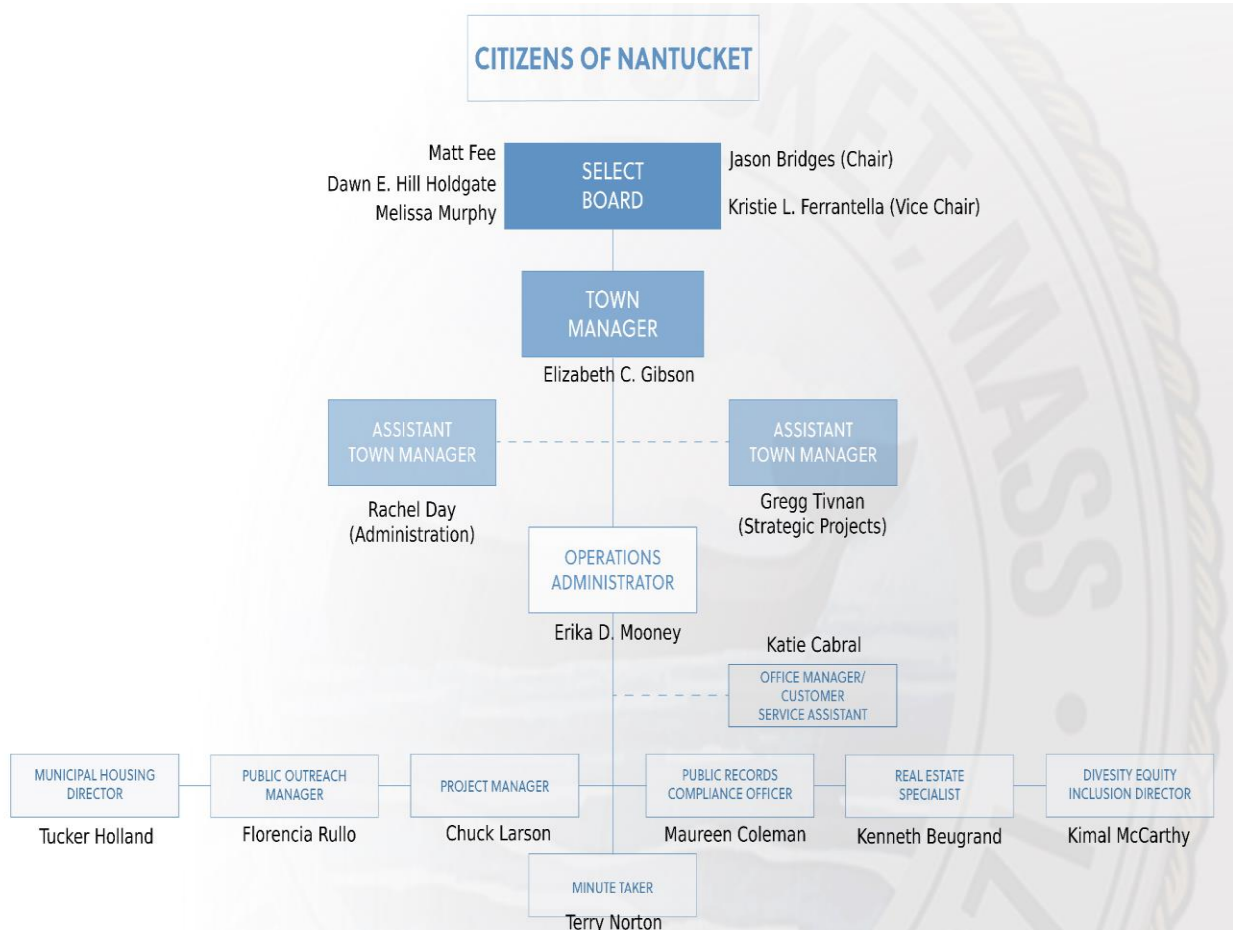
Under the guidance of these three officers, the TMO organizes implementation and reinforcement of the county's policies, as well as overseeing all the various government offices and departments responsible for delivering municipal services from public education to road repairs on Nantucket (ACK-3, 2021). The many offices and departments overseen by the TMO

are grouped under the following categories: Public Works, Health and Human Services, General Administration, Finance, Natural Resources, Planning and Land Use Services, IT and GIS (Information Technology and Geographic Information Systems), Public Safety, Human Resources, and Culture and Tourism (ACK-7, 2020). As demonstrated in Figure 2 (highlighted in orange), the TMO plays an essential role in managing all town affairs, functioning as the heart of the Nantucket government.

For instance, the mission of the Public Works department is to provide and maintain services to the public regarding the economy and quality of life for both citizens and visitors of Nantucket (ACK-13, 2021). Similarly, the Human Resources department strives to provide competent service to the community, empowering citizens through their leadership in recruitment, hiring, benefits, employee relations, and training and development (ACK-9, 2021). The Finance department manages real estate, tax, and insurance affairs, as well as the town payroll and invoices. It is dedicated to assisting citizens and local agencies in town financial matters (ACK-6, 2021). Lastly, the Public Safety department, comprising Fire, Police, Central Dispatch, Marine, and Emergency Management, is responsible for the protection and security of all Nantucket citizens (ACK-7, 2020). Aside from their main objective of safeguarding the town of Nantucket, they are also committed to educating the public about the services they provide, ultimately leading to a more informed and aware community.

Town governments are more efficient and more adequately able to execute the will of the people when the populace of the town is knowledgeable about and participates in their government. However, like other towns, many of Nantucket's citizens lack sufficient understanding of the multitude of services available to them along with the time and effort required to make such services possible. This results in low participation in town meetings and elections, making it difficult for the government to create policies that reflect the needs of the people. Out of 9246 voters, only 1022 voters participated in the 2021 annual town meetings, resulting in an 11% voter turnout (ACK-2, 2021). One solution the Town Manager's Office has proposed is a Citizens' Academy, in which the community is offered the chance to learn about the government and acquire hands-on experience through meeting various department heads, touring facilities, and participating in other interactive programs (Tivnan, 2021). The Nantucket Police Department has already made an effort to educate citizens about their work by forming a Citizens' Police Academy (ACK-5, 2021). The town would like to use this as the model for a more comprehensive Citizens' Academy that includes all government departments and is directed at enhancing awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the many components of Nantucket's government system.

# Appendix B: Nantucket Town Manager's Office Hierarchy



Listed above are all of the members of the Town Manager's Office, ranked by position. Image provided by and adapted from (ACK-3, 2021), with names and positions from (ACK-4, 2021).

## Appendix C: Table of Project Interviewees

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Position/Title</b>	<b>Other Notes/Purpose</b>
Keith Mansfield	Nantucket Citizen's Police Academy Facilitator	Previous academies review
Katharine Labrecque	Lexington, MA Citizens' Academy Facilitator	Previous academies review
Deb Brunelle & Susan French	Barnstable, MA Citizen's Academy Facilitators	Previous academies review
Elizabeth Gibson & Gregg Tivnan	Nantucket Town Manager & Nantucket Assistant Town Manager for Strategic Projects	Project Sponsor, met weekly
Graeme Durovich	Nantucket DPW Recycling/Solid Waste Coordinator	DPW point person for DPW academy model
Brian Turbitt & Rick Sears	Nantucket Director of Municipal Finance & Assistant Finance Director	Finance Department representatives for Finance Department template
Janet Schulte	Nantucket Office of Culture and Tourism Director	Curriculum structure & delivery, public outreach methods
Kimal McCarthy	Nantucket Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Director	Diversity and inclusion, public outreach methods, local community issues
Jason Bridges	Nantucket Select Board Chair	Current events/local issues, public outreach methods, curriculum structure & delivery
Kristie Ferrantella	Nantucket Select Board Vice Chair	Current events/local issues, public outreach methods, data processing & analysis
Florencia Rullo	Nantucket Town Administration Public Outreach Manager	Public outreach methods, visual presentation, diversity and inclusion, translation of materials (English to Spanish)
Katie Cabral	Nantucket Town Admin Office Manager, Customer Service Representative	Public outreach methods, common questions from the public

Brooke Mohr	Nantucket Affordable Housing Trust Vice-Chair	Public outreach methods, diversity and inclusion, local community issues
Peter Morrison	Nantucket Civic League Co-President	Public outreach methods, academy structure & delivery, diversity & inclusion
Shantaw Bloise-Murphy	Nantucket Chamber of Commerce Business Manager	Public outreach methods, curriculum structure & delivery
Jason Graziadei	N. Magazine Senior Writer, Nantucket Current Editor	Public outreach methods, diversity & inclusion, local community issues



## Appendix D: Sample Interview Questions and Topics

### 1. *Preliminary Interview Questions Asked to Existing Citizens' Academy Facilitators in Massachusetts*

#### Preamble

We are a group of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) conducting a research project in collaboration with the Nantucket Town Manager's Office to develop a citizens' academy curriculum for Nantucket.

We would be delighted if you would take 20 minutes to answer some questions about your experience in developing and implementing the \_\_\_\_\_ Academy program. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may stop at any time. We will be taking notes during our conversation and may wish to quote you in our final report. In the case we would like to use a quote from you, we will give you an opportunity to review any quotations prior to the publication of our paper. We will also be happy to provide you with a copy of the report when it is completed. Thank you for your support in this research!

Do you have any questions before we begin? If you have any questions or concerns after the interview, you can contact us at [gr-ack21-tmo@wpi.edu](mailto:gr-ack21-tmo@wpi.edu) or our faculty advisors, Dominic Golding, at [golding@wpi.edu](mailto:golding@wpi.edu), and Fred Looft at [flooft@wpi.edu](mailto:flooft@wpi.edu).

#### Background

- How long has your citizens' academy been running?
- What is the size of your typical citizens' academy class?
- What problems did you wish to solve when designing your citizens' academy?

#### Design

- How did you decide where to hold your citizens' academy?
- Were there any academies that inspired you when creating your own?
- Did you lean more towards a classroom or active learning experience?
- What would you say your greatest challenge was when developing your citizens' academy?
- Were there any methods that were phased out for more efficient methods?

#### Implementation

- How did you decide which content to prioritize?
- What aspects of government did you strive to convey the most with a citizens' academy?
- Are there any aspects of the academy that you needed to change or test over multiple iterations?

#### Marketing

- How did you initially spread word about your citizens' academy?
- Did your advertising strategy change on subsequent runs of the academy?

- Were there any marketing strategies you consciously chose to avoid when developing the academy?

#### Measure of Success

- Following a session of the academy, did you use any methods to determine the success of your academy?
  - If you did use methods of measuring success, would you like to share them with us?
  - If you're comfortable answering, would you like to share what you think you can improve on?
- What avenues did you use for feedback?

#### Conclusion

- Do you have any additional documents you can share with us that can help us learn more about best practices?
- Who else should we talk to?
- Can we get back to you for clarifications?

#### Final Wrap Up

Thank you for answering our questions about your academy. We greatly appreciate your time, and we'll take your information to heart when developing our model of a citizens' academy. If you have any more questions, please don't hesitate to contact us. We will follow up with you once we've written our proposal.

## ***2. Initial Suggestions for Citizens' Academy Content - Department Head Interview Questions***

### Preamble

We are a group of students from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) conducting a research project in collaboration with the Nantucket Town Manager's Office to develop a citizens' academy curriculum.

We would be delighted if you would take 30 minutes to answer some questions about your department and its goals for citizen learning. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you may stop at any time. We will be taking notes during our conversation and may wish to quote you in our final report. We will give you an opportunity to review any quotations prior to the publication of our paper. We will also be happy to provide you with a copy of the report when it is completed. Thank you for your support in this research!

Do you have any questions before we begin? Additionally, if you have any questions or concerns after the interview, you can contact us at [gr-ack21-tmo@wpi.edu](mailto:gr-ack21-tmo@wpi.edu) or our faculty advisor, Dominic Golding, at [golding@wpi.edu](mailto:golding@wpi.edu).

### Department Mission and Objectives

- If you were to summarize the mission of your department, what would you most like to emphasize to citizens?
- What do you feel citizens know about your department's objectives, operations, and capabilities, and what do you feel they do not know?
- What information/resources do you wish citizens would be more aware of that are related to your department? Unrelated to your department?

### Frequent/Misguided Inquiries from the Public

- Are there any frustrating questions from citizens your department is asked frequently that a citizens' academy course could cover?
- What do you think citizens don't know about your department that they should know?
- What is an example of a case study related to your department's operations that you feel would be interesting and informative to citizens?

### Citizens' Academy Content

- Would you be open to giving recorded or in-person tours of your department facilities as a part of a Nantucket Citizens' Academy?
- Would you be willing to have a representative from your department attend one of the Citizens' Academy classes to give a presentation on your department?
- Is there anything else you suggest be included in this program, related to your department or otherwise?

### Conclusion

- Are there any resources (written or otherwise) you could provide us with that you think would be helpful to our research and plan for a Nantucket Citizens' Academy?
- Could we get back to you for any clarifications?

### Final Wrap Up

Thank you for answering our questions about your department. We greatly appreciate your time, and we'll take your information to heart when developing our model of a citizens' academy. If you have any more questions, please don't hesitate to contact us. We will follow up with you once we've written our proposal.

## Appendix E: Explanations and Links to Project Deliverables

We interviewed representatives in towns that have existing citizens' academies, as well as meeting with department heads and prominent community figures in Nantucket, to get a more complete picture of town government functions, stakeholders' perspectives, and how to structure the academy. We also conducted a survey of Nantucket's citizens to determine what the public needs and wants from the academy. Based on this research, we have developed a set of deliverables that the town can use as the basis for a full citizens' academy in the future. The deliverables include the following items (access links can also be found below):

1. A model academy session for the Nantucket Department of Public Works - Includes a [PowerPoint presentation](#), a case study, a brief photo tour of NDPW facilities, and a take-home [pamphlet](#)
2. An [academy session template](#) that can be used to gather pertinent departmental information
3. A public survey that determines the content and scheduling of the citizens' academy curriculum with regards to the needs and interests of the Nantucket community - includes English and Spanish versions of the survey and a poster for the survey in both languages (here is the [English version](#) and [Spanish version](#) of the survey questions, and the [English and Spanish poster](#)). For more details regarding our survey data and associated analysis, please follow [this link](#).
4. Two sample evaluation surveys:
  - a. One [sample post-session evaluation survey](#) to evaluate the effectiveness of academy sessions with regards to content inclusion, delivery and organization.
  - b. One [sample post-academy survey](#) to evaluate the effectiveness of the academy as a whole, again with regards to content inclusion, delivery and organization, as well as usefulness to the participants.

### Academy Session Template

We created a template that the town can use in the future to develop the content needed for each additional academy session. It consists of eight essential questions and additional notes that can be used to gather necessary information on a particular department of government and guide the academy facilitator(s) in creating that department's academy session or session section

(if one session covers multiple departments). In addition to providing the central content for an academy session, the template also provides a sense of consistency by establishing a basic structure for academy sessions, making it easier to contextualize each department in relation to each other and ensuring that the most important information for every department is conveyed in the academy. It should be noted, however, that each department is anticipated to diverge from the template in significant ways to suit the particular needs of them and their audience. This is necessary, for example, to fit multiple smaller related departments into one session, as the flow of the session needs to accommodate two sets of presentations, interactive activities, and other assorted materials, and all involved departments might choose to share a case study or common examples between themselves.

The template asks eight fundamental questions about the department which are designed to elicit session content regarding the department's structure, functions, purpose and communication methods that serve as the core topics presented to the participants. This template consists of simple but important questions such as “What do we do?”, “Who are our key members?”, “What is our department structure?”, and “How can citizens learn more about us?”, with clarification provided to ensure the answers are useful as presentation material. These were chosen because they are the questions to which citizens need to know the answers to make good use of the department, because citizens want to know the answers to them in particular, or because they will help foster connections between the participants and the department. Figures, tables, and photographs/videos should be used alongside the answers to the questions to better engage participants and enhance explanations. The template also asks what the department plans to use for the case study and interactive activity, both of which are essential to making the academy an engaging and effective experience for the participants through hands-on learning. They also help to answer questions about how the theoretical ideas that were presented are carried out in practice, grounding their understanding of the town government in reality. Finally, the template reiterates that each department can and should make modifications to more effectively convey the details of their operations, as there is no one formula that can teach all concepts.

### **NDPW Model Academy Session**

We focused on the Nantucket Department of Public Works in the model academy session because it is a large and dynamic department with many distinct subdivisions, it provides a diverse array of publicly-facing functions and services that may be of interest to a large number of citizens, it is suitable for providing a sample tour, it is easily recognizable and well-known, and there are many misconceptions held by the public regarding its functions, organization and purpose. Given this wide variety of traits that often also apply to other departments of the Nantucket Town government, the NDPW was chosen to serve as a model department for the creation of the remaining citizens' academy sessions.

The model's sample materials include a Powerpoint presentation, case study, photo tour, and pamphlet. The presentation covers the primary questions that the academy session should answer about the DPW, including every question from the academy template, and aims to give the academy participants a broad understanding of the NDPW's structure, functions, and organization, as well as how to effectively engage with them. The slides are focused on providing context and additional information for the explanations of the presenter, and are not meant to be used as standalone material, so they include few words and many figures. The pamphlet provides supplemental information that is better presented in a take-home format or that the presenter may not be able to cover, such as an extensive list of all programs and services provided by the department, background information that can be referred to if the participants are curious, contact information for department heads, and any other useful information that the participants should be able to read at their own pace and refer to later. These two forms of media work together to convey the session's information to its participants.

The experiences of academy facilitators and prominent Nantucket community figures with experience in teaching and presenting information about municipal government indicate that learning is enhanced through stories that engage participants by contextualizing the topics being taught within a framework that the learners can easily relate to (Bridges, personal communication, November 12, 2021; Brunelle & French, personal communication, November 8, 2021; Schulte, personal communication, November 1, 2021). Accordingly, we incorporate a case study in the presentation to realistically illustrate a typical process performed by the DPW in greater detail and how it may tie into the topics previously covered in the presentation. The case study provides a starting point for the questions that participants might ask and allows them to

contextualize the information given in the presentation by applying it to a real example. For the DPW model, their case study examines their solid waste and recycling process, particularly highlighting the complex sorting, compacting and storage processes that happen to waste after it is dropped off at the Nantucket Recycling Center and Landfill. This is positioned at the end of the presentation rather than alongside it because much of the presentation does not relate to recycling due to the DPW's many areas of work. Although recycling is complicated enough to be the best choice for a full case study, these smaller areas of the DPW may use simpler case studies to provide context as well.

In addition to the case studies, research has indicated that interactive components improve participant engagement and learning. For the DPW model, we suggest the town include a tour of the DPW waste disposal and processing facility. As an example of what this could cover, we have taken several photographs of locations around the facility and provided explanations of why they were chosen, as well as recommendations for how to choose additional locations to include in the tour. The purpose of a tour is to allow academy participants the chance to move around and get fresh air while engaging their curiosity, visual and auditory attention, and desire for knowledge. These additional components help to break up the academy session into manageable chunks of time and provide opportunities to learn in a more hands-on way than with the presentation and pamphlet. Engaging participants in hands-on activities has the benefits of developing critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills while encouraging the participants to make connections with the knowledge they've just learned from the presentation (Steele, 2019). All together, these components are intended to create a well-balanced and informative academy session.

### **Survey for Gauging Current Civic Engagement in Nantucket, as well as Public Interest and Preferences Regarding a Citizens' Academy**

We created a survey to measure the citizens' knowledge of and participation in town government and their desire and preferences for learning more about it, potentially through a citizens' academy, as well as to answer logistical and demographic questions such as when they would be available to join an academy, what age they are, and if they have ever served in or officially worked with the Nantucket town government. The primary purposes of this survey were to explore the knowledge and opinions of the public to determine if the public believed



there was a need to improve current civic engagement levels and if a citizens' academy was a plausible solution, to determine what specific information the academy should teach, and to identify who was likely to attend the academy.

The survey was created in English and translated to Spanish by Florencia Rullo, the NTA Public Outreach Manager, to reach a wider and more diverse audience. A poster was created to advertise the survey and its purpose of helping to create a citizens' academy, again using both languages and translated by Ms. Rullo, and was posted in local businesses and information hubs. The survey was also sent out via email through several prominent community figures and Town employees that further distributed it to various communities on the island. Over the course of 12 days, the survey gathered over 100 responses. These responses were compiled and analyzed, and were used to make critical decisions about what material to include in the academy and who that content was intended to engage. The survey itself, the response data and analysis, and the poster advertising it are all deliverables that have been essential to gaining information on the audience the academy is intended for, and they can be modified and reused in future years or reviewed to determine what kind of data the public can provide to assist in the creation of the academy.

### **Analysis of Academy Progress and Success**

Finally, we have provided two surveys that help determine participant satisfaction through qualitative feedback. One survey should be administered after every individual session, and the other should be administered at the academy's conclusion. Both surveys are used to gather qualitative feedback from citizens regarding academy content and delivery, such as recommendations for presenters, opinions on interactive activities, and self-evaluations of how much was learned.

In addition to the feedback questionnaire administered at the academy's conclusion, we also recommend development of two identical surveys that serve as an academy pre- and post-test to provide a quantitative measure of success. These surveys can demonstrate what citizens know and feel about government at the start and end of the academy's runtime, and they can be compared to evaluate improvements in participant knowledge and opinions. All surveys, qualitative and quantitative, can be used to improve the academy in future years.

## **Appendix F: Recommended Quantitative Testing of Curriculum**

Sample Pre and Post-Academy Survey Questions Testing Information Retention of Citizens'

Academy Participants by (Yawn, 2012, p. 142).

- I. The number of members on the city council.
- II. The population of the municipality.
- III. The titles of two of the city's four charter officers.
- IV. The number of city staff.
- V. The city's budget.
- VI. The number of parks in the community.
- VII. What the initials GIS stood for.
- VIII. How "responsive" they believed "city government was to the needs of its citizens."... on a scale of "Very responsive" to "Not Responsive at All".

## **Appendix G: Testing a Preliminary Academy Session Using Focus Groups**

Additionally, if time permits and it is deemed necessary by the project's content or department head, two focus groups will be conducted as trial runs for further feedback on the preliminary model. These groups will run through a mock version of a citizens' academy session consisting of the model department's slides and related interactive media. As noted in the timeline, one or both of these focus groups will only be conducted if it is deemed necessary by the project's content or the department head, and if time permits.

The first group will comprise government officials from the model's department with the same goals as the interviews of assessing the full session for content correctness and inclusion, structural fluidity, and alignment with the department's objectives for participating in the academy. Participants will be asked the same questions as were used for the interviews (Appendix D-2), but will be given the opportunity to discuss them amongst each other with their department head and a WPI student discussion leader.

The second group will be made of no more than 10 citizens who are not Town employees or current members of town committees. We will select participants through a mailing to the Nantucket Civic League members. This will allow us to gauge an estimate of program organization, accessibility, participant engagement, and information retention. Participants will be surveyed post-program to provide suggestions for improvement through a brief questionnaire that will follow the model, listed in Appendix E (Post-session Questionnaire). Again, questions will be categorized by program content and structure, but will reflect the citizens' point of view.

Participants of this focus group will also be tested for their increase in knowledge of the specific department (if any) using 2 identical short surveys given before and after the session. An example of this can be seen in a previously performed experiment by Mike Yawn in Appendix F. The results of the feedback survey and these two questionnaires will then be used to modify the content and structure of the curriculum and to make recommendations to the Town for future implementation.

## Appendix H: List of Interviewed Academy Suggestions

Suggestions recommended by facilitators from two or more academies:

- Using an academy structure that includes logically ordered department presentations, starts with an academy overview, ends with a graduation ceremony, and combines similar departments into one session where appropriate
- Holding the academy at a time and location that is popular and conducive to learning
- Including tours, extracurricular activities, discussions, and breaks
- Advertising frequently using many methods
- Evaluating the likely audience and making an effort to reach out to other audiences
- Providing food during sessions
- Using facilitators to compile and maintain the academy curriculum
- Surveying (both during and after the academy)
- Encouraging participants to volunteer
- Basing the amount of content about a given subject in the academy on the average citizen's interest in that subject
- Leaning into the unique aspects of Nantucket and emphasizing them in the academy or using them to the academy's advantage
- Giving participants a personal notebook or folder for holding take-home materials and writing their own notes and future questions in
- Keeping most academy content exclusive to those who sign up to encourage participation
- Including effective and unique presentations given by passionate and trained presenters
- Collaborating with other organizations, including other town academies
- Covering budgeting and finance for each department in depth
- Ensuring academy participants are suitable before accepting them

Suggestions recommended by facilitators from only one academy:

- Having a good first impression (NCPA)
- Asking participants to give suggestions of other potential participants who would be interested in the academy (NCPA)
- Making citizens feel like part of an exclusive group by giving them access to special areas (NCPA)
- Presenting positive content, like rights and opportunities that are not well-known (NCPA)
- Allowing people to come and go at any time (NCPA)
- Using multiple presenters and playing to their strengths (NCPA)
- Allowing participants to anonymously give direct feedback to presenters (NCPA)
- Addressing misconceptions and issues as the core of the academy's content (NCPA)
- Holding virtual sessions (LCA)

- Handling controversial topics well (LCA)
- Obtaining and maintaining high levels of support from the town manager's office (BCA)
- Getting outside opinions on the quality of academy sessions (BCA)