

Research Brief Template

Retake Our Democracy Transformation Study Group

NOTE: This is an information template, not a design template. All word ranges are flexible and offered as suggestions. Some pieces may be somewhat or even significantly longer. Formatting and design will be done later.

Date: _____

Research Topic: _____

Researcher Name(s): _____

General Suggestions:

- It is a good idea to insert quotes from sources you use, especially if they are inspiring or offer the kind of detail that brings your work to life;
- Data, charts and graphics also help break up the text. When we go to publish we will need to get permission to use those charts/graphics, but Roxanne has suggested this is usually not that difficult;
- Once you've completed a research inventory, take some time to consider how to narrow the focus into a manageable slice of the problem. Most any of the areas we are examining have many facets to the problem that will require multiple diverse solutions or strategies. It is fine to lay out a big problem and then address a slice of it. If you do that, circling back to your needs section and honing it to possibly give the big picture need, but then devote more time to zooming in on the aspect you plan to address. Hopefully, we will recruit more researchers who can take on areas that you can't address in one brief AND/OR, once done you might then want to go and tackle a second brief on another solution.
- We are learning as we go. These guidelines are just suggestions that we can all discuss when we meet.

Research Brief Template Outline

- A. Current Problem:** What challenge, problem, or form of injustice are we trying to address. Provide a statement about the problem to be resolved. Ideally, this would show recent data about how the problem has gotten worse over time and/or is worse in the US or in NM than in other nations or states. The idea is to describe why the issue is a problem and show how the same issue has been resolved or reduced in other contexts. Also note if women and/or communities of color or low-income communities are disproportionately impacted. Include charts or other graphics or links to videos if you find them. Finally, Karl incorporated a kind of alternative vision here and that could be an inspiring way to end this section: "Imagine if..... and then presenting the kind of scenario you will lay out in Section D. (400-600 words).

Provide link(s) to one or two articles and/or video that outline the problem well and provide a sentence to specify the kind of info found in each publication. Stylistically you could end this piece with a line like: “For a deeper description of the problem, see the following :”

- B. History of Efforts to Solve Problem:** The Problem Statement should set this up a bit. You will have laid out the problem and trends associated with it. Here you may well want to build on that providing descriptions of where the US or NM have tried to implement strategies to address the problem and either failed or had limited success. You may also want to outline here how other communities, states or nations have effectively addressed the problem to a significant or at least promising degree. If you do this, it would be good if you were able to identify what was different about what seemed to address the problem. You do not have to go into great detail as to what worked or failed to work, merely outlining the key elements in either case. (300-600)

Provide link(s) to article(s) and/or videos that lay out this history. You can use the same stylistic approach to referencing the more detailed article(s) as above. It may be that one goes into depth about something that tried and failed and one goes into depth about something that worked.

- C. Scope of Research:** No need to go into great depth; just identify the scope of your research in one or two paragraphs. Even if you’ve found several models that address the problem, you can’t go into great depth on all of them. We can discuss options when we Zoom next as there are multiple ways this could proceed, including:

- The scope of research could show multiple effective efforts in different communities, states or nations, but not go into depth in any of them. And it could provide an analysis of the common threads or elements found in the different contexts; OR
- The scope could be an in-depth look at how one community, state, or nation successfully addressed the problem. It could conclude with a brief outline of how other communities, states, or nations employed some or all of the strategies, with links to them all.
- In either case, please lay out your methods. What did you review? Who did you interview? What else contributed to the final product, including who reviewed it for cultural, gender, and age relevance.

Terry asked what one does if they lay out a pernicious problem and then come up largely empty in relation to strategies or if the strategies are not sufficiently transformative. I’d say in this instance a series of Google searches might help, e.g. “most impactful strategies addressing X” or “transformational strategies addressing Y” and other similar strands. If you come up empty, then turning to the research and seeing if there is evidence of impactful strategies in areas related to the area you are researching. If all fails, a conversation with the TSG would be the next step.

D. How Were Strategies/Solutions Developed, Who Was Part of the Development & Implementation, and How Did It Work? (1200-2400 words)

Quite obviously, this could go in many directions, but you likely want to include:

- Who were the key players and their roles?
- How was it funded (if funding is involved) or what did it cost?
- How were strategies/solutions developed? Did a core group of advocates, legislators, or city councilors convene and research possibilities, identify a strategy, and then reach out to local stakeholders? How did the process happen?
- What steps were taken? How long did it take to unfold and have an impact?
- What challenges did they face? Who was served?
- What were the results? How do you know this worked?
- Were there unique characteristics, assets, resources, or political power that made implementation easier and that may not be available in all communities or in NM? Or is this something most communities could actually do with resources that are largely available?

E. How Can This Be Replicated? 400-600 words

What would be the typical replication process? Who needs to be involved? What resources need to be in place? Any foreseeable barriers? How long from talk to implementation. Here we are NOT describing how this could be done in NM, just in other US communities. In this section, you would be writing generally about the kinds of resources, partners, stakeholders, that need to be involved. **Could NM Replicate This? How? 400-1000 words**

Here we will be very granular. Who are potential allies who would be sympathetic to this strategy and support it? Which legislators might be willing to introduce legislation? What kind of bill(s)/funding are necessary or at least helpful? Who are the logical community partners to be involved? Maybe include contact info for key players (with permission).

F. Closing 300-500 words

What more could/should be explored? Where do we go from here? How can people learn more? For example, if your problem statement outlined a multifaceted issue and your scope of work noted that you were only examining one or two examples of effective strategies, what further research and development might be next? How might the solution you laid out be adapted to address other aspects of the problem or other kinds of communities?

G. Resources.

We should talk about this. We don't want dozens of footnotes, but we do want people to be able to trace resources that were foundational to the work done.