

# Lexington's first Civic Assembly

*General Government and Planning Committee Presentation*

*April 28, 2026*





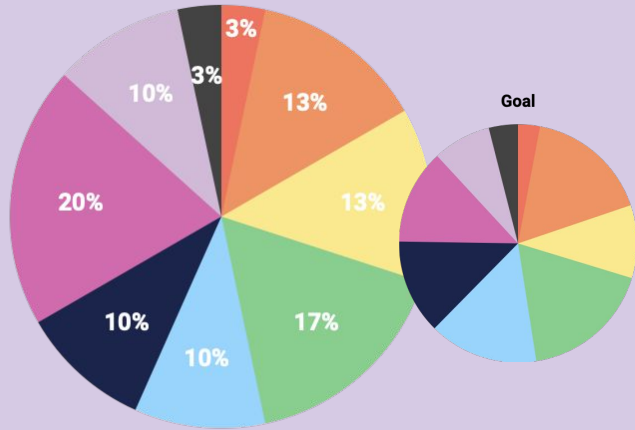
# How did we build our Assembly?

- **2023:** Planning, exploration – is an assembly the right tool for charter review?
- **2024:** Decision making, fundraising and grant submissions
- **2025:**
  - **March 2025:** First Advisory Group Meeting
  - **June 2025:** Trial Run, facilitated by Dr. Catherine Annis
  - **Fall 2025:** Topic selection, public input
  - **November 2025:** 11,500 postcards mailed to random addresses
  - **December 31, 2025:** Application deadline
  - **January 2026:** Civic Lottery to draw 36 assembly members
  - **March 2026:** Assembly!



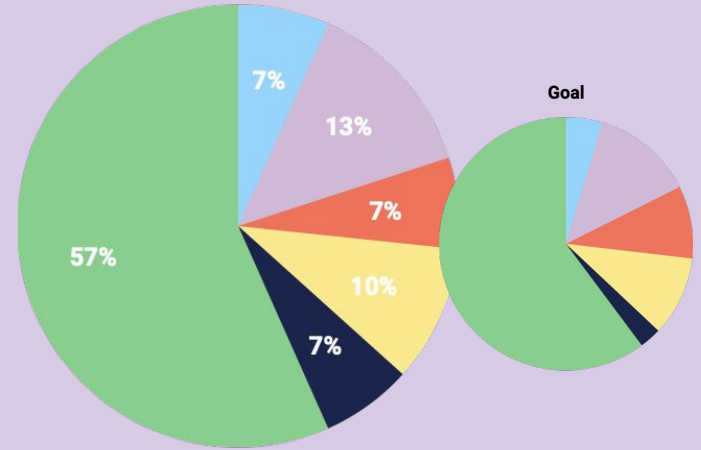
# Who was on Lexington's first Civic Assembly?

Age



- 16-18
- 18-24
- 25-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- 70-79
- 80 or older

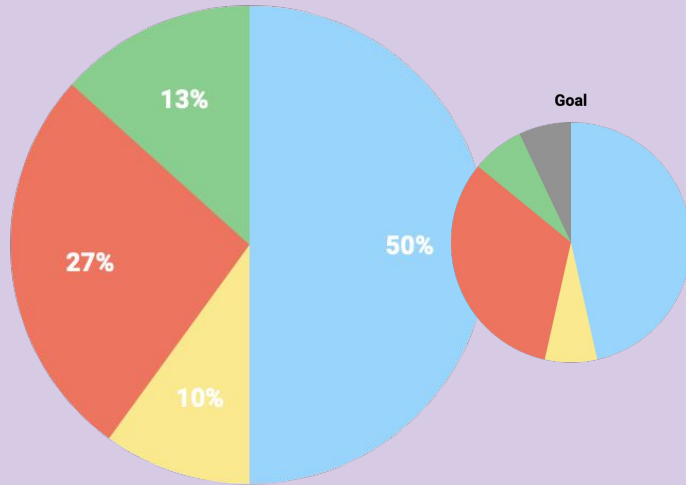
Race/Ethnicity



- Asian
- Black
- Hispanic
- Multi racial
- Other
- White

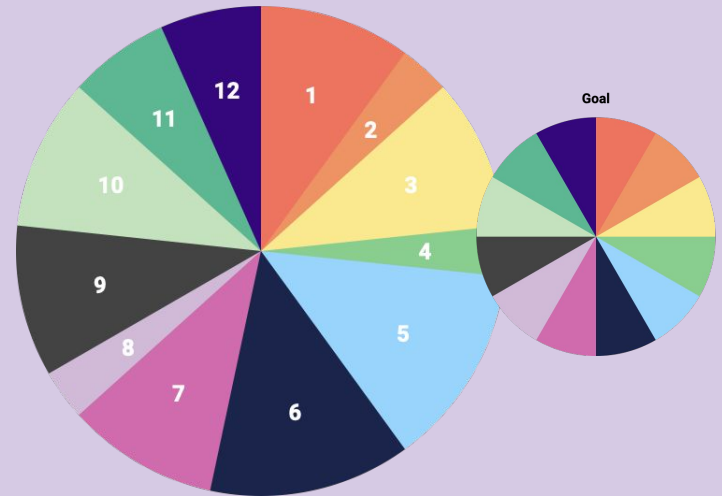
# Who was on Lexington's first Civic Assembly?

## Political Registration



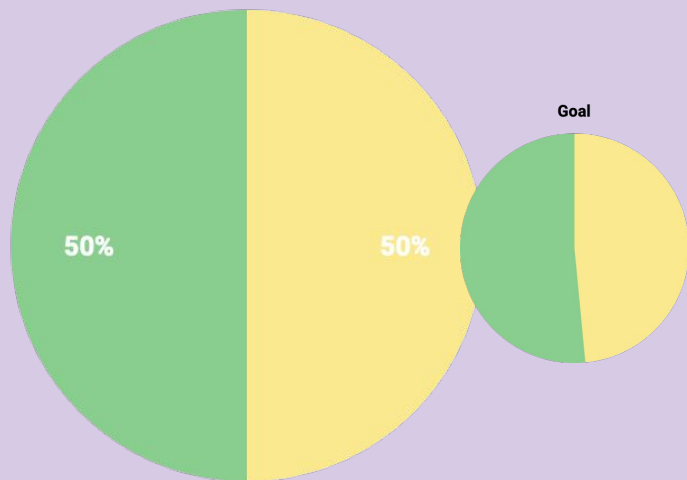
- Democratic Party
- Republican Party
- Independent
- Not Registered

## Council District



# Who was on Lexington's first Civic Assembly?

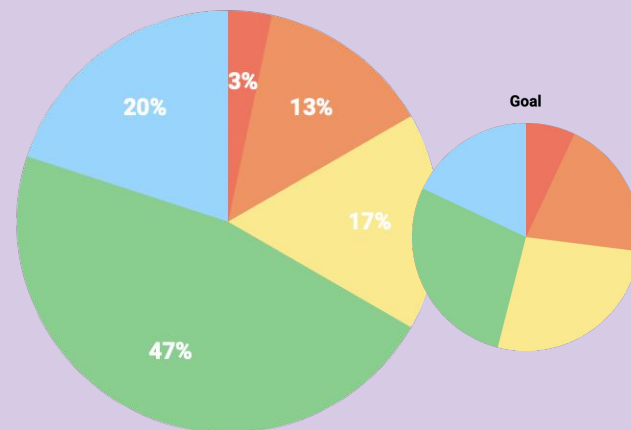
Sex



Male

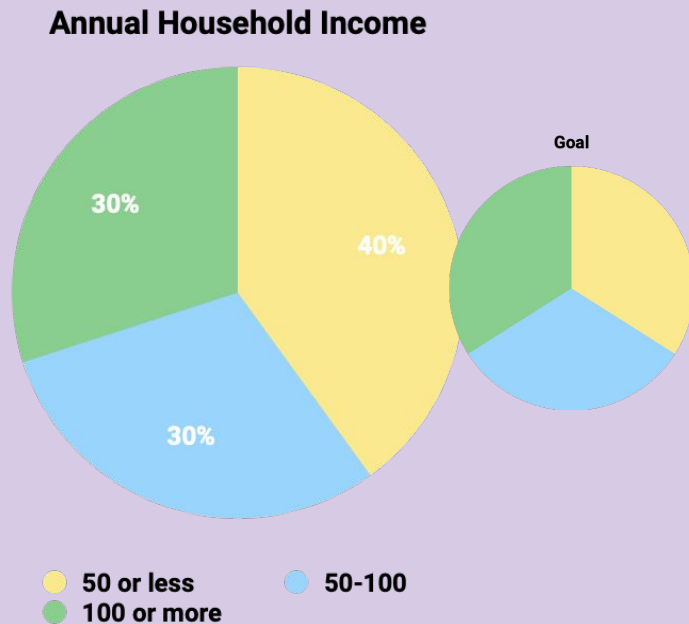
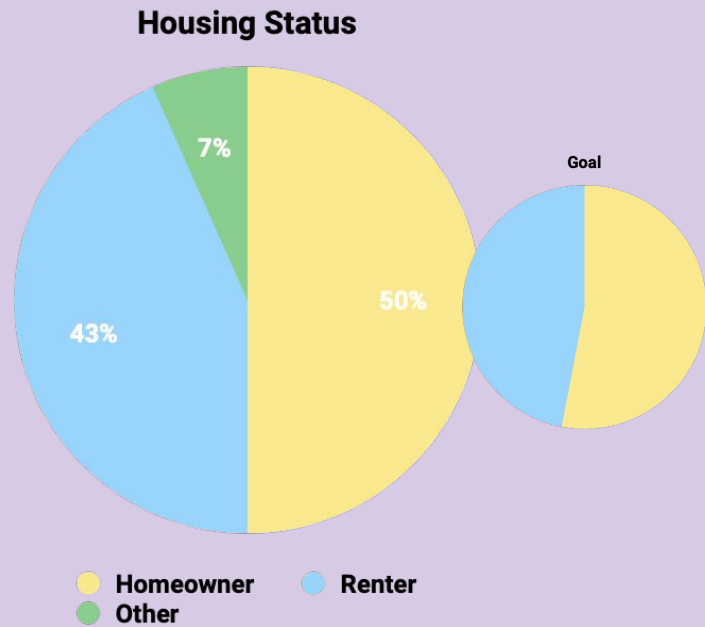
Female

Education



- Some school but no diploma
- High School or GED
- Some college or associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree or more

# Who was on Lexington's first Civic Assembly?



# About the process



## Orientation

Saturday, May 1



## Education Sessions

Tuesday, March 3:  
Council Compensation

Tuesday, March 10:  
Charter Review

## Deliberation Sessions

March 14: Begin  
Deliberation

March 26: Public Forum

March 28 : Drafting  
Proposals

March 29 : Finishing and  
Voting on Proposals

# By the Numbers

Assembly  
Members

**30**

Sessions

**7**

Total Hours

**33**

Staff and  
Volunteers

**30**

Votes Cast

**1,263**

Budget

**\$220k**

Postcards

**11,500**

Flipcharts

**180**

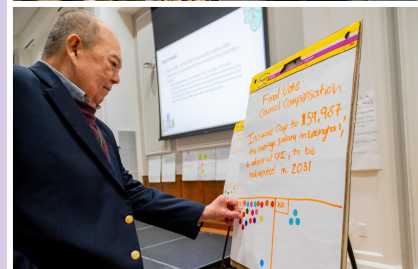


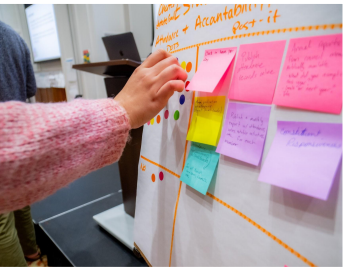


# Recommendations

# #1: Council Compensation

- Increase salary cap in Charter to \$59,987, the average annual wage in Lexington
- Effective 2031
- Continue to adjust salary with CPI
- Why?
  - Pay Councilmembers the average annual wage of a job in Lexington
  - Increase competitiveness of races
  - Reflect that the job has changed since the Urban-County merger
- Passed by 84.6% supermajority



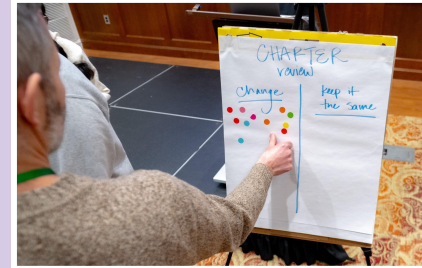


## #2: Council Accountability

- Amend charter to require that Council create publicly viewable attendance and accountability expectations
- Why?
  - Transparency for the ultimate accountability (elections!)
  - If increasing compensation, accountability should increase too
- **Passed by 88.8% supermajority**

# #3: Charter Review

- Mandatory Charter Review every 8 years, done by a group of randomly selected, demographically representative residents
  - Public input required, time limit on process
- Why?
  - Need for regular, fair, public review
  - Other parts of the charter are outdated
- Passed by 88.8% supermajority





# Dissenting Report

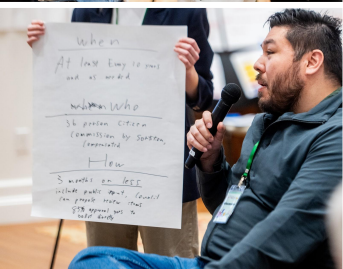
- **Compensation:**
  - Some Assembly members were concerned about making the compensation for Council so appealing that people would run to make it their career instead of a public service.
  - Some Assembly members were concerned that the increase to \$59,987 would be too large for the public to approve it.
- **Accountability:**
  - Some Assembly members were concerned with the specifics of how the Council would be held to account with these guidelines.
- **Charter Review:**
  - Some Assembly members did not agree with the frequency of review, with some wanting more frequent review and some wanting less frequent or non-recurring review.



# Amendment Language

# Charter Amendment vs. Ordinance or Resolution

- Some changes proposed by Assembly would need to be made in the charter (structural) and some would need to be made via ordinance or resolution (policy & detail)
- The following are charter amendment drafts produced by Department of Law with input from CivicLex
- Final amendment and ballot language will be made available to Council and the public over coming weeks



# Council Compensation: Draft Amendment Language (Section 4.05)

All duly elected members of the Council shall receive an annual base salary to be fixed by the Council, which shall not exceed \$6,000 per annum, or the maximum set by the General Assembly of Kentucky for Urban County Governments. Effective with the term of office that begins in 2031, all duly elected members of the Council shall receive an annual base salary which shall not exceed \$59,987 per annum. In no case shall any change in the annual salary of council members voted by the Council become effective during the current term of any council member.

# **Council Accountability: Draft Amendment Language (Section 4.07)**

The Urban County Council shall, by ordinance or resolution, establish written standards for Council member attendance and accountability, which shall be reviewed at the beginning of each new Council term.

Records documenting compliance with attendance and accountability standards adopted hereto shall be public records. Nothing in this section shall be construed to alter, amend, expand, or restrict the procedures for the removal or discipline of a Council member otherwise applicable under Kentucky law.

# **Council Accountability Ordinances / Resolutions recommended to include:**

- Specific attendance and accountability expectations
- How records will be made publicly available
- Frequency of updating records

# Charter Review: Draft Amendment Language (Section 14.04)

Without limiting the amendment and revision procedures available under this article, the Council shall convene a Citizen Charter Review Assembly every eight years to conduct a comprehensive review of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Charter. The Citizen Charter Review Assembly shall be established pursuant to an ordinance which shall, at minimum, establish selection procedures for the assembly using a representative lottery and establish procedures for the assembly to conduct its review and publish its recommendations, which shall include opportunities for public Engagement.

The Council shall further establish, by ordinance, a standing Charter Review Board to serve as a permanent advisory body to identify appropriate Charter amendments between eight-year review cycles, to facilitate the review conducted by the Citizen Charter Review Assembly as set forth herein, and to advise the Urban County Council not less than annually on appropriate Charter amendments.

# Charter Review Ordinances / Resolutions could include:

- Size, eligibility, and representation guidelines of Citizen Charter Review Assembly Commission
- Specific public input guidelines for Citizen Charter Review Assembly
- Establishment and composition of Charter Review Board

# Thank you!

- **Members of Lexington's First Civic Assembly!**
- **Project Team and CivicLex Staff** - Haley Wartell, Javan Thomas, Kit Anderson, Kristy Maggard, Lilly Bramley, Megan Gulla, Nikki Weir, Noel Osborn, Peter Baniak, Richard Young, Stephanie Mobley, Riley Steffey
- **Facilitator** - Tanya Torp
- **Civic Assembly Advisory Group** - Abby Piper, Andi Johnson, Catherine Annis, Christian Motley, David Lowe, Josh Douglas, Martin Rivers, and Susan Lamb
- **Funders** - Rockefeller Foundation, Omidyar Network, Porticus, Democracy Funders Network
- **Guest Speakers** - Mayor Linda Gorton, Vice Mayor Dan Wu, County Clerk Susan Lamb, Amy Beasley, Andrea James, Angela Evans, Don Todd, Gloria Martin, Hannah LeGris, Harry Clarke, Jay McChord, Jennifer Reynolds, Jennifer Scutchfield, Kathy Plomin, Liz Sheehan, Shayla Lynch, Steve Kay, Susan Lamb, Whitney Baxter
- **Education and Legal Assistance** - Megan Griffith, Kentucky League of Cities, Jay Phillips, Embry Merritt Womack Nance
- **LexTV** - Hailey Salyers and Crew
- **Independent Evaluation** - FIDE North America & Ken Dockeral
- **Assistance with Sortition and the Civic Lottery** - JS Butler and Dr. Catherine Annis, University of Kentucky Martin School
- **Photography and Videography** - Unsung Hero Media
- **Volunteers** - Helen Evans, Dan Evans, Patrick Mason, Kevin Slovinsky, Ethan Speer, Jennifer Brown, Amber Swigart, Eller Buddington, Jo Davis, Hannah Rivera, Lisa Satin, Kristal Swim, Ellen Mueller, Kristy Segabarth, Louise Edmonds, Roy Edmonds, Hayle Paradero
- **Transylvania University** - Ray Daniels, Ryan Benjamin, Laura Triplett, Mitch Fox, Officer Sapp, Officer Magnifico, Dr. Krisalynn Love
- **Printing and Design** - Printlex, Cricket Press, The Kentucky Shop
- **Local Catering and Businesses** - DV8 Kitchen, Cup of Commonwealth, Bourbon n Toulouse, Southland Lanes, Caramandas Cupcakes
- **Big Blue Taxi** - Randy Glover
- **418 Communications** - Emma and Coley Mckinstry
- **News Coverage and Reporting** - Aaron Mudd (CivicLex) and Anabel Peterman (Next City), WKYT, FOX 56, Kruser and Crew, LEX18, Spectrum News, WUKY, Lexington Herald Leader, WEKU