



Policy Circle Fact Sheet

The Policy Circle is a grassroots network of women who meet in community-based circles for conversation about public policy and how it affects their communities and the nation. Believing that limited government and a thriving entrepreneurial economy create the best opportunities for everyone, we are starting conversations across the country to change the conversation.

The Policy Circle empowers women to constructively influence public policy-making by helping them learn how to articulate their views and strengthen their voices in public policy debates.

Several times a year, members come together with other members from their community in circle meetings where they meet and discuss policy briefs available from The Policy Circle website <https://www.thepolicycircle.org>. At these meetings, roundtable discussions take place in small groups where women learn from each other, share ideas and find and strengthen their voices. Members are not policy experts; they are women who want to learn more about public policy and connect with other women who share the same concerns and desire to see policy changes in their communities and the nation.

Circle meetings focus on important issues like the economy, education and healthcare among others and agree to a truce on social issues that can be divisive and distracting. Circle meetings are "off the record", so what is said in a Circle stays in a Circle ([here's a video](#)).

On The Policy Circle website, members have access to a [library of policy briefs](#) and discussion materials as well as the tools they need to start and grow a circle ([here's a link to a demo](#)). They also have the ability to share and discuss information with other members, as well as organize events extending invitations to all circles in a city or a state.

The Policy Circle has found a true unmet need. In under a year, it has grown from 50 to over 500 members and 17 Circles. It's a truly grassroots network that started in Illinois and Indiana and is quickly spreading to other states, including Ohio, New York, Connecticut and Texas.

The Policy Circle is non-partisan, non-profit 501c3 and does not participate in lobbying or political activity. The Policy Circle seeks to be member-supported and while there is no fee to join, it accepts donations to help cover its costs.

More information is available <https://www.thepolicycircle.org>.

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The Need

Women are concerned about the direction of the country and the state of their communities. They want to talk about issues and get engaged but either aren't sure how to do this or are not yet connected with a group of women with similar concerns. The Policy Circle empowers women to constructively influence public policy-making by helping them learn how to articulate their views and strengthen their voices in public policy debates. We do this through community-based face to face meetings throughout the year and a website that enables members to access information, share ideas and stay connected.

The Goal

By participating in a circle, women:

1. Learn – They learn about policy issues
2. Connect – They have an opportunity to gather with others, articulate their views and strengthen their voices
3. Engage – They learn to they can be influential and make a difference

What's a circle?

A circle meets as a small group in a woman's home – they read a policy brief beforehand and at the meeting have a facilitated discussion.

A circle leader or co-leaders plan and run meetings, deciding how and when to discuss one of several available policy briefs. Some circles decide to focus only on one topic for multiple meetings, while others discuss a different brief each time they meet. Circles meet four to six times a year, and throughout the year Policy Circles members have numerous opportunities from outside organizations to participate in policy events in their community.

Through the website, Policy Circle members have access to all of the Policy Briefs, all the tools they need to start and grow their circle, share articles and discuss them, as well as organize events extending invitations to all circles in a city or a state.

Membership

- There is no cost to join, although donations are accepted and encouraged.
- As of January 2016, 17 circles with over 500 members have been established.
- The focus for 2016 is to launch circles in Ohio, New York, Connecticut and Texas
- The Policy Circle invites a diverse group of women, and as circles are forming women often request to be a part of a circle with other women that they do not already know. Current members range in age from 20s to 70s and represent a diversity of race and economic status.

Policy Briefs

Initially, six policy briefs (on Economic Growth, Taxes, Healthcare, Education, Higher Education, Fiscal Responsibility) were written to provide a year's worth of content for circles to read and discuss. More are on the way.

Timeline

2013/2014	Initial women's policy discussion group (Rose Friedman Society) take places in Wilmette. Group grew from 25 - 60 within three months
March 2014	Founder connect to explore potential of a national network of discussion groups.
Winter 2015	Policy Circle established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Policy Circle Website launched
Spring 2015	Chicago Circle is launched
Summer 2015	Springfield Circle is launched Indiana Introductory meeting with 80 potential members/circle leaders
Fall 2015	First Circle meetings take place in Indiana
Fall 2015	The Policy Circle is introduced at The State Policy Network
Winter 2016	17 Circles now formed in IL, IN, NY, TX

Founders

Angela Braly, Kathryn Hubbard and Sylvie Légère created The Policy Circle initially based on a policy discussion group held in Sylvie's home. They extensively researched other organizations and were unable to find one that fulfilled what they envisioned, so they created their own model.

The Policy Circle's Core Principles

- **The free-enterprise system works:** Policies that limit government and encourage a thriving entrepreneurial economy provide greater opportunities and better lives, especially for the most vulnerable in our communities.
- **Social issues are not discussed:** Because discussions of social issues can be divisive and distracting, we agree to a "truce" on those issues.
- **We value fact-based dialogue:** We learn through reliable research from well-known and respected sources.
- **We learn from each other:** Face-to-face discussions in a safe forum can empower women to share ideas, find their voice, learn from each other and get engaged.
- **Each of us can be an agent of change:** We seek to increase the number and power of women who support these ideas. Talk about The Policy Circle!
- **What is said in a circle stays in a circle:** Circle discussions are "off the record." What is said in a circle is not to be recorded or attributed publicly. However, if a member writes on the website, in a blog or in social media or speaks at a public gathering or forum, she cannot expect those statements to be considered "off the record."
- **Privacy of Contact Information:** Circle members do not use the contact information of members for other purposes.
- **The Policy Circle is a 501(c)(3) charity.** As such, it does not engage in lobbying or political activity. Of course, members may lobby and engage in political activity as individuals. However, circle members are not permitted to lobby or engage in political activity on behalf of, or using the name of, The Policy Circle.