From Pitch to Plan

Know your issue. Face the pushback. Draft your plan.

HPAC Capstone · Tri-C High Tech Academy · Friday, October 23, 2026

Citizenship Health Institute with Strengthening Our Students

How far we have come

1. Named our assets and our community's challenges
2. Picked the topic areas that matter to us
3. Cut the class's big list down to a small group list
4. Chose our own topic
5. Came up with ideas to address it
6. Climbed the question ladder: 15, pick 1, then 15 more
7. Built our elevator pitch and 3 key facts
8. **TODAY: 3 arguments against, and a rough plan**

Where we started: what we bring

127

assets you named

49

challenges you named

2.6 : 1

assets for every challenge

We have more assets than challenges. That is the Asset-Based Paradigm: use what our community already has, combined in new ways, to create change.

From a big list to our own topic

The class's big list of challenges

Our group's small list

Our topic

Topics our groups chose

- Poverty and hunger
- Violence and safety
- Mental health
- Pollution and environment
- Addiction
- Animal welfare
- Racism
- Teen jobs
- AI ethics

The question ladder

4. **Land on your sharpest question**
3. **Round 2: write 15 more about that one**
2. **Pick the 1 most interesting question**
1. **Round 1: write 15 questions about your issue**

Before the ladder

Step 5: every group came up with ideas for how to address its challenge.

The ladder took those ideas and zoomed in, so you could find the one question worth answering.

Our elevator pitch and 3 key facts

A 30-second pitch moves through six steps

1. **Hook**
2. **The problem**
3. **Why us**
4. **Our question**
5. **Our idea**
6. **The ask**

3 key facts

Each fact proves your issue matters.

Use real numbers.
Name where the fact came from.
Local is best: Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, or Ohio.

Remember what we watched

Double Dutch attention video

We counted jumpers and many of us missed the giant chicken. Look for the questions you are not seeing.

Love IT: the HPAC video

Students like you have done this work before. Your project can be next.

What It Means to Be a Leader (TED talk)

Leadership is not a title. It is what you do for the people around you.

Making health numbers real

About 1 in 8 women will get breast cancer, but found early, nearly all survive. About 4 in 10 high schoolers feel persistently sad or hopeless. Numbers make people care.

Sources: American Cancer Society, Breast Cancer Facts and Figures; CDC, Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2023

Today: go deeper

Know your question and its answer. Then get ready for the people who disagree.

3 facts for it

3 arguments against

1 rough plan

Checkpoint: is your group caught up?

- [ ] Our topic in one sentence
- [ ] Our one best question
- [ ] The answer we are finding
- [ ] 3 key facts, with sources
- [ ] Our elevator pitch

Missing a box?

Catch up first, using the worksheet.

You cannot argue for an issue until you can ask your question and know the answer.

3 facts that support our issue

1 Fact 1

What it says
One clear sentence with a number

Where it came from
A credible source you checked

Why it matters
What it proves about your issue

2 Fact 2

What it says
One clear sentence with a number

Where it came from
A credible source you checked

Why it matters
What it proves about your issue

3 Fact 3

What it says
One clear sentence with a number

Where it came from
A credible source you checked

Why it matters
What it proves about your issue

Check it: Is the source real? Is the number current? Did you confirm anything AI gave you?

New today: 3 arguments against

Not everyone will agree with you.

That is good news. When you know the pushback ahead of time, your pitch gets stronger, your plan gets smarter, and funders see that you thought it through.

What people might say

“That is too big for teens.”

“Someone already does that.”

“It costs too much.”

“That is not a health issue.”

“People will not show up.”

“It will not change anything.”

Example: answering the pushback

Practice group: Stress at our school (an example made up for practice)

Argument against	Our answer
"Teens cannot fix mental health."	We are not fixing all of it. We are starting one peer check-in group at our school.
"The school already has a counselor."	We will work with the counselor, not replace them. Our group helps students take the first step.
"Students will not come."	We will survey students first and build the group around what they tell us they want.

Every answer shrinks the project, adds a partner, or adds proof.

Your turn: our 3 arguments against

	The argument	Who might say it	Our answer	Proof we have
1				
2				
3				

Write this on your worksheet. Strong arguments only: what a real principal, parent, funder, or council member would say.

Ask the six questions about your plan

Who

Who is affected? Who will help? Who does each job?

What

What exactly will we do? What will change?

When

When does each step happen between now and April?

Where

Where will it happen: school, church, neighborhood?

Why

Why this issue, why here, why us?

How

How will we do it, pay for it, and know it worked?

Bring the community in



Ways to engage them

- Ask them first: a short survey or interview
- Invite them: an event, a meeting, a table at school
- Show them: a poster, flyer, or social media post
- Partner: ask an organization to help
- Give them a job in the project

Partners we know: SOS, TYWIST, Renounce Denounce, Emmanuel Baptist Church, Community of Hope, Tri-C

Is it small enough?

Too big

End hunger in Cleveland

Still big

Fight hunger in our neighborhood

Just right

Stock a free snack shelf at our school with a local partner, refilled every two weeks

The just-right test

- Can we finish by April?
- Can our team do it with what we have?
- Can we say it in one sentence?
- Does every member have a job?
- Will we be able to tell if it worked?

Our rough draft plan

1. **Our issue**

2. **Our question**

3. **Our idea**

4. **Who we will work with**

5. **Our first 3 steps, with dates**

6. **What we need**

7. **How we will know it worked**

8. **Is it small enough? Yes / Not yet**

Before you leave today

Turn in your worksheet with all four parts.

- ☐ 3 facts for it
- ☐ 3 arguments against
- ☐ Six-question plan
- ☐ Rough draft plan

Identify | **Develop** | Enact | Assess | Share

You are here: Develop. Next: the grant request. Then Scholars Day in April 2027.