NASAA Assembly 2008
Session Title: Making Meetings Matter
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Session Summary: Citizen Engagement is central to the work of state arts agencies. It is a value we hold as public agencies, as well as a powerful method for gathering input, catalyzing action and encouraging collaboration. So how can state arts agencies make the most of planning forums, statewide conferences and other meetings that we convene? What are the ingredients of successful public dialogue? What session design principles and facilitation strategies are effective? What role can artists play? Participate in this hands-on workshop to enhance your facilitation skills and expand your repertoire of creative techniques for engaging the public.

Objectives
Participants experience meeting facilitation techniques that help them appreciate the value of engaging participants and using the power of the arts

Participants are motivated to:
- Assess meeting purposes and design meetings that function well for the agency and the intended participants.
- Improve and expand their facilitation skills
- Employ art, artists and creative techniques in meeting design
- Consider on-line methodologies for exchange with their publics

Web Links:

Public Deliberation, a Manager's Guide to Citizen Engagement
www.businessofgovernment.org

Beyond Public Meetings: Connecting Community Engagement with Decision-Making
www.twyford.com.au

The Art of Powerful Questions
The World café presents: Café to Go
http://www.theworldcafe.com/

The Co-Intelligence Institute
http://www.co-intelligence.org/

The Institute for Cultural Affairs/ Technology of Participation
http://www.ica-usa.org/index.html

National Coalition on Dialogue and Deliberation
http://www.thataway.org/

Animating Democracy at Americans for the Arts
http://www.artsusa.org/animatingdemocracy/

When we speak of citizen engagement, we will be referring to forums that bring the general, impacted public into partnership with decision makers through dialogue-based processes at points along the policy-development continuum, which is to say agenda setting, policy design, and implementation. In general, these kinds of forums are considered "deliberative spaces," characterized by face-to-face and online forms of discussion. In some cases, there will even be a role for the public in "social monitoring": engaging citizens in measuring the impacts of policy for evaluation.

What we need to do:

1. **Educate participants.** Provide accessible information to citizens about the issues and choices involved, so that they can articulate informed opinions.

2. **Frame issues neutrally.** Offer an unbiased framing of the policy issue in a way that allows the public to struggle with the most difficult choices facing decision makers.

3. **Achieve diversity.** Involve a demographically balanced group of citizens reflective of the impacted community.

4. **Get buy-in from policy makers.** Achieve commitment from decision makers to engage in the process and use the results in policy making.

5. **Support quality deliberation.** Facilitate high-quality discussion that ensures all voices are heard.

6. **Demonstrate public consensus.** Produce information that clearly highlights the public's shared priorities.

7. **Sustain involvement.** Support ongoing involvement by the public on the issue, including feedback, monitoring, and evaluation (America*Speaks*, 2004).

Table 3: Four Levels of Public Involvement

Level	Description	Goals	Strategies	Tools
Information	Information exchange that ensures preconditions for participation	• Raise public awareness • Collect public opinion • Generate policy momentum	• Written communication • Electronic communication • Verbal communication • Visual communication	• Opinion poll/survey • Public comment periods • Public hearing • Poster and media campaign
Consultation	Information-processing tools and clear agency input process	• Educate the public • Stimulate public debate • Clarify values • Broaden information base • Improve decisions	• Meet with the public face-to-face • Meet with the public online	• Public meeting • E-consultation
Engagement	Information-processing tools and in some cases shared decision making	• Involve citizens in problem solving • Involve citizens in decision making • Build capacity for implementation • Improve outcomes	• Meet with the public face-to-face • Meet with the public online • Delegate authority	• Public deliberation • Online deliberation
Collaboration	Processes to build capacity for lasting cooperation among groups and policy implementation	• Represent stakeholders • Involve experts • Reduce conflict among interests • Improve policy • Build capacity for implementation	• Establish a federal advisory committee • Design developmental processes • Share decision making	• Multi-stakeholder negotiation • Policy consensus process

Source: Adapted from OECD, 2003.

IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC IMPACT

INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Public Participation Goal:	**Public Participation Goal:**	**Public Participation Goal:**	**Public Participation Goal:**	**Public Participation Goal:**
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the public:	**Promise to the public:**	**Promise to the public:**	**Promise to the public:**	**Promise to the public:**
We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how the public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Example Techniques to Consider:	**Example Techniques to Consider:**	**Example Techniques to Consider:**	**Example Techniques to Consider:**	**Example Techniques to Consider:**
• Fact sheets • Web sites • Open houses	• Public comment • Focus groups • Surveys • Public meetings	• Workshops • Deliberate polling	• Citizen Advisory Committees • Consensus-building • Participatory decision-making	• Citizen juries • Ballots • Delegated decisions

FIGURE 14

Table 4: Framework for Selection of Engagement Techniques

	Agenda Setting	Analysis	Design	Implementation	Evaluation
What is the agency trying to accomplish at this stage?	• Establish the need for a policy or reform • Define the problem to be addressed	• Define the key challenges and opportunities associated with an issue • Align qualitative and quantitative evidence with appropriate policy alternatives • Produce a draft policy document	• Evaluate alternative policy proposals • Develop workable policy document	• Establish programs, guidelines, and effective processes to deliver public benefits	• Monitor policy outcomes to determine whether the goals of the policy are being met during implementation
What are the rationales for doing public involvement?	• Establish values • Identify priorities • Generate outcome statements	• Involve the public in identifying and stating in their terms the problems a policy will address	• Engage the non-expert public in understanding how policy prescriptions will address values, priorities, and outcomes	• Ensure broad public awareness and support of policy	• Ensure policy outcomes meet public goals
What are the key challenges?	• Risk of raising expectations that input will become policy • Ensuring that key views are represented	• Incorporate expert and experience-based knowledge cooperatively • Develop background materials that ensure balance and neutrality	• Ensure that ordinary people who will be impacted by policy are involved • Ensure clarity around how input will influence policy and program design	• Communicate process and outcomes broadly • Ensure community capacity has been developed over the policy development process	• Develop appropriate accountability mechanisms • Create information-collection mechanisms • Connect information collection to policy feedback cycle
Which engagement techniques might work best?	• Deliberative Poll • ChoiceWork Dialogue • 21st Century Town Meeting	• Citizens Jury • Consensus Conference	• 21st Century Town Meeting • Consensus Conference • ChoiceWork Dialogue • Study circles	• Public hearing • Mainstream media	• Social monitoring • Scorecards
What are the strengths of this technique?	• Uses a random scientific sample • Clarifies values • Quantifies opinion shifts • Generates media attention	• Is cost-effective • Uses a random scientific sample • Allows for in-depth, technical issue exploration • Incorporates expert views • Avoids media spotlight	• Engages large segments of the public • Cultivates shared agreement • Uncovers public priorities • Generates media visibility	• Is cost-effective • Reaches large numbers of citizens • Reinforces leadership role of public officials and experts	• Engages the public in follow-up • Builds new skills • Engages citizens in their community • Distributes information collection widely

Source: Adapted from OECD, 2003.

Table 6: Characteristics of Deliberation Online

Feature	Face-to-Face	Online
Identity	In addition to physiological factors, participants are generally asked to introduce themselves as part of trust building.	Users provide as much information as user/designer wishes shared with the group.
Conversation balance	While similar discussion patterns can and do emerge, the role of the facilitator has greater force in bringing everyone into the discussion.	Conversation is driven by relatively few posters.[23] While there is always a "main stage" for group discussion, numerous sub-conversations arise.
Timing	Participants talk to each other "live," or in real time.	Most online deliberations are asynchronous, which means participants can drop in and out of discussion at will, regardless of time.
Observation	It is difficult, although not impossible, for researchers and observers to remain unobtrusive.	Guests and researchers can observe the proceedings of online deliberation unnoticed and in very large numbers.
Attention	A high value is placed on active listening by all participants.	Reading comprehension replaces listening skills. Users must possess basic functional literacy to acquire knowledge.
Research	It is extremely difficult and cost-intensive to capture data. Substantial interpretation is often required to condense documentation.	Computer mediation renders discussion recordable, quantifiable, and interpretable.
Timeline	While many methods are extended over time, most rely upon a fixed, much shorter time frame for discussion.	Often takes place over several weeks.
Resources	A weakness is the lack of information resources to address concerns as they arise.	Users can access unique information at any time to enhance quality and content of discourse. Information can be verified in real time.
Environment	In general, participants have little influence over the shape of the physical environment. It certainly cannot be customized for individual participants.	Users can often influence the look, feel, and content of the online environments, while joining from a physically comfortable location.
Location	Participants must travel to a central, physical locale. This naturally excludes some citizens.	Ability of users to communicate is not limited to geographic constraints.

Designing the Arc of Dialogue

Purpose	**Why are we specifically coming together to engage in this dialogue? Why is it important to us?**
Intended Outcomes	**What do we hope to achieve, gain, or accomplish by engaging in dialogue?**
Ground Rules/ Principles for Engagement	**What are the "norms," rules, principles, or guidelines we want to establish to guide our dialogue?**
Ice Breakers/ Community Building	**Who is in the room? What connections to one another can we find?**
Experience Questions	What questions will invite participants to think about their own experiences with the topic and to bring these into the conversation? Experience questions help participants begin to make personal connections and find personal meaning in the dialogue topic. This process also allows participants to begin to establish a "common ground" of understanding and personal connection to the topic.
Exploratory Questions	What questions will help participants explore the dialogue topic beyond their own personal experiences with it? Exploratory questions help people engage in <u>inquiry</u> and <u>exploration</u> in an effort to learn with and from one another.
Synthesis of Ideas	The facilitator helps participants to <u>identify</u> and <u>make meaning</u> from the "threads" that connect the ideas, perspectives, and insights generated through the dialogue.
Next Steps	The facilitator works with the group to reflect on its learning and to decide what, if any, are the next steps the group wants to take.
Closure	The facilitator works with the group to reflect on its learning, offer final observations, make comments to one another about the learning process.