Engaging the Public on Hot Topics

CCAC, Wednesday, April 13, 2016

Today's Agenda

11:00 Welcome
• About the Institute for Local Government
• Interactive Exercise
• Discussion

11:20 Best Practices & Hot Topics
• From Implementing Recommended Practices to Creating Exceptional Strategies
• TIERS
• Overcoming Barriers

11:50 Open Q&A

The Institute for Local Government
ILG is the non-profit research and education affiliate of

www.ca-ilg.org
ILG Mission

- Promoting good government at the local level
- Practical, impartial and easy-to-use materials

ILG’s Public Engagement Program

RESOURCES AVAILABLE ONLINE

- Tipsheets
- Guidebooks
- Case Stories
- Webinars
- Coaching, Training, Technical Assistance

ILG has instant polling ‘clickers’ and interpretation headsets we loan to local gov’ts (no charge except shipping)

Hanna Stelmakhovych | hstelmakhovych@ca-ilg.org | 916.658.8221

www.ca-ilg.org
THINK

Step 1: Self-Assessment

- Public Engagement Project Assessment
- Agency Assessment

Step 2: Consider PE Approach

- Draft PE Approach for Specific Effort
- Draft PE Approach for Agency Wide Application

Step 3: Contemplate Community Landscape

- Create/Update List of Local CBOs and others
- Identify diverse locations to hold meetings with target audiences in mind

INITIATE

Step 1: Draft Public Engagement Approach

- Choose a mix of in-person and online activities
- Consider timeline, budget, staffing, who will facilitate, how will data be gathered, what might go wrong

Step 2: Develop Outreach Plan

- Create an Outreach Plan
- Consider what you know from your community landscape

Step 3: Reality Check

- Are there local, state, or federal laws or regulations you need to consider?
- Internal ‘politics’ or larger ‘politics’
ENGAGE

Step 1: Implement PE Approach
- Execute your plan
- Ensure roles are clear; adjust as appropriate

Step 2: Implement Outreach Plan
- Implement your plan, prioritizing outreach
- Ensure targeted audiences are represented (authentically) within your plan

Step 3: ‘Reality Check’
- Are there internal organizational ‘politics’ or challenges that have changed?
- Check in with key community leaders on a regular basis to understand new or coming issues

REVIEW

Step 1: Evaluate PE Approach
- Evaluate your plan
- Consider: What worked? What could have been better? Is training needed?

Step 2: Evaluate Outreach Plan
- Evaluate your outreach plan
- Consider: What worked? Is training needed? Are there community leaders to build stronger ties with? Ask for help

SHIFT

Step 1: Internal Organizational
- Consider beneficial organizational shifts
- For example: PE assigned within job description(s); commitment to train electeds and staff; ongoing evaluation and assessment

Step 2: External: Your Community
- Consider beneficial shifts in external relations
- For example: Set and track metrics related to in-person and phone meetings with underrepresented community members; engage with local leadership to build stronger ties

Step 3: Policy Change
- Consider policy review/change/adoption
- Commitment to review PE related policies if they have not been systematically reviewed in 10 yrs; adopt a resolution demonstrating commitment to PE
Contact Information

• Sarah Rubin
  srubin@ca-ilg.org
  (916) 658-8263

• Randi Kay Stephens
  rstephens@ca-ilg.org
  (916) 658-8207
The Institute for Local Government (ILG) is developing a new framework any local government can use to plan and execute public engagement efforts. The “TIERS” framework has been developed in direct response to what we have heard from local elected officials and staff across California.

In 2015, ILG conducted a statewide survey and found that 69 percent of respondents said they do not have the sufficient staff, knowledge and financial resources for public engagement. These findings mirrored the results of a 2013 Public Agenda survey which found that 69 percent of respondents thought a lack of resources and staff could stand in the way of a deliberative (public engagement) approach.

Further, there is a lack of standard best practices for authentic and effective public engagement, which leads to a lack of common understanding of what public engagement is and how to approach it. The framework outlined below provides a step by step approach to public engagement.

Local governments can benefit from public engagement in the following ways:

- Better identification of the public’s values, ideas and recommendations
- More informed residents
- Improved local agency decision makings and actions, with better impacts and outcomes
- More community buy-in and support, with less contentiousness
- More civil discussion and decision making
- Faster project implementation with less need to revisit again
- More trust in each other and in local government
- Higher rates of community participation and leadership development
**Step 1: Self-Assessment**
- Public Engagement Project Assessment
  - Quick Assessment (1-4 hours)
  - Deeper Assessment (8 hrs to 6 weeks)
  - Template Provided
- Agency Assessment
  - Davenport Institute’s "How are WE Doing?" assessment tool

**Step 2: Consider Public Engagement Approach**
- Draft Public Engagement Approach for Specific Effort
  - Template Provided
- Draft Public Engagement Approach for Agency Wide Application
  - Review agency’s public engagement policies and practices, including current staffing
  - Conduct an analysis of the public engagement functions and needs across the agency

**Step 3: Contemplate Community Landscape**
- Create or update a list of local community based organizations (CBOs) and others to inform outreach efforts
- Identify diverse locations to hold meetings with target audiences in mind

**Step 1: Draft Public Engagement Approach**
- Choose a mix of in person and online activities
- Consider the timeline, budget, staff time implications (your department and other departments as applicable)
- Who will facilitate events? Who/ how will data gathered be input, analyzed, summarized?
- What might go wrong? How might your approach mitigate for challenges?
  - Template Provided

**Step 2: Develop Outreach Plan**
- Create an Outreach Plan
  - Consider what you know from your ‘community landscape’ listing; who you are trying to reach, how much time and money available
  - Template Provided

**Step 3: ‘Reality Check’**
- Are there local, state or federal laws or regulations you need to consider?
- Are there internal organizational ‘politics’ or challenges to take into consideration?
- Are there larger ‘Political’ issues to keep in mind?
  - For example: is an election near? A significant recent incident?

"Society is strongest when we all have a voice. Engaged communities are often more vibrant and healthier."
- The James Irvine Foundation
Step 1: Implement Public Engagement Approach
- Execute your plan; ensure roles are clear; adjust as appropriate
  - Template Provided

Step 2: Implement Outreach Plan
- Implement your plan, prioritizing outreach
- Ensure targeted audiences are represented (authentically) within your plan
- Double check with local leaders to ensure authentic voices are reached

Step 3: ‘Reality Check’
- Are there internal organizational ‘politics’ or challenges that have changed and need to be considered?
- Check in with key community leaders on a regular basis to understand new or coming issues; mitigate accordingly

Step 1: Evaluate Public Engagement Approach
- Evaluate your Plan
  - What worked? What could have gone better?
  - See ILG resources like Rapid Review Worksheets
  - Is training needed for any staffers in order to execute more effectively in the future? (e.g. facilitation skills; graphic design; survey question construction; meeting design)

Step 2: Evaluate Outreach Plan
- Evaluate your outreach plan
  - What worked? What could have gone better?
  - Is training needed for any staffers in order to execute more effectively in the future? (e.g. challenging people; communications skills; small group facilitation)
  - Are there community leaders who the agency should build stronger ties with?
  - Ask for help when needed from organizations like ILG, Davenport Institute and/or consultants

Step 1: Internal Organizational
- Consider beneficial organizational shifts
  - For example: public engagement assigned within job description(s); commitment to train electeds and staff in public engagement policy and/or skills; ongoing communication strategies that go beyond traditional methods such as ethnic media;
  - Send out periodic surveys to understand satisfaction with public engagement related efforts and policies

Step 2: External | Your Community
- Consider beneficial shifts in external relations
  - For example: Set and track metrics related to in-person and phone meetings with diverse and underrepresented community members, choose time bound goals; engage with local leadership programs

Step 3: Policy Change
- Consider policy review/ change/ adoption
  - Commitment to review public engagement related policies if they have not been systematically reviewed in the last ten years; Adopt a resolution demonstrating commitment to public engagement